
Subject: Re: Market Research 101

Posted by [Teddy Allen](#) on Thu, 10 Feb 2011 19:33:08 GMT

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On Feb 9, 4:44 pm, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

> Folks,
>
> OK, today's topic: "What you want, verses what you
> can get". Or, perhaps, "What you want, verses what
> you can afford."
>
> I wrote this book of mine with only one idea
> in mind: I wanted a book that was both informative
> and beautiful. It turns out that informative you
> can get for a dime a dozen. Beautiful, well, that
> costs a bit more. Quite a bit more, as it turns out. :-)
>
> So, here is the question I should have started with,
> according to my MBA son. How much would you be willing
> to pay for a book about graphics programming in IDL?
>
> Let's start with a couple of assumptions. Let's assume
> it is a pretty good book and that it contains information
> that may be of some interest to you. Would you pay \$25,
> \$45, \$85, \$135? Where do you start drawing the line?
> What causes you to draw the line? Do the aesthetics of
> the book have anything to do with it? Do you care whether
> it is in back or white or color? Cloth cover or paperback?
> Sexy picture of the author on the back cover?
>
> At your price point, whatever it is, would you expect
> a full-color book, or would you expect black and white
> illustrations? (Keep in mind this is a book about
> scientific visualization techniques.) If you expected
> color, how much of a premium (above what you would pay
> for a black and white book) would you be willing to pay?
> What would you think is "reasonable"?
>
> Would it matter to you if the book was in black and white,
> but you could gain access to a color PDF of the book for
> some nominal charge if you bought the book?
>
> Or, are you one of those modern kinds of readers who
> disdain physical books, and only consider buying a book
> if you can load on your Kindle or iPad?
>
> Obviously, I have to make some choices here in the next
> week or so. And, obviously, I don't expect everyone will

> be willing to cough up \$150 for a book, even if it is
> personally autographed by the author. But I would like to
> get a sense of what people might expect to pay for a technical
> book and what they would expect to get for their money.
>
> Thanks!
>
> Cheers,
>
> David
>
> --
> David Fanning, Ph.D.
> Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
> Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming:<http://www.idlcoyote.com/>
> Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

David,

First of all, thank you for your continued efforts to help the pace of my programming evolve from the speed of uphill flowing chilled molasses to snail like. Yes, there is a huge difference! I represent the IDL user who spends days on plotting (and career choice re-evaluation) to achieve seconds for real analysis...yes, the graduate student.

In the past three years I have bought three IDL books. At that time price was not a concern due to my modis operandi: I need all the help I can get approach. At this point with the evolution of IDL 8.0, I will only consider buying another IDL book only if it is written in 8.0 (or 8.0.1, etc...). I think the advantage you may have in selling this book is that there do not appear to be any IDL 8.0 books currently on the market. If you make it, I will buy it, thus insuring a rapid evolution from snail to gazelle.

Generally, I detest electronic books. I do not like to be forced to use a battery or a plug to do something that normally does not need it. Can you imagine being on a long flight, say from Narita to Jakarta, and have to stop reading because the power is used up on an e-reader, thus forcing you to browse again and again at the sky mall catalog hoping that you can catch something different with each turning page. For me paper books are the only way to go. However, the ONLY exception is for reference books. As a student, I tend to travel extensively with bulky texts and reference books. Not only does that kill my back, but it can add extra weight to the sensitive weight limits from all airlines. Once I was over the limit and was forced to walk throughout the airport with my IDL manuals and GFD text shouting nerd alert with each step. A kick me sign on my back would have been more welcomed.

Now, getting back to your topic...I would be delighted with a PDF version. I use my IDL reference books while using IDL. Since I do not

use IDL without power, I do not need a paper book. A PDF IDL book would allow me to leave my other books at home, but more importantly will always be accessible whenever I use IDL. Also, you can easily imagine the benefits of a PDF book while competing for space on the small in flight tray tables. There is no room for both a book and laptop. But, voila, there is infinite space for the PDF! While I am not a publishing guru, I can guess that a PDF book with unlimited color plots would be much less expensive to produce and hopefully less expensive to buy than a paper book. Color plots in an IDL reference book are indispensable and should not be compromised. I hope there will be a PDF version available. This request is not an effort to spend less, but instead to reduce bulk and exploit color plots to maximize the learning process.

Hope this info helps.....Good Luck!

teddy

p.s. there is sooooo much more room on a PDF for sexy pics of the author. (and limitless photoshop opportunities as well!)
