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2012/09/27/worse-than-elsevier/](https://noncommutativeanalysis.wordpress.com/2012/09/27/worse-than-elsevier/)

Worse than Elsevier

by Orr Shalit

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Recently, I received the following email:

Dear Dr. Shalit,

I am writing to inquire whether you have received our previous email inviting you to submit an article to the Special Issue on "Uncertain Dynamical Systems: Analysis and Applications," which will be published in Abstract and Applied Analysis, and the deadline for submission is October 19th, 2012.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

To this, I replied:

*Dear *****,*

I am sorry, I did not realized that you were waiting for an answer from me.

The special issue sounds interesting, but I do not submit papers to journals that require processing charges from the authors.

Best regards,

Orr Shalit

This has been my opinion for a long time, and it didn't change when Gowers and Tao joined the bad guys. Here's what I think is bad about the publishing model where authors pay to have their papers published.

- . There is an obvious conflict of interests here, which might corrupt science.
- . These journals always seemed to me to be a nasty way to wring money out of mathematicians that either don't know better, don't believe in their own worth, or couldn't (for some reason) publish their work in a normal journal.
- . It will decrease mobility: it creates another obstacle for mathematicians with no grant money or from weaker institutions, making it harder for them to eventually get grants and move to perhaps stronger institutions.
- . And even if I do have grant money, that's not how I want to spend it.

And don't tell me that in the eighteenth century or ancient Greece scientists payed to have their work published: because here people are not paying to have their work published – everybody's work is *published* on the web if they wish it – here people are paying to have their work published *inside a journal*, meaning that they are buying their work's

credibility.

Only two good things about this model. First, it is open-access, which is great, but as I've said that doesn't matter any more, since all papers are open access anyway (even if the official journal version isn't). Second good thing, and this is really a good thing: in this model people have to think about what they are sending for publication, because publishing also has a price. So hopefully this can create eventually a situation where people publish a little less papers, but these papers are more complete and contain less repetition.

That last point is really is something to think about. I can think of at least one different means of attaining this goal: tenure.