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Dear Members,

Your executive has been giving consideration to some constitutional amendments and is indeed about to meet to consider whether to recommend some changes to you. We wonder whether it is healthy for office bearers to hold office for long periods without a break, and would like to bring new ideas and new energy into the committee on a regular basis. To achieve this we are considering limiting the periods for which any individual can hold office within the executive or hold a position of chairperson of the specialist sub-committees to two years. This is already the case with the office of President who relinquishes his office and normally serves as a member in some other role. In the case of Specialist sub-committee chairman, however it is likely that they will not be on the committee at all. In deliberating members will have to satisfy themselves that we have enough public spirited booksellers around the country to fill the offices as they fall vacant. They will of course be re-eligible to hold the same offices after a waiting period of a year.

Another matter that we wish to clarify in the Constitution is the way members behaving improperly will be dealt with. SABA has in some cases assisted members by setting up an environment where they all have access to business. There is always plenty of opportunity to compete honourably on the basis of service. Some members sometimes see fit to take advantage and by their behaviour put the relationship of the Association with the Education Departments or other customers at risk. They also undermine relationships within the association. It has been the responsibility of regional executives to respond to bad behaviour in the past, and this will continue. But we wish to set down procedures which will be fair to members and guide the people involved.

Educational booksellers in the Western Cape have had a long and productive relationship with the department there, and they have done a great deal to see that the service to the department is excellent. It seems that the department is anxious to buy at better prices and has told members that they will have to give a discount of 20% in future. Experience tells us that this discount does not give enough margins to sustain a stock holding bookshop and it is likely to put retailers under pressure. The trend in the region has been for a slow expansion in the number of retailers while booksellers have been disappearing in other regions where Edu-Solutions has been favoured, or direct buying from the publishers takes place. We do hope that this does not mark a change with similar results in the Cape.

In Kwa-Zulu Natal booksellers have waited for a long time for the Qids-Up orders to be allocated, but the department there has indicated that they are now almost ready for distribution. Jay Rangiah and his SABA colleagues have arranged meetings with the department to ensure that these orders were not redirected and it is pleasing to see that SABA played an important role in protecting booksellers’ interests. The Provincial Library also recently handed out orders to many small booksellers and this may well help to sustain them. And we are also hoping that the Education Department will soon be able to issue orders for school library books under the ELITS project. We are disappointed however that the department has placed large orders of readers for the schools with Edu-Solutions and that funds from Section 21 schools for these books are being redirected before the schools receive them.

We are encouraged by developments regarding the abolition of VAT on books. There has been talk on this for some years and it receives support from the DA and from some senior members within the ruling party. A committee has now been formed within the Department of Finance to look into the question. One issue that will no doubt receive attention is the collection of VAT on the sales of digital books. These are purchased online from websites and it will prove very difficult to trace the delivery of books bought on foreign websites. How can local booksellers compete when they are paying a tax of 14% which foreign suppliers avoid? This is no doubt of little concern now, but the sales of digital books are fast growing into a sizable part of the retail market in US and UK.

As I write South Africa is celebrating the arrival of the first Indians in the country 150 years ago. Through hard work and education the families of the original settlers and many immigrants who followed them have been able to play an important role in the development of South Africa and now hold many positions of responsibility. May I take this opportunity to congratulate the book people – whether they be booksellers, publishers, librarians or even lovers of the book – for what they have done for our country. And may I wish all our members a busy Christmas and back to school season.

G Redhi
President
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African language publishing for children: Where to next?

This two-year project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, set out to deepen understanding of African language publishing for children, a subject of some controversy in recent years. Public figures such as Pallo Jordan when Minister of Arts and Culture have been highly critical of the lack of vision and commitment of the publishing industry; publishers, for their part, have countered with the Writing in Nine Tongues catalogues which showcase their African language materials.

The project team analyzed existing materials and undertook in-depth interviews with a wide range of key players in the world of children’s books. The main findings were presented by two members of the team – Professor Viv Edwards and Dr Jacob Marriote Ngwaru of the University of Reading, UK – to an audience representing all sectors of the book value chain at Museum Africa, as part of the National Book Week programme.

The extent of African language publishing in South Africa

The first issue examined in the report is the extent of African language publishing for children. Is it as limited as is sometimes suggested? Or are publishers justified in their claims that they are meeting current needs?

The higher profile of African languages achieved by the PASA catalogues – and also by the 2008 DAC Catalogue of South African Literature – is applauded. These publications mark an important first step in providing centralised sources of information for education departments, teachers, librarians and bookshops.

Closer examination, however, suggests that African language publishing is not as vibrant as it might first appear and the amount of material available for a particular age range or genre is often very limited, even in the more widely spoken languages. Of particular concern is the dearth of materials for very young children and huge variations in the numbers of books available for speakers of different African languages.

The schools market

The very heavy dependence on the schools market is one of the defining characteristics of publishing across the continent. South Africa, where the vast majority of all locally published books are for the school market, is no exception.

The balance between textbooks and supplementary reading materials or ‘real books’ is another important difference. In Europe, North America and Australia, there is far greater emphasis on ‘real books’ and reading for enjoyment. Although South African schools are also moving in this direction, textbooks remain the main learning resources and cross-subsidize other kinds of publishing.

Many of the constraints on African language publishing for the schools market relate to education policy. However, small publishers are further disadvantaged by difficulties in accessing finance.

Education policy

One of the major obstacles to the expansion of African language publishing is the failure to implement the language-in-education policy. At the international level, the arguments for mother-tongue based bilingual education are well rehearsed: students who have a sound foundation in the mother tongue participate more actively, feel more confident about their learning and outperform peers who operate only through the medium of a second language.

Because mother-tongue-based bilingual education is currently available in only a tiny handful of pilot schools, it is not surprising that parents veer to education in English, the language of highest status. Publishers, for their part, are reluctant to invest without a market-spend large enough to make African language publishing viable. In a Catch 22 situation, the absence of teaching materials in turn affects the willingness of teachers to use African languages as the medium of instruction.

Challenges for small publishers

Cash flow is an important issue for smaller companies servicing the schools market. Financial institutions often fail to appreciate the seasonal nature of educational publishing, where most orders are received and processed in just four or five months of the year. The length of time required for a return on investment – up to two years – is also problematic.

There are two main ways of marketing to schools – through visits from the sales team and through the mailing of sample copies to schools with postal addresses. Publishers able to place copies in the hands of those making choices are likely to do best and, because marketing is capital intensive, small publishers inevitably find themselves at a disadvantage.

Large companies often have regional distribution centres or are able to take advantage of vertical integration, calling on specialist sister companies. Small publishers experience difficulties in servicing schools in rural areas responsible for buying their own materials when small numbers of books have to be delivered across large areas.

Complaints about the book procurement process are widespread in the industry but small companies are affected disproportionately. Responsibility for procurement has been divided between provincial and national levels. The process has been complicated by the fact that different provinces operate different systems. Calls for submissions are costly and come at different times, making it difficult to respond. However, there is a good deal of support for shifting responsibility from the provinces to the national level, providing that this process is both robust and transparent.

The trade market

The current book buying public of South Africa is estimated to be 50,000 out of a total population of 48 million people. Increasing the customer base by even a modest proportion is clearly in the interests of the book value chain and African language publishing for the trade market is an obvious target for future growth. But in something of a vicious circle, publishers complain that
booksellers don’t stock African language books and bookshops counter that this is because they do not sell.

Yet there are many indications that Africans do read when the content is affordable, accessible and of interest. Isolezwe, the daily Zulu newspaper in Durban, for instance, has a circulation of more than 95,000, outperforming the English-language dailies from the same publisher. The issue, it would seem, is relevance. In taking a critical look at the limitations of current approaches, publishers will need to pay particular attention to content and pricing, as well as alternative ways of reaching untapped markets.

Bookazines for the young adult market currently not catered for and highly illustrated, comic style short stories aimed at newly independent readers are just two examples of recent initiatives aimed at making low price books available to people who don’t visit bookshops through reading clubs and door-to-door sales.

Other challenges for publishers

While the main imperative for publishing in South Africa, irrespective of language, is to extend beyond the schools market, two challenges – the development of writers and translation – apply specifically to African language publishing.

Developing writers

Very few African authors write in their first languages and manuscripts submitted to publishers are usually in English. They tend to target older readers and are often of very poor quality. Publishers, then, need to nurture potential authors. Empowerment deals which offer mentorship are one source of support; other strategies include competitions, workshops and grants.

The role of translation

Translation is a controversial issue in South Africa. Some people feel that it is detrimental to the development of original literature in African languages; others feel that it is a valuable form of cultural sharing with the potential to greatly increase the amount of reading materials in African languages with minimal effort.

By analyzing a sample of books currently available it was possible to show that a large proportion were in fact originated in African languages, and that most of the translations are targeted at the early childhood market. This would suggest that concerns about the negative impact on original writing in African languages are, in the main, ill founded.

Translators working in this field need not only to be proficient linguists but also to have an in depth knowledge of what makes a successful book for children and there is a serious shortage of people with the relevant breadth of experience. Because African languages are still in the process of standardization, translation is more challenging: translators working with European languages are expected to average roughly 2,500 words per day; the norm for African languages is less than half this number. Although it will require time to develop the relevant expertise, advances in IT will help to shorten the process and there is evidence that the first steps towards quality translation are already in place.

How many language versions?

Various co-publishing initiatives involving different languages have demonstrated that, by combining orders, larger print runs are able to achieve impressive economies of scale. Why, then, are South African publishers failing to fully exploit translation in this way?

