



News

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Association of Subscription Agents and Intermediaries (ASA) members advised to cut services to low discount publishers.

Members of the ASA are being advised by the Association to cut their services to publishers who provide unacceptably low terms. This move has been sparked off by the decision of Thomson Finance to reduce their terms to a level below which a proper service to the publisher cannot be maintained.

Agents provide a hugely valuable service both to their library customers and to their suppliers, the 50,000 or more publishers worldwide. The overwhelming majority of publishers fully support the role of subscription agents who provide many valuable services to publishers. These services include such activities as:

High renewal rates. Agents, by working much more closely with libraries than is possible for publishers, regularly attain a higher rate of renewal than exists in publishers non-agency business. The renewals are delivered on time and with correct payment making agents a very valuable business partner.

Pre-payment. Agents pre-pay their subscriptions. What is more they frequently pay for subscriptions well in advance of their library clients paying the agents. This not only saves a

great many subscriptions breaking down, but also helps prevent costly reprints and overruns. It also helps publishers cash flow and revenues from interest earned.

Currency handling. Agents pay publishers in the currency required irrespective of the currency in which the customer pays the agent. For a great many customers raising a multitude of cheques in foreign currencies would be prohibitively expensive and lead to many cancellations. This service saves publishers the very considerable costs of currency handling that would otherwise arise.

Automation. Many agents supply their orders to publishers in an automated format thus avoiding the necessity of re-keying the renewals which reduces errors and saves administrative costs. Since subscriptions are renewed in general in the autumn each year this automation greatly reduces the 'peaks' in the subscription cycle. Further automation is being planned in claims handling and other areas.

Promotion and sales. Agents promote publishers journals titles around the world by listing them in their catalogues, newsletters and web based services. They make it easy for the customer to buy journals and this benefits publishers by providing a well used, flexible channel to the library market. Many agents will

target specific journals directly to libraries and customers through direct mail and other activities.

Electronic journals. Agents go to great lengths to try and obtain from libraries all the necessary information to enable publishers to enter subscriptions to their electronic journals. This is a very time consuming activity but because agents keep this information on their extensive subscription systems and update it regularly it means it is instantly available thus directly reducing publishers costs in collecting such information.

Price. Agents sell to libraries at list price wherever possible. Where the terms provided by publishers do not permit this desirable practice then the price is sometimes above list price.

The ASA is therefore advising its members to examine ways in which they can cut their services to those publishers who give agents unacceptably low terms, without harming the interests of their library clients. Those publishers (such as Thomson Financial) who have reduced their terms to agents well below the value of these services and below the level at which agents can continue to supply such titles at list price to library customers, may as a consequence find that agents are forced to increase the price of their journals above list price. Libraries should note that this amounts to an increase in their service charges. A list of publishers on such low terms is available on the ASA Website (www.subscription-agents.org) as an aid to libraries and agents when dealing with these publishers.

Further information: Secretary General, ASA, Association of Subscription Agents and Intermediaries, 10 Lime Avenue, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 1DP, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1494 534778.

Fax: +44 (0)1494 534778. E-mail: rollo.turner@onet.co.uk

Prenax provides web-based subscriptions management on an international scale

There is a new kid on the block in the world of subscriptions management. Its name is Prenax, an international web-based company that offers professional management of newspaper and magazine subscriptions to businesses and institutions.

They manage national as well as foreign newspapers, magazines and journals.

The parent company, Prenax Global, currently has offices in the UK, Sweden, France, Germany and the United States. Prenax was founded in Sweden in 1993 and last year was listed as one of the top-ten fastest growing companies in Sweden. The company is fast becoming established in the UK with an impressive client list including market leaders in the financial, media and IT industries.

Prenax's proposition to the market is that it combines an excellent online service with peerless customer service. The web-based solution allows clients to search and order publications but has the additional feature of enabling an administrator or librarian to download management reports which list expenditure, subscribers, publications and requests per department, cost centre or whatever demarcation the client wants.

But it is far more than just a website. They combine the online facility with excellent customer service. They emphasize building strong, personable, and long-lasting relationships with their customers. Consequently, providing the best customer care is their top priority. In fact McKinsey rated Prenax's service as excellent in a recent study of the company.

Further information: Robbie Frazer, UK Manager, Tel: 020 7569 3037. E-mail: robbie.frazer@prenax.co.uk

Digital technology deal heralds library of the future

A multi-million pound technology deal, announced on 19 October by the British Library and IBM at the Frankfurt Bookfair, is set to provide the Library with a Digital Library System (DLS) – and with it an end to the problem of how, in an information society, digital publications can be retained for future use.

The development means that the British Library, with the help of IBM, will build a national 'Digital Library' to preserve and access electronic materials indefinitely, ensuring that its digital collections – including words, sounds and images – will still be retrievable when the formats in which they originated are long dead.

CrossRef Access expands Ovid full text linking capabilities

On November 15 Ovid Technologies announced that it will add support for CrossRef to its Ovid OpenLinks™ product by year end. The CrossRef database of linking information uses article metadata and a persistent identifier or Digital Object Identifier (DOI) for linking to the publisher's content. By the end of 2000, the CrossRef database, which went live in June of this year, is expected to have three million records in its linking database.

OpenLinks was developed by Ovid as a complementary product to access the full text journal content of journals not available in Journals@Ovid, and today features links to over 2,000 full text journals at remote publishers' sites. Ovid's CrossRef implementation will add thousands of additional OpenLinks titles that journal subscribers can select and link from Ovid bibliographic databases.

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Questia announces free trial

Questia, the online research service, is scheduled to launch in January of next year.

