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## **The UK B2B Information Market**

### **Limited growth expected in 2012 for the first time since 2008**

After declining revenues in 2009, the B2B information market began to stabilise in 2010 although there was still a marginal decline of 0.5% in total market size.

In 2011, the weakest market segments – business press and business directories – are expected to continue to face revenue decreases. Some limited growth across all market sectors is expected in 2012 for the first time since 2008 but, given the recent downgrading of UK economic forecasts and advertising expenditure forecasts, this growth could be quickly curtailed.

The ***UK B2B Information Market***, published by IRN Research on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011, covers trade journals/magazines, directories, business information services, and trade conferences/exhibitions. The contents pages from the report are included as an Appendix.

- Exhibitions and conferences plus business information services have been relatively resilient in the last two years and maintained modest growth but trade journals and B2B directories/databases have struggled as advertising revenues have fallen dramatically.
- Traditional directory publishers have faced a range of new competitors including new start-up Internet directory providers, search engines, and business networking sites but are now pushing ahead with digital strategies to combat declining sales.
- Trade journals have had to face competition from free and low-cost information sources and traditional publishers have been slower to adapt to the new digital environment. Most now have a digital presence but few have a clear business model to make money from their online content.
- Many of the larger companies are focusing increasingly on specific verticals and functions and are seeking to build brands across multi-platforms (print, digital, mobile) and, in many cases, across various types of information formats, e.g. trade journals, directories, and events.
- However, some verticals are performing better than others. For example, those companies with extensive content portfolios in sectors such as construction, public services, and retailing are facing difficult times but better performing sectors include energy, pharmaceuticals, and transport and logistics.
- B2B information companies are leaner after a period of cost cutting and internal restructuring and some have negotiated financial restructuring packages to give them some breathing space for the next few years. This has helped to maintain profit margins although sales have been generally weak.

- Limited growth opportunities in the UK means that more and more UK-based B2B information suppliers are focusing growth strategies on emerging markets, and particularly the Asia Pacific and Latin American regions. Larger exhibitions/conferences companies, for example, are expanding overseas by cloning existing events in new regions, acquiring events or events companies outside the UK, or launching new trade shows and conferences in markets which are still developing as events markets.

The full report, ***The UK B2B Information Market 2011***, is available in PDF format directly from IRN Research. 66 pages. Price: £350/€410/\$550

## **About IRN Research**

Established in 1991 in the UK, IRN Research is a full-service market research consultancy and a member of the Market Research Society (MRS). IRN Research has a particular focus on the content and information industry offering a range of bespoke research services, on an ad-hoc and continuous basis.

Recent bespoke projects have covered:

- Strategic review of the European company financial information market
- Market data markets (equities, bonds, commodities trading etc.) in Asia Pacific
- Market study of the legal conferences/events market in Germany
- Survey of the use of the patent information system by SMEs
- User feedback on Europeana, the European cultural heritage portal
- An analysis of the use of resource discovery services by academic researchers

For further information contact David Mort on 024 7642 1821 or [dmort@irn-research.com](mailto:dmort@irn-research.com).

IRN Research, Concorde House, Trinity Park, Solihull, Birmingham, B37 7UQ, United Kingdom  
Tel: +44(0)121 635 5210, Fax: +44(0)121 635 5211  
URL: [www.irn-research.com](http://www.irn-research.com)

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