Against the Grain

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Papers from 1988 Charleston Conference

Editor

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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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For the year ending</th>
<th>Avg. U.S. origin list price</th>
<th>Avg. U.K. origin list price</th>
<th>Avg. other foreign origin list price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1987</td>
<td>$32.40</td>
<td>$39.71</td>
<td>$57.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1988</td>
<td>$33.63</td>
<td>$42.21</td>
<td>$60.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1988</td>
<td>$34.56</td>
<td>$46.43</td>
<td>$65.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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