Current patent rules make it impossible for an individual to educate themselves up to anything approaching a graduate level. All of the required journal information and a huge body of text is locked up within copyrights. With a different set of rules it would be theoretically possible for a poor South African teenager to learn the equivalent of a Masters in Aeronautical Engineering; right now something like this is simply impossible.

As it is now if I want to read any mathematics text written after the 1500's I am required to maintain student status at a major University to check things out of a brick and mortar library.