Introduction

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This will be an extended CRIV Notes, in that it reports the Committee's second site visit to CCH INCORPORATED. The Committee's feeling was that this information was important enough to be included here, rather than waiting until the November *CRIV Sheet*. This information can also be accessed through the CRIV's Web site "CRIV Page" (http://www.aallnet.org/committee/criv/).

The CRIV visited the Chicago offices of CCH INCORPORATED on May 18, 2000, meeting with executives and senior staff in publishing, customer service, marketing, sales and library relations for an in-depth discussion of a variety of issues. Listed below are some of the key points of the discussion. Members of the CRIV felt that these points should be highlighted in order to provide a quick view to major outcomes of the meeting. More extensive articles, covering these and other important aspects of the way CCH handles its business, follow this list.

- Sales representatives handle sales, demonstration, and product information; all other issues or problems should be directed to Customer Service.
- Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and other self-help tools are available to provide frequently requested information.
- If you cannot solve a problem within a reasonable time frame, high-level management assistance is available.
- Help CCH improve; take the surveys!
- Use the publication "Doing Business with CCH," also available online (http://support.cch.com/).

The CRIV wishes to thank CCH INCORPORATED President Becky Hensley, CCH Business Unit publishers and managers, Customer Service leaders, and Librarian Liaison Leslie Bonacum for their kind hospitality and their willingness to meet with us.

CCH Customer Service would like law librarians to know that the company is committed to continuous improvement of customer support services. CCH encourages law librarians to contact senior management with comments, questions, or concerns that can help it meet this goal. Contact numbers are as follows: Jerry Pruitt (Vice President of Customer Service), 773/866-3142; Mike Dorociak (Manager, Order Management), 773/866-3289; Barbara Johnson (Manager, Billing and Account Administration), 773/866-3152; and Mike Swiney (Product Support), 773/866-3125.

CCH Organizational Structure

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CCH INCORPORATED, in its current form, was founded in 1913, the same year the U.S. federal income tax was created, although the company's roots go back as far as 1892. In 1996, CCH INCORPORATED was purchased by Wolters Kluwer, the same parent company that owns Aspen Publishing. CCH and Aspen are thus linked to and in communication with each other, but they exist as autonomous units within Wolters Kluwer U.S., which is comprised of Aspen Publishing, CCH INCORPORATED, CCH Canadian, CCH Tax Compliance, and CCH Legal Information Services (CT Corporation, Washington Service Bureau, and CCH CORSEARCH).

In 1997, CCH was reorganized into five publishing and software units, with each group focusing on a defined market and subject area. In 1999, the Tax Compliance software unit became a separate Wolters Kluwer U.S. unit. Today, the Federal and State Tax, Health and Human Resources, Business and Finance, and Small Office/Home Office units make up CCH's Publishing Business. Each of the CCH Publishing business units has its own editorial, sales, marketing, and product development staff, although they share common customer service and distribution support services. Many of these business units are actually larger than some of the Wolters Kluwer companies in other countries, and CCH Publishing is the largest unit in Wolters Kluwer's holdings worldwide.

CCH has been based in the Chicago area throughout its lifetime, although it maintains offices around the United States. In total, CCH supports over 3400 employees, including an editorial staff of 600 members, most of whom are accountants and/or attorneys.

CCH Account Management

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The CRIV brought to CCH's attention some concerns of AALL members regarding its handling of customers' accounts and subscriptions. In response, CCH representatives stressed two main points.

1) Rather than contacting sales representatives, librarians should contact Customer Service representatives for solutions to problems involving accounts, billing, and similar matters. This practice is much more likely to result in the timely resolution of problems.

2) CCH management stressed its desire to be informed of persistent customer service problems. CCH's goal for customer service is "one-and-done." That is, a problem should be resolved after one call to the Customer Service department. (Of course, for this goal to be achieved, the librarian must be prepared to provide basic information during this call, such as account and invoice numbers.) If a problem is not resolved or recurs, librarians are urged to contact Customer Service a second time and to ask for a Customer Service manager. The proper 800 number to call appears on the billing document and may differ from 800 numbers appearing elsewhere, such as on advertising material.

The CRIV brought up a number of other specific problems submitted by the AALL membership.

Separate or Multiple Accounts

Some librarians were unhappy that they had been unsuccessful in getting several separate accounts merged into one. Others had the opposite problem: orders and subscriptions they wanted to be maintained separately had all been placed on one account. CCH management said that Customer Service can solve both types of problems. CCH added that these problems are less likely to arise initially if customers are careful to use the name they have established for their firm or organization consistently, and to associate the proper account number with a given name.

