

2014

ATG Interviews: Dr. Mehdi Khosrow-Pour

Katina Strauch

Against the Grain, kstrauch@comcast.net

Tom Gilson

Against the Grain, gilsont@cofc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Strauch, Katina and Gilson, Tom (2017) "ATG Interviews: Dr. Mehdi Khosrow-Pour," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 26: Iss. 5, Article 21.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6855>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

ATG Interviews Dr. Mehdi Khosrow-Pour

President and CEO, IGI Global

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

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

ATG: For those readers who may not be familiar with the works published by IGI Global can you tell us what they might find if they visited your Website?

MK-P: The first thing that one will find on the IGI Global Website is the fact that IGI Global is now offering quality reference titles (peer-reviewed reference books, scholarly journals, and databases) in all areas of academic research — including, but not limited to: Business, Communications, Computer Science, Education, Engineering, Environmental Science, Healthcare, Library Science, Psychology, Public Policy and Administration, Security, as well as in the Social Sciences and Humanities, and not just content focused on information science and technology research, which is what IGI Global had predominately been known for since the company's inception in 1988. We have been expanding our content coverage since 2009, and today offer a diverse collection of titles in all of the above academic research areas allowing us to become a major disseminator of knowledge in all content areas, and not just those with purely an IS&T focus. IGI Global's portfolio of content currently includes more than 2,600 reference books, 160 journals, and close to 30 different database purchasing options. Not to mention more than 59,000 full-text book chapters and 14,000 full-text journal articles available for individual purchase.

On each page of our Website, we provide a full-text search for titles — also searchable by subject area, publication type, and copyright year; with purchasing options on all levels fitting a variety of budgets. Additionally, we provide reviews/testimonials for each of our publications, a list of best-sellers, and also a list of indices where our publications are currently discoverable. Content can be purchased in both electronic format as well as in print; on the full book or journal volume level; on an individual article or chapter level; as well as in a multitude of collections including, but not limited to eBook and print bundles; subject-based or discipline-based databases; as well as in our largest databases InfoSci-Books, which holds every book published by IGI Global, and InfoSci-Journals, which holds every journal published by IGI Global. All of our electronic content has extremely liberal DRM.

ATG: We were excited to learn that IGI Global was publishing a third edition of the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology*. What led you to decide the time was right for a new edition?

MK-P: Taking into consideration the rapid pace of technological revolution and the impact of technology on all facets of life, the contents of previous editions of a publication such as the



Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology can become obsolete very quickly. The initial edition of this publication, which was a five-volume set released in January 2005, was well-received both by researchers and academic libraries all over the world. Subsequently, the eight-volume, second edition was released in October 2008, and included many new articles (roughly 60% new content) as well as some articles (roughly 40%) from the first edition. Over the years, the publication became a major source/platform for researchers, students, and many practitioners worldwide to learn about the latest research discoveries related to the field of information science and technology research and its applications. As a result of this worldwide recognition and requests from many researchers, back in 2011 we began planning for the third edition. One of the hardest decisions that we had to make was whether or not to pull any content from the previous edition. Due to the nature of the research and how quickly new innovations are introduced, we decided to only include new content in this third edition. Also, in order to make this edition much more appealing to a wider community of researchers, students, and practitioners, we have opted to include a number of content areas that were not reflected in past editions, including, but certainly not limited to: Big Data, Assistive Technologies, Digital Media, Engineering Science, Gaming, Healthcare Administration, Hospitality, Travel, and Tourism Management, Management Science, Marketing, Materials Science, Psychology and Human Behavior, Robotics, and Sustainability, just to name a few.

ATG: There has been a lot of change in the information industry since the last edition of the *Encyclopedia* in 2008. What would you say are the key new developments and trends? How are these changes affecting libraries? How are libraries responding?

MK-P: We have been afforded an extraordinary privilege to be present for such phenomenal technological changes where the whole world is becoming one electronic village in which we can identify and share knowledge instantly. As it was mentioned above, the pace of technological change has far exceeded many experts' imaginations, causing many organizations, including libraries, to be forced to formulate the best possible course of actions to deal with this ever-changing set of challenges and opportunities.

Content strategy and collection development, have been, and will continue to be, significantly impacted. Discoverability has become a significant topic of conversation for publishers, vendors, and libraries all over the globe.

In my opinion, many libraries, specifically those in more developed nations, have managed to persevere through these changes that have been brought upon them by fully utilizing a variety of technology-related applications in their day-to-day operations. Regrettably, libraries in the lesser developed nations, do not have the same accessibility to these applications and sadly as such, the divide between these regions is becoming much more evident. Many institutions are becoming much more progressive in their handling of electronic content and are on the verge of eliminating print resources completely.

