



IndieCreator: Insights from a Newbie Comic Creator & Other Industry Pros

This is a series of bi-weekly columns by Bob Heske @ Heske Horror, creator of [The Night Projectionist](#), [Cold Blooded Chillers](#), and [2012: Final Prayer](#), featuring interviews and insights from indie comic artists, writers, creators, distributors and visionaries.

14 Questions with Harry Markos @ AAM Markosia

Growing up in the UK, young Harry Markos was an avid reader of comics until his hormones kicked in and his eyes wandered to lovely lasses and soccer. Later in his adulthood, Harry met a friend who published comics in the UK, reviving his love for graphic pulp fiction. Feeling that there was a gap for books to be adapted into graphic novels, Harry recruited his publisher pal and lo and behold – Markosia comics was eventually formed. His timing and instinct were dead on as graphic novels have been the highest grossing films for Hollywood. Since Markosia opened its doors, Harry Markos has added titles such as *Starship Troopers*, *Beowulf* and, more recently, the Dracula sequel *Harker*. For the rest of his story, read on ...



1. Please give us the elevator pitch about Markosia. What differentiates you from other comic publishers?

(HM) You know, it's a tough business and we work very, very hard to do the best that we can for everyone connected to us. It's an ongoing thing and you can't really relax and leave things undone otherwise your life becomes that much harder. There isn't really anything that makes us stand apart from the rest; we're all pretty much trying to do the same things really, trying to stick around during tough times and to keep doing the best we can.

For a small company we are very ambitious and have many, many new projects in development for the next few years. When something new comes along, we try and get involved as early as possible and are generally happy to take a few chances.

2. Tell us about the re-branding you did back in 2007 when Markosia became AAM Markosia. How did your business plan change and what were some of the talent you brought on board?

(HM) The re-branding was just one stage of many that we put into operation to streamline the company and set into motion a long-term business plan. We wanted to have a number of trusted creators close to hand; creators that we trusted and had worked with previously, not just for the comic production but for generating work outside of the industry. Merging with the studio made sense for us and it wasn't difficult or stressful in any way. We still have plans for the studio for the future, and we hope to make some announcements towards the end of 2010 regarding some new projects.



3. With the global economic downturn, it's a tough market out there. Yet many comic publications remain resilient. In fact, more comics and graphic novels have been adapted into Hollywood blockbusters in the past 5 years than ever. Is the reason that most people really are escapists at heart? Or are comics simply the best dog-gone source of creative entertainment going?

(HM) I think it's a mix of both, to be honest. Comics to movies/TV makes perfect sense. They are ready-made storyboards and it cuts out a number of stages involved in selecting projects. If a producer likes a graphic novel, he or she can simply pick the phone up and start the ball rolling. The visuals are already in place and the whole process, again in my opinion, is simpler.

2008 DOMESTIC GROSSES

#1-100 - #101-150

< Previous Year				Next Year >				
Rank	Movie Title (click to view)	Studio	Total Gross / Theaters	Opening / Theaters	Open	Close		
1	The Dark Knight	WB	\$533,345,358	4,366	\$158,411,483	4,366	7/18	3/5
2	Iron Man	Par.	\$318,412,101	4,154	\$98,618,668	4,105	5/2	10/2
3	Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull	Par.	\$317,101,119	4,264	\$100,137,835	4,260	5/22	10/16
4	Hancock	Sony	\$227,946,274	3,965	\$62,603,879	3,965	7/2	9/7
5	WALL-E	BV	\$223,808,164	3,992	\$63,087,526	3,992	6/27	1/8
6	Kung Fu Panda	P/DW	\$215,434,591	4,136	\$60,239,130	4,114	6/6	10/9
7	Twilight	Sum.	\$192,769,854	3,649	\$69,637,740	3,419	11/21	4/2
8	Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa	P/DW	\$180,010,950	4,065	\$63,106,589	4,056	11/7	2/26
9	Quantum of Solace	Sony	\$168,368,427	3,501	\$67,528,882	3,451	11/14	1/25
10	Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who!	Fox	\$154,529,439	3,961	\$45,012,998	3,954	3/14	9/4

The stats speak for themselves, movies based on comic books make more money than movies that aren't. And comic creators are some of the most imaginative people on the planet, so there will never be a shortage of great ideas!

4. Who are some of your favorite storytellers and artists?

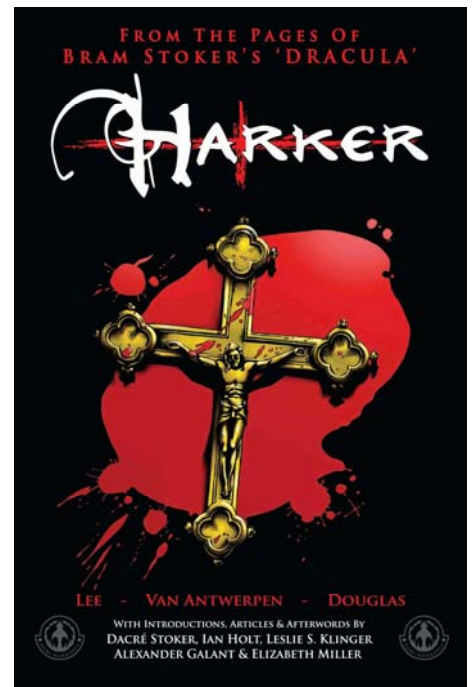
(HM) I'm a huge fan of [Garth Ennis](#). Any writer who can tell a serious and often scary story and include the kind of humor that he does wins my vote. My favorite artist is [Frank Cho](#). That man can draw!

