



**Interview with
Rachel Martin, Elsevier**

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KENNEALLY: *Nature Climate Change*, based in the UK. *Frontiers in Climate* in Switzerland. *PLOS Climate*, with headquarters in California. *The Journal of Climate Change*, published in Amsterdam. Scholars around the world have taken up the challenge to publish the latest research on what may prove to be the story of the century – that technologies created by humankind are altering the natural ecosystem of Planet Earth, with dangerous consequences.

Welcome to Copyright Clearance Center’s podcast series. I’m Christopher Kenneally for Velocity of Content.

Publishing is sharing information and data on climate change even while taking steps to drive systemic change within its own sector. Publishing 2030, launched last week, is a one-year project that aims to support and test early-stage ideas that will positively contribute to the publishing sector’s sustainability. Rachel Martin, co-founder of the Publishing 2030 Accelerator and global director of sustainability at Elsevier, joins me now from Amsterdam with the details. Welcome to Velocity of Content, Rachel.

MARTIN: I’m very excited to be here, Chris.

KENNEALLY: Thank you for joining me. How does the Publishing 2030 Accelerator plan to promote systemic change in the publishing sector regarding climate action?

MARTIN: Well, perhaps maybe let’s take us back a little moment. Last year, in the lead-up to COP26, which was the UN’s conference on climate change, we saw that many of the world’s leaders strengthened their commitments towards becoming net zero. So we saw China make a declaration to become net zero by 2060. We saw India make a target of 2070. And in the US, we also saw that they rejoined the Paris agreement and quite recently have now strengthened their commitments further. And in my home country of Australia, we finally strengthened our commitments as well. So we know that this is top of mind.

Within our sector, we’ve seen that both small and big publishing houses have made commitments themselves to become net zero. And I think they help to create both awareness of the climate emergency, but also start a discussion within their organizations. This is really where the accelerator comes in. We have to acknowledge that what it takes



to become net zero – it’s technically possible. We don’t need any more fancy technology. What is required, and the biggest challenge, is to really have a think of our sector, think about our workflows, our processes, and actually figure out how we’re going to reach these goals.

Now, I think it’s a little scary if we consider that 75% of the climate pledges I just mentioned are technically not going to get us to that net zero position by 2050. So we need people in our sector to move faster, people who have the resources and the time and the passion and the dedication, and that’s what the accelerator is really all about. It is about moving these ideas that we keep hearing, that we keep discussing, into action. We’re going to test early-stage concepts. We’re going to see the viability of some of these assumptions that we’ve made and make them available for the sector to develop and to grow and to really move it on.

KENNEALLY: And the Publishing 2030 Accelerator, Rachel Martin, is not about technology, then, but about commitments. So tell us – who are the initial signatories and key sponsors of Publishing 2030?

MARTIN: As you’ve mentioned, it’s a one-year project, so what we wanted were people who were doers. This means the initial signatories have really dedicated their time, their availability, their knowledge, and in some cases, resources to make these a reality. So the initial sponsors or signatories to our manifesto are obviously my partner in crime, Jörg, who’s the founder and manager of the Future Book Forum, at Canon. And we have two chairs, so Michiel Kolman, who is the chair of the inclusive publishing and literacy committee at the International Publishers Association, and Richard Charkin, former IPA president and well known in our industry, who will help us chair. Both of those are signatories.

We have a small steer co, and that’s formed by the International Publishers Association and the Federation of European Publishers, both of which are keen to look at what we’re doing and help guide and steer the direction of the accelerator.

And of course, we have the members. The full list is available on the website, of course. But I’m pleased to see we’ve got printers, such as Marc Freitag from Livonia Print, and we also have others, such as José Manuel Anta from the International Publishing Distribution Association and other members who are publishers, like Elsevier and Planeta, and of course, Angus Phillips from the Oxford International Centre for Publishing. So it’s a diverse group, and I’m sure as the announcement has gone out that we will get more people, and we’d love to have more people involved who are really willing to be doers and contribute to the manifesto.



KENNEALLY: When you launched Publishing 2030 Accelerator on October 4, there was a five-point manifesto that went with it. Tell us about that.

MARTIN: It's a five-point manifesto, because we do need a little bit of commitment to kick us off. The first one is really just to commit to take responsibility. Everybody loves the book. Everybody understands the book. But we want the book to also love the planet as well. I think there are areas in our business and our operations and our sector that we could be doing more on, particularly around carbon emissions and environment. So the first is really to commit to taking responsibility and saying that this is really an important part.

