BookExpo America (BEA) 2011 will provide book trade professionals with more educational, purchasing and networking opportunities with a return to a three-day format.

This year’s BEA takes place at the Jacob K. Javits Center in New York City from May 24-26. Last year’s event moved to midweek for the first time, and exhibit hall hours were reduced from three days to two.

Steve Rosato, BEA event director, noted that the switch to a three-day format would allow attendees to get the most out of their experience at the show.

“A lot of people genuinely like the two-day format and it did work for them,” he said. “However, I have to acknowledge while people liked the two-day format, a lot of people genuinely need three days to meet their objectives at BEA. While our mantra has been quality versus quantity, there is a reality of what people can accomplish in two full days. We will always do what will make BEA the best event possible for the people we serve.”

More than 20,000 book industry professionals are expected to attend BEA, including booksellers and distributors for the college market.

In addition, more than 1,500 exhibitors will be on hand during exhibit hall hours, which are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 24 and Wednesday, May 25, and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Thursday, May 26.

An estimated 65 educational sessions will also be offered to industry professionals, who will have access to authors, new titles, traditional content, digital content and the latest trends paving the way in the publishing industry.

BIG IDEAS

For the second straight year, a series of sessions entitled “Big Ideas at BEA” will allow attendees to meet with industry leaders and learn about the latest trends and technologies within the publisher, retailer, librarian and consumer communities.

“Scaling Enhanced E-Book Production: Should Publishers Make or Buy Them?” takes place on Monday, May 23, from 9:30-10:30 a.m., moderated by publishing journalist and digital content strategist Charlotte Abbott. As the market for tablet devices and dedicated e-readers rapidly evolves, publishers are facing new opportunities and demand for enhanced e-books. A panel of experts will talk about the most efficient way for independent publishers to navigate the many logistical hurdles involved – from securing and managing rights, to engaging with technical and creative specialists and finding the right digital distribution partners.

Another session of note on Monday is “The Arc of Publishing” from 12:30-1:30 p.m. Skott Klebe, chief architect, Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., will review the characteristics of market disruption and discuss how they apply in the changing world of e-book publishing, with special attention to the author-direct publishing model currently gaining attention on the Amazon Kindle and Barnes & Noble Nook.

On Tuesday, May 24, “Gowalla Where? Emerging Niche Social Media Platforms (and Their Uses) All Book Industry Professionals Should Understand” takes place from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., presented by Kelly Leonard, executive director for online marketing, Hachette Book Group.

Social media platforms are quickly becoming the defining architecture of many businesses and industries, including the book industry, which is why publishers, retailers, librarians and everyone in between should possess a fundamental understanding of these community-building tools, especially the frequently overlooked and misunderstood location-based niche platforms. What do you know about Foursquare? Gowalla? Instagram? Scvngr? Tagwhat? Participants are encouraged to join one of these niche services to get the most out of the hands-on experience.

“The Report of My Death Was Exaggerated – The Printed Book” takes place on Wednesday, May 25, from 11 a.m.-noon, moderated by Gerry Donaghy, book-purchasing supervisor at Powells.com. Print books are still most publishers’ bread and butter. With all the buzz around apps, e-books and digital, attendees will find out how publishers are investing more than ever in print to ensure books stay relevant and captivate a multi-media audience that is used to digital content.

Thursday, May 26 is the final day of educational sessions. “How E-Books Will Save the Book: Putting Storytelling and Creation at the Center of Publishing” runs from 10-11 a.m. The itch to make and read e-books will revitalize the book. By focusing on the core of what a book is — words, ideas, stories — e-books will reinvigorate the book.

Ben Clemmons, director of user experience for Blurb, will discuss several great examples of how this trend is changing publishing with new relationships taking shape, new tools and new ways of working.
The American Booksellers Association's (ABA) ninth annual Day of Education will be held on Monday, May 23, at the Jacob K. Javits Center, one day before BookExpo America's (BEA's) exhibit hall hours begin.

This year, the ABA program spotlights children's bookselling, with educational sessions and panels on such topics as turning mind share into market share in the children's market, creating events for children and reaching the young-adult (YA) audience.

In addition, the schedule features programming for general booksellers, including beginner and advanced e-book sessions, panels on strategic thinking, effective marketing, a session on how to increase non-fiction sales and more.

Programming at the Day of Education is targeted to ABA indie bookstore members, but is open to all BEA attendees.

SCHEDULE

ABA's Day of Education will feature 15 education sessions, roundtable discussions and workshops on a variety of topics.

The program will start with a plenary session jointly sponsored by ABA and BEA from 8:30-9:45 a.m. Christopher J. Zane, a nationally noted entrepreneur, will be the opening plenary speaker.

Five sessions are scheduled from 10-11:30 a.m. Annie Philbrick, co-owner of Bank Square Books, will moderate a "Small and Mid-Size Roundtable" discussion for owners and managers of small to mid-size stores. The session is open to booksellers only.

ABA Chief Operating Officer (COO) Len Vlahos will instruct attendees on "E-Books 101." Are you lost in the e-book woods? You are not alone. The beginner-level discussion will focus on the rapidly evolving digital marketplace. This session is for booksellers who need basic answers about what e-books are, how they are used and why they matter.

