

# Toward a Hybrid Publishing Model for the Journal of Systemics, Cybernetics, and Informatics (JSCI)

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## Short History

Since 2003 the Journal of Systemics, Cybernetics, and Informatics (JSCI) has been a *free* open-access electronic journal according to the definition provided by the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) has been *no Article Processing Charge* (APC) for the published articles.

In its first 5 years, the Journal also had a printed version with a different ISSN. But the electronic version of the Journal that provided free access to both the abstracts and the full versions of the published papers, made it financially unfeasible to have the printed version of the Journal. Subscriptions to the printed material did not make any sense because of the free open-access of the electronic version. Consequently, up to the present (April 2018), the electronic version has been sponsored by the International Institute of Informatics and Systemics (IIS), which provided both: 1) most of the content of the Journal; and 2) all the required financial support. This sponsorship generated 17 volumes, about 110 issues, and 2600 articles that have been published with no APC to their respective authors. This business model is definitely not self-sustainable. Accordingly, if JSCI is to be independent from its longtime sponsor, it should search and identify a business model that would allow its self-sustainability, which requires, at least, a self-financing business model.

## Objective: Two-Dimensional Hybrid Business Model

In order to meet the self-sustainability challenge, the JSCI planned to adopt a two-dimensional hybrid model.

**Electronic/printed hybridity:** The objective is to publish *printed copies of special issues* of the Journal on more *specific topics*, along with the *regular multi-disciplinary issues* of the current electronic version of the Journal.

These printed copies of specific topics will be distributed, via Amazon, Barnes & Noble and other similar outlets, to those potential readers who are willing to pay the price of the respective printed copies of the special issue.

We hope that the financial resources generated by the printed copies of the special issues will provide part of the financial support that the JSCI necessarily requires to keep its 17-year-old electronic, free and open access version.

**APC/non-APC hybridity:** The objective is to provide the following options to the potential authors willing to submit contributions to the Journal:

1. To pay an APC in order to have their article (accepted for publication) in the open-access electronic version of the Journal. The APC will be used to cover the *real* processing costs; which, by the year 2011, was in the range of US \$500-\$1000, in the case of *not-for-profit* academic or scientific organizations according to Paul Ginsparg<sup>1</sup> at Cornell University and the founder of the Arxiv.
2. Not to pay the APC but their article will be published only in the printed version while the abstract will be published in the electronic version.

## Next Steps

The implementation of the two-tier hybrid model that is briefly described above, will provide a learning process, which might show what additional steps should be taken in order to meet the challenge of designing a business model that would assure the self-sustainability of the JSCI.

## Second Phase

In the second phase, the purpose will be not to depend on any of the financial or the non-financial support of the IIS in order to meet the challenge of a self-sustainable journal; which will:

1. Maintain its actual, open-access electronic version; and
2. Create a revenue stream (basically via printed copies, especially of special issues) that would, hopefully, support the cost of the open-access electronic version related to regular issues, while maximizing the number of authors not paying APC.

In this second phase, the IIC might design and implement a system to support the process of *multiple-author books* to be distributed directly and/or via outlets like Amazon. This might help the publisher in identifying synergistic relationships between the free, open-access business model and the traditional printed copies model.

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<sup>1</sup> Ginsparg, P., 2001, 'Creating a global knowledge network,' in Electronic Publishing in Science, UNESCO HQ, Paris, 19-23 Feb 2001) estimated that the range of electronic publishing costs are in the range of US \$500-\$1000. After an exhaustive study, Ginsparg affirmed that "eliminating the print product, and by restructuring the workflow to take greater advantage of electronically facilitated efficiencies, it is likely that the costs of a relatively large existing publisher could be brought down closer to \$1000/article...We can also ask whether an idealistic electronic start-up venture, without the legacy problems of an existing publisher, might be even more efficient. At least one such in physics, currently publishing about 700 articles per year, operates in the \$500/article range...But private communication suggests that this number is likely to creep upward rather than downward, as some of the labor volunteered from initial enthusiasm is replaced by paid labor, and salaries for existing labor are adjusted to competitive levels for retention, so might also move closer to the \$1000/article published range." Ginsparg's article is posted at <http://www.cs.cornell.edu/~ginsparg/physics/blurb/pg01unesco.html> (accessed on April 29, 2018). More details with regards to costs and pricing of Open Access Journals with regards to different publishers can be found in Callaos, N., 2011, Costs, Prices, and Revenues in Journals Publishing; posted at <http://www.iiisci.org/journal/sci/Costs.pdf>

## **Publisher and Sponsor(s)**

Since 2003, the publisher of the JSCI has been the International Institute of Informatics and Cybernetics (IIC), a for-profit organization, and, up to the present, the unique sponsor has been the International Institute of Informatics and Systemics (IIS), a not-for-profit organization. The goals of the first two phases described above are to:

1. Lower the dependency of the IIS's financial sponsorship and, hopefully, eliminate it; and
2. Continue with the non-financial sponsorship of the IIS, especially regarding copyrighted content, web platform, members, reviewers, etc.

The publisher will continue to be the IIC, and it would try to identify other sponsors in order to diminish the dependability on the IIS.