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Serials Pricing Update

Editor

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The Nemesis Speaks (continued . . .)

Dougherty . . .

Richard Dougherty: "Are Libraries Hostage to Rising Serials Costs?" *Bottom Line* 2,4 (1988), 25-27. A provocative article from Dougherty reporting on Michigan's experience with targeting specific publishers for cancellation reviews and spending targets. He raises the question of developments that could bypass both libraries and publishers. Since Duderstadt had a major role in vetoing the targeting project, it is interesting to note Michigan's new president promised to "address this matter... cooperating with national efforts...while we endeavor to develop a broad strategy for dealing with rising costs." Dr. Duderstadt from his position within NSF has obviously taken Michigan's problems to heart, and is seeking national solutions, as noted in our second news item above. Maybe you failed in your targeting project, Dick, but you certainly did not fail in getting serious attention focused on the problem. P.S. Read the editorial in the new issue of *Journal of Academic Librarianship* (January, 1989) for some of Dougherty's observations on last year's Charleston Conference...

Books pricing update

Celia Wagner and **Doug Duchin** (BNA)

Book prices rose steadily throughout 1988. From December, 1987, through December, 1988, the average book price rose from $37.23 to $40.85, a jump of 9.7%. Within that overall increase, the following figures show increase by Country of Original Publication.

For the year ending	Avg. U.S. origin list price	Avg. U.K. origin list price	Avg. other foreign origin list price
December 1987	$32.40	$39.71	$57.82
June 1988	$33.63	$42.21	$60.96
December 1988	$34.56	$46.43	$65.28
annual percentage increase	6.7%	16.9%	12.9%

Publishing output appears to be about the same as last year.

Price activity varies between different subject areas. Law book prices, for example, fell slightly, to an average of $43 per title, while Engineering titles held steady. The average Science title now costs $62.02, with Mathematics the only area where prices average less than $50. And the average Chemistry title has risen since July from $88 to $91.

Serials pricing update

1990 --- too early to tell??

Due to the fact that prices for journals are not set until late spring or early to mid summer, it is too early for many serials' vendors to give us a reading on serials pricing in the year ahead. This is further complicated by the fact that there is a new Administration in Washington and the ability of the American dollar to remain stable in European markets is, as always, unknown. More will be reported in future issues of this communication. In the meantime, please send me whatever information you all might want to communicate.

And...speaking of book prices... how about this??

(from your editor)

In a memorandum dated November 19, 1988, a publisher who will remain nameless informed its accounts that there would be an 8% across the board increase on all of its titles as of January 1, 1989. How frequently does this happen in a given year? Are jobbers thankful that this publisher didn't take the other option of shortening the jobber's margin? Or did they -- indirectly?

NOTE

Charleston Conference 1988 papers submitted for publication will appear in *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*, vol. 13, no.2, late spring, 1989.