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## Author Rights: Using the SPARC Author Addendum to secure your rights as the author of a journal article

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Sarah Michalak, University Librarian  
and Associate Provost for University Libraries  
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The copyright holder controls the work. Decisions concerning use of the work, such as distribution, access, pricing, updates, and any use restrictions belong to the copyright holder. Authors who have transferred their copyright without retaining any rights may not be able to place the work on course Web sites, copy it for students or colleagues, deposit the work in a public online archive, or reuse portions in a subsequent work. That's why it is important to retain the rights you need.

Transferring copyright doesn't have to be all or nothing. The law allows you to transfer copyright while holding back rights for yourself and others. This is the compromise that the SPARC Author Addendum helps you to achieve.

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Read the publication agreement with great care. Publishers' agreements (often titled "Copyright Transfer Agreement") have traditionally been used to transfer copyright or key use rights from author to publisher. They are written by publishers and may capture more of your rights than are necessary to publish the work. Ensuring the agreement is balanced and has a clear statement of your rights is up to you.

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Value the copyright in your intellectual property. A journal article is often the culmination of years of study, research, and hard work. The more the article is read and cited, the greater its value. But if you give away control in the copyright agreement, you may limit its use. Before transferring ownership of your intellectual output, understand the consequences and options.

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