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From Barnes & Noble: Jim Hilt and Patrick Rouvillois
Kobo Gets into Illustrated Content and Kiwis

By Laura Hazard Owen

Toronto-based e-reading company Kobo has acquired French digital software company Aquafadas, the companies announced at the Frankfurt Book Fair on Wednesday. The terms of the acquisition were undisclosed.

Aquafadas, which lets publishers create digital content across smartphones, tablets and other platforms, will work with Kobo to create illustrated digital content. Kobo will also let authors use Aquafadas tools through (Kobo’s) self-publishing platform, Writing Life.

The acquisition will help Kobo, which just announced a new tablet called the Arc, compete against Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Apple, all of which sell their own enhanced content. The new self-publishing tools could also be Kobo’s answer to Apple’s iBooks Author.

“This radically improves our ability to bring illustrated content like magazines, graphic novels, manga and children’s books into a compelling reading experience,” Michael Tamblyn, Kobo’s EVP content and merchandising, told me. “We see a lot of companies trying to do quick and dirty digital magazines that lose the potential richness of that experience. We wanted to find something that made the format as compelling in digital as it already is in print.”

Aquafadas could also help Kobo quickly convert foreign publishers’ illustrated books into ebooks. Aquafadas already works with international publishers like Egmont International, Lagardere and Mondadori.

Aquafadas tools will be available to authors through Kobo’s self-publishing platform Writing Life, though Tamblyn didn’t specify when the tools will roll out. Writing Life is available in new languages as of Wednesday—German, French, Italian, Portuguese and Dutch—and the company said authors from 82 countries are now using it.

Separately, Kobo announced that it is expanding its presence in New Zealand. The company partnered with New Zealand bookstore chain Whitcoulls in 2010 and has now partnered with New Zealand independent booksellers association Booksellers NZ and book and stationery chain Paper Plus Group. The new agreements bring Kobo devices to over 300 stores in New Zealand.

This article was produced in cooperation with:

Mondadori Sees Synergy in Kobo Partnership

By Edward Nawotka

A little more than one week ago, the Kobo Touch e-reader went on sale at 350 of the 600 Mondadori bookstores across Italy. “And so far, the reception has been great—or at least there are no complaints,” smiles Ricardo Cavallero, General Manager of Mondadori’s trade books division.

The new e-reader has competition in the Italian market, where Amazon is already firmly established. Mondadori’s Kobo reader offers some 60,000 titles in Italian (of which 30,000 are public domain or otherwise free titles).

But Cavallero points out that what makes this device unique is not what you can buy on it, which is the same as the others, but who is behind it: “As far as I know, it is the first time a publisher has partnered directly with an e-book retailer, so we are developing a new model. As a publisher, we can now have a very direct engagement with our reader, which is exactly what a publisher needs.”

Asked why the company didn’t put its brand on a white label device rather than partner with an existing brand, Alessandro Del Sarto, Mondadori’s Head of Innovation and Program said simply, “we weren’t looking to reinvent the wheel,” adding “Kobo is an international platform, it is open, and it is growing fast, so it was a good fit for us. It allows us to focus on our core strengths and to develop products, scout books and produce great content.”

But, adds Cavallero, “The next challenge for us as a publisher and a retailer is to be able to develop new ideas and concepts for these new platforms.”

As for the digital future, Cavallero believes that the biggest change on the horizon is the development of new pricing models. “In Italy, we have agency pricing, but to me, the only difference between agency and the reseller model is the discount. But if we have the control, we can set the parameters. In Italy, I look at how the pay TV model has been implemented. It’s very popular. That’s something I really think would work well for books.”

5 Things to Do: Thursday, October 11

TOC Metadata Conference
9:30 am to 12:30 pm in Hall 4.C, Room Entente. Good metadata is one of the most important factors for book discovery in an increasingly digital book-selling environment. Find out what you can do to create and maintain good metadata. (£250)

New Zealand Editors’ Buzz Panel
11:00 am to 11:30 pm at the Sparks Stage, Hall 0.0, N988. As part of the Guest of Honor program, four editors from New Zealand will discuss their favorite Kiwi books and passion for literature.

How to Succeed at Crossmedia
3:30 pm to 5:00 pm at the StoryDrive Conference, Hall 4.0, Room Europa. Four experts from the film industry will discuss how publishers can find the right partners to create crossmedia brands. (£175)

Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award
4:00 pm to 5:00 pm at the Forum Children and Young Adults, Hall 3.0, K371. This year marks the 10th anniversary of this prize for children’s literature. The works of the 2012 recipient, Guus Kuijer, will be presented, along with the 2013 nominees. Reception to follow.

OCLC Publisher Partnerships for Library Integration
5:15 pm to 5:45 pm at the Hot Spot Professional & Scientific Information, Hall 4.2, P457. The Online Computer Library Center offers insight on how publishers can work closely with libraries around the world.

Follett Holds Forth

Ken Follett is just as popular in Germany as at home. A frequent visitor to the Frankfurt Book Fair, he was interviewed on the “Blue Sofa” yesterday about his latest novel Winter of the World.
What is the Storyverse?

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Hunter S. Thompson, Hell’s Angels

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The Storyverse. It’s as old as the first story. But it’s entirely new to us.
E-Book Trends Differ Around World

It’s not a matter of price, it’s a matter of content.

