

AI Ethics Needs Institutional Guardians

Not just tools—trusted leaders with mission and legacy.

Swipe for insights →

2020

Year of MIT's First Major Journals Contract Cancellation

This milestone marked MIT's formal break from traditional paywalled publishing in favor of open access.

In 2020, MIT canceled a major journal contract with Elsevier, a move driven by its commitment to open scholarship. This decision was not a reactive cost-cutting effort but a strategic pivot based on the MIT Framework for Publisher Contracts, which Chris Bourg helped develop. The cancellation saved millions and signaled institutional confidence in equitable, open scholarly systems.

Source: MIT News • Published October 11, 2026

<https://news.mit.edu/2026/chris-bourg-named-vice-provost-and-barbara-ostrom-director-mit-libraries-1006>



01

Legacy Shapes AI Governance

Chris Bourg's background as a U.S. Army officer and her ROTC service inform her leadership style—rooted in service, discipline, and institutional integrity. Her appointment as vice provost and library director underscores that AI governance is not solely a technical or legal function but one shaped by lived experience, ethical commitment, and a sense of duty. Leadership in AI safety must be measured not just by policy output, but by character and continuity.

02

Open Access Fuels Ethical AI

MIT's shift toward open scholarship—catalyzed by Bourg's leadership—creates a foundation for transparent, auditable, and ethically responsible AI. When scholarly content is freely accessible, generative AI models trained on it are more likely to reflect diverse, verified knowledge. This reduces bias and increases reproducibility. The move from paywalled to open publishing is not just a financial decision; it is a governance choice that directly supports trustworthy AI development.

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