April 2010

ATG Interviews Patrick C. Sommers

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Recommended Citation

Strauch, Katina (2010) "ATG Interviews Patrick C. Sommers," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 22: Iss. 2, Article 20.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5509>

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psychology, sociology, and organizational behavior. Content wise, the articles provide definitions and background, as well as reports on research and analysis. The authors are successful in writing in an accessible style easily grasped by undergraduates and informed lay readers. Each entry has list of see-also references and a bibliography. The set provides an alphabetical list of articles and a reader's guide to the entries by broad subject category. A useful index takes readers directly to the particular pages where they can find the specific information they are seeking. The *Encyclopedia of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* is a title that has multi-disciplinary relevance. Undergraduates in fields as diverse as business, psychology, and sociology among others, could find themselves leafing through its pages.

Grey House Publishing adds another title to its "Top-Rated" series of reference works. *America's Top-Rated Small Towns and Cities* (2010, 9781592375974, \$195) is in its first edition and covers 8,908 towns and cities with populations ranging from 3,000 to 25,000. This two-volume set is structured much like the others in the series. The sections are arranged alphabetically by state with profiles offered for each location discussed.

This profile section is very brief and is not nearly as thorough as the contents available in other books in the series like *America's Top-Rated Smaller Cities* (2010, 978-1592375509, \$195). Perhaps this is a function of the size of the locations discussed and the lack of available information. The editors may also feel that a new star rating system devised for this set helps compensate (more about that later). In any case, each profile includes brief information about the history, population, economy, income levels, housing information, safety and crime, and educational attainment. The information in the profiles is generally adequate to give readers a general sense of the location. However, facts about the economy are skimpy. The only information provided is the number of single family and multifamily building permits issued. Unfortunately, there are no employment figures, nor mention of major business or employers. The profile section is followed by ratings of the various towns and cities within the state by the

factors covered in the profile. In addition, all this rating information is cumulated in a national ratings section that makes up half of volume two. This is a different approach than that used in prior works in the series that rely on appendices to relay such comparative information. Each state section is introduced by a map of the state and a list of the various locations by star rating.

As mentioned above, new to this set is that each entry starts with a "star" rating system. Stars are assigned "using a proprietary bell curve formula" that takes into consideration home values, educational attainment of the population, the visual attractiveness of the area, etc. Exactly how this formula is calculated remains a mystery but it includes at least these three criteria. In any case, it gives readers an easy-to-grasp evaluative comparison among locations. The highest rating is five stars.

While the individual entries in *America's Top-Rated Small Towns and Cities* are not nearly as thorough as in prior sets in the series, it does provide information about numerous small locations not discussed anywhere else. It also provides other features that users may find helpful like the star ratings. Libraries that have found other sets in this **Grey House Publishing** series useful to their patrons will want to consider it. It will help round out their collections, as well as give basic information about nearly 9,000 locations throughout the United States, and it does so in an easy-to-use reference set. 🌿

ATG Interviews Patrick C. Sommers

President, Gale, part of Cengage Learning

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

ATG: *We have read all the press reports about EBSCO's exclusive licensing agreement with Time, Inc., and Forbes. We have also read Gale's open letter about the exclusivity agreement. As I understand this, Time, Inc. asked for the exclusivity via an RFP? Is that correct?*

PS: **Time Inc.** was looking for a single partner with whom to distribute their content into the library market. In our discussions with them, it was clear that it was immaterial to them whether the winning bidder sub-licensed the content to other information providers. This is the key differentiator in the bids they received. **Gale** submitted a bid that exceeded their "asking price," and it included the rights for us to sub-license to other information providers. Our intent was to share content with our competitors to ensure fair access for all library users. The winning bid, as we understand it, was well in excess of what the publisher requested in its RFP, and access, as has been announced, will be restricted to one aggregator.

As for **Forbes**, we did have the opportunity to bid for the content, but it was late in the process and we pushed our way into the process. Another information provider proactively approached the publisher with

an exclusive bid and attempted to preclude others from bidding. To **Forbes'** credit, they did not seek an exclusive agreement, and they did allow us to bid as we did for **Time** — for rights to redistribute their content to all information providers to ensure fair access for all. Unfortunately, the other aggregator bid an even higher amount to keep the content for themselves. As we've stated, we believe this runs counter to fair-access principles that libraries value so much.

