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## **TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFULLY MARKETING YOUR TEXTBOOK**

PAWLAK: Hello, and welcome to the TAA teleconference “Tips and Strategies for Successfully Marketing Your Textbook,” presented by Robert Christopherson, Professor Emeritus of Geography at American River College.

Robert is the author of the leading physical geography textbooks in the U.S. and Canada, all published by Pearson Prentice Hall. He and his nature photographer wife, Bobbe, have completed nine expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic regions since 2003, gathering information and photos for his books. *Geosystems*, now in its seventh edition, won a TAA Textbook Excellence Award in 1998. *Elemental Geosystems*, now in its fifth edition, won a Textbook Excellence Award in 2005. *Geosystems* Canadian edition, now in its second edition, and *Applied Geography*, now in its seventh edition.

Robert was recognized for excellence in teaching with the 1999 Distinguished Teaching Achievement Award from the National Council for Geographic Education, and the Outstanding Educator Award from the California Geographical Society in 1997. TAA presented him with its President’s Award in 2005. He has spoken across the U.S. and Canada to hundreds of colleges, groups, and professional meetings. I now turn the teleconference over to Robert Christopherson.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Well, thank you, Kim, and welcome to everybody. Make sure you have the handout that I submitted that Kim attached to an e-mail. If you don’t have it, speak up, and she’ll send it out. Everybody?

The other thing is I would encourage you to – I’ll try and give pauses, and go ahead and interject, say, Robert, and interject a question as we go along, so that we don’t have to wait until the end for any Q&A or discussion of an item that’s of particular importance or you want to hear more about. I assume that everyone on this call could probably give this presentation that I’m going to give you, so I don’t have any illusion about unlocking secrets or having secret information or something. So please just say, Robert, and I’ll stop and interject.

The nightmare scenario would be that story you’ve heard where someone wrote a book and then didn’t adopt it for their own class. And I always thought that was an amazing thing. Maybe – or writing a book, and maybe just your mother read it. I want to think of bigger than that, and think about the entire process and having maximum readership for your book. The idea that you would have a unique



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approach, something that could alter or change your discipline, the overall direction of a discipline. We live in a very dynamic era in terms of many topics, globalization, global climate change, issues of diversity, so it fits the soft side and hard side. And with that in mind, and if your book potentially has a new direction to shift that marketplace and the students and the dialogue, it's important that it be in as many hands as possible.

So that's kind of this holistic view of marketing. The idea that an author toils and produces manuscript, and then some marketing people that know nothing about your subject are going to be in control of marketing it, to me, is ridiculous. And I view the author as being someone deeply involved in the entire process. Now, as I say on the handout, publishers generally are not used to this more holistic authorship role. This is something you have to force. This is something you train them to accept your more aggressive input, that you have a deep concern that as many readers as possible can get a hold of your information. So I've prepared a list, six items in a little more detail, and then six items towards the end that we can look at.

And let's just start off with what you should do as you're working on the textbook. And item number one, it says authoring is a business. The idea about this is that you would treat it very specific with a business card for your book. On the business card, design an icon. This icon might be something that you'll use in the book as well. Design some letterhead. The business cards are very effective, and can go in the publisher's sales booth at the national sales meetings, or at the national sales meetings to sales reps – I meant to say your annual professional meeting – and can go in the booth next to your book display. Establish a post office box. I don't expose my street address. So we went locally here, got a post office box. I put the cell phone number on the card, and an e-mail address that's dedicated to the book, and the e-mail address appears in the preface. So all this information is in the preface. This means you don't use your university business cards. You don't use university letterhead. You make this a professional operation with all these specific items. And psychologically, it's just a neat feeling to have your book business card.

And, of course, prepare your home office, your writing studio, library. This is just a formal statement to yourself and to others that you're in this serious business. And to me, that psychological structure helps support me, so that, with all my insecurities, so that I can produce something that's a more marketable product. So that's part of marketing. A professor comes to the publisher's booth at your annual meeting, and there on the shelf are your business cards, right with your book.

Two, be involved in the book design. You're a teacher, you know how the classroom works. Be involved with a pedagogically effective design. They tend to get fancy. I know one geology book came out that I saw, and it had six different



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fonts in four colors at the introduction to the chapter. That's just ridiculous. Some designer that doesn't know anything about teaching or focusing students or signaling to students about what's important, what they need to keep in mind, they designed that. I think that requires you be involved in that. And let the personnel, let the publisher, let your editor know that you want to be proactively involved in the overall process in terms of the design.

Present ideas for their cover design. I put "their" in quotation marks. Think of your cover. Don't leave this up to strangers. I'm blessed that my wife, a talented nature photographer, and so I'm able to choose her photographs that dramatically illustrate content. But think of your cover in your mind, and what you want it to communicate. I've been able to do the last five book covers, of course with editorial approval. Don't forget the inside front and inside back covers. You've got teaching space there, where that you would open that – the cover of the book, and there's two pages that you could fill with features, with pedagogy, with something that the rep could open up when they're talking to an adopter, something to draw the students' interest. I have a Living Earth satellite mosaic on the inside cover, and the little caption refers to various places where they can look for more detail in the book. The inside back cover, think of that space as well. And then, since you thought of these spaces, and you thought of them as being part of the marketing, work those into the book itself. When you're writing in a certain chapter, maybe refer to your world map in the inside back cover, or what you've chosen to put in there.

Also, there's the half title page, and the title facing page. The title page is on the first recto page, the right-hand page, and title facing page would be on that verso page facing it. OK, then on the back side of that is the half title page. When you first open the cover, this'd be the first piece of paper. And use that space. Put something dramatic there, a photograph, or something representative. And think these things out in advance as you're working, so that you keep an idea list, and start feeding these in to the editor or production manager as your input on that.

