

The Rights Retention Strategy (for researchers)

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HTML Slides: <https://tiny.one/rrs-cam> (CC BY 4.0 license)

Declarations

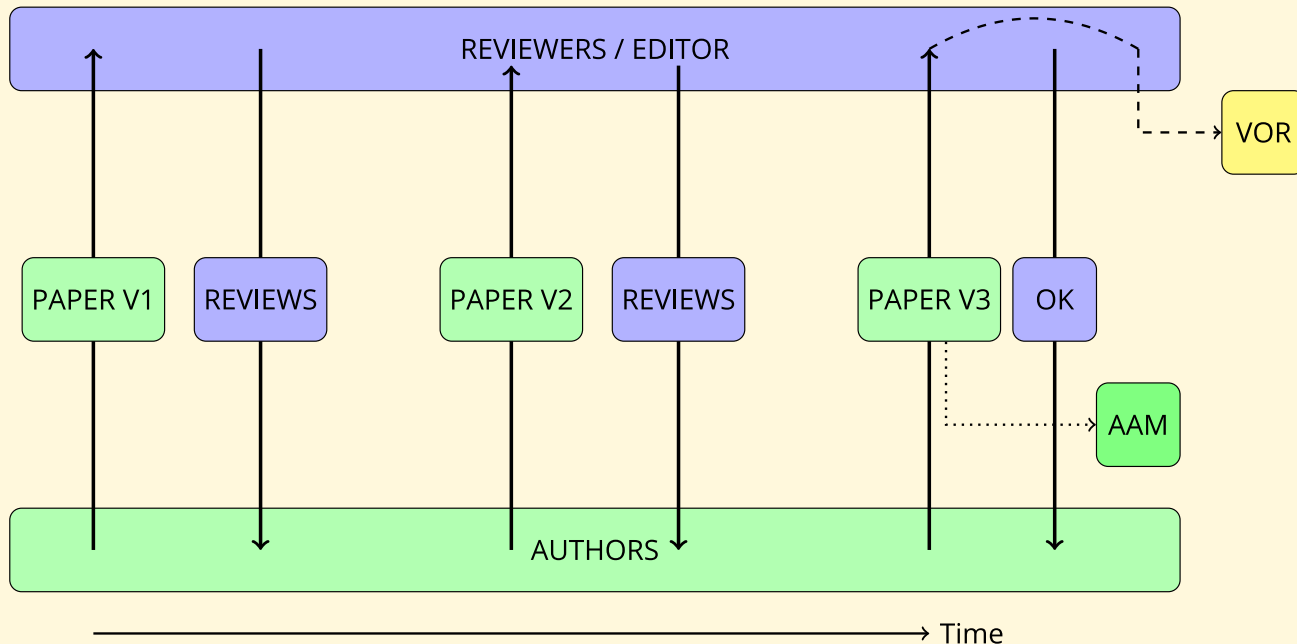
Affiliate editor of *bioRxiv*; advisory board member at *F1000Research*, *Gigabyte*.

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The problem

- The emergence of hybrid journals (pay to both read and publish) in response to OA mandates has complicated OA.
- As of April 2022, UKRI-funded work must be OA without embargo under CC BY, via gold "transformative agreement" sharing of "Version of Record" (VOR) or green (sharing your Author Accepted Manuscript, AAM) route.
- Fundamental right for researchers to keep rights to their work, rather than sign away copyright to publishers.



The rights retention strategy (RRS)

- Add the following text to your manuscript before submission and inform the editor in covering letter of your intention to use the RRS.

For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.

- Upon editorial acceptance of your article, deposit your author accepted manuscript (AAM) *without embargo* in your institutional repository.
- I've also written a [primer](#) on the RRS for researchers.

Is it working?

- Ross Mounce has curated over 500 examples of RRS in action over the last year:

<https://www.coalition-s.org/blog/observing-the-success-so-far-of-the-rights-retention-strategy/>

- Re-use of material on wikipedia
- Use across STEM and HSS
- Adoption by funders (e.g. Wellcome) and institutions . . .

UK institutional approaches

- University of Edinburgh created an institutional wide policy that means all their employees give Edinburgh right to deposit their work in their repository.
- Here in Cambridge, OSC have created a one-year opt-in pilot along similar lines. If you sign up, this gives you extra support in case of "complications" with journals.
- See [Rights retention pilot](#) for further information; signing up takes less than a minute.

What's not to like?

- Publishers signed an open letter concerned about RRS. Much is made by publishers of the "hallowed status" of the VOR. e.g. it is referred to as "the foundation of the scientific record".
- OA advocates Shina Caroline Lynn Kamerlin and Shaun Yon-Seng Khoo have expressed concerns about legal aspects and practicalities.
- Springer Nature are the worst in my view, effectively ignoring the RRS at time of submission and requiring an embargo. They have now relented, and have suggested they will offer a "compliant route" for UKRI-funded work.
- Is the RRS a Verschlimmbesserung??

Who blinks first?

- If you wish to release your AAM under CC BY without embargo (as required by funders), journal may ask you to sign agreement that requires an embargo.
- An ethical journal should desk-reject submissions using RRS if it conflicts with their workflow, avoiding this situation.
- **Journal blinks first:** author deposits AAM without embargo immediately; VOR appears in following months.
- **Author blinks first:** journal gets its way, author might get into trouble with funder.
- **No one blinks:** green OA AAM and (paywalled) VOR. Would publisher send a takedown request to author or the institutional repository? Nobody knows yet.
- Huge temptation to just sign anything put in front of an author at time of acceptance. Most of us are not lawyers and the need to get published usually overrides concerns over ownership...

Take back control (Erin Mckiernan)



Summary

1. Encourage all authors to keep their rights to their material (for reuse, archival, sharing).
2. Include the RRS in your manuscripts and challenge the system! Talk to us if you face difficulties with a publisher.
3. Other approaches may work (e.g. LIBER zero embargo).
4. If a success, perhaps hybrid journals will disappear. Push for more ethical approaches, like **diamond open access**.