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Subject: Re: Market Research 101

Posted by [Paul.Bowyer@gmail.com](mailto:Paul.Bowyer@gmail.com) on Fri, 11 Feb 2011 09:46:25 GMT

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On Feb 10, 8:33 pm, Teddy Allen <teddy.ie...@gmail.com> wrote:

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

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>

>> 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!)

Hi David,

I would be more inclined to buy a pdf version, and I'd probably pay  
\$50 for the pleasure.

For a printed version, and issue of colour, either have colour  
versions on your web site as someone else suggested, or provide a CD  
with them all - or will that cause costs to rocket too?

All the very best,  
Paul

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