

2014

ATG Special Report: Doody's Digital Workshop for Publishing Staff: Books and the New Learner

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Recommended Citation

Kubilius, Ramune (2014) "ATG Special Report: Doody's Digital Workshop for Publishing Staff: Books and the New Learner," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 26: Iss. 3, Article 23.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6763>

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MG: Staying at the leading edge of technology has been critical to our success, and there certainly have been many changes in the 33 years we've been in business — in both the kinds of content that get converted and the technology. We've been successful in adding more and more automation and automated learning into our processes, which have been successful in letting us produce a more reliable product, faster and at lower cost. Looking ahead, I see new frontiers as "big data" becomes a more important part of the landscape and we develop even more and faster automation to deal with the much larger volumes of information. There is also the challenge of adding more granular and precise tagging to content that had previously been converted at a basic level; this is happening as content owners realize the value that's buried deep in the content. There is also semantic tagging — where we apply more intelligence to content than was ever possible.

ATG: *The world of econtent must be exciting, but it must also take a lot of energy. What do you do to relax and recharge? Do you have any favorite activities or interests?*

MG: I'm an avid skier though I don't get away nearly as much as I'd like, and I play the saxophone — not well, but I enjoy doing so and try to get time to play at least three or four times a week when I'm not traveling. They don't appreciate saxophones much in hotel rooms.

ATG: *It's been great talking to you. We appreciate your making the time in your busy schedule.* 🌻

against the grain
publisher profile

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Doody's Digital Workshop for Publishing Staff: Books and the New Learner



by **Ramune K. Kubilius** (Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

In the fall of 2013, as an outgrowth of the consulting arm of **Doody Publishing** (Publishing Services Division of **Doody Enterprises, Inc.**), an inaugural workshop was offered with a focus on the migration of publishers from a print-first to a digital-first framework. Teaming up with some of the first workshops' participants, a second workshop was planned and held April 8, 2014 at **Roosevelt University's Schaumburg, IL** campus. A third workshop, for society executives, is scheduled for September 29/30, 2014, to be held in the suburbs of Chicago.

Thirty-five persons (and seven speakers) attended the second workshop that was entitled "Books and the New Learner." Most attendees were publishing and editorial staffs from health-related associations headquartered in the greater Chicagoland area (as many health associations are), with a small number of participants who travelled from out of state. There were some attendees also from the commercial publishing and service provision sectors (sales, eBook platforms and consulting, etc.). Although the workshop wasn't designed with librarian attendees in mind, it turned out

that two librarians were in attendance — one who works for a book jobber, and one from an academic medical library.

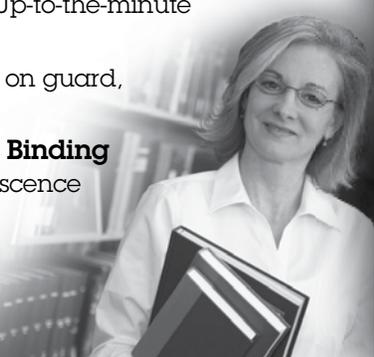
Billed as a half-day workshop, the program actually ran from 11 am to 5 pm, with a few breaks. In the morning session, after initial greetings, the two organizers, conductors and hosts of the workshop, publishing field veterans and consultants, **Dan Doody** and **Rich Lampert**, presented an update on eBook publishing and trends in health sciences publishing. In the afternoon session, a panel of educators

continued on page 33

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Doody's Digital Workshop from page 32

and students, from **University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)**, **University of Chicago**, and **Midwestern University**, shared their insights on their expectations, needs, and practices. There were two breakout sessions that provided an opportunity for the larger attendee group to discuss cases in smaller groups.

In his introduction, entitled “Books, eBooks and libraries,” **Dan Doody** discussed key milestone years in STM publishing. He provided an anecdotal look at library spending, and discussed the findings of a few reports, presenting salient findings about print vs. eBook usage and experiments with providing students with devices (e.g., iPads) as well as other trends.

Rich Lampert discussed “What? How? Why? Building effective eBook publishing programs” (listed in the schedule as “eBooks are the answer, but what was the question?”). He mentioned that since 2008, a majority of **Doody** (Publishing Services Division) consulting projects have related to digital publishing. He started with the basics, “what is an eBook, anyway?” and proceeded to discuss what percent of revenues eBooks represent in the industry. eBook revenues are still a relatively small portion of the market share (13.9% of professional book revenues), and as **Dan Doody** reminded during his earlier presentation, health sciences libraries are no longer buying

many print books. **Rich Lampert** pointed out ways in which online books cannot mimic print books, things that may create discovery issues. For example, calling a chapter “Introduction” is not useful for discovery.

In the afternoon panel session, the first speaker, **Midwestern University** anatomy faculty member **Sandra Inouye**, PhD, presented on “The iGeneration and the Use of Multimedia in Medical Education.” She described the teaching tools used — simulators, computer assisted instruction, and virtual patients. Recapping her remarks, she overviewed the principles for instructional media, including coherence, redundancy, etc.

