

Understanding Author Misconduct

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What are the issues in author misconduct?

- Ethical misconduct
 - Examples
 - Plagiarism
 - Self plagiarism
 - Breach of confidentiality
 - Consequences
 - Professional sanctions
 - Loss of credibility
 - Loss of employment
- Legal misconduct
 - Examples
 - Copyright
 - Contract violation
 - Consequences
 - Legal exposure
 - Loss of employment

Plagiarism

- Definition: “*Plagiarism includes copying someone else's work without appropriate credit, using someone else's work without clear delineation of citation, and the uncited reuse of an author’s previously published work that also involves other authors.*” - Information for authors of the IEEE Signal Processing Society.
- Comments
 - Simple definition
 - Universally viewed as unacceptable behavior
- Examples of misconduct
 - Copying sentences from another authors paper without the use of quotation marks and citation.
 - Copying a figure from an internet web page without clear statement of its source and proper citation.
- Typical consequences
 - Rejection paper or proposal
 - Sanction from professional society or publication
 - Loss of esteem by professional community
 - Loss of future and current employment opportunities

Self Plagiarism

- Definition: “*Self-plagiarism involves the verbatim copying or reuse of an author’s own prior work without appropriate citation; it is also unacceptable. Self-plagiarism includes duplicate submission of a single journal manuscript to two different journals, and submission of two different journal manuscripts which overlap substantially in language or technical contribution.*” - Information for authors of the IEEE Signal Processing Society.
- Comments
 - Clear citation of related or overlapping work is always required
 - Depends on policies of specific organization and communities
 - Overlap between journal submissions is never acceptable
 - Some societies allow overlap between journal and conference publications
- Examples of misconduct
 - Near simultaneous submission of manuscripts to different journals
 - Submission of a journal manuscript which substantially overlap with a previous journal publication by the same author
- Typical consequences
 - Rejection manuscript
 - Sanction from professional society or publication
 - Loss of esteem by professional community
 - Loss of future and current employment opportunities

Overlap between Journal/Conference Publications

- Example: *“It is acceptable for conference papers to be used as the basis for a more fully developed journal submission. Still, authors are required to cite related prior work; the papers cannot be identical; and the journal publication must include novel aspects.”* - Information for authors of the IEEE Signal Processing Society.
- Comments
 - Some communities have a tradition of overlap between conference and journal publications, but other communities consider this unacceptable.
 - The trend is toward less acceptance of overlap.
 - **BE CAREFUL**

Breach of Confidentiality

- The implied social contract of confidentiality
 - When you agree to review a manuscript or proposal, you are also agreeing to treat the information in the manuscript or proposal confidentially.
- Comments
 - Once you have agreed to confidentiality, strictly abide by your agreement.
 - Breach of confidentiality may also involve plagiarism.
- Examples of misconduct
 - You received a manuscript or proposal to review, and then you distribute the manuscript to your colleagues without the permission of the author.
 - A reviewer for a manuscript recommends rejection, and then publishes the research results in a conference.
 - You retain a copy of a proposal or manuscript for later reference.
- Typical solution
 - If you would like to distribute a manuscript you reviewed and recommended for publication, then you may contact the author to directly request a copy for your use or distribution.

Copyright violation

- Definition: The unauthorized reuse of copyrighted content owned by another.
- Comments
 - Copyright and patents are examples of intellectual property
 - Even if you created something, you may not own it.
 - Copyright violation is a form of theft.
- Examples of misconduct
 - An author re-publishes a paragraph from another authors publication that appeared in a different journal. The author clearly indicates the source of the figure, and cites the previous work.
 - An author uses a figure from the internet with appropriate citation.
- Comment
 - Do not use something unless you own it.
 - Check copyright policies of societies and journals

Summary

- Author misconduct may be **ethical or legal** in nature.
- Either form of misconduct may have very serious professional consequences.
- Standards for appropriate ethical behavior sometimes depend on the specific community.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions if you are unsure.