



# Beyond the Book®



## **BTB #94: Publishing Has A Future? Yes!, Says 'Round Table' Panel**

KENNEALLY: Well, welcome and good afternoon. My name is Chris Kenneally. I'm the director of author and creative relations for the non-profit Copyright Clearance Center. I'm also the host of a podcast series called Beyond the Book which you can find at [Beyondthebook.com](http://Beyondthebook.com) and we in fact are sponsoring the conference today and we'll be making available many of the programs as part of our podcast series in the future and we're very happy to be here. I want to thank all of the staff of the New York Center for Independent Publishing for the hard work they've done. I want to thank as well our host today, The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. I want to thank all of you for persevering on what is said to be the first beautiful day of 2009. If you haven't looked outside, in fact it is. Our topic today at the very final program is What's Next?

It's a simple enough question and I was reminded that it was the question that the fictional president in *The West Wing*, Josiah Bartlet, always ended all of his meetings with. What's next? The idea seems to be that when you're a President in the White House, there's never anything quite done. There's always something more to do and I think there's an implication there in our own question: what's next? If you're an author or involved in publishing, you've probably finished a book or you're writing a book. So once you've done that, what's next whether you sell five copies or 500 copies or 500,000 copies is to write another book or to publish another book. So we have a very simple answer to that question but if we just were here for simple answers then we wouldn't have a two day conference, right? We need to really dig in a little bit deeper and the subtitle for the program is "The Future of Publishing" and I get kind of queasy when I hear people talking about the future.

I don't know about you. I say the future? Who's kidding whom? I mean if we had been here a year ago and we had said that the whole world would be in an economic crisis such as hasn't been seen for 75 years, I think we would have been laughed out of the room. So when we talk about the future, we have to have a certain amount of caution and so you take what you hear today and sort through it for yourself and for what you need but I'll let you know that I did do a little bit of research and discovered that there's something out there called the Association of Professional Futurists and when I saw that, I said to myself, my Lord, that probably is slightly more specious as an occupation than what I heard about yesterday which is professional bloggers but there are in fact professional futurists out there.

They have their own association and on their website they have some recommended books and because we are authors, I hope we are also readers and I'll



# Beyond the Book®



pass along a couple of the titles that struck me. There's a book still recommended, published in 1954, *The Strategy of Indirect Approach*. There's a book called *Strategy Safari: A Guided Tour Through the Wilds of Strategic Management*. That sounds like an exciting title. There's something called *Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant*. It says that this book, by Renee Mauborgne and Chan Kim emphasizes capturing and creating new demand rather than focusing on battling existing competitors in existing spaces. So capturing new demand.

That sounds like a good hint for what we might want to do as we contemplate the future of publishing and then finally if all of this seems to be taking too long for you, strategy has a way of doing that, there is a book out called *Simplified Strategic Planning: The No-Nonsense Guide for Busy People Who Want Results Fast*. So you can have your strategic planning in 30 minutes or less. So you should look that up on the APF website. I'll also just sort of bring up another organization out there which I find interesting. It's The Institute For The Future and on their website, they are carrying out a number of research assignments. They are publishing some kind of ten-year forecast and what I love about the terminology they use there is that as they focus on the next three to ten years, they will anticipate discontinuities and emerging dilemmas.

In other words, the future has some problems. We have some problems ahead of us. The future is not the rosy scenario that we all might wish it were and on that very same website for The Institute For The Future, some various subjects are brought up and you wonder, what are they thinking about there? Well, believe it or not, they're thinking about smart underwear. Seriously. Smart underwear can help prevent ulcers it seems. So you might want to look into that. So if you're thinking about the future, it doesn't have to always involve very high falutin' things. It could even involve underwear. But today we're going to look at the future of publishing and I want to start by introducing Paul Biba. Paul, welcome to the program.

BIBA: Thank you.

KENNEALLY: Paul is a retired corporate lawyer with a specialty in international transactions. He's worked in 45 countries over his career. He's traveled extensively and began using eBooks, we'll ask him how long ago this was, when he found it was impossible to carry an adequate paper library on extended trips overseas. He's also something of a technology buff who started building his own computers back in the 1960s. He began reading eBooks on a Palm III and is currently reading on a Sony Reader, Kindle, and an iPhone, all of which he has here and will be showing a bit of today. He's a longtime contributor to TeleRead,



# Beyond the Book®



the net's prime eBook related site and was recently made co-editor. Congratulations there, Paul. He manages the site for them. At Teller Read, he's a frequent contributor on news and comment and he's also been for the last five years the chief US reviewer for GPSpassion.com.

I was to start actually by asking you a future related question. When you started building those computers in the 1960s, people were afraid of computers.

BIBA: Oh, they certainly were. When I started building them, there actually were not even any handheld calculators.

KENNEALLY: But is anyone afraid of computers anymore?

BIBA: Yes, there is quite a bit of –

KENNEALLY: We have a few hands that just went straight up in the air.

