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ATG Interviews John R. McHugh, Publishing Advisor and Consultant

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Publishing Advisor and Consultant

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

ATG: You have written extensively on the publishing business. What motivates you to write new material and then post your papers for free at your Website?

JM: For a number of reasons: First, because writing is the best way to find what you know and don't know. The discipline of writing enables you to clarify your thinking on a subject. Secondly, I write to educate and share what I have learned. When I finish an assignment I debrief myself and ask "What have I learned that I can share with people?" Much of my new learning finds its way into my writing. Finally, I enjoy the process of writing, start with an idea, find the words, organize one's thoughts, etc.

ATG: Are you like many "consultants" — namely, someone between jobs?

JM: It's been said that a consultant is a person, with a briefcase fifty miles from home, who borrows your wristwatch to tell you what time it is. It does seem that there are many unemployed executives who advertise themselves as consultants. That's not me, as I have been in this business full-time for 16 years and have consulted for over 30 years. I am in the consulting business for the long haul and will be available to advise clients as long as they need me.

ATG: How are you different from other publishing consultants?

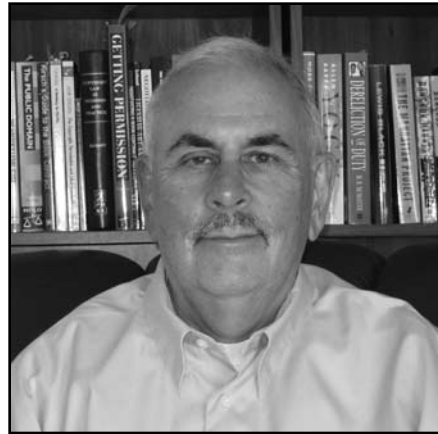
JM: You won't be working with a neophyte, needing on-the-job training, when you work with me, as I have proven processes, templates, and a bank of tested audit questions. At the front-end of our relationship, I will spend time discovering your needs and whether or not I can serve you.

I am committed to educating clients by providing 80 free professional papers on every aspect of publishing management. When I finish an assignment I debrief myself and ask, "What have I learned that I can share with my readers?" Much of what I learn advising clients finds its way into my writing.

ATG: What is important in your relationship with clients? How do you ensure that you provide the best possible service to your clients?

JM: An assignment is about what the client wants to accomplish and his/her needs. Much of working with clients is about effective communications. Therefore, from the very first contact I pay attention and listen to the client. I ask questions to clarify and increase understanding.

As an outsider, it is important for me to get a sense of the political dynamics of the client's organization and attempt to understand where the power resides. Finally, I always strive to understand the client's culture because organi-



zational culture can be a powerful determinant of a company's performance.

ATG: What do you enjoy most in your work and why?

JM: Two things. First, management audits of publishing programs are enjoyable because of the contacts with staff, volunteers, editors, vendors, etc. The assembling of information and then making constructive suggestions that will help the client improve its publishing program are gratifying.

Second, executive recruiting has always been at the top of my list. I enjoy interviewing job candidates, as it is stimulating and always broadens my perspective. Helping the client find the best-qualified candidates is gratifying too. For the convenience of my clients, I have captured my recruiting in a fairly simple process which is explained in my *Executive Recruiting Checklist* (PM-6, 2 pages), which is free at my Website, <http://www.johnbmchugh.com/management.htm>.

ATG: Why do we find copyright so confusing? What are the best books on copyright for us non-lawyers?

JM: Copyright by design is vague to ensure flexibility. So there is a wide latitude in how we can approach copyright situations. Making copyright decisions is frustrating given the ambiguity of the Copyright Law. Nevertheless we must make informed decisions. Therefore, one should have a basic understanding of the Copyright Law and its tenets major such as fair use, infringement, public domain, etc.

Best books for lay people: I like the books from **Nolo** (www.nolo.com) by Attorney **Stephen Fishman**, *The Copyright Handbook* and by Attorney **Richard Stim**, *Getting Permission*. I have also found useful Attorney **Lee Wilson's** book *Fair Use, Free Use and Use by Permission* from **Allworth Press** (<http://www.allworth.com/>).

ATG: What is your opinion of eBooks?

JM: eBooks have been at the forefront of the book publishing industry. For most non-fiction publishers' eBooks may be hyped up a bit more than their financial importance would warrant in the scheme of things. eBooks will continue to grow as devices become more affordable, better selection is made available, and compatibility between devices is increased.

But when one reads the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Salon*, etc., one would think that the future of publishing is riding on eBooks. I don't see it that way in the scientific, technical, medical (STM) and educational publishing business. At this point, eBooks are a tiny speck in the book picture, but the importance of eBooks will grow.

ATG: Have you ever worked with librarians in your consulting work?

JM: Yes, a number of times. We interview librarians (primarily "special" librarians) on the phone as part of the qualitative research component of my consulting work. Librarians are busy professionals, but in every instance they make time to talk to me. My experience is that librarians love to share information and to educate their patrons. I always get the sense that when I call, librarians think, "A publisher cares enough to retain **McHugh** to call and to listen to me as an important customer." A call from me to librarians on behalf of my client is a positive sign to them.

ATG: What is the future of the library market?

