

CCL-EAR Committee Review EBSCO Upgrades March 2014

All California community colleges receive Academic Search Premier, Business Source Elite, and MasterFILE Premier as part of the EBSCO state-wide-buy. EBSCO's tiers or levels—from entry level to fully loaded—are elite, premier, and complete. These reviews are both an assessment of the individual upgrades as well as the complete database packages that they will form. The following rating scale was used to assess each upgrade:

- #1 --- Not recommended
- #2 --- Recommended with reservations as noted
- #3 --- Recommended
- #4 --- Outstanding offer

A common theme that emerged through the analysis of these three collections is the need to wade through large amounts of information to find known content. By known content, we mean journals, reports, and ebooks from reputable academic publishers. There is a lot of unknown in these upgrades—international, open source, and undistinguished publishers abound. The issue of quality at the expense of quantity needs to be considered when making decision about upgrades.

After reading this review, please post your comments or questions on the CCL-EAR review site: <http://www.cclibraries.org/reviews/review-index/#ebSCO>

Academic Search Complete

When first looking at the unique titles in Academic Search Complete, the reviewers broke down title lists into four categories—

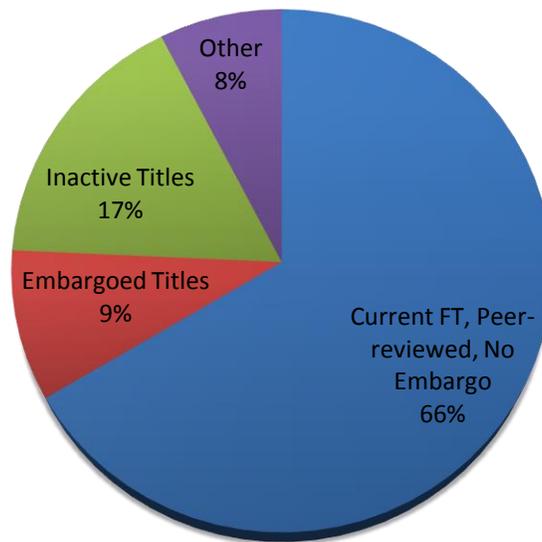
1. **Current, non-embargoed, peer-reviewed titles:** this category would seem to be the most valuable, mainly because libraries can expect to get the latest peer-reviewed content.
2. **Embargoed titles:** this category includes titles that are delayed from 6 – 18 months.
3. **Inactive titles:** this category includes titles that have both a start date and an end date. Libraries will only have access to the static archive of titles.
4. **Other titles:** this category includes magazines, trade publications, and reports. All of these titles are current.

The reviewers also tried to identify open access journals, which were found across these four categories.

Source Breakdown

At first glance, the makeup of this upgrade collection is promising-- 66% of the collection is made up of peer-reviewed journals, which are current with no embargo. The sizes of the other three categories are relatively small-- Inactive Titles make up 17% of the collection, Embargoed Titles, 9%, and Other, 8%.

Initial Breakdown of Unique Titles in Academic Search Complete Upgrade



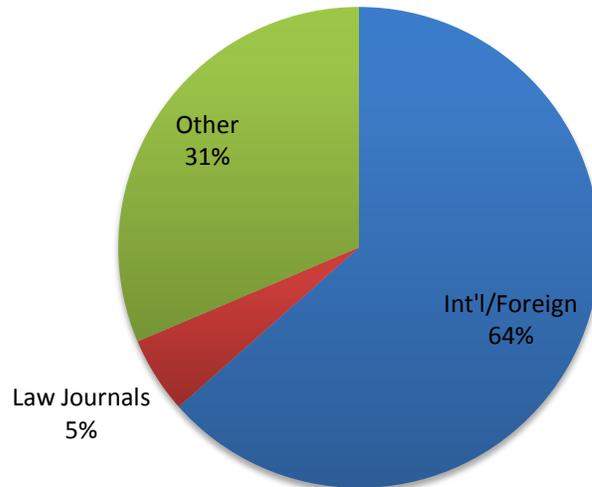
Current, non-embargoed, peer-reviewed

When looking at this category closely, the first thing that jumps out is the number of titles from international publishers¹. Of the 3137 titles in this category, 1991 or 63% are from international publishers.² 161 or 5% are law journals. Of the 985 journals in the Other category, there are just a handful from well-known academic publishers such as Elsevier, Cambridge University Press, Sage, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, etc. and a very small number from university presses.

