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Katina Strauch

College of Charleston, strauchk@cofc.edu

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ATG Interviews Keith Courtney

Sales Director, Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

by Katina Strauch (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <strauchk@earthlink.net>

Please note: British spelling has been retained. — KS

ATG: Thanks for talking to us about the Taylor & Francis buyout of Gordon & Breach. Can you tell us why you bought Gordon & Breach anyway? Did G&B want to be purchased or did T&F approach them?

KC: We made the initial approach. We were aware that G&B published some high quality books and journals which would be complementary to our existing program.

ATG: Are you going to keep the G&B imprint or just fold the books and journals into T&F?

KC: We do not intend to retain the G&B or Harwood imprints. The G&B program will be folded into one of the appropriate T&F imprints.

ATG: How many books and journals were published by G&B at the time that you purchased them? Any electronic materials?

KC: G&B currently publishes over 250 journals and 100 new books per annum, with a back list of over 3500 book titles.

ATG: Will you disclose any of the finances in the buyout? How much money was it worth paying for G&B?

KC: Many months of detailed work precede any acquisition, and we are confi-

dent that we paid a fair and realistic price. It is a public record that we paid £21.7m.

ATG: How many employees did G&B have and what has happened to them?

KC: In all acquisitions there is bound to be some kind of rationalisation. G&B employs 150 staff worldwide and we are currently assessing their roles and how we can best utilise their skills.

ATG: Do you think that all the journals that G&B publishes are worth continuing to publish or do you plan to shut down some of them?

KC: We have been impressed with the high quality of many of the titles and we will continue to publish them, however it is likely that a few titles will be cancelled.

ATG: What are you going to do with journals which are running horribly behind? Is (and if so how is) T&F going to change the publishing schedules of these materials?

KC: On acquiring G&B our priority was to address the publishing schedules. We are delighted to say that beginning 2002 it is our aim to have all titles published on a regular, and in particular, a calendar year basis. At T&F it is unthinkable to operate any other way. In order to achieve this, we are currently clearing a backlog of titles in production and working closely with the academic editors to ensure a regular flow

of material going forward. In addition it may be necessary to carry forward some previously announced titles to 2002. In such cases any payments already received would automatically be honoured.

ATG: What about prices? Is T&F going to hold prices or even reduce them? If not, why not, since surveys show that G&B materials are badly overpriced?

KC: The financial status of each individual journal is currently being assessed and our pricing intentions will become clearer on completion of the exercise. We are well aware of the problems that have beset G&B over recent years and the impact that this has had on subscriber levels, a trend that we do not wish to continue.

ATG: Anything else that you would like to add?

KC: The next year or so is going to be a challenge, but the initial response from the academic community, including the editors and editorial boards, has been most encouraging, and we believe that we can restore a quality publishing program.

ATG: Tell us about Keith. What he does for fun, what he likes to read, hobbies, interests, family, etc.

KC: My family likes it best when I am at home cooking and looking after our large garden, but if T&F can slow the growth, perhaps I could get to play some more golf.

ATG Interviews Michael Markwith

President, TDNet Inc. <michael@tdnet.teldan.com>

by Janet L. Flowers (Head of Acquisitions, Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) <janet_flowers@unc.edu>

ATG: Michael, some of us were surprised by your recent change in position as you seemed challenged in your work with SwetsBlackwell. Please tell us a little about your career path and what factors led you to your current position at TDNet.

MM: I am always challenged by my work. My career has only been in the world of library information and started when I was in graduate school in 1967 with Richard Abel Company. I have been lucky thus far holding sales and management positions with Abel, Blackwell North America, and Faxon when all were at the tops of their games. In 1995 my career took a turn toward management and leadership when I was chosen CEO

of Swets in the US. TDNet offers the opportunity to again combine leadership and sales with a service that is both unique and wanted by librarians.

ATG: Please briefly describe what TDNet is and what services it provides.

MM: TDNet is an e-journal management and access service that allows librarians and their libraries to retain local control while providing full and complete Web access to their e-content. We provide SDI ("my library") capability along with complete searchability for library users for all e-journals that the library owns or has licensed. We are vendor neutral and customize our solution for each customer. It's unique.

In some ways, the service reminds me of what it was like in the mid-60's when librarians were able to order all books directly from publishers. Then the number of titles and publishers mushroomed and book distributors became a welcomed necessity. TDNet is in that position today for e-journals.

ATG: Where did the name come from?

MM: TDNet is derived from the parent company and the service we provide: Teldan electronic journals on the Net.

ATG: How many staff are there in your company and how is it generally organized?

MM: TDNet is a subsidiary of Teldan

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