

No Shelf Required  
Interview with Joseph Sanchez

Interview Information

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Interviewer: Sue Polanka, No Shelf Required

Interviewee: Joseph Sanchez, Library Director at Red Rocks Community College

**Sue Polanka:**

Hi everybody this is Sue Polanka with No Shelf Required. Today is Monday, April the fourth, and I'm on the phone today with Joseph Sanchez. Joseph is with the Red rocks community college library. Joseph thanks so much for joining me today.

**Joseph Sanchez:**

A pleasure to talk to you Sue.

**SP:**

And Joseph congratulations on being named a Library Journal mover and shaker for twenty eleven.

**JS:**

Thank you, likewise to you as well.

**SP:**

It's great to see your name there. So, I wanted to speak which as of today because, was it last week or was it two weeks already, time flies Joseph, that red rocks community college library and Douglas county library in Colorado started a new plan that you'll be adding to your catalog and E. books published by members of the Colorado independent publishers association and that soon through click through links patrons will be able to purchase a eBook titles from: these catalog records so I wonder just if you could just tell us a lot more about this project and why you started it and now and how it is going so far.

**JS:**

Well Jamie and I have happened to have very similar visions and different pieces of the eBook puzzle we're both more than interested in in doing something proactive rather than simply talking and a lot of the stuff that we've been seeing in the library field, we both have had ideas and things that we can do like most librarians were very disturbed by the,

**JS:**

the ownership problem that he books presented and Jamie and I met last December at the urging of a colleague we discovered that we had different pieces, critical pieces of the puzzle, that the other person was missing. Jamie ha got a lot of big vision ideas and the ability to implement some of the things that I've had he said I had the key one of the legal keys, and the implementation that nobody else had and so we put these two ideas together and came up with a plan to sort of bypass all the large publishers to start creating some legal precedent for libraries to own their own he content and work more closely with the authors because we started realizing with an eBook we can,

**JS:**

We can work a lot more closely and promote the author in a different way than we used to with traditional print books that had to come out of the publishing house or the author had to spend a lot of money and so we started with the Colorado independent publishers association.

**JS:**

About two Fridays ago maybe it's maybe it's a month ago now it's moved so quickly with him and started drafting an agreement and,

**JS:**

It went really well, I think. Independent publishers and authors have a more natural interest with libraries than they do with their publishers per se. The publishers like when a larger cut of, the cookie and libraries we don't really care about taking a cut and that's I think the big thing that that the independent publishers realized oh wow you can really give it. A huge market and they're not asking for anything in return except for the legal right to actually own the digital file of the book.

**SP:**

Right. So how does this all work? You have a server somewhere and you purchased the titles and loaded the books is that?

**JS:**

Exactly. We're using adobe content server four right now. I am actually trying to come up with something that would be different in than Adobe's server but it works for now, it's expensive so it really won't work for smaller libraries, and we have alternative plans in the long term but because we wanted to get this up and running now, Douglas county can afford it we said okay let's just run with adobe content server. So the technical staff is actually really easy to do, it will authenticate users. It will let the book to be used just like the traditional print book was a one-to-one relationship somebody check it out, nobody else can use it.

**JS:**

And that's what doctors really like about it.

**SP:**

So that because it's on the adobe content server, do the titles have the adobe DRM?

**JS:**

They will now.

**SP:**

For the one book one user, actually to guarantee that. And what kind of content is out there, what do you have?

**JS:**

It was very surprising when we met with, we we've gone to this Colorado independent publisher's association website look, and they're very active, one of the stronger independent publishers association in the state, and the nation, and they have all kinds of content, you know, and we're going to treat it just like traditional content. We're dealing with five to ten of their authors, right now or some other better sellers and they're more,

**JS:**

Authoritative writers, we have a number of math books, at the math helps different things of that nature everything from nonfiction to fiction, but we told them we're going to treat it just like we treat traditional stuff. We're going to have is collection development policy will examine it for its credibility, for you know how it fits our collections, and will purchase you know a number of titles catalog them and then in the catalog in on them in the link and the o-pack users will see link out to the publisher the author's website if they wanted to buy more titles you know for more titles by this author click here, because we're not really interested in handling money, we're not interested in it you know getting in the Barnes and noble.

**JS:**

Market, we just we do think that we can help authors, there's a really symbiotic relationship that can develop between authors and libraries, with e-publishing you buy the book and then we also promote and market the author it's it's very easy to deal with digital content.

**SP:**

So besides putting the content in your catalog, do you have other ideas to help promote and market this whole project and specifically the authors and titles?

**JS:**

Yes, we are working on a number of more traditional type of marketing schemes besides the news release that you read we're going to have statewide and district wide marketing campaign, to kind of push this for the independent publishers. A lot of this is obviously a reaction to the Macmillan and a lot of the more draconian things at large publishers are doing what you know we were trying to say look we don't really need to per se,

**JS:**

And get authors like authors attention and say look you don't have to be stuck with these people, we can work with you and we have you know millions of readers and these are people that love books, the book buyers, you know we can do things for you that these other people can't and we're not going to say you can just because you're working with us that you can't work with everybody else.