By Laura Hazard Owen

Which e-book trends cut across cultures and countries, and which are country-specific? Execs from Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Google, France’s FNAC and India’s Indiaplaza discussed similarities and differences at the CED panel Wednesday afternoon at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

"Customers are going to keep on paying for value. In the long term, we’re going to see e-books worth something," Michael Serbinis, CEO of Kobo, said. "We see a very healthy business." As for changes in pricing models, "we just see them as fluctuations in this long-term evolution."

Jamie Iannone, President of Digital Products at Barnes & Noble, agreed that "for quality works, customers are really willing to pay for e-books. We [and publishers] have been sensitive to the value of the book. Even e-books still sell a lot of physical books," he said, which is "very different from other industries."

Santiago de la Mora, Director of Print Content Partnerships for Google in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, said e-books are just at the beginning of adding "tremendous additional value relative to the print book." He mentioned functions like translations, locations, definitions and highlights (all of which are available in Google’s recently updated Play app for Android). "The e-book is a boon to the industry because in some cases it’s an enhanced product [over print]."

Venkat Valliappan, Head of Books at Indian e-commerce site Indiaplaza.com, said e-book prices must remain low in India. "[International] publishers sell print books in India at [lower] prices and the same should be true for e-books," he said. The volume of Indian customers that international publishers will gain by keeping their e-book prices low "has to be given the utmost importance. That’s why the major publishers have agreed that ‘for quality works, customers are more than one billion smart-phones in the world.” As for device choices, "the consumer will decide, but it has to be made easy for them to access the content."

This article was produced in cooperation with:

DIY E-Books and Apps Easier than Ever

By KeriLee Horan

Moglue, an e-book development startup founded in 2010, has been allowing users to create and view their own apps and e-books on their intuitive platform for some time. Chris Riley, CEO and co-founder, announced Wednesday morning that the company will expand their offerings by launching a paid distribution model next week.

For a flat fee of $199 for one book or $999 for unlimited books, users will be able to sell their works on Android or iOS stores. If users would like to sell on both platforms, the price increases to $299 for one book or $1,499 for unlimited books, although unlimited pricing will no longer be offered after December 31, 2012. The company allows users to retain rights to their works as well as keep 100% of the royalties.

In addition to announcing the new paid plan, Riley highlighted the ease with which non-technical users can build their own products. "We had a six year old girl use us to build an app to share with her class," he said.

To begin, users import artwork that they have created, drag these elements to a blank canvas, then use a library of motions provided by Moglue to program interactivity and motion, essentially creating an animated e-book. "Text, sounds and voice overs can also be imported to the canvas."

While Riley mostly discussed opportunities for children’s books, Moglue can be used to create fiction or non-fiction works as well as digital magazines. Riley also recommended cutting costs by developing series of five-to-ten books. "We’re encouraging series books," he said. "That way, you’re only doing pre-production once and you can keep that content to use again and again."

Editorial: America vs. the World: Round 2?

By Edward Nawotka

Here’s a typical Frankfurt story for you: I live in the United States, but had to come all the way to the Frankfurt Book Fair to have a meeting with Barnes & Noble, America’s dominant bookstore chain. B&N has a stand here in Frankfurt for the first time and if you miss it, don’t be surprised, as it’s in Hall 6, sandwiched in a dozen square meters between the Chinese pavilion and the French publishers. The signage says simply: Nook and Nook Development.

Why no B&N branding? Because their team is here representing an entirely new company, Nook Media, armed with $300 million from Microsoft and another $305 million committed over the next several years.

"Microsoft," you say, "I thought they were dead, doomed to second-tier status by Apple." Yes, well, as we noted yesterday, users of Microsoft devices are the most active buyers of book content on mobile devices, so it would make sense that they would invest in the book business (after, it must be noted, killing off their own book digitization project several years ago).

"The point of the new company is not about being a retailer, it’s about content," notes Patrick Rouvillois as Vice President, Managing Director—International, who is based in Luxembourg.

That Rouvillois is a Frenchman is symbolic, as it, in his own words, asserts B&N’s “commitment to developing the international market.” It’s also in its way as the French have proven anything but amenable to digitization. A headline in Livres Hebdo yesterday read “France Remains Impervious to the Digital Flurry in Frankfurt." (See our own take on this on page 13.)

B&N’s arrival in Europe signals the start of Round Two of “America vs. the World.” The beachhead for B&N is the UK, where Nook devices will be available in 1,200 stores by Christmas. Round One saw the invasion of Google, Amazon and Apple and their “take no prisoners” approach.

But this time, B&N promises it’s going to be different. “We are huge supporters of the author and publisher community," said Rouvillois. "Translation: we come in peace.

DIY E-Books and Apps Easier than Ever

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Thursday, 11 October 12:30 - 13:30
Venue: Forum Dialogue | Hall 5.1

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When users discover your content, they want to be able to access it, re-use it and share it effortlessly within their workflows.

But, as a publisher, how do you meet user expectations and still retain control over how your content is viewed, accessed and shared?

Visit our booth — Hall 4.2, Stand F410 — to learn about content rental and sales in copyright compliant workflows.
Challenges of Selling Books Online in the Arab World

By Nina Curley

"It's difficult to move books in the Arab World," confessed Ala'a AlSallal, founder and general manager of online bookseller Jamalon. "Readers usually wait for book fairs to buy books."

That's changed with the launch of several online booksellers in the past few years. Yet those working to build the Amazon.coms of the Arab World face several challenges. First, Arabic book production and consumption is limited. The Arab World publishes one title per year for every 12,000 people who live in the region (around 25,000 books total), compared to one for every 500 people in Britain, according to a 2008 UN study. The same study found that the average reader in the Arab World reads only four pages a year.

