

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:00] DC:** Today, on The Print Report, revisiting the Bronte Global Alliance.

**[0:00:05] PM:** This time, we're going to talk about how to work with the platform and the Alliance.

**[0:00:11] DC:** Welcome to The Print Report with Deborah Corn and Pat McGrew. All the print that's fit for news.

[EPISODE]

**[0:00:20] DC:** Hey, everybody. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador. More specifically, we are here with The Print Report, and that means Pat McGrew from McGrewGroup is on the other end of this line. Hello, Pat McGrew.

**[0:00:33] PM:** Hi, Deborah Corn. It is always a pleasure to be here for The Print Report.

**[0:00:38] DC:** Excellent. So, we are post drupa-ing podding with some of the guests that we spoke to on the floor at drupa. More specifically, we are speaking again with Francesco Crotti from Bronte Global Alliance. Buongiorno, Francesco.

**[0:00:58] FC:** Buongiorno. Good afternoon at the stage.

**[0:01:03] DC:** Yes, it is good afternoon, but my Italian is limited. So, thank you so much. We had a lovely conversation at drupa, and Pat, I'm going to kick it over to you to give us a little recap on that and get us into today's topic, which is, how can I get involved with the Bronte Global Alliance.

**[0:01:22] PM:** Right. So, when we were at drupa, we sat with Francesco and we talked a bit about the Bronte Global Alliance, which is a three-part approach to helping people distribute books in their own country and perhaps even globally. The way the Alliance was laid out by Francesco in our first podcast, you got the understanding that we talk about book production,

we talk about book distribution, and we talk about plugging into platforms, plugging some capabilities into platforms that support all those things. It is a really great Alliance. The concept of the Alliance is a really great one because it allows everyone in the Alliance to be independent in their own business, but it also brings the power of working in a network, in a group.

So, Francesco, the reason we wanted to talk to you today is to talk about how to actually make it all work. If I'm a distributor and I'm sitting somewhere and I'm saying, "I have all these things I'd like to distribute. I might want to be working with a network of printers. I might have a platform that I use to capture content, but I'm struggling with how to get it printed and out into the world." If I come to you and I say, "How can Bronte Global Alliance help me, a distributor?" What do you just say to someone?

**[0:02:53] FC:** Thank you, Pat. Yes, during drupa, we met a lot of book printers that were asking how to engage and explore new opportunities, because they see a new possibility to build a good partnership with the distributors in their country. So, if I need to tell to the distributor, what does it mean? I believe that today there is a lot of pressure to reduce inventory, to speed up production and sales in the market, and deliver on time, have a good quality. At the end, a distributor is looking for something that is related to printer.

For example, they would like to offer print-on-demand service instead, to have big inventory of books, mainly in long tail, to have a virtual archive where they can upload files and then get books from printer directly when the book are sold. What I suggest is, let's go into this discussion with us, because we have a nice platform that is able to put together the distribution and the printing houses that can deliver the service. And if they would like to have a print-on-demand business ready, we can put them in contact with some printers that they can print locally for them. This is what we could do together.

**[0:04:30] PM:** So, if I am a book printer somewhere, I can grow my business if I'm serving distributors, right? That's part of the idea. And if I'm a distributor, the best way for me to grow my business without having to build a new warehouse on the back of the plant is to create a network of book printers that I can funnel work to. So, the Bronte Global Alliance is designed to facilitate building that network between the distributors and the book printers. Do I have that right?

**[0:05:06] FC:** Yes, Pat. Because for the book printer to offer in their market a POD service, it's quite heavy, if they don't have a good relation with distribution as well. Because to print a single copy, or very few copy, and manage all the account in this way, it's very, very heavy, okay, for this quantity. So, what we suggest is to build this relation, because at the end, distributors has a huge number of publisher, they want to have this service, they can manage the relation with the printer in behalf of them, placing order according to the selling cycle of the books, and then managing the accounting. At the end, the printers can send the invoice directly to the distribution, and distribution collect money because they used to collect money in behalf of publisher and pay the printer as well. So, this is something that is very effective.

