This study examines serials title changes in scientific, social science, and humanities serials published in the United States and Canada. The investigator compared the presence and characteristics of title changes in a sample of 632 serial publications from the disciplines of anthropology, psychology, biology, physics, and literature and linguistics. Using data in the WorldCat records for these publications, comparisons were made for the characteristics of title change histories, including life span, rate of title change, and type of title change. Results were compared with those of previous serial title change studies. Findings are consistent with earlier studies, showing that scientific publications were most likely to have a history of title changes, while humanities serials were the least likely to change title. Scientific serials were found to have a higher frequency of title changes due to changes in scope. In the context of recent changes to cataloguing rules, the implications of these results are discussed.

Headings:

- Periodicals, Humanities
- Periodicals, Social science
- Periodicals, Scientific and technical
- Serial publications/Cataloging
- Titles of books, periodicals, etc.
SERIAL TITLE CHANGES:
A COMPARISON OF SCIENTIFIC, SOCIAL SCIENCE
AND HUMANITIES PUBLICATIONS

by
Rebecca Soltyss Jones

A Master’s paper submitted to the faculty of the
School of Information and Library Science of the
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science
in Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina
July, 2003

Approved by:

_______________________
Advisor
Table of Contents

Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1
Literature Review .................................................................................................... 3
Methodology ............................................................................................................. 9
Results and Discussion .......................................................................................... 13
Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 22
Notes ...................................................................................................................... 23
References .............................................................................................................. 24
“The only constant of serials is change”

Introduction

According to Regina Reynolds, head of the National Serials Data Program, “serials that change their titles are both the bane of serial catalogers’ work lives and the equivalent of a “Full Employment Act for Serial Catalogers” (2000, p. 28). Mering and Simpson assert that because they tackle challenges such as title changes, “serials librarians have the job of untangling some of the most complicated bibliographic control problems in the library world” (1996, p. 41). Bibliographic control of serials is crucial: by some estimates, in many libraries, seventy-percent or more of the use of materials involves serials (Osmus, 1992).

What is the nature of serial title changes that creates so much work and evokes such strong reactions among serials librarians and staff? The answer lies in the chain of work processes that is set-off when any serial publication changes its title. The first challenge is for the serials librarian or staff to become aware of the title change. This would seem straightforward; unfortunately, publishers do not consistently inform subscribers when they alter their publications’ titles (Afes & Wrynn, 1993; Foggin & Gammon, 1991; Tuttle, 1996). Ideally, publishers would provide advance notice of any title change through a prominent statement in an issue or accompanying notice, or even via a separate letter or email to the librarian (ibid). In reality, the astute serials check-in
staff will notice the new title on the first issue, and the title is then brought to the attention of the serials cataloger. Nelson describes the work resulting from title changes as “genuine processing boondoggles” (1993, p. 4). Tuttle (1996) outlines this work, which includes both bibliographic and physical processing: the serials cataloger must evaluate the title change (which can be a complicated and time-consuming puzzle) and alter and create new records, then staff must update acquisitions records, change the shelf labels and relocate the unbound publication on the shelf, as well as alter the binding records. Several authors mention an aspect to title changes which may be overlooked in libraries: when a title change reflects a significant change in content, it may be time for the collection development librarian to re-evaluate the serial publication for the library’s collection (Afes & Wrynn, 1993; Foggin, 1992; Nelson, 1993).

Osmus points out that earlier research found that in fact serials catalogers spend more of their time recataloging serials publications due to title changes and other changes, such as main entry, format, and holdings changes, than they do cataloging new serials titles (1992).

While there is much discussion in the serials literature about title changes as problematic and challenging, there have been very few published studies of serials title changes. A small-scale study of serials title changes was conducted and selected aspects of these serials title changes were analyzed in order to contribute new information about title changes and to provide an update to the data gathered in earlier studies.
Literature Review

The literature on serials title changes, while small, emerged during the 1970s and continued into the 1990s (Mering and Simpson, 1996). Even librarians outside of serials have heard of the “Worst Serial Title Change of the Year Award” which began in 1974 and is still given annually by ALA. From 1973 until 1980, the newsletter, *Title Varies*, was published by serials librarians to alert their colleagues of “awful” title changes and cataloging and other issues related to serials title changes, as well as to inform publishers of librarians’ concerns about their title change practices (Mering & Simpson, 1996).

