



A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

BNC

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Book Pricing: A Summary of Print Book Prices

October 2005 –December 2012

PREPARED BY BNC STAFF

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INTRODUCTION

Conventional wisdom is that everything is getting more expensive—but is that actually the case for books? Are book-pricing trends the same across all genres and formats, or have some prices changed in a different direction? To review pricing, we've drawn the average list price and average actual selling price for every week from the start of BNC SalesData tracking (October 2005) until the end of 2012. We compared those prices over time, and the results may be surprising to some.

This data covers print book sales as represented by retailers reporting weekly into BNC SalesData. BNC SalesData represents approximately 85% of the trade book market in Canada. List price values are collected through BNC SalesData, which draws from a bibliographic feed sent by publishers to R.R.Bowker LLC. All titles with a list price of \$0 were excluded from calculations.

The average actual selling price (AASP) values reflect the actual prices that consumers paid for print books, including retailer-level discount, as provided to BNC SalesData through reporting retailers' point-of-sale systems. Only retailer data that includes the point-of-sale price was included in the AASP calculation.

To determine overall pricing patterns, we compared the average list price and the average actual selling price of print books in Canada for each week of sales data collected since October 2005. We further refined our analysis to look at pricing patterns for different formats (hardcover, trade paperback and mass market) and top-level subjects (fiction, nonfiction and juvenile), and broke out books published by Canadian-owned publishers to see whether the overall trends in the overall market were the same for Canadian books.

Since prices fluctuate over the course of the year, in our analysis we compared prices in 2012 with a similar previous period—either the same quarter in a previous year, or with 2006, the first full year of BNC SalesData tracking.

SUMMARY

The average list price for all print books sold in Canada has gradually declined over the last seven years. In the fourth quarter of 2005, the average list price for all books was \$19.21. In Q4 of 2012, that figure was \$18.71, down 3%. There are fluctuations in price throughout each year, with the highest average list prices in November and December, when many publishers release their big fall gift books.

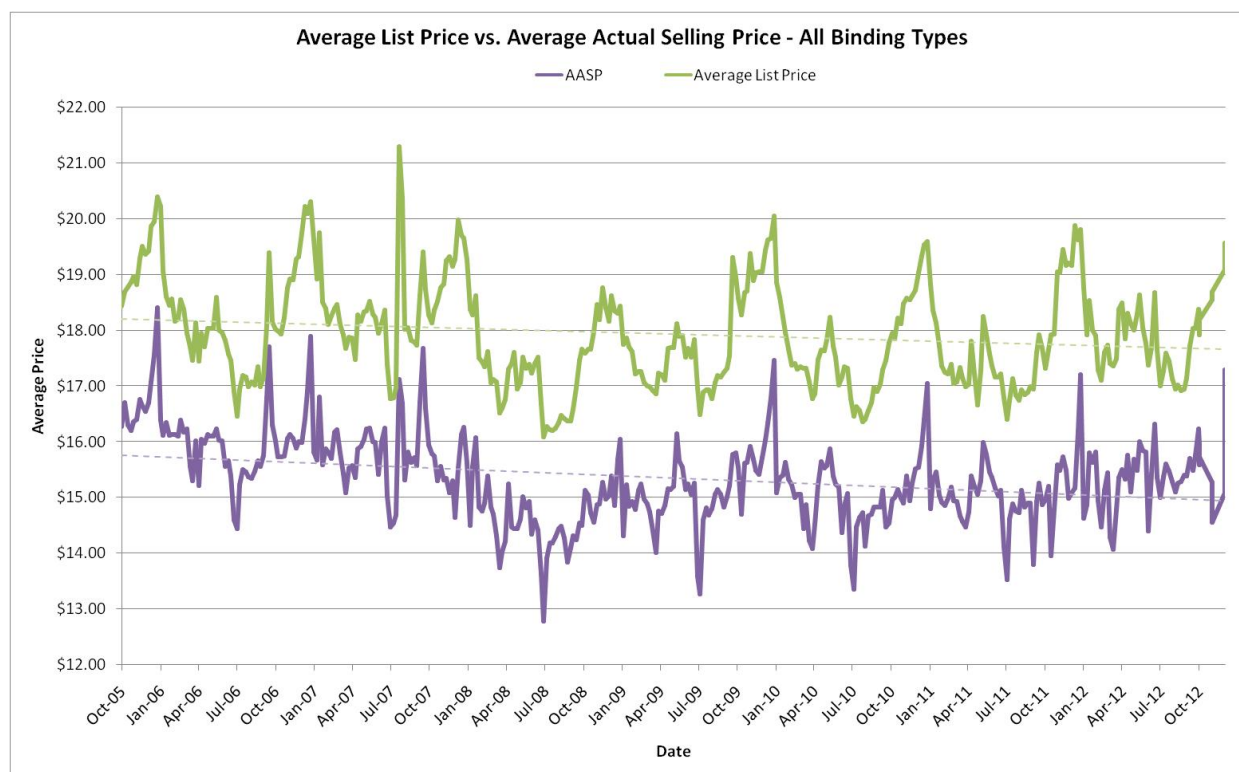
The largest decline in the average actual selling price also occurred during the months of November and December. In 2005 the AASP in December was \$17.43, and in December 2012 it was \$16.27: a 6.7% drop.

The gap between average list price and AASP has widened over the period of this study. In 2006, the average selling price was 12.3% lower than list price. In 2012, the AASP was 14.3% lower than list price. This may indicate an increase in retailer-level discounts.