At the same time, ABA Technology Director Matt Supko and Matt Norcross, owner of McLean & Eakin Booksellers, will lead a session on "E-Books 201." If you are actively selling, marketing or promoting e-books, creating events around them or otherwise interacting with your community through e-books, this session is ideal. The discussion will also provide the latest updates on Google eBooks, e-readers and apps, and how to sell digital.

A "Large-Store Roundtable" is among the notable sessions scheduled from 12:30-1:45 p.m. Cathy Langer, lead buyer at the Tattered Cover Book Store in Denver, Colo., will moderate this roundtable discussion for owners and managers of large stores.

Also from 12:30-1:45 p.m., Vlahos, along with Jonah Zimiles, owner of Words Bookstore in Maplewood, N.J., and Chuck Robinson, owner of Village Books in Bellingham, Wash., will talk about "Reimagining Your Store." Managers will learn how to organize their store to best meet customer needs in the 21st century. Topics include layout, signage and other visual cues, merchandising, staff expectations, technology and more.

"Free for the Asking: Marketing with PR and Social Media," is also scheduled from 12:30-1:45 p.m., moderated by ABA Chief Marketing Officer Meg Smith with panelists Jarek Steele, co-owner of Left Bank Books in St. Louis, Mo., and Rob Dougherty, manager of the Clinton Bookshop in New Jersey; Putting your store in the media spotlight and keeping it there does not have to cost a lot of money. In fact, it does not have to cost anything at all beyond the usual staff hours. The session will focus on how to take advantage of free media outlets to market and promote your store.

One session of note from 2-3 p.m. is "Making Non-Fiction Sexy," moderated by ABA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Oren Teicher with panelists Joe Foster, consultant at Above the Treeline, LLC in Ann Arbor, Mich., and Ann Leyhe, co-owner of Mrs. Dalloway's Literary and Garden Arts in Berkeley, Calif. The session will focus on how managers can curate and merchandise non-fiction titles to increase sales and provide a unique in-store experience for customers.
In addition to purchasing the essential textbooks, apparel and supplies they need each semester, students, as well as faculty and administrators, rely on their bookstores as a resource for literary works in a variety of categories that make up the trade book department.

For Jim Huang, manager of the Kenyon College Bookstore, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, trade books, and the bookstore itself, provide a sense of community for the 1,600 students it services.

“Kenyon College is a community of readers and writers, and this bookstore is a reflection of our community,” he explained. “More than ever, we believe that a roomful of trade books is meaningful and sends a statement about who we are and aspire to be. Offering the opportunity to touch, explore, flip open and devour books is part of the education that this institution provides to our students.”

**TRADE-BOOK ASSORTMENT**

Huang noted that the bookstore carries “everything” when it comes to trade books.

“We are a full-range trade bookstore, offering books for all interests and all ages,” he said. “We have sections devoted to classics (Penguin Classics, Dover Thrift Editions), but also stock the latest best sellers in fiction and non-fiction.

The manager also pointed out that more than 400 trade titles are being used as textbooks during the current spring semester. “For a college of just 1,600 students, we think that’s a pretty significant number,” he said.

Currently, the bookstore carries nearly 7,500 titles and 16,000 units on its trade-book shelves. Huang noted the variety of titles that the store carries.

“Kenyon students read everything, so we’re not the kind of store that sells lots of copies of a few titles. Rather, we sell just a few copies of a lot of titles.

“Students here are as likely to read ‘Pride and Prejudice’ as they are to read ‘Pride and Prejudice and Zombies’ — and that’s just talking about what they’re reading on their own, excluding what’s being required in classes.”

Huang pointed out that many trade-book sales are tied to campus speakers. “We did especially well with books by W.S. Merwin in the fall semester and by Jonathan Franzen earlier this semester, with well over 100 copies sold by each of these campus visitors. Faculty and alumni authors also do very well here.”

Among the top-selling trade books in the Kenyon College Bookstore is “Alma Mater,” a novel by Kenyon’s Writer-in-Residence, P.F. Kluge, about college life. More than 2,000 copies of the book have been sold.

“Obviously, this book is a natural for us, so much so that when its original publisher was ready to let it go out of print, this bookstore took over publication of the title and continues to make it available,” Huang said.

Beyond Kenyon authors, the bookstore has seen significant sales of the following trade-book titles over the last few years: “Independence Day” by Richard Ford; “Three Cups of Tea” by Greg Mortenson; and “Water for Elephants” by Sara Gruen, among many others.

**LOCATION**

Huang explained that trade books are located throughout the Kenyon College Bookstore. Some shelving units are strictly for books, and a back room is largely devoted to fiction. But books are prominent elements in other displays as well.

“This week, we’re featuring a bunch of books among Earth-friendly products on our Earth Day display,” the manager said. “Roughly speaking, we have over 1,500 linear feet of shelving for trade books. I’d ballpark all trade-book space at approximately 1,000 square feet.”

With the success that the Kenyon College Bookstore has had in the area of trade books, Huang noted the importance of having a vast inventory available to students.

“Kenyon’s passion for words and ideas is rooted in books. We believe that words matter, and we believe that books matter. We know that the experience of browsing a vast selection of physical trade books in a brick-and-mortar store is something special and something worth preserving.” —CSE

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Kenyon College Bookstore offers nearly 7,500 titles on its trade-book shelves. PHOTO COURTESY OF KENYON COLLEGE BOOKSTORE