Title and DOI name ownership/control policy and transfer procedures

June 18, 2007

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Background

The concept of publication ownership has historically not been a factor in controlling DOI name deposits at CrossRef. It was assumed that publishers would only deposit DOI names for their own publications and that hosting locations would be stable with infrequent changes handled by the publisher updating the metadata for their DOI names. In practice the following conditions have significantly complicated the situation and have necessitated the introduction of a publication ownership policy:

1. Ownership transfer of a publication (new publisher and new hosting platform).
2. Change in publishing partner (same owner with new hosting publisher).
3. Change in hosting platform (same owner with new hosting platform).
4. Two or more publications with the exact same title.

DOI name ownership has always been enforced by CrossRef. A given publisher with prefix 10.1234 is the only member allowed to create DOI names with that prefix. Once created only that member may modify 10.1234 DOI names unless CrossRef staff changes ownership of the DOI name to some other prefix. This *does not* change the prefix of the DOI name, it only changes which CrossRef member may make changes to the DOI name's metadata including its URL.

Publication and DOI Name Ownership Policy

The CrossRef system freely allows members to deposit DOI names for a title that is previously unknown to the system thus creating a new title record. This action is keyed to the journal title, not the ISSN. Multiple ISSNs will be attributed to a single publication if the title matches exactly. It is *CrossRef policy* that ownership of each publication will be assigned to the member prefix which creates the first DOI name for that publication. In the event of two different publications having the exact same title, CrossRef staff must intervene and manually create a second title record with the same title but different ISSNs and to set the publication control to allow differing member DOI name deposits to be assigned to the correct instance of the publication.

CrossRef policy is that all publications should be assigned ownership (ie. locked down) to prevent erroneous deposit of DOI names to the title. This policy prevents accidental or intentional violation of the DOI name ownership policy during any of the transfer situations described above.

DOI name ownership is regulated by assignment to the prefix of a CrossRef member account. *CrossRef policy* is that upon the creation of a DOI name its ownership is set to the prefix used to create it. Once a DOI name is assigned to a piece of content it must remain unchanged and *CrossRef policy* dictates that only one DOI name shall exist for a given piece of content, regardless of where that content is hosted or its ownership.

Generally the owner of a publication title will be the same as the owner of the associated DOI names. This is not mandatory. If a title changes ownership the DOI names deposited by the former owner may retain that ownership. *CrossRef policy* is that the acquiring

owner must supply direction to CrossRef regarding ownership change and must document the concurrence of the former owner.

In the event of a dispute over publication ownership as assigned within CrossRef the dispute procedure described below shall be followed.

Title and DOI Name Transfer Procedure

Since titles will be assigned ownership within the CrossRef system limiting who can create new DOI names for the title, CrossRef must be notified by the publisher acquiring the title to change ownership. This notification must include correspondence from the prior publisher releasing ownership and thus confirming their agreement with the ownership transfer. Ownership will not be transferred until transfer documentation is supplied.

Once title ownership has been changed the new owner will be free to deposit new DOI names for new articles using their prefix. Based on the terms of the title transfer (which are outside the scope of CrossRef) the DOI names associated with the title that belong to the previous owner may also be transferred to the new owner. The notification mentioned above must specify the disposition of such DOI names.

If DOI name ownership is to be transferred to the acquiring publisher or to a new prefix (see example case #1 below), the acquiring publisher must provide a list of the DOI names to CrossRef. The depositor reports listed on http://www.crossref.org/06members/ may be used as the basis of this list. This list may optionally include a new URL to be assigned to the DOI name (tab delimited, one DOI name and URL per line). Refer to the example transfer files at the end of this document.

As noted above, depositing new DOI names for articles that already have DOI names violates CrossRef policy. If new DOI names *are accidentally assigned* to an item that already has a DOI name a system conflict will be created if the metadata is a close match. This results in the item not being available for reference matching until the conflict is resolved. If the metadata is close but with certain differences, typically slight changes in the publication or article title, a conflict will not be created. However the ability of the system to perform reference matching may be seriously limited, affecting both DOI names. Please see example case #4 below.

