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Periodicals Price Survey 2005: Choosing Sides

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There is a global struggle over open access and no immediate answer to the dilemma. Where are librarians in this debate?

By Lee C. Van Orsdel & Kathleen Born

CHOOSING SIDES

The scholarly communications market, which exploded last year with headline-grabbing news of research libraries balking at publisher deals, governments investigating the scientific publishing system, and reformers touting author-pays business models, has settled into an uneasy state of relative calm. On the surface, not a lot has changed. Fleets of salespeople continue to push bundles of journal content from the big STM (scientific, technical, and medical) publishers, and budget-starved libraries continue to cut journals they can't afford. Beneath the surface, however, the tide of change runs strong.

One indicator is the sharpened rhetoric that signifies growing consensus about the nature of the ongoing "serials crisis." Librarians are quick now to challenge anyone who suggests that an infusion of new funds from their institutions will solve the problem. Higher education itself is in a funding crisis and in no position to rescue library materials budgets. Nor will the crisis be solved by lower rates of annual inflation for journal titles. For decades we focused concern on annual price increases while base prices for scientific journals, in particular, cumulated into such a mass that the entire scholarly communications system has become unsustainable.

As evidence mounts that the STM journals crisis has weakened other segments of the scholarly publishing market, including book publishers, virtually everyone concedes that change is necessary and that it must come quickly. Our "serials crisis" has, in fact, morphed into what some would call a crisis of public policy, pulling patient advocates, taxpayers, researchers, grant agencies, legislators, and antitrust lawyers into unlikely alliances with academic librarians—all united in pursuit of more open and affordable access to scientific information for the good of society as a whole. These alliances do not exclude scholarly publishers, many of whom welcome the benefits of opened access. Even publishers whose opposition is fixed would have to agree that the open access (OA) movement is pushing the market. But there is little agreement on how or to what extent.

There is no immediate answer to the dilemma. Journal prices are not dropping, and academic library budgets are not rising. OA business models, where publication costs are paid upfront and subscribers have free access, are too new to attract established publishers in great numbers. Legislative initiatives to force authors to archive publicly funded research findings on the web have stalled for the moment in the United States

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and Britain, although major private research foundations like the Wellcome Trust have begun to mandate web posting of research articles resulting from their grants. The advent of Google Scholar may jumpstart scholars into cooperating with the open access repository movement, but that is speculation at this point. So librarians study use data, correlate use to price, and cut every journal that is not essential, while publishers labor over complicated pricing models looking for a way to maintain revenue in a struggling market.

This year's periodicals price study looks at these and other factors that are reshaping the serials marketplace. Three Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) databases—Arts and Humanities Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index, and Science Citation Index—provide the 4,893 titles used in the study. These databases typically reflect the journal holdings of large research libraries. For smaller academic libraries, we include an analysis of 2,759 journals in EBSCO Publishing's Academic Search Premier.

TABLE 1 AVERAGE 2005 PRICE FOR SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES

DISCIPLINE	AVERAGE PRICE PER TITLE
Chemistry	$2,868
Physics	2,719
Engineering	1,683
Biology	1,494
Technology	1,460
Math & Computer Science	1,267
Astronomy	1,235
Geology	1,197
Botany	1,109
Food Science	1,107
Health Sciences	1,081
General Science	1,059
Zoology	1,053
Geography	945
Agriculture	799

SOURCE: *LJ* PERIODICAL PRICE SURVEY 2005

Cost history for the study was pulled from EBSCO's database of 282,000 serial title listings. For practical reasons, the data are limited to prepriced titles (as opposed to standing-order and bill-later titles) that can be ordered through a vendor. The data are current as of February 11, 2005.

Price engineering for 2005

While strategies of reform are discussed in distant venues, publishers, vendors, and librarians deal with the frustrations of a changing marketplace that defies all attempts to standardize pricing or practices. Tiered pricing, by which the subscribing institution is slotted by type and size into a pricing matrix, has caught on at Project Muse, BMJ (British Medical Journal), and a number of society presses. Some publishers are trying a use-based pricing scheme that starts with an estimated cost for a bundle of content and adjusts future pricing based on usage over the year. Science uses this approach with its top customers.

