

# Electronic Access Membership

*This is in response to Dr. Robert M. Hamer's letter "Electronic Access and Membership" that appeared in the Forum section on page 79, in the August 2001 issue of Amstat News.*

Editor:

Robert,

I appreciate your letter to the Amstat News Editor about "Electronic Access and Membership". This is an important, timely topic. Indeed, the statistical literature is only now beginning to catch up to the progress made in the biological sciences in placing scholarly material on our desktops. As you know, several statistical journals are now available on [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org), although their policy is archival (at least five years old) and access to those not at licensed institutions is not easy.

There are several reasons for the delay in our field, some technical and some historical, some financial. Over the past two years, ASA has been working hard to bring several journals online. [IMS is also striving to bring their journals online in the very near future.] Even as we move online, we recognize that our full goal—including properly embedded mathematics, full cross referencing—may still be a year or more away.

Our immediate goal is to release electronic versions of the 2001 issues for six ASA-sponsored journals. Open questions remain about what to do with past journals. There is a five year gap with JASA and none of the other ASA-sponsored journals have any archived material online. This problem will be addressed once we get the current journals up and running.

There was also mention in your letter about a yearly CD, which I presume is Current Index to Statistics (CIS). As you may know, CIS has been undergoing considerable revamping in the past year. The web version ([www.statindex.org/CIS](http://www.statindex.org/CIS)) has changed dramatically. An article about the development of the CIS web product appears in this issue of *Amstat News*. The CD-ROM Release 10 is nearing completion as I

understand it, and hopefully will alleviate some of your concerns. However, The Web product is now a separate subscription, and is the primary focus for development and licensing.

ASA's policy has been to keep the basic services of membership inexpensive and let people buy on the "cafeteria plan", rather than making everybody pay for the same "free" subscriptions. Thus the costs of setting up electronic ventures are spread over subscribing members, individual and institutional.

I have a separate article in this issue of *Amstat News* about the new look and feel of Amstat Online, ASA's Web pages at [www.amstat.org](http://www.amstat.org). Later this Fall, there will be an article announcing the electronic journals. These will hopefully have a positive impact on membership. We are also actively exploring other ways to add value to membership. We certainly welcome your input in this regard.

Many thanks for your letter,

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