

<http://svpow.com/2013/12/06/elsevier-is-taking-down-papers-from-academia-edu>

## [Sauropod Vertebra Picture of the Week](#)

### **Elsevier is taking down papers from Academia.edu**

**December 6, 2013**

Lots of researchers post PDFs of their own papers on their own web-sites. It's always been so, because even though technically it's in breach of the copyright transfer agreements that we blithely sign, everyone knows it's right and proper. Preventing people from making their own work available would be insane, and the publisher that did it would be committing a PR gaffe of huge proportions.

Enter Elsevier, stage left. Bioinformatician Guy Leonard is just one of several people to have mentioned on Twitter this morning that Academia.edu took down their papers in response to a notice from Elsevier. Here's a screengrab of the notification:

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Hi Guy

Unfortunately, we had to remove your paper, Resolving the question of trypanosome monophyly: a comparative genomics approach using whole genome data sets with low taxon sampling, due to a take-down notice from Elsevier.

Academia.edu is committed to enabling the transition to a world where there is open access to academic literature. Elsevier takes a different view, and is currently upping the ante in its opposition to academics sharing their own papers online.

Over the last year, more than 13,000 professors have signed a petition voicing displeasure at Elsevier's business practices at [www.thecostofknowledge.com](http://www.thecostofknowledge.com). If you have any comments or thoughts, we would be glad to hear them.

The Academia.edu Team

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(Kudos to the Academia.edu team, by the way, for saying it like it is: "upping the ante in its opposition to academics sharing their own papers online". It would have been easy for them to give no opinion on this. Much better that they've nailed their colours to the mast.)

I was going to comment on Elsevier's exceedingly short-sighted and mean-spirited manoeuvre, but happily the Twittersphere is on it already. Here are a few thoughts:

- David Winter wrote: [Added value! Subs fees pay for lawyers to stop you sharing your work with colleagues...](#)
- Rich FitzJohn speculated: [I wonder what their long game is here; petty harassment like that makes me way less inclined to publish in an Elsevier journal.](#)
- To which Rafael Maia responded: [so silly...is it really worth it? its like they are proudly embracing being the dicks of academic publishing](#)
- But Dr. Wrasse was [more forthright](#).




This doesn't *directly* affect me, of course, since I've had the good fortune not to have published in an Elsevier journal. But it's another horrible example of how organisations that call themselves "publishers" do [the exact opposite of publishing](#). The good people I know at Elsevier — people like Tom Reller, Alicia Wise and [The Other Mike Taylor](#) — must be completely baffled, and very frustrated, by this kind of thing.

Every time they start to persuade me that maybe – *maybe* – somewhere in the cold heart of legacy publishers, there lurks some real will to make a transition to actually serving the scholarly community, they do something like this. It's like a sickness with them.





Do scholarly publishers really need to be reminded that ["publish" means "make public"](#)? Yes. Yes, they do. Apparently. Remember how I called legacy publishers ["enemies of science"](#) back at the start of 2012? Yup. Still true. And, astonishingly, as Rafael Maia noted, Elsevier seem determined to lead the way.

[Have they learned nothing?](#) Will they never?

## 115 Responses to “Elsevier is taking down papers from Academia.edu”

1.  [John Furfey \(@jfurfey\)](#) Says:
2. [December 6, 2013 at 5:04 pm](#) University of Exeter does have an institutional repository, which would allow these researchers to deposit an open version of this paper. See an Elsevier example from their colleagues here: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/11748>
3.  [davidgerard](#) Says:
4. [December 6, 2013 at 5:04 pm](#) Repeat after me: “Elsevier delenda est.”
5.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:
6. [December 6, 2013 at 5:06 pm](#) Thanks for this, John. It's a good solution for authors at

Exeter, of course, but not for everyone else. I do worry that the system of IRs leads to balkanisation.

7.  [John of the Freezers](#) Says:
8. [December 6, 2013 at 5:24 pm](#) This makes me so very, very angry. I take a middle-of-the-road position wrt publishing/OA but this is going too far. I think this could backfire in a huge way against Elsevier. I am very glad I quit my editorial board post at Elsevier's J Theor Biol journal 2 years ago in protest of their antics. Ugh. Awful behaviour, Elsevier!
9.  *Marcus* Says:
10. [December 6, 2013 at 5:39 pm](#) Putting a PDF of your papers on your personal website isn't always in breach of your copyright agreement with a publisher. See for example what the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) has to say about articles published in their journals:  
<http://www.siam.org/journals/rcuk.php>  
Of course, SIAM has members rather than shareholders. Not all "legacy publishers" are bad guys.
11.  *Marcus* Says:
12. [December 6, 2013 at 5:49 pm](#) To be honest, I don't think that elsevier is the bad guy here. Academia.edu is a commerical organisation which aims to make a profit from (amongst other things) people "sharing their papers" on Academia.edu. Not so different from elsevier. The difference is that Academia.edu does this by (partly) illegal means whereras elsevier does it by legal (but unethical) means.
13.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:
14. [December 6, 2013 at 5:53 pm](#) Marcus wrote: "Of course, SIAM has members rather than shareholders. Not all "legacy publishers" are bad guys."  
You're right, of course. I am using "legacy publishers" here as shorthand for "legacy publishers that have failed to make the transition to world of infinite, free, perfect copies and instead have retained a business model based on erecting barriers". You will readily appreciate that that description needs a bit of compressing.  
"The difference is that Academia.edu does this by (partly) illegal means whereras elsevier does it by legal (but unethical) means."  
The real difference is *what* they do. Academia.edu makes research available; Elsevier

makes it *unavailable*. Next to that fundamental difference, everything else is down in the noise to me.

15.  [mrgunn \(@mrgunn\)](#) Says:

16. [December 6, 2013 at 8:17 pm](#) So just to briefly comment on this as an Mendeley employee. We received tons of Elsevier takedowns before we were acquired, so this isn't surprising, but it still makes me sad. I don't think this is the right thing for Elsevier to do. Obviously that's only my personal opinion, but I really hope Academia and Elsevier can work something out. Rich Price is a friend and I want them to succeed. If there's anything I can do, please let me know.

17.  [drgunn](#) Says:

18. [December 6, 2013 at 8:21 pm](#) So just to briefly comment on this as an Mendeley employee, we received tons of Elsevier takedowns before we were acquired, so this isn't surprising, but it still makes me sad. I don't think this is the right thing for Elsevier to do. Obviously that's only my personal opinion, but I really hope Academia and Elsevier can work something out. Rich Price is a friend and I want them to succeed. If there's anything I can do, please let me know.  
This doesn't really help the situation, but just so everyone knows, Mendeley is still receiving takedowns from other publishers after the acquisition, so Elsevier isn't the only one doing this.

19.  [aliciawise](#) Says:

20. [December 6, 2013 at 8:30 pm](#) Hi Mike -  
Elsevier does issue takedown notices from time to time when the final version of the published journal articles has been, often inadvertently, posted.  
There are many other good options for authors who want to share their article. They can share the final published version of the article with colleagues, use it for internal teaching and training, and at conferences or meetings. Any author who publishes in an Elsevier journal can also post and share other versions of their article, following some simple guidelines that vary by the version of the article to be shared. And of course the final published journal article can be shared whenever an author publishes open access with us.  
With kind wishes,  
Alicia  
Alicia Wise,  
Director of Access & Policy  
Elsevier  
@wisealicy

21.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

22. [December 6, 2013 at 8:37 pm](#) Thanks for chipping in, Alicia; but I'm disappointed to find you implicitly approving of this behaviour. No-one disputes that Elsevier is within its legal powers to do this. But "legal" is not the same thing as "right", as I'm sure you understand very well. The bottom line is that by doing this, Elsevier is once again deliberately positioning itself as our enemy. It's simply not rational to behave like this, then act all surprised and hurt when researchers consider you to be The Evil Empire. Like every other publisher, Elsevier has a simple choice to make. Is it going to be researchers' partner, helping them to do the things they want to do? Or is it going to be a bully, taking advantage of the power history has given it. Without a doubt, the latter is going to be more profitable in the short term. Equally doubtless, it will kill Elsevier stone dead in the long term. It's distressing to see such short-termism from such a venerable publisher.

