BELLAGIO PUBLISHING NETWORK NEWSLETTER

An occasional publication concerning publishing and book development

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The Bellagio Publishing Network is an informal association of organisations dedicated to strengthening indigenous publishing and book development in Africa. The group includes publishers, donor organisations from both government and private voluntary sectors, and others who are concerned with books and publishing. This newsletter covers news of the Network and perspectives on publishing and book development.

News and Reports on Publishing

Perspectives and Commentary

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Editorial

Katherine Salahi
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Although the idea of an African Publishers Network (APNET) was mooted well before the first Bellagio conference on publishing and development in 1991, and might well have developed into a credible organisation without a parallel network to support it, the fact remains that 'the Bellagio Group of donors' within the Bellagio Publishing Network from the start made APNET their major focus for support. Through the Bellagio secretariat and the annual Network meetings, the donors were able to keep in close contact with each other and with APNET. The coherent relationship between funders and APNET that was thus enabled has now successfully transformed into the APNET strategic partnership. APNET has come of age and this year, for the first time, is meeting with its strategic partners independently of the Bellagio Publishing Network. Where does this leave the Bellagio Publishing Network?

The main mission of the Bellagio Publishing Network has been to strengthen African publishing, and many good developments, of which APNET is perhaps the most high profile, have happened in the ten years of the Network's existence. But no one at all familiar with the conditions prevailing throughout the African continent today can claim that enough has been done. Illiteracy remains a running sore in the body politic. Book provision is still woefully inadequate, in quality and quantity, where it matters most – in schools, in libraries, in rural areas and in the poorer parts of towns and cities. Books, those most powerful of emancipatory tools, those calories of creativity and the imagination, are still denied to the great masses of Africa's inhabitants.

Many organisations in the south and the north share a mission to eradicate illiteracy in the name of development. What distinguishes the Bellagio Publishing Network associate organisations and individuals is our emphasis on the strategic role of African publishers in this process, and our commitment to indigenously published books for real development. Our original mission statement spelt this out:

> Recognising the importance of the printed word and the development of a reading culture as key vehicles for social, economic and cultural development and autonomy, and aiming to foster an increase in the number and quality of African voices being heard both inside and outside of Africa, the Bellagio Group *[i.e. 'the Bellagio Group in support of African publishing', which became known as the Bellagio Publishing Network – Ed.]* will work to strengthen indigenous African publishing.

Not enough has changed since 1993, when that statement was set down by a group of enthusiastic and dedicated book professionals, donors and NGOs, to warrant any claim of mission accomplished. Nor is the end in sight. Much remains to be done, many organisations and individuals remain committed to the aims.

The *Bellagio Publishing Network Newsletter*, as 'an occasional publication concerning publishing and book development', has from the start covered a wider geographical focus than the Network it serves. In this issue we cover new developments within the Caribbean Publishers Network, an organisation directly inspired by the African Publishers Network, and working closely with them. The APNET-CAPNET relationship is symptomatic of an encouraging increase in south-south co-operation for culture and development. A short piece on networking among publishers in the Pacific provides the good news that another new regional organisation for strengthening indigenous publishing is in the making.

We make no apology for the strongly South African focus of this issue, because each article carries wider relevance than South Africa alone. Bridget Impey and Colleen Higgs write about two new South African initiatives that are attempting to address issues of literacy and empowerment through book development. As we struggle to comprehend the current world crisis sparked by the September 11 attacks on the USA and the retaliatory attacks on Afghanistan, the urgent need for a properly educated, critically alert world citizenry cannot be overstated. Jane Katjavivi's report on an academic conference on book development held at Rhodes University (during the Zimbabwe International Book Fair) highlights one worrying issue: the chasm between different professions apparently working in the same field to the same end. Sulaiman Adebowale's thought-provoking review article on *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* touches on similar issues though viewed through a different lens. The idea of 'the culture of a society's publishing' encapsulating 'its connections with the larger society' is appealing, and worth exploring in other studies.

'The Internet, e-commerce and Africa's book professions' carries the Hans Zell hallmark of valuable practical advice combined with sober realism on the hot topic of publishing in the digital era. It poses questions that are vital to ask, and should help focus publishing planning in this key area for forward-looking publishers in Africa and elsewhere.

Secretariat news

Rachel Wiggans, who was assistant co-ordinator of the Network for four years, left the secretariat in February to pursue other interests. Her quiet dedication, immense hard work, intelligence and humour, not to mention her fluency in French, were invaluable. We are deeply grateful to her for her many contributions to the work of the secretariat, and wish her the very best.

We are delighted to welcome Sulaiman Adebowale to the secretariat during a one-year sabbatical from CODESRIA, where he is Assistant Editor of Publications and Communications. Sulaiman is working on the newsletter and website while taking an e-media course at Oxford Brookes University.

Networking in the Pacific

Linda Crowl, Robyn Bargh and Liliane Tauru
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For a couple of centuries, publishing concerning the Pacific Islands had been developed and promoted in Europe or the US. The writers, the publishers, and even the readers were largely foreign to Oceania. Few opportunities existed for indigenous Pacific peoples to tell their own stories through their own publishing, an opportunity essential to supporting the writing and perspectives of indigenous Pacific peoples in both local and foreign languages, so that Pacific voices can be heard within and around the world.

Since 1994, Pacific Islands publishers have begun a process of strengthening linkages among book actors in the region through activities that encourage the growing literature of indigenous content and titles. They have organised book fairs of their own and in conjunction with other events such as the Australian Book Fair in 1996 and 1998, the Salon du livre d'outre-mer in Paris since 1998, and the Festival of Pacific Arts in 1996. They have also worked with international bodies such as UNESCO, which sponsored a workshop in 1998 on Creating a Reading Environment. Education officials from 13 Pacific Islands countries committed themselves to surveying book provision in their own state (the findings have been published as *Book Provision in the Pacific Islands*, UNESCO and Institute of Pacific Studies, 1999); fostering national book policies; and working towards regional co-operation in book matters.

In 1999, a conference of the South Pacific Association of Literature and Languages (SPACLALS) was held in Suva, Fiji. At the conference, there was a panel discussion on Pacific publishing; the panel was Robyn Rangihuia Bargh from Huia Publishers, New Zealand; Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe from Rarotonga and Linda Crowl from the Institute of Pacific Studies in Fiji.

A year later, Robyn Bargh, Linda Crowl, Liliane Tauru, and book people from Hawaii, Samoa, New Caledonia and other island countries discussed ideas at the 8th Pacific Arts Festival in Noumea in a workshop on Pacific publishing.

The dialogue led to the creation of a network of actors to promote the development of the publishing industry in the Pacific region. The following main objectives were proposed:

1. develop successful publishing business units employing indigenous Pacific people, in each Pacific island nation;
2. strive to publish works which convey the stories, images and dreams of indigenous Pacific peoples using their own languages or the lingua franca; and
3. create a network of publishing business units which will enable indigenous Pacific peoples to share experiences, knowledge and skills.

An initial step has been taken with the creation of an email discussion list. This list is hosted by the Pacific Community (www.spc.int) and is open to all Pacific publishers as well as to related professions. To send a message, the address is: pacific-publishers@lyris.spc.int

> *Pacific Islands publishers have begun a process of strengthening linkages among book actors in the region through activities that promote the growing literature of indigenous content and titles.*

The next step will be to participate in Australia's or New Zealand's book fairs in 2002, then to host a book fair in the islands in 2003. Given the small and under-educated populations of the Pacific Islands, separated as they are by vast oceanic distances as well as by 1200 indigenous and four colonial languages, book fairs are essential to foster communication among professionals and to share the joy of books with the general public. We hope to establish Pacific Islands prizes for publishing, writing, illustration, and marketing and to offer workshops on significant topics for Pacific Islands publishers.