Second, standard issues facing e-commerce platforms in the Middle East—regional logistics, import duties, payment gateways—also loom large. To succeed, pioneers in the sector are taking three primary approaches to increase book consumption: translating global content into Arabic, digitizing books and entering the Saudi market.

Jamalon, which launched in 2006 offers 120,000 Arabic books and 250,000 books in English, sourcing mostly from Lebanon, the U.S., and the U.K. To beat competitors, the company focuses on having the best deals in the region. "We spend a lot of time negotiating prices with book sellers in the U.S. and the U.K.," said AlSallal, "to get deals that allow us to compete with Amazon," said AlSallal. When it comes to settling deals for Arabic books, Jamalon often secures discounts of up to 50% from publishers, he said, taking only a 5% commission to keep prices low.

To boost the quantity of available Arabic content, Jamalon has launched Sofia Translation, in partnership with Saudi publisher Obeikan, to offer publishers from around the globe a chance to translate their books into Arabic. "This will encourage people to write new books for the region," said AlSallal. "It's easier to sell a book in Arabic than a book in English."

Pioneer Neelwafurat, which began selling books online in Beirut in 1998, is also working to increase Arabic content in the digital space. After launching its e-commerce site in 2000, it now offers 450,000 Arabic print books and 2,500 e-books, and last year it introduced iKitab, an e-book reader application for the iPhone, iPad and Android. Thanks to iKitab, the site's e-book sales have increased four-fold this year, according to marketing executive Ghida Barraj.

But for online book retailers to become profitable, they must inevitably enter the Saudi market, where customers consistently buy between 5 and 15 books per order, says AlSallal, in contrast to much lower rates of purchase in, for example, Jordan or Lebanon. Making such a project feasible means stocking locally in large quantities. To succeed, pioneers in the sector will need to introduce iKitab, an e-book reader application for the iPhone, iPad and Android. Thanks to iKitab, the site's e-book sales have increased four-fold this year, according to marketing executive Ghida Barraj.

Six digital innovators based in Singapore have been sponsored by the Media Development Authority of Singapore to come to Frankfurt and share their products and services in the Hot Spot in Hall 8.0 this year.

Crossmedia is a large part of digital innovation in Singapore. Chips & Toons is a cutting-edge animation studio that creates animation the web, print, and mobile apps. The Drawing Room, best known for their award-winning films, have made their first foray into print with their new comic book series Tattoo Wars, and Tien Wah Press creates beautiful digital editions of traditional books, comic books, and virtually any printed material.

Beyond creating e-books, some publishers are creating virtual worlds. Sing Lee’s Publishers Learning Management System features an 18 comprehensive tools that assess and manage the learning process and foster communication between teachers and students. Strategic Creative Group’s mission is to use technology to help customers reach their clients through the familiar usage of their mobile phones and devices.

Two publishers have tapped into the app market with unique innovations. Epsilon Mobile has created Papyrus, which converts static content into interactive apps on smartphones and tablets while Pixel Interactive’s Little Learning Tots educational apps for children aged 2-8 years old encourages learning through play.

And for those next generation learners World International Preschool has created the first motion-sensing technology for pre-school age children.

The keys to success are translation of international content, digitization and selling to the Saudis.

By Alex Mutter

"Books are packaged in a shell. You see the shell, but you never see the meat inside the book."

During his presentation in the Hot Spot in Hall 4.2, Richard Kobel, the Assistant Vice President of Business Development at Scope e-Knowledge Center, argued that academic books have not enjoyed much visibility online and that this lack of discoverability is a big problem for academic and STM publishers.

"I think it’s clear to everyone that effective metadata at the chapter level is critical to discoverability."

Online journals, meanwhile, have handled the discoverability issue well, with rich linking, through citations, keywords, detailed abstracts and robust metadata. Kobel suggested that academic and STM publishers should, in effect, copy the "article economy" that has led to the profound success of the journal space online.

Publishers can utilize on a chapter-to-chapter basis the same techniques, such as abstracts and keywords, information generally used for individual papers and scholarly articles.

Kobel pointed to the creation of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) for individual chapters as a relatively straightforward way for publishers to increase book discoverability. The creation of abstracts and summaries could also be viewed as a marketing tool, and be given the same amount of importance as other marketing ventures. And on a broader scale, greater data transparency should be a much bigger part of publishers' workflows.

Although the presentation was geared towards academic publishing, Kobel maintained that similar techniques could be used by trade publishers for anthologies and story collections.

"It’s all about reading content, and then extracting themes," Kobel said. "It works for any type of content."
Faces & Places at the Fair

Lynn Gaspard (Saqi Books)
New Zealand authors: Rachel McAlpine, Clare Feeney, Adrian Blackburn

Hachette booth, Hall 8.0

L to r: Tine Smedegaard Andersen (Gyldendal Forlag), Leena Majander (WSOy)

Gutenberg press demo in Hall 4.1 Q533

HH Dr Sheik Sultan bin Mohamed Al-Qasimi Ruler of Sharjah
HE Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi, Founder of Kalimat

Jane Harris (Walker Books)

Julia Lampham (Wiley)

Gutenberg press demo in Hall 4.1 Q533

Helmut Pesch (Bastei Lübbe)

Mark Streatfeild (Orion)

Amanda Ridout (Phaidon)

Roberta Chinni (Bologna Book Fair)

Rebecca Smart (Osprey)

New Zealand authors: Rachel McAlpine, Clare Feeney, Adrian Blackburn

Penguin Australia’s Kate McCormack in a meeting

Irum Fawad (Abu Dhabi Book Fair)
Digital Publishing: Lessons Learned

By Amanda DeMarco

What lessons can trade publishing learn from the music and film industries? Richard Mollet, chief executive of the UK Publishers Association, suggests it can learn far more from the successes of scientific and academic publishing. It’s a particularly interesting statement coming from Mollet, former Director of Public Affairs at the BPI (the representative organization for the recorded music industry in the UK).