5. Your new FROM THE PAGES OF BRAM STOKER'S 'DRACULA': HARKER series has an impressive team. What's even more impressive is that the graphic novel sequel is endorsed by Bram Stoker's family. Tell us how this project came about, how you assembled the team, and how you got rights to continue the story after Dracula's death.

(HM) Well [Tony Lee](#) and his fiancée, Tracy, must take the credit for the idea. I had discussed ideas for new projects with Tony and as soon as he mentioned *Harker* I was sold. He also contacted Dacre Stoker, Bram's great-grand-nephew who had just signed a publishing deal for a novel sequel, and the rest is history. We involved Dacre and co-writer Ian Holt from the very beginning, and they have both been incredibly supportive.

Tony's amazing script is brilliantly accompanied by the atmospheric art by [Neil van Antwerpen and Peter-David Douglas](#), who worked their socks off on this project and were as professional a team as any publisher could possibly dream of. I hope to work on many more projects with this team in the future.

Finally, we were fortunate to have endorsements from notaries such as [Leslie S. Klinger](#), [Elizabeth Miller](#) and [Alexander Galant](#). We feel very privileged to have had their support and are extremely grateful.



6. Anything you can tell us about the Dracula sequel being made into a film? How did you market it to the studios or did they contact you?

(HM) I can't say too much other than what you probably already know! There is interest but these things take time – much longer than people realize. If we sign a deal we'll be letting the world know, don't you worry!

7. You have established a stellar library of world-known, bankable titles – *The Lexian Chronicles*, *Starship Troopers*, *Beowulf*, *Kong: King of Skull Island*, *Midnight Kiss*, *Hope Falls*, *Serpent Wars*, *Dark Mists*, *Eleventh Hour*, and now the *Harker* sequel. What are your personal favorites?

(HM) My personal favorite will always be *The Lexian Chronicles*. It was the title that started things off for the company, the longest creator-owned title we have published to date, and I

have very fond memories of working with everyone involved on it. I have enjoyed every single title that we've published, have very few regrets on that count, and will always be proud of them all. Two recent books of ours in particular have given me great pleasure and filled me with a lot of shameless pride, *Serpent Wars* and *Harker*.

8. Which of these established titles will have significant, surprising story shifts in the near future? Give us a tease!

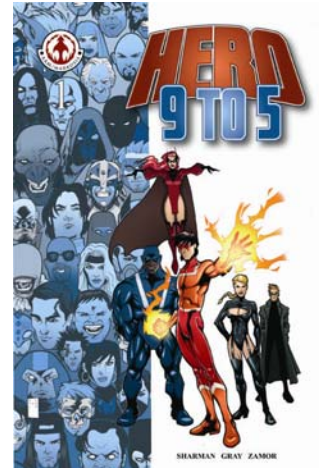
(HM) Well, that's a bit of an awkward one really because we don't have any ongoing titles at this time, our projects are mainly mini-series, so it kinda makes me giving you a teaser tough! Also, we have actually stopped publishing monthly comics, we now go straight to graphic novel format, which we believe is a prudent way of doing things at this time.

People have been asking us for a while now about certain titles we published returning with sequels. We get so many requests you wouldn't believe! I can announce now that we will be going into production in 2010 with sequels for *Dark Mists* and *Midnight Kiss*, which will please a lot of people!



9. Aside from HARKER, what new title do you think will be a breakout comic for Markosia in 2010?

(HM) I think we're going to have quite a few! *Harker* is already out, so unless we announce anything new about it in 2010, we can't really include that one. We have a number of titles that will be making debuts next year, including *The Dark*, *Haven*, *Hero 9 to 5*, *Freeman of the Armed Services*, and many more. 2010 is going to be a very productive and exciting year for us and I can't wait!



10. How's the web comic side of the business doing? What plans for growth do you have here?

(HM) Web comics are on hold at the moment because of the introduction of comics on iTunes and other digital platforms. We have a lot going on with the digital market; some exciting developments to come in early 2010 and another reason why I believe 2010 will be our best yet. The digital market is going to explode over the next couple of years and will form a crucial part of the industry.

11. I noticed you have several books on MyEbook. I love that site! You also have books on Wowio. How do you use "free comics" to build an audience and generate sales? And how do you measure your success doing this?

