

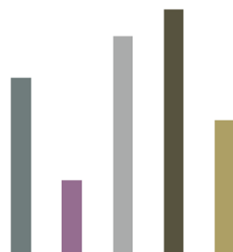


Preprints and Ethics: Thoughts from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

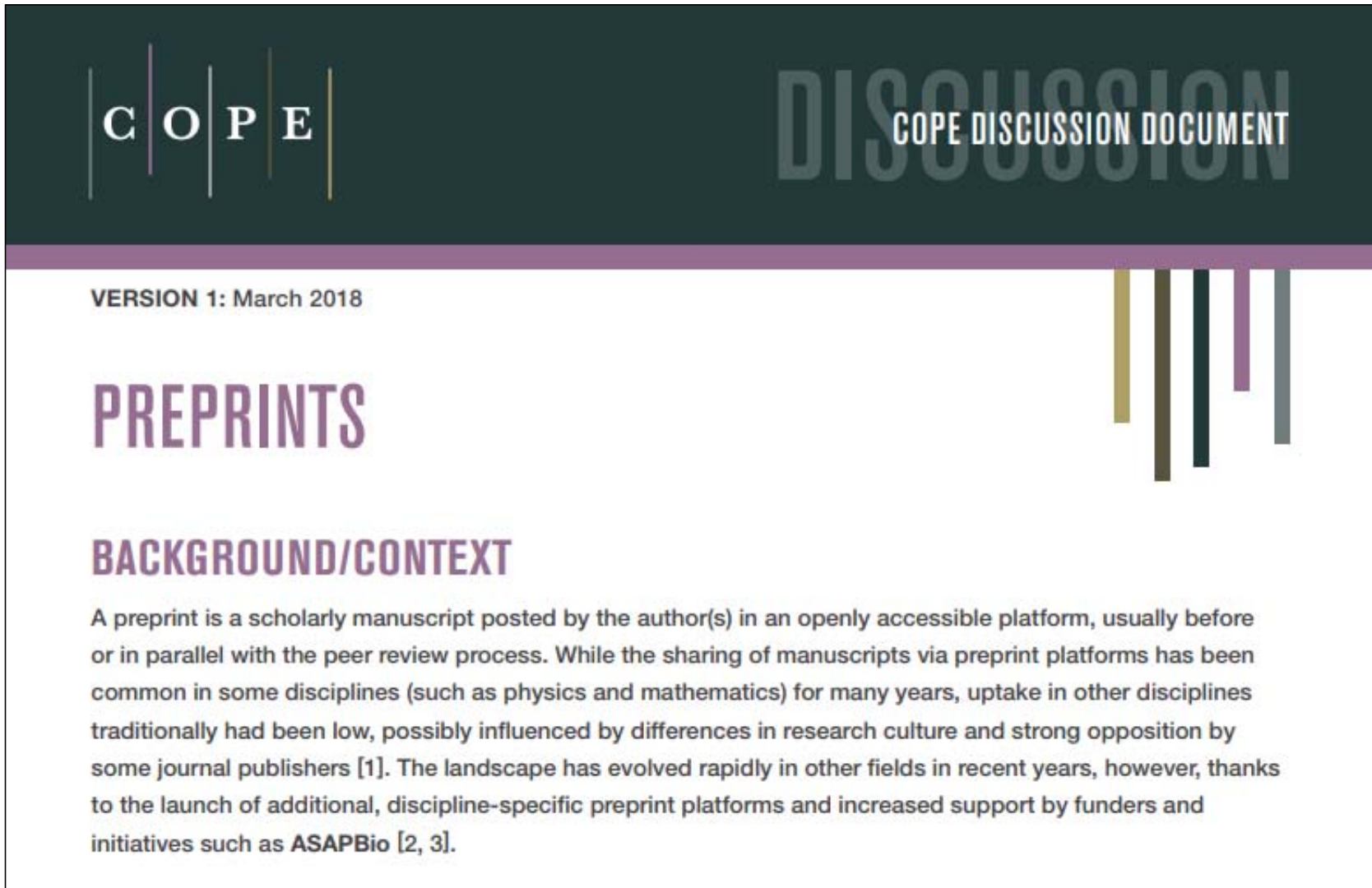
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COPE Discussion Document

The cover graphic for the COPE Discussion Document features a dark teal header with the COPE logo on the left and the words 'DISCUSSION' and 'COPE DISCUSSION DOCUMENT' on the right. Below the header is a purple horizontal bar. The main content area is white and contains the text 'VERSION 1: March 2018', the title 'PREPRINTS', and the section 'BACKGROUND/CONTEXT' with a paragraph of text. On the right side of the white area, there are several vertical bars of varying heights and colors (gold, dark green, purple, grey).