It’s also an opinion that was warmly supported by the other participants on Wednesday’s “Lessons Learned from Digital Publishing” panel. Richard Charkin, executive director at Bloomsbury Publishing, cites the success of Crossref, a collaboration that allows cross-publisher citation linking in online academic journals—and the failure of trade publishers to cooperate similarly to create a publisher-led retail alternative to Amazon.

Charkin, whose preference for academic over trade publishing is well-known, points out that academic publishing is now a 90%-digital business, with trade (in English) “lagging” at 15–25%. And that one of the industry’s errors, says Charkin, is that it hasn’t applied the lessons of digital publishing to print. After all, a print book is handled 24 times before it’s sold, and publishers pay royalties “based on a retail price that no one pays,” as part of a system “whose complexity would make a rocket scientist blanch.”

Matt Hanbury, CEO of Australia’s Murdoch Books (which he sold just before the fair to Allen & Unwin), says that there is an imbalance between risk and pay-out, with publishers taking chances, then losing their earnings to big players in bad deals they never should have signed. The much-promised digital revolution in publishing “has been high-jacked by technology providers.”

George Lossius, CEO of Publishing Technology, says publishers have clung to big players because they give direction, even if that direction doesn’t make sense. In recent years, publishers have rushed to make iPhone apps, although 60% of smartphones are Android phones.

The panel wasn’t completely pessimistic, despite an awareness of the industry’s many missteps; Lossius predicts a doubling in readership (if not in revenue) due to increased digital reading, device use and accessibility.

Frankfurt Virgin

Taste, style and authority: my first Frankfurt

By Peter Florence

Frankfurt virgin. I come to this off the back of our festivals in Segovia and Xalapa that wheeled and dealt in freedoms of speech, salsa rhythms and flying suckling piglets. We do energy and exchange and celebration. And here I’m wandering around awed by the thrum of serious and utterly focused industry.

The thing I never dreamed about Frankfurt was how calm and quiet and deeply civilized it is. It’s partly, of course, that the whole shebang is designed and organised on a scale that respects space and fosters communication. And it’s partly that publishers are without exception really interesting and engaging and passionate about whatever they’re selling. I know and hear everywhere that the deals on the book futures markets are done here with the same vigour and bravura as the maddest bank trading floor, but there’s something of the library here that sweetens the whole experience. Even the parties and dinners and nights of romantic negotiations seem to be conducted with a grace and pleasure that sings We Love This Business.

Halls 5 and 8 seem to be my version of that cafe in Paris where you’re supposed to bump into everyone you’ve ever known. And everyone seems cheerful and inspired by something they’ve just learned. More often than not it feels as if publishing has begun to get a handle on its own value. I keep hearing people saying they’ve made a digital breakthrough that isn’t just about bowing to the great superpowers of retail. It sounds to me as if the moment when the people who play with lucrative multimedia begin to talk not about “content” but about ideas and stories is really coming. And that it’s the publishers of taste and style who will begin to dominate other media.

So, in a world facing the same austerity as the motor industry and the shock of a one-generation technological evolution, there’s a quiet assertion of resilience and optimism that’s rooted, it seems to me, in the one thing that publishing can deliver better than any other medium or sector: authority.
Finland: Where Reading is a Superpower

By Rachel Aydt

In Finland, the publishing industry isn’t exactly on fire, but in spite of the challenges of the last few years, cool heads have prevailed. A tiny gain in sales over the previous two years, following a big dip after the global financial crisis of 2009, has created a “slow and steady wins the race” mentality.

It also helps that this well-educated nation of 5.5 million residents really likes to read.

“Books still have a strong position in Finnish society, and 77% of the population buys at least one book a year,” says Sakari Laiho, Director of the Finnish Publishers’ Association. Seventy-five percent of parents read aloud to their children, a practice proven to establish good reading habits early on. What’s more, writing is ranked among the most respected professions.

“Belief in the power of reading to foster well-being and that access to culture is a right for all are the cornerstones of the Finnish mindset,” says Dr. Iris Schwanck, Director of FII, the Finnish Literature Exchange, a cultural program to support the publication and promotion of literature abroad. “Reading is one of our superpowers and an integral part of the Finnish story.”

Leena Majander, Vice President of WSOY, the second largest publisher in Finland (purchased last year by Sweden’s Bonnier), is intrinsically aware of the importance of literature to the nation. “The Finnish language and books published in our language are vital for the identity of our small nation. A common saying is that Finland has been built with wood (i.e. the paper industry) and head (i.e. the brains nurtured by our famous education system). Now we only have the head, as the market for the wood is rapidly declining. The head needs food, which books and literature can give to people.”

And the country is very committed to supporting its home-grown writers: the Finnish aesthetic is so closely entwined with their national identity that locals often look to their own backyards for reading material.

