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## The Pay-Per-View Trend

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# THE PAY-PER-VIEW TREND



BY STEPHEN FADEL

**DON'T** look now, but pay-per-view appears to be gaining popularity. While two big information aggregators, Dialog and LexisNexis, have operated pay-per-view sites for a few years, many other information providers are now climbing aboard the end-user bandwagon.

For information professionals, pay-per-view sites often make good preliminary search tools. For example, I could run a quick check for market share data in the Market Share Reporter database (via AlaCarte!), search for Investext analyst reports (via OpenAccess), and search articles in more than 120 California newspapers (via NewsLibrary)—all for free and without having to pay an annual subscription fee. Pay-per-view sites can also help widen the number and variety of sources available to searchers. Finally, information professionals should be prepared to outline the strengths and weaknesses of pay-per-view sites for clients shopping for information.

When reviewing pay-per-view sites, users need to consider several factors:

- **Search Options.** Many sites offer only rudimentary search features.
- **Content.** Pay-per-view content is often a subset of total content available. For example, pay-per-view searchers using FPinfomart.ca get access to only 60 of the more than 300 mostly Canadian news sources available to regular FPinfomart subscribers.
- **Limitations on Use Agreements.** Most sites have strict usage guidelines targeted towards end users, making use by information professionals problematic.
- **Search Assistance.** Pay-per-view search support tends to be skimpy, often limited to online help documentation.
- **Price.** Buyers need to shop around, since prices vary.

## LEXISNEXIS PAY-PER-VIEW

Hosted by the information powerhouse LexisNexis, AlaCarte! [<http://alacarte.lexisnexis.com>] gives users access to about 20,000 of 32,000 LexisNexis sources. Users can access periodicals, a selection of business reference sources, case law and other legal materials, but not public records.

Searchers choose from one of three content tabs: Research, Business Intelligence, and Search by Source(s). The Research tab covers periodical content (newspapers and magazines), while Business Intelligence focuses more on business reference sources (company directories). Search by Source(s), especially useful for those familiar with LexisNexis content, enables users to search up to 10 specific sources. For example, I could limit my search to only ABI/INFORM.

AlaCarte! offers basic and advanced search screens. Basic search consists of a single text entry box with a date selection menu. In contrast, the AlaCarte! advanced search page offers one of the most robust search interfaces of all the pay-per-view

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## LexisNexis AlaCarte!

Improve your business one search at a time

Research Business Intelligence Search by Source(s)

Search Newspapers, Magazines, Journals, TV News, Archives...

Specify Date Range Previous 90 days

Use Advanced Search Terms & Conditions

Premium Research at your Fingertips

- Can't find answers on the fine Web? We've got what you need— from specialized trade journals to world-known research resources.
- Spend less time searching and more time delivering results.
- Free searches, no subscriptions required. No risk—all reward.

Learn how LexisNexis AlaCarte! helps small businesses and solo practitioners find the most relevant research, fast.

Trusted content for business leaders and professional services consultants, CEOs, financial advisors, market analysts, PR advertising, journalists.

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Figure 1: LexisNexis' AlaCarte! [<http://alacarte.lexisnexis.com>] gives users access to about 20,000 of 32,000 LexisNexis sources.

sites. Advanced search includes a Guided Search area with search options such as "with all the words" and "with the exact phrase." Advanced searchers can limit by source type, such as TV Video News, as well as search different fields, such as Company Name or Country. There's also a Boolean search area. This is where things get interesting. Users not only can use AND, OR, and NOT, but also truncation (!), proximity operators such as W/S (keywords in the same sentence), and search by file section. A search for the term superyacht in the title segment looks like this: title (superyacht!).

Depending on the type of search, results are sorted by date or relevancy. Result citations usually include the source, date, sometimes a short excerpt, and price. To view the full text, searchers can either click on the "View Now" button or use checkboxes to select multiple items and then add them to My Cart. First-time users will need to complete an online registration form. Registered users simply log in. Charges are billed to your credit card. Prices vary from \$3 for articles to \$9 for company directory listings.

