Georgia Tech Open Access Policy Frequently Asked Questions
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Q: Why are we considering an open access policy? Doesn't the current model work?
A: Under the current model, most publishing transfers copyright to the publisher, leaving no rights retained by authors. The current model does not support authors who wish to retain some rights to copyright and then use those retained rights to make their work available in institutional archives. In some fields such as physics this does not matter because the field already practices systematic archiving, but in other fields it does matter.

Q: What kinds of publications are included and not?
A: This policy applies to all published scholarly articles that any person authors or co-authors while appointed as a member of the Faculty, except for any such articles authored or co-authored before the adoption of this policy, or subject to a conflicting agreement formed before the adoption of this policy, or conducted under a classified research agreement. Examples of excluded content include books, course materials, theses, student-only publications, opinion pieces.

Q: What universities have tried open access policies and what good has come to them from it?
A: You can find a list of institutions and funders with open access policies here: http://roarmap.eprints.org/. One form of desired “good” might be increased distribution and citation to work. Studies have found that publications available via open access experience more downloads than those available by subscription only. There are conflicting results regarding whether publications available by open access experience more citations, though most studies find an increase in citations. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Access/ for more information.

Q: Will Georgia Tech’s policy force compliance in a manner conflicting with my funding sources or with the policies of the journals in which I want to publish?
A: No. The policy will not require you to take action that conflicts with funding sources or journal policies, because you can opt out. The policy makes it possible for you to retain rights, if you choose to do so and if that choice is compatible with your funding sources and journal policies.

Q: Why do we not make open access opt in?
A: Opt in approaches, also called recommendations, do not have the influence over publisher policies that opt out approaches have. A number of publishers have policies that allow archiving “if required by employer/funding agency”. A Georgia Tech policy with opt out will allow authors to fall under the “if” condition.

Q: Does passing an open access policy mean that Georgia Tech will require/encourage us to publish in open access journals?
A: No. The policy neither encourages nor discourages publication in any venue type. Faculty should publish in the venues that are most appropriate for their work.

Q: Why should Georgia Tech stick its neck out?
A: The policy gives authors who are so inclined a chance to increase the distribution and possibly impact of their work by making it more widely available. Changes in publishing are a reality and will continue to be so. Establishing a policy that works for Georgia Tech on our terms means we have a chance to lead in any system-wide policy discussions that may take place later.

Q: What do I have to do if/when I don’t want to participate in the policy for a given article?
A: The policy asks that you opt out. The library will maintain a simple web-based form to allow you to do that.

Q: Which version of the article should be deposited with SMARTech? Is it the final version before copyediting or the published version appearing in the journal pages?
A: Different publishers will allow different versions to be archived. There are two versions of interest: the author’s post-print (final version after incorporating referee feedback), and publisher’s version (final version with additional publisher formatting). SHERPA/RoMEO tracks which versions can be archived according to publisher. The policy calls for deposit of author’s final version. If the publisher allows deposit of the publisher’s version, then we recommend that.

Q: Can you provide some specific directions about what we should do when we receive copyright agreement forms from publishers (assuming we are not opting out)?
A: You can find out the policy of any specific journal by checking the SHERPA/RoMEO service: [http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/](http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/). If your publisher allows archiving, you are all set. If you publisher does not allow archiving, you can submit an author addendum. We will make addendum instructions available.

Q: Can the library track publisher policies for me? I want this to be as simple as possible.
A: The staff at the library will look up publisher policies for you. The faculty member only needs to submit article and journal information via the web form, and the staff will look up the policies for each journal/publisher.

Q: If I am submitting to another open access venue, do I still need to deposit the paper with SMARTech? What if I host it on my own web server or webpage?
A: You may satisfy the terms of this policy by making publications available through an alternative repository of the author’s choosing, with notification to the Provost or Provost’s designate, provided that such repository makes the work accessible in full-text to the public, without costs imposed on any individual user, and that it offers to preserve and maintain access to the work indefinitely. Your own web server (or
webpage) will generally not meet the requirements because it does not preserve and maintain access to the work indefinitely.

