



**Digital Dilemmas - Should an author make their book available online?
Carolyn Pittis of Harper Collins discusses the benefits.**

Q: Welcome again to another edition of *Beyond the Book*. My name is Chris Kenneally. I am the Director of Author Relations for Copyright Clearance Center, and the host of our ongoing podcast series we call *Beyond the Book*, which is at Beyondthebook.com.

Joining me right now as – at the Publishing Business Conference and Expo is Carolyn Pittis, who is a Senior Vice President, Global Marketing Strategy and Operations for Harper Collins. And global marketing strategy, Carolyn, that covers a multitude of sins. But you're here to talk about really how authors and publishers are working in new ways, new and exciting ways, to develop community and to bring their readers closer to them, I think, would be one to put it. Tell us about some of the new programs that Harper Collins is working on.

A: Well, I think Harper Collins has been – had a great run of experimental work that we've done over the last several years. It began very intensely a couple of years ago when we embarked on a digital warehouse project. Two years on we have over 2,000 titles in our digital warehouse.

Q: And what – just for the people who are listening who don't know, tell us what the digital warehouses try to accomplish.

A: The goal really is to make sure that all our book content is available on demand to be used to market the print editions, or market the electronic editions, and to market the authors really in a very highly scalable way. In November we launched the Browse Inside Reader on Harpercollins.com, and it's been a tremendous success.

We have two programs that are using the digital warehouse right now. We have something called Sneak Peaks which allows consumers to view a title – 20% of a title up to two weeks before the book is actually on sale. So fans love that, they love getting their early read. Literally and figuratively.

And then we also rolled out very recently, within the last couple of weeks, a full access program where we provide 100% of the content of certain titles available so

that fans can read those books, browse those books, and hopefully buy an edition of the book.

Most successfully, I think we've partnered with Neil Gaiman, one of our authors, who allowed fans to choose which of his books to make available for free. His fans chose a book called *American Gods* which was published several years ago. And we've had over 1.2 million page views in less than a week.

Q: Let me ask you, you tell some book publishers that you're putting all your content online, that sends them running for the exits. How can you sit there calmly and say that?

A: Well, I think in – it's always an author by author case. And I think some authors in this market are convinced that providing more access to content actually drives sales of their books. And other authors are at the absolute end of the spectrum where they're very – they won't even have an e-book edition available, because they're concerned about piracy.

Harper Collins aims to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all those authors, on either end of the spectrum, and in between. And it really is dictated by what the author wants to do, in what communities, how comfortable they are with making content available in whatever amounts. But with our Browse Inside platform, now, we can really turn on a dime to change the amount of content, or the type of content that's available, and sort of mix and match. Maybe it's a chapter one week – we're experimenting with a lot of ideas and it's very exciting.

Q: Well, for a first time author it would be different than an established author. An established author might say, well, maybe my older books, or something like that, but not the newer books. How do you – what are some arguments or what's the bait you offer to an unestablished author to feel comfortable about this?

A: Well, I think we're actually experimenting with whom ever calls us and says I want to try it. All of the – I think most of the experiments that we've have done have been driven by author interest. So it's really not about convincing an author to do something. It's really about saying, we know that you're interested in X, Y, Z and what about this? Would you like to try this? And I think that sort of leads me to Author Assistant, which is another way, another platform of basically collecting and aggregating information about the author, provided by the author, and allowing an author to create a page on our site so that they can market themselves. And then we can take that content and market them throughout the site. So there's a lot of cross marketing that we do.

We're the first publisher that's done that as well. Most publishers have struggled with what kind of services to provide authors in terms of website builds and things like that. This is the first time there's a real scalable platform that's very easy to use, if you can use a bank card at your bank, or check in at an airport you can use

this tool. And very unintimidating. We've got 100 authors up so far. And the goal really is to provide these scalable solutions so that authors feel like they have a partner, marketing partner, in their publisher, rather than hearing my publisher's not doing enough for me. So we're providing these tools and whether it's widgets, content widgets, or author pages, so that authors can get their message out. And that's – we see that as the job of the publisher, not just for publishers to say, oh, go up on MySpace, or go up on FaceBook and make your own page. We're saying we can distribute content for you.

Q: Well, as Director of Author Relations, I hear this with interest, because I often hear, or I will tell people that if you scratch an author you'll get a complaint about a publisher. And you're nodding your head saying, yes, yes. And this is an interesting way to kind of become closer to the author, really.

The other part of the business, this sort of three legged stool here, is you're trying to come closer to the community and what's interesting to me is you're the global marketing strategy. So you can't simply get the author excited about the fact his or her book is in the local book store. You have to get them excited and thinking about a global audience. How do you do that?

A: Well, I think we're – our goal, really, is to create tools that work in all our markets. So Browse Inside, for example, is something where it's been rolled out on the main Harpercollins.com site, but it's – by the end of the summer, it's going to be out on all the sites worldwide. Our Australia site, our Canadian site, our UK site, it's one product, and it's available. So an author can really have global reach in all our markets. And I think that that's part of the benefit you get from working with the publisher that really thinks globally.

We also really looking most traffic to websites domestically and internationally. There's no boundaries anymore, people go everywhere. English language readers can read a site that's in Germany as easily as they can in the United States. So, I think it's important to really think about what is common in these markets, and then what is very different. Because there are different needs, and I think that's where the continued to evolve rights and reach issues that are going to be about what can happen in a global marketplace, where digital moves much more easily than print.

Q: And so there'll be plenty of work for the authors, the publishers, and the lawyers as well, I think, if we're talking about rights. Is there one particular aspect of the rights questions that Harper Collins has had to address?

A: Well, I think it's always fascinating to me how historically rights have been divvied up. Where one publisher may control rights in one country and another publisher in another. And maybe some publisher has audio rights and another has e-book rights. And that just – it slows down the ability for that content to travel when you have to coordinate across different organizations.

So, I think it's vastly in an author's best interest to think about not moving to divvy up your rights, and work – find a partner who can really exploit all your rights effectively, because I think you get a lot more integration of reach, and a publisher can do a lot more, at least I believe Harper Collins can do a more, when they've got the widest basket of rights to exploit. And maybe the rights are exploited in different order. Maybe the e-books rights are exploited first for some new authors, and then you go to print. There's a lot of opportunities. But when there's lots of different rights holders internationally, it – you may miss opportunities because of the pace of the market moves so fast.

Q: And the further complicating factor is the devices that are out there that the content is traveling to. It's not simply that people can read these materials online. They can now read them on their cell phone, they're writing novels on cell phones in Japan right now. So, you've got wheels within wheels. It's a very complicated situation.

A: Yeah. And I think the need for speed is driving certainly our investment in technology and our investment in experimentation. And I think with it becomes a you need to be willing to fail, you need to be willing to put something out there that people are going to criticize and not have thin skin and say OK, I guess we got that wrong, and now let's listen to the consumer feedback. So, interacting with consumers is not the first. Most publishing houses have had retailers and wholesalers or retailers to do that job. So, I think it's very important for us to create and maintain those consumer connections. To read the marketplace, and how do consumers want to read books today? And how does that vary by how old you are? Or what you're used to.

Q: Well, I want to thank you for connecting with me today. Carolyn Pittis is the Senior Vice President of Global Marketing Strategy and Operations for Harper Collins. My name's Chris Kenneally, and thank you for joining us for *Beyond the Book*. And we look forward to having you back very soon. Thank you, Carolyn.

A: Thank you.

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