

Draft Crossref Member Practices v0.3

Introduction

Our Member Practices set out the standards we expect all Crossref members to meet. They include some dos and don'ts, but they are not intended to cover every situation. We expect our members to follow not just the content, but also the spirit of these Member Practices. This means: following responsible, ethical scholarly communication practices; communicating clearly, openly and fairly with everyone involved; and responding promptly when concerns are raised.

We recognise that mistakes happen, misunderstandings can arise, and members may themselves be affected by deceptive or fraudulent practices by third parties. This means that it may not be possible for members to adhere to all of the practices at all times. However, we expect members to promptly and constructively address any issues we communicate to them.

We are still unable to get involved in individual instances of non-compliant activity, we don't intervene in legal or financial disputes between parties, and we don't assess the quality of published content or research. But where we see compelling evidence of deceptive or fraudulent activities, where there are systematic problems indicating that a member is no longer acting responsibly, or particularly if a member does not make reasonable efforts to improve after being notified of concerns, we may suspend or ultimately revoke their Crossref membership.

These practices have been created in consultation with our [Member Practices Working Group](#), and are currently subject to consultation with our community – please [read more about the consultation](#) if you have feedback to share. The final version will be discussed and approved by our board. We will review the practices annually, and any updates will be approved by the board and communicated to members.

Throughout these practices, we have used terminology from NISO Transfer Code of Practice v5¹. The code focuses on journal publishing, but we have used this terminology to cover publishing for all different content types.

- **Journal owner** - The legal owner of the journal in question, whether a publisher, academic society, or other third party.
- **Appointed publisher** - Party contractually appointed as publisher of a journal by the Journal Owner.
- **Receiving publisher** - during a title ownership transfer, the Receiving publisher is the "Party contractually appointed as publisher of the journal from the Effective Transfer Date" (eg the new publisher of the journal).
- **Transferring publisher** - during a title ownership transfer, the Transferring publisher is the "Party contractually appointed as publisher of the journal until the Effective Transfer Date" - eg the old publisher of the journal.

Crossref Member Practices v0.3

Your overall approach

✗ Do not undertake deceptive or fraudulent activity

A pattern of undertaking deceptive or fraudulent activity will lead to revocation. This includes, for example:

- Operating as a papermill.
- Offering authorship or references for sale.

Your member organisation

✗ Do not provide misleading, outdated, or false information about your organisation

It's important to provide accurate information about your organization. For example:

- Be clear about your ownership and your connection with other organizations - don't set up several different legal entities owned by the same people in order to obscure the links between these organizations.

¹ NISO Transfer Code of Practice v5 <https://doi.org/10.3789/niso-rp-24-2026>

- Don't claim that you are indexed in [DOAJ](#) if you are not, and do not claim an association with a community body or trade organisation if there isn't one.
- Don't display an official journal impact factor if you do not have one.

Publication process

✓ Ensure you have robust processes which protect the quality of your content

We don't assess the quality of our members' published content or research, but we expect our members to have robust processes in place to protect the quality of their content.

✗ Do not promote misleading, outdated, or false information about your publishing process

Make sure that your website and all your communications openly and honestly describe your publishing process. For example:

- If you charge author fees, make sure the costs are explicitly mentioned on your website.
- If you charge to withdraw content, make sure the costs are explicitly mentioned on your website.
- Do not claim to undertake independent peer review if you don't. If you choose not to undertake peer review, this is fine, but needs to be made clear on your website.

Ownership

✓ Only register records for items where you are the steward

Published content

Only register records on your membership and prefix for content in titles that you own, or where you are the appointed publisher.

If you intend to register Crossref DOI records for published content in a specific title, you should only proceed if you have legal rights to the title, and are taking responsibility for

stewardship of the content and the metadata. This means that you are either the title owner or the title owner's appointed publisher.

If you are a university that is a Crossref member, you may get a request from your faculty staff to register a DOI record for their article that was published in a journal belonging to a different member. You should NOT do this. By registering a DOI record for an article in a journal, you are claiming responsibility for that journal title and the ongoing stewardship of all the content published in that journal. If you are not the owner or appointed publisher of the title, you cannot take on this responsibility. If you host the version of record or author accepted manuscript in your repository, you should display the DOI record created by the publisher of that journal. (However, if you host a preprint version of the article, you are welcome to register a preprint record for the item - [more on versions here](#)).

Grants

Only register records for grants where you are the awarder. You must not register records for grants where you are the grantee unless you are also the awarder. By registering the record, you are stating that you are the awarder of the grant.

Preprints

Only associate preprints with a repository if you are responsible for the repository. You must not register records for preprints if you are the author and are not responsible for the repository.

✗ Don't resell Crossref DOI registration services

As a Crossref member, you cannot re-sell DOI registration services. You can only register records through your membership and prefix where you are the owner or the appointed publisher of that title. By registering DOI records through your own membership and prefix, your organisation will appear in the metadata record as the publisher of the title, and you will be taking on responsibility for both the title and the metadata records. Everything in the Member Terms and these Member Practices becomes your responsibility as to that title.

✗ Do not create new DOI records for items that already have DOI records

Once registered, a DOI should be the persistent identifier for that item... forever. This means that once an item has a DOI record, you should not create a new record for the same item.

