

## SSRN releases handful of new features to enhance user experience

As you may have noticed, SSRN is looking a little different these days. That's because we have recently released a number of new features designed to further enhance the user experience. These features include our completely revised Simple Submission process, a new sign in process, and redesigned Author and Abstract Pages, each with their own unique, new features.

Some of these items have been available on Beta pages. During the first half of 2008, the SSRN community provided valuable comments and feedback on all the features.

These new features are:

### 1. SIMPLE SUBMISSION

Released at the end of June, [Simple Submission](#) aims to streamline the submission process for authors, making it quicker and easier to upload papers to the SSRN eLibrary. The official release of this feature was mentioned in Gregg Gordon's [Mid-Year President's Letter](#), which outlined several milestones and accomplishments for the company so far in 2008.

### 2. NEW USER SIGN IN

Released in September, the new [User Sign In](#) process has created a more intuitive, user-friendly way for scholars to access the SSRN User Headquarters. The Sign In is modeled after commonly used websites and forms, making it easier to not only log in to SSRN HQ but create a new user account. It also helps cut down on time spent, errors incurred or problems experienced during log-in.

### 3. REDESIGNED AUTHOR PAGES

The number of SSRN authors now exceeds 100,000. With that number continuing to grow at a rapid pace, we have realized that a more comprehensive page is important. Therefore, our new Author Home Page not only looks a little different, it contains some additional information as well:

- **Sorting functionality:** Although we changed the page layout, the default sort order is still Downloads. You can now also sort by the various columns, which include Paper Title, Primary Author, Date Posted, and Citations.

Michael C. Jensen's Scholarly Papers						Aggregate Statistics	
Click on the title of any column to sort the table by that column.						Total Downloads	Total Citations
						333,170	6,539
						Downloads	Citations
						(Rank)	
<b>ACTIONS:</b> <a href="#">Email Selected Abstracts</a>   <a href="#">Export Selected Bibliographic Info</a>   <b>VIEW:</b> Selected   <a href="#">Original List</a>   <a href="#">All Versions</a>   <a href="#">All Abstracts</a>   <a href="#">Legend</a>							
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure</a>   <a href="#">Show Abstract</a>   <a href="#">Download</a>	Michael C. Jensen Harvard Business School William H. Meckling University of Rochester Simon School (Deceased)	Posted: 19 Jul 98 Last Revised: 15 May 08	47,734 (9)	1,814	
<small>Michael C. Jensen, A THEORY OF THE FIRM: GOVERNANCE, RESIDUAL CLAIMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS, Harvard University Press, Dec. 2000, and The Journal Of Financial Economics, 1976. Accepted Paper Series</small>							
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Value Maximization, Stakeholder Theory, and the Corporate Objective Function</a>   <a href="#">Show Abstract</a>   <a href="#">Download</a>	Michael C. Jensen Harvard Business School	Posted: 11 Apr 00 Last Revised: 17 Feb 04	20,001 (13)	90	
<small>Unfolding Stakeholder Thinking, eds. J. Andriof, et al. (Greenleaf Publishing, 2002). Also published in JACF, V. 14, N. 3, 2001, European Financial Management Review, N. 7, 2001 and in Breaking the Code of Change, M. Beer and N. Norhia, eds, HBS Press, 2000. Accepted Paper Series</small>							

- **Additional features:** Another new feature is the Search function at the top of each Author Page. Additionally, we've added the ability to download the full-text PDF, view the abstract, or even email the abstract to others.

#### 4. REDESIGNED ABSTRACT PAGES

At the end of September 2008, the SSRN eLibrary contained more than 201,000 abstracts and 160,000 full-text PDFs. As with our Author Pages, we wanted to create a more comprehensive Abstract Page to encompass all the information that is now available:

##### - CITE READER:

We are very pleased to be implementing our new CiteReader technology, which was developed by our development firm, ITX Corp. This technology helps us capture references, citations, and footnotes included in all papers submitted to SSRN.

A light blue box with a thin border containing paper statistics. The title 'Paper statistics' is at the top. Below it, there are two rows of data: 'Abstract Views: 131,685' and 'Downloads: 47,734'. A horizontal line separates these from 'Download Rank: 3'. Below the line, there are two more rows: 'References: 91' and 'Citations: 1,914'. Each of the last two rows has a small blue question mark icon to its right.

Paper statistics	
Abstract Views:	131,685
Downloads:	47,734
Download Rank:	3
References:	91 ?
Citations:	1,914 ?

