Price Index for Legal Publications Committee 2009-2010 Annual Report

The 2009-10 Price Index for Legal Publications Committee consists of: Diana C. Jaque, chair; Judy C. Janes, vice chair; and Jean Mattimoe, Lorna Tang, Arturo Torres, Lyn Warmath, and Regina Watson, members. Compiling the Price Index is an arduous task and takes a substantial amount of work by each committee member. On behalf of AALL, thanks to each committee member for their hard work in 2009-2010.

We continued to fulfill our charge to collect prices of legal publications. However, this year provided some challenges. Thomson Reuters had not submitted prices for the Price Index since 2003, but they agreed to provide pricing for the 2009 Price Index. We worked to identify a current title list for Thomson Reuters publications and submitted it to them in late November. In the spring, Thomson Reuters submitted 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 new set prices. Historically, prices within the Price Index have been for supplementation. After Thomson Reuters submitted new set prices, the chair looked more closely at other publishers’ prices within the Price Index. It appears that other publishers have also supplied new set pricing between the years 2005 and 2008. This means that next year’s committee will need to devote a substantial amount of time to clean up the Price Index for the long term.

For 2009, we compiled pricing for most titles within the index, and we will publish the main portion of the index. Due to the substantial number of titles from Thomson Reuters, it is not possible to bring them into the main portion of the Price Index without resetting the base. As part of the clean up process, the base will need to be reset in 2010, and it was decided not to reset the base two years in a row. Members will be able to view the Thomson Reuters prices in a separate table, and the Thomson Reuters 2005-2009 prices will be available within the Price Index’s query function.

Going forward, the committee will need to address several things in cleaning up the Price Index. It will need to develop written standards for the type of pricing provided for each material type (i.e., new set versus supplementation). Currently, no written documentation exists about what prices are included in the Price Index. This makes it extremely difficult to determine when a publisher has fulfilled its obligation to provide pricing under the AALL Sponsorship Policy. Second, the committee must consider resetting the base in 2010 due to the substantial influx of Thomson Reuters titles and other inconsistencies within the 2005-2009 indexes. Lastly, the committee must work with the AALL Board to look at the long-term continuity of this committee. The Price Index Committee should consider whether it would be more consistent if the Price Index had an editor or a long-term advisor.

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1Thomson Reuters (then called West) prices appear in the 2004 Price Index, but the prices were collected by Price Index Committee members based on their library’s payments for each title. In 2005, the AALL Executive Board directed the committee to include only pricing that was received directly from the publishers (2008 Price Index Introduction available at http://www.aallnet.org/members/price_index-2008.asp). As a result, no pricing for Thomson Reuters titles appears in the Price Index between 2005 and 2008.
Respectfully Submitted,
Diana C. Jaque
Chair 2009-2010