

# Editorial

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## COPYRIGHT AND THE WEB

All publication today is facing the dilemma of copyright, quality of material, and the World Wide Web. This journal is facing the same issues. We are now publishing the complete current issues on our website. This will change in the near future to PIN coded access to the latest issues. The journal is also getting an increasing number of papers which have already appeared on web sites for publication in the journal. Some journals prohibit publication of material accepted on web sites other than their own as part of the copyright agreement. This is partially stemming from a need to retain exclusivity of the material. Then why do authors and students still want hard copy publications? One reason is that only refereed publications are being filtered into hardcopy publication. If the copyright at present held by the journal is going to revert to the authors, additional dissemination of the publication is facilitated, but the stamp of refereed approval can only be given to those that are accepted by a scholarly journal. A proposal presented to the US government by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences demands the retention of copyright by the authors, giving a limited license to journals to publish their papers, while the authors could publish them on the web. Moreover, authors could then grant permission to reprint the papers rather than the journals. This does create a problem of incentive for journals to publish papers at all. In particular this would create a loss of a source of revenue and control of commercial use of their database. It is argued by the large publishers such as Elsevier that authors holding copyrights would create a bottleneck in the free flow of information, as authors may also want to exploit their publications commercially by charging access to their publications in direct competition with journals. Vice versa, publications which charge access to their sites may face the competition of free access through authors to their own publications on their personal web pages. But the journal will still remain as the refereed source and hold a more comprehensive database than any single author can provide.

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