



## Understanding ISLS publications policy

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The ISLS has developed a publications policy that aims to help scholars disseminate their work widely. In the case of journals, ISLS works with commercial publishers (Taylor and Francis, which acquired Lawrence Erlbaum, for the Journal of the Learning Sciences, and Springer for the International Journal of CSCL). In the case of conferences, ISLS publishes its own materials.

As part of the conference process, authors are asked to sign a copyright agreement. This document attempts to answer questions about your rights and obligations when you sign the copyright agreement with ISLS for conferences.

## Summary

- When you publish a paper in an ISLS conference, ISLS becomes the owner of your paper when you sign the copyright form or agree online
- ISLS gives back to you certain rights, including
  - the right to make copies of your conference paper for your teaching
  - the right to include parts or all of the paper in any textbooks you write, or in compilations of your own works
  - the right to make copies for use in your own institution
  - the right to put a copy of the paper on your website
- Other people who want to make copies (for instance, for course readings packs) need to ask ISLS for permission. (You do not need permission to make copies for your own teaching or your own institution.)
- ISLS owns the words and figures, not the ideas. You do not need to ask permission to reuse the ideas.
- If you want to resubmit the paper to a journal, publish it in a book, or to write a new paper that includes portions of the old one, you need to ask for permission from ISLS. You do not need to ask permission if you submit to an ISLS journal. Use the copy-and-paste test below.
- ISLS attempts to get your work to the widest audience. We distribute all papers for free through the ACM digital library, and give permission very liberally whenever people ask for it. We just ask in return that every use of the paper (part or all of it) contains a copyright notice saying that ISLS owns it.

## What is copyright?

Copyright relates to laws about who owns specific works. Whenever a book, article, graphic, etc. is created, the creator has specific legal rights about controlling if and how copies of that work can be made. Through national laws and international treaties, a very comprehensive system exists to say who owns what works. All works are owned by somebody when they are created and in most cases for over a century afterwards.

### **Who owns the copyright when I write a paper?**

In most cases, you do. The exceptions fall mostly into two categories. The first is a "work for hire," which is when an author writes something as an agent of somebody else; for instance, if a business contracts with you to write a paper for them as a consultant, they typically own the work. Universities and research organizations typically do not claim this kind of ownership over work done by scholars they employ.

The other exception relates to government employees. In many countries, including the United States, the copyright of government employees belongs to the government or to the public. In countries with ties to the United Kingdom, this is often called a Crown Copyright.

It used to be, in some countries, that a lot of work had to be done to establish ownership, including putting copyright notices on the paper, filing copies with the government, placing copies in national libraries, etc. But nowadays, copyright comes with simply writing the paper down. (It doesn't count if it's only in your head.)

### **Does this mean I can't use direct quotes in articles, even if I cite properly where they came from?**

There's an exception in copyright law called 'fair use'. If you are using a short quote from somewhere else, for instance for commentary on that other work, you don't need permission to include the material and cite the source. Of course that doesn't mean you can quote an entire paper. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair\\_use](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_use) for more information.

### **After I present it at the conference, I can still turn my conference paper into a journal article, right?**

Yes, but you may need ISLS permission for other than ISLS journals. Read on about the 'copy-and-paste test'.

### **What is the 'copy-and-paste test'?**

Copyright is different from plagiarism. Copyright is about protecting a creative work expressed in a tangible medium. For books, this means a particular combination of words and figures. Copyright is a legal issue.

Plagiarism is about taking someone's ideas without proper attribution. Naturally this is a major violation of professional ethics of scholarship.

The copy-and-paste test is a way of clarifying the difference between the two. If someone steals your article by copying sentences, paragraphs, or figures from your paper, they are violating copyright, unless you gave them legal permission to do so, and an appropriate copyright notice is included.

If someone writes a paraphrase of your article, and passes it off as their own without citing you, that person is guilty of plagiarism, but technically the person has not violated your copyright, because they didn't use any of your unique combinations of words.

If you write an article, give away copyright to that article, and then write a new article that's a paraphrase of the first one (or an expansion, or simply refers to the same ideas), but none of the unique combinations of words (or specific figures) have been copied and pasted, you're neither violating copyright nor committing plagiarism, since you can't steal an idea from yourself, and nothing literal has been directly copied from the old article.

On the other hand, if you do use copy and paste to make your second article, you're using literal material from the first one without attribution, and you would be violating the copyright on the first one (which you've given away to someone else), unless you get permission.

### **When do I need to ask ISLS for permission?**

If you're writing an article on the same topic of your conference paper, but don't copy and paste anything from the conference paper, you don't need ISLS permission. It would be appropriate however to refer to the ICLS conference paper in your acknowledgements and clarify the relation of the current work to the earlier paper.

If you're writing something and use a short direct quote from your conference paper (or a single figure) that would fit under fair use, you don't need ISLS permission. You simply need to indicate this is a quote and cite the source conference appropriately.

If you're writing something for one of the society journals (IJCSCL or JLS) and you want to reuse parts of your conference paper, you don't need ISLS permission. You should cite the conference paper where appropriate; for instance, you might include a statement in the acknowledgments that states how the paper is based on the earlier conference paper, such as "Preliminary analyses of the studies in this paper were presented at CSCL 2009," or "A preliminary version of these design arguments were presented at ICLS 2010."

