

Open Access Policy Notifications: What Language Works?

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ABSTRACT

In October 2014, the IUPUI Faculty Council adopted a rights retention, opt out, open access policy. In short, the faculty retain rights to their scholarly articles and agree to make the accepted manuscripts available in the institutional repository (IR) or to opt out for each article that they do not make available. IUPUI's University Library was charged with implementing the policy. The library agreed to deposit works in the IR on behalf of authors when a suitable version can be found or when authors supply one. In 2015, the library developed an open access policy website that explained the policy and gave authors a streamlined webform for participation.^[1] Authors can login to the website to either deposit, opt out, or complete a waiver. In addition, on the same site, the library developed a webform to enable the staff to send email notifications to authors. These emails notify authors that their specific article has not yet been deposited or opted out and ask the authors to participate in the policy accordingly. If authors do not respond, they receive two reminder notifications. For the first few years of the policy implementation, the response rate per article hovered above 40% but began to decline in 2019. Compounding this, many authors responded to the notifications incorrectly—for example, by sending the publisher's final published article instead of the accepted manuscript. To address these issues, the library decided to revisit the language of the notification emails. This poster reports on the results of a randomized comparison of two versions of the notifications.

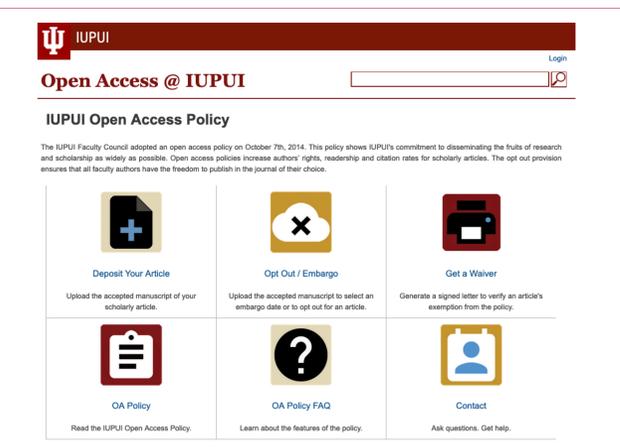
BACKGROUND

About IUPUI: IUPUI is a campus of the Indiana University (IU) system. Founded in 1969, as a collaboration between IU and Purdue University, the campus includes IU schools and Purdue schools and offers degrees accordingly. The IU School of Medicine is the largest school on the campus and its faculty and students write a majority of the articles affiliated with the campus.

IUPUI OA Policy: In 2010, the IUPUI Library Faculty organization adopted an opt out, open access policy for their works. Four years later the IUPUI Faculty Council adopted a Harvard-model OA policy.^[2] Following the adoption, the library built a deposit/opt out website using the content management system, Drupal. The site gives authors a way to submit to the library's repository team without worrying about detailed metadata creation. Authors are provided a receipt to indicate that they have participated in the policy by depositing, opting out, or requesting a waiver for an article.

OA Policy Notifications: Administrative users of the OA policy site have access to Drupal nodes created by an annual import of a bibliographic list of articles authored by the IUPUI faculty. If an article cannot be found by the library in an eligible open access version, the library completes a webform on the site to send a form letter to the author requesting participation for that specific article in the OA policy.

IUPUI Open Access Policy Site



NOTIFICATIONS 2015-2020

Dear [Author Name],

In order to share your work on behalf of the IUPUI Open Access Policy, I am requesting the final submitted manuscript (your last word processing document) for the following:

[complete citation with hyperlinked DOI]

Please note that the "manuscript" (sometimes called a "post print" or an "author's accepted manuscript" – [see example](#)) is the document prior to the publisher's format and is not the publisher's PDF.

Would you (or one of your staff members) please send us the accepted manuscript? You can upload it to the OA policy site (<https://openaccess.iupui.edu/>) or simply attach it in reply to this email.

Authors choosing to opt out for an article may do so by a) uploading a file to the policy site and selecting "opt out" or b) by replying to this email.

The IUPUI Faculty Council adopted an opt-out open access policy on October 7th, 2014. This policy shows IUPUI's commitment to disseminating the fruits of research and scholarship as widely as possible by sharing article manuscripts at IUPUI ScholarWorks (<https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/>). It also increases readership and citation rates for our faculty authors.

Under the policy, the faculty have retained their copyrights to the accepted manuscript—furthermore, the vast majority of publishers permit authors and co-authors to share these manuscripts at IUPUI ScholarWorks.

The library will check your manuscript for tracked changes and other editorial marks, convert your manuscript to PDF, and include a hyperlink to the final published version. If your articles are already posted to an open access website (in accordance with copyright policies), we do our best to not bother you. We are excited to help you participate. We can also help you comply with funding-related policies, such as the NIH Public Access Policy. So, please let us know if you have any concerns or questions. You can learn more about the policy at: <https://openaccess.iupui.edu/>.

Best regards,

[Contact information for Scholarly Communication librarian]

REVISING NOTIFICATIONS

From 2015 to 2020, authors received one of two notification form letters: 1) a letter for the IUPUI OA policy (see above) and 2) a nearly identical letter that also alerts the authors to the requirements of the NIH Public Access policy. We revised the notification language following two informal reviews—one by a group of faculty authors and another by librarians from University Library and the Ruth Lilly Medical Library. Comments on the notification language from authors focused on issues inherent to OA policy implementation (e.g., anxieties about copyright, article version, and OA fees). In contrast, the librarians made several stylistic changes and suggested a shorter and more welcoming notification. We decided that the best approach to address both needs was to highlight incentives for participation while providing a bulleted list of hyperlinks to the policy FAQs.^[3]

