

Global Coalition of Access to Research, Science and Education Organizations calls on STM to Withdraw New Model Licenses

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As a group, the undersigned organizations share a vision in which scholarly knowledge is a common good, a resource for the whole of humanity. This means more than just allowing the public access to research outputs, it means making research available in a way that allows its integration with the rest of human knowledge. It means making the resources arising from research and from wider public activities *interoperable*.

The Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers has recently released a set of model licenses for [research articles](#). In their current formulation, these licenses would limit the use, reuse and exploitation of research. They would make it difficult, confusing or impossible to combine these research outputs with other public resources and sources of knowledge to the benefit of both science and society. There are many issues with these licenses, but the most important is that they are not compatible with any of the globally used Creative Commons licenses. For this reason, we call on the STM Association to withdraw them and commit to working within the Creative Commons framework.

The Creative Commons licenses are the *de facto* global standard for providing users with legal confidence of their rights to reuse content. They are not perfect, but they have been applied to over a billion resources by millions of authors. Creative Commons licenses are the preferred option supported by major content platforms and Open Access publishers. They are recommended by governments in Australia, Europe, the United States and elsewhere. If research outputs are to be a first class citizen of the web then they should use the same licenses.

Using the STM model licenses would make the research literature legally incompatible with hundreds of millions of Creative Commons licensed pictures on Flickr, videos on YouTube, articles on Wikipedia and across the web. Not all Creative Commons licenses allow all forms of use, and not all are compatible with Wikipedia but all Creative Commons licenses use common terms and a common and established legal framework. By contrast, the STM model licenses will increase costs for all stakeholders by creating legal uncertainty that can only be resolved by legal action, probably in multiple jurisdictions. Confusion and inconsistency are not in the long term interests of any stakeholder.

The organizations listed below – which includes funders, institutions, publishers, curators and the users of public resources – call on the STM Association to withdraw the model licenses. We share a positive vision of enabling the flow of knowledge for the good of all. A vision that encompasses a world in which downstream communicators and curators can use research content in new ways, including creating translations, visualizations, and adaptations for diverse audiences. There is much work to do but the Creative Commons licenses already provide legal tools that are easy to understand, fit for the digital age, machine readable and consistently applied across content platforms.

Let us work together towards a world where the whole sum of human knowledge, both that from within academia and that from without, is accessible, usable, reusable and interoperable. And let us work within the legal frameworks that have already been globally adopted as a base

for building the rest of the tools we need to make this a reality.

Please email Catriona MacCallum (cmacallum@plos.org) if your organization would like to be added to the list of Signatories. You can access the the letter with the original signatories at [figshare](#).

Signatories:

Government/Funders:

[Australian Governments' Open Access and Licensing Programme](#) (AusGOAL)

[Shuttleworth Foundation](#)

Research Libraries/Institutions/Education:

[American Library Association](#) (ALA)

[Association of College & Research Libraries](#) (ACRL)

[Association of European Research Libraries](#) (LIBER)

[Association of Research Libraries](#) (ARL)

[Australian Open Access Support Group](#) (AOASG)

[BGI-Shenzhen](#)

[Boston Library Consortium](#) (BLC)

[Center for Research Libraries](#)

[COAPI](#) (Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions)

[COAR](#) (Confederation of Open Access Repositories)

[Collegium Artium](#)

[Consortium Cincel-Chile](#)

[Consortium of Cameroon University and Research Libraries](#) (COCUREL)

[EIFL](#) (Electronic Information for Libraries)

[EOS](#) (Enabling Open Scholarship)

[European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations](#) (EBLIDA)

[European Network for Copyright in support of Education and Science](#) (ENCES)

[Five Colleges, Incorporated](#) (MA)

[Harvard Open Access Project](#) (HOAP)

[IS4OA](#) (Infrastructure Services for Open Access)

[International Federation of Library Associations & Institutions](#) (IFLA)

[Jisc](#)

[International Coalition of Library Consortia](#)

[League of European Research Universities](#) (LERU)

[Libraries and Archives Copyright Alliance](#) (LACA)

[LYRASIS](#)

[Max Planck Digital Library](#) (MPDL)

[OpenAIRE](#)

[Research Libraries UK](#) (RLUK)

[SCONUL](#) (The Society of College, National and University Libraries)

[SPARC](#) (The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition)

[SPARC Europe](#)

[The Oberlin Group](#)

[UK HE International Unit](#)

[University of Kansas](#)

[Universities UK](#)

Civic Society Groups:

[Authors Alliance](#)

[Centro Cultural de España en El Salvador](#)

[Centrum Cyfrowe](#)

[COMMUNIA](#)

[Copyright for Creativity](#) (C4C)

[Creative Commons](#)

[Electronic Frontier Foundation](#) (EFF)

[FSFE](#) (Free Software Foundation Europe)

[Fundación Karisma](#)

[Fundación AccesArte](#)

[Kennisland](#) (KL)

[La Casa Tomada](#)

[La Radio Tomada](#)

[New Media Rights](#)

[ONG TEDIC- Paraguay](#)

[Open Forum Europe](#)

[Open Knowledge](#)

[Open Rights Group](#)

[Public Knowledge](#)

[QuestionCopyright](#)

Publishers/Directories:

[BioMed Central](#)

[Co-Action Publishing](#)

[Copernicus Publications](#)

[DOAJ](#) (Directory of Open Access Journals)

[Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene](#) _

[eLife](#)

[figshare](#)

[Hindawi](#)

[MDPI](#)

[OASPA](#) (Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association)

[Open Book Publishers](#)

[Open Library of Humanities](#)

[Open Humanities Press](#)

[PeerJ](#)

[PLOS](#)

[SciELO](#)

[ScienceOpen](#)

[The Winnower](#)

[Ubiquity Press](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#) (WMF)

Technology Providers/Platforms:

[discoverygarden](#)

[Impactstory](#)

[Plazi](#)

[River Valley Technologies](#)