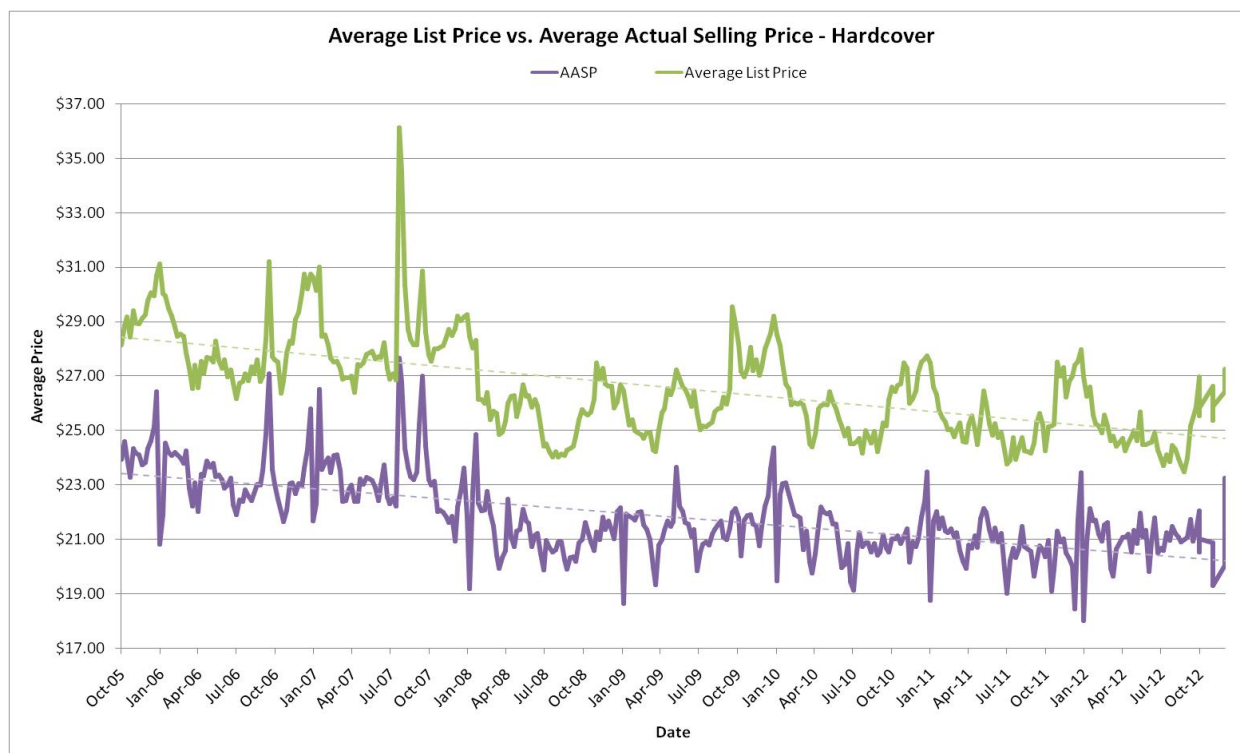
TRENDS (2006–2012)

- Hardcover prices declined the most of all formats.
- Hardcover average list price declined 10.4%.
- Hardcover AASP declined 9.9%.
- Trade paperback average list price declined 4.4%.
- Trade paperback AASP declined 6%.
- Mass market average list price stayed relatively stable, dropping only 1.2%.
- Mass market AASP declined 6.3%.
- The AASP for mass market titles consistently spiked downward in June and July of each year.