**[0:06:07] PM:** Let's kind of define the term publisher, because publisher could be Millon or McGraw Hill or Houghton Mifflin, but it could also be Deborah's Print Media Centr publishing arm, which Deborah is going to write the definitive book on how to be a mentor for Girls Who Print. She's got this great idea, and now she's written this book, but she's not a printer. She's the owner of the content. So, so the best way for her to distribute that content worldwide is to be involved with the distributor who has all those book printing relationships, and then work with someone who has a platform that says anybody, anywhere in the world can buy that book, and then through the distribution channel, it'll get printed and delivered in the right country, at the right place, at the right time.

**[0:07:02] FC:** Yes, you're right, because you're mentioning a big publisher. Big publisher, they can be the service by themselves, and we are happy to support them. I heard that some big publisher, for example, would like to set up a POD service for themselves, building an implant, in some cases, where they can do it. But they need the platform at the end. But then we have a lot of publishers that are medium-sized more and they need to engage distribution if they want to be effective in the market. So, in this case, means that publishers with distributors can have this kind of service if they find a good partner in the country as a printer, but they need a workflow. Because if not, it's very heavy to manage a single copy. If you copy the real print-on-demand that we talked about in the previous podcast. So, these are way that we can do it. Okay? This is the way that we can support them.

**[0:08:04] PM:** So, the distributor becomes the aggregator of the content, and their relationships with the printers help ensure that those books get printed and delivered as they need to be?

**[0:08:15] FC:** Yes. This is the way. And then also in the market, we see that are also big platform that are offering self-publishing activities, and this is for author that they are not so professional at the beginning. They have the idea to write their own book. They want to try. They don't know where to go. And then they apply to this platform just to have suggestion, recommendation, a consultative approach, because I can put some content on paper, but –

**[0:08:15] PM:** Hurried into a book is different.

**[0:08:51] FC:** It is completely different. But then, when I have the books ready to print, then I need to print and get service, then I need to have also marketplace. This platform, giving this service too. So, they are marketplace, where I can buy books from author at the beginning. This is the way that we can do.

**[0:09:13] PM:** In the US, we might know names like Lulu and Blurb as kind of platforms that are great for first-time authors or people who were just trying to break in, or somebody who wants to publish their personal ancestry.com history. I know people do that as well.

**[0:09:32] FC:** Yes. So, people, they want to try something for their family, for their friends. Everyone is able to write a book at the end.

**[0:09:42] PM:** Deborah, you had a question?

**[0:09:44] DC:** I do have a question. I'm a little confused about something. Is Bronte Global Alliance something I seek out if I already have a relationship with publishers and I'm looking for a better way to service them? Or is Bronte Global Alliance open to people who want to become members, so that they can have publishers as customers? Or some form of both?

**[0:10:18] FC:** Depends on the strategy of the printer. It is the strategy of the printer because many printers are looking for new market opportunities. So, what I mean, normally, the relation with the book printer and with the publisher is for printing short run or runs, but doesn't matter, because the same to print 300 copies or to print 1,000 copy is the same at the end of the day. Because we have digital equipment, we can do it efficiently in digital, but at the end, I don't change the business model.

But the publisher market is asking for something different. So, what is asking? Is asking to have a really book-of-one opportunity, because there are many, many titles in the market, but sometimes we forget that the 80% of the book business is not related to new titles. Is related to

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**[0:11:19] PM:** That catalog.

**[0:11:20] FC:** The catalog, for example. But the catalog is not always available. Then, you need to have faster printing activities and a quick response if you want to follow them the market demand. So, this is a way where you need to have, as a printer, a very strong automation in place that is able to link your business, not only to publisher, but also to distribution or platforms where they can collect books, content, authors, and then can drive business to use. This is the way that you can play.