¹ International publisher - titles published outside of the United States.

² This is a conservative number as reviewers were not able to verify each title and publisher.

Breakdown of Peer-reviewed Journals That Are Current with No Embargo



Embargoed Titles

In looking at the 438 embargoed titles (9% of the upgrade collection), the reviewers found excellent academic content. 345 titles or 79% of this category were made up of journals from the following publishers (all titles are 12 month embargoes):

- Cambridge University Press – 25 titles
- John Wiley and Sons – 17 titles
- Nature Publishing Company – 13 titles
- Oxford University Press – 44 titles
- Routledge – 26 titles
- Springer Science & Business Media B.V. – 67 titles³
- Taylor & Francis – 55 titles
- Wiley-Blackwell – 98 titles

While these journals are all embargoed, the reviewers feel that the content is still valuable to community colleges. The committee has discussed the issue of embargoed content as recently as October 2010. The Committee wrote a short comparison review of large database packages, which included Academic Search Premier. Many of the journals in ASP have embargoes, but the committee concluded that, “The value of the content outweighs the inconvenience of embargoes. In our experience, embargoed titles are not detrimental to research at the community college level” (Council of Chief Librarians California Community Colleges Electronic Access and Resources Committee).

Final Recommendation - 2

³ 5 of the 67 titles are embargoed for 6 months.

When making a decision about this collection, libraries should look closely at the list of embargoed titles; there may be some overlap with other databases such as JSTOR or Project Muse. This makeup—a small percentage of well-known publishers—is not uncommon in the database business, and there is value in the over 400 quality academic journals in this upgrade collection.

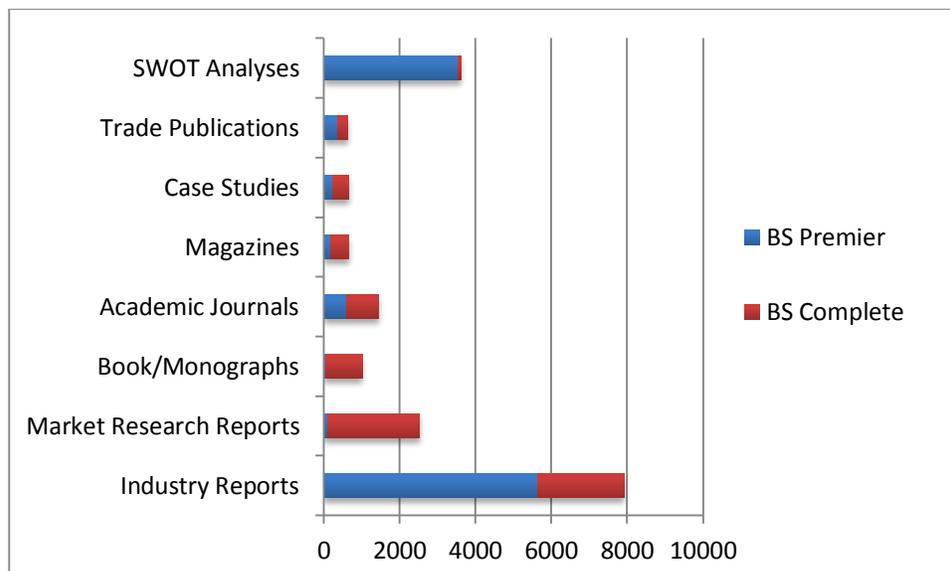
The value in the small number of embargoed titles comes with a caveat. By excessively padding title lists, EBSCO is making it harder for students to find solid academic content. When only roughly 9% of titles are from reputable academic publishers, there are thousands of journal articles to wade through when students begin their search. Also, keep in mind that Academic Search Premier, which is included in the state-wide-buy, is also structured this way, so an upgrade to Academic Search Complete will ultimately make finding quality academic content harder.

