

知识的代价

The cost of knowledge

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Terence Tao is a Professor of mathematics at UCLA. He has won numerous honors and awards. In 2007 he was elected as a Fellow of the

Royal Society. In 2006, he received the Fields Medal for his research in number theory.

几天前，受到蒂莫西·高尔斯（Tim Gowers）最近一篇博文的启发，一个叫作“知识的代价”的网站（<http://thecostofknowledge.com/>）诞生了，它提供了一个窗口，数学家们和其他学术界人士可以公开抗议学术出版公司爱思唯尔（Elsevier）的运作方式，特别是它极高的期刊定价，它的“捆绑式销售”政策——强迫图书馆为了少数高质量杂志而不得不同时订购大量没用的劣质杂志，以及它对近年来互联网开放阅读所采取的反对立场——支持诸如“停止网络盗版议案”（SOPA）和“科研成果议案”（RWA）的游说活动清楚地表明了它的立场。（这些活动是有案可查的；比如回应高尔斯的呼吁博文的这个维基网站就搜集了几个这方面的链接。一些其他商业出版公司也有类似的举动，但一般没有爱思唯尔走得那么远，这也是为什么它成为众矢之的原因。）在前述的那个抗议网站，我们可以公开宣布不向爱思唯尔的期刊投稿，拒绝成为其刊物的审稿人或编委。

（过去曾有几个爱思唯尔所属期刊编委会由于定价分歧

A few days ago, inspired by this recent post of Tim Gowers, a web page entitled "the cost of knowledge" has been set up as a location for mathematicians and other academics to declare a protest against the academic publishing practices of Reed Elsevier, in particular with regard to their exceptionally high journal prices, their policy of "bundling" journals together so that libraries are forced to purchase subscriptions to large numbers of low-quality journals in order to gain access to a handful of high-quality journals, and their opposition to the open access movement (as manifested, for instance, in their lobbying in support of legislation such as the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and the Research Works Act (RWA)). [These practices have been documented in a number of places; this wiki page, which was set up in response to Tim's post, collects several relevant links for this purpose. Some of the other commercial publishers have exhibited similar behaviour, though usually not to the extent that Elsevier has, which is why this particular publisher is the focus of this protest.] At the protest site, one can publicly declare a refusal to either publish at an Elsevier journal, referee for an Elsevier journal, or join the board of an Elsevier journal.

(In the past, the editorial boards of several Elsevier journals have resigned over the pricing policies of the journal, most famously the board of *Topology* in 2006, but also the *Journal of Algorithms* in 2003, and a number of journals in other sciences as well. Several libraries, such as those of Harvard and Cornell, have also managed to negotiate an unbundling of Elsevier journals, but most libraries are still unable to subscribe to such journals individually.)

For a more thorough discussion as to why such a protest is warranted, please see Tim's post on the matter (and the

而集体辞职的案例，最轰动的要算 2006《拓扑学》以及 2003 年《算法杂志》，还有一些其他学科的期刊。有几家图书馆，包括哈佛大学和康奈尔大学的图书馆成功地和爱思唯尔达成“解包”协议，但大多数图书馆仍然无法自己选择所订购的期刊。）

至于为什么这样的抗议是正当而合理的，更多更全面的讨论可以参考高尔斯的文章以及 100 多条回应。关于爱思唯尔的种种问题，不少数学家，尤其是那些数学系图书委员会的成员，或多或少了解一些，有些人已经私下里决定抵制爱思唯尔。然而重要的是把这件事公开化，使它为大众所知，而非仅仅限于小圈内。（有趣的是，这种私下小范围行为和公开行为的区别对于我所钟爱的逻辑智力游戏同样至关重要。但那是题外话了。）在网上也可以找到另一面的说法，比如爱思唯尔负责自然科学的高级副总裁大卫·克拉克（David Clark）对于高尔斯博文的回应。

就我自己而言，尽管过去有大约百分之九的文章发表在爱思唯尔期刊上（包括一两篇正在排版的），我决定从今天起，不再向爱思唯尔投稿，也拒绝成为其期刊的编委，尽管我将继续为这些杂志审一些稿件。就在撰写此文的时候，在抗议网站建立的短短 4 天之内已经有 500 多位数学家以及其他学科的科学家签了名。

我很幸运，自己已经没有在一批指定的期刊上发表文章的压力了。正因为如此，对这个抗议采取什么样的行动是每个人自己的选择，我不会做任何建议。然而，我认为将我们对这一事件的想法广为传播是值得的，至少使大家知道存在这样一个抗议活动（更多的呼吁和相关内容可在上面提到的网站找到）。

100+comments to that post). Many of the issues regarding Elsevier were already known to some extent to many mathematicians (particularly those who have served on departmental library committees), several of whom had already privately made the decision to boycott Elsevier; but nevertheless it is important to bring these issues out into the open, to make them commonly known as opposed to merely mutually known. (Amusingly, this distinction is also of crucial importance in my favorite logic puzzle, but that's another story.) One can also see Elsevier's side of the story in this response to Tim's post by David Clark (the Senior Vice President for Physical Sciences at Elsevier).

For my own part, though I have sent about 9% of my papers in the past to Elsevier journals (with one or two still in press), I have now elected not to submit any further papers to these journals, nor to serve on their editorial boards, though I will continue refereeing some papers from these journals. As of this time of writing, over five hundred mathematicians and other academics have also signed on to the protest in the four days that the site has been active.

Admittedly, I am fortunate enough to be at a stage of career in which I am not pressured to publish in a very specific set of journals, and as such, I am not making a recommendation as to what anyone else should do or not do regarding this protest. However, I do feel that it is worth spreading awareness, at least, of the fact that such protests exist (and some additional petitions on related issues can be found at the previously mentioned wiki page).