In all other circumstances, if you want to copy and paste things out of an article you wrote for an ISLS conference and use them in a journal article, book chapter, (or anything else), you need to ask ISLS for permission to do so, and ISLS will be pleased to grant permission.

### **How do I ask for permission?**

Send an email to the publications committee chair(s), or the executive officer of the society. Remember to tell us what you want to reuse, and where you want to reuse it. Also remember that once you've got permission, you still need to alert the journal publisher that portions of your new article are owned by ISLS and that they need to include a copyright notice to that effect. If you give us the email address of someone at the publisher that you're dealing with, we can send a copy of the permission letter to them to facilitate this.

### **Why does ISLS take ownership?**

ISLS takes ownership so we have maximum flexibility in trying to get your work out. For instance, we now put our conference papers into the ACM Digital Library, publish them in hard copy through Lulu.com, and publish them on thumb drives or CD-ROMs for conference attendees. Because the society owns the papers, nobody can later claim that they did not give permission for some new use of the papers.

### **Why is ISLS making this so complicated for me? I used to turn conference papers into journal articles all the time before.**

Even though in many communities it is normal for scholars not to worry about copyright issues regarding their own work, it can cause problems. For instance, let's say an author publishes her paper in an ISLS conference. Later, the author adds some more material, and publishes the paper in a journal. The journal is later acquired by another company. At some point, the publishing company realizes that there are huge sections of their article that are also in the conference paper, and that people are including a link to the free online version of that conference paper. They then sue ISLS, because they think they own the paper. Indeed, they probably have a signed contract with the author saying she owns the paper and is giving full ownership to them. The problem is, she already gave ownership of the parts in the conference paper to ISLS previously. Many authors do this kind of "double dipping" without any ill intentions, but it puts their work into a legal mess of who owns what. The only way to sort it out if people or organizations fight about it is through lawsuits. We don't want that to happen.

Copying your own work may be perfectly ethical, but if you signed away copyright to anyone else, it's not legal.

### **What if the conference paper I'm submitting to an ISLS conference has portions that have previously been published elsewhere?**

Make sure to communicate with the conference chairs and the publications committee chairs. If we can get clean permissions from whoever owns the earlier publication, it will be fine, but do this before you sign over copyright to ISLS.

### **I don't remember signing my rights over to ISLS for an old conference paper.**

Each conference has done the transfer of copyright differently. In some cases, paper forms were collected; in others, email forms were sent out; and in some, the form was a part of clicking through the online submission process. In addition, to streamline things, in some years we have allowed the lead author to sign one form and promise that all the coauthors had also agreed to the terms.

### **Why don't you just put everything in the public domain?**

If we did that, people could conduct plagiarism, and we would have no legal way to stop them. In addition, there are issues in that 'public domain' doesn't really mean the same thing from country to country, and in some countries it's not actually possible to put something into the public domain.

### **Why don't you just use creative commons licensing?**

The main reason is how creative commons handles commercial licensing. Many people use creative commons to share things, under the condition that someone else shouldn't make money on it, and that their name is associated with it (attribution). This matches scholarly values well. Our problem is that sometimes it's in the best interest of getting the work out to do things that count as commercial use (like publishing a compilation in a book with a commercial publisher). ISLS wants to be able to work with commercial organizations when it's the best way to get the work out, but we still want to prevent other people from exploiting or profiting unfairly from the work.

### **Does ISLS make a profit on my work?**

No. ISLS is a nonprofit organization, and to date we have never made money on any publication activities. Any income from publication activities (like fees for hardcopies of proceedings) has gone directly into printing costs, or to offset preparation costs for putting out the proceedings.

## How do I cite papers from ISLS conferences?

Follow the citation format required by the publication venue. For example:

### APA format

Cakir, M. P., & Stahl, G. (2009). Interaction analysis of dual-interaction CSCL environments. In C. O'Malley, D. Suthers, P. Reimann & A. Dimitracopoulou (Eds.), *Proceedings of Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) 2009 (Part 1, pp. 3-12)*. Rhodes, Greece: International Society of the Learning Sciences.

### ACM journal format

ENGESTRÖM, Y. 2008. From design experiments to formative interventions. In *International Perspectives in the Learning Sciences: Creating a learning world. Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference for the Learning Sciences – ICLS 2008, Part I, Maastricht, Netherlands, June, 2008, P. A. KIRSCHNER, F. PRINS, V. JONKER, G. KANSELAAR, Eds. International Society for the Learning Sciences, 1-3 – 1-24.*

If the proceedings do not indicate separate editors, use the names of the conference chairs.

## How can I get old ISLS proceedings?

Although the process is not yet complete, we are trying to get all old proceedings in the ACM Digital Library. After a free web registration, you should be able to get the papers online from <http://www.acm.org/dl> by looking under "publications of affiliated organizations".

If you are looking for hard copies of recent ISLS proceedings (either ICLS or CSCL), check the ISLS store at Lulu.com:  
<http://www.lulu.com/shop/search.ep?contributorId=958342>

We encourage you to recommend the hard copies to your library; although we love digital distribution through ACM, libraries are better at cataloguing hard copies, and your colleagues and students are even more likely to discover the works.

## Who can I talk to if I have questions?

If your question is related to a current or prospective submission to an ISLS conference, contact the conference organizers through the email address they've set up. If your question is related to permissions or other questions after publication, contact the publications committee chair(s) or the executive officer of the society.