

Changing Scholarly Publishing

A Guide for Graduate Students

What's the problem?

"You and I have...lost control of a system that should exist for us and for our students. Instead, commercial publishers have taken over. Maximizing profits has become their primary goal. The system that should serve us is at the mercy of hostile takeovers and profit-oriented planners. Disseminating scholarly research seems to be an afterthought."

Michael Rosenzweig
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
Evolutionary Ecology Research



\$ticker shock!

Recognizing a profit-oriented publisher

Journal	Reality Check
<i>Journal of Applied Polymer Science</i> \$13,495/yr – Wiley	2003 Ford Focus LX \$13,580
<i>Chemical Physics Letters</i> \$10,264/yr – Elsevier	2003 Kia Rio Cinco hatchback \$10,385
<i>Management Decision</i> \$7,372/yr – MCB University Press	A year's rent at \$600/month \$7,200
<i>Biopolymers</i> \$6,395/yr – Elsevier	11-day cruise to the Galapagos Islands with Smithsonian Tours \$6,480
<i>Theoretical Computer Science</i> \$4,908/yr – Elsevier	Segway Human Transporter \$4,950
<i>Forest Ecology & Management</i> \$2,975/yr – Elsevier	Canon GL2 MiniDV Digital Camcorder \$2,999
<i>Proteins: Structure, Function & Genetics</i> \$2,190/yr – Wiley	40" digital TV \$2,195
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> \$1,252/yr – Kluwer	Dell SmartStep laptop computer \$1,219
<i>Philosophical Studies</i> \$1,139/yr – Kluwer	Crescendo violin \$1,145

What you can do:

1 Pay attention to the pricing policies of the presses to whom you submit your papers. Go to the publisher's website and look at their prices for individual and institutional subscriptions. Avoid submitting your work to price gougers. The most costly journals come from a few commercial publishers, among them Academic Press, Blackwell Science, Elsevier Science, Kluwer, Marcel Dekker, Pergamon, Springer Verlag, Taylor & Francis, and Wiley.

2 Pay attention to the forms you sign when you submit your papers.

If you sign away all your rights to the material, you are giving the publisher a monopoly on your scholarship. You will allow publishers to charge as much as they want for access to your work. You may be signing away your right to use your own work in the future.



3 Investigate non-traditional publication.

New technologies are changing the way scholarship is shared. There are a growing number of reasonably priced electronic journals. Some scientific fields (especially physics) make use of preprint servers that allow you to post your work and make it immediately available to your colleagues without charge. Institutional repositories are beginning to be available on some campuses. These repositories allow members of the university community to post their scholarly contributions and distribute them electronically free of charge.



- 4** **Become involved in your professional organizations.** Make sure that your professional organizations have fair pricing and copyright policies. Unfortunately, some “scholarly” societies, such as the American Chemical Society, operate much like commercial publishers. Make sure that your professional societies are truly serving the scholars in your field, not cannibalizing their colleagues for cash.
- 5** **Talk to your professors.** For what journals do your professors edit, review, and write? Senior faculty may be unaware that they are contributing to the pricing crisis that results in journal cancellations at the library.



All scholars are in this together.



Quite understandably most scholars identify with their own disciplines. They also, naturally, focus on their own research needs and the needs of their students. It can be difficult for the particle physicist to relate to the work of the art historian or the researcher in early childhood education.

Moreover, in some disciplines, informal communication methods have evolved to a very sophisticated level, particularly through electronic means. Scholars in these areas may assume that all scholars are adequately in touch with the research in their fields. For many scholars and for most students, however, this is not the case; they still depend on access to the published literature.

Because of differences across the disciplines, the crisis in scholarly communication has had a divisive aspect for some faculty. It is all too easy for some scientists to minimize the impact of library reductions in monographic purchases if monographs are not central to their own work. It can also be easy for humanists and social scientists to view declining resources in their areas as solely attributable to the extraordinary price increases in the journal dependent sciences.

A more useful view, in the long run, will be to see all scholars as having common interests, a common stake in making changes in the system. All scholars, their students, and society in general, are in this together.

For more information:

Create Change (www.createchange.org) is a rich source of information and news on the scholarly publishing crisis, and a source of content for the present document.

The University of Tennessee Libraries maintains a web page on Scholarly Communications Issues at www.lib.utk.edu/~colldev/issues.html

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Ask a librarian to speak with your student professional society or your department. Subject librarian in your field:
www.lib.utk.edu/refs/reference/subjlibrnsbydept.html