Less transparent is the maddeningly obscure "quoted pricing" favored by Wolters Kluwer Health, the Nature group, and many others. The move to customized pricing mirrors the move by libraries to customized bundles of journals. Whether negotiated by one library or a consortium, these complex pricing schemes can turn seemingly simple orders for e-journals into full negotiations, draw-

TABLE 2 COST HISTORY GROUPED BY LC SUBJECT

SUBJECT	AVERAGE NO. OF TITLES 2001–2005	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2001	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2002	% OF CHANGE '01–'02	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2003	% OF CHANGE '02–'03	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2004	% OF CHANGE '03–'04	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2005	% OF CHANGE '04–'05	'01–'05 % OF CHANGE
Agriculture	141	$585	$626	7	$677	8	$749	11	$799	7	37
Anthropology	39	246	266	8	287	8	312	9	328	5	33
Art & Architecture	62	107	109	2	117	7	126	7	135	7	26
Astronomy	9	918	1,088	19	1,160	7	1,253	8	1,235	-1	35
Biology	194	1,094	1,171	7	1,276	9	1,392	9	1,494	7	37
Botany	55	814	864	6	931	8	1,017	9	1,109	9	36
Business & Economics	246	491	539	10	594	10	646	9	702	9	43
Chemistry	179	2,140	2,321	8	2,505	8	2,699	8	2,868	6	34
Education	92	261	285	9	308	8	335	9	367	9	41
Engineering	224	1,217	1,323	9	1,430	8	1,550	8	1,683	9	38
Food Science	16	818	860	5	926	8	1,014	10	1,107	9	35
General Science	59	755	828	10	914	10	988	8	1,059	7	40
General Works	63	76	78	3	87	11	98	14	110	11	45
Geography	52	685	769	12	835	9	912	9	945	4	38
Geology	73	884	951	8	1,025	8	1,115	9	1,197	7	35
Health Sciences	1,217	781	839	7	915	9	999	9	1,081	8	38
History	192	115	121	5	134	11	149	11	163	10	42
Language & Literature	283	108	115	7	127	10	141	11	154	9	42
Law	66	158	173	10	190	9	207	9	221	7	39
Library & Information Science	51	267	285	7	314	10	345	10	386	12	45
Math & Computer Science	179	968	1,031	6	1,103	7	1,197	9	1,267	6	31
Military & Naval Science	7	345	329	-5	355	8	385	8	447	16	30
Music	40	77	86	12	93	8	97	4	114	18	49
Philosophy & Religion	115	140	150	7	166	10	183	10	197	8	41
Physics	197	2,012	2,192	9	2,365	8	2,550	8	2,719	7	35
Political Science	39	212	243	14	271	12	303	12	333	10	57
Psychology	124	340	371	9	397	7	435	9	472	9	39
Recreation	17	120	138	14	145	6	156	8	179	15	49
Sociology	231	311	340	9	371	9	419	13	455	9	46
Technology	185	1,057	1,152	9	1,252	9	1,359	9	1,460	7	38
Zoology	84	820	888	8	954	7	988	4	1,053	7	28

SOURCE: *LJ* PERIODICAL PRICE SURVEY 2005

ing out the renewal process for weeks or months in many cases and stretching the renewal season into the winter months.

It's the cost, stupid

Despite years of outrageous periodical prices in some fields, the data on the extent of the problem continues to mount—and continues to shock. An exhaustive study commissioned by Oxford University Press (OUP) and conducted by a British university, Scholarly Journal Prices: Selected Trends and Prices reveals great disparity among the pricing behaviors of 12 prominent scholarly publishers (http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/dis/lisu). The report gives five years of pricing data, publisher by publisher and comparatively across six broad subject fields.

TABLE 3 AVERAGE PRICE PER TITLE BY COUNTRY 2005

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF ISI TITLES	AVERAGE PRICE PER TITLE	COUNTRY	NUMBER OF ISI TITLES	AVERAGE PRICE PER TITLE
Ireland	33	$2,354	Czech Republic	12	$324
The Netherlands	473	2,327	Spain	14	311
Austria	23	1,346	Japan	63	309
England	1,002	1,327	Hungary	5	297
Germany	287	1,317	Slovakia	5	294
Singapore	12	1,182	Australia	24	230
Switzerland	78	1,028	Canada	97	226
New Zealand	22	801	Norway	11	211
United States	2,145	679	Scotland	8	172
China	5	612	Italy	44	171
Sweden	7	430	Finland	5	136
Russia	16	411	Belgium	13	127
Israel	12	353	India	7	126
France	99	344	Mexico	6	123

AVERAGE COST OF AN ISI TITLE: $1,008

SOURCE: *LJ* PERIODICAL PRICE SURVEY 2005

TABLE 4 COST HISTORY BY CONTINENT/COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

