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People Profile: Mindy King

Editor

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Chinese Scholars? Just learned that ProQuest plans to expand its presence in East Asia and has appointed the magnificent Boe to lead the effort. Boe Horton has been named Senior Vice President and Managing Director, East Asia Pacific, and will relocate to Hong Kong during 2010. Mr. Horton will develop ProQuest’s East Asia Pacific strategy, leading sales and operations for the region. He will also be responsible for establishing joint ventures, partnerships, and licensing agreements, as well as identifying new digital products and services for both Asian and Western markets. Boe’s research is in addition to his role leading ProQuest’s Research Solutions Group — composed of Serials Solutions, ReWorks-COS and Dissertations. Prior to this role, Mr. Horton headed strategy and integration during the merger of ProQuest Information and Learning and CSA. He is also former Chief Operating Officer and General Manager for both CSA and Bowker.

www.proquest.com/

Speaking of ProQuest, had lots of fun and enlightenment talking to Rod Gauvin, Senior Vice President, ProQuest during the 2009 Charleston Conference. ProQuest was the main Gala Conference Reception Sponsor and as we all remember much fun was had by all (weren’t the shrimp and grits awesome!). Anyway, Rod and ProQuest continued to expand the famous ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

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Pay-Per-View at the American Institute of Physics:
One Scholarly Publisher’s Experience with “The Article Economy”

by Douglas LaFrenier (Director, Publication Sales & Market Development, American Institute of Physics, 2 Huntington Quadrangle, Melville, NY 11747) <dlafrenier@aip.org>

Despite all the talk of the “article economy,” sales of single articles are a minor revenue source for scholarly publishers, who continue to rely on subscriptions and consortia deals for the vast majority of their income. (Publishers in some disciplines can count advertising as another source of revenue.) Yet the purchase of single articles obviously serves the needs of a significant number of users: My organization, the American Institute of Physics (AIP), for example, with a total article database of about 400,000 papers, sold an average of 560 articles per month from our Website in 2008. And that does not include articles sold through third-party document delivery services, such as Infotrieve, CISTI, and the British Library.

AIP, as it happens, was one of the first two publishers to enable anyone with a credit card to buy any article online, back in April 1998. The American Chemical Society was the other, and ACS beat us to the punch by a matter of hours. (We lost the bragging rights that come with the first press release!) Since AIP’s online platform, Scitation, hosts many other not-for-profit society publishers, we enabled each of them to enter the online single-article marketplace as well. “E-commerce” was the heady talk of the day (this was before the dot.com bust around 2001), and publishers were pleased to have this new revenue stream from direct sales, though many undoubtedly expected more robust results.

In retrospect, the low number of direct article sales was partly due to the fact that we were still focused on “availability” and had not yet discovered “discoverability.” It took Google to teach us that.

Google is so much part of publishing DNA these days that it’s hard to remember how much resistance it met with originally. Publishers debated about allowing Google spiders to crawl our Websites for content — indeed, many publishers were still trying to build “portals” or “gateways” to corner online traffic in their disciplines. Why wouldn’t our users come directly to us for our content? Google was a game-changer if only because it caused a lot of us to rethink this strategy, and forced us — even the Society publishers whose brands are virtually synonymous with their subject matter, such as ACS or IEEE or the American Physical Society — to realize we were not the center of our universe. Once we permitted Google to index our content in 2003, the “Google effect” was plain to see: Before Google, our article sales were about $2500 a month; after Google indexed our content, sales rose fairly immedi-