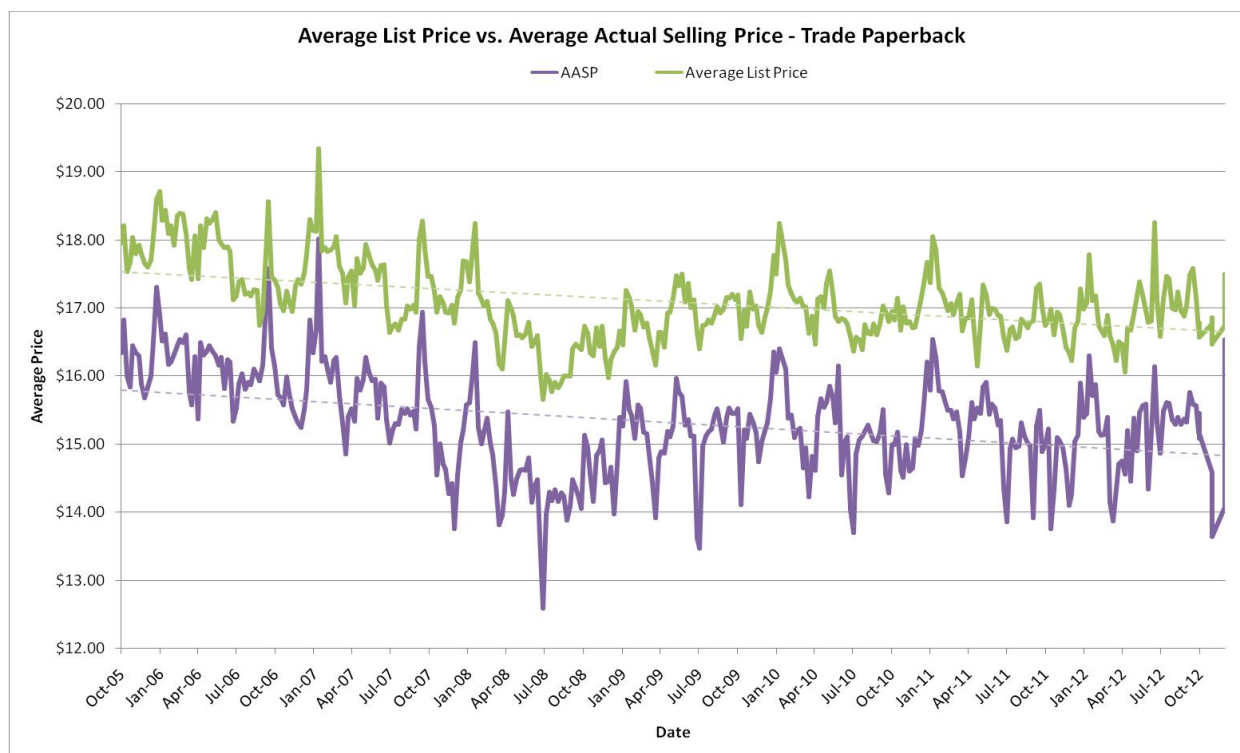
ALL TITLES – ALL BINDING TYPES



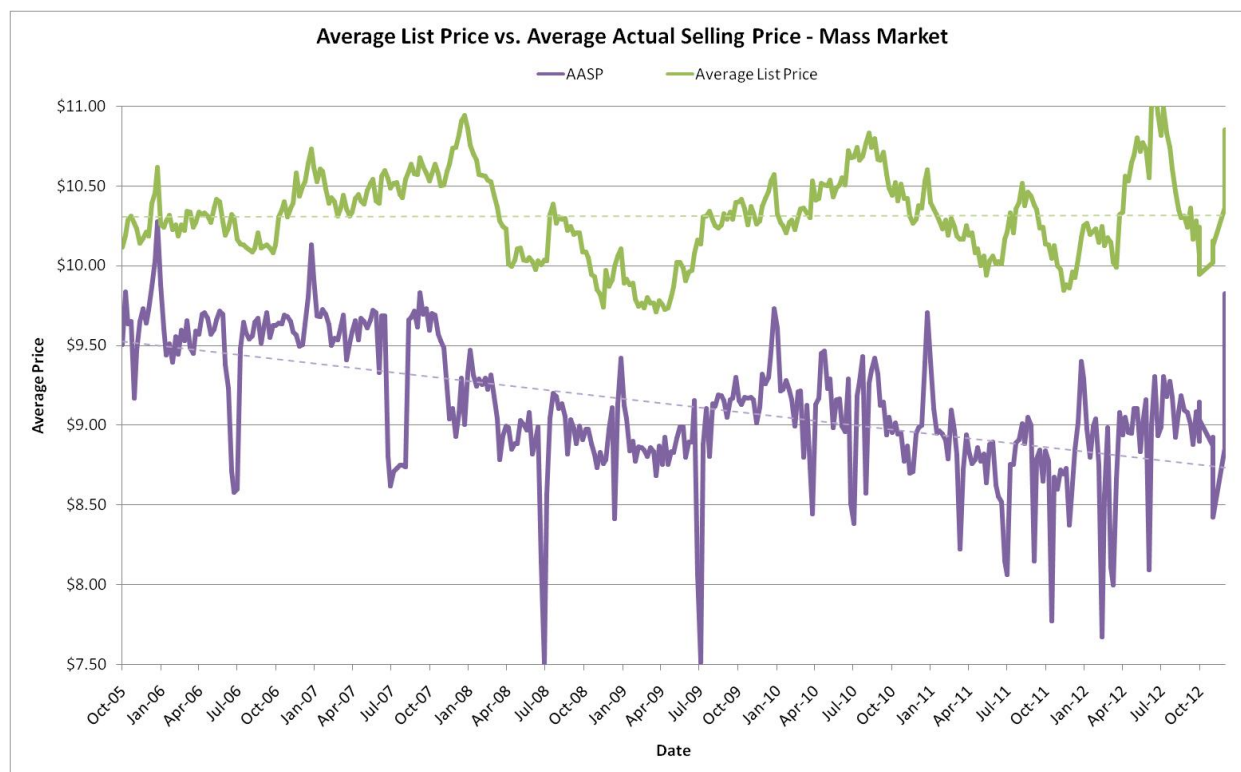
ALL TITLES – HARDCOVER



ALL TITLES – TRADE PAPERBACK



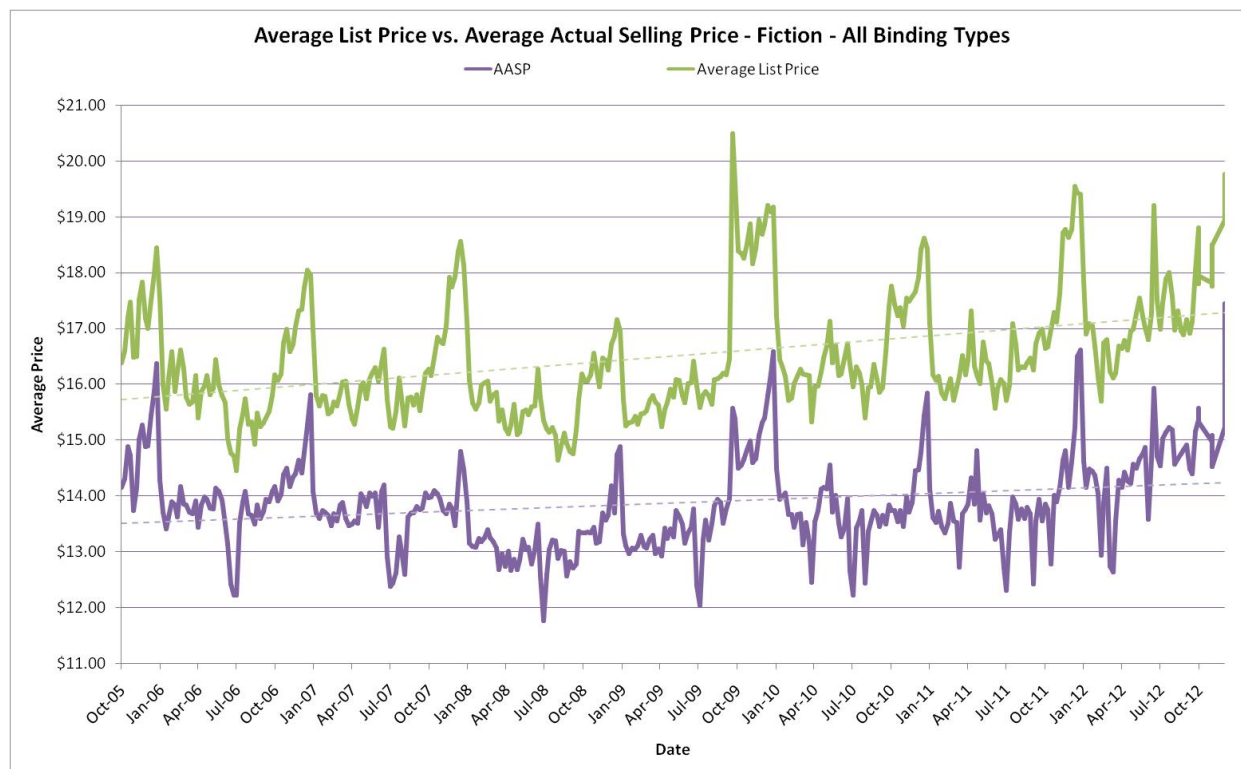
ALL TITLES – MASS MARKET



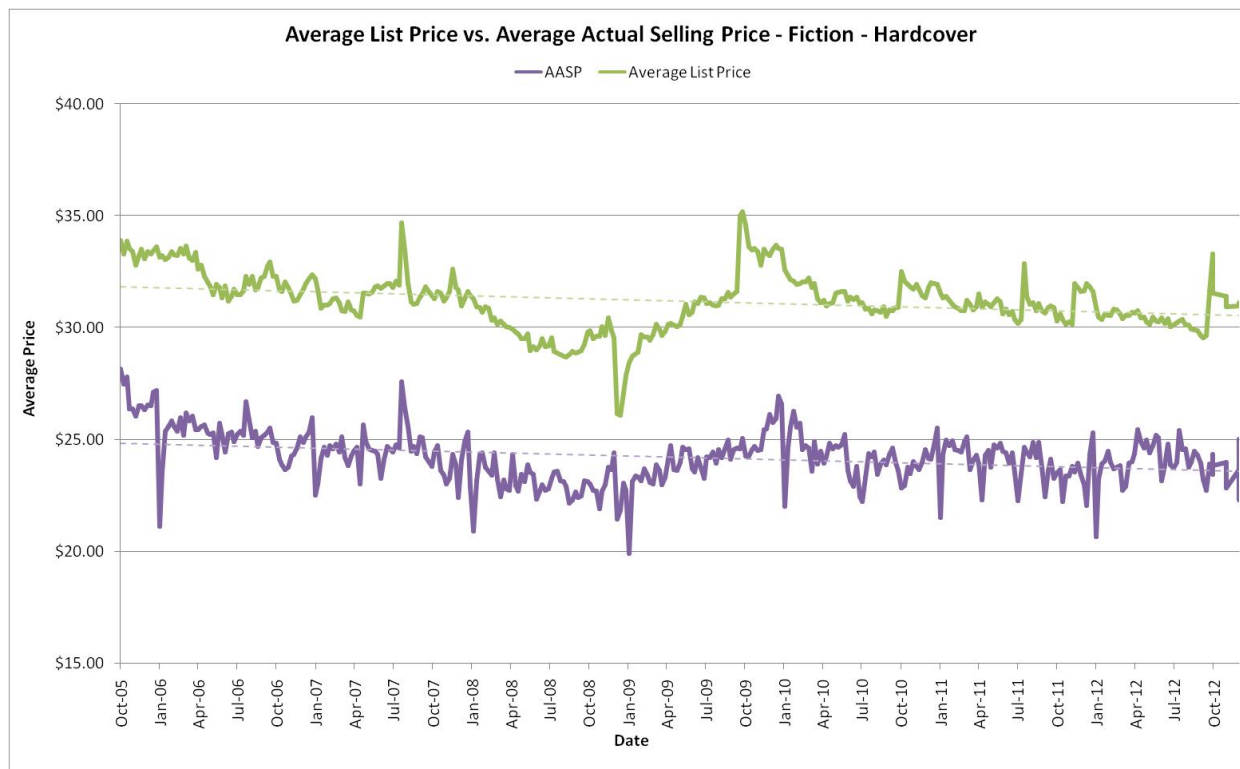
FICTION

- The average price of fiction in all formats has increased since 2006.
- The average list price of fiction in all formats increased by 9%.
- The AASP for fiction in all formats increased by 6%.
- Trade paperback fiction list prices grew by 4%.
- Hardcover fiction list prices declined by 4.9%.
- Mass market fiction list prices declined by just .3%, but the AASP for mass market fiction decreased 6.7%.

