

S&S and Town House tie-in
Simon & Schuster and Dublin-based publisher Town House have signed a co-publishing deal. Under the deal, Town House authors have the chance to be published under one of three new imprints: Town House/Simon & Schuster, Town House/Pocket and Town House/Scribner.

Amazon to offer bursaries

Amazon.co.uk is offering two £2,500 bursaries for published writers embarking on their second works. The judging panel will include Rachel Holmes, managing editor of Amazon.co.uk, three Amazon.co.uk customers, a celebrity and three established authors. Full criteria for submissions will be announced on 1st May.

Canongate television move

Canongate Books has entered an exclusive agreement with the William Morris Agency for the representation of its film and television rights.

Penguin's Spark
Dame Muriel Spark's 21st novel is to be published by Penguin. The author, previously published by Constable in hardback and Penguin in paperback, sold hardback rights in *Aiding and Abetting* to Viking publisher Juliet Annan. The deal was agented by Bruce Hunter at David Higham Associates.

Zone in on books
Internet auction site eBay has launched a Book Zone, where collectors can sell and bid for rare books. The zone is at ebay.co.uk.

National reading list Web move

Andrew Stone

Academic booksellers and publishers are planning to set up a national online database of university and college reading lists in a bid to boost academic book sales.

Delegates at the annual conference of the Booksellers Association's Campus and University Group in Harrogate voted last week to go ahead with plans to create a comprehensive database of reading lists.

Dominic Knight, m.d. of Macmillan Press, told delegates that the proposal was a result of research which suggested that booksellers and publishers could increase textbook sales most effectively by targeting university reading lists. He said it was clear that "if students were told to buy a book by their tutor they did".

Figures from the Policy Studies Institute show that students spend an average of £120 a year each on books, but publishers and booksellers believe that this figure could be increased by a significant percentage if better reading list information were available. The scheme could help booksellers by saving them the time and effort involved in collating reading list information, and has the potential to streamline the sales process and cut returns.

Euan Hirst, Blackwell Retail's buying and merchandising manager, said the benefits to all were clear, despite some misgivings among booksellers. The potential downside was that individual campus shops could lose business if reading list information was available to competitors over the Internet.

Despite this, campus booksellers would still be well placed to use the information to improve their own competitiveness, Mr Hirst said. "There are enormous reasons to believe that individual campus shops will be the best at exploiting the information."

Mr Hirst added that by being part of the group that developed the scheme, booksellers could influence the way it worked. The first lists could be gathered for the scheme as early as next year, he said.

Macmillan Press' Dominic Knight said the service was likely to be run as a for-profit business, and tenders would probably be invited for the service. "It will be a great business. Imagine a portal where all the students will have to go in order to get their reading lists."



Driving force: Mike Boswood, managing director of Thomson Legal and Regulatory Group Europe, with passengers Wendy Beecham far left, m.d. of Sweet & Maxwell, and Cynthia Murphy, director of account management, at Westlaw UK, launch the legal research tool Westlaw.co.uk.

Irving summing up

Revisionist historian David Irving accused Penguin of being "reckless and foolhardy" in publishing Deborah Lipstadt's *Denying The Holocaust* without first having it checked it for libel. The accusation was made during Mr Irving's summing up at his landmark libel action against the author and publisher. He also directed his ire against Macmillan, which ceased publishing his work in the mid-1990s, accusing it of "the equivalent of book burning".

Richard Rampton QC, acting for the defendants, said Mr Irving had been shown to be a "right wing extremist, a racist and, in particular, a rabid anti-Semite". A judgment is expected within the next month.

Race hots up in Internet rights market

The battle to be first in Internet rights hotted up this week with the launches of online rights exchange centre Subrights.com and the UK-based rights advertisement site RightsForBooks.com.

The news came as Rights Center.com, the first entrant in the field, announced a link-up with Bradbury Phillips International, the leading rights management software provider. The site has already signed a deal with Reed Exhibitions to tie in with the LBF, BookExpo America and the French Salon du Livres.

Subrights.com claimed to be the

Internet's first fully integrated marketplace for the exchange of subsidiary publishing rights. Its site will eventually feature "complete automation of deal flow-through", and be compatible with publishers' customised rights management software.

Those selling rights can choose the amount and type of information they display about each title, and market selected books electronically. They will pay commission of 8% to 10%, which Subrights.com claimed would be offset by the value added through increased transparency.

The site was set up by Joel E

Fishman, former senior editor at Doubleday (US) and founder of the Bedford Book Works literary agency, Jacqueline LeDonne, former publisher of the Frankfurt Book Fair's rights site Frankfurt Virtual, and Robert Riger, former m.d. of the Book of the Month Club. Funding is from US capital firm Seed Investments.

The UK service RightsForBooks.com allows publishers to place advertisements, including book covers, on the Website for free. The RightsCenter.com and Bradbury Phillips will focus on building an online rights management system.