

Using the Estimating Price Update Utility

The Estimating Price Update utility takes Accubid estimating prices and updates them with prices from Apex. This allows you to hone in your estimating prices to be more competitive. Accubid's dbPricer format is used to communicate the estimating prices from the estimating program, and to import the Apex prices back in. The dbPricer utility is available from Accubid.

The enclosed Estimating Price Update Utility (EstPrcUpd.exe) is designed to work with Apex 8.5 and above.

Here are the steps to update your estimating prices.

You	Accubid Estimating	Apex
1 Update the estimating database so that appropriate UPC codes are used wherever possible.		2 Create a new "BEST" vendor, with the accumulated best prices from a representative set of vendors.
	3 Create a backup of the current items and prices.	
	4 Export the item database as a CSV file in the dbPricer format.	
		5 Import the CSV file created in the previous step with the Estimating Price Update Utility.
		6 Use the BEST vendor prices to re-price the imported prices, matching equivalent items but not changing the item UPC numbers.
		7 Export the new prices into a CSV file in the dbPricer format.
8 Determine audit report parameters for price changes.		
	9 Import the Apex item price data using dbPricer, preparing an audit report of price changes.	
10 Verify and accept the new prices or restore from the backup.		

Details:

Step	Notes
1 Update the estimating database so that appropriate UPC codes are used wherever possible.	<p>Many of the items in the estimating system are materials that will be quoted, and will not benefit from this price update procedure. Of the items that are left to be priced, a large percentage of them do not have UPC numbers. Of the items that do have UPC numbers, perhaps a fourth of them use obsolete or discontinued numbers. There are also regional variations on what items are normally purchased, so the “out of the box” items may need to be updated to be more representative of the materials that are actually purchased.</p> <p>The estimating item data will need to be updated to accommodate these issues or your new prices will probably not be that useful. This is certainly the most time consuming part of this procedure.</p>
2 Create a new “BEST” vendor, with the accumulated best prices from a representative set of vendors.	Apex already supports the use of a “BEST” vendor as a repository of the lowest prices from a specified set of vendors (typically the “preferred” tier). It is done by copying vendor prices into the BEST vendor’s prices, selecting lower prices only. See the Apex help system for more information.
3 Create a backup of the current items and prices.	You will want a way to restore your estimating data to the current state if for some reason you decide not to use the new prices.
4 Export the item database as a CSV file in the dbPricer format.	A simple procedure to do this was written by Matthew DeCiantis at Accubid. It is included below.
5 Import the CSV file created in the previous step with the Estimating Price Update Utility.	<p>Run the Estimating Price Update Utility. Specify the “BEST” vendor that you set up in step 2, the path to the CSV file created in step 4, and the path for the output file that you want to create with the new Apex prices.</p> <p>Note that steps 5, 6, and 7 automatically run in sequence.</p>
6 Use the BEST vendor prices to re-price the imported prices, matching equivalent items but not changing the item UPC numbers.	The Estimating Price Update Utility will take the items imported in step 5 and price them using the “BEST” vendor prices. This includes determining if the BEST vendor has equivalent items at lower cost.

	<p>However, the original item's UPC number from the estimating system is not changed, even if a different, equivalent item is used to determine the price. This is because the dbPricer program cannot import new items, so the UPC numbers must be left unchanged.</p> <p>Conceptually, this is probably the most interesting step. In the estimating system, each item is a representative of a group of similar items with slight variations or made by different manufacturers. When Apex uses the Comparator data to find equivalent items, it is essentially looking in detail at that same group of items. Apex can then determine the best representative price for that group.</p> <p>For this to work correctly, however, we have to rely on good Comparator data, and you must agree with the Comparator data about what is equivalent and what is not. This will be difficult to check for thousands of items, which is why I suggest using an audit report from the dbPricer program to check the price changes.</p>
7 Export the new prices into a CSV file in the dbPricer format.	The Estimating Price Update utility then writes out the new prices into a dbPricer file.
8 Determine audit report parameters for price changes.	Since it will be impossible to verify how thousands of items were priced, it will be beneficial to create an audit report that shows any dramatic price changes to the estimating items. For example, if an item changes by more than 20% or \$1,000 it might be considered dramatic. You should decide on these parameters so that you are comfortable with the new prices.
9 Import the Apex item price data using dbPricer, preparing an audit report of price changes.	See the dbPricer help system for more information.
10 Verify and accept the new prices or restore from the backup.	You then have to make the final decision as to whether to accept the new prices, or recover the item data from the backup made in step 3.

Preparing a CSV file for use by the Estimating Price Update Utility

Written by Matthew DeCiantis

You can import items from an Accubid estimate that have been exported as a .CSV file. To export an estimate as a .CSV file for use in Apex, follow these steps:

1. From your Version 6 (or higher) Accubid estimating program, click the Database menu and then select the Edit option.
2. Select the appropriate material database from the dialog that appears, then click on OK.
3. Switch to the dbPricer screen style.
4. Copy the required range of material from the right side of the Database Update screen.
5. Open Excel and paste the copied material to the PriceUpdate5.01_TEMPLATE1.xls file (which is available from the Utilities page on the Support section of the Accubid website, and installed as part of Accubid's dbPricer).
6. Within Excel, change the Price Date column to the current date.
7. Save the Excel file as a CSV file.