Now, what this means is that, as the author, you're thinking of the appearance of the product, what the front and back covers do. The back cover could be an overview of your part structure or chapters. The inside front cover space, the inside back cover space, the title-facing page, and the half title page, they all become part of the billboard for your product.

Now, if you just do the manuscript and submit it, then people that know nothing about your discipline are picking, at least in my field of geography, another picture of Yosemite, and there it goes, cliché and so on. And there might be blank pages, or nothing on the title-facing page. So I think this is part of marketing, and this is something an author needs to do.



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The last item on that first page of the handout, think of the paper the book is printed on. They might balk at soy inks, but the idea of having a nice coated paper like pub thin or influence gloss – although influence gloss is a little bright – and work to find out if they can get the Forestry Stewardship Council – this is an FSC seal of approval, and usually you’ll put a box – let’s see, we put it on the bottom of the copyright page in one edition, and I put it at the bottom of the dedication page in another – but that you would have this seal that means the paper was derived from sustainable forestry.

Now, the difficulty is that the FSC requires the publisher’s entire list to be on this type of sustainable paper, and so maybe the publisher is only halfway there. You can still, without the seal, describe how your book was done on sustainable paper, so that I’ve had one book come out without the seal, but the paper was the correct paper. So we wrote a little piece on that. That shows that the author is conscious and has a conscience, and is thinking about the trees and the paper, and what went into what the words are printed on. I think that’s very important, and it’s another signal to the adopter that the author was awake.

Request that you review the book design, and these are usually in PDF files. And this also includes the color palette, so that you can take a look at what they’ve come up with. Now, I like suggestive icons at different places, so the student is visually cued that they’re reading a news report, or they’re reading a more in-depth focus study. Well, those icons have to be designed, so you’d want to proof those. And seeing the color palette is like a two-sheet PDF file that has little colored chips of all the principal colors in the book, and you can look at that, and make sure there’s nothing Kool-Aid electric garish kind of a thing.

Now, again, please keep in mind that publishers are generally not used to an author asking to see these things. So you push for it. It’s your baby, it’s your product, and you want to choose the clothes it’s going to wear. So this includes the chapter opening design, the chapter opening photos. Take part in that process as well.

With so much Internet, AP and Corbis and Google Images, and all the NASA files – in my area of earth systems science, physical geography, the NASA sites are incredible. You can do a lot of your own photo research. And it’s not that hard to do, and it’s not that hard to arrange. If I find a Corbis or an AP image, a Reuters image that I want to use for a figure, I submit the callout for it. The photo agency gives me access to a high-res file, so I can get a TIFF copy of the photo to process. Then the publisher probably has a bulk discount, and so when they pay the permission – they would pay it, not you pay it – but you just research the photo. This should be an integral part of your book, and I think you can see that that would assist with the marketing, if things are integrated so that they apply; the chapter



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opening photos weren't something that were just tacked on or pasted on. They're something you thought out that relates directly to your chapter, which the sales rep is going to try to sell out in the field.

Once you're three-quarters of the way, or 80% of the way, through the book and you have an idea of the photo coverage or satellite image coverage, pick the sample photos that would go in the table of contents. Maybe they will allow 12, 13, 14 photos. If the last page of the TOC ends, say, half empty, an oversized photo could go in that location. So this is something to keep in mind.

Now, the last item under number one – under number two, be involved in the book design is the placement of URLs. Now, we use a bold-faced blue font typeface that embeds these directly in a paragraph. So as a student is reading along, there's a URL that they can go to the Internet, and go into more depth and highlight or augment the material they're reading in your book. And I have over 200 of those. Then with my student learning center, I've probably got another 300 or so listed there. So the student is equipped with about 500 URLs, not listed at the end of the chapter, not listed in an appendix, but embedded in the chapter. Now, that is a real sales feature for marketing, and it's not done. And I've been baffled by this because I've been doing it nine years now in my books, and it is a lot of work – and that could be why you don't see it anywhere. The most common thing people say to me, he goes, well, the URLs go bad. Well, let's assume that you had 5% of the URLs go bad, and you have 200 URLs. Well, that's ten, and in the preface, you instruct the student just to back up the pathway – and more than likely they'll find the source or the changed address. So the error rate has never been a problem. Looking at my e-mail traffic over the last nine years, I think it's all been complimentary. I have not had one say, well, I tried to go to that source, and it wasn't good.

M: Robert?

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah.

M: I don't know what a URL is.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Oh, this is an Internet address. [www.terra.nasa.gov](http://www.terra.nasa.gov), or <http://www> – an Internet address is a Universal Resource Locator.

M: OK.

CHRISTOPHERSON: URL. And what it does is that the student sitting at their desk, their cubicle, their dorm room, and they're reading – and what it does is like it



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makes virtual threads from your book out to the real world. And it's a very powerful marketing tool.

Now, all these things I've suggested, on the computer screen as you're composing, obviously you've got to get a cinema monitor – 24" wide, 30" wide, whatever. I have these different documents open. So there'll be the URL list. They'll be the photo idea list. They'll be the outline – H1, H2, H3 headings, and these documents are open all the time so that as I'm working on the chapter, I'm adding things to these other lists – and that includes glossary as well, so that to assist in your work, you do a lot of tasks on the fly rather than wait until the end and then have to go back and figure out where everything is. So that you're doing it as you fly. That includes the figure captions.

