

Self-Plagiarism & Self-Citation

GRS Writing Group – FRI 1 JUN 2018

Self-plagiarism is a contentious area in research. Some see this form of plagiarism as a serious breach of academic conduct whereas others see it as a minor misdemeanor. While there are some guidelines in instructions to authors and in publication manuals (more commonly in STEM than HASS), there is no definitive rule about acceptable re-use of researcher's own text. And views differ according to the nature and context of the self-plagiarism.

Overall, there is agreement that in many cases self-plagiarism without self-citation goes against the ethical principles of research publication. The intent of referencing previous research is to enable readers to attribute the cited work to the appropriate researchers, to understand the development of ideas over time, and to distinguish the prior research from the original work in the publication. Understanding this intent should help in making decisions about ethical writing practices, including self-plagiarism.

Self-plagiarism is often discussed along with other related terms:

- Plagiarism: representation of original ideas or words of others as your own
- Self-plagiarism: re-use of your own ideas or words without appropriate referencing
- Self-citation: referencing your own previously published work
- Duplicate publication: publication of a paper that overlaps substantially with one already published, without clear, visible reference to the previous publication.
- Prior publication: Release of information in the public domain prior to publication of paper
- Copyright: the exclusive and assignable legal right, given to the originator for a fixed number of years, to print, publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material.

There are various types of self-plagiarism:

- Complete (or almost complete) duplication of a research paper
- Partial duplication of a research paper – “salami slicing” of a paper into small units of publication or reproduction of portions of data from a large study
- Textual recycling – duplication of chunks of text (but also tables and figures)

There are acceptable forms of self-plagiarism:

- Articles may be accepted for publication in two or more journals with permission from the journal editors, including translation of articles from one language to another.
- Preliminary research presentations - such as conference presentation, abstracts, or papers –are frequently turned into fuller journal papers as the pre-published form is frequently different to

the final paper and rarely presents all the data and discussion. While prior publication may not prevent publication of a fuller paper, formal acknowledgement of prior publication is common.

- Introductions and methods sections of research papers are understood to be less original than other parts of a paper, with many standard phrases. Re-use of text in these sections is not seen as misconduct by all journals. However, other journals clearly indicate that citation to the original source should always be made when re-using any text.



Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. American Psychological Association: Washington, D.C. 2010. Sixth edition. p16:

There are limited circumstances under which authors may wish to duplicate without attribution their previously used words, feeling that extensive self-referencing is undesirable or awkward. When the duplicated words are limited in scope, this approach is permissible. When duplication of one's own words is more extensive, citation of the duplicated words should be the norm.



ICMJE. Overlapping Publications

<http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/publishing-and-editorial-issues/overlapping-publications.html>



Roig. 2015. Avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other questionable writing practices: a guide to ethical writing

<https://ori.hhs.gov/avoiding-plagiarism-self-plagiarism-and-other-questionable-writing-practices-guide-ethical-writing>



Bruton and Rachal. 2015. Education Journal Editors' Perspectives on Self-Plagiarism. J Acad Ethics. 13:13–25

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10805-014-9224-0>



Thurman et al. 2016. Self-plagiarism: a misnomer. American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology Jan: 91-93

[https://www.ajog.org/article/S0002-9378\(15\)01028-5/pdf](https://www.ajog.org/article/S0002-9378(15)01028-5/pdf)

Next session JUL 6: Typography

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