Despite these recent paper and postal cost increases, the USDOC predicts that the long-term prospects for the periodicals industry are favorable and the industry should grow at an average annual rate of 2-3% through 1993. A threat to magazines over this time interval may be cable television as it targets the same audience. It is likely that advertising revenues that would normally go to magazines may be directed to cable TV stations. Another threat is legislation by the federal and some state governments in the United States which could impose advertising taxes.

The USDOC reports that U.S. imports of magazines fell 5% in 1988 to $101 million (in current U.S. dollars). Exports are strong, however. In particular, U.S. exports include special interest magazines appealing to well-educated, affluent, English-speaking readers. The United States is one of the few markets that can publish on narrow subject areas of interest to a minority of the population.

Book Publishing

The USDOC divides the U.S. book market into the following categories: textbooks (accounting for 33% of shipments); technical, scientific and professional books (20%); adult and juvenile trade books (17%); mass market paperbound books (8%); religious books (5%); all other books (17%). Industry shipments of these products in 1988 were estimated by the USDOC to be $12.8 billion (U.S.) an increase of 9.4% over the 1987 levels. This growth was fueled by strong textbook sales and growth in consumer demand for juvenile books. In turn, the demand for textbooks, and instructional materials, has been boosted by rising school enrollments and publishers' strong market support provided to retail book outlets.

The expected growth of industry shipments in 1989 of approximately 4% over 1988 (measured in constant 1982 dollars) to $14 billion (U.S.) will be dependent on higher levels of library and educational funding and disposable personal income, coupled with gains in the U.S. reading population and school enrollments. In addition, the USDOC maintains that the need for information on the part of U.S. scholars, technicians and professionals should contribute to increased sales of technical, scientific and professional books. Furthermore, it is expected that the increased disposable income of the U.S. book-buying public will contribute to increased sales.