“It is said that Finland has strong literary traditions, and writers have played a strong role in our history,” adds Laiho. “Readers are especially very keen on reading domestic authors. In the long run, this investment pays off many times, but as we know, publishing is not for those who wait for instant results. One guarantee for the success of our domestic literature are the Finlandia prizes, which are awarded in December, making it very easy for people to pick a domestic book as a Christmas present.”

This is not surprising, considering the country’s sterling reputation as educators, non-fiction is the largest category in Finland, with textbooks following in second place. In 2011, sales were evenly split between domestic titles and translations—an amazing feat considering how tiny the country is.

Abroad, the Finnish literary sensibility is also quite appealing. “In general literature, I would say that our reputation is of being a somewhat exotic country with quiet people living near to nature,” says Laiho, and it’s something which gives Finnish writers status in the global marketplace.

“Our foreign rights operations are stronger than ever, and everybody in the publishing team has an international mindset. We all work hard for the international success of our authors with strong sales potential abroad,” says WSOY’s Majander.

So, as Finland celebrates its literary locality with pride and the marketing finesse of timing—new award-winning titles are presented during the holidays, serving as collective stocking stuffers for a nation of readers—the publishing industry looks to export its success abroad.

There is an untranslatable Finnish word—satu—which is closely tied to the Finnish character. It roughly means “perseverance in the face of adversity” and it applies here. With Finland as an example, the global publishing industry can take heart that whatever challenges publishers face, slow and steady gives you the opportunity to survive, and hopefully, to thrive.

Finland will be the Guest of Honor at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2014 with the slogan “Finnland. Cool!” Look for the Finnish stand in Hall 5.0, A491.

This article was produced with the support of FII—Finnish Literature Exchange.

The Kiwi and the Dragon are Friends

One of the smallest nations in the world, New Zealand, has become a key trading partner with one of the largest, China.

By Jillian Ewart

Apart from Australia and the Pacific Islands, Asian nations are New Zealand’s nearest neighbors. The population of Auckland, our largest city, is now around 20% Asian. Australia is our biggest export market, and New Zealand has long-standing trade relationships with the UK, North American and European countries. But as of 2011, China was our second largest export market, with exports three times higher than in 2006. And this massive prospective market for books and learning materials has not gone unnoticed by New Zealand publishers.

Education is the entry point for New Zealand publishers to China and other Asian nations, and while the sector is only a fraction of current total exports, it is being pursued vigorously.

Wendy Pye of Award Reading and Sunshine Books has just returned from the Korean launch of a chain of technology-driven English language teaching centers for children called SMARTree. Award Reading provides the language learning content for the new venture, together with Korea’s government telecommunications company and the BBC, with input also from Samsung.

“In the 30 years I’ve been in the educational market, I have never seen anything quite like this,” says Pye. “It is the next learning platform for the world.” Award is releasing their program to other markets at Frankfurt.

Another company, Kiwa Media, facilitates the easy migration from print catalogues to digital media. Chinese investors in Kiwa will soon open an office in Tianjin, near Beijing. Investor Xiaoying Fu says they love Kiwa’s product, that it is cutting-edge technology, and scalability is not a problem when introducing their products to the international market. Managing director Fiona Feng is at Frankfurt along with Kiwa’s CEO Rhonda Kite.

New Zealand’s biggest educational publisher, Learning Media, actively sells rights in Korea and provides publishing services to Singapore’s government, says Chief Executive David Glover.

Trade publisher David Bateman Ltd. has a joint relationship with China that began 20 years ago at the Stanford Publishing Course, where Paul Bateman became friends with Chongqing Publishing director Ding Yi. This paved the way for recent co-production of seven titles: two are books about China, with English text supplied by Bateman and photographs sourced by Chongqing; the others are rights to Bateman titles for China. As Paul says “Chongqing, a small city in China you’ve never heard of, with 20 million people!”

Of course, trade is a two-way transaction: New Zealand publishers have been printing around 70–80% of their output in China for around 25 years. As a consequence, Times Printers Everbest division and 1010 Print are two of the major Chinese firms involved, and they have generously become sponsors of New Zealand’s While You Were Sleeping Guest of Honour program.

The Jetsons Meets Shopaholic

Until this moment, my life has been filled with diets, promises to diet, failed diets, exercise, this toll-free number to collect your prize.”

Bonacci number sequence for digesting chocolate, and high school cafeteria records, you have

Chocolate Chocolate Moons


“The Jetsons Meets Shopaholic” by Melanie Schmitt was published in the Spring 2014 issue of PUBLISHINGPERSPECTIVES.
By Olivia Snaie

This October marks twenty consecutive years that Barcelona literary agent Anna Soler-Pont has been coming to the Frankfurt Book Fair. In 1992, as an enthusiastic 24-year-old, with a background in Arabic literature and a passion for traveling, Soler-Pont arrived in Frankfurt with a pack of business cards and no scheduled appointments, but she convinced publishers to listen to her. She was in the process, she told them, of assembling a catalogue of women writers from different cultures. Just several months earlier, Soler-Pont had traveled overland from Barcelona to New Delhi to visit these authors.

“Believe me, if you drive from Barcelona to Lahore to visit a writer, even if you’re only 24, they will receive you,” she says.