**References:** This refers to all references from the full-text PDFs that have been submitted to SSRN. The CiteReader technology captures the information from the reference section or bibliography and pulls it together. We then manually verify and clean-up each “potential reference,” parsing the reference into the appropriate database fields. Reviewing millions of references is a lot of work, but the we have found the quality is much higher than any of the automated systems we evaluated.

**Citations:** Citations are actually References that have been matched from a different PDF in the SSRN eLibrary. We are working with CrossRef to provide external links using DOIs, but have not been able to make it work effectively yet. Once we are able to add DOI links, we think it will be very comprehensive and able to provide direct links for references to working papers. Interestingly, about 13 percent of the 1.9 million Citations are to working papers within the SSRN eLibrary.

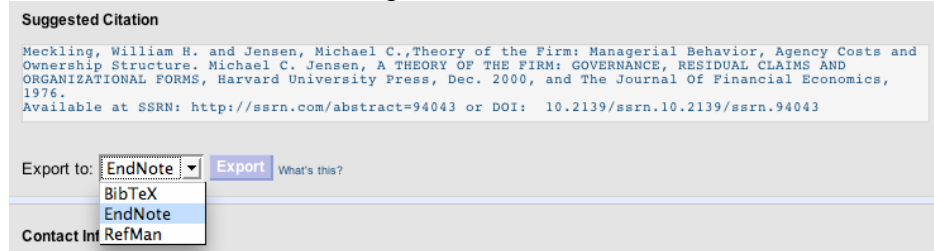
**Footnotes:** The Footnotes functionality is mainly applicable to legal research papers, which have Footnotes instead of a Reference section. Footnotes provide a wealth of information from references to well-thought-out mini research papers. The problem, however, is that Footnotes don't follow a convention that allows for easy capture, verification, and parsing. While we have started to capture and verify them, the process is much more complicated than References. As we continue to improve our process, more Footnotes will be available.

##### - SHARING CAPABILITIES:

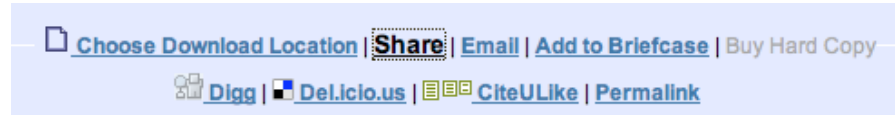
With more and more scholars referencing SSRN papers, we wanted to make it as easy as possible to share abstracts and papers.

First, the “Export” feature, while having been part of the Abstract Page for some time now, offers scholars the ability to export the paper information into several popular reference management applications. Currently, users can export in EndNote, BibTeX,

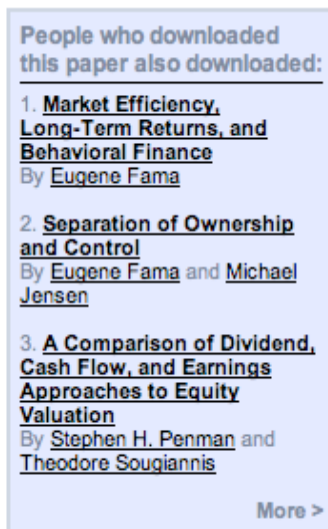
and Reference Managers formats. We plan to add RefWorks soon, and we are also working with online services CiteULike and Zotero to allow users to easily create references to SSRN papers. These options build upon the Suggested Citation section, which enables scholars to cut-and-paste reference information into their own papers.



Secondly, we have added a Share feature, which can be seen as one of the selectable options at the top of each Abstract Page. This feature allows anyone interested in sharing or bookmarking the research to do so through Digg, Del.icio.us, and CiteULike. With this feature, users can also create a Permalink function for adding a link to their own website.



## - RECOMMENDATIONS:



Another interesting new feature is the “People who downloaded this paper also downloaded.” item located on Abstract Pages. We love this feature, and many users have actually told us they “found” papers relevant to their research through this list.

As you can see, it is similar to other features on popular sites like Amazon. We obviously saw the usefulness of these recommendations and originally worked with researchers at MIT on recommender systems.

Basically, our approach tracks all of the papers downloaded by a known user, aggregates and orders the data, and then ranks it based on a few different criteria. Over the last few years, downloads have greatly increased, including more than 5.7 million in the last 12 months, which has greatly improved the functionality of this feature.

We have a lot more in store for the remainder of 2008 and beyond. First, we are very excited about the new networks we are starting with leading scholars. Secondly, we are working on completely rewriting the Subscription system to allow for faster distribution of research and more customized modes of delivery, including RSS feeds and other enhancements. We know you will be very pleased with the new system.