*Cataloging approaches:*

The rules and guidelines covering serials title changes have evolved over the years and continue to improve the ability of serials catalogers to better handle title changes: “what does not constitute a title change has been clarified and expanded over the past twenty years” (Mering & Simpson, 1996, p. 43). In his article reviewing the evolution of serials cataloging from 1985-1990, Williams describes the changes in approaches to serials cataloging as becoming “more simplified, efficient, and user-oriented” (1992, p. 39). Zajac (1986) reviews the past century’s three cataloging techniques applied to title changes:

- *Earliest entry cataloging:* First proposed by Cutter in 1876 and incorporated in the 1908 British Rules, this approach requires a single bibliographic record under the serial’s original title, with notes containing the full history of the serial on this record.
• **Latest entry cataloging:** Incorporated into the 1908 American and 1949 ALA Rules, this approach also calls for a single record for the serial, but under the latest title, with notes providing information on its bibliographic history.

• **Successive entry cataloging:** Also proposed by Cutter in 1876, this approach was adopted in the 1967 edition of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR). In this approach, each qualified title change requires a separate bibliographic record to be created with notes linking it to records for the earlier and/or later title.

In the revised editions of AACR that followed the 1967 publication, successive entry cataloging continues to be the rule for serials title changes. The Library of Congress adopted successive entry cataloging in 1971 (Nisonger, 1998). In later editions of AACR2, the rules for title changes were further altered and clarified such that fewer “inconsequential title changes” resulted in new records (Rosenberg, 1996, p. 213).

In AACR2 (1998 revised edition), Rule 21.2A1 prescribes that “In general, consider a title proper to have changed if any word other than an article, preposition, or conjunction is added, deleted, or changed, or if the order of the first five words (the first six words if the title begins with an article) is changed” (p. 314). The Library of Congress’ CONSER Cataloging Manual provides a succinct definition of a title change: “in general, a title is considered to have changed when words that affect access or that change the meaning or scope of the title are added, changed, rearranged, or dropped. A change in title, once determined, always necessitates a new record, regardless of the choice of main entry” (Hirons, 1993, module 16, p.6). Another revised edition of AACR2 was published in 2002. The new Rules, implemented beginning in December, 2002, will result in “fewer
new records due to title changes,” according to a presentation by Jean Hirons (2002).²

The CONSER Cataloging Manual also has been revised.

Costs of serials title changes:

As the authors cited above suggest, there are significant costs associated with title changes. Tuttle (1996) asserts, “besides the experience of changing serial records, there is a high risk of losing early issues of the new title, because publishers do not always mention the old title or the title change on the cover” (p. 9). In the author’s own serials experience, issues with the new title often are placed with the “sample” subscription materials because check-in staff does not recognize that a currently received serial has had a title change -- these issues may take weeks or even months to go through the hands of the bibliographers, who eventually discover that the issue is not a sample but is part of a paid subscription. Consequently, another cost is the time spent claiming missed issues that actually have been received.

Afes & Wrynn (1993) and Mering and Simpson (1996) point out that very little research on serials title change has been conducted, despite the prominence of title changes as a topic of concern and complaint among serials librarians. The majority of the small literature on the topic could be categorized as descriptive literature that reviews cataloging standards and practices, and “opinion” pieces (for example, Foggin’s challenge to the idea that title changes are, in fact, a problem with which serials librarians should be concerned (1991, 1992)).
Studies of serials title changes:

Four key studies of serials title changes found in the literature provide context and background for the current study, as well as models for the methodology employed.

The earliest of these studies was conducted by Charbonneau, who collected data on title changes from random samples of 1000 serial titles from an academic library and 250 public library serial titles (1982). The author analyzed a sub-sample of these titles, comparing science, humanities, and social science publications. The records for the selected publications were searched in the OCLC database “to determine the presence or absence of links to preceding titles. The number of years that the serial had been in existence under its most recent title was noted. Where no previous title existed, this number was, of course, equal to the number of years that the serial had been published. Serials for which OCLC bibliographic records were unavailable, or for which beginning dates were unknown, were excluded from the study; they were replaced by other randomly-selected title.” (p. 20).

