

# Indigo vs. UPEI

by Joel MEGGS

Indigo recently opened its doors in Charlottetown to the usual fanfare that greets new megastores on PEI. There has been much speculation as to what Indigo's impact will be on the retailing landscape of Charlottetown. Fears that a book superstore will put independent booksellers like The Bookmark and The Reading Well out of business have been lingering since the original announcement of a Chapters outlet.

But what will Indigo mean to the university community? One would think that the close proximity of Indigo to the university would suggest they're trying to tap into the campus economy, and that it's possible that the UPEI Bookstore would have something to fear from the arrival of Indigo. Eric Gallant, manager of the Bookstore, says Indigo and the Bookstore are really apples and oranges:

"[Indigo] does not pose a big threat to me or university bookstores," Gallant said. "In fact, I wish them luck."

There is not much overlap in the books that the UPEI Bookstore and Indigo sell. Students aren't likely to find their textbooks in the Indigo store, and they aren't likely to in the future.

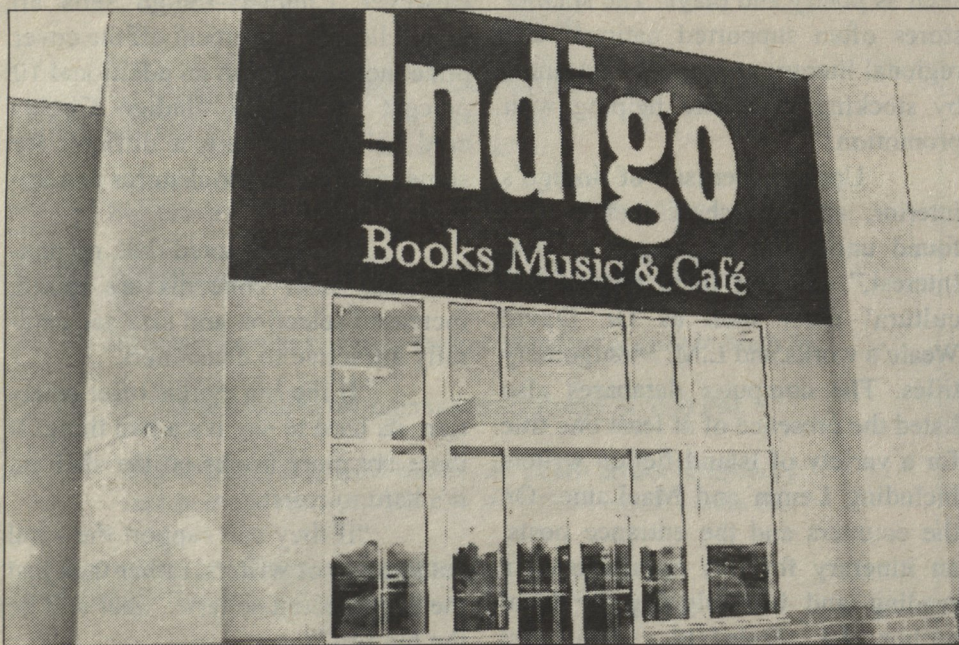
"Textbooks are not a gold-

mine," Gallant says. The industry standard on markup for textbooks is 20 percent, and since many texts are heavy, much of that is taken up by shipping charges.

This may explain why you can find many of your textbooks on Indigo's website, for order from their central warehouse, instead of in the store. This may be of little use to students, as the 10 percent discount one receives by ordering one's textbook this way will more than be eaten up by shipping charges. Also, there is a three to five week shipping period for most of these textbooks.

Gallant concedes that he may lose some of the trade book sales to Indigo, classics like Dickens or Shakespeare, but as trade books make up such a minuscule part of the Bookstore's inventory, he doubts he will feel the loss.

Gallant says that university bookstores are pretty safe for the foreseeable future. He sees the next real threat to university bookstores coming not from book mega-stores or their online counterparts, but from e-texts, that is, the delivery of entire textbooks on your computer screen for a fraction of the price of a hard-copy, but he believes it will be at least a few years before e-texts begin to catch on.

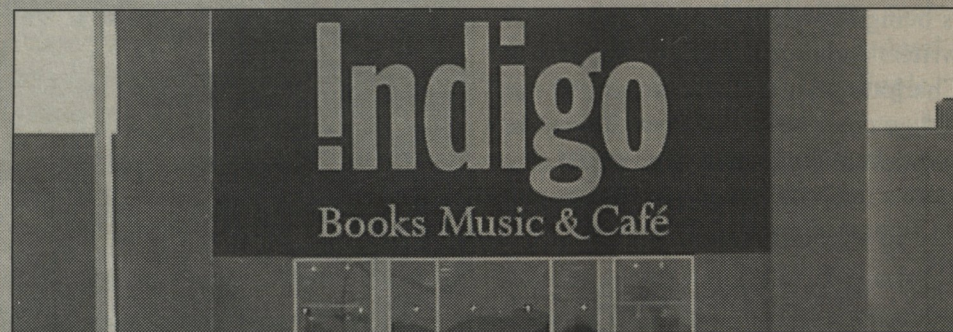


They should be giving us money for this kind of product placement.

# Indigo a-Go Go

A Review

by Jeff COLL (age 21)



Store: Indigo

Location: University Avenue

The first time I walked around the new Indigo, I couldn't help but feel a great sense of disappointment. After all, the store had become another addition to Charlottetown's growing collection of megastores, yet there seems to be very little "mega" about it.

The store certainly has more square footage than all of Charlottetown's other book stores combined, but the selection leaves something to be desired. Yes, there are a lot of books, but if you pay attention, you will start noticing redundancies. Table displays with books that can be found in other sections are set up all over the store, taking up space that could better be used for regular shelf space.

The sections themselves don't seem to have much more than a Coles or a Bookmark provide either. Instead of a greater diversity of books, you are more likely to find a greater diversity of editions. I can understand why it may be useful to have several different versions of translated works such as *Oedipus Rex* or *The Odyssey* (Homer is located in the Poetry and Literary Studies section next to Jewel), but I can't understand why there need be four editions of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* for customers to choose from.

Of course, Indigo is more than just a book store — there is also music and a café, as the immense sign outside the store proclaims. These features are limited as well, especial-

ly the music "section" which consists of two small racks symmetrically placed on opposite sides of the island of cash registers. To add insult to injury, the CDs contained on both racks are identical, leaving the customer with roughly forty CDs (mostly jazz, folk rock and aging pop groups) to choose from. I am convinced there are more kinds of candles (I swear you can smell them from Politics) than there are CD titles. The Indigo Café, tucked into one corner with the magazines, pales in comparison to the atmosphere that can be found at, say, the Starbucks in the Moncton Chapters. There are only two tables with two chairs each. The other seating options are the ten bar stools surrounding the service area. These are hardly the conditions under which one would want to sit, chat, drink coffee and eat cheesecake (at \$4.50 per sliver, I probably wouldn't eat the cheesecake in more pleasant conditions anyway).

The bottom line, I suppose, is that Indigo Books is not for starving English majors like me. Judging from the candles, the music selection, the price of cheesecake and the size of the Self Help section, this is a store for trendy, mellow and financially secure neurotics who can think of nothing better to do than to kill an afternoon book browsing and perhaps getting some of their Christmas shopping done before the leaves start hitting the ground. But still, I can't help but think that those people will be somewhat disappointed too. Only time will tell, friends. Only time will tell.