BIBA: There's quite a bit of computer phobia around and especially in the arts. People tend to be a little bit, pardon the word, Luddite. However, if you are authors, that's where it's going, guys and you're going to have to come into the fold as it probably with computers and eBooks is the most convenient way right now to start your distribution. This little telephone I have up here –

KENNEALLY: And we are asking you to hold it close to the microphone for our podcast listeners.

BIBA: See, there it is. It's an Apple iPhone. The Apple iPhone, you can put various applications on it. You can download them from Apple. You can have it do things. It has a lot of applications. Apple just two days ago I think it was people downloaded the one-billionth application to the iPhone. A billion applications circulating around the world on the iPhone. Why –

KENNEALLY: Now again can I interrupt here.

BIBA: Yeah.

KENNEALLY: Because as I mentioned to the panelists before we began, most people think I'm usually just loco but in this case I'm in loco audiences. I'm playing the part of the audience here. When you say downloading an application, if the audience doesn't know what you mean by that, please tell us.



# Beyond the Book®



BIBA: Right. There are two ways you can get an application, a computer program running on your iPhone. You can either connect it to your PC and Apple provides all the software, all the cables to do that or I can just push a button on my iPhone and browse the Apple Store and pull over the air applications from the Apple Store for a fee, generally between \$.99 and \$3.00 or \$4.00, right onto the iPhone.

KENNEALLY: What kind of applications are specifically of interest for authors or anyone in publishing?

BIBA: I have four eBook reading applications on this machine. Four of them and the reason you need to know about this is as of April 21<sup>st</sup>, the leading application, the leading free application of all these billion downloads, so the leading free application on the iPhone was the Kindle Reader for the iPhone, an eBook reader. It's number one. You want to know what number three is? EReader, another eBook reading application in these billion downloads.

KENNEALLY: It's interesting, Paul. I remember when the Kindle came out with some fanfare a couple of years ago now. Someone went and asked Steve Jobs what he thought because they didn't have their own Kindle at that point and there was some concern about that and he said well, he wasn't worried because no one reads anymore.

BIBA: That was very recent. Actually that was only about last year I think.

KENNEALLY: Was it a year ago? OK, well, time flies and I knew when I heard that that he had something up his sleeve and it was simply the idea that people will only want to eventually carry one device around and would you make a prediction as to whether they're going to pick the Kindle or the iPhone?

BIBA: It's too early to tell. There are so many disadvantages to reading on a little platform like this that I suspect the Kindle or the Sony Reader, same thing, will end up being prevalent but this is always with you. It's always in your pocket. You can always have a book. You can't always carry that around. On that iPhone store, by the way, 11% of all the applications on that store have the word book in their title. That's a lot. That's something you guys needs to learn about, learn to deal with and it's really not terribly complicated once you get into it. A lot of resources on the web for you to go to.

KENNEALLY: Well, since you do have a Kindle with you, can you do a little compare and contrast here? I mean this thing is about three times the size of the iPhone.



# Beyond the Book®



BIBA: Yeah, it's about three times the size of the iPhone. You can see the screen here. One of the nice things about it – and I will just tell the audience what I'm doing. I was increasing the size of the font on this Kindle to the largest font size and I bet you can read that even in the middle of the room or at least the first couple rows if you have good eyes. If you're reading impaired, something like this where you can get a huge font size is a God send. One of the things this does, by the way, is this Kindle communicates with this iPhone. So I can take my eBook and put it on the Kindle and put it on the iPhone and I can read this in the supermarket while I'm standing in line and then when I get home I can open the same book on my Kindle and it will open to the page I left off on my iPhone. How convenient is that?

KENNEALLY: It's kind of a bookmark feature.

BIBA: Exactly right. Exactly right. This is what people want. This is why eBooks have not taken off until this year. Because there has never been the convenience factor. eBooks were always for nuts like me who built their own computers, who run websites. Now with Amazon and Apple coming into play, eBooks are for the computer illiterate and they really are. You can buy this – you don't even need to – sorry, I'm pointing to the Kindle. You can buy a Kindle. You don't need a computer. It does everything wirelessly. If you've never seen a computer in your life, you can still wind up with 500 eBooks on this machine.

KENNEALLY: Well, Paul, one of the things that did kind of hold things back for the eBooks was, as you say, the technology wasn't there for the reader, for the content consumer in the tech phrase but the publishers and to some extent the authors as well had concerns about putting their work online. Can you sort of walk us through some of the arguments there and give us an update on the state if you will of whether or not DRM is dead or alive.

BIBA: Good point. Now I've been very optimistic about eBooks. Oh, go out and get into eBooks. The problem with eBooks right now is it's a new technology and it is rapidly emerging. There's a lot of confusion about them yet. So it's not a mass-market technology yet. For example, just like if you remember your CDs or your games on computers, there are various copy protection schemes that publishers put onto eBooks which means maybe you don't own the book, maybe you only rent it because you can only put it on one machine. You can't put it on another machine. We have format wars going on right now where there are various different types of eBooks and some of them are not all interchangeable. This machine, the Kindle, will only take one type. That's being fought out right now.