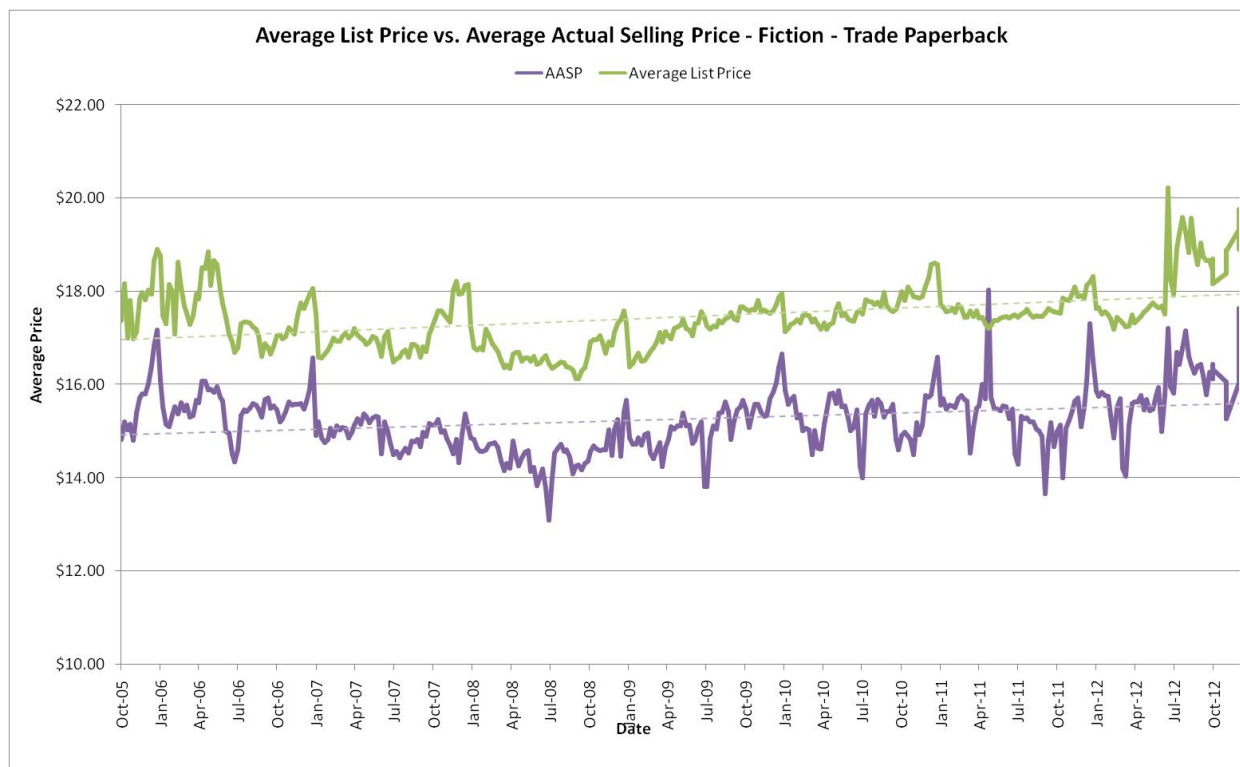
FICTION – ALL BINDING TYPES



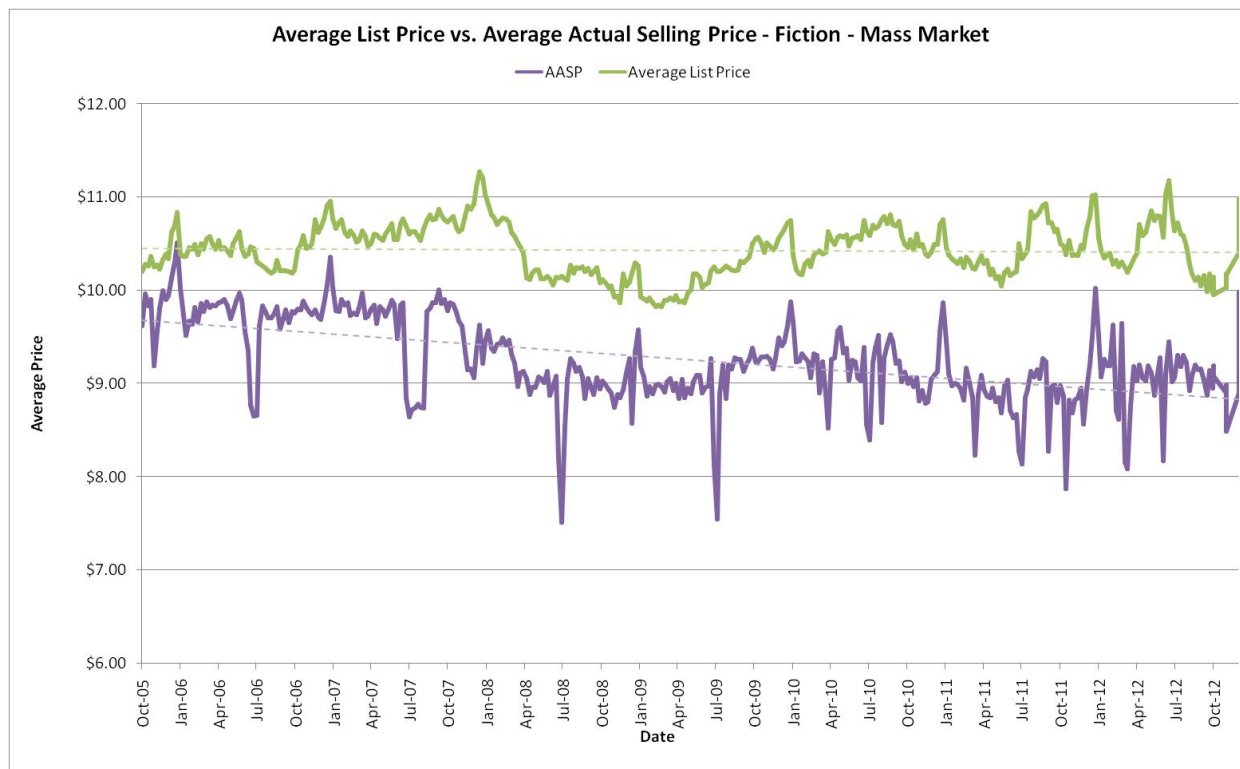
FICTION – HARDCOVER



FICTION – TRADE PAPERBACK



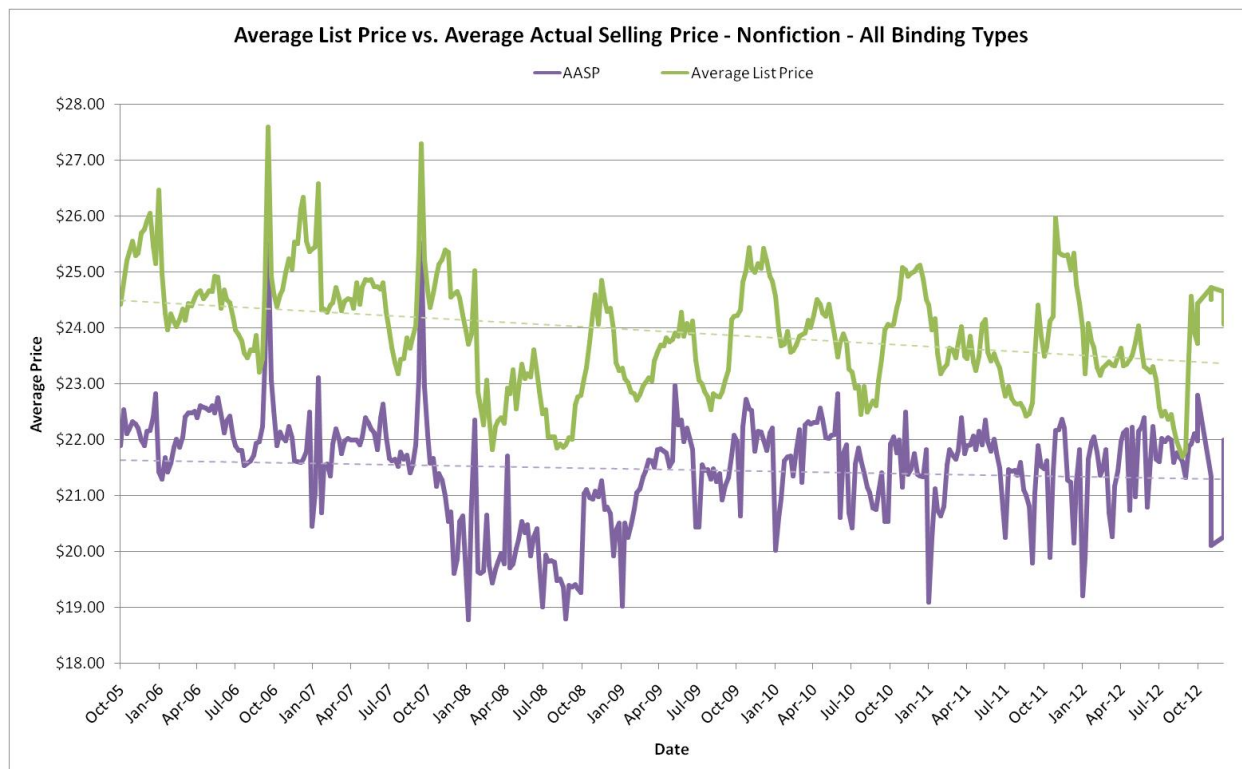
FICTION – MASS MARKET



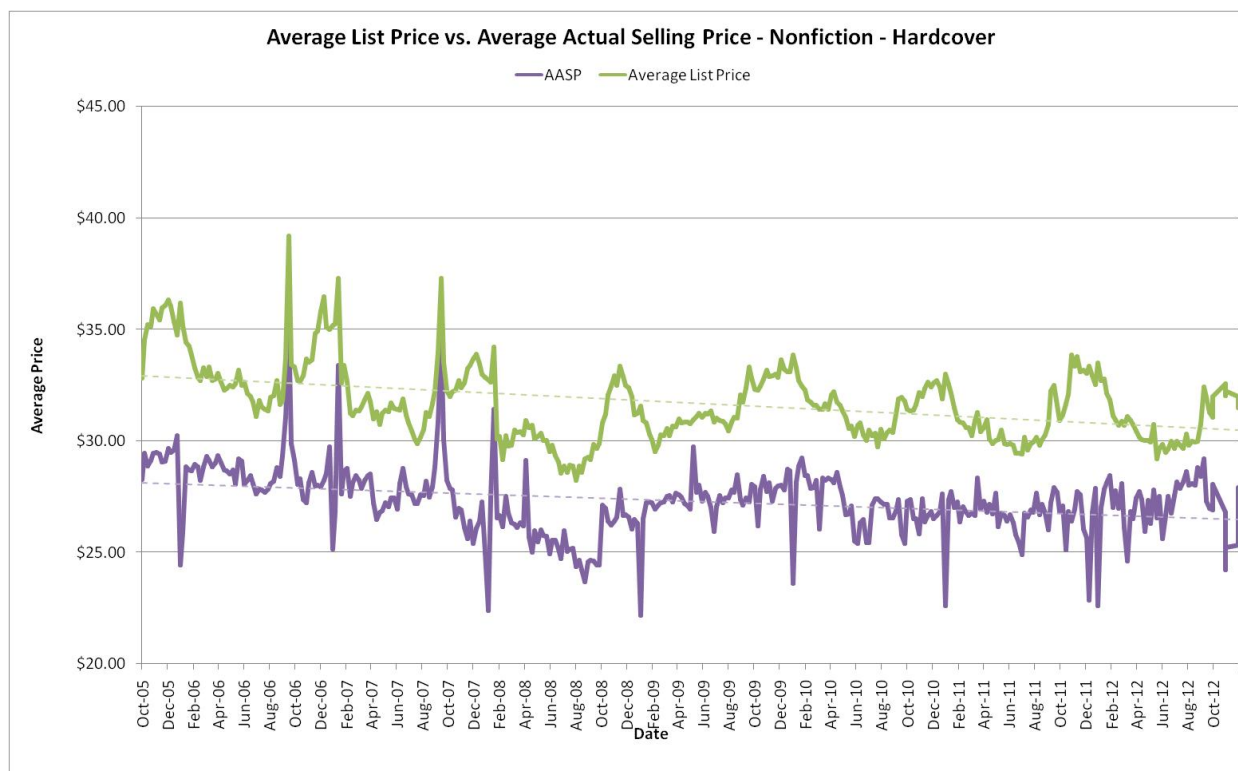
NONFICTION

- The average list price of nonfiction in all formats dropped 4.6% between 2006 and 2012.
- The AASP of nonfiction in all formats dropped 2.7%.
- Hardcover and trade paperback nonfiction average list price and AASP declined.
- Mass market nonfiction average list price increased 29.8%.
- In 2012, the AASP for nonfiction was 8.2% lower than the average list price, compared to a 15.7% difference for fiction. This may indicate that nonfiction is not discounted as heavily at the retailer level as fiction.