[MESSAGE]

**[0:12:02] DC:** Print Media Centr provides printspiration and resources to our vast network of print and marketing professionals. Whether you are an industry supplier, print service provider, print customer, or consultant, we have you covered, by providing resources and strategies that enable business marketing and creative success, reporting from global events, these podcasts, Project Peacock TV, and an array of community lifting initiatives. We also work with OEMs, suppliers, industry organizations, and event producers, helping you connect and engage with our vast audience, and achieve success with your sales, marketing, and conference endeavors. Visit [printmediacentr.com](http://printmediacentr.com) and connect with the Printerverse. Links in the show notes. Print long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUES]

**[0:12:57] PM:** So today, if I want to say I'm in Italy and there's a book that I know was written 40 years ago. Very often, these are academic texts that are written a long time ago. But all of a sudden, the topic is popular again. And as the author, I go to my publisher and I say, "Hey, can we print more of these books?" And the publisher says, "Oh, that's way too expensive to print three copies of the book." But if that publisher has access to a distribution platform, as you've

described, they can simply make that title available on the platform, unlock it, basically for print-on-demand activity, and then the publisher, I guess, would be responsible for marketing the fact that that book is now available on demand. So, there's a marketing component to the technology that you're bringing to the market as well.

**[0:14:00] FC:** Yes. I can tell you the experience that we have in our market because in our market, we are printing for different distributions. I can share with you, for example, what's happening with Ingram. We are part of the Global Connect of Ingram –

**[0:14:17] PM:** So, am I. My books are in Ingram Global Connect too.

**[0:14:22] FC:** Okay. So, if somebody in Italy want to buy your book, but where you can get it, you go to Amazon, you place an order, and we'll print it on demand. He is not printing on stock. So, daily, we are receiving order through Amazon from Ingram, and we are printing a thousand book per day of unique book, or two copies, just in case, and we are delivering to the final destinations. So, this is the way that we are playing, for example, with Ingram.

Or we have another experience with the Messaggerie Libri, that is the main distributor that we have in Italy. They have a more than 600 publisher, and they are managing in a traditional way, inventory, and all the kind of stuff. But then, for many titles, they need to have a virtual archive, where, if they collect from a bookstore an order, they can ask for printing and then deliver to the bookstore directly, without to have anything in inventory before. Then, you have a big catalog that is always alive, and then you can do business. So, this is the way that you can play –

**[0:15:40] PM:** If I'm in another country, say, if I'm not in Italy. I'm in the Netherlands, and I'm a distributor in the Netherlands, and I think this sounds like a really good platform, a way for me to connect with publishers as well as printers. So, how do I get in touch with you? Do I just reach out to the Bronte Global Alliance and say, "Tell me more. Tell me how to work with you." Then, what happens next?

**[0:16:05] FC:** Yes, if, as an example, you are in the Netherlands and you want to know more, please, you need to contact us. But then we need to discuss and find a good partner there

because it's clear that the book-of-one is something that the US bring locally. So, does it make any sense to print in Italy a book and ship it in no land.

**[0:16:28] PM:** True.

**[0:16:28] FC:** The price of delivery is higher than the price of the book at the end of the day.

**[0:16:32] PM:** That's true. Yes. I see that a lot.

**[0:16:36] FC:** Okay. So, it means distributors that want to be part of the network can contact us. We will find together a partner there, and then we start to share knowledge and see if there is a real opportunity to work with us and with them on this project. Okay?

**[0:16:56] PM:** And your printing side –

**[0:16:57] FC:** And they tell you another stuff, for example, about what we are doing for the Italian publisher today. Because we are part of Ingram Global Connect, we start to offer the new service that is called Global Exchange. So, the publisher, they have in our digital archive the books. They can also offer to the other countries because they are part of the network as well. So, it means that a publisher in Italy can offer a book through the Ingram network to US, and if they receive an order in US, Ingram will place the order to the US printer and deliver in US. It is the way.

**[0:17:46] PM:** All right. So, if I understand how Bronte Global Alliance works, you're the Alliance, and then your, effectively, Italian partner in the Alliance is Rotomail. So, Rotomail is the printer in Italy for the Global Alliance, right?

