

Market Research Report - Abstract Algebra

Like many advanced markets, abstract algebra is fairly well segmented with double digit shares for the top five titles and single digit niches for the remainder. As for the market size, TWM tracked a little over 17,000 students focusing on the top 250 engineering schools in the country during the Spring and Fall 2000 semesters combined - I would put the estimate at 20-25,000 per year.

Gallian (HM) has been the market leader over the past three years although Fraleigh (AW) held the top spot twice. Fraleigh is unique among these titles in that it seems to perform much better during the spring semester. The new edition in 1999 did not seem to have much of an influence on the market. Perhaps this was due in part to the new edition of Dummit in the same year, which actually held the top spot for a semester for Fall 1999. This title was originally published at PH and went to Wiley as part of the antitrust settlement following the Pearson acquisition. As of Fall 2000, this book beat out Fraleigh (in its week semester) for the #2 spot overall.

Aside from the jousting among the top titles, there has been little change in this market over the past three years. The last new entry was Goodman from PH (1998) which was a failure. Looking ahead, it will be interesting to see if Dummit can decisively beat out Fraleigh (Dummit actually seems to do better in the Fall!) and challenge Gallian for the top spot. I actually went back and added the older Hungerford (Algebra) and Herstein (Topics in Algebra) books as I saw they were being used in the same courses at the same schools. They demonstrate that in advanced math, old is still good. This is an additional barrier to entry.