Bet You Missed It -- Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Team of News Sleuths

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Book Pricing Update

Trends in Book Pricing for the half-year ending December 31, 2003

by Jamie Vandenberg (Approval Coordinator, Blackwell’s Book Services, Inc.)

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Each year, Blackwell’s reports on pricing trends in academic monographic publishing. We derive this data from the books that were treated on our New Titles/Approval Program during the previous year. This article reports statistics recorded from July 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003. A total of 19,422 academic monograph titles were treated during this time period with an average list price of $65.06. Excluding 733 reprints, the average list price of the remaining 18,689 titles was $66.13.

In broad subject areas the number of new titles treated (excluding reprints), and their average list prices broke down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Subject</th>
<th># of titles</th>
<th>% of titles treated</th>
<th>Avg. List Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Humanities</td>
<td>6,481</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>$50.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>6,447</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>$59.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sci./Tech./Med.</td>
<td>5,723</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>$91.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average list price for a scholarly book in the Arts and Humanities last fiscal year (July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003) was $48.56. For the period between July 1, 2003 and December 31, 2003, this average increased by 5%. Art books as a subcategory (657 titles) also rose 5%, from $48.56 to $51.29. Architecture titles (263 titles) rose slightly from $53.88 to $54.52 or 1%. Music and Performing Arts books (562 titles) saw a larger increase of 6% from $50.70 to $53.75. The average price for Humanities titles (excluding Fine and Performing Art) increased 1%
from $56.31 to $56.73. Literary texts increased by 4% from $26.11 to $27.30. Literary Criticism titles increased 5% from $57.15 to $59.85.

The average list price for a book in the Social Sciences (including Law) last fiscal year was $57.91. This report finds an increase of 2% for a Social Science book in the first half of this fiscal year. Law books (483 titles) noticeably increased from $82.82 to $89.59 or 8% while Library and Information Science titles dropped significantly from $56.21 to $48.45 or -14%. Communication and Mass Media Studies titles rose 3% from $49.88 to $51.63. Military Science titles increased 14% from $41.10 to $47.64 while Sports and Recreation titles increased just 2% from $37.54 to $38.19.

Prices for an average title in the Sciences, Technology, and Medicine rose 6% from last year’s average of $85.64. As a subcategory, General Science titles increased 6% from $63.26 to $67.21. Astronomy books rose from $78.25 to $81.22 or 4%. Earth Science books increased 11% from $56.79 to $60.19 while Math books have increased 13% from $81.34 to $93.07. Computer Science titles also saw an increase from $57.55 to $63.99 or 10%. Medicine titles rose just 1% from $84.40 to $85.49 while Dentistry titles dropped -8% from $78.92 to $72.23. Nursing books increased 4% from $44.90 to $47.01 while Agriculture books increased only 1% from $89.60 to $90.76. Natural Resources books dropped -6% from $68.12 to $64.33.

For more information on price details of specific subject areas for last year, please see Blackwell’s Cost and Coverage Study at: http://www.blackwell.com/level4/CoverageandCostIndex.asp

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Column Editor’s Note: Hey, are you reading this? Your esteemed column editor would like to know what you think! Zip off a quick email to <pmrose@buffalo.edu>. Does BYM fill your needs? Do you have any suggestions for changes? I’m listening! — PR

SPAMMER SEQUESTRATION
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

More than half of all email is spam, according to this article—which makes it a huge problem that needs to be solved expeditiously. Email filters and legislation against spam have failed to stem the flow, so a third solution is being proposed: charging for spam emails. Several start-up companies are developing ways to charge spammers while still allowing free email for other purposes. One company offers email “stamps” at low cost to distinguish legitimate business email from spam. Another works on the principle of charging fees to senders whose recipients complain. A third solution establishes a clearing house for ISPs where each ISP subscriber has a credit limit. When someone complains about one of the subscribers, a fee is charged against it — it is blocked from sending emails once its credit limit is reached.


TIMELINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS
by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

In an effort to improve access to selected research papers, Science and Science Online now offer immediate online access to papers accepted for publication in the print version. Editors select papers according to timeliness and importance of the research. Access is free to AAAS members only. The rest of us can pay for each article, or just wait six to eight weeks for it to appear in print.

THE DOLLAR DANCE
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

The writer of this article argues that the US dollar has not dropped far enough to address the current-account deficit that threatens the recovery of the global economy. The US trade deficit is 5% of the GDP—that percentage needs to drop by half, and the dollar's value is key to that adjustment. Several other factors are delaying a natural market adjustment for the dollar: Asian banks continue to buy Treasury bonds at low return rates, the US budget deficit continues to grow and domestic savings are insufficient. In order to avoid a more abrupt, painful drop in its value at a later date, the global economy would do well to let the dollar drop gradually over the next few years.


FROM THINKTANKS TO LAPTOPS
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

In Dec. 1968, Doug Engelbart—then a Stanford Research Institute scientist—demo'd an online system (nicknamed NLS) that included videoconferencing, hyperlinks, networked collaboration, digital text editing, and the "mouse." In this article he talks about the evolution of ideas bouncing around think tanks in the '60s into the networked computer world we all take for granted today.


INVENTING HOWARD DEAN
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)

Tracing the way former presidential candidate Howard Dean used the Internet to build support and raise an astonishing amount of campaign funds, Wolf identifies five basic strategies which led to Dean's early success. The Internet gave the means to decentralize his campaign by encouraging independent groups of supporters linked through the Web. It also allowed these groups to organize at a local level while communicating and coordinating efforts through the Web. Using the Web bypassed conventional political pathways like the Democratic Leadership Council and the Democratic National Committee—thus pulling in people who do not toe the party line. Dean's early entry into the campaign through the Internet gave him an advantage in getting his name and message out, as links begat more links. Finally, the Internet campaign allowed horizontal communication of ideas between supporters as well as vertical communication between campaign headquarters and supporters. Overall, the Dean campaign revived to some extent the face-to-face exchanges of political campaigns before television.


WHAT IF WE CONTROLLED THE MEDIA?
by Wendy E. Wood (Virginia College at Austin)

Do you ever get frustrated with the news media? Why are some stories (e.g., "Bennifer") emphasized while others fall by the wayside? A Website called Technorati (www.technorati.com) may help alleviate some of your frustration. Technorati comprises an ever-changing list of the most popular news stories as determined by how often bloggers link to them. The site currently scans over 900,000 blogs; each link in each blog is added to the ranking. Those stories with the most links are added to Technorati's "Breaking News" section. What results is basically news for the people, by the people. The results might surprise you: more "strange tales," fewer entertainment stories, and a pretty well balanced, more global view of major news events.

See — "How the Web Edits News" by Steven Johnson in Discover, November 2003, p.25.