

## Rightsstatements.org editorial policy

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This document outlines the procedures for dealing with changes and additions to the rights statements that are provided by rightsstatements.org. In principle, there are three different types of changes that can occur:

- The addition of one or more new rights statement(s) to the existing suite of rights statements.
- Significant changes to the text of one or more existing rights statements that alter the semantic meaning of the statements.
- Minor changes to the text of one or more existing rights statements that do not alter the semantic meaning of the statements.

Translations of the existing rights statements are not considered to be changes or additions for the sake of this document (see the section 'translation policy' below). Following best practices, individual rights statements that are no longer used will be deprecated by not including them when releasing a new version of the rights statements.

### Versioning vs changes

All rights statements published by rightsstatements.org carry a version number. The initial version of the original set of rights statements is published as 1.0. All rights statements **MUST** move to a higher version number at the same time unless there is a decision to deprecate one or more rights statements in which case they are not included in the new version of the vocabulary. Changes that result in a substantial change to the semantic meaning of a rights statement **MUST** only be undertaken as part of a versioning process. As an editorial practice, a new version of all the rights statements should only be created when there are substantive changes that have an effect to a number of rights statements. All other changes that are neither the addition of new rights statements nor the change in semantic meaning of an existing statement (e.g., fixing typos or translation mistakes) are considered to be minor changes, following the technical white paper; such changes may be made at any time and are not subject to this policy.

### Addition of a new rights statement

The addition of a new rights statement (or multiple new rights statements) does not require a new version. It can be undertaken at any time according to the following procedure.

1. The need for a new rights statement is identified either by the International Rights Statements working group or by an outside party that approaches rightsstatements.org.
2. If the need for the new rights statement is plausible and if it falls within the scope of rightsstatements.org's mission the working group creates a proposal for the new rights statement. The proposal is based on the proposal template and contains (1) a rationale for its creation, (2) an assessment of its impact and (3) the full text of the new rights statement in the format established by the white paper. The working group can invite

outside experts to contribute to drafting.

3. The proposal will then be published for a public comment period of 4 weeks. Rightstatements.org will solicit input from the public via social media and via relevant professional networks.
4. All comments received during the public comment period will be resolved by the working group. All decisions made in this process need to be motivated and any resulting changes will be tracked.
5. The final proposal will be presented to the rightstatements.org Steering Group for approval.
6. If the Steering Group approves the proposal it will then be handed to the Technical Working Group for initial review. If the technical working group has no blocking concerns regarding the proposal, they begin work on its implementation. If there are blocking concerns, the concerns are communicated both to the International Rights Statements Working Group and the Steering Group.
7. The Technical Working Group implements the new statement on the staging server and asks the Statements Working Group to review the new statement. Once the new statement has been reviewed it will be pushed to the live server, the changelog will be updated with the new rights statement and a link to a pdf version of the final proposal.

## **Minor changes to the text of an existing rights statement**

Minor changes to the text of an existing rights statements do not require a new version. Changes can only be considered to be minor if they do not affect the meaning of the statement(s) that they apply to. Given this minor changes will be limited to corrections of spelling mistakes and other errors. Minor changes to existing rights statements can be made in line with the following procedure.

1. An error or mistake is identified and brought to the attention of a representative of rightstatements.org.
2. The error or mistake is reviewed by the chairs of the Statements Working Group. If they agree that there is a need to correct the mistake/errors they make a proposal for a change to the Statements working group.
3. The members of the Statements working group have 2 weeks to indicate their approval or objection.
4. If the Statements Working Group approves the proposal it will then be handed to the Technical Working Group for initial review. If the Technical Working Group has no blocking concerns regarding the proposal, they begin work on its implementation. If there are blocking concerns, the concerns are relayed both to the International Rights Statements Working Group and a recommendation presented to the Steering Group for their decision.
5. The Technical WG implements the change on the staging server and asks the working group chairs to review the new statement within two weeks. Once the change has been reviewed it will be pushed to the live server. The change will be documented in the changelog.

## Versioning the rights statements

Versioning of the rights statements must happen for all rights statements at the same time. It is possible to deprecate specific rights statements by not including them in a new version (the Statements section of the website always redirects to the list of statements that are included in the most recent version).

Versioning should only be undertaken if there are substantial changes to one or more rights statements. In this context substantial changes must be understood as changes in wording or structure of the statements that do not alter the substance of the rights statements. **The substantive meaning of an existing statement should never be altered.** If there is a need to change the substance of a statement then the existing statement needs to be depreciated and replaced by a new statement with a different name.

Versioning the rights statements is a substantial undertaking and should only be done when there is a clear need and after careful consideration. Possible reasons for versioning include:

- The need to deprecate an existing rights statement (for example because feedback informs us that there is no longer a need for a rights statement)
- The need to substantially alter the language or structure of one or more rights statements (for example to make them easier to understand or to avoid misconceptions that have appeared during usage)

A versioning process can only be initiated by the Statements Working Group after approval by the Steering Group.

1. After the need for a new version of the rights statements is identified either by the Statements Working Group, it submits a request for a new version to the Steering Group. This request includes the rationale for creating a new version.
2. If the steering group agrees with the need for a new version, the working group drafts a new version of all rights statements that are to be included in the new version. This draft versioning proposal is based on the versioning template and contains (1) a rationale for creating a new version and (2) the full text of the new rights statements in the format established by the white paper with changes from the previous version clearly marked. The working group can invite outside experts to contribute to drafting.
3. The draft versioning proposal will be provided to the steering group for approval.
4. If the steering group approves the draft versioning proposal it will then be published (as a google doc) for a public comment period of 4 weeks. Rightstatements.org will solicit input from the public via social media and via relevant professional networks.
5. All comments received during the public comment period will be resolved by the working group. All decisions made in this process need to be motivated and any resulting changes will be tracked.
6. The final versioning proposal will be presented to the steering group for approval.
7. If the steering group approves the versioning proposal it will then be handed to the technical working group for implementation.
8. The technical working group implements the new versions on the staging server and asks the working group to review the new versions on the staging server. Once the new

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versions have been reviewed, the statements will be pushed to the live server, the changelog will be updated with the new version and a link to a pdf version of the final versioning proposal.