**JS:**

So we have a large marketing plan pushed out we're going to start in the summer, brick and do some author talks specially because a lot of these

**JS:**

author i are fairly local you know come down for the day some of the larger libraries. You know we can do a little, In out face to face meet and greet kind of thing.

**SP:**

Sure. So this is a project from your library red rocks community college and the Douglas county library, so for are users of your library the only ones that can access these books?

**JS:**

Yes. It's not like project Gutenberg.

**SP:**

Right.

**JS:**

For example, the consortium in the state of Colorado with Douglas county credit mark records for the five hundred most popular project Gutenberg titles and anybody can click on those/

**SP:**

Right.

**JS:**

Here's the thing with digital content an author owns it and it is valuable. We're doing basically what overdrive does which is by passing over drive you don't have to spend any insane amount of money per year taxes titles, it'll go away the second you stop subscribing.

You know it's basically the same exact thing that overdrive does. We authenticate a user based on their library card number. So if somebody does not have a library card they cannot access the author's book, they can click on the link can go the author's website but they will not be able to download and read the book.

**SP:**

So if other libraries in the Colorado area or even beyond wanted to take part in this is it that opportunity available?

**JS:**

That's what we're working on right now. We're currently still working on some of the behind the scenes stuff in the contracts and all these other things it's been a very positive and encouraging experience because it's gone so quickly, and it's gone so much more smoothly than we had anticipated, and we're trying to use it as a model that can go out to the entire country. We kind of we want to see the library community taking a more proactive stance on E-books and E-content management, not just E-books though I'm trying to prepare the means that the community for the day when music is no longer available on CD now and when the vast majority of

**JS:**

movies are streamed. We want libraries to not be left out of the bargaining table and not be stuck into these draconian licensing models to third party vendors like overdrive, but we have very little control of the content and the licensing is going to price out smaller libraries really quickly.

**SP:**

So how does the pricing, are you paying the list price of the book for the address that you buy?

**JS:**

Yes.

**SP:**

And then it is one book one user and are there any limits like twenty-six?

**JS:**

We're working on that right now because authors do have you know a little bit of, there's some definitely some legitimacy on one area that we can see with publishers and vendors concerns about any books is that the file itself doesn't ever really corrupt like a traditional book does.

**JS:**

So, it has a potentially unlimited life, which is the new and unique reality so we're trying to look at and based upon previous history, and look at how long have books with the lasted in libraries? Because libraries don't get rid of books because they're decayed, we get rid of because not the shelf space anymore the lifespan of a book really is, you know I mean potentially fifty sixty seventy eighty years. One of the things we're looking at is creating some kind of a model where we pay the list price of the book, and then in ten years will be visited okay we can even keep this, did it circulate enough to warrant keeping this available on our servers? Because with the books and lie in this model that we're using libraries can quickly build up collections of you know, half million, three million volumes that couldn't do this in the past server space is relatively affordable and cheap and that's the thing that we really understand the authors concern in the publisher's concern, you know you buy a book once but you know libraries have bought books once and they've kept him for fifty sixty years.

**JS:**

So when we're trying to base this off of previous legal precedent looking at the print market and how the print market work so we've got some plans and some ideas we're still ironing those out trying to do some kind of study to go to the author and say look this is how books have always worked so we understand sense based on that model if the book had a lifespan of fifty sixty years, or ten years in the library, after ten years we'll revisit it and if we want to keep the book then we might pay you an archival fee. In this scenario, we're not sure what it is but we want to be more of a onetime fee where we spend money and say okay we're going to keep these five books to get rid of these five so we'll pay you twenty dollars per title preaches he's five and that's it.

**JS:**

There's other concepts as well because we're looking and hoping in the future that we can do this with best sellers. Maybe a library and you know a hundred dollars for ten copies of the latest Harry potter for a year, and then they lose eight of those copies after a year. And then they spend you know eventually after the end of that after five years they spend another ten dollars and keep one title. We're not sure how that's going to work, there's so many different models in the sky's the limit here we just want to make sure that it's fair and it's based on something realistic rather than just the greed of the publisher or the vender the fear I mean I think the publisher and the vendor also have a lot of legitimate fear

because. With the E-books we really do not need the publisher and the vendor Amazon could perfectly legally sell the book for the author without the publisher.

**SP:**

Right and that's what's happening now right minutes some of the big-name publishers are moving over to self-publishing and bypassing that formal structure?

**JS:**

And yet in the authors don't need them all they need is a shell that has millions and millions of people going to it which is Amazon or it could be the L. A. website, you know and I see authors having a much more natural and friendly relationship with libraries because we're not going to take a big piece of that you know, we don't care we might take some small amount just for maintaining a website you know we're maintaining this but I don't even right now came in there and even you know that it was a very eye opening experience when we're speaking with the representative from the Colorado independent publishers association because he kept thinking that you guys are like publishers, you're looking for a pound of flesh and it was really eye opening experience when I looked at him I said I understand your problem, you've got to realize where librarians we're on your side he care about literacy and reading, we don't care about making money, you know we have another source of funding and we care more about getting your books into the hands of three million people. And you could see that aha moment when he realized oh wow, this is radically different, you are not a publisher.