Charbonneau derived the following formula: the total number of title changes divided by the cumulative number of years the serials were published, multiplied by 100 percent and thus a hypothesized constant for the chance that a given serial will change title in any given year. He named this “Taylor’s Constant” in honor of David C. Taylor, editor of the above-mentioned newsletter, *Title Varies*. Taylor’s Constant is 1.3%, and his study results showed that the percentage of title changes per year for each category that he examined were very close to the postulated value of the constant. In his conclusion, Charbonneau suggests that others test Taylor’s Constant and that it could be
useful for projecting the number of staff hours a library would need to process its serials title changes.

Later in the decade, Khosh-khui studied a random sample of OCLC serials records in order to find the correlation between the rate of title changes and several attributes of the publications, including issuing source, country of publication, language, frequency, regularity, and subject content (1986). He randomly sampled five percent of titles from *Ulrich’s International Periodicals Directory* and *Irregular Serials & Annuals*. He searched by ISSN for these titles in OCLC and retained those records that contained linking notes (MARC field 780 - preceding title and field 785 - succeeding title). His resulting sample of records totaled 453 records that he then analyzed by type of title changes (e.g. merging or splitting), main entry changes, subject headings changes, issuing body (governmental or non-governmental), language, country of publication, frequency, regularity, and classification. Among his findings, Khosh-khui reported that 54.47% of the serials in his sample had title changed within the first ten years of their publication life, and 80% of the changing serials changed title one to three times, while 20% had four or more title changes.

Roberts, Vidor, & Bailey (1986-7) studied the time and dollar costs of serials title changes in the Georgia Tech library. Their article describes all of the actual steps that their library staff performed in order to conduct the physical processing and cataloging of title changes. The results of their two-month study of the total costs of processing serials title changed showed that costs were less than the authors had expected: they report a cost of $14.14 per title change. As a follow-up to this study, the authors conducted a survey of twelve publishers, asking them if the initialisms they placed on the cover of their
journals were or were not an integral part of the title. This question was pertinent to catalogers forced to make their own interpretations of initialisms when cataloging a serial. All of the publishers replied that the initialisms in question were not part of the title, but were “acronyms, logos, or informal titles” (p. 141).

The most recent title change study was conducted by Afes and Wrynn (1993), in which the authors evaluate the impact of journal title changes in medical libraries. Their two-part study included a survey of serials librarians and an analysis of journal title changes. In their introduction, they summarize the significance of title changes and the need for better understanding their impact, reiterating many of the assertions from the literature described earlier: “adding to the already high expenditure for journals is the cost of frequent title changes, a time-consuming factor in the serials control process. Title changes require creation of new records and revision of existing ones; they also complicate the shelving and binding process and confuse patrons. Significant staff time is spent identifying and validating changes. Many libraries experience work flow problems as a result of title changes” (p. 48). The authors’ survey of serials librarians at 144 academic health sciences libraries found that title changes are a major concern to these serials librarians and have a significant effect on technical services workflow.

Afes and Wrynn also provide a useful overview of the range of purposes of serials title changes: while sometimes there is “no readily apparent purpose,” others “reflect a change in the scope of a journal by alluding to new research topics and emerging fields, or can illustrate the nature of the journal more precisely than the old title. Thus, it is inevitable, even desirable, that journals will change their titles over time, given their kinetic nature” (p. 48). In their study, they sought to identify the reasons why the
sampled biomedical journals changed title through a systematic analysis of two years worth of title changes in journals indexed in *Index Medicus* and *SERLINE*. Their final sample included 302 journals, and they examined the physical issues in addition to the journals’ catalog records. The authors were able to locate reasons for the title changes for two-thirds of the sample (most often on the cover or in an editorial), and the majority of these reasons involved changes in scope, audience, frequency, or content (1993).

Afes and Wrynn concluded that their findings substantiated the need for standardization of title change reporting by publishers, and as a final stage in their research, they contacted the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) and found that their own study supported the recently completed standard ANSI/NISO Z39.1-1.99x, which, among its contents, required that publishers apply for a new ISSN to be used on the first issue of a renamed publication (1993). Finally, the authors contacted the eighty-four publishers responsible for the title changes that they had analyzed and provided them with their study results and the NISO standard.

