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**Parragon Renews Discovery Kids Deal, Adds E-Books**

By Karen Raugust  
Jun 16, 2011

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Parragon has extended its licensing deal with Discovery Communications for another three years, allowing it to expand its Discovery Kids nonfiction program and add e-book versions of current and future print releases. Over the last three years, Parragon has published more than 200 Discovery Kids titles.

"Discovery Kids has really brought a great cachet to our reference and learning program," says Wendy Friedman, Parragon's president, North America and Latin America. "It's a respected brand and a respected company." She adds that the license offers an opportunity to create educational yet entertaining content. "It's not in-your-face learning."

"Parragon was one of our earliest partners and they've been steadily increasing their business year on year," says Rich Maryyanek, partner and chief marketing officer at Big Tent Entertainment, the licensing agent for Discovery Kids. "On the retail distribution side, Parragon is phenomenal. Anywhere children's books are sold, you'll find Discovery Kids books. They also develop really creative formats that are very hands-on and interactive."

The broad program includes nonfiction on everything from space to the human body to machines—sharks and dinosaurs are the most popular themes—with formats ranging from activity books to atlases. The books are sold in trade and mass channels, specialty stores, craft stores, Toys R Us, dollar stores, supermarkets, drug stores and beyond.



Recent additions to the program include interactive board books for toddlers and an interactive 3D series encompassing sticker, coloring/activity and novelty titles. The bestselling series to date is a line of readers, with stickers, of which 14 have been published to date; that series will see added titles in the original format as well as new 3D versions.

"This is different from other licenses, since it's a brand," Friedman says. "We work hand in hand [with the licensor] to put the content together, rather than using pre-existing content like we do with most other licenses."

Maryyanek reports that 53% of children who watch the Discovery Channel do so with an adult, while 57% of adult viewers watch with their kids. The books lend themselves to parents and kids reading together, as well. "We bank a lot on the co-viewing aspect," he says. "That really sets us apart."

Separately, on Tuesday Parragon announced it had secured the license for Squinkies, a line of collectible figures from Blip Toys. It will release a variety of formats, including color and activity, sticker, and novelty books, in North America and other key territories. Many of the titles will be packaged with Squinkie figure assortments. The toys, which were released in summer of 2010, consist of squishy micro-figures and micro-pets inside a plastic bubble.

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BLOGS

**ShelfTalker**

**Strategies for the Summer**

Last week, we had a really productive staff meeting. The meeting had two parts: the reality part, and the brainstorming part. The reality part of a staff meeting is where I share with the staff some of the money facts of the store.

**A Friend in the Dumps**

It's not every day when you open displays and they're full of books your friend wrote.

**Honk for Humor**

It's no secret that comic novels have had a tendency to be overlooked by big prize committees. I think humorous writing has gained more respect in recent years, and most of us understand how difficult it is to do really well. But I wonder if we adult readers and critics still tend to discount or distrust laughter-inducing writing as a literary achievement.

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**TOP 5 CHILDREN'S FICTION**

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1	The Throne of Fire (Kane Chronicles #2) <i>Rick Riordan / Author</i>
2	Theodore Boone: The Abduction <i>John Grisham / Author</i>
3	Thirteen Reasons Why <i>Jay Asher / Author</i>
4	The Book Thief <i>Markus Zusak / Author</i>
5	What Happened to Goodbye <i>Sarah Dessen / Author</i>
6	Uncommon Criminals <i>Ally Carter / Author</i>

**TOP 5 CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK**

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1	LEGO Harry Potter: Building the Magical World <i>DK Publishing / Author, Elizabeth Dowsett / Author</i>
2	Fancy Nancy: Stellar Stargazer! <i>Jane O'Connor / Author, Robin Preiss Glasser / Illustrator</i>
3	Lego Star Wars Ultimate Sticker Collection <i>DK Publishing / Manufactured by</i>
4	LEGO Star Wars: The Visual Dictionary <i>Simon Beecroft / Author, Jeremy Beckett / Consultant</i>
5	A Sick Day for Amos McGee <i>Philip Christian Stead / Author, Erin E Stead / Illustrator</i>
6	Press Here <i>Herve Tullet / Author</i>

**TOP 5 CHILDREN'S SERIES & TIE-INS**

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1	Hunger Games <i>Suzanne Collins / Author</i>
2	Diary of a Wimpy Kid <i>Jeff Kinney / Author</i>

3	Fallen <i>Lauren Kate / Author</i>
4	Cars 2
5	Dork Diaries <i>Rachel Renee Russell /</i>
6	Percy Jackson and the Olympians <i>Riordan, Rick /</i>