Business Source Premier and Complete

The business databases are a more complex animal. Business Source Elite, the entry-level database, is included in the statewide buy, and this is essentially a business journal and magazine/trade publication database. While this database does include “Other sources”—SWOT analyses, country reports, case studies, books/monographs, market research reports, and industry reports—most of these sources are either inactive or they are not full-text. The preponderance of inactive titles means that many of the industry or market research reports are singletons, covering a company or industry for only one particular year. Much of the country reports content is already available in Country Watch, which is provided free to California community colleges.

Business Source Elite is missing the content that many community college business instructors desire for student research—industry and market research reports and SWOT analyses. It is important to focus on these source types when considering an upgrade.

There are two levels of upgrades for Business Source Elite—Premier is the first level of upgrade and Complete is the second. If you subscribe to the Complete level, libraries will have access to content in the Premier level as well as the Complete level.



EBSCO has not evenly spread out sources types in the two levels of upgrades. They have essentially excluded market research reports and books/monographs from the first upgrade level, Premier. Libraries will have to upgrade to Complete in order to have a balanced coverage of business sources. Below is a breakdown of the sources in each upgrade, including an upgrade level recommendation for most colleges.

Industry Reports

Business Source Premier	Business Source Complete
<p>There are 5,636 full-text industry reports, 2,403 are listed as current. Almost all of the current titles are published by MarketLine, a well-known and reputable publisher of financial analysis. There are roughly 130 industries profiled that are current. For most industries there are individual reports by country as well as a global report.</p> <p>For example, there are 8 individual reports for the Toy & Games Industry (see figure 1), 19 for the Trucks Industry, 29 for the Tobacco Industry—the number of reports differs for each industry. For most industries there is a United States report as well as international reports.</p> <p>There are 194 industries profiled that are inactive. The end date for these industry reports range from 2002 – 2012.</p>	<p>The next level up adds 1,975 Industry reports-- the highlight being 362 titles from The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). Starting in 2009, these are yearly reports from the following select industries: automotive, consumer goods, energy, financial services, healthcare, and telecoms. These reports cover a much broader spectrum. There is a 6-month embargo on these reports.</p> <p>The remaining industry reports are almost all current, with approximately 40% covering industries in the United States. Unfortunately, the quality of the publishers is a mixed bag. All of reports on United States industries are published by Barnes Reports, which is not a well-known publisher of financial analysis. The remaining reports are international/foreign in scope and come from more reputable publishers: Business Monitor International, MarketLine, and Taiwan Institute of Economic Research.</p>

Figure 1. Toys & Games Industry Reports, Business Source Premier.

Toys & Games Industry Profile: Asia-Pacific
Toys & Games Industry Profile: Europe
Toys & Games Industry Profile: France
Toys & Games Industry Profile: Germany
Toys & Games Industry Profile: Global
Toys & Games Industry Profile: Japan
Toys & Games Industry Profile: United Kingdom
Toys & Games Industry Profile: United States

Recommendation: Premier. The Complete upgrade's strength lies in its international coverage, which is usually not as important to community college business curriculum as domestic coverage. Unless a college has a strong international business program, the Premier level should suffice.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Business Source Premier There are 3,555 full-text SWOT reports, 2,588 (73%) listed as current. MarketLine, a well-known and reputable publisher of financial analysis, publishes all of these reports. These reports are on individual companies, and include a brief company profile and ample analysis of company strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.</p>	<p>Business Source Complete The next level up only includes an extra 54 SWOT reports, none of which stand out as particularly significant as compared to the reports in the premier package. 45 (84%) of these reports are current.</p>
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Recommendation: Premier. The vast majority of SWOT analyses are in the Premier level. The Complete level doesn't add much in this category.

Market Research

<p>Business Source Premier There are 94 full-text market research reports, none of which are current. Reports are from 1997 to 2012.</p>	<p>Business Source Complete There are 2,427 full-text reports. These reports are the most significant part of the BSC upgrade. Most of these reports are published by Sanford C. Bernstein & Co., a well-known and respected publisher of financial analysis. These reports or "Black Books" are industry standards and include both industry and company reports and range from analysis on new markets such as "Amazon Web Services (AWS): Leading the Migration of the Datacenter to the Cloud" to analysis of more traditional markets in "Fundamental Drivers of Success for U.S. Household & Personal Products & Beverages & Snacks." While this content is excellent, much of it is quite old—starting all the way back in 1973, there are roughly 50 reports per year (at the time of this review, there were 28 reports from 2013). The content from Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. seems to be published on a year-to-year basis as opposed to a subscription model; thus it is hard to classify reports as current or inactive.</p>
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Recommendation (with reluctance): Complete. Without the Complete level upgrade, colleges will not have access to market research. While much of this information is historical, much of the material is company and product specific and the publisher is top notch. It is recommended that librarians consult with business faculty to determine how important this content is to the department.