ATG: In the case of the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology*, you are wearing two hats, serving as both publisher and editor. What is it like blending those two roles?

MK-P: Although it becomes difficult from time to time, I have always tried to keep my scholarly work totally separate from the business world that I also live in. I devote two full days each week to my scholarly work which is extremely important to me; since in my heart, I am still, and always will be an academician first...and a business man second. As a publisher and purveyor of content who understands the gap in the current market and the needs of libraries looking to grow their timely collections, as well as a scholar and current Editor-in-Chief of four peer-reviewed journals (the *Information Resources Management Journal*, the *Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations*, the *Journal of Information Technology Research*, as well as the *Journal of Cases on Information Technology*), I have had the opportunity to create and disseminate scholarly content that feeds my own scholarly interests as well as the needs of the academic markets. It is like being the owner of a symphony orchestra and, at the same time, being a composer too!

continued on page 50

ATG: When we interviewed you in May 2012, you said that IGI Global's growth would not have been possible without the strong collaboration of your authors and editors. Taking the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology* as an example, how do you recruit quality authors and editors? What criteria do they need to meet?

MK-P: Our authors and editors from all over the world have always been an integral part of our success at IGI Global. The field of information science and technology research is borderless and in many ways its arena is almost 100% global. We are proud of our collaboration with more than 65,000 experts from all over the world; each lending their research, expertise, and time to our publications over the past 30 years! IGI Global has always been a facilitator of knowledge development and a disseminator of progressive academic research conducted by our colleagues all around the globe in various academic disciplines.

For the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Third Edition*, specifically, I had the privilege of working with more than 1,800 researchers from 50+ countries who contributed more than 760 articles to this publication. Some of the contributors to this edition had articles in the previous edition that were well-received and favorably reviewed, and as such we opted to invite them to contribute their most recent findings as new material in this edition. In order to make the content in this edition as progressive and diverse as possible, we also sent a number of exclusive invitations to experts in the field with cutting-edge research interests in a variety of discipline areas.

ATG: In developing a comprehensive work like the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology*, how does an editor ensure that the topic coverage provides the best-balanced compilation of concepts and issues?

MK-P: The first step in developing a comprehensive publication such as this ten-volume set, is defining the overall scope, and then identifying the various topic areas to be covered within. For the third edition of this publication, we decided to broaden the scope of the coverage. In the previous edition, there were 26 separate research categories. Each of the hundreds of articles fell into its respective category. In the third edition, we expanded the coverage to include 100 different research categories, many of which I already outlined in my responses above. A greater emphasis was placed on the utilization and management of IS&T in areas such as Healthcare, Business, Communications, Engineering, and Psychology, all areas that were underrepresented in the previous edition. As we issued a "Call for Submissions" we made sure that we maintained a balanced coverage and that there was a strong acquisition of articles in each of the research categories. Obviously, it is almost impossible to have equal coverage in all 100 areas, but we are pleased with the balance of coverage we ended up with at the end, making this edition very suitable towards the needs of all researchers and their students.

ATG: In addition to ensuring well-balanced topic coverage, what measures have you taken to increase the navigability of the encyclopedia?

MK-P: Based on the recommendations of many researchers and libraries, the issues surrounding navigability in this edition of the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology* have been improved significantly.

The previous editions had the articles arranged alphabetically by the title of each article. In this edition, all articles are divided into categories relevant to their topical coverage. There are 100 different categories, with each volume containing multiple categories. Each of these categories is arranged alphabetically across the ten-volume set, beginning with "A" categories and ending with "W" categories. Within each category, the articles are also arranged in alphabetical order. As each new category is introduced, section dividers represent the transition from one category to the next.

To further assist with easy navigation, there are two different tables of content compiled at the beginning of each volume. The first represents the "Contents by Volume," which displays the arrangement of the content in its respective categories, and the second represents the "Contents in Alphabetical Order," which displays the arrangement of content from A to Z by the articles' titles. Each volume also contains the preface and user's guide, the full list of contributors with accompanying page numbers, as well as a full index.

The User's Guide, new to this edition, provides the reader with an overview of the features both on a volume-by-volume level as well as the article level, and how to effectively navigate across the volumes to find the content most relevant to their needs. Obviously, in the electronic version of the encyclopedia, the navigation features allow for full-text searching which returns search results much more expeditiously.

