

Publisher Alley®

Time-Saving Tips for Building a Buy Report

December 8, 2008

You may have experienced a slow response from the Buy Report recently, and we apologize for this. We understand that the Buy Report is a critical, time-sensitive function in Pub Alley, and we are addressing all possible sources of the problem.

The most likely reason for the slowness is the size of the file that Pub Alley uses to research demand information for comparable titles. With 500,000 new titles published each year, and the addition of supplemental title data such as category, carton quantity, jacket copy, etc., the amount of data in this file now exceeds best-practice standards for any database.

While we examine options for reducing the size of this file, there are short-term “tricks” that you might apply to speed the creation of Buy Reports.

1. Insert new titles into a Buy Report as far in advance as possible. This will alert you to any problems with title data or imprint assignments, which need to be addressed via datafix.

2. Above all, use the strategies below to *reduce the number of times that you open a report* in the process of adding comparable titles. Each time a report is opened, Pub Alley verifies the sales and demand figures for all of the comparable titles, in order to supply the most current information.
 - 2a. Consider using something other than the Buy Report on-screen as a reference when researching comparable titles. For example, did you create an Excel spreadsheet with the names of all the new titles? Is there a catalog that corresponds to your new title list? If so, you can refer to one of these to identify each new title, research and add comps, and move to the next new title in sequence. Re-open the Buy Report only when you are ready to enter suggested buys and other information.

 - 2b. Alternatively, refer to the Excel spreadsheet or catalog exclusively when researching comps. Jot down the ISBNs for the selected comps on your reference sheet, open the Buy Report, and add all of the comparable titles using the Add Comps link next to each new title.

- 2c. Remember that the Buy Report(s) can be emailed and completed off-line as soon as all comp titles have been associated. Doing so means that your online report will NOT be updated, but we highly recommend this option in the event that the online save commands are functioning slowly. Extreme slowness when saving online introduces the possibility of data loss, which is avoided when working offline.
3. If appropriate, consider creating multiple small Buy Reports. This is more appropriate for those publishers NOT participating in category buying. When you work with smaller reports, Pub Alley will be verifying demand and sales for *a smaller number of comparable titles* each time you open the report.
 4. When possible, assign 2–3 comparable titles per new title. There is a limit to the number of comparable titles that the B&T buyers can evaluate, and more than 3 comps for each new title will increase the time it takes a report to open.

For clarification, or if the tricks above fail to solve the problem, please do not hesitate to call us. We can often locate reports that haven't yet reached you via email, input data quickly, etc. As a reminder, Lisa Parker can be reached at 603-746-3102, x3305, and Jamie Carter is at x3287.