

BOOKNOTES

THE OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WASHINGTON BOOK PUBLISHERS

MARCH 20, 2008

www.washingtonbooks.org

The Washington Book Publishers, an informal, all volunteer group of editorial and publishing professionals in the Washington, D.C., area since 1976

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The Washington
Book Publishers 

Dear WBP Members,

JOIN THE FUN!

VOLUNTEER FOR THE ANNUAL DESIGN & EFFECTIVENESS COMPETITION

Plans are well under way for the 2008 Design & Effectiveness Competition, under the expert direction of Betsy Kulamer, WBP Vice-President and Competition veteran. There is a terrific cadre of volunteers in place, who would be delighted to have additional help on any aspect of the effort, including publicity, hospitality, outreach, technical support, and production.

Working on the Competition is enormous fun, and you get to know your book publishing colleagues in a whole new way. If you'd like to contribute your talents and time, contact Betsy at bkulamer@asce.org, 703-295-6275.

PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS

The 2007–2008 WBP year has been flying by! We have many exciting programs under our belts and more to come. So far, we've met each other at:

- Panels on
 - Offshoring of Services;
 - Acquiring and Rejecting Authors; and
 - Marketing in the 21st Century;
- The WBP Holiday Party & Book Exchange;
- Brown-bag lunches on both editorial and design careers;
- A field trip to a book manufacturing plant; and
- A report on the O'Reilly Tools of Change Conference & Technology Update.

If you missed this terrific presentation, you can access the PowerPoint slides and handouts on our web site at www.washingtonbooks.org. Also, see Claire Reinburg's report on the program in this issue of the newsletter.

Upcoming programs include:

- A legal panel in April looking at publishing issues such as copyright, libel, and contracts—and also issues of employment law for publishers, such as exempt or non-exempt status for editors and artists.
- A career lunch on freelancing;
- A proposed field trip to either the National Archives or the Library of Congress; and
- In mid-June, the Annual WBP Design & Effectiveness Competition and Award Ceremony

I'm looking forward to seeing you at these events—watch your in-boxes and mail boxes for announcements.

—Laura

Laura C. Lawson
Senior Acquisitions and Development Editor
Davies-Black Publishing/CPP, Inc.

Book Marketing in the 21st Century

On Tuesday, January 29, WBP members were schooled in the art of contemporary book promotion during a panel discussion on marketing tools and techniques in today's fast-paced and increasingly electronic world. The discussion focused on new forms of communications technology such as blogs and e-promos, on how to successfully meet the needs of members and customers, and on traditional marketing strategies that still work. One of the major themes coming out of the evening's talk was the idea that content-driven marketing messages are the way of the future. According to the panelists, the most effective way to generate readers and consumers is to make valuable content both visible and accessible, and to let people see how that content will benefit them. In other words, let your book product do the talking. Other useful tactics are as follows: build a productive partnership with your IT department, as they are an invaluable element in online marketing; increase your "searchability" by linking with other websites and having them reciprocate; include your authors in the marketing process; consider making free online excerpts of your books available, because—let's face it—people like to sample before they buy; and, most importantly, listen to your customers, who are often your single greatest advertising and marketing source. Last but not least: try all avenues. What works for one book project might not be an effective or appropriate format for another, so remember that flexibility and creativity are key to achieving marketing success across the board. For more information, the panelists recommended Seth Godin's *Meatball Sundaes: Is Your Marketing out of Sync?* (2007).

—ERIN MOSELY

Book Swap: High Point of Holiday Party

How can anyone think the book is dead? About forty hard-core book people gathered at the Wilson Center in December for the annual WBP party, and good food wasn't the only draw. Each attendee had



brought the evening's requisite admission book for 'potluck.'

At the announcement that it was time to take one from the swap area, they swarmed the tables in delight. The hosts had ensured that each book went into a decorative bag so that no one knew what book was inside.