CAPNET News

compiled from CAPNET newsletters

Congratulations to CAPNET's president, Ian Randle, who has been awarded the Order of Distinction in Jamaica's Independence Honours list, for services to publishing. Not only is it heartily deserved on a personal level, but it also recognises the amazing success Ian has achieved in building up a large and financially viable Caribbean list. It is the first time that a Caribbean government has seen book publishing as something worth rewarding. Congratulations from all of us, Ian!

Ian Randle was invited to address the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) culture ministers in The Bahamas in late September, and took part in a 90-minute discussion session on the needs of the Caribbean publishing industry. There was strong interest from ministers, who are making recommendations to the next Heads of Government session.

'Reclaiming Our Own Voices'
Membership of CAPNET has been growing steadily over the year. At the forthcoming Conference and Workshop being held in Jamaica, November 1-7, 2001 CAPNET are expecting 75-100 delegates from around the Caribbean and the international publishing industry to attend. A full report of the conference will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

The conference keynote speaker is The Mighty Sparrow (Dr Slinger Francisco), whose life work in calypso speaks directly to the conference theme, 'Reclaiming Our Own Voices'. Among the major topics for discussion are market opportunities for Caribbean publishers; translation and cross-cultural publishing; publishing in multiple languages; new technologies and Caribbean publishing; new technologies and intellectual property rights; national book policies; selling books in the Caribbean and abroad; a model for Caribbean book distribution; and Caribbean book fairs.

One highlight will be a presentation from a speaker who is at the centre of current developments in e-publishing and print-on-demand technology, which are likely to change the whole face of publishing in the next few years. The Governor-General of St Lucia, Dame Pearlette Louisy, will speak on Caribbean creole languages. Several writers have been invited to read, including Earl Lovelace, Lorna Goodison, Oonya Kempadoo, Simone Schwartz-Bart, and Rafael Constant.

Shirley Carby (Carlong Publishers, Jamaica) is coordinating the workshops. The leader of the editing workshop is Roger Stringer, who runs his own specialist publishing company in Zimbabwe and has been closely involved in the development of the African Publishers Network (APNET) and the Zimbabwe Book Fair. The marketing workshop will be led by South African publisher Bridget Impey, who has run similar workshops at the Zimbabwe Book Fair for the last five years.

CAPNET's first Annual General Meeting will be held alongside the conference. The AGM will hear reports from the President and the Treasurer, and will be asked to adopt the draft constitution and bylaws. It will also elect the CAPNET executive for the coming year: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and delegates from each of the four Caribbean language areas.

www.capnetonline.com is CAPNET's new website, where you will find up-to-date information on CAPNET and the publishing conference in Jamaica.

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People's Book Centres: a new South African initiative

Bridget Impey
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A proposal is being developed in South Africa that will develop capacity in communities and create new jobs through adding value to the work being done by South African librarians to encourage reading and develop a book culture. It sets out a strategy for working in partnership with libraries to support reading promotion initiatives and to extend them into new areas. In particular, it seeks to popularise the concept of *owning* and *buying* books, as well as *reading* them.

Who will benefit? In the first instance it will be the members of the book clubs who will come to share in the pleasure of reading, who will have access to books at affordable prices, who will find their lives enriched through book-related social activity. Librarians will gain through increased usage of their libraries. In the ripple effect, publishers will gain through new opportunities to sell their products, and eventually other booksellers will gain new customers who have acquired the book buying habit.

The proposal looks at how one could set up a number of 'people's book centres'. These will be located within libraries and will work within the communities served by those libraries. They will promote book owning through the concept of book clubs. They will also be encouraged

> *[T]he 'people's book centres' ... will be located within libraries and will work within the communities served by those libraries. They will promote book owning through the concept of book clubs. They will also be encouraged to develop the commercial side of the business by selling textbooks into local schools.*

to develop the commercial side of the business by selling textbooks into local schools. The proposal is not aimed at replicating traditional retail bookstores. But the people's book centres will need to become self-sustainable and it will be necessary to develop a commercial angle while they are developing and growing in this emerging market. A number of innovative ideas, many of which involve working closely with local and international publishers, will offer ways of reducing the recommended retail selling price of books to the community.

The managers of the people's book centres will be drawn from the local communities and will receive on-going training in the setting up, promotion and facilitation of book clubs and reading circles. These book clubs will cater for the needs of a wide range of people in the community and will reflect different interest groups: book clubs might be set up focusing on business and entrepreneurial skills, self-improvement, health and well-being, cooking, crafts, hobbies, sport, religion, health and fitness, travel, women's or men's interests, or children's story-telling. Learners' book clubs linked to local schools are likely to have a special place within the centres. The people's book centres will encourage all these ways of expanding reading and book buying.

The book clubs will operate on similar principles to traditional book clubs: members meet once a month, and pool resources to buy books which will be shared, discussed and enjoyed within the group. Eventually, the books will become the property of individual group members. The exact 'rules' of each book club will differ from community to community depending on local circumstances and buying power.

The installation of computers will provide not only access to the internet and e-mail facilities – a kind of Internet café – but also added value to the book clubs by providing links to publishers' websites, Oprah Book Choice discussion groups, and other on-line forums.

The proposal is to test the feasibility of the people's book centre strategy with a pilot project of three centres situated in disadvantaged community areas of Cape Town set up by March 2002. These will be assessed after 12 months, and drawing on what has been learnt we will move on to establish three more centres in the Western Cape. After year two the pilot project will move into the next phase: the development of further centres in other parts of the country, in both urban and rural areas.

The centres will be 'franchised', although the franchisees will not be required to make a capital investment in the centre. Rather, they will take ownership of the franchise operation as the business becomes profitable. A franchise will ensure that the business operations adhere to certain standards, and will give the operation greater buying power. The 'head office' or franchiser will provide training, mentoring and ongoing support.

We need to develop and grow the book market in South Africa – the primary target of this project aims to benefit both the publishing and bookselling sectors. At the same time the project has other advantages; it will enable previously disadvantaged people to assert their rights in the world of retail bookselling and will uplift and strengthen previously neglected communities through capacity building and job creation.

For further information, or to obtain a copy of the proposal, please contact either:

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Community Publishing Project launched in South Africa

Colleen Higgs

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The Community Publishing Project (CPP) was launched in August 2001 by the Centre for the Book and NB Books in Cape Town. The CPP aims to make it possible for individuals, community groups and community-based organisations to publish books of interest to a particular community, but not cost-effective for a commercial publisher.

The CPP also aims to empower individuals and community groups to develop the necessary skills and capacities to enable them to publish, which in turn means that interesting and worthwhile books which would otherwise not be published will see the light of day.

NB Books has donated R150 000 (US$17,500) over three years to pilot this exciting new publishing project. It will open up entry points into publishing, making more openings for new and marginal voices. The new publishers who will participate in this project will need to learn marketing and how to be publishing and book-selling entrepreneurs.

Hannes van Zyl, Managing Director of Tafelberg Publishers, has been incubating this idea for several years. He believes that books have a beneficial and enriching influence in society, especially books which reflect a diversity of voices and experiences. Commercial publishers can't always justify the publication of books which would probably only have limited market, especially in a country like South Africa where the book-buying

Writers who have not been published are often critical of publishers' lack of interest in their writing. However, working as small publishers could make it possible for writers to understand the need for a collaborative relationship between publishers, writers, booksellers and other actors in the book chain.

market is very small. A project such as this makes possible the publishing of these more marginal works.

