



Starting from a blue-sky proposition, we found Quantiv's business analysts and technical consultants particularly helpful in highlighting issues and potential pitfalls so that the final product matched our business model.

**Phil Scarlett**  
Managing Director  
The Book Partnership



### The Company

The Book Partnership was created in 2000 when representatives from the retail, wholesale and software sectors combined to provide independent retailers with web-based systems to help them compete with national chains such as Waterstones, supermarkets and on-line stores like Amazon.

The company developed its first application to meet market demands from booksellers who needed up-to-date information on the latest bibliographical changes (including new releases), online ordering, order management tools and a fully functional website customised to each bookseller within a single integrated system.

Scalability was crucial for The Book Partnership, with a potential user-base of over 1,700 independent bookshops in the UK and Ireland. Each shop would need a personalised interface to the central system, which would allow them access to their own-branded website both in-store and by its customers over the internet, without significant overheads to themselves or The Book Partnership.

### The Business Requirements

The Book Partnership needed to provide independent booksellers with web-based, real-time information on stock availability from the major wholesalers. This would allow booksellers to place online reservations and orders with confidence, knowing that they were viewing reliable data on stock availability and lead times. More importantly, the company recognised the potential to diversify into music and wanted an application that could change over time.

When Quantiv started working with The Book Partnership, a bookseller's best source of data was a monthly updated CD Rom but, given an average of 100,000 amendments a week, the CDs were out of date before they could be distributed. As a result, customer orders were often delayed or unfulfilled - severely diminishing the levels of service independent booksellers could provide their customers.

### The Solution

Quantiv worked closely with The Book Partnership's management team to define and model the company's business requirements before mapping them into Quantiv's Business Framework. By building a model based on underlying business processes rather than create a solution on a project basis, the Quantiv platform could flex with the business. According to Phil Scarlett, Managing Director of The Book Partnership: "Starting from a blue-sky proposition, we found Quantiv's business analysts and technical consultants particularly helpful in highlighting issues and potential pitfalls so that the final product matched our business model."

The application operates on a software as a service basis and incorporates an automated customer ordering and order management system, giving each bookshop access to a real-time database of millions of books via a personalised portal on the Internet.

“

I feel like I'm in control for the first time ever. I could see at a glance exactly what each wholesaler had in stock and I had an edge in obtaining titles for my customers. It has substantially increased shop sales and added new internet business.

**Gordon Frankland**  
Hale Bookshop

”

Each shop can create a personalised e-commerce website and has web service capability to send and receive orders and invoices. The Book Partnership establishes and manages each bookshop client via central administrative functions within the system. It also includes an electronic data interface with major book wholesalers as well as data provider Nielsen BookData Limited to ensure real-time bibliographic data and stock ordering.

By running a single copy of the Quantiv application, with the appropriate business continuity features in place, technical issues, maintenance costs and support requirements are significantly reduced for everyone – The Book Partnership and its independent customers.

## The Benefits

### 1. Reduced overheads

Centralised management of the system and all supplier interactions has resulted in amazingly low overheads for the company and any modifications are quickly, easily and cost effectively implemented.

"There was only one choice for The Book Partnership," says Phil Scarlett. "Quantiv delivered a customised yet agile solution in an industry where no independent software package existed."

### 2. Increased revenue for the independent booksellers

The vastly improved quality of information and the automation of several stages of order processing has directly increased sales and saved on staff time. "Some booksellers have even been able to generate additional sales of over £100,000 a year through Internet sales – a significant revenue increase for a local retailer," said Phil Scarlett.

The service requires no on-site installation and runs easily alongside a shop's existing systems, making it very attractive to technology-shy small businesses.

As Cheshire based, Hale Bookshop's Gordon Frankland explains, "I feel like I'm in control for the first time ever. I could see

at a glance exactly what each wholesaler had in stock and I had an edge in obtaining titles for my customers. It has substantially increased shop sales and added new internet business."

If you consider the ease with which the internal and website interfaces can be personalised to reflect a bookshop's requirements and brand, and the bookseller's enhanced control over supplier-selection, prices and discounts, it's little surprise that The Book Partnership has been warmly embraced by early adopters.

Gerry McQuillan of Kelvin Books, Glasgow, said: "We believe that the system has given us the tools to operate our schools, college and library business more effectively. Putting us technologically ahead of other booksellers in our area, enabling us to comply and win educational tenders that have an e-procurement requirement."

### 3. Better stock management and control

Working with Quantiv, The Book Partnership has also created a scanner based stock management system for bookshops. This on-line scanning system allows retailers to scan:

1. deliveries from suppliers;
2. books as they are sold;
3. returns of unsold copies, meaning that stock can be managed quickly and efficiently.

### 4. Competitive advantage

Over the years, The Book Partnership has changed its strategy and added functionality to the Quantiv platform but has never had to re-engineer the data model. It has never lost track of an order and has been able to ensure its members receive the most up to date price and availability information.

The longevity of the platform is testament to the standard of the original business analysis and the way the process information was seamlessly transferred to the developers.



## Quantiv

Station House, Stamford New Road,  
Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 1EP

**Tel:** +44 (0)161 927 4000

**Fax:** +44 (0)161 927 4100

[www.quantiv.com](http://www.quantiv.com)