

ETD Terms and Definitions is intended to be used as an educational tool. There are many applicable definitions to these terms as well as numerous other terms which may not be represented here. If you would like to suggest a revision or addition to the ETD Terms and Definitions list, please contact terms@usetda.org

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A

Access Type – The manner in which an ETD is made available (or not) to the university community and/or public. See **University-only Access** and **Open Access**.

Archiving – The application of processes, techniques and protocols to preserve the scholarly record over time. See **Digital Preservation**.

Availability – Level of access to which an ETD is available to the general public or in the institutional repository.

Author Rights – Rights which empower researchers and authors to advocate for themselves in their relationship with their publisher, and has the potential to revolutionize the scholarly communication system. See [SPARC Author Rights](#).

Author's Addendum – Contract that grants the author the 'license to publish' instead of a 'transfer of copyright'. This can allow the author to post pre-print and post-print research material related to a published journal article in an institutional repository.

B

Born Digital – An item is born-digital if it has been generated entirely electronically by using a word-processor and/or electronic composition software. For electronic files which have been produced by scanning, see **Retrospective Conversion**.

C

Closed Access – The full text and sometimes the metadata of closed access ETDs are only available to authorized members of University staff and external examiners for administrative purposes. This is also known as an "embargoed" or "No Access" ETD. This access condition is usually granted for patent pending, proprietary, third-party sponsoring request or data sensitivity or security threat. Some universities allow a limited closed access restriction period to allow students time to publish journal articles or books from their ETDs. See **Delay, Publication**.

Closed Community ETD – The full text of closed community ETDs are only available to authorized members of University students, faculty and staff, or in some situations access may be restricted within a State or consortium arrangement of member schools via login or IP restriction.

Collection – A specialized group of records in an institutional repository. ETD collections are common and are often the largest and initial collections in an IR.

Copyright – A form of protection grounded in the U.S. Constitution and granted by law for original works of authorship fixed in a tangible medium of expression. Copyright covers both published and unpublished works. As intellectual property law, copyright protects original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, such as poetry, novels, movies, songs, computer software, and architecture. Copyright does not protect facts, ideas, systems, or methods of operation, although it may protect the way these things are expressed. Copyright is affixed to the author as soon as the work is fixed in any tangible form, and is not dependent on publication of the work. Authors may secure, and/or transfer all or a subset of their rights via a signed written agreement. See [U.S. Copyright Office](#).

Creative Commons - A nonprofit corporation dedicated to making it easier for people to share and build upon the work of others, consistent with the rules of copyright. They provide [free licenses](#) and other legal tools to mark creative work with the freedom the creator wants it to carry, so others can share, remix, use commercially, or any combination thereof.

D

Delay, Publication – Theses and dissertations are blocked for a period of time to allow the student time to publish, file patents, or to provide other needed protection before the theses and dissertations become available online. (Publication delay periods generally range from 6 months up to 6 years). See **Closed Access**.

Deposit – The electronic submission of an ETD. Usually an online process, the student logs in, is guided by a “wizard” of prompts and screens to provide metadata as well as upload of the ETD document file(s).

Digital Library – A managed collection of information, with associated services, where the information is stored in digital formats and accessible over a network. For details see “[Digital Libraries](#)” by William Arms.

Digital Preservation – The management process of ensuring digital objects and information are accessible over the long term. Development of standards, format compatibility, format migration and systems interoperability are important aspect of this process. Digital preservation systems are under development to provide appropriate digital preservation techniques. Current techniques include the LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe) model.

Dissemination – Methods of distributing electronic documents on the Web.

Dissertation – A research document written by a post-Master, Doctoral-level student. The term “dissertation” may be used in some countries or universities to mean a post-baccalaureate, Master-level research project.

Distribution License – A license agreement signed by a student during the ETD submittal process which grants certain rights to the institutions for making the ETD available in a digital environment. The author maintains complete control to publish his or her work as he or she sees fit beyond the repository deposit.

E

Embargo – Restricting access to an electronic document for a specific period of time. Also, called **Publication Agreement** – "Publication" is a technical term in legal contexts and especially important in copyright legislation. An author of a work generally is the initial owner of the copyright on the work. Copyrights granted to the author of a work include the exclusive right to publish and/or transfer rights to the work. See **Publication**.

Publication Delay. See **Delay, Publication; Closed Access**.

Eprint – Any version of a work available online which has been either submitted for formal publication or has been accepted after formal review. The term encompasses both pre-print and post-print.

ETD – Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) that can be accessed on the Web in full- or partial-text.

ETD Program – A university that files ETDs either in an institutional repository or through a commercial repository such as ProQuest/UMI.