This idea that people will write chapters, and then go back and tack in the figures, has never made any sense to me. Roughly draw your figures before you ever start to write. Have an idea of the photos, what to emphasize, and have that done as the chapter is done. Now, I know I'm talking about writing a book, but I'm talking about marketing the produce so that the sales reps can tell the fields that this is an integrated work – figures, captions, URLs, text tying into features inside the back cover, front cover, and so on and so on.

Now, be involved in book design as being involved in marketing. Do you have any thoughts, questions, ideas on item number two of our outline? Anyone?

So it all makes sense, huh? (laughter)

PAWLAK: Remember you have to press 4\* on yourself to ask a question.

CHRISTOPHERSON: OK. I'm talking about intense slave labor, fellow authors. (laughter) So OK. All right, book design. So I assume from that that this is maybe part of those – one of those things where all of you are already doing this. The ancillaries and extras – generally, publishers will pay for student study guides and instructor's resource manuals, that type of thing, but the first couple of editions, do these yourself, and that sets the template. So even though I'm on my seventh edition, and I only wrote my student's study guide and IRM for the first three or four editions – I have a co-author now that does the heavy lifting – the work on that set the template for it.

And I would even go so far as to suggest that for the first index as well, using a computer program. That way you can set the orders of headings and suborders and the way you reference things, so the last index becomes the template for the next one. An index is important, and the sales rep can use that as part of the marketing



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to show that this index works, that it's not just a fluff list done by some stranger. Make sure in your proofreading that you proofread the index.

So those initial ancillaries – the student study guide, the instructor's resource manual, if there's a DVD with PowerPoint presentations, that you be involved in that, that it has your touch.

Push for an interactive website. Submit ideas and input for it. Mine is the Geosystems Student Learning Center, and this is the fourth or fifth iteration that it's been through. Up until the edition I'm working on right now, we had a CD-ROM in the back that had almost 70 animations and had satellite loops and self-tests and that type of thing, and on this edition, the publisher is doing away with the CD-ROM and they're integrating it all on a student learning center. So I've been able to put on the student learning center even some of the figures that I've cut from the past to act as part of the learning support that would go on the interactive website. So that's something to push for, and obviously, that becomes a sales feature because the student has a tutor right there that you were involved with, so it's as if they have your embrace as they read the work.

I have about – I guess we're up to 17 or 18 career links on that site, where I interviewed a person in a field related to a particular chapter, and found out about their background and how they caught up in geography – and I interviewed an astronaut at the Johnson Space Center that made a remote sensing image of a volcano that blew up that I use in Chapter 1. And those career links, those become a marketing tool because the student can be referred to something to give them an idea about jobs in that field and career counseling. And the people are always quite excited to be interviewed. I interviewed a hazards specialist out at the Hawaii Volcano Observatory, and all that they go through to try to get tourists not to walk out there in their flip-flops on the hot lava. But think about career link for the chapters in your book, and these could either appear in the book as they used to do in my book, or you could put this marketing feature on your interactive website. And I already covered the CD-ROM.

The idea of having news reports or current events or what we would call today an author's blog, this has been a struggle. I have campaigned for this for I guess 12 years now, to try to get this capability, and I think we're finally at the point where I'm going to be allowed to have an author's blog that will be referred to in the book, that will be referenced on the website. And the students can go to this – the adopters can go to this, and maybe once a month, I'll post new things that have happened in the field. Now, in physical geography, there's a lot going on. In some of your areas, you may have to be creative to fill in related current events, happenings, that type of thing, but think about that. Somewhere where you can



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dialogue, pull something that comes in a journal or in a news release that relates to your textbook, and that really makes it alive.

Develop ideas for – and the blog would have, again, an icon, a design, and you would be in charge of the content.

PAWLAK: Robert?

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah.

PAWLAK: Can you define a blog for those who might not know what it is.

CHRISTOPHERSON: It's like an op-ed column in a paper, in a newspaper, and people can respond to it. Does that sound right, Kim? So that you write –

PAWLAK: Yeah, that sounds right. Does anybody have any questions about what a blog is? I just wanted to make sure that we weren't using jargon that maybe someone doesn't know.

CHRISTOPHERSON: There are only a few examples of this out there, but this to me is the next step of interactivity between – as long as we have printed text in the virtual Internet world. That you would have – you would be able to write an opinion column of text-related subjects, and that becomes part of the marketing of your book in this Internet age. That's the thing. As we're starting to go across this bridge into the virtual world, the electronics, and taking and connecting as many threads across the river as you can, and that's just another idea that would feed into a marketing strategy.

Develop ideas for shrink wraps of your book. You've all noticed how even if you're market share is increasing, the used book –

M: Robert?

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah.

M: Fred Kleiner (sp?). May I just ask about the blog? Is this available to your students only through some sort of password-protected site.

CHRISTOPHERSON: No, they've got the student learning center in a password-protected site, and I'm not wild about that – but they've – the blog would be just out there, and the website would link to it. Google would pick it up, and might reference it if somebody put in the keywords “physical geography,” in my case, but the blog would not be password-protected.



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M: So the publisher isn't concerned about students buying used books and yet getting everything they need?

CHRISTOPHERSON: No, you mean so they don't need to buy the book?

M: Well, I know my publisher are concerned that students will buy used copies of a book, and if they have unrestricted access to all of the ancillary features, whether it's a website or a blog or so forth, that that just reinforces the desire to save money and buy used books, and so publishers tend to offer these things in a password-protected way to generate sales of new books. So I was curious how yours worked.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Our student learning center is password-protected, and it actually includes an e-book version of the book. The blog would not step over that line. The student could not pass the course with the blog.

M: Right, OK. Thank you.