Decisions about which languages to translate are driven by potential sales. Most books are translated into isiXhosa, isiZulu and Afrikaans; smaller languages such as isiNdebele and Tshivenda are frequently overlooked. Yet the same educational rationale for making languages available in the larger languages, applies to these smaller languages and this raises issues of equality of opportunity.

Some publishers explain their reluctance to expand across all the official languages in terms of their frustrations around translation and the dearth of writers able to write in African languages. Others felt that this was simply an excuse and took a more strategic view. As part of their commitment of multilingual publishing, they prepare camera-ready versions in a range of languages ready to submit for approval and promotional purposes but minimize risk by printing only when the orders come through.

Ways forward

The delay in implementing mother-tongue-based bilingual education has had a serious effect on the willingness of risk-averse publishers to produce African language materials. The gradual introduction of bilingual education would not only help to achieve improved educational outcomes but would also provide an invaluable boost for the book value chain.

Publishers need to move beyond their very heavy dependence on the schools market to explore ways of producing books with content of interest to a wider range of people and on ways of reaching them at prices they can afford. The blue skies thinking of some new entrants to the industry points to the potential of methods such as direct marketing through book clubs and door-to-door sales and distribution via magazine outlets.

High turnover companies have been slow to recognize that the promotion of African languages is an effective way of implementing affirmative action within the framework of BEE. Some companies are already involved in the mentoring of writers and illustrators, either on an informal basis or as part of empowerment deals. Others have the potential to contribute through the mentoring of smaller competitors in areas such as marketing. Workshops offered by the South African Book Development Council (SABDC) on various topics of interest to SMEs provide a useful framework for moving forward.

There is a temptation for publishers to use the very real issues for writers and translators as an excuse for limiting still further their exposure to risk-taking around African language publishing. This attitude overlooks the fact that both the standardization of English and Afrikaans and the development of children’s literature in these languages have taken place over long periods of time. It also fails to recognize that the emergence of children’s literature in African languages is a work in progress and that the first steps in resolving problems have already been taken.

The full report can be downloaded from: www.ncll.org.uk/50_research/30_research_papers/AfricanLangPublishing.pdf

Professor Viv Edwards
University of Reading, UK
The 12th LIASA Annual Conference was held at the Saint George Hotel and Conference Centre 27 September until 1 October 2010. LIASA adopted the Presidential theme of Ellen Tise, current IFLA President, namely ‘Libraries driving access to knowledge’. The IFLA President herself delivered an address on the opening day of the conference.

The conference was officially opened by the Minister of the Department of Arts and Culture, Lulu Xingwana. The keynote address was delivered by a well-known expert on advanced technologies, Pieter Geldenhuys.

The programme made provision for a variety of sessions for all levels of LIS workers and also covering the different specialist areas of librarianship, such as public, government, special, academic libraries, as well as IT, cataloguing, acquisitions and school libraries.

Other matters of national importance discussed at the conference included a discussion on the need for school libraries, the impact of the Protection of Information Bill, driving access through technology, library leadership, and library services for clients with special needs, marketing in libraries, collection development, the role of LIASA in quality assurance in higher education, among others.

Information on international developments included amongst others eServices in German Libraries, Web 2.0 technologies in libraries and online access for the Public at the United States National Archives. A very valuable and relevant presentation on how Open Access provides new opportunities in Africa provided an overview of the current status, progress made and future directions on this important matter.

**Annual General Meeting**

A detailed annual report was presented to the AGM. The President highlighted the following matters in her report:

• Progress on the establishment of a statutory body included the implementation of a pilot project and a presentation was made to delegates to provide opportunity for input.

• LIASA membership increased by more than 16% in 2009 and more than 6% in 2010.

• With the support of members, donors and partners, LIASA’s financial situation had improved significantly.

• An interactive website was launched during the AGM and the online registration option demonstrated.

• Amongst others, media coverage, publications, South African Library Week (SALW) and ‘Every child a book’ campaign contributed to the promotion of LIASA and its goals.

• Over the last two years, LIASA has provided valuable training opportunities for more than 1000 librarians via the Centre for Information and Career Development and sponsorship from the Carnegie Association of New York. CEPD also provided various training opportunities supported by the SABINET grant.

• LIASA has secured representation on the Board of the ETDP SETA and Chambers of Higher Education, Further Education and Training and Provisioning.

Being an election year, the new Executive Committee was announced at the AGM and introduced to the members.

**Awards and achievements**

**Honorary Membership** was awarded to past LIASA Presidents Robert Moropa, Tommy Matthee and Rachel More.

**LIASA Librarian of the Year**.

Ms Denise Nicholson was selected as the Librarian of the Year, Ms Elmarie Thomson achieved 3rd place. Once again the Librarian of the year was generously sponsored by UKS offering a 1st prize of R30,000.00, EBSCO Information Services and EBSCO Publishing jointly sponsored the 2nd prize worth R20,000.00 and SABINET sponsored the 3rd prize worth R10,000.00.

**President’s Award for the Best Branch.** All Branches are evaluated in terms of output, marketing, member numbers and activities. The Western Cape Branch was awarded the Best Branch. This year an award was also made to the most improved branch and the Eastern Cape Branch scooped this honour.

The **Justice Albie Sachs Freedom Award** was launched at the conference and originated from a proposal by Ms C Walker. The goal of the award was to honour the ‘unknown librarian’ that Justice Sachs mentioned in his speech at the opening of the IFLA Conference in Durban in 2007. That ‘unknown librarian’ had been instrumental in providing him with books during the period he spent in detention - a fact that he has never forgotten to this day.

The Award is a departure for LIASA whereby the association will honour South Africans who support the concept of freedom of access to information – it is a bold stand that we are taking and it shows that we have grown as an organisation when we are able to look beyond the boundaries of our Association and honour citizens who have made such meaningful contributions to our society in this area.

The first recipient of the Award was Piet Westra, former Director of the SA Library in Cape Town (now the National Library, Cape Town) and the presentation was made during a plenary session during which Justice Albie Sachs shared ‘Memories of a book-loving archivist’ with participants.

The presentation of the award was followed by a book signing where Justice Albie Sachs signed copies of his latest book *The Strange Alchemy between Life and Law.*

**Conclusion**

The conference has indeed created a platform for participants from various sections and levels to engage; analyze and debate the challenges of illiteracy, lack of culture of reading and more specifically the matters around the theme ‘Libraries driving access to knowledge’.

**LIASA Executive Committee 2010-2012**

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Judy Henning, former LIASA Secretary Nazeem Hardy, LIASA National PRO
National Book Week 2010
An opportunity for the book sector to promote the book and reading

The South African Book Development Council (SABDC), in association with the Department of Arts & Culture, launched the inaugural National Book Week that took place from 6 – 13 September 2010.

The opening ceremony was heralded by the arrival of Books on Bikes to much excitement from the crowd. Ten youth from the Youth Empowerment Project in Khayelitsha had cycled from Cape Town to Johannesburg to reach JNB at the opening of National Book Week 2010. The public was asked to donate books at Southern Sun hotels around the country.

The Keynote address by the Minister of Arts and Culture at the opening ceremony added value and credibility to the project. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) also strongly supported the project and participated through sending notices to schools and having an exhibition stand at Museum Africa. They also donated bags to kids visiting Museum Africa, as well as books.

The allocated exhibition space was filled. MacMillan made use of the opportunity by also hosting storytelling in the reading tents which the kids enjoyed. The exhibition space is geared towards reading promotion, rather than selling and the SABDC will assist exhibitors to make the most of this opportunity in coming years.

The schools, libraries and organisations that were aware of National Book Week strongly supported the project. It created a good networking space for those who work in the reading promotion arena.

The various book donation programmes ensured wide distribution of books to schools and/or libraries. Sappi’s Book Donation Programme supported the inaugural National Book Week through the donation of books to the value of R200 000 to 24 libraries around the country. Van Schaik donated leisure reading books to the value of R340 000 to 30 schools and 20 libraries in Gauteng. The books were formally handed over to the Minister of Arts & Culture and the Department of Basic Education at the Opening Ceremony.

KB, the only Ambassador for this year’s programme, attended and spoke at the Opening Ceremony. She also interacted with the audience through storytelling and reading to children in the Reading Tent.

Successful programmes included the authors programme, a two day seminar called Our Voices, Our Stories, which was presented by some of the best creative minds in South Africa. In the reading promotion seminar, executives of the leading reading promotion projects in the country came together to make recommendations to government. A two-day Pan African Writers’ Symposium was hosted by Academic and Non Fiction Authors Association (ANFASA) with author organisations from 9 African countries.

The Demo Library provided by SABDC through a partnership with the City of Joburg Library Services was very popular. People could learn how to use public libraries in a non-threatening way.

The print disabled community was catered for through the South African Library for the Blind (SALB), but the focus was also on sensitising sighted people to the world of the visually impaired. Their services were well received and children and adults alike enjoyed the Braille game. Children also had fun making their own books through SALB’s tactile books project.

Bookdealers provided a good opportunity for the public to purchase books at affordable prices starting at R5.

Two poetry sessions were convened by two of South Africa’s leading poets Prof. Keorapetse Kgosisile and Masoja Msiza. The sessions provided a platform for emerging poets to expose their works and receive invaluable input from the convenors.

Post event articles indicate that National Book Week was widely celebrated, with small initiatives by individuals/schools/organisations to promote reading during the week. One such initiative is that of the Knowledge and Management Services Library of the Presidency. Books were collected from staff members to donate to the Clapham High School during National Book Week.

