

STM Consultation on Sharing via Scholarly Collaboration Networks (SCNs)

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What are SCNs

- SCNs are **platforms that allow researchers to develop and maintain professional relationships**. Some enable:
 - Discussion or research and **information exchange**
 - **Sharing of research results, articles and data.**
- Not typically used for group interactions and activities more akin to social networks (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook) or workplace tools (e.g., SharePoint, Google Docs)
- STM* working group identified **40+ such networks**

**STM – The International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM) is an international trade association organized and run for the benefit of scholarly, scientific, technical, medical and professional publishers. (www.stm-assoc.org)*

SCNs are Growing in Popularity

- SCNs have grown substantially* in recent years, particularly in the “big” three – **Academia.edu**, **ResearchGate**, and **Mendeley**
 - **Registered users:** Academia.edu 15+ million users, ResearchGate 5+ million, Mendeley 3.5+ million
 - **Uploaded documents:** Mendeley reported that its users had uploaded 470+ million documents, and ResearchGate reported that 14 million are “accessible” via its platform.

*CCC/CLA Report on Scholarly Collaboration Platforms, M. Ware, November 27, 2014 (CCC/Outsell)

SCNs are Growing in Popularity

To put this in perspective...

DropBox is largest tool for the private sharing of documents—three years ago, it had 100M users sharing 1 billion files a day!—and Google Scholar holds about 160M documents.

SCNs: The 21st Century Embodiment of a Standard Academic Practice

Scholars have shared various versions of their scholarly articles with their colleagues **since the journal first appeared** (1665).

Online versions and online distribution makes this process much easier.

- **Good for scholars and for scholarship** with the promotion of the publication to wider audiences.

Authors, readers, funding agencies and publishers share the same primary goal: *provide access to publications.*

The Role of Scholarly Publishers

Scholarly publishers handle **all aspects of the publication process** (editorial/peer review management, composition/tagging, online distribution and archiving). These activities require income.

- Given that **subscription income is still the dominant business model** for scholarly publications, unfettered access to the highest value version (publisher's version of record) can cause economic harm.
- Clearly, the **open access model is one means of providing wide access.**

The Role of Scholarly Publishers

The **present situation** with distribution and access to licensed (subscription) content on such networks **is ambiguous** and needs to be simplified for all parties.

Publishers want to **encourage use of such networks without endangering their ability** to provide and maintain valuable publications.

STM Seeks Clarity and Consensus

STM assembled a **working group** in Sept. 2014 to examine the current landscape of article sharing via SCNs and publishers' role. **Ten publishers**, both for profit and not-for-profit, and some of whom owned or interacted with SCNs, took part.

'Voluntary principles for article sharing on scholarly collaboration networks' were drafted and posted it for a two month **STM Open Consultation** in early 2015 inviting wide participation among all stakeholder groups.

Voluntary Principles for Article Sharing on SCNs

The principles are meant to:

- **clarify** how, where, and what content should be shared using these networks and sites,
 - **improve** the experience for all stakeholders
 - **encourage publishers and SCN's to work together** to facilitate sharing, benefiting researchers, institutions, and society as a whole.
- All comments and a summary are posted on the STM website
 - Key recommendation: Principles should be: **clear, simple, uniform**

Response to STM's Open Consultation

- Based on the community's constructive feedback, a revised set of principles was posted August 28.

<http://www.stm-assoc.org/stm-consultations/scn-consultation-2015/>

- Posting includes an **explanation of the changes** made to the principles.

Voluntary Principles: Key Points

- **Publishers commit to facilitate** the dissemination and discovery of their authors' scholarly articles.
- **Sharing should be allowed** within a research collaboration group (to be defined by the group)
 - Allow article sharing **between subscribers and non-subscribers** within the group
 - **Include commercial researchers**, subject to publisher policy or appropriate licensing
 - Include members of the **wider public** participating with the group

Voluntary Principles: Key Points

- Publishers and libraries should **extend** their collective **use of standards** such as COUNTER to quantify article use on networks.
- Publishers and standards organizations should continue to **work together on tools that facilitate sharing** (article versioning and access rights metadata).
- **Publisher policies** on research collaboration group sharing and public posting of articles should be **clear and easily discoverable**.

Next Steps for SCN Working Group

Publisher posting policy - Several publishers (e.g. NPG, Wiley, Elsevier) have issued/in the process of issuing policies to address posting via SCNs.

Article tagging project - To support implementation, a working group is developing a technical solution based on tagging XML metadata in scholarly articles.

- Participants include publishers, platforms and Crossref
- Draft design for trackable article sharing by Q1, 2016

The SCN working group continues to reach out for wider involvement, including non-publisher owned networks and **librarian networks**

- **Seeking librarian involvement and/or endorsement**
- Comments/updates on progress, email scnproject@stm-assoc.org
- Updates will continually be posted on:
www.stm-assoc.org/stm-consultations/scn-consultation-2015/

References

STM Association's voluntary principles statement and consultation on article sharing networks:

www.stm-assoc.org/stm-consultations/scn-consultation-2015/

Richard Van Noorden, Online collaboration: Scientists and the Social Network. *Nature* 512, 126–129
doi:10.1038/512126a.

CCC/CLA Report Scholarly Collaboration Platforms,
M.Ware, Outsell, Nov., 2014

F. Dylla interview with Scholarly Kitchen, Feb. 24, 2015

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