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President and CEO of Ingram Digital Group

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

ATG: Congratulations on your recent appointment as president and CEO of Ingram Digital. You were recently CEO of Coutts Information Services and MyiLibrary which were acquired by Ingram in December 2006. Now can you explain to us what this means to us in the book buying market?

JG: Coutts' being part of the **Ingram Book Group** is excellent news for the book-buying market. It means that **Coutts** has access to over a million extra titles in inventory, which is going to make a significant impact on their ability to offer rapid delivery to book buyers. It also means greater sharing of bibliographic resources, which should improve both the quality and quantity of MARC records available. Finally, **Ingram** can provide **Coutts** with a secure source of investment to enhance their services to customers over the long term.

MyiLibrary has become part of the **Ingram Digital Group**, which is the **Ingram** division focused on e-content hosting, digital asset management and digital distribution services. **MyiLibrary** now sits alongside **VitalSource**, which provides digital textbooks, **CoreSource**, the digital asset management and distribution system, and our range of retail eBook and audioBook solutions. As CEO of **IDG** I can now focus entirely on the digital arena, including how we support libraries in the transition from print to electronic and in feeding back to publishers an understanding of the needs of the market. Our recent agreement with **Microsoft** and participation in their **Live Search Books** program is a great example of what this means for libraries and for publishers. Books that publishers place into the programme that need to be scanned can also be added immediately to **MyiLibrary** and made available as eBooks and also be made available in print through our sister company **Lightning Source**, the print-on-demand supplier, giving libraries the opportunity to choose a digital edition of a book or a print version or indeed both!

ATG: Can you tell us about your experience in the physical and digital distribution segments of the book industry?

JG: It's been an interesting journey and so much has changed since I came into the book world in 1992. In that time the environment has changed in astonishing ways, affecting how books are published, distributed, used, bought, stored and accessed. It's been great to be part of that revolution, which seems to be gathering pace, working with publishers and with libraries to help both make the transition into the digital world. A key part of my work as an eBook distributor has been to consult with both libraries and publishers to find the right business and access models that best serve content owners and content users. While the print book market is still robust, the eBook wave is certainly rising, and we are seeing

that eBook revenues in areas such as Science, Technology and Medicine are starting to gain real momentum. Also, with major publishers now providing simultaneous 'e' and 'p' versions in some disciplines, eBook availability is increasing at a rapid pace.

ATG: What does the Ingram group of companies offer publishers and other content owners that is unique?

JG: At **Ingram** we offer a unique proposition that combines digital content storage, a complete asset management service and a comprehensive distribution capability to take content into retail, library and consumer markets — into all channels and in all transfer and download formats including print-on-demand. We are also unusual in being a traditional book business that also has a large presence in the 'e' world. This means that we have a good understanding of the needs of book-buyers — whether academic libraries, public libraries or retail outlets — and we are a trusted long-term partner for the content creators. This allows us to work closely with publishers to create, agree and deliver eBook distribution models that offer real value to content purchasers in all sectors of the industry. With active relationships with over eighteen thousand publishers around the world, we think we are exceptionally well placed to work with them to address and overcome the complexities of this new digital content space. It's what we do. It is this combined capability that has propelled us to the number one position for publishers for the distribution of digital content.

Right now we are focused on making available as much digital content as we can, in as many formats as the consumers of content require. This means providing solutions for online access to reference material, for downloading academic material such as textbooks for intensive use, and for downloading

all kinds of content onto mobile devices and eBook readers including audio content. At the same time we are building channels to markets — retail, institutional, consumer markets — and libraries will benefit from that wider choice of content.

ATG: Why did Ingram purchase Coutts? Why is Ingram moving into the academic library bookselling space? This has never been a priority, has it?

JG: Ingram recognized the important position **Coutts** had taken in the market in bridging the gap between print book supply and eBook supply by consolidating their offer to libraries for both formats. Strategically aligning **Ingram**'s extensive stock holding, its **Lightning Source** print-on-demand delivery capabilities and its digital ambitions with an innovative supplier to the academic library market was a win-win all round. Publishers benefit, libraries benefit, and **Ingram** continues to grow in reputation and capability.

ATG: Let's talk about MyiLibrary. How is this unique from other eBook offerings like eBrary, eBook Library, individual publisher print packages, etc? Why buy eBooks from a book vendor?

JG: Buying eBooks from a library book vendor such as **Coutts** enables acquisitions librarians and collection development librarians to work through one single channel for both print and electronic editions, thereby giving them a simple format choice. It also enables them to get the benefits of workflow integration that only this type of offer can deliver, by, for example, embedding eBooks in approval and new title plans, facilitating automatic duplication checking and aggregating electronic content on one platform which in turn enables the hosting of local content on the same platform. For libraries already benefiting from the integrated services of a book vendor, those benefits will continue to accrue as they move toward an increasing commitment to eBooks.

In addition to buying eBooks through a book vendor, libraries, however, also now have the choice of buying through other non-traditional book suppliers. Our distribution arrangement with **ProQuest** is one such example and we will be signing many more, allowing libraries the choice of where they want to buy their digital content.

In its new home, **MyiLibrary** offers long term strength and stability for e-content management. It already has the widest content range, soon to be greatly expanded. Across the **Ingram Group** we have a very large title bank of nearly half a million digitized files and we are working with publishers to make this content available to libraries through **MyiLibrary**.