Each article contains in-depth discussions of key issues, terms, and concepts, as well as thousands of critical terms with detailed definitions. Specifically including: a brief introduction to the topic area; an overview of issues, controversies, and problems as they relate to the theme; solutions and recommendations on how to deal with those issues presented in the preceding section; charts, graphs, tables, and formulae are included as illustrative examples wherever appropriate; discussions of future research directions; a conclusion; extensive list of references; additional reading section; as well as key terms and definitions.

All listed references have been submitted to CrossRef and will experience increased visibility through this linking network, and our hope is that the content will also be considered for inclusion in a number of indices such as DBLP Computer Science Bibliography, ACM Digital Library, and The Book Citation Index in Web of Science.

ATG: In that same May 2012 interview, you mentioned that IGI Global started taking advantage of digital opportunities as early as 2002. But today you still make a sizable investment in print as the new *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology* at-

tests. Why? What role does print play in your publishing strategy? Do sales really justify the investment? Or are there other factors that play into it?

MK-P: Our projections regarding digital opportunities for IGI Global have been right on target during the past decade and we are now witnessing that more than 50% of our revenue is coming from our e-content particularly IGI Global InfoSci databases which offers the most comprehensive collection of contents for a fraction of the combined total cost of the print versions.

In regards to making such a sizable investment in publishing a ten-volume encyclopedia, there are other factors that have contributed to our decision in also publishing this edition in print too. The primary factor is the fact that the print world is still present and the global academic community still does not seem to want to let this go! Many of our contributors are still expressing that their university is reluctant to only accept the electronic version of their published materials in support of their tenure and promotion efforts. You'd be surprised to know about the number of potential contributors who check with us first to make sure the final publication is also available in print! However, thanks to the technology of POD (Print On Demand) and SRDP (Short Run Digital Printing) we have been able to minimize our print costs significantly. For your information, we released the electronic version of this encyclopedia long before the print version was available, and most of our revenue so far for this publication is coming from the electronic version through IGI Global's platform and through platforms and distribution channels offered by our major e-content provider partners, such as: ProQuest (Ebrary), EBSCO Information Services (EBSCOhost), Gale: Cengage Learning (Gale Virtual Reference Library - GVRL), Credo Reference, Ingram Content Group, Inc. (MylLibrary), Skillsoft (Books24x7), Safari Books Online, Dawson Books, YBP Library Services, etc.

ATG: What aspects of your publishing program have expanded? Contracted? What market forces have led to these changes?

MK-P: Since our last interview in 2012, we have been able to expand our coverage areas even further by offering many more reference titles (books, journals, and databases) encompassing a variety of cutting-edge topics in academic areas such as business, engineering, environmental science, healthcare, communications, social sciences, and even the humanities in addition to keeping a strong focus on our traditional coverage areas in information science and technology. Today, our business titles generate more than 20% of our revenue followed by titles in information science and technology, education, medicine, engineering, media and communications, as well as environmental science.

We have also placed a much stronger focus on publishing more large compilations. In this new copyright year, IGI Global customers will start to take notice that our collection of major reference works has increased significantly with more large compilations such as the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Third Edition* being added to our

continued on page 52

expansive portfolio. Additionally, we will be releasing more handbooks of research (single and two-volume) as well as multi-volume book collections in a vast array of subject areas than ever before. This trend will continue substantially with an anticipated 25% growth by the 2016 copyright year.

ATG: *How does the library market react to expensive, multi-volume offerings such as the Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology? Have library budgets recovered enough to afford sets like this? Are you finding that libraries are more likely to access encyclopedias such as this one via various online platforms, such as your line of databases and/or subject subscription packages through various distribution partners?*

MK-P: From the beginning we were very mindful about the library budgets and their ability to invest in such comprehensive publications. At the same time, we do not want to deprive the academic world of the wealth of knowledge these publications offer. These compilations fuel many new innovations which power the engines of economic growth, development, and prosperity.

In order to cater to any budgetary constraints that academic libraries, corporations, or other organizations are experiencing that might stand in the way of acquiring publications such as the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Third Edition* into their reference collections, we just recently began offering one- and two-year subscription options so that these institutions do not have to purchase the entire set up front.

We also offer a number of pre-publication discounts on both the print and electronic versions of our titles. On the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Third Edition*, in particular, we are offering a pre-publication discount which has been extended to December 31, 2014. To learn more about the current discounts on this publication as well as others, one can visit the **IGI Global** Online Bookstore.

Also, with each print purchase of this edition of the encyclopedia, we are also offering complimentary lifetime electronic access to the ten volumes, as well as complimentary lifetime electronic access to any updated content/volumes that are added to this edition of the encyclopedia in the future.

