

Elsevier

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Elsevier B.V. (Dutch pronunciation: [ˈɛlzəvir]) is a publishing company which publishes medical and scientific literature. It is a part of the Reed Elsevier group. Based in Amsterdam, the company has operations in the United Kingdom, USA, and elsewhere.

Leading products include journals such as *The Lancet* and *Cell*, books such as *Gray's Anatomy*, the ScienceDirect collection of electronic journals, the *Trends* and *Current Opinion* series of journals, and the online citation database Scopus. Its free researcher collaboration tool, 2collab, launched in 2007, was discontinued in 2011.

Elsevier publishes 250,000 articles a year in 2,000 journals.^[1] Its archives contain seven million publications. Total yearly downloads amount to 240 million.^[2]

In 2010, Elsevier reported a profit margin of 36% on revenues of \$3.2 billion.^[3] Elsevier accounts for 28% of the revenues of the Reed Elsevier group (£1.5b of 5.4 billions in 2006). In operating profits, it represents a bigger fraction of 44% (£395 of 880 millions).^[4] Adjusted operating profits rose by 10% from 2005 to 2006.^[5]

Elsevier



ELSEVIER

Parent company	Reed Elsevier
Founded	1880
Country of origin	Netherlands
Headquarters location	Amsterdam
Official website	www.elsevier.com (http://www.elsevier.com)

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Reed Elsevier Annual Report 2011

Turnover	€ 6,902 million
Pre-tax profit	€ 1,090 million

Reed Elsevier Annual Report 2012

Turnover	£ 2,063 million (+0.2% from '11)
Adjusted Operating Profit	£ 780 million (+1.6% from '11)

see Elsevier reports,^[4] turnover = revenue; profits not adjusted

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History

Elsevier took its name from the Dutch publishing house Elzevir, which, however, had no connection with the present company.^[6] The Elzevir family operated as booksellers and publishers in the Netherlands. Its founder, Lodewijk Elzevir (1542–1617), lived in Leiden and established the business in 1580. Elsevier was founded in 1880 and is the oldest and largest company dating from that time.^[6]

Company figures

Elsevier employs more than 7,000 people in over 70 offices across 24 countries. The company publishes 2,000 journals and 20,000 books. It is headed by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ron Mobed.^[1] In 2003 its publishing accounted for 25% of the world market in science, technology, and medical publishing.^[6]

Elsevier's operating divisions

Elsevier has two distinct operating divisions: Science & Technology and Health Sciences. Products and services of both include electronic and print versions of journals, textbooks and reference works and cover the health, life, physical and social sciences.

Science & Technology

Ron Mobed is the CEO of Science & Technology.

The target markets are academic and government research institutions, corporate research labs, booksellers, librarians, scientific researchers, authors, and editors.

Flagship products and services include: VirtualE, ScienceDirect, Scopus, Scirus, EMBASE, Engineering Village, Compendex, Cell, SciVal Spotlight.

There are the following subsidiary imprints, many of them previously independent publishing companies: Academic Press, Butterworth-Heinemann, CMP, Digital Press, Elsevier, Focal Press, Gulf Professional Publishing, Morgan Kaufmann, Newnes, Pergamon Press, Pergamon Flexible Learning, Syngress Publishing.

ScienceDirect is Elsevier's platform for online electronic access to its journals and over 6,000 e-books, reference works, book series, and handbooks. The articles are grouped in four main sections: *Physical Sciences and Engineering*, *Life Sciences*, *Health Sciences*, and *Social Sciences and Humanities*. For

most articles on the website, abstracts are freely available; access to the full text of the article (in PDF, and also HTML for newer publications) often requires a subscription or pay-per-view purchase.

Health Sciences

The target market is physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, medical and nursing students and schools, medical researchers, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, and research establishments. It publishes in 13 languages including English, German, French Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Japanese, Hindi and Chinese.

Flagship publications include: The Consult series (FirstCONSULT, PathCONSULT, NursingCONSULT, MDConsult, StudentCONSULT), Virtual Clinical Excursions, and major reference works such as *Gray's Anatomy*, *Nelson Pediatrics*, *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*, *Netter's Atlas of Human Anatomy*, and online versions of many journals^[7] including *The Lancet*.

There are the following subsidiary imprints, previously independent publishing companies: Saunders, Mosby, Churchill Livingstone, Butterworth-Heinemann, Hanley & Belfus, Bailliere-Tindall, Urban & Fischer, Masson.

