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A Journey Through Time — Recalling the Past with Nijhoff, Emery Pratt and Faxon

Some Nijhoff Old-Timers Remember

by **Ineke Middeldorp-Crispijn** (Area Manager Marketing and Relations North America, Martinus Nijhoff International, North American Liaison Office, 39 Joanna Drive, Foxboro, MA 02035; Phone: 800 346-3662; Fax: 508 698-0148)
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Martinus Nijhoff International, having changed a few decades ago from “Martinus Nijhoff,” and still simply referred to as just “Nijhoff” has been around for quite some time. The company hasn’t been around for a millennium, but certainly for almost one hundred and fifty years. “Not too shabby, ah?”

So many dramatic and historical changes have taken place between 1853, the year Nijhoff was founded, and now. In 1853, with inventions as for instance the telephone still years away, and the world awaiting the first commercial production of the typewriter (the “writing ball” of Danish pastor **Malling Hansen** in 1870), Martinus Nijhoff opened his first bookstore and a year later, published his first book.

During the early business years, the busy street in The Hague where the company was located was full of people on foot or bike and filled with horse drawn carriages. After all, **Henry Ford** hadn’t even been born, let alone invented his automobile.

People do not live long enough, yet, so they would be alive today to tell these early Nijhoff years from personal experience. However, Nijhoff’s current president, **Mr. Bas Guijt** has been trying. He has worked for the company for almost 46 years. Starting as a 16-year-old boy, later putting himself through college, and after literally working himself up from the basement to the top floor, he has been Nijhoff’s president since 1989. Still full of ideas, energy and going strong, he is not planning on leaving any time soon.

Bas has worked with the last Nijhoff family member involved in the business, **Mr. Wouter Nijhoff**, who retired from the presidency in 1965. From those early days Bas remembers sales people such as **Mr. Brandt Cortius** traveling for weeks by train to reach customers all over Europe. Or worse, traveling for months by boat and train, to reach libraries in North America. Air travel nowadays isn’t a picnic either, but it doesn’t even begin to compare to being away from home for months just because your only option is to cross the ocean by boat.

The worst thing that happens to current day **Nijhoff** travelers is the loss of luggage or the occasional cancelled flight. Maybe some embarrassing moments as well, like having to walk back through the hotel lobby in your PJs, because you have been locked

out of one of the hotel side entrances after a fire drill. Or starting in the men’s bathroom and ending up in the women’s just because someone decided to move up the partition in order to create more space at the ladies’ end. Yes, embarrassing at the time, funny after a while, but still no comparison to traveling during the old days.

The funny thing is that if you’re looking for dramatic changes over all that time, the most dramatic ones have taken place relatively recently. Talking about changes with Nijhoff personnel who have been with the company for many years (between 46 and 20) all agree on the one change that had the most dramatic impact on their job: automation in one form or another. Whether you are talking about the electric typewriter and later the word processor, the calculator or a complete automated system, they all had a major impact on a business like Nijhoff and its employees.

The whole order process, shipment, claims, invoicing, customer service were all done manually not that many years ago. Stacks of hand and type written papers, filing cabinets, even filing rooms, everywhere. And, of course, the all-important mailroom standing at the heart of the company. All of these definitely had to make place for automated systems, including the computer terminals. It is not that there is no regular mail coming in or going out, it is that it so unbelievably much less compared to 25 years ago.

What am I saying? . . . Compared to even five years ago there has been a significant drop in the use of paper. In 1995 many boxes of fax paper were bought on a weekly basis. In the year 2000, months go by before I need a replacement. E-mail, e-mail and more e-mail, all filed away electronically. Saving lots of time, allowing for higher efficiency.

Adjusting to handy equipment is not difficult. Our Head Accounts Payable, **Ron de Gruiter**, doesn’t really miss the, what he calls, gambling machines. (Neither does he miss the days when he had to call the receptionist in order to place an outside call.) During Ron’s early years at Nijhoff he worked with one of these devices on which you had to slide levers up and down and then turn a handle. Viva Las Vegas! These days are over.

