

December 2006

## People Profile: Richard Charkin

Editor

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### Recommended Citation

Editor (2006) "People Profile: Richard Charkin," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 18: Iss. 6, Article 18.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4695>

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anti-publisher sentiment but rather a legitimate desire to make available everything to everyone for free. The problem is there is no such thing as a free lunch, and a good value one can be pretty sustaining.

**Q:** How about other new things at Macmillan you'd like to mention?

A: The list could be very long. Here are some highlights: the new edition of the magisterial, multivolume *Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, which marries the authority of tradition with the use of the Web to create an economics community; **ScholarlyStats** from **MPS Technologies**, which offers librarians a high-quality statistics service for journal assessment and reduced overhead costs; new products from *Nature* in the fields of photonics, nanotechnology, microbial ecology, climate change, and the geosciences, as well as a continued push into clinical with *Nature Clinical Practice* and *Macmillan Medical Communications*; more development of the American-English version of <http://www.macmillanenglishcampus.com/> for university-level students; significant expansion of our Chinese and other Asian activities, <http://www.macmillan.com.hk/>; and, in particular, Spanish-language children's publishing such as <http://www.edicionescastillo.com/>; and I am personally looking forward to our publication next year of **Borat's Travel Guide** — I think he'll be addressing with utmost indelicacy all matters of diplomacy between the United States and Kazakhstan.

**Q:** This article is for *Against the Grain*, which is read by academic librarians, publishers, and vendors. Anything else you'd like to talk about related to libraries?

A: Library acquisition budgets should be increased significantly as the productivity of librarians improves. But I would say that, wouldn't it? 🌱

## against the grain people profile

### Richard Charkin

Chief Executive, Macmillan  
4 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW UK  
Phone: +44 20 7843 3645 • Fax: +44 20 7843 3600  
<richard@macmillan.com>  
Weblog: <http://charkinblog.macmillan.com/>

**BORN & LIVED:** Born in London UK and have lived there and Oxford, with two short stretches in Boston.

**EARLY LIFE:** Perfectly fine, thank you.

**FAMILY:** One wife, three children, and four grandchildren so far.

**EDUCATION:** Natural Science Tripos, **Trinity College, Cambridge**, Part 2 History and Philosophy of Science. Advanced Management Program, **Harvard Business School**.

**FIRST REAL JOB:** Science editor, **George Harrap and Co**, London.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** 1971-3 Harrap

1973-4 Pergamon Press

1974-88 Oxford University Press

1988-95 Reed Elsevier

1995-7 Current Science Group

1997- Macmillan Publishers and Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck

Current non-executive roles at **Wisden Group**, **Melbourne University Press**, **University of the Arts London**, **London Business School**, **British Library**, **Baldons Cricket Club**, and **Common Purpose**.

**IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE:** Music, sport.

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** *Flatlands*, *Billy Bunter*, *Blandings*.

**PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD:** Overcomplexity and lousy signage and bad spelling.

**PHILOSOPHY:** Occam's Razor.

**MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT:** Computerisation of the *OED*.

**GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW:** Survival.

**HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:** Search me. And I don't believe anyone else has a truly better answer to this question. 🌱



## Thinking Globally: The Benefits of Interdisciplinary Publishing

by **David Levinson, PhD.** (Anthropologist and president of Berkshire Publishing Group, 314 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230; Phone: 413-528-0206) <david@berkshirepublishing.com>  
Blog: [www.duboisweb.org/blog/](http://www.duboisweb.org/blog/)

Last evening I was reading the new, 50th-anniversary special edition of *New Scientist*. The issue contained a piece titled "Predictions: Brilliant Minds Forecast the Next 50 Years," and one thing that jumped out at me as I read the predictions (each a long paragraph or so in length) was how narrowly focused most were on what would happen in the expert's scholarly discipline (whether molecular biology, paleontology, or astrophysics) that would affect the larger world. Equally striking was the almost complete absence of

any interdisciplinary thinking or suggestion that possibly a mix of new developments from different sciences might have the most influence on the future.

### The Problem of Specialization

The single-discipline approach showcased in the anniversary issue of *New Scientist* is typical of today's knowledge production industry. This industry is made up mainly of people from academia and public and private research institutions. It is funded by tax dollars,

foundations, and private donations. Specialization and differentiation of interest and function in knowledge production and dissemination are now the rule; that specialization means that disciplines subdivide into increasing numbers of subdisciplines, each with its own concepts, methods, theories, language, associations, and publishing outlets. This trend is no surprise: the study of human



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