Criticism and controversies

In recent years the subscription rates charged by the company for its journals have been criticised; some very large journals (those with more than 5000 articles) charge subscription prices as high as \$14,000, far above average.^[8] The company has been criticised not only by advocates of a switch to the open-access publication model, but also by universities whose library budgets make it difficult for them to afford current journal prices. For example, a resolution by Stanford University's senate singled out Elsevier's journals as among those which might be "disproportionately expensive compared to their educational and research value" and which librarians should consider dropping, and encouraged its faculty "not to contribute articles or editorial or review efforts to publishers and journals that engage in exploitive or exorbitant pricing".^[9] Similar guidelines and criticism of Elsevier's pricing policies have been passed by the University of California, Harvard University and Duke University.^[10] The elevated pricing of field journals in economics, most of which are published by Elsevier, was one of the motivations that moved the American Economic Association to launch the *American Economic Journal* in 2009.^[11]

Resignation of editorial boards

In November 1999 the entire editorial board (50 persons) of the *Journal of Logic Programming* (founded in 1984 by Alan Robinson) collectively resigned after 16 months of unsuccessful negotiations with Elsevier Press about the price of library subscriptions.^[12] The personnel created a new journal, *Theory and Practice of Logic Programming*, with Cambridge University Press at a much lower price,^[12] while Elsevier continued publication with a new editorial board and a slightly different name (the *Journal of Logic and Algebraic Programming*).

In 2002, dissatisfaction at Elsevier's pricing policies caused the European Economic Association to terminate an agreement with Elsevier designating Elsevier's *European Economic Review* as the official journal of the association. The EEA launched a new journal, the *Journal of the European Economic Association*.^[13]

At the end of 2003, the entire editorial board of the *Journal of Algorithms* resigned to start *ACM*

Transactions on Algorithms with a different, lower priced publisher,^[14] at the suggestion of *Journal of Algorithms* founder Donald Knuth.^[15] The *Journal of Algorithms* continued under Elsevier with a new editorial board until October 2009, when it was discontinued.^[16] The *ACM Transactions on Algorithms* is still in circulation.

The same happened in 2005 to the *International Journal of Solids and Structures*, whose editors resigned to start the *Journal of Mechanics of Materials and Structures*. However, a new editorial board was quickly established and the journal continues in apparently unaltered form with editors D.A. Hills (Oxford University) and Stelios Kyriakides (University of Texas at Austin).^{[17][18]}

On August 10, 2006, the entire editorial board of the distinguished mathematical journal *Topology* handed in their resignation, again because of stalled negotiations with Elsevier to lower the subscription price.^[19] This board has now launched the new *Journal of Topology* at a far lower price, under the auspices of the London Mathematical Society.^[20] After this mass resignation, *Topology* remained in circulation under a new editorial board until 2009, when it appears to have been discontinued.^[21]

The French *École Normale Supérieure* has stopped having Elsevier publish the journal *Annales Scientifiques de l'École Normale Supérieure*^[22] (as of 2008).^[23]

Parent organisation links to weapons industry

An editorial in the medical journal *The Lancet* in September 2005 sharply criticized the journal's owner and publisher, Reed Elsevier, for its participation in the international arms trade.^[24] Specifically, Reed Exhibitions organized the Defence Systems and Equipment International Exhibition (DSEi), a large arms fair in the U.K. The authors, appealing to the Hippocratic oath, called for the publisher to "divest itself of all business interests that threaten human, and especially civilian, health and well-being."^[25]

In the 24 March 2007 issue of the *The Lancet*, leading medical centers including the UK Royal College of Physicians^[26] urged Reed Elsevier to sever weapons ties. Doctors spoke out against Reed's role in the involvement of the organizing of exhibitions for the arms trade.^[27] Reed Elsevier's chief executive responded in June 2007 with a written statement agreeing to do so,^[28] welcomed by authors of the petition,^[29] announcing that it would sell the part of the company which handled military trade shows. The sale was completed in May 2008.^[30]

Chaos, Solitons & Fractals

There was speculation that the editor-in-chief of *Chaos, Solitons & Fractals*, Mohamed El Naschie, misused his power to publish his work without appropriate peer review. The journal had published 322 papers with El Naschie as author since 1993. The last issue of December 2008 featured five of his papers.^[31] The controversy was covered extensively in blogs.^{[32][33]} The publisher announced in January 2009 that El Naschie had retired as editor-in-chief.^[34] As of November 2011 the co-Editors-in-Chief of the journal were Maurice Courbage and Paolo Grigolini.^[35] In June 2011 El Naschie sued the journal *Nature* for libel, claiming that his reputation had been damaged by their November 2008 article about his retirement, which included statements that *Nature* had been unable to verify his claimed affiliations with certain international institutions.^[36] The suit came to trial in November 2011 and was dismissed in July 2012, with the judge ruling that the article was "substantially true", contained "honest comment" and was "the product of responsible journalism". The judgement noted that El Naschie, who represented himself in court, had failed to provide any documentary evidence that his

papers had been peer-reviewed.^[37] Judge Victoria Sharp also found "reasonable and serious grounds" for suspecting that El Naschie used a range of false names to defend his editorial practice in communications with *Nature*, and described this behavior as "curious" and "bizarre".^[38]