Writers who have not been published are often critical of publishers' lack of interest in their writing. However, working as small publishers could make it possible for writers to understand the need for a collaborative relationship between publishers, writers, booksellers and other actors in the book chain. The project will offer mentoring of new publishers by established ones. Writers

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and community publishers will learn about the crucial importance of marketing and distribution of books. It is not enough to get a book printed; publishing also means marketing and selling. A key aim of the project is to develop new small publishers filled with enthusiasm and imagination in the marketing of the books they produce.

The timeliness of this project is evidenced by the theme of the recent Annual Conference of Women in Writing held in Johannesburg in early September, which tackled the publishing stalemate – whither African women writers, and promoting and enhancing current relationships with publishers.

The CPP was launched with a celebratory exhibition of books. Some were handmade; some were self-published; some had been produced by writers' groups or small publishing companies. The exhibition demonstrated in a lively way the great variety of forms that 'the book' can take, and showed that the process of publishing may be more accessible than is usually assumed. There are many possible routes into publishing for those who may be venturing into it for the first time, all of which have their validity. Which method is eventually chosen will depend on the aims and objectives of each particular project, what is being said, who it is aimed at, and how it is intended to reach them.

15th Commonwealth Writers Prize 2001 held in Ghana

Akunu Dake

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> This masterful book is a sort of literary ventriloquist act as Carey re-imagines the voice and life of Australian villainous folk hero, Ned Kelly. It is a book that bursts with creative energy. Its seamless telling of a tragic tale of poverty and injustice is tempered by a buoyancy and wicked turn of phrase that completely overwhelms the reader. Kelly's story resonates through Australian history into the present. It is the ultimate Australian story, a search for roots for a nation's character.

Those are the words of the Chairperson, pan-Commonwealth judging panel 2001, distinguished poet, novelist and essayist Professor Kofi Awoonor, in describing Peter Carey's novel, *True History of the Kelly Gang.* The Australian author was the winner of the 15th edition of the Commonwealth Writers Prize hosted for the first time by Accra, Ghana in April this year.

Instituted in 1987 by the Commonwealth Foundation, the Prize is the only international literary prize with a two-tier judging process. For the purpose of the selection, the Commonwealth is divided into four regions – Africa, Caribbean and Canada, Eurasia, and South East Asia and South Pacific – each of which selects its own Best Book winner and Best First Book winner. These eight regional winners then compete for the overall Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book and Best First Book.

The Commonwealth Writers Prize is a tribute to Commonwealth writing and its significant contribution to contemporary literature in English. The prize is also designed to encourage and reward the upsurge of new fiction in English and ensure that works of merit reach a wide audience outside their country of origin. The Prize is administered by the Book Trust of London on behalf of the Commonwealth Foundation.

British writer Zadie Smith was awarded the Best First Book prize for her novel *White Teeth*. The novel was commended by Professor Awoonor as,

> … an astonishingly attractive debut novel; a most fetching examination of the interlocking lives of immigrant families – Caribbean, South Asian, and Jewish – in North London. Drawing on three people's experiences of uprooting and settling, as well as their colonialist pasts, the novel is a wonderfully expansive, inventive, exuberant, comic celebration of multicultural life, growing up, survival in the English capital.

Zadie Smith donated her £3,000 prize money to a school in Accra.

Alhaji Aliu Mahama, Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, presented the prizes at the Prize gala awards dinner held at the Banquet Hall of the State House in Accra.

The novels were judged by a Pan-Commonwealth Judging Panel. Other members that worked with Professor Kofi Awoonor (Ghana) were Professor Penina Mlama (Tanzania), Mr Kevin Baldeosingh (Trinidad and Tobago), Professor Valentine Cunningham (United Kingdom) and Ms Meira Chand (Singapore).

The nominees for the 2001 Best Book category were:

Africa
Zakes Mda (South Africa) *The Heart of Redness* (Oxford University Press, South Africa)

Caribbean and Canada
Anita Rau Badami (Canada) *The Hero's Walk* (Alfred A. Knopf, Canada)

Eurasia
J. G. Ballard (United Kingdom) *Super-Cannes* (Flamingo, HarperCollins, United Kingdom)

South East Asia and South Pacific
Peter Carey (Australia) *True History of the Kelly Gang* (University of Queensland Press, Australia)

The nominees for the Best First Book Prize:

Africa
K. Sello Duiker (South Africa) *Thirteen Cents* (David Philip Publishers, South Africa)

Caribbean and Canada
Pearl Luke (Canada) *Burning Ground* (Flamingo, HarperCollins, Canada)

Eurasia
Zadie Smith (United Kingdom) *White Teeth* (Hamish Hamilton, United Kingdom)

South East Asia and South Pacific
Arabella Edge (Australia) *The Company* (Picador, Australia)

The 2002 Prize will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland.

'Colonial and Post-Colonial Cultures of the Book'
Conference held at Rhodes University, 6-8 August 2001

Jane Katjavivi
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The Conference on Colonial and Post-Colonial Cultures of the Book, held in early August this year at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, was both fascinating and frustrating, an example of what brings us together and of how we still operate in separately secluded professional worlds. As a book practitioner – former publisher, current bookseller, and an active participant in book development within Namibia and the region – it was an interesting opportunity to discuss books with academics, who made up 99.9 per cent of the participants at this conference.

Issues of book and readership development, the emergence of different groups/types of authors, and the business side of books, or even the sociology of publishers – who publishes what books by whom? – were peripheral to the main discussions, which were still very much text-based. Rather, representations of colonial subjects, whether in New Zealand, Ireland, India or Africa – images of the native, of cannibalism, of traditional cultures – were examined. So were the struggles of form and voice of particular individual authors at particular points in the history of their countries.

It was the historians who delighted me most. Participants and presenters came from three main academic subject areas – Literature, History and Information Studies. There was one geographer, who was interested in the mobility of books, and is pursuing research on the changing nature of Heinemann's African Writers' Series. There was Elisabeth Anderson from South Africa's Centre for the Book – the only other non-academic apart from me.

Both the opening and closing keynote addresses were given by Robert Darnton, Princeton University, USA. The former was on 'Books and the British Raj' in India and the latter was on an e-book project on the Renaissance in which he is engaged. In his presentation, he explored how the e-book project on the Renaissance is addressing the needs of young academics, who are finding it harder to get published due to drastic cuts in library budgets at American universities. The significance of dwindling US library resources concern all those in the book sector, given that publishers the world over have relied on prospects of US library sales to fund and develop viable local academic titles.

Ian Willison, of the British Museum, also gave a valuable presentation on 'Centre and Periphery in the Histories of the Book in the English-Speaking World'. Its focus was primarily on countries of the old Commonwealth, and identified an important link between the development of local newspaper publishing for and from the settlers, and the development of local book publishing capacity. I would have liked to see more examination of African countries without significant white settler communities, but few people at the conference had much knowledge about publishing on the continent outside of South Africa.

The academic links represented at the conference were clearly strongest between Oxford, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and North America. I was told that the interest in book history is apparently a new one emerging from Renaissance literature scholars and being taken up by others who are moving on from traditional literary theory to new grounds. Indeed, one of the most useful aspects of the conference was the discovery that academics are beginning to talk about book histories, and book history projects in different countries. Ian Willison is a key figure in the book history project in the UK, and is engaged with others undertaking the same task in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. But unfortunately those writing the book histories do not seem to include publishers, and I think they should.

