

February 1991

## Book Pricing Update

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### Recommended Citation

Wagner, Celia (1991) "Book Pricing Update," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 11.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1066>

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# Book Pricing Update

by *Celia Wagner* (Blackwell North America)



Since 1983, we have charted the increase in titles costing over \$75, and those costing over \$100. Below are the numbers, and charts, through June, 1990.

For the second year in a row, the increase in both categories has slowed — the number of volumes in each category continued to grow, but not as quickly as it grew last year. The dollars associated with each category grew as well, but again, more slowly than before. In 1990:

Almost 13% of new titles cost more than \$75. That 13% represented nearly 35% of the total list price for all new titles.

Only 6.4% of new titles cost more than \$100, but that small group represented 22% of the total list price.

The most expensive books are not distributed uniformly throughout all subject areas, as a glance through the Blackwell Coverage and Cost Studies will confirm. Nonetheless, one of the simplest ways to adjust approval expenditures is to raise or lower the price limit. Libraries underspending their approval budgets may find that raising the price limit will bring in more of the kinds of titles they want. Conversely, libraries overspending might miss only a few titles, but save a good deal of money, by cutting out the most expensive books.

	1983	1984	1985	1986
Percent of titles over \$75	4.1	4.2	4.1	5.3
Percent of dollars over \$75	16.2	15.9	15.	18
Percent of titles over \$100	2.6	1.6	1.4	1.9
Percent of dollars over \$100	8.7	8.5	7.7	8.9
	1987	1988	1989	1990
Percent of titles over \$75	7.2	10	11.6	12.8
Percent of dollars over \$75	23	30	32.9	34.9
Percent of titles over \$100	3	4.5	5.6	6.4
Percent of dollars over \$100	12.5	17.8	20.3	22

What do you say to your faculty colleagues when they ask about a title they ordered a few months ago and it still has not arrived?

"Well," you reply, "we ordered it right away. Since it had been published recently, we expected it to arrive. Instead, it was reported 'out of print' or 'out of stock indefinitely,' I don't recall which."

## OUT-OF-PRINT SEARCHES

### Oliver's Books

Then you go on to explain that you will have it searched, but the reality is that very little time is available to work with these desiderata and such "new" titles won't end up in the book trade for some time.

**HELP IS AT HAND.** Oliver's Books specializes in finding such books, and I have contacts in the book world built up over the past thirty years. I worked at Pickwick Book Store in Hollywood many years ago and for twenty years was the chief book selector for the academic approval plans of Richard Abel and his successor, B. H. Blackwell.

Older OP titles you need will also be sought, of course, and I will supply quotes before shipping or ship and bill according to your guidelines.

I'd be pleased to serve you. Do give me a try.

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