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Response to David S. Lindsay Regarding “Self-archiving of publications from the *Journal of Parasitology*”

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When I saw the title of President Lindsay’s editorial in the last *ASP Newsletter*, I was interested to read his thoughts. As an administrator of the institutional repository (IR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, assisting authors with self-archiving of their papers is my stock-in-trade. I understand that there are many approaches to self-archiving policies, and I knew that the *Journal of Parasitology*’s policy had recently changed.

Working with *JP* previously was a real pleasure. It had an open policy, allowing authors to retain the right to upload the published version of an article into an author’s IR or on his or her personal Web page. This, my colleagues and I felt, was as it should be. The author’s intellectual output as published in a journal is *his or her* stock-in-trade. It is the product of months—and sometimes years—of planning, investigation, labor, and writing (also known as blood, sweat and, occasionally, tears). The least an author should be able to do, one would think, is to post the paper in the university repository or on his own lab page online. Beyond the sweat-of-the-brow consideration, it seemed a reasonable policy in that readers were able to access the so-called canonical version of an article (not just an author’s version, galley proof, or manuscript version), that is, the one that would be cited in subsequent papers.

Professor Lindsay explains in his editorial that he spoke with a representative at Allen Press about why freely self-archiving *JP* papers is no longer allowed, not even in IRs or on personal Web pages. He said that, “Full versions of *The Journal of Parasitology* articles, including Open Access articles, may not be reposted on any website, including institutional repositories or authors’ personal websites. However, we welcome links to the article on www.journalofparasitology.org.” Professor Lindsay reports that the Allen Press representative stated that, “There is no time limit after which you can self-archive on these [s]ites. The [half-]life of the *Journal of Parasitology* is greater than ten years and the papers retain their value making it difficult to determine how long a prohibition should be.” There is a further claim that self-archiving adversely affects the financial status of the journal and, therefore, the Society.

I will say that, in my eight years working with the repository, this is far and away the *most restrictive* policy I have ever encountered. Even Elsevier has a much more open policy than this. For one thing, if you cannot even post so-called “Open Access” articles from *JP* on a personal Web page, what makes that “Open Access” in any sense? At the very least, paying for open access should ensure that the published version of the article—the one you, as an author, cite when you write later papers—can be posted wherever you, as the author, see fit.

I note that Professor Lindsay's source of information for this piece was a representative of the *for-profit* company, Allen Press. Before Allen Press instituted this extremely restrictive permissions policy, the Society had been the copyright holder of the *Journal of Parasitology* for upwards of 100 years. The ASP is a society that has thrived without corporate intervention for as long, or longer, than most societies in existence today. Academic societies exist to further their fields of study and to facilitate scientific advancement, which is predicated on robust, dynamic, and authoritative written communication. Putting that writing behind a very restrictive paywall for readers, on one side, and demanding payment from authors, on the other side, does nothing to further this time-tested manner of communicating with one's peers, students, and the lay public. Delicately, I suggest that it does ensure the profitability of Allen Press.

Publishers used to serve in the function of printers. They administered basic editorial functions like copyediting, graphics lay out, typesetting, printing, and distribution. In the current technological environment, publishers see that desktop-style publishing is a powerful tool that diminishes their usefulness. An author can now easily create his or her own high-quality graphics, and can write with the assistance of grammar and spell checkers. Printing and distribution are often digital, and have become possible without the aid of a printing company. What are publishers to do to stay in business? They tell you that you must give away your copyrights, pay them a lot of money, and then they do for you what you have the expertise to do yourself. That is a fine trick and, from my view as an observer, Allen Press has done this very thing.

The Allen Press representative claimed that, "It is not the policy of Allen Press to allow self-archiving on these [s]ites [such as ResearchGate] because this practice adversely affects the financial status of the *Journal* and therefore the Society." How does posting on these sites adversely affect the financial status of the *Journal* and "therefore the Society," exactly, and to what extent? The non-systematic posting of single, random articles from a journal on scattered sharing sites is surely not a true threat to the financial health of the Society. Journal publishing is changing and can be done well very cost-effectively. Clinging to the high-cost aspects of an old model of publishing in itself may be fiscally risky.

One might feel: The ASP has worked with Allen Press for a long time; doesn't the Society "owe" them its business? As a learned society, the ASP exists to support the field of parasitology, to facilitate mentoring and training, and to give an outlet for graphic and written products of research. The ASP owes its members financially-sustainable operations. If a long-time partner changes its practices, the Society needs to evaluate objectively if those changes are in line with the mission of the group. It seems evident that the needs of the partners cannot lead decisions.

One might claim: The Society is getting more money now than ever before due to this arrangement with Allen Press. This may well be so, but at what cost? Relying on article processing charges to ensure the financial health of the society seems to me like a structured investment.

Why tie proceeds to publication and go through a middle entity? Tying the financial health of a society to professors' mandatory job duties is problematic. At its worst, it is coercive and it is open to rife corruption of the process. In addition, pay-to-play publishing is exclusionary. Professor A can pay, Professor B cannot. Whose work do we see? Is Professor A's work more valuable to us because he can pay to have his work published?

The Society's contract with Allen Press will expire at some point and, in the interim, there is an opportunity renegotiate with them thoughtfully, or to look for a better outlet for the time-honored *Journal of Parasitology*. There are many publishing ventures arising from universities themselves, in libraries and academic departments, on viable and stable electronic platforms, that require very little overhead to administer. If even a fraction of the current article processing charges were pooled, the *Journal* could continue to be published not-for-profit, with the option to again allow authors to retain all rights to share work freely. See examples from the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Duke University School of Law as three excellent beacons.

<http://www.library.pitt.edu/e-journals>

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