Academic Journals

<p>Business Source Premier There are 591 academic journals in the Business Source Premier upgrade. 158 of these titles are current and peer reviewed, 190 are inactive, and 243 are embargoed (6-18 months). Like Academic Search Complete, the majority of the current, peer-reviewed titles either focus on international issues or are by academic publishers that are not well known. Similarly, the embargoed titles are mostly by well-known academic publishers: John Wiley & Sons, Oxford University Press, Routledge, Springer Science & Business Media B.V., Taylor & Francis Ltd., and Wiley-Blackwell.</p>	<p>Business Source Complete There are 855 academic journals in the Business Source Complete upgrade. 560 of these titles are current and peer reviewed, 144 are inactive, and 150 are embargoed (6 – 18 months). There is one current title that is not peer reviewed. Like Academic Search Complete, the majority of the current, peer-reviewed titles either focus on international issues or are by academic publishers that are not well known. Similarly, the embargoed titles are mostly by well-known academic publishers: John Wiley & Sons, Oxford University Press, Routledge, Springer Science & Business Media B.V., Taylor & Francis Ltd., and Wiley-Blackwell.</p>
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Recommendation: Leaning toward Premier. Both upgrades provide the EBSCO model of packaged academic content in the form of padding and embargoed titles. 41% of titles in the Premier upgrade are embargoed and from quality academic publishers, while only 17.5% in the Complete upgrade. It needs to be reiterated that, with regard to academic journal content, the higher level the upgrade, the more hidden the quality academic content becomes in the mass of journal titles.

Books/Monographs

<p>Business Source Premier There are 42 titles in the Premier level upgrade, only one having been published after 2003. The publishers are reputable.</p>	<p>Business Source Complete There are 872 titles in Complete level upgrade. Approximately half (429) of the titles are from well-known academic publishers: American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, American Management Association International, Center for Creative Leadership, EIU: Economist Intelligence Unit, Haworth Press, International Labour Organization, Springer Science & Business Media B.V. / Books, Taylor & Francis Ltd. The average publication date of these titles is February, 2002. The remaining titles range from the non-academic, <i>Not For Tourists Guide to Atlanta, 2008</i>, to the irrelevant, <i>Guide to Writing a Shopping Center Security Manual: Revised Edition</i>. In addition, many of the remaining titles focus on international business.</p>
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Recommendation: Complete. Librarians should compare books/monographs in the complete upgrade with their print and ebook collections.

Country Reports

<p>Business Source Premier</p> <p>While country reports are not a significant source type in the business upgrades, it is worth noting that the Premier level upgrade does include reports that are current and by reputable academic publishers. There are 1,193 full-text country reports, 859 (72%) listed as current. There are a number of quality publishers of country reports—Business Monitor International, CountryWatch, EIU: Economist Intelligence Unit, IHS Global Inc., MarketLine, Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development, PRS Group, Inc. EIU: Economist Intelligence Unit is the only publisher with an embargo (6 months). While California community colleges already have access to CountryWatch reports, the diversity in country reports included makes this a strong selling point of the premier package. In addition, there is a career guide series by Going Global, which provides resources for working in foreign countries.</p>	<p>Business Source Complete</p> <p>The next level up includes an extra 253 reports, but the lion share are published by CountryWatch with an additional 35 reports in French.</p>
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Recommendation: Premier. Premier offers the majority of country reports, and many are from reputable academic publishers.