As with all new initiatives, there were some teething problems with National Book Week, all of which have been earmarked for change in 2011. There was a lower audience attendance than anticipated, mostly due to the public sector strike. A more focussed public campaign will be required to draw the desired audiences. It was anticipated that an audience would be arranged for the Adult Reading Tent however this did not happen, and the adult reading tent was greatly under-utilised. Greater media coverage was anticipated specifically from electronic media (e.g. the public broadcaster).

A great foundation has been laid for National Book Week. The successes will be built on, the shortcomings sorted out and greater support from the sector will be sought. A sincere thanks to all those who participated in National Book Week from the SABDC.

www.sabookcouncil.co.za
Developing education for the 21st century
Education Week Convention and Learning Expo a great success!

The 4th annual Education Week Convention and Learning Expo at Emperors Palace, Johannesburg from 28 - 30 September was a resounding success. More than 1400 delegates and education stakeholders from across the spectrum participated at Africa’s largest education convention and learning expo.

The preconference workshops, conference sessions as well as the free visitor programme on the exhibition floor were all extremely well attended and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Continued professional development, motivation and recognition of educators and finding practical solutions to problems (there is definite policy fatigue in the sector) were the key issues raised throughout the sessions.

The opening session featured a keynote presentation by Edward Mosuwe from the Department of Basic Education on developing, maintaining and supporting an education system for the 21st century.

Michael Stevenson of Cisco engaged the audience in how to move education systems to learning societies, followed by Education Conversations, moderated by Graeme Bloch. The focus of this panel discussion was on how best to move forward; repairing relations after the strike, and creating functional schools and training systems for educators. There was good input from all panellists and the audience, providing diverse perspectives.

Subsequent sessions were divided in three different tracks: Basic Education, Further and Higher Education, and Education Technology Indaba.

Basic Education featured sessions on the impact of policy and curriculum changes in the classroom and building a foundation of quality that included a report back on the Education Action Scorecard Project. Best Practice in School Management and Governance addressed leadership and management enhancement of teachers and the track concluded with case studies of successful schools.

Further and Higher Education included sessions on how to work towards an integrated postsecondary education system for preparing and developing teachers by higher education institutions with best practices as case examples. Creating synergies between post secondary education institutions and the workplace as well as student support programmes were discussed.

The Education Technology Indaba featured sessions on how information and communication technologies can help transform African education. eLearning solutions in an African context and equipping educators and students for the information age were discussed.

The closing panel discussion, chaired by Alexandra Pinnock of Pinnock Consulting featured discussions on how to bridge the inequalities in education – featuring interesting input from the audience. One of the delegates mentioned that he had been doubting whether he was in the right profession, but that attending this conference had convinced him that this was the right place for him to be in.

The five preconference workshops were all extremely well attended and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive – highlights include Jeremy Behman’s workshop on innovative education and leadership practices in further and higher education; and Nomfuso Ntlosi’s basic coaching and mentoring workshop.

The education system is facing a number of diverse challenges – most of which were addressed in almost all the sessions: low levels of literacy and numeracy, poor matric pass rates, insufficient student retention at higher education institutions, lack of employment opportunities for graduates, poor motivation among teachers, lack of safety and security and insufficient teacher training and professional development, to name but a few. There was a general consensus that these challenges can only be addressed through a combined effort.

Looking ahead to Education Week 2011, the conference programme will be expanded to address the above mentioned challenges. Basic Education issues to be addressed include teacher training and development, improving literacy and numeracy levels, social development issues and career guidance.

Further & Higher Education & Training issues to be addressed include capacity development in the FET sector, increasing participation and completion and innovative funding and partnership solutions.

Education Technology Indaba issues to be addressed include developing 21st century skills to equip students for a rapidly changing world and workplace, the role of eLearning in improving access to education and social media and networking as a teaching tool.

Maths & Science Literacy issues to be addressed include demystifying fundamental maths and science concepts, subject appropriate teaching methods and managing practical work.

Safety & Security in Educational Institutions issues to be addressed include safety programmes in schools, addressing bullying and gangsterism, community involvement in promoting safety awareness, access control, CCTV and e-safety.

Sport & Recreation issues to be addressed include how physical wellbeing enhances academic performance, sports outreach programmes and whole child development.

For more information on Education Week 2011, please contact Nicolaas Loretz, Programme Director (email: nicolaas.loretz@spintelligent.com, phone: 021 700 3555).
Producing printed materials as required has been around for many years, the trusty stencil duplicator or mimeograph machine setting the early benchmark. But the recent quantum leap in digital technology now makes true print-on-demand a commercial and marketing reality in the book-publishing sector.

Short-run printing is quite common, with proof copies and limited-circulation and out-of-print titles being the most popular. But, says Mega Digital’s Adrian Tromp, ‘There’s a real business case to make print-on-demand the standard except for the most highly sought-after titles.’

Electric Book Work’s Arthur Attwell agrees, pointing out that titles selling fewer than 1 500 copies a year are perfectly suited for print-on-demand (POD). While the unit price of the book is slightly higher than with litho printing, the savings incurred throughout the process generally outstrip any upfront print-price benefit. The quality difference between digital and litho is imperceptible. And a huge advantage is that every book is a wanted book – ‘That means almost no returns and the pulping of unwanted books is virtually eliminated,’ Attwell points out.

While short-run printing is a manufacturing technology, POD is a business process. ‘In publishing, the editorial department is tasked with achieving certain gross margin returns and will often opt for large runs in order to get unit costs down. The finance department, on the other hand, monitors warehousing costs, stock returns, capital tied up in slow-moving inventory, shrinkage and pulping costs. The two departments have conflicting goals and the variance often takes up excessive management time and attention. It’s fundamental that cost of book sold, not cost of book printed, become the benchmark measurement, says Attwell.

The traditional supply chain of publisher, printer, warehouse and finally customer has eight separate costs, while true POD has significantly fewer. In an actual example, a title held by a leading publisher was withdrawn because of slow sales. Placing the book on a POD basis involved a small initial setup fee, after which the book sold 376 copies over the next nine months. Once the cost of printing of R50 per book was deducted, there was income in excess of R8 000 for the author – from a title that was no longer ‘in print’.

Apart from the obvious benefit of placing slow-moving titles on POD, there’s a need for POD in the technical, academic and medical fields where there’s ongoing change in the subject matter, such as HIV/AIDS treatment.

‘There’s no discernable difference in print quality and finishing capabilities, there are significant savings in warehousing and capital expenditure, and the environmental impact is overwhelmingly positive,’ says Mega Digital’s Tromp. ‘Print on demand has come of age.’
A crystal ball to the future
Kalahari.net offers local booksellers a sound online solution

Technology enables book enthusiasts to have a bookshop in the palm of their hands. Amazon, one of the US’s largest booksellers, announced in July that sales of books for its e-reader, the Kindle, outnumbered sales of hardcover books for the previous three months.

This phenomenon is the result of Amazon building a compelling offer between a device and content. Their e-reader sales during the first 24 days of October have already surpassed the total of all Kindles sold in October, November and December of 2009.

The proliferation of touch tablet device (more than 30 releases before Christmas) will definitely speed up this process. This trend will reflect well locally in the tablet offering by kalahari.net.

Kalahari.net launched the first e-book store in March of this year and consumer adoption of this format is growing rapidly. In fact, the country’s leading online retailer with the largest catalogue of international and local bestselling e-books is making the adoption of this new format as easy as possible.

This can be evidenced in three ways. First, from a software perspective, it launched a free e-book reader software application that makes it easy for you to enjoy e-books and e-magazines on your PC or Mac. Second, from a hardware perspective, it started marketing the Elonex range of e-readers. The entry level device is the first e-reader available in South Africa for under R1,000. Third, it launched a Digital Downloads channel on kalahari.net making it easy for consumers to find and download relevant content.

Those who still love the smell of ink on paper are rapidly becoming extinct. By the end of October Amazon announced that customers bought more e-books on Amazon.com during the last 30 days than print books – hardcover and paperback combined – on its top 10, 25, 100 and 1,000 best-seller lists. The ratio of e-book to print sales was 2 to 1, the company said.

South Africa is to follow suit a lot sooner that we think if the statistics generated by the kalahari.net Festive Season Shopping Survey 2010 are anything to go by. More than anything, 21% of the respondents are hoping for an e-reader while 18% would love to find an iPad with their name on it under the tree this year.

Although the respondents feel the media items such as books, CDs, DVDs and games are certain to be the biggest sellers online this year, almost 15% feel that e-readers will be second inline. This statistic is encouraging.

The Association of American Publishers (AAP) announced that, Trade book sales (not including books for academic study) for the period of January-August 2010 were $2.91 billion. E-book sales in the same period were $263 million. E-books for the period comprise 9.03% of total consumer book sales, compared to 3.31 percent at the close of 2009.’

Furthermore traditional US brick & mortar book retailers struggle to compete against Amazon’s physical book prices and are not able to stock the same variety.

If US trends are anything to go by then kalahari.net seems to offer booksellers a bright future by offering two distinct products that should add new life to local booksellers.

When looking into the US crystal ball, the following questions come to mind; who are the booksellers that are in trouble, who can prepare for a bright future and lastly is there a space for a small bookseller in the digital world?

Bigger is not better

For those not familiar, Barnes & Noble is the largest brick & mortar book retailer in the US. In August they announced that the company is up for sale. The reason for this was declining profits and a changing marketplace. According to pursuistit.com, Barnes & Nobles ‘put thousands of small booksellers out of business over the last couple of decades by offering the best selection, pricing and atmosphere.’

