

U.S. Serial Services Price Index for 2003/2004

by

Nancy Chaffin and Ajaye Bloomstone

This is a combined report on the 40th and 41st annual surveys of U.S. Serial Services, a product of the ALA/ALCTS Library Materials Price Index Committee, as researched and reported by Nancy Chaffin and Ajaye Bloomstone.

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 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 current terminology, these are print integrating resources. 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. In practice, the titles in this category also include serials issued as replacements, such as directories, procedures, and policy manuals, and legal materials that fall outside either "periodical" or "integrating resource" definitions, such as sets of case law.

A total of 1310 titles were included in the 2003 data for Tables 1-7 and a total of 1326 title for 2004. In 2003, 58 titles were dropped from the index, having been discontinued altogether or having been discontinued in paper. Fifty-seven titles were identified as 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. In 2004, 38 titles were dropped¹ and 54 were added based on the same criteria. As in most of the recent years past, a little over half of the titles were dropped from the index due to their conversion to electronic versions only, usually Web-based. The remainder of the titles ceased publication. In cases where a title underwent straightforward name changes, it was considered the same resource.

The authors determined prices for the titles and identified replacement titles by consulting publisher lists (many of which were available on publisher's Web sites), by contacting publishers by telephone and e-mail, from subscription vendor databases, and from library subscription records.

The data for the 2003 index show that the average 2003 price for U.S. Serial Services titles in the sample is \$800.74 (Table 1). This is a 7.2% increase over the 2002 average, and over 2.5 times the average price for 1984. The data for the 2004 index show the average that year to be \$857.96 (Table 1), a 7.2 increase over the 2003 average, very similar to 2003.

Tables 2 through 7 show the average price changes by subject (including "U.S. Documents") and the numbers of titles added and dropped for both years. Changes within the indexes will be discussed by category for each year.

¹ A total of 38 titles dropped for both 2003 and 2004 is merely coincidence.

Table 2 is the index for titles in the "Business" category. For 2003, "Business" titles increased in price by 7.3 %, the greatest price increase in this category since 1991. This was the 3rd largest price increase for that year. In this index, 19 titles were dropped and 15 titles were added, resulting in a total of 302 titles. This was one of the most volatile of the titles lists in 2003. In 2004, "Business" titles increased in price by 7.0%, and although this was very similar to the increase observed the year before, in 2004 this was 4th largest price increase of the categories. The title list for 2004 was more stable than the previous year, with 1 title dropped and 9 titles added.

Table 3 contains the index for titles in the "General and Humanities" category. In 2003, prices in this category increased 4.8%, the lowest increase for that year. Three titles were dropped and 2 titles were added in 2003. In 2004, however, prices in this category increased 11.3%, tying with "U.S. Documents" (discussed below) as the category with the highest price increase. In 2004, 4 titles were dropped from this index and 1 title was added.

Table 4, the "Law" category, had the largest price increase in 2003, 9.1%. Four titles were dropped and 11 titles added to this index in 2003. In 2004, "Law" titles underwent a more modest price increase. At 6.5%, "Law" titles were the next to lowest category. Also, the title list for "Law" was somewhat more stable, with only 1 title dropped and 6 titles added.

The "Science and Technology" index, Table 5, has the highest average price of the indexes -- \$1,054.03 in 2003 and \$1108.86 in 2004, and in 2003 this index had the second greatest price increase, 8.1%. There was moderate volatility in the title list, with 10 titles dropped and 7 titles added. In 2004, "Science and Technology" continued to

have the highest average price, but, at 5.2%, the increase was the lowest of the indexes. The change in the title list of this category was also more modest, with no titles dropped and 6 added.

Prices for titles in Table 6, "Social Sciences" increased an average of 6.3% in 2003, the second lowest for that year. The total number of titles remained stable, with 4 titles dropped and 4 titles added. However, in 2004, titles in this category increased in price by 10.1%; this category showed the third highest increase for that year. In 2004, the number of titles included in the index decreased; 6 titles were dropped and 1 was added.

In 2003, Table 7 "U.S. Documents" was the only index to show a decrease in average prices, -6.7%. This was deletion/addition of the titles in the index. Eighteen titles were dropped, and although another 18 titles were added to the index, few were identified that closely matched in price the relatively expensive titles that were dropped. This was corrected somewhat with the location of more expensive titles to add to the index in 2004, where the price increase of 11.3% was the largest increase (tied with "General and Humanities"). Note that in 2004 26 titles were dropped and 31 were added. Much of the volatility in this category can be attributed to the migration of increasing numbers of federal government titles to Web access only. The "U.S. Documents" category dropped the largest number of titles as a result of no longer being available in print.

