

# Electronic Publishing in Computer Science

Joe Halpern

# The Current Situation in Computer Science

- Authors typically post papers on their home pages.
  - They are allowed to remain even after journal publication.
- Citeseer ([citeseer.nj.nec.com](http://citeseer.nj.nec.com)) “harvests” the papers and makes them available.
  - most computer scientists try to find papers first by checking Google and/or citeseer
- There are also public repositories
  - CoRR hangs off Ginsparg’s arxiv.
  - Not that successful (because of citeseer?)
- There exist successful free online journals
- There is a huge disparity in price between society journals and Elsevier/Kluwer journals
  - 18 cents/page vs. 90 cents/page
  - no correlation between price and quality
  - by and large, authors do not consider price when submitting papers

# Issues

The goal of having free online repositories containing a large fraction of papers (at least preprints) seems to be almost a reality in CS.

BUT ...

- We need to distinguish “publication” in the sense of making public (e.g., posting on a repository) from *certification*:
  - this is what editorial boards/referees do.

There could be other ways of certifying quality:

- Senior person says that the paper is important.
- The paper has lots of citations.
- The paper has lots of downloads

Big concern:

- What will happen to the traditional certification system if papers are freely available online?
  - Setting up reputable review boards is not free.

# Getting There From Here

All publishers are very concerned about the future. Current strategy:

- Put together large digital libraries that university libraries will have to subscribe to.

Holy grail: make content free but find some value-added services that people are willing to pay for.

- What are they?
- Do they even exist?

It is possible to imagine other models:

- Pay for review (essentially page charges)
- Universities support the review process
- ...

But even assuming these are economically viable, how do we get there from here.

- Raise author awareness.
- Make departments pay for the journals they use.
- Switch support to cheaper journals

We're trying to move from one Nash equilibrium to another; it's not easy.