# Beyond the Book<sup>®</sup>



KENNEALLY: Can I just sort of be sure to make that clear then. The format you're talking about would be analogous to 8-track and cassette and VHS and Beta and so forth.

BIBA: That's a good analogy for somebody – for a non-technical person. So there are issues. There are issues to be worked out yet.

KENNEALLY: Do we have a sense of where this is going to go and how long it's going to take before it's sorted out and we know that VHS wins or who wins?

BIBA: Well, probably another – my personal estimation is another two to three years. That will all be sorted out because the industry is coming together now to try and work on a standardized format for everyone, just the way they did with DVDs or with VHS and Beta, VHS won.

KENNEALLY: If we're in publishing and particularly for self-publishers who don't have the resources to sort of know the marketplace as well as the big houses, can we afford to wait until it's decided or should we jump in and make a decision one way or the other, one format or another?

BIBA: Well, it's not difficult to write a book and then push a button on a computer and convert it from one format to another format. There are sites on the web that will even do that for you so I don't think if I were an author, and from what I've heard this last – I was here all day yesterday, about the difficulties of distribution, I would be trying to get my book out there any way I could and worry about format wars later.

KENNEALLY: So you would be Agnostic and Catholic maybe. You would put your book out in as many different forms as you could.

BIBA: That's what I would do because it doesn't cost you anything. You're just running a little computer program or a letting somebody else convert it from a Mobipocket format to an eReader format. Boom.

KENNEALLY: I was just thinking an Agnostic Catholic, if my mother heard me right now, what would she say? Well, Paul, you've got some other hardware up here before we move on to the other panelists. Is there something you want to say about anything else?

BIBA: Yeah, I just wanted to point out that computers themselves are getting smaller. This little machine I'm holding up in front of you is called an Eee PC.



# Beyond the Book®



KENNEALLY: Sorry, a what?

BIBA: An E-E-E, three Es, P-C. A fully functional PC with a hard drive in it. I can put reading software on here and I can read books on here, carry them around with me. There's still another format that is available to you.

KENNEALLY: How is that different than the typical laptop apart from the fact it's a lot smaller?

BIBA: It's basically a lot smaller.

KENNEALLY: That's it?

BIBA: That's about it. It will do almost everything that your large laptop will do and gets eight hours of battery life instead of toting around one of these big things.

KENNEALLY: What's the weight?

BIBA: What's the weight? Probably 3.5 pounds. Very easy to carry. I don't carry my big laptop with me when I use this.

KENNEALLY: And in fact in the introduction, we mentioned that you turned to eBooks because as you were traveling it became just a burden. We know how it is if you're in particular the far flung places, you want to have as little with you as possible.

BIBA: Exactly right. Exactly right. I try to go away for two weeks or three weeks with one suitcase checked – not checked. I mean no checked baggage. That helps. So does my Kindle. Battery life on a Kindle is probably about three weeks.

KENNEALLY: So I guess if we're going to ask you finally what the future of publishing is, it's a future very much moving towards digitized versions. Are we going to ever leave the book behind? Do you want to predict that?

BIBA: No, we will never leave the book behind because of just pure – people like books, OK? Number two, certain books – look around this library. Many of the books, the art books, the architecture books, you need a large format, beautiful glossy paper. You can't digitize everything. So we will never get rid of books. Mass-market books I think are going to go onto your Kindle or your iPhone.

KENNEALLY: Well, thank you very much, Paul Biba. I appreciate that. We will actually take questions when the program is finished, OK? Moving now to Laura Dawson. Laura, welcome.



# Beyond the Book®



DAWSON: Thank you.

KENNEALLY: Laura is a 20-year veteran of the book industry, having worked in e-commerce at Barnesandnoble.com, libraries for SirsiDynix, and publishing, Doubleday and Bantam. She is now an independent consultant offering expertise on the digital transition and she writes a bi-weekly newsletter about issues in that transition called The Big Picture. Some of her clients have included McGraw-Hill, Alibris, Ingram Library Services, Bowker, and Muze and what I understand you want to tell us about, Laura, is about some trends in self-publishing and it seems to me having been to a conference or two this year, that print on demand really seems to be one of the buzz words most often heard, the buzz phrases most often heard. Connect those dots for us. Why are we suddenly seeing this emerge as a really popular form?

DAWSON: I think primarily because publishing as we've known it for years and years and years is fundamentally broken. They're just not getting the types of content, they're not getting the types of authors that they used to. They're going for the big smash hits and that's the only way they can monetize what they're doing. HarperCollins, their mid-list authors get forgotten very quickly. They can't give them the support that they really ought to and a lot of authors – HarperCollins is just one example, I'm just throwing – you know, I'm not saying anything against HarperCollins per se. I'm saying it against all of them per se. But they really are not supporting any of the more literary authors, the mid-list authors, their backlist gets forgotten within a year and it's not – they can't make it work economically to do that.

KENNEALLY: That means they are trying to hit home runs every time.

DAWSON: Bingo. Yes.

KENNEALLY: And that's a very hard thing to do.