ATG: *Does Gale have any exclusive contracts with any publishers? Do other aggregators? Is the need for exclusivity increasing or decreasing? Why or why not?*

PS: **Gale** has no exclusive licensing agreements for periodical content in our aggregated databases. There is no "need" for exclusive agreements in this part of the market. Publishers are certainly looking to augment their falling subscription and ad revenues, and we understand that. We believe that, with education about the impact of exclusives and careful execution of non-exclusive agreements, all parties — publishers, information providers, libraries, and users — can win. But not if the interests of one or more of those groups are not addressed.

ATG: *I understand why exclusivity is not good for libraries. It limits competition. Is there any alternative for the databases that do not have exclusive agreements for specific titles once an exclusive agreement is in place at a competing aggregator?*

PS: When this issue first arose more than a decade ago, academic libraries were forced to work with certain vendors or publishers to get access to high-end STM content — in many cases at an extreme premium. This eventually led to the creation of the Open Access movement. Libraries and researchers realized that allowing one publisher or a collective of publishers to have that much control was detrimental to their respective missions. However, while Open Access content has created new opportunities, it did not solve the problem. Libraries are still seeing tremendous price increases for content they feel they need to have and cannot get anywhere else.

For public and K-12 libraries, this practice is new — and it's definitely new for popular magazine content licensing. The timing is interesting, because newspapers, magazines, and information sources are changing rapidly. For many popular magazines, decades of

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ISSN: 1946-6242 online version
ISSN: 1946-6234 print version

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There is an increasing recognition that classical medical diagnoses—prostate cancer, diabetes, atherosclerosis—hide the true heterogeneity of these diseases from patient to patient. In fact, for some diseases, breast cancer for instance, as reported in a recent research article in *Science Translational Medicine*, “Development of Personalized Tumor Biomarkers Using Massively Parallel Sequencing,”^{*} each person’s cancer is a distinct entity, one that follows a unique disease trajectory and has its own spectrum of susceptibility to treatment. We are just learning how to define these subgroups of patients. Once we can study subgroups of similar patients, the strength of our experimental results will increase and development costs will decrease.

Chief Scientific Adviser, **Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D.**
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*Sci Transl Med 24 February 2010 2:20ra14. DOI:10.1126/scitranslmed.3000702

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content (up to current day) are posted freely online. At a time when libraries are choosing between laying off staff and cutting resources, libraries are very likely to find ways to access this freely available content over being forced to purchase additional products.

ATG: *Are the publishers who insist on exclusivity signing their death knell? They are definitely limiting their distribution channels. Will they just be forgotten or out-competed (if that’s a word)?*

PS: First, to clarify, it’s our experience that very few publishers request, let alone insist on, exclusive agreements. Most have been pursued aggressively with very lucrative agreements that would be difficult to resist.

Once an exclusive licensing agreement is in place, these publishers certainly receive less exposure. And, in some cases, their content will no longer be deemed relevant. In others, we believe that users and libraries will find workarounds to use content from publisher Web sites, and the value of the titles’ presence in an aggregated file will be diminished.

Interesting note: Many of the publishers who locked up in exclusives in the past are now working with **Gale** and the other aggregators on a non-exclusive basis. The allure of the initial revenue wore off once they realized that there was more revenue and visibility in the non-exclusive model.

ATG: *How many of the journals covered in the various aggregator databases are “exclusive?” Can you make a guess? Does Gale have any exclusives in its databases?*

PS: **Gale** has NO exclusive periodical licensing agreements for titles in its aggregated databases. When you look at the other vendors, one in particular has made this their main strategy for many years.

To fully understand why they took this approach, it’s worth looking at their business as a whole, which includes not only database products, but also subscription services. For example, nearly half of the content in their journal and business database products is licensed exclusively. It’s no coincidence that more than half of their content is also under a one-year embargo as well (meaning that the content does not appear in their databases until one year has passed from publication). The larger part of their business is, after all, subscription services. Because these titles are available from only one database vendor, and because that information is restricted by a one-year embargo, customers buy both print and electronic journal subscriptions for the same titles from the subscriptions business unit. Customers do this because they want the full run of the publication on the same platform. They buy duplicate access to content from the same vendor — at a cost that is set by that vendor — because they have no other choice.

ATG: *Do any of the other database aggregators have “exclusive” titles? How rampant is this? Has it escalated in recent years?*

PS: The practice began more than ten years ago, and, until now, has been restricted to marquee academic and STM journals. The problems created by consolidated and restricted access to STM content and its impact on prices for academic libraries have been well-documented.

