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Physics Bestsellers 1996/1997

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Physics Bestsellers 1996/1997

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Editor's note: We at ATG have for a long time wanted to produce scholarly bestseller lists. Here is the first installment in what I hope will be many "scholarly bestseller" lists. Any of you booksellers who can provide us with such information, PLEASE write! — KS <strauchk@cofc.edu>

Selection of science books is among the most difficult jobs in an academic library. A vendor "best seller" list can be a useful tool, allowing librarians without a strong science background to draw upon the collective expertise of selectors across the country in evaluating their own holdings. This list shows titles in **Library of Congress** subclass QC Physics purchased most often by **Yankee Book Peddler's** approval plan and firm order customers during our 1996/97 fiscal year. In querying our database to compile the list, we excluded non-monographic series, so as not to count titles commonly acquired on standing order. We also excluded our "General—Academic" content level, in order to exclude the sort of accessible science book often widely reviewed and easily evaluated. These fifty titles represent approximately the top 10 percent of the remaining physics titles sold by **YBP** during 96/97. They range in list price from \$19.95 to \$139. At press time, all were in print. — BN

Alexander of Aphrodisias. *On Aristotle's Meteorology 4*. Cornell Univ Press, 1996. 0801432251 cloth \$45.00

Ambegaokar, Vinay. *Reasoning About Luck: Probability and its uses in Physics*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521447372 paper \$19.95

Arons, Arnold B. *Teaching Introductory Physics*. John Wiley, 1997. 0471137073 cloth \$64.29

Atomic and Ion Collisions in Solids and at Surfaces: Theory, Simulation and Applications; Roger Smith et al. Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 052144022x cloth \$69.95

Badii, R. *Complexity: Hierarchical Structures and Scaling in Physics*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 0521418909 cloth \$74.95

Bub, Jeffrey. *Interpreting the Quantum World*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 0521560829 cloth \$49.95

Cao, Tian Yu, 1941- *Conceptual Developments of 20th Century Field Theories*.

Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 0521431786 cloth \$59.95

Climate Change, 1995: The Science of Climate Change; ed. by J.T. Houghton. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521564336 cloth \$95.00

Climate Variability, Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the Semi-Arid Tropics; ed. by Jesse C. Ribot. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521480744 cloth \$80.00

Debenedetti, Pablo G., 1953- *Metastable Liquids: Concepts and Principles*. Princeton Univ Press, 1996. 0691085951 cloth \$69.50

Decoherence and the Appearance of a Classical World in Quantum Theory; D. Giulini ... et al. Springer-Verlag, 1996. 3540613943 cloth \$74.50

Deconvolution of Images and Spectra; ed. by Peter A. Jansson. Academic, 1997. 0123802229 cloth \$99.00

Efetov, Konstantin. *Supersymmetry in Disorder and Chaos*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 0521470978 cloth \$100.00

Electron: A Centenary Volume; ed. by Michael Springford. Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 0521561302 cloth \$49.95

Fara, Patricia. *Sympathetic Attractions: Magnetic Practices, Beliefs, and Symbolism in Eighteenth-century England*. Princeton Univ Press, 1996. 0691010994 cloth \$45.00

Gambini, Rodolfo. *Loops, Knots, Gauge Theories and Quantum Gravity*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521473322 cloth \$75.00

Gennes, Pierre-Gilles de. *Soft Interfaces: The 1994 Dirac Memorial Lecture*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 0521564174 cloth \$19.95

Gruppen, Claus. *Particle Detectors*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521552168 cloth \$100.00

Guillemin, V., 1937- *Symplectic Fibrations and Multiplicity Diagrams*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521443237 cloth \$49.95

Handbook of Nuclear Properties; ed. by Dorin Poenaru. Clarendon/Oxford, 1996. 0198517793 cloth \$98.00

Handbook of Physical Quantities; ed. by Igor S. Grigor'ev. CRC Press, 1997. 0849328616 cloth \$139.00

Hooft, Gerard't. *In Search of the Ultimate Building Blocks*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 0521550831 cloth \$39.95

Imry, Joseph. *Introduction to Mesoscopic Physics*. Oxford Univ Press, 1997. 0195101677 cloth \$49.95

Kogan, Sh. *Electronic Noise and Fluctuations in Solids*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521460344 cloth \$84.95

Kondratyev, K.Ia. (Kirill Iakovlevich). *Global Change and Remote Sensing*. John Wiley, 1996. 0471960780 cloth \$115.00

Krieger, Martin H. *Constitutions of Matter: Mathematically Modeling the Most Everyday of Physical Phenomena*. Univ of Chicago Press, 1996. 0226453049 cloth \$65.00

Le Bellac, Michel. *Thermal Field Theory*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521460409 cloth \$69.95