23.  [aliciawise](#) Says:

24. [December 6, 2013 at 8:45 pm](#) Hi again, Mike -  
Why do we send take down notices? We aim to ensure that the final published version of an article is readily discoverable and citable via the journal itself in order to maximize the usage metrics and credit for our authors, and to protect the quality and integrity of the scientific record. The formal publications on our platforms also give researchers better tools and links, for example to data.  
Any authors affected by a takedown notice who would like to self-archive and need help in doing so are welcome to contact us at [universalaccess@elsevier.com](mailto:universalaccess@elsevier.com) – very happy to help!  
With kind wishes,  
Alicia  
Alicia Wise  
Director of Access & Policy  
Elsevier  
@wisealic

25.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

26. [December 6, 2013 at 8:49 pm](#) I'm sorry, Alicia, that is absolutely hogwash and we both know it. You do *not* issue takedowns for the benefit of authors. You do it for your shareholders. If you were working for the benefit of authors, you would do what authors want, not the *exact opposite*. The only usage metric that counts is citations, and it's well established that freely available papers are much more cited than those behind paywalls.  
By all means insist on your legal right to do this. But please, let's not go pretending that it's for authors' benefits. That's just insulting our intelligence.

27.  *Marcus Says:*

28. [December 6, 2013 at 8:52 pm](#) @Mike Taylor

One of my fears is that Academia.edu and its ilk are in the long run potentially damaging green open access. If green open access is something from which third parties are making a profit (and essentially, this seems to be the Academia.edu business model), then publishers may in the future insist even more on gold open access than they already do.

29.  *Andy Farke Says:*

30. [December 6, 2013 at 9:12 pm](#) It is totally within Elsevier's legal right to do this, and I am honestly surprised they didn't do it sooner. That said, this move does not endear the publisher to me.

I agree with Mike and others that, at least by the opinions of most outside Elsevier, the whole situation is almost certainly about the financials—a PDF off of the Elsevier grid is revenue that Elsevier is losing. The one benefit to a publishing scientist from restricting distribution is perhaps a centralized location for download statistics...in terms of credit to authors, I use Google Scholar to find who cites what. As for protecting the quality and integrity of the scientific record...I'm not sure what that means, other than a assurance that the official version on the Elsevier website hasn't been tampered with. Given my line of work (dead dinosaurs), that's never been a huge worry, and I am hard-pressed to think of many examples where this sort of tampering wouldn't be easily exposed. It's a moot point for me, because I don't have institutional or personal access to any Elsevier journals...so I'm writing the authors (arguably the people with most incentive to futz with the "version of record") for a PDF anyway.

31.  *aliciawise Says:*

32. [December 6, 2013 at 9:15 pm](#) Hi Mike – I am really surprised to read that you think citations are the only metrics that matter. What about alt metrics such as numbers of links or views?

Oh and... sorry to ask a silly tech question in the middle of an interesting conversation... but how does this gravatar thing work on WordPress? You and William are clever enough to have your pictures on your posts... I've got a little purple and orange cartoon thingy and can't really figure out how to change it!

- Alicia

Alicia Wise

Director of Access & Policy

Elsevier

@wisealic

33.  [davidgerard](#) Says:
34. [December 6, 2013 at 9:16 pm](#) Alicia – if this is for the benefit of the *authors* as you say ... then could you please state the royalty rate you pay your authors? Thanks!
35.  [eco32i](#) Says:
36. [December 6, 2013 at 9:26 pm](#) Did my part – just posted PDF of the Cell article on the lab’s website
37.  [Jolyon Ralph](#) Says:
38. [December 6, 2013 at 9:29 pm](#) Alicia. If you want help in changing your avatar, I can publish a paper and send you a link with the information. It will cost you \$25 to access.
39.  [Brian K](#) Says:
40. [December 6, 2013 at 9:30 pm](#) How hard is it really to just self publish the unformatted text? That seems to be the real issue here. No publisher cares if you give access to the doublespaced version with figures appended at the end – As alluded to already by Alicia. The publisher does do SOME work to get it into a more presentable form, so I can understand why they might be inclined to ask for that to be taken down.
41.  [omegacs](#) Says:
42. [December 6, 2013 at 9:38 pm](#) [ But “legal” is not the same thing as “right”, as I’m sure you understand very well. ]  
I think this is the primary disconnect right here. Assuming that somebody comprehends the difference between these two orthogonal concepts is more and more a fundamental mistake. Especially in current US society, absolute moral concepts such as “right” are actively attacked no matter what the context, and the only thing around to fill that gap is mindless legalism. This results in people (especially in business, IMO) incorrectly believing that they are the same thing.  
What’s worse is when people try to defend their “legal” actions as “right” with such doublespeak as seen in Elsevier’s followup comment. Either they are outright deluded into thinking that their twisted concept of “right” is actually legitimate, or they know it isn’t and lie (“spin”) accordingly. Honestly not sure which is worse, but neither are acceptable.

43.  [Jennifer Howard](#) Says:
44. [December 6, 2013 at 9:43 pm](#) Hi Mike,  
I wrote about this for the Chronicle's Wired Campus blog, quoting your post: <http://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/posting-your-latest-article-you-might-have-to-take-it-down/48865>  
Best,  
Jennifer Howard
45. [Elsevier shoots itself in the face – again | Kevin McCready](#) Says:
46. [December 6, 2013 at 9:48 pm](#) [...] has removed an academic paper from its website, and actually written to the academic saying "Academia.edu is committed to [...]"
47. [Posting Your Latest Article? You Might Have to Take It Down – Wired Campus - Blogs - The Chronicle of Higher Education](#) Says:
48. [December 6, 2013 at 10:06 pm](#) [...] a notice this week, as Michael P. Taylor, a paleontologist and open-access advocate, reported in a post on his group blog. Many researchers post copies of their articles online, Mr. Taylor said, even if they're not [...]"
49.  [Jennifer Howard](#) Says:
50. [December 6, 2013 at 10:15 pm](#) I was also able to get comments from Richard Price at Academia.edu, BTW, which I've now added to my blog post.
51.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:
52. [December 6, 2013 at 10:22 pm](#) Many thanks, Jennifer, for writing this up for the general audience. I think your treatment was very fair.  
omegacs, you are no doubt correct that there *are* people out there who make no distinction at all between "legal" and "right", but I honestly don't think the Elsevier people I've met fall into that category.  
Brian K, you make an interesting point about accepted (post peer-review) but unformatted manuscripts. Personally, I'd be quite happy with a culture where we all post our manuscripts somewhere suitable and centralised (arXiv? PeerJ Preprints?), and publishers can do what they want with the formatted versions. But until we're at the point where (A) everyone regularly posts their manuscripts *and* (B) they're accepted as legitimate in the community, that approach won't really get the job done.  
Alicia, your avatar is showing up just fine for me. Did you fix it after posting that



comment? On citations being “the only metric that counts”: that seems to be the case right now; I don’t defend it, I just observe it. (Of course in many places the Impact Factor of the journal is more important still; but nothing anyone does after the paper is published can affect that one way or the other, so it’s irrelevant to this discussion.) Marcus, you say “publishers may in the future insist even more on gold open access than they already do”. They’re not the boss of me.

53.  [davidgerard](#) Says:

54. [December 6, 2013 at 10:27 pm](#) Those defending Elsevier need to keep in mind Elsevier’s fraudulent pseudojournals, blatant scientific fraud for marketing cash. Elsevier passed the “reasonable doubt” event horizon long ago. <http://kmccready.wordpress.com/2013/12/06/elsevier-shoots-itself-in-the-face-again/>

55.  [davidgerard](#) Says:

56. [December 6, 2013 at 10:51 pm](#) Alicia Wise claims: ” Any author who publishes in an Elsevier journal can also post and share other versions of their article, following some simple guidelines that vary by the version of the article to be shared.” This claim is false.

<http://science slashdot.org/comments.pl?sid=4527505&cid=45622313>

“I had this problem, nearly a year ago, and as a result had to move my website from pages.google.com to my self-hosted website at <http://www.danielpovey.com> (I explain the situation there).

What happened is I made available online a preprint of a paper that I had submitted to an Elsevier journal... this is explicitly allowed by the terms you agree to (the preprint is the draft version that you submit to the journal, before the reviewers suggest changes).

Anyway, Elsevier’s people submitted a DMCA request to Google, even though what I was doing was 100% allowed, and this caused Google to take down my whole homepage. Google restored my website about a week later, after I submitted a counter-notification or whatever they call it, but by that time I’d decided to move to self-hosting.”

57.  [davidgerard](#) Says:

58. [December 6, 2013 at 11:32 pm](#) Despite lightning-fast initial responses, Alicia has been unable to respond in the last couple of hours to questions about (a) the royalty rate Elsevier pays to the authors it claims to be working for (b) Elsevier’s DMCA takedowns of self-hosted preprints. I look forward to her responses, of course.

59.  [David Roberts](#) Says:

60. [December 7, 2013 at 12:19 am](#) Alicia Wise wrote:  
“to ensure that the final published version of an article is readily discoverable and citable via the journal itself”

I almost never browse journals to discover articles: I use Google Scholar, and then choose the first link that gives me access to the paper, whether that be the arXiv, a publisher, someone’s website, a repository etc. (The exceptions are some boutique open-access journals who save everyone money by having simple websites)  
Or I use a subject index like MathSciNet, which is a much better engine for actually finding papers than Springer’s or Elsevier’s platforms.