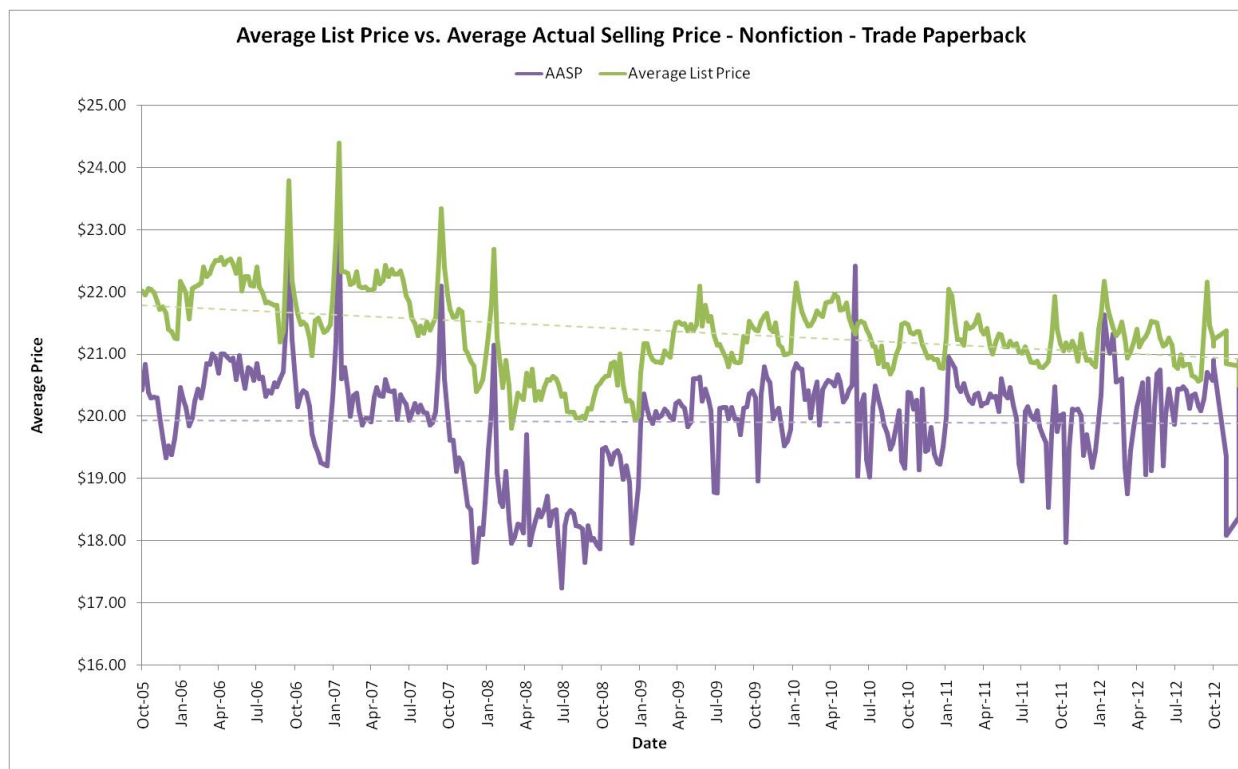
NONFICTION – ALL BINDING TYPES



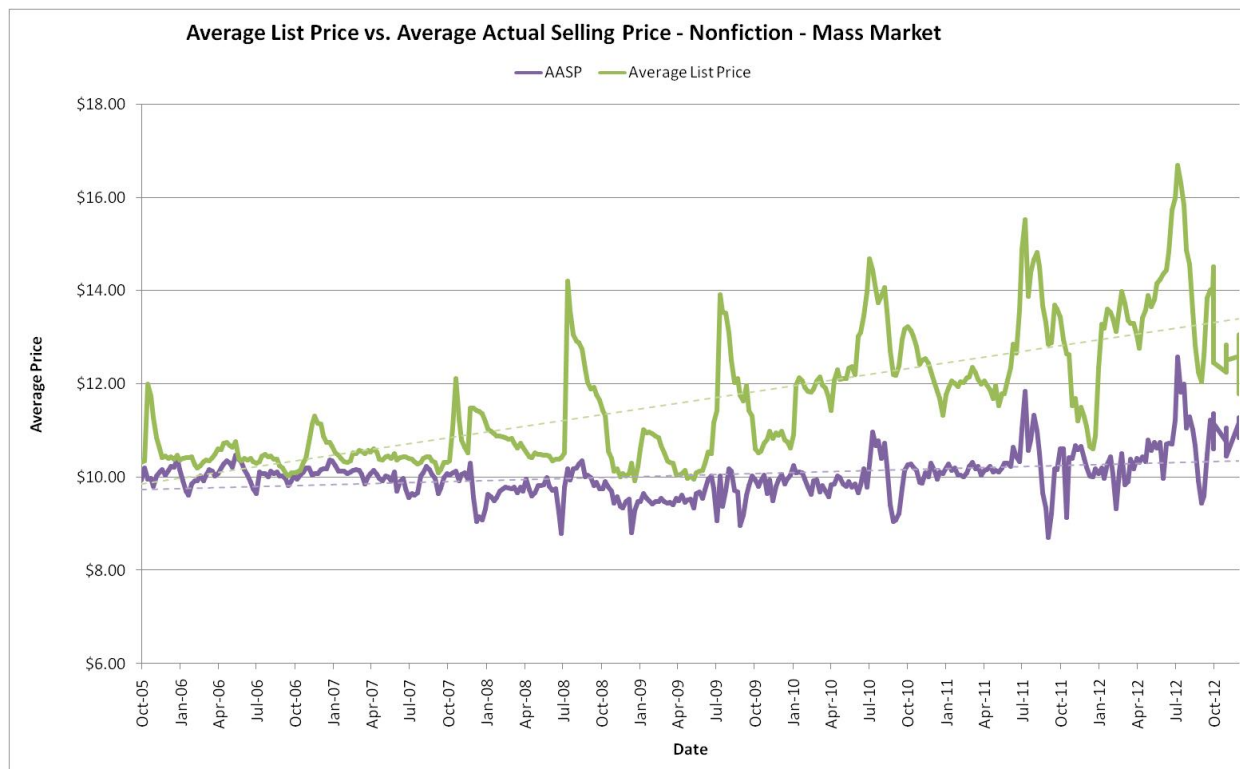
NONFICTION – HARDCOVER



NONFICTION – TRADE PAPERBACK



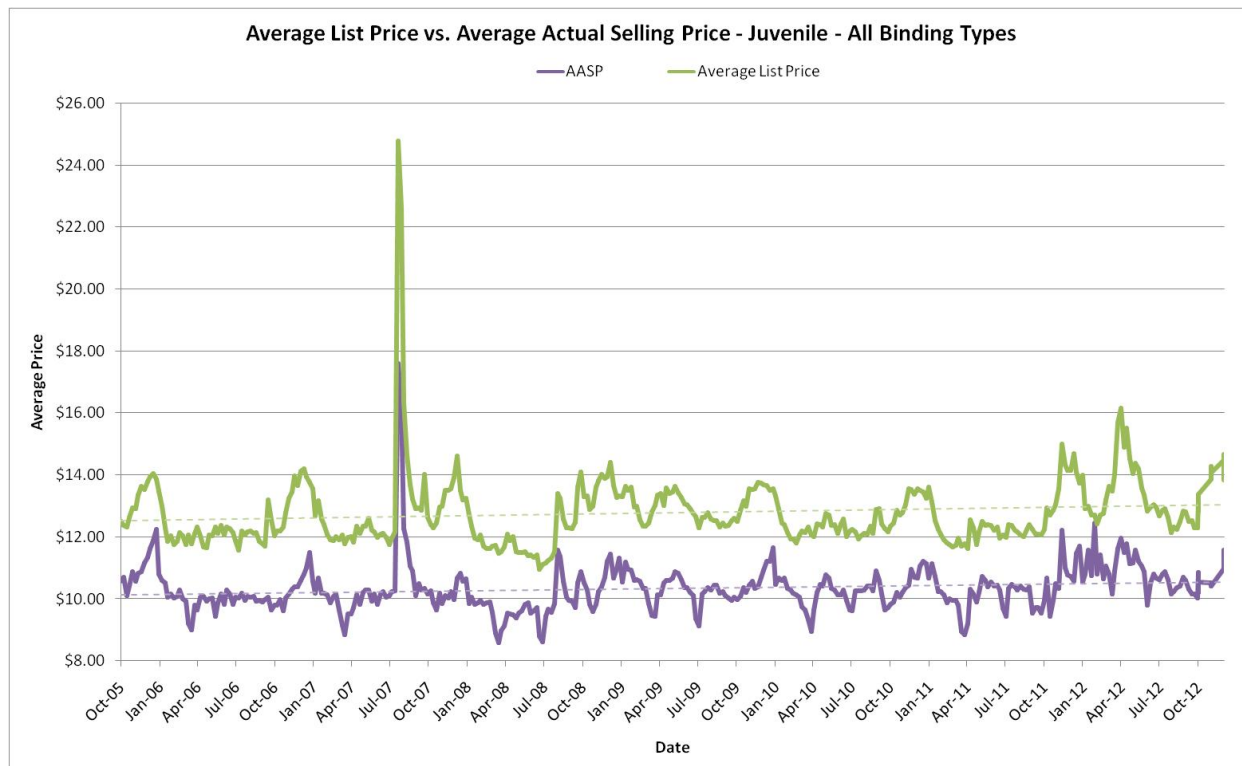
NONFICTION – MASS MARKET



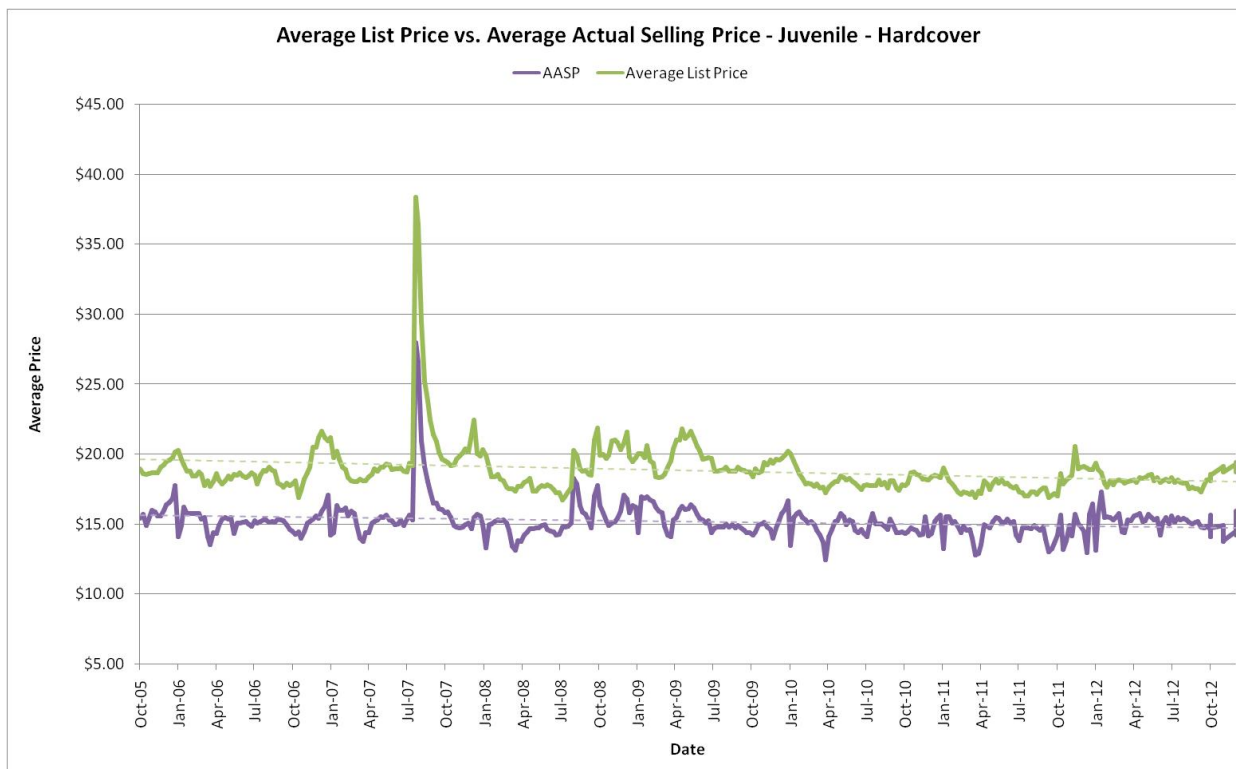
JUVENILE

- Juvenile list prices for all binding types increased 8.1% between 2006 and 2012.
- Juvenile trade paperback list price and AASP both increased by close to 5%.
- Juvenile hardcover list price dropped 2.5%.
- Juvenile mass market list price dropped 3.36%.