Have all changes been for the better? On most of them, the old-timers agree, but not on all of them. There is no doubt that cus-

tomers service

has improved a great deal. Communication back and forth is many times faster than 25 years ago or even ten years ago. E-mail allows for almost instant answers to questions and the decrease in telephone rates makes long distance calls much more affordable. However, some say that communications by e-mail and voice mail depersonalized contact compared to letters and phone conversations. Others say that the quick e-mail interaction did the opposite and personalized customer relations. Things are not always cut and dried.

Talking about change, it is not always as simple as it being either “good” or “bad.” The fact that one is able to select and buy a book from an online bookstore and receive the item without ever having to leave the house is a great thing. However, some beg to differ and say that due to the rise of the mega and online bookstores, the true art of book-sellership has (almost) disappeared. At best, it has changed beyond recognition. Someone reentering the business after a hiatus of 15 years, will not be able to do the same job as in 1985. It simply is impossible. It doesn’t exist any longer. We don’t have to tell that to any librarian who was trained in, for instance, the 60s, 70s or even 80s. They know from first hand experience what people mean when they are talking about the total overhaul of a profession.

Not only what one does and how one does it changed significantly. How about WHERE one goes to work? The Nijhoff old-timers are currently working in spacious offices occupied by a small number of people. That is the way they all started out also. In between, they had to make do with cramped quarters. And there was that time in which psychologists-of-work invented the “kantoortuin,” which is Dutch for “open office floor plan” or literally translated “office-yard.” One had to be able to have a clear view of any other person in the office, unobstructed by partitions, filing cabinets or bookcases, thus promoting the flow of ideas and cooperation. Every self-respecting business transformed its workplace into such an “office-yard.” The only way to sneak a chocolate bar was to hide behind one of the oversized plants and semi-trees being present in abundance. Some positive remnant of the “kantoortuin” remains: lots of greenery. But not to the extent that complete

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plant watering schedules had to be created.

In the early 1990's "where one goes to work" changed even more literally for Nijhoff personnel due to the move from the inner city to the suburbs of The Hague. In the suburbs, there were not as many tempting inner city activities such as shopping and bar hopping to their disposal any longer. Old-timers remember the traditional annual extra long lunch-break officially instated by Nijhoff to witness the Queen going through the streets of The Hague in her golden (really!!) carriage drawn by the whitest of white horses. This day is called "Prinsjesdag" in Holland and it is the day that the queen addresses the nation to announce the annual budget. For some of the Nijhoff crew this scene was an old one and they decided to make the most of the extra hour and went straight for the nearest bar. They proceeded to enjoy more than one well-known great Dutch beverage. Time flies when you are having fun and what do you know . . . even the extra long lunch did come to an end. Making haste going back to the office, the group was presented with an obstacle: a road. It was blocked in order to let the queen through. Police everywhere and no chance of breaking through the barriers. They learned more than one lesson of which "never leaving without using the facilities first" turned out to be not the least important one. Employees are now solely dedicated to their work.

As a company, Nijhoff had its share of disasters over the years. Wars raging through Europe aside, fires, floods and pest invasion have threatened to destroy the building. When, just having arrived at work in the morning, you turn on the light and it doesn't work, the first thing that pops in to your mind isn't: "oh, probably a flooded building. It is when you realize you are shin-deep into water, that something starts to dawn on you. That time it was water out of a leaking coffee machine instead of coffee itself that woke up one of Nijhoff old timers.

But, it is not all that easy to shock or throw off the average Dutchman. A little "dry" humor goes a long way. After a pretty serious blaze, some old-timers were pondering over the question "what could have started this fire" upon which one of the others answered: "flames I suppose." After all, the Nijhoff emblem says "Alles komt terecht," meaning "everything will be ok" (or loosely translated: "Don't worry, be happy"). Dedication, persistence, faith and humor have done a lot for Nijhoff.