61.  [David Roberts](#) Says:

62. [December 7, 2013 at 12:29 am](#) If authors leave up preprint versions of their articles which are so substantially different to the so-called ‘version of record’, then they are being, to be blunt, stupid (I think this problem must happen in the sciences more than mathematics, but see for instance <http://quomodocumque.wordpress.com/2013/11/23/homological-stability-for-hurwitz-spaces-ii-temporarily-withdrawn/>). They shouldn’t leave faulty copies of the paper where they can be found. If the publisher insists and is willing to back up with legal muscle that the published version cannot be made available, anywhere, then simply wind back the clock to a version that is in fact correct and make *that* available. And do it before signing any copyright transfers, making it clear exactly what version this is.

63.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

64. [December 7, 2013 at 12:38 am](#) David Roberts says: “I almost never browse journals to discover articles”  
Having now sat and thought about it, I can’t remember one single occasion in my entire academic career (now approaching a decade) where I have discovered an article by browsing a journal’s web-site. I *always* discover elsewhere (mailing list, blog post, personal email, twitter, news story) that a paper of interest exists. Only then do I (sometimes) go to the journal web-site. Generally, googling for the title will yield an equally good and more convenient option.  
I’ve always assumed that this is what everyone does. Have I misunderstood? Is there a whole generation out there that regularly goes to publishers’ web-sites to browse journals’ tables of contents?

65.  [Stevan Harnad](#) Says:

66. [December 7, 2013 at 12:52 am](#) **Don't (just) boycott: Deposit!**  
Elsevier may have enough clout with take-down notices to third-party service providers (and might be able to weather the backlash blizzard that will follow) — but not with institutions self-archiving their own research output.  
I take this as yet another cue to push 100% for immediate institutional deposit mandates and the Button.  
Since 2004 Elsevier does not embargo author self-archiving on the author's institutional website.  
And even if they ever do, closed-access deposit is immune to take-down notices.  
(But I don't think they will dare arouse that global backlash — they will instead try to hope that they can either bluff authors off with their empty-double-talk about “systematicity” and “voluntariness” or buy their institutions off by sweetening their publication deal if they don't mandate OA...
67.  [Academia.edu slammed with takedown notices from journal publisher Elsevier | VentureBeat | Business | by Jordan Novet](#) Says:
68. [December 7, 2013 at 12:52 am](#) [...] news surfaced in a post on Sauropod Vertebra Picture of the Week, a blog about open [...]
69.  *Crusty X. Clown* Says:
70. [December 7, 2013 at 3:21 am](#) Isn't this the same Elsevier which published a faux “Australasian Journal of Bone & Joint Medicine” for THREE YEARS to showcase Merck products, masquerading as a peer-reviewed journal while hawking commercial goods? Shame on them. I wouldn't cut them any slack on this.  
Last year they were lobbying to rescind the NIH rules which required publicly-funded research to be freely available after a delay. They look and act like greedy rentiers.  
Short-sighted and only thinking of their own bottom line.
71.  [michiexile \(@michiexile\)](#) Says:
72. [December 7, 2013 at 3:23 am](#) Dear Alicia,  
«Hi Mike – I am really surprised to read that you think citations are the only metrics that matter. What about alt metrics such as numbers of links or views?»  
The moment alt metrics start mattering for my getting an academic job in the first place, start mattering for my promotion ladder at my university, and start mattering for my applying for grants you actually have an argument here.  
As things stand right now, however, most academic systems I move in (Sweden, Germany, UK, Slovenia, US) reward by citation almost exclusively. My job prospects hinge on publishing in journals that can be expected to generate higher-than-average citation — since this is the common prospect for influential research. My promotion and grant funding hinge on having many citations and on publishing in highly cited venues.

It's clear that other agents in this particular system of interlocking interests and agendas benefit strongly from alt metrics — and many academics, me included, would prefer an academic reward and evaluation system that is more in step with contemporary technology.

But it isn't. And as long as our incentives reward citation beyond everything else, citation is what we will seek. You want to look out for our interests? Citation maximization is the most efficient way. You may want to sell us a centralized point for citation metrics; but that is a selling argument towards librarians, not academic authors.

73. [bookmarks for December 2nd, 2013 through December 6th, 2013 | Morgan's Log](#)  
Says:

74. [December 7, 2013 at 4:04 am](#) [...] Elsevier is taking down papers from Academia.edu | Sauropod Vertebra Picture of the Week – Can Elsevier be any more condescending? Welcome to Academics Got Talent, with Elsevier playing Simon. – (academia2.0 copyright cc openaccess ) [...]

75. [Healthcare Update – 12-6-2013 | Dr. WhiteCoat](#) Says:

76. [December 7, 2013 at 4:51 am](#) [...] ever published a paper with Elsevier, think twice before trying to make it available to others. Elsevier is sending takedown notices to authors who try to make their work available to the public. Read your submission agreements carefully ... and consider publishing your papers somewhere other [...]

77.  *Josh VW* Says:

78. [December 7, 2013 at 5:02 am](#) Mike,  
I'm a chemist (just started a tenure-track job at an R1 school in the US) and I pretty regularly browse the tables of contents for a list of about 10-15 journals (Nature, Science, Nature Baby Journals, a few ACS journals, and J Chem Phys). More recently, I've been using an RSS reader to get the just-published titles/abstracts. This is pretty common in my field – in my Ph.D. group the PI actually assigned people to read the TOCs of different journals each month and alert the group to the important papers. Frankly, I'm as befuddled by your way of getting the literature as you are by mine. I know some people who have extensive automatic email alerts set up (or fancy searches in their RSS readers). However, 99% of papers in my field wouldn't be sexy enough for a news post, few chemists (proportionally) use twitter, and it would seem egotistical for a PI to email a large list of people every time his/her group published a paper. Maybe a few people whose research has a very strong overlap, and even then only a couple times a year (out of 10-20 papers per year a standard-sized group at an R1 would produce).  
-Josh

79.  [David Kastrup](#) Says:

80. [December 7, 2013 at 9:03 am](#) Uh, I don't see how this is newsworthy. Elsevier journals are *very expensive*. They have built a reputation, and at least some of the expensive journals have capable editors. They would not be able to demand their exorbitant prices if the articles were published elsewhere, so they make *exclusive* contracts with the authors. That's the deal. The author knows that the exact article is *burnt* for other publishing, including self-publishing, but he is free to write a *different* article based on the same results. It does count reasonably well in the hunt for citations.

It's a tradeoff.

And I don't know why it is impossible to get into people's heads *not* to sign any agreement that they don't agree with.

If people made it a rule to take contracts and agreements serious, things like the Windows EULA would never have escalated to their current state since it is just silly that Microsoft reserves the right to remotely destroy your data with unsolicited DRM schemes going haywire, without recompensation.

I'm not using most "free" web services and very little proprietary software because the usage conditions are absolutely grotesque as a rule. *Please*, people, take them serious.

And if that means that you cannot accept them, don't accept them. The only message that registers (with considerable delay) at the legal departments is if their work provably incurs net losses of money and reputation.

Elsevier's restrictions are actually not sneaky or unexpected, and at the *core* of their business which is not underhanded (like the "free" services which make *you* their product). You can take them or leave them.

It's probably good that Elsevier does a bit of enforcement right now so that people get *aware* contracts are not a joke, and that "leave them" is a viable and defensible option if your goal is wide dissemination.

81.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

82. [December 7, 2013 at 9:37 am](#) Crusty X. Clown wrote: "Last year [Elsevier] were lobbying to rescind the NIH rules which required publicly-funded research to be freely available after a delay."

I wish [the law they were lobbying for](#) had been that benign! It didn't just seek to roll back the NIH public access policy, but to make *all* such policies illegal. It really was the most transparently self-serving land-grab; and despite [formally withdrawing their support](#) just before [the act was killed](#), they made it clear in [their statement](#) that "we continue to oppose government mandates in this area [...] While withdrawing support for the Research Works Act, we will continue to [...] oppose repeated efforts to extend mandates through legislation".

Josh VW, thank you for a very different take on article discovery. Perhaps, then, the SOP varies between fields?

David Kastrup, the newsworthiness here is Elsevier evident desire to systematically alienate the people who they depend on for free donations of content, editorial services and reviews. For an organisation nearly entirely dependent on uncompensated volunteer labour, they sure know how to take a dump on their pool of volunteers.

