

6

Judging a book by its cover: e-books, digitization and print on demand

Shirley Hyatt

Introduction

When I look at the book, the image I see keeps changing. It is a bundle of papyrus leaves, a roll of parchment, a stitched set of pages, and a flow of images on a screen. Perhaps, like beauty, ‘the book’ exists only in the eye of the beholder – that is, each of us has a subjective notion of its essence, even though it is constantly passing through mutations.

(Darnton and Kato, 2001)

Seen from the perspective of 2002, it is clear that 1999 and 2000 were ‘binge years’ for electronic books and electronic publishing: news reporters proclaimed the goings on of authors, of publishers, of book companies; authors experimented with distribution channels and software tools; publishers launched e-book initiatives; and librarians evaluated, discussed and loaned e-books. Books had never before been so telegenic; new initiatives sprang up everywhere. Compared with the excitement of those years, 2001 and 2002 reflect an emerging conservatism, concern and cynicism. Among the e-conservatives

there is smugness; among the e-liberals, quiet. Some initiatives have been withdrawn; some authors have declared retirement, and several businesses are no longer with us. Nevertheless, we sit in 2002 with sure knowledge (confidence on the part of some, resignation on the part of others) that the next five years will bring great strides in e-bookmanship. New business rules, new publishing expectations and new audience expectations generated by a digital world are transforming the book world steadily and surely. Accordingly, this chapter examines some of the forces that are working to transform the book world that are affecting readers, authors, publishers, distributors, sellers and collection managers, and that will, ultimately, move books squarely into an electronic world.

Several components make up the electronic reading experience, so a few definitions are in order. The first component is hardware: one reads an e-book on a desktop computer, a laptop, or some smaller wireless device – tablets, personal digital assistants such as Palm and Handspring, handheld PCs, and dedicated reading devices such as the RCA Gemstar REB. The reading device may even be a learning toy such as the Leap Pad dictionaries found in toy stores – all referred to in this chapter as ‘reading appliances’.

The second component is software that facilitates the searching, navigation, font appearance, functionality and presentation of information. Most e-book companies require the use of proprietary client-side reading software to view and manage their books independently of the web. A few, like netLibrary, require standard browsing software to view centrally located e-books. In this chapter both types are referred to as ‘reading software’.

‘E-book’ refers to content that has been made available digitally and electronically. This includes text that has been converted from print to digital form, digital images, digital audio books and content that has been created from the ‘get-go’ in a digital mode. Their formats, the software used to create the e-books, and languages in which they are coded vary considerably, and the term ‘e-book’ encompasses all of these. E-books may be distributed via the web, by CD or floppy

disk, via an aggregator dedicated to e-books, by a publisher or author site, by not-for-profit digitization projects, via software-oriented download sites, or by a wireless connection from a mobile device.

This chapter is about e-books themselves – not ‘gizmos’ or reading software. The discussion in this chapter focuses on descendants of the traditional book industry, evolutionary offspring of that entity that keeps changing, that constantly passes through mutations, and that might possibly just be something that exists only in the eyes of the beholder (Darnton, 1999). Fundamental to this discussion is a belief that the e-book business – including authoring, publishing, library management, and reading – is not significantly different from the movement toward digitization that has taken place over the past 30 years.

Trends in authoring, publishing and bookselling

By all accounts we have reached a crisis in scholarly publishing. While faculty at research institutions ‘donate’ their articles to journals as a prerequisite to managing their careers, their institutions and libraries are required to buy back the work, in the form of journal subscriptions, at exorbitant rates. The exorbitant increase in the price of periodicals has forced libraries to cut back on their purchases of monographs. The cuts in library budgets for monographs has made university presses reluctant to publish books in fields where demand is weakest.

It used to be the case that university presses (and other small presses) could count on selling 800 copies of a monograph, and could count on libraries to ensure that their books would not be published at a loss. Today the figure is 400, often less, and not enough in any case to cover costs. These publishers can no longer be sure of selling books that would have been irresistible to librarians twenty years ago.

(Darnton and Kato, 2001)

As a result, some of the finest young scholars are finding it impossible to publish their research, though ground rules for employment ('publish or perish') remain unchanged. Eventually, it is surmised by some, the affected disciplines will atrophy from lack of talent able to prove itself in the traditional ways.

The crisis is equally telling in trade publishing. Book profits traditionally have been based on a serendipitous combination of best-sellers and front lists (titles issued within the past year), and mid- and back lists (that is, trade books with artistic and intellectual aspirations that were not earmarked in advance as blockbusters – principally literary fiction and serious non-fiction). Mainstream book publishers are finding it especially hard to make a profit these days, hard to publish and cultivate back-list authors, hard to maintain quality mid- and back-title lists. There are four principal indicators of the seriousness of this problem.

First, almost all of these publishers have been purchased by huge entertainment media conglomerates, who are suspected of inappropriately treating books as if they were a commodity no different from their other products. Some accuse these conglomerates of being too greedy, intentionally focusing on books that will be huge blockbusters, while ignoring cultivation of mid-list authors. Some quality imprints have been discontinued by these corporations, and author contracts cancelled. In 1997, for example, HarperCollins, a unit of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, announced plans to fold its Basic Books imprint into its main adult trade list; then in the following June HarperCollins cancelled the book contracts of more than 100 authors. Nevertheless, studies show that these conglomerates, including HarperCollins, are producing just as many mid-list titles, yet are actually profiting less per title than in the glory days of publishing (Kirkpatrick, 2000).

Second, in a tradition dating back to the American Depression intended to protect booksellers from the risk associated with offering titles that they are not able to review in advance, publishers permit full refunds for titles that do not sell in bookstores within 90 days.

Books that do not sell within 90 days are at risk of being taken off the shelves, and returns by chains have reached record proportions, spiking to 37% in 1997. This affects the profitability of books.

Third, in the USA inventories are taxed, creating a disincentive for publishers to retain stock. Books have become less of an asset to be stockpiled and more of a fluid commodity to be moved as quickly as possible.

Finally, with over 16,000 public libraries in the USA alone, the library market could shore up well-reviewed books that would otherwise have borderline profitability. Now, with the decline in library monograph budgets, these titles are much less likely to generate profit for publishers.

Entangled with the changes in publishing are the emergence of huge mega-bookshops and the demise of small, independent bookshops. Independent bookshops traditionally have a strong role in hand-marketing and selling mid-list books to the public. Independents complain, with justification, that they are being driven out of business by the large booksellers, to whom publishers have given favourable discounts. Indeed, independent booksellers in the USA reduced from 5100 in 1993 to 3500 in 2000 (Kirkpatrick, 2000). The American Booksellers Association, the independent store owners' trade group, successfully brought anti-trust suits against six of the largest book publishers for unfair competitive practices.

The mega-bookstores, with their significant negotiating power, levy payments from publishers for favourable merchandising. Displaying books on front tables, for example, may cost publishers US\$10,000 per title per store. The publishers in turn select only blockbuster books for this exorbitantly priced merchandising treatment, leaving fewer marketing dollars for mid-list books. Chainstore merchandising policies help turn consumers' attention away from mid-list titles and toward those elite books that are backed by heavy marketing budgets.

At the heart