June 2001

ATG Interviews Michael Markwith, President, TDNet, Inc.

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Recommended Citation

Flowers, Janet L. (2001) "ATG Interviews Michael Markwith, President, TDNet, Inc.," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 13: Iss. 3, Article 15.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3495>

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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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Ltd and some venture capital organizations. Most of TDNet senior management comes from Teldan, and many of TDNet's production and administrative functions rely on Teldan resources and facilities in Tel Aviv. I have just hired David Fritsch (formerly Director, Strategic Initiatives for Faxon/Rowecom) as our Vice President for Sales for North America. David brings a tremendous knowledge of the e-journal management challenges as well as detailed knowledge of how libraries actually work. We are fortunate to have such depth of experience and maturity in a new company. We also have arrangements with additional organizations in the USA and Europe that have signed distribution agreements with TDNet. Our staff size is growing nicely.

ATG: Whom do you see as the primary customers for this service and why?

MM: Any library that is struggling with managing e-journals and frustrated with multiple access requirements and multiple interfaces. Libraries that have from 100 to 10,000+ e-journals are potential TDNet users. This is very exciting for me as my colleagues and I are able to work with ARL, college and university, medical, hospital, corporate, and government libraries. We are never bored.

ATG: What is unique about your company's approach to e-resource management?

MM: TDNet is completely agent neutral. Our service helps libraries manage the material they have ordered through any of the above companies, directly with publishers, or through an aggregator. We provide a local solution that provides uniform interface and access. We don't base our pricing or service on the amount of subscriptions placed with us; we are independent of the traditional subscription business. In this way we are unique.

ATG: Can you please describe what is meant by "print services" on your Website?

MM: We have a historic business relationship with Teldan, an Israeli full-service information provider and subscription agent. Teldan works primarily with libraries in Israel, Europe, and South America but not in the US. They are a full-service subscription agent for their customers. The Website refers to Teldan Ltd.

ATG: Does your company work with aggregators, such as ProQuest?

MM: We appreciate and work with aggregators. Our service encompasses all of a library's e-journal titles whether purchased through an aggregator or an agent or direct with the publisher. Thus, we complement aggregation services. We provide our customers with weekly updates of all their titles, links, and synthesize statistics from all sources on a title basis that provides a complete picture of e-journal usage.

ATG: Do you foresee your service including all e-resources, such as eBooks in the future? Why or why not?

MM: Yes, we do. We have added Z39.50 searching and will add eBooks to our management system. We are doing so because current customers are asking for the more complete service. We have built our service in modules, so we allow choice. Our development plans do call for management of all e-content, not just journals, by Q1 2002.

ATG: On your Website, you describe your services as the "perfect solution." To what problems? And why is your solution perfect?

MM: "Perfect" is a marketing term. My colleague, Nir'am Ben Elissar, says that "yes, we are miracle workers but we cannot do the impossible". The problem we address is frustration at managing e-journals and the added time and cost incurred by libraries. We have a solution that saves time, money, and frustration and that's why it is "perfect."

ATG: Please describe how the pricing is structured for your services.

MM: Our pricing is based on the number of titles that a library asks us to manage. The more titles, the lower cost per title. We offer some advantages to development partners and offer special consortia pricing.

ATG: Can you tell us who some of your current customers are?

MM: We have many customers in Israel, UK, Japan, Australia, and the US. Many of our corporate customers don't allow us to mention them as customers. I will gladly share references privately.

ATG: What do you see as the greatest challenges for publishers with electronic resources in the next five years? For vendors? For libraries? For users?

MM: You said this was interview, not an encyclopedia. The challenges are legion and I think the two dominant ones are licensing and standardization. Many people far more knowledgeable than I have addressed the licensing problems so I only add that we recognize the issue as primary. The standardization challenges of format, access, pricing, etc. will also remain with us for some time as all parties protect their own needs and requirements. We see it as our role to actually provide a solution to the standardization problem, and help where we can with the licensing issues.

ATG: What do you see as the greatest challenges for TDNet in the coming five years and how does your company plan to meet them?

MM: This is a very interesting and complex question. And one that is actually controversial. I think our greatest challenge is to address the competition, and the competition is the library doing the work locally. In other words, just as prior to the mid-60's, libraries have been going it alone with tremendous investment of time, talent, staff, and money. And most librarians (and hence library users) remain frustrated by the multiple access, multiple interfaces, and general lack of control for e-journals. Not from lack of trying; rather it's the nature of the beast of e-journals. Thus, it's our challenge to help librarians provide a cost efficient, cost effective, and stable solution to e-journal management and access problems. We have grown the company in this first year by being responsive to customer requirements, and we will continue to meet this "competitive challenge" by proving we can provide a local solution that is comprehensive and delivers cost savings to any type of library.

ATG: How do you hope to compete with the large serials vendors?

MM: That's an understandable question. We offer a solution for managing e-journals that is "serial vendor neutral" and we aren't handling print subscriptions. Thus, we have the advantage of not requiring or providing a proprietary service that is based on handling print subscriptions. Most libraries use multiple serials vendors and are thus looking at multiple e-services. We offer a single solution that includes all e-journals for libraries regardless of their multiple ordering sources so the fact that the primary serials vendors are "large" should not be a factor in a library's decision to use TDNet.

