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Group Therapy/ Status Reports

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Group Therapy

Column Editor: **Rosann Bazirjian** (Syracuse University)

We're still looking for gripes and issues! Is there anything you need to get off your chest? This includes Publishers and Vendors too! Tell Rosann Bazirjian at Syracuse University, LIBRVB@SUV.M.bitnet or FAX (315) 443-9510

GRIBE:

My gripe involves the inconsistency among the status reports which we receive from vendors and publishers. I am all too tired of receiving a "not yet published" report one month, only to be followed by an "out of stock indefinitely" report the following month. Or, what about those out of stock reports where the actual book shows up the following week? Also, what do some of these reports mean? For example, what is the difference between "tracing with publisher" and "claiming with publisher"? Can't there be any standardization among vendors and publishers between the wording of the status reports we receive?

Gripe submitted by **Marie Laney**,
Syracuse University

VENDOR RESPONSE:

As a bookseller, I can sympathize with your very legitimate concerns regarding the apparent inconsistency in the status reports you receive from your vendor. Too often one report contradicts another and the reasons are twofold.

1) Like many other aspects of the bookselling/publishing industry, there are no universally accepted standards for the status codes and messages used by publishers. Consequently, each publisher, operating independently, assigns its own set of status messages to be interpreted by the vendor.

2) The status messages vendors receive from publishers are often unclear. As examples, one publisher may report "not yet published" titles as "out of stock" and "publication cancelled" titles as "out of print." As a result, the vendor is placed in the position of deciphering and decoding these messages to assure that the library receives the most correct and current information. While book vendors can and do filter many of these messages for errors, some erroneous reports are bound to reach the library.

It is the responsibility of your vendor to enhance its computer systems and familiarize its staff to guard against the dissemination of misleading status re-

ports. For example, our firm's computer system will not permit the operator to record an out of stock and not yet published report for the same title. The user is alerted to verify the accuracy of the recent report as well as the original report before submitting a new report to the library. Similarly, our system will not report an "out of stock" status if the publisher's reported due date is less than two weeks from the report date. If the library received an "out of stock" report one week and the book the next, it is because the publisher, for any number of reasons, has failed to advise a due date.

In addition to comprehending often confusing terminology used by various publishers, the experienced staff of a vendor can derail an erroneous report by recognizing, for example, that a 1992 publication cannot be reported "out of print" simply because the publisher has not yet recorded a particular title in its database.

Unfortunately vendors, like publishers, have not standardized the number, type, and wording of their reports. To use your illustration, while some vendors may use the terminology "tracing with publisher" and others may use "claiming with publisher" the meaning is the same.

Can there be any standardization among vendors and publishers for wording of the status reports you receive? **YES.** However, the probability of this happening, because of the independent

nature of publishing and the competitive nature of bookselling is, in my opinion, almost non-existent.

Submitted by: **Gary Herald**, President, Ambassador Books

PUBLISHER RESPONSE:

Ms. Laney's plea for consistency in status reports codes would seem to be an easy, "politically correct" problem to solve, though any one who has been involved with any sort of standardization might think otherwise.

I'm not sure how a title could move from "not yet published" to "out of stock indefinitely." (Elsevier doesn't use this code) unless there was the unlikely situation that the entire print run of a title sold out on initial release and there are no plans to reprint. Conceivably, this could happen with a conference proceedings, where the bulk shipment went to the conference participants and the balance were sent on the publisher's approval plans, leaving no stock.

While Elsevier uses "temporarily out of stock" with a date to indicate when the reprint is due, it is possible some publishers may use "out of stock" for the same status, thus the situation of the book showing up a week after the librarian was told it was out of stock.

By way of example, Elsevier's status codes are as follows:

OOP	Out of Print
NYP	Not Yet Published
Temp Out Stock, Due	Temporarily out of stock, reprint due (date specified)
Not Distributed	North American distribution is handled by a firm other than Elsevier NY
N/A Abandoned	Not available, project abandoned (usually, author never completed manuscript)
New Edtn No Dt	A new edition (with or without a date) is expected, so order for previous edition is not accepted
OOS	Out of Stock (reprint is being considered)

continued on page 46

1992 Journal Pricing Update

by **Adrian W. Alexander** (The Faxon Company)

U.S. Periodical Price Index

The U.S. Periodical Price Index is prepared annually under the sponsorship of the Library Materials Price Index Committee of ALCTS, and is published each year in the April 15 issue of *Library Journal*. The data for this study is compiled and analyzed currently by Kathryn Hammell Carpenter of the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Adrian Alexander of Faxon.

