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ATG Interviews Springer

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Thijs Willems – Project Manager, Springer Book Archives

Wouter van der Velde – eProduct Manager, eBooks

Jennifer Kemp – eProduct Manager, eBooks

by Tom Gilson (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*) <gilson@cofc.edu>

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ATG: *We're delighted to be talking to you regarding recent developments at Springer, but first tell us a little bit about yourselves — i.e., your backgrounds, current responsibilities, etc.*

WvdV: I work with Jennifer as Product Manager for eBooks, and focus on regions outside the Americas. I have worked in publishing for more than ten years, including the peer review process and online usage statistics.

JK: I am a Springer eBooks Product Manager for the Americas and manage the marketing of the Springer Book Archives. In my previous life, I was a librarian for several years.

TW: I'm Thijs Willems, Project Manager for the Springer Book Archives project. I've worked in STM publishing for about nine years in different roles in product development and product management.

ATG: *Springer just announced a major digitalization project called Springer Book Archives (SBA). What exactly does this project entail? Is there a specific implementation time line?*

TW: The project's goal is to digitize as many Springer eBooks as possible. By the end of 2012, we'll have over 100,000 eBooks on SpringerLink, with the addition of about 65,000 titles dating back to the 1840s.

We are diligently securing rights for the books, ensuring the highest possible scanning quality, and are looking forward to having the majority of English titles also available in print via the low-cost MyCopy service (about 70% of all the SBA books are in English, most of the rest are in German). As a consequence of this digitization effort, SBA titles, many of which have been out of print or hard to find, will be available in print as well.

ATG: *What are your individual roles within the project?*

JK: Wouter and I are responsible for making known the good work that Thijs and his team are doing with this initiative.

TW: I am the project manager responsible for completing the Springer Book Archives, including the location, digitization, and rights clearance of SBA works.

ATG: *Earlier you mentioned the need to secure rights. Copyright can be tricky, especially given the lack of uniformity in international copyright laws. How are you getting the copyright permissions that you need? What strategies are you using to avoid the problems that the Google Books project has encountered?*

WvdV: Indeed, this is an interesting and large part of the whole project. Springer has always had a good relationship with its authors, but as you can imagine, in times, where the only medium of publication was ink and paper, any contract between a publisher and an author would not mention reproduction in electronic format.

TW: When we started this project, one of the main goals we set was “we have got to do our utmost to obtain the electronic distribution rights, and we have to share the revenues with our authors in the form of royalties.”

For the part of titles, where we do not yet have the electronic distribution rights, or where we need our author's data for paying royalties, we are contacting them and/or their heirs using our internal databases, as well as contact databases that are rented.

JK: For all our authors, who are entitled to receive royalties, we have reserved the money up front. Our authors have the choice whether they want to have the royalties paid directly to their own account, or they can have it transferred to charity. If they choose the latter, Springer will contribute to charity as well.

ATG: *In the scientific community a premium is usually placed on the most current information. Why an archive of materials dating as far back as the 1840s?*

WvdV: SpringerLink usage statistics already show a very high interest in eBook content which is relatively older (5 years+). We believe that researchers and students are going to use these classic titles.

JK: The project comes out of a number of concerns. One, our customers have asked us when we will digitize our backfiles, so we know there is an interest in “legacy” content, which forms the foundation of today's scientific knowledge. Two, a large corpus of eBooks, particularly of this breadth and depth, can also alleviate physical space and hardcopy collection management issues for librarians. Beyond that, Springer is committed to making the works of our authors accessible in perpetuity. The historical context and access to primary sources provided by such a database is, we believe, a boon for the scientific community.

TW: Springer believes that all of our published works are valuable scholarly content, and we want readers to find and use as many of our books as possible online.

ATG: *We understand that there are some sensitive materials — i.e. titles published by Springer during the Third Reich are not included in the collection. Why are they being withheld?*

TW: We found a small number of titles (fewer than ten), published in the 1920s and 1930s (most before 1933) that contain references to racial and religious differences which might look unpalatable out of context. On the one hand, we were hesitant to include these titles in the collection, but on the other, we did not want to play the censor, either. We are now consulting science historians to determine the best way to make these titles accessible for legitimate scientific research.