**Methodology**

This study of serials title changes examines characteristics of title changes across disciplines in the areas of the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. As the review of the literature above has shown, while serial title changes are an issue of concern to serials librarians and staff, there has been little systematic inquiry into the nature of these changes and their effects on libraries and users. In their article “celebrating” the twentieth year of the Worst Serial Title Change Award, Mering and Simpson identify a
need for “more empirical research...to aid serial catalogers in handling title changes. For instance, what effect does successive entry cataloging have on library catalog users? Has the rate of title changes changed in the past twenty years? How does the rate vary by discipline, and what are the implications for different types of libraries?” (1996, p. 45).

This study seeks in part to address the first three of these questions, by comparing rates and other aspects of title changes in serials across disciplines. With regards to Mering and Simpson’s last question, information on serials title change gathered from this research could be applied to improve efficiency in serials work and improve service to library users.

In developing a methodology for this proposed study of serials title changes, previous title change studies were used as models in the design of this study. This descriptive, comparative design study allows for the comparison of rates of title changes and other attributes of title changes across publications in several academic disciplines and by category of sciences, social sciences, and the humanities.

**Study sample.** In order to identify serial publications from which to draw a sample for this study, a comprehensive directory to over 75,000 periodicals published by American and Canadian publishers, *The Standard Periodical Directory* (2002), was used to narrow the study population. This naturally limits the generalizability of the study results, as serials published outside of North America and any others not listed in the *Directory* are excluded from the study population.

**Sampling.** In order to select social science, science, and humanities publications from the population of serials publications represented in the *Directory*, the subject categorization that the *Directory* employs was used. Each serial title in the *Directory* is
assigned to a single subject category, and the following subjects were selected for this study: Biology and Physics, representing science disciplines; Anthropology and Psychology, representing social science disciplines; and Literature and Linguistics, representing the humanities. The total number of serial publications represented in the Directory for these five discipline categories is 1892.

Sample size. As Neuman (1997) asserts, the size of the sample “depends on the kind of data analysis the researcher plans, on how accurate the sample has to be for the researcher’s purposes, and on population characteristics” (p. 221). A sampling ratio of about 30% is needed for small populations (under 1000) in order to produce a high degree of accuracy. Because this study of necessity was small-scale, this convention was used, and a sample consisting of 33% of the titles in each subject category was selected. Thus the total sample size was 632 titles, consisting of 31 anthropology, 181 psychology, 83 physics, 101 biology, and 236 literature and linguistics publications (see Table 1).

A random numbers table was used to select publications from each subject category that were then searched by ISSN in the WorldCat database. If no bibliographic record for a selected publication was located in WorldCat, or if publication dates were unknown in a record, a replacement publication was randomly selected for the sample.

Data compilation: Each randomly selected serials title was searched in WorldCat. The record number and the dates of publication were gathered for serials whose records do not indicate a title change history. The record for each serials title having a title change history, as indicated by the presence of 780 and 785 fields was saved, and information from the records for every title relating to it also were collected. The collected elements from each serials record include the following:
• OCLC control number
• Title
• ISSN
• Dates of publication
• Frequency
• 780 information (Preceding Entry)
• 785 information (Succeeding Entry)
• Any 5XX information relevant to publication history/title changes

Table 1

*Sample Size by Discipline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>No. of serial publications in population</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature &amp; linguistics</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>632</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results and Discussion

Out of the total sample of 632 serial titles that were searched in WorldCat, 160 of the titles, or 25.3%, were found to have a title change history as indicated by the presence of a 780 or 785 field. Using Excel’s statistical analysis tools and SPSS, the title change histories by subject discipline were analyzed (see Figure 2).

Nine publications in the sample of 31 anthropology titles were found to have a history of title changes, which constituted 29.0% of the anthropology sample. The average number of title changes for those publications having title change histories was 1.11 (range = one to two title changes). The total number of years each current publication has been published, from its starting date to the year 2003, was calculated. For anthropology titles, the average length of time of publication was 56.6 years.