Twenty years later, the indefatigable Soler-Pont has sold 1,000 books and represents 77 international authors. This year her Pontas agency is riding high on the success of Swedish author, Jonas Jonasson, whose first novel, The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared, has sold nearly four million copies in three years in various languages, of which 1.4 million copies were sold in Germany. Pontas now is staffed by eight people. Soler-Pont has two partners—her husband, Ricard Domingo, former director at the Planeta Group and former director of Barcelona Televisió; and Marc de Gouvenain, former editor at French publisher Actes Sud, and Scandinavian literature specialist. While at Actes Sud, de Gouvenain brought Stieg Larsson to the international arena.

In 2002, Pontas also became a film production company—an essential move for Soler-Pont because “30% of films produced today come from books.”

Soler-Pont probably has more energy than most people, and she has been working non-stop for the past twenty years.

“We grew from what was a personal passion and curiosity to a business as well. At a certain point I had to learn about business and become a solid professional in order to provide good international service to my clients.”

In 2008, Soler-Pont’s hard work and passion came full circle when she met Palestinian-American author Susan Abulhawa. She went on to sell rights to Abulhawa’s debut novel, Mornings in Jenin, to over 20 countries as well as film rights. Abulhawa, she felt, was “the perfect client. After this long journey, she was the one who connected all the dots—the Arab world, a woman…”

Soler-Pont is referring to an experience that became the catalyst for her career as an agent in 1991, while doing freelance translation work for publishers and believing she would become an Arab specialist, she traveled to Cairo where she met with Naguib Mahfouz. During tea with Mahfouz and his wife, the author told Soler-Pont that, “winning the Nobel prize is nothing. I’m just an old man. Come with me to the café by the Nile where you can meet young writers.”

The café was filled with writers, including six women “who adopted me,” said Soler-Pont. She returned to Barcelona loaded down with the women’s novels and high hopes of having them translated into French or Spanish. Soler-Pont took out the phone book and began calling prestigious publishers, including Gallimard in Paris. “They all asked me the same two questions: ‘Are you a literary agent?’ and ‘who owns the rights?’”

“I didn’t know what a literary agent was, and I didn’t know anything about rights,” she laughs.

“To learn about the business, you could either work for a literary agency or start your own. I chose the more difficult path.”

This path led her to Frankfurt a year later where she eventually spent 18 months working with the Book Fair in 2007 as commissioner of the program of Catalan culture, when Catalonia was the fair’s Guest of Honor.

“Frankfurt has been really important to me,” muses Soler-Pont. “For years my calendar began with Frankfurt, and every October people took me more and more seriously.”

“The Jetsons Meets Shopaholic”

Chocolate Chocolate Moons

A cozy futuristic mystery for sophisticated readers tired of counting calories and hungry for a good laugh.

THESE WORDS CHANGED MY LIFE:

“Congratulations plus-size student! Based on your cholesterol readings, body-fat ratio, Fibonacci number sequence for digesting chocolate, and high school cafeteria records, you have won the Good and Plenty Scholarship for two at Neil Armstrong University on the Moon. Call this toll-free number to collect your prize.”

Until this moment, my life has been filled with diets, promises to diet, failed diets, exercise, therapies, nutritionists, acupuncture, hypnosis and memories of falling over the marbles rolled in my path at school as my classmates laughed and yelled, “Molly Marbles, round as a marble, fat as a moon.”

I suck in my breath, pull up my bra straps, push my hair behind my moon-shaped face, crack each finger and toe, and call the number.


Above quote from review in Wall to Wall Books.
Has E-Book Adoption Reached a Plateau in the UK?

By Michael Bhaskar

Print sales are generally public. Bestseller lists are a fixture. Not so for e-books, for which total sales and breakdowns by retailer or category are still carefully guarded by retailers and publishers alike. It’s a shame, as greater transparency would allow for better decision making and give us an overall sense of the contours of digital change.

No matter, it’s just about possible to make out what is happening in the UK.

Firstly though, we should separate the two strands of digital publishing that have emerged. On one hand you have straightforward “vanilla” e-books, or digital replicas of print titles; on the other you have digital first e-books that require more developmental work, breaking new ground in terms of product and business model. These latter projects have, I believe, caught on in the UK more than elsewhere.

More Competition at Christmas

Amazon Kindle is still the dominant platform, selling more devices and books than any other retailer by a considerable margin. Their aggressive pricing, intensive marketing and established place as the go-to Internet retailer have all cemented them at the top of the e-book pile. Apple iBooks, Kobo, Google and Sony, alongside a host of smaller start-ups, are all in the mix though. With the launch of Barnes & Noble’s Nook in the UK, competition will be ferocious this Christmas. To what extent the Nook makes inroads against the Kindle will be the decisive question for e-book watchers in 2013.

Earlier this year it was announced, to the shock of many, that Waterstones, the UK’s largest book retailer, would partner with Amazon to sell devices in stores. Many were surprised that Waterstones would partner with their most strategically difficult competitor, but clearly Waterstones feels the plan will ultimately give them a viable digital presence and protect the efficacy of bricks-and-mortar retail. It will undoubtedly boost the shift to e-books.

Recent Publishers Association figures put e-book sales growth at 188% over the past year—which actually represents a slowdown. Digital trade sales accounted for £84 million in revenue from January to June 2012. When both HarperCollins and Hachette UK released their semiannual reports, e-book sales accounted for more than a quarter of revenues at both companies. Victoria Barnsley, the CEO of HarperCollins UK, predicted that e-book revenues could be a third of the group’s total within two or three years. Other indications suggest growth may plateau as e-book reading reaches a natural level among frequent book buyers. As ever, no one knows what will happen, but more will emerge in the weeks after Christmas.