University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) School of Public Health associate professor emeritus **Daniel Swartzman**, J.D., MPH, discussed “Online Graduate Public Health Education: MOOCs as Texts.” His remarks were based on experience teaching students who are earning degrees and certificates in an online environment. He reviewed the benefits of online education (when done well). He also mentioned problems including the obvious — there is more work for faculty in order to do this well, and not all students learn optimally in an online environment. Public health, at least for the programs at **UIC**, involves a group of students who have no definitive professional examination and who place a premium on knowing facts. However, they do not always read the assigned readings. **Swartzman** threw out a challenge to publishers in the audience:

there are some “packaging matters” he doesn’t know how to do and he presumes they do (or should). His prediction? “The future is going to have to be multimedia or transmedia.”

The slide titles and illustrations used by **Michael Woo**, MD, of the **University of Chicago** provided a humorous view of some points that may cause publishers some worry. Beginning with his title “The New Learner: Old Farts & New Stinkers,” he shared the observation that the type of medical information the students and residents he teaches are seeking is often not found just in peer-reviewed and classic sources, but also from crowd-authored content that is free and searchable.

Maggie Kaminska, a third-year student pharmacist at **UIC**, and **Mike Green**, a third-year osteopathic medical student at **Midwestern University**, shared their views on information they seek and find in required textbooks and elsewhere, as well as their expectations and information-seeking practices in general. As one listened, one could not help but think about whether it was a matter of different learning styles or the differing information needs of different health profession students. What came to mind were reports from years past by **Carol Tenopir**, **David King**, and others, about differing information seeking and reading patterns — of students, faculty, and different professional specialties.¹ These two students shared some similar, but also different, experiences. One mentioned a practice of watching videotaped

continued on page 43

Doody's Digital Workshop from page 33

lectures, presentations, a review of treatment plans and guidelines, and use of various products (also a concern that her library was cancelling a popular aggregated clinical information resource). The other student mentioned purchasing alternative (print) textbooks, being frustrated with required readings, and having a concern about retention of information.

Discussion between panel members and the audience was lively and engaging, indicating that the allotted time easily could have been expanded. Summary remarks and additional questions by **Dan Doody** included observations that there are differences between seeking knowledge and seeking answers, between "tradition" and what learners want. And, not surprisingly for this audience, society publishers have much to consider in terms of potential partnerships, and the ways they package, market, and sell their information products. Questions one might ask include: What is the attitude/ideology of the textbook? For what content do you pay (or are you willing to pay)?

Workshop organizers divided the larger group into smaller groups, and each discussion period provided some groups an opportunity to discuss one case, and others another. The cases discussed by the groups were drawn from the experience of the two organizers, perhaps being an amalgam of some "not so good practices" that would elicit discussions on how publishers might better proceed in given scenarios. The cases had lighthearted titles, such as "The Flagship is Taking on Water," which led discussants to analyze a society's publication of the new edition of its "most visible and lucrative non-periodical publication" and the problems therein... Summaries of discussion points provided others the opportunity to hear opinions and conclusions reached by small groups other than their own. For one case, for example, some discussants opined that eBooks all too often are an afterthought, others thought that the society publishers bring added value and interactivity to the content. There are still struggles to find platforms and good content management systems. Challenges include determining what customers want, choosing the right market, distribution channels, and marketing routes. Conclusions? No one has figured it all out yet. The trick is to experiment, to be agile, quick, and not expensive. Think of the end-user: is it going to be a student or a professional?

Each workshop attendee's packet contained a flashdrive containing the presentation slides (except the students remarks, which were extemporaneous), and there was a selective (and not necessarily endorsed by workshop sponsors) list of vendors mentioned during **Rich Lampert's** keynote talk. There was also a useful summary with **Rich Lampert's** notes, fleshing out and highlighting salient points from other presenters' talks. Attendees will have to judge whether they felt that these and other promised workshop "take-aways" were fulfilled.

There are a number of professional associations to which attendees of the April 8th workshop might belong and many learning opportunities that all of us can utilize — in person and online. Apparently, workshop organizers feel they have identified a niche needs area they can fill, since they announced plans to offer two publishing-related workshops a year. After assessing registration numbers and analyzing attendee feedback, they will be able to make conclusions on how to proceed and what publishing issues to address in the future. Perhaps they will decide to offer advanced versions of some workshops already held. On the topics of the second workshop, namely "books" and "new learners," for example, one could envision that more can be discussed in greater depth. It may be useful to hear from those involved in the publishing cycle, from content creators to users of the content, especially if more time is left for dialogue with participants. As attendees, speakers or discussants, these additional persons could bring unique perspectives and insights.

It was interesting to be in a workshop of peers largely doing work outside one's own usual realm, but common ground for discussion was found as the day progressed. In the short span of one day, interesting conversations took place, and presumably, conversations continued at workshop attendees' workplaces and beyond. 🌿

Endnotes

1. (A sample reference) Not All Users Are Alike: How do Age and Productivity Affect User Behavior? (**Carol Tenopir**, **Peter B. Boyce**, and **Donald W. King**), *23rd Annual Charleston Conference* (2003).

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