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Abby Brothers

Blackwell's, abby.brothers@blackwell.com

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Book Pricing Update — One Publisher's Treatment of Science Textbooks Over a Ten-Year Period

by **Abby Brothers** (New Titles Account Coordinator, Blackwell's) <Abby.Brothers@Blackwell.com>

Column Editor: **Dan Miller** (Manager, Approval Systems Department, Blackwell's) <Dan.Miller@Blackwell.com>

With the fiscal yearend close at hand, Collection Development and Acquisitions Librarians are now facing the daunting tasks of evaluating budgets and analyzing trends in scholarly publishing. While it is important to identify publishing trends as a whole, consideration of an individual publisher's response to the market can offer valuable insight. Of the most distinguished university presses, **Cambridge University Press**, provides a particularly useful case study. Blackwell's treated 1,177 Cambridge titles on Approval for the 1997 calendar year, superseded only by sci-tech publisher **Springer-Verlag**, with 1,257 titles, and the trade publisher **Routledge**, with 1,202 titles. A ten-year look at Cambridge titles from 1988 through 1997 reveals a few interesting trends.

With the popularity of academic disciplines shifting from year to year, a similar degree of fluctuation in Cambridge's coverage over ten years might be expected. Surprisingly, however, it maintained remarkable consistency in its broad-level treatment of subjects. Its two

largest areas of concentration over the ten years under consideration were the LC Q classification (Natural Sciences) and the LC P classification (Languages and Literature). In 1988, 23% of its titles fell within the LC Q class and 16% fell within the P class. Over ten years Cambridge's average distribution across the Q and P classes was 24% and 18% respectively, and by 1997, 25% of its titles fell within the Q class and 17% fell within the P class. Although only 9% of all university press titles fell within the LC Q class, 29% of those were contributed by Cambridge, that is, about 2,000 of 6,670 titles!

If we look within Cambridge science titles we find an increasing focus on textbooks over ten years, and a significant increase in the average list price of these titles.

In 1988, only 26% of Cambridge Q class titles were textbooks, as compared with 50% in 1997. The average price of the cloth editions of these titles rose considerably during this period. In 1988, science textbooks averaged \$57.64, and in 1997 they averaged

\$82.35: a 43% increase. Even without factoring inflation into these figures, this increase is high when compared with Cambridge science titles in general which saw only a 28% price increase during the same time frame. By 1997 escalating prices in Cambridge science textbooks put the \$82.35 average list price for these titles 13% ahead of the average list price of \$72.87 for Cambridge science titles in general.

How has the detailed-level subject content of Cambridge science textbooks changed over ten years? In 1988, most of the science textbooks were distributed fairly evenly among the various disciplines, with mathematics and physics accounting for 15 titles, or about 54% of all science textbooks. By 1997, mathematics and physics textbooks jumped to 86 titles or about 73% of science textbooks. Algebra titles clearly outnumbered other math fields, while math physics titles such as *The Geometry of Physics*, dominated the physics textbooks. Although Cambridge does not publish a great deal in computer science, it is interesting to note that in 1988 only 2% of these titles were treated as textbooks. In 1996, only 1.5%

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Test Driving CD-ROMS from page 44

So how do you top a source like this one? That's right. You place it on CD-ROM.

The CD-ROM (\$235 stand alone version, \$1,775 network) includes not only the text and diagrams from the original, but additionally includes animation and 3D graphics. This version also includes the first of 3 planned supplements, the 1997 Supplement I, which brings the article count to nearly 7,600. Access to these articles is just a few keystrokes away in most cases. The CD uses a "DynaText" Browser which displays two "collections," the *Encyclopaedia of Mathematics* and the DynaText Browser Documentation. The *Encyclopaedia* is divided into three categories or "books": the entries, the index and the guide. The entries are arranged alphabetically and contain the article text with links to the animation and graphics. The index provides information such as a list of authors or article titles. The guide helps the user understand how the search engine works and how the information is structured. The CD is fairly easy to use and the informational content is logically laid out and easy to follow. However, the user will be able to save time, energy and use the CD more effectively if he or she reads the guide first.