CONTINENT / COUNTRY	AVERAGE NO. OF TITLES 2001–2005	AVERAGE COST 2001	AVERAGE COST 2002	% OF CHANGE '01–'02	AVERAGE COST 2003	% OF CHANGE '02–'03	AVERAGE COST 2004	% OF CHANGE '03–'04	AVERAGE COST 2005	% OF CHANGE '04–'05	'01–'05 % OF CHANGE
NORTH AMERICA											
United States	2,146	$498	$537	8	$581	8	$631	9	$679	8	36
Canada	96	169	178	5	189	6	211	11	226	7	33
Other	7	101	107	6	109	1	121	11	122	1	21
Average for all North America	**2,249**	**483**	**520**	**8**	**563**	**8**	**611**	**9**	**657**	**8**	**36**
EUROPE											
France *	93	233	234	1	280	19	334	19	344	3	48
Germany *	292	887	970	9	1,069	10	1,217	14	1,317	8	49
Ireland *	34	1,726	1,845	7	2,003	9	2,145	7	2,354	10	36
Italy *	43	118	116	-1	129	11	157	22	171	9	45
The Netherlands *	475	1,751	1,873	7	2,023	8	2,187	8	2,327	6	33
Switzerland	77	700	764	9	804	5	932	16	1,028	10	47
United Kingdom	997	915	1,023	12	1,114	9	1,213	9	1,310	8	43
Other	112	370	420	13	457	9	516	13	505	-2	36
Average for all Europe	**2,123**	**1,028**	**1,126**	**10**	**1,227**	**9**	**1,345**	**10**	**1,426**	**6**	**39**
ASIA											
Japan	62	280	277	-1	279	1	290	4	309	7	11
Other	47	392	405	3	425	5	444	5	482	8	23
Average for all Asia	**109**	**327**	**332**	**1**	**341**	**3**	**356**	**4**	**385**	**8**	**17**
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND	46	294	341	16	405	19	458	13	503	10	71
SOUTH AMERICA	14	85	87	3	91	4	91	0	95	4	12
AFRICA	9	72	88	22	109	24	106	-3	111	4	54

* Included in European Monetary Union

SOURCE: *LJ* PERIODICAL PRICE SURVEY 2005

TABLE 5 COST HISTORY BY BROAD SUBJECT

	AVERAGE NO. OF TITLES 2001–2005	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2001	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2002	% OF CHANGE '01–'02	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2003	% OF CHANGE '02–'03	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2004	% OF CHANGE '03–'04	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2005	% OF CHANGE '04–'05	'01–'05 % OF CHANGE
ARTS AND HUMANITIES CITATION INDEX											
U.S.	503	$123	$131	6.5	$141	7.6	$153	8.5	$162	5.9	31.7
NON-U.S.	532	158	170	7.6	191	12.4	218	14.1	235	7.8	48.7
SOCIAL SCIENCES CITATION INDEX											
U.S.	822	250	270	8.0	294	8.9	321	9.2	349	8.7	39.6
NON-U.S.	587	497	547	10.1	598	9.3	662	10.7	721	8.9	45.1
SCIENCE CITATION INDEX											
U.S.	1,200	786	848	7.9	918	8.3	994	8.3	1,068	7.4	35.9
NON-U.S.	1,676	1,266	1,375	8.6	1,492	8.5	1,622	8.7	1,732	6.8	36.8

SOURCE: *LJ* PERIODICAL PRICE SURVEY 2005

Some interesting factoids: Elsevier has the highest overall median price, based on its entire portfolio of journals. Cambridge University Press has the lowest. Elsevier also has the highest median price in each of the six subject fields, though Kluwer and Sage come close to Elsevier's median price in the social sciences and humanities. Sage achieved the dubious distinction of highest overall rate of price increase between 2000 and 2004 (94%). Librarians looking for comprehensive cost/value analysis for journals in biomedicine will find a wealth of data in the report.

Well, it's also the impact

Impact factors are a common measure of the quality of a particular journal based on the number of times its articles are cited by researchers in the field. The implication is that the higher a journal's impact factor, the higher the quality of the journal and the more the publisher can charge for a subscription. The OUP study looked for that correlation for biomedical titles and failed to find it, i.e., the priciest titles were not necessarily generating the highest impact factors. The study found a stronger correlation between number of pages and price. These kinds of data are essential tools in the current serials market. More are needed. Impact and usage data are changing the way librarians discern the value of journal subscriptions, and they are voting with their renewal lists.

