October 2016

ATG Interviews Karen Phillips, Vice President, SAGE

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Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6477

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**ATG Interviews Karen Phillips, Vice President, SAGE and Khal Rudin, Director, Adam Matthew**

by Tom Gilson (Associate Editor, Against the Grain) <gilson@cofc.edu> 
and Katina Strauch (Editor, Against the Grain) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

**ATG:** We were interested to learn of SAGE’s purchase of Adam Matthew. How did the deal come about? Why did the deal make sense for SAGE? For Adam Matthew?

**KP:** At SAGE we publish high-quality materials for Higher Education teaching and research, and are actively developing our portfolio in new markets and opportunities that contribute to this goal. With this in mind we decided to build a program of digital primary source collections and quickly identified Adam Matthew as a market leader with a high-quality program and excellent reputation that perfectly matched the publishing we were looking to do. Our relationship with Adam Matthew grew from January 2012 when we started representing them for sales in the Middle East. Through our early conversations with Adam Matthew, there was clear alignment, in terms of culture, business and publishing values, discussions of a more permanent partnership followed from there. This was a fantastic opportunity for SAGE to partner with an experienced primary sources publisher and for us to offer them the opportunity to grow that business with full confidence that they would have a partner that shared their values.

**KR:** We have grown our product portfolio rapidly over the last five years and demand for our primary resource collections has increased significantly. As a small company, ensuring that you correctly support these global markets can be challenging. Thinking strategically for the future, we were looking for a partner to help support us in our outreach and our growth within new markets, and SAGE’s global reach with sales and marketing teams around the world provided this perfectly. We also have ambitious plans for the expansion of our product portfolio and in SAGE we found the perfect partner to grow Adam Matthew and invest when exciting new editorial opportunities arise. Importantly SAGE also agreed that it was important to let us continue to operate independently with the same management team and staff.

**ATG:** Most of our readers have heard of SAGE but may not be aware of many of the company’s publishing efforts. Karen, can you fill us in?

**KP:** SAGE is largely known and recognized as one of the leading independent academic publishers. Over our near 50-year history we have developed an incredibly strong publishing program within the social sciences and a growing program in engineering and medicine, even more so with our recent acquisition of the Royal Society of Medicine’s journals. We work in partnership with some of the world’s leading scholarly societies across our portfolio of 700+ journals. We have developed and launched products for scholarship and education across all areas of the social sciences. This includes a wide textbook and reference program, journals, and most recently online products for the library market. These include SAGE Knowledge — our online social science library, and SAGE Research Methods — our online research methods tool for the social and behavioral sciences. We also launched State Stats in 2012 — a new database from CQ Press that provides comprehensive data coverage of each state including health care, crime, education, and more. As part of our wider commitment to the advancement of scholarly and educational knowledge in society we have also launched several community projects for social scientists and researchers including networks and blogs (socialsciencespace.com and methodspace.com) and most recently a podcast series, “Social Science Bites.”

**ATG:** How about Adam Matthew? Khal, can you give us a little background? What collection areas are strengths for Adam Matthew? What else should our readers know about Adam Matthew?

**KR:** David Tyler, Bill Pidduck, and I started Adam Matthew Digital in January 2007 (Adam Matthew has been publishing source material since 1990) with the aim of producing a varied portfolio of online primary source collections for the humanities and social sciences. When I joined Adam Matthew (in 2002), David and Bill had already developed fantastic relationships with leading archives around the world. We have continued to nurture and expand these partnerships ever since. Adam Matthew is now an award-winning online publisher, but the same values and drivers that have defined us as a business since 1990 remain: editorial integrity, a passion for unique and interesting content, good relationships with the academic community, and long-term global partnerships.

Many people often recognize Adam Matthew from some of our first digitization projects, such as the Mass Observation project from the University of Sussex or Empire Online, but our range of collections is now extremely varied. Some of our other collections include, Global Commodities, Eighteenth Century Journals, Slavery Abolition and Social Justice, and Victorian Popular Culture. Our new titles available in 2013 include China, America and the Pacific, and American Indian Histories and Cultures from the Newberry Library in Chicago, built so that it will be cross searchable with our American West collection.

