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ATG Interviews Samantha Burrridge, Managing Director, Palgrave Macmillan

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ATG Interviews Samantha Burridge

Managing Director, Palgrave Macmillan

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

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

ATG: In the original press release introducing *Palgrave Pivot* you claimed that it “liberates scholarship from the straightjacket of traditional formats.” What does that mean?

SB: It refers to the fact that academics now have an option to publish their research at its natural length, rather than make it fit the traditional formats of journal article or monograph. Most scholarly journal articles are between 7,000 and 8,000 words in length, whilst scholarly print books are published between 70,000 and 110,000 words. Sometimes research doesn’t fit to those lengths, and *Palgrave Pivot* was designed to provide academics with an alternative option to those formats.

ATG: What role does *Palgrave Pivot* play in *Palgrave Macmillan’s* overall publishing strategy?

SB: We’re committed to user-focused innovation across all our publishing areas and want to work closely with our community to develop the tools and services it needs. The development of *Palgrave Pivot* was a direct result of an ongoing program of research we are undertaking to explore the needs of the scholarly market. We questioned over 1,000 researchers across the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), and the research revealed insights into the way academics both consume and produce research. We learnt that 36% of journal article authors and 50% of monograph authors were not satisfied by the publication formats available to them and so developed *Palgrave Pivot* to meet those needs. We want to continue to challenge the traditional boundaries of publishing, and *Palgrave Pivot* is just one example of several new initiatives that we are committed to delivering to the scholarly community over the coming year.

ATG: You just mentioned some additional *Palgrave* initiatives that may also challenge the boundaries of traditional publishing. Can you share with us what else you are planning?

SB: We have just announced our latest initiative, which is the option for open access publishing across all our outlets: journal articles, *Palgrave Pivots*, and monographs. We are offering open access under a CC-BY license and are currently the only commercial publisher to do so across all its formats.

Beyond this, the survey we undertook explored much more than just research format, and identified further pain points that researchers have with publishing. We are developing our plans to break down further boundaries to meet the needs that they have expressed. Watch this space...

ATG: The *Palgrave Pivot* format is new for the humanities and social sciences. How are authors responding? Not everyone would be comfortable writing in this new format length. Have authors expressed concerns



about this? How have you responded? What editorial services are you offering your *Palgrave Pivot* authors?

SB: Authors are responding extremely positively. We knew from the research there was a need in the community for this format, but the response and enquiries we’ve received has been better than even we expected. We’re proud that *Palgrave Pivot* has attracted some big names in the humanities, such as Akira Iriye, whose *Global and Transnational History* was one of our launch titles.

We offer our *Pivot* authors the same service that we do our journal and monograph authors. All *Palgrave Pivots* go through our normal peer-review processes and can be cited and included for research assessments in the same way as traditional academic outputs. We are conscious of the need for *Palgrave Pivot* to publish the same kind of highest-quality academic work we have always been renowned for.

Of course, academics are still very welcome to publish with us using traditional formats too.

ATG: According to your Website, each of your titles undergoes complete peer review within 12 weeks of acceptance. That’s a pretty tight schedule. How are you defining complete peer review? How are you recruiting reviewers? What qualifications do you require of your reviewers?

SB: Titles are published within 12 weeks of acceptance. Acceptance takes place only after peer review and once we have the final manuscript. Peer review plays an important role as part of our quality assurance, and thus we use the same rigorous peer-review process that we use for our monographs.

There is some variation in the peer-review process depending upon the academic/professional area. For the standard process, initial proposals that qualify for publication are peer-reviewed (single-blind) by at least one academic or expert. Upon receipt of the complete manuscript it may be peer reviewed

by at least one more academic or expert, who writes a review. Commissioning staff discuss the review(s) with the author, and if necessary another reviewer may be sought, and revisions will be made.

We have a broad network of reviewers that we know and trust, but reviewers are sought on a title-by-title basis, to ensure reviewers are knowledgeable about the subject area. Reviewers are typically Associate Professor or Lecturer level and above.

Speed is of the essence when it comes to publishing topical research, and this is appreciated by our authors. *Sporting Times* by **Kath Woodward** was one of the first pieces of academic research to be published in the aftermath of the 2012 Olympics, which was particularly relevant given that she was examining the idea and importance of time in sport.

ATG: You claim that *Palgrave Pivot* is a market-changing initiative. How so?

SB: We believe it’s market changing because it’s providing researchers with an outlet for their research that we know they need, and that previously hasn’t existed. By breaking the traditional publishing boundaries of format and enabling research at its natural length, a new type of publishing emerges.

ATG: *Palgrave Pivot* Launched with 21 titles in October 2012. How many titles do you have now? How many are you projecting by the end of 2013?

SB: To date we have published 28 titles. We expect to publish more than 100 titles in 2013 across the humanities and social sciences, and many more in the years thereafter.

ATG: How are you making *Palgrave Pivot* titles accessible to the marketplace? Are they primarily available for title-by-title purchase? Can they be purchased as part of a subscription database? What should interested readers and libraries expect to pay for a title?

SB: For institutions, *Palgrave Pivot* titles are available on *Palgrave Connect*, our award-winning eBook platform, via the 2013 Subject Collections and *Connect’s Build Your Own Collections* option.