Many had used the opportunity to provide volumes from their own publishing houses, while

others brought in books they'd purchased. Equine aficionado Laura Lawson drew an appropriate book—on horses. Others found current politics, poetry, and good fiction in their book bags. Some people appeared to start reading on the spot, while others continued to swap books among themselves until they got

Recommended Reading

Periodically *Slate* magazine asks its contributors, themselves noted writers, to review recent books they consider worth reading. Here are a few of their recommendations for this season:

Fiction

- Dangerous Laughter: Thirteen Stories*, by Steven Milhauser
- People of the Book*, by Geraldine Brooks
- The Senator's Wife*, by Sue Miller
- Slip of the Knife*, by Denise Mina

books they preferred. It all worked out and everyone left happy. This should be an annual event—many thanks to the person who thought of it.



Attendance was a bit smaller than anticipated but many assumed that people were held back by the usual awful



traffic or the allure of the national tree-lighting ceremony nearby. For those who did come, it appeared that

books are still a main attraction.

I had moved from the DC area nearly two years ago, was passing through and happy to find that the party was on.

—Dawn Leland, Portland, Maine

Nonfiction

- Swimming in a Sea of Death*, by David Rieff
- The Long Embrace: Raymond Chandler and the Woman He Loved*, by Judith Freeman

Member Announcement

Georgetown University Press is pleased to welcome Nancy Driver as editorial and production coordinator.

The Book's Future Depends on Thinking Outside the Book

Courtesy of tour guides Charlotte McNaughton of ASCE and Lori Barber of MarkLogic, WBP members rolled through the changing landscape of publishing charted at the 2008 O'Reilly Tools of Change conference in New York at our February 28, 2008, meeting. Trends and developments in publishing technology and reader preferences are reshaping our profession, but the good news is that professional and society publishers could be in the driver's seat in significant ways. Buckle up for the Top 10 Tips for Washington Book Publishers gleaned from the O'Reilly Tools of Change conference in 2008:

1. Context Is King.

Indexing, tagging, and assisting readers to find your content are what matter now. Charlotte noted that layout and design of web pages and websites are also increasingly important. In the flood of search results from Google (Lori entered a term that returned a million+ hits), customers are desperate for help in finding the appropriate sites for their needs. Lori urged publishers to think about their audiences in terms of "personae" and to craft "user stories" that reflect what those users really do with your content. Being tuned in to ways that different users and readers interact with your content gives you the ability to respond with appropriate delivery methods.

2. Wait—Contact Is Also King!

Charlotte emphasized the amount of discussion at the conference related to networking sites and online communities, which have exploded in growth. The web has morphed into a tool for connecting with others through shared interests, be they professional or personal. Through community, content becomes more contextual, and Lori noted that professional or society publishers know all about community. The challenge for publishers is finding new ways to leverage this contact network.

3. The Distributor Is Key.

"The most important player in the publishing industry today is the distributor," according to speakers at sessions Charlotte attended. Distributors now may be preserving and storing digital content or delivering content to print-on-demand facilities. Ingram and

Amazon.com are two aggressive players in this field. In addition, Lightning Source is expanding internationally, offering smaller publishers a potentially economical option for overseas distribution.

4. Do You Wiki, Blog, Friend, RSS? Better Start.

These tools give publishers the opportunity to connect in new ways with their audiences. Charlotte emphasized the need for us to think outside the book from the start when developing content. Move beyond the covers: does the author have a blog with an existing audience? Could you publish more related content online to link to your books, such as data sets or background materials? Think podcasts, discussion areas, and other venues that might touch more online users. We know of books being written through use of wikis. Lori discussed the converse of this point, too. Is there content you can scrape from the web and integrate with your own content? "Integrate with the world," she advised. So, offer Web 2.0 applications, if they're appropriate for your community.

5. Making XML Is No Longer Optional.

Lori remarked, "XML is no longer optional. But who really cares how you get there?" Publishers have the most flexibility in delivering content if they use XML, but they could get there either through post-processing software (like www.pcpage.com or www.easypress.com) or through direct export (Quark or Adobe). If your workflow processes are set up right, "the XML should be practically free." Many publishers are offshoring conversion work or working with vendors here to obtain XML. And, as Lori pointed out, there are more tools coming along all the time to help us interact with our XML.