For the sample used in this study, the average periodical price for 1992 rose by 12.6% percent over the 1991 average price, when 211 "Soviet" translations were included, and by 12.2% when the "Soviet" translation titles were excluded. 1992 marks the second consecutive year in which the overall average price of the sample increased by more than 10%. By comparison, the average price, excluding translations, had risen by a fairly steady rate (9.0 - 9.9 percent) from 1982 to 1990.

Of the 25 subject categories used to describe the sample, 12 experienced increases of over 10%. Five of the subject categories now have average prices at least 500% higher than they had in the index base year of 1977: Chemistry & Physics, Engineering, Labor & Industrial Relations, Medicine, and Zoology. At current rates of increase, this "500 Club" should also include the following categories next year: Industrial Arts, "Soviet" Translations, and Mathematics, etc. (which also includes Earth Sciences, Life Sciences, Botanical Sciences, and General Sciences).

Faxon 1992 Price Increases by Publisher

At the ACRL Conference in Salt Lake City in April, Faxon released an analysis of 1992 journal price increases by specific publisher. This report will be available to all Faxon academic clients by ALA. In preparing this report, Faxon analyzed only those titles for which it had at least 3 or more orders for

U.S. clients, paying in U.S. Dollars, in 1992. Also, only calendar year subscriptions were analyzed, and, if a publisher had separate rates for airmail and surface delivery, these were counted as separate rates.

Price increases were analyzed in two ways: unweighted price increases were based on average prices for all titles from a publisher, regardless of the number of individual titles in Faxon's database. Weighted price increases reflect the number of orders actually placed for each title (Ex. — the price increase for a title with 100 orders would count twice as much as the increase for a title with 50 orders). For this summary, weighted increases only will be used.

The analysis is organized into three groups of publishers: Continental Europe, United Kingdom, and United States, and lists 1991 weighted prices in addition to both unweighted and weighted prices for 1992.

Eleven major continental European publishers were included in the individual analysis. 1992 weighted price increases ranged from a high of 14.4% for Elsevier Scientific Publishing (Ireland) to a low of -5.2% for Springer Verlag. Other European publishers also posted net decreases in terms of U.S. dollars, for 1992, including Elsevier Editions Scientifiques (-7.6%), Elsevier Science Publishers (-0.8%), Elsevier Sequoia S.A. (-2.2%), Kluwer (-1.7%), and Munksgaard (-1.4%). The overall change reported for Faxon U.S. clients in this analysis was -0.6%.

Fourteen British publishers were included in the individual analysis. Their 1992 weighted price increases ranged from a high of 34.4% for MCB University Press to a low of 2.0% for the British Medical Association. The overall increase for British publishers was 14.3%. In addition to MCB, those publishers included in the

individual analysis that exceeded the average increase were:

Oxford University Press (14.9%), CAB International (15.4%), Pergamon (18.0%), and John Wiley (19.4%).

Forty-eight U.S. publishers were included in the individual analysis. Their 1992 weighted price increases ranged from a high of 31.6% from the American Medical Association to a low of -8.3% from Datapro Research. The overall weighted increase for U.S. publishers was 11.3%, a figure that was exceeded by 14 of the publishers included in the individual analysis. Three of those publishers, in addition to the AMA, had weighted increases exceeding twenty percent: American Chemical Society (22.7%), John Wiley (22.6%) and Wiley/Liss (22.3%).

This publisher-by-publisher analysis indicates that 1992 was an interesting year for journal prices. Because the U.S. Dollar strengthened in mid-1991 after the conclusion of the Persian Gulf conflict, price increases for continental European titles were minimal for U.S. libraries, when compared with previous years. British titles, however, increased significantly in price (14.3%), due primarily to Pergamon's move to a single, worldwide price structure last year. Increases for U.S. titles, meanwhile, were somewhat similar in the Faxon analysis to the increases shown in the U.S. Periodical Price Index. ☛

Group Therapy

continued from previous page

For further information I would refer you to a survey by the AAP/LRTS Out of Print Task Force, conducted by Helmut Schwarzer and summarized in the October 1990 issue of *Yankee Book Peddler's Dialogue*.

Submitted by **Mary Fugle**, Director, North American Sales & Distribution, Elsevier Science Publishing Co. ☛