CHRISTOPHERSON: The rest of it is a scratch-off card, and I said, I'm not wild about that because I think there's better ways they could do it, but for now, that's what I'm stuck with. So it's password-protected. The thing about – the students are not only finding used books, publishers that have been sloppy with how they get rid of older editions, there are people that have gone in and bought up whole pallets of – let's say you're in your sixth edition, and they were able to get a whole pallet of third edition – and they put those out on sale for \$1.99. And so there are students that are attempting to cover a class with an old, but new copy. And Pearson, about five years ago, instituted a program of complete pulping of books so that this didn't happen. So be sure and ask your editor to check on warehouse behavior because no matter how clever we are about marketing, if they can get two or three old edition of your book for a buck and try to cover it, then you won't sell a new book at all.

That's the next item – is be aware of shrink wraps for your book. Regional products that relate content to that part of the country or whatever guides they have. With my books, an atlas is a shrink wrap. They can shrink wrap kits with study guides and stuff, and that helps cool down the used book through-flow. Again, that's part of the marketing.

Now, with my books, as I'm working on the book, on the screen, one of these documents that I have open on the side are things that are new to this edition so that by the time I finish the book, I've got a complete list of everything's new, so when the marketing person invariably asks, what's new in your book, they immediately get this document sent to them. And that's that selling that it's a true update, a true revision with new content and work becomes part of offsetting used books – that



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the awareness of what's new in the book means the older editions don't work because they don't have the new, sexy stuff in it. And so I would say that's another one of those documents on your computer screen on the fly where you're enumerating new features as you produce them.

My wife and I put out an 18-month calendar that the publisher underwrote – again, this was after a 10-year struggle, and in the little boxes, we've got factoids that relates specifically to physical geography. And then, of course, her photography is throughout. Think of things like this like a calendar or some kind of a poster, something that would be on the desk or in an office. Maybe it could be just a little desk calendar that the dates turn and has some information about your book on it. And Kim let me write a little article about the calendar that was in the newsletter.

OK, now that's item three, ancillaries and extras. So you've set up a business. You've got business cards. You've concerned about the total design of the book and how that feeds into marketing. You've looked at ancillaries and extras and things that go with the book, like if you're students and you adopt this book, the author's e-mail is in the book – the author's – the URLs are there for Internet access. The author has a blog where they're posting updated material that can add excitement to understanding. The features list I mentioned is item number four about having that open on the screen, and (inaudible) –

M: Robert?

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah.

M: This is Kevin Patton (sp?). Before we move onto a new topic, I wanted to address the blog thing again, and this is partially in response to Fred's question and possible concern by a publisher. But based on an idea I got at the last TAA meeting, I started a blog. And you can do this free like at Blogger, which is a Google site, and others, and that's the way I did it, independent of my publisher. And mine is focused toward people who teach in my field rather than the students.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Excellent.

M: And I've been in contact with my publisher about it, and now, when our next edition comes out, they want to either link into that blog or have some kind of a connection with it, themselves. But they want it to be – and I do, too – want it to be outside of the password-protected area for those other assets, for the reason being that I want people who aren't using my book to get engaged with what I have to say, what my voice is so that hopefully at some point they'll think, maybe I better check out his book, maybe this is something I ought to look at more seriously than I did before. But you can do that for free on your own.



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CHRISTOPHERSON: Right. The reason I wanted my publishers to do it was that it would be thoroughly interlinked with our website, with the old CD-ROM, with the book, and that they would underwrite the design work on it and webmaster part. But you can go out on your own and set that up. And it's great that your publisher now will link that into the other products with your book. That's excellent. And directed at the teachers in opposed the students, that's another neat idea. I know in my preface, I divided between a dialogue and narrative directed at students and then one for you the teacher, and so you could almost have a student blog and a professor blog or something.

All right. In terms of marketing and sales of your book, the fifth item I've put is know the market, and this is so important not because you're copying other books' content or anything. But I've prepared elaborate spreadsheets, and I go through the books, and I have all kinds of different topics and items and so on – and then go through and lay out the coverage that's in the field so that you can find those areas that aren't being served. Like in my field, systems approach, applied topics for relevancy, that type of thing were just big voids back in 1992 when my first edition came out. So know the market in terms of what the competition is covering, how you differ from that, how your approach is different, and then the confusion at the reps, at the sales reps – especially if you have, say, they have four chemistry books, and you're one of them, is the differentiation between the products and your analysis and feedback and even talks at the meetings will help differentiate your product. So you can't do that unless you know what the field is doing. So when a competitor of mine comes out with a new edition, I immediately get a hold of a copy – have marketing get a copy. They get them in trade with other publishers, and I go through that immediately to get an idea, OK, now, they've shifted this towards my approach. I'm blessed that my books are the leading ones, so I can kind of follow to see which topics got adjusted. Did they decide to cover a barrier island loss off the Louisiana coast, or how are they doing with climate change? That type of thing. So item number five I think is important.

One comment to make – don't forget Canada. Most of your publishers have subsidiaries that service Canada, and if your book is already in metric, SI units, with English units in parentheses, then that eliminates that problem. And so think of content. Now, in my field, physical geography, it's easy because the environment doesn't stop at the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. It tends to go across, as nature goes, and yet, when my book came out in 1992, it was the only one that had maps that had both U.S. and Canada on them, and now we have the leading books in Canada. So be thinking of that in your field. Now, if you specifically come out with a Canadian edition, there's other things you're going to have to do like the spellings. They don't P-L-O-W a field up there. They P-L-O-U-G-H it, and so there are spellings, and of course, the kilometre spelled R-E instead of E-R. And Canadian



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examples. So your publisher might decide to do a Canadian-specific edition the way mine did.