Commercial Fiction is Digital King

There is, however, a clear sense of what sells as an e-book. Commercial fiction is clearly the “classic” e-book seller. Non-fiction, reference and children’s all struggle to sell the volume achieved by fiction, a pattern seen around the world (as evidenced by the Fifty Shades phenomenon).

While non-fiction, reference and children’s may struggle as basic e-books, they have started finding a market as mobile apps. British publishers, including established brands like Penguin and Faber & Faber, as well as start-ups like Touch Press and Nosy Crow, have produced notable commercial and critical successes in an area fraught with difficulties. Most publishers are still only building their skills in this area, so it is encouraging to see positive breakthroughs.

While basic e-books still generate the majority of digital book revenue in the UK, there is a new suite of products increasingly coming into the public consciousness and, crucially, delivering a solid return. Matching a creative flair to a commercial nous will be the key. Then again, it always was.

Michael Bhasker is the Digital Publishing Director for Profile Books in the UK.
E-Books in France: Shunned or Just Getting Started?

By Olivia Snaije

There has been much talk about why the e-book market is slow to take off in France. The Guardian recently ran a piece on “Why France is shunning the e-book” and the New York Times proclaims that France’s paper book market and independent bookstores are doing well.

The current situation of the market lies somewhere in between. It is true that bookstores support both the government and the public. Paper books represent 52% of the French cultural goods market and for the moment, e-books make up less than 2% of sales.

However, three heads of major publishing companies are acutely aware of the arrival of the digital age and commented for Publishing Perspectives on today’s book market in France, which must take into account a very different set of rules from the US and the UK.

Jean Arcache is CEO of Place des Editeurs, a publishing group owned by Edits, which holds the foreign license for Lonely Planet and also publishes best-selling American authors such as Harlan Coben and Danielle Steel.

“The situation here is very different from the US, which started with discounting. Here, because of fixed price laws, you cannot do that. This raises the average price of an e-book to €15, rather than €9.99. This means we’re starting with little volume but a lot of value. It’s more beneficial because we can invest in social marketing, which is very important, in order to beat Amazon’s loyalty program. . . . We are beginning in a controlled environment which means the market will evolve through value and not discount. Moving to digital is linked to the availability of reading devices. The Kindle Fire will be out this fall. This may push forward the market for Christmas sales. Kobo’s partnership with FNAC helped everyone to go further. Now that some of the readers are much cheaper than others, this has allowed the market to start. We have an agreement with Google Play and the major players in the US are now present in the French market.”

Place des Editeurs imprint Bel fond has just launched an enhanced e-book available on Apple called Que Viva la musical, inspired by the late Colombian author Andrés Caicedo.

Claude de Saint Vincent, CEO of Media Participations, would like a global e-book format and more digital titles in France. Claude de Saint Vincent is deputy CEO of Media Participations, a conglomerate of book publishing (especially graphic novels and comics), film and television productions and news services. He is also Chairman of Izneo—an online comic book platform created by an alliance of publishers.

“The French market was solid until 2008 when you began to see a decrease. When you look at the turnover it looks like a sound market but when you look at the volume of books sold, then you realize you have fewer paper readers than five years ago.”

As far as the digital market is concerned, “it hasn’t taken off in France for two reasons: the Kindle was launched in 2007 in the US. When you go on Amazon you have access to 1.5 million books. In France the Kindle was launched 11 months ago, and when you look at Amazon.fr there are 65,000 books available. We just don’t have a significant amount of e-book readers and the offer is not wide enough.”

He adds: “Most people think digital publishing is an opportunity, but actually it’s very complicated because there’s no global format. With black and white you can start making money, but in France with such low volume, we are actually losing money.

“It’s a strong trend and unavoidable, but the offers on the market need to be extensive.”
10 Things You Need to Know About Selling Rights

By Vinutha Mallya

You made the journey to the biggest book fair, and now you’re wondering how to make the most of it. An intensive “Rights Express” seminar on Wednesday by the legendary Lynette Owen, Copyright Director at Pearson Education presented practical advice on how to sell rights successfully.

Here’s Owen’s wisdom, expressly condensed into 10 points:

**One**
You can sell not only book publication rights but other rights too, for example: rights for co-editions, book club rights; condensation rights; audio book rights; e-books and digital downloads; TV and film rights; and merchandising rights.

**Two**
Research the market climate and potential partners, and imagine the rights potential for each title.

**Three**
Set up a database to record details of your titles, submissions and sales, and details about your publishing partners. The database should help you track submissions and negotiations. A well-designed system will enable quick decision-making.

**Four**
Strategize your sales efforts. Identify priority markets and key titles to sell.

**Five**
Meet your potential publishing partners at book fairs. Fix appointments in advance, by contacting the editor directly. Come prepared with rights guides and information sheets. Be clear on the rights that you will offer. Take notes during the meeting.

**Six**
Pitch one or two titles to your potential publishing partner; do not flood potential licensees with too much marketing material.

**Seven**
Follow-up within a week of the Fair. Don’t lose momentum. Refer to your notes for the materials you had agreed to send out to the potential partner.

**Eight**
Obtain all details from the partner before negotiating the deal, such as their expected first print run, local price, publication schedule and promotion plans.

**Nine**
Understand the key points of the license contract before negotiating. Negotiate royalty rate, payment terms, but also set dates for payment and publication schedules. Follow up diligently: for decisions, signing of contracts, payments due, expiry dates, etc.

