Company Profile: Euromonitor International

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Ed. Note: Watch future issues of The Charleston Advisor as these products may be reviewed. My thanks to Annette M. Budzisz, Press Executive, for supplying most of this information. —APM

Richard Charkin Interview
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My own view is that where information is free there is no freedom of information.

ATG: Macmillan publishes a significant number of reference books through the Palgrave and Grove imprints. Will these titles always appear in print or do you think in some cases there may only be a Web version?

RC: I think the format of the product is less important than its content. Whether or not we publish in print as opposed to Web only will be defined by the marketplace. If enough people want to buy it in print we’ll publish; if not, we won’t. My own hunch is that the book will be with us for many decades but that scholarly research (as opposed to general browsing) will move progressively towards the Web.

ATG: You brought out an electronic version of the Grove Dictionary of Art two years ago and electronic versions of the Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians and the Grove Dictionary of Jazz this year. How do these new versions differ from their predecessors? Are you finding that libraries are buying either online or print or are they buying both?

RC: I think that we have managed to create the World’s largest repository of information on art, music and culture. Through the electronic versions we have not only been able to add sophisticated search and other electronic functionality but also to extend the electronic content by, for instance, links to tens of thousands of works of art in museums and galleries. Libraries have been buying both products; they provide different needs for different people.

ATG: Are you working with any online aggregators? If so, which ones?

RC: We are working with Xrefer (of which I also happen to be a director) ProQuest, NetLibrary, eBRary and Questia. It has been clear to us from the start that there is a business for us in working with these companies. What has not been clear is which is the best model and it is for this reason that we have been keen to participate with a range of different services.

ATG: Pan Macmillan publishes the titles of many celebrity authors. Which authors have you found the most fascinating to meet? Are any of the titles available as e-books? Do you think e-books on hand-held devices will ever take off?

RC: One of the supposedly attractive things about working in trade publishing is the glamour. One of the best sellers we have published recently is Bridget Jones Diary. So last year Renee Zellweger, as part of her training for the starring role in the film, came to work undercover in our publicity department in order to learn how to speak with an English accent and to understand how British companies work. I was the only person who knew that she was in fact the Hollywood star, although quite a few people were surprised to see Jim Carey drop off the new publicity assistant in a stretch limousine! I was then invited to take part in the party scene in the film, but the switchboard went and forgot to pass the message on — so Hollywood has been deprived of a new star and I am still awaiting the call.

I’ve never been convinced about eBooks for most general purposes. The physical aspects of a general book are as important — arguably more important — than the content and it will take many years before an electronic format will compensate for these physical qualities.

ATG: What, in your opinion, are the most exciting current publishing initiatives?

RC: Print-on-demand is the technology, more than any other, that will radically transform the business both by reducing the cost of holding stock but also by allowing production at the point of sale and hence eliminating the cost of freight.

ATG: Do you have any time for hobbies?

RC: I am currently attempting to build a cricket pitch in the deepest countryside of France where the geography, history or culture give me no encouragement at all.