In the second category of social sciences serials, psychology titles, 43 publications in the sample of 181 were found to have a history of title changes (23.8 %), with an average of 1.49 title changes per publication (range = one to five changes). The average length of publication for these titles was 39.8 years.

In the first of the two science disciplines, 31 of 101 biology titles (30.7 %) had at least one title change, with an average of 1.52 changes (range = one to five changes). These biology serials had an average publication length of 51.1 years.

Twenty-nine of the 83 physics titles (34.9%) have a history of title changes, with an average of 1.83 changes (range = one to five changes). The average length of publication for these titles was 40.9 years.

Representing the humanities, among the literature and linguistics titles sampled, 48 out of 236 publications (20.8%) had a title change history. The average number of
changes was 1.35 (range = one to three changes). These titles had an average publication length of 36.2 years.

Table 2

*Results by Discipline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>No. with title change history (%)</th>
<th>Average no. of title changes per publication with title change history</th>
<th>Average length of publication (in years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>29 (34.9)</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>31 (30.7)</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9 (29.0)</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>43 (23.8)</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature &amp; linguistics</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>48 (20.8)</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>160 (25.3)</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 shows the frequency distribution of title changes by discipline. The majority of publications with title change histories have had one or two title changes during the course of their life span. While none of the anthropology publications in the sample had more than two title changes and the literature and linguistics publications had three or fewer title changes; some publications among the psychology, physics, and biology publications had as many as five title changed during their life span.
Figure 1.

Frequency distribution for number of title changes by discipline.

The life span, or length of time a publication was published, under its original title was found to vary widely (see Table 3). Perhaps not surprisingly, to those with serials experience, many of the serials in the sample changed title after only one year of publication. The longest run of a publication with the original title was 111 years for an anthropology serial, *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society.*
Table 3

*Life Span of Serials Prior to First Title Change*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Average no. of years published before serial first changed title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>15.1 (range = 1 to 66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>26.3 (range = 4 to 102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>29.0 (range = 1 to 111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>13.2 (range = 1 to 58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature &amp; linguistics</td>
<td>12.3 (range = 1 to 49)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The intercorelations between the life span of the publications and the number of title changes that have occurred were calculated (Figure 5). There is a statistically significant correlation in the psychology and physics serials in the sample, but not in any of the three other disciplines. These results indicate that there is no consistent pattern for this relationship across disciplines.

Table 4.

*Intercorrelations Between Number of Years in Existence and Number of Title Changes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.497</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature &amp; linguistics</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.790</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.249</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to compare the publications in the sample that have title change histories with those retaining their original titles, the mean length of publication was computed for both groups and compared in a t-test (Figure 6). In general, a statistically significant difference exists between the groups, indicating that the publications whose titles have changed have been in existence longer than those that have retained their original titles. The difference was less significant for the anthropology publications in the sample than in the other disciplines ($p = .058$); however, it was close to statistical significance at the 0.05 level. It is important to note that the small size of the anthropology sample ($n = 9$ for those with title change histories; $n = 22$ for those retaining original title) may have prevented reliable results in the test.

Table 5

*Mean Number of Years in Existence by Publications With and Without Title Changes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Publications with title changes</th>
<th>Publications without title changes</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature &amp; linguistics</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data on the life span of all of the serials in the original sample -- those with and without title change histories -- were used to test Charbonneau’s proposed constant for the rate of title changes per serial per year (1982). As described in the literature review, Charbonneau derived a formula which divided the total number of title changes by the cumulative number of years published of all of the serials in his sample, both with and without title change histories, multiplied by 100 percent and found in his study a value for $T$ (“Taylor’s Constant”) to be 1.3%. Using his methodology, the value of $T$ was calculated for the categories of sciences (physics and biology), social sciences (anthropology and psychology), and humanities (literature and linguistics) serials in the present sample (Figure 7). The highest rate of title changes was that of the science serials, with $T = 1.9\%$. The rate of title changes in the social science publications was $T = 1.1\%$. The lowest rate of title changes was that of the language and literature serials, with $T = 0.95\%$. These results did not approximate Charbonneau’s postulated value of 1.3% in any of the categories. Nevertheless, the results do agree with Charbonneau’s in the ranking of the rate of title changes: the scientific serials have the highest rate and the humanities the lowest rate of title changes.
Table 6

