



## **Publishing, Principles and Practice**

### **Book Review**

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**Publishing, Principles and Practice** is written by Richard Guthrie and published by Sage in 2011. It is an interesting book which covers almost everything related to publishing. It consists of 225 pages. References are given at the end of each chapter in the notes following suggestions made for further reading. At the end, the book has a detailed index.

The book starts with an “Introduction”. This section provides basic information on the topic publishing emphasizes its significance and gives a brief summary of the chapters of the book.

Chapter 1 is “A History of Books”. The chapter starts with the earliest forms of writing and brings us to today with the emphasis on publishing. The chapter begins with the time of Eumenes II in Asia Minor (197-159 BC); talks about Guttenberg and discovery of printing press and focuses on early English trade, gives an account of emergence of English printing companies, and ends with today’s conglomerate publishing. The backbone of the chapter is laid down according to the historical background of Britain; however, developments in other western countries like France, Germany and USA are also mentioned.

Chapter 2 is “The Publishing Process”. This chapter presents a detailed and vivid description of ‘publishing process’, with its difficulties. It lays down the detailed description of the tasks of an editor. In his account Guthrie gives interesting details in relation to the design of the cover and types of paper used in the process of publication.

Chapter 3 is “Sectors in the Anglophone Model”. The chapter begins with stating that the “economics of the book trade is of paramount importance” (p49). It presents publishing



Anglophone books on both sides of the Atlantic. The USA being the largest single book market, five, six times of the UK; the UK publishers have always been very active in exporting books, particularly to UK's former colonies in Australasia, North America, Sub-Sahara Africa, East and South East Asia. What is more, the UK has also been exporting English Language books to its neighbours in Europe. The UK and USA book markets are broadly divided into three categories as: consumer or trade books (fiction, non-fiction, reference and children's books), school books together with English Language Training books (this is UK definition, in the USA they are classified as el for elementary and hi for higher education) and academic or higher education or professional publishing such as journals. This broad classification is then divided into eight single sector book markets as: consumer-trade books and materials; academic or higher education books and publishing; children's books; school or el-hi books and materials; English Language Training books; professional books and journals; reference books and publications; and religious books and materials. In the book, the writer focuses on these categories one by one.

Chapter 4 is titled "Craft to Corporation". This chapter elaborates on the publishing firms; 80% of book sales are under the control of a few large firms. The 20% of publishers enter into the market with difficulty but sometimes quit the market soon. The writer explains the entry criteria to the market and the requirements to be successful in the market. In the section "The Corporatisation of Books", the writer explains that at the outset of the twenty-first century, book trade is in the hands of seven global mixed-media corporations, namely: News Corporation (Australian), Berelsmann (German), Holtzbrinck (German), Pearson (British), Thomson Reuters (Canadian), Reed Elsevier (Netherlands and UK), Lagardère (French). The book also describes the key interlockings between multinational media and globally active internet corporations. After presenting an account of the mergers the chapter focuses on the top 5 USA publishing firms (Random House, Pearson-Penguin, Hachette, Harper Collins, Simon & Schuster) and UK publishing firms (Hachette Livre UK, Random House, Penguin, Harper Collins, Independent Alliance, Pan Macmillan). The key dates in the history of



these firms are also given. The chapter ends with an account of horror writer Stephen King's digital book experiments in the year 2000 and developments in digital publishing at the outset of the new millennium.

Chapter 5 is "Copyright and Publishing Law". In line with the whole book, in this chapter the writer takes a chronological order of Anglophone countries (UK and the USA); however, the emphasis is on the UK. A timeline of copyright and intellectual property law which starts from 103 AD and ends with the developments in the year 2010 is given. This chapter includes some interesting cases related to the copyright law in the British history and some contemporary cases in the USA. It also includes a section on libel, dividing libel into three categories as sedition, defamation and blasphemy. The chapter touches upon plagiarism and ends with Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

Chapter 6 focuses on "Rights and Contacts" from multinational perspective. Talking about the rights of various parties in different media, the chapter presents lists of primary and secondary rights. After an overview of book club rights, paperback rights, translation rights, serial rights and territorial rights, the chapter gives an account of other Anglophone markets such as Australia, India, Scandinavia, Canada and South Africa. The chapter also presents a sample contract and presents all that could be included in publishing contracts in detail.

Chapter 7 is about "Marketing, Promotion and Bookselling". Since the aim of publishing is to earn money, the chapter presents information about the techniques and tactics used for selling books. The most important point 'creating an aura around the book' is mentioned several times throughout the chapter and explained why and how.

Chapter 8 talks about the state of the art in "The Era of Digital Publishing". This chapter talks about the Internet, open source culture, social networking, broadcasting v. networking, media regulation, advertising, guerilla marketing piracy and digital music , print on demand, Google books and e-books.



In conclusion, publishing is a book that provides the reader with a detailed account of all aspects of the publishing process with excellent and vivid examples.