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Lingua Franca

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Book Prices for the year ending December 31, 1991

by Celia Wagner (B/NA)

Following is information showing the average prices of titles treated through the Blackwell North America Approval Program over the past five years. The figures were tabulated every six months, for the entire preceding year, in an attempt to smooth out short-term pricing fluctuations.

For the calendar year ending December 31, 1991:

The average price for all titles was \$49.112, up from \$42.53 one year ago—an increase of 15.5%.

The average price for U.S. origin titles was \$40.62, up from \$36.56 one year ago—an increase of 11.1%.

The average price for U.K. origin titles was \$56.67, up from \$47.83 one year ago—an increase of 18.5%.

The average price for other foreign titles was \$79.48, up from \$67.07 one year ago—also an increase of 18.5%.

As the chart shows, however, the penultimate year (ending December 31, 1990) was an anomaly, the only time in five years that prices have dropped in all categories. Hence the increases reported above are more dramatic than they would be if prices were compared from eighteen months, rather than a year, earlier. When Blackwell reported the 1990 across-the-board price decreases, we expressed skepticism that the drop signalled the beginning of a downward pricing trend. Unfortunately for those concerned with library budgets, our skepticism appears to have been justified.

AVERAGE LIST PRICES OF NEW TITLES TREATED ON APPROVAL FOR THE YEAR ENDING:

	12/87	6/88	12/88	6/89	12/89	6/90	12/90	6/91	12/91	Var	Pct Var
all	\$37.23	\$39.30	\$40.85	\$41.84	\$43.47	\$44.28	\$42.53	\$45.63	\$49.11	\$6.58	15.5%
U.S.	32.40	33.63	34.56	35.61	36.58	36.86	36.56	38.32	40.62	4.06	11.1%
UK	39.71	42.41	46.43	47.92	49.48	48.79	47.83	52.76	56.67	8.84	18.5%
Frgn	57.82	60.96	65.28	62.77	69.06	71.55	67.07	71.55	79.48	12.41	18.5%

Focus

Librarians As Wizards?

by Mark Sexton (Mark Sexton Associates)

The provocative new journal of academic life, *Lingua Franca*, continues to stir things up on campus. Its February issue has an article apparently aimed at waking up the faculty to what's happening in their local library if they haven't noticed yet. Author Craig Davis suggests that "the library will be a major petri dish for new academic technologies of study and subject, and librarians will be the wizards if they're wise enough." He adds, "As theoretical and technological pressures create an

increasingly complex inter-disciplinary environment, librarians have the potential to be more than technowizards. Their technical perspective could make them instrumental in the foundation and management of new modes of communication and thought that will overcome disciplinary borders as successfully as transnational corporations transcend national borders."

Lingua Franca recently got rave reviews in *College and Research Libraries*, *Library Journal* and several general media. It has attained a circulation of 16,000 in a little over a year of publication.