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ATG Interviews Michelle Casalini, CEO and Owner, Casalini Libri

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I'm a native Southern Californian, back when there were
Scripps
Institution
of
Oceanography
Library

Against the Grain / November 2012 <http://www.against-the-grain.com>

I’m convinced early on that users would demand the
of STM journals to digital, and we were con
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Peter Brueggeman
Interview — Peter Brueggeman
from page 54

is and will be a librarian tasked with Scripps
user outreach and instruction, and I continue
to do collection development in marine and
earth sciences as well as Scripps archives/spe
cial collections. Other library users will also
continue to receive many of the same services
and resources they have in the past.

ATG: What does your experience with the
Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library
closing tell you about the future of special
ized, departmental libraries? What about the
future of research libraries in general?

PB: In the case of the Scripps Library
closure, while challenging for some in the short
term, it’s reflective of the need to realign and
streamline facilities, collections, and budgets
as the academic research library continues
to evolve. Looking into the future, as scholar
arily eBooks are preferentially acquired, as are
ejournals, then one would expect a steadily-
decreasing use of physical collections, which of
course will continue to impact all libraries. At
some point, the cost-effectiveness needs to be
examined about shifting physical collections
in part or in entirety to compact shelfing on
off-campus facility with a reading room and with on-cam
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research library is as essential as it has ever
been to the academic enterprise. The relation
ships between librarians and their users evolve,
but the services and the resources provided by
academic libraries continue to be paramount
in both research and teaching.

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from page 54

MC: Yes, we launched our first collection,
the award-winning Editoria Italiana Online,
in 2003 with a relatively small selection of
eBooks and e-journals by prominent scholarly
publishers from Italy. Since my father founded
the company in 1958 our mission has been
to assist academic libraries in building their
relevant bibliographical information, books, and
journals in the countries we represent.

As a library supplier, we closely followed
the changes that, after the debut of HighWire
Press in 1995, brought about the migration of
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MC: Tell us about the latest Torrossa
platform. How has it evolved from the 2003
version? In what specific ways does it reflect
the changes in the marketplace?

MC: When we decided it was time for a
new platform, we aggressively sought input
from the librarians who use the platform every
day and work with researchers in the field and
students, as well as consulting with publishers
and authors. The feedback we gathered at a
recent Charleston Juried Product Development
Forum was also instrumental in our planning.

The Torrossa platform has all of the features
today’s users have come to expect: a neat and
intuitive interface, a quick search textbox,
continuing on page 58

ATG: You first launched the first ver
sion of your full-text platform in 2003 at the
Frankfurt book fair with 20 publishers. Then
you launched a newer version of the platform
in 2007. And now you have released a brand
new platform called Torrossa. Do we have
the timeline correct?

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ATG Interviews Michele Casalini
CEO and Owner, Casalini Libri

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

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

In the past year, we launched the Torrossa
platform (www.torrossa.it), on which the con
tent we host continues to grow and multiply;
Il Mulino is just one of the publishers that has
recently joined Torrossa.

ATG: Tell us about the latest Torrossa
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continuing on page 58
highly advanced search options, personal workspace, citation tools, and more.

As for the content itself, Torrossa unifies all of our eBook and e-journal content in a single interface, offering institutions with a critical mass of academic publishing from Italy and Spain that is constantly growing.

The platform is specially designed to give us greater flexibility for continuous enhancements and further innovation as the market moves forward and new economic models for content acquisition and licensing are established.

**ATG:** You are also helping publishers to put up their own content, correct? This fills a gap in the availability of bibliographic information. Please tell us how this service works.

**MC:** Yes, the academic presses in the countries we cover are nearly all small- and medium-sized publishers who do not otherwise have the technological and economic resources to make the transition from print to digital on their own. Our strategy was to create a digital showcase for scholarly research from Romance language countries. But not only are we offering our publishers their own space on a digital landscape that is heavily dominated by STM publications and, especially, by English language content, we are making the transition for them: digitizing their content in PDF format, breaking eBook files down to the chapter level, creating the metadata, cataloging, and indexing. I always like to admit that if you find any inaccuracy in our databases, the error is solely our own.