ETD University Personnel – University employees who assist students with filing ETDs in a university repository or in a commercial repository such as ProQuest/UMI. ETD university personnel typically work in a graduate school or a university library.

F

Fair Use – One of the more important copyright limitations is the doctrine of "fair use." The doctrine of fair use has developed through a substantial number of court decisions over the years and has been codified in section 107 of the copyright law.

Section 107 contains a list of the various purposes for which the reproduction of a particular work may be considered fair, such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. Section 107 also sets out four factors to be considered in determining whether or not a particular use is fair:

1. The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes
2. The nature of the copyrighted work
3. The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole
4. The effect of the use upon the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work

The distinction between fair use and infringement may be unclear and not easily defined. There is no specific number of words, lines, or notes that may safely be taken without permission.

Acknowledging the source of the copyrighted material does not substitute for obtaining permission. [See U.S. Copyright Office.](#)

Free Access – Also known as **Open Access**.

G

H

Handle – A persistent URL (Web address) that points to a digital object.

Hold – See **Publication, Delay**.

I

Indexing – An automated process in an institutional repository which harvests the digital object collection metadata to display to the public in an organized fashion.

Infringement – Misuse of copyrighted material. See **Copyright, Fair Use, Plagiarism**.

Institutional Repository (IR) – An online database that provides access to digital collections such as theses and dissertations for online viewing and provides the associated metadata regarding the documents (e.g. student and university name, year of graduation, document title, abstract, keywords). A type of digital repository designed to collect the work of a particular institution.

Intellectual Property Rights – Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind: inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce. IP is divided into two categories: Industrial property, which includes inventions (patents), trademarks, industrial designs, and geographic indications of source; and Copyright, which includes literary and artistic works such as novels, poems and plays, films, musical works, artistic works such as drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures, and architectural designs. Rights related to copyright include those of performing artists in their performances, producers of phonograms in their recordings, and those of broadcasters in their radio and television programs. See [WIPO](#), **Copyright**.

J

K

Keywords – Search terms or phrases relating to the item/body of work. Keywords are often words or phrases from the document title and/or abstract, are discipline-specific and which provide topic/subject search terms for online discovery.

L

LaTeX – A high-quality typesetting system; it includes features designed for the production of technical and scientific documentation. LaTeX is often used by engineering and mathematics students. LaTeX is the *de facto* standard for the communication and publication of scientific documents. LaTeX is available as [free software](#).

License Agreement – A licensor may grant license under [intellectual property](#) laws to authorize a use (such as copying software or using a ([patented](#)) invention) to a licensee, sparing the licensee from a claim of infringement brought by the licensor. See **Author Rights**, **Copyright**, **Fair use**.

LOCKSS – Lots of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe. Originally developed the Stanford University Libraries, this digital preservation methodology allows inter-institutional sharing of archival collections. The NDLTDP participates in the [MetaArchive](#) cooperative, a consortium of LOCKSS institutional partners.

M

Mandate, ETD – Required ETD submission policy. Often the University President, Provost, or Graduate School Dean may implement such a policy to launch an ETD program at their institution.

Metadata – Data that describes other data. For items in open access repositories, this usually consists of a full bibliographic reference, abstract, keywords, and similar information about the related digital object(s) (i.e. ETDs).

MAchine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) – A standard library catalog format. MARC code provides interoperability between systems and search interfaces. For details see [MARC Standards](#).

Microfilm – An archival microform produced on 35mm film reels which contain micro-reproductions of documents for transmission, storage, reading, and printing. Microform images are commonly reduced about 25 times from the original document size. Companies such as ProQuest/UMI provide scanning and digital to microfilm conversion services.

Multimedia – [Media](#) and [content](#) that uses a combination of different [content forms](#). The term can be used as a noun (a medium with multiple content forms) or as an adjective describing a medium as having multiple content forms. The term is used in contrast to media which only use traditional forms of printed or hand-produced material. Multimedia includes a combination of [text](#), [audio](#), [still images](#), [animation](#), [video](#), and [interactivity](#) content forms. Multimedia is usually recorded and played, displayed or accessed by [information content](#) processing devices, such as computerized and electronic devices, but can also be part of a live performance. *Multimedia* (as an adjective) also describes [electronic media](#) devices used to store and experience multimedia content. Multimedia is distinguished from [mixed media](#) in [fine art](#); by including audio, for example, it has a broader scope. The term "rich media" is synonymous for [interactive multimedia](#). [Hypermedia](#) can be considered one particular multimedia application.

