



WRITERSWORLD Newsletter - Issue No. 86

Digital dictates publishing's future

By John Lehmann: First published *The Australian*

THERE'S a little bit of Gordon Gekko in Jane Friedman, arguably the world's most influential book publisher.

The president and chief executive of HarperCollins Publishers certainly doesn't believe greed is good. But, like Michael Douglas's brazen Wall Street raider in the film *Wall Street*, she has a disdain for doing lunch. While Gekko thought lunch was for wimps, Friedman would rather spend every spare moment trawling her emails in search of a winning book pitch. "Who needs lunch? It puts weight on you. I'd rather read through emails at my desk between meetings," the 30-year veteran of the New York publishing scene told Media during a trip to Sydney last week. Friedman's devotion to email paid off recently when she received a story idea from a 12-year-old Chinese girl. The idea has now become a book, called *Snowbird*, that HarperCollins plans to publish this spring while launching a push into China.

China and India are the new frontiers for book publishers, but the fight for their future is being waged at home, and Friedman is leading the charge. Last year, as the chairwoman of the Association of American Publishers, Friedman took Google to court on behalf of five leading publishers. They alleged that Google's library scanning project -- through which the internet giant is making digital copies of books -- was an extensive and flagrant violation of copyright law. When Google announced in December 2004 that it would begin digitising publishers' books, HarperCollins responded by deciding to put its book directory on to its own digital files. By next year, Friedman aims to have digitised 20,000 books, stretching back to the 1920s. "I was very concerned about Google actually physically owning our digital copies, so we said, 'Why doesn't HarperCollins take this lead?'" she says. "It's going to be expensive (the price tag runs to seven figures) but we're going to become a true 21st-century publisher; we are going to maintain and host the digital files for all of our intellectual property."

More than a year later HarperCollins, owned by News Corporation, which owns *The Australian*, is the only publisher to take such an ambitious step. But Friedman, who is about to reel off her ninth consecutive year of record profits at HarperCollins, recognises that Google is not just foe but also an important partner. "It's up to us to recognise where we will be friends with them and where we will sue them," she says. HarperCollins, the world's third largest English-language trade book publisher with annual revenues of \$US1.3 billion (\$1.7 billion), has entered a book-by-book contract to use Google's search capability, enabling internet users to scan a limited number of pages to gauge their interest in a book. "If a person can search inside a book, that's great. It's like taking the shrink-wrap off books in bookstores; that's what we need to get the consumer interested in our books," Friedman says. HarperCollins is not yet planning to sell books via the internet, although it enables users to download some texts.

Friedman is more interested, at the moment, in the marketing potential of the web, particularly in selling HarperCollins' back list, known in publishing circles as "the long tail". "Before the internet, if you wanted to find people who collect mushrooms, you would have to do a tremendous amount of research to find the different societies," she says. "Now you can google 'mushrooms' and get it at your fingertips, and you can get to those people and sell *The Complete Book of Mushrooms*, which was published 25 years ago." Friedman sees integrating the traditional publishing business with digital applications as her most important challenge. "The traditional part of HarperCollins is now a \$US1.5 billion gorilla that needs to keep being fed, with new authors, new works, new marketing, new creativity," she says. "Then we have to invest in our future, which is kind of a parallel universe to what we are doing today. My intention is that everything gets integrated; the digital world becomes part of the fabric of the traditional publishing world.".....**THE END**



FREE BLACKBERRY 8700

WRITERSWORLD have combined with the Interchange Group Plc to bring you the phenomenal offer of a free Blackberry 8700 Wireless Handheld™, the most amazing electronic communication device ever invented, which makes it easy to stay connected while on the go. You get uncompromising email, browsing and voice performance in one thin, stylish, lightweight handheld with a full QWERTY keyboard. Sadly this offer can only apply to United Kingdom residents. [\(Please click here to contact our chosen Blackberry retailer\)](#)

WORDS TO THE WISE

Whether you use **WRITERSWORLD** or any other print-on-demand company insist that when your book is published you have a direct account with the printer. This will cost you nothing and you will end up with 100% of the royalties and the ability to purchase copies of your books at cost. Yes, with **WRITERSWORLD**, you get 100% of the royalties on sales of your book! You will get exactly the same distribution rights as the print-on-demand publisher and a monthly e-mail letting you know what your sales are. With respect, do not leave your book in the hands of any print-on-demand book publisher and be dependent on the publisher to know what your sales and royalties are and allow them to profit from the sales of your book. Also insist that your book's ISBN number is issued to you and your book's imprint page reflects you as being the publisher.

SUBSCRIPTIONS & LEGAL NOTICE

Subscriptions to the **WRITERSWORLD** Newsletter are free and please distribute it freely.

WRITERSWORLD - The leading book publisher in self-publishing, print on demand books and book reprints in the United Kingdom that also issues the books ISBN number in the author's name, pays the author 100% of the royalties and supplies the author with copies of their books at print cost.

www.writersworld.co.uk

www.writersworld.co.uk
We can publish your book.