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Tim Bradbury-Vice President, GaleNet

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Interview with Tim Bradbury

Vice President GaleNet <bradbur@gale.com>

by **Katina Strauch** (Editor, *Against the Grain*)

ATG: *What, exactly is GaleNet and what is your job ?*

TB: **GaleNet** is a brand that represents all of our online products — *Contemporary Authors, Encyclopedia of Associations,* for example, are all on the GaleNet platform. My role is to help lead the electronic publishing initiative and help move us from a print publisher to an information publisher.

ATG: *We love your products, but we didn't love the previous pricing.*

TB: We recently came up with a more flexible pricing model that enables large and small libraries to use just the products they need — not everything that's on GaleNet. In fact, few libraries purchase all that is available from GaleNet.

ATG: *Aren't you licensing some of your content to third parties?*

TB: Not our core products, generally, just the consumer products, although **SilverPlatter** makes some of our products available. Our whole Consortia business model tries to embrace working with **OCLC** regional affiliates to meet the varied needs of libraries.

ATG: *Tell us more about your Consortial model? You were invited to the Consortium of Consortia meeting in Chicago organized by* ***Tom Sanville*** *of* ***OhioLINK****, I believe.*

TB: For the last fifty years we have been a publisher. It's our core business. We are trying to serve library needs and our own needs in this electronic Wild West frontier. Whether it's **Solinet** or **Galileo**, our intent is to remain true to our expertise in the marketplace as a publisher. We create and publish high-level, more credible information sources that meet your reference needs. We don't have a sales force of 40 people, but a small highly targeted sales organization.

Yes, we made a presentation to the Consortium of Consortia. Some of the questions that were raised were regarding price. We understand the scale that a central buying concern would bring to our products. But we are not a periodicals database. We create data and expend resources to create high value, information solutions to help people move forward.

There is a significant difference between a reference publisher and a periodicals aggregator. There are a lot of products out that are "just good enough" that we have to compete with. Additionally, there's the whole issue of licensing in the electronic world versus ownership in the print world. The bottom line is there are different needs and different definitions. We are in the process of forming an advisory group to make sure that we are getting customer input, setting prices and constructing a business model. The Chicago meeting was an interactive exchange. We collected a lot of information that will help us evolve to the next level.

ATG: *Can we talk more about your pricing model. How can you change your pricing to be more in line with what your customers want and not lose money?*

TB: How do you change the pricing of your product to be meaningful for your marketplace? In the old model, we asked for the number of buildings in your area and your overall FTE and then created a price. The marketplace told us they didn't like that because they wanted equal access regardless of the building that they were delivering information to. Then, we decided to price based on concurrent users regardless of how they were coming into the system, remotely or into satellite branches. We are migrating our CD-ROM prices to reflect the non-wall environment because the LANs could provide dial-in access. At this time we don't have transactional pricing. Pricing is not a science in the online world. We are learning together.

ATG: *What is a concurrent user in the http environment?*

TB: That's a good question. We are looking at a timeline of four to five minutes. Within that time frame, how many hits do we get on our servers. We are moving from a session environment to an http environment. We understand that we need to be flexible with this pricing. For example, we won't disable access if someone goes over their number of user access points. We try to determine if this is an anomaly because of a special assignment or if we're seeing an actual increase in usage. The marketplace has been fair to us and we need to be fair as well. After all, we are just learning about electronic consumption habits.

If someone is on our system and is just wading around, then something is wrong. They either weren't given the proper instruction or they are in the wrong database. There is a difference between our type of content and the type of content that you find in a periodical and it has implications for the delineation of the concurrent user.

ATG: *Let's pursue that for a minute. Are you talking about fulltext versus indexing information. For example, your* ***BGMI*** *(Biographical and Genealogical Master Index) database would be much more useful if it linked to the fulltext of the materials which it indexes.*

TB: We have a suite of data which involves different types of information, both indexing and fulltext. But we are looking at fulltext possibilities for the indexing information that we have as well. What records can we link to fulltext? That is part of the way that GaleNet is going to continue to be successful. We are looking for how we can implement something like you are describing and enhancing our data through the expertise held by our editorial staff and by linking complementary content. Individual products are the seeds of an answer, but by linking data through partnership we can provide our customer with the whole information solution.

ATG: *In the September 1997 issue of* ***ATG****,* ***Fran Wilkinson*** *conducted an interview with some of the key players in the reference landscape ("Reference Materials — So Many Choices, So Little Money: Librarians and Publishers Speak Out!", p.1, 16, 18, 20, 47). One of the people interviewed was Gale's* ***Lynda James-Gilboe*** *who stressed the difference between being a publisher that serves institutional markets compared to those who serve the consumer markets.*

TB: Yes, Lynda's point was that Gale products — aimed to a small, highly targeted audience — often get compared with the prices of electronic products that are aimed at large markets with millions of users. We create products for information professionals with very high standards. As a result, creating these products involves substantial research and the cost of that research can't be spread over millions of products.

But, we don't want to go into the consumer marketplace. We are owned by **Thomson** and they have very few consumer products. Perhaps **Jane's** and **Peterson's** are the closest we get to con-

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sumer products. Gale has built a strong brand in the library market and we're committed to staying there.

ATG: What is Thomson's commitment to the library marketplace? I know they just divested themselves of ***Routledge. ATG*** *interviewed* ***Colin Jones****, president of Routledge in that same September issue (pp.34-36) and Thomson's name came up a few times.*

TB: There is a high level of commitment. Just look at the recent reorganization in **Thomson**. Gale's group of companies includes **Gale**, **IAC**, **Derwent**, **ISI**, **Jane's**, **Peterson's** — all companies whose primary marketplace is the library community. Collecting the companies under one umbrella should drive synergies that benefit libraries. For example, if we link our data, libraries will be able to navigate a broader spectrum of information. We want to be number one and the recent reorganization puts our group of companies into the marketplace together. It all makes sense.

ATG: Let's talk more about this competition word. In the electronic marketplace we are playing with huge dollars and it's become more a matter of market competitors than product competitors.

TB: Yes. **Wolters Kluwer** and **Reed** are not direct competitors with us product wise, but they are in terms of the overall market dollars. In the Consortia business model, we are all competing for the same amount of market dollars, and they are limited.

ATG: What is your sales volume within the library market and how does it break down among types of libraries?

TB: The library market — special, public, academic and school (K-12) is the main market for our print and electronic resources. Academic and public libraries are the largest portion of our business. We have seen double-digit growth in the last several years driven by our ability to assess some of the product needs of the marketplace. We are attuned to business development ideas and suggestions from the marketplace. In fact, we give monetary compensation to people who come up with product ideas that we end up pursuing. We evaluate between 750 and 1000 products a year. We don't pursue them all because they don't necessarily fit into our core competencies or perhaps we don't have the money to pursue the idea fully. We will continue to evaluate new products in the future. Things are changing and the product development timeline has increased five to ten fold. Library needs are changing and we are trying to adapt quickly to the changes and come out with new products and services in a timeframe that works for our customers. We're making sure we have the proper manufacturing infrastructure and product cycle to support this. Timing is everything.

ATG: So what direction will GaleNet take in the future?

TB: We will continue to analyze, from the customer's perspective, the content that we publish. We have seven to ten content centers and we will stay focused on those areas and enhance them through partnerships and through the kind of analysis that's made Gale information so reliable.

ATG: Can we get a glimpse of the private ***Tim Bradbury****?*

TB: My wife and I have two great kids, boys, and a third on the way. It keeps me sane. I call it a "hug and slug" environment.

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