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International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia

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International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia

by Philip G. Altbach (Boston College)

Early in 1995, the first major reference volume focusing specifically on book publishing will be issued by **Garland Publishing, Inc.** It is international in scope, with coverage of book industries and 29 separate regions and countries. The contributors are also an international group, with authors from more than 20 countries represented. In addition to geographical chapters, there are also 34 essays considering key topics in publishing — from book marketing and bookselling to small presses and university press publishing. This volume, more than 700 double-columned pages in length, is a key resource for understanding book publishing worldwide. Indeed, it is the only comprehensive reference book on the topic. The encyclopedia is also unique because we chose to ask authors to write substantive chapters on carefully selected topics and countries rather than to include short entries on a wider array of subjects. Longer chapters allow more comprehensive coverage,

deeper analysis, and a broader perspective. We are convinced that a selective encyclopedia of this kind will be a valuable and long lasting reference volume.

We chose to focus on the major publishing countries rather than to provide brief surveys of every nation, and most of the world's major publishing nations are included. Examples of the geographical chapters are Germany (**Peter Weidhaas**); Russia (**Gregory Walker**); United Kingdom (**Ian McGowan**); China (**David Wei Ze**); India (**Tejeshwar Singh**); the United States (**Robert E. Baensch**); and Argentina (**Francisco del Carril**). In addition, comprehensive regional essays cover all of the major world regions and provide some coverage of countries not discussed in the individual essays. Each of the geographical chapters includes historical surveys of the publishing industry, a discussion of current trends and future problems, and relevant up-to-date statistical information. Authors have provided



analysis as well as description.

The topical essays have also been chosen to stress the major issues in publishing today. Authors were asked to write from a critical perspective as well as to provide a discussion of current trends. A sampling of the topics are children's publishing (**Sheila Ray**); college textbook publishing (**Naomi Silverman**); feminist publishing (**Florence Howe**); international copyright (**Paul Gleason**); libraries and publishers (**Patricia G. Schuman**); new technologies and pub-

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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 start-up 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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lishing (C.J. Grycz); Third World publishing (Philip G. Altbach); reference publishing (David Attwooll); and the societal context of book publishing (Shiego Minowa).

The authors include the most informed analysts on their respective topics, and are a combination of people within the publishing industry and informed outside observers and scholars. The diverse perspectives are another unique feature of the encyclopedia.

We began work on the encyclopedia more than two years ago, and the challenges of editing a reference volume of this kind were considerable. Two decades of experience in research on publishing and knowledge distribution issues helped make this wide-ranging book possible. Our first major decision was to focus on longer, more analytic chapters rather than short entries. A major task was to choose key subjects — especially difficult since this is the first reference source on the topic and there were no models to follow.

The next challenge was to locate quali-

fied authors willing to write on the topics we had selected. We discovered that there is much expertise on book publishing in the publishing community, but that publishers cannot often be convinced to write! We also tried hard to obtain authors from as wide a range of countries and regions as possible. While there is fairly wide geographical diversity among the authors, a significant number are from the United States and the United Kingdom. This creates a certain over-emphasis on Anglo-American perspectives in the encyclopedia.

While we made every effort to provide as complete coverage of countries and topics as possible, we were unable to locate authors willing to contribute for several important areas: for example, while a number of publishers and other experts were approached to write on Italy, in the end, we could not find anyone; and we were also unable to locate anyone to prepare a current chapter on publishing in Arabic, and we have instead reprinted a very informative article from a journal. Similarly, we were unable to find an author for a chapter on ethnic publishing in the United States. There are several other missing topics as well. Editing a major

International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia offers a contemporary multifaceted analysis of book publishing. The authors include many of the most well-known experts on their topics, and contributors are from all continents and regions. The volume may be purchased from **Garland Publishing, Inc.**, 1000A Sherman Ave., Hamden, CT 06514, USA. A toll-free number from within the USA is (800) 627-6273. The fax is (203) 230-1186. The cost of the volume is US\$95.

Philip G. Altbach and Edith S. Hoshino, editors, **International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia** (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), c. 700 pages. ISBN 0-8153-0786-1.

reference volume of 64 major chapters, with authors from a score of countries, all writing from different perspectives, was a challenge. Several chapters were translated from French and Spanish. ☞

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