6. Enrich and Enhance That XML

Both Charlotte and Lori noted that the MLS/librarian/cataloger is moving back to center stage because of the increased need to enrich XML with metadata and taxonomies. "All hail the library-science specialist," Lori commented. Charlotte reported that speakers at the conference called the master of library science "the most desired skill set in publishing now."

Structure for all of our content will become increasingly important. So, metadata here we come.

7. We Need to Go Beyond E-Books.

In the future, we might not need dedicated e-book devices, as cellphones and PDAs deliver content in acceptably readable formats. PDFs, however, don't easily translate to the small screen and probably will still be read on computer screens. Think in terms of how your e-books might resemble software instead of printed pages. Lori chided that "Just selling by the chapter is so 2006." Is there a chunk of content below the level of article or chapter that might have value to your readers? How about \$0.99 for just the "Methods" section? As Lori put it, "Readers will pay you if you give them the content they want, when they want it, and at a price they consider fair."

8. Get Moving.

Lori noted that publishers should start with what they have today to move into these technology areas. She commented that our goal might be to "fail faster" in some of our experiments and new ventures. Waiting a long time to see how it goes or moving slowly could involve larger expenditures to find out what doesn't work. So, get going.

9. Professional Publishing Is Well Positioned to Benefit from the Shift.

Lori reminded us of Mike Shatzkin's "15 Trends to Watch in 2008" (*Publishers Weekly*, January 7, 2008): "The Internet will drive 21st-century publishing enterprises to be more like what professional publishing has always been: highly vertical and format-agnostic." Many of us are in a good place to take advantage of changes in publishing technology. As we've learned to deliver content to our specialized audiences, we've picked up tricks along the way. To quote Tim O'Reilly, "The real core of what a publisher does hasn't changed... We just need to rediscover our old skills in the new world" (*The Seybold Report*, Volume 7, Number 22, 2007).

10. The Bottom Line: Agility.

Lori's presentation began and ended with the term "agile publishing." She noted that the Oxford English Dictionary defines agile as "1. able to move quickly and easily. 2. quick-witted or shrewd." Sell content to readers when they want it, how they want it, where they want it. Deliver answers, not

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The Washington
Book Publishers 
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www.washingtonbooks.org

**PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS,
PROGRAMS!
See inside!**

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links or copies. Transform content into data.

Many thanks to Lori Barber and Charlotte McNaughton for the lively presentations and discussion. Go to www.washingtonbooks.org to access Lori Barber's slides and Charlotte's notes and handouts from the O'Reilly Tools of

Change for Publishing 2008 conference. For other reports from the conference, see Bill Kasdorf's article for SSP ("O'Reilly TOC: A Wake-Up Call to Publishers") and the presenters' slides and notes on the O'Reilly site.

—Claire Reinburg

WBP PRESENTATION

LEGAL ISSUES IN PUBLISHING:

Libel, Employment Law, Untruthful Authors, Copyright, Fair-use, and More

Wednesday, April 9th

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

1779 Massachusetts Ave., NW, D.C.

(DuPont Circle Metro)

Refreshments at 6:00 pm; Program starts at 6:30 pm

Members attend free; Nonmembers \$10

www.washingotnbook.org

SAVE THE DATE!

THE WASHINGTON BOOK PUBLISHERS
DESIGN & EFFECTIVENESS COMPETITION
AWARD PROGRAM

Will be held on Tuesday June 10, 2008

Watch your mail and e-mail for
information on entering the competition and attending the ceremony.



WASHINGTON BOOK PUBLISHERS

Bookmark WBP.ORG!

The Washington Book Publishers website is posting up-to-date information to meet your needs! Please review the website periodically at www.washingtonbooks.org for information on upcoming events and recent job postings. If you have any information for posting or suggested improvements, please email Margot Ziperman at mziperman@cqpress.com.

Job Bank

Job postings are run at no charge and are included at the discretion of the newsletter coordinator. Submissions should no more than 100 words. To submit a posting, please contact yamile.kahn@wilsoncenter.org. More complete listings can be found at the WBP website at www.washingtonbooks.org.

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Graphics & prod. coord., Brainstorm Creative Resources, visit brainstormresources.com/ApplyOnline (3/3)

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