I was so quick to brush over the major wars, but actually wars can do "funny" things to people. Even as recent as right after the Gulf War, a customer of ours in

that region still owed us a considerable amount of money and wasn't too keen on paying us. He stated that everything had been destroyed which turned out to be "not quite" true. After many legal battles we managed to get about 80% of our money.

The business started and remained for the great majority of its existence a family business. Despite all the changes, one thing remained: a family atmosphere; a place where one looks forward to going in the morning. A number of old-timers have even

met their current spouses at Nijhoff. And yes, they are still together.

The place has its trials and tribulations, its ups and downs, but just as in the case of a real family, it is a place where people care, solve problems with and take care of one another.

Thanks to the following old timers: **Bas Guijt, Ron de Gruiter, Tony van Kreel, Joke Korving, Steven Beij, Annemieke van de Noordaa, Gerard Simmerman and Ineke de Jong.**

Emery-Pratt Then and Now

by **Mo Shattuck** (Emery-Pratt Company)

Emery-Pratt Company was started by **Wesley Emery** in Lansing, Michigan, in the fall of 1873 as a retail bookstore. We are told that he was a traveling book salesman from New York who came to Michigan and decided to stop traveling and start a bookstore in Lansing. It was called the **Emery Bookstore**. After a few years he sold the bookstore to his son, **Archibald Emery**, and went back on the road as a traveling book salesman.

Archibald (Archie) Emery continued the bookstore and expanded it as business grew. After several years, Emery's son-in-law, **Hubert Pratt**, came into the business with him. The name was changed to **Emery-Pratt Company** and has remained the same to this day.

In 1956, Mr. Pratt, who was in his late 70s, agreed to sell the bookstore to **Burdette & Maurice Shattuck**. Part of the agreement was to keep the bookstore operating for at least one year and to keep the current 5 employees during that time. The Shattuck brothers were already in the office supply business and wanted to purchase the bookstore for its downtown Lansing location which was close to all the state Capitol offices. During that first year of business in the bookstore location, the State Library of Michigan approached the Shattucks about being their book jobber. Since they had committed to keeping the bookstore going for a time, they agreed to do it. In setting up procedures to fulfill their commitment to the State Library they determined it was worthwhile to offer the same services to other libraries.

In 1966, **Emery-Pratt Company** moved its operation to **Owosso, Michigan**. The Shattucks determined it was in their best interest to expand the wholesale division serving libraries, and to terminate the bookstore division of the business. From that time on, the company's focus has been to provide the best possible service to libraries throughout the

United States.

Emery-Pratt Company today is owned and operated by **Maurice B. and Pamela A. Shattuck**, (son and daughter-in-law of **Burdette Shattuck**). They have continued the commitment of service and have been the driving force behind further expansion of services via the Internet (www.emery-pratt.com) for customers as well as major expansion in internal automation.

In addition to their longevity in the book business, they provide access to over 1.8 million titles from over 70,000 publishing sources. Extensive follow-up and research on back-ordered items means customers get materials as soon as possible. 24/7 accessibility via their Website gives customers the ability to check on orders at any time. Publisher prepayment is provided when required by smaller publishers thereby saving customers the hassle of sending payment in with orders. Automatic Title Selection Profiling can be used for advance notification of new titles as they are released. Duplicate Order Alert gives notification of any possible duplication of previous orders. Custom invoicing on open account is always available. Cataloging, including MARC records, and standing order service is available as well. All of these services are designed to simplify the library's ordering procedures so that they have more time for other library responsibilities.

A library's need for quality service and follow-through in acquiring the many publications needed for their individual collections is still of great importance today. With the accessibility of publications from thousands of publishing sources and the lack of library staff time to pursue them, **Emery-Pratt** is constantly renewing its efforts to provide the highest level of service in today's marketplace.

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From The Boston Book Company to The Faxon Company to RoweCom, Inc.

