

2001 U.S. Serial Services Price Index

By Ajaye Bloomstone and Nancy J. Chaffin

Ihis is the 38th annual survey of U.S. Serial Services, a product of the ALA/Association for Library Collections and Technical Services Library Materials Price Index Committee, working in conjunction with Faxon/RoweCom.

The selection of titles surveyed and determination of prices were in accordance with the guidelines of the American National Standard for Library and Information Sciences and Related Publishing Practices—Library Materials—Criteria for Price Indexes (ANSI Z39.20-1983). The standard defines a U.S. serial service as “a periodical publication that revises, cumulates, abstracts, or indexes information in a specific field on a regular basis by means of new or replacement issues, pages, or cards, intended to provide information otherwise not readily available.” In August 1999 a new standard for library material price indexes, Criteria for Price Indexes for Printed Library Materials (ANSI/NISO Z39.20-1999) was published by the National Information Standards Organization. That standard specifically excludes serial services. Lacking inclusion of serial services in the 1999 standard, we have continued to use the 1983 standard.

A total of 1,302 titles were included in the data for Tables 1–7. This year, 95 titles were dropped from the index, having been discontinued altogether or having been discontinued in paper. One hundred three titles were identified as

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TABLE 1: U.S. SERIAL SERVICES
(excluding “Wilson Index” and excluding Russian Translations as of 1988) (95 titles dropped; 103 titles added)

Year	Number of Titles	Average Price	Price Change	Index
1984	1,537	295.13	—	100.0
1985–87	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1988	1,310	341.32	N/A	115.7
1989	1,308	363.20	6.4%	123.1
1990	1,308	377.24	3.9%	127.8
1991	1,307	412.38	9.3%	139.7
1992	1,294	445.37	8.0%	150.9
1993	1,294	466.57	4.8%	158.1
1994	1,294	489.76	5.0%	165.9
1995	1,280	522.01	6.6%	176.9
1996	1,280	556.58	6.6%	188.6
1997	1,281	578.22	3.9%	195.9
1998	1,282	604.31	4.5%	204.8
1999	1,286	638.18	5.6%	216.2
2000	1,294	671.94	5.3%	227.7
2001	1,302	711.07	5.8%	240.9

replacements for the dropped titles and were chosen to correspond as closely as possible to the price range, intended audience, and subject content of the dropped titles. There continues to be movement from printed paper to electronic-only publications, particularly those that are Web-based. In addition to the migration from print to electronic-only, fewer new print serial services are being introduced. This trend has made it increasingly difficult to identify replacement titles that correspond to the coverage, audience, and subscription price of those titles no longer included in the index.

Prices for approximately 750 of the sample titles were extracted from the serial subscription database of Faxon/RoweCom. The authors determined prices for the remaining titles and identified replacement titles by consulting publisher lists (many of which were available on publishers’ Web sites), by contacting publishers, and from library subscription records.

The data as computed by Faxon/

RoweCom show that the average 2001 price for U.S. Serial Services titles in the sample is \$711.07 (Table 1). This is a 5.8% increase over the 2000 average, and almost 2.5 times the average price for 1984.

Tables 2–7 show the average price changes by subject (including “U.S. Documents”) and the numbers of titles added and dropped. The greatest average price increase was in Table 4 “Law” (+11.8%). Although “Law” titles have steadily increased since 1984, including two years with increases of over 10%, this is the largest increase for this category of serials since the base year. In this category, 14 titles were dropped and 14 titles were added.

The next largest increase was seen in Table 3, “General and Humanities” (+6.9%), in which five titles were dropped and six were added, and in Table 5 “Science and Technology” (+6.6%), in which 13 titles were dropped and 17 were added.

Table 6, “Social Sciences,” shows a less dramatic increase (+4.1%). In that

TABLE 2: BUSINESS (40 titles dropped; 44 titles added)					TABLE 3: GENERAL and HUMANITIES (5 titles dropped; 6 titles added)					TABLE 4: LAW (14 titles dropped; 14 titles added)				
Year	Number of Titles	Average Price	Price Change	Index	Year	Number of Titles	Average Price	Price Change	Index	Year	Number of Titles	Average Price	Price Change	Index
1984	289	437.07	—	100.0	1984	122	196.55	—	100.0	1984	272	275.23	—	100.0
1985–87	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1985–87	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1985–87	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1988	281	458.33	N/A	104.9	1988	116	225.95	N/A	115.0	1988	265	338.13	N/A	122.9
1989	281	493.23	7.6%	112.8	1989	116	255.27	13.0%	129.9	1989	265	354.32	4.8%	128.7
1990	281	523.79	6.2%	119.8	1990	116	274.39	7.5%	139.6	1990	264	390.98	10.3%	142.1
1991	281	584.93	11.7%	133.8	1991	116	292.23	6.5%	148.7	1991	264	424.68	8.6%	154.3
1992	278	625.67	7.0%	143.2	1992	116	317.15	8.5%	161.4	1992	258	467.27	10.0%	169.8
1993	278	641.28	2.5%	146.7	1993	116	336.71	6.2%	171.3	1993	258	490.44	5.0%	178.2
1994	278	676.44	5.5%	154.8	1994	116	362.25	7.6%	184.3	1994	258	504.86	2.9%	183.4
1995	281	695.88	2.9%	159.2	1995	116	381.80	5.4%	194.3	1995	258	542.73	7.5%	197.2
1996	281	737.14	5.9%	168.7	1996	116	410.75	7.6%	209.0	1996	258	593.81	9.4%	215.8
1997	287	751.99	2.0%	172.1	1997	115	429.12	4.5%	218.3	1997	257	592.84	-0.2%	215.4
1998	287	781.33	3.9%	178.8	1998	115	455.78	6.2%	231.9	1998	257	611.71	3.2%	222.3
1999	294	798.73	2.2%	182.7	1999	115	492.59	8.1%	250.6	1999	258	668.61	9.3%	242.9
2000	297	820.73	2.8%	187.8	2000	117	503.98	2.3%	256.4	2000	261	703.56	5.2%	255.6
2001	301	822.48	0.2%	188.2	2001	118	538.68	6.9%	274.1	2001	261	786.39	11.8%	285.7

