

# What Are the Models for Licensing, Pricing, and Contracting for Print and Online Subscriptions?

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Jennifer Bol opened the session with an overview of major issues in the pricing of electronic subscriptions. Dean Smith then spoke about pricing models developed and implemented by the American Chemical Society (ACS) for its publications.

The trend in electronic subscriptions is to retain print as part of a bundled print and electronic subscription. The issue of archiving currently drives retention of print: If a library cancels a print subscription, it retains back-issues; however, if a library cancels an electronic subscription, will it have access to previous years' contents?

Institutions usually want to offer the widest possible distribution of a journal. However, libraries' subscriptions often are limited by budget. Thus, even if a bundled subscription falls within a generally acceptable price for addition of electronic access to print (that is, 15% to 20% above the price of print alone), libraries do not want to be required to buy both print and electronic (instead of print alone), because bundled subscriptions increase the overall price of a journal. (For information on licensing institutional access to electronic content, see the Liblicense site, <http://www.library.yale.edu/~llicense/>

[index.shtml](#).)

Individual subscriptions are important for society publications that serve memberships. Individual electronic subscriptions potentially can drive growth in an association's international membership, especially if arrival of each print issue is delayed by weeks-long overseas shipping.

Single-article purchase is offered uncommonly, in part because it is unclear how many single articles a person might

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buy instead of subscribing. Also, single-article offers have implications for "less used" research articles, which are valuable but economically disadvantageous as stand-alone articles.

Subscription packages group titles within a discipline. A package of titles might be offered at a discounted rate to encourage subscriptions to "marginal" journals.

Finally, apart from traditional publishing, electronic exchange of information occurs among scientists. For example, the Los Alamos Archives Server functions as an alert service through which (non-peer-reviewed) research in physics and related disciplines can be submitted and retrieved at no cost.

Dean Smith described how ACS is reinventing its science journals specifically for the electronic medium rather than offering replicas of printed pages. Articles go on line as soon as possible, before print editions come out, and are offered in hypertext markup language (HTML) for interactive viewing and portable document format

(PDF) for printing. Content is expanded with animation. Links are created to cited articles, outside databases, and so on. Subscriptions include access to electronically archived articles, and search tools allow easy location of specific articles.

ACS initially offered a price option with high flexibility: Institutions could buy electronic access with or without print and buy only titles that were needed; price depended on access, ranging from 105% of print price for electronic access for a single department to 190% of print price for electronic and print access for the entire institution.

Feedback from librarians indicated a desire to keep print and a perception that addition of electronic access was too expensive. Librarians also wanted a license without site restrictions and with provision for interlibrary loan. In response, ACS now offers an organization-wide electronic license that adds 25% to the base print price for libraries that promise to keep all current print subscriptions for the year (1998). In addition, at an additional cost to their subscriptions of 25%, an institution participating in a consortium is offered electronic access to all journals subscribed to by any member of the consortium. "Authorized sites" include all buildings of an institution, and a user can be anyone physically at a library terminal. Noncommercial libraries can print copies to support research (but not to fill requests by commercial customers) in accordance with customary guidelines for interlibrary loan.

ACS now is addressing next-level concerns of librarians: archiving, ownership (versus license for use), and standardized contracts. ■