My U.S. based book was the number one seller in Canada at the time Pearson said let's do a separate Canadian version. And so I found that my sensitivity to Canada is one reason that helped the marketing up there. And then with the Canadian edition where you just replace about 35% of the content with Canadian-specific examples. So be thinking of that marketing strategy of Canada as being part of your market, and then in your contract, have the word "domestic sales" expanded to include U.S. and Canada so it's not counted as an export. I know I've talked to a lot of authors, and only a few, oh, I've thought about Canada – and so that's something to keep in mind. It's not as big a market as the U.S., but it is a market.

The sixth item I have there is just to be present, and that means that if you have national or regional professional meetings and there's a publisher's booth, make sure your publisher has a booth. Ask your editor to place ads in the conference program, the abstract paper program, and spend time at the booth. I keep a pad of paper there, and when someone comes up to the booth and says, gee, I really love you're book and so on, but I was wondering about a page 54 where you say – I pull the pad and paper out. I put their name, put page 54, write down their comment. We dialogue about it. Or I'll look at them, and I'll say, when I go home, what book or books do you want me to read? And they kind of step back a little shocked, and so they give me a couple of books to read, and that's something people remember. So when I attend paper sessions, I try to sit near the front. I take lots of notes. I try and be present at the meeting. Now, you don't want to hang out at the booth the whole time, but to be available there like a lot, an hour or two each sessions day, to be there – and as I mentioned, put your author business cards near your books. Ask the marketing people if they're going to have blowups of the covers. What are their plans? What do they plan to demonstrate? Are they going to have a monitor there? They may not be thinking of some of this stuff, and you've got a CD-ROM you want to demonstrate or a website you want to demonstrate.

Try and present at the national sales meeting of the publisher. The publishers hold one or two of these national meetings a year, and normally they invite one or two authors per discipline. Try and get on that list when you've got a new front list book. Prepare a PowerPoint. Don't just stand up and talking head, but show features in your book – something's unique, why you feel so strongly about it, and that connection with sales reps is just invaluable. NSM, you can't go every year, they got to spread it around, but that's something I would highly recommend.

Now, the argument you get, oh, I don't want to stand at the booth. People think I'm overanxious, or I'm hanging – wondering, are you going to buy it or not? Or, one thin dime, one tenth of a dollar, you know, and you're at a carny or something. No,



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it's that you want more than just your mom to read the book. You want – you've got a statement here and you want people to see it. And I've never had anybody question that earnestness. At these sales meetings, it's been appreciated. Now, count on at the end of the three days of being exhausted because you have been exposed to anonymous critics that you don't know, who come up, and you've invited them to criticize you, and so it's really an exercise. But instant, tremendous reviews.

The third item there is to put your e-mail address in the preface. So at the end of the preface, it's got your name. It's got the P.O. Box, and it's got your e-mail address. And I still don't see that in very many books, and I don't what people are afraid of. I've got the leading books and so on – might get six e-mails a week. Maybe around finals it'll go up a little bit where a student is working on a paper, and want to know about a footnote or a reference or something. But I've found this to just be an incredible, dynamic interrelationship with the field and a boost to marketing. A rep can e-mail me, and I'll e-mail back, and they'll go right in the guy's office and have the fresh information.

A professor will e-mail and say, on page 138, the way you've done this paragraph is an out-of-date definition, and so I look around and check and the guy was right. So I rewrite the paragraph, e-mail him back immediately, maybe even that same day, and ask him to approve the new wording. Now, I've gotten e-mail traffic on that kind of interaction that is just priceless where they're just – it took their breath away that an author would write back immediately and respond. So I keep a working copy of the book, and when I get an e-mail where a student had a question or they found a typo or the professor didn't like something or whatever, I mark the book up. And at the end of two years of the three-year cycle, I've got like almost a reviewed copied of the book. If some areas generated more questions, then I know that needs attention. If a figure confused two or three people, and that's marked, use a multiplier to think, OK, that's something I've got to work on. And I bet 100 people had that same issue.

So the e-mail is like a way that you can get free feedback and questions and contact and the occasional really warm e-mail of a student late at night thanking you for helping them understand soils or something. But please think about that – putting contact information at the end of the preface. And it's never got out of line. I've never been overwhelmed or anything about that. You might want to have a dedicated e-mail address that's specific to the book. Have any of you tried that as I've described? Put an e-mail in the text where a student can e-mail you? Anybody? OK. So this is something to do, and then keep that working copy that you markup as the traffic comes in. That's incredible because when the marketing manager calls you, you can specifically target some of that stuff in the conversation.



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Every publisher has electronic sales manual and sales manual has copy in it, and the copy is written by somebody that doesn't know anything about your discipline. So ask the marketing person and your editor to let you edit the sales manual copy or advertising copy. Be involved in that. You can look at something and see that they don't have any of the buzz words for sociology in there or any of the correct terms. And find out about what kinds of marketing pieces they're using – cards, calendars, posters, ads – what they're doing, and ask to see that copy. If success happens to your book, then find ways of underwriting things like scholarships or travel funds for students to go to conventions, especially if they're presenting a poster or a paper. And you have to choose because a lot of people are going to want the money. But maybe in California, we have the California Geographical Society, so my wife have waded into that fairly heavily, and to setup things like that. And it shows good payback. If your professional organizations does centennial funds or that type of thing, to be a donor to that.

All right, that's part of being present – the idea that you're focused after the book has come out with that. And to me it enlivens being an author to have that stuff going on. It's like electricity coming from outside, and it's stimulating when you're all alone there in there in the salt mine, going through a chapter – and all these thoughts cross your mind of all the connections to all the human beings out there.