Censorship was an issue that ran through many of the discussions and was directly addressed in the South African context by a former member of the South African Censor Board in the 1970s. But this could have been explored in more depth, and taken into account self-censorship as well as the more obvious state censorship.

There were simplistic comments about some publishers not publishing books that have turned out to be classics, such as Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, without attempts to look at how publishers are located within their own societies and are representative

> *There were simplistic comments about some publishers not publishing books that have turned out to be classics … without attempts to look at how publishers are located within their own societies and are representative of them, while at the same time being strategically placed to break cultural and literary barriers.*

[T]he conference was timed to clash with the ZIBF, a major forum in the calendar of the publishing industry in and on Africa. Most people in the book sector in the region were in Harare, not at Rhodes … But there was little concern there about the clash, or the lack of participation therefore from publishers, who could have contributed to the deliberation at Rhodes.

of them, while at the same time being strategically placed to break cultural and literary barriers. Some publishers take huge business risks to promote new or avant-garde authors. Others publish what will sell safely and quickly. There was no discussion of the variations in the continuum between these extremes; thus leaving me with a feeling that some of the speakers are unaware of the reality of the publishing process.

Furthermore, although 36 papers presented at the conference covered a wide variety of themes and topics, the time allotted was too short to hear or discuss the issues properly. Those who could not make it to the conference had their papers read in full, whereas many of the presenters who had paid to get there were frustrated by being cut short after 20 minutes. Secondly, after attending meetings where I have always encountered a wealth of interesting presentations and discussions by academics, politicians, publishers and authors, I was surprised to sense that participants at the Rhodes conference were not really very interested in what others were saying.

Which brings me to another frustration about the conference: the conference was timed to clash with the Zimbabwe International Book Fair, a major forum in the calendar of the publishing industry in and on Africa. Most people in the book sector in the region were in Harare, not at Rhodes. I had opted for Rhodes because it was a new forum for me and I was interested in exploring the topic of the conference. But there was little concern there about the clash, or the lack of participation therefore from publishers, who could have contributed to the deliberation at Rhodes.

Conferences usually end with a brief attempt at working at a way forward; the Rhodes gathering focused on the idea of developing a network between people in different countries working on book histories. I hope the proposed network will include more than just the white South and that African publishers will also be involved in such projects. The idea of a more formal intellectual exchange between publishers and our own academics about book development on the continent is an endeavour we should all engage in.

The Internet, e-commerce and Africa's book professions

Hans Zell

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More and more African publishers are now making use of the Internet, and many have established a presence on the World Wide Web. Meanwhile the first e-book ventures are currently being launched in Africa, although currently limited to publishers in South Africa. It is also good to see that a recent issue of APNET's *African Publishing Review*[1] contains several articles on the impact of new technology on the publishing trade.

There are, of course, still many caveats as they relate to the use of the Internet in Africa and this has been the subject of much discussion and debate. There are several Web sites devoted to the development of the Internet in Africa, Internet connectivity, and the telecommunications infrastructure. There are also a growing number of online discussion groups that focus on issues of Internet access technology, Internet skills, information needs, and the development of African Web content and African Internet portals.

Most report that, despite good progress in recent years, low income and poverty is still the main barrier to Internet growth in Africa, together with a weak telecommunications infrastructure in most countries. High connection costs and punitive telephone call costs through local Internet Service Providers (ISPs), coupled with the high costs of international bandwidth for delivery of Web pages, are cited as the other major obstacles.

Further problems stifling the Internet in Africa, according to the US Internet Council in its *State of the Internet Report 2000,* are 'low computer penetration, illiteracy, lack of trained personnel, disinterest, and a failure to understand the benefits of Internet access'.[2] This last observation is certainly true and, among book professionals in Africa, there are probably still many who do not fully appreciate the benefits of Internet access, or who may not have had an opportunity to find out for themselves just how much information is now accessible to them for free.

Understanding the benefits of Internet access
Some of the opportunities and benefits that the Internet, and the World Wide Web more specifically, offers to publishers and NGOs with publishing activities are summarised below:

- The Web can provide international visibility. Publishers in Africa establishing their own Web sites could find that it can become a powerful global marketing tool for reaching a much wider audience (both local and international) than was possible at relatively modest cost.

- The Internet is a vehicle that can assist publishers in targeting many special interest groups to promote their books, or provide them with addresses for mailing-list research and development. There are various ways to exploit the Internet for distributing information or for niche marketing, reaching what for the most part are fairly tightly focused interest groups; this can be achieved, for example, through postings to online mailing lists and discussion groups.

- The Internet can assist publishers to find partners for co-publishing ventures; or help them to be up to date with what the competition is doing. Moreover, the Web now also offers the opportunity to exchange information, and to buy and sell rights through cyberspace.

- The World Wide Web is a wonderful resource for editors working in publishing companies or working freelance. It provides quick access to dictionaries, thesauri, style guides, and many other tools for professional editors. It is a huge general resource of information, allowing free access to numerous online reference works, databases, news sources, and much more. By providing access to such a huge amount of information and knowledge – currently over two billion unique indexable pages – using the Internet can be an empowering and liberating experience.

- Finally, one still often overlooked benefit of the Internet is that of self-training in various publishing skills. Many publishing skills can now be taught online through publishing distance education courses, which are, other than the cost of time spent online, mostly accessible for free. This could be beneficial both for training of in-house staff as well as for training of freelancers.

By providing access to such a huge amount of information and knowledge – currently over two billion unique indexable pages – using the Internet can be an empowering and liberating experience.

However, before publishers can make effective use of the Internet as a marketing tool and information resource, or as an aid for research, they first need to learn the basics of using and searching the Web, for example how to devise

effective search strategies to track down the information or the resources they seek. It is very important to have a broad understanding of the search engines, and to select the right tool for the job. It is also essential that any publisher who wants to take advantage of the opportunities offered must get a proper feel of how the Internet works, and how it could function as a marketing tool. There are no shortcuts to this, and anyone who is serious about the Internet must be willing to invest in the time required to come to grips with it.[3] I estimate that this will require, for a start, at least 60-80 hours of online time exploring or 'surfing' the Internet. There is also the need to add time necessary to keep up with changes and developments in the Internet.

Establishing and promoting a Web site

Over the last couple of years, quite a number of African publishers, NGOs and research institutions with publishing programmes have established Web sites. Publishers' sites from over 20 African countries are on the Web, with South Africa taking up the largest number. While it is beneficial to have any kind of presence on the Web, however modest, to take advantage of useful international visibility, many of these Web sites are unfortunately rather dull and uninteresting, are not apparently kept up-to-date, or are not offering much information that is likely to attract visitors beyond an initial visit, if indeed they get visited in the first place. Some are also poorly designed or structured, are difficult to navigate, or have bloated graphics and far too many images on some pages that in turn create long download times, especially within Africa. In some cases, the Web site designers seem to lack a proper understanding of the functions of a Web site, the nature of their main target audience, the kind of information that should be provided, and the benefits that are likely to derived from a Web presence. Others may have well-designed and interesting Web sites—but no one knows about it! Creation of a Web site is only one aspect, and the first step, but without adequate Web site promotion they will not attract any significant traffic.