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 in the United States has increased by a factor of nearly 3 times. Over this time period, 3 of the

categories, "Science & Technology", "Law", and "General and Humanities" titles have more than tripled in price; should pricing trends continue (and there is no reason to think otherwise), "Social Sciences" titles will also have tripled in the next two or three years. The remaining categories have more than doubled, although price increases for "Business" and "U.S. Documents" are still below the 2.5X mark.

Nancy J. Chaffin is the Metadata Librarian at Colorado State University Libraries, Fort Collins, Colorado. Ajaye Bloomstone is the Acquisitions Librarian at the Paul M. Hebert Law Center Library, Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The U.S. Serial Services Price Index is produced for the American Library Association/Association for Library Collections and Technical Services/Library Materials Price Index Committee.

TABLE 1**U.S. SERIAL SERVICES
(excluding "Wilson Index")
(excluding RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS as of 1988)**

(2003: 38 titles dropped; 54 titles added)

(2004: 58 titles dropped; 57 titles added)

YEAR	# TITLES	AVERAGE PRICE	PRICE CHANGE	INDEX
1984	1537	295.13	--	100.0
1985-87	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1988	1310	341.32	N.A.	115.7
1989	1308	363.20	6.4%	123.1
1990	1308	377.24	3.9%	127.8
1991	1307	412.38	9.3%	139.7
1992	1294	445.37	8.0%	150.9
1993	1294	466.57	4.8%	158.1
1994	1294	489.76	5.0%	165.9
1995	1280	522.01	6.6%	176.9
1996	1280	556.58	6.6%	188.6
1997	1281	578.22	3.9%	195.9
1998	1282	604.31	4.5%	204.8
1999	1286	638.18	5.6%	216.2
2000	1294	671.94	5.3%	227.7
2001	1302	711.07	5.8%	240.9
2002	1311	747.16	5.1%	253.2
2003	1310	800.74	7.2%	271.3
2004	1326	857.96	7.1%	290.7

TABLE 2**BUSINESS**

(2003: 19 titles dropped, 15 titles added)

(2004: 1 title dropped, 9 titles added)

YEAR	# TITLES	AVERAGE PRICE	PRICE CHANGE	INDEX
1984	289	437.07	--	100.0
1985-87	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1988	281	458.33	N.A.	104.9
1989	281	493.23	7.6%	112.8
1990	281	523.79	6.2%	119.8
1991	281	584.93	11.7%	133.8
1992	278	625.67	7.0%	143.2
1993	278	641.28	2.5%	146.7
1994	278	676.44	5.5%	154.8
1995	281	695.88	2.9%	159.2
1996	281	737.14	5.9%	168.7
1997	287	751.99	2.0%	172.1
1998	287	781.33	3.9%	178.8
1999	294	798.73	2.2%	182.7
2000	297	820.73	2.8%	187.8
2001	301	822.48	0.2%	188.2
2002	306	849.65	3.3%	194.4
2003	302	911.89	7.3%	208.6
2004	310	975.45	7.0%	223.2

TABLE 3**GENERAL & HUMANITIES**

(2003: 3 titles dropped; 2 titles added)

(2004: 4 titles dropped; 1 title added)

YEAR	# TITLES	AVERAGE PRICE	PRICE CHANGE	INDEX
1984	122	196.55	--	100.0
1985-87	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1988	116	225.95	N.A.	115.0
1989	116	255.27	13.0%	129.9
1990	116	274.39	7.5%	139.6
1991	116	292.23	6.5%	148.7
1992	116	317.15	8.5%	161.4
1993	116	336.71	6.2%	171.3
1994	116	362.25	7.6%	184.3
1995	116	381.80	5.4%	194.3
1996	116	410.75	7.6%	209.0
1997	115	429.12	4.5%	218.3
1998	115	455.78	6.2%	231.9
1999	115	492.59	8.1%	250.6
2000	117	503.98	2.3%	256.4
2001	118	538.68	6.9%	274.1
2002	118	569.02	5.6%	289.5
2003	117	596.5	4.8%	303.5
2004	114	663.75	11.3%	337.7

