



ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES®

September 10, 2015

Youngsuk Chi
Chairman
Elsevier

Dear Mr. Chi,

We, the undersigned, representing some 204,144 faculty and more than 3.6 million students, are writing to convey to you our significant concerns regarding Elsevier's updated sharing and hosting policy. The updated Elsevier article sharing policy imposes excessive restrictions on authors and institutions, employs embargo periods that are counter to the requirements established by the federal government, and, more fundamentally, impedes the sharing of information by scholars that is so fundamental to the research process.

Access to research publications is an essential component of teaching, research and learning. Elsevier's policy places strict requirements on authors and institutions as to when and where an accepted manuscript may be publicly available. The policy requires the author to employ the most restrictive Creative Commons license, prohibiting full reuse or commercial use. This restrictive license impedes collaboration among researchers and scholars. Collaboration is further restricted by embargoes ranging from 12 to 48 months on final, peer-reviewed accepted manuscripts.

Extended embargo periods will lead to confusion and conflicts as well, since they are in direct conflict with mandates in the U.S. and Canada for deposit of the results of funded research. Many U.S. federal agencies and all three Canadian funding agencies are implementing public access plans and policies; at this time, all plans have at most a 12-month embargo. In Europe, the embargo periods are coalescing on six months. Elsevier's intention to enforce embargoes up to 48 months could place the grantee into direct conflict between funder and publisher. This threatens compliance and eligibility for future grant awards.

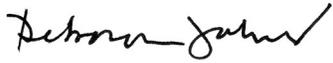
On its website, Elsevier states that its mission is to create "solutions that enable our customers to leverage the vast potential of information to advance science, health and technology." We believe the new policy conflicts with this stated mission. We urge Elsevier to consider the negative impact that this policy will have on researchers and scholars who wish to utilize all tools to the greatest advantage in the conduct of their research in order to advance scientific discovery.

We hope that this letter serves as an opportunity for engagement and dialogue with the scholarly community, including libraries. A revised policy must enable immediate open access to accepted manuscripts in open repositories. The policy should allow authors to determine the type of license appropriate to the work and one that permits collaboration and reuse. Finally, a revised policy should comply with the embargo periods required by U.S. and Canadian grant funding agencies for deposit of published research.

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On behalf of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Jakubs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Deborah Jakubs, Ph.D.
President, Association of Research Libraries

Rita DiGiallorardo Holloway University Librarian
Vice Provost for Library Affairs
Duke University

CC: Alicia Wise