



For Immediate Release
Wednesday, May 20, 2015

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NEW POLICY FROM ELSEVIER IMPEDES OPEN ACCESS AND SHARING

Global coalition of organizations denounce the policy and urge Elsevier to revise it

Washington, DC and Göttingen, Germany – Elsevier’s new sharing and hosting [policy](#) represents a significant obstacle to the dissemination and use of research knowledge, and creates unnecessary barriers for Elsevier published authors in complying with funders’ open access policies, according to an analysis by the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and the Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR).

“Elsevier’s policy is in direct conflict with the global trend towards open access and serves only to dilute the benefits of openly sharing research results,” said Heather Joseph, Executive Director of SPARC and Kathleen Shearer, Executive Director of COAR, in a joint statement. “Elsevier claims that the policy advances sharing but in fact, it does the opposite. We strongly urge Elsevier to revise it.”

The new stance marks a significant departure from Elsevier’s initial policy, established in 2004, which allowed authors to self-archive their final accepted manuscripts of peer-reviewed articles in institutional repositories without delay. While the stated purpose of the new revision is, in part, to roll back an ill-conceived 2012 amendment prohibiting authors at institutions that have adopted campus-wide Open Access policies from immediate self archiving, the net result of the new policy is that Elsevier has placed greater restrictions on sharing articles.

Twenty-three groups today released the following statement in opposition to the policy:

“On April 30, 2015, Elsevier announced a new sharing and hosting policy for Elsevier journal articles. This policy represents a significant obstacle to the dissemination and use of research knowledge, and creates unnecessary barriers for Elsevier published authors in complying with funders’ open access policies. In addition, the policy has been adopted without any evidence that immediate sharing of articles has a negative impact on publishers’ subscriptions.



“Despite the claim by Elsevier that the policy advances sharing, it actually does the opposite. The policy imposes unacceptably long embargo periods of up to 48 months for some journals. It also requires authors to apply a "non-commercial and no derivative works" license for each article deposited into a repository, greatly inhibiting the re-use value of these articles. Any delay in the open availability of research articles curtails scientific progress and places unnecessary constraints on delivering the benefits of research back to the public.

“Furthermore, the policy applies to "all articles previously published and those published in the future" making it even more punitive for both authors and institutions. This may also lead to articles that are currently available being suddenly embargoed and inaccessible to readers.

“As organizations committed to the principle that access to information advances discovery, accelerates innovation and improves education, we support the adoption of policies and practices that enable the immediate, barrier free access to and reuse of scholarly articles. This policy is in direct conflict with the global trend towards open access and serves only to dilute the benefits of openly sharing research results.

“We strongly urge Elsevier to reconsider this policy and we encourage other organizations and individuals to express their opinions.” The statement is available [here](#) and we welcome others to show their support by also endorsing it.

The statement has been signed by the following groups:

COAR: Confederation of Open Access Repositories
SPARC: Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition
ACRL: Association of College and Research Libraries
ALA: American Library Association
ARL: Association of Research Libraries
Association of Southeastern Research Libraries
Australian Open Access Support Group
IBICT: Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology
CARL: Canadian Association of Research Libraries
CLACSO: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales
COAPI: Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions
Creative Commons
Creative Commons (USA)
EIFL
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Greater Western Library Alliance
LIBER: European Research Library Association



National Science Library, Chinese Academy of Sciences
OpenAIRE
Open Data Hong Kong
Research Libraries UK
SANLiC: South African National Licensing Consortium
University of St Andrews Library

SPARC®, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, is an international alliance of academic and research libraries working to correct imbalances in the scholarly publishing system. Developed by the Association of Research Libraries, SPARC has become a catalyst for change. Its pragmatic focus is to stimulate the emergence of new scholarly communication models that expand the dissemination of scholarly research and reduce financial pressures on libraries. More information can be found at <http://www.sparc.arl.org>.

COAR, the Confederation of Open Access Repositories, is an international association with over 100 members and partners from five continents representing universities, research institutions, government research funders, and others. COAR's mission is to enhance the visibility and application of research outputs through a global network of Open Access digital repositories. COAR brings together the major repository initiatives in order to align policies and practices and acts as a global voice for the repository community.