July 2001

Dear Editor,

With the news just released that Reed Elsevier's acquisition of the Harcourt publishing businesses has been approved by the competition authorities in the US and UK, we wanted to inform you immediately about our plans. For Elsevier Science this means that we will bring the Harcourt scientific, technical and medical (STM) publishing and our existing businesses together as one. We are delighted about this and intend to ensure that it means improved products and services and increased value for scientists and libraries. I would like to give you some insight into how we will do this.

The combined business will focus entirely on scientific, technical and medical publishing. We believe that Harcourt STM and Elsevier Science are an excellent match in terms of culture and business. The products and people in the Harcourt scientific, technical and medical publishing businesses reflect the Elsevier Science commitment to quality and value.

The name of our combined business will be Elsevier Science. We have created two divisions: Science & Technology and Health Sciences, both operating under the Elsevier Science name. In the Science & Technology Division we will add the journals, books and major reference works published under the Academic Press imprint to our existing portfolio. In addition to existing Elsevier Science products and imprints, such as The Lancet and Excerpta Medica, the Health Sciences Division will include the well–known imprints of W.B. Saunders, Mosby and Churchill Livingstone, as well as MD Consult.

Our business strategy will continue as before. We want your publications to be as widely accessible and widely–read as possible. Our mission is to make all of our scientific material available to researchers on their desktops, 24 hours a day, wherever they are in the world.

We will retain the integrity and editorial independence of all journals. We will not close down any journals as a direct result of the merger. Contracts with editors and authors in general will not change.

Our market–leading electronic platform, ScienceDirect®, is evidence of our commitment to invest in quality products. We will continue these investments in the combined business. The first step is to create access through ScienceDirect to all the journal titles from the Harcourt portfolio as soon as possible. This will enable the widest possible access to your journal. Elsevier Science will also honour all existing contracts for the IDEAL platform.

The commitment we made two years ago to keeping price rises to a single digit figure for the complete print package of our journals, incorporating the effects of currency fluctuations, growth in volume output and inflation, will also apply to the extended portfolio. This should result in lower price increases for Harcourt journals than in the past and also below the industry average, in line with Elsevier Science's policy.

Over the coming months we will keep you informed about the progress being made in bringing together the competencies and people of Harcourt and Elsevier Science.

Scientific publishing is going through a period of rapid change as a result of electronic publishing. At Elsevier Science we are very excited about the possibilities it offers to enhance the role that scientific literature plays in the research process. I enclose the transcript of a presentation I made earlier this year, which should give you a flavour of our current thinking on how we can move forward to reap the full benefits of electronic publishing.

I would like to thank you for your work and dedication on your journal. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask your regular contacts at Elsevier Science and Harcourt.

Yours sincerely,

Derk Haank
Chairman
Elsevier Science