Faxon Contact: **Mary Basilone** (Marketing Manager, Faxon, RoweCom Academic & Medical Services; 781-410-3342) <basilone@faxon.com>

Foreword: In 1991, Constance (Connie) L. Foster wrote and published a 200-page company history of The Faxon Company. The Faxon Company: Linked to Three Centuries. A Company History 1881-1991, is not only an ambitious compilation of hundreds of interviews as well as a distillation of voluminous business bibliographies and corporate histories, but also a personal chronicle of events that make reading the following timeline a fascinating journey of how one company helped shape and influence the trends of an entire industry. The staff at RoweCom and Faxon gratefully thank Ms. Foster, now a professor and serials coordinator at Western Kentucky University, for committing this history to paper.

We would also like to acknowledge Joe Solitto, a 39-year Faxon veteran, for his help in documenting the company's more recent history.

From **The Boston Book Company to The Faxon Company to RoweCom, Inc.:** Over 100 years as an international subscription agency and information services company.

1881—The company begins as The Boston Book Company, a law publishing and bookseller firm located on Beacon Street in Boston, Massachusetts. Charles Soule serves as president of the company until his death in 1913.

1902—For the ALA Conference in June 1902, The Boston Book Company, later to be named The F. W. Faxon Company, Inc., places an advertisement in the Handbook for the Twenty-Fourth Annual Conference of the American Library Association, Boston and Magnolia, June 14-27, 1902 that issues a similar invitation to visit "our new and commodious establishment, to examine our stock of periodicals—the largest of its kind in the world—and to study the library methods employed by us in handling it." This blurb also emphasizes the company's fifteen years of experience and 120,000 volumes.

1918—**Frederick Winthrop Faxon**, the former Library Department manager, and later, vice president of The Boston Book Company, sends out the following announcement about his new company:

Announcement of The F.W. Faxon Company.

I have purchased from The Boston Book Company its entire Library Department, including its book and periodical publications, and large stock of periodicals and society transactions.

For over twenty years I have developed and managed this business, and can now assure my friends and customers of more satisfactory service than ever before. This business will be conducted under the name of The F.W. Faxon Company, at 83 Francis Street, Boston, and a Magazine Subscription Department will be added.

1920—**Brown University** is listed as the first academic customer from whom Faxon took a serials order in 1920. Faxon had previously sold back issues to the university.

1927-1928—Forerunner to the *Faxon Guide to Serials*, The F. W. Faxon Company publishes the company's first complete catalog, a confidential wholesale subscription price list of periodicals. This publication was 8 1/2" long and only 3 1/2" wide. Year 2000 version: 11" long and 8 1/2" wide and 2" deep with over 36,000 title entries.

1936—**Fred Faxon** dies on August 31, 1936. Ownership is transferred to Albert Hassam Davis, Sr.

1951—**Al Davis, Sr.**, gives his son and his son's wife Alice four hundred shares of stock in the newly formed corporation, a formal commitment to maintaining a family-owned business. A bill of sale of personal property from Albert H. Davis to The F.W. Faxon Company, Inc., includes the following items: 1 Remington bookkeeping machine; addressograph machine and filing cabinet; 3 adding machines; 5 Underwood electric typewriters, 28 miscellaneous typewriters; a Burroughs checkwriter; a Pitney-Bowes postage meter; letter opener; 17 steel and 17 wooden file cabinets; 57 desks; 89 chairs; an Ediphone transcriber and dictator; four 2500-card wheeldexes; 4 electric fans; 1 electric watercooler. This listing reveals details of the size of the company and the

types of "mechanization" prevalent for business transaction and customer service. These items and work in process plus inventory, merchandise and all outstanding contracts as of June 30, 1951, became the responsibility of The F.W. Faxon Company, Inc., according to an agreement signed on August 1, 1951.

