

SPARC

IGNITING CHANGE IN SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Introducing SPARC

What is SPARC?

SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition) is an international alliance of libraries igniting change in scholarly communication.

It was founded to address serious problems caused by the soaring cost of scientific, technical, and medical journals and to unleash the potential of the digital networked environment for enhancing the scholarly communication process.

SPARC pursues its objectives via a two-pronged strategy:

- **Public advocacy** of fundamental changes in the system and the culture of scholarly communication.
- **Incubation of alternative channels** of scholarly communication.

A Catalyst for Change

SPARC is an effective and visible advocate for cultural changes in scholarly publishing that benefit the academic community.

The **Create Change** program (developed by SPARC, ARL and ACRL) and the **Declaring Independence** initiative (created by SPARC with support from the Triangle Research Libraries Network) give librarians and researchers tools to educate and serve as activists within their communities.

SPARC also encourages and supports a variety of related initiatives aimed at expanding access to scholarship, such as the **Budapest Open Access Initiative** (in which SPARC played a developmental role)

and the **Open Archives Initiative**.

Exploring New Models

SPARC is a leading proponent of open or economical access to the peer-reviewed literature that scholars have traditionally given to the world without expectation of payment.

It is working with universities and libraries to demonstrate and enhance awareness of new institutional roles in information dissemination, such as:

- hosting **institution-based repositories** of articles;

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

SPARC aims to harness the creative energy and grassroots potential of libraries with a stake in scholarly communication. A key to its success is the commitment of members to support SPARC-partnered publishing projects and implement local advocacy programs.

Membership in SPARC is open to the broad academic and research library community worldwide. Today nearly 250 libraries belong to SPARC, including the members of **SPARC Europe** (www.sparceurope.org), a regional affiliate governed by a European membership and operating in collaboration with SPARC headquarters staff in Washington, DC.

- providing **infrastructure support for scholar-led innovations** in scholarly communication;
- development of new **collaborative digital publishing** enterprises and models.

It does this through sharing of information and expertise, such as with its influential position paper, **The Case for Institutional Repositories**, and with **Gaining Independence**, a practical guide to planning non-profit electronic publishing ventures.

SPARC also offers the fee-based services of the **SPARC Consulting Group**, which applies specialized expertise to business and project planning.

Publisher Partnerships

SPARC constructively influences the journals marketplace by encouraging publishers to compete where prices are too high and competition is needed.

To date SPARC has focused on scientific, technical and medical (STM) fields, where the economic benefits to libraries are greatest. However, several new projects are under development in the social sciences and humanities.

SPARC partners with community-based ventures that fall into one of three categories:



SPARC Alternatives: Supports lower-cost, directly competitive alternatives to high-priced journals in important fields. Examples include:

- American Chemical Society: *Organic Letters; Crystal Growth & Design*

- Cambridge University Press: *Theory & Practice of Logic Programming*
- *Evolutionary Ecology Research*
- IEEE: *Sensors Journal*
- Opulus Press: *Journal of Vegetation Science*
- MIT Press: *Journal of Machine Learning Research*
- Royal Society of Chemistry: *PhysChemComm; Geochemical Transactions*
- University of Warwick: *Algebraic & Geometric Topology; Geometry & Topology*

Current program focus is on supporting efforts of editorial boards that have withdrawn from existing high-priced journals to introduce a reasonably priced or open-access alternative.



SPARC Leading Edge:

Supports ventures that demonstrate innovative and beneficial business models. Priority in selection of new partners in this category is on alternatives to institutional subscription revenue as a means of supporting publication costs. Current Leading Edge partners are:

- BioMed Central
- *Documenta Mathematica*
- Institute of Physics & German Physical Society: *New Journal of Physics*
- *Internet Journal of Chemistry*
- University of Arizona: *Journal of Insect Science*



SPARC Scientific

Communities: Supports development of non-profit portals that serve the needs of a discrete scientific community by aggregating peer-reviewed

research and other content. Examples are:

- *BioOne*
- *Columbia Earthscape*
- California Digital Library: *eScholarship*
- *MIT CogNet*
- Cornell University Libraries: *Project Euclid*

Links to all SPARC's current publishing partners can be found on SPARC's web site.

Partnering for Success

Through these partnerships, SPARC reduces publisher-partners' market entry risk while providing scholars with prestigious and responsive alternatives to current publishing vehicles.

SPARC helps its partners enter the market at lower cost by:

- **quickly delivering a core subscription base** and readership through the "purchase commitment" of SPARC members—giving new journals time to build a pipeline of authors and establish prestige;
- **generating support for SPARC projects** through its broad public communications and marketing programs;
- **offering advisory services** that help ensure an attractive and sustainable market offering.

Who Benefits?

SPARC stimulates creation of better, faster, and more economical systems for distributing new knowledge, benefiting:

- **Libraries.** By focusing public attention on the price of journals and offer-

ing the market alternatives, SPARC fosters the kind of competition that will bring high journal prices back to earth or facilitate broad adoption of open-access business models.

- **Scholars.** SPARC encourages development of high-quality, rapid delivery channels for research, which will drive expanded access, greater impact, and innovative application.
- **Publisher-partners.** Working with a variety of publishers whose business goals are compatible with library needs, SPARC supports development of vibrant and economically viable new models of communication.
- **Society.** Research conducted by faculty at universities—often with the aid of government funds—propels key ad-

vancements benefiting the economy; SPARC facilitates improved communication of this research.

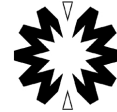
Organized for Action

By intention, relatively little of SPARC's energy is devoted to governance matters in order to assure its agility. It is managed on a day-to-day basis by a small professional staff, and guided by a Steering Committee of the following individuals:

- James Neal, Chair
Columbia University
- Cynthia Archer
York University (Canada)
- Karyle Butcher
Oregon State University
- Ray English
Oberlin College Library
- Ken Frazier
University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Sarah Michalak
University of Utah

- Bas Savenije
University of Utrecht (The Netherlands)

SPARC operates under the administrative umbrella and tax status of the Association of Research Libraries. SPARC Europe is sponsored by LIBER (Association of European Research Libraries/Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche).



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SPARC, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, is an initiative of the Association of Research Libraries.

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Join SPARC and help ignite change in scholarly communication!

For membership information, phone Kerri Allen at 202-296-2296 x121
or see the SPARC web site: www.arl.org/sparc/core/index.asp?page=b0