At present, CCH sends out statements monthly, unless the customer requests that no statement be sent. In the future, CCH will send out statements only for those months during which some activity has been recorded on an account.

Invoicing

Some librarians would like only one charge to appear on an invoice. Others prefer the time savings derived from processing multiple charges on a single invoice. Either option may be available. Librarians can contact Customer Service (800/449-6439) to discuss their requirements.

When multiple items appear on a single invoice, it is necessary to include with the payment a copy of the entire invoice indicating any adjustments made. When remitting other than the full amount shown on an invoice, the stub alone is not sufficient to ensure proper application of the payment.

Subscription Renewals

The CRIV received numerous complaints from law librarians that subscription renewals have at times generated too much confusing paperwork. Since our last site visit in 1997, the renewal process has evolved in stages as CCH has taken steps to streamline it. As part of this new initiative, renewal letters 90 days in advance of the renewal date were sent between September 1999 and May 2000, but these have been phased out due to customer feedback. The current renewal timeline has been simplified, and is designed to result in fewer unintended lapses of services. As of June 2000, customers may expect the following subscription notices for most subscriptions:

- Renewal invoice 60 days before renewal date

Then, only if no payment has been received,

- Reminder letter 15 days prior to renewal date
- Reminder letter for payments 30 days late
- Call from retention specialist 45 days late
- Suspension of subscription 60 days late
- Cancellation of subscription 90 days late.

It is important to note that university library accounts are handled by the Renewal Retention Group at CCH, and are thus exempt from the suspension/cancellation schedule imposed on other accounts. Also, of necessity, renewal of the print versions of *Standard Federal Tax Reporter* and *Federal Tax Guide* are handled differently from other print subscriptions, since they are revised annually. CCH requires prior signed authorization, in the form of a "Rapid Renewal," to ship the new contents of these multi-volume sets out to subscribers each year.

Cancellations

The recommended procedure for subscription cancellations is to notify CCH, either in writing or by phone, that a subscription (or subscription copy, if multiple copies are up for renewal) is to be terminated. You can avoid potential problems by providing your account number, the subscription title(s), contact name, and institution address as it appears on the account. If you wish, CCH will then provide you with a revised version of the invoice, identified by the same invoice number. Do not merely send partial payment on a subscription invoice and expect CCH to figure out that you reduced the number of copies or canceled a title! CCH recognizes that your subscription needs may change for myriad reasons. In order to be more responsive to customers' needs, CCH is interested in the reasons for cancellations, although this information is not required. For CCH policy regarding cancellations in the middle of a subscription term, customers may refer to the CCH publication "Doing Business with CCH" (in print or at http://support.cch.com).

Common Expiration Date

A number of AALL members have requested the convenience of one annual bill for subscriptions, in which all of the library's titles have a common subscription term. Barbara Johnson (Manager of Billing and Account Administration at CCH) invites any customer interested in subscription consolidation to contact her department (800/449-6439). CCH is willing to work with librarians to try to accommodate special billing requirements.

Subscription List

The CRIV learned that it is possible to obtain a complete "Subscription Inventory Report" from CCH Billing and Accounts Department to assist librarians in managing their CCH accounts and to allow them to budget more accurately for the future. The report lists detailed information on the services and subscriptions under a particular account. To obtain this information, either call a customer service representative (800/449-6439) or use the 24-hour Automated Phone Information System (otherwise known as IVR, or Interactive Voice Response system) (800/525-3335), and select "Account Inventory" (option 4). For the latter, you will need not only your nine-digit account number but also a PIN for security reasons. If you do not have a PIN, you may call (800/449–6439) to obtain one.

Standing Orders

Librarians have been asking CCH for standing order service for monograph publications revised semi-annually and annually (e.g., *Federal Estate and Gift Taxes, IRS Code and Regulations*). CCH asked the CRIV to let our colleagues know that it is indeed possible to get any CCH publication revised annually (or more often) on a standing order basis. However, at the present time, if a title is issued semi-annually (e.g., in January and June), the library cannot set up a standing order for one edition only per year, but must receive both editions. To order CCH monographs on a standing order basis, contact CCH Customer Service rather than your sales representative. Sales representatives do receive a commission, even if the order is entered by a Customer Service representative.

