Grand Valley State University

From the SelectedWorks of Matt Ruen

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Copyright for Scholars: What GV Faculty Need to Know

Matt Ruen

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Copyright for Scholars: What GV Faculty Need To Know

What is copyright?
- Copyright law grants the creators of original intellectual and creative work the rights to: reproduce, distribute, perform, display, or create adaptations of the work, and to grant those rights to other people.
- Copyright law also includes many rights of use, allowing educators, students, and the public to use copyrighted material without special permission.
- To learn more, visit our Copyright Guide (http://www.gvsu.edu/library/copyright).

Who owns copyright in my scholarship?
- You probably do, unless you have signed those rights away.
- Under certain conditions, you might share copyright with your co-creators or with GVSU, as described in the GVSU Administrative Manual (Chapter 4, Section 1).

What happens when I publish an article?
- You either give the publisher a license to publish your work, or transfer copyright to the publisher. This depends on the publisher, though traditional subscription journals frequently ask you to sign over all of your rights.

What rights might I be signing away to publishers?
- Traditional publishers often ask authors to sign over all of their rights, including the right to share their work with students or use it in future scholarly activity.
  - Subscription journals may give you permission to re-use your own work in specific, limited ways...but not all journals do so.
- Open Access publishers need permission to publish and distribute your work, and often require authors to use a specific Creative Commons license.

How can I learn more about a publisher’s copyright agreement?
- Before submitting an article, check the publisher’s website. Most publishers explain their requirements or provide a copy of their standard agreement.
- Puzzling over a copyright transfer agreement that you’ve already received? Talk to your liaison librarian. We’ll work with you to help you understand the terms.
  
  **Tip:** When looking at a publisher’s copyright agreement, consider how you might want to use your work in the future; does the agreement allow that?

How can I retain the ability to use my own work?
- Ask your publisher: copyright transfer agreements are just like other voluntary contracts: you can ask for changes in the agreement.
- Use an author addendum: these are standard templates for negotiating with publishers.
  - Print and fill out the SPARC Author Addendum: http://sparcopen.org/our-work/author-rights/sparc-author-addendum-text/
  - Or, generate a custom addendum online with the Scholar’s Copyright Addendum Engine: http://scholars.sciencecommons.org/
- Choose an open access publisher: when your work is published in an open access journal, you retain your copyright, and can re-use the work however you choose.

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