1960—**The F. W. Faxon Company** becomes the first fully automated library subscription agency when it installs a new state-of-the-art IBM 305 RAMAC to process serial subscriptions. The company's first computer cost \$229,000. "The computer was a big investment. Everyone thought I was crazy, especially for a business our size to invest in a computer of its size," says **Al Davis, Jr.**

1961—**Frank Clasquin** is hired as executive vice president and general manager.

1961—**Al Davis, Jr.** takes over the family business after his father and mother are killed in a fire that ravages the Davis home in Wayne, Maine.

1961—The 1961 edition of *The Faxon Librarians' Guide to Periodicals and American Subscription Catalog* announces the four advantages of the IBM 305 RAMAC (Random Access Method of Accounting and Control) as follows:

Single source of data that avoids re-keying of information to produce invoices, checks, publisher orders and other working documents.

Storage capacity for customer, publisher, and title records within rapid access electronic disk memory.

Logical and arithmetic abilities for renewal dates, sorting, totaling, and applying postage.

Proven reliability that insures accuracy of all data processing.

1964—The F. W. Faxon Company finds a better solution for processing and mailing thousands of publisher orders. Pitney Bowes designs a machine called The Faxon System that contains three chutes for checks, orders, and envelopes. Prior to this invention, a clerk sat with a rubber finger, picking up each check and inserting it into the proper envelope.

1964-1976—The F.W. Faxon Company reports that agency revenue from publishers from 1964 to 1976 has decreased by one-third. This erosion of revenue prompts subscription agencies like Faxon to focus on offering customer's greater control and participation in the serials management process.

1975—The F.W. Faxon Company and its unique sets of records generates the first periodical price study in the industry covering the three-year period from 1973 to 1975.

1979—With the roll-out of SC-10—an

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Profiles Encouraged

Name: Joe Reynolds

Position: President & Chief Executive Officer, Bell & Howell

Born where and when: Mt. Vernon, NY. July 7, 1949

Current residence: Whitmore Lake, MI

Education: BA, Philosophy, 1972, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.

Job experience summary: Almost ten years at subsidiaries of Prentice Hall, Inc. in sales and marketing roles within the college textbook industry; 16 years with The Thomson Corporation, the first 8 in Sales and Marketing roles at Delmar Publishers, the last 8 in general management roles, starting with CEO of Delmar Publishers 1990-1995, COO of School and Career Education in Thomson's Education business, now known as Thomson Learning, then CEO of the School and Career Education Group, also responsible for technology strategy for creating and delivering products across the Education Group, as well as sales, marketing, and channel strategies for the Education Group. Joined Bell & Howell Information and Learning as President and CEO in April 1998.

Proudest/most recent accomplishment(s): Launch of Digital Vault, Launch of XanEdu, our higher education curriculum business, creation of bigchalk.com, The Education Network by merging the K-12 assets of Bell & Howell Information and Learning and Infonautics' Electric Library, acquisition of Chadwyck Healey in 1999, and the creation of a new product dynamic at Bell & Howell Information and Learning that has us now developing over 100 new product/services for introduction over the next 18 months.

First job: Paper route for *The Herald Statesman* in Yonkers, NY. First professional job out of college was as a college textbook sales representative for Prentice Hall in the SE US.

Biggest recent surprise: Finding new wines on a recent trip to Sonoma, CA.

Favorite pastimes: Boating (anything in, on, or around water!), reading, fine wines, and stimulating conversations.

Last book read or literary tastes: Historical Novels. *Gone for Soldiers* and military techno thrillers like Tom Clancy's *The Bear and the Dragon*.

What would you like to be doing seven years from now?: Enjoying life with my wife as empty nesters with new grandchildren, traveling, and teaching on the college level.

Had I but world enough and time...I would have taken up the piano again...I love music and love to sing!

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automated online check-in system—to assist clients by providing a complete management database of serials from ordering to payment history, Faxon becomes the first subscription agent to promote the value-added concept of service to clients, offering them more than they might even think they need.