The DynaText browser allows standard searching, using either the find box at the bottom of the screen or the search form. In addition to standard searching, the search form allows Boolean, proximity, special characters, wild-cards, context-sensitive searches and even provides a search history. The organized architecture of this CD however, presents certain search limitations. Due to the methods used to create

the CD, certain headings, illustrations and equations cannot be found using the find feature because they are not actually part of the text, but they can be found easily by browsing the alphabetical entry list under the first few letters of the subject. For example, one can find "fundamental forms of surface" by quickly browsing the entries under the letter "f", then the letters "fu" instead of performing a find search on "fundamental forms of surface". Many of the features of this browser can even be customized to specific user preferences. The help screens are easily accessible throughout the program and provide adequate support in easy-to-understand terms. In fact, if you understand the mathematical text of the *Encyclopedia*, the help screens are a "piece of cake." The real "power" of this CD is displayed by using the hypertext links contained within the articles. One can easily leap from information on a theory to background information on the theorist without pulling and searching through multiple volumes. Many of the terms used within the articles are linked to definitions which enhance understanding. This is extremely beneficial in the case of complex theories and problems. But most impressive is the inclusion of intriguing animation and 3D graphics.

These features give the user a perspective that simply cannot be delivered in a paper source. The user becomes completely interactive with the source by being able to manipulate 3D images, change their color and texture and even set them into motion. And within some articles, the user can view a short animated demonstration or movie of a principle or concept like the "Archimedean Spiral." This is a great use of the technology. Overall, the *Encyclopaedia of Mathematics* is a great resource made better by CD-ROM and a must for serious mathematical study.

Math Bestsellers
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Cloth \$44.95

Krantz, Steven G. (Steven George), 1951- *Primer of Mathematical Writing: Being a Disquisition on Having Your Ideas Recorded, Typeset, Published, Read and Appreciated*. American Mathematical Society 1997. 0821806351. Paper \$19.00

Hosking, J.R.M. (Jonathan Richard Morley), 1955- *Regional Frequency Analysis: An Approach Based on L-Moments*. Cambridge Univ Press 1997. 0521430453. Cloth \$69.95

Long, J. Scott. *Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables*. Sage Publications 1997. 0803973748. Cloth \$47.50

Klein, Judy L., 1951- *Statistical Visions in Time: A History of Time Series Analysis, 1662-1938*. Cambridge Univ Press 1997. 0521420466. Cloth \$64.95

Burgess, John P. *Subject with No Object: Strategies for Nominalistic Interpretation of Mathematics*. Clarendon/Oxford 1997. 0198236158. Cloth \$45.00

Dedekind, Richard, 1831-1916. *Theory of Algebraic Integers*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521565189. Paper \$23.95

Allen, Michael Patrick. *Understanding Regression Analysis*. Plenum 1997. 0306456486. Cloth \$42.50

Wavelets, Multilevel Methods and Elliptic PDE's; Ed by M. Ainsworth. Clarendon/Oxford 1997. 0198501900. Cloth \$49.95

Hersh, Reuben, 1927- *What is Mathematics, Really?* Oxford Univ Press 1997. 0195113683. Cloth \$35.00

Konhauser, Joseph D. E., 1924-1992. *Which Way Did the Bicycle Go? — And Other Intriguing Mathematical Mysteries*. Mathematical Assn. of America 1996. 0883853256. Paper \$29.95

Henrion, Claudia. *Women in Mathematics: The Addition of Difference*. Indiana Univ Press 1997. 0253332796. Cloth \$39.95

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were treated as textbooks. But in 1997, Cambridge published 73% of its computer science titles as textbooks.

A discussion of Cambridge be complete without considering titles published as lower under-works since many libraries, ing textbooks, usually exclude their approval plans. Between number of lower undergraduate-textbooks fluctuated, but al- siderably lower than the upper ones. In 1997, only six science designated as lower under- bearing such titles as *Phys- 500 problems & solutions guide to Mathematica ver-*

textbooks would not the number of such graduate-level even those purchas- these titles from 1988 and 1997, the ate-level science ways remained con- undergraduate-level textbook titles were graduate-level, ics with answers: and *A Beginner's sion 3.0*. For many librarians it may be reassuring to know that, although Cambridge has increased its treatment of science textbooks, titles at the lower undergraduate level are not substantially contributing to the numbers.

As one of the most prominent University Presses, Cambridge is frequently included on general University Press publisher-based Approval or New Titles Announcement Service plans. However, their strong coverage in the sciences may be of particular interest to librarians considering publisher-based plans in Mathematics and the Natural Sciences. Some of the large sci-tech publishers, such as **Springer-Verlag**, **Birkhauser**, or **Elsevier**, are usually the first considered for such plans, given the tendency of University Presses to concentrate their coverage within the Humanities and Social Sciences. But Cambridge should not be overlooked as an integral part of any such plan. Their demonstrated commitment to science book publishing over the past ten years substantiates their significance to this field of scholarly publishing.

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