JM: I have no specific predictions. I do know that the library market is changing and publishers need to pay attention to librarians. That's evident if one reads your magazine *Against the Grain*. That is one of the reasons I wanted to interview you as editor of *Against the Grain* as part of the *McHugh Expert Interview* series. My guess is that the library market will continue to experience difficult times and even more so after the crash of 2008 and now the recession. Librarians impress me as an adaptive bunch, and it seems as though they've done a great job of making their shrinking budgets work in this difficult economy.

ATG: What new things are you working on?

JM: Over the last year I have started the *McHugh Expert Interview* series (see prior question). There are now ten available at my Website, www.johnbmchugh.com. This year I started a new LinkedIn Group, "Association and Nonprofit Publishing."

ATG: I note that earlier in your career you were the Director of Programs and Membership at the American Society for Quality (ASQ). How has that affected your thinking on business and organizations?

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JM: Profoundly. In that position I was in charge of all the **Society's** businesses and had ten managers reporting to me. **ASQ** made me focus on the customer and his/her requirements for satisfaction. I also learned the vital importance of well-documented processes, measurements, cycle-time, and always listening to the customer (including internal customers). I also started reading the works of the leaders in the quality field, **W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, and Philip Crosby.**

ATG: *What three predictions do you have for publishers?*

JM: Our industry will see more and more and more digitization of copyrighted content. Copyright protection will become even more vital as content aggregators want more and more free content. Learn all you can about copyrights and licensing. And finally, since a new product has to come from somewhere, namely publishers, solid product development processes will always be contemporary. If it's not coming from **Google** or **Amazon** they are not publishers. 🌱

against the grain people profile

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John B. "Jack" McHugh

BORN AND LIVED: Born and grew up in Evanston, IL., a suburb just north of Chicago on Lake Michigan.

EARLY LIFE: BS **Xavier University, U.S. Army**, lived in Cleveland, Boston, and Columbus, OH.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Currently publishing advisor and consultant. Prior, publishing executive who worked in commercial and nonprofit publishing. Author of 90 papers on publishing management, available at my Website.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Read, exercise, and follow **Ohio State** and **Green Bay Packer** football

FAVORITE BOOKS: Many. I read U.S. History (presidency, Civil War), biographies and fiction, mostly satire and humor.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Moron telemarketers who call me and mispronounce my last name "McHugh"—"McHuge," "McHug," "McUgh"—How hard can it be? Give me a break. It's a common Irish name.

MOST MEMORABLE ACHIEVEMENTS: Starting new publishing ventures and my professional writing.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: To remain professionally active and vital along with good health. 🌱

ATG Interviews Bipin Patel

CIO, ProQuest

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

and **Leah Hinds** (Charleston Information Group) <leah@katina.info>

We caught up with **Bipin Patel**, the CIO of **ProQuest**, regarding the all new **ProQuest** platform.

ATG: *When will the new platform be operational for libraries that are ProQuest customers? Do you have a specific date or timeline?*

BP: We are taking a phased approach to migrating customers to this new, ground-up, modern platform. We alerted them to the migration schedule in July, and as we're doing this interview, we're just shy of the first wave of migration in August. The process will allow customers ample time to preview the platform. Further, we are offering a wide variety of tools to help customers with the migration, including support from our training and technical support teams and access to a large kit of helpful materials called "SwitchedOn." Customers also have access to a special Migration Support Website (linked to our proquest.com site) to assist them.

ATG: *It's difficult to comment on the new platform at this time since we cannot see how it works. Is there a website that we can visit that will show us how a search or searches will work on the new platform?*

BP: We're very excited about connecting customers and reviewers with the new platform, and when this interview is published many of your readers will be previewing it. We have been keeping customers updated through a Website that helps them prepare — http://www.proquest.com/en-US/promos/feature08_pg.shtml.

I hope your readers will visit the Website, but let me preface that visit with a quick summary. We started this project because we kept hearing from our customers that people wanted to link A&I to full-text, the ability to cross-search all their **ProQuest** content, and simplification of administration resources for librarians. That was the beginning of a deep journey into what this platform should be... should do, and end-users have been at the heart of it. We dug into the culture of end-users so we could truly understand them. The result is that we've created a search experience that goes well beyond discovery and propels serious research in exactly the way end-users — whether they're students or librarians or faculty members — want that to happen. The platform is designed for purpose, and because end-user needs are constantly evolving, this is a living platform that will evolve with them. We're using an agile process that will iterate to make the platform ever better and ever more

responsive to needs. Because of the process, changes will come in a disciplined way, always driven by customers and end-users.

This is an entirely new search infrastructure that supports libraries and their users, and we feel it will set a new standard for the search and discovery experience. The platform will get the user to relevant content quickly — whoever they are, whatever they're researching — always providing context that helps them understand the content properly, but also helps them understand where they are in the research process. Further, we're introducing very powerful, but intuitive, research tools that allow users to work with the content they find. These are very thoughtfully introduced — the right tools, at the right time, in the right place. And to support librarians, we're simplifying the administration of library e-resources, using the single platform to ease set up, centralize reports, and streamline training.

ATG: *As we understand it, all ProQuest, CSA Illumina, and Chadwyck-Healey products are included in the first release but not databases distributed by ProQuest like Safari, Factiva, and Critical Mention? Will these databases be included as well? If so, when?*

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