

SSRN'S COPYRIGHT REFERENCE GUIDE:

SHARING RESPONSIBLY

Welcome to the SSRN Copyright Reference Guide, for Authors posting their content on SSRN. This guide aims to help you understand your rights, navigate copyright issues, and share your work responsibly. By referring to these guidelines, you can ensure compliance and contribute positively to SSRN and the broader academic community.

01 Understanding Copyright

Copyright Basics:

Copyright protects original works of authorship, giving creators exclusive rights to their creations. These rights include reproduction, distribution, adaptation, and public display.

Public Domain:

Works in the public domain are not protected by copyright and can be freely used by anyone. This includes works with expired copyrights or those intentionally placed in the public domain by the creator.



02 Understanding Publishing Rights

Intricacies and Sharing Liberties:

The display of a copyright notice on a work, indicating the author's copyright ownership, doesn't always directly translate into the ability to freely share or distribute the work. This is because when authors enter into publishing agreements, they might transfer some or all of their rights to publishers. Such a transfer can significantly impact where and how the content can be shared, potentially resulting in embargoes or specific papers versions permitted for platforms like SSRN.

As a result, while the copyright notice acknowledges ownership or attribution, it doesn't necessarily establish the right to post the piece. This emphasizes the importance of obtaining a clear understanding of your rights and familiarizing yourself with publishers' policies. This proactive approach ensures authors can make well-informed decisions about sharing their work responsibly and effectively.



03 Understanding Manuscript Versions

When sharing your research on SSRN, it's important to be aware of the different manuscript versions and their implications. These versions reflect various stages of the publication process and have varying copyright considerations:

Working Paper:

A working paper, often referred to as a preprint, is an early draft of your research that has not yet undergone peer review. Sharing working papers on SSRN allows for collaboration, feedback, and exposure in the academic community.

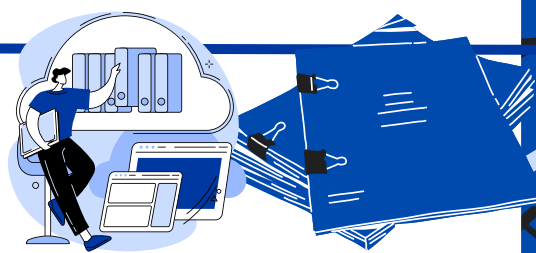
Accepted Manuscript:

After peer review, when your paper has been accepted by a journal but hasn't undergone the publisher's formatting and editing process, it's known as the accepted manuscript. Many publishers allow authors to share the accepted manuscript on platforms like SSRN, helping to disseminate research before the final publication.

Final Published Version:

The final published version, also known as the Version of Record, is the polished, formatted, and edited article as it appears in the journal. It often includes pagination, official journal branding, and editorial improvements. Publishers might have specific policies about sharing the final published version, often reserving exclusive rights for distribution.

When posting content on SSRN, you generally have more flexibility with sharing working papers and accepted manuscripts. However, to determine which version you can share and where and when you can post it, consult your publisher's copyright policies and/or your author agreement. If you're uncertain, it's recommended to contact your publisher for clarification.



04 Rights and Permissions

Third-Party Content:

If your document includes content owned by a third party (not the author), you are responsible for ensuring that your use complies with the copyright policies of the content owner. Any content with copyright held by someone other than the author requires permission from the third-party rightsholder. Always refer to the publisher's policies to understand third-party copyright obligations.

Examples of third-party copyright or restricted use include:

- Copyright held by someone other than the author
- "Permission required" instructions for contacting a third party
- Restrictive license text limiting usage
- Watermark or stamp - may show name, IP address of downloader, etc. (a method used by publishers to discourage sharing)





Subscription-Based Articles:

Subscription articles require payment to access. Copyright for these works is often transferred to the journal, necessitating explicit permission to reuse the content.