DAWSON: Yes. Yes, it is.

KENNEALLY: You win ball games by hitting a lot of singles and that sort of thing.

DAWSON: Right. Yes.

KENNEALLY: So I guess one of the things that self-publishing, we probably ought to distinguish for people the old model of, if you will, the vanity press and the new model for the self-publishing and to give people an idea of the numbers involved.



# Beyond the Book®



Everybody wants to hit that homerun, would love to see sales of 500,000 books but is it sometimes better to sell 5,000 books to the 5,000 people –

DAWSON: Who really want them.

KENNEALLY: Who really want the book. Yeah.

DAWSON: Yeah. Yeah, and it's not just 5,000 books. It's 5,000 books this year and maybe 3,000 next year and maybe 2,000 the year after and maybe 5,000 the year after that because something comes up and people realize that there's a book out there on this topic and they want to go back and read it whereas the homerun model is just it's one book and then that's it. The life of the book is done probably after about a year.

KENNEALLY: Well, we know that there are many self-publishing services online. Do you have any thoughts about which are easier or better? Are they all rather the same? I'm sure people ask themselves is there a real difference between one or the other and is that enough to just make the book available and see it listed in the Amazon catalogue?

DAWSON: In terms of the variety of services that are out there, I don't think anyone's done a really coherent study yet of whether Lulu is better than Lightning Source is better than BookMasters is better than whatever. It's something I'd like to do frankly but I think there's a real shortage of information. I don't think prospective authors really are aware of every service that's out there and can do a really good compare and contrast and shop around.

KENNEALLY: So one thing you might recommend to people considering this is to do just that, to shop around.

DAWSON: To do research. Yeah.

KENNEALLY: To look into what the various services are.

DAWSON: Yes. Yes, and I have yet to find a really good go to source for that.

KENNEALLY: Well, that might be a tip for the NYCIP to start to work on.

DAWSON: I think, yeah.

KENNEALLY: Yeah.



# Beyond the Book<sup>®</sup>



DAWSON: There's some work that could definitely be done there.

KENNEALLY: Right. Well, as I said in the question, it's more than simply quote publishing the book and making it available through Amazon.

DAWSON: Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. And I know that there was a lot of discussion about distribution yesterday and I would continue to emphasize that. Having the book listed on Amazon is having the book listed with a couple million other books on Amazon. It doesn't mean that people are going to find it. One of the big ways that people find out about things right now is on Google or whatever search engine they're using. If your book is not available as to be searched, it's going to be harder for people to come across it when they're looking up whatever topic it is you've written about.

KENNEALLY: Well, one of the things that probably ought to be called out for people who are thinking about maybe not just publishing their own book but perhaps putting out of line of books is if they're going to be putting illustrations in or using other materials from outside their own creation. There's this whole matter of rights clearance and this is not a plug –

DAWSON: Exactly. Well, that's right up your alley.

KENNEALLY: Right, exactly. Not at all a plug for Copyright Clearance Center because we don't do a lot of the things you might be thinking of. We do some but not all. Still it's calling attention to a question that really kind of strikes at the heart of all of this and that is who owns what, right?

DAWSON: Right, and that's extremely confusing right now. Extremely confusing.

KENNEALLY: And when you are working with authors or with even the businesses you've worked with, the larger publishers, how do they handle it and what are some sort of suggestions you can make to help simplify this for people?

DAWSON: Some of the big publishers, I have seen them try to find rights holders and not be able to find them, love the illustration in question and use it anyway and hope someone gets in touch with them because they'd be happy to remunerate them.

KENNEALLY: So they kind of close their eyes and –

DAWSON: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Help!



# Beyond the Book®



KENNEALLY: Well, that's that whole issue of something which people may have heard about which is so-called orphan works.

DAWSON: Yes. Yes, yes, yes. And orphan works can be actual whole entire books. They can be pieces of books to which there are many contributors. They can be illustrations. There are tons and tons of assets out there, intellectual assets, intellectual property assets that have no discernable owner.

KENNEALLY: And it should even be said too that if you're thinking about using a photograph from Flickr and there's a Creative Commons license attached to it which allows certain kinds of uses for free, if you're going to be using that photo in a commercial context that could be outside the bounds even of the Creative Commons license.

DAWSON: Right, and then you have to contact the rights holder and negotiate something with them.

KENNEALLY: So I guess what we want to do is kind of call attention to the fact that just because it's on the web, it's not freely available.

DAWSON: Doesn't mean you can use it.

KENNEALLY: One of the things that's going to change very shortly on the web of course is the result of the lawsuit that the settlement of which is now impending in a court right here in New York City and that's the so-called Google Books case and for those who may not be familiar, there indeed is a deadline for participating or not participating in that suit coming up on May 5<sup>th</sup> of this year. So if you haven't looked into that, if it possibly has an impact on your works, you might want to do that and Copyright Clearance Center has some resources on that and you can Google as well, [Googlebooksettlement.com](http://Googlebooksettlement.com) to learn more but what do you think the impact of that settlement may have in the next five years? Again we're looking into the future, using our crystal balls. Tell us to what change is going to happen once that comes to fruition.