If one pay-per-view site wasn't enough, LexisNexis offers a second: LexisNexis by Credit Card (LNCC) [[http://Web.lexis.com/xchange/ccsubs/cc\\_prods.asp](http://Web.lexis.com/xchange/ccsubs/cc_prods.asp)]. This second site provides access to many of the same resources covered in AlaCarte!, but with a different search interface. Compared to AlaCarte!, LNCC offers fewer advanced search options. Fees mimic AlaCarte! prices.

Unlike AlaCarte!, LNCC sells search passes. Users can pick either a daily or weekly search pass in three categories—Major Papers, Business Sources, or a combined Newspapers, Business and Financial Databases. Rates vary from \$30 (day pass—Major Papers) to \$250 (week pass—Newspapers, Business and Financial Databases).

## DIALOG'S OPEN ACCESS

Open Access from Thomson Dialog [[www.dialog.com/openaccess](http://www.dialog.com/openaccess)] enables users to search ABI/INFORM, Investex,

TableBase, and more than 240 other resources from Dialog's collection of 550-plus databases. In Open Access, periodical coverage is strong, but coverage of market research reports and company directories is weak. A full list of databases within Open Access is available from the Open Access Help menu.

On the Open Access home page, users choose from one of eight Industry Centers—Business & News, Chemistry, Engineering, Environment, Government, Intellectual Property, Medicine, or Pharmaceuticals. Open Access then prompts

Quick Logon MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED

Dialog Open Access

Quality Data...just a click away.

All you need is a credit card to receive instant access to the power of DialogDirect! No passwords, monthly fees or minimum charges. Conducting searches and displaying title lists of search results is free. Simply choose one of the following Industry Centers to start searching for the information you need.

Industry Centers

- Business & News**  
Corporate News, Business Research, Company Financials, Company Product Lines and Demographic Data. **SEARCH NOW!**
- Chemistry**  
Abstracts, abstracts, chemical data, and full text articles and reference materials related to the chemical industry. **SEARCH NOW!**
- Engineering**  
Includes aerospace technology, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering, and civil engineering, computer science, and software databases. **SEARCH NOW!**
- Environment**  
Worldwide environmental data covering the petroleum, gas, electric, and nuclear power industries and their supplies. **SEARCH NOW!**
- Government**  
Commerce Statistics and Government News and Detailed Regulatory and Legislative Information. **SEARCH NOW!**
- Intellectual Property**  
Patents, Trademarks, and Copyrights. **SEARCH NOW!**
- Medicine**  
Comprehensive, global coverage of biomedical research including medical practice and devices, therapy and treatment breakthroughs. **SEARCH NOW!**
- Pharmaceuticals**  
Track the drug pipeline, study and analyze up-to-date reference materials relating to drugs in development and new products. **SEARCH NOW!**

Dialog Member Service  
Get more information For experienced users requiring precision searching of Dialog's entire collection of databases.

Dialog Business Tools  
Tools designed to empower you

- Dialog NewsRoom
- Dialog TradeStartWeb
- Intranet Toolkit
- Journal Name Finder
- Alerting Services

Figure 2: On Dialog's Open Access home page, users choose from one of eight Industry Centers.

users to pick subcategories. For example, selecting Business & News displays the subcategories Business News, Business Research, Company Financials, Company Product Lines, and Demographic Data (US). By selecting categories, users drill down to the required search form. Then, using fill-in-the-blank text boxes, checkboxes, and pop-down selection menus, users search one or more databases.

With fewer search options than AlaCarte!, Open Access users can use the operators AND, OR, NOT, parenthesis, and truncation (\*). Advanced Dialog command language is unavailable.