83. [\*Pig-ignorant entitlement and its uses | Gavia Libraria\*](#) Says:

84. [December 7, 2013 at 4:31 pm](#) [...] for Elsevier, academia.edu understands how to exploit pig-ignorant entitlement. They promptly told their faculty participants about Elsevier's demands, blaming those demands clearly and succinctly on Elsevier... and suddenly the battle moved out [...]



85. [\*Dominic Connor\*](#) Says:

86. [December 7, 2013 at 5:15 pm](#) The solution is to separate the activities of managing a refereeing process and that of distributing papers. We now live in a world where printing papers and selling them is a legacy business, but there is still a need for a quality assurance process whose management requires paid-for resources. One the QA process is applied then an agreed "badge" can be put on papers and distributed as the author sees fit. The funding of such a process is a political question, because it will require specific payments, which is why it has not happened yet. But I think it is inevitable and that is known just as well by the management of Elsevier. They know that the source of their paychecks has moved from providing a service to now being an obstacle one must pay to get past. Thus it is not rational for Elsevier executives to care about the "good of Elsevier", since the strategy that is best for the firm, includes their redundancy. Given the choice of destroying the core business over time as they are doing or unemployment, Elsevier management have chosen their own interests. This is of course classical agency theory from economics and tells us that complaining cannot achieve anything and that the decline of Elsevier will continue until none of the current management are in place or until there is no Elsevier.

87. [\*ANL Technology News : Academia.edu yanks research papers after Elsevier objection\*](#) Says:




88. [December 7, 2013 at 5:20 pm](#) [...] do the exact opposite of publishing," said University of Briston paleontologist Mike Taylor in a blog [...]



89. [\*K991\*](#) Says:

90. [December 7, 2013 at 7:42 pm](#) Two things. First of all, the simple response to Elsevier's policy, if you don't like it, is not to submit papers for publication in Elsevier journals. Their policies are absolutely clear, and no-one is forced to agree to them if they don't want to. Further, no-one has to cite papers published in Elsevier journals, either. Second, as several people have mentioned in posts here, journals are getting less and

less relevant to readers. Soon this will shift to authors too. Article level metrics focus attention clearly and plainly on the authors of papers, and Elsevier can't supply me with important ALM data about papers published in the last 12 months, but Springer/BiomedCentral can – and that means that its BMC papers that I'm talking about in the 'Pathways to Impact' section of the ESRC grant application I'm writing. So there's a real incentive for me to publish in gold OA journals that are easily discovered by others and tracked by me. The Academic.edu thing is a bit of a red herring.

91.  [davidgerard](#) Says:
92. [December 7, 2013 at 9:13 pm](#) K991 – it turns out that simplistic internet-libertarian solutions aren't entirely applicable to the working lives of academics. Surprisingly enough.
93. [CERN undertakes largest ever Open Access Initiative | Spicy IP](#) Says:
94. [December 7, 2013 at 11:05 pm](#) [...] for academics, Academia.edu. These incidences have found their way on to several sites, (see here, here and here for example). You can view some of Elsevier's responses via Alicia Wise, director of [...]
95.  [LSU Geog BA majors \(@LSUGeogBAmajors\)](#) Says:
96. [December 8, 2013 at 1:45 am](#) Marcus and others are, in my opinion, correct that Academia.edu is not a disinterested third party. Full-text PDFs of articles drive traffic to Academia.edu and therefore increase its advertising revenue. I know this because I have many papers listed on my Academia.edu page that contain only a brief description and a link to the journal's website. I also have a few PDFs of papers posted for various reasons (e.g., small foreign language journal with no web version). In terms of numbers of hits, the papers with PDFs have one or two orders of magnitude more than the ones with only links. That's a function of how search engines order results and other things. Bottom line? Academia.edu generates a lot more revenue if users post Elsevier PDFs rather than just link to the Elsevier website. I was an early user of Academia.edu and like the service; I believe academic publishing should be not-for-profit; but let's follow the money and keep our eyes open.
97.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:
98. [December 8, 2013 at 8:31 am](#) LSU Geog BA majors, I'm not worried about Academia.edu making money. For me, the point is that they are doing it by *creating* value, whereas Elsevier are trying to *destroy* value. Everything else is secondary.



99.  [Mickey Mortimer](#) Says:

100. [December 8, 2013 at 8:48 am](#) “Further, no-one has to cite papers published in Elsevier journals, either.”

Well, we actually do. If we want to be honest scientists, that is. That’s why the standard approach to a terrible business of simply shopping elsewhere doesn’t work for technical journals. Specific results and studies are published in specific papers, so as scientists we don’t have a choice between citing paper A from Elsevier and paper B from PLoS One. The same issue occurs when it’s time to download a paper. If the Taxonsaurus monograph from Elsevier costs \$35 and we think that’s too much, we can’t just say “You priced it too high, good chap. I’ll show my disapproval by downloading the cheaper Taxonsaurus monograph from PLoS ONE.” No, there’s only one Taxonsaurus monograph, and if we’re studying taxonsaurs, we need it. But that doesn’t mean we grudgingly give Elsevier our money, because no scientist can afford to pay the thousands of dollars a year it would take to keep us current in our field. So we develop systems like Academia.edu to get what we need to do our jobs and Elsevier doesn’t get our money anyway. If Elsevier then shuts that down, they’re still not getting our money because we still can’t afford them. We’ll just find other more secretive or tedious ways to get what we need. The only entities that can sometimes afford Elsevier’s rates are libraries, and it’s not like those are archiving Academia.edu pdfs, so if the company thought it was losing potential income it was sorely mistaken.

101.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

102. [December 8, 2013 at 9:11 am](#) “That doesn’t mean we grudgingly give Elsevier our money, because no scientist can afford to pay the thousands of dollars a year it would take to keep us current in our field. So we develop systems like Academia.edu to get what we need to do our jobs and Elsevier doesn’t get our money anyway. If Elsevier then shuts that down, they’re still not getting our money because we still can’t afford them. We’ll just find other more secretive or tedious ways to get what we need.”

Mickey’s nailed it. When the money just isn’t there, there’s no way for Elsevier (or any other barrier-based publisher) to screw it out of us.

Vague thought: I wonder why it is that all the reputable Gold-APC open-access journals offer waivers for unfunded authors, but no barrier-based publishers offer waivers for unfunded readers.

103.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

104. [December 8, 2013 at 9:16 am](#) Mickey again: “The only entities that can sometimes afford Elsevier’s rates are libraries, and it’s not like those are archiving Academia.edu pdfs, so if the company thought it was losing potential income it was sorely mistaken.”

Spot on once more. It’s one more manifestation of corporations’ bizarre wish-fulfillment delusion that every download marks what would otherwise have been a sale. Multiple studies have shown that not only is this not the case, but people who pirate



more music also buy more music legitimately, indicating (though not providing) that piracy leads to *more* sales. The corporations must know about this. So either they're ignoring the evidence because it conflicts with their preconceived ideas; or, worse, they're not actually concerned about sales so much as they about control. As always, we face an unpalatable choice: they're either dumb or mean.

Hanlon's razor says "Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity", and on the whole I do prefer to believe that no-one at Elsevier is *deliberately* out to prevent progress. Certainly this latest bonehead manoeuvre supplies evidence in support of the stupidity hypothesis.

105.  *aliciawise* Says:

106. [December 8, 2013 at 9:40 am](#) Hi Mickey and Mike,

We're happy to work with social sharing networks and the door remains open for academia.edu if they would like to engage with us. LSU Geog BA majors (above) describes different ways that subscription papers are surfaced and displayed on the platform, so there are options to explore.

There are many other ways to share papers, and to access them too.

Authors can share the final published version of the article with colleagues, use it for internal teaching and training, and at conferences or meetings. Any author who publishes in an Elsevier journal can also post and share other versions of their article, following some simple guidelines that vary by the version of the article to be shared.

And of course the final published journal article can be shared whenever an author published open access in our 1600+ open access journals.

Access is available to what you describe as unfunded readers (and I like the waiver idea – will discuss this internally) at low cost through DeepDyve (which is like iTunes, Spotify, or Netflix but for journal articles – <http://www.deepdyve.com/>). Free access is available via libraries to all walk-in users, and not just to members plus there are interlibrary loan options too. There are other access programs outlined here: <http://www.elsevier.com/about/universal-access/access-initiatives>

Alicia

Alicia Wise

Director of Access and Policy

Elsevier

@wisealicy

107. [Why blame Elsevier? Understanding who "owns" scholarly work | Donghee Yvette Wohn](#) Says:

108. [December 8, 2013 at 12:48 pm](#) [...] down papers that were published by Elsevier and uploaded onto Academia.edu by the author. (This blog post gives a detailed account of what happened, and there was a long thread on AOIR's [...])

