

Mendeley and Elsevier

Martin Fenner

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Earlier this week the rumors that started in January became official: Elsevier is buying Mendeley (see also [here](#)). A lot has been written about this announcement, in particular about the fear that Mendeley as a product and organization will turn into something not as open and collaborative as before.

I first met Victor and Jan from Mendeley in 2008 and did an interview with Victor in September 2008. We worked together in the organization of two Science Online London conferences (2009 and 2010, together with Nature.com and others), and my current job started with an entry for an API programming contest co-organized by PLOS and Mendeley, with the first lines of code written in the Mendeley offices during the Science Online London 2011 hackathon. I wish Mendeley all the best with their new parent.

What this acquisition signals to me is that commercial publishers are now moving into the software tools for scientists business at full speed. They have always done this, but with ReadCube by Digital Science (a Nature Publishing Group sister company) in 2011, the acquisition of Papers by Springer last year and now Mendeley, reference management now often means using a tool owned by a publisher – this market used to be dominated academic software such as Zotero and commercial software vendors such as Thomson Reuters (Endnote) or ProQuest (RefWorks).

For me this trend signals that publishers have realized that we are moving into an Open Access publishing model, which in contrast to subscription publishing is not about owning the content, but about providing valuable services around content that is free to read and reuse.