Questia is designed to help students write better research papers, faster (although others who do research – such as professors, librarians and teachers – might find it useful as well). It includes:

- A collection of thousands of easily searchable, full-text, hyperlinked books, journals and articles;
- A broad set of research tools, including an automatic footnote and bibliography generator;
- Plus much, much more!

Right now, Questia is offering a special sneak preview of the service and a FREE one-month trial (redeemable when the site launches).

Complete details are available at:

<http://www.questia.com/trial/major/index.html>,

and Questia is trying to get as many people as possible to enrol for the trial before the service launches, and the offer ends on January 7, 2001

Sage Publications' half price subscription deal to UK universities

Sage Publications has reached an agreement with the Managing Agent of NESLI (the National Electronic Site Licence Initiative) to offer UK university libraries the chance to add additional Sage Publications journals to their collection at half the usual subscription price.

NESLI members can take out a half price subscription to a 2001 volume of any of over 200 Sage Publications journals to which they do not currently subscribe. They will also receive free access to available back volumes of the subscribed journals for as long as the subscription is maintained.

The offer is for volumes published in 2001 only and includes permanent access for 2001 volumes, as well as access to available back files for the duration of the subscription. Journals in Volumes 1 and 2 in 2001 are excluded from the offer.

Access to Sage Publication's journals will be provided through NESLI/Swetsnet Navigator and licensing arrangements under this offer are covered by the NESLI Model Licence.

For further information contact: Jane Makoff, Head of Journals Marketing, Sage Publications, 6 Bonhill Street, London EC2A 4PU, UK.

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Journal of Hospital Librarianship – new journal

The Haworth Information Press has announced the publication of *The Journal of Hospital Librarianship*, a new title which is the first journal devoted entirely to disseminating information about recent developments and advancements in hospital librarianship.

Through a discussion of administrative issues, new technology and relevant products, the publication aims to offer librarians practical and innovative suggestions and strategies that will improve the hospital/clinical work environment. Topics in the first issue include: value of hospital library internships; impact of electronic journals: the Cedars-Sinai

experience, and access management – living with firewalls.

Email: getinfo@haworthpressinc.com;

web: <http://www.HaworthPress.com>

Swets Blackwell acquires Munksgaard Direct

On 27 October Swets Blackwell and Munksgaard announce the signing of an agreement that Swets Blackwell have acquired Munksgaard Direct, the book and subscription service division of the Munksgaard Group. The agreement is effective from October 2000 and, according to the press release, will result in Swets Blackwell becoming the leading agent in Denmark with in the business of subscription, database and electronic services. Peter Munksgaard (no relation) will remain the manager of the new expanded operation and all the employees of Munksgaard Direct will transfer to the new company.

A new service for the UK Higher and Further Education Communities.

zetoc[™] is a new British Library service, offered exclusively to the UK Higher and Further Education communities. Therefore, access is available only to ac.uk organisations (excepting Research Councils) at this Web address: <http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk>. zetoc[™] provides free access to the British Library Electronic Table of Contents (ETOC) database, a vast research resource of 15 million journal articles and conference papers, to which 10,000 are added daily.

In addition, the integrated current awareness alerting service enables students and researchers to set up table of contents (TOC) alerts for journals of their choice from the database. Every time a new issue of a journal appears, its table of contents information is added to the database. This is then automatically emailed to those who have selected that journal for a TOC alert, providing them with the latest developments in their field. All articles are of course available from the British Library Document Supply Centre.

The zetoc[™] venture is a partnership of the British Library with Manchester Information & Associated Services (MIMAS), based at the

University of Manchester and the Joint Information Systems Committee of the UK Higher Education Funding Councils (JISC).

The initiative forms an important part of the JISC's plans to establish The Distributed National Electronic Resource (DNER), a managed environment for accessing quality assured information resources on the Internet. To coincide with the availability of the new free service, the British Library is offering zetoc[™] user training courses for UK universities.

If you are a university librarian and think you or any of your colleagues would benefit from attending one of the above zetoc user training courses, please contact: Kate Moores
Fax: 01937546697 Email: kate.moores@bl.uk
web: <http://www.bl.uk>

e-psyche to be available via EBSCOhost

The recent press release from EBSCO suggests that Institutions seeking a detailed cross-section of psychology-related materials at an affordable price, need look no further than e-psyche. This detailed collection is now available from EBSCO Publishing via its Web-based search service, EBSCOhost. The e-psyche database contains journal coverage for more than 3,500 titles, and is updated weekly by EBSCO.

Designed for use in a variety of research institutions including academic and public libraries, e-psyche covers more than twice the number of journals included in other, popular psychology collections. In addition to journal coverage, the database also includes newsletters, dissertations, preprints, indexed Web sites, technical reports and conference proceedings. e-psyche offers sophisticated linking capabilities providing easy access to author e-mail addresses, publisher URL addresses, full text links and citations. The majority of the backfile dates as far back as 1998, with several titles dating back even further

RoweCom Intergrates Barnes & Noble.com, Mindbranch Content Into kStore Service

On November 15, RoweCom Inc. announced the integration of Barnes & Noble.com and

MindBranch content into its kStore service. kStore users are now able to purchase all their knowledge resources from a single interface, without ever having to leave the kStore site.

Additional new functionality includes the ability to search for books and market research reports with expanded Quick Search and Advanced Search options, as well as tracking all types of purchases within one convenient order history, resulting in simple and seamless tracking and management of knowledge resources.

“Barnes & Noble.com and RoweCom have collaborated closely to raise the bar in delivering e-commerce services to our shared clients,” said Brian Buckley, vice president of Barnes & Noble.com’s business solutions. “This level of integration of our services is a key step forward in simplifying the knowledge acquisition process, and we will continue to work together to provide powerful and advanced solutions to meet the ever-increasing need for knowledge in the digital economy.”

For more information, visit: www.rowe.com