

## **Publishers clash over green values**

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25 February 2008

**The conflicting demands of expansion and sustainability dominated *The Bookseller's Going Green* seminar last week, with Penguin m.d. Helen Fraser calling for an industry-wide standard and asking publishers to move beyond offsetting.**

At the seminar, which was attended by more than 50 delegates, Fraser, chair of the BA/PA environmental group, warned that the measures that have to be taken to make business sustainable will come at a cost. "If we don't want to find London under 20 feet of water by 2020, we are going to have to do something more drastic than just offsetting," she said. "And it's not necessarily going to be cheap. Switching off lights might save you money, but bigger, more expensive steps have to be taken."

However, publishers clashed over whether green values should inform all areas of a publishing list in the panel discussion that capped off the seminar. Mic Cady, editorial manager at AA Publishing, suggested that his role was to reach as many motorists as possible and persuade them of the facts. "I have a team of editors who are passionate about this issue and I am using this passion to drive the guides," he said. "I would like it to be that people take it for granted that publishers give ethical and green information."

Mark Ellingham of GreenProfile asked Helen Fraser how Penguin could justify giving Jeremy Clarkson a platform. Fraser responded that Clarkson was being read mainly by 18-24 year old men who possibly then move on to more environmentally-aware authors. They agreed on the need for a "fantastically funny" mainstream media commentator with a strong green sensibility.

Nowhere was the urgency of the matter more apparent than in advertising guru and author John Grant's presentation on green marketing. "We are already in the grip of a global emergency. There will be no place for neutrals," he said. "Your people must be as passionate about green issues as they are about books."

The old model, Grant pointed out, saw sustainability as a cost of doing business. But now we must ask how business can drive sustainability results, and treat sustainability as expanding the space for innovation, he said.

"There are loads of positive examples of companies moving into this space and doing really well. Look at the market differently and think: 'how can we meet the same need with a different system?' We need to be able to say that life's going to be better. This is an exciting revolution that will change the fortunes in many industries."

One area where a new system has already been successful is paper sourcing, the seminar heard. Membership of the publishers' database for responsible environmental paper sourcing (PREPS) has grown from 10 to 15 in the last year, and a paper's recycled content is now searchable. John Wiley's books manufacturing director Carole Richmond gave a thumbs-up to the initiative."

Most people are decent and reasonable and do not want to be implicated in deforestation in Indonesia," she said. "We kill trees to make our books and we should be responsible about that. Publishers together can make quite a loud noise."

*Source:* [www.thebookseller.com](http://www.thebookseller.com)