

## Editorial

*Journal of Markets & Morality*  
Electronic Edition

As you may have already noticed, some important changes have taken place to the online edition of the *Journal of Markets & Morality* ([www.marketsandmorality.com](http://www.marketsandmorality.com)). I want to take this opportunity to explain what has changed and to provide the backdrop for why such changes were implemented.

Let us begin first with the backdrop. In a recent study, “Scholarship at the Crossroads: The *Journal of Markets & Morality* Case Study,” associate editor Jordan Ballor investigates how the rapid advent of technology is pushing academic journals (including *JMM*) toward a crossroad. “With the advent and proliferation of information technologies in the late twentieth century, most especially the innovation of the Internet,” writes Ballor, “scholars and educational institutions were faced with scintillating possibilities as well as complex difficulties.” Historians James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller address these developments at length and with notable clarity. They observe, “Major methodological advances in the humanities are usually not as frequent, nor as dramatic, as advances in the natural sciences. Two notable exceptions to this rule are found in the Enlightenment and in the current revolution in the storage and retrieval of information” (*Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995], 73). These words, true at the time of their writing ten years ago, have become even more salient as the transition into the “Information Age” has progressed, as Ballor’s findings reveal.

Beyond the popular applications of the new technologies, scholars and researchers are particularly affected by such innovations. As Bradley and

Muller write, “We believe that the newer technology, understood broadly, is no longer optional. The scholar who neglects current technological advances in the manipulation and accessing of sources puts himself or herself in the position of a student who refuses to adopt the methodological advances of the Enlightenment; they become, by definition, precritical” (*Church History*, 74). Yet, the ability of research scholars to have unprecedented access to primary and secondary materials, via computers and electronic media, brings about the expectation that any respectable scholar will pursue the acquisition of such information with all the more vigor and diligence. And this is one of the major difficulties that scholars now face in the second decade of the Internet Age. As Stephen Arnold writes, “Libraries and individual researchers are likely to be befuddled about where to go to find what they need in the current STM or scholarly data universe. Locating and getting precisely what one needs has become somewhat more complicated in the Internet Age” (“The Scholarly Hothouse: Electronic STM Journals,” *Database* 22, no. 1 [February/March 1999]).

Moreover, beyond the pure research interest of making data available via electronic means, there are other pressures that seem to contribute in a trend toward e-media, the most important of which is the lower cost of reproduction and distribution than print media. For many scholars, however, this advantage does not circumvent an even more important feature of p-journals, namely, a publication’s relative prestige and reputation within a niche community of scholars. So, while e-journals offer superior advantages over p-journals especially with respect to ease of distribution, they are often regarded as less prestigious by the scholarly community and thus less valuable in the tenure review process of which publication credentials form a large and important part. According to Ballor, the current situation can be summed up as follows: “economic and functionality concerns are pushing scholarly journals toward electronic media, while traditional views of the prestige and importance of publication for the advancement process act as a counterforce.”

The *Journal of Markets & Morality* began in 1998 as a print-only publication, and, in 2002, subsequently added free full-text electronic versions of all current and previous content. Thus, subscribers and nonsubscribers alike could enjoy full electronic access to all content, but only subscribers would receive a print edition of the journal. As a librarian from Australia queried recently in correspondence with me, “What would I get for subscribing that I can’t get now?” Besides a print edition of the journal, the answer was nothing. This interesting problem prompted us to look into the state of the e-publishing industry, to reevaluate our current systems of delivery, and to reassess the

needs of our various audiences (both for researchers and casual readers alike). What we found was that certain pressures and interests of the *Journal of Markets & Morality* had resulted in a patchwork system of delivery, through which all content was freely available in electronic format on the World Wide Web, a medium that most researchers and libraries actually prefer, but the print edition of the journal was available only for a subscription fee. This strange situation attests to the truth of Andrew Odlyzko's observation that "the scholarly publishing business is full of inertia and perverse economic incentives" ("The Economics of Electronic Journals," *The Journal of Electronic Publishing* 4, no. 1 (September 1998):<http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/0401/odlyzko.html>). To overcome our inertia and correct the perverse economic incentive, we took steps to remedy the problem by implementing what is called a "moving wall," that is, a restriction of electronic content for nonsubscribers, which I describe below.

Although subscribers will have already received the latest print edition, nonsubscribers who are accustomed to viewing the journal online will likely have encountered a restriction on accessing current issues. The two most recent issues of the journal are now classified as "current," while all previous issues are called "archived." The access to current issues is now restricted: subscribers have full access to all electronic content, but nonsubscribers are only able to view the editorial, contents pages, article abstracts, book review titles, the first paragraphs of each controversy installment, scholia introduction (but not the scholia itself), and contributors pages. A confirmation page was set up on the website, and a database of subscribers is now being kept. When a subscriber logs in to the journal website, a session cookie marks the user as a subscriber, and all content is immediately displayed. The website pages use scripts to check whether the user is a subscriber, and in this way determines what information to display. Subscribers who have not received their password may obtain this information by querying the following address: Meredith Nieuwsma at [mnieuwsma@acton.org](mailto:mnieuwsma@acton.org). New online subscribers will receive their password at the time of transaction.

As always, I encourage readers to visit our webpage to answer general inquiries, to obtain subscription information, to utilize our search engine, or to download files from the archives.

—Stephen J. Grabill, Ph.D.