Low, Francis E. (Francis Eugene), 1921- *Classical Field Theory: Electromagnetism and Gravitation*. John Wiley, 1997. 0471595519 cloth \$59.95

Merrill, Ronald T. *Magnetic Field of The Earth: Paleomagnetism, the Core, and the Deep Mantle*. Academic, 1996. 0124912451 cloth \$89.00

Mouroulis, Pantazis. *Geometrical Optics and Optical Design*. Oxford Univ Press, 1997. 0195089316 cloth \$69.00

Nonequilibrium Statistical Mechanics in One Dimension; ed. by Vladimir Privman. Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 052155974x cloth \$100.00

Novel Optical Materials and Applications; ed. by Iam-Choon Khoo. John Wiley, 1997. 0471127930 cloth \$74.95

Owens, Frank J. *New Superconductors*. Plenum, 1996. 030645453x cloth \$39.50

Particle Physics: One Hundred Years of Discoveries: An Annotated Chronological Bibliography; V.V. Exhela et al. Amer Inst of Physics-AIP, 1996. 1563966425 paper \$52.00

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Perspectives in Quantum Hall Effects: Novel Quantum Liquids in Low-Dimensional Semiconductor Structures; ed. by Sankar Das Sarma. John Wiley, 1997. 047111216x cloth \$74.95

Pfalzner, Susanne. *Many-Body Tree Methods in Physics*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521495644 cloth \$49.95

Polyak, Ilya. *Computational Statistics in Climatology*. Oxford Univ Press, 1996. 0195099990 cloth \$65.00

Quantum Physics, Chaos Theory, and Cosmology; ed. by Mikio Namiki. Amer Inst of Physics-AIP, 1996. 1563965445 cloth \$65.00

Ridley, B.K. *Electrons and Phonons in Semiconductor Multilayers*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1997. 0521474922 cloth \$69.95

Robinett, Richard W. (Richard Wallace). *Quantum Mechanics: Classical Results, Modern Systems, and Visualized Examples*. Oxford Univ Press, 1997. 0195092023 cloth \$65.00

Snygg, John. Clifford. *Algebra: A Computational Tool for Physicists*. Oxford Univ Press, 1997. 0195098242 cloth \$85.00

Steele, Charles W. *Numerical Computation of Electric and Magnetic Fields*.

Chapman & Hall, 1997. 0412086212 cloth \$69.95

Strobl, Gert R., 1941- *Physics of Polymers: Concepts for Understanding their Structures and Behavior*. Springer-Verlag, 1996. 3540607684 paper \$39.00

Swartz, Clifford E. *Teaching Introductory Physics: A Sourcebook*. Amer Inst of Physics-AIP, 1997. 1563963205 cloth \$75.00

Transport Properties of Fluids: Their Correlation, Prediction and Estimation; ed. by Jurgen Millat. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521461782 cloth \$90.00

Tribble, Alan C., 1961- *Princeton Guide to Advanced Physics*. Princeton Univ Press, 1996. 069102670x cloth \$59.50

Weinberg, Steven. *Quantum Theory of Fields; V. II: Modern Applications*. Cambridge Univ Press, 1996. 0521550025 cloth \$47.95

Westgard, James B. *Electrodynamics: A Concise Introduction*. Springer-Verlag, 1997. 0387945857 cloth \$49.00

X-Rays: The First Hundred Years; ed. by Alan Michette. John Wiley, 1996. 0471965022 cloth \$69.95

Yndurain, F.J. *Relativistic Quantum Mechanics and Introduction To Field Theory*. Springer-Verlag, 1996. 3540604537 cloth \$59.00

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Given what we know about the ingredients, then, let's venture a few guidelines for picking omelets off the menu, assuming that we want edible ones.

1. Follow the money. In the final analysis, only economically viable offerings will last.

2. Look for consumer convenience. A couple of years ago I argued in this forum that content is king. I don't think so any more. **Becky Lenzini** found a quote the other day that said "communications is king — content is only a prince." I think that's right, in almost all contexts, which leads to the next point.

3. Make sure you are thinking clearly about the specific informing activities being supported. What is true for newspapers is not true for STM journals, even though both are called publishing.

4. Watch the underlying characteristics — technical, economic, and scope — of distribution. This is the traditional middleman role. Both publishers and libraries are at core distributors, and this will make this topic the hardest of all for us to think about, because it is us.

5. Finally, watch for the overall effects on societies, however big or small. These will never control, but they may well dampen, the speed at which things happen.

Who will make the omelet? Who knows? There will be many of them. Some will even be good.

From ordering to invoicing, libraries all across the country are designing service to meet their needs. Why shouldn't you?

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