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Book Pricing Update

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Book Pricing Update

by *Celia Wagner* (B/NA)

Blackwell recently reported a 2.2% drop in average book prices during calendar 1990. As a follow-up to that study, I surveyed the subset of titles in the areas of Science, Technology, Medicine, and Agriculture.

In years past, titles in these areas have increased at a faster-than-average rate. During the past year of price declines, this group of titles suffered a price drop, though not as steep as the overall drop: -1.7% versus an overall -2.2%.

Following is a chart noting the list prices, dollar variance, and percent variance in the Q, R, S and T Library of Congress classifications (Blackwell subject divisions 42 through 81), calendar 1990 versus calendar 1989. The largest declines were in Forestry, Dentistry, and Pharmacy. A few areas, including Veterinary Medicine and Nursing, showed substantial price inflation, though publishing output in these areas meant that their price increases had little impact on the bottom line.

Blackwell North America Approval Plan Average Prices in Science, Technology, Medicine, and Agriculture 1990 to 1989

LC	Blackwell North America				
Class	Subject	1990	1989	Dollar variance	Percent variance
Q	42 General Science	\$42.82	\$46.94	(\$4.12)	-8.8%
QH-QR	45 Biology	\$80.40	\$77.95	\$2.45	3.1%
QD	48 Chemistry	\$99.60	\$107.18	(\$7.58)	-7.1%
QE	51 Earth Science	\$76.59	\$77.87	(\$1.27)	-1.6%
QB	54 Astronomy	\$56.76	\$58.11	(\$1.35)	-2.3%
QC	57 Physics	\$72.41	\$74.37	(\$1.96)	-2.6%
QA	60 Mathematics	\$57.74	\$57.58	\$0.16	0.3%
QA	61 Computer Science	\$37.60	\$37.44	\$0.16	0.4%
All Q Classes.		\$62.06	\$63.33	(\$1.27)	-2.0%
T	63 Interdisciplinary Tech	\$53.28	\$54.21	(\$0.92)	-1.7%
T-TX	66 Technology	\$68.49	\$67.19	\$1.30	1.9%
All T Classes.		\$66.55	\$65.61	\$0.94	1.4%
R-RJ	69 Medicine	\$65.46	\$66.41	(\$0.95)	-1.4%
RK	70 Dentistry	\$79.36	\$66.18	\$13.18	19.9%
RM-RS	72 Pharmacy	\$78.32	\$88.86	(\$10.53)	-11.9%
RT	73 Nursing	\$32.19	\$29.93	\$2.26	7.6%
All R Classes.		\$63.69	\$63.80	(\$0.11)	-0.2%
S	75 Agriculture	\$53.20	\$60.52	(\$7.32)	-12.1%
SD	76 Forestry	\$50.18	\$73.15	(\$22.97)	-31.4%
SF	77 Animal Husbandry	\$31.62	\$38.40	(\$6.77)	-17.6%
SH-SK	78 Natural Resources	\$38.94	\$44.79	(\$5.85)	-13.1%
SF	81 Veterinary Medicine	\$78.55	\$68.51	\$10.04	14.6%
All S Classes.		\$47.68	\$56.09	(\$8.41)	-15.0%
Q, R, S, and T Classes combined:		\$62.49	\$63.55	(\$1.05)	-1.7%