TABLE 5: SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY (13 titles dropped; 17 titles added)					TABLE 6: SOCIAL SCIENCES (9 titles dropped; 12 titles added)					TABLE 7: U.S. DOCUMENTS (14 titles dropped; 10 titles added)				
Year	Number of Titles	Average Price	Price Change	Index	Year	Number of Titles	Average Price	Price Change	Index	Year	Number of Titles	Average Price	Price Change	Index
1984	281	295.36	—	100.0	1984	159	283.82	—	100.0	1984	203	97.37	—	100.0
1985–87	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1985–87	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1985–87	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1988	302	378.37	N/A	128.1	1988	154	343.18	N/A	120.9	1988	190	101.89	N/A	104.6
1989	302	420.19	11.1%	142.3	1989	154	345.10	0.6%	121.6	1989	188	110.79	8.7%	113.8
1990	303	443.36	5.5%	150.1	1990	156	370.40	7.3%	130.5	1990	188	101.45	-8.4%	104.2
1991	302	483.90	9.1%	163.8	1991	156	398.76	7.7%	140.5	1991	188	107.74	6.2%	110.7
1992	301	529.35	9.4%	179.2	1992	154	420.24	5.4%	148.5	1992	187	112.18	4.1%	115.2
1993	301	560.45	5.9%	189.8	1993	154	448.88	6.8%	158.2	1993	187	117.93	5.1%	121.1
1994	301	593.73	5.9%	201.0	1994	154	466.86	4.0%	164.5	1994	187	121.98	3.4%	125.3
1995	301	640.14	7.8%	216.7	1995	154	487.16	4.3%	171.6	1995	170	121.28	-0.6%	124.6
1996	301	675.82	5.6%	228.8	1996	154	513.08	5.3%	180.8	1996	170	129.37	6.7%	132.9
1997	302	716.95	6.1%	242.7	1997	151	536.85	4.6%	189.2	1997	169	151.38	17.0%	155.5
1998	302	757.33	5.6%	256.4	1998	152	557.34	3.8%	196.4	1998	169	162.32	7.2%	166.7
1999	301	804.40	6.2%	272.3	1999	152	577.89	3.7%	203.6	1999	166	166.57	2.6%	171.1
2000	299	866.69	7.7%	293.4	2000	152	600.06	3.8%	211.4	2000	168	195.16	17.2%	200.4
2001	303	924.29	6.6%	312.9	2001	155	624.62	4.1%	220.1	2001	164	197.26	1.1%	202.6

category, nine titles were dropped and 12 were added. Table 7, “U.S. Documents,” had a very modest increase (+1.1%); 14 titles were dropped and 10 titles were added. This continues a trend, observed for a number of years, of fewer and fewer U.S. documents being published in paper format, and therefore eligible for inclusion in this index.

Table 2, “Business,” proved to be the most problematic, both in the number of titles requiring replacement (40 dropped and 44 added) and in understanding why the average price increase was so low (+0.2%). Those of us who have consistently purchased business serial services over the years know that these services have steadily increased in price, but the index states otherwise. Understanding the discrepancy between

experience and data required examining the data at the title level as well as broadly. In the case of the “Business” titles, there was a larger number of replacements than is usual. Although this index is maintained by adding titles that correspond closely to those dropped, this proved to be very difficult with the “Business” titles. Many of the serial services no longer offered in paper were some of the most expensive titles in this category; however, few similarly priced replacement titles could be identified to add to the index. The average price for the dropped titles was \$990.65; the average price for the added titles was \$640.20. These averages, coupled with the large volume of replacement titles (over 13% of the titles in the 2000 index were replaced), have

resulted in averages for all the business titles to appear to be very slight.

In 1998, the base year for this index was set at 1984 to ease comparison with other price indexes. Since 1984, the average price for a serial service subscription has increased by a factor of almost 2.5. Over this time period, “Science and Technology” titles have more than tripled in price, while “Law” and “General and Humanities” are just below that threshold. “Social Sciences” and “U.S. Documents” have more than doubled in price. “Business” remains the sole category that has not doubled (or more) since 1984. For the entire index, no year has experienced increases less than 3.9%, and in the majority of years it has exceeded 5%, including the last three years. ♦