**[0:18:01] FC:** Yes.

**[0:18:02] PM:** So now, if I'm in the Netherlands, you can help me find printers that can do the kinds of work that you're offering. If I understand, Rotomail is very well-known worldwide. You're part of several groups of printers that work together worldwide. So, it's very likely that, through

your connections, you already know a printer that would be interested in working with a distributor in one of these other countries.

**[0:18:31] FC:** Yes. Also, because we are partnered with several vendors. We are partnered with HP. We are partnering with Hunkeler. We are partnering with the TechNow as well. Muller Martini. So, it means that in this kind of relation, we can find them –

**[0:18:48] PM:** They know where all the printers are.

**[0:18:49] FC:** – the printers are. Because at the end, you need to also have a good knowledge on digital, how to manage digital in the right way. Sometimes the book printer, not so familiar with digital, or they're using digital, just in case. They are not building their business on digital only. We did because we are coming from the digital space. But it doesn't matter. So digital is very strong part of the offer that you can give to the customer. And then also, at the end, it doesn't matter, you print digital or not. At the end, people want to have a book, and then today they can get the book with the same quality, with the same paper, with the same cost per printing as traditional technology. So, at the end of the day, it's important to get the book on time, the good price, that's it.

[MESSAGE]

**[0:19:55] PM:** If what you're doing isn't helping you grow, let McGrewGroup help you fix that. Better sales talk tracks, more compelling print samples, and winning workflow strategies can be yours. With decades of experience in transaction, direct mail, and commercial print, as well as years of marketing expertise, we can help with business and production strategies, CCM advice, and develop your content. McGrewGroup is ready to help you grow, expand, optimize, and thrive. Drop us a note on LinkedIn, or at our website, [mcgrewgroup.com](http://mcgrewgroup.com).

[EPISODE CONTINUES]

**[0:20:30] PM:** Deb, you've got a question?



**[0:20:31] DC:** I do. Here I am again with my question. I'm a little confused about something. Is Bronte Global Alliance sitting in between all of the members of the Alliance and the distributors and the printers? Or are you facilitating direct relationships? So, if I'm the distributor, I can speak to my printer directly. Then, how does that work? Because that seems to be something that most people are afraid of. Why won't that printer and that distributor go off walking happily into the Italian sunset without you?

**[0:21:12] FC:** Okay, Deborah. No, we are not in the middle of the relation. We want to facilitate the relation. Our idea, our strategy, is to build the network. For that, we need to offer our platform to the different players, but then we want to facilitate this conversation. Because to achieve this goal, you need a lot of knowledge. You need a lot of capability. Many book printer visitors in these days, in months, and they found that we are a very high level of technology, not only because we have a good partner as a vendor, but also because we have a very strong automation in place.

This is something that we can offer to others as our experience. Also, distributors can trust on this business model, because it works. Today, sometimes it's easy to present a good marketing idea. Book-of-one is a story that everyone knows from many, many years, but then everyone saying, "Yes, it could be very nice, but how it works?" Okay, come to Rotomail and see how it works, because we are printing one million books per year in a book-of-one model. This is the story they want to bring to the industry.

**[0:22:37] DC:** So, basically, it's the technology that keeps them, everybody together. Because otherwise they have to find their own or build their own or do something, and you're coming and you're saying, "Hey, we have everything you need in order to be the best printer, the best distributor, the best online order on demand, print on demand, partner for you." And they can or not tell people that they're part of the Bronte Global Alliance. That doesn't affect you necessarily, but that's the glue that keeps them with you. As long as you are updating your technology, introducing new things to the market that help them service their clients better, why would they leave you?

You have to understand, I'm American, so that's the first thing I think of, is like, how do you get out of this? Like, where's the trap door that someone's going to fall through at the end of it? But

it's not. We have a way for you to do this to your most excellent point, that has just been something you've been speaking about, and now you don't have to figure it out. You just need to become a member of the Alliance. Are there any criteria for that? Do people have to have a certain amount of expertise or customer base? Or they just need to be interested in the space?

