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People Profile: Toby Green

Editor

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Internet, and for a new model for its book business more suited to the needs of potential readers and their librarians or information managers.

Phase One: Producing eBooks

Until 1998, OECD had been maintaining an archive of all publications on microfiche. By this time, microfiche was a dying technology, and the organization desired to discontinue supporting it. An alternative had to be found, and the decision was made to create an archive copy in PDF. Having integrated the creation of PDF files into our production process, PDF files for each book were available and offered the possibility of being able to use them for other purposes.

The first new application of the PDFs was to our online bookshop. The eBooks were made available for purchase at 80% of the print price and were offered free of charge to clients purchasing the print editions. This way, we were able to meet the needs of those who required instant access to our content and yet who still wanted the printed edition. By 2000, a pattern began to emerge, roughly 20% of all online bookshop sales were eBook only, with an additional large number of customers taking advantage of the opportunity of instantly downloading the eBook while waiting for the arrival of their printed copy.

Finding a Solution for Those Without Purchasing Power

Clearly, the online bookshop had been a success, but it was never going to be the "killer solution" we needed to arrest the erosion in our sales, since individually, the majority of our readers do not themselves have purchasing power. Most of our potential readers rely on their institution (university or company library) to provide with access to and pay for the information they need. These institutional buyers generally prefer to centralize their buying, often through book suppliers.

Until recently, book suppliers had no ability to handle eBooks, so there was no effective delivery channel, even if the institutions wanted to obtain our books. Of course, there were emerging initiatives such as **netLibrary**, **Questia**, and **Ebrary**. However, in trying to reach those without purchasing power, their business models did not seem to offer any significant advantage compared to print. Their business models still required librarians to pick and choose every title individually, and usually only allowed one-user-at-a-time access. Users could only browse the titles the librarian had bought, rather than a publisher's entire catalog, so there was no advantage to publishers in terms of having titles "discovered." In short, they took all the inefficiencies of the printed book model and copied them on the Web!

The other big problem with these emerging eBook systems was their use of proprietary technologies and their lack of common standards and models. Which horse should we back? Would any actually succeed in the long run? We also did not like the cost of sale associated

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Toby Green

BORN & LIVED: Born in West Dorset (UK) and now live in Paris, France.

EARLY LIFE: Brought up in rural surroundings. Spent boisterous childhood with three brothers on ponies and horses.

FAMILY: Married with three (boisterous) boys aged 5, 3 and 3 (yes, twins!).

EDUCATION: BSc(Hons) Microbiology & Virology, **Warwick University**, UK.

FIRST JOB: Petrol pump attendant.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: 1984 - date: promoting, selling or marketing specialist publications with Academic Press, Elsevier Applied Science, Pergamon Press, Elsevier Science and, now, OECD. Currently Head of Dissemination and Marketing, OECD Publications. Since 2001: ALPSP Council Member.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Organise Disc Golf Tournaments and spend time with my family.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: 1994: Launched ContentsDirect, Pergamon's email ToC alerting service — it is now serving all Elsevier journals. 2000:

Launched SourceOECD, OECD's e-library of books, periodicals and statistical databases.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I think there could be a re-emergence of University Presses

thanks to the Open Access movement and some reduction in the share of the journals market controlled by for-profit publishers. Online services will be increasingly sophisticated and able to draw different content types together. Libraries will be buying online access to more books on a subscription basis. Conversely, I think printed books will do better thanks to print-on-demand technologies.



with these models, which would have pushed up prices to our clients.

Unconvinced by those potential solutions, we looked at the e-journals model. Here was an online publishing solution that was maturing very quickly indeed. There was an established and standardized infrastructure from publisher to reader, via all the usual intermediaries, including librarians. Most of all, this was where the majority of all reading was going on, thanks to a very open discovery system.

The e-journal market is characterized by some very large, aggregated, online portals gathering together journals from many different publishers. Access to these portals is often free, and, provided a subscription is in place, click-through access to the full text is easy. We figured that if we could load our eBooks into a system like this, we would benefit by having more of our books "discovered" as a part of user searches. We also liked the idea that these systems are multi-user. If you could have 20 people at the same institution reading the same journal article at the same

time, why not for books as well?

The e-journals model also meant that we could continue to work with our existing distributors with minimal disruption to our end-client relationships, and thus retain control of the business model and of contact with our end-clients. The cost of sale was also a known quantity and affordable. Furthermore, we realized that we could position our books alongside our journals and statistics and work towards an integrated information system or e-library.

eBooks, Phase II: An Online Library

So the question became how to shoehorn our books into a journals system. The solution was to gather our books into 20 subject-area clusters, and to load each cluster as a journal into **Ingenta's** journal platform. Each book behaved as an "issue" and each chapter as an "article." To begin with, we did not have the ability to break books into chapters, so each "issue" in effect had a single "article" — the whole eBook.

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