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ATG Interviews Bob Nardini

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Column Editor's Note: In early January 2007 YBP Library Services called me to let me know that Bob Nardini had left YBP and joined a competitor, Coutts Library Services. I spoke with Bob two weeks later. — PC

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ATG Interviews Bob Nardini

Group Director of Client Integration, Coutts Library Services

by Pam Censer (Science Librarian, University of Florida) <pam.censer@gmail.com>

ATG: In the press release from Coutts about your appointment your title includes the phrase "group director of client integration" was does that mean?

BN: I think it is more or less a British term. It means that my job will focus on making sure

that Coutts' services mesh with the processes of academic libraries, so that it is easy to do business with Coutts.

ATG: You joined Yankee Book Peddler (now YBP) in July 1985, many academic
continued on page 48

librarians think of you as the memory of their own approval profiles as well as the most knowledgeable person at the company. With this history, what factors caused you to leave?

BN: Coutts got my attention because the company developed and implemented a strategy for integrating print and electronic resources, which is what I think will be needed for any company to prosper in the years ahead. A lot of smart people work at Coutts, and I am enjoying the chance to work with them. It is a reborn company with global reach. After 21 years, it was time for a change.

ATG: Will you be traveling more with Coutts since the company has more UK clients?

BN: At this point, I don't have exact plans. But I do expect periods of heavy travel, yes, depending on company and customer needs. Early on, I will be needing to go on the road with experienced Coutts staff, which will be one of the best ways to learn about the company and its customers.

ATG: Won't it be strange to represent the company without an in-depth knowledge of the company processes and staff?

BN: I would mostly be listening and gaining a better understanding of the client base. In time, I'll be able to contribute more than just listen.

ATG: Your listening skills are some of the best in the business. One of the reasons librarians view you as a colleague is because you understand the complexities of academic collections. Another reason is your writing and participation in professional organizations. Do you expect to continue the same level of participation with your new position?

BN: Yes, and I expect to encourage others at Coutts to participate in the same way. Some of my new colleagues like Bob Schatz are already very active. Bob serves on the NASIG Board. We vendors learn a lot when we work with librarians in this way. We meet people, we hear what they're thinking about, and we learn the language they are using to describe the day's issues and questions.

ATG: One of your former colleagues at YBP described your departure as emotionally traumatic. Could you comment?

BN: My boss at YBP, George Rego, was gracious about giving me time to say "goodbye" in person to people on the day I left. I'm grateful for that. Yes, it was emotional. I'd worked with some of these people for ten, twenty years. Normally when a person leaves to join a competitor he must leave immediately, with no goodbyes allowed. Since I left, a number of capable people have been given greater responsibility and real promotions. I'm happy about that. YBP had become a

different company, in many ways, than the one I'd joined and known for all those years. In a very real sense, the best thing I could have done for the company was to leave.

ATG: I remember the Coutts company that John Coutts founded with the University of Toronto as a big customer. Are they still a customer?

BN: Yes, they certainly are. Toronto is a very large customer. A couple other large customers in Canada would be the University of British Columbia and the University of Western Ontario.

ATG: Tell me about the Coutts customer base, is it primarily Canadian?

BN: Actually the biggest group of clients is in the UK, with Canada second, and the U.S. next. Coutts has offices in four different countries, including the Netherlands, where Coutts Nijhoff International is based. The people in these offices have the language skills and the cultural skills to expand globally.

ATG: Is hiring you part of the company's goal to expand the customer base within the U.S.?

BN: Yes, there is certainly a lot of room for growth in the U.S. Stanford is Coutts' more prominent customer in this country. A few of the others include Central Michigan, Nova Southeastern, and James Madison.

ATG: Has Coutts hired others from YBP?

BN: Yes, Carolyn Morris and Cathy Boylan were hired from YBP. Carolyn is Director of New Business Development in the U.S., with territory responsibility in the Northeast. Cathy is responsible for sales in Europe.

ATG: Ingram is now the parent company for Coutts. Could you explain how this arrangement works?

BN: The day I interviewed with Coutts it was announced that Ingram had acquired them. Coutts will become the academic division of Ingram. Coutts has the people with expertise on academic libraries. Ingram has

an enormous inventory that Coutts will now be able to draw upon. Also, the combination of eBooks, with Coutts' MyiLibrary platform, and Ingram's Lightning Source print on demand business, should be a powerful one. MyiLibrary will become part of a division called Ingram Digital Ventures, headed up by James Gray, who had led the revived Coutts since buying the company a number of years ago.

ATG: Is the Coutts relationship with Ingram analogous to the YBP relationship with Baker and Taylor?

BN: Yes, the situations are similar, in that YBP became the academic division of Baker & Taylor. But the possibilities at Ingram Digital Ventures are unique.

ATG: Another phrase from the press release describing your appointment was "the full seamless ILS covering both print and electronic content" can you elaborate?

BN: The electronic content of eBooks is fully controlled by Coutts, since MyiLibrary, the company's eBook platform, is a sister company. Coutts controls the platform and the content, and so does not have to rely on third party suppliers or aggregators.

ATG: When I read the phrase "fully integrated" I imagined eBooks delivered automatically to a library as part of an approval plan. Is this possible with Coutts?

BN: This is a service offered now by Coutts, yes.

ATG: Will you be relocating as a result of your new position?

BN: Yes, eventually I'll be moving to the Buffalo, New York area, nearby where I grew up.

ATG: Was this location a positive factor for your decision to change companies?

BN: Well, it wasn't a negative. I can live with snow.

ATG: At least it isn't snowing here in Seattle. Thanks so much for talking with me, Bob and I wish you every success at Coutts. 🐼

ATG Interviews JoAnne Sparks

Director of Library Services Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

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

ATG: What you have done at MSKCC in the past three years has been incredible! You have made the library the center of the Research Center and this was after three years with no library director in place. Can you tell us what you did and how you did it?

JS: We transformed a traditional print-based library into a mostly electronic collection,

we completely renovated the existing physical library space that was left, and we launched a state-of-the-art Website (<http://library.mskcc.org>) available anywhere with a public Internet connection — all in less than three years! Recently we opened the Cyber Library Café. See the announcement message at: http://library.mskcc.org/scripts/portal/about/news/nov06/wnew_01.pl — another little plug for people to venture to our Website! The Cyber Library Café is located on the ground floor

continued on page 49