A Proposed NISO Work Item:  
Addendum to Journal Article Versioning Recommended Terms  

Proposal for Consideration by the NISO Voting Membership  
Approval Ballot Period: August 11 – September 11, 2012

The following proposed work item is submitted by: Lettie Conrad, SAGE, CCM Committee Member

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Approved by the NISO Content and Collections Management Topic Committee, July 13, 2011

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2008, the NISO Journal Article Version (JAV) working group developed a set of recommended terms to be applied to iterations of an article’s lifecycle. Most terms were assigned scope and definition that allow for actionable, unambiguous and reliable tools for publishers, librarians, aggregators, indexers, and end-users. In 2011, SAGE undertook an enhancement to our production systems and journals platform (online.sagepub.com) to adopt those recommended terms that applied to our publishing program. We encountered two points of difficulty with the term “proof” and have since been pressured by our publishing partners and readers to remove this label, adopting instead the term “OnlineFirst Version of Record.”

First, the scope of the term “proof” was found to be less precise and more difficult to apply than the other terms outlined in this recommended standard. The definition of an article in the “proof” stage lacks specificity, because it:

- includes a number of potential types of documents (e.g.,...); and
- allows for versions that “may” remain internal or “others (that) may” be released publicly, although they are not authorized to do so.

Both elements are vague and problematic for SAGE and, we believe, most publishers. All other JAV terms encompass only one easily defined variation with a clear instance in the publication lifecycle. The word “proof” implies significant rework is expected before full release to a “version of record,” however, no interim state is defined in the current JAV structure.

SAGE has adopted the term “proof” for the first online publication of articles, but we found this to be less than ideal, as our OnlineFirst articles are fully endorsed for full publication and typically do not change substantively prior to print / issue publication. Essentially, SAGE’s “proof” articles are online versions of record, minus volume / issue data, yet no allowance for this type of article is provided by the current JAV recommendations. Following an article’s “proof” version, the natural next step, as defined by today’s JAV structure, is to proceed to a version of record, which is clearly defined and not negotiable. This structure does not allow for a common instance in online publishing today, where the content and intent represented in the first online release constitutes the version of record, save only for “final” bibliographic data.

STATEMENT OF WORK

We raise this issue of ambiguity around the term “proof” and ask CCM to consider a change to the definition of “proof” or the addition of another term that would allow for publishers to reflect the wide
variety of potential iterations at this stage of an article’s lifecycle. For example, SAGE does not publish any article, either online or in print, with the qualifications defined as “proof.” SAGE releases an online version of an article that has been fully vetted, edited, typeset and approved, although it has not yet been given a volume / issue / page number designation. SAGE refers to this type of article as an “OnlineFirst Version of Record,” which are considered complete and official, missing only the final bibliographic details. Therefore, “proof” does not adequately describe this type of online article and the publisher is in need of more variation in version terms.

The current state of JAV terms does not fully service the community as the 2008 recommendations intended and instead leaves members of our industry without a fully reliable, actionable versioning structure upon which we can build a movement toward JAV standard terms.

1. PROJECT GOALS
   a. The CCM will identify a small working group to draft an addendum regarding the “proof” category of articles that will be considered under the NISO review process.
   b. This group will also reconsider the concept of proposing a metadata framework or dictionary in which JAV terms could be incorporated (this was rejected in the course of the original working group in 2008).
   c. If this addendum approved, a change will be made to the official JAV recommended term documentation and distributed as appropriate.

2. BENEFICIARIES
   a. Librarians, faculty, students and all consumers of journal articles will benefit by reduced or prevented confusion over use of the term “proof” used for articles that have surpassed the stage of publisher value-add (copyediting, typesetting, etc.) and are considered closer to the final version of record.
   b. Publishers will benefit from added flexibility to apply appropriate, branded terms to articles within the “proof” category. By removing the obstacles currently presented by the ambiguous definition and use of the term “proof,” this proposed added flexibility could potentially increase rate of JAV term adoption by publishers, which would benefit the entire scholarly community.

3. SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES AND OBJECTIVES
   a. Addendum to the JAV recommended term documentation, approved by the CCM
   b. Archive and distribution, as deemed appropriate by the NISO governing bodies

4. PARTNERS AND PARTICIPATION
   a. CCM: The Content and Collection Management Committee will review the draft and present this addendum to the standards community.
   b. CrossMark: This matter has been presented to leadership at CrossRef, to ensure we incorporate their needs / perspective given the newly launched CrossMark service. They have deemed the JAV terms to be complimentary and posing no direct impact on the CrossMark service.
5. **TIMELINE**

Following are the proposed timeline milestones for this initiative. Future/modified dates to be determined by an established working group.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Appointment of working group</td>
<td>Month 1</td>
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<td>Approve initial Work Plan and draft addendum</td>
<td>Months 1-2</td>
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<td>Consider metadata framework concept proposal, including further information gathering</td>
<td>Months 1-3</td>
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<td>Completion of final recommended practice</td>
<td>Months 4-5</td>
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<td>Approval and Publication</td>
<td>Month 6</td>
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