




Academic Library Pricing Dataset for SciFinder Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus: 2018-2024

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Abstract

This dataset contains database pricing and agreements received through public records requests made to members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and a few non-ARL research libraries. Pricing from the years 2018 to 2024, depending on the institution, is included for three premium academic databases: SciFinder from the American Chemical Society's Chemical Abstract Service, Web of Science from Clarivate, and Scopus from Elsevier. The pricing in this dataset is difficult to acquire and of significant interest to libraries that license these products and those wishing to investigate pricing strategies and approaches in the library database market.

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Data Availability: The data and materials described in this Data in Action article can be freely and openly accessed on Iowa State University's DataShare under doi.org/10.25380/iastate.26081797.v1. Please see Table 1 for details and links to the data.

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Background

The data was gathered as part of a research study into pricing fairness in the academic library database market. The dataset contains pricing paid by member libraries of the Association of Research Libraries and a few non-ARL member libraries for three premium bibliographic databases. SciFinder scholar is published by Chemical Abstract Services, a division of the American Chemical Society (ACS). SCOPUS is published by the commercial publisher Elsevier. Web of Science is a product of Clarivate. This type of pricing data, which is typically subject to non-disclosure requirements, is difficult to obtain and is not commonly made publicly accessible. Pricing data can be used by customers—in this case libraries, consortia, and other organizational and corporate subscribers—seeking market insight and intelligence to inform negotiations and fair pricing (Thornton and Brundy 2021). It may also be used by competitors in establishing their own price points.

Value of the Data

- The data is unique. Due to the non-disclosure restrictions found in institutional licenses with academic publishers like ACS, Clarivate, and Elsevier, academic library pricing, like that found in this dataset, is not easily accessible.
- The data includes consortia and direct pricing, allowing easy comparison and understanding of group discounting strategies.
- The data is actionable. Individual libraries and library consortia may use the data to determine whether they pay fair market prices for their subscriptions.

Related Research Article(s)

A related article is forthcoming.

Data Description and Methods

The pricing information in the dataset is the result of over forty public records requests made during a 15-month period to public member libraries of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). ARL is a member organization made up of many of the largest US and Canadian academic, public, and governmental research libraries. The ability, process, and cost for an out-of-state resident to make public records requests varies from state to state. Public record requests were not made to ARL public members when such requests were for any reason not allowed, when the cost was prohibitive, or when the request process was overly burdensome or opaque. Pricing was not received for every request made. To increase the size of the dataset, a small number of research libraries that are not part of ARL were also included in the public records requests. These libraries were included because they were similar in size and mission to ARL member libraries, and they had relatively easy public records request processes.

The public records were requested for:

- 2019 - 2022 pricing and license agreement for Clarivate Web of Science
- 2019 - 2022 pricing and license agreement for Elsevier Scopus
- 2019 - 2022 pricing and license agreement for American Chemical Society/CAS SciFinder

To facilitate pricing analysis and comparison, database prices were taken from the publisher agreement or institutional invoice that was shared through public records requests or from information already made publicly accessible. All prices are in US dollars. Pricing was entered in an Excel spreadsheet for the years provided. If pricing was not provided for a given year, the corresponding cell did not have a value entered and is empty. Because Web of Science is priced as a suite of related products rather than as a stand-alone product like Scopus and SciFinder Scholar, the product detail tables for Web of Science were copied from the shared agreements and are included in a separate pdf file for easy reference. Lastly, redacted license agreements received through the public records request are included in a downloadable zip folder.

Overview of Data Files/Datasets

Table 1: Overview of “Academic Library Pricing Dataset for SciFinder Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus, 2018-2024”

Lable	Name of data file/data set	File types (file extension)	Data repository and identifier (DOI or accession number)
Data file 1	Readme	Portable document format file (.pdf)	DataShare Iowa State University DOI: 10.25380/iastate.26081797.v1
Data file 2	Brundy Thronton Web of Science Pricing Details 2024	Portable document format file (.pdf)	DataShare Iowa State University DOI: 10.25380/iastate.26081797.v1
Data file 3	Premium Pricing Pro-ject_ Data Article_Clean 6-5	Excel spreadsheet file (.xlsx)	DataShare Iowa State University DOI: 10.25380/iastate.26081797.v1
Data file 4	Public Records Documents	Zip file (.zip)	DataShare Iowa State University DOI: 10.25380/iastate.26081797.v1

Limitations

- Pricing was provided by public institutions subject to public records disclosure requirements. It was not possible to obtain pricing from private institutions.
- Some institutions released records outside of the years requested. Pricing was included, when provided, for the years spanning 2018 to 2024.

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Data Availability

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Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

References

- Brundy, Curtis, and Joel Thornton. 2024. "Academic Library Pricing Dataset for Scifinder Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus, 2018-2024". Iowa State University. <https://doi.org/10.25380/iastate.26081797.v1>.
- Thornton, Joel B. and Curtis Brundy. 2021. "Elsevier Title Level Pricing: Dissecting the Bowl of Spaghetti." *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 9 (1): eP2410. <https://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.2410>.