



A MESSAGE TO THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY: JOURNAL PRICES, DISCOUNTS AND ACCESS

We pay close attention to the voices of the research community we serve, including those who have responded to an online petition that is putting forward some serious negative judgments about Elsevier. Being criticized by even one researcher, let alone all the signatories of the petition, is difficult for a company whose reason for being is to serve the research community. The essence of our work is to create and sustain journals that make it possible for researchers to have their work efficiently reviewed, enhanced, validated, recognized, discovered and made highly accessible, in perpetuity, to readers in virtually every country of the world.

It's work that is both complex and investment-intensive, performed by Elsevier employees working for a vast global community of more than 7,000 journal editors, 70,000 editorial board members, 300,000 reviewers and 600,000 authors. We are proud of the way we have been able to work in partnership with the research community to make real and sustainable contributions to science.

In reviewing the petition and the commentary, we're also troubled by the distortions and misstatements of fact that have been advanced — distortions that need correction.

- First, the cost of downloading an article has never been lower than it is today — on average one fifth of what it was just 10 years ago. As the effective price paid per journal accessed has decreased, the number of journals accessed has increased, and the usage of those journals has grown by over 20% per year. We have invested heavily in making our content more discoverable and more accessible to end-users and to enable the research community to develop innovative research applications. Perhaps it shouldn't be a surprise that in a study published by the Publishing Research Consortium, which Elsevier's research team help conduct, 93% of university researchers report that access to journal articles is "fairly easy or very easy." The full report is available [here](#).
- Libraries are never forced to take "bundled" packages; they always have the option to purchase individual articles, subscribe to titles, or subscribe to sets of journals. Most choose large collections, however, because they get substantial volume discounts that offer more titles at a lower cost. And the additional titles they subscribe to are used by their researchers. In fact, on average approximately 40% of researchers' usage is of journal titles that the library previously had not subscribed to.
- Elsevier has actively and progressively promoted a wide range of access options, which are important since no one model will ever be the only solution for every type of journal. We publish eight open access journals, including the flagship premium-quality journal *Cell Reports*. We offer authors the option to sponsor open access to their article in more than 1,100 titles. We have one of the industry's most liberal author posting policies for manuscripts and preprints. We have worked cooperatively and successfully with other funding bodies to provide open access. We have provided a range of free and low-cost access options through programs like Research4Life, PatientINFORM, the DeepDyve article rental service, and various document delivery programs with low-cost library-to-library options.
- Elsevier supports the principle that the public should have access to the output of publicly funded research, and we are committed to the broadest possible dissemination of published research. We are happy to work with any sustainable business model for publishing. However, we are against unwarranted and potentially harmful government laws that could undermine the sustainability of the peer-review publishing system. It is our sincere wish to de-escalate from the constant cycle of legislation and lobbying that has marked

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the scholarly communication landscape for many years, and accelerate collaborative work in partnership with other stakeholders. [Note added on 27 February 2012: For more information on our position on this issue, please see our message on the [Research Works Act](#).]

While some of the facts about Elsevier are being misrepresented, the depth of feeling among some in the research community is real and something we take very seriously. We're listening to all the concerns expressed and redoubling our substantial efforts to make our contributions to that community better, more transparent, and more valuable to all our partners and friends in the research community.

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