Marketing to Libraries

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include participants from across the US and Canada. The European Council will include members from a number of European countries. The goal of the Library Council is to gain information useful to Academic Press, which will help us develop products, systems, and services to meet the changing needs of our valued customers.

V. Can you address some of the forces currently driving the library market? What developments do you see in libraries and publishing in the next few years that might have an impact on our working relationships?

M. We continually ask ourselves about the future of libraries. Where the library market is headed is not always clear to publishers, or to librarians, for that matter, which makes our task all the more challenging. AP wants to publish works in their most useful format, be that print or electronic. Academic Press has recently entered the field of electronic publishing. It’s a risky venture at the moment. Libraries say they want CD-ROMs, but then hold-off on making purchases, or they’re only willing to pay prices that don’t take into account new product research and development. New technology brings with it expensive startup costs. Existing print editions were generally not produced with subsequent CD-ROM reprints as an option. Therefore, the time and expense it takes to reformat these works must somehow be recouped.

Another issue created by the new electronic media is site licensing. How many licenses should be included with a product? There are no restrictions if six students are looking at a book together, but what if they’re at separate computer terminals? How many concurrent users will be permitted per license? Should publishers allow buyers to network products? One of AP’s purposes in setting up the Library Councils is to work through some of these issues.

V. John Steinbeck’s father lost his shirt trying to ship iceberg lettuce back east from California in railway cars full of ice. Now, everyone has access to lettuce year-round. Maybe we’re in a similar position: in ten years the issues we’ve been discussing will be standardized and incorporated into our lives. Maria, thank you for talking with me. ☄️
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