During the life of the book, I put down number seven, service your e-mails – students, teachers, sales reps. I use it as a warm-up exercise in the morning, maybe the first half-hour or hour, and just warms up the fingers and gets things going. Especially respond to critical input, either pointing out that they're wrong and teaching them about the concept, or pointing out that they're correct, and do you like this rewording of it.

Develop PowerPoint talks. Let marketing know you're available to speak on campuses. I've been really busy. I don't have as much time to go out and speak as I'd like, but I have PowerPoints on some of the key subjects like global climate change. And I've been to back to Kansas, and Miami and Texas, giving talks, and the wonderful thing there is to be able to speak in a class that adopts your book. And so you've got this one-on-one, face-to-face thing with the actual classroom, as well as the big thing in the auditorium at night where everybody is invited. So think about that.

Respond in professional newsletters, journals, and so on. If you're doing academic publishing in peer-reviewed literature, you're already out there, but read your newsletters of your association, and respond back to items that appear. And oftentimes, I find that they'll reprint in the very next issue a feedback on some item.



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Prepare a detailed correction file – the idea of monitoring error. Several things I’ve pointed out like the e-mail traffic – finding typos and errors. In the classroom, I would give students ten points for every error they found. Only once did I have a student say, you’re tricking us to read the chapter, and I had to laugh and say, that’s right. But that that was a good source to capture typos. But the thing about the correction file is that if your book is successful and goes through, say, four printings, the publisher oftentimes between the first and second printing will open a window and allow you to submit corrections – within reason, not a rewrite or anything. But take advantage of that. And even between second and third and third and fourth printings submit a correction file. They may not pick it up, but at least give it a shot. And that helps improve the accuracy and the feel of the book for better marketing – a correction file.

And I know you all do this, but be preparing the clippings and preparation file for the next edition. Set up hang folders or something or your computer screen where you file electronic articles or material, and that becomes the preparation file so that you’re already thinking about the marketability about the next book during this two years of your three-year cycle. But I’m sure that’s something that you all do.

The idea of teaching from your textbook – the classroom crucible that – I know in some ways if you had, say, two different ways of presenting something, and in one section you talked it one way and another the other and you assessed which was better, and then rewrite the chapter accordingly. So that idea of using that classroom to test materials. Now, we all know that you can’t record your lecture and have those typed up and make that manuscript because the writing can’t include eyebrows and eye expressions and hand gestures. When you sit down and write, you have to have the words evoke that emotion of eyebrows and hand gestures. So I’m not saying that you verbally write the thing and record it. I’m saying use it to test different patterns of presentation.

Now, that gets us within five minutes of an hour, so if we could just open it up – I’ve been talking quite a bit now over these 12 items. Any thoughts or comments do you – or criticisms? Do you see how to think more expansively about marketing? That – this idea? Anyone? Maybe everybody is already gone.

M: Robert?

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah.

M: What do you think about what may be a growing trend of online textbooks?

CHRISTOPHERSON: Well, we’ve been experimenting with that about six different versions with Pearson. We’ve done Safari X. We’ve done learning systems.



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They've tried an e-book. At the University of British Columbia, we've got the hardback with an e-text, but it's not really an e-text. It's just PDF files. And we're trying another different version of that now, so we're right in that uncomfortable raw edge of transition, and so none of these alternatives to the printed book took off. But they were trying at least. So I think that's something to keep in mind with your own book. And I found the publisher jumps out and comes up with products that they never asked me about, and so the products weren't sensitive to students and failed.

I think we're going to move in a direction to have something that I've called a dynamic e-book, and if you saw the *Harry Potter* movies, you saw the students go to the library, and they would open a book – and as they're reading along, the figure or the portrait or the painting in the book would come alive, or they would open the family album, and the parents would come alive. That's the idea of a dynamic e-book, where the student is reading the page about the hydrologic cycle, and clicks on the diagram, and it starts to move around, and the water starts to flow. I think the first publisher that comes up with dynamic e-book that's interactive that's not just PDF pages, that's not just reprinted stuff, I think that's going to be the – that'll be the thing. I don't know – five years ahead, ten years, whatever.

F: Oh, I think you're right. This is Mary-Ellen Lipianca (sp?), Bob. Been very much enjoying your talk, and I agree with you about the dynamic e-books. That is the wave of the future.

CHRISTOPHERSON: I know.

F: I wanted to respond to something that you said earlier in your presentation regarding involvement in book design.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah.

F: I think that's a great idea, but I also think that authors need to educate themselves about that field because design is a technical field. And I have, from the other side of the desk as an editor, have worked with authors who didn't have sufficient understanding to have reasonable input on the design of their textbook. And they would often want to make decisions ran contrary to market intelligence. For example, they might want to have a two-column book when in fact two columns identifies your book as an upper-level book rather than an introductory book and so on. That they didn't happen to know that. I've also worked with some authors who have been wedded to certain ideas or certain colors, and made more of an argument than was needed to try to have those expressed in a textbook.



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CHRISTOPHERSON: Right, well, Ellen, to avoid demagoguery like that, always have your creative impulse seasoned with doubt, and work with the designer not order the designer. Work with the designer in the idea of using their expertise. Don't march into the place and start breaking glass. So the best way to avoid that is just don't do that.

Now, the idea about one column or two column. We found that two column – my books have like over 1200 figure elements in them, and the two column gave us greater flexibility to have variety of presentation of figures, maps, satellite images, photos, and art as opposed to one column with lots of air on the page. And so the two column thing can go either way there. We just found it was more flexible in page layout design.