DAWSON: I am not yet convinced it will make much difference. I think not as a result of the settlement per se. I think the result of increased digitization is going to mean that a lot of rights are going to be called into question where before stuff was in print, it would get boxed up, it would get put in a storage facility somewhere, it would get pulped, whatever.

KENNEALLY: It would get put in a library on the shelf.



# Beyond the Book<sup>®</sup>



DAWSON: A storage facility somewhere and you know, people really – it wouldn't matter who was the rights holder in those cases but if something is digitized, it's going to live a lot longer and it's going to be searchable and it's going to be retrievable.

KENNEALLY: And potentially made available in a –

DAWSON: For sale.

KENNEALLY: Exactly.

DAWSON: Or to run advertising against which is Google's of course ultimate plan and that I think is where things are going to shift. That's where things are going to change.

KENNEALLY: Well, finally since this is the Center for Independent Publishing and as I explained to people, independent publishing is kind of like the old term for small press is you can't call them B movies anymore. They're independent films and so we have independent publishing but essentially for people who are working with fairly small lists, a limited number of authors and so forth, maybe just getting into the game, is it a practical decision to not even think about going in paper at all?

DAWSON: I think it's something that you might consider. Definitely. Definitely.

KENNEALLY: Is there an advantage to having a printed book?

DAWSON: Yeah, it looks more real to people, you know? They'll take you more seriously as a publisher but for example, genre publishing. There are some genres that are doing quite well without seeing a book in print. Romance for example.

KENNEALLY: Right, exactly. I was going to say it's sort of a shock to realize that one of the leading eBook publishers is Harlequin Romance.

DAWSON: Yes.

KENNEALLY: They have been leading the way and it surprises you because if you have a stereotype view of who their reader might be, you would not think that's the case.

DAWSON: Well, think about who these readers are. They're primarily women who are very, very busy, who when they sit down at their computer and a lot of it actually isn't the Kindle or any particular eBook reader, it's their computer. They sit down,



# Beyond the Book®



Mommy's working and she's reading her romance actually but nobody has to know that.

KENNEALLY: And she can take it to the playground with her and read it on Paul's iPhone there. Well, Laura Dawson, thank you very much and we'll turn now to Jeff Rivera. Jeff, welcome.

RIVERA: Thank you very much.

KENNEALLY: Jeff is a columnist for GalleyCat. We might tell people who GalleyCat is in just a minute and he is the founder of a group called GumboWriters.com, a leading online book marketing firm that specializes in creating strategic promotional plans for independent and traditionally published books. He works with clients on how to capitalize on viral marketing, social networks, blogging, YouTube and other Internet marketing techniques that have helped his clients and have helped him land deals for books far and wide and Jeff, let's go into just briefly GalleyCat because it's one of the great resources online. Tell us about it.

RIVERA: GalleyCat is one of the leading book publishing industry online magazines. It's right up there with *Publishers Weekly*. It's something that a lot of agents and editors read actually so it's a resource that they use to find out what's going on in the industry and a resource that writers and authors can use to be able to find out what's going on behind the scenes. So I wrote a column, a regular column for GalleyCat and I also write for as of the next couple of weeks, School Library Journal, a regular column for them as well and then I have GumboWriters.com.

KENNEALLY: What are some issues you're following in that work that are pointing us in the direction of the future? Can you tell us what's going on this year that's going to make a difference that we might not see immediately but it's going to make a difference a year from now or a couple of years from now?

RIVERA: A lot is going on. This is why a panel like this is very important. A lot is going on behind the scenes with the digital everything to do with eBooks because it's affecting what's happening in house at major publishers as well as in the agencies. There's a lot of fear about eBooks and the pricing of how much it would cost per book because this affects the pocketbooks of the authors, it affects the pocketbooks of the publishing houses and it affects the pocketbooks of the agents who represent the authors. So everyone's afraid. My God, if we lower the prices, that means we're going to make less money.

KENNEALLY: Absolutely, and there's even been some disputes in the past I'm aware about royalty rates on eBooks. There's been a kind of traditional view of how



# Beyond the Book®



royalties are split for domestic publishing and then foreign rights but extending that into eBooks has proven to be a difficulty.

RIVERA: Right. I mean recently there's some big name authors who when they began their contracts with the major houses, digital? What was digital? No one knew what that was. So now they've had to renegotiate their contracts and now allow themselves to be open up for that type of distribution as well.

KENNEALLY: And that's also sort of a sticky area because someone who might have had a contract from ten years ago, as only far back as ten years ago would have a contract that would be today considered an antique because of all the new rights and the new versions of books that are possible and that if those rights weren't granted in that original contract, they would have to be renegotiated.

RIVERA: Absolutely, and this is probably one of the most exciting times I think for any writer or author to be in the industry because so many opportunities are opened up for people who are interested in breaking in or expanding their genre to include other audiences as well.

