

Questions for: Jenny Kuehne

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The key accounts manager, rights and licensing at Frankfurter Buchmesse contributes to our Q&A series



Describe your current job in one sentence

To create meaningful products for the international rights community.

What was your first job in the book industry?

I started out as an editor at a small academic publishing house.

How has the industry changed since your first job?

The most obvious change, unsurprisingly, is how “digitisation” has impacted the way content is found, bought and consumed - which in turn has changed the ways it is created and delivered. There are good and bad sides to that, of course. On the one hand, the growing competition both with other media and among publishers themselves has put tremendous pressure on the industry; on the other hand, this has also provided space for creativity and agility, a rethinking of tradition. Publishing is very much alive, and if it continues to embrace technology and the transformations to come, I don't think there is anything to fear - especially since the people working in the business haven't themselves changed. They are still deeply passionate about what they do, eager to take advantage of new opportunities, and to share new ideas with the generation of publishers coming through the system.

"Smart contracts, ISCC, automated licensing - there is a lot cooking away right now"

What are the most interesting things you're seeing at the moment in the industry, especially in the area of rights and licensing?

I have to repeat myself and go with: technology. While I have to admit that my grasp of blockchain is still limited, the possibilities seem endless and very much transformative, also or even particularly in the field of rights and licensing. Smart contracts, ISCC, automated licensing - there is a lot cooking away right now, and I am excited to see where it is all going. Another thing that I think is fabulous is the growing availability of international voices and that publishing is getting more diverse and multicultural.



What will the 2019 Frankfurt Rights Meeting be all about, and whom does the event address?

Three time's a charm, so I will lead my answer with: technology. We will have a session on technologies for rights (selling), looking at online rights platforms like IPR License, touching on E-Signature and the international legislations around it and also blockchain. Furthermore, the FRM will explore the Chinese and the Czech markets - both very different but both united in the fact that a lot is happening there. Indeed, the conference motto is "Expanding, Emerging, Evolving", and the aim is to provide the audience - rights managers, agents, publishers, business development managers - with meaningful insights and an understanding of these topics that will support them in their work.

What's the biggest challenge in rights and licensing now?

From what I can tell, rights departments feel the same pressure as the industry as a whole. For one, I think rights sales have become more granular - more sales are needed to generate the same income as before. Furthermore, new ways of exploiting and delivering IP - like subscription models - make it increasingly difficult to negotiate sound contracts that provide a profit margin to all parties involved.

What do you most like doing when you're not working?

My great passions are my family, volleyball and reading.

What is the best book you've read in the last year?

Probably *4,3,2,1* by Paul Auster.

What are you reading now?

Ein Schönes Paar (A Fine Couple) by Gert Loschütz.

How do you like to read: on screen, on paper, or do you listen to audiobooks?

All of the above - I enjoy the flexibility. On paper at home, on screen when travelling, and audio when exercising or driving. Just perfect.

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