Today the vast selection and competitive pricing offered by eCommerce players like Amazon has put Barnes & Noble in dire straits.

Barnes & Noble’s attempt to emulate Amazon’s Kindle strategy has been an inferior attempt, and beside the hype during the pre-order phase of their e-reader the Nook, their digital attempts haven’t been met with much success.

The margins for e-books also seem much lower than physical books and it’s questionable if Barnes & Noble can handle this decline in margin. If they didn’t have physical stores, like Amazon, the small margins wouldn’t be a problem. But for a brick and mortar retailer, often located in a mall with very expensive rents, it will be a challenge.

If the majority of your sales are best sellers and trade books, then you are in big trouble and if you don’t have a sound e-commerce strategy, your trouble will just be exacerbated.

Know your market

If any bookseller is likely to survive, it will be the small local booksellers, many are secondhand resellers, who seem to have the most longevity. Most small bookshops don’t pay exorbitant rentals.

The South African online market is currently estimated to be sitting at six million unique users. Most of these users are based in major cities who access the Internet during office hours. Smaller retailers off the beaten track, therefore stand to benefit from weekend shoppers and collectors.

I recently visited the secondhand bookshop at the Boek-Oase during Aardklop Arts Festival in Potchefstroom. I found myself dusting off classic secondhand books including Anthony Bourdain’s Les Halles Cookbook, but more exciting an old copy of the Opperman classic, Joernaal van Jorik. While local publishers are slow to adopt e-books, smaller booksellers still have a life span. However, they should not entirely ignore the benefits that that Internet has to offer.

Build an online strategy

In the past, an online presence was a major investment for any small company and, booksellers often relied on advice from a techno savvy acquaintance which in the long run, ended up costing them even more. Now brick and mortar booksellers of all shapes and sizes can venture into the online space without any great financial investment.

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CNA Readathon

2010 ‘Readers are Leaders’ campaign makes a real difference

‘This year’s CNA Readathon 2010 – ‘Readers are Leaders’ campaign has been a huge success and brought us face to face with perhaps the most inspiring people of all: children,’ says Innocentia Buthelezi, Group CSI Manager for Edcon. ‘They have shown courage beyond their years when faced with their unfortunate circumstances, strength beyond understanding and determination beyond measure. It is so utterly moving, and all of us are so privileged to be able to make a difference in their lives.’

The 2010 ‘Readers are Leaders’ campaign, promotes literacy across South Africa. CNA, now the main Readathon sponsor, has supported the highly acclaimed campaign since 2003.

‘The decision to give our support was easy,’ Buthelezi said. ‘The campaign is in perfect harmony with our community focus on the development of education. It has continued to help develop a culture of reading, and it highlights the importance of literacy.

‘A vital aspect is the distribution of Readathon materials that promote reading activities in the classroom, to 26 000 schools, 330 000 educators and more than 13 million school children.’

School children, teachers and parents joined hands to help make the campaign the success it is. It has resulted in a true transfer of knowledge that has empowered people to help themselves. Through this long-running initiative with READ Educational Trust under the auspices of the National Department of Basic Education, children across the country are now in a better position to benefit and will continue benefiting into the future.

CNA attributes much of the success of this year’s campaign to employees, people in the retail trade, suppliers. Of special value has been the support given by consumers. A great many purchased READ-recommended books, which were available from CNA stores, for donation to schools. Those donations have been used to help establish much needed libraries.

During the course of Literacy Week, which coincided with the campaign, school children visited Parliament and encouraged those in attendance to stop for ten minutes and read. As part of the campaign, all South Africans were encouraged to also ‘stop, drop and read’ for ten minutes to show their commitment to creating a literate country.

Furthermore, CNA stores created a reading corner in which eminent community members and ambassadors - Gcina Mhlope, Kenny Maistry and Hlubi Mboya - sat with local school children and read to them. CNA’s reading corners worked wonders in raising awareness of the campaign.

The campaign and its continuing great success demonstrate how corporate social responsibility can ensure more South African children enjoy their right to literacy.
Edinburgh in the third week in August was glorious: warm, mostly sunny, skirling with pipe music and buzzing with festival goers. And what a privilege it was to attend the British Council’s Bookcase programme over four days at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, along with fifty-four delegates from other countries.

We were hosted at the grand old Caledonian (now a Hilton) where the sumptuous rooms look out over the Princes Street Gardens and up at the fabled Castle on its crag. Every night as the Edinburgh Tattoo ended fireworks erupted into the sky above it, crowning the end of action-packed days.

The British Council is the UK’s leading cultural relations organisation, and the idea behind Bookcase is to expose delegates to UK writers and enable networking that will increase the profile of contemporary UK writing internationally. We attended lunches at the National Library of Scotland, the delightful Scottish Poetry Library and the City Chambers with the Mayor and other dignitaries.

The EIBF has been running since 1983 and is the biggest in the world, lasting for three weeks with more than 700 events. It takes place in an encampment of elegant marquees and canopied boardwalks in Charlotte Square, one block off Princes Street. Writers from established and famous to young and upcoming attract over 17,000 book lovers, and there is a spirited and popular children’s programme too.

Efficient organisation is key to the general enjoyment. Capacity audiences start to form polite queues outside the venues half an hour before each event, in the knowledge that seating is first come, first served and doors are closed the moment the participating writers walk in. You snooze, you lose at the EIBF. But there are other attractions in the bookshops and cafés with bars, including the circus-like Spiegeltent with its mirrored booths. Many festival goers gathered to chat on the lawn in the sunshine under an imperious statue of Prince Albert on his horse.

The one-hour events begin with a short reading after each writer is introduced – not always a success unless it is short and lively – followed by a general discussion, with questions from the audience at the end. The larger air-conditioned marquees hold up to 300 in raked seats. In the Spiegeltent, the audience is seated at tables for less formal events, including ‘Unbound’ from nine to eleven in the evening which features musicians and literary entertainments.

Among the well-known writers, I listened to A S Byatt, Ian Rankin, David Mitchell, Andrea Levy, British Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, Russell Celyn-Jones, Owen Sheers and D B C Pierre. I also enjoyed talking to top Scottish writer Janice Galloway (her work is described as ‘tense tales of passion and compassion’) and was mesmerised by Kei Miller from Jamaica, a poet and first-novel finalist in the 2007 Commonwealth Writers’ Prize currently teaching creative writing at Glasgow University.

Of particular interest was the winners’ event at which the two James Tait Black Memorial Prizes – the oldest in the UK, founded in 1919 – were awarded, chaired by Ian Rankin. The award process with submitted books starts with recommendations from graduate English Literature students at the University of Edinburgh; their choices are then discussed and adjudged by senior academics. To share the burden of winnowing down many entries to a shortlist compiled by student readers seems a good way to go, adding a keen young reader element to a process that (in South Africa at least) sometimes appears to result in capricious personal choices.

A S Byatt won the fiction prize for 2009 for her novel The Children’s Book (Chatto & Windus), while John Carey won the biography prize for William Golding: The Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies (Faber & Faber).

One of the best aspects of the Bookcase programme was meeting and getting to know other ‘literary professionals’ – as delegates were called – from around the world. Most were festival directors, or involved in organising book festivals. Others were editors of literary journals, publishers, librarians, radio and print journalists, translators, and of course, the resourceful British Council team.

At their main party on the Saturday evening, it was a great pleasure to meet up with our Poet Laureate Bra Willie Kgotsitile and novelist Siphiwo Mahala, among other South African literati. Due to arrive a few days after we left were Marlene van Niekerk, Mandla Langa and Kopano Matlwa.

Would I go again? Like a shot, aiming to be there for longer to enjoy a fuller range of the Edinburgh Festival’s literary, dramatic and music events. The express train journey between Kings Cross station in London and Edinburgh takes just 4½ hours and this stately city is one of the world’s most beautiful and fascinating.

Edinburgh was declared the first Unesco City of Literature in 2004. Characters from books by Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson, J M Barrie, Arthur Conan-Doyle, John Buchan and Muriel Spark seem to lurk round each corner, almost rubbing shoulders with John Rebus, busy about modern police business. Ian Rankin, J K Rowling, Iain Banks and Alexander McCall Smith are regulars at the EIBF, and the spirit of Robert Burns is there too in the poetry and pipe music. All are celebrated in literary pub crawls where small groups walk between pubs to be entertained by poets, actors and musicians.

Thank you, British Council, both for the pleasure of being there again and for the well-thought-out programme that enables world-wide literary links.

Jenny Hobbs
Director, Franschhoek Literary Festival
A dream come true
A new Literary Festival for Johannesburg

For many years I have dreamt about a literary festival for Johannesburg. This year it finally came true when Boekehuis partnered with the Mail & Guardian to bring to life the M&G Johannesburg Literary Festival. With Darryl Accone, the M&G books editor and myself at the helm, it was bound to be everything I had ever dreamed of. It was held over a weekend from 3 to 5 September at the 44 Stanley Avenue complex in Milpark. This festival of South African literature also marked the 25th anniversary of the M&G and took as its subtitle and theme, Being Here Now: Who are we? South Africans in 2010.

Forty four Stanley Avenue is a red-brick maze of small independent shops and restaurants reclaimed from what used to be an area for workshops and warehousing. The atmosphere of individuality at this venue, and the fact that it is not remote from the city centre and historically connected to it, was appealing to us when we started looking for a venue to host the festival. We wanted it to be in a public space that had a sense of community, a place where people could freely interact in congenial surroundings. Impersonal conference centres or corporate spaces wouldn’t do. The venue proved to be a success, vibey and with a great ambience. The normally laid-back venue was transformed into a hive of activity as people rushed about to talks dissecting the state of South Africa’s fiction and the country’s education crises.