Q: I think some journals will not want to publish my work if I make trouble over their copyright assignment. What can I do to avoid rejection and what reassurances can you give?  
A: If you are concerned, you can opt out.

Q: I don't have the funds to pay the page charges that some journals require to allow open access. Will the university provide a pool of funds for this purpose?  
A: Given the tightness of budgets, there are no present plans to provide a pool of funds to cover page charges. You can opt out of the policy if you do not have access to page charge funds.

Q: What are the journal business model implications? How will a journal that allows open access archiving survive? Will a journal that allows open access archiving have page-charges? Will this kill-off the economics of my field's best journal?  
A: One path to a viable business model is provided by open access policies that allow an embargo period so that the journal retains first-to-market status. The GT policy includes an embargo. Page charges are another potential mechanism for revenue generation by journal publishers. Whether a particular journal decides to impose page charges is a complex business decision that weighs many factors including increased revenue with the potential for a decrease in strong submissions if competing journals do not have page charges. If you are concerned about the impact on the economics of your field's best journal, you can opt out. You might also consider working within your field to understand and maintain journal viability.

Q: I don't want to just give my stuff away for free, do I?  
A: When you sign over copyright, you are already giving away your stuff for free. In fact, this policy will often mean that you give less of your stuff away for free (and preserve it for use by yourself, colleagues, and the broader community). If you believe your work has commercial potential, you should pursue intellectual property protection in advance of submission to conference and journal venues.

Q: Will this kill peer-review?  
A: It seems unlikely. At a minimum it would require a series of outcomes, each far from certain. The argument generally goes as follows: (1) open access archiving will destroy the business model for journals and (2) when journals go out of business, peer review will also disappear. See the FAQ on journal business models for a discussion of the first of these assertions. On the second assertion, conferences in many fields execute a vibrant peer review process that operates almost exclusively on the unremunerated efforts and good will of research community participants who view participation as part-and-parcel of community membership.
Q: Is open access the same as web-only journals? Aren’t web-only journals much lower quality than traditional print journals?
A: Journals vary in quality, regardless of the format and cost-structure of their publication. A few definitions are needed. Web-only journals are those that do not produce hard-copy print issues but instead publish only in on-line digital format. These may require subscription or be free to readers. Many journals are moving to web-only due to the costs and other limitations of hard-copy print. Open access journals are free online to readers and may or may not also publish hard-copy issues. Open access journals are NOT the same as open access publishing, because the latter refers to archiving published journal papers regardless of whether they appear in open access journals or traditional journals. Regardless, the type of journal and its quality are independent variables.

Q: Will people take and re-use or abuse my work somehow?
A: Any work available on the Internet is at risk of re-use or abuse. The legal system provides protections against unauthorized uses, and reputable journals will take seriously any allegation of theft if they publish a suspect paper. One could argue that when work is more widely available it is open to greater abuse. On the other hand, wide availability improves the ability to compare purported “new” work against previous publications. In sum, it is probably a wash.

Q: The page charges for many high-quality archival journals are currently optional. All authors therefore, regardless of their level of funding, currently have equal access to high-quality peer review and publication of their ideas. Open access journals, however, must necessarily charge authors for publication. This creates an uneven playing field in which authors' financial resources place restrictions on their ability to publish.
A: Author page charges are one way for journals to raise revenue. There are other options such as institutional subsidies, advertising or donor support. Further, if an embargo period preserves a business model for journals, they may be able to support open access archiving without a need to raise revenue beyond paid subscriptions for those wanting immediate access to the published material.

Q: Are there any new issues of ADA compliance raised by this policy, for example to make the deposits in SMARTech accessible?
A: No. The deposits will be in formats already supported by SMARTech and thus covered under existing mechanisms to make SMARTech accessible.