ATG: What excites you the most about your new position?

MM: All of the above! And I really enjoy the "can do" and "will do" attitude of my colleagues in Israel and the US. This company's leadership has the maturity and experience of many years in the library information business: we know the difference

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Library Profile — University of Cape Town Libraries

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The University

The **University of Cape Town (UCT)** is South Africa's oldest university and one of Africa's leading teaching and research institutions.

UCT was founded in 1829 as the **South African College**, a boys' school which also provided some tertiary education. The College developed into a full-fledged university during the period 1880 to 1900, building its first dedicated science laboratories, and starting the Departments of Mineralogy and Geology to meet the need for skilled personnel in the country's emerging diamond and gold mining industries. Soon afterward the Medical School was begun, as were engineering courses and a Department of Education.

UCT moved from the city to its present site — on the **Groote Schuur Campus** — a splendid mountainside location on the former estate of **Cecil Rhodes** on the slopes of **Devil's Peak** in 1928, providing an opportunity for rapid development.

Apart from establishing itself as a lead-

ing research and teaching university in the decades that followed, UCT was also from 1960 to 1990 a well-recognized center of sustained opposition to apartheid and support for academic freedom. The 1980s and 1990s at UCT have been characterised by a deliberate, planned process of internal transformation to meet South Africa's new challenges in higher education.

The University has six faculties (Commerce, Engineering and the Built Environment, Health Sciences, Humanities, Law and Science). This structure was recently reviewed as part of a comprehensive strategic planning process aimed at fulfilling UCT's Mission of being "an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."

Today, the university community comprises more than 16,000 students and about 4,500 members of staff. Particular emphasis is placed on postgraduate studies, and 30% of its students are enrolled in postgraduate programmes. UCT is internationally recognised as Africa's leading research university, a position confirmed by independent peer review.

The Libraries

The establishment of a library was one of the earliest aims of the **South African College** founders, but it was not until 1905 that the books, which had accumulated by purchase and gift, were formally organised as a library by a professor of Modern Languages.

In 1920 a University Librarian was appointed — the first in South Africa. Since then there have been six University Librarians at UCT. The present incumbent is **Ms. Joan Rapp**, who has held this position since 1998.

By 1929 the Library had five members of staff, one branch library (Medical) and a stock of ca. 40,000 items. The foundation stone for the new main library on the **Groote Schuur Campus** was laid during the centenary celebrations in that year.

The first expansion of the main library took place in the mid-1960s, but the increasing accommodation crisis led to the development of a "linear library," a fairly narrow building running through several contiguous buildings housing different Faculties.

The Main Library has once more changed its shape and now forms a "U" around the

campus's central and most historical building. Now a traditional exterior — in harmony with the architecture of the campus — houses a dramatic and technologically sophisticated interior. Renamed the **Chancellor Oppenheimer Library**, the Main Library houses a number of information services desks and special collections, along with a new Knowledge Commons, modeled on those of the **University of Southern California** and **Eastern Michigan University**.

Today, UCT Libraries consist of the **Chancellor Oppenheimer Library** and a number of branch libraries. There are 188 members of staff and a bookstock of about 1 million volumes; journal holdings of ca. 16,000 titles, of which 5,300 are current; and ca. 100,000 other library materials.

Acquisitions

Since the arrival of a new Director three years ago, there has been a radical organisational restructuring, based on American models. Since April 2000 all acquisition functions fall under one department. The management of e-resources is also done in this section, as is the preparation of journals for binding. There is a strong emphasis in the Libraries on providing electronic access to information. There are 13FTE staff members in Acquisitions, 3 of whom have library qualifications.

A Web-based in-house system is used to place and receive orders, and process journal subscriptions. No cataloguing is done in Acquisitions.

Over 80% of material purchased comes from outside South Africa. A major international subscription agent, Swets, is used to supply the bulk of the journals. The books are bought mainly from library suppliers in Britain (**John Smith and Son**) and the U.S. (**Blackwell Book Services** and **Busca**).

A particular challenge is acquiring the material for the **African Studies Library**, probably the best in Africa. **Southern African** published material is bought from **Clarke's Bookshop** and **Clarke's Africana** and **Rare Books**. The range acquired is fairly comprehensive. The difficulty is obtaining material from the rest of Africa. The two best sources are the **Africa Bookshop** in London, the main outlet for the **Africa Book Collective**, which distributes many African publishers. The other is **Hogarth Distribution**,

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between solutions for libraries and fantasyland technology. It's been a rewarding experience for me professionally. Also, it helps to have a unique service that meets expressed needs and provides help and support for librarians. This is very exciting.

ATG: Where do you see yourself in five years and what do you hope to be doing? What hobbies are you currently pursuing and what new ones (if any) do you hope to add?

MM: In five years I would like to be recognized as a member of the company that pioneered the positive solution for managing e-journals. It is my goal to have **TDNet** synonymous with libraries accessing e-content. My hobbies are the same I've had for the past few years: golf, recreational running (no more marathons for me), and reading and collecting Pacific Northwest and Southeast fiction. My newest hobby is helping daughters Anne (17) and Michelle (15) sort through all the colleges recruiting them. It's fun and rewarding, and as a side benefit gives me better insight into the full picture of higher education beyond The Library.