The second one's really around driving change. So we really want to put sustainability at the heart of our organizations and our sector. That has to be about challenging our established thinking. We have elements like book returns, book fairs – the way we used to do business particularly pre-COVID really highlights that there is this need to seize those opportunities presented by virtual meeting or traveling less that could really benefit and help us in terms of carbon emissions.

The third one's around acceleration of action. So we definitely feel the time for talking is done. We want a one-year project. We want to deliver some outcomes. And we want a community of people who are not afraid of testing and learning. I'm sure we will find some areas that really do need future development, and we'll also find areas which we might possibly fail in, and that's OK as well. This is about a learning process. It's about getting some people together to test out these ideas so everybody else doesn't have to test them out as well.

It's also about shared experience, so that's our fourth commitment. This isn't a closed group where we're going to develop a fully fledged idea. No, this is really about sharing our learnings and our processes, our concepts, our ideas, testing them with the wider sector, and inviting others to come along on the journey as well.

And of course, we want to hold ourselves accountable, which is the last part of the manifesto. The community needs to drive progress, and we have to be accountable for it. We don't want to say, hey, here's our work streams, and then not deliver. We definitely want to be able to come in a year's time and say, hey, we had this idea. We tested the concept. We got a whole heap of people involved. And this is the outcome and this is what the sector can do next. So this is really about acceleration.

KENNEALLY: Rachel Martin, what steps have publishers already taken to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 around climate action?



MARTIN: I see a lot of action happening. Like I mentioned, in the lead-up to COP26, a lot of publishing houses big and small made their own commitments. I was really impressed to see in the United Kingdom, the Publishers Association launched Publishing Declares, which was a commitment, and I think they've got nearly 100 signatures for publishing and publishing organizations looking to, again, put climate on the agenda and try and get to net zero by 2050.

I do think that's a really incredibly important step to really put that final destination out there. In a couple weeks, we'll have Frankfurt, and people will come by different means of transport. Chris, you might come by plane. I'm coming by train. But we know the final destination is Frankfurt, and that helps us to really crystallize the actions needed to work back and create the roadmap to get to net zero. So I found that was very, very refreshing.

I also found that there was a lot of stuff happening in terms of being a responsible business. So lots of publishers, my publishing house included, have been doing a lot of work on upskilling around data gathering. So we need lots of data. We need to figure out what our Scope 1, Scope 2 – so our direct location emissions – are. We need to be able to report them. We need to be able to track them. So there's been a lot of work with that and with our suppliers to gather that information. I've been super-impressed to see how sophisticated printers actually are in terms of their ideas of actually having a carbon calculator reporting on it, capturing it, and publishers are no different as well. There's been some interesting developments there. Various carbon calculators have been launched.

And even at my own business, we're really looking at doing this for up to – I think we're coming on to 15 years. What we see is that we've already got a 70% reduction in our direct location-based emissions since 2010 merely by looking at our Scope 1 and Scope 2 and optimizing our office locations and really putting into place there. So there's a lot of movement around it.

The second biggest area I see in terms of publishers and what we're doing is engaging with our suppliers. There's a big push to make sure everybody's on this journey as well. I've been really heartened to see that in many locations internationally – for example, in the Nordics, in the UK, and in other places, Australia – there's an engagement to look at creative industries more broadly to really include printers and paper mills and to have a look at that whole supply chain. So the building blocks are really there. That's why the accelerator's also really, really important as well, because we can share and tap into all of these networks that are developing.

And I think the final thing, which sometimes gets overlooked, is on the content side. We can't forget that we're publishers. I've been so impressed to see how content has been



used. There's lots of studies, lots of data that show that in COVID times, the public were buying up environment books in all sorts of different formats, whether that be fiction or storytelling or factual. There was all sorts of appetite out there for climate-related information.

For academic publishers, there was a great initiative last year launched called the Climate Change Knowledge Initiative developed by Kudos and I think Cactus, and what that did was to translate really important climate-related research into layperson summaries so people could access and understand that research. At our publishing house, we have the SDG Resource Center, and we often do curated issues for things like World Environment Day, biodiversity, and COP26 and COP27 coming up to really highlight and showcase the research that's out there.

We've also done quite a lot of work, and I see a lot of conversations within the industry as well, around – you know, how do we get people to really understand and action the research that we're publishing. So there's a lot of work at the moment of how do we make sure that when we're publishing this amazing stuff that it's getting into the hands of the practitioners or the policymakers or the general public to make informed decisions? So we've been really heartened to see a lot of conversations around scholarly communications, confidence in research, and all the impacts that it has around it. There's a lot of work happening, particularly within the academic publishers – who, I must admit, were the first to sign on to the SDG Publishers Compact very early and very enthusiastic.