The practice was bad for libraries then, but it’s even worse now, because now the titles being targeted are popular general and business periodicals that are considered foundational for public and school libraries. The number of libraries impacted — especially those with less funding — is significantly greater, and, in this economic climate, they are the ones least able to afford content duplication and rising costs.

In the last year we have seen a rapid escalation of the practice. Again, this practice is rarely initiated by the publisher, but, instead, by a single aggregator looking to control and restrict access to content. This is why we have been so vocal recently. We want librarians to be informed about actions by others that will impact their choices and pricing. We believe that libraries — the economic buyers — have the power to determine if the practice is rewarded ... and expands.

ATG: *Can you tell me in general terms about the contracts Gale as an aggregator signs with publishers? Roughly how much money is offered by the aggregator to the publisher of a very popular magazine or scholarly journal or to the publisher of a magazine or scholarly journal that is not so*

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popular? And what is the length of time in these agreements? Do most aggregators have standard terms?

PS: For the past 20+ years, there has been a relatively standard means for licensing and aggregating periodicals. Titles are typically licensed non-exclusively with “evergreen” agreements (renewed annually). Publishers are paid a royalty based on usage of their content. As a result, publishers with high-use titles tend to make more than those with low-use titles. It has been largely viewed as a fair system that provides broad and fair access to content and allows libraries to make purchase decisions based on which products have the right mix of content, interface features, and price for their user community.

Now that model is being disrupted by aggressive tactics, which result in royalty payments 10 to 20 times the previous amount paid and give the vendor the ability to restrict and control access. One can’t necessarily fault the publisher for taking the money, but who is ultimately going to pay for this extreme cost escalation? We think it is clear that it will be libraries. If the periodical aggregation business moves to a monopoly, we believe the impact on libraries will be catastrophic.

ATG: How many publishers are out there for aggregators to sign agreements with? How many single publishers? How many publishing conglomerates?

PS: Globally, there are thousands of publishers whose titles make their way into aggregated databases. We seek to work with all publishers and work hard to maintain our relationships with them. Because **Gale** is a publisher too, we understand the issues publishers face.

We’ve long held the position that exclusive arrangements are bad for publishers, as well as libraries. By restricting access to content, the usage and exposure of content is limited and, ultimately, its value is diminished. Most publishers understand this and license content to multiple vendors, but others base their decision on expedient, short-term financial considerations. However, some publishers have realized the negative long-term impact of exclusive licensing agreements on their business and have returned to non-exclusive licensing. We are working to educate publishers and libraries that non-exclusive licensing is best for both groups.

*ATG: I have to show my colors here. I will put on my miniscule publisher hat. My husband and I publish *Against the Grain* which is a labor of love. I receive licensing agreements on a regular basis from all of the aggregators. They want my full-text content in their database. But the amount of money that I could recover compared to the revenue that I get from ads and subscriptions (not a fortune, mind you) allows me to continue to publish *Against the Grain*. If I were to license my fulltext content to aggregators, I could not afford to publish *ATG* anymore. Putting on*

against the grain people profile

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Patrick C. Sommers

BORN AND LIVED: Cape Girardeau, MO until I joined Dun & Bradstreet in 1969. Since then I have lived in 11 different cities and 18 different homes.

EARLY LIFE: Grew up in an idyllic small town in the '50s-'60s — did all the things you read in books and see in movies. At 14 got my first job in the food services business (curb hop), and when I was 16 upgraded to working in the local public library.

FAMILY: A wife (**Barbara**) and a daughter (**Whitney**) living in Minneapolis.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Read, play golf, listen to music, travel.

FAVORITE BOOKS: Very eclectic taste — same in music.

PET PEEVES: Hidden agendas, anything less than the truth.

PHILOSOPHY: Understanding requires Context. We have the opportunity to define the future if we are bold enough to let go of the past.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: All of them are memorable — I have been fortunate to have worked with some outstanding people during my career.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: I hope to be in a position to make a small positive difference in the world. I also hope to get my handicap down to a single digit.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:

It depends on the industry’s willingness to embrace change. The convergence of technology, changing business models, and the Internet is accelerating. This will have a profound impact on libraries and our education systems and consequently those industries serving them. You don’t need to look any further than the newspaper and periodical industries to see how a long-term, stable business model can come apart and relatively quickly. 🌱

my librarian’s hat, I would probably cancel the print subscription for my library if I could get the content from an aggregator online.

So, the aggregator database scenario is generally not good for a small publisher like me. It is good for the library by and large. The irresistible force meets the immovable object. So, I am sympathetic with Time, Inc., and Forbes. They are bigger publishers but they still have to maintain their subscribers so that they can continue to publish their content. What’s the aggregator solution? Will we continue to have aggregator databases? Will the aggregators force some good publishers to quit publishing? None of us wants that, right?

