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People Profile: Wendell Lotz

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Caught in the Middle:
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ISBN-10 and ISBN-13, wherever possible; we are targeting completion at various points throughout 2005. The communication phase of the project includes:

- The ability to receive publisher records and bibliographic records from third parties, with either the 13-digit identifier, or both ISBN formats as keys.
- Outputting MARC records, paper invoices and packing slips, new title alerts, status reports, (i.e., virtually any paper document), using the identifier that the customer or supplier sent.

While the first phase of the project was relatively simple from a technical viewpoint, there is significantly more difficulty in the second phase. Some of the most significant difficulties for Ingram have included:

- Managing the real estate on internal screens, Web pages, and paper documents.
- File exchanges based on the ISBN as key. Although the surrogate key solved many problems and made the project simpler in the mainstream ordering processes, many ancillary or smaller processes use the ISBN-10 as their key.
- Managing the cut-out date for internal associates, i.e., how do you keep an organization with hundreds of customer and supplier contacts synchronized in conveying the details of our state-of-readiness message to trading partners.
- Converting the rich metadata assets, which use the ISBN to link to content records. Ingram manages an archive of over one million electronic book cover images. The image files are named with a nomenclature featuring their ISBN-10.

All of these issues can be conquered with technical expertise and careful planning.

As the “executive sponsor” and focal point at Ingram for “things 13,” the issues we can’t control cause the most concern and occupy the inevitable drive-time musings. Among these are:

- Worries about publishers abandoning ISBN-10 before it is time. We have already seen multiple publishers issuing books without the ISBN-10 on

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people profile

J. Wendell Lotz

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BORN & LIVED: Born in Yonkers, NY; spent the formative years including first professional library job in various parts of Ohio.

EARLY LIFE: Grew up in a small town of 1800, one of three children of a dentist and librarian. I loved sports, playing most of the backyard renditions of that era, and began attending collegiate football games at the age of six. But, most of all, my mother introduced me to books—every Christmas and birthday included a book as a gift, a tradition I have tried to maintain with my own children. I was valedictorian of my high school class and began my writing “career” as editor of the school newspaper, which came out every grading period on mimeographed paper.

FAMILY: Married to Rebecca James, an M.L.S. and former school and public librarian, as well as an executive at Baker & Taylor and Ingram. Three children—two grown daughters (CPA and Funeral Director, respectively) plus a 12-year-old boy at home; two grandparents.

EDUCATION: B.A. Heidelberg College, M.A. in History, University of Cincinnati; M.S. in Librarianship, Western Michigan University.

FIRST JOB: Social Sciences Bibliographer, the Ohio State University.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Ohio State Libraries Acquisition Department, 1968-1972; Joined Baker & Taylor as Manager, Approval Program Services, 1972-1980; held various Marketing Dept positions, 1980-1995; my final B & T position was Vice President, Information Technology Group. I joined Ingram Book Company in 1995 to build the database department. Most of my career has focused on the management of bibliographic metadata. Currently the Chair, BISAC General Committee; Vice-Chair, Editor; member of the ONIX international Steering Committee.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Golf, exercise, read books, spectator sports of all kinds.

FAVORITE BOOKS: Favorite author is Robert B. Parker. I’m a firm believer in the saying “so many books, so little time.” I try to split my reading between non-fiction history, religion, and business, and fiction—usually mystery. Currently reading a Nicholas Sparks novel and one of my history professor’s works, The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, that I never had time to read when he wrote it in the 70’s.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: People who talk so loudly on their cell phones that the whole world has to listen in.

PHILOSOPHY: “Just do it,” copyright Nike, but expresses my attitude about most things. A corollary attitude is one that was crystallized by a New York bus driver during one of my recent trips to the City and that is “one should not worry about tomorrow because no one has ever seen it. By the time tomorrow gets here it is today.” So analyze the issue or problem you are encountering, develop a plan, and execute it. Modify as circumstances dictate.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Led the building of the bibliographic database that underlies iPage and most of the major online book retailing Websites around the world. A close runner-up would be “led the development of Baker & Taylor’s B & T MARC system of services.”

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: The most important goal for the next five years is guiding my son’s development so that he becomes a happy, productive member of society.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Assuming that the “industry” is the library world specifically, I find myself somewhat distant from library issues of the early 21st century and reluctant to comment. What I will be interested to watch over the next five years is the impact of Google Print and the competitive efforts of other search engines to digitize the information resources of the world and index them with the latest search technologies. I believe these efforts could have significant impact on the skills and tasks required of librarians pushing them ever more towards being “information managers” and altering acquisition and collection development practices to a large degree.

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