**[0:23:59] FC:** No. That is not something that you need to have in advance. Repeat, Rotomail experience started in books 14 years ago. We start from scratch. And to achieve the result that we are getting today, it took a lot of energy, money, and time. Then, what we can say to the others that we can avoid them to do 14 years of experience before to be happy in the business. For sure, maybe it will take one year to set up everything and be ready because you need to buy digital if you don't have it, or because you need to understand how to approach the market, how to position real price, something like that. But this is the experience they want to share.

For sure, we have – our goal is to sell our solution on the market. This is the way. But then, we want to make this market grow in the strategy, everything that we have in mind, that is based on really automation. So, at the end, is really automation the key of the success of the market. High-end, for example. We came from the transactional business. There are many companies that today are playing transactional business, but it's a business that is declining. But they have a digital capability. They know how to manage valuable data. So, they have something that they can bring also in the book printing industry. These are other way we can support them to approve the market. This is what we can offer.

**[0:25:36] PM:** So, Francesco, I think that's a really interesting about the decline in the transaction printing universe and the opportunity to grow in another direction. Deborah, I think that that's a really relevant point for a lot of people who listen to us, that if you're doing something right now and you're already digitally capable, but you're watching your market shift, and it might be that the clients your serving are shifting. It might be that their needs are shifting. Books are forever. There are always going to be books. People will always buy paper books. And we see this in the data.

We see the global research tells us that very often when somebody buys a digital book, they also buy the physical book. They buy both of them so that they can read them whenever they want. Or there are still people – every plane I get on, there are people with physical books in

their hands. Yes, they could have an e-reader. They could read on their phone, but they don't. They have a book in their hand. I think there's still a lot of comfort, especially for trade fiction, a lot of the reading we do for pleasure, people really like that physical touch and feel of a book. Academics isn't going anywhere either. Academic publishing is massive.

In fact, it's become one of the really brilliant places where back catalog work starts to become really interesting as topics come back up to the surface over time. But also because in most universities, and even down to the junior high and high school level, a lot of the academic books are printed in a microformat, where instead of printing the 800-page history book, they're printing them in smaller chunks, and they're only printing what they need. You start to think about all the possibilities for someone who has the capability of printing books. Then all of a sudden, being involved with something like Bronte Global Alliance makes lots of sense, because it might not be 100% of your business, but it might backfill the business that has been declining for you. So, Francesco, I think that's a really excellent point.

**[0:27:49] FC:** Yes. Thank you. Thank you.

[MESSAGE]

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[EPISODE CONTINUES]

**[0:28:27] DC:** Yes, also, I mean, there's just so many opportunities with the digital marketing people who are just not thinking about books. I use this example all the time about Digital Book World and the fact that the major publishers are there, and they happen to have digital publishing divisions, and those digital assets are, some of them, become book worthy, or workbook worthy, or supplement –

**[0:28:57] PM:** Also, yes.

**[0:28:58] DC:** – worthy. Or, we only – here's a podcast series, but here's the story behind it. Here's more information about it. Those are coming in long-form books or magazines or supplements and things like that. So, being in the distribution system also allows you to, I think pitch your other divisions on things that could be books because you already have a way to do small, targeted copies of, I mean, productions of them.

**[0:29:34] PM:** Deborah, I think, sort of to wrap it all up in a nice bow, the other piece of that Bronte Global Alliance platform is their ePrint on demand. Their ability to take what they know how to do and plug it into a platform that already exists. So, maybe I'm a specialist in a certain kind of book, and I've already built a platform, but I really don't have access to all the content I might want to have access to, or I don't even have access to reliable printers that I'm comfortable with. That's another place that the ePOD platform can help expand the people that you have access to in the content that you have access to. It's really hard for smaller publishers to find new content in the volumes that they might like, right? People get bored if they go to a platform and they see the same four books over and over again, right? They want content variability.

So, this is another way to bring that kind of variability to a platform that already exists. For those of you who have digital publishing platforms where you're already handling certain kind of content, this would be a conversation worth having as well.