The events were hosted in two different spaces at 44 Stanley Avenue – The Room, an annexe to the Il de Giardino restaurant, and the gallery space of AoP (Art on Paper). It was hard for Boekehuis to find a good space for the bookselling in close proximity to the events. In the end we settled for courtyard space partly under olive trees, outside the biggest venue, using trestle tables. Fortunately September is still in the dry season in Joburg and chances were slim that it would rain.

The festival was well attended with many sessions oversubscribed to. Bookselling was vigorous and not limited only to books that were under discussion. As is often the case, however, the discussions served as encouragement and impetus for people to buy the relevant books, and we saw renewed interest in the books after every talk.

The level of discussion in all the panels was of a high standard, guided by the chairs that were carefully selected to provide that spark and perspective which makes the difference between a middling and a vigorous discussion.

South African fiction writing is brimming with health, but the state of reading is so dire as to be virtually on a hospital respirator. That was the verdict of Craig MacKenzie, professor of English at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), who chaired the opening panel discussion, Word count -- the state of South African fiction.

According to MacKenzie, 100 new works of South African fiction are published every year. To get through them all, you would have to read one book every three days. But that’s exactly where the problem lies: writers are writing, but they aren’t being read. It’s a depressing vortex of nothingness, in which many new works of South African fiction simply disappear without even so much as a literary review, let alone any tremor on the sales seismograph.

Leon de Kock, professor of English at the University of Stellenbosch and himself a published poet and translator, called it ‘the big black hole’. ‘Writing is a conversation. It’s tough speaking into a black hole,’ De Kock said.

One of the livelier discussions was one entitled After the Fall: The Postcolonial Hereafter, chaired by David Attwell, which included the panelists Imraan Coovadia, Moeletsi Mbeki and Roger Southall. Mbeki provocatively began by asking when South Africa had ceased being a colony: in 1910, 1924, 1961 or perhaps 1994?

Another session focussed on trauma and writing. In this session writers responded to Murambi, The Book of Bones, the Senegalese novelist Boris Boubacar Diop’s novel on Rwanda. Music, poetry and short pieces of writing combined to make this 90-minute session a primer on how to write about complex and painful subjects.

What I found very interesting were the responses to the festival and the reporting about it. Already before the festival a tweet from BookSA set off a whole twittering amongst mostly Cape Town women writers about why there were so few women in the programme. This was again brought up in a web response after the festival by Catherine Jarvis who wrote, ‘Where were all the South African women writers?? South Africa is a deeply patriarchal society.’ A male respondent said: I found it enlightening, enjoyable and challenging.

David Smith who is the Africa correspondent of The Guardian thought that the sessions ‘offered glimpses of a relentlessly complicated nation attempting to define itself, contest itself and wrestle with its internal contradictions.’ His article provocatively started with, ‘Blacks don’t read, so how can such an event survive?’ Smith was referring with this statement to a column written by Sihle Khumalo earlier in the Sunday Times in which he stated: ‘Go to any black household and you will find lots of music tapes, LPs, CDs and DCDs and a handful, if any, of general books. That, by the way, includes blacks in the suburbs. The lack of reading is a black thing, irrespective of where you live. It is way more fashionable to have loads of music than to be truly knowledgeable.’

This sentiment seemed to be echoed in an article by Don Makatlele writing in the Sowetan a few days after the festival on the legacy of the well-known author Lewis Nkosi who had died in Johannesburg during the same weekend of the festival. At his memorial service his widow mourned the fact that the royalty cheques of an author of his calibre amounted to almost nothing and that he was unable to pay for the hospice in which he was treated for the last year of his life. Makatlele then showed the sales numbers for Nkosi’s most recent, and critically acclaimed book, Mandela’s Ego, illustrating a sad state of affairs for the book sales in South Africa of an established author. From Sept 2008 to February 2009,
Mandela's Ego sold 60 copies; from March 2009 to August 2009 another 77 were sold; then from Sept 2009 to February 2010, and in the last accounting – March to August this year, a further 14 copies were sold. Angry and frustrated Makatile went on to berate South African readers, saying: ‘Out of a nation of 48 million, how do we buy only 200 books of someone like Nkosi’s work?’

It is a burning question whether the book industry in South Africa is sustainable as it is now. Every year more books get published. But the book sales do not seem to follow this trend. If it is true that blacks don’t read, where will future sales of books come from? And who will attend the literary festivals?

South Africa has well-established book festivals: Cape Town, Franschhoek, Stellenbosch (Woordfees and Versindaba), Richmond and now M&G Literary festival. And every year more players are entering the field, hoping to capture a market and find revenue (the most recent addition being Estoril Books’ Bookex to be held in the Sandton Convention Centre end November).

Like the classic Heineken beer ad (Heineken reaches the parts other beers cannot reach), these initiatives will hopefully reach parts of the market that the established ventures cannot and so broaden the book market to secure our publishing and bookselling futures.

Corina Van der Spoel
Boekehuis

The state of the book trade in Africa
Using Nigeria as a yardstick

Nigeria is considered a yardstick for the book trade in Africa due to the fact that Nigeria has the largest single reading public and most virile publishing industry on the continent.

Publishing started in Nigeria as an offshoot of British publishing with an emphasis on the distribution of British published books. This developed into a new market for UK based publishing companies. Originally, published works were mostly religious literatures, government publications and school textbooks for government and mission schools. Printing was limited to small scale needs, and authors were foreign. After independence in 1960, some of the local subsidiaries of the multinationals started the publication of literary series by African authors. For example: Heinemann’s African Writers’ Series. Ever since then demand for books in Nigeria has continued to rise steadily with government remaining the foremost buyer.

In the past three decades of political instability, the book trade suffered greatly along with many other business sectors in Nigeria. Non-accountable military junta dominated the better part of the past 30 years and many Nigerians lost faith in the nation. Nigeria’s notable writers and intellectuals opted for self-exile and though Nigerian authors excelled on the global stage, the book trade sector foundered.

In this transient period of civilian rule, government deviated from the standard book chain practices and embarked on massive purchases for free supply to schools directly from publishers in the name of free education; cutting off booksellers, who are major players in the book chain to disastrous effect.

In the aftermath it has been reported that there are 16 million children of a school going age not enrolled in school in Nigeria, and that only 500,000 out of 40 million illiterate adults are registered for mass literacy programmes nationwide.

While assessing Universal Basic Education (UBE) programmes, the Minister of Education, Professor Rugayyat Rufai stated that 10 million Nigerian Children lack access to education. This is a threat to the nation’s future.

During the 2010 World Cup half a million people a week signed up to the mass literacy campaign iGOAL.

Kailash Satyarthi, President of the Global Campaign for Education said, ‘World leaders cannot bury their collective heads in the sand any longer. We urge Ban Ki-Moon to help children from all over the world and listen to the messages calling for change from eighteen million people. Now we wait for their response. Education is the very basis of all that is good in the world, health prosperity and democracy. Now is the time for action.’

While this is true, it is also true that mass literacy cannot be accomplished without a well developed and functional book trade. Book development should be regarded as significant when discussing education for all and with today’s technology, there are vast new worlds of possibility for book development and distribution on the continent.

ICT is now an important medium for promoting and selling books and journals. Intelligent use of the internet can secure much needed visibility for booksellers in Africa enabling them to reach a wider market than was possible before.

Books and journals are now being advertised and sold on the web. Internet bookselling is increasing at an astronomical rate. Purchasing books on the internet has become popular because of the considerable discounts offered by many online bookstores and Amazon.com now has a strong presence in Africa. Some local publishers and a few Nigerian booksellers now run online bookshops. This trend will surely increase with time as more booksellers realise the gains of online book trading.

Training in the area of e-commerce for African booksellers is urgently called for.

Nigeria has a relatively well-developed book trade though it shows weakness in distribution and investment capital. Demand potential is enormous and largely underdeveloped.

Books need to be made as cost effective as possible and distributed as widely as possible in the future. The development of key distributors serving as links in the book chain between retail shops and publishers should be considered. Local publishing should be fostered through literacy campaigns which will in turn broaden the market base.

Some form of comparative action is overdue in the promotion, marketing and distribution of books meant for the African market. The intra-African book trade demands urgent attention to support the interflow of goods and services between countries. This will foster mutual support in the fight for self-sufficiency.

Oluwonge Orimalade
Managing Director, Books And Prints Ltd.
The ideal gift

You don’t need to be a bookseller to realise that reading sets the imagination free to explore worlds and follow paths previously unknown... let them choose the way this Christmas.

A book token is a form of gift voucher redeemable in participating bookshops as an alternative to cash, as a means of exchange in a transaction involving the purchase of a book or books.

The first book token was launched in the UK in 1932. It was invented by Harold Raymond, an English publisher who was disappointed at only receiving three books among more than 100 presents one Christmas in the 1920s. This book token has grown into one of the largest multi-retail gift vouchers in the UK and was renamed “National Book Tokens” in 2000.

In South Africa, the book tokens scheme is run by the South African Booksellers Association. Tokens are both available and redeemable at most SABA affiliated bookshops.

