Often called “self-plagiarism,” text recycling is the reuse of textual material (prose, visuals, or equations) from one document in a new document where: (1) the material in the new document is identical to that of the source or substantively equivalent in both form and content; (2) the material serves the same rhetorical function in both documents; and (3) at least one author of the new document is also an author of the prior document (Moskovitz 2018). As the use of plagiarism-detection software by academic journals grows, more instances of text recycling are being identified in submitted manuscripts—and yet there is no consensus on what constitutes ethically or legally acceptable practice. Text recycling is thus an increasingly important and controversial ethical issue in academic publishing. Nonetheless, in spite of the proliferation of journal editorials and guidelines on the topic, little actual research on text recycling has been conducted, and it is rarely addressed in the ethical training of researchers or in scientific writing textbooks or websites.

The Text Recycling Research Project is the first large-scale investigation of the subject. Our aim is to better understand text recycling, to help build consensus among stakeholders, and to promote ethical and appropriate practice. Our current work looks at three dimensions of text recycling:

1. **Beliefs and Attitudes**: How do authors, editors, and other stakeholders understand the ethical dimensions of text recycling—and why? How do different contextual factors affect these beliefs?

2. **Text Analysis**: How common is text recycling in STEM? What patterns of recycling are common? How does the practice vary across STEM disciplines?

3. **Legal Analysis**: When is text recycling legal and when does it violate copyright or contract law?

In the next phase, we will use what we’ve learned to develop model guidelines, policies, and educational materials in collaboration with selected publishers, scholarly societies, universities, and professional organizations.

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<tr>
<th>Principal Investigators</th>
<th>Collaborators</th>
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<tbody>
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Recent and forthcoming publications:


Cary Moskovitz & Susanne Hall. Views of Expert and Novice Researchers on Text Recycling: A Survey-Based Study (*In progress*)

**Future work:**

Interested in updates on our project as it moves forward? Visit [www.textrecycling.org](http://www.textrecycling.org) for current information and to sign up for news updates via email.