**[0:30:55] DC:** Yes. For new business development, everybody's going after the physical publishers of books. What I'm saying is that a lot of these publishers have digital divisions, and there are tons of digital producers out there who are just not thinking about books. This is a perfect solution for them because they don't have to do anything. They just have to send their file in and be part of the Alliance, correct?

**[0:31:27] PM:** So, Francesco, if that's the case, if I've got a digital file, if I'm part of a digital content platform, and I've got something that I've been doing as an eBook, but now I want the physical book, I can – as that digital content provider, how would I engage with the Bronte Global Alliance to make my catalog of digital content available? Just give you a call?

**[0:31:55] FC:** If you are in Italy, you can go to the Rotomail, POD Rotomail website. You log in, and then you can start to –

**[0:32:04] PM:** Upload your files and just do it, right?

**[0:32:05] FC:** – upload your file, and then let's do what you need, and then place the order, and it's in the order. Again, it's difficult if you are not in Italy, because then, to ship out of the country, is not so easy. It's nice if you place a quantity, big quantity, not the print on demand.

**[0:32:23] PM:** If I'm in Germany, though. So, let's pretend that you have a relationship in Germany with a distributor, and let's pretend that they have their website. If I'm a digital content provider, I could get in touch with a member of the Bronte Global Alliance and plug in that way, right? That's how it would work?

**[0:32:43] FC:** Yes. Then, stating for your example, if you are in Germany and you want to have a service in Italy, and then you're part of the Alliance going to the distributor, then you can get this book printed in Italy. So, this is the way that it works. The same for many Italian publisher that want to have something in Germany. If you have an Alliance or member are there, you can share the content. But it's important that we are not in a between. So, means that at the end, business is with the local printer, and let me say the publisher, smaller one, big one, or whatever. We are not in between.

**[0:33:26] DC:** Is it global, or is it European? We're speaking about Europe a lot here.

**[0:33:31] FC:** No, we need to build the Alliance. So, the Alliance is everywhere. I believe that is something that – we are in contact, for example, with the company in US, where we want to expand our activity. We are in contact with the companies in Latin America as well. At the end, drupa was a good moment for us. We have good leads and then we need to work on that.

**[0:33:56] PM:** It's the power of a global show. You get to talk to everybody instead of just a regional show.

**[0:34:03] FC:** Yes.

**[0:34:05] PM:** So, hopefully then, Francesco will come back at a later time, and we'll learn of all the new people that have joined the Alliance after your success at drupa. We'll keep a finger on the pulse of Bronte to keep an eye on what you're doing. We want to thank you for taking time to come back and talk to us again about the Bronte Global Alliance. Deborah, I think for The Print Report, this is a really great topic, and I know books continue to be a really hot topic for us. So again, thanks very much, Francesco. We really appreciate it.

**[0:34:38] FC:** Thank you to you for the opportunity to talk.

**[0:34:40] DC:** Everything you need to connect with Francesco and the Bronte Global Alliance is in the show notes. Just want to echo that I was looking at my Google Analytics and book production. Book printing is like the third most searched topic. I mean, organic search thing that people are coming to my site for. I mentioned this. It was getting topical in my LinkedIn group and was more about finishing there, but now it's about printing on my website. So, it's a very topical topic. Get in touch with Francesco. Until next time, everybody. Thank you so much. Print long, publish long, and prosper.

[OUTRO]

**[0:35:21] DC:** Thanks for listening to Podcasts From the Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through [printmediacentr.com](http://printmediacentr.com). We'd love to hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

[END]

### **Mentioned in This Episode:**

Bronte Global Alliance: <https://www.bronteglobalalliance.com/>

Bronte Global Alliance on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/bronte-global-alliance/>

Francesco Crotti: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/francesco-crotti/>

Bronte Global Alliance e-book: <https://www.bronteglobalalliance.com/demo-request-freebie/>

drupa: <https://www.drupa.com/>

Ingram Content Group: <https://www.ingramcontent.com/>

Messaggerie Libri: <https://www.messaggerielibri.it/>

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