
Library Services, Unity Health Toronto

This tool provides general guidelines for junior researchers in scientific publishing and collaborating with information specialists.

The Information Specialist is the sole copyright owner of the search strategies that are created for knowledge synthesis projects. Therefore, they are the only ones with the right to publish the search strategy or any substantial part of it. It is imperative to ask permission when you plan on using or distributing the search strategy(ies), or the results derived from them, in your manuscript, poster presentation, or any other forms of scholarly communications.

The library team consults the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), Defining the Role of Authors and Contributors, when determining authorship attribution for a knowledge synthesis project being prepared for publication. In keeping with the guidelines, the Information Specialist (IS) typically provides the following in return for co-authorship credit:

- Search strategies design
- Writing relevant sections of methodology
- Approval of the Final version of manuscript
- Suggestion of author-supplied keywords to make article more discoverable
- Response to the reviewers’ comments
- Accountability to the team by providing feedback
- If needed, the IS could also provide suggestions about potential journals, especially Open Access ones, for submitting the manuscript.

If the information specialist’s contributions do not justify authorship (please see above), they should be acknowledged, and their contributions should be specified. (e.g., created search strategy in Medline, assisted in refining the research question, provided guidance on selecting a screening software, offered intellectual support in writing the protocol). Because acknowledgment may imply that the information specialist endorses the study, it is a best practice that the corresponding author obtains written permission to acknowledge them in their paper. It is also recommended that you acknowledge the information specialist who PRESS peer reviews the search strategy.

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Please notify us after your manuscript is accepted for publication, even if the information specialist is not a co-author of the manuscript. We keep track of the number of successful projects and collaborations. This way, we can ensure that the Library Services continues to have enough funding to collaborate with you in knowledge synthesis projects.

To assist you with manuscript submission, please ask for the IS’s ORCID identifier.

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