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Publishing with chains: a comparison of publishing agreements within library and information science

Publishers within the LIS field acquire either permission or copyright transfer from authors in a variety of methods, each with distinct benefits and limitations for the rights of the author(s). Since publishing agreements contain a wide array of clauses, academics' literacy in copyright matters should be equally robust, however, due to the frenzied pace of academic life, some authors surrender additional rights and privileges. The study addresses the following research questions:

- ❖ What are the common elements or terms of publishing agreements?
- ❖ What are the uncommon terms?
- ❖ What should authors look for within these agreements?

This study compares ten recent publishing agreements within LIS from eight different publishers including both journal articles and monographs collected through a convenience sampling. The documents were analyzed with both document analysis and open coding procedures. The analysis finds most publishers require copyright transfer with specific limitations on future publications or reproductions. Additionally, a majority of the documents included an originality/non-prior published clause. Three of the agreements contained little or no restrictions, two of which did not require copyright transfer. Variations within the documents illuminate the complexities of publishing agreements, and are displayed through a term/clause checklist for authors. These findings highlight common clauses, and identify specific areas of concern for authors, however are limited to LIS.