

Electronic Ordering

Macmillan Distribution supports numerous methods of taking orders from electronic feeds:

- EDI
- Teleordering
- Nielsen Booknet Web
- PubEasy

EDI

Although technically all electronic ordering comes via EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) this term normally relates to orders sent in a standard national (Tradacoms) or international (Edifact) format via a VAN (Value Added Network) such as BT, IBM or GIES (First Edition).

Because these messages can be used to order anything from a car, with all its options, to a can of baked beans the message format is complex and normally requires specialist software to build. Its advantages are that once a customer builds the message it can be read by any supplier without explanation.

Each order is normally acknowledged with a return message showing the status and the price of each ordered title.

Because of the cost of the software this option is restricted to large organizations placing tens of thousands of order lines per year.

TeleOrdering

Whitaker developed a system nearly twenty years ago to which bookshops could send their orders for any UK ISBN regardless of the publisher or distributor. A database, based on the Nielsen BBIP, is maintained which enables the customers order to be split and routed via EDI, Fax or Post to the correct supplier. Nielsen charge both customer and supplier for this service.

The advantage of this service is that the customer does not need to split his order by supplier or even know who supplies what ISBN.

The disadvantages of this service is that the customer has to use the Nielsen supplied software or write his own to provide the file in the defined TeleOrdering format. There is no order response as the service is one way only.

Nielsen Booknet Web

Nielsen Booknet Web is a new web based ordering service to front end the TeleOrdering system. Web users can place orders either as standard TeleOrders to be delivered to the supplier ASAP or as urgent one line orders direct into the suppliers order processing system.

The participating suppliers then update the web service with acknowledgement and delivery details which the customer can see from his Browser at any stage up to a few weeks after the delivery of his order.

The advantage of this service is as per TeleOrdering above but with the added benefit of acknowledgement and delivery information.

The disadvantages are still that it is chargeable. However, Nielsen have now introduced a new free of charge, low level entry for customers wishing to order via the web, but who want to take advantage of the teleordering system.

PubEasy

The PubEasy web service was developed by Macmillan Distribution as a means of providing information to customers by self-service. It has now been adopted by most of the UK and US trade publishers and has hundreds of active users worldwide.

The key to this service is that it is FREE. It allows customers to enter orders onto their Browser, as a result of a Price and Availability search; on an order form; or by Copy and Pasting from any other desktop application. There is also a facility for the customer to manage their own back orders.

Orders are acknowledged by Email and customers can track their order delivery online.

For more technically competent users a facility exists for text order files created in \Transact format from their back office ordering systems to be sent via the Web or email directly to our order processing system. These orders will be acknowledged by a returned text file, which could be uploaded to their ordering system.

PubEasy can also now be fully integrated with Batch.co.uk (the B.A. run web based payments and returns request system), enabling the customer to manage all their transactional based activities via the web and from one place.

The disadvantage of PubEasy is that orders have to be split by distributor and sent to that supplier's PubEasy website. The system can only handle orders for titles distributed by PubEasy affiliates.