PS: There’s a clear distinction to be made here. Users do not access the information in a database in the same way that they do when they subscribe and receive a print copy. That is, rarely does anyone use an aggregated database to sit down and read the latest issue of *Time* or *People*.

The value of an aggregated database is the ability to, for instance, search by subject across a plethora of titles, search for a specific article or writer, or see how a topic was covered at a particular point in time, etc.

Consequently, we believe that the subscription business is not impacted by a general-interest title’s inclusion in a database any more than free copies in a doctor’s office impact subscriptions. Licensing royalties are incremental revenue to general-interest publishers.

In addition to serving users with quality information in the context of other searchable content, aggregated databases promote brand awareness for publishers. The value to publishers — smaller ones in particular — is that their brand is served up along with other quality publications and is highly visible to hundreds of millions of information-seekers annually. This exposure frequently leads to individuals seeking out subscriptions to a publication they were not aware of previously.

We still believe there is tremendous value to aggregated databases. That said, we also see tremendous value to new product concepts that we are developing. Our portal products — Global Issues in Context, GREENR, Career Transitions, and more — take information delivery to the next level by providing information in context, with Web 2.0 community tools and Website-like interfaces.

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We base these products on scientific data we've collected about how users seek and use information. We are investing in ways to make information more accessible and usable rather than in trying to keep information away from others.

ATG: *What's a publisher to do? It's interesting that we are seeing more and more publishers building their own content sites. We are also seeing more and more publishers making their content unique between elec-*

tronic and print. We are also seeing distinctions about how the full text is presented in html, xml, pdf, etc. Also in the searchability and presentation of that content.

What's the next step? Will journals continue to be published in their current form (a package of related articles) or will content take on new forms like individual articles, tables, charts, graphics, etc.? Any predictions?

PS: We believe that publishing will transition into many different models and delivery methods. Popular publications will continue and will be accessed through a variety of tech-

nologies: electronically through e-readers like the iPad, PCs, the publisher's Website and also print editions. Content from these publications will also be accessed through aggregated databases and the Web. Additionally, this content will be organized within context and available through knowledge portals and subject-specific Websites. The point is that publishing isn't transitioning from "this" to "that" — there will be many different models designed to meet the needs of many different types of consumers.

ATG: *I appreciate your frank answers. Thanks so much.* 🍷

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addition, selection criteria are developed for each collection. A publicly accessible Web archives has collection-specific selection criteria available for review and are available on the **Library of Congress Web Archives Website**.

<http://bit.ly/cxcGE2>

<http://www.nytimes.com/>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/7601281/Twitter-archive-to-be-stored-by-Library-of-Congress.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/lcwa/html/lcwa-home.html>

Author Solutions (ASI), an indie book publishing group, has announced two executive team

appointments. **Don Seitz** has been named senior vice president of sales, and **Keith Ogorek** has been promoted to the role of senior vice president of marketing. **Author Solutions, Inc.**, an **Inc. 5000 company**, is owned by **Bertram Capital**. ASI's self-publishing brands are **AuthorHouse**, **AuthorHouse UK**, **iUniverse**, **Trafford**, **Xlibris**, and **Wordclay**. Headquartered in Bloomington, Indiana, ASI also operates offices in Indianapolis and Milton Keynes, England. **Kevin Weiss** is ASI chief executive officer and president.

<http://www.authorsolutions.com>

Got a great message from the inimitable **John Riley** the other day. It said "**Funny how CIP Data can do you in.**" There was a link to an article and comments that were entertaining and poignant at the same time. The link was to a discussion of the article "Betraying Salinger ... I

scored the publishing coup of the decade: his final book. And then I blew it." The article by **Roger Lathbury** gives us an insight into this great author and his wars with the publishing world.

<http://nymag.com/arts/books/features/65210/>

Heard that the glorious **Helen Henderson** missed **UKSG** because the cartilage in her knee split in two and is blocking the joint. She is having surgery in the UK the beginning of May but she is still coming to the States, she says, even if it's by wheelchair. Good luck, **Helen**, and we can't wait to see you dancing!

Bummer. **Buzzy Basch** tells me that 35 people are still stranded in Edinburg after **UKSG** because the planes aren't flying because of the volcanic ash from the Iceland volcano. Edinburg is a good place to be stranded in, but stranded is stranded

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