

Case Study: Perseus Books



Perseus Books implements RightsLink® to automate licensing of its online content

The Perseus Books Group is committed to enabling independent publishers to reach their potential whether those publishers are Perseus-owned, joint ventures, or owned by third parties. Member publishing programs include Avalon Travel, Basic Books, Basic Civitas, Da Capo, Lifelong Books, Running Press, Seal Press, Vanguard Press and Westview Press, as well as partnerships with PublicAffairs and Nation Books, and joint ventures with Weinstein Books and The Daily Beast. In 2008 the general economy was in decline and Perseus's long-time permissions manager left the company to attend graduate school. This compelled Bill Smith, Director, Domestic Rights and Digital Partner Development at Perseus, to evaluate the company's permissions operations and the available options for managing this core business moving forward.

As a well-respected, mid-sized publisher of popular trade books on a diverse range of subjects, Perseus's content is highly sought out by fellow publishers to republish in both textbooks and trade books. The volume of these inquiries has been high- so much so that, in a given week, hundreds of republication requests could flood into Perseus via mail, fax and email. The process of reviewing and granting these requests was manual and handled by a full time permissions manager. As the number of requests soared, there was a constant backlog, with an average turnaround time for requests ranging from two to four weeks. Though in line with the traditional world of permission granting, this was a time-intensive, deadline-driven process and Perseus sought a more efficient, automated means of handling this business.

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options for managing this core business moving forward. In a meeting with Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), a global rights broker for millions of the world's most sought after books, journals and other content, Smith learned about RightsLink®, CCC's point-of-content licensing tool. RightsLink supports publishers' online strategy by providing content users with instant reprint and permission services, any time, worldwide.

“I thought from the get-go that RightsLink was a great system,” recalled Smith. “By implementing RightsLink on the Perseus website to handle routine, reactive requests, our rights group would be freed up to do more proactive licensing, while permission seekers placing their orders through RightsLink would be rewarded with instant permissions granting.”

Smith discussed with his executive team the time savings and other benefits RightsLink would afford Perseus, and the decision was made to deploy the automated solution in Spring 2009. Over the summer, Smith and his rights team

worked closely with the RightsLink implementation team to customize the offering to meet Perseus's unique licensing requirements and business processes.

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“Though we are a trade book publisher, we also have strong academic imprints,” noted Smith. “As a result, we wanted to make our offerings flexible to accommodate the wide range of potential users and permitted use types and allow users to tailor their RightsLink usage to the exact use they want.”

Now, when permission seekers wish to obtain rights to reuse Perseus content, they simply locate the desired title on the Perseus website and select the ‘Click here for copyright permissions’ link and pick the appropriate type of use from the drop down menu. From there they follow the steps to complete the permission order process.

Since launching RightsLink on Perseus titles in October of 2009, Smith estimates that more than 80 percent of permission requests flow through RightsLink in a completely automated fashion, translating into many hours of saved staff time each and every day. In certain cases where permissions can't be cleared immediately through RightsLink due to rights or other issues, the permission seeker is automatically directed to Perseus in-house staff who can evaluate the

request individually. In addition, a member of the Perseus rights team uses RightsLink's many management tools each morning to review orders that went through the system the previous day.

“Some publishers I've spoken with worry that they will lose control of their permissions business by moving to an automated solution, but I tell them it's not the case with RightsLink,” said Smith. “We have the capability to go into RightsLink every day to review orders and negotiate based on our and the requestor's unique needs.”

In addition to providing significant time savings to Perseus's own staff by automating the company's permissions business, Smith anticipates that RightsLink may increase permissions revenue because of the expediency it provides to Perseus's many reuse customers.

“There's a frustration level that permissions seekers reach when they have to obtain permissions for a hundred excerpts for a textbook they're putting together,” concluded Smith. “The permissions they have to wait for the longest are going to be the ones they leave out, especially as they get close to their spending threshold. When they see that a publisher uses RightsLink, they know they can get those permissions instantly – even if it's 11:00 p.m. It's this ease and efficiency of use that has made the program a success thus far.”

About Copyright Clearance Center

Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), the rights licensing experts, is a global rights broker for millions of the world's most sought after books, journals and other content. Founded in 1978 as a not-for-profit organization, today CCC provides smart solutions that simplify the licensing of content that lets businesses and academic institutions quickly get permission to use copyright-protected materials, while compensating publishers and content creators for the use of their works. For more information, visit www.copyright.com.

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