
Subject: Re: Market Research 101

Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2011 22:53:49 GMT

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I want the electronic version. And not just for an e-reader. I need a pdf I can search on my work computer.

My experience with other paper-vs-electronic pricing is that the latter goes for about 50-70% of the former. But, for an electronic book that costs 70% of the paper version, it better be full-colour and hi-res. At the 50% level, in the past

it was not unusual for me to buy both electronic and paper so I could read the latter on the train to-and-from work.

Nowadays, with the explosion of e-readers, I'm only interested in electronic books in pdf form.

Note: I have only ever bought electronic technical books.

For technical topics I'm not interested in beauty. I can buy copies of "Cats in the Sun" if I want to look at beautiful

pix. I'm interested in the conveyance of information, expanding the realms of what I can do, or what I thought was

possible. That doesn't mean I don't want the graphics to look professional, I do. I just think beauty is too subjective

a metric for measuring the efficacy of a technical text (you might think sticking pictures of your kids on the front

page makes it "beautiful").

As for the price - in my opinion I think you're limited to <\$100 simply because of IDL v8 function graphics. Whenever I

see an IDL plot/surface/image/map/whatever graphic now I immediately think "how would I do that in function graphics?"

(It's the Curse Of Knowledge[*]) I also think your book/expertise will help with that via the usual route: you point out

how you actually did something, what issues were important, what weren't, etc. I reckon that sort of information is

universal regardless of the graphics display system one may prefer. Having said that I'm willing to buy several copies

for my colleagues (electronic for me, paper for them) simply to get you working to fix your IDL v8 installation so you

can write the function graphics version. :o)

cheers,

paulv

[*] Check out "Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die" by Chip Heath and Dan

Heath. Or see:

<http://37signals.com/svn/posts/213-the-curse-of-knowledge>

David Fanning 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
>
>