In addition to that, *Palgrave Pivot* titles are available as individual eBooks from *ebooks.com*, **GoogleBooks**, and **Amazon** and are priced between \$30 and \$45. Libraries can also purchase them from library suppliers.

ATG: Are academic libraries your main market? Or are individual scholars/students your primary focus?

SB: Researchers are our main focus, via whichever route they choose to purchase or access *Palgrave Pivots*. We expect that most will access titles through their libraries, via *Palgrave*

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Connect. So far, we have also been pleased with the response to the individual eBooks.

ATG: We notice that Palgrave Pivot titles are optimized for use via ReadCube. Can you explain what that means for our readers who are not familiar with ReadCube? Does this have any impact for users who want to download Palgrave Pivot titles onto handheld devices?

SB: Palgrave Pivot titles have been further optimized for use on Palgrave Connect with ReadCube, an interactive PDF reader. ReadCube allows the reader to add electronic notes and highlights, hyperlinked references, and more. ReadCube is currently actively developing a mobile reader app which should be released in the not-too-distant future; however, Palgrave Pivot titles themselves are already accessible through handheld and tablet devices.

ATG: Print-on-demand also seems to be part of your strategy. Why? Can you elaborate?

SB: Our ongoing dialogue with researchers worldwide, together with the sales patterns of our monograph program, shows us that many researchers are still keen to purchase research in print, and print-on-demand is the most effective way to do this for our customers.

ATG: Sam, we've been asking all of these serious, business-related questions. What about your personal interests? What are your favorite activities outside of publishing? What do you like to do for fun?

SB: I love to read, learn, travel to new places, and find different perspectives. Great food, good friends, and laughing with my daughter are all top of my list of priorities.

ATG: Thanks for taking the time to talk to us today. We really appreciate it! 🌿

against the grain people profile

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Samantha Burrige

BORN AND LIVED: Born in Oxford, spent four years at **University of St Andrews** in Scotland as an undergraduate, studying English Lit and Art History, then spent two years in the Czech Republic before moving to London.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I started at **Macmillan** as a Sales Rep for Eastern and Central Europe, then became Regional Manager, setting up local offices for the company. After a couple of years as UK Sales Director, in 2000 I moved into business development, working on the *Dictionaries of Art and Music* and other early digital works. Thereafter, for ten years, I was Publishing Director of **Palgrave Macmillan**, growing our editorial teams and lists in the UK and US, and became Managing Director of the company in 2012.

FAMILY: I have one gorgeous nine-year-old girl.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by **Milan Kundera** and our *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, developed in partnership with **The Royal Shakespeare Company**.

PET PEEVES: Grey skies, procrastination.

PHILOSOPHY: Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Can be a struggle to have that wisdom, but I try.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Creating innovative, useful, beautiful things with a small team of inspiring colleagues, authors, and other collaborators: **Palgrave Pivot** (what it is and what it will become), and the **RSC Complete Works of Shakespeare**, are two which spring to mind.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Happiness and continued knowledge and satisfaction from work.

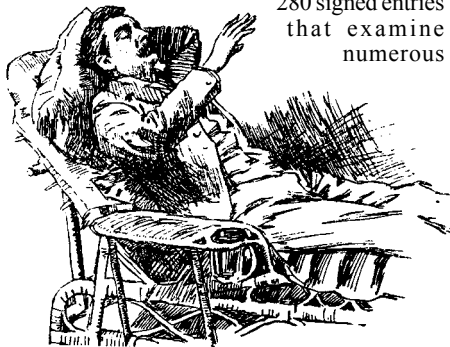
HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Clever, faster, more adaptable. Publishing will be about tools and services as well as continuing to be about great content. When considering how we make lives easier, get research out quicker, make it more efficient to sort through the mass of information... I ask, why wait five years? 🌿

From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

SAGE Reference releases another title in its ever-growing collection of single-volume encyclopedias with the publication of the *Encyclopedia of Trauma: An Interdisciplinary Guide* (2012, 978-1412978798, \$375). Edited by **Charles R. Figley** of **Pennsylvania State University**, this reference consists of more than

280 signed entries that examine numerous



types of trauma utilizing a multidisciplinary approach. As such, traumas resulting from both behavioral and neurobiological sources are explored.

It is important to note the serious meaning of trauma as applied in this work. Traumas are seen as major upheavals and catastrophes that cause significant suffering. They are more than chronic stresses in one's life that can be resolved. They are rather occurrences where "the life enhancing balances and developments are irretrievably disturbed." A look at the encyclopedia's Reader's Guide bears this out. Articles run from those on workplace violence and sexual abuse by clergy to those on community disasters and battered women. There are also entries that discuss trauma from anthropological, archaeological, and psychological perspectives with articles like: Racial and Ethnic Factors; Rituals and Ceremonies

and Bereavement. In addition, other articles discuss trauma as it relates to a number of other areas including war and combat, crime and law, medicine, religion and spirituality as well as entries related to ethical and philosophical issues. The articles are text-rich with few, but relevant, illustrations. The writing is precise, factual, and informed by recent scholarship. The requisite Readers Guide, bibliographies, "see also" references, and well-structured index are provided and increase the value for both students and faculty. In short, this is another quality **SAGE** production.

The *Encyclopedia of Trauma: An Interdisciplinary Guide* reflects the growth of a once narrow specialty that has blossomed into a field with far broader implications. Not only does this work provide relevant background definitions and explanations of diverse issues

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