KENNEALLY: Well, then talk about that because trying to expand the audience, grow the audience especially if you're starting out is really quite a challenge and if you're going to do something non-traditional, go out on your own, Laura was talking about the resources that are out there but it sounds like a daunting task because again the old world model was I write the book, he publishes it. Today it's increasingly sort of meeting in the middle, I write the book and maybe I publish it and maybe I do the marketing and so forth and so on. Can you tell us where you've been successful yourself and where you have had colleagues and others who have been successful maybe as a way to help people sort out what works, what doesn't work?

RIVERA: Well, here's why it's exciting. We live in a time now that I could literally finish a book today at noon, have it uploaded to Kindle by 1:00 and have my first book sold by 2:00. I have cut out the agent, I have cut out the publisher. I'm doing my own marketing but what people don't realize is that when you are published by a major publisher which I am, you still have to do just as much publicity and marketing on your own. So the only great thing about having a publisher is the credibility that goes along with that. Other than that, there's really no advantage to it, especially in digital marketing. The distribution channels are available for major publishers but when you're dealing with digital marketing, there really isn't any advantage to having Warner Books or Grand Central like I have or Random House or Harlequin or any of the other ones.



# Beyond the Book®



KENNEALLY: I was a freelance writer for many years and Jeff, what I used to say to people was I was the worst boss I ever had, you know? I worked all hours of the day and night and I was always critical of what I was doing in my own mind. I could never quite leave the job. There's a certain convenience factor, a comfort factor to be able to turn things over to somebody else. How does it feel to sort of – I don't want to put it in a bad light but to be stuck with the book in so many different ways and you have to still keep writing. As I said, you have to write the next book too.

RIVERA: Right. Well, I think that's a fantasy that people would like to believe, that once they get published by a Grand Central or Random House or anybody else that they can sit back, relax, and let them do their job when the reality is that when you publish with a Grand Central or Random House and your book is out, the publicists may or may not do anything. They may send out a press release which they may or may not follow up with. They may or may not send out galleys and anyone who's really successful as making their book really successful is someone who's proactive. Now this also could happen with just luck. So when the right person happens to read the book and they just start talking about it. That can happen too but in the commonplace, it's really about the author being more proactive about their own publicity and marketing.

KENNEALLY: Well, what doesn't work these days? Is the personal appearance still important or would you rather spend time online and get to know a global audience instead of a local audience?

RIVERA: Well, I think either way, depending on the book. I think if you want to think about cost factor, let me tell you a little bit about how I began. I started a screenplay called *Forever My Lady*. I got rejection from studios and it was a story I was really passionate about and I really wanted out there and that normal people liked a lot. So rather than experience rejection again, I decided to self-publish the book. I built an audience online through MySpace and other means and because I had no money at all, I think my first printing I spent like maybe \$200 printing like 25 to 50 books. I don't remember exactly and from there, every penny that I would make from selling the book online I'd reinvest in printing off more books. From there I was able to get an agent and from there I was able to get Grand Central interested. So that's how I sort of began in that –

KENNEALLY: So you're kind of a hybrid. You're the Prius here on the panel, right? You've got experience working in that new model and yet that led you to a deal with a traditional publisher.

RIVERA: Right. Absolutely.



# Beyond the Book®



KENNEALLY: And would you, again looking into the future and your own crystal ball, would you think that's going to be more common these days? In fact, maybe it's an investment strategy for some of the publishers. That they'll see whether there's an audience, they'll see whether or not the author is committed to the work and then they'll go and take the change.

RIVERA: Right, they want to see – at the end of the day it's about making money. They don't care how passionate you are about it. They don't care – I mean it might strike a chord with them. They're in it for the money because they have stockholders to appease and their job is on the line. Their books have to make money. You need to come to them with 10,000 fans ready to – poised and ready to buy your book before they're even interested in it. It's a platform. They don't even want the potential audience. They want people who are ready to buy, lay down their \$10 or whatever the case. I think that that's the future. That's why I say this is one of the most exciting times that we are in this industry for anybody who's starting out or looking to switch genres, that you can actually digitally for nothing create your own publishing company and take off from there.

KENNEALLY: Well, finally, Jeff, you mentioned a number of resources that are available to promote books and authors and there's one I'm not familiar with. Can you tell us about Shelfari.

RIVERA: Shelfari, yeah. Well, I created GumboWriters.com which is my own website and if you want to write it down you can contact me through there. I created it because I saw what it was like as a traditionally published author to go through the process of the publicity department that really did little to nothing. So based on the skills I learned as a self-publisher, I was able to figure out what worked and what didn't in terms of getting exposure online and social media marketing is part of that. That includes Facebook, that includes Twitter, that includes Shelfari. Shelfari is sort of like the book reader's version of Facebook and it's an excellent resource if you're looking to promote your books. LibraryThing is another example of that. What's great about Shelfari is that you can find people – suppose you've written a book that's sort of like John Grisham's book, *The Client*.

You can go and look up John Grisham's book, *The Client*, and you can find 1,500 or 2,000 readers who have read John Grisham's book and loved *The Client*. You can contact each of and every one of them and say hey, if you like *The Client*, you'll love my book. John Grisham has already done all of the work for you. You're just piggybacking on him.

