

[Mel Chua: Hacker. Writer. Researcher. Teacher.](#) [Human jumper cable.](#)

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[How to assign copyright to your interviewees](#)

April 15, 2012 – 11:47 pm

I've gotten some people asking how I [assigned the copyright to my interviewees for radically transparent research](#). Since it's often not clear who owns the copyright to a research transcript by default, assigning licenses (open or otherwise) to content is nigh-impossible until you untangle that, so it's a vital first step in the radically transparent research process. It's pretty simple, though; I want to run this by Purdue's copyright lawyer, but here's what I have right now, in please-steal-me template format. Usage should be obvious. We sent this out to subjects via email, directly in the email text, but you can do whatever you like.

INTERVIEWER: <put your name here>

INTERVIEWEE: <put their name here>

DATE: <fill this in>

LOCATION: <fill this in>

INTERVIEWER hereby irrevocably transfers and assigns to INTERVIEWEE in perpetuity, all right (whether now known or hereinafter invented), title, and interest, throughout the world, including any copyrights and renewals or extensions thereto, in the attached transcript of the interview recorded between us on DATE in LOCATION.

If you want something more for your email so it's not all legalese, you can add...

That should do it. You now own the copyright to this; we don't. It's all your call what to edit, what to do, how to license it, and so forth. Let us know what you'd like to do with it.

- If you want to leave your name in or not
- If you want to leave the names of other people/institutions in and identifiable or not
- If you want to cut parts of it or not
- If you'd like to put this in the public domain, license it CC-BY, CC-BY-SA, or something

else

- If you'd like to host the file somewhere or if you'd like us to do the uploading/hosting/etc for you
- If you want to scrap this transcript entirely and pretend the interview never happened :)

If we can figure out what you want to be released under what license by the end of DATE, that would be awesome — that gives us time to DO ACTION. Happy to do a call/visit/something if it would help!

Then sign it, ship it, and make sure you keep a (digital or physical) copy for your own records. That's it. Note that this doesn't get you out of going through your friendly local IRB if you're doing human subjects research — but it certainly helps to have this as an artifact when you're explaining the process to them!

Know someone who'd appreciate this post?      

What do you think?

Name (yes, you have to)

E-mail (required - not shared)

Website

Say it!

• Common topics

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