Ditching print in America

Journal cancellations, particularly print duplicates, are epidemic in American libraries. A Publishers Communications Group survey in the spring of 2004 reports that 84% of respondents said they

Periodical Prices for College and Medium-Sized University Libraries

An analysis of EBSCO*host* Academic Search Premier is included for the benefit of mid-sized and smaller academic libraries that find the ISI data less representative of their collections. Table 8 gives price history by discipline for the core collection of journals found in the database, and price projections for 2006 are found in Table 7.

TABLE 7 2006 COST PROJECTIONS BY TITLES IN ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER

ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER	NO. OF TITLES	% OF LIST	2005 COST	% OF COST	PROJECTED % OF INCREASE	PROJECTED 2006 COST	% OF COST	PROJECTED OVERALL % INCREASE
U.S.	1,230	46.2	$449	35.4	8	$485	35	9.3
NON-U.S.	1,435	53.8	818	64.6	10	900	65	

SOURCE: *LJ* PERIODICAL PRICE SURVEY 2005

TABLE 8 COST HISTORY FOR TITLES IN ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER

SUBJECT	AVERAGE NO. OF TITLES 2001–2005	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2001	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2002	% OF CHANGE '01–'02	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2003	% OF CHANGE '02–'03	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2004	% OF CHANGE '03–'04	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2005	% OF CHANGE '04–'05	'01–'05 % OF CHANGE
Agriculture	51	$432	$458	6	$519	13	$624	20	$697	12	61
Anthropology	28	175	219	25	247	13	283	14	322	14	84
Art & Architecture	32	120	129	8	141	9	156	10	173	11	45
Astronomy	12	1,294	1,441	11	1,537	7	1,685	10	44	-97	-97
Biology	73	851	922	8	1,058	15	1,192	13	1,361	14	60
Botany	22	827	850	3	939	10	1,086	16	1,197	10	45
Business & Economics	88	187	220	17	240	9	271	13	297	10	59
Chemistry	45	1,604	1,937	21	2,094	8	2,294	10	2,469	8	54
Education	186	219	244	11	267	10	306	15	344	12	57
Engineering	142	671	774	15	850	10	937	10	1,033	10	54
Food Science	16	337	378	12	404	7	475	18	516	9	53
General Science	42	459	521	14	565	8	634	12	692	9	51
General Works	63	71	74	4	82	11	89	8	95	7	33
Geography	37	286	333	16	381	14	430	13	499	16	74
Geology	21	567	568	0	644	13	735	14	815	11	44
Health Sciences	604	460	519	13	588	13	663	13	742	12	61
History	169	142	152	7	173	14	192	11	212	11	49
Language & Literature	110	100	111	11	122	10	136	11	150	11	50
Law	68	207	227	10	247	9	276	12	298	8	44
Library & Information Science	45	102	114	12	121	6	131	8	139	6	36
Math & Computer Science	88	657	791	20	859	9	939	9	1,035	10	58
Military & Naval Science	16	152	167	9	181	8	196	9	219	11	44
Music	17	67	98	45	110	12	109	-1	130	19	93
Philosophy & Religion	120	146	158	9	178	12	196	10	217	11	49
Physics	84	1,623	1,856	14	2,000	8	2,172	9	2,384	10	47
Political Science	56	202	237	17	262	10	292	11	329	13	63
Psychology	67	318	352	11	386	10	439	14	498	13	57
Recreation	16	127	145	14	153	5	169	11	187	10	46
Sociology	194	201	228	14	256	12	286	12	317	11	58
Technology	59	667	763	14	850	11	935	10	1,047	12	57
Zoology	1	559	625	12	65	-90	65	0	65	0	-88

SOURCE: *LJ* PERIODICAL PRICE SURVEY 2005

Periodical Prices for Public and School Libraries

Titles in EBSCO Publishing's general index, Magazine Article Summaries, reflect the typical interests of schools and small public libraries. Table 9 provides historical price data for titles in the index. Price increases for next year are expected to be in the range of 5%–7%.

