

Dear Peter,
Dear CoK Colleagues,

When I received your mail one week ago, I was in Budapest for a conference and I am now in Marseille. I have read the very rich mail exchange you have generated. Thank you for reactivating our CoK group and resynchronizing us. In this mail I will answer the two questions you asked us in your first mail of September 8th. Later on, I would like to discuss several points raised in the 39 mails you received until your second mail of September 12th.

Your first question :

> I am trying to ascertain to what extent the boycott of Elsevier remains in place.

1 ----- Won't publish

Since January 2012 I no more send articles to Elsevier's journals. I submit them only to journals belonging to an academic society or to a university press. Indeed, even if some might misbehave, they are nonprofit organizations that we (as members academic societies or universities) could control, in a way or another. In contrast, major commercial publishers (i.e., Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley-Blackwell) are owned and controlled, either by shareholders, or by investors, or as family businesses (e.g., Springer Nature is owned by the Holzbrinck's family) and they consider us as their cash cows, that we are...

I made one exception recently when I contributed to a special issue of 'Journal of Turbulence', in honor of a colleague and friend, which was published by Taylor&Francis, one of the worst commercial publishers. Actually, this gave me the chance to publicly denounce T&F bad practices (by showing the copyright transfer form I had to sign and the price of downloading my paper). In the same conference I gave last March in Barcelona, I also showed another copyright transfer form that I had received from Cambridge University Press, which was even more shocking (but after complaining CUP lawyers accepted to cancel 'Section B'). You can download the slides from

http://openscience.ens.fr/MARIE_FARGE/2017_CONFERENCES_ON_OPEN_ACCESS/2017_03_02_ACADEMIA_EUROPAEA_BARCELONA/2017_03_02_Knowledge_as_a_commons_Slides.pdf

I would like to suggest you to add on the CoK website (or on another one) the possibility to deposit the copyright transfer forms publishers we have received. I think it is very important to make them public, to show how publishers and their lawyers are creative to get more control on our articles. Remind that it is sufficient that one the coauthors of an article signs this form to give the publisher all intellectual property on the content of the article (text, figures, additional material deposited on the journal website ...), this for a duration of 70 years after the death of the last coauthor to die. Consequently about all scientific publications of the 20th century are not yet in the public domain !

2 ----- Won't referee

Since January 2012 I decline all demands for refereeing articles from journals published by Elsevier, or by any other commercial publisher.

Here is the formula I usually use : 'Dear Electronic Platform Robot, In 2012 'The Cost of Knowledge' (<http://thecostofknowledge.com/>) denounced the bad practices of Elsevier and called to boycott its journals. xxx's practices being similar, I also boycott xxx and therefore cannot refer this article'.

3 ----- Won't do editorial work

Since January 2012 I am on strike as member of the editorial board of ACHA (Applied and Computational Harmonic Analysis) and refuse to do any editorial work for this journal.

In 1993 I participated to the creation of ACHA with Academic Press as publisher. In 2000 ACHA was transferred to Elsevier due to the acquisition of Academic Press by Elsevier. The main change for me was that Elsevier asks the editors to use their peer-review platform EES (Elsevier Electronic System, later renamed EVISE). I refused to do so and continued to only exchange by mail with the referees I choose. Indeed, the strategy of Elsevier is to automate as much as possible the peer reviewing process. For example, editors are instrumentalized to create a database of referees by requiring they feed data to EES, from there Elsevier develops software to identify the 'best' referees (using deep learning algorithms tuned with Elsevier's criteria). Moreover, on August 30th 2016 Elsevier got the US patent N° 9,430,468 for 'Online peer review and method'...

In 2012, following the CoK call for boycotting Elsevier, several editors of ACHA signed the boycott, including Ingrid Daubechies who was one of the three editors-in-chief. We then discussed about resigning 'en masse', but decided not to do so, as long as we did not have a well-thought alternative solution for keeping the journal and all its past issues. I thus decided not to resign but to refuse any demand from Elsevier to treat a paper submitted to ACHA, which is what I mean by 'being an editor on strike'. Here is the formula I used: 'Dear Elsevier Editorial System, As long as Elsevier's managers have not yet proposed to CNRS, the institution paying my salary, a better business model for subscribing to Elsevier's journals, I cannot work for them. Indeed, according to the contract signed between CNRS and Elsevier, they have the obligation to propose a new business model before December 31st 2012. If you are not a machine and if you would like to discuss with me about this, please send me an email (with your name, address and phone number).'

Ingrid, who was president of the IMU, decided to resign in order to avoid conflict of interest and she made the case public in an interview she gave to the New York Times on February 13th 2012 (where she is mentioned as 'one of the unpaid editors in chief at the Elsevier journal Applied and Computational Harmonic Analysis', this point is very important since tax payers and politicians think editors are paid by publishers), see

http://openscience.ens.fr/ABOUT_OPEN_ACCESS/ARTICLES/2012_02_13_NY_Times.pdf

She then created a 'blog on mathematical journals' on the IMU website, where she defended the idea of 'emancipation of our journals: set our journals free!'. Her post still deserves to be read since it is still deemed relevant, see

http://openscience.ens.fr/ABOUT_OPEN_ACCESS/BLOGS/2012_10_22_Ingrid_Daubechies.pdf

Your second question :

> whether a presumably reduced boycott can have any further effect, and, if not, what should be done going forward.

Boycotting Elsevier is still very pertinent. On June 27th this year I signed the recent boycott of Elsevier launched in Finland to support the library consortium FinELib (which is presently negotiating Elsevier's contract), called : 'No deal, no review', see

<http://www.nodealnoreview.org/>

About what should be done : for me a priority is to explain to our colleagues the present major mutations of the publication system and the challenges we are facing. Unfortunately most of them are unconscious and too busy to take the time to get informed. Anyway, I am trying to do my part (as the little colibri of the amerindian legend, see http://aupetitcolibri.free.fr/NOTRE_PROJET/legende_amerindienne.html). I am giving conferences and writing papers about those issues, but the public is mostly composed of librarians (who

are perfectly informed and willing to act, without impressing the major publishers) or by young researchers (who should play the present system without trying to change it, if they want to get an academic position).

You can consult my website where you will find what I have been trying to for many years, see (starting with the most recent contributions)

http://openscience.ens.fr/MARIE_FARGE/
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I am still optimist concerning the Diamond Open Access model, we have designed together (following a CoK discussion launched by Ingrid in March 2012) and the platform <http://dissim.in> that ex-students in computer sciences from ENS and myself are developing, see

http://openscience.ens.fr/MARIE_FARGE/2017_CONFERENCES_ON_OPEN_ACCESS/2017_03_02_ACADEMIA_EUROPAEA_BARCELONA/2017_03_02_Knowledge_as_a_commons_Slides.pdf

All the best,

Marie