

# Editorial

---

A significant development in journal publishing has been the massive consolidation of commercial publishing into fewer and fewer companies—for example, Reed-Elsevier owns Pergamon, Wolters Kluwer owns Lippincott-Raven, and International Thomson owns the Philadelphia-based Institute for Scientific Information (ISI). Journal pricing is primarily controlled by circulation. Libraries feel that they are a captive audience, and that they are obliged to pay the price the publishers ask for the journals that library patrons demand. As library budgets stagnate, libraries cancel subscriptions and rely on interlibrary loan services. These services are as a rule not paid for to publishers. This reduces the number of active subscriptions. Publishers see their subscriber numbers fall, and to maintain their revenues, they raise the subscription prices.

Alternative publishing systems have been introduced. Essentially, these ‘open access’ papers are free electronic journals with universal access. This still needs managing, reviewing, setting into standard format, archiving and a reliable website management. It does not come free, the costs here too need to be covered. Payment is steered to the authors who have to come up with grant, department, or personal funding.

IJEE operates in a mixed modus of reasonable subscription prices coupled with modest publication charges. The vast number of submitted papers has resulted in a larger size of the journal now reaching 1100 pages a year—compared with only 500 four years ago.

At the moment it seems unlikely that the established historically viable publishing will be easily superceded. But we at IJEE watch developments and will try to keep in the forefront of publishing. One such development is our interactive papers on the web, which are gaining in recognition and popularity with authors.

This issue contains a special section on Spreadsheet Applications in Engineering Education. The guest editors collaborated internationally, Chung Yau Lam based in Singapore and Karim Kabalan in Beirut. 14 papers were chosen from 34 submissions covering a wide spectrum of engineering disciplines. My sincere thanks are due to our guest editors who selected and prepared the papers for publication.

Michael Wald