INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL & MEDICAL PUBLISHERS

STM Guidelines concerning the Application of DRM in Document Delivery Requirements for Pharmaceutical Industry Clients

The application of "digital rights management" or "technical protection measures" (referred to hereinafter as "DRM") to digital content distributed by publishers is not uncommon, although not as common as DRM restrictions in other digital distribution by other media industries.

The form of DRM typically used in e-publishing generally enables the initial download and printing right in connection with the digital object that has been purchased by the consumer, but then places technical restrictions on the ability to further distribute, copy or print. The use of DRM is generally tied to a particular business model, so a lower fee is charged for a more limited ability to copy and distribute, while a broader right to copy and distribute attracts a higher fee. It should also be noted that some publishers apply "watermarking" to documents which note information about the circumstances and source of the supply (with date/time stamps and the like), which will not for purposes of these Guidelines be defined as DRM given that such technologies do not digitally alter the document in any fashion.

The "reprint" or multiple copy business model involves a broader right to copy and distribute--- this is often used by entities such as a pharmaceutical industry company when that company is distributing many copies or reprints of a journal article for promotional purposes. Typically there is a higher charge associated with the reprint model (although often at a lower per-unit basis), normally dependent on the number of copies/reprints being made. In some cases there is also a service charge associated where the publisher is providing color print reprints and related services.

DRM is often applied by publishers for a document delivery business model (used to obtain copies of specific articles from journals not used often enough by a customer to merit a full journal subscription) where the expectation is that only one copy is being made--- so these systems permit an initial download or print but prohibit further downloading or printing. Publishers have generally required document delivery suppliers with whom they contract to apply DRM to copies delivered through those suppliers' services as well. Many publishers however have adopted a mixed model where they do not apply DRM to their own services which they operate directly but do require the application of DRM to document delivery services. In many cases the reason for this is that the publisher expects to be dealing with its own direct customers in its own services, customers with whom they have an established relationship.

Recently some pharmaceutical industry customers have complained about DRM restrictions and the difficulties that this may impose on a customer trying to maintain a particular technology environment (so some DRM technologies might not be permissible in a particular IT system), and have noted that often when they purchase directly from a publisher, DRM is not applied. Such customers through the Pharma Documentation Ring (PDR) have called for the elimination of DRM requirements, even when they are purchasing copies from a third party document delivery service provider, and note that they represent a type of customer that is identifiable and reliable, with strong respect for intellectual property protection and understanding of the relationship of IP rights and business models.

This STM Guideline is intended for pharmaceutical and related biotechnology company customers, in the context of direct publisher and publisher-licensed document delivery services, where individual journal articles are being obtained for the internal use of a staff member or researcher at the company. STM understands that for such customers, the ability

to manage digital objects in a secure IT environment is critical. We encourage STM members to take the following steps:

1. Consider your DRM strategy and tactics with respect to the needs of your particular pharmaceutical and biotechnology company customers

2. If you currently require document delivery suppliers who you license to use DRM for their deliveries, but believe that the "non-DRM" benefit to your pharmaceutical and biotechnology customers outweighs the potential risk in not using such technology protection for such customers, then:
    a. prepare a list of your pharmaceutical and biotechnology customers
    b. discuss with your document delivery supplier-licensees whether they can provide documents without DRM to those listed customers
    c. consider whether you could similarly change policy with respect to your own document supply services (if you currently apply DRM)

3. Discuss your intentions with your pharmaceutical and biotechnology customers and note, if you think this useful, that you would like to evaluate this initiative on a regular basis and that you will seek their input, possibly even in the form of usage reports.

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