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PW NEWSLINE

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

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When We Are All Publishers: NJ Indie Is Insta-B&N

Beginning next week, Barnes & Noble won't be the only bookstore publishing public-domain classics. Walter Boyer, who owns the indie Bookends in Ridgewood, N.J., will be publishing several thousand via his own store. And unlike B&N, he'll be making them available on-demand.

Bookends is the first American bookseller to install an InstaBook machine, which allows for on-demand printing of trade paperbacks.

(Several have previously been placed in Canada stores.)

The system, like other in-store machines, is book publishing's version of the celestial jukebox, that elusive but much-romanticized notion in which anyone can walk into a store and buy any book at a moment's notice. In addition to the Huck Finns and Don Quixotes, Boyer touts his ability to serve those who want some customized publishing, self-pubbed and out-of-print authors and anyone else in need of a quick, inexpensive title in book form. "We're definitely becoming a publisher," says Boyer, whose store, a small, event-heavy venue in an upper-middle-class neighborhood that is a kind of NJ Just Books, is not big enough to hold the title-selection of a superstore.

Indeed, Boyer cites the golden ring of on-demand publishing as motivation: the ability to carry books without stocking them. It should be said that, at the moment, the system is relatively limited (many are obscure niche titles) and the list is governed by InstaBook, itself limited by royalties and rights issues.

InstaBook says it has about 10,000 titles in total, with about 6000 of them non-custom books; it is concentrating on expanding, mostly in the public-domain and out-of-print sphere. But it also is courting traditional large publishers who want to make backlist titles available at point-of-sale and already has an agreement with Penguin Canada.

While B&N has started its own conventional classics line and Borders has dabbled with the Sprout system, neither have combined the two--making an established backlist available on demand. And of course, on the self-publishing front, iUniverse and Co. already undercut the traditional vanity business. But Boyer says those services are pricier and take more time. An hour, he said, was reasonable for a small run with InstaBook.

InstaBook founder Victor Celorio charges \$500 per month to have a machine placed in a store, and Boyer said that the cost-per copy for consumers ranges between \$7.50 to \$15 depending on the number of copies printed. Boyer's store is being used as kind of showroom for the machine; he says he and his partners, Celorio and publishing consultant Tim Harper, are hoping that many other indies sign up.

Celorio is aiming for hundreds of stores and thinks the distribute-and-print model has a throwback quality to it even as it suggests a neat futurism. "It's a return to the original bookstore concept, where there was no publisher and a bookseller printed the book for you." He feels both the print-and-distribute idea and its inverse can co-exist. "It's not an either-or proposition. It's a complement to the existing publishing setup."--Steven Zeitchik

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Now Batting Against Bush Team...

The contents of Joseph Wilson's memoir *The Politics of Truth*, scheduled for release this Friday, is being kept under the expected embargo key, but the publisher has released his complete media schedule. It's a rich affair for a book that will likely follow in the steps of other Bush admin tell-alls (even if it is not pubbed by S&S).

So it's *Dateline* Friday, *Meet The Press* Sunday and *Larry King* Monday. *Charlie Rose* and *Jon Stewart* complete the long weekend on Tuesday, in a day that strikes us as the media equivalent of being confronted with two ice-cream flavors and realizing they have the swirl. The book will not appear on *60 Minutes*.

Publisher Carroll & Graf has also chartered and designed an **independent Web site**, with requisite supporting material and not-so-supporting material, like the infamous Robert Novak column.

Among the book's biggest revelations, both author and publisher have acknowledged, will be Wilson naming which admin official(s) he thinks outed his wife as CIA. News watchers have been making plenty of guesses about those leaks, especially in light of reports, like the one in *The Times* several weeks ago, that "The White House took the unusual step last year of specifically denying any involvement in the leak on the part of several top administration officials, including Karl Rove, President Bush's senior adviser, and I. Lewis Libby, Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff."--Steven Zeitchik

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'No Child' Act Still Good for Books

In financial news, McGraw-Hill Education reports that sales increased 6.4%, to \$278.2 million, for the first quarter ended March 31, while the company's operating loss was reduced to \$68.8 million from \$70.1 million in the first quarter of 2003. Sales in the school group were driven by higher sales in reading and testing which is benefiting from the release of funds from the No Child Left Behind Act. Terry McGraw, chairman of parent company McGraw-Hill Cos., said it is clear that funds from the No Child act are finding its way into the market and he expects those funds to have more of an impact in the second and third quarters.-
-Jim Milliot

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JOB OF THE DAY

We've had 17 new jobs posted in the last week! Here's one of the 41 positions currently listed on PW JobZone:

ASSISTANT COPY CHIEF

Disney Publishing
New York

Oversees copyediting and proofreading of various Disney Children's Books Group titles from MSS to bound books, to ensure consistency of style and quality while meeting multiple deadlines.

To learn more about this and other job opportunities, visit:
jobs.publishersweekly.com

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