ATG: *Our understanding is that this new collection will be searchable and accessible via SpringerLink, bringing the total number of titles to 100,000 eBooks plus thousands of Springer journal articles. It promises to be a massive database. Do you anticipate adding any new search features to enable researchers to better navigate all of this additional content? Are there any new apps in the works to facilitate the use of the “expanded” SpringerLink?*

WvdV: We believe that the current search technology, which is powered by industry-leading software provider Endeca, provides more than enough search-faceting functionality to handle the increase in content. We currently allow users to filter their searches by: publication, collection, subject, author, language, publication date, and content type. These options, in addition to the powerful relevance algorithms provided by both Endeca and TEMIS, allow users to quickly narrow down a large results set into exactly the content they are interested in.

In October, Springer launched the free SpringerLink app, which provides many of the same search features across the entire Springer content set, returning the results in a mobile-optimized display. The SpringerLink app is currently available for iOS devices only.

ATG: *How are new features and apps developed by Springer? Some providers have involved librarians and others in contests to propose new app ideas. Does Springer use similar strategies to develop innovations in SpringerLink?*

JK: Springer has many products and takes a variety of input into account when planning for enhancements, which we do on an ongoing basis. We have several invaluable librarian advisors, with whom we meet frequently, to get focused input on existing offerings as well as developments in the works. SpringerReference.com is one example of a product discussed with our advisors while it was still being created.

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SpringerLink has a continuous development cycle to which a great deal of resources are devoted. As it is the home of so much of our content, it is a natural lab for innovation while at the same time requiring adherence to the quality, dependability, and performance for which it is known. So we are delighted to have recently launched the SpringerLink app and we also completed an API challenge earlier this year, which generated some really interesting submissions.

Springer.com, of course, must reflect up-to-date information on all Springer products, services and activities, and for a variety of audiences (librarians, authors, etc.), but it also hosts functionality, like our free MARC records download tool. So, it too requires constant updates that are driven by feedback, product development, and industry trends.

ATG: Will the eBooks in the Springer Book Archives be available to libraries for direct purchase, or are we talking about licensing the eBooks via an annual subscription fee? Any idea of what the pricing will look like? Will these eBooks be eligible for Springer's "MyCopy" purchase option to buy a print copy?

WvdV: Springer will continue to use the outright purchase model for subject collections, with tiered pricing based on the size and research intensity of the institution. However, we will continue to work with customers to evolve our business models.

And, yes, we are happy to say that MyCopy will be available for English language titles that are suitable for this service — i.e., those under 1,200 pages long.

ATG: Can interested libraries customize a group of individual titles for purchase? Does that fit into the current business model, or is purchase limited to the subject collections?

WvdV: Springer strongly believes in the collection model. Usage statistics prove that on the institution level, a large portion of the collection is being used over time. See for instance the Liverpool studies by Terry Bucknell, that show that after a period of more than three years, the amount of titles in the collection that are being used is still growing.

The search engines and references bring researchers and students to individual chapters of titles, that based on title and main subject area sometimes even did not look of interest for a librarian to choose.

For libraries who need another purchase option, Springer will continue to offer its eBooks, including the archive titles, also through third-party vendors and aggregators.

ATG: As we commit more deeply to this world of eBooks, some librarians are expressing concerns about the impact on one of the staples of library service, interlibrary loan. What arrangements are being made to enable the interlibrary loaning of the eBooks available via SpringerLink?

against the grain

publisher profile

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JK: SBA works will share the same permissive interlibrary loan allowances that our "regular" eBooks already have, including provisions for print and digital loans.

ATG: What "permissive" interlibrary loan allowances are you referring to? Can you be more specific for those of us who are not familiar with current Springer loan provisions?

JK: For libraries in the USA, Springer allows interlibrary loan for single chapters, in compliance with applicable United States and international copyright laws, guidelines, and conventions. These chapters can be downloaded and submitted in print or electronically to non-commercial libraries.

ATG: What is the most effective way to make use of Springer eBook content on mobile devices? Do you have specific recommendations as to which mobile devices are most compatible with your content?

JK: All SBA titles will be available in PDF, which works well on large screen mobile devices and tablets such as iPads. In addition, a limited number of book archive titles will be available in EPUB. Of course, there is also the free SpringerLink app for iPhones and iPads.

ATG: While Springer Book Archives is a mammoth undertaking, we suspect that it is not the only development at Springer that our readers would be interested in. Are there other new products that we should be on the lookout for?