Book tokens are promoted and exchangeable at most bookshops in SA. Are they available in yours? For more details contact SABA on 021 945 1572 or visit www.sabooksellers.com
The new Companies Act, 2008

Some of the most far reaching provisions

The Companies Act, 2008 (“the 2008 Act”) introduces a number of new provisions in our company law. This article summarises some of the more far reaching provisions which are pertinent to all local companies, booksellers included.

Trading under technical insolvent circumstances

The 2008 Act provides that companies may not trade under insolvent circumstances and can be required to cease trading under these circumstances. It is a commercial reality that the majority of companies in South Africa trade under technically insolvent circumstances (i.e. their liabilities exceed their assets), but are commercially solvent, for example where a company is funded by subordinated loans. If the 2008 Act remains unchanged, such companies will contravene the 2008 Act and may have to cease trading and/or be put under business rescue.

Put options against companies at fair value

A very far reaching provision in the 2008 Act, is the provision that every shareholder will have the right to require the company to buy his shares at the fair value thereof under certain circumstances.

The circumstances which will trigger this right are when a special resolution is proposed to
• amend the rights attaching to shares;
• undertake any fundamental transaction – to sell the major part of the assets of a company, to implement a merger or amalgamation or to implement a scheme of arrangement.

Although it is clear that the purpose is to protect minority dissenting shareholders, the impact on companies will be severe. Few companies will be willing to undertake merger and acquisition activity as explained above, unless they know that there will be no dissenting shareholder who may require the company to buy him out at fair value. This will be impossible in the case of listed companies with hundreds or thousands of shareholders.

The financial impact of having to make payment of fair value may well cripple companies, especially given that a payment to a shareholder under this put option is not subject to satisfaction of the solvency and liquidity test.

Lastly, this provision will conflict with so-called lock-in provisions where a shareholder is precluded from selling his shares within before the expiry of a certain time period, as the lock-in provisions could be circumvented by enforcing the put option rights under the 2008 Act. Companies should therefore be very careful before proposing a resolution to implement a fundamental transaction.

Fundamental transactions and the rights of creditors and shareholders

Under the 2008 Act, any shareholder, no matter how small his shareholding in the company, may apply to court to stop any fundamental transaction, i.e. a sale of the major part of the assets or undertaking of the company, a merger or amalgamation or a scheme of arrangement. Problematically, the 2008 Act does not set a limited time period within which a shareholder can apply for the resolution to be set aside. It is therefore theoretically possible that a shareholder may, years after the implementation of a special resolution, require that the transaction be unwound.

The Draft Companies Amendments Bill, 2010 (“the Draft Bill”) proposes to remedy this omission by providing that if 15% of shareholders opposed the resolution, a shareholder has 5 business days after the special resolution was passed, to require the company to apply to court for a review of the special resolution. If less than 15% of shareholders opposed the resolution, any shareholder may apply directly to court (i.e. not via the company) to review the special resolution, within 10 business days of the passing of the resolution.

Shareholders’ agreements

At present shareholders in a company will govern their relationship for the most part in a shareholders’ agreement, which will in many instances differ from the standard constitutional documents of the company. Parties would then provide that if there is any conflict between the agreement and the constitutional documents, the agreement will prevail.

Under the 2008 Act, the position changes completely – notwithstanding what the agreement may say, if there is a difference between the long negotiated agreement and the constitutional documents or the 2008 Act, the constitutional documents and the 2008 Act will prevail and the provisions in the agreements may from that day be voidable. This will have a major impact on existing minority shareholders, as most of their minority protections are to be found in the shareholders’ agreement, which may be voidable.

Fortunately the Draft Bill proposes to extend the two year grace period to shareholders’ agreements.

Inter-company loans and security

Under the 2008 Act, any loan from one company to another which form part of the same group of companies or any security provided for another company in the group, will require a special resolution (requiring the support of 75% of the voting rights of the shareholders present).

The potential impact of this provision on our large corporate groups may well be far reaching, as they make loans and provide security to group companies on a daily basis and may not continue to do so unless a special resolution is in place.

Business rescue proceedings’ impact on existing positions

A company can be put in business rescue simply by a resolution of its board of directors, or on application to court by shareholders, creditors, employees or a trade union active in the company. This resolution may be challenged in court, but unless and until that is done, the business rescue stands.

A number of the consequences of business rescue proceedings are the following –
• once a company is in business rescue there is a moratorium on all legal proceedings by or against the company;
• suretyships or guarantees may not be enforced against the company;
• the business rescue practitioner can choose which agreements the company will continue to be bound by and may even “cherry pick” in an agreement
which provisions the company will be bound by. The Draft Bill proposes that the practitioner may only suspend as aforesaid for the duration of the proceedings and may only cancel if a court agrees, but the proceedings remain far reaching:

- any property owned or in the possession of the company, even if it is not owned by the company, may not be dealt with by any party.

The above are obviously very far reaching, but especially so given that a company may simply put itself under business rescue by passing a resolution to that effect, with no court oversight being required at all.

Another far reaching provision is that, if the company is financially distressed, the board has only one of two options: it must either put the company under business rescue or send a notice to all shareholders, creditors, trade unions in the company and all employees that the company is financially distressed – we can all imagine the commercial consequences of such a notice.

**Shareholders can ratify fraudulent or due to grossly negligent actions**

One of the surprising provisions in the 2008 Act, is that the shareholders of a company may by special resolution, approve actions by the directors of the company whereby they fraudulently or grossly negligently act outside the scope of their authority and power under the memorandum of incorporation of the company and that no party will have a claim for damages against the directors for acting in such a manner.

The Draft Bill exacerbates the position by providing that not only can fraudulent and grossly negligent action be ratified, but that directors’ actions which are also undertaken knowingly, wilfully or intentionally may be ratified.

**Enhanced liability of directors and other officers**

The 2008 Act increases the standard of conduct expected of directors, as well as other officers of a company. On the one hand, the 2008 Act partially codifies the existing common law fiduciary duties and the duty of care and skill owed by directors to companies, but the 2008 Act also amends the standard required.

Under the 2008 Act, a director must act with the care, skill and diligence that may reasonably be expected of “someone” fulfilling his functions and having his knowledge, skill and experience and not only as to his own skills.

At present directors are protected by the corporate veil. However, under the 2008 Act, any person who has suffered damages (e.g. a creditor, employee, shareholder, supplier, contract party etc) can institute an action directly against a director or any officer if he breaches the 2008 Act (which includes his duties to act in the best interest of the company and with care and skill).

Madelein Burger-van der Walt
Partner, Mergers & Acquisitions,
Webber Wentzel

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**A crystal ball to the future**

Kalahari.net offers local booksellers a sound online solution

Find a Marketplace

Booksellers can now load their own stocked books on kalahari.net’s Marketplace. This is a sales initiative that offers anyone, including booksellers, the chance to sell used and new goods on kalahari.net. Regardless of the amount of items you want to sell, listing them for sale couldn’t be easier. The step-by-step guidelines ensure that booksellers’ books appear on the site and will be viewed by thousands of kalahari.net shoppers. kalahari.net will process the order on your behalf and let you know where to send the product. Once you have shipped it, the proceeds are passed onto you.

**e-Traders**

An affiliate service is also offered by kalahari.net, called e-traders. Booksellers that already have websites or that correspond on email to their customers can earn a percentage commission on all qualifying purchases made directly or indirectly through e-trader links from their site (or e-mail) to kalahari.net. Booksellers can thus sell both books and e-books on their websites by using e-traders, and earn revenue.

It’s easy to use and kalahari.net takes care of customer service, deliveries, returns, cancellations and transactional customer issues. All you have to do is link to them. They even provide you with a special online link builder along with animated banners advertising all their latest promotions and regular newsletters filled with the latest e-trader related info.

If the US market is anything to go by, then local bricks and mortar booksellers should brace themselves and start building a sustainable strategy. Such a strategy should encompass building a niche genre offering that is non-competitive to trade e-books and an online strategy that offers new revenues without making an investment in technology that won’t see a return on investment. It’s not that difficult or expensive to do.

Gerjo Hoffman, Senior Category Manager for e-content at kalahari.net
Technology Update

South African e-Book Reader

In an effort to make e-books available to all South Africans, Kalahari.net has launched an e-book Reader application. Available for download on kalahari.net, the free software called kalahari.net reader can be used on PCs and MACs.

Gerjo Hoffman, Head of e-content at kalahari.net says, ‘kalahari.net is aiming to drive the adoption of this new technology and increase the consumption of electronic content in South Africa. With the country’s largest e-book catalogue of international and local best-sellers, kalahari.net is now offering all South Africans with access to a computer, the opportunity to trial with the technology that is available to them.

‘We have designed the software around the customer; making it easy for him or her to build a comprehensive e-book library and then to consume it according to his or her own preference whether that be on a PC or MAC.’

Arthur Goldstuck, Founder and Managing Director of World Wide Worx, a specialist business technology research house, agrees with this approach. He says that the number of South Africans with a propensity to buy digital content will hit the one million mark by 2015 but that the ability for users to consume content on various platforms is vital to this success. ‘We see growing appetite for e-books and digital content, so interoperability is the key to the e-book market taking off in this country,’ he says.

Customers who previously used Adobe Digital Editions to access and read e-books from kalahari.net can now download the kalahari.net Reader instead. And, because the kalahari.net Reader supports Adobe Digital Rights Management (DRM), customers can still read documents that are protected with Adobe DRM.

www.kalahari.net

Enhanced e-books five times more popular than conventional e-books, says Germany’s Textunes

Berlin-based textunes announced recently that downloads of its e-books have doubled to the one million mark in the past six months, with enhanced e-books emerging as the most popular downloads. The download total reflects the entire 18 month period since the launch of the company. According to the results of the firm’s research released at the Frankfurt Book Fair, enhanced e-books are five times as popular as conventional e-books.