109.  *Tilo Grätz* Says:

110. [December 8, 2013 at 2:04 pm](#) Elsevier might simply publish all their journals open access, and link them to social media as well.

111. [Interessante Links und Nachrichten 06.12.2013ff - Pirat Aleks A.](#) Says:

112. [December 8, 2013 at 7:31 pm](#) [...] Wissenschaftsverlag Elsevier zwingt Wissenschaftlern, ihre eigenen Papers von ihre eigenen Websites zu entfernen. <http://svpow.com/2013/12/06/elsevier-is-taking-down-papers-from-academia-edu/> [...]

113.  *RMS* Says:

114. [December 8, 2013 at 8:50 pm](#) I post all my Elsevier accepted manuscripts (not the final professionally edited PDF, but a PDF'd version of the Word manuscript with figures inserted) in my institutional repository and Research Gate, conforming to the requirements to indicate it is not the final version and where the final published version can be found. So simple and easy. And by the way, Elsevier is the only publisher I have published with that allows this embargo free.

115.  [zephirawt](#) Says:

116. [December 9, 2013 at 6:51 am](#) I can see a potential conflict of interest here. The scientists want to use the services of established publisher, its impact factor, business name at the market and peer-review services – but they still want to give nothing for it. If you don't like the impact factor of Elsevier journal, just don't publish in it you hypocrite. Otherwise just follow the publisher rules.

117.  *Mickey Mortimer* Says:

118. [December 9, 2013 at 9:19 am](#) Alicia,  
Thanks for the reply but it merely exemplified how publishers seem to have little idea of what researchers need or want. I had never heard of DeepDyve, so I checked it out. The process to sign up is very fast and easy, so that's great, but things went downhill from there. As I study theropod dinosaurs, I searched for 'theropod' and the first rentable paper that came up was Xu et al.'s (2011) description of Xiaotingia from Nature. DeepDyve lets me choose between downloading it or renting it. Downloading costs \$43.20, which is far too high for any paper, and is even more laughable here as it notifies us right under the price that the paper is 6 pages long. Who anywhere thinks \$7.20 per page is reasonable? Note Nature itself "only" charges \$32 for it, so DeepDyve apparently thinks it adds \$11.20 worth of value somehow. But DeepDyve's main service is rentals, so let's look there. "Rent for Free", that looks good. Clicking on it shows that in actuality, I can only read it for five minutes for free.

Which is useless for study. Researchers need to refer to articles again and again to check details on projects that take months.

The second option is to buy rental tokens, 5 tokens for \$20. One token is a thirty day rental, so effectively that's \$4 to rent an article for a month. Perhaps surprisingly, this really isn't much better than the first option. Technical articles aren't like library novels that I can read over a month and be done with. They're resources we need to refer to again and again over our careers. I have 1,968 pdfs on (non-bird) theropods, of which I'll probably access a few hundred any given month. So I'd be paying a thousand dollars a month to have an online database of rented articles that I have to keep track of to re-rent the next time I need each one? That's making things harder for me, not easier. But hey, there's a third choice, the "best option for professional researchers". "Read up to 40 articles per month – Just \$40 per month." A dollar an article. Finally a decent price... to buy a pdf for. But again renting pdfs is just silly. No matter how cheap it is, I don't want a constantly changing tiny collection of articles I have to regularly reacquire, and can only read in my browser window. To make it worse, when I rented the Xiaotingia article, there's no way to zoom in and out, you have to use single page view (no scrolling between pages), you can't copy-paste or search the text, and the figures were very dark and over saturated. So DeepDyve is actually removing useful features of the article, making it more tedious to track and access, and then charging me for it? Why would I ever use such a "service"?

119.  *Green Lizard* Says:

120. [December 9, 2013 at 10:02 am](#) Perhaps people need to be reminded to read their publication agreement?

Elsevier are doing exactly what they are entitled to do and should do. Academia and others, Research Gate is another example, are in the wrong and are breaking terms of copyright.

Many publishers allow for copies of work to be held openly on authors own websites, many also allow for this to be shared on departmental websites and through Open Access mandates from funders, even more material can now be self-archived within institutional repositories that make work publicly available.

Elsevier policies on Open Access may be quite strict and in some regards restrictive, but they do not prevent some form of the work in one medium or another from being made freely available online.

Whilst this is all true, there is ultimately a huge imbalance of power swayed towards publishers when it comes to sharing research and fees for making articles available Open Access can be massive.

121.  *Mickey Mortimer* Says:

122. [December 9, 2013 at 10:28 am](#) And just to address the other options listed by Alicia above, so I don't appear to be just trashing one and ignoring the rest...

1. "Authors can share the final published version of the article with colleagues"  
That's what Academia.edu is, just centralized for ease of use.

2. “use it for internal teaching and training, and at conferences or meetings”

That’s not useful for the vast majority of people, who aren’t their students and can’t afford to go to most conferences. Honestly, how’s that latter option supposed to work anyway? It has to be a holdover from when papers were made of paper, so authors could hand out reprints. I had a few theses given to me at meetings via CD a decade ago, but with the options for transferring large files online today, any transfer is going to be electronic anyway. In that case, emailing me a pdf or link to one stored online via cell phone at a meeting can happen any time, between devices anywhere in the world. But I’m sure Elsevier would crack down on any centralized method of doing this freely.

3. “Any author who publishes in an Elsevier journal can also post and share other versions of their article, following some simple guidelines that vary by the version of the article to be shared.”

This relates to Brian K.’s comment above “How hard is it really to just self publish the unformatted text? That seems to be the real issue here.” The double-spaced prepublished versions with figures at the end are far more tedious to use and can’t be cited for page number. Note this doesn’t mean publishers add value by changing this into the final version, because authors are required to submit their articles in this inferior state. Any author that is capable of submitting a manuscript could certainly make it single-spaced and insert figures between the text, but we don’t do that thanks to a history where peer review was written by hand between text lines and physical figures were placed between physical text by publishers who required training to do so. In addition to all of this, it’s just complicated and stupid to have multiple versions of the same article floating around.

4. “And of course the final published journal article can be shared whenever an author published open access in our 1600+ open access journals.”

That doesn’t help the majority of your articles.

5. “Free access is available via libraries to all walk-in users, and not just to members plus there are interlibrary loan options too.”

Free except for the hours worth of gas and time, and parking. Then there’s the tedium of (at my university library at least) getting temporary access to their servers as a non-student, and emailing everything to myself or transferring it to a USB drive. And waiting for a public computer to use. And only being there in the hours the library is open, which overlap standard work hours almost entirely. SV-POW nailed the walk-in topic earlier. This is what I had to do in the nineties to get papers, it’s archaic and an utterly unnecessary use of resources today.

As for interlibrary loan, this is a last resort option when no one has the physical product and pdfs do not exist. How is this even relevant to open access? Are there electronic parts to the interlibrary loan program where when your library doesn’t subscribe to a journal, you can get a pdf sent from another library that does subscribe? If so, what a waste of time and resources for everyone.

Of course, the libraries are still paying a ton for the access, when they can afford to do so.

In short, none of the publisher-approved ways to get articles are realistic for researchers. You want a way that will result in us paying you? Charge ten cents per page to buy a pdf. Give us the option to pay double that, with the additional ten cents per page going towards the authors, and I bet a lot of people will do that instead of illicitly finding a free copy.

123.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

124. [December 9, 2013 at 10:56 am](#) Man thanks to Mickey for that careful, detailed response to Alicia. I just want to expand on one part of it:  
“Authors can share the final published version of the article with colleagues”  
That’s what Academia.edu is, just centralized for ease of use.

That is exactly right. By preventing researchers from streamlining this process by hobbling Academia.edu, Elsevier is saying in so many words “you can do this, but we want it to be difficult and time consuming”. Could there be a clearer example of deliberately destroying value?

125.  [aliciawise](#) Says:

126. [December 9, 2013 at 11:17 am](#) Hi Mike,  
Would you agree that sharing an article in a private group on a social sharing network is more akin to emailing an article to colleagues than posting it on a publicly accessible site?

We are happy to work with all the social sharing networks and there are lots of ways to make this work well and at scale. Options include private sharing, linking, and using accepted manuscripts rather than final versions after an embargo period.

- Alicia

Dr Alicia Wise

Director of Access and Policy

Elsevier

@wisealic

127. [Elsevier takes down papers from Academia.edu | Research Support Hub](#) Says:

128. [December 9, 2013 at 2:19 pm](#) [...] the blogosphere... Chronicle of Higher Education; SV-POW; Venturebeat and [...]

