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ONLINE DATABASES

A Flurry of Sales

By Carol Tenopir

LAST YEAR ENDED WITH A FLURRY of major sales in the information industry. Just as 2006 holiday shopping started, primary and secondary publishers announced acquisitions, mergers, and sales opportunities.

Wiley buys Blackwell

John Wiley & Sons' purchase of Blackwell Publishing for nearly \$1 billion is the most controversial of these recent deals. Although both companies publish reference works and other books, librarians have concerns about the impact on journal and license prices. Blackwell publishes over 800 scholarly journals in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, including many published for small professional societies. Its reputation is society-friendly, with relatively reasonable prices for libraries. Wiley also publishes some society journals in its over 400 titles, but its prices on the whole tend to be somewhat higher than Blackwell journals.

The acquisition brings Wiley/Blackwell to over 1250 journal titles, close to giants Elsevier (2200 titles) and Springer (1500) and surpassing Taylor & Francis (1050). October rumors of Springer's interest in Taylor & Francis's Informa Group brought additional concerns of the potential for even more consolidation. With the Wiley acquisition of Blackwell, nearly 6000 scholarly journal titles, or approximately one-quarter of all active peer-reviewed titles, are held by just four commercial publishers. The library group Information Access Alliance has expressed its concerns to the U.S. Department of Justice (www.informationaccess.org/wiley.blackwell.pdf) about this further consolidation of power in the scholarly publishing arena.

Blackwell and Wiley have each assured their current customers that 2007 prices and licenses will not be affected.

It will take a while for the effects—whether good in terms of new products, or bad in terms of higher prices—of this sale to be felt in libraries.

Secondary publishers

Greeted with a more positive reaction by librarians, the secondary information industry also saw some noteworthy changes at the end of 2006.

Dow Jones purchased Reuters's share of Factiva, to make it a centerpiece of the restructured Dow Jones Enterprise

Media Group (EMG), along with Dow Jones Newswires and Dow Jones Licensing Services. EMG is headed by Clare Hart, former president of Factiva. Hart will also serve as president of the Content Technology Solutions sector of EMG. Together with the other two parts of EMG (Dow Jones Indexes and Reprints and Dow Jones Financial Information), they promise new integrative products in 2007, especially for the corporate market. Some of Reuters's content will remain on Factiva, but Dow Jones is now the sole owner.

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CSA and ProQuest

A larger surprise was that Cambridge Information Group acquired ProQuest Information and Learning late in the year and combined it with its CSA subsidiary. At press time, the deal was not yet finalized. Academic libraries are core markets for both CSA and ProQuest, but their products are complementary. CSA's Illumina is strong in science indexing databases, while ProQuest has deep indexes in general information, news, and business. Both have many linking agreements with primary publishers, and each brings social science and humanities offerings. ProQuest's notable works in-

clude Chadwyck-Healey's world literature collection, Digital Dissertations, and Historical Newspapers. CSA has unique products including Ulrich's Serials Analysis System, Illustrata, its new tables and figures indexing system, and Community of Scholars. ProQuest also brings Serials Solutions, the UMI microform vault, and SIRS library automation system.

ProQuest's stock price never recovered from financial irregularities in 2006, so this change is a good idea for all parties. ProQuest, formerly UMI, has a long and valued place in the library market. CSA is the newer kid on the block, rising rapidly, particularly in academic libraries. The combination may open up new markets. ProQuest has a greater presence in the public and school library market than CSA, and CSA has customers in scientific research organizations as well as academic research libraries. ProQuest has significant retrospective and full-text holdings and publisher agreements, while CSA has dynamic indexing. In addition to many existing products and services, there is the possibility of new product combinations, including more retrospective indexing, full-text links, and hybrids.

This activity demonstrates how attractive electronic information is in today's business climate but that companies have to focus on their main markets. What it all means in prices, licenses, and new products for libraries may be both positive and negative. The rest of 2007 should be interesting.

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