For those libraries that have purchased, or are interested in purchasing **IGI Global's** InfoSci-Books database, our largest book database, they will have access to this publication as part of their database package.

For those who do not want to purchase the entire encyclopedia and do not have access to it through their institution's library, all 760 articles will be available for single-article purchase through **IGI Global's** pay-per-download platform, InfoSci-On-Demand. This platform allows customers to perform a full-text search through all of **IGI Global's** book and journal content, then purchase and download the full PDFs of each book chapter or journal article.

ATG: *Why do you feel that this encyclopedia is an essential addition to academic*

against the grain people profile

Co-founder & CEO, Outsell, Inc.
330 Primrose Road, Suite 510, Burlingame CA 94010
Phone: (650) 342-6060 • Fax: (650) 342-7135
<astratigos@outsellinc.com> • www.outsellinc.com

Anthea C. Stratigos

BORN AND LIVED: Native of the San Francisco Bay Area – born and raised.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: See bio on our Website.

FAMILY: Greg, my husband of 22 years, stepson Jeff and his wife Wendy, stepdaughter Melissa and her husband Gus. Two sons, Mark age 24, and Gregory 21, and our grandson Grant age 5. And we can't forget Nell, our six-year-old black lab.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE: Love to travel, long walks and swimming, reading, gardening, writing and enjoying Greg's amazing cooking and new restaurants wherever we go. We are foodies.

FAVORITE BOOKS: Too many to list — I'm an avid reader but I loved *Atlas Shrugged*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Rain of Gold*, and the *Conversations with God Trilogy*. I love fiction of all kinds — chick lit to the serious — and will read stuff with a spiritual bent and the occasional business book.

PET PEEVES: People who don't take responsibility for their actions and who say "can't do." I also don't like nails on a chalkboard and rude drivers either. And I am on a crusade for people to "give up busy," put down their cell phones and devices, and actually enjoy each other and their surroundings.

PHILOSOPHY: Live a good life, be honest, and make a positive difference along the way.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Became the youngest female VP in the D&B company when I was 29. Starting **Outsell**.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Continue to grow new services in **Outsell**, launch some start-ups, and publish a couple of books I have in the works that support a philanthropic as well as business legacy. 🌱

libraries? In what ways do you feel that this compilation will progress the researchers of today into more forward thinking for tomorrow? What sets it apart from other similar major reference works on the market?

MK-P: As mentioned previously, ongoing research findings are the fuel for new innovations and discoveries in all economies. The interdisciplinary nature of the content in this encyclopedia sets it apart from others in the field. Also, the rigorous peer-review process of the encyclopedia is only one of the many facets that make this an essential addition to academic libraries. In order to ensure that the material included in the final publication represents the highest quality, all proposals for submission were carefully reviewed and then all full submissions were subjected to the double-blind review process before any articles were accepted for this publication. Knowing the wealth of coverage offered in this third edition of the encyclopedia by more than 1,800 scholars and experts from institutions in more than 50 countries, we hope this comprehensive reference collection will make a fundamental impact in the discovery of new innovations, solutions, and opportunities in all areas of academic research.

ATG: *Access to the data supporting research is a growing need. Does IGI Global offer separate access to the data sets that support the research in your publications? If not, are there plans to do so?*

MK-P: We have always strongly believed that providing open access to data sets, in sup-

port of research efforts, is extremely important. The entire research community benefits from providing transparent research data. We encourage our contributors to submit their data sets to centralized repositories specific to their fields of research. The growth of these highly available repositories extends the knowledgebase for the entire research community. In an effort to promote the sharing of research data sets, we also continue to grow our own data set repository and offer open access freely to data sets within our Website as well as on our award-winning InfoSci database platform.

ATG: *As you know, we always like to end our interviews on a more personal level, and we know that you are an avid reader and a big music fan. What are your latest favorites?*

MK-P: Among my latest additions to my music collection are "One More Night" by **Maroon 5** and "Nothing Without Me" by **Markus Schulz** featuring **Ana Diaz**, both of which I enjoy playing on my new **SONOS** wireless ten-speaker stereo system at home, which I love. The latest book I have read is *Robert B. Parker's Blind Spot* by **Reed Farrel Coleman**. I must admit that my world is not only occupied by long working hours, but also lots of continuous excitement with activities such as scuba diving (I am a certified diver), as well as frequent sky diving, car racing (recently I completed a 20-mile race at the Pocono Raceway), and I am currently taking lessons towards obtaining my helicopter pilot's license. Overall, I would say that I am a thrill junky! 🌱