KENNEALLY: Rachel Martin, this attention to the global supply chain – it really changes the perspective, doesn't it? You mentioned how important content is to publishing, but now publishers see themselves as part of an entire range of workflow.

MARTIN: Indeed. And I think because carbon emissions and, of course, looking at the value chain – you know, nobody's going to get to net zero by themselves. We all kind of have to work together. Recognition of that has been incredibly important. In the lead-up to COP26, there was a joint statement that was issued by, I think, the International Publishers Association alongside the key players. And it was the first time that everybody really crystallized that, yeah, we should put this on the agenda, and that we have to really work together for this. Getting us into the room and having the discussions was incredibly important last year.

And now it's time to kind of say, OK, how do we move some of those ideas, those tricky, really hard-to-move things? Book returns or recycling or end of life for our products is really hard, and we need to start thinking about making those choices now. Having the forums there where we can have those discussions have been incredibly important. And I really hope – and I'm really excited to see the outcomes of all of these different work



streams and areas and to share that knowledge not just amongst publishing, but also internationally as well.

KENNEALLY: And as a follow-up to all that activity that began at least as far back as COP26 a year ago, the SDG Publisher Compact Fellows recently conducted a survey to understand better how academic publishers are relating all these efforts to the SDG framework. Do you have any preliminary results that you can share?

MARTIN: What I have heard in terms of feedback around the classifications from the SDG Compact Fellows has been, at least for academic publishers, is that it varies dramatically, right? There are some people who are very advanced, my publishing house included, in terms of categorization of SDGs. We use a combination of categorization, but we also use AI and what we like to call a special sauce in order to make sure that we have accurate recall on SDGs related to research, whereas others are at the starting process and kind of saying, OK, this is really important. Many of them have signed up to the SDG Publishers Compact and then are really looking at, OK, what does this mean?

So the HESI SDG Compact Fellows Group in their survey and what they sent out is a really great way of taking those 10 broad commitments that the compact says and boiling it down to the academic kind of application for that. And I think the taxonomy and the classifications working stream is incredibly important to really move the needle here, because it's not just about us saying, hey, this article relates to SDG number three. We need everybody to be talking the same language and the same ideas, right? So there's an element of standardization that could really help elevate, I think, the whole sector.

KENNEALLY: And the International Publishers Association will hold a sustainability summit in Frankfurt at the book fair on Wednesday, October 19. You'll be speaking about two work stream initiatives – the carbon footprint of an individual book and a distributed printing network idea. Give us a further preview of what publishers attending the summit will learn.

MARTIN: First and foremost, you'll get to hear from our wonderful UN partners, the UN publications team. They've done their first stop take survey of SDG Publisher Compact members – so not just academic publishers, but actually our trade associations and everybody, who is nearly 300 signatories. So we hope to give some little bit of detail about how the compact's being received, what kind of action's happened, and where some of those gaps might be to really elevate the sector more broadly.

I'm really excited to be with Jörg on stage, where we will be talking about the Publishing 2030 Accelerator. So the first work stream we're really hoping to present – our concept about how do you calculate an individual book print of a book, and what does that mean?



Many times when I come to a lot of meetings and I talk to lots of different publishers, they tell me, you know, people will pay more for a sustainable product. And I think we have yet to test that idea. So I'm really hoping that we can at least start the conversation. That will be really, really exciting.

My colleague Jörg will talk about the distributed printing network. Print on demand's been around for a while. That's not a new technology. Like I said, the technology exists. But what does that actually mean in practice? What would need to change if we were to fully utilize the technology that print on demand might present? He has some initial thoughts and concepts that he's going to present there. So that will be really exciting.

And of course, we're very excited that the IPA is hosting, and they'll be talking to us as well around some interesting things the UK Publishers Association also have recently brought out – a carbon calculator. This is for publishing houses to calculate their own emissions as well. So they'll be there to talk about that. So a practical, amazing, inspirational presentation that hopefully gets everyone very excited at Frankfurt.

KENNEALLY: Rachel Martin with Elsevier and the Publishing 2030 Accelerator, thanks for speaking with me today.

MARTIN: Pleasure, and I love coming and talking to you.

KENNEALLY: That's all for now. Our producer is Jeremy Brieske of Burst Marketing. You could subscribe to the program wherever you go for podcasts, and please do follow us on Twitter and on Facebook. I'm Christopher Kenneally. Thanks for joining me on Velocity of Content from CCC.

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