In one of the articles in the *African Publishing Review* issue focusing on ICT, a contributor states, 'A Home Page on the Internet can introduce our company's profile and range of products to customers across the continent where it is difficult to traverse', and then goes on to say 'since the Home Page is meant for the global market and is looked at by millions of people, acting as the edifice for our enduring relationship with our customers, it has to be captivating, spelling out our message quite clearly'.[4]

A good Web site should certainly be captivating, but there is absolutely no guarantee that 'millions of people' will access the site and look at the information. The common view that the Internet itself will drive success is fallacious; no Web site can succeed without systematic promotion through both online and print media. Although, this can certainly be quite time-consuming, an effective promotion of a Web site is absolutely crucial. Anyone setting up a Web site will first need to publicize the site vigorously and systematically before they can even hope to attract a few thousand visitors, much less millions. Anyone launching and maintaining a Web site must also learn how to create good links sections, how to get plenty of reciprocal links, and how to make visitors come back by providing something varied and interesting, and offering inter-activity between visitors to and owners of the site for example, from discussion forums to conference and vacancy announcements, competitions, author profiles, special offers, how to submit manuscript proposals, etc.

Anyone launching and maintaining a Web site must also learn how to create good links sections, how to get plenty of reciprocal links, and how to make visitors come back by providing something varied and interesting, and offering inter-activity between visitors to and owners of the site....

In addition to learning about the Internet and Web site promotion, publishers also ought to have at least a basic understanding of how Web pages work, including HyperText Mark-up Language (HTML, the language and formatting codes used to create and structure Web pages), the role and importance of the server and the browser, and the use of meta tags. It is important to understand what makes a good and user-friendly site, in terms of its design, structure, principles of good navigation, download times, currency, etc. and the use of descriptive meta-tags to ensure that the site gets picked up by the search engine robots.

Online publishing and e-commerce—cutting through the hype

Everybody is now talking e-this and e-that, there is a growing interest in e-commerce boosted by frequently exaggerated claims that you can make a lot of money on the Internet. No doubt some companies are doing good business in certain consumer sectors of e-commerce, but marketing and selling of e-books – unlike selling electronic journals, which have been around for some time – is only just taking off in earnest (although there are now in fact thousands of e-books which can be accessed online for free). It is probably also true that electronic commerce

for publishers, even in the countries of the North, is still not sufficiently mature and tested.

As with the Internet, there is currently far too much hype about the potentials of e-commerce for books. In his article in the *African Publishing Review* Alan Ross looks at the pros and cons of the e-book and, among the advantages, he lists 'The prospect of selling millions of copies in a very short time'.[5] In support of this, he cites the 'spectacular success of Stephen King's novella *Riding the Bullet* published on the Internet that allegedly sold 500,000 copies within 48 hours'. King followed this success with a promise that he would write up to eight instalments of another e-book, *The Plant*. These were issued under an agreement where readers pledge to pay one dollar, later increased to three dollars, for downloading each chapter. The scheme was hailed as a master-stroke in the e-book revolution. Unfortunately the plan didn't quite work out and by chapter two only 70% of the readers had coughed up cash, and, by part four, only 46% had paid. So King has now decided to suspend the novel for a year or two, leaving online readers in a state of limbo, and with a book that may never be completed.

This is probably a good example of how volatile the e-book situation still is. It demonstrates that the harsh realities of Internet publishing do not reflect the hype surrounding it – not least since the very nature of the technology has made it possible, many people do expect most things to be free on the Internet. Therefore, a good measure of scepticism about the hype would not be out of place, quite apart from the fact that selling e-books in the countries of the North is a very different proposition from selling such electronic products in Africa, or in other parts of the developing world.

In another remarkable piece of hype, Johnnic e-Ventures – the Internet division of the Black empowerment company Johnnic, who have acquired a 50% holding in the South African digital publisher comPress, to explore new publishing models and 'to open up publishing to the masses' – posted the following on its site:[6]

> comPress, the first digital publisher in South Africa to sell e-books, has established a strong presence in the emerging market of electronic publishing. By breaking down production and distribution barriers, it has targeted niche markets previously deemed unreachable.
>
> "Publishing, for so long an exclusive domain, is finally being opened up to the masses," said comPress joint MD François van Schalkwyk. "What we're seeing is the true democratisation of information dissemination, which will ultimately bring an end to the inequalities of information access which are entrenched by traditional publishing models."

Using the Internet as a marketing, sales and distribution mechanism, comPress has developed an e-commerce-enabled online catalogue (www.oneworldbooks.com) through which it sells a wide range of downloadable e-books.

However, such statements are in stark contrast with an article by Elisabeth Anderson of the Centre of the Book in Cape Town, in which she reports that the majority of the population in South Africa, and especially children and young people, are still hugely disadvantaged when it comes to books and reading, much less owning a computer and having access to the Internet.[7]

But one must recognise also that the changes brought on by the electronic media, the whole new economics of networks and information, and the availability and free distribution of electronic information on the Internet, are rapidly changing the commercial environment for most publishers in the countries of the North, many of whom are now busy positioning themselves to be able to move over to an online environment. Although it is hard to make predictions with any certainty, professional and scholarly publishing is going to change quite dramatically over the next three to five years.

Secondly, although online publishing may be a less profitable venture for the few African publishers currently involved in it, they will have to establish a presence in the new media arena sooner or later, probably sooner rather than later. They will have to build new routes to new markets, certainly the overseas markets, and will need to give thought to how best to develop products suitable for both print and online formats.

Thirdly, they will need to learn how to position themselves in this shifting market place, and cultivate expertise in a range of areas. This will have to include development of in-house technical and IT skills and/or finding technology partners to develop online products, and manage and sell these products themselves, through, for example, the African Books Collective, or through other external vendors and distributors. Furthermore, if

[African publishers] will have to establish a presence in the new media arena sooner or later, probably sooner rather than later. They will have to build new routes to new markets, certainly the overseas markets, and will need to give thought to how best to develop products suitable for both print and online formats.

African publishers want to sell books online they will not only need to learn how to manage a Web site, but will also have to understand and develop expertise in e-commerce, and its related areas of liability, security, and protection of the privacy of customers. They will need to deal with aspects such as secure servers, encryption, and automated online payment systems.

Another important decision for African publishers is whether to host an e-books site in-house or outsource it. Rather than doing it on their own, some of the larger publishers in the North tend to license online library companies (for example the NetLibrary at http://www.netlibrary.com/, or YBP Library Services at http://www.ybp.com/) to distribute their books in digital formats. The publisher supplies hardcopy books or text to the company, who then convert them into digital files for sale as e-books. They are usually sold as part of large collections to academic, public and business libraries, and the revenue accrued from sales is split between the publisher and the online distributor. The supplier employs special digital rights management technology to prevent more than one user from reading an e-book at once, as well as special technology that prevents printing and copying content. Some also provide inventory management.

Keeping up-to-date with the new technology
As mass-based Internet access in Africa is still a very long way away – despite the growth of ISPs, telecentres, cybercafés and improved telecommunications infrastructure in several African countries – all this might sound futuristic, but it will not be the case in five or ten years' time. It is not suggested that African publishers should embark on a dramatic restructuring of their business because of the electronic media, but they must keep abreast with ICT developments—and there is no better way to be kept informed than through the Web.

Technology is moving incredibly fast, and faced with the fact that conventional export markets for print products will continue to shrink, most African publishers, perhaps not surprisingly, adopt something of a 'wait-and-see' attitude. However, it is important that they monitor developments, as otherwise they may find it difficult to catch up at a later time when delivery of some of their products over the Internet might become a reality. Although few African publishers, outside south Africa, are currently involved in online and electronic publishing, they may want to become informed about trends and changes in the publishing world, especially the profound changes that are taking place in scholarly communication, education, and training, and how digital technologies are transforming book and journal publishing.