Taylor’s Constant by Serial Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Taylor’s Constant (T) = rate of title changes per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>105 Title Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___________________________________________________  x 100 = 1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5621 Cumulative Years Published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>73 Title Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___________________________________________________  x 100 = 1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6523 Cumulative Years Published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>65 Title Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___________________________________________________  x 100 = 0.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6828 Cumulative Years Published</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of title changes. In order to assess the types of title changes that occurred in these publications and compare these types across disciplines, the ten types of changes constituting a title change, thus requiring creation of a new bibliographic record, listed in the CONSER Manual (Hirons, 1993) were used. Using the titles in the 245 field (Title Statement) of the OCLC records for each publication in the study sample, each title change was coded as corresponding to one of these ten types of title changes (see Table 7. Without access to the actual item or insight into the cataloger’s interpretation for each change, this classification was necessarily imperfect but serves to give some information about the nature of the changes in these serial titles. While some title changes could be categorized under more than one type of change, an attempt was made to identify the
most prominent type of change that occurred. A graphical depiction of the results is found in Figure 2.

Table 7

CONSER categories of title changes (Hirons, 1993, pp. 6-10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A serial is given a completely different title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A word (other than an article, preposition, or conjunction) is added, changed, or dropped within the first five words of the title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A word is added anywhere that changes the meaning or indicates a change in scope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The order of the first five words (or six, if there is an initial article) changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A word (other than an article, preposition, or conjunction) is changed, deleted, or added to a section title ($p$) or the designation of the section ($n$).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The name of an issuing body included in the title changes its name causing a change in the title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The name of the corporate body is added to or dropped from the beginning of the title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The form of the name of an issuing body given at the beginning of the title changes (i.e., full form to initialism).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The language of the title changes (i.e., the title in the other language has not been recorded as a parallel title in field 245).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The title is given in multiple languages and the title in the language that has been given as the title proper is dropped.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As might be predicted, the majority of the title changes in the sample fell into Category 1, that is, the serial was given an entirely new title. The second most common type of change was the addition, deletion or change of a word within the first five words of a title (Category 2).
The scientific serials differed from the social science and humanities serials in the study sample in having a higher frequency of changes classifiable as Category 3; that is, involving the addition of a word changing the meaning or indicating a change in scope: 21.7% of the biology and 18.9% of the physics title changes were in this category. For example, *Thin Films* became *Thin Films and Nanostructures*. Perhaps this reflects the more rapid changes in scientific developments, research and terminology. Among the title changes in the physics publications, there was a high rate of changes classifiable under Category 5 -- changes in the section title or designation. Physics titles in the sample frequently split or narrowed in designation, corresponding to partner titles in a group of journals; for example, *Nuclear Physics*. Again, this trend among scientific journals may reflect the more rapid pace and increasing specialization of research and technology.

![Figure 2.](image)

Number of title changes by CONSER category.
Conclusion

This study was designed to analyze serials title changes across disciplines in the sciences, social sciences and the humanities. The findings here appear to agree with those of earlier studies of serials title changes. It was found that scientific publications were the most likely to have title change histories, while humanities publications were the least likely to change title. These results agree with those of Charbonneau (1982) and Khosh-khui (1986). While no explanation for these differing rates of title changes can be found in this study, it could be hypothesized that the more rapid rate of scientific advances in research, technology, and knowledge, as compared to that of the humanities, explains the more frequent changes in the scope and content of scientific publications as reflected in serial title changes. Charbonneau’s *Taylor’s Constant* (1982) for predicting the rate of serials title changes was not found to hold true for the serials in this study, although, again, the higher rate of change among serials in the sciences was found.

Future explorations of serials title changes should compare the results of this and earlier studies with serials title changes following the implementation of the 2002 revision of AACR2. While the cataloging rules and guidelines continue to evolve, effectively changing and reducing the circumstances in which serials will be recataloged under a new title, the sheer number of serials publications continues to increase, thus ensuring that serials title changes will continue to challenge library staff and users.
NOTES


2 The data for this study was collected from bibliographic records created prior to the implementation of the newest revision of *AACR2*. 
References


