

Dear All:

I write to alert you to an issue that threatens the very basics of research and teaching at Cornell. As you well know, access to scientific journals and publications is the very foundation for research and teaching. In 2003 the Library is facing serious constraints as it struggles to cope with rising subscription rates for journals across the disciplines. A major focus of concern is how to sustain access to *Elsevier's ScienceDirect*, an online collection of over **1500** titles.

The Library's dilemma is an impossible one to resolve. Either it agrees to a three-year contract with Elsevier that prohibits cancellations for that period and raises prices each year by 7%, or the Library cancels vast numbers of Elsevier journals in order to continue to afford them on an annual basis. The Elsevier pricing policy has made cancellation very expensive: in effect, if the Library cancels, the prices of those subscriptions retained increase substantially, thus eliminating much of what has been saved by the cancellation.

Elsevier is also offering a separate option, which would allow the Library to save some money by canceling all of its paper subscriptions and relying on electronic access only. That option is very problematic, however, because (a) paper copies of many Elsevier journals are still used and needed by Cornell scholars and students, (b) it would in effect shift responsibility for maintaining the collection to the publisher, raising questions about future access and preservation, and (c) it would also prohibit cancellations and lock the Library into 7% increases for the next three years.

The other more drastic option of serials cancellations would compromise the amount of information readily available to scholars and students.

For profit publishers are holding universities hostage. Higher education cannot continue to give away its research findings and its peer review contributions and then re-acquire, at price increases triple the CPI, the scholarly literature that is the fruit of its faculty's labors. In the long term, we must create a new means for dissemination and evaluation of our intellectual output, working with scholarly societies and others to achieve a more sensible solution.

We urge you to work with the University Library and senior administrators to expose the deleterious consequences of present publishing patterns and practices on access to information for scholars and researchers. Some universities have conducted successful symposia or retreats with their journal editors, department chairs, review committees, and other influential campus leaders. As a first step, the Library and members of the faculty senate could educate faculty in their departments about the costs of providing access to many of their key information tools. We need to prepare our faculty of the inevitable cancellation of print subscriptions, and the likelihood that some titles now available in paper and electronic form will only be available through interlibrary loan. In addition the faculty needs to take action in the discussion of emerging alternatives, including the DSpace initiative being launched by Dean Cooke.

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