



JSTOR: A History

Roger C. Schonfeld

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Ten years ago, most scholars and students relied on bulky card catalogs, printed bibliographic indices, and hardcopy books and journals. Today, much content is available electronically or online. This book examines the history of one of the first, and most successful, digital resources for scholarly communication, JSTOR. Beginning as a grant-funded project of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation at the University of Michigan, JSTOR has grown to become a major archive of the backfiles of academic journals, and its own nonprofit organization.

Roger Schonfeld begins this history by looking at JSTOR's original mission of saving storage space and thereby storage costs, a mission that expanded immediately to improving access to the literature. What role did the University play? Could JSTOR have been built without the active involvement of a foundation? Why was it seen as necessary to "spin off" the project? This case study proceeds as an organizational history of the birth and maturation of this nonprofit, which had to emerge from the original university partnership to carve its own identity. How did the grant project evolve into a successful marketplace enterprise? How was JSTOR able to serve its twofold mission of archiving its journals while also providing access to them? What has accounted for its growth? Finally, Schonfeld considers implications of the economic and organizational aspects of archiving as well as the system-wide savings that JSTOR ensures by broadly distributing costs.



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