**ATG:** What benefits can customers expect now that Adam Matthew is part of the SAGE Group? How will collection offerings change, if at all? Are service enhancements in the works? Will customers see pricing changes?

**KP:** Our product fit and our strongly aligned brand values make this an exciting opportunity. SAGE’s sales presence internationally will enable the further dissemination of Adam Matthew products into new markets. There is a great appetite for their products, and this relationship will support that. Adam Matthew will continue to operate as an individual company within the SAGE Group. Both SAGE and Adam Matthew strongly believe in high quality and integrity, and with SAGE’s commitment to long-term independence will enable Adam Matthew to maintain its approach to creative, high-value product development.

**KR:** Our commitment to excellent customer service remains, and with global support from SAGE we will be even better placed to help new and existing customers. This partnership will not change our collection offerings, but will enhance our ability to digitize more primary source collections. It is extremely important to us that our collections are set at a price that enables access for institutions ranging in size and funding from small colleges to large universities.

**ATG:** Discoverability is always an issue. In what ways will you be enhancing the discoverability of both Adam Matthew collections as well as other SAGE collections? Are you looking at new ways to integrate with web-scale library discovery systems and database providers? What investments are you making in metadata production and delivery?

**KR:** We invest a lot of time categorizing and adding associated search terms that will aid researchers discover texts that are continued on page 51
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not transcribed, are rare manuscripts, or are printed materials that use place names and
languages that are no longer in common use, for example.

We have agreements in place with Ex Libris, EBSCOhost, Summon, and OCLC
to support the enhanced discoverability of our resources. In addition to this we also have
our own federated search feature, Archive Explorer, which is open to everyone via
our company Website. From here you can search across all our collections and then if
a user has access they can link directly to the documents.

ATG: We understand that Adam Matthew will continue to operate under its existing
management. That implies similar corporate cultures, but there are bound to be some
differences. What changes will we see down the road?

KP: As with any company there will be differences in working practices, but at the core
both SAGE and Adam Matthew are closely aligned in our business values and publishing
goals. There are no plans to merge Adam Matthew into SAGE, or to change existing
relationships between Adam Matthew and its partners. SAGE is committed to maintaining
the distinctive brand that the Adam Matthew team has developed.

KR: An acquisition should not be about changing who you are, but rather finding a
company to support your long-term goals. As a smaller company with an established
reputation, it was important for us to maintain our brand recognition when we were acquired.
SAGE recognized and respected our distinctive brand, and in SAGE we found a strong product
fit. At Adam Matthew we have the same management team in place who will continue to run
Adam Matthew as an independent subsidiary of SAGE. We see both companies mutually
benefiting from our individual strengths: SAGE from Adam Matthew’s expertise and
Adam Matthew from SAGE’s global and financial support.

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**ATG: As the relationship matures what impacts do you expect SAGE to have on Adam Matthew? What about Adam Matthew’s impacts on SAGE?**

**KP:** This is a fantastic opportunity for SAGE to learn from Adam Matthew’s experience in providing primary source products for the library market. We now have a governance board consisting of both senior SAGE and Adam Matthew executives which enables us to learn from each other and in turn ensure we continue to offer products and services that support scholarship and education.

**ATG: What about in the longer term? Where do you see the SAGE and Adam Matthew in five years? What would be the key elements of a strategic plan to get there?**

**KR:** As a smaller company we have been well placed to adapt quickly to the changing nature of our publishing markets, and the next five years will undoubtedly see continued change, both technically and driven by user demand. A key drive for us all is to ensure that we continue to stay ahead of this curve as much as possible by continuing to work well as a management team and by using the expertise of our global partners. The next five years will be about ensuring that we continue to provide quality, unique collections from leading archives and libraries, and that we utilize the most appropriate technologies to make the material available and enhance the user experience.

**KP:** As Khal has stated, with changes in the market, the focus over the immediate and longer-term future will be to continue to be trusted joint partners for the library community, publishing and providing access to high quality research material and supporting their needs with digital material. Maintaining an open dialogue, both internally and with our library communities, will be a key focus. Over the imminent and longer-term future, SAGE and Adam Matthew will mutually help each other to grow, providing each other in expertise and international reach as we continue to service our research communities.