While they might be able to develop attractive and relatively sophisticated Web sites to support their marketing activities, few African publishers, other than the multinationals, or publishing conglomerates in South Africa, will be able to make a major investment in electronic publishing and developing multi-media content in a significant way. And even if they had the resources they might well consider it far too risky.

I also suspect most African publishers would probably not want to attempt to sail through these uncharted waters on their own, and therefore this is something that calls for new alliances, new partnerships with technology providers, and new collaborative ventures for digital publishing.

Eventually, even for small publishers, there may be opportunities to develop some products for delivery over the Internet, and/or re-packaging content in Internet compatible formats. For example this could be 'added-value' online products – i.e. through regular updates, or complementary materials to the main product – or tailor-made collections of licensed content (text, databases, or artwork/artistic materials) for niche markets; or African publishers could make available free extracts from books on their Web site, as 'teasers' to entice prospective customers to purchase the complete physical product.

Meanwhile, donors might wish to consider how they could empower African publishers to join the electronic revolution, and to assist them in developing products in electronic formats in areas where there might be demand, and which might meet a niche market.

Type of training and capacity building needed
So what type of training and capacity building is most acutely needed?

It is probably unrealistic to expect publishers to become technically proficient and have an intimate knowledge of Web design, and at the same time to become knowledgeable about the Internet, Web content, the use of the Web as an information resource, and acquire an awareness of the benefits the Internet can bring. Most publishers in Africa, as indeed many publishers elsewhere – and despite new Web authoring software and tools that are becoming more and more user-friendly – don't really have the time, and probably not the inclination, to become involved in Web site design and to master HTML coding. Most will prefer to rely on professional Web site designers rather than dabble in Web authoring in an amateurish way, although there may not always be sufficient local expertise for Web site design now. The same goes for the field of electronic publishing and/or e-commerce, areas where they would also need to seek specialist advice. This might include local advice, expertise, and sharing of know-how from businesses in African countries that are already involved in e-commerce, although there are probably not too many of these at this time; many may have Web sites, but are not yet actively involved in e-commerce.

Training and capacity building thus has to be on three distinct fronts:

1. The planning, authoring and creation (understanding HTML, SGML, design essentials, etc.), and maintenance of Web sites.
2. Web content, how to use the Internet, evaluating Internet resources, learning about search engines and portals, search strategies, what makes a good Web site, and how best to promote products online.
3. Electronic/Web-based publishing and e-commerce, the different e-book formats, licensing of electronic products, exploiting electronic rights for print books, and digital rights management.

A fourth aspect of the digital revolution is that of digital printing and short-run print technology. This is potentially very attractive for African publishers, although it requires quite separate training.

As has been suggested above, it is probably unrealistic to expect publishers to become technically proficient in Web authoring or Web site design, or to become experts in the more complex technical aspects of electronic

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[I]t is probably unrealistic to expect publishers to become technically proficient in Web authoring or Web site design... It is vital, however, that training about the Internet must come before everything else, including e-books and e-commerce, and substantial time ought to be allowed in any training programmes or workshops for hands-on practice to demonstrate all the Internet's possible uses.

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publishing. It would also be unwise to try to provide training – through workshops, for example – on all three fronts at the same time, as there would be far too much to absorb during one workshop. It is vital, however, that training about the Internet must come before everything else, including e-books and e-commerce, and substantial time ought to be allowed in any training programmes or workshops for hands-on practice to demonstrate all the Internet's possible uses. While focusing principally on the Internet, such workshops might also provide at least a glimpse, a very broad understanding, of the fundamentals of e-commerce and online selling, the different categories of virtual shops, payment systems, security, e-business orders processing, and distance selling.

Participants in any workshops might also wish to examine models of book-related Web sites from the

countries of the North, for example the remarkable growth of online bookstores, and discuss whether similar initiatives might be undertaken in Africa, possibly as collective ventures or small networks, and providing access to African-published books and journals and home-grown content.

● Learning about e-mail and electronic mailing lists
Although use of e-mail is now common among many African publishers, training is probably also needed for working with e-mail as a communication tool for the book professions, and how to make the most of e-mail— whether by editors, for communication with authors, for peer review processes, or by those involved in book marketing.

Electronic mailing lists and online forums, one of the primary forms of interaction on the Internet, are not widely used as yet in Africa, and many people still do not fully understand the benefits, not least for postings by publishers and NGOs to select target groups. Provided postings or announcements are low-key and hype free, this, as is use of e-mail, is one of the most effective and least expensive methods to publicize new publications to tightly focused special interest groups.

● Online forum for African publishers
APNET, or another organisation promoting book development in Africa, might also wish to establish an electronic discussion group for African publishers and NGOs involved in publishing, to provide a forum for discussions on topics of common interest, sharing of know-how and information, for announcements about book promotional events, conferences and meetings, and possibly also to provide an outlet for some kind of 'Rights on offer' service.

Possible components of a workshop programme
The components of Internet training workshops for African publishers ought to serve primarily as an Introduction to the Internet and the World Wide Web, but, at the same time, provide at least basic understanding of e-commerce.

It may be possible to draw on the model of 'travelling' Internet workshops for African university librarians organised by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) and which have been held in several African countries to date, reportedly with considerable success.[8] Workshop content and course training materials were developed with the assistance of the Institute for Learning and Research Technology at the University of Bristol, UK, in collaboration with local librarians and facilitators in Africa. It would have to be recognised of course that the needs for Internet know-how and training are quite different for publishers to those

of librarians. For example, unlike libraries, Web sites of publishers and NGOs are not generally intended to provide a public service, but are designed primarily to provide visibility, promotion and marketing for the publishing output from these organisations; and publishers will be interested in exploring the opportunities offered by e-commerce.

In preparation for any workshop it may also be useful to conduct a preliminary survey to determine what particular aspects of the Internet are judged to be most important, or potentially most important, for African publishers and NGOs, from a point of view of using the Web as an information or training resource, to establish contacts with publishing partners on a South-North or South-South basis, as a resource for editors, or as a promotion and marketing tool.

Notes

1 African Publishers' Network (APNET), 2000, *African Publishing Review,* vol. 9, no. 3.

2 *State of the Internet Report 2000* http://www.usic.org/

3 For more information about Internet basics, marketing on the Internet, and Internet bookselling, see also M. Zell, Hans (2001), 'The Internet for the Book Professions' in *Book Marketing and Promotion: A Handbook of Good Practice,* The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP). Available online at http://www.inasp.org.uk/psi/bmp/internet.html.

4 Sukumar, Dar (2000), 'Technological Developments in Publishing and Book Distribution', *African Publishing Review* vol. 9, no. 3:7.

5 Ross, Alan (2000), 'The Impact of Technology on the Publishing Trade', *African Publishing Review* vol. 9, no. 3: 2.

6 http://www.boot.co.za/news/nov00/johnic14.htm [as at November 2000].

7 Anderson, Elisabeth (2000), 'The Centre for the Book – South Africa' *The African Book Publishing Record* vol. 26, no. 4, pp 255-258.

8 For more information visit http://www.inasp.org.uk/lsp/internet/intro.html

REVIEW ARTICLES

The Politics of Publishing in South Africa, edited by Nicholas Evans and Monica Seeber

In the age of the ubiquitous turn of the century attempts to (re)present a post-modern third millennium worldview, few nations today could be more convincing than South Africa in its efforts at reinventing itself. The South African struggles have rightly gained our sympathy, they are not just reforms of existing policies and laws, but encompass a desperate need for a deeper and more fundamental restructuring of every space and facet of a society scarred and marred by years of racist apartheid ideology. The enormous challenges impeding such an attempt have made the South African story at the turn of the century a moving meta-narrative.