129.  [Frank Drebin](#) Says:

130. [December 9, 2013 at 3:05 pm](#) Alicia,  
I’ll leave the continued analysis of your dissembling to others, but this young researcher is making his best effort to never publish in any Elsevier journal, nor review, for all the science- and scientist-hostile reasons that you must be aware of but choose to ignore.  
Frank

131.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

132. [December 9, 2013 at 3:28 pm](#) Alicia asks: “Would you agree that sharing an article in a private group on a social sharing network is more akin to emailing an article to colleagues than posting it on a publicly accessible site?”  
Maybe, I don’t know. I’ve got no strong opinion on whether along the continuum that mode of sharing falls.  
But I don’t really think it’s the issue. You’re trying to divide up sharing into two categories, Good Sharing and Bad Sharing. But that’s just not how researchers think. As an author, *all* sharing of my work is good for me; and as a reader, *all* sharing of others’ work is good for me, too. You don’t need me to tell you that science has always been based on sharing. There is real bitterness in the irony that, just when we have the most incredible friction-destroying sharing tool the world has ever known, organisation that originally came into existence in order to *help* researchers share their work are now actively working to prevent that from happening. Surely you see how very fundamentally that is wrong. Not just a sub-optimal business model, not just bad PR, but profoundly wrong in a violating-the-nature-of-the-universe, trying-to-put-the-genie-back-in-the-bottle way.  
Here is Elsevier’s problem in nine words: you’re the opposite of what you say you are.

133.  [Elsevier, academia.edu, and Berlin OA meeting / Mostly physics](#) Says:

134. [December 9, 2013 at 5:20 pm](#) [...] Illustration from Mike Taylor’s blog. [...]

135.  [Matt Wedel](#) Says:

136. [December 9, 2013 at 6:30 pm](#) Mike wrote:  
*There is real bitterness in the irony that, just when we have the most incredible friction-destroying sharing tool the world has ever known, organisation that originally came into existence in order to help researchers share their work are now actively working to prevent that from happening.*  
Hammer. Nail. WHAM!  
WHAM!  
WHAM!  
WHAM!  
WHAM!  
(apologies to Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle)

137.  [John Furfey \(@jfurfey\)](#) Says:

138. [December 9, 2013 at 7:10 pm](#) “Academia.edu is committed to enabling the transition to a

world where there is open access to academic literature”.

Where can I find the documentation for their API, so that I can make use of all of the data they collect for the upcoming transition?

139. [Turning the tables on Elsevier: a thought experiment | Neuropolarbear](#) Says:

140. [December 9, 2013 at 10:16 pm](#) [...] pretty bothered by Elsevier's tactics of not being nice about letting people post their papers on their own websites, and on [...]

141.  [Marie Farge](#) Says:

142. [December 10, 2013 at 12:39 am](#) Thanks to Elsevier's last move, the situation now is very simple:

1. authors should no more sign the copyright agreement, or should put their paper under Creative Commons License CC-BY (if they sign the copyright agreement, this has then no more legal value),
2. members of the editorial boards should require that publishers replace 'copy-right agreement' by 'author-right agreement', where authors keep the ownership of their work and only grant the non exclusive authorization to publish their paper,
3. editorial boards and referees should ask for legal rights (that they presently do not have) in recognition of their highly specialized expertise and of their voluntary work to perform peer-reviewing (if some editors are paid they should have a contract with the publisher and the other members of the editorial board should be informed).

143. [Elsevier is using DMCA to block authors from sharing their own work | sojyujai.org](#) Says:

144. [December 10, 2013 at 1:23 am](#) [...] <http://svpow.com/2013/12/06/elsevier-is-taking-down-papers-from-academia-edu/> [...]

145.  [David Newman](#) Says:

146. [December 10, 2013 at 1:34 am](#) A law professor colleague, Philip Leith, never assigns copyright to the publisher. He always keeps the copyright, but offers them a licence to reproduce the article. He has never had an editor refuse to accept an article under those terms – once they have gone through the whole review process, and got a publishable paper, they are not going to give up on it at the last moment.

147.  [David Roberts](#) Says:

148. [December 10, 2013 at 8:30 am](#) David Newman – yes, that is the ideal situation. Publish with

whomever you like, but actually *negotiate* the contract. Otherwise, post article online, describe it as ‘accepted for publication in journal X’ (with documentary evidence), and let the publisher sweat.

149. [A Hacker's Views... · Twitter Open Access Report – 10 Dec 2013](#) Says:


150. [December 10, 2013 at 1:22 pm](#) [...] is taking down papers from Academia.edu. From SV-POW: Lots of researchers post PDFs of their own papers on their own web-sites. It’s always been so, [...]

151. [Elsevier persigue a los autores que comparten sus trabajos públicamente | Conocimiento Libre \(o lo que está detrás del Software Libre\)](#) Says:

152. [December 10, 2013 at 3:03 pm](#) [...] se cuenta en Slashdot, la editorial Elsevier está obligando a retirar artículos difundidos en la plataforma Academia.edu por supuesta infracción en los ‘acuerdos de transferencia de copyright’ entre los [...]

153. [Have publishers lost sight of the purpose of publishing – i.e. to make something generally known? | Liblog@chi - Library news from University of Chichester](#) Says:

154. [December 10, 2013 at 3:14 pm](#) [...] <http://svpow.com/2013/12/06/elsevier-is-taking-down-papers-from-academia-edu/> [...]

155.  [Don't blame Elsevier for exercising the rights you gave them | Savage Minds Backup](#) Says:

156. [December 10, 2013 at 9:07 pm](#) [...] has been a lot of talk around the Internet recently about Elsevier taking down PDFs of articles on academia.edu and what it says about scholarly publishing (my favorite analysis is here). As an open access [...]

157. [Att såga av den gren man sitter på – Flickus flackus flum](#) Says:

158. [December 10, 2013 at 9:13 pm](#) [...] har du oftast din egen webbsida och ett antal sociala nätverk där du vill sprida din artikel. Där säger Elsevier stopp. De äger publiceringsrätterna och forskaren förfogar därför inte över sitt eget material. [...]

159. [Can you post your article on your profile? | News from the Library](#) Says:

160. [December 10, 2013 at 11:59 pm](#) [...] SV-POW [...]

161. [Somewhere else, part 99 | Freakonometrics](#) Says:



162. [December 11, 2013 at 4:47 am](#) [...] public". Paywalls are the opposite of publishing" <http://svpow.com/2012/10/16/pub...> via <http://svpow.com/2013/12/06/elsevier...> (and @NGhoussoub [...])

163. [The End of an Era for Academia.edu and Other Academic Networks? | The Scholarly Kitchen](#) Says:

164. [December 11, 2013 at 9:31 am](#) [...] has prompted a storm in the Twittersphere, a response from Elsevier, a number of commentaries on blogs and list-serves, and a truly bizarre article from CNET that casts Academia.edu as a "new [...]"

165. [intellectual exclusion and economic exclusion from the higher education economy | \(un\)free archaeology](#) Says:

166. [December 11, 2013 at 10:32 am](#) [...] Now there is an Academic Spring. More than 14,000 (and counting) researchers have signed the Cost of Knowledge boycott of Elsevier. In spite of that (in both senses), where researchers have published their work through Elsevier then made that knowledge openly-accessible, Elsevier is now taking down papers from Academia.edu. [...]



167. [William Park](#) Says:

168. [December 11, 2013 at 5:03 pm](#) Hi Mickey,  
I'm the CEO of DeepDyve and wanted to respond to your comments. As you correctly point out, we have designed our rental service to focus on the 2 main features users want: 1) ability to read the full article; 2) affordable price. In exchange for these benefits, we restrict other elements of access, such as the outright ability to download and own the PDF. For some users who absolutely require downloading and printing the PDF, this will not be a suitable exchange.  
For many others, they receive the 2 key benefits they need, and in many instances, either for free, or for a rental amount that is 90+% cheaper than the purchase price. These users often skim articles and cannot verify the article's significance simply by the Abstract, so the ability to freely preview the full-text for 5 minutes (think movie trailer), or at worst rent the article for a few dollars, saves them money compared to buying the 'wrong' PDF. For others, they are comfortable streaming articles from the Cloud and working online – that is their reading and research behavior which while different than yours and others, is becoming more commonplace. Our goal is to simply provide innovative, alternative access models to meet the needs of these under-served users, typically unaffiliated with an academic library, who cannot afford traditional journal subscriptions.  
Sincerely,  
William Park  
CEO, DeepDyve

169.  [Pedro J. Silva \(@Pedro\\_Biochem\)](#) Says:

170. [December 11, 2013 at 7:06 pm](#) Alicia Wise said:  
“Why do we send take down notices? We aim to ensure that the final published version of an article is readily discoverable and citable via the journal itself in order to maximize the usage metrics and credit for our authors, and to protect the quality and integrity of the scientific record. The formal publications on our platforms also give researchers better tools and links, for example to data.”  
I find this argument stands sharply at odds with Elsevier’s policy of allowing authors to deposit only the submitted version (pre-review, rather than the approved version) in institutional repositories.

