The economics of scholarly publishing are perverse. Each year universities pay hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, in subscriptions to publishers to purchase work that their own scholars produced. Despite many new initiatives over the last decade, including my own, subscription costs have continued to rise. Why? Quite simply, researchers need access to publications to do their work and thus the threat of cutting subscriptions would be met with resistance from within our own universities. Without the threat of cutting subscriptions Universities are stranded at the negotiating table. I think we can change that.

The threat of one worker quitting is a limited threat to a company because it is merely one employee but the threat of a union of workers quitting can be devastating to a company.

Today, I write to suggest a coalition of Universities. This coalition would act on behalf of participating Universities to negotiate costs of subscriptions with publishers. The threat of cancellations would gain weight with each participating University and, in time, could effectively tip the balance back towards academia. The benefit: millions of dollars back towards research. The cost: simply agreeing to work together.

Will you join?