Open Access Articles:

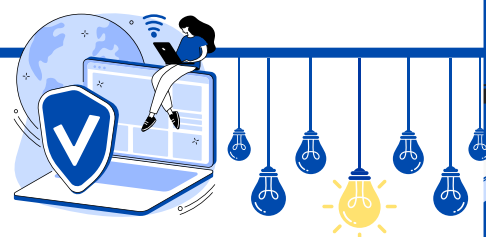
Open Access articles are freely accessible online with limited restrictions. Authors typically retain copyright, but there are differences between types:

- **Green Open Access:** While content might be freely accessible on a publisher's website due to Green Open Access, it does not automatically mean that the content can be posted on platforms like SSRN without restrictions. Publishers often impose embargo periods, which means that a certain time must pass after publication before the author can share a specific version of the article. Additionally, the specific version of the article that can be posted may be limited to the pre-print or accepted manuscript version, rather than the final published version.
- **Gold Open Access:** Articles are freely accessible upon publication and are licensed under Creative Commons licenses (CC licenses). In many GOA models, authors retain their copyright, allowing them to control how their work is shared, adapted, and reused. Familiarize yourself with the terms of the license to understand how you can share the content on SSRN.

Creative Commons NC Licensed Content:

Navigating the intricacies of non-commercial (NC) content can be challenging. Creative Commons licenses are designed to offer a balance between allowing content creators to share their work with others while still retaining some control over how the work is used. The "NC" designation means that the content can be used for non-commercial purposes only. The exact interpretation of "non-commercial" can vary and might not be straightforward in all cases. Note that CC licenses don't distinguish between nonprofit and for-profit entities for NC restrictions.

Hence, the authorization to share your paper on SSRN hinges on the terms outlined in the author agreement you've entered into with the publisher. This is particularly relevant if the publisher holds the copyright alongside the license, potentially requiring you to seek permission for posting "NC" licensed content.



- In conclusion, determining posting rights of a work can be complex. Authors are encouraged to approach their publishing journey with a keen awareness of copyright ownership and publishing rights. While authors may hold the copyright to the content, publishers may possess exclusive rights to distribute and control access to the final published work. This distinction has a direct impact on authors' ability to share their content freely.

In navigating this landscape, authors are encouraged to:

- **Review Agreements:** Thoroughly examine your copyright and publishing agreements with the publisher to gain insight into which rights are retained and transferred. It's worth noting that individual agreements with publishers might be established to retain more rights beyond the conditions outlined to SSRN. Therefore, instances might arise where we lack knowledge about the retained rights, prompting a request for permission to post.
- **Request Permission:** When necessary, seek permission from the publisher to ensure compliance with sharing policies.
- **Check Policies:** Delve into the publisher's self-archiving and sharing policies, often detailing the specific versions eligible for posting and the suitable platforms for sharing.
- **Leverage Resources:** Make use of valuable resources like the "How Can I Share It?" tool (<https://www.howcanishareit.com/>). This tool provides personalized information to help authors understand the permissible sharing avenues for their work on SSRN.

Streamlined Copyright Compliance and Submission Documentation:

To preempt copyright setbacks, authors are encouraged to provide accompanying documentation during the time of submission. This documentation may include permission letters, email correspondences, or author agreements, through the SSRN Support Center at <https://service.elsevier.com/app/contact/supporthub/ssrn/>. When submitting these documents, please include either the abstract ID of your submission or the title of your work for expedited processing.

Clarifying Rights and Policies:

SSRN actively engages with publishers to comprehend their rights and self-archiving policies. While many have shared valuable insights, some publishers may not have responded yet or might not have been engaged. For assistance or follow-ups with publishers, reach out to us. We're here to help navigate these complexities.



SSRN encourages responsible sharing and aims to balance authors' needs with publisher policies. If you need help or have questions, reach out to us at Copyright@ssrn.com

By referring to these guidelines, authors can share their research responsibly and compliantly on SSRN, fostering a collaborative academic environment.