171.  *aliciawise* Says:

172. [December 11, 2013 at 8:34 pm](#) Hi Pedro -  
Elsevier does permit posting of accepted manuscripts. These are the author’s version of the manuscript of an article that has been accepted for publication (i.e. post peer review) and which typically may include any author-incorporated changes suggested through the processes of submission processing, peer review, and editor-author communications.  
With kind wishes,  
Alicia  
Dr Alicia Wise  
Director of Access & Policy  
Elsevier  
@wisealic

173.  *Claire* Says:

174. [December 12, 2013 at 12:04 am](#) I’ve published in Elsevier journals before and have made use of the rather reasonable self-archiving option. However, trying to erode the NIH open access requirement is indefensible. Elsevier, please stop trying to be evil!!!

175.  *telescoper* Says:

176. [December 12, 2013 at 10:25 am](#) Reblogged this on [In the Dark](#) and commented:  
Yet another example of an academic publisher (Elsevier) acting in a manner clearly detrimental to research.

177.  Mickey Mortimer Says:

178. [December 12, 2013 at 11:25 am](#) William,

Thanks for the reply, but I don't think it addresses the needs of actual researchers and again shows publishers' misunderstanding of us.

You say users want "the ability to read the full article", but as I noted in my critique, researchers don't need the ability to read articles over five minutes or a month, they need to refer to them for details throughout their career. Even given that, most articles can't be fully read in five minutes.

You further say affordable price is a desire, and I agree there, but I think DeepDyve's prices aren't worth the result. It costs \$4 to rent the 6 page Xiaotingia article for a month. We pay 10-15 cents at copy machines for pages that last a lifetime. Would you pay 66 cents for pages that disappear after 30 days? Most articles are between 5 and 15 pages long, so even the general 'best deal' is 25 cents per temporary page. Your final option is paying \$40 a month and getting at most 40 articles, so \$1 per article at best. That's an average of 7 to 20 cents per page, matching well with photocopy prices, but again for pages that disappear after 30 days.

In exchange for this average to expensive price for temporary goods, "we restrict other elements of access, such as the outright ability to download and own the PDF."

Downloading and owning a pdf would certainly be contrary to any rental service, but how about copy-pasting, zooming and searching for words being enabled? By not providing these abilities, you're just making it more and more worth it to spend a few minutes emailing an author or searching/posting to a sharing network to get permanent access to a more useful version.

"For many others, they receive the 2 key benefits they need, and in many instances, either for free, or for a rental amount that is 90+% cheaper than the purchase price.

These users often skim articles and cannot verify the article's significance simply by the Abstract, so the ability to freely preview the full-text for 5 minutes (think movie trailer), or at worse rent the article for a few dollars, saves them money compared to buying the 'wrong' PDF."

Here your major error is that no researcher buys pdfs at the 'purchase price', for they simply can't afford to. No one will pay \$30 for an article they really want, let alone for one that has a chance to be 'wrong'. What occurs is that someone will have free access via a university library, then it gets distributed via the internet to everyone else interested for free. At least that's how paleontology works. If experts in other fields somehow have thousands of dollars to spend on pdfs, I'd like to know how they finance it.

"For others, they are comfortable streaming articles from the Cloud and working online"

This wouldn't be as bad if we could each have more than 40 articles at a time, which wouldn't delete after a month, and had copy-pasting, searching, etc..

"Our goal is to simply provide innovative, alternative access models to meet the needs of these under-served users, typically unaffiliated with an academic library, who cannot afford traditional journal subscriptions."


And my point is simply that these users are not researchers, contrary to this being presented as an alternative to Academia.edu.

179.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

180. [December 12, 2013 at 11:47 am](#) Thanks, Mickey. That's my own feeling precisely. I do appreciate that DeepDyve is making a good-faith attempt to provide a solution to a very real problem. But the issue is this: the problem is itself totally artificial. So any inferior workaround is just a waste of time compared with the true solution, which is *stop creating the damned problem in the first place*. In order to get publishers' permission to use "their" articles at all, DeepDyve (and other similar services such as ReadCube) have to promise to cripple those articles — no printing, zooming, copy-paste, etc. So what we end up with *at best* is much, much worse than what we'd have in a sane universe. That's why I said I wouldn't use DeepDyve even at zero cost. It's a crippled product, and it's been crippled *by design*. That kind of deliberate damage pains me deeply. Suppose a small number of large corporations had a monopoly on all the food in the world, and made it available only to universities who could pay subscriptions. Then suppose DeepDyve came along and offered and offered access to that food. This is good; but because the corporations that own the food have all the power in the relationship, they dictate the terms. And so DeepDyve has to tell customers "we can sell you food, but only a limited number of meals, and we have to pee in it before we give it to you, and you have to vomit it up again 24 hours after you eat it".

181. [Elsevier \(i.e. the owner of Mendeley\) "asks" the users of Academia.edu \(i.e. a competitor of Mendeley\) to take their papers down « Docear](#) Says:

182. [December 12, 2013 at 1:34 pm](#) [...] SVPOW: Elsevier is taking down papers from Academia.edu [...]

183.  [Elsevier presses copyright on papers at academia.edu | African Studies library](#) Says:

184. [December 12, 2013 at 2:56 pm](#) [...] giant scholarly journal publisher Elsevier has demanded a take down of papers from Academia.edu this month. This is a self-defeating action in terms of bad publicity for big [...]

185. [Riled up by Elsevier's take-downs? Time to embrace open access | PNCAU](#) Says:

186. [December 12, 2013 at 10:21 pm](#) [...] scholars (such as Mike Taylor) have suggested that scientists should actively rebel by illegally posting final article PDFs to [...]

187.  [David Roberts](#) Says:

188. [December 13, 2013 at 12:08 am](#) 5 minutes might be enough to read a 4-page CNS ~~paper~~

*extended abstract and* and judge its “importance”, but not enough to read, for instance, a 30+-page mathematics paper. One might even want to write some stuff down from the paper, since it can’t be copy/pasted.

189. [Aktuelles 13. Dezember 2013](#) Says:

190. [December 13, 2013 at 1:06 pm](#) [...] Elsevier is taking down papers from Academia.edu | Sauropod Vertebra Picture of the Week “Lots of researchers post PDFs of their own papers on their own web-sites. It’s always been so, because even though technically it’s in breach of the copyright transfer agreements that we blithely sign, everyone knows it’s right and proper. Preventing people from making their own work available would be insane, and the publisher that did it would be committing a PR gaffe of huge proportions. Enter Elsevier, stage left.” [...]

191. [The Geek’s Reading List – Week of December 13th 2013 | thegeeksreadinglist](#) Says:

192. [December 13, 2013 at 3:09 pm](#) [...] <http://svpow.com/2013/12/06/elsevier-is-taking-down-papers-from-academia-edu/> [...]

193.  [#ElsevierGate and the Open Access conspiracy | Jason B Colditz](#) Says:



194. [December 13, 2013 at 4:28 pm](#) [...] week in the world of Open Access (OA). Earlier this week, Elsevier issued a firestorm of DMCA takedown requests to Academia.edu, demanding that thousands of research articles be removed from the site. Around [...]

195. [No puedes publicar un artículo tuyo en tu página web en el formato de la revista | La Ciencia de la Mula Francis](#) Says:

196. [December 14, 2013 at 12:11 am](#) [...] Cuento esto por dos razones. La primera porque Elsevier ha solicitado a Academia.edu que elimine todos los artículos que publica en su web (copias del pdf con formato final de la revista). Si no lo hace, tomará medidas legales. Academia.edu ha enviado un correo a todos los investigadores que lo usan para informarles de que se retirarán dichos artículos de la web, instándoles a reenviar los manuscritos (preprints) correspondientes. Nos lo cuenta Jordan Novet, “Academia.edu slammed with takedown notices from journal publisher Elsevier,” VB Business, 06 Dec 2013; y muchos afectados lo cuentan en su blogs, como “Elsevier is taking down papers from Academia.edu,” Sauropod Vertebra Picture of the Week, 06 Dec 2013. [...]

197.  [jigalle](#) Says:

198. [December 14, 2013 at 4:16 pm](#) Reblogged this on [cloudarian](#).