JK: In August, we launched SpringerReference (springerreference.com), a platform with all the latest, published, and forthcoming editions of eReferences (reference works, including encyclopedias, handbooks, dictionaries, bibliographies, and data collections) which

provides constant, peer-reviewed updates, so that these "living" eReferences are up-to-date with the latest scientific discoveries.

ATG: What are the purchasing models for this eReference collection? Can they be purchased to own? Or are they available via subscription or under some licensing agreement?

JK: SpringerReference is available on a separate platform, and can be subscribed to for an annual subscription. At an additional fee, subscribing libraries can obtain the reference works that are published as a completed work in the subscription year. The perpetual access to these reference works will be on SpringerLink.

ATG: We understand that Springer is also offering a number of free value-added Websites.

JK: Yes, in addition to SpringerReference, Springer offers a number of free sites, many introduced recently, that your readers may find useful:

AuthorMapper (www.authormapper.com) is a free interactive tool that visualizes scientific research areas and trends by plotting authors, subjects, and institutions on a world map as well as identifying scientific trends through timeline graphs, statistics, and regions.

A customizable widget is available for it which allows, among other things, for all the authors of an institution to display, for example, on a library's home page.

LaTeXSearch.com, a free online service which makes over one million LaTeX equations discoverable, was launched in January 2010. It is powered by a collection of over 120,000 peer-reviewed articles in journals published by Springer, such as *Inventiones Mathematicae*, *Acta Mathematica*, and *Math-*

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ematical Programming. Users can search on an equation, article title, or DOI, and equations that are similar (or even exactly the same but written slightly different) will also appear under the “Similar Results” tab. This ability to provide a comprehensive set of results is unique to *LaTeXSearch.com*.

Exemplar (www.springerexemplar.com) is a free linguistic tool designed to aid the publishing process for authors, editors, and the scientific community at large. Exemplar allows researchers to quickly see how a particular term or phrase is used in peer-reviewed, published literature. This is a tool to help consolidate the use of subject-specific terminology and facilitate the communication of scholarly information through standardization.

Also, this year, **Springer** launched a network of job sites, with over 5,000 up-to-date listings. *ScienceandHealthcareJobs.com* is the main site and includes linkouts to two other sites. *StethoscopeJobs.com* is the

“daughter” site for physicians, and *LabratJobs.com* is the site focused on scientific researchers.

The sites in the network include:

- www.ScienceandHealthcareJobs.com
- www.LabratJobs.com
- www.StethoscopeJobs.com

A timely and well-received set of sites in this economy!

ATG: *That is an impressive list of resources that will definitely enhance the scholarly efforts of your users and other interested readers.*

Jennifer, Wouter, and Thijs, *we want to thank you for taking the time to talk to us. Getting your individual perspectives has been both fun and very informative.*

JK & WvdV: Thank you for the opportunity to bring this information to your readers.

TW: It’s been our pleasure to inform you about this new **Springer** initiative. Please don’t hesitate to contact us in case you have any further questions. 🐾

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Dave Nicholas’ and **Ian Rowlands’** paper, “Coming of Age: Strategic Directions for Digital Repositories (CIBER Research) was selected as HOT on **LinkedIn** since it was being talked about on **LinkedIn** more than anything else on **SlideShare** so they put it on the homepage of **SlideShare** (in the “Hot on **LinkedIn**” section). Congrats, **Dave** and **Ian**!! <http://www.slideshare.net>

While we are talking about **Dave**, we just learned that he has accepted an adjunct chair

in the **School of Information Sciences** at **University of Tennessee Knoxville!** **Dave** will continue to be based in the UK but he will be seeking grants in partnership with the outstanding scholar **Carol Tenopir!** Ho ha!!

After 18 years, the magnificent **Bob Kelly** (Director, Journal Information Systems, **The American Physical Society**) is retiring. “What a long strange trip it has been,” he says, quoting from the **Grateful Dead**. He continues: “Together we, APS, SSP, and others, had the opportunity to kick off and participate in the evolution from print journals, limited to one user at a time reading, generally, a few years of a subscription to

many users at a time reading the full corpus of a publishers’ journals back to volume one. We had great discussions, talked and experimented our way into the concept of reusable XML, open access, accessibility, new deliverables and linking. We lowered our costs, expanded our reach and set the stage for the future.” **Bob** also invites us to visit him on **Facebook** where he will be posting some of his “street photography.” Sounds like a great retirement occupation!

Way back when in another life I was a medical librarian (and did you know that **Dan Tonkery** was too, albeit at a much higher level?).

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