‘The introduction of the iPad in Germany has given an additional boost to our user numbers. We more than doubled the amount of e-books sold in the past six months,’ said Managing Director Simon Seeger.

The majority of downloads are for iPhones (62%), followed by iPod touch (28%) and iPad (10%).

www.Publishingperspectives.com

SA’s internet penetration grows ever wider

The advent of low-cost mobile data services, coupled with the growing affordability of smartphones, has created a demographic shift in the South African online world, says Diane Charton, Managing Director at Acceleration Media.

‘Over the past two years, the costs of mobile data services have fallen dramatically, with affordable data bundles available even to prepaid users,’ says Charton. She adds, ‘High-speed data network coverage has reached most parts of urban South Africa and even more remote regions. We’re seeing a growing pool of South Africans using data services from their smartphones as a result,’

Charton points to the success of publications targeting lower LSM bands – such as Die Son and Soccer-Laduma. These publications have enjoyed much success with the launch of their .mobi portals as evidence of the way that the Net is expanding its reach in South Africa.

In addition, recent research points to the growing use of the Internet by a wider population. For example, one study by World Wide Worx found that 8.5 million of South Africa’s urban cellular users have phones capable of accessing email and that as many as 9.5-million can browse the web on their phones.

This growth the country’s pool of Internet users significantly. The research indicates that 28% of the urban cellular market uses mobile instant messaging (IM), demonstrating that people are actually using their devices to access richer data services.

The implications for South African society are profound, says Charton. People have far easier access to information wherever they are and the ability to quickly disseminate information of their own using platforms such as social media tools.

‘In an environment where there is talk of media tribunals and protection of information bills, information will be able to travel freely thanks to tools such as Twitter or Face-book, which are very popular with mobile Internet users,’ notes Charton. ‘More people will have a voice and the ability to participate in the media landscape.’

www.mediaupdate.co.za

When will we have e-book bestseller lists?

For all the data we are collecting about the book industry, there is one crucial piece of the puzzle we don’t yet have: robust sales figures for e-books.

A key topic of many of the seminars and discussions at Frankfurt this year was the impact growing e-book sales are having on the landscape still dominated by print, with the key question being ‘are e-book sales cannibalizing the existing market, or growing it?’

While individual retailers and publishers, and groups such as Association of American Publishers, Book Industry Study Group and Nielsen BookScan are reporting some sales stats, no-one can yet provide comprehensive figures for how many e-books are being sold, to whom and for how much.

Any attempt to track e-book sales
Technology Update (continued)

will need to get global feeds from sources including Kobo, Apple’s iBookstore, and presumably Google (once Editions comes to fruition), and to be really useful those global sources will need to break down their sales country by country and then be combined with local e-book sales data in each market. Given Kindle’s current dominance of the e-book market (estimated at perhaps 70% in the US), input from Amazon is crucial but that is unlikely to happen.

Maybe the solution doesn’t lie with trying to collect figures from retailers (or resellers or ‘agents’ or whatever they may be calling themselves in future) but from publishers. Is there sufficient will among the global publisher community to pool all their e-book sales figures for everyone’s sake?

www.publishingperspectives.com

Study on e-book piracy

The American based study group ‘Attributor’ recently released a new research, which examines the demand for pirated e-books across the Web and calculates how many people look for pirated e-book material on a daily basis. The study aimed to determine the behavior of Internet users with regards to book piracy. It also highlights the need for an educational, industry-wide initiative about e-book consumption.

Key findings from the recent study include:

• 50 percent increase in online searches for pirated downloads throughout the past year
• 1.5-3 million daily Google queries for pirated e-books
• 20 percent increase in demand for pirated downloads since the iPad became widely available in mid-May 2010
• 54 percent increase in pirated e-book demand since August 2009
• Proliferation of smaller sites that host and supply pirated e-books – a shift from larger sites like Rapidshare dominating the syndication market
• Widespread international demand, with the largest number of searches during the study originated in the United States (11 percent), India (11 percent) and Mexico (5 percent)

Based on this research, Attributor announced partnerships with Macmillan and Kensington Publishing Corp. to support its Attributor Protected Badge program, a global campaign to drive consumer awareness about fair trade and distribution of e-books and protection of author royalties.

www.attributor.com

Google Editions launch imminent

Google sources announced that Google Editions will be launched in the US before the end of 2010, with international launches to follow soon after in 2011. Google Editions will be available on multiple devices, including the iPad, online via a Google ‘web reader’, but will not be available on Amazon’s Kindle device at launch.

At its launch in the US, there will be over 400,000 paid-for titles available from ‘publisher partners’, along with 2 million public domain titles. Google confirmed that it was working with more than 35,000 publisher partners, in more than 100 countries. Google also confirmed that it would work with US publishers on ‘agency model’ terms, though admitted that this might be subject to change.

The Bookseller.com

Chinese e-book industry booms

The e-book industry in China is booming and is now the second biggest in the world after the US industry. In 2009, the number of e-books sold in China reached 3.82 million, and that in the first half of 2010 amounted to over 20 percent of the world’s total.

The Bookseller.com

France’s e-Reader

The Fnacbook is an open device that retails for €199. The price includes 50 French and foreign classics already downloaded, and free wifi and 3G internet connection in France to enable consumers to buy books from fnac.com any time anywhere. The Fnacbook weighs 240g, an initial 2,000-book capacity, and will offer the Android operating system from early next year. E-book prices will be set by publishers, and files will be interchangeable with all other digital equipment, except the Kindle. The group will stock the device in its stores, on fnac.com and in the major outlets of SFR (French Internet provider), which is providing the internet connectivity. The e-bookshop now stocks about 80,000 titles from most of the major publishers and is growing by 5% to 10% a month.

The Bookseller.com

Top 10 tips for booksellers

During the a panel discussion organised during the Gotheborg Book Fair with the participation of, among others, the digital publishing expert Martyn Daniels and the President the American Booksellers Association, Mr Tucker, booksellers were given these ten tips as to what they should be considering doing in today’s Digital World:

1. Own the customer relationship
2. Create communities
3. Sell Books in all formats and do what is says on the tin - be independent
4. Think Mail Order on the Internet
5. Be Promiscuous
6. Stop competing with your allies
7. Forget POD and adopt DOD (Digital on Demand)
8. Price Right
9. Don’t Sell e-readers, it is not your business
10. Keep abreast of the digital market

To read more, go to http://bookseller-association.blogspot.com/2010/09/top-tips-for-booksellers-from.html
Wordsworth under new ownership

The owners of Bargain Books have acquired Wordsworth Books as of the 1st November 2010.

Wordsworth had been severely impacted by the recession with flat revenues, falling margins and rising costs. In an effort to save the chain of bookstores, Andrew Majoribanks who had a good working relationship with Bargain Books’ John O’Sullivan, approached Bargain Books to invest in Wordsworth. Negotiations eventually resulted in the sale of Wordsworth to the Bargain Books shareholders. Wordsworth’s publishers and suppliers also played a critical role in making the deal a reality. Without their cooperation the acquisition would never have happened.

Although Bargain Books and Wordsworth are two very disparate brands within the book trade, both are in the business of book-selling. The two sister companies will continue to operate much as before. Wordsworth will continue to target the premium end of the market while also offering value to its customers. Bargain Books’ strength is in the mass market and there will be no impact on this major chain’s strategy or direction.

‘The first priority will be to return the business to profitability to ensure its long term survival,’ says John O’Sullivan on the acquisition of Wordsworth Books and changes that will be made by the new owners.

‘The financial management of Wordsworth Books will be improved and all areas of the profit and loss account will be transformed. Waste will be eliminated and costs cut wherever possible. Margins will be increased and excessive discounting will be terminated. The customer loyalty programme will be discontinued until a more cost effective and efficient programme can be implemented.’

Wordsworth’s greatest asset according to John, is its loyal and dedicated staff with hundreds of years of book selling experience behind them, booksellers that have stood by Wordsworth through thick and thin. The new shareholders intend to give these steadfast people all the tools necessary to make a great success of Wordsworth Books in the future. Staff and management will be given greater autonomy and responsibility for their stores’ performance in future. Andrew Majoribanks will also continue to run Wordsworth reporting to a new Board of Directors including O’Sullivan.

‘The first thing you will probably notice will be shops which will be full of fantastic books,’ says John regarding what we should expect.

‘Wordsworth will also offer a greater range of value books where price and quality meet the demands of price conscious customers. There has been a world wide trend toward buying down during the recession and Wordsworth Books will seek to satisfy this market. Greater emphasis will also be placed on good old fashioned customer service and supplying the books our customers want rather than what we think they want! Wordsworth Books is a niche player which will seek to capitalise on its knowledge and expertise as a small independent chain to offer the highest level of service in book-selling in SA’

Caroline Nixon seeks new opportunities with Kalahari.net

Edcon will lose a great asset when Caroline Nixon leaves the CNA Newsstand department at the end of the year to join the Kalahari.net team.

‘After 21 years with Edcon and with the way retail is moving internationally to more online shopping, I have seen there is a huge opportunity in the e-commerce side of retail. I have decided to accept a fabulous opportunity that has been offered to me by moving to Media24 Kalahari as Head of Category Management,’ says Nixon on the move she will be making from Johannesburg to Cape Town.

