

## **Streamlining magazine allocations**

The new i-Mag system revolutionises the way in which magazine allocations are handled by Menzies Distribution, resulting in an improved service to retailers.

The system, which went 'live' on 12 June 2006, replaces Menzies' previous Continuum Magazine Allocation (CMA) system, centralising the entire allocation operation at the distributor's Edinburgh Park headquarters.

i-Mag is a new web-based system, designed in-house by a project team. By centralising allocations to one location, i-Mag enhances the process which was previously spread across Menzies' 25 separate branches and introduces a level of consistency across the network.

The new software incorporates a number of unique functions which have been designed following feedback from both retailers and publishers. Balancing the needs of the two groups has proved a challenge, but here are some examples of features within i-Mag that will help to grow sales and reduce waste for both publishers and retailers alike;

1. Low copy protection. If the sales history would lead to an allocation of 2 copies but the retailer has increased their order to 3 copies following a request from a local customer then the system will recognise the increased order of 3 copies and ensure this is supplied. This is especially useful for orders of smaller volume titles with loyal readers and for Partworks.
2. Consecutive sell-outs. If a customer sells out of a magazine 3 issues in a row their supply level will be automatically increased. This will help the retailer meet local demand and test for additional sales potential.
3. Consecutive zero sales. If a title hasn't sold any copies for 3 issues then the supply will automatically be deleted. This will help to reduce waste and free up valuable shelf space for other titles that are selling.
4. Enhanced constraints management. This will help us tailor our service to specific retailers. i-Mag allows us to 'tag' specific accounts with a range of exclusions. For instance, one customer may not be interested in the introduction of new titles. Alternatively, a retailer may have no interest in stocking adult publications; if so, we can place a specific constraint, either permanent or temporary, for the retailer.