

Publishers Collaborate on Ongoing Edelweiss Field Tests

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On Tuesday, March 3, representatives from [Above the Treeline](#), nine publishers, Ingram Book Group, and the American Booksellers Association met at Random House's New York City offices for discussions about ongoing field tests of Edelweiss, Treeline's online, interactive catalog product. About 30 booksellers are currently testing the product, which was developed with input from ABA, independent retailers, and publishers.

John Rubin, Above the Treeline CEO, told *BTW* that he was especially pleased with the cooperative spirit of the forum, which included representatives from Chronicle Books, Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, John Wiley & Sons, Penguin Group (USA), Random House, Simon & Schuster, Thomas Nelson, and Tyndale House Publishers. "At the end of the meeting, one of the publishers said what an incredible feat it was to get everyone in one room," Rubin said. "I have a lot of appreciation for publishers getting together for this. I think it certainly shows a good amount of collaboration and interest in making Edelweiss work for both publishers and booksellers. That came out very clearly in the forum."

Publishers at the meeting shared what they have learned through the field-testing thus far and provided suggestions, as well as fixes, proposed by booksellers who have been participating in the test.

Mark Nichols, ABA's senior director of publisher initiatives, who participated in the Edelweiss forum, noted, "Input from both booksellers and publishers is ensuring that e-catalogs will make the buying process more efficient and will enhance the relationship between the buyer and the sales rep." And, he added, "it is yet another way the entire book industry can become more environmentally responsible."

Rubin noted that the response from booksellers participating in the Edelweiss field-test has been very positive. "The beta test is continuing and we're making refinements," he said, adding that Treeline was working toward making Edelweiss more like a traditional catalog, "but with the added interactive benefits provided by the online medium."

Among Edelweiss' many innovative features are the user's ability to electronically "mark-up" a catalog with suggestions, comments, and custom tags to highlight unique attributes of individual titles and for buyers to manage catalogs in an online library and filter catalog views by category, custom tags, pub dates, etc.

Plans call for Edelweiss to be a freestanding online module, available at no charge to book buyers, regardless of their current Above the Treeline affiliation, and to other end users of catalogs such as publicists, bloggers, agents, etc. ([Read an earlier *BTW* article on Edelweiss](#) and watch for more on this subject in weeks to come.) --[David Grogan](#)