ATG: What percentage of eBooks compared to print books are being purchased at this time according to Coutts and Ingram's databases? And are academic libraries in the US buying eBooks at the same level that public libraries are buying them? And of the percentage (above), what percentage are in 'packages' rather than individual titles?

JG: Currently eBooks make up quite a small proportion of overall book sales, but it is growing rapidly. The driver for that growth is how fast publishers can make available their front-list content. For one major publisher, eBook sales in 2003 were only 1% of total book revenue, but had risen to 6% by 2006. With the vast majority of journals now online, academic users are increasingly aware of digital media and are creating their own level of demand and expectation for eBooks. Today's most forward-thinking publishers — **Taylor & Francis**, **Springer** and **Oxford University Press** are examples — are publishing simultaneously in 'p' and 'e' to allow libraries the choice of formats to suit their needs. As we go through this transition stage an increasing number of publishers will see significantly greater take-up of eBooks.

Academic libraries are buying eBooks more heavily than public libraries (where audioBooks are more in demand). Academic libraries often like to build opening collections by taking advantage of package offers and we anticipate that more and more of them will see the benefit to their patrons of buying publisher packages on the **MyiLibrary** aggregated platform and then continuing to buy eBooks title-by-title through their existing approval and new title programs. The opportunity is there, the question is, how quickly will libraries embrace it?

ATG: Currently, our library gives access to particular book titles via the online public access catalogue. We also give access by subject-oriented Webpages. The first access point, the OPAC, depends on the availability of the MARC record which is downloaded into the OPAC. As I understand it, MyiLibrary presents itself as a database and not as a group of MARC records that can be downloaded into the OPAC individually. Is this correct?

JG: MyiLibrary can be searched either through the library OPAC or directly. We make available MARC records for individual titles and for the titles within packages or collections, and many libraries load these into their existing catalogs. The records can all be upgraded to individual library specifications. In addition, we can offer expanded MARC records to include interactive Table of Contents and in some case chapter abstracts. We understand the importance of metadata in aiding the discovery of content. So while **MyiLibrary** is a full text database, it is also a metadata database in MARC format accessible through the OPAC.

It should be noted, however, that traditional MARC records are a poor form of discovery for eBook content and as much aggregation as possible at the full text level definitely makes searching for what you want an easier, more effective experience.

ATG: Is eBook purchasing going to catch on? And will a single proprietary database really succeed?

JG: Yes, most definitely. A number of major academic libraries such as **Stanford** and **Toronto** have purchased large eBook collections and are now working to integrate ongoing eBook acquisition into their day-to-day workflows. There is no longer any doubt about the adoption of eBooks, it is just a question of whether this will happen rapidly or very rapidly! Now it is simply about format choice — hardback, paperback, eBook, or a combination of both print and 'e.'

There is huge value to the institution and to library patrons in moving to a single aggregated platform as the availability and the demand for e-products grow. As libraries acquire more monographic content in electronic format, buying direct from publishers means they could be looking at upwards of 50 individual access platforms — with all that entails for managing the interface, different access and licensing models and managing links. **Ingram** as a whole has commercial relationships with around eighteen thousand publishers and we are working hard to aggregate as much of their relevant eBook content as possible. It has to be the answer.

It is not about a 'single proprietary database.' **MyiLibrary** is simply a repository of content, and it uses no proprietary reading software, only common applications such as **Adobe Acrobat** and all content is accessible through a standard Web browser.

In addition allowing libraries the option of taking a locally hosted version of the platform gives them great choice in terms of archiving purchased content and management and archiving of local content.

Value for libraries in this market is a combination of the most cost-efficient methodology, purchasing power, extensive publisher relationships and the single vendor interface to integrate eBook acquisition into normal workflows.

ATG: What does the future hold for this industry?

JG: We have to recognize how quickly things are changing, and how irreversible the changes will be. In the academic community we have a generation of students who have grown up in the online world and with the expectation of instant access to the information they want. Not only will native digital learners — the ones born to it — create demand, they will become increasingly impatient with traditional delivery models — with going somewhere to find and wait for a piece of information, a book. That move away from the physical book, plus the ever-increasing costs of investment in physical stock, in library storage, stock losses and security, will all help shape the digital future.

Libraries will move to hosting local digital content on an integrated platform, and we will see a move to more consolidation of multiple platforms. We will also see significant changes to publisher revenue streams as the publisher digital asset base grows. I would also expect to see more effective linking of the major search engines such as **Google** and **Microsoft Live Search**, and a secure infrastructure for e-textbooks. We are certainly involved in all these areas!

ATG: Please tell us about yourself. Family? Training? Education? Hobbies?

JG: Before I joined the business, prior to 1992, I worked for a time in IT sales and finance. Living on the south coast of England I love sailing, and my wife and I have taken to spending weekends on the water with our German Shepherd, Kiera. With a good book and a bottle of wine, it's amazing how quickly a couple of days can pass by!

ATG: And what do you like to read?

JG: Anything and everything — so long as it's well-written! I'm currently trying out a few of the latest eBook reader devices, and that has certainly been an interesting glimpse into the (near) future.

source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The **Wolfsonian-FIU**, located in Miami Beach, is a museum, library, and research center that uses its collection of approximately 120,000 objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design. For over one decade now, the **Wolfsonian** has been a division of **Florida International University**.

www.imls.gov
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