

Virgin goes to US with Holtzbrinck

Joel Rickett

Virgin Books is to take its feisty mix of commercial non-fiction to American readers through a distribution deal with Holtzbrinck.

It will launch in the US on 1st January 2006, with titles including Carol Vorderman's *Eat To Beat Cellulite Recipes*, *the You Are What You Eat Meal Planner* and Steve Fossett's *Chasing the Wind*.

Virgin Books said it was determined to generate "significant revenue" from the US market. Its parent Virgin

Group is growing its brand in the US.

It has appointed Amy Rhodes, previously publisher of Rodale Trade Books, on a short-term contract to support the launch.

KT Forster, m.d. of Virgin Books, said: "We are excited about developing the Virgin book brand in the US market, alongside the Virgin Group's growth with the airline, mobile phone company and retail interests. Holtzbrinck's expertise in placing new lists and brands in to the marketplace was just what we were

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looking for."

John Sargent, c.e.o. of Holtzbrinck Publishers, pledged to "position Virgin Books as a major player in the American book industry".

Virgin Books publishes more than 200 titles a year, and has an active backlist of 400 titles. Areas include health, biography, music, sport, travel literature, cult writing, film and erotica.

Holtzbrinck is operated by German group Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck, and also distributes Bloomsbury, Rodale and Walker in the US.

Briefs

Germans Change the World for a Fiver

A German edition of *We Are What We Do's* book *Change the World for a Fiver* is to be launched at Frankfurt. Titled *50 Kleinigkeiten, die die Welt verändern*, it is to be published in February 2006 by Pendo Verlag. The initial print run will be 50,000 and other foreign editions are already under way in Australia, New Zealand and North America. *We Are What We Do* spokeswoman Eugenie Harvey said creative partner Scholz & Friends in Germany had adapted the book. "The book works on everyone contributing for nothing. The idea is to keep the cover price as low as possible, to make it as accessible as possible," Harvey said. First published in the UK in September 2004 by Short Books, it sold 135,000 copies in the first year.

Fighting pirates at breakfast

Speakers including Ibadan's Kolade Mosuro are to appear at the UK Publishers Association anti-piracy briefing being held at the fair on Friday. This year's briefing sees a change of venue to the Maritim Hotel (Saal Maritim I+II) and includes a breakfast from 8 a.m.

Box expands for Eddison

Eddison Sadd Editions is to further expand its new Book-in-a-Box series at Frankfurt. *Decision Dice* was the first title, making sales to date of 150,000 copies in 13 countries. It said world markets were responding well to the concept and it is hoping to close further deals at Frankfurt.

French translations site

The French Book Office UK has launched a new website aimed at making it easier for British publishers wanting to translate French texts. The frenchbooknews.com site includes a selection of recent French publications. Publishers will also be able to check if the French title they are interested in is already translated in a database, due to be ready in the first half of 2006.

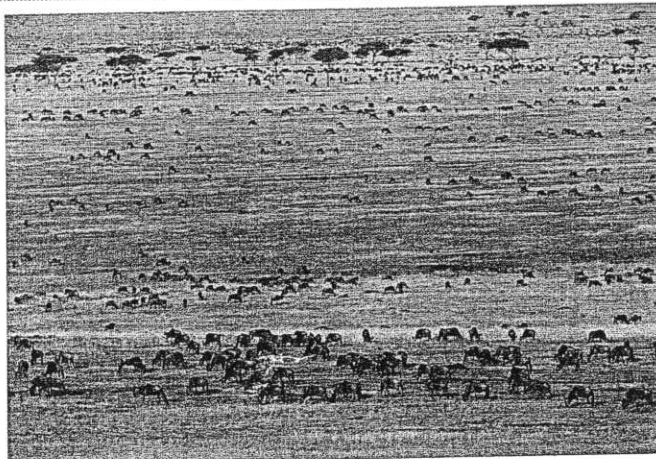
Italy's Longanesi consolidates

Longanesi, Italy's third largest publishing group, has consolidated its position in a formal holding company to be called Gruppo Editoriale Mauri Spagnol.

It will have combined turnover of nearly €110m and publishing programmes totalling 800 new titles a year. Messaggerie Italiane will own 74% of the group, while the heirs of Italy's legendary publisher Mario Spagnol will hold 23%. The remaining shares will be in the hands of a private investor. Longanesi's chief Stefano Mauri becomes president, and Luigi Spagnol managing director.

The new holding is larger than what was formerly known as the Longanesi group, as it includes the literary and encyclopedia publisher Garzanti and its satellite Vallardi as well as Messaggerie's 50% of R L Libri, a joint venture in mass market publishing with Rizzoli.

Longanesi is one of Italy's leading best-seller houses, Luigi Spagnol's Salani is Harry Potter's publisher and Garzanti publishes Michael Crichton.



Target Earth: the tie-in to BBC TV series "Planet Earth" is expected to cause a big splash at Frankfurt, following in the footsteps of its predecessor *The Blue Planet*, which was printed in 13 different languages. Ben Donald, BBC Worldwide head of book rights for Europe, Middle East, India and Africa, said: "The TV series has been sold to pretty much all our European TV partners, and the film to theatre distributors, which makes a fantastic platform for book publishers. It's making a huge noise in every country and we're going in with very high amounts for multi-language coedition printings." The 11-part series is due to air in 2006 and 2007, and has already been pre-sold to broadcasters in New Zealand, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Australia, Germany, Canada and Portugal. "Planet Earth" comes from the team responsible for "The Blue Planet", led by series producer Alastair Fothergill. The BBC said it was one of the most ambitious factual series it has ever commissioned.

Gazelle and Lavis merge

Distributors Gazelle Book Services and Lavis Marketing are to merge in a deal taking effect in early November.

Gazelle, which has a client list of hundreds of publishers, is acquiring the 25-strong client list of Jim Lavis, Lavis Marketing's senior partner.

Gazelle represents British publishers as well as importing books from the UK and other overseas territories. It also provides distribution to North America and other areas for UK and European publishers.

Lavis concentrates its promotional activity in Europe and specialises mainly in the academic, scholarly and scientific, technical and medical areas.

"The advantage is offering a more comprehensive service to publishers," Jim Lavis said. "We now have the strength, opportunities and expertise of two companies to respond to market demand."

Lavis will take partial retirement, but will remain working for Gazelle on a part-time consultancy basis setting up the new Gazelle division Lavis STM.

EU libraries plan 'threatens copyright'

"It might be the end of most publishing"

Anne Bergman-Tahon,
FEP director-general

A plan by the European Commission to digitise the contents of Europe's libraries has been branded a threat to copyright laws by the Federation of European Publishers.

Anne Bergman-Tahon, Federation of European Publishers director-general, said she feared the Commission's acknowledgement that, while present copyright protection remained, there would be a "black hole" where 20th-century works were concerned.

"The Commission says it's going to digitise the content but cannot make it available because of copyright law. It suggests a review of the copyright legislation in Europe, and that appears to me as a

threat. Once it has digitised everything it will want to give some form of access," she said. "But if everything becomes available, can you access it free online why would you get it from bookseller? It might be the end of most publishing."

The Commission is to hold a Publishers Summit in Brussels on 6th December. Martin Selmayr, Commission spokesman for the information society, claimed Brussels was not proposing any rule changes in respect of copyright. "We are looking at how to use the existing laws and how, if digitised libraries are organised, they can be made to respect copyright," he said.