

INFORMATION ON ELECTRONIC BACKFILES, ACCESS AND ARCHIVING FROM ELSEVIER SCIENCE

DIGITAL ARCHIVING A Policy Summary

Elsevier Science has been a leader in digital archiving of electronic journals. We were among the first to make a commitment to the preservation of digital files and to working with librarians and authors to ensure their satisfaction with our policies and procedures. We have been in intensive discussions regionally and internationally for many years and are currently developing archival partnerships. We understand the importance of this issue to librarians and scientists, particularly as more libraries go "electronic only" and the certainty of redundant paper copies is reduced.

POLICY

In 1999 a formal archiving policy was added to the licenses for ScienceDirect. This policy, as modified in 2001, states that Elsevier Science will:

- maintain the digital archive of the journals it owns and distributes on ScienceDirect
- convert the files as the technology of store or access changes
- transfer the archive to depositories mutually acceptable to Elsevier Science and library advisors in the event we can no longer maintain the archive

The policy also acknowledges that there may be limitations to our ability to offer access to titles to which we lose publication rights (through non-renewal of contracts or sale). Normally, in such cases we will either retain non-exclusive distribution rights or make copies available to customers for local use.

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BACKFILES AND ARCHIVES FAQs

A COMMITMENT TO KNOWLEDGE PRESERVATION

Elsevier Science recently launched two projects to ensure that the scientific research community will have ongoing and functional access to the electronic versions of our journal articles. One, our *electronic backfiles program*, is a fee-based service, available now through ScienceDirect® and for local loading by our ScienceDirect OnSite customers. This program enables researchers to access backfiles of Elsevier Science journals electronically, in some cases as far back as the journal's first volume. The other is our *electronic archive initiative*. This is an ongoing project, which we are undertaking with leading libraries and organizations involved in preservation, to ensure that our electronic publications will be accessible to the scholarly research community in perpetuity.

Following are answers to common questions about our backfiles program and our archive initiative.

BACKFILES

How are the backfiles accessed? FOR SCIENCEDIRECT

The journal backfiles are maintained by and accessed through ScienceDirect®, the leading Web information source for scientific, technical and medical research. ScienceDirect subscribers have direct access to over 1,200 Elsevier Science journals, and they can navigate directly via links to over 10,000 STM journals by other publishers worldwide.

FOR SCIENCEDIRECT ONSITE

Journal backfiles are available for local loading in the standard SDOS format, offering complete integrated access for all of your institution's users.

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DIGITAL ARCHIVING

A Policy Summary (continued from page 1)

Access to the archive is a right of ScienceDirect customers for those years to which they have subscribed to the electronic format. If a library ceases to be a ScienceDirect customer, they can acquire a copy of the files for the years to which they subscribed.

PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

Although our formal policy does not require that we deposit our files with third parties, we believe it would be in everyone's interest to have copies of the Elsevier Science electronic journal files at a number of distributed locations. With this in mind, we are pursuing several approaches, as described below.

First, we have ScienceDirect On Site customers who already have our electronic journal files for local use. Approximately a dozen customers internationally receive one copy of every Elsevier journal available through this program. They are de facto archives in the event of disaster and, in some cases, there may be a more formal commitment to serving a regional or national community, should the need arise.

Second, Elsevier Science is working with Yale University Library under a grant from the Mellon Foundation to investigate what it means to be an official archive and how that archival relationship can best be realized. A team is working vigorously in 2001 to develop a detailed understanding and plan for such an official archival relationship. Once this relationship is defined, it is presently expected that 2-3 official archives will be established internationally. These archives would involve a detailed formal commitment between the publisher and the archive and would be intended to serve the requirements of both libraries and scientists.

Third, we are also talking with a number of libraries around the world that have expressed an interest in serving as an archive for a specific region or community of interest. These libraries are differentiated from "official" archives in being self-designated and our relationship with them would be less formal, with different terms and conditions of use.

Finally, Elsevier Science is exploring the archiving needs and concerns of specific academic disciplines (e.g., biomedicine, physics, chemistry). Scientists have different requirements for access to and searching of the digital literature, depending on what information is most critical to their research. It is essential that an understanding of these needs be incorporated into the thinking on digital archiving.

IN SUMMARY

Digital archiving is a complicated problem. Elsevier Science has been participating in archiving discussions at a senior management level and intends to continue to take a lead in this area. There are no easy answers or fool-proof solutions. But it is essential to be part of the process and to assure library customers, authors and scientists that the scientific literature will not be lost simply because of a change in media. ■

BACKFILES AND ARCHIVES

FAQs (continued from page 1)

Who can search the backfile collections?