**SP:**

Now you mentioned something there that of course makes a lot of people cringe that we have an alternate source of funding and with those alternate sources of funding decreasing for many different types of libraries around the world really, do you see a time when you know if this idea takes off and if we are working directly with authors is there a time then that we say look I'm sorry we have to take a small chunk because we can't afford to buy the content.

**JS:**

Yeah, it makes perfect sense. There's so many different models I mean you could look at the Amazon third party vendor model, where libraries could become a book version of that you know Craigslist for books.

**SP:**

Right.

**JS:**

You know I see a lot of possibility there in the future and the beauty is the win situation for the library and the publisher, or the author, because we don't need to take as much.

**SP:**

Right.

**JS:**

We're just not going to take as much as Amazon or Macmillan or HarperCollins. You know we could take five percent and it would be a big win for us it'd be a big a big win for the author. You know of course that's going to create all kinds of

massive legal issues and their publishers are going to get very scared. So, I'm not sure eventually where this is going to go and eventually the federal government's going to have to, you know take a good look at this what came in I really want to do is create in a legal environment where when that happens in the federal government really take a long hard look, they're going to look at president and say okay this is how it's been done for a hundred years, this is how it's going to have to be based on. And the Macmillan model is going to be you know white dot where they come up with some arbitrary twenty six. I mean the Harper Collins one where they say twenty-six circulations and the title is going to be that you know that so arbitrary and it's based on fears based on a legitimate fear but it's not fair and it's not reasonable. You know so what we're trying to do is say okay lets base this on history, so I mean in libraries keep such detailed record we can easily say look, this is the life span of the average book we can come up with something like that based on you know our numbers that we have, and we can say look if you're going to do this we understand we'll work with you but it has to be based on something real.

**SP:**

Sure. Now I have one thought that came to mind there's always. There's this great debate about in a library saying we promote authors and there's the big question of because someone goes to the library and borrows a book does that mean they're more likely to purchase a book as a result so I'm hoping that with the system you set up with the with the ability to click on a link in the catalog and purchase other titles, I'm hoping that you'll have some data at some point that proves yes or no having books in library catalogs does lead to people buying books. I think that's a number we really need to have I hope that I hope you'll be able to provide us with that sometime down here.

**JS:**

It's something we've never been able to prove because the manipulative nature this that could actually this could work and that's definitely something that we can do is we can finally start answering a lot of questions about the nature of book purchasing we can start doing a lot of different things with this model and we're gonna try and basically start branching out to all independent publishers, and just say look we're on your side all we want to be able to do is buy the book, we will we will, we understand your concerns about the lifespan of the book we'll give you data will give you stats will sit down at the table, we're not going to try and twist your arm like the publisher, because we're not the publisher. We just care about accessing content you know we're much more benign, you know I would think we're actually more positive in that regard because we care about reading, we care about literacy more than anything yeah. Eventually you know it if funding gets that bad and this becomes popular enough, I could see if taking a tiny percentage you know sort of a discovery presented a referral fee from the author, but I think doctors not going to mind that because we you know we have millions of new hits coming into the author's website that they potentially never had.

**SP:**

Yeah.

**JS:**

You know and that's only fair to that that's further down the road right now I mean obviously there's so many questions being created and we're trying to control that and basically get this project up and running so that we can show the world that this works and then it's possible and it's do-able and instead of treating eBooks something entirely new we have to look at legal precedent and previous models and base it on that because if we don't we'll create chaos.

**SP:**

Right.

**JS:**

And we're going to create massive amounts of chaos, the HarperCollins approaches creating chaos. And we need to base it on existing reality in preparing a legal precedent and how libraries have always functioned.

**SP:**

Well, I think it's great what you're doing and I appreciate what you and Jamie have brought to the limelight and then I'll be following closely and I hope that you will keep all of us posted on how well it's going and what challenges you're coming up with too because I think they're probably want to get up and going and have some stories and hopefully some others will follow suit and see if they can do something similar.

**JS:**

Definitely. Jamie and I both have websites that we will be posting about this on. Jlarue.com J. L. A.R.U.E. dot com. Thebookmyfriend.com. No punctuation, just the book my friend dot com okay. And I'll be posting a lot of news actually this week about some changes to this whole model because red rocks that is probably going to back out of it and I'm going to be trying to migrate this over to a much larger four-year academic institution. And I'll be explaining that on the website later this week.

**SP:**

Okay so thebookmyfriend.com and Jlarue.com. All right yes, I'll make sure I put this in the blog posts as well. Thank you, Joseph, for taking some time to speak with me today in explaining your great new idea and process and I wish you the best of luck.

**JS:**

Thank you so much. Thank you for your time.