KENNEALLY: I like the idea of John Grisham doing work for me.



# Beyond the Book<sup>®</sup>



RIVERA: That's right.

KENNEALLY: That's a nice image. So before we leave you, Jeff, can you do me a favor because I'm a bad speller. Spell Shelfari.

RIVERA: Sure. It's S-H-E-L-F-A-R-I dot com. I feel like I'm in a spelling bee.

KENNEALLY: Although with Google these days, you don't even have to spell properly, do you know? You'd find it anyway. Jeff Rivera, thank you very much. And finally, I want to welcome Mike Shatzkin. Mike, welcome

SHATZKIN: Thank you.

KENNEALLY: Mike is founder and CEO of The Idea Logical Company and of BasketballLibrary.com.

SHATZKIN: BaseballLibrary.

KENNEALLY: I'm sorry. My eyes are going. BaseballLibrary.com.

SHATZKIN: Don't try to hit a fastball.

KENNEALLY: He has four decades of experience as a published writer and has worked in all aspects of the publishing industry, writing, editing, agenting, selling, marketing, and managing production. His own work has appeared in *Publishers Weekly*, *The Bookseller*, *Publishing News*, and *Publishing Research Quarterly* among many other publications and you can read many of those articles and learn much more about Mike at his site which is Idealog, I-D-E-A log dot com. And Mike, thinking about the future here, I want to let you look in your crystal ball but past being prologue and all of that, has what your experience amounted to in all this time told you much about where we're going and can we really have any good idea of where we might be two years, five years from now?

SHATZKIN: Yeah, I think we do. I think that there are a couple big arcs of change and one of them, absorbing one of them will clear up the mystery about why Harlequin is the eBook champion which is from horizontal to vertical and I describe 20<sup>th</sup> century consumer media as being format specific and horizontal in what they cover. So *The New York Times*, CBS, Random House, they could cover any subject but they did it in a form that was familiar.

KENNEALLY: So newspapers, broadcast TV –



# Beyond the Book®



SHATZKIN: Newspapers, books, TV. Right. They stuck to their knitting. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Internet is forcing people to organize around interest because it catalogues things by interest. So more and more you're seeing the communities form. Whatever it is you're interested in, you can go at it from dawn until dusk on the Internet without having to go off on something else so that you have the genres, science fiction and romance particularly, have vertical audiences. That is you can find the people and they can gather around the subject.

KENNEALLY: It's almost obsession driven and I don't mean that in a bad way.

SHATZKIN: It is obsession driven and I think once I wrote in a speech that every obsession can be ultimately indulged in the Internet world and that's exactly right and so what happens is that the publishers who already had the good fortune to be vertical which Harlequin did, find the Internet is made for them because their audience collects into a pocket. Random House and HarperCollins and Grand Central don't have that luxury because today's book is a biography, tomorrow's book is a mystery, the day after that they're doing a travel book and the audiences for all of them are completely different.

KENNEALLY: What does that mean for a publisher's brand or even for that matter an author's brand? I mean it has positive and negative implications I would think.

SHATZKIN: Well, the single biggest mistake that every single major trade publisher is making today is a failure of understanding of brand. Random House is not a consumer brand. Simon & Schuster is not a consumer brand. It is a business brand. The collection development person at the New York Public Library understands the brand, the book review critic of *The New York Times* understands the brand but the average person is not thinking about whether the novel they read was Random House or Grand Central and so trying to translate those brands to consumer brands is futile because what brand is based on is a consistent understanding of what you're going to get. That's the value of a brand and Random House and Simon & Schuster are not consistent in what they deliver. They deliver something different with every book they publish so they have to completely rethink brand which has not yet begun to happen in any of the major houses.

KENNEALLY: So for our audience today, many of whom are authors and thinking about self-publishing, going the non-traditional route at least, can an author be more successful as a brand today with the resources of the Internet behind them?



# Beyond the Book®



SHATZKIN: Well, an author is a brand and there's no question about that. An author defines a brand but of course the problem is that most authors, if you're not James Patterson or Stephanie Meyer –

KENNEALLY: Or that fellow who's working for me, John Grisham, right?

SHATZKIN: Or John Grisham. Your brand is too small to have a lot of economic value but it does have value to everybody who knows your work. So yes, I think that the authors should be working their brands and in fact the other corollary to the horizontal to vertical change is that the horizontal publishers, the ones we all want to be published by, right? We all want to write our novels, our memoirs, a book of narrative writing which would be published by Random House, HarperCollins, etc. That day is dying and their horizontal mechanisms for promotion are dying. Whether *The New York Times* Book Review will be here in two or three years is an open question. *PW*, *Publishers Weekly*, it's hard to imagine them surviving one more year.

So all of the things that we're about, publishing as a horizontal content, book stores which are the key component of turning what we publish horizontally into something vertical that a consumer can absorb by putting them in the proper, putting books in the proper section. They're all challenged. Borders may not last another year or two. So the whole support system for what we have always thought of as big time publishing is collapsing and things are going to have to change as a result in ways that they haven't yet.