N

NDLTD – Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations. An international organization dedicated to the promotion and distribution of ETD documents as open access. The [NDLTD](#) is the world's largest consortium of ETD universities and maintains an international union catalog of ETDs from around in the world.

No Access – A method to securely restrict any access to an ETD for patent, proprietary, security, data sensitivity issues, third party sponsor issues. See **Closed Access**, **Sequestered**.

Non-exclusive – Often used to specify the type of distribution license granted by a student to the institution to allow it to make ETDs freely accessible via the internet. With a non-exclusive license the student retains his/her copyright to the ETD.

O

Open Access – Information readily available on the Web at no cost and without access restrictions. Also, the scholarly communication reform movement that aims to make scholarly literature freely available on the Web. The Open Access movement aims at reforming scholarly communications by improving the dissemination of scientific information. Open-access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. The full text and metadata of open access ETDs are available for downloading and viewing by anybody with access to the World Wide Web.

Open Archives Initiative (OAI) – The OAI develops and promotes interoperability standards that aim to facilitate the efficient dissemination of content. Its major contribution is the OAI Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH), a set of guidelines that enable repositories to expose the metadata describing their content to service providers who harvest the metadata into large aggregations (see OpenDOAR). Intended to expose the work deposited in repositories to the widest possible audience and ensure the interoperability of repositories. Note: do not confuse OAI with OA (open access).

OAI-ORE – [Open Archives Initiative Object Reuse and Exchange](#) defines standards for the description and exchange of aggregations of Web resources.

OAI-PMH – Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata harvesting. Standards for metadata harvesting. For details see [NDLTD Union Catalog project](#).

OpenDOAR – The Directory of Open Access Repositories. Allows users to search for specific repositories, or search within the contents of all the repositories in the directory.

P

Patent – A patent protects inventions or discoveries. Ideas and discoveries are not protected by the copyright law, although the way in which they are expressed may be. Copyright protects original works of authorship. See **Copyright** and **Trademark**.

PDF – Portable Document Format. This is an open source format and standard for digital documents developed by Adobe. Now recognized as an international standard, PDF documents are commonly used to share documents across the World Wide Web. PDF allows the document appearance to remain constant across all computer platforms.

Permission – An explicit allowance provided by the copyright holder to use copyrighted material. See **Fair Use, License Agreement**.

Plagiarism – The use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own [original work](#). Within [academia](#), plagiarism by students, professors, or researchers is considered [academic dishonesty](#) or academic fraud, and offenders are subject to academic censure, up to and including [expulsion](#). In [journalism](#), plagiarism is considered a breach of [journalistic ethics](#), and reporters caught plagiarizing typically face disciplinary measures ranging from suspension to termination of employment. Some individuals caught plagiarizing in academic or journalistic contexts claim that they plagiarized unintentionally, by failing to include [quotations](#) or give the appropriate [citation](#). While plagiarism in scholarship and journalism has a centuries-old history, the development of the [Internet](#), where articles appear as electronic text, has made the physical act of copying the work of others as well as the detection of plagiarism much easier.

Post-print – A scholarly article in its final published form, after it has gone through the peer review/refereeing process. Publishers often distinguish between pre- and post-prints in their policies on self-archiving articles. Pre-prints are not the PDFs produced by the publishers, but may be a pre-published Word document or PDF version produced by the author. Since additional changes may occur during the proofing process, pre-prints are not considered "the version of record" and thus are of lesser value than the published version of an article. Pre-prints are characterized as being the version of the paper before peer review and post-prints as being the version of the paper after peer-review, with revisions having been made. See also [SHERPA definition](#).

Pre-print – Documents in pre-publication status, such as a draft or version of an article, that have not yet been published, but may have been reviewed and accepted; submitted but with no publication decision; or intended for publication and being circulated for comment. See also **Post-print**.

Preservation – The management process of ensuring printed and digital objects and information are accessible over the long term. See **Digital Preservation, Archiving**.

Print-only Access – Theses and dissertations are in paper and are placed on library shelves. Secure method to assure few people will ever view theses and dissertations. ETD is accessible only from library shelves or Interlibrary Loan. May also apply to some ETD programs where an indefinite campus restriction is allowed. Although ETD submission may be required, access may be limited to login for authorized university community or by interlibrary loan request by print distribution.

Publication – In the broadest sense, publication is to make [content](#) available to the [public](#). While specific use of the term may vary between country, it is usually applied to text, images, or other [audio-visual](#) content on any medium, including paper or [Electronic publishing](#) forms such as [websites](#), [E-books](#), [Compact Discs](#) and [MP3s](#). "Publication" is a [technical term](#) in legal contexts and especially important in [copyright legislation](#). An author of a work generally is the initial owner of the [copyright](#) on the work. Copyrights granted to the author of a work include the exclusive right to publish and/or transfer rights to the work. Most book and journal article publication agreements require the author to transfer copyright ownership to the publisher, although many publishers will allow an author addendum for IR deposits of journal article pre-print version.