Sponsored journals

At a 2009 court case in Australia where Merck & Co. was being sued by a user of Vioxx, the plaintiff alleged that Merck had paid Elsevier to publish the *Australasian Journal of Bone and Joint Medicine*, which had the appearance of being a peer-reviewed academic journal but in fact contained only articles favourable to Merck drugs.^{[39][40][41][42]} Merck has described the journal as a "complimentary publication", denied claims that articles within it were ghost written by Merck, and stated that the articles were all reprinted from peer-reviewed medical journals.^[43] In May 2009, Elsevier Health Sciences CEO Hansen released a statement regarding Australia-based sponsored journals, conceding that these were "sponsored article compilation publications, on behalf of pharmaceutical clients, that were made to look like journals and lacked the proper disclosures." The statement acknowledged that this "was an unacceptable practice."^[44] *The Scientist* reported that, according to an Elsevier spokesperson, six sponsored publications "were put out by their Australia office and bore the Excerpta Medica imprint from 2000 to 2005", namely the *Australasian Journal of Bone and Joint Medicine* (*Australas. J. Bone Joint Med.*), the *Australasian Journal of General Practice* (*Australas. J. Gen. Pract.*), the *Australasian Journal of Neurology* (*Australas. J. Neurol.*), the *Australasian Journal of Cardiology* (*Australas. J. Cardiol.*), the *Australasian Journal of Clinical Pharmacy* (*Australas. J. Clin. Pharm.*), and the *Australasian Journal of Cardiovascular Medicine* (*Australas. J. Cardiovasc. Med.*).^[45] Excerpta Medica was a "strategic medical communications agency" run by Elsevier, according to the imprint's web page.^[46] On October 7, 2010, Excerpta Medica was acquired by Adelphi Worldwide.^[47]

Shill review offer

According to the BBC "The firm [Elsevier] offered a \$25 Amazon voucher to academics who contributed to the textbook *Clinical Psychology* if they would go on Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble (a large US books retailer) and give it five stars." Elsevier said that "encouraging interested parties to post book reviews isn't outside the norm in scholarly publishing, nor is it wrong to offer to nominally compensate people for their time. But in all instances the request should be unbiased, with no incentives for a positive review, and that's where this particular e-mail went too far", and that it was a mistake by a marketing employee.^[48]

"The Cost of Knowledge" boycott

Main article: The Cost of Knowledge

In 2003 various university librarians began coordinating with each other to complain about Elsevier's "big deal" journal bundling packages, in which the company offered a group of journal subscriptions to libraries at a certain rate but in which librarians claimed that there was no economical option to subscribe to only popular journals at rate comparable to the bundled rate.^[49] Librarians continued to discuss among themselves implications of the pricing schemes and felt pressured into buying something without having other options.^[50]

On January 21, 2012, the mathematician Timothy Gowers publicly announced he would boycott Elsevier, noting that others in the field have been doing so privately. The three reasons for the boycott are high subscription prices for individual journals, bundling subscriptions to journals of different value

and importance, and Elsevier's support for SOPA, PIPA, and the Research Works Act.^{[51][52][53]}

Following this, a petition advocating non-cooperation with Elsevier (that is, not submitting papers to Elsevier journals, not to refereeing articles in Elsevier journals, and not participating in journal editorial boards), appeared on the site "The Cost of Knowledge". By February 2012 this petition was signed by over 5,000 academics.^{[51][52]} As of January 2013 it is signed by over 13,000 researchers.^[54]

Elsevier disputed the claims, arguing that their prices are below the industry average, and stating that bundling is only one of several different options available to buy access to Elsevier journals.^[51] The company also claimed that its healthy profit margins are "simply a consequence of the firm's efficient operation".^[53]

On February 27, 2012, Elsevier issued a statement on its website that declared that it has withdrawn support from the Research Works Act.^[55] Although the Cost of Knowledge movement was not mentioned, the statement indicated the hope that the move would "help create a less heated and more productive climate" for ongoing discussions with research funders. Hours after Elsevier's statement, the sponsors of the bill, Representatives Darrell Issa and Carolyn Maloney, issued a joint statement saying that they would not push the bill in Congress.^[56]

Imprints

Imprints are brand names in publishing. Elsevier uses its imprints to market to different consumer segments. Many of them have previously been the company names of publishers that were purchased by Reed Elsevier.

- Academic Press
- Baillière Tindall
- BC Decker
- Butterworth–Heinemann
- Churchill Livingstone
- Gulf Professional Publishing
- GW Medical Publishing
- Hanley & Belfus
- Morgan Kaufmann Publishers
- Mosby
- Newnes
- North-Holland
- Pergamon Press
- Saunders
- Syngress
- William Andrew

See also

- List of periodicals published by Elsevier

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External links

- Early history of Elsevier family (<http://www.uill.ac.uk/historic/elzevierlondon.shtml>)
- BBC News: Reed criticised for 'arms link' (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4227702.stm>)
- CAAT's page on Reed Elsevier (<http://www.caat.org.uk/armsfairs/reed.php>)

Official links

- Elsevier company website (<http://www.elsevier.com>)
- Reed Elsevier financial reports (<http://www.reed-elsevier.com/index.cfm?articleid=114>)
- History of the modern company (http://www.elsevier.com/framework_aboutus/pdfs/ElsevierHistory.pdf) (PDF)
- Elsevier health website (<http://www.elsevierhealth.com>)
- Elsevier science website (<http://www.elsevierdirect.com>)

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| 1880 establishments in the Netherlands | Elsevier | Bibliographic database providers
| Publishing companies of the Netherlands | Academic publishing companies
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