‘My 21 years with Edcon have been very special years, as they have given me the opportunity to not only grow myself in the Retail Planning and Buying side of the business but also to manage different portfolio’s over the past years, hence my diverse product knowledge and experience. I started in Edgars textiles to menswear and children’s wear prior to moving to CNA. The last seven years I have been with CNA, I moved across from Jet Stores when we took it over from the ‘This Day’ owners. Having been part of a team rebuilding a business that had gone into liquidation to where it is today.

The past four and a half years I have been heading up one of the Buying Division’s in CNA that is the Reading & Newsstand departments. I have interacted with dynamic people from publishers to authors, plus also had the opportunity in getting involved in SABA over the past 3 years being on the Executive Committee. Even though I am leaving Johannesburg I will continue to run as Chairperson for the Northern Region.

I look forward to joining Kalahari and building the business with a dynamic team around me.’

Penguin’s business to business website

Penguin Books SAs dedicated business-to-business website www. penguinbooks.biz is a novel way to get marketing companies to see and use books in a new light.

‘Often marketing and communication professionals are unaware of the services that we can provide. This new website aims to provide inspiration; highlight opportunities; and find the perfect solution for your next promotion; incentive; or corporate gift. Books offer incredible value for money as they have a high perceived value, as well as a longer shelf life than most other premium products,’ explains Gillian Spain, Business Development Manager, Penguin Books SA.

Penguin Books was founded on the philosophy of making great writing affordable and available to everybody. This philosophy paid off and most people now have a Penguin book somewhere on their
shelves, from cool classics, through to Jamie Oliver cookbooks.

Penguin now offers this brand cut-through as branded books for corporate communications campaigns.

www.penguinbooks.biz

Exclusives’ green campaign

In an innovative green campaign Exclusive Books is selling bookmark seed strips (a biodegradable paper strip that encases seeds with fertiliser at the correct distance apart) at R15 each at all stores nationwide.

The challenge is for South Africans is to plant the seeds, then tell Exclusive Books and the authors involved - Jane Griffiths, Sonia Cabano, Kathryn Hawkins, Keith Kirsten, Justin Bonello, Carmen Niehaus, Scott Attfield, Justice Kamanga and Ernst Van Jaarsveld - what they plan to do with their bountiful harvest by adding pictures, sketches or words that inspired their idea to the Exclusive Books Facebook Page under the ‘Bookmark’ Tab.

For each bookmark sold, Exclusive Books will donate a seed strip to FoodBank and R5 from the sale of each bookmark will be donated to Exclusive Books Reading Trust. FoodBank is a non-profit organisation that has been running over 18 months. Their main objective is to aid areas suffering from food shortages. They will ensure the successful distribution and proper utilisation of the Exclusive Books seed strips.

www.exclusives.co.za

EBF and IBF to merge

At a General Assembly in Frankfurt this year, the European Bookseller’s Federation (EBF) and International Bookseller’s Federation (IBF) voted on a proposed merging of forces into one single legal entity, called ‘the European and International Booksellers Federation’. The objective of the consolidation process is to make the best use of staff and financial resources in order to help booksellers and booksellers' associations to face the numerous challenges the book industry is faced with in these difficult times. The entity will be composed of 2 branches, the European Booksellers Federation and the International Booksellers Federation, each of them being in charge of their own bookselling and lobbying issues. A Joint Booksellers Board is created to look after the financial and administrative affairs of the European and International Booksellers Federation. The process will be fully completed and ready for final ratification at the Spring Assembly 2011.

For more info, contact eurobooks@skynet.be

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New publication for teachers

The Business of Teaching is a new South African quarterly publication, published by Absolutely Write! of Cape Town, launching in January 2011. It targets teachers, school managers and principals in public and independent secondary schools across South Africa.

The magazine’s role is to positively refocus conversations and issues related to teachers and teaching, and sharpening professional practice in the classroom. The magazine includes editorial content written by South African and international professionals in the fields of education, finance, psychology, law, life skills, nutrition and sports science. This content is relevant, informative, topical, up to date, and promotes teaching as a positive, aspirational and professional career.

Words to learn by

Success in your pocket – that’s what a new ‘mini’ version of the award-winning Afrikaans-English school dictionary from Oxford University Press Southern Africa will represent for learners who use this work to read, write, think and communicate in the two languages spoken in every province of South Africa.

The Oxford Afrikaans-Engels Afrikaans Skoolwoordeboek School Dictionary won the coveted ATKV Woord-Wise Award – popularly called the Veertjie – in 2008 when taalkundiges recognized its contribution to the use of the Afrikaans language among learners, and the academic merit of the work.

The mini version contains more than 11 000 entries in English and Afrikaans – all the A-Z content of its bigger brother, in a pocket version measuring only 11.5 cm by 7.5 cm.

The Oxford Afrikaans-Engels Afrikaans Skoolwoordeboek School Dictionary is the first in a range of up-to-date and easy-to-use bilingual school dictionaries that help young users of multiple languages to communicate with and understand one another. The other two published in the range so far are in IsiZulu-English and Northern Sotho-English.

Publishers assert their role in digital education

At the Frankfurt Book Fair in October, the International Publishers Association (IPA) officially adopted a statement asking governments for better cooperation when managing the digital migration in education.

The policy statement seeks to outline the unique role that independent, competitive and entrepreneurial publishers play in improving education results, including in the digital environment.

Says IPA Secretary General Jens Bammel: ‘This statement is an important reminder why education needs publishers, and that digital migration can only lead to improvements in learning outcomes, if all stakeholders work together.’

Graham Taylor, Director, Educational Publishing, UK Publishers Association, added: “Educational publishers make a vital contribution to education and we want policy makers to understand that. We support teachers in the classroom and give every pupil the chance to fulfil their potential. We empower digital technologies and enable the means to deliver curriculum change.

We are investing in a new generation of educational services. We bring sustainable solutions, and we want to work with all stakeholders to equip schools with the tools they need. We truly believe we enable the world to teach and learn.”

www.internationalpublishers.org

Chinese Brick and Mortar booksellers losing massive ground

According to the China Daily, China has lost half of its private libraries in ten years, due to harsh competition from Internet sales, e-books and rising property prices. According to the firm ACNielsen, 56% of the estimated 420 million Chinese Internet users are looking for books when they surf the net. The competition problem with brick-and-mortar stores is compounded by the fact that most internet sellers offer better bargain prices and home delivery. According to official figures, already more than 7 million e-readers have been sold in China.

www.Chinadaily.com

Unisa women of the year goes to Librarian

The UNISA Library Executive Director, Dr B Mbambo-Thata was elected as the 2010 Unisa Woman of the Year at a prestigious Unisa Women’s Forum (UWF) Luncheon on 13 October 2010. The UWF Luncheon, co-hosted by Corporate Communication and Marketing was a celebration of the achievements of Women in Unisa. This year the UWF also awarded the Feroza Adam Award to Prof D Allais, the finalist with the highest score in women’s activism.

Dr Mbambo-Thata is an outstanding scholar and activist in her field and is recognised for her sustained contributions at local, regional and international levels. Her professional career spans more than three decades of distinguished service and exemplary leadership, and she has achieved recognition internationally as a leader in her field.

Her four years at Unisa has seen the introduction of several major strategic projects, including the Unisa Institutional Repository; implementation of the Mobile Device Catalogue Access – AIRPAC – the first of its kind on the continent; extended library hours to improve student access and the implementation of Radio Frequency Technology (RFID) to enable self services for clients as well as improving stock management. The latter is a critical feature for the Unisa library, given its size and scope.

http://unisalibraryresearch.blogspot.com
Title: Battle of Britain, The
Author: BBC Archives
ISBN: 9781408427521
RRP: R 239.95 vat inclusive.
Publication Date: September 2010
Content: There were nearly 3000 RAF pilots who fought against the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain, which raged in the skies over southern England and the English Channel in the summer of 1940. With news bulletins, reportage, personal accounts from the ground crews, and excerpts from Churchill’s famous speeches, this recording undeniably shows why, for the victorious RAF pilots, ‘This was their finest hour’.

This Audio Book offers you the pleasure of “reading” in a non-reading situation. In the car, in the gym, in the studio, in the bath...

Title: Fry’s English Delight Series 3
Author: Fry, Stephen
ISBN: 9781408467497
RRP: R 239.95 vat inclusive.
Publication Date: September 2010
Content: A third collection of four radio programmes on the use of language bought to you from the king of the spoken word. Includes the following episodes: He Said, She Said (do men and women use English differently?) Accentuate the Negative – the use of contradiction, The Future of English (what will it sound like a century from now?) The Trial of Querty and Future Conditional.

This Audio Book offers you the pleasure of “reading” in a non-reading situation. In the car, in the gym, in the studio, in the bath...

Title: Goon Show Volume 27, Check the Yuckabakaka Gauges!
Author: Milligan, Spike and Sykes, Eric
ISBN: 9781408427279
RRP: R 239.95 vat inclusive.
Publication Date: August 2010
Content: Four more episodes from the classic radio series. The Goon Show was a British radio show that started in 1951 and ran until 1960. It changed the face of British comedy and still maintains its influence to this day! The Goons included Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers and Harry Secombe. They burst onto the radio with surreal storylines, absurd logic, puns, catchphrases and ground breaking sound effects. Written by Spike Milligan and Eric Sykes, starring Milligan, Secombe and Sellers.

This Audio Book offers you the pleasure of “reading” in a non-reading situation. In the car, in the gym, in the studio, in the bath...
The Executive Committee of the South African Booksellers’ Association would like to thank the following members for acknowledging their ongoing support by remitting their annual membership fees:

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