F: I think it's much more effective with science content in general, but I think the point I'm making there is that ultimately it is the market that will decide what they want. So if instructors are familiar or prefer a certain type of design or a certain type of layout or column or even trim size, the publisher – a smart publisher will find that out and will try to satisfy that demand as much as possible.

CHRISTOPHERSON: OK. Excellent point. Please, everybody that has heard me give this idea about authors being proactively aggressive, always have doubt and insecurity. That's your co-pilot. And so when you talk to the artist or the designer, I listen to their ideas – and learn from it, and you'll polish your act. I'll polish my act as I learn more about it, but I never go in knowing. I stick my head out, and walk on the ice, but that's just an excellent point you've made about that.

F: Well, I think you made many excellent points, and I've made copious notes here, and would like to use some of your ideas in my next book as suggestions for authors – of course, crediting you.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Excellent, but some of this like having an Internet e-mail address in the preface, I cannot understand why I don't see that in every book. I don't understand –

F: I know. You're right, it does make perfect sense.

CHRISTOPHERSON: – or embedded Internet addresses. What's – I mean –

F: Well, I think some publishers are very slow to – have been slow to come into the online world, and they're pretty flummoxed by Web 2.0.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah, well, be the force with your book to convert and make that work. The first time we did embedded URLs, we had to have a whole summit



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meeting about how punctuation and how you would break the URL from one line to the next. I mean we had to go through all these little baby steps. It worked out, and

–

F: Yeah. Well, I think Pearson is extremely lucky to have you because it's very rare to find authors with this level of desire for involvement and willingness to learn about the publishing world and make active contributions to marketing, and it's just wonderful.

CHRISTOPHERSON: I can only hope, but you never know. I mean I can – I just would never treat students the way we get treated as authors. But there are appreciative people – the production people in particular love the interchange back and forth. I mean they actually will ask me –

F: Well, and the main way because you are right, they really don't know. They don't know higher education curricula. They're visual people. They're artists. They come from art backgrounds, and I think they're very grateful for whatever help they can get to interpret the academic content or the content from the subject areas.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Well, feel free to e-mail me, and we can dialogue about this more. I mean, I've all –

F: OK.

CHRISTOPHERSON: The one thing that's missing in the world is a blood and guts guide to authoring.

F: Yes, that's true.

CHRISTOPHERSON: It's not the – you get the publisher's authoring guide, and it's some kind of grammar deal or something. And the thing about having something out there – because when I look back to 1987, when I signed my contract, there was a year that I was working on my book alone before I discovered TAA, and then I joined TAA in 1988. And I even put my member number, 794, on the thing, but that gave me that support psychologically. When I went to the first meeting, and I was sitting in a room full of people that were going through the same nightmare I was, that was so rewarding and comforting and affirming. But I think of the things that everybody thinks that everybody knows how to do an art manuscript, and everybody knows how to do documents on the fly with a glossary and captions – everybody thinks everybody knows that, and everybody doesn't know it, and everybody is pretending. It's really strange. Like John Wayne really thought he could act, and there was no – OK.



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So I think part of this holistic view of marketing is also the holistic view of authorship, and we really need some blood and guts material out there about how to work it. Or like having a style guide for your book. I have a 15-page style guide that's specific and personal to my books. So that when my book goes to a copy editor, or my book goes to a production person, a style guide accompanies the manuscript so that we don't go through all the capitalization fights, and we don't go through how numbers are treated, and it's set – or the diacriticals like Hawai'i has a glottal stop in it, and if you don't put the glottal stop between the two I's, the word Hawai'i is misspelled. So those are called out in the style guide, and that to me is part of the marketing because the reps can point out one of the complex words like Ar Riyad (sp?) Saudi Arabia, and show that there's a cedille under the 'd' that this book paid attention. But you won't hear the publishers talking about having authors prepare style guide, and it's you know it's part of that blood and guts guide that's needed.

F: Well, very good, and I will talk with you more on it. Thank you.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah, OK. Anyone else?

M: Robert, Michael Lenny (sp?), just wanted to –

CHRISTOPHERSON: Oh, hi, Michael.

M: I just wanted to say hello, and sorry I missed your program, must have been 9:00 Eastern Time.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Oh, hello, Michael?

M: Yeah.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Anyway, thanks for calling in. I've been – this is an aside, but I've been working on the polar bear (inaudible) all week. I've had four uninterrupted days, so I'm really feeling good about it.

M: Oh, fantastic.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Everybody that's left on the call, Michael Lenny and his wife, Alana (sp?), went with Bobbe and I last year on one of the arctic expeditions. So we actually got to be in the place that a book we're working on is about, and that was just magic. Any comments or questions about anything –

M: Robert, this is Fred Kleiner again. First, I know I speak for everyone in thanking you for taking the time to share all of your experiences with us. I would only add a



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couple things. First, you are speaking from a privileged position that I'm also happy to occupy now, but if one is a beginning publisher with an untested text, it's not realistic to expect to allow the publishers to allow that kind of input. Nonetheless, I must –

CHRISTOPHERSON: You said, a new publisher – a new publisher.

M: He meant a new author, I think.

M: A new author with a publisher and an untested text in the market is unlikely to allow the degree of input that you're urging. I must say that I was in the happy position of being brought onto a text that was already an established text, and could have had these opportunities from the beginning, and was reluctant to because I had this notion that it was inappropriate to market one's self that, that was below the dignity of a professor. I was very slow, I must say, to adjust to the idea that if, as you said, you want anyone actually to read what you've written, and you've put X years into preparing the text, it is really worth an extra few weeks of your time –

F: Yeah.

