

Serials Price Projection Report

2022

Each year, EBSCO surveys a wide range of publishers and reviews historical serials pricing data to provide our customers with serials price projections to assist them in budgeting for the upcoming renewal season. While the serials price forecasts are based upon careful analysis, we recommend customers exercise caution when using these projections as they rely on historical trends and current estimates.

2022 Price Projections

At the time of writing, we expect the overall effective publisher price increases for academic and academic medical libraries for 2022 (before any currency impact) to be in the range of **3 to 5 percent overall, with the range for print titles being slightly higher and the range for online titles being slightly lower**. Also important is the role of e-journal packages in the information marketplace. More than half of EBSCO's sales for 2021 were from e-journal packages; likewise, library budgets are, in large part, spent on these collections. As a result, their impact on the overall serials price increase is significant. We expect the overall average price increase for **e-journal packages**, including provisions for mandatory take-over titles, upgrades, etc. to be in the range of **1 to 3 percent**.

Factors that Influence Pricing

For decades, the serials information marketplace saw steady annual publisher price increases, with no indication of change. Last year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic impacts, many publishers kept prices flat or implemented the lowest annual price increase in their history.

Economic factors continue to have an impact on library budgets and publisher price increases. In the U.S., the CARES federal stimulus package has provided some relief for academic institutions, though not enough to cover all losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Librarians remain watchful that additional budget cuts could come as federal stimulus money expires. The U.S. economy is creeping back toward pre-pandemic levels and unemployment is slowly declining. However, U.S. inflation is notably on the rise which could result in future higher publisher price increases. The U.S. dollar has weakened over the past year relative to the euro, British pound, and other world currencies. Outside the U.S., there are areas with even larger library budget contractions and heightened economic concern. Reporting indicates Australian universities collectively experienced a decline of AU\$1.8 billion in revenue last year due to much lower international student enrollment resulting from border closures due to

COVID-19. Additionally, Australia's fiscal 2022 federal budget indicates a decrease of 8.3 percent in total government funding for higher education.

Open Access (OA) continues to be a major influencer in the scholarly information marketplace. The Read & Publish (RAP) model, a license option that bundles together an institution's access to a publisher's subscription content with the ability of that institution's authors to publish openly through its journals, is gaining traction. In general, these RAP deals shift how the cost of previous e-packages is allocated by moving a portion of the cost to the "publish" side of the equation. The portion of funds moved from the "read" side to the "publish" side vary by deal, but in general, the articles published by the institution's authors become free to the world with the institution or funder paying for the publishing of the article. Based on the hundreds of RAP deals EBSCO transacted in 2021, the average overall RAP deal cost is generally at or above the previous "read-only" e-package deal cost. In European countries, centralized national funding strategies, which pull funds away from individual libraries to be used for national OA publishing deals, have been catalysts for large Read & Publish agreements with most of the major publishing houses. In the U.S., RAP has rolled out slower than in Europe, due in part to the U.S. higher education funding model, which is more diffused and distributed among states and institutions with less central federal control.

Though the migration from print to electronic format has been underway for decades, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of electronic resources and has shown a bright light on the lower utility of print subscriptions. Library non-renewal of print subscriptions intensified in 2021, and this trend is expected to continue, especially as publishers are more and more often setting a different price point and/or setting a different price increase for print compared to electronic.

Discussions about the value of e-journal packages are not new, and as e-journal packages continue to have the most significant impact on the disposition of libraries' budgets, they are the natural target to downsize or outright cancel as budget pressures continue. Librarians are closely evaluating content use, value and quality compared to the price, as well as availability of the content via other means. Though the projected price increase for e-packages is moderate compared to individual subscription price rises, any increase creates challenge for institutions facing ongoing budget pressures.

