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U.S. Book Production Plummets 18% in 2005, According to Bowker Statistics; Smaller Publishers Show the Largest Drop in New Titles; UK Now Leader in English Language Publishing

By Lee Glendinning and agencies

Bowker, the world's leading provider of bibliographic information, today released statistics on U.S. book publishing compiled from its Books In Print(R) database. Based on preliminary figures from U.S. publishers, Bowker is projecting that U.S. title output in 2005 decreased by more than 18,000 to 172,000 new titles and editions. This is the first decline in U.S. title output since 1999, and only the 10th downturn recorded in the last 50 years. It follows the record increase of more than 19,000 new books in 2004.

Great Britain, long the world's per capita leader in the publication of new books in any language, now replaces the United States as the publisher of most new books in English. 206,000 new books were published in the U.K. in 2005, representing an increase of some 45,000 (28%) over 2004.

Only the very large academic, professional, and trade publishers managed to publish close to the number of new titles and editions that they did in 2004. Output from the smallest publishers dropped by more than 7%, while new titles from the small-to-medium and medium-to-large publishers declined by 10% and 15% respectively.

The number of new titles released by the largest general trade houses decreased 4.7%, to 23,017. University presses increased their title output 1.8% to 14,746, their largest annual total since 2000. Since 1995, new titles have increased 51% for all U.S. publishers, 17% for the largest trade houses, and 14% for university presses.

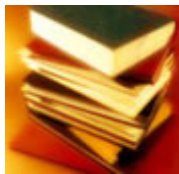
General adult fiction and children's books, two of the bellwether categories in U.S. book publishing, showed double-digit decreases in new titles and editions. Virtually every broad publishing category tracked by Bowker except legal showed significant decreases. Among adult non-fiction categories released by all U.S. publishers in 2005, religion, biography, history, and technology suffered the steepest declines. The largest general trade houses, on the other hand, did have a few bright spots. Sports & recreation led all categories with a 22% increase in new titles, followed by an 18% increase in new medical & health titles, and a 6.9% increase in adult fiction releases.

Meanwhile, university presses showed some growth in most categories, with science and law enjoying the largest increases.

In 2005, the average suggested retail price for adult hardcovers released by the largest general trade houses increased 3 cents to \$27.55; adult fiction hardcovers decreased 7 cents to \$25.01; and adult non-fiction hardcovers increased 3 cents to \$28.52. Adult trade paperbacks increased 1 cent to \$15.77; adult fiction trade paperbacks decreased 2 cents to \$14.76; adult non-fiction trade paperbacks increased 10 cents to \$16.26; and adult mass-market paperbacks increased 7 cents to \$7.42. The average list price for juvenile hardcovers decreased 1 cent to \$16.08. In all, the largest general trade publishers released 345 more titles as adult trade paperbacks and 301 fewer as adult hardcovers.

Additional charts and statistics can be found at www.Bookwire.com by clicking "Book Industry Statistics."

"In 2005, publishers were more cautious and disciplined when it came to their lists," said Gary Aiello, chief operating officer of New Providence, N.J.-based Bowker. "We see that trend continuing in 2006."



The price of paper has already gone up twice this year, and publishers, especially the small ones, will have to think very carefully about what to publish."

"The sudden and steep drop in the number of new books published in the U.S. last year was surprising," said Andrew Grabois, a consultant for Bowker. "Yet 2005's book output was the second highest total of new books ever recorded, after 2004's record year. The reappearance of limits was the most interesting thing about publishing in 2005. Even an industry that produces more new products than any other must make choices. The question is, will British publishers face a similar market correction, or have they figured out how fewer publishers can publish more books for even fewer readers?"

The book production figures in this preliminary release are based on year-to-date data from U.S. publishers. If changes in industry estimates occur, they will be reflected in a later published report. Books In Print data represents input from 83,000 publishers in the U.S. The data is sent to Bowker in electronic files, and via BowkerLink(TM), Bowker's password protected Web-based tool, which enables publishers to update and add their own data.....**THE END**

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