DOI Name and Publication Ownership Dispute Resolution Procedures

DOI name ownership may come into dispute when an organization making the deposit (creating DOI names) is not legally recognized as the publication owner and is making such deposits under agreement with the publication owner (see exceptional case #1 below). Should the publication owner enact a transfer that negatively impacts this organization, the organization must find remediation with the publication owner. In all cases CrossRef will abide by the publication owner's directions concerning the disposition of the DOI names associated with their titles.

DOI name ownership may also come into dispute when two members claim ownership of a single publication. As described above, the 'owning' member is the first depositor and acquires the ability to continue depositing DOI names for that title. The 'disputing' member is denied the ability to deposit and initiates the following resolution process.

1. The disputing member will notify CrossRef by email of the problem

2. CrossRef will contact the owning member informing them of the problem

3. If the owning member agrees that their ownership is incorrect or does not respond with 5 business days CrossRef will assign publication and appropriate DOI name ownership to the disputing member.

4. If the owning member challenges the claim CrossRef will request that the two parties resolve the issue and submit joint instructions to CrossRef on how to disposition ownership.

5. If joint resolution is not achieved within 30 days CrossRef will suspend the owning member's ability to deposit new DOI names for the publication.

6. If joint resolution is not achieved within 60 days CrossRef will modify the appropriate DOI names to a landing page indicating that ownership is in dispute.

7. At any time during joint resolution deliberation CrossRef will accept direction from legal authority specifying how to establish ownership.

Example Transfer and Resolution Files

Transfer of DOI name ownership

H:email=pfeeney@crossref.org;fromPrefix=10.1363;toPrefix=10.1111

10.1363/370605

10.1363/371305

10.1363/371905

10.1363/372505

10.1363/374505

Transfer of DOI name ownership and assignment of new URL

H:email=pfeeney@crossref.org;fromPrefix=10.1016;toPrefix=10.1007

10.1016/j.thbio.2004.03.002	http://www.springerlink.com/index/10.1016/j.thbio.2004.03.002
10.1016/j.thbio.2004.03.003	http://www.springerlink.com/index/10.1016/j.thbio.2004.03.003
10.1016/j.thbio.2004.02.001	http://www.springerlink.com/index/10.1016/j.thbio.2004.02.001
10.1016/j.thbio.2004.03.001	http://www.springerlink.com/index/10.1016/j.thbio.2004.03.001

Forced Prime/Alias

H:email=pfeeney@crossref.org;op=force_alias

10.1234/370605   10.1234/370605.1

10.1234/371305   10.1234/371305.1

10.1234/371905   10.1234/371905.1

10.1234/372505   10.1234/372505.1

Conflict Resolution

H:email=pfeeney@crossref.org;op=primary

10.1363/370605

10.1363/371305

10.1363/371905

10.1363/372505

10.1363/374505

Representative Situations

Various situations may complicate title and DOI name ownership and transfer. While an exhaustive list would be impossible to create the examples shown here are representative.

	Condition	Event	Response
#1	A publication is hosted by an organization other than the publication owner. This organization makes DOI name deposits on behalf of the owner using a prefix assigned to the depositing organization and not to the publication owner.	The publication owner decides to move to a new hosting platform	CrossRef will notify the depositing organization that it will be transferring ownership (DOI name and title) to the control of the publication owner. In this case the publication owner must also be a member of CrossRef and have their own assigned prefix.
#2	Same as #1 except the deposits use a prefix assigned to the publication owner.	The publication owner decides to move to a new hosting platform	The publication owner is in control and may make changes to hosting location without permission of the current host. CrossRef will change the password of the depositing account disabling access by the current hosting provider.
#3	Same as case #1 or #2	The publication owner decides to move to a new hosting platform but wishes to allow the former platform to continue to host the content benefit from DOI name linking	The new hosting platform will take over depositing DOI names for new content. All previous DOI names will be redirected to the new platform. The former platform will take on the role of depositing multiple resolution (a second URL) for all DOI names. Crossref can regularly supply the former platform with metadata describing the new DOI names. The owner must give permission.
#4	Same as case #1 or #2 or a journal ownership is transferred to a new publisher.	New publisher or platform assigns new DOI names to past content that already has DOI names	If conflicts are created they will be resolved by making one DOI name into an 'alias' that points to the other which is made 'prime'. Aliased DOI names are then unable to be updated If conflicts are not created the new publisher (or platform) must identify which DOI names go together, then forced prime-alias will be established.