VERSION 1: March 2018

PREPRINTS

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

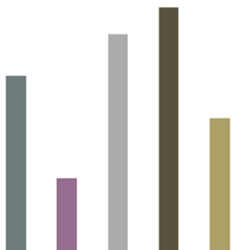
A preprint is a scholarly manuscript posted by the author(s) in an openly accessible platform, usually before or in parallel with the peer review process. While the sharing of manuscripts via preprint platforms has been common in some disciplines (such as physics and mathematics) for many years, uptake in other disciplines traditionally had been low, possibly influenced by differences in research culture and strong opposition by some journal publishers [1]. The landscape has evolved rapidly in other fields in recent years, however, thanks to the launch of additional, discipline-specific preprint platforms and increased support by funders and initiatives such as **ASAPBio** [2, 3].

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Ethical questions for consideration by editors/journals when making policies surrounding preprints

Recommendations for journals, publishers, preprint platforms, and authors



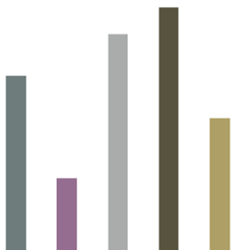
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Ethical questions for consideration:

Are preprints publications?

- Share many similar features to article publications (content, scope, format, DOI)
- Opinions vary by discipline
- Many disciplines do not consider preprint to be prior publication in preventing later peer review at a journal



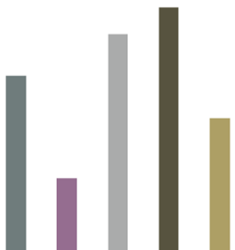
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Ethical questions for consideration:

Do preprints establish precedence?

- Many disciplines would say yes
- Authors may need to read and be aware of existing preprints
- Raises questions about citations to preprints



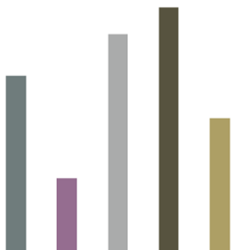
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Ethical questions for consideration:

What happens to the preprint if the work is subsequently published in a journal?

- In most cases the preprint exists in perpetuity
- Both paper and preprint benefit from linking
- Questions arise about concerns or corrections/retractions after article publication



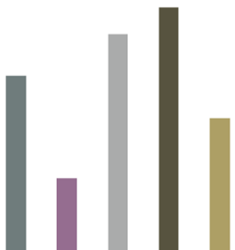
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Ethical questions for consideration:

Can papers be posted on multiple preprint platforms?

- Clear guidelines are not available in most fields, including relevancy to highly interdisciplinary work
- Many preprint servers do not have explicit restrictions against multiple postings



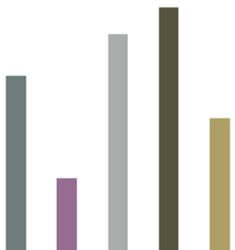
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Ethical questions for consideration:

What are the license implications of posting on a preprint platform?

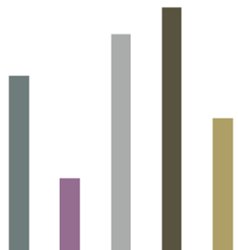
- Varies by preprint platform
- Authors need to be aware of licensing
- Journals may need to remind authors



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Recommendations for journals, publishers, preprints platforms, and authors

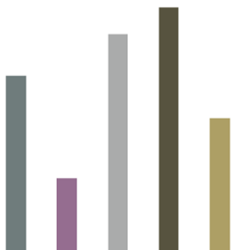


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Recommendations for journals, publishers, preprints platforms, and authors:

Transparency is key

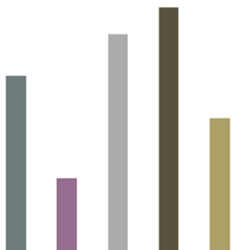


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Recommendations for journals, publishers, preprints platforms, and authors:

- Journals should have clear and publically posted policies surrounding preprints
- Publishers should consider processes to link preprints to published articles, and have clear policies related to licensing of content
- Preprint servers should mark content clearly to indicate it has not undergone peer review
- Authors should make themselves aware of preprint and journal policies



Feedback Welcome



New version coming soon! Send any feedback to:

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