**ATG: Khal, you mention using the expertise of your global partners. Which specific partners are you referring to? What expertise do they contribute? We’d love a scoop. Are you working on any new partnership deals that you can tell us about? What about for SAGE? Are there any additional plans to add to the family, so to speak?**

**KR:** Our global partners include everything from scanning companies to designers, and video and film creators to MARC record producers. All partners are key to the development of our collections and it would be unfair to single out individuals — they’re all vital!

**KP:** As an independent business, SAGE will continue to look to the future, with growth through new launches such as SAGE Research Methods, through strategic acquisitions as with Adam Matthew, or through partnerships. This year we expect to see more digital partnerships.

**ATG: You have been pretty vague about new content initiatives that may be in the works. Can you give us anything to look forward to?**

**KR:** See new collections listed in “Additional Items of Interest” above. Our collections are increasingly incorporating video and audio content, such as Moving Pictures, Optical Entertainments and the Advent of Cinema, which launched in 2012 — the latest addition to the Victorian Popular Culture Portal. In a prestigious collaboration between the British Film Institute (BFI National Archive) and Adam Matthew, we included video clips of original archive footage from the earliest days of cinema. Our editorial team worked closely with the BFI to select a range of footage, allowing users to examine the various uses that film was employed for in the earliest days of its invention. In The First World War: Personal Experiences we offer extraordinary oral histories of veterans and those who lived through the First World War, selected and sourced from the Imperial War Museum, London.

**KP:** See above for SAGE’s recent launches: These include SAGE Knowledge — our online social science library, and SAGE Research Methods — our online research methods tool for the social and behavioral sciences. In 2013 we will shortly be announcing the launch of an enhancement to SAGE Knowledge — SAGE Navigator the essential social sciences literature review tool. Hosted on SAGE Knowledge, SAGE Navigator provides students, faculty and researchers with access to the resources they need to kick start their literature search and review.

**ATG: We’ve spent a lot of time talking about business but our readers are always interested in the personal side too. What do you like to do for fun? Are there particular activities or hobbies you enjoy pursuing? Aside from Charleston, what is the most interesting place you’ve visited in the last year?**

**KR:** I’m extremely lucky in that I really enjoy my job and I get to travel around the world as part of my role. In the last six months I’ve been to the U.S., Canada, Japan, Thailand, Hong Kong, Australia and Singapore and I am looking forward to going to India for the first time in April. I will meet with the SAGE team in New Delhi and plan to spend some time looking in some archives for potential future projects! I have two young children, Verity and Harrison, and they are always exploring and learning new things.

**KP:** I have to agree that I’m extremley lucky in that I get to travel around the world. Recently I’ve visited Hong Kong, Japan, and the Netherlands. I also love the outdoors. Currently I’m learning to play the piano and I’ve taken up watercolor painting. I also love to read and cook. I quite enjoy the personal side of our business as well. It makes the job much more enjoyable and fulfilling. I’m looking forward to going to India in April! I will meet with the SAGE team in New Delhi and plan to spend some time looking in some archives for potential future projects! I have two young children, Verity and Harrison.
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and Zach, and so much of my “free” time is spent having fun with them. My wife Zoe and I support the Cheltenham Festivals and we’re looking forward to the Jazz Festival in May where we’ll see many established and new musicians including Van Morrison, Laura Mvula, and Jamie Cullum. If time allows I also like to go and watch my football team, Arsenal; I know that Karen also shares this interest although it’s rather painful watching them play at the moment!

KP: As Khal says, we both support and follow the Arsenal football team. I live in Highbury (in London) within a mile of Arsenal’s Emirates Stadium, and for me football matches are both an opportunity to see live sport, but also keep in touch with family and friends on their way to or from the games. I’m also a great fan of dance and my favourite venue for this is also local; Saddlers Wells is a great venue for contemporary dance (I’m particularly fond of Matthew Bourne and Ballet Rambert).