**ATG:** You mention you have Italian and Spanish materials on the Torrossa platform, and you refer to covering Romance language countries. How many titles are you covering in each language?

**MC:** Right now Torrossa includes a total of 13,000 eBooks and 550 e-journals for a total of over 220,000 articles and chapters. Conference proceedings comprise a fair portion of the eBooks, and they are, of course, published in a variety of languages, independent from the country of publication. In descending order the languages represented are: Italian, Spanish, English, French, and German.

Our efforts were concentrated in Italy at the start and then just three years ago we moved our efforts to Spain with amazing results. The number of Spanish publishers contributing to Torrossa doubled in just one year, and we expect to reach over 50 in the coming months. In 2013 we’ll be adding content by the Spanish publishers Iberoamericana Vervuert and Casa de Velázquez along with a host of university presses. In the meantime, we have a few publishers from Portugal and France signed on, and we’ll certainly be looking to consolidate those markets in the coming years.

**ATG:** You stated that some authors want to go to bigger international publishers? How does this effect Torrossa? How many publishers are you working with?

**MC:** We now have over 150 publishers contributing their content to the Torrossa platform, and that number is increasing at a steady rate.

It is true that authors are attracted by the audience that the big international publishers promise and that this is a challenge for the small academic publishers we work with. But that is precisely where Torrossa comes into play: we aim to give our publishers the visibility their academic content deserves in order to make the transition to digital an even greater opportunity for them.

A further advantage Torrossa offers is context. The tradition of research in Italy, Spain, France, and Portugal, in fields like the Humanities and Social Sciences and, still today, the output is not dominated by a handful of big publishers; rather there are hundreds of small scholarly publishers producing high-quality research all across Western Europe. With the Torrossa platform, publishers and researchers have a framework that is specially dedicated to the scope of their publications and studies.

Our mission with Torrossa is to produce a platform that meets the expectations of publishers and the needs of libraries.

**ATG:** We also notice that you have a sister site, store.torrossa.it, which is dedicated to individual users so you are selling to directly to the reader. Is this a successful operation? Is it taking away from your library sales? Or are they proving to be mutually exclusive?

**MC:** Yes, the Torrossa platform was developed specifically for the academic library market which, as it is heavily concentrated in the Humanities and Social Sciences and, still today, the output is not dominated by a handful of big publishers; rather there are hundreds of small scholarly publishers producing high-quality research all across Western Europe. With the Torrossa platform, publishers and researchers have a framework that is specially dedicated to the scope of their publications and studies.

Nevertheless, we wanted to make this wealth of exclusive, original-language content also available to private individuals that are outside the university context. So, we created the sister site Torrossa Store where anyone can purchase articles and chapters. Our institutional subscribers are located all over the world, but customers of Torrossa Store tend to be located in Italy and Spain.

**ATG:** Is Torrossa content available for download on to mobile devices?

**MC:** There is a Torrossa App for private individuals to purchase eBooks to their mobile devices, and we are now working on the licensing adjustments that will allow our institutional customers to offer download to mobile devices to their users.

**ATG:** When you are not working hard for publishers and libraries how do you like to spend your time? Are there any personal interests or hobbies that you’d like to share with our readers?

**MC:** I’ve always been very interested in environmental issues, and actually we have installed a photovoltaic system on the roof of our logistics offices which powers our entire fleet of servers; this way the Torrossa platform serves as a bridge also to an environmentally-friendly future.

My sister Barbara and our wonderful colleagues joke that Torrossa is my “baby” but, seriously, I have a wonderful 11-year-old son, Piero Niccolò, and we love to go hiking together in the mountains.

**ATG:** Michele, thank you for being so gracious in taking the time to answer our questions.

**MC:** Thank you, Katina and Tom. It has been a pleasure.