**Ten**
Create and maintain a good reputation as a rights seller. Be punctual; deal honestly and fairly; and build good and trustworthy relationships. Remember, the world of rights is a small one.

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**Emmanuelle Beulque Speaks at SPARKS**

Emmanuelle Beulque, editorial director of Sarbacane Creation, spoke about the French children’s publisher’s approach to kid’s books on the SPARKS stage in Hall 8 yesterday. Ten-year-old Sarbacane publishes from pre-school to teens and has a reputation for high production values. Beulque believes in “multi-level books”—those that not only engage with plot and illustration but also have a lasting impact because they engage a child intellectually.

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**What Can Publishers Learn from Moleskine?**

By Rachel Aydt

Publishers who hope that their catalogs will become iconic across generations might want to stamp the words “Self-identity and mobility” onto their five-year plans, says Marco Beghin, the head of Moleskine America.

“...The design of Moleskine...the rectangular shape of the notebook...is in our collective memory,” which to his mind explains the fierce devotion to the brand. This stance sounds as confident as the collective imprint from Carl Jung himself, but more publishers could learn to stand as tall behind the ideology of their own products.

What is it that you carry [that] says who you are? he asked. “It’s not your phone; if everyone put their phones on the table you couldn’t tell them apart. But a notebook contains the content that represents you.”

Beghin challenges our ideas of mobility by continually describing the moments between analog and digital. “We don’t stand for analog or digital. We’re in a mobile continuum.” The notebooks themselves, the analog if you will, have gone through one seismic shift to accommodate all of this motion and carrying: not too long ago they went from having a hard cover to having a soft cover.

“What the soft covers you can scan pages now. You can open and close it a million times because it’s bound like a book. We had to consider quality and mobility.”

Here at Frankfurt, Moleskine is showcasing its new partnership with Evernote, a company comprised of a handful of applications created to help people stay organized. This is how it works: Download Evernote on any computer or phone, snap a picture of a special Moleskine notebook—this has been optimized with this application. Use cataloging stickers that come with the notebook to tag your pages, and Evernote will automatically sort them by the sticker category so paper pages can automatically be filed electronically. It creates a new workflow for those looking to traverse seamlessly between the analog and digital worlds.

What does this partnership, and this company, teach the rest of the publishing world? Most importantly, throw the notion that consumers automatically line up in Team Paper or Team Digital camps out the window. When considering product development, remember that your readers have different desires at different times, depending on the nebulous nature of lifestyle and mobility at any given moment. Help readers adapt your different products to different usages.

After all, Team Digital still carries Team Paper in their backpack, in their pocket, and continues to stack their bookshelves and pile their desks high. Remember that Team Paper longs for the organization of Digital, but is reluctant to give up the manual creative process completely. In a way, Moleskine finds this analog/digital balance without actually having to, well, be digital.

Their new partnership with Evernote means that they can still do what they do best: be blank canvases for creativity, but now they can be photographed, digitized, and catalogued with the Evernote app.

Of course, balancing the new continuum is what matters. “During the day I read a lot on my iPad,” says Beghin. “But at night I prefer to read paper before bed. It’s more relaxing.”
The One Country You Should Watch? India, Says OUP Strategist

By Daniel Kalder

According to Casper Grathwohl, VP of Group Strategy at Oxford University Press in the UK, India is the country that publishers should be watching right now.

Last year the publishing market grew by 45%. Amazon opened its “Junglee” online retail aggregation service in February 2012, and while it currently functions as a resale marketplace, the firm has also just launched the Kindle, throwing open the doors to its vast online bookstore in August.

“With 100 million internet users, the potential for growth is vast,” says Grathwohl. “India is attractive for publishers because there’s a rising middle class, and early signs are that e-books are really starting to take off.”

All the major trade publishers have offices in India, says Grathwohl, and e-books have extra appeal because “they bypass all the problems print books have with distribution and the supply chain.” But at the same time, he adds, digital publishing and online selling of print books in India will force publishers to deal with complex issues: “For instance, it raises questions about global pricing. How do you manage a high price market, such as the US, where a course book might cost $150, and a low price market like India where it’s $20?”

Amazon.com currently does more business from India than homegrown rival Flipkart does inside India, says Grathwohl. Demand is huge, but he adds, publishers will need to be extremely flexible in dealing with the country. “The future, he thinks, will see much more localization. “Re-importation of cheaper course books has been a problem for a long time, and in educational publishing this has given rise to local adaptations.”

“The importance of offering local variations is essential to understanding the country’s market, adds Grathwohl. "OUP has been a success in India because we don’t treat it as a homogenous area. We have regional offices all over. There is huge variation across the country, we can’t treat it as one entity.”

Publishers seeking to transfer their experience from working in the similarly huge market that is China are in for a rude awakening: “There’s much more standardization and regulation in China. In India, it’s a free-for-all.”

A rising middle class, looser regulations and e-book growth puts India ahead of China on many publishers’ agendas.

EVENT: Recent GAMA Moves and What They Mean for the Future of Publishing
1:30 pm to 4:30 pm at the Sparks Stage, Hall 8.0 N988. Hear Caspar Grathwohl, OUP, in conversation with Mark Dressler.
“WE NEED NEW PARADIGMS.
AND I BELIEVE THIS INNOVATION WILL NOT COME FROM THE USA OR EUROPE, BUT FROM A COUNTRY LIKE BRAZIL.”

Bob Stein

Going beyond Google: TO SEEK, not to Search.