1980—Faxon unveils **DataLinx**, a new online system with remote access to the Westwood mainframe. This revolutionary new system provides clients with online access to Faxon's catalog of titles.

1981—**Albert H. Davis, Jr.**, sells **The F. W. Faxon Company** to his daughter, Judy Davis, and son-in-law, **Dr. Richard R. Rowe**.

1984—**The F.W. Faxon Company** changes its name to **The Faxon Company**.

1984—With the advent of the personal computer in the workplace, Faxon develops a desktop system called **MicroLinx**. The initial specifications for this new personal computer-based check-in service were developed around **Dan Tonkery's** kitchen table with **Amira Aaron**, **Becky Lenzini**, and **Bonnie Postlethwaite** as key members of the development team.

1990—First EDI X12 transmission in the serials industry between Faxon and **The Royal Society of Chemistry**. Address changes are sent in an X12 860 transaction set.

1994—UK-based **Dawson Holdings PLC** acquires **The Faxon Company**, and its subsidiaries, making **Dawson** the second largest library information services organization in the world.

1994—**Dr. Richard Rowe** incorporates **RoweCom, Inc.**, the world's first provider of automated library subscription services. Its **Subscribe** service uses the Internet for orders, payments and claims related to more than 20,000 academic, scientific, technical and medical journals.

1995—Faxon rolls out industry's first Website and FTP service by a subscription agent at ALA Midwinter. Faxon introduces the first business system designed by an agent explicitly for the purpose of conducting business using standard electronic interfaces to both libraries and publishers.

1995—**Fredrick "Fritz" Schwartz**, Faxon Manager of Client Technical Service and industry pioneer in EDI implementation and education, passes away and is honored with a NASIG scholarship in his name.

1997—Dawson announces the launch of a new electronic information access service called **Information Quest (IQ)**. IQ provides one-stop worldwide access to scientific, technical, medical, and business journals in electronic form through the

Internet. IQ searches the original journal text and then delivers the selected original journal article, including graphics, right to the user's desktop.

1997—**Dan Tonkery** is appointed President and Chief Operating Officer, Dawson North American Subscription Operations, which includes The Faxon Company and Turner Subscription Agency.

1998—The company announces the industry's first Y2K compliant subscription management system.

1998—An industry first, Faxon launches a new electronic journal licensing resource called **License Depot**. The new Web-based service provides access to information about electronic journal titles plus links to over 200 publisher Websites.

1999—Faxon launches **Subscription Depot**, a Web-based subscription ordering and management system, at ALA Annual.

1999—Major subscription agents, including Faxon, sponsor the development of standardized electronic journal license agreements.

1999—**RoweCom, Inc.** acquires the subscription operations of UK-based **Dawson Holdings PLC**. The units acquired from Dawson Holdings included: The Faxon Company, Faxon Canada, Faxon Quebec, Information Quest (IQ), Dawson UK, Dawson France, Dawson Espana and Turner Subscription Agency, collectively known as the Dawson Information Services Group (ISG).

2000—Another industry first, Faxon, RoweCom Academic & Medical Services enters in an agreement with the **IUPUI University Library** that empowers Faxon with "durable power of attorney" to act on IUPUI's behalf when negotiating electronic journal licenses with publishers.

2000—**RoweCom** announces a partnership with **AsiaSmart.com**, the first and largest Internet-based magazine subscription service provider in Asia. As a result of the agreement, Singapore-based AsiaSmart.com will provide business titles to its Asian clients for the first time by offering RoweCom's kStore catalog, ultimately reaching 100,000 additional individual users.

2000—At the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, Faxon, **RoweCom Academic & Medical Services** unveils the industry's first start-to-finish e-journal strategy that helps libraries greatly simplify the entire e-journal acquisition process from identification and license negotiation to access and ongoing maintenance.

2000—RoweCom launches an enhanced version of its kStore subscription management service, featuring unified searching, integrated shopping carts, and streamlined administrative and member customization capabilities.