Each search form provides the names of databases searched with accompanying descriptions and sample records. Often, search forms are set to search several databases at once. More experienced users would probably like the ability to limit searches to specific databases—searching only TableBase, for example. Sadly, this option is often not available.

Results, usually arranged chronologically, include entry title, date, database name, and cost. Venturing beyond the results list to view the full text, users need to pay. Two options are available—setup an account by providing contact and credit card information and selecting a password and username. Users can also enter credit card information as a visitor (no account setup necessary). Prices start at \$4.45 for articles.

## OTHER PAY-PER-VIEW SITES

Besides the diverse range of content provided by Dialog and LexisNexis, several other pay-per-view sites offer more specialized and uniform types of content. Here is a brief review of some of the more popular sites.

Alacra Store [[www.alacrastore.com](http://www.alacrastore.com)], still in beta, focuses on business information. Sources include Datamonitor, IBIS-World, Gale, Forester Research, Dun & Bradstreet, Moody's Investors Service, and others. When searching, users should remember that ADJ5 is automatically inserted between words, quotes designate phrases ("greeting card"), a minus sign excludes terms (-russia), and word stemming is automatic. Prices range from \$9.95 for articles to thousands of dollars for market research reports.

FindArticles [[www.findarticles.com](http://www.findarticles.com)] supplies a mix of free and fee access to about 900 magazines and journals. Earliest coverage dates back to 1973. Providers of fee-based content include Goliath, HighBeam, and KeepMedia. Prices vary depending on content provider.

Hosted by CanWest Interactive, FPinfomart.ca [[www.fpinfomart.ca](http://www.fpinfomart.ca)] provides pay-per-view access to 60 Canadian newspapers and newswires. Company profiles are also included. Coverage is from 2001 to the present. Prices start at \$4.95 (Canadian) for articles.

Gale's pay-per-view site, Goliath [<http://goliath.ecnext.com>], provides access to different resources including reference sources such as *American Wholesalers and Distributors*. Goliath's Industry and Market Reports include information extracted from the *Encyclopedia of American Industries, Business Rankings Annual*, TableBase, and the database Business and Industry. Prices start at \$4.95 for reference articles. Monthly and annual subscriptions are also available.

Pushing the beta time limit, Google Scholar [<http://scholar.google.com>], established in 2004, covers scholarly periodical literature from sources such as IEEE, Wiley, Ingenta, HighWire Press, and others. Unfortunately, Google still provides no source list. Prices vary depending on source.

The majority of content within HighWire [<http://highwire.stanford.edu>] covers medical and scientific periodical literature with a growing collection in the social sciences and the humanities. More than 850 periodicals are available on a pay-per-view basis with prices starting at \$5. There's also full text from more than 200 periodicals.

IngentaConnect [[www.ingentaconnect.com](http://www.ingentaconnect.com)] allows users to search more than 30,100 periodicals from a range of disciplines (a few books are also included). It supports basic Boolean operators as well as truncation (\*). Document delivery comes in three formats: online, fax, and the Ariel document delivery system. Prices start in the mid-\$20s.

## MORE PAY-PER-VIEW OPPORTUNITIES

One of the smaller pay-per-view services, KeepMedia [[www.keepmedia.com](http://www.keepmedia.com)] provides access to more than 200

publications including popular business magazines, an eclectic assortment of trade journals, a scattering of newspapers and academic journals, and about a dozen reference sources, many from Gale such as *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*. It is one of the cheaper pay-per-view sites, with prices starting at \$1.

NewsBank's NewsLibrary [[www.newslibrary.com](http://www.newslibrary.com)] covers more than 1,000 newspapers throughout the U.S., including U.S. outlying areas. Earliest coverage dates back to 1980 (*Boston Globe*). Users can limit searches to title or text as well as region, a specific state, or specific newspaper. NewsBank also operates ObitsArchive.com [[www.obitsarchive.com](http://www.obitsarchive.com)], a pay-per-view site for newspaper obituary articles, price tagged at \$2.95.