(HM) Well, with wowio we were one of the first publishers to be involved with them, and things were very good at the start when there were funds involved which came to publishers and creators

The screenshot shows the AAM/Markosia website interface. At the top, it says 'AAM/MARKOSIA Presents...' with a circular logo. Below that, there are three sections, each with a character image and a list of titles with page counts:

- Baby Boomers**: 10. The Dark Tyke | 11. Baby Boomers | 12. Inner Turmoil | 13. San Diego Scuffle | 14. Spornovoka | 1. Cage Match | 2. Playground Panic | 3. A Good Clean Fight | 4. Babe Nur | 5. War Vets | 6. Breakfast Storage | 7. Chili Con Carnage | 8. Babies on a Plane | 9. 300 Dark Girl
- Digging For Apples**: Book 1
- Starship Troopers**: Blaze Of Glory | Dead Mans Hand

alike. Unfortunately the bubble burst and things went south. But it gave us all a glimpse of the future, something we should be thankful for to them.

With [MyEbook](#) we have been involved closely with them from the very beginning and have a great relationship with them. They have some amazing features coming soon, including eCommerce, which again will help publishers and creators alike. The good thing about MyEbook is that everything is free for everyone! You can upload as much content as you want for free, read everything for free, use any feature you want for free, and it is a great format. MyEbook has a great part to play with regard to the future of publishing. The guys there have developed something that can't be ignored and will certainly make a tremendously positive impact on the industry. Watch them closely in 2010 and remember I told you!



The screenshot shows the MyEbook website interface. At the top left is the MyEbook logo with the tagline 'get it out there'. To the right is a Facebook integration box that says 'Add our facebook app to your profile.' and a 'Sign' link. Below this is a navigation bar with links for 'Create myebook', 'my account', and 'home'. The main content area is titled 'Book detail' and features a book cover for 'The Lexian Chronicles 3' by Markosia. The cover art depicts a character in a lush, green, fantastical forest. To the right of the cover is a metadata box containing the following information: Author: markosia, Added: 27 May, 2008, Last updated: 07 Jun, 2008, Category: Comics, No. of pages: 24, Views: 238000, No. of ratings: 13, Favourited: 11, Number of subscribers: 1, and Tags: comics, lexian, chronicles, fantasy, science fiction, scfi, markosia. Below the book cover is a 'Rate this myebook' section with a 5-star rating and a 'save to favourites' link. To the right of the book cover is a 'launch this myebook now!' button and a 'Link to, embed or share this ebook' section with a URL, an 'Add to my site' link, and a 'Share ebook' button with social media icons.

For us it is a great way to get people from all over the world aware of us and our books. We get great feedback from people and use that when it comes to selecting future titles. I've also signed a number of titles that I read on there for the first time, so it has been very useful in that sense also.

12. *It was recently reported on 20/20 that Howie Mandel suffers from OCD and has a wicked germ fetish, which is why he hand-bumps contestants on "Deal or No Deal". Fascinating! Are there any "did you know?" facts about Harry Markos that your readers would be surprised to learn?*

(HM) The only thing I will tell you is that I am passionate about soccer, especially my team Arsenal here in the UK. And that my favorite band of all time is Dream Theater, who can do nothing wrong ... ever!

13. *OK, this is an "IndieCreator" column, so our readers will want to know - what do you look for in new material - web comic or print - and are you accepting submissions now?*

(HM) We are always looking for new material. What I ask for initially is a short synopsis of the project, maybe half a page, nothing too detailed. I also ask for a minimum of six pages of completed artwork and a cover. If it takes my fancy, I then call the creator involved and discuss thing further, whereby I will probably ask for more info*.

**Reader Alert: So be sure to include contact info on the footer or header of every page of your pitch!*

14. Aside from your website, is there any other media where we should look for Markosia (podcasts, social websites, YouTube, etc.)?

(HM) We have the usual Facebook, ComicSpace and MySpace accounts, as well as pages for those who would like to see our books digitally:

<http://www.facebook.com/harry.markos?ref=profile>

<http://www.myspace.com/markosia>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/London-United-Kingdom/Markosia-Enterprises/36669536301?sid=abcd1d89b180492c6b1ff668a1b32179&ref=search>

<http://www.comicspace.com/markosia/>

<http://www.comixology.com/digital/publisher/54/Markosia>

<http://genusapps.com/store.html>

InvestComics Jay Katz's AAM Markosia Best Bets:

Here are some great AAM Markosia books to pick up ...

<Jay, give us your 3-5 AAM Markosia faves here.>

Don't forget to vote for InvestComics for "Best Comic Book Website" in the 2009 Project Fanboy awards. To cast your vote, [click here](#).

Bob Heske is creator of [The Night Projectionist](#), a vampire horror series by publisher [Studio 407](#) with film rights optioned by [Myriad Pictures](#). Through his Heske Horror shingle, Bob self-published his critically acclaimed horror series [Cold Blooded Chillers](#). Bob's trade paperback [Bone Chiller](#) (a "best of" CBC anthology) won a Bronze medal in the horror category at the 2009 Independent Publisher Book Awards. His "end times" anthology [2012: Final Prayer](#) was released on November 13, 2009. Bob's works are available online at Amazon.com Zaldiva.com, ComixPress, IndyPlanet, HeavyInk, SmallZone, DriveThruComics and YuDu.com (store). You can email Bob at info@coldbloodedchillers.com.