Key Differences

- (Re)emphasizes: not the published PDF ["accepted manuscript (*not the published version*)"]
- Provides a definition of the desired version, adapted from the OA Button Version Explainer ("does not include the journal's typeset and design").^[4]
- Links to two studies demonstrating the OA citation bump:
 - Large scale: 33%^[5]
 - Local: 63%^[6]
- Allows authors to reply directly to the email notification:
 - "you can attach your accepted manuscript file(s) in a reply"
 - "reply 'opt out' to this email to avoid receiving reminders"
- Provides links to FAQs addressing seven common concerns:
 - Copyright
 - Coauthors
 - Version
 - Other articles
 - "Free" access
 - Tracked changes
 - Journal deposits

REVISED NOTIFICATION 2021-

(with key differences highlighted)

Dear [Author Name],

I am requesting a copy of the **accepted manuscript (*not the published version*)** of the following article for deposit in [IUPUI ScholarWorks](#) under the terms of the [IUPUI Open Access policy](#):

[Complete citation with hyperlinked DOI]

The publisher of this article does not permit authors to openly share the published file that the library can download from the journal with subscription access. However, authors are permitted to share a pre-published draft (with any tables and figures) that **does not include the journal's typeset and design**. Here is an example of the version that we are seeking: https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/24737/Fukui_2019_mediatonal.pdf.

By making a version of your article free in IUPUI ScholarWorks, you will ensure that readers everywhere have access to at least one version of your article. Research has shown that making this version available in a site like IUPUI ScholarWorks **can increase citation rates by 33%. (A local study found a citation bump of 63% for our authors.)**

To participate, **you can attach your accepted manuscript file(s) in a reply** to this email. Alternatively, you can add an accepted manuscript to our deposit queue by uploading the file(s) to the [IUPUI Open Access policy website](#). The file(s) will be kept offline and deposited by the library in IUPUI ScholarWorks as soon as possible.

If you do not want to participate for this article or if you do not have a copy of the accepted manuscript (sometimes called a "preprint" or a "postprint"), [please "opt out"](#) on the OA policy website or simply **reply "opt out" to this email** to avoid receiving reminders about this article.

Some [frequently asked questions](#) about this process are answered in the links below.

- [But what about copyright](#)
- [Do I need to ask my coauthors](#)
- [Why can't I just share the final published version of this article](#)
- [What about my other articles](#)
- [But isn't this article already "free" on the journal's website or on ResearchGate](#)
- [My draft version includes comments and tracked changes, is that o.k.](#)
- [But isn't the journal going to deposit this in PubMed Central](#)

If you would like to discuss these or any other questions about the IUPUI Open Access policy or IUPUI ScholarWorks, please let me know.

Sincerely,

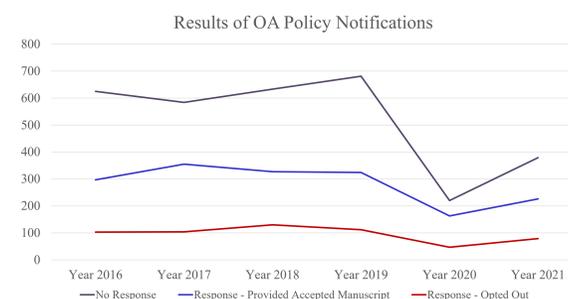
[Contact information for Scholarly Communication librarian]

RESULTS

To test the new notification language, we created two randomized lists of articles and authors. One for the old notification and one for the new version. No author received both versions. The two versions were sent to authors requesting accepted manuscripts for individual articles published in 2020. The test ran from August 2021 through October 2021.

	Old Version (n=118)	New Version (n=111)
No Response	50% (n=59)	38% (n=42)
Provided Accepted Manuscript	34% (n=40)	47% (n=52)
Opted Out	16% (n=19)	15% (n=17)

With the new notification language, the overall response rate (authors that participated in the policy by providing an article or by opting out) increased from 50% to 62%. In November 2021, we switched to the new notification language. Although the test ran for only a portion of the articles requiring a notification, we expect that the overall response rate to IUPUI's OA policy will increase in 2022 over prior years.



LIMITATIONS

This project tested two versions of an email notification against each other at one university campus, within a three-month period. The test groups did not overlap and were randomized at the article level. Although one email notification outperformed the other, we do not have data that would help to explain why this is the case. The revised email includes several changes—any one of these or all of them could have contributed to the improved response rate. Our goal was to improve the response rate to notifications. Future study would be required to compare the effectiveness of specific points of change in the notification language.

Although we saw an increase in responses, many authors first responded by sending the published version instead of the "accepted manuscript" as requested. Although we adapted language from the OA Button Version Explainer, included "not the published version" in italics, and linked to an example file, this did not dissuade authors from sending the incorrect version as a first response. Authors that provided an incorrect version (12 articles) received a follow up email with a link to an example format for an accepted manuscript—in response, 6 provided the correct version and the other 6 opted out.

DISCUSSION

A growing number of U.S. universities have adopted faculty-led, open access policies. The Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions (COAPI), which provides a community of support for its members, now includes 123 colleges and universities.^[7] Although many of these members have adopted OA policies based on the Harvard model, how a campus and its library choose to implement a policy varies according to the needs of the institution and available resources. IUPUI chose to send notifications per article to affiliated authors both to remind authors to participate and also to increase awareness of the institutional repository and the benefits of "self"-archiving. Prior to adopting an OA policy, IUPUI ScholarWorks served primarily as a tool for graduate student theses and gray literature archived by librarians.^[8] Since adopting an OA policy, the repository is now more widely used by research groups and individual faculty as a tool for sharing reports, articles, and conference works. We believe that the revision to the notification language described here will contribute to sustaining the continued growth of library's repository service.

REFERENCES

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7. COAPI Members. Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions. <https://sparcopen.org/coapi/members/>
8. IUPUI ScholarWorks. <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/>



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