November 2003

Book Pricing Update: Trends in Book Pricing by Subject Area - June 30, 2003

Tom Loughran

Blackwell's Book Services, tom.loughran@blackwell.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Loughran, Tom (2003) "Book Pricing Update: Trends in Book Pricing by Subject Area - June 30, 2003," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 15: Iss. 5, Article 24.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4172>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Book Pricing Update

Trends in Book Pricing by Subject Area - June 30, 2003

by **Tom Loughran** (Manager Approval Systems, Blackwell's Book Services, 6024 SW Jean Road, Bldg. G, Lake Oswego, OR 97035; Phone: 877-270-4338) <tom.loughran@blackwell.com>

Each year, **Blackwell's** reports on pricing trends in academic monograph publishing. We derive

this data from the books that were treated on our academic **Approval Program** during the previous year. In the year ending last June, we treated 41,639 academic monograph titles with an average list price of \$61.88. Excluding 1,697 reprints, the average list price of the 39,942 remaining new titles was \$62.94. This represents a 2% price increase in the average price of an approval monograph from the previous year.

Trends in Pricing in the Humanities

Within the universe of approval books, 14,084 **Humanities and Fine Arts** books increased 3% in price, from \$46.99 to \$48.56. **Art** books (1,375 titles) fell -1%, from an average price of \$51.37 to \$51.04. Books on **Architecture** (493 titles) also fell -1%, from \$54.48 to \$53.88. **Performing Arts** books (1,072 titles) increased 2%, from \$49.63 to \$50.79. **Music** as a subcategory of **Performing Arts** rose 8%, from \$53.07 to \$57.09 on 488 titles. **Humanities** titles (excluding the Fine and Performing Arts) rose slightly more than the price of an average new title — 4%, instead of the average 3% overall. Within Humanities there were also some significant deviations from the average: the price of an average **History** title rose 6%, from \$48.35 to \$51.19, as did **Folklore** and **Mythology**

books, from \$39.98 to \$42.57. The price of the average **Literary text** rose 3%, from \$25.39 to \$26.11, while the price of a volume of **Literary Criticism** rose just 2%, from \$55.88 to \$57.15. **Religion** titles also rose 2%, from \$50.52 to \$51.52 and **Philosophy** titles fell -3%, from \$63.58 to \$61.99.

Trends in Pricing in the Social Sciences

The average price of 13,774 books in the **Social Sciences** (including Law) rose 1%, from \$57.17 to \$57.91. Again, within the broader category there were significant variations: 1,075 **Law** titles fell -4% — from \$86.04 to \$82.82. 1,266 **Economics** titles fell -1%, from \$69.70 to \$68.71. Also registering a decline, 270 titles in **Military Science** fell -17%, from \$49.33 to \$41.10. Books in **Environmental Studies** rose 4%, from \$63.84 to \$66.38, as did books in **Education**, from \$48.51 to \$50.53. **International Relations** titles held steady, rising only four cents on average, from \$57.70 to \$57.74. And **Sports and Recreation** titles fell -2%, from \$38.27 to \$37.54. **Psychology** titles rose 8%, from \$60.92 to \$65.69 and 83 **Applied Psychology** titles rose 11%, from \$58.29 to \$64.85. 109 **Anthropology** titles were up 4%, from \$62.40 to \$64.71. 1,266 **Political Science** titles stayed virtually the same, falling a nickel from \$53.12 to \$53.07. In another high publication area, 2,213 **Business administration** titles rose 6%, from \$54.97 to \$58.14, while 184 **Management** titles declined -1%, from \$54.55 to \$54.01.

Trends in Pricing in the Sciences and Technology

Last year saw an increase of 3% in price of the average STM title, or one percentage point more than the overall rate. The average price of a book in the **Sciences and Technology** went from \$82.82 to \$85.64. At the bargain end of Sci-Tech books, 319 **Nursing** titles rose 1%, from \$44.29 to \$44.90. Overall, 996 **Biology** titles fell -1%, from \$96.08 to \$94.77, but within the larger category, 154 **Human Biology** titles fell -2%, from \$92.98 to \$91.42 and 130 **Botany** titles fell -17%, from \$108.04 to \$90.03 and 170 **Zoology** titles rose 3%, from \$82.63 to \$85.12. At the higher priced end of STM, 253 **Chemistry** titles rose 6%, from \$138.71 to \$146.92. Books in **Medicine** rose 2%, from \$83.31 to \$84.60. **Astronomy** titles fell -5% from \$82.18 to \$78.25. 39 **Forestry** titles fell -6%, from \$95.47 to \$89.33, while 186 **Agriculture** titles rose 1%, from \$89.13 to \$89.60. While the price of 2,564 **Computer Science** titles rose 3% (from \$55.85 to \$57.55), 822 of those titles in **Personal Computing** rose only 2%, from \$38.93 to \$39.63.

The price of the average **Mathematics** monograph fell -3%, from \$83.45 to \$81.34. 2,161 titles in **Technology** (encompassing all of the **Engineering** disciplines) rose an average 8%, from \$105.52 to \$114.17, as did the average price of titles in **Earth Sciences**, from \$89.73 to \$96.73.

For further price details of subject areas not mentioned, or of sub-disciplines of those listed above, please visit our Website at: <http://www.blackwell.com/level4/coverageandcost/index.asp>.

Talk of the Trade

by **Barry Fast** (Deltabooks, 186 Cross Street, City Island, NY 10464; Phone: 718-885-9563) <barry0112@aol.com>

Radar Debuts with Boldface Boors

One of my favorite oxymorons is "popular culture", and the latest entry in the media world, *Radar* magazine, is devoted to covering this aspect of American civilization (another oxymoron?). This new magazine launched in May with a cover story on celebrity "Monsters", people who have "distinguished themselves in the area of physical and verbal abuse, overweening arrogance, and by the imposition of a particularly nasty influence over the culture at large." **Michael Moore** (*Stupid White Men*) made the cut for acting out his everyman blue collar routine from his \$1.7 million apartment in Manhattan's Upper West Side. He sends his daughter to a prestigious private school, while "unsuccessfully pressuring his writing staff at his TV Nation show not to join the **Writers Guild**." He achieved fame and fortune with his pro-union activism, but apparently the only good unions are those in any business but his business.

Partisan Review Killed by its Own Success

Speaking of popular culture, we Americans tend to measure success in terms of numbers, the more the better. By other measures, however, a

relatively small magazine (circulation never more than 15,000) was brilliantly successful, exerting a powerful influence on political thought and literary taste for at least half a century. Quoting from the *New York Times*, "From its inaugural issue in 1937, which included Delmore Schwartz's short story, *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*, a poem by Wallace Stevens, and contributions by Lionel Trilling, Sydney Hook and Edmund Wilson, to its heyday, the 1940s to the '70s, "the journal published an astonishing range of landmark work."

For many Americans, *Partisan Review* was their introduction to Abstract Expressionism, Existentialism, New Criticism, and the voices of talented young writers such as Norman Mailer, Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Hardwick and Susan Sontag. When many intellectuals were in the thrall of communism and apologists for Stalin, the *Partisan Review* gave a strong voice to American liberalism, providing a forum for political ideas that opposed totalitarianism (a word we don't hear much any-

continued on page 84