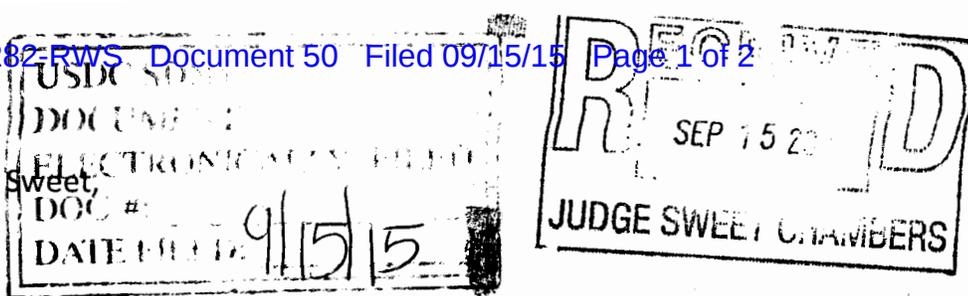


Dear Mr. Robert W. Sweet,



I am writing to clarify some details on Elsevier v. Sci-Hub, Case # 15-cv-4282.

I am the main operator of sci-hub.org website mentioned in the case. That is true that via sci-hub.org website anyone can download, absolutely for free, a copy of research paper published by Elsevier (Elsevier asks for 32 USD for each download).

I would like to clarify the reasons behind sci-hub.org website. When I was a student in Kazakhstan university, I did not have access to any research papers. These papers I needed for my research project. Payment of 32 dollars is just insane when you need to skim or read tens or hundreds of these papers to do research. I obtained these papers by pirating them. Later I found there are lots and lots of researchers (not even students, but university researchers) just like me, especially in developing countries. They created online communities (forums) to solve this problem. I was an active participant in one of such communities in Russia. Here anyone who needs research paper, but cannot pay for it, could place a request and other members who can obtain the paper will send it for free by email. I could obtain any paper by pirating it, so I solved many requests and people always were very grateful for my help. After that, I created sci-hub.org website that simply makes this process automatic and the website immediately became popular.

That is true that website collects donations, however we do not pressure anyone to send them. Elsevier, in contrast, operates by racket: if you do not send money, you will not read any papers. On my website, any person can read as many papers as they want for free, and sending donations is their free will. Why Elsevier cannot work like this, I wonder?

I would also like to mention that Elsevier is not a creator of these papers. All papers on their website are written by researchers, and researchers do not receive money from what Elsevier collects. That is very different from music or movie industry, where creators receive money from each copy sold. But economics of research papers is very different. Authors of these papers do not receive money. Why would they send their work to Elsevier then? They feel pressured to do this, because Elsevier is an owner of so-called "high-impact"

journals. If a researcher wants to be recognized, make a career – he or she needs to have publications in such journals.

What I written here is not just my opinion – this topic is widely discussed in research community. For example, a researcher John Willinsky wrote a book named “The Access Principle: The Case for Open Access to Research and Scholarship” where he discusses this problem. The general opinion in research community is that research papers should be distributed for free (open access), not sold. And practices of such companies like Elsevier are unacceptable, because they limit distribution of knowledge. In 2012, there was an “Elsevier boycott” organized by a prominent mathematician Timothy Gowers to battle such practices:

“The Cost of Knowledge is a protest by academics against the business practices of academic journal publisher Elsevier. Among the reasons for the protests are a call for lower prices for journals and to promote increased open access to information. The main work of the project is to ask researchers to sign a statement committing not to support Elsevier journals by publishing, performing peer review, or providing editorial services for these journals.”

I would like to also mention that we never received any complaints from authors or researchers, only Elsevier is complaining about free distribution of knowledge on sci-hub.org website.

Best regards,

Alexandra Elbakyan,

the sci-hub.org operator