The Politics of Publishing in South Africa is one facet of this complex process, but it is equally an astonishingly enlightening story of how publishing as an industry in all its shades and forms has participated in, influenced and been influenced by the political history of the country. It traces how writers, editors, publishers, printers, and including the booksellers and readers – notes in 'an ensemble of discrete processes which centres on the production and dissemination of literary artefacts' (p. 107), using Andries Oliphant's definition – pursued their various roles in developing a culture of publishing, but also in fostering and destroying apartheid and contributing to the socio-economic development of the country.

In this sense, however, it is tempting to conclude that the book is a story with an obvious ending. A review of the culture of a society's publishing should encapsulate its connections with the larger society. But *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* is more than just a publisher's account of the story of a nation. Firstly, the book is a collection of critical and candid analyses of the past and present involvement of citizens of South Africa, bound together by a communal relationship to the written text, in shaping their country's future. The open and self-critical Truth and Reconciliation Commission mentality pervading the chapters suggests not just a willingness to banish the evils of the past but also an understanding of the nature of and possible answers to some of the challenges facing them.

For instance, Phaswane Mpe and Monica Seeber's critical overview explores the history of publishing in South Africa and explicitly paints the multifaceted faces of South African publishers over the years. In a world where labels – self-given or attributed – still play a role in identity construction, it is interesting to note that mergers and acquisitions, a direct product of developments in the publishing sector and global capital today, have 'changed the complexions and cultures of companies in ways that render apartheid "collaborators" and "non-collaborators" simplistic and unreliable categories for classifying publishing houses' (p. 31). True, the current relevance of an 'apartheid stigma' in the scheme of things is arguable. But looked at in the perspective of, for example, government policy – strongly advocated for in the entire book as a crucial element to put things right – there is need for more than just resources to resolve some of the development questions facing the country.

Secondly, by recognising an ongoing forever-changing story and chronicling it as such, *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* attempts to grasp the nature of the current culture of publishing. The fluidity and malleability of actors continuously reinventing themselves to survive suggest that South African publishers are close to understanding how to cope with a global culture of mobility. Some publishers will survive, others won't, which may or may not be as a result of what they did or did not do, or simply, as shown in the demise of the 'Alternative Press', because times have changed. Dick Cloete's and Guy Berger's accounts of the downfall of the dynamic, fiery, indigenous, small and independent publisher, such as Ravan and Skotaville, in post-apartheid South Africa are telling, but aptly situate the context of the business. The loss of foreign donors, lack of support from the new government coupled with a decreasing interest in South Africa and a decline in local political mobilisation mean those publishers must have to do more than reinvent themselves. But we are neither to cry for them, nor laugh at them, opines Berger. Alternative publishers served a particular critical period in the country's history; they were crucial to the social movement that brought about the South Africa of today, but new factors would have to

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The Politics of Publishing in South Africa
...is an astonishingly enlightening story of how publishing as an industry in all its shades and forms has participated in, influenced and been influenced by the political history of the country.

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assure their sustainability and relevance now. This is arguably a serious debate beyond the confines of publishing, but certainly worth pursuing further.

The challenges of publishers in a country with a 'rich publishing history' (p.3) from a 'third world' part of the globe to achieve recognition for their development are noteworthy, and the writers in this book do try as much as they can to inform the world. The particularity of the South African case is glaring in the wealth of a nation in the company of the poorest countries in the globe. But much more than that, as Nicholas Evans and Monica Seeber argue in their introduction, there are pointers of 'uniquely South African' roles in publishing, whether multinational or indigenous, that 'do not parallel the story of underdevelopment in publishing on the continent'. However, Eve Gray's discussion of the near-absence of South-South co-operation, involving South Africa and other nations in the South, e.g. India, and the overarching dominance of imported academic books from the United States and the United Kingdom seems more indicative of the true status of the South African publishing industry.

Gray's article makes an effort to place academic publishing in South Africa beyond the transformation taking place within South Africa itself – its changing higher education policies, the influence of distance education, government policy and the responses of local publishers to these – to include the external dynamics – regional, continental and global – impacting on academic publishing in the country. Like Gray's, Nicholas Combrinck and Maggie Davey's near sardonic dialogue is a realistic characterisation of publishing not just in South Africa, but of its place among others, be it industries or countries.

However, the turning point of this commendable book, which also touches on other important issues – professional training and development, language policies, writing, education and digital technologies – is the concluding article on copyright licensing. In a painstakingly argued piece entitled: 'Protecting the Publishing Industry: Reprographic Reproduction Rights Administration as a Strategy and Tool for National Book Publishing Developments', Monica Seeber ignores other salient issues influencing questions of copyright ownership and control, intellectual property, piracy and international regulatory mechanisms. It is valid that we need to act effectively against piracy and violation of copyright material, be it locally produced or foreign, not just with a view to sustaining the publishing industry, but also as part of our interconnection with the global world around us. But it is equally compelling that a discussion of copyright devoid of the impact of the digital environment (p.282) seriously impedes, rather than facilitates, our search for ways of assuring the sustainability of the publishing industry, especially the fragile ones in the South. The

reasons behind this assertion are manifold. Some pointers worth mentioning are as follow:

Firstly, that '[t]he immediate imperative is – since …the book continues to be the primary means of transferring knowledge in Africa – to put our analogue houses in order and take steps to eradicate, or at least control, copyright infringement through unauthorised photocopying' (p 282) is not convincing. Recent developments in publishing have confirmed that the impact of digital media cannot be constrained to digital publishers only; it affects the standing and survival of print publishers, given the obvious facts that virtually all print media exist today first in their digital format.

Secondly, past and present advances in information technology have made it imperative for discussions of copyright to be situated in the practicalities of enforcing and controlling copyright violations. It is not just enough to appeal to the moral and ethical sides of would-be copyright thieves, but to be realistic about the limitations of enforcing copyright laws today.

> *[A] discussion of copyright devoid of the impact of the digital environment (p.282) seriously impedes... our search for ways of assuring the sustainability of the publishing industry, especially the fragile ones in the South.*

The Politics of Publishing in South Africa would have been more fitting if Seeber's well-researched discussion on the issues above was balanced with other perspectives, especially one that connects copyright issues beyond the confines of 'analogue media' – perspectives that seek ways of surmounting the problems posed in earning returns on investments in publishing in the digital era. The significance of media convergence discussed by Steve Kromberg is one of such possibilities, and this ought to be linked with copyright issues. Then, we can fully understand the value of South African publishers' attempts at protecting intellectual property rights alongside the question of 'Why then is the level of literacy in South Africa so low?' (p.3), or of how the country can cope well with the 'change in statutory inequalities of apartheid to the nominal equality of constitutional democracy' (p. 125) as Oliphant succinctly puts it.

Review by Sulaiman Adebowale
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A Handbook on Journalism Ethics: African Case Studies, edited by Chudi Ukpabi

This is a disturbing, ambitious attempt at delving into the minds of media practitioners, in this case journalists, in sub-Saharan Africa, and much more. It strives to condition their thinking by inculcating doctrines that not only challenge the practice of journalism on the continent, but also strongly advocates for a rethinking of the very ethos of media work in Africa. It tries to question more than the who, what, where, when, and why to prod the integrity of the journalist as an individual and as a member of a profession and a community, society or nation.

