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Christine Lamb-Chief Operating Officer, ingenta

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ATG Interviews Christine Lamb

Chief Operating Officer, ingenta <<http://www.ingenta.com>>

by Judy Luther (President, Informed Strategies) <www.informedstrategies.com>

***Interviewer's Note:** It was fun to catch up with Christine during Online in London in December 1999 for this interview and learn more about her new role with ingenta. We extended the interview to capture comments about ingenta's merger with UnCover as this combination provides for the delivery of all journal articles whether they are in print or electronic form.*

***ATG:** Tell us about BIDS and the move that made ingenta a separate company.*

CL: BIDS was very innovative ten years ago. It was one of the first national consortia to offer bibliographic databases to the higher education community in the U.K. They also developed their own, popular interface to ISI databases. BIDS expanded thereafter to twelve databases, including Inspec, Compendex, Embase, ERIC. After many years of successful growth, Bath University decided to seek outside investment.

David Brown, Director of Business Development, who was working as a consultant to BIDS, knew that Mark Rowse, the current CEO, was looking for a business to acquire. Mark was intrigued by the scholarly publishing value chain, where information provided by the author has value added by the publisher and intermediary and then is offered to the user, often that same author again. Mark Rowse obtained private financing to purchase BIDS and create ingenta in 1998. The University of Bath is one of the company's largest shareholders today and the BIDS academic service continues to be operated on a not-for-profit basis by ingenta. We call the arrangement a public/private partnership.

***ATG:** What is ingenta? Tell us about it.*

CL: Mark saw BIDS as the beginnings of a channel to market for publishers. Ingenta is a global distributor of electronic research information. We offer hosting and Web portal development for publishers and free bibliographic searching to libraries and end users with fulltext delivery of e-journal subscriptions to the desktop.

Today, ingenta offers access to 2,300 titles from 30 STM publishers including Academic, Blackwell, Wiley. Ingenta either hosts the publications or links to them on the publisher's Website. Publishers can also choose to have ingenta deliver their

data to other third party providers such as OCLC, RoweCom and Maruzen. ** (See Editor's note below.)

The ingenta business model is interesting because it expands the reach of publishers by enabling them to offer their content to more markets in different ways. Two-thirds of the publishers use the ecommerce system to sell articles individually. Some are testing it and all publishers set their own pricing. Ingenta does not license and resell publications, rather we deliver them to the user. The environment is attractive for all kinds of users who need high value information.

The idea is to create a PBS or Waterstone's bookstore atmosphere at the site with fee-based, quality information—highbrow, not high-tech. Users can become frustrated having to search many different publishers' sites separately. Ingenta can provide added access points for publishers who already have journals on their own Websites. Ingenta promotes the service as a whole, while publishers usually focus on promoting their own products and titles.

***ATG:** What's ahead for ingenta?*

CL: In early 2000, the new Website will have subject searching for journal titles and Easylink, which allows libraries and publishers to imbed a URL in their Websites to link directly to a particular journal title. The first portals, or e-communities, we are building with publishers will be launched at the end of February. Two of those are with CABI and one with a distance learning institute.

Since ingenta deals only with electronic publications, we offer opportunities for consortia and other groups to point users to the service. My belief is that libraries want to buy collections of articles on a fee basis. In ingentaJournals, publishers set their pay-per-view price plus a \$5 charge for ingenta. This is the beginning of a scalable program across the entire database rather than having users access multiple silos of journals by different publishers.

Near term enhancements for ingenta include reference linking and hyperlinking within PDF articles and improved e-commerce capabilities. The future vision for the service is to deliver information to the desktop of the end user wherever he/she may be. Article sales will become of in-

creasing importance to publishers because users want to buy that way. Since ingenta loads the IP addresses of subscriber records from publishers, we can offer the end user flexible options for accessing fulltext and secure delivery.

Ingenta's strategy includes providing users with other appropriate material, such as reports, conference proceedings, and books. In addition, content that can be offered without charge is being added, such as Medline, with links to fulltext in ingentaJournals

A second service available for publishers is the ability to create virtual communities by combining proprietary content with that from other publishers in a specific subject area. These topical portals will offer services such as calendars, news, an alerting service and interactive discussion groups in addition to content. There will be three initially, two from CABI—one on veterinary science, the second on human nutrition, and the third for the Action Learning Institute in conjunction with the International Management Centres Association (IMCA), which is an education and training organization focused on enhancing management skills.