199.  [More news from the scientific publishing front « Deadline island](#) Says:
200. [December 14, 2013 at 6:04 pm](#) [...] Even more so, the current system gives publishers an undue degree of control over our work, to the extent that allows them to veto the dissemination of articles by their own authors, as was reported, for example, recently by another blogger: Elsevier is taking down papers from Academia.edu. [...]
201. [Academia.edu slammed with takedown notices from journal publisher Elsevier - The Headlines Now - Live News India, World, Business, Technology, Sports, Fashion, LifeStyle & Entertainment](#) Says:
202. [December 15, 2013 at 4:22 pm](#) [...] news surfaced in a post on Sauropod Vertebra Picture of the Week, a blog about open [...]
203. [Elsevier steps up its War On Access | Sauropod Vertebra Picture of the Week](#) Says:
204. [December 17, 2013 at 9:40 am](#) [...] who freely donate their work to shore up the corporation's obscene profits. The thousands of takedown notices sent to Academia.edu represent at best a grotesque PR mis-step, an idiot manoeuvre that I thought Elsevier would [...]
205. [on publication practice | biomimetic robotics and machine learning](#) Says:
206. [January 2, 2014 at 9:19 pm](#) [...] Update / Dec. 2013: Elsevier seems to reinforce their effort to discourage open access publishing. A paper sharing platform, academia.edu, has been forced by Elsevier to take down certain publications. Read the full story at <http://svpow.com/2013/12/06/elsevier-is-taking-down-papers-from-academia-edu> [...]
207. [Will Elsevier have a Snowden Event? | Sauropod Vertebra Picture of the Week](#) Says:
208. [January 13, 2014 at 6:00 am](#) [...] single-minded about cultivating the ill-will of the people they allegedly serve (most recently with this and this). Sometimes I wonder if the other barrier-based publishers are getting too much of a free [...]
209.  [La academia, las restricciones de las revistas académicas y su coqueteo con el "Open Access" | Facetas históricas](#) Says:
210. [February 8, 2014 at 11:12 pm](#) [...] Lo anterior a pesar del "compromiso" de Elsevier de permitir el acceso a la ciencia de manera gratuita, como lo menciona en su propia página de Internet. Esto provocó una ola de indignación por parte de los afectados, quienes

volcaron sus inquietudes principalmente en Twitter, donde se pudieron leer una serie de comentarios al respecto. [...]

211. [Pour une utilisation critique des réseaux sociaux académiques | URFIST Info](#) Says:

212. [February 14, 2014 at 10:21 am](#) [...] encore reçu beaucoup d'échos en France : et pourtant cela fait plusieurs mois maintenant qu'Elsevier demande régulièrement le retrait d'articles déposés par leurs auteurs sur le réseau social Academia. Si on le regarde sous l'angle de [...]

213. [Things To Look Out For In Research Publishing « Martin's Notes](#) Says:

214. [February 16, 2014 at 8:15 am](#) [...] keep reading about how Springer and Elsevier, well Elsevier mostly, is going after researchers in what can only [...]

215.  [Georgia Christinidis](#) Says:

216. [February 20, 2014 at 1:49 pm](#) One central problem with academia.edu is its intransparency. The latest unannounced innovation seems to be that they now only list papers that have actually been uploaded – for instance, I actually listed the details of 9 articles on academia but uploaded only three due to copyright restrictions, providing abstracts and/or links to e-journals for the others. Now, only the three articles are displayed, the others are nowhere to be found. In my view, this indicates another move by academia.edu to actively compete with rather than supplement other providers/publishers now that they've apparently reached a user base of six million. They no longer work as a 'gateway' to those publications by a user published on other platforms; only those published on academia.edu itself will be accessible – and benefit from the high google rankings usually achieved by academia.edu papers. Precisely because it works based on personal accounts, which suggests that what you see there is at the very least the most important/representative output by a user, this means if you're going to use the platform at all, there is a high amount of pressure on users to publish all their papers there. Given that we don't yet know what the business model is going to be, I find this highly worrying. They're going to attempt to drive out publishers, and what are their practices going to be once they have a stranglehold over the market? Not that I'm not critical of publishers like Elsevier, but it looks like academia.edu is not going to be any better.

217.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

218. [February 20, 2014 at 2:36 pm](#) That is a strange change indeed on Academia.edu's part. Seems directly opposed to its stated purpose. More generally, you're completely right that just because Elsevier and Academia were in conflict doesn't automatically make Academia good guys.



219.  [Georgia Christinidis](#) Says:

220. [February 20, 2014 at 3:21 pm](#) Yes it is opposed to their stated purpose – the only explanation that occurs to me is a deliberate strategy to capture more of the market...

221.  [Georgia Christinidis](#) Says:

222. [February 20, 2014 at 4:35 pm](#) They're back now, to be fair. Did not respond to the support request I sent them, so I'm not sure whether this was a technical problem (though one apparently shared by many other users) or, in fact, a strategic change that they've now reversed. Whichever it was, I do think it highlights some issues with the company.

223. [Open Practices and Identity: Evidence from Researchers and Educators' Social Media Participation | George Veletsianos](#) Says:

224. [March 19, 2014 at 3:48 pm](#) [...] this paper, Elsevier has started taking action against this activity by sending takedown notices to academia.edu. How does one respond to actions that are in direct conflict to strongly-held values and ideals? [...]

225.  [Larry Moniz](#) Says:

226. [April 10, 2014 at 1:27 am](#) Just as college professors and private industry researchers are paid for their work first by the employing institutions, then by the academic book publishers that publish their works, so do the publishing houses deserve to make a profit. Sorry folks, but research is less a philanthropic activity than a business. I've been a journalist for 50 years. The money comes from somewhere. I've also seen researchers who ignore evidence.

I was at a Pennsylvania Society for Archeology Conference last weekend. At the keynote dinner I had a couple, both college professors, who sat at our table. The wife became irate as discussion turned to my presentation entitled: Chasing the Beringia Land Bridge Myth and Finding Solutrean Boats. She still asserts the first immigration came across during the Ice Age and is responsible for Clovis First. She left the table in a huff and went to sit with some of her students rather than conduct a discussion — this despite her also being an archeology textbook author.

I was stunned that she wouldn't take part in a cordial discussion rather than telling me I should have done better research. As a journalist I don't have to meet the same peer standards that academicians must match. I must merely report factually, accurately and without bias. That's what's won me more than a dozen investigative reporting awards over the years. And, those awards WERE in awards competitions by juries of MY peers — journalists all. It's why I spent many months scouring many thousands of online sources for valid information, reading hundreds of articles and verifying each bit



of the research with as many independent sources as possible.

But I digress. While some people tout “academic freedom” or other arguments to avoid paying for resources. Journalists and publishers of all stripes have copyright protection on their works. Otherwise, production of all those works would quickly dry up. For example, how many college professors would spend weeks, months or even years researching if they were doing it for FREE? I suspect few if any. We all work to shelter ourselves and families and feed them. The same professor commented on how little college educators make, yet I know from have covered colleges as a journalist that the average associate professor makes about 300 percent of the annual earnings of a typical newspaper reporter. In New Jersey, first grammar school teachers earn as much or more than the typical journeyman reporter with five years professional experience. . That’s why research papers, even by lowly journalists, require payment. For instance, my months of research sell as a Kindle download for \$50, while many of the “professorial” papers sell for hundreds of dollars and their books, even in E-format for well over \$100. As a “retired” journalist, my only pension is the Social Security money I paid in during my career.

Thus, you can perhaps, now, understand a little bit more why I’m on the side of the publishers, journalists and authors who spend five or 10 years learning their craft. I knew going into my career that I would likely never become wealthy or even make a decent middle class income. I didn’t worry about it. I loved the work. After 50 years, I still love the work.

Writing isn’t something I do, it’s what I AM.

227.  [Mike Taylor](#) Says:

228. [April 10, 2014 at 8:55 am](#) Hi, Larry, thanks for chipping in. It seems that you’re equating the commercial arrangements of academic research with those of journalism, but in fact they are completely different. And so you say:

While some people tout “academic freedom” or other arguments to avoid paying for resources. Journalists and publishers of all stripes have copyright protection on their works. Otherwise, production of all those works would quickly dry up. For example, how many college professors would spend weeks, months or even years researching if they were doing it for FREE? I suspect few if any.

College professors are paid salaries, not royalties on their work. If you’re a professional researcher, the expectation is that you produce research in exchange for that salary. So (most) researchers aren’t doing it for free, but for a salary. Copyright protection on the papers they write is wholly irrelevant to how they get paid.

For what it’s worth, I have never heard of an academic author being paid anything directly for a paper they write (as opposed to indirectly as part of their salary). I *have* heard of authors paying the publisher page-charges — being out of pocket *and* seeing their work going behind a paywall where most people can’t read it. Now *that* is disgraceful.

229.  [davidgerard](#) Says:

230. [April 10, 2014 at 8:57 am](#) Yes. Academic publishers notably go silent when you suggest they pay royalties to the researchers, c.f. [above](#).