The book is divided into five sections. The introduction on media and journalism ethics in Africa describes the background of the project that resulted in the handbook, and briefly touches on the need for journalists to be able to balance objectivity in reports of events with their equally important role of strengthening the process of political and social development in their various communities.

In section two, three chapters explore some of the key theoretical underpinnings surrounding ethical challenges to the work of journalists in Africa and the outside world. The section covers how issues of democracy, good governance and peace building, civic journalism and community media, and journalism and self-regulation are influenced and can be influenced to promote the development of the profession and the society in which it is practised.

Section three presents 14 case studies from 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa (three case studies), Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Although the glaring absence of studies from North Africa, of the politically active press in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, for example, undermines the broadness of the debate, some of the case studies are interesting analyses and appraisals of the state of journalism in their respective countries. A wide spectrum of media is also explored: print, radio, television, photojournalism and digital media. Some of the harrowing stories of death, imprisonment, torture, censorship, and poverty – externally foisted on the

profession – are juxtaposed with corruption, greed, and illiteracy – internally fostered within the profession.

Although the glaring absence of studies from North Africa, of the politically active press in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, for example, undermines the broadness of the debate, some of the case studies are interesting analyses and appraisals of the state of journalism in their respective countries.

The fourth and fifth sections cover practical steps and codes of ethics for both journalists and media practitioner trainers to train journalists on media ethics. The accompanying diskette provides examples of situations confronted by journalists daily in the pursuit of their work. The issues covered range from bribery and corruption, AIDS reporting, personal opinion, and self-censorship to harassment, legal implications and the public right to know.

In spite of its unusual design format, which makes it quite tasking to read, this is a handbook that would be useful to journalists and media practitioners and trainers in Africa and the developing world.

Review by Sulaiman Adebowale
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NEW PUBLICATIONS

compiled by Sulaiman Adebowale

Outstanding Books for Young People With Disabilities 2001, February 2001, International Board of Books for Young People (IBBY), 20pp, catalogue distributed by the IBBY Secretariat, Nonnenweg 12, Postfach, CH-4003 Basel, Switzerland, +41 61 272 29 17 (tel), +41 61 272 27 57 (fax), ibby@eye.ch

This valuable annotated booklist not only showcases the very best of literature for young people with or without disabilities but also covers a range of instruments of communication that 'opens the way to understanding and acceptance, and to the inclusion of young people with disabilities in society'.

The catalogue is the third in the series of an IBBY project that started in 1997. The widely distributed 1997 catalogue was followed by the 1999 selection, which was exhibited at various international book fairs and fora around the world. The 2001 collection, selected by a team led by Nina Askvig Reidarson, encompasses a wide variety of literature from a diverse group of publishers in various parts of the world (from Sweden to Iran). It aptly captures the breadth of the differing and complex nature of young people with disabilities. From non-verbal communication tools for people with learning difficulties, to raised picture books for the blind and visually impaired, and to easy-to-read books for those with mental disabilities, the books and picture stories represent a vital resource for the understanding of disability in society.

Two authors from Africa, Ifeoma Onyefelu (Nigeria) and Meshack Asare (Ghana) are included in the collection. Onyefelu's *A Triangle for Adaora: an African book of shapes* received special mention as being 'a pleasant and useful resource for local children' and as a tool that 'could open the way for communication between children from different cultures'. In *Sosu's Call,* Asare uses the story of a disabled boy to tackle issues of 'participation, social inclusion and potential, as well as myths and compensation connected with disability'. The book, published by Sub-Saharan Publishers, Ghana, won the 1999 Prize for Children's Literature in the Service of Tolerance.

How to Produce Environmental Education Materials, 2001, Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), 152 pp & *Production for Non-Fiction for Young People (Aged 15 and above) in Asia and the Pacific,* 2001, Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), 108pp. Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), 6 Fukuromachi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-8484, Japan, +81 3 3269 4435 (tel), +81 3 3269- 4510 (fax), book@accu.or.jp, www.accu.or.jp

The two volumes are reports of two training courses organised by the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), between October 1999 and December 2000. The organisation has been involved in training courses on book development in the region since 1967 with a view to developing human resources in the publishing industry.

The background to *Production for Non-Fiction for Young People* is the shortcoming of local publishers to produce quality original local works to meet growing demands

for non-fiction titles. According to the ACCU, local publishers in the region tend to focus on fiction or publish translated versions of popular books from abroad, rather than risk non-fiction titles, a policy which tends to have adverse effects on the development of the region.

The handbook focuses on practical knowledge and skills needed to produce high quality material for local readers. The book is divided into three main parts and an appendix. Topics in Part 1 include attempts at inculcating an understanding of the boundaries of 'What is Non-Fiction?', war and news coverage, picture books, planning, executing and managing projects to ensure titles are well produced and marketed to the appropriate audience. Part 2: Production, presents the learning outcomes from workshop sessions attended by participants in relation to real life fact-finding missions, for example, a traditional indigo-dyeing trade. Part 3 covers case study reports on the current situation of non-fiction for young people from 19 countries in the region.

How to Produce Environmental Education Materials is a manual for those engaged in the publication of materials on the environment. It seeks to impart hands-on skills and ways to plan and execute a viable publishing project to effectively disseminate information about the environment and sustainable development praxis.

This four-chapter volume engages authors, publishers and other information media actors on various issues impacting on the environment and publishing. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the issues to look out for; chapter 2 compiles a series of lectures on environmental education and the role of the media, planning and producing environmental education materials, how books can be made to introduce and vitalize local activity on environment, paper and the environment, and needs of local community-based activities for preservation of environment and publication. Chapter 4 contains practical workshop sessions; and Chapter 5 gathers case study reports on publishing, information dissemination and the environment from ten countries in the region.

Both volumes represent a commendable attempt of the ACCU to improve the workings and roles of the publishing industry in the region.

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The Ordeal of the African Writer, Charles Larson, 2001, ISBN 1856499308 (HB) & 1856499316 (PB), viii+168 pp, Zed Books Ltd, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, UK. +44 (0)207 7837 8466 (tel), +44 (0)2078333960 (fax), hosie@zedbooks.demon.co.uk. Price: £45/$55.00 (HB), £14.95/$19.95 (PB)

This invaluable book explores the realities behind the African writer and writing. It thoroughly examines the pertinent questions shaping the work of African writers – questions such as who are they writing for, in what language should they write, and in what genre should they adopt. It also prods other critical challenges influencing literary writing from Africa – the state of the publishing industry on the continent and the involvement of publishers outside Africa, and the impact of socio-economic and political crises.

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African Publishing Review, ISSN 10297618 1998 APNET, Harare. Annual subscription inside Africa $30/£20 (airmail $35/£25), outside Africa $50/£35 (airmail $60/£40) from APNET, PO Box 3773, Harare, Zimbabwe. +263 4 706196/7 (tel), +263 4 705106 (fax), e-mail: apnet@harare.iafrica.com

Vol. 9 no. 5, 2000 *Revista das Edições Africanas,* the first Portuguese edition of the APR has also been released. The issue explores the book industry in Angola and Mozambique, women writers and APNET's participation at the Gothenburg book fair.

Vol. 10 no. 2, 2001 focuses on using the media and marketing strategies to promote reading and book distribution in Africa, with case studies from Kenya, Mozambique and Nigeria. It also covers articles on the Frankfurt and Bologna book fairs.

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Bellagio Studies in Publishing

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International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia, Philip G. Altbach and Edith Hoshino (eds.), 726 pp, 1995. New York: Garland $95 (cloth). Available from Garland Publishing, Inc, 1000A Sherman Ave, Hamden, CT 06514, USA.

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