KENNEALLY: So it's the end of the world as we know it then, Mike. Is that what you're telling me?

SHATZKIN: Yeah, I think that's a fair assessment.

KENNEALLY: OK, and how do you feel about that?

SHATZKIN: Well, I try not to get emotional about what I think is reality because –

KENNEALLY: But it's a world you've lived in for a long time.

SHATZKIN: I'm sorry?

KENNEALLY: It's a world you've lived in for a long time.

SHATZKIN: Oh, yes. It's a world I have lived in for a long time. My first book publishing job was in 1962 on 586 Fifth Avenue in Brentano's. They had just



# Beyond the Book<sup>®</sup>



opened a paperback department and I got a job because my father was the vice president to whom the division reported. I got a job as a clerk on the floor of the brand new paperback department of Brentano's and so yeah, I've seen a lot of change over a lot of years. I think that the future we're headed into is a better one. I don't think that many, many authors have been ill served by the present system. It's a small number that really make money and it's a small number that are really well published and for most people, getting a major book contract was about getting a \$5,000 advance, getting a book put out that nobody knew was there, having it remaindered, nine times out of ten, a year later and it's true that they didn't have to do any work but it's also true that they didn't get any results.

So I think that that person, same person today going to any one of the eBook or print on demand companies that we've talked about, and there are some great ones we didn't talk about like Smashwords which will take anything you do and turn it into an eBook like that for nothing which is available to everybody and Blurb.com which is a print on demand company that specializes in high quality photographic and art reproduction so if you're doing that kind of book, you can do it print on demand with them. All of these things which will force you to create your audience one person at a time are not necessarily a lot worse than what your choices were before when somebody else had control of your life and didn't do that much for you anyway.

**KENNEALLY:** So I mean the king is dead then and we're living in what? A kind of republic of authors?

**SHATZKIN:** Well, we're living in the moment in a time of great transition and it's a very difficult time because we're being – and by the way, I want to say I respect the major publishers. I like the major publishers. I know most of them. They're very smart people. They are what they are because of the circumstances in which they find themselves and the circumstances in which they find themselves is they've got to continue to generate revenue and the old model of selling books to Barnes & Noble and Ingram is how you generate revenue and the eBook model has not developed to that point yet and when it does, it's not going to generate revenue in the large clumps that today's book publishers demand.

So we're in a period over the next – I would say over the next three or four years, the big six will turn into the big four. By ten years from now, there'll be one or two major trade publishers left and they will continue to do what they do now. There will just be less of them and it'll be smaller and most publishing will be about interest niches and the power will be to the person that controls the community. We're also moving from a period where the power was in the content to the power being in the community and there's a whole lot of reasons for that which we won't



# Beyond the Book<sup>®</sup>



get into now but that is a big change and a publisher's power will come from the fact that whether it's about knitting or it's about baseball or it's about teaching yourself how to cook, they've got an audience of people that want the videos, the audios, the books, the print, the experts, all of that and the people that have content will go to their tollbooth.

KENNEALLY: Well, Mike, we'll look for you online then and at your community and everyone's community.

SHATZKIN: I have to mention Filed By Author before I leave or I'll get shot by my partner.

KENNEALLY: This is the –

SHATZKIN: My partner's in a new business called Filedby.com which has a website called Filed By Author which has a website for every author with a book in print in the US or Canada today and you can claim your site and you can use it and for very nominal fees, you can really expand it but you can use it for free and this is something that every author should know about. It's a month old. It's still in diapers but it's something that if you go check out Filedby.com, I'm sure you'll be glad you did.

KENNEALLY: All right. Well, Michael, thank you very much.

SHATZKIN: Filed by – either one. Filedby.com will get you there.

KENNEALLY: All right. Well, thank you, Mike Shatzkin.

SHATZKIN: Thank you.

KENNEALLY: I want to thank everyone on the panel. I've enjoyed the discussion. Paul Biba, thank you very much for joining us. Laura Dawson as well. Jeff Rivera. Mike Shatzkin. My name is Chris Kenneally, as I mentioned, the director of author relations for Copyright Clearance Center. This program will be podcast as part of the Beyond the Book series and if you've gotten anything out of this discussion, and we will have some questions from the audience in just a moment, it's possibly some kind of an action plan but in a previous life I was a consultant I have to admit and not for very long and I would tell people, I would look at the audience that I was working with and I would say whenever anyone says to me, we need an action plan, I just say well, what's the first word in action plan? And they would look at me and think well, is there a trick here?



# Beyond the Book®



Action of course is the first word in action plan and I highly recommend action. I found a quote that sort of sums that all up from the philosopher and NHL Hall of Famer, Wayne Gretzky. He said, “You miss 100% of the shots you never take.” So with that, I advise you to start taking as many shots as you can and we’ll take some questions now from the audience but we do ask you to wait for the microphone to come over to you or David gets – he’ll hit you with the microphone.

END OF FILE (54:00)