M: – to make sure it gets read. And I would everyone listening to this call to take your remarks to heart. They are right on the mark. They do work. And anyone else who is as reluctant as I had been in the past to get involved in sales and marketing I think is making a real mistake. So thank you very much.

CHRISTOPHERSON: OK. Wait, hold on one second. I would say that for the first-time author, if our blood and guts guide we were talking about existed, the first-time author with a publisher could do some of these aggressive things, or at least suggest them or make the publisher aware that they're there, but then develop, say, a three-edition strategy. On the first edition, we'll push it this far, and then on the next edition take it that next step. Now, this would be true for content as well. If – in my discipline I tried to introduce a new way of teaching physical geography by making it through systems analysis and systems. So in the first edition, I did about 35% of the way. The second – by the third edition, we were 100% on the new track, and the discipline is like a huge thousand foot oil tanker. And so you gradually change course with this thing, and if you're not concerned with marketing of your own book, then you don't care what the course is. You don't care about – well, of course, you care about what the course is. Well, then you care about the marketing of the book. So I would say develop two or three edition down the road, and go as far as you can on the first edition and then push it with each one, and you might find that even on a first edition, you would be able to sell some of the concepts you want by just being proactive. You might find they hadn't even thought of putting something inside the front cover.



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M: Yeah, I agree, and I would also say that even in the case of a publisher that doesn't want to hear anything from you as an author because they don't know how good your book is going to be, and if they produce the book with little input from you about design, choice of cover, and so forth, nonetheless once the book exists, all of the tips you've given about going to conferences, being willing to speak to prospective adopters and the like, those can still be followed with profit even if the publisher isn't going to work with you ahead of time.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah, that's true. And always, even when you go to speak to the publisher, have that doubt in there so that you're open to learning and so on.

One thing on a first edition author, when they get reviews of your initial manuscript, maybe before contract signing they had you do three or four sample chapters, as fast as you can prepare a review of the reviewers and send that immediately back in. So that your manuscript got reviewed, and then you reviewed the reviewers, and that document, at least way back in the days when I first signed, they threw that out on the table at the meeting and it blew everybody away. So have that level of interactivity even at that initial baby step on a first time book.

M: Are you suggesting the review of the reviewers or a review of the reviews?

CHRISTOPHERSON: Well, the reviews – good catch, Michael. You don't want to criticize the people, but acknowledging their ideas, the errors they make, what you learn from them, so that publisher can see that there's this open, willing, student, author, learner person. That's – and it shows that you embrace reviews. So yes, I did mean to say reviews.

M: May I throw in just an observation with regard to your first edition, second edition, third edition approach, Robert?

CHRISTOPHERSON: Sure.

M: Which I think is excellent. One thing that I'm becoming more and more of a believer in in the contracts is including language with regard to – a publisher will consult with author on the cover. Publisher will consult with author with regard to the ad campaign, etc., etc.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Oh, absolutely.

M: And contractually, legally, it doesn't mean anything from the standpoint that the publisher can say, well, we consulted with him. We showed it to him. He hated it. And it was the worst thing in the world according to the author, and we went ahead



and did it anyway. But from a standpoint of a collegial relationship with the publisher, and what practically will happen is they will consult with you. And you'll have your input.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah, excellent idea. Just have it worded in.

M: It's not as threatening to the publisher that way. You don't have a right of approval. You have the right of review. They're just going to consult with you.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Have any of you had experience with the inside front cover, half title page, title page, inside back cover, back cover stuff where you helped design it or suggest things, anyone?

M: Robert, this is Kevin Patton again. Yeah, I've used the inside front cover. I do anatomy and physiology books, and for several editions on a couple of our books we put sort of a listing of all the anatomical directions that the student would have to get familiar with to understand the particular elements of each chapter. So it's in a handy spot that students can refer back to while they're – no matter what chapter they're in.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah, and you can think in chemistry, where you could put some of the inorganic chemistry, some of the key concepts right there for ready reference.

M: Sure.

CHRISTOPHERSON: But see, that would be something of a design marketing person wouldn't think of, but an author teacher would. Something to help the student.

OK, well, if some of you have further feedback, my e-mail address is in that handout. And again, I'm just a student of being an author as you are. We're all working on this thing together, and I don't – it's one of those things where the more you understand, the more you don't know. The horizon is forever retreating just like there's an infinite combination of words. I've thought writing is so much like oil painting – an infinite combination of colors possible. So we'll always be learning this, and if I could encourage you to stay with TAA, and come to our annual meetings – that first year, without TAA, I can remember that vividly, even though it was 1987. And people like Michael Lenny, I went to him more than a decade ago at a TAA meeting, and he helped me. And Steve Gillen (sp?), and everybody. I think that's a key to the juice in this business that we've chosen. So I want to thank all of you for your patience and time today. And but again, my e-mail is there, so dialogue any time, any questions. Thanks a lot, Kim.



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PAWLAK: All right, thank you, Robert, for sharing your expertise with us, and thank you all for participating in today's teleconference. For those of you who don't know who Michael Lenny is or Steve Gillen, they are attorneys that specialize in textbook and academic authoring, and they have been a part of TAA since almost since its founding and volunteer a lot of their expertise for our members. So I want to thank Michael for always being there and for calling in today and making comments.

M: Thank you, Kim.

PAWLAK: I will be sending an e-mail to all of you following the teleconference that includes a short survey about your experience today. Please fill that out. Your comments really help us promote these teleconferences. The e-mail will also have contact information for Robert. So if no one has any other questions, we can sign off.

M: Thank you.

M: Great job, Robert.

PAWLAK: All right, thank you.

CHRISTOPHERSON: Have a great day, bye-bye.

PAWLAK: You too, Robert. Bye.

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