Author's response to reviews

Title: Restrictions impeding web-based courses: a survey of publisher’s variation in authorising access to high quality on-line literature

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The following formatting changes have been implemented:
Title amended removing unnecessary capitalisation.
Section headings amended removing unnecessary capitalisation.
Text boxes removed and text incorporated in main body of article.
Underlining has been removed and italics used for emphasis instead.
Reference list has been altered to the journal style.

I have attempted to phone the editor regarding the request for provision of additional data as an additional file. We have already addressed this comment in our earlier revision as the additional information we are referring to is the identification of the publishers surveyed and their responses but our objections are raised again below:
We have debated as to whether we should name the publishers involved in this survey. On balance we have decided we should not. One reason is that when contacting publishers we did not state that their responses may be disseminated more widely and used in a research publication. Therefore, we believe to publish the names of respondents would be a breach of the spirit and possibly the letter of ethical research practice. Furthermore the institution’s copyright advisor advised us against incorporating these details in the article because we might make ourselves open to litigation. Finally, and very importantly, publishing these details might create bad feeling which could damage re-negotiations for subsequent permission requests, and adversely affect the delivery of our course. We would however discuss further details in confidence with appropriate individuals who contacted us for more information and as such we have placed a note to that effect after the table in the article. Even with anonymisation of the publishers involved, we believe that the paper still ‘shines a light on practice’ by exposing the extent of the potential problem for online courses wishing to access and use extracts of published material in online courses.
Could you please contact the corresponding author if you need to discuss this matter further.