TABLE 9 COST HISTORY FOR TITLES IN MAGAZINE ARTICLE SUMMARIES ULTRA

MAGAZINE ARTICLE SUMMARIES ULTRA	AVERAGE NO. OF TITLES 2001–2005	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2001	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2002	% OF CHANGE '01–'02	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2003	% OF CHANGE '02–'03	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2004	% OF CHANGE '03–'04	AVERAGE COST PER TITLE 2005	% OF CHANGE '04–'05	% OF CHANGE '01–'05
U.S.	264	$52	$55	6	$58	5	$60	3	$63	5	21
NON-U.S.	34	105	109	4	127	17	141	11	154	9	47

SOURCE: *LJ* PERIODICAL PRICE SURVEY 2005

cancel print when electronic is available. Theoretically, print cancellations should help a publisher's bottom line unless advertising revenue is affected. The same can't be said for cancellations of e-journals. Publishers must have cringed when OhioLINK, the prototype of shared virtual libraries, announced in February that it will cut electronic titles in 2005 and 2006. Somewhat counter to the American experience, much of the rest of the world continues to take print. European libraries favor print because of an anomaly in the VAT structure that protects print, but not online, subscriptions from taxation.

Scandal du jour

Emerald Publishing gets this year's award for the most egregious breach of ethics. The publisher formerly known as MCB University Press has for nearly 30 years been republishing articles without notification that they were duplications—560 duplicated articles in 73 journals at latest count. Philip Davis of Cornell, who discovered the duplications, found articles were at times published simultaneously within journals in the same discipline, many of which carried hefty price tags.

As Davis points out, this practice raises serious questions for the libraries that unknowingly purchased the duplicates and for the peer-review process that may have been compromised by editors who had a commercial stake in the company. It will be interesting to see if this is an unwelcome anomaly or merely the first shoe to drop in a scandal that, either way, does the commercial publishing sector no good.

Parliamentary backbone

Proponents of open access experienced disappointment in November when the British government declined to enact recommendations from a parliamentary committee that would have put Britain into a leadership role in the OA movement. The committee had endorsed principles of open access and proposed strategies to get scientific information into the hands of the public. Various groups in England are working to implement some of the recommendations, but the government continues to waffle on the core issues raised in the report. Apparently they have chosen not to upset wealthy STM publishers, some of the largest of whom are headquartered in the UK.

Playing U.S. hardball

A similar setback was experienced in the United States. Last summer Congress asked the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop a mandate to get its grant-funded research findings into PubMed Central (NIH's open archive) within six months of the article publication date. Powerful alliances for and against the proposed policy were formed, and arguments continued through the fall. A watered-down proposal, announced in February, removed the mandate for grantees to deposit articles and essentially lengthened the embargo period to 12 months for articles that are deposited, with some exceptions. Again, the commercial publishers seemed to win, aided mightily by a vocal core of society publishers that saw the proposal as a threat to business. While the new NIH policy is better than no policy, the fear is that it will make the 12-month embargo the de facto standard for some time to come, unnecessarily stifling the timely exchange of scientific information.

OA: Europe to take a look

Meanwhile, the European Commission (EC) has begun a study of scientific journal publishing that will try to reconcile concerns about access with the economic interests of publishers. In announcing the report, the EC indicated that Europe leads America in producing scientific publications by a good 10%, yet the publications of its authors are cited less frequently. The EC sees a possible link between access and impact and apparently recognizes that the roots of change may lie in the market itself. The report is due later this year. Interestingly, the British Office of Fair Trad-

TABLE 6 2006 COST PROJECTIONS BY BROAD SUBJECT

	NO. OF TITLES	% OF LIST	2005 COST	% OF COST	PROJECTED % OF INCREASE	PROJECTED 2006 COST	% OF COST	PROJECTED OVERALL % INCREASE
ARTS AND HUMANITIES CITATION INDEX								
U.S.	490	53.0	$79,619	43.8	7.0	$85,192	43.2	8.4
NON-U.S.	434	47.0	102,140	56.2	9.5	111,843	56.8	
SOCIAL SCIENCES CITATION INDEX								
U.S.	779	57.7	271,864	39.8	9.0	296,332	39.7	9.3
NON-U.S.	571	42.3	411,589	60.2	9.5	450,690	60.3	
SCIENCE CITATION INDEX								
U.S.	1,127	41.3	1,204,002	30.3	7.5	1,294,302	30.3	7.5
NON-U.S.	1,602	58.7	2,774,380	69.7	7.5	2,982,459	69.7	

PROJECTED OVERALL INCREASE FOR ALL ISI TITLES: 7.8%

SOURCE: *LJ* PERIODICAL PRICE SURVEY 2005

ing has stated it is waiting for the EU report to decide how it can best monitor the market that it pronounced two years ago as "not working well."