Northern Light [[www.nlresearch.com](http://www.nlresearch.com)] returned to its roots recently when it announced free searching. Once you've found useful premium information from its array of journal, magazine, and newspaper sources, or from its selected business Web sites, news wires, or white papers, you can pay by the day for \$4.95 or the month for \$9.95. Payment is by credit card.


OvidPPV [<http://ppv.ovid.com>] offers users their choice of a basic or a limited advanced search page to access roughly 650 mostly medical journals. Articles average \$25. Information professionals might also be interested in Ovid's Resource of the Month (free access to different Ovid databases each month), available from the Ovid home page [[www.ovid.com](http://www.ovid.com)].

It's hard to think of PubMed [[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez)] as a pay-per-view source. However, this large database of biomedical periodicals (more than 4,800) dating back to the 1950s does provide link-outs to Web sites such as ScienceDirect and IngentaConnect. Pay-per-view prices vary by provider.

Maintained by the publisher Elsevier, SCIRUS [[www.scirus.com](http://www.scirus.com)] provides a mix of periodical and public Web-based content focused on scientific, technical, and medical information, some free, some fee-based. Periodical sources include BioMed Central, PubMed, and ScienceDirect. Date coverage and prices vary based on periodical source. Elsevier also provides pay-per-view access to more than 1,800 STM periodicals through its product ScienceDirect [[www.science-direct.com](http://www.science-direct.com)], which offers limited search options. ScienceDirect article cost is \$30.

STN Easy [<http://stneasy.cas.org>] gives access to about 100 scientific and technical databases. Examples of databases include Derwent World Patents Index, CAPLUS, SciSearch, and INSPEC. Users must register for a free login and password before searching. Prices start at \$1.12 for patent records. Users are also charged \$2 per search.

Westlaw by Credit Card [<http://creditcard.westlaw.com>], Westlaw's pay-per-view site, provides access to two types of material—case law and briefs. Focus is on the U.S. court system covering federal, district, and state courts. Information from specialized courts such as U.S. Military Courts is also provided. Users can search by case/brief title or docket number. Individual cases cost \$13, briefs \$35.



With emphasis on science and technology and secondary coverage of medicine, law, and other topics, Wiley Interscience [www.interscience.wiley.com] lets searchers gain access to more than 700 periodicals. Setting it apart from other sites, users also can also search more than 2,000 books and more than 60 reference works, mostly in science and technology, for example, the *Kirk-Othmer Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology*. The price for periodical articles, book chapters, and reference entries appears to be a uniform \$25 per item.

Windows Live Academic Beta [http://academic.live.com] provides very basic searching to roughly 4,300 journals as well as conference proceedings with an emphasis on computer science, physics, and electrical engineering. Publishers include Elsevier, IEEE, Blackwell Publishing, John Wiley & Sons, and others. It includes useful result sort options. Date coverage and prices vary based on publisher.

Yahoo! Search Subscriptions BETA [http://search.yahoo.com/subscriptions] is yet another site that's been in beta a little too long. It gives users access to *Consumer Reports*, *Factiva*, *Financial Times*, Forrester Research, IEEE publications, LexisNexis (via AlaCarte!), *New England Journal of Medicine*,

*The Street.com*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. *The Wall Street Journal* requires users to have subscriptions. Date coverage and price vary among content providers.

### A BUSINESS MODEL TO WATCH

This article is by no means comprehensive. It introduces a wide range of potential information sources, from business to science to scholarly literature. You probably know of some pay-per-view sites not included in this article. In addition, many individual publishers—Dun & Bradstreet is one—offer pay-per-view search options on their Web site.

Like everything else affiliated with the information industry, pay-per-view continues to be an evolving business model for information providers. It certainly seems attractive to traditional online information companies in their continuing quest to gain end users as customers and not lose them to the Web search engines. Monitoring ongoing pay-per-view developments should prove useful for information professionals.

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