Missing Pages

Since the previous CRIV site visit to the company in 1997, one of the most significant improvements in CCH's service has been the timely delivery of replacement pages. This is due in large part to the capabilities of CCH's new "Print on Demand" technology, and to the automation of account information, which tracks exactly when a subscription may have lapsed. Most noteworthy, however, has been the timesaving Internet tool that allows customers to request replacement pages and reports via the CCH Web site. CCH is an industry leader in the use of available technology to resolve problems more quickly and improve customers' access to account information.

CCH plans to expand the ways in which customers can acquire account and subscription information and communicate with the company concerning those matters. Customers can, of course, contact Customer Service by phone, to talk to a Customer Service representative, or to use the Interactive Voice Response system. The latter is effective for simple matters (e.g., requests for faxes of invoices, for invoice payment status), and it is available 24 hours a day. In the near future, CCH plans to provide Internet access to similar services and information through its Web site (www.cch.com).

CCH has provided librarians with a good deal of operational and service information through its booklet, "Doing Business with CCH" (in print or at http://support.cch.com). A new edition is due out shortly. For their part, librarians can provide feedback to the company easily by participating in CCH's annual mailed survey or the telephone survey, which is conducted randomly as part of its handling of customer service telephone inquiries.

Best Practices

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A portion of the CRIV's site visit to CCH in May was devoted to elaborating on and adding to the list of "best practices" for publishers and librarians, which was begun during the CRIV visit to Aspen Publishers in March (see "Best Practices" report in May 2000 *The CRIV Sheet*). As with Aspen, this conversation resonated with both CCH representatives and CRIV members, because it sought to document the reasonable expectations that both librarians and publishers have for each other.

To remind readers, the "best practices" effort is an attempt to articulate a vision of the "perfect publisher" and the "perfect librarian." Not that any individual publisher or librarian will ever be perfect, but identifying the characteristics of this unattainable goal establishes standards which publishers and librarians can use in developing their own practices.

In this regard, the CRIV was heartened by the fact that CCH representatives had not only reviewed the draft list prepared after the Aspen visit, but had used it as a benchmark to assess CCH's existing practices. The site visit report had not explicitly mentioned this as a goal of creating a "best practices" list, but ultimately this is indeed part of what the CRIV sees as an important outcome of the activity. To see it put into practice, even if prematurely since the work has only begun, confirmed the value of the activity.

The original list included the following behaviors that we would expect a "perfect publisher" or a "perfect librarian" to exhibit:

A "perfect" publisher would:

- Establish, maintain, and publicize the existence of multiple methods that librarians may use to communicate effectively with the publisher, including both traditional (phone, mail, fax) and non-traditional (e-mail, Web site) means.
- Provide opportunities for librarians who prefer them to have "one to one," ongoing relationships with representatives of the company.
- Ensure that all parts of the company have ready access to the same information about the customer.
- Provide documentation or confirmation to the librarian of customer complaints and their resolution.
- Develop and maintain a well-trained, efficient customer service operation.
- Establish a librarian relations position or group within the company.
- Create and utilize a well-supported Web site.

A "perfect" librarian would:

- Identify payments accurately.
- Include invoices when returning books to publishers.
- Explain to a publisher how the library's acquisitions procedures work.
- Inform library staff members and other individuals in the institution how "cold calls" are to be handled.

As a consequence of the spirited (used in a positive sense) discussion with CCH, the following can now be added to the draft list of "Best Practices:"

A "perfect" publisher would also:

- Do its best to avoid the creation (or continuation) of duplicate accounts.
- Provide easy-to-use mechanisms for customers to "opt-out" of telemarketing efforts.
- Clearly articulate differences (in scope of coverage, etc.) between print and electronic versions of the same product.
- Develop knowledge, both institutionally and individually, about the needs and practices of librarians and libraries.

A "perfect" librarian would also:

- Use consistent identification when placing orders for products.
- Use sources (e.g., Web sites, catalogs, "how to do business" publications) to learn about and work efficiently with publishers.
- Take initiative, in a positive way, in trying to resolve specific problems by adequately researching the issue before contacting a publisher and, if necessary, by seeking the assistance of appropriate higher-level managers for continuing problems.
- Develop knowledge, both institutionally and individually, about the business needs and practices of publishers.

Seeing the best practices concept "come to life," through its use by CCH to think about its own practices as they relate to libraries and librarians, was exciting, to say the least. But it was also challenging, because it means that this is an activity that must be continued and ultimately brought to fruition. The CRIV can be the conduit by which this happens, but only with the participation of librarians and publishers alike.
The CRIV urges you to write or e-mail your ideas on best practices, either directly to Frank Houdek (houdek@siu.edu) or by using the CRIVPage Comment/Suggestion Box.