TABLE 4**LAW**

(2003: 4 titles dropped; 11 titles added)

(2004: 1 title dropped; 6 titles added)

YEAR	# TITLES	AVERAGE PRICE	PRICE CHANGE	INDEX
1984	272	275.23	--	100.0
1985-87	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1988	265	338.13	N.A.	122.9
1989	265	354.32	4.8%	128.7
1990	264	390.98	10.3%	142.1
1991	264	424.68	8.6%	154.3
1992	258	467.27	10.0%	169.8
1993	258	490.44	5.0%	178.2
1994	258	504.86	2.9%	183.4
1995	258	542.73	7.5%	197.2
1996	258	593.81	9.4%	215.8
1997	257	592.84	-0.2%	215.4
1998	257	611.71	3.2%	222.3
1999	258	668.61	9.3%	242.9
2000	261	703.56	5.2%	255.6
2001	261	786.39	11.8%	285.7
2002	262	839.65	6.8%	305.1
2003	269	916.06	9.1%	332.8
2004	274	975.82	6.5%	354.5

TABLE 5**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

(2003: 10 titles dropped; 7 titles added)

(2004: 0 titles dropped; 6 titles added)

YEAR	# TITLES	AVERAGE PRICE	PRICE CHANGE	INDEX
1984	281	295.36	--	100.0
1985-87	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1988	302	378.37	N.A.	128.1
1989	302	420.19	11.1%	142.3
1990	303	443.36	5.5%	150.1
1991	302	483.90	9.1%	163.8
1992	301	529.35	9.4%	179.2
1993	301	560.45	5.9%	189.8
1994	301	593.73	5.9%	201.0
1995	301	640.14	7.8%	216.7
1996	301	675.82	5.6%	228.8
1997	302	716.95	6.1%	242.7
1998	302	757.33	5.6%	256.4
1999	301	804.40	6.2%	272.3
2000	299	866.69	7.7%	293.4
2001	303	924.29	6.6%	312.9
2002	304	975.49	5.5%	330.3
2003	301	1054.03	8.1%	356.9
2004	307	1108.86	5.2%	375.4

TABLE 6**SOCIAL SCIENCES**

(2003: 4 titles dropped; 4 titles added)

(2004: 6 titles dropped; 1 title added)

YEAR	# TITLES	AVERAGE PRICE	PRICE CHANGE	INDEX
1984	159	283.82	--	100.0
1985-87	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1988	154	343.18	N.A.	120.9
1989	154	345.10	0.6%	121.6
1990	156	370.40	7.3%	130.5
1991	156	398.76	7.7%	140.5
1992	154	420.24	5.4%	148.1
1993	154	448.88	6.8%	158.2
1994	154	466.86	4.0%	164.5
1995	154	487.16	4.3%	171.6
1996	154	513.08	5.3%	180.8
1997	151	536.85	4.6%	189.2
1998	152	557.34	3.8%	196.4
1999	152	577.89	3.7%	203.6
2000	152	600.06	3.8%	211.4
2001	155	624.62	4.1%	220.1
2002	156	656.54	5.1%	231.3
2003	156	698.13	6.3%	246.0
2004	151	768.44	10.1%	270.7

TABLE 7**U.S. DOCUMENTS**

(2003: 18 titles dropped; 18 titles added)

(2004: 26 titles dropped; 31 titles added)

YEAR	# TITLES	AVERAGE PRICE	PRICE CHANGE	INDEX
1984	203	97.37	--	100.0
1985-87	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1988	190	101.88	N.A.	104.6
1989	188	110.79	8.7%	113.8
1990	188	101.45	-8.4%	104.2
1991	188	107.74	6.2%	110.7
1992	187	112.18	4.1%	115.2
1993	187	117.93	5.1%	121.1
1994	187	121.98	3.4%	125.3
1995	170	121.28	-0.6%	124.6
1996	170	129.37	6.7%	132.9
1997	169	151.38	17.0%	155.5
1998	169	162.32	7.2%	166.7
1999	166	166.57	2.6%	171.1
2000	168	195.16	17.2%	200.4
2001	164	197.26	1.1%	202.6
2002	165	202.6	2.7%	208.1
2003	165	189.05	-6.7%	194.2
2004	170	210.39	11.3%	216.1