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# PHILOSOPHERS' IMPRINT MISSION STATEMENT

*Philosophers' Imprint Editorial Board*

*University of Michigan*

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## 1. Description

*Philosophers' Imprint* is a refereed series of original papers in philosophy, edited by philosophy faculty at the University of Michigan, with the advice of an international Board of Editors, and published on the World Wide Web by the University of Michigan Digital Library. The mission of the *Imprint* is to promote a future in which funds currently spent on journal subscriptions are redirected to the dissemination of scholarship for free, via the Internet.

Although the *Imprint* is edited by analytically trained philosophers, it is not restricted to any particular field or school of philosophy. Its target audience consists primarily of academic philosophers and philosophy students, but it also aims to attract non-academic readers to philosophy by making excellent philosophical scholarship available without license or subscription.

The *Imprint* issues papers at irregular intervals; readers can receive periodic notices of recent publications by subscribing to an electronic mailing list. Papers are published in an attractive, typeset format that can be read on-screen or printed by the reader. Their physical appearance and Universal Resource Locators (URLs) are permanently fixed, to allow for reliable citations. The *Imprint* provides its own indexes and full-text search engine, in addition to being indexed by *Philosophers' Index* and public search engines.

Submissions to the *Imprint* are refereed anonymously and selected for publication on the basis of their estimated long-term significance. The *Imprint* does not publish regular book reviews or discussion notes, though papers responsive to the current literature may of course meet the Editors' criteria. Submissions must be sent electronically; submissions in hard copy will not be considered, acknowledged, or returned. Although there is no page limit on submissions, the Editors value economy of expression and do not currently plan to publish book-length works.

**2. Mission**

There is a possible future in which academic libraries no longer spend millions of dollars purchasing, binding, housing, and repairing printed journals, because they have assumed the role of publishers, cooperatively disseminating the results of academic research for free, via the Internet. Each library could bear the cost of publishing some of the world's scholarly output, since it would be spared the cost of buying its own copy of any scholarship published in this way. The results of academic research would then be available without cost to all users of the Internet, including students and teachers in developing countries, as well as members of the general public.

These developments would not spell the end of the printed book or the bricks-and-mortar library. On the contrary, academic libraries would finally be able to reverse the steep decline in their rate of acquiring books (which fell 25% from 1986 to 1996), because they would no longer be burdened with the steeply rising cost of journals (which increased 66% in the same period)[1].

The problem is that we don't know how to get to that future from here, and there are so many other, less desirable futures in which we might end up instead. The current trend toward licensing access to electronic versions of journals is counterproductive, since it reproduces the unnecessary economy of subscriptions and permissions, in which intellectual property produced at universities is transferred to those who can collect fees for its dissemination. Now that academic institutions have access to the Internet, they have no reason to pay subscription or subvention fees to anyone for disseminating the results of academic research.

Unfortunately, significant obstacles stand in the way of a transition to fully electronic publishing. Authors do not view electronic publication as prestigious, readers do not view the electronic literature as authoritative, and neither of these views seems likely to develop in the absence of the other. Younger scholars are unsure whether electronic publications will count towards tenure and promotion. And the funds that would support electronic publication and archiving are tied up in print subscriptions that can't be discontinued until an electronic alternative is available.

*Philosophers' Imprint* aims to overcome these obstacles in order to promote the free electronic dissemination of scholarship. The *Imprint* is designed to combine the permanence and authority of print with the instant and universal accessibility of the Internet. The Editors select for publication only those submissions which are judged to be of lasting value, on the basis of a blind refereeing process. Having no commitments to subscribers, the Editors are free to publish as few papers as are found to meet an absolute standard of quality. Each paper is given a fixed, typeset appearance and a stable Universal Resource Locator (URL), to allow for reliable citations. The University of Michigan Digital Library has committed funds to produce the *Imprint*, to provide it with indexes and a full-text search engine, and to ensure the permanent accessibility of its archives.

No license, subscription, or registration is required for access to the *Imprint* Because the *Imprint* has no subscription income, it must operate economically, without paper or postage. Contributors are therefore required to submit their work electronically. Refereeing will take place on a secure website, and all correspondence with authors will be by electronic mail. Finally, the *Imprint* will not manage rights and permissions. Permission for instructional uses won't be necessary, since the *Imprint* will be accessible without charge to teachers and students alike; permission for other uses will be managed by the authors, who will retain copyright in their work.

1. Stevan Harnad, "Free at Last: The Future of Peer-Reviewed Journal," *D-Lib Magazine* (1999); The Association of Research Libraries, New Systems of Scholarly Communication, `http://www.arl.org/scomm/change.html`; Anne M. Buck, Richard C. Flagan and Betsy Coles, Scholars' Forum: A New Model For Scholarly Communication, `http://library.caltech.edu/publications/ScholarsForum`

### 3. Instructions for Subscribing to the Mailing List

New papers are published by the *Imprint* at irregular intervals, as they are refereed, selected, and edited. Readers who wish to be notified of new publications by the *Imprint* may subscribe to an electronic mailing list, by sending an e-mail to philosophers-imprint-general-request@umich.edu with the word 'subscribe' in the subject field. Notices will be sent no more frequently than once a month. (To be removed from the mailing list, send a message to the same address with the word 'unsubscribe' in the subject field.)

### 4. Instructions for Submitting a Paper

#### *4.1 Formatting your paper*

We strongly prefer to receive submissions in Rich Text Format (RTF). Compose your paper in a standard word-processing application. Prepare the paper for blind refereeing by removing personal references, including those which may be automatically inserted in the "Properties" or "Summary" field of the document. Save your paper in Rich Text Format (RTF), with the extension ".rtf" after the filename.

#### *4.2 LaTeX manuscripts*

If your paper contains symbols or equations that cannot be handled by a standard word-processor, you may submit a pdf file produced from LaTeX. If the paper is accepted, you will be responsible for formatting it using the Imprint macros at: http://ctan.tug.org/macros/latex/contrib/philosophersimprint

#### *4.3 Submitting your paper*

To submit a paper to Philosophers' Imprint, visit http://www.philosophersimprint.org/submissions/, fill out the form, and upload your submission. You should receive an acknowledgment from the Editors within a week. *Philosophers' Imprint* no longer accepts submissions by email.



### References

Buck, Anne M., Richard C. Flagan and Betsy Coles Scholars' Forum: A New Model For Scholarly Communication http://library.caltech.edu/publications/ScholarsForum

Harnad, Stevan "Free at Last: The Future of Peer-Reviewed Journal" *D-Lib Magazine* (December 1999) http://www.dlib.org/dlib/december99/12harnad.html

The Association of Research Libraries, New Systems of Scholarly Communication http://www.arl.org/scomm/change.html