Travel over the last year has all been for work, and continuing with the theme of the local, for once I took my holiday as a “staycation” in London, which has to be one of the most interesting places I’ve been to! I recommend London city walks, with long lunch breaks, and a good café stop to end the day off.

Editor’s Note: Be sure to read Khal’s personal profile in this issue, page 62. — KS

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Speaking of the Charleston Conference 2013, it’s coming up! We just posted the call for papers yesterday — April 15! Here is the link! http://www.katina.info/conference/callforpapers.php

Heard from the full-of-ideas Audrey Powers <apowers@usf.edu> who is working on a preconference and also guest editing the November issue of Against the Grain. She says she needs to get most of this done before August because they are going to Martha’s Vineyard to celebrate Audrey’s son’s wedding to a wonderful Chinese woman. Audrey’s son (is his name Austin, I think I remember?) and his wife-to-be live in Beijing and are coming here with a whole group of Chinese family and friends.

Most of you have renewed your subscriptions to Against the Grain! Thanks!! If you haven’t renewed yet, please do so! Leah Hinds, Tom Gilson, and I have been working with Charles Watkinson and Purdue University Press on a plan to digitize back issues of Against the Grain. We have been tuned for an announcement hopefully at the 2013 Charleston Conference! Speaking of April 15, a bit of trivia. Did you know that it was April 15, 1912, when the Titanic went down. Most expensive tickets for the voyage were capped at $4,350, equivalent to $100,000 in today’s currency. Read more things! http://usu2campaignarchive2.com/?w=8e778c42e71e178d4dc0b4e&d=4cf-4d5a2d2&e=0e940787fc.

Most of us know about the recent purchase of Mendeley by Elsevier. Elsevier was one of our Editorial Director, SAGE
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Karen Phillips

BORN AND LIVED: Born in London 1962, lived in Buckinghamshire for most of my childhood and then London for the last 28 years

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I have worked at SAGE for 28 years, it was my first job after university, so my entire publishing career. I have worked in marketing and editorial, across our books and journals programs and more recently have focused on developing our online products for the library market.

FAMILY: I have a partner who is MD of an IT company, which develops software for the travel industry, and two wonderful children, who are now young adults (aged 18 and 20).

IN MY SPARE TIME: I try to enjoy time with friends and family.

FAVORITE BOOKS: To Kill a Mocking Bird, God of Small Things, We Need to Talk About Kevin.

PHILOSOPHY: I’m taken by Rawls’ “Theory of Justice” as a pretty sound philosophy.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Being promoted to Editorial Director at SAGE was a big moment in my career, it felt like the culmination of years of solid achievements in our publishing, and represented a big shift in my responsibilities.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: The growth of SAGE’s online products to the point where they represent the largest source of growth for SAGE.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: The pace of change has really accelerated in Higher Education publishing for both the teaching and research resources. In terms of teaching resources for the college market, alongside our textbooks we’ve seen an increase over many years of learning materials online, more recently with the increase in online assessment and video materials, and over the last year the launch of MOOCs. In the next five years, I think we will be developing even more effective pedagogic resources for a blended learning experience for students.

One of the significant changes for publishing in the next five years will be the increasing purchase of student textbooks at the institutional level. This is already the established model for the Career Colleges in the U.S., and we are also seeing early signs of this in the UK market in response to the threefold increase in student tuition fees. A more centralized textbook purchase model will increasingly be focused on e-versions of texts.

In terms of the future of publishing for researchers, I think the library will continue to be our primary partner for the foreseeable future, despite significant growth of open access publishing. In five years, I would expect a mixed economy of traditional and open access journals, with an overall growth in the amount of research published reflecting the global growth in research funding and publishing. Open access publishing will be a major area of growth for both STM and social science publishers, but much of the next five years will be focused on challenges here as we struggle to work out a sustainable publishing model, and researchers and research funders adapt to the changing demands and different choices that present themselves. The libraries will not only be a key partner for the dissemination of research via traditional journals but resilient partners in collections development through good quality reference materials (increasingly delivered online), and increasingly being the point of access to growing suites of digital products, such as data products, video collections, and primary source collections.

Please note though, it’s easy to explain change in retrospect, but not so easy to predict in advance.

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