Don't believe the rumors

Despite rumors to the contrary, the OA movement remains a powerful catalyst for change. The number of journals in the Directory of Open Access Journals stood at 1,463 in February, double that of a year ago, with substantial numbers of peer-reviewed titles in fields like biology (61), chemistry (40), general medicine (164), neurology (31), public health (58), geology (22), philosophy and religion (48), education (110), and computer science (45). An ISI study found that the open access journals it tracks for impact are doing well, even when compared with very well-established traditional journals. As other studies of OA vs. toll-access articles emerge, indications are that OA literature will exceed toll-protected literature in both citations and downloads.

There are signs that commercial publishers are willing to experiment. OUP switched to an open access business model for Nucleic Acids Research, a top-rated journal. A number of hybrid OA experiments are underway that give authors a choice about when and how to make their articles free and open on the web, usually but not always based on an author's willingness to pay up front. Blackwell's Online Open service and Springer's Open Choice program are two early examples.

Cell Press is representative of another type of hybrid. Starting in January 2005, it is offering free access to the content of its e-journals once they are 12 months old. HighWire Press and others have been doing this for a long while, but it's the first time an Elsevier journal with the cachet of Cell Press has done so. These initiatives seem designed to keep authors within the folds of the traditional publishers rather than lose them to emerging journals that are fully open access.

To post or not to post

One of the reasons the UK and U.S. proposals drew such fire from publishers is the fear of losing revenue if authors are allowed (or, worse, required) to post their articles in disciplinary repositories after they are published. Over 90% of publishers now allow authors to post articles on homepages or in institutional repositories. If authors took advantage of these rights, theoretically most scientific research articles would be available to anyone around the world for free, with minimal delays for embargoes imposed by some publishers. Since authors have largely not bothered to do that, publishers consider the risk to be minimal. Disciplinary repositories, like NIH's PubMed Central, may appear more threatening because they encourage direct and timely exchange among researchers. In physics, however, where arXiv has been a hugely popular repository for years, publishers have coexisted nicely with an open access repository, with no reported attrition in subscriptions caused by the access to preprints and postprints.

Publishers in other fields, however, aren't buying the idea that sales will remain stable or grow when the information is available on the web for free. Nature, for example, seems to have been spooked by the NIH proposal. A day before the expected NIH announcement, Nature imposed a six-month embargo on its authors, who had long enjoyed a liberal policy of self-archiving whenever they wished. Google's entry into scholarly communications may make these discussions somewhat moot if the added exposure drives up both use and publisher revenue.

The Google phenomenon

Google Scholar, now in beta test, aims to deliver scholarly content to new audiences by crawling repositories and web pages where articles have been posted before or after formal publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Researchers may have been slow to adapt to the notion of self-archiving their scholarly output on the web, but Google may entice cooperation because of its proven success in reaching worldwide audiences.

The majority of STM publishers already open their metadata to crawling by Google and a score of other third-party web services because they recognize the value of the increased exposure for their content. CrossRef Search, a well-established linking service founded and owned by STM publishers, and Google Scholar are already collaborating. Beginning this month, Google Scholar will give top billing to a publisher's official link whenever multiple versions of an article appear. Publishers are already seeing new revenue from pay-per-view requests that come directly from the web, rather than through library-sponsored databases. It will be interesting to see how the presence of the ubiquitous browser affects the traditionally conservative habits of scholars and publishers who, up until now, have had a rather exclusive relationship.

Budgeting for 2006

Libraries are buying scholarly journals in a market dominated by a small number of publishers, the result of a decade of consolidations in the industry. STM publishers are scattered around the globe, as are their customers, providing a natural hedge against the kinds of currency fluctuations that used to wreak havoc with library budgets. Given a U.S. dollar that was weak against the pound and the euro for most of the year, for example, last year's price increases for European titles were lower than expected. Publishers may have been more concerned about cancellations than currencies. U.S. publishers also seemed to show restraint when they set prices for 2005. We may see a trend emerging of overall increases in the 7%–9% range, rather than the 9%–11% of past years. On the other hand, if the dollar continues to weaken, look for price hikes to return to the higher range for 2006. ■

OUR "SERIALS CRISIS" HAS MORPHED INTO A CRISIS OF PUBLIC POLICY, WITH AN UNLIKELY ALLIANCE UNITED IN PURSUIT OF MORE OPEN AND AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION