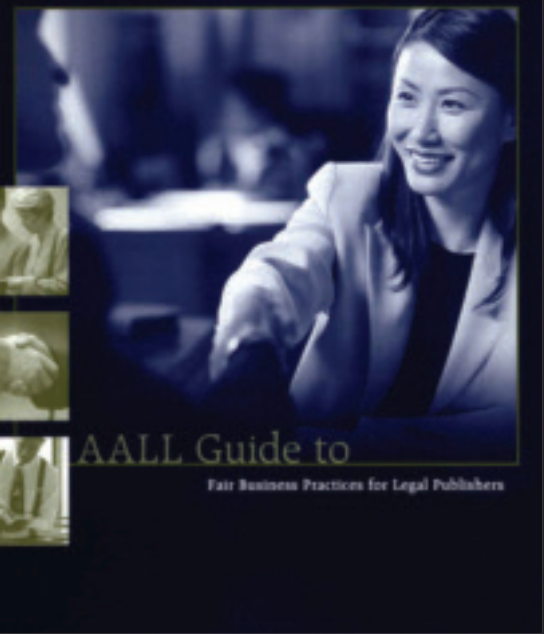


AALL and Vendors Partner for Fair Business Practices

AALL guide receives ongoing support from legal publishers

by Kay Moller Todd



The *AALL Guide to Fair Business Practices for Legal Publishers* was adopted by AALL in 2002. During the drafting stage, publisher comments and suggestions were extremely helpful, and discussions with the publishing community have continued since adoption. The ongoing contributions and support provided by three legal publishers—the Bureau of National Affairs Inc. (BNA), LexisNexis, and Thomson West—are particularly significant.

During the drafting stage, BNA and LexisNexis provided comments on publishing processes and practices. Those comments were critical to the development of a document that is clear and specific. After an internal review and comment process, BNA's top executives met with the AALL Fair Business Practices Special Committee, which drafted the *Guide*, and discussed issues with respect to complying with the *Guide's* principles. LexisNexis similarly met with the committee, and both publishers provided written follow-up comments.

Kamla King Hedges, BNA's library relations director, continues for a third year on the Fair Business Practices Implementation Task Force. In that role, she provides insight from both the library and publishing worlds and solicits comments from her colleagues at BNA on issues and proposed changes to the *Guide*.

LexisNexis' support continues as well. In a recent e-mail communication, Cindy Spohr, senior director of the Librarian Relations Group, comments that the *Guide's* principles "reflect the interests of all concerned, and offer standards for both law librarians and legal publishers," she says. She continues that the *Guide* "help[s] facilitate resolution of any issues that may arise by setting the parameters for discussion between law librarians and legal publishers. LexisNexis applauds the work of the special committee and looks forward to ongoing work with the Implementation Task Force."

Thomson West has also shown support for the *Guide*, and a letter sent to the task force last year from Anne Ellis, senior director of librarian relations, expressed the company's position (see copy of the letter on this page). Thomson West's Vice President of Customer Experience Sue Schway recently spoke with me about the challenge of customer service and her company's use of the *Guide to Fair Business Practices*. She indicated that her company "puts a very high priority and focus" on customer service and that she seeks "to ensure that our practices reflect the partnership we promise to AALL member customers."

The *Guide to Fair Business Practices* is under the oversight of the AALL Fair Business Practices Implementation Task Force, whose members this year are Rita Dermody; Kamla King Hedges; Kay Todd, chair; and Richard Vaughan. The task force works in tandem with the

Committee on Relations with Information Vendors (CRIV) to evaluate member complaints about publishing practices, particularly in light of the *Guide's* principles.

This year the task force will also consider additional annotations to those principles. Members should continue to forward their complaints about specific practices to CRIV, which will research the complaint and coordinate with the task force. The task force welcomes direct communications from publishers about their efforts to comply with the *Guide's* principles, including their thoughts on topics or practices not addressed by the *Guide*. ■

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Ms. Kay Todd
Chair, AALL Fair Business
Practices Task Force

Dear Kay:

We appreciate the opportunity to share our views on the *AALL Guide to Fair Business Practices for Legal Publishers*. West is committed to the *Guide* and to its intent. In fact, we worked with the initial AALL Fair Business Practices Task Force to give input into this document.

Our commitment to the *Guide* is reflected in key processes and practices at West. We now have a cross-functional group of senior managers that regularly reviews product shipping, updating, and other areas to ensure that our practices reflect the spirit of the *Guide*.

West values its partnership with AALL members, and we appreciate the opportunity for constructive dialog that can make a meaningful difference.

Best regards,
Anne Ellis