

*Responding to the Challenges Facing Scholarly Communication*  
Overview (December 22, 2005)

During University of California negotiations with publishers of scholarly works in 2004, it became clear to UC faculty that the current models of scholarly communication had become unsustainable. UC Librarians and budget officers had seen this crisis approaching for some years. But long as library budgets could be managed and access to the most critical work could be maintained, faculty members were largely insulated from the growing crisis. When it became clear, in the face of falling university budgets and rising costs of publications, that the UC community's access to new knowledge would progressively be limited, and that the access by others to UC-produced scholarship would similarly be limited, the Academic Council (effectively the Executive Committee of the UC Academic Senate) established a Special Committee on Scholarly Communication (SCSC) to consider what role the faculty should take in addressing these important issues. The accompanying five short papers and appendices are the result of SCSC's work. The papers define and explain the faculty's view of changes that could improve dissemination of scholarly work to enhance the discovery and communication of new knowledge, and best serve the public interest.

The current model for many publications is that faculty write articles and books, referee them, edit them and then give them to a publisher with the assignment of copyright. The publisher then sells them back to the faculty and their universities, particularly to university research libraries. While there clearly are costs of publication, a number of publishers (particularly, but not always, for-profit corporations) earn munificent profits for their shareholders and owners. However, maximizing profits for these latter groups may work to the detriment of faculty, educational institutions and the public.

Meanwhile, opportunities to reduce production and distribution costs and to create innovative forms of publication and dissemination are increasingly manifest, and enabled by networked digital technologies, new business models, and new partnerships.

The papers explore this simultaneous challenge and opportunity from five starting points:

- One discusses copyright issues, and recommends that faculty authors adopt the practice of granting to publishers non-exclusive copyright of their research results, while retaining copyright for other educational purposes, including placing work in open access online repositories.
- Two consider recommended best practices, from a faculty viewpoint, for journal and book publishers respectively.
- One considers the role of scholarly societies in publishing, and recommends changes in some societies so that they may better support development and dissemination of scholarly work in their discipline, and at more economical cost.
- The final paper recognizes that technology has made and will continue to make available new methods of publishing and presenting new knowledge.

The University of California faculty recognizes that these changes must be carefully reviewed to ensure that the quality of presentation of scholarly research remains as high as or higher than in the past, principally by continued application of the well-established and tested process of peer-review. We feel that faculty, University administration, publishers and societies can work collaboratively not only to improve and sustain dissemination of scholarship, but can materially improve it using new technology.

It is the Academic Senate's intention to work actively with the University of California Administration to press for and enact the changes outlined in these papers, and to encourage their wide adoption throughout the world, both by other faculties and universities, and by the publishers of our scholarly work.