This is particularly important when the owner or appointed publisher of the item changes. The new owner should continue to display and use the existing DOIs for any content that already has a DOI record. Our standard title ownership transfer process will give the new owner access to those existing DOI records, even though the records are on the prefix of a different member. The new owner will be able to update the metadata and resolution URLs of these records.

✓ Always add ISSNs to your journal title records where you have them

We recommend that members always include ISSNs in their journal records. This makes it clear which title you are registering and claiming ownership for. A pattern of not including ISSNs could indicate an attempt to obscure the accurate identity of a title.

✗ Do not register DOI records for journals that have hijacked or cloned other existing journals

Sometimes fraudulent journals are created which mimic other existing journals. The purpose of these journals is to encourage researchers to submit their work and pay a publication fee before they realise that they have not actually submitted to the "real" journal.

We know that different journals from different members can sometimes have similar, or even identical, titles. As long as these journals have a different ISSN and key title in the ISSN system, these journals will be considered to be distinct journals in their own right. However, it is a problem if these journals have the same or a similar title to another journal and, in addition, copy the original journal's branding or design and/or use a similar URL.

As COPE explains, it's important that a journal website does not "mislead potential authors and readers about the journal's origin, scope, or association with other journals and organisations"².

If you are acting as the appointed publisher for a title, make sure that the title is not hijacking or cloning an existing title, as you will be held responsible for this.

✓ Where ownership or publishing rights have been transferred away from you, give permission for the transfer of ownership in the Crossref system without unreasonable delay

Once content has been registered with Crossref for a particular title by a member, another member is unable to register content for exactly the same title without ownership of that title being transferred to them in the Crossref system. We only make the transfer with the permission of the original member in the Crossref system (see [Transferring responsibility for titles and DOIs](#)).

If content was registered with us by an appointed publisher, and the journal owner wishes to take ownership back in the Crossref system, we need permission for the ownership transfer from that appointed publisher. We cannot act based on a request from the title owner [or anyone else other than the first record registrant in our system]. That's because there is no way to confirm who is the definitive owner of a title and who currently has the legal rights to publish the content.

We expect the transferring publisher to give permission to Crossref to transfer ownership of the title without unreasonable delay. If the receiving publisher is unable to get a response from the transferring publisher, or believes that the transferring publisher is not the correct owner or appointed publisher, we may contact the transferring publisher, and expect an answer within a week.

Where there is a title ownership dispute between two members and the current owner in our system does not give permission for a transfer of ownership in our system, we will not transfer ownership, and instead will follow our [title ownership dispute policy](#).

² COPE DOAJ OASPA WAME. Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing — English.

<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12>
2022 COPE, DOAJ, OASPA, WAME

If we notice a pattern of title ownership disputes for a single member, we may determine that this is a pattern of activity that doesn't meet the spirit of the terms, and we may act accordingly.

Working with contributors

✓ Ensure that your authors, editors, and other contributors are real people who make a genuine contribution to your outputs and investigate any reported concerns from the community

Published content

If you are registering records for published content, ensure that your authors and editors are real people who make a genuine contribution to your content.

Crossref occasionally receives community reports with claims that a publication's editors or authors are either a) not real people or b) real people who are not in fact associated with the work in question.

We pass these reports on to our members and expect them to review the situation in a timely manner, and where necessary, retract the work. If we are credibly contacted by an author on their institution email address claiming not to have authored a work, we would expect the work to be retracted.

It's also important to note that the [COPE guidelines](#)³ state that AI cannot be an author. If your authors have used AI to support them, this may be captured and acknowledged in your Crossref DOI metadata when we release schema 6.0.

Grant records

If you are registering records for grants, make sure that the grantees you include are genuinely the recipient of the grant, and that they are real people or organisations.

³ COPE Council. COPE position - Authorship and AI - English.

<https://doi.org/10.24318/cCVRZBms>

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- ✓ Include names of authors in your metadata

It's important to provide information about your authors in the metadata. Where a work is authored by an organisation rather than a person, this should be captured in the metadata.

Retractions and withdrawals

- ✓ Allow authors to request removal, or withdraw their work for consideration up to the point of the assignment of copyright or payment of author fees.

- ✓ Respond to concerns about your published content in a timely manner

We expect our members to have a process to review and respond to concerns regarding their published content promptly. We would expect that members respond to the initial concern within weeks, and follow a process to review the concern, confirm the decision with the reporter, and retract where necessary. We understand that this process may take a significant amount of time.

- ✓ Ensure that records for withdrawn or retracted content continue to resolve to an active landing page, and the community is made aware of the change of status

If an item is retracted or withdrawn, this change needs to be part of the persistent scholarly record.

This means that members should not just remove withdrawn or retracted content so that the DOI resolves to a 404 page. Instead, the DOI should resolve to an active landing page which makes it clear that the item was removed. A DOI record should be created for the post-publication update and linked to the original item. The DOI record metadata should also be updated to make it clear that the item was removed. Visit our [versions, corrections and retractions page](#) to learn how.

Your metadata

- ✓ Respond to concerns about your metadata in a timely manner

It's important that your metadata is kept up-to-date and accurate. We expect members to respond to concerns about their metadata in a timely way, and update the metadata where necessary.

- ✓ In your metadata, don't suggest a relationship with another entity that isn't true

For example, if you are registering records for journal articles, don't include references in your metadata that aren't in the reference list of the article. If you are registering grant records, don't add a relationship to a published output if the output wasn't funded by your grant.