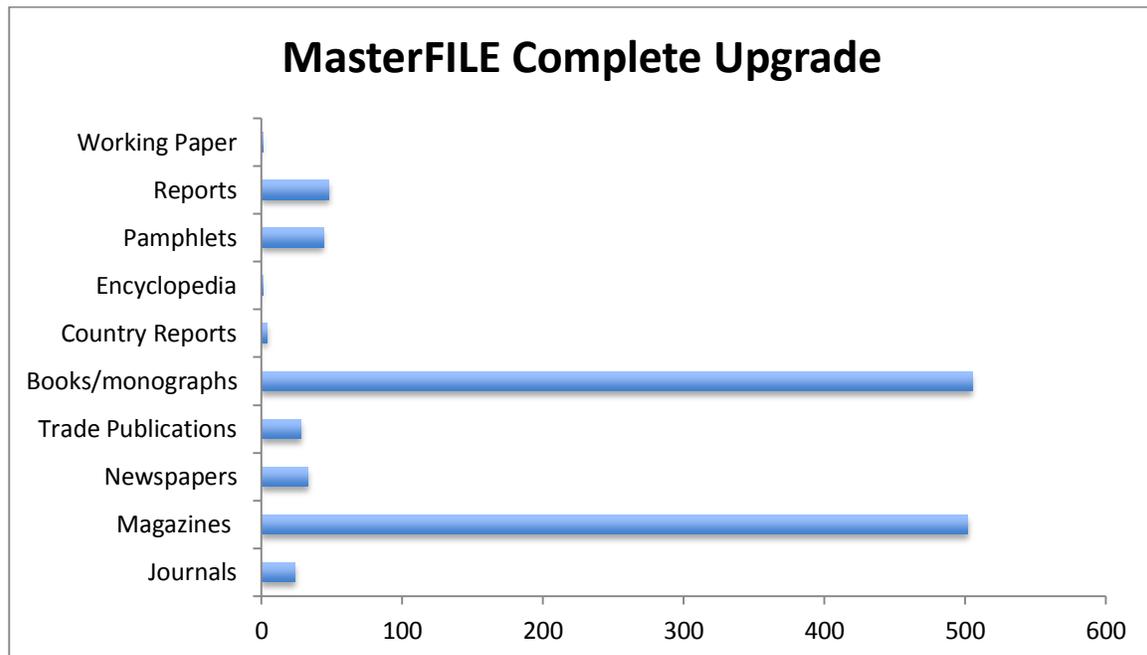
Final Recommendations

Business Source Premier – 3
Business Source Complete – 2

The Premier level is the larger of the two upgrades, and comes with a significant price tag. It offers a variety of source types—other than market research—and adds valuable content to Business Source Elite. Business Source Complete adds market research and not much else. It is unfortunate that EBSCO is requiring libraries to upgrade to the Complete level in order to get a well rounded business database. Libraries should consult with business faculty before making a decision about the Complete level upgrade.

MasterFILE Complete

The MasterFILE Complete upgrade provides little academic content. EBSCO advertises the database as a public library product, and after analyzing the title list, the reviewers wholeheartedly agree. The upgrade adds approximately 1,190 new titles. The break down is as follows:



Books

The average publication date of the books/monographs is 2005, and the most recent publication date is 2010. Books are not academic in nature. The following titles are included: *When You Have to Go to Prison: A Complete Guide for You & Your Family*, *01 Puppy-Buying Tips*, *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television & Beyond*. The upgrade includes a number of travel guides, how-to guides, and cookbooks.

Magazines

Magazines are the most valuable assets in this upgrade. All titles are full-text, and 449 of the 502 titles are current. The magazines include some excellent titles for pleasure reading—Wired, UTNE Reader, Vogue, Money, Architectural Digest, etc.—and may be attractive for academic libraries that have drastically cut print publications. There are also many magazines that will appeal to the long tail. For example: Alabama Genealogical Society Magazine, Australian Auto Action, etc.

Recommendation - 2

MasterFILE Complete is not appropriate for most academic libraries, and its composition is similar to the other EBSCO upgrades—a small number of quality titles and a lot of padding.

Works Cited

Council of Chief Librarians California Community Colleges Electronic Access and Resources Committee (CCL-EAR). "Large Database Comparison." Review. *Community College Library Consortium*. Ed. Sarah Raley. Community College League, Dec. 2010. Web. 4 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.cclibraries.org/index.html>>.