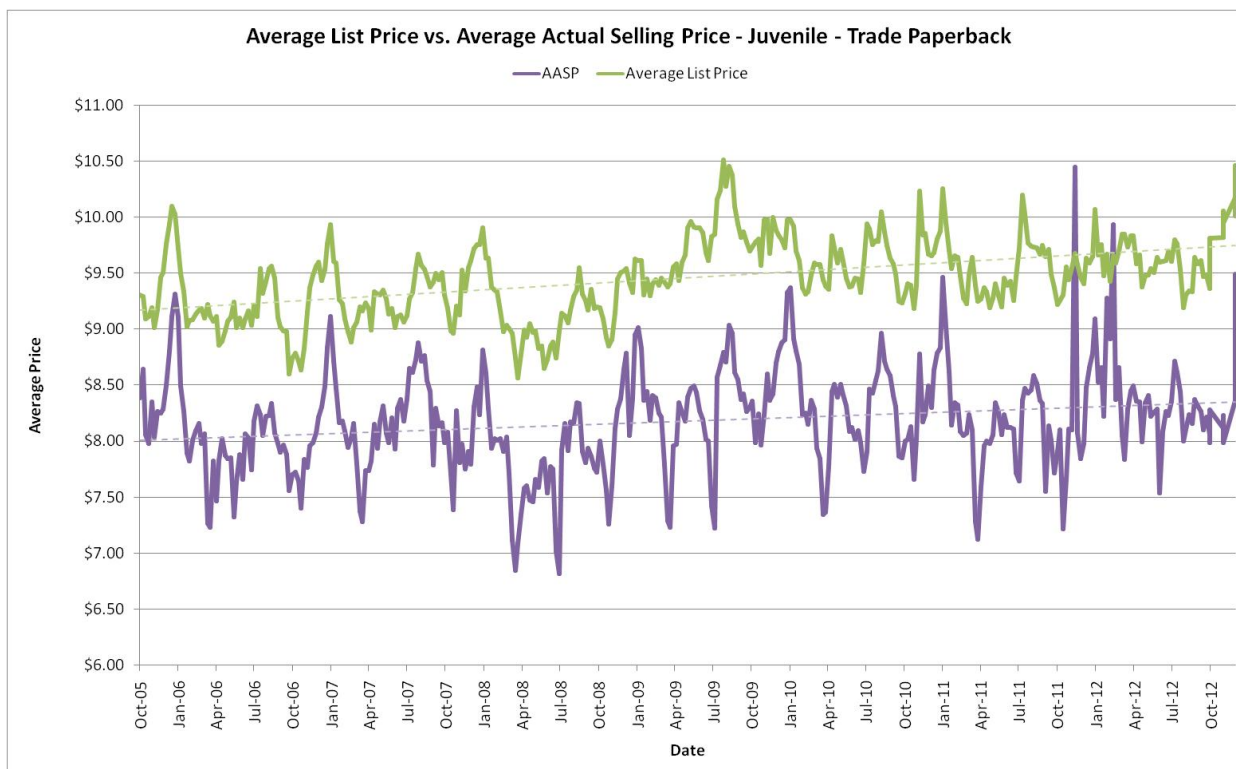
JUVENILE – ALL BINDING TYPES



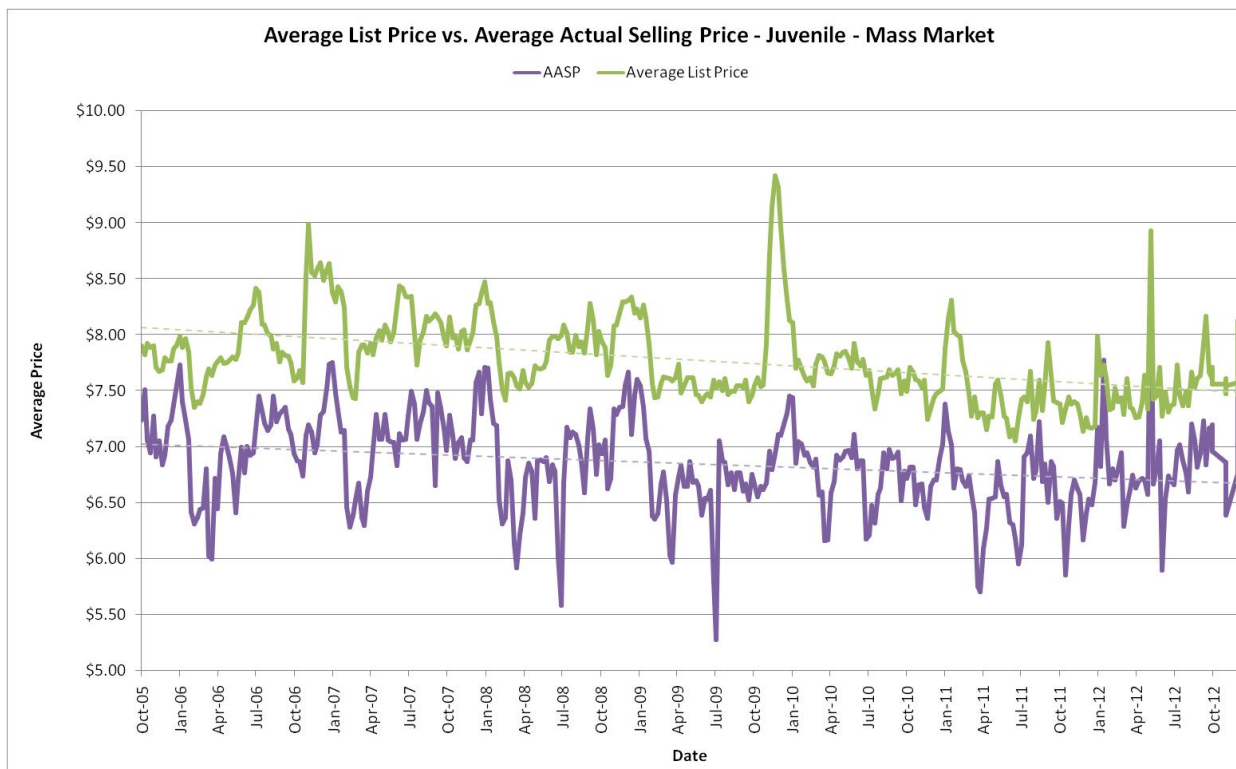
JUVENILE – HARDCOVER



JUVENILE – TRADE PAPERBACK



JUVENILE – MASS MARKET



CANADIAN MARKET

- Prices for titles published by Canadian-owned publishers have come down significantly since 2006.
- The average list price for these titles was \$15.40 in 2012, down 15.2% over 2006.
- The AASP declined even more dramatically in 2012, down 25.2% over 2006.
- At \$13.53, the average list price was the lowest in August 2012 that it has been since BookNet began tracking sales data.

CANADIAN MARKET – ALL BINDING TYPES