All ScienceDirect subscribers have free access to abstracts in a backfiles collection as it becomes available online. Full-text access to the backfiles is available under separate license for current ScienceDirect and ScienceDirect OnSite subscribers.

What is the pricing structure for the backfile collections?

Access to each backfiles subject cluster will be licensed with a one-time payment, rather than an annually recurring license fee. When the one-time fee is paid, users will have unlimited access to search, browse and download articles in the selected subject field. Customers having once paid for the files will continue to benefit from future version upgrades as long as they remain ScienceDirect subscribers. The cost of the backfiles collections varies; please consult your Elsevier Science representative for details.

When will the backfile collections become available?

Elsevier Science will build its electronic backfile collection by

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first concentrating on those disciplines for which archival literature remains the most relevant to contemporary research and analysis. Full-text access will be made available in clusters, each covering a particular subject field. Electronic backfiles of chemistry, mathematics and economics titles will be among the first to be provided.

What is available now?

Organic chemistry is the first subject area to be completed. This initial package includes eight organic chemistry journals, among the most frequently used and prestigious titles in the ScienceDirect database. (*Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry; Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters; Carbohydrate Research; Journal of Fluorine Chemistry; Phytochemistry; Tetrahedron; Tetrahedron Letters and Tetrahedron: Asymmetry.*) The collection provides electronic access to over half a million pages, extending back to Volume 1, Number 1 for titles in this field. The longest-published journal, *Tetrahedron*, dates from 1957.

What are the next titles to become available?

Inorganic chemistry, chemical engineering and the remaining chemistry titles will be available in the second half of 2001.

In what format will the backfile articles be available?

Text will be viewable in PDF format. We are calling the backfiles collection "live" files because all article titles, abstracts and references will be available in HTML, enabling researchers to use ScienceDirect's advanced searching capabilities to find relevant backfile articles. Elsevier Science, in committing to offer retrospective backfiles of our entire journals list, has attempted to build as much functionality as possible into the backfiles collections.

Will the backfiles collections be accessible through CrossRef™?

All the articles in the backfiles collections will be registered with CrossRef and will be "live" files. As such, researchers will be able to link to the abstract or full text of the referenced article, depending on what is electronically available.

Are there limits to how the backfile documents may be accessed and distributed?

The same license terms that apply to current ScienceDirect documents apply to the backfiles.

ARCHIVAL ACCESS ON SCIEDIRECT

Will I still have access to historical copies of journals that I have subscribed to in the past if I cancel those subscriptions in the future?

Yes. This is one of the purposes of our archiving initiative. We recognize the importance to our customers of having permanent access to the journal collections for which they have paid.

Will there be an additional or ongoing charge for accessing the archives of journals to which we no longer subscribe?

As long as an institution subscribes to ScienceDirect, Elsevier Science will continue to allow access to titles for those years for which an institution has paid.

And what if I cancel my ScienceDirect subscription entirely?

If an institution ceases its ScienceDirect access entirely, Elsevier Science will provide an electronic file containing the journal editions for those years that have been subscribed; this file may be loaded onto a local server. There will be a nominal charge for downloading the files.

Where will the electronic archives reside?

The primary storage and access platform for the archives will be ScienceDirect. Also, redundancy provisions are in place to ensure maximum protection in the event of a disaster.

How long will the electronic archives be maintained?

It is the intent of Elsevier Science to maintain the electronically archived copies of its journals forever.

How will Elsevier Science ensure that the electronic archives will always be available and accessible?

As the technology for document storage, display and access changes, the archives will be modified accordingly. In addition, we maintain a backup archive system separate from the ScienceDirect platform to ensure the ability to recreate the files in the event of a disaster. We are also in active discussions with a number of university libraries, national libraries and preservation organizations to explore other alternatives to ensure permanence.

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BACKFILES AND ARCHIVES

FAQs (continued from page 3)

What if Elsevier Science itself ceases to operate?

The company has established a commitment that, in the unlikely event it should be unable to meet its archival responsibilities, the electronic archive will be turned over to one or more depositories selected jointly by the publisher and an independent board of library advisors. In addition, the company is in active discussions with librarians and other parties about additional ways to achieve the level of assurance that librarians need with respect to long-term access to electronic journals.

What's behind Elsevier Science's commitment to permanent archiving?

At Elsevier Science, we understand that the permanent archiving of electronic information, and assured access to those archives, are critically important to our customers and the entire scientific community. As the world's leading publisher of scientific, technical and medical journals, we have a unique role in – and a special responsibility for – preserving knowledge and facilitating scholarly communication. ■

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