Publication Agreement – "Publication" is a [technical term](#) in legal contexts and especially important in [copyright legislation](#). An author of a work generally is the initial owner of the [copyright](#) on the work. Copyrights granted to the author of a work include the exclusive right to publish and/or transfer rights to the work. See **Publication**.

Publication Delay – See **Delay, Publication**.

Published Version – The form of the post-print that is copy-edited and formatted as it appears in the journal. See **Post-print**.

Publisher Rejection – An article, poem, short story, or book derived from an ETD that was not accepted for publication by a journal or book publisher, because it was derived or taken directly from an electronic thesis or dissertation.

Q

R

Release Options – Standard access options in an ETD submission deposit form that specify when a work will be made available to the public. The "form" may be in printed and/or electronic format, and governs access options available to the student for institutional repository and/or ProQuest/UMI submission.

Restricted Access – For ETDs this generally signifies that the complete work or aspects of the work will not be accessible to the public for a specific period of time. During this time the ETD may or may not be available to the university community, although the metadata is generally available to the public. This term may be used to refer to ETDs that are available to a limited population as well as ETDs where access is embargoed.

Retrospective Digitization – The digitization of print documents such as theses and dissertations as an archival process as well as to provide greater access by publishing in online collections. Digitization involves a scanning process, application of standards for images files, as well as OCR (optical character recognition) conversion. Digitized collections may be image-based files and/or a combination of enhanced full-text files via application of an OCR process.

ROMEIO Project – A project that defined the archiving policies of publishers. Now part of SHERPA (see below). Publishers are defined as having a Romeo color of white, yellow, blue, and green, which mean:

White: archiving not formally supported

Yellow: can archive preprint (i.e., pre-refereeing)

Blue: can archive post-print (i.e., final draft post-refereeing)

Green: can archive preprint and post-print

S

Scholarly Communications - The creation, transformation, dissemination and preservation of knowledge related to teaching, research and scholarly endeavors. Among the many scholarly communications issues include author rights, the economics of scholarly resources, new models of publishing including open access, institutional repositories, rights and access to federally funded research, and preservation of intellectual assets. See **SPARC**.

Secured – Restricted access to a database collection or institutional repository by login authentication. Typically used to provide access to campus-restricted ETDs to authorized students, faculty and staff.

Self-archiving – Placing a copy of your work in a digital repository or professional or departmental Web site.

Sequestered – The act of removing, separating or seizing anything from the possession of its owner under process of law for the benefit of [creditors](#) or the state. For ETDs, this is usually an “embargoed” or “No Access” condition, typically requested for security purposes (i.e. homeland security directive). See **Closed Access, No Access**.

SHERPA/RoMEO – Database of the copyright transfer policies of academic publishers and their journals. Use this site to find a summary of permissions that are normally given as part of each publisher's copyright transfer agreement. Searchable by publisher name or journal title.

SPARC – The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition is an international alliance of academic and research libraries working to correct imbalances in the scholarly publishing system.

SWORD – A repository deposit protocol; in other words, a way to get items into the repository. Funded and supported by the [Joint Information Systems Committee](#) (JISC), SWORD allows you deposit resources (like electronic theses and dissertations) into repositories powered by platforms such as DSpace, Eprints, Fedora, IntraLibrary, and Zentivity.

T

Thesis – A research document written by a post-baccalaureate, Master-level student. The term “thesis” is used in some countries or universities to mean a doctoral research project. This term is also used as a general term to mean a research project.

Trademark - A trademark protects words, phrases, symbols, or designs identifying the source of the goods or services of one party and distinguishing them from those of others. See **Patent**.

U

University-only Access – The full text of university-only ETDs are only available to authorized members of University students, faculty and staff, or in some situations access may be restricted within a State or consortium arrangement of member schools via login or IP restriction. Many universities allow interlibrary loan service to provide print and/or electronic versions as requested from other academic libraries. This method has a higher usage rate than print theses and dissertations on shelves, but still restricts access to university patrons only. Term may also be synonymous with “Campus-Only” access. See also **Closed community ETDs**.

Unpublished Work – A book, article or presentation which has not yet been accepted for publication by a book or journal publisher.

V

W

Withheld – Theses and dissertations are withheld from the public for a certain period of time or indefinitely. See also **Closed Access**, **Embargo**, **No Access**.

X

Y

Z