***ATG:** What is ingenta's market? What are its competitors?*

CL: Ingenta offers publishers access to a market of researchers and professional knowledge workers. While there are competitors who offer a similar service hosting journals, ingenta is distinguished by a different philosophical outlook and a broader scope. Ingenta believes it can expand business for publishers and at the same time offer users a huge selection of high-value resources. BIDS usage alone places ingenta in the top 20 Websites in the UK with 15,000 user sessions/day. Seventy percent of ingenta searches result in the download of an article.

***ATG:** Do you have a vision of what the future will hold for publishers, vendors and librarians?*

CL: End users want fulltext on the desktop. If the current group of vendors and suppliers don't serve customers' needs, new entities will emerge that are totally customer-driven. This is happening already with libraries acting as their own aggregators and publishers, and authors

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finding creative ways to self-publish on the Internet. As we have seen on a global basis, when you remove the barriers to free trade, business flourishes.

ATG: *You have varied experience in the industry. Can you tell us about your background?*

CL: In 1991-92 I left print publishing for **Faxon's** electronic services because I perceived that users wanted information at a faster pace and intermediaries were building new services to deliver information faster. I gained an enormous perspective on the industry and a different angle on electronic delivery.

I then worked for INSO which was a spinoff of Houghton Mifflin. This division had created Spellchecker™ using the *American Heritage Dictionary* and sold it to OEMs for multimedia reference and consumer products. I managed licensing and product development for other electronic reference works. They were way ahead in using SGML to structure reference works.

SilverPlatter was intriguing as a secondary publisher aggregator, which was working on linking bibliographic information to fulltext for the scholarly and professional world.

My perspective on the industry has encompassed primary and secondary publishing and a subscription agent offering TOC access and document delivery. My role has grown with each company but I've always chosen with my gut what will work best. I find the information industry interesting and challenging and have no desire to switch to another industry.

ATG: *Tell us about yourself. Family. Hobbies. Reading, etc.*

CL: Business reading: I just read Hal Varian's book *Information Rules: a Strategic Guide to the Network Economy*. I'm in the midst of reading *Weaving the Web* by **Tim Berners Lees**. I love to read poetry: **Neruda**, **Dickinson**, **Heany**, **Plath**. My two sons are 10 and 13 and both know all about the Internet. The older one is an active trader on **eBay** and sees a future as a Wall Street trader and the younger one knows all the **Pokemon** hotspots and was delighted when *Encyclopedia Britannica* became available free online. I have a wonderful husband who holds down the fort while I'm on the road. He is a sound mixer at **WGBH TV**, the PBS station in Boston. We are all avid skiers.

ATG: *Since this interview, ingenta has bought CARL Uncover. What was the mo-*

tivation and how do you expect this will impact the market?

CL: There are potent benefits to bringing ingenta and UnCover together. Both ingenta and UnCover give away the citations, abstracts and tables of contents of publications as a navigation aid to finding the right article. Publishers in ingenta will benefit from the added traffic and usage which will come from UnCover customers accessing their electronic subscriptions through ingenta. UnCover library customers will benefit from having access through ingenta to electronic articles on a pay-per-view basis or by subscription. UnCover publishers will be offered incentives to deliver articles electronically through ingenta. Ingenta's e-commerce and alerting services for libraries will be enhanced by adding those from UnCover.

Both services will be reengineered in the next year to bring together the best features into one service. UnCover benefits from the significant financial investment that ingenta brings to the deal. With the companies combined, new services will be developed that expand usage and delivery of fulltext research information on the Internet. Through the Uncover acquisition, ingenta's reach in the US market has been established overnight. Traffic to the site will be ten times higher than before. 🐼

Editor's note: ingenta currently offers 2,600 journals of which approximately 1,100 are from Elsevier and are only available in the U.K. See the upcoming interview with **Mark Rowse** in *The Charleston Advisor* (v.1#4, June, 2000) by **George Machovec**, **Chuck Hamaker**, and **Katina Strauch**. —KS

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