CCH—Sales

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CRIV members met with the three CCH business units of primary interest to librarians during the site visit: Business and Finance, Federal and State Tax, and Health and Human Resources.

A large majority of CCH customers buy from only one CCH business unit. For example, accountants mostly use products from the CCH Federal and State Tax unit, while health industry attorneys and professionals need publications from the CCH Health and Human Resources business unit. The sales representatives of each unit are expected to be completely knowledgeable about each product within their own units. Their primary responsibilities are making sales, demonstrating products, taking orders, and providing specialized product information to their customers. Each business unit has a certain level of flexibility and autonomy, and can set its own policy and practice on technical development, marketing, and pricing, etc., to best serve customers' needs in its specific market. One unit may outsource its telemarketing, while another unit may not use telemarketing at all.

However, law librarians have interests across CCH business unit divisions, because we usually buy from more than one CCH business unit. As a consequence, we often need to work with more than one CCH sales representative. According to CCH, at the request of a law librarian, any CCH sales representative will be happy to act as the lead sales representative for a law library and will collaborate with other sales representatives to best satisfy a librarian's needs across their business units.

CCH customers can place new orders with any CCH customer services representative or with their own sales representative(s). Even if an order is placed with a regular CCH customer services representative, assigned sales representative still receive the order information and the appropriate commission credit due to him or her.

Electronic Product Issues

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In preparing for the site visit to CCH, the CRIV solicited input from the AALL membership regarding CCH's practices. The CRIV received some comments/questions that relate to CCH's electronic products. These comments included the subjects of the CCH Web site, pricing, inclusion of information, tracking of Internet usage, and training.

CCH is currently in the process of enhancing its Web site. Work is also in progress to provide customers a complete electronic product catalog through a new online store. As a result of CRIV comments, CCH is now exploring the addition of a separate Web page for librarians. This addition would include such items as a directory of sales reps and a FAQ list. CCH welcomes suggestions about the design of this Web page. Please contact its Customer Service department (cust_serv@cch.com) or the Librarian Liaison, Leslie Bonacum (bonacuml@cch.com), with your ideas.

As with print products, there are differences in pricing among the three business units. Sales representatives can advise customers of the pricing options available. CCH believes its pricing reflects the value of its products. Enhanced functionality, increased timeliness, and often more information is provided with electronic products. Of course, the cost of the technology and personnel are a factor as well.

CCH assured CRIV members that the information included in the print products appears in the electronic products. This has not always been the case. The CRIV emphasized the importance of CCH articulating any differences between print and electronic products before a library begins an electronic subscription and cancels a print subscription.

Librarians often need to track their usage of electronic products to determine acquisition needs. CCH will look into developing reports to provide this information.

As more electronic products become available, access to training is increasingly important for researchers. CCH provides training in a variety of ways: in-person at the user's site, in-person in classes (CLE), by telephone, and increasingly by electronic options (i.e., Web-based tutorials). Currently, CCH does charge for some of these services to recover some costs.

The CRIV recommended that CCH begin providing both training-the-trainer options and training in an academic environment. CCH responded positively to arranging sessions for training-the-trainer at such gatherings as AALL Annual Meetings and regional Chapter meetings.

The ability to directly train users in the law schools is a newer concept for CCH. CCH committed to exploring with CRIV, ALL-SIS, and other organizational groups how best to accomplish this task. CCH recognizes the ongoing responsibilities that librarians have in providing training. It was very receptive to working with us to find ways of meeting our common goal of training effective researchers.

The following article was inadvertently omitted from the site visit report on the CRIV's trip to Aspen Publishers in March of this year. The CRIV again apologizes to Aspen for this omission.

Notifications of New Aspen Publications

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The CRIV relayed to Aspen several librarians' requests that Aspen establish a procedure whereby customers could be notified of forthcoming supplements and new editions, rather than receiving these new products automatically. Upon such notification, librarians could respond by placing an order for the forthcoming publication they want to receive.

Aspen representatives explained that a postcard notification system is in use, but it plans to implement a revamped notification procedure, to arrive as part of its new computer system conversion. Customers will be able to receive notifications of the publication of new supplements and new editions, either for every title on their accounts, or only for those titles they specify (receiving automatic shipments for all others).

Aspen recommended that law librarians wanting to take advantage of this new notification option wait until the new system is operational before contacting their sales account representatives with this request. Aspen stressed that handling this change through account representatives will be the best method.