Currency Impact

It is important to note that only a portion of most libraries' spend is for material priced by publishers in a currency other than the library's local currency. The percentage of non-local currency spend varies by country and institution based on the library's collection. For example, less than 5 percent of non-U.S. titles are priced by publishers in a non-U.S. currency for the U.S. market. As a result, currency fluctuations have a very minimal impact on prices for U.S. librarians. Customers in other countries typically are subject to more significant currency impact due to a higher proportion of their titles being priced by publishers in currencies that are not the customer's currency. For customers in the U.K. and Eurozone countries, generally 50 to 60 percent of content spend is priced by publishers in their local currencies. Libraries in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, South Africa, and other countries generally have much higher ratios of their spend allocated to titles priced in other currencies by publishers and therefore can expect currency fluctuations to have a more significant impact on their prices. As always, and depending on library location geographically, EBSCO recommends customers add an additional 2 to 4 percent to the estimated price increases when budgeting to protect themselves from a possible shift in currency in which they are invoiced between now and the time subscription payments are made.

As mentioned above, we are currently projecting price increases for individual titles priced in the publishers' base currencies of 3 to 5 percent. *Projected Price Increases by Customer Billing Currency* shown in the table below are based on currency exchange rates as of this writing vs. exchange rates in late fall of 2020 during the ordering and invoicing season for 2021. An increase of more than 3 to 5 percent reflects an adverse currency impact on the billing currency. An increase of less than 3 to 5 percent reflects a favorable currency impact.

Projected Price Increases by Customer Billing Currency

Billing Currency*	Journals Priced by Publishers in U.S. Dollars %	Journals Priced by Publishers in British Pounds %	Journals Priced by Publishers in Euros %
Australian dollar	3 to 5	7 to 9	2 to 4
British pound	-1 to 1	3 to 5	-2 to 0
Canadian dollar	0 to 2	4 to 6	-1 to 1
Euro	4 to 6	8 to 10	3 to 5
New Zealand dollar	0 to 2	4 to 6	-1 to 1
South African rand	-1 to 1	1 to 3	-2 to 0
U.S. dollar	3 to 5	7 to 9	2 to 4

**Customers should consider the amount of their purchases priced by publishers in currencies other than their local currency when applying these estimates to their collection expenditures for purposes of estimating potential overall annual price increases. For example, generally less than five percent of U.S. customers' content is priced by publishers in a currency other than U.S. dollars.*

Impact of Publishers E-journal Packages on Budgeting

These price projections are primarily intended as a general indication for an “average” academic or academic medical library’s non-e-journal package serials collection. We have separately indicated an estimated price increase for e-journal packages. While we have estimated the impact of annual price increases of multi-year e-package licenses, each library will have different factors to consider related to the impact of their e-packages on their overall serials budgeting. These include the individual annual price increases built into their licenses, the timing of their renewal, requirements related to publishers acquiring or disposing of journals, and the percentage of their overall serials spend consumed by e-journal packages. These factors could result in a library’s effective spending increase being above or below the average increase forecasted for e-journal packages above.

Conservative Budgeting

The currency exchange environment is often dynamic and difficult to project. EBSCO continually communicates with major publishers regarding projected price increases and monitors world currency exchange rates. Should we see major developments in these areas, we will update our information regarding projections.

Other Budgeting Tools

EBSCO provides price projections as one tool in the budgeting process to assist customers in forecasting the effect of future serials costs on their budgets. EBSCO offers other budgeting and collection analysis tools that provide information specific to a customer's collection. Some of the most popular are:

- [The Five-Year Journal Price Increase History \(2017-2021\)](#), which shows price fluctuations over the last 5 years for typical library lists invoiced in U.S. dollars. Data for each library type is based on a merged list of titles ordered by representative libraries purchasing in U.S. dollars. Each list is based on the actual ordering patterns of the libraries in the sample.
- The Five-Year Price Analysis by Title shows the last 5 years of order history for titles on subscription, with year-to-year price variance (amount and percentage).
- The Historical Price Analysis report, which tracks the retail cost of all titles ordered through EBSCO over a specified period of time and provides percentage-of-change comparisons.
- The Customized Budget Analysis report, which provides specific price projections for customers' titles ordered through EBSCO.
- The Online Availability report (with estimated prices), which lists journals on order with EBSCO that are available online either in combination with or separate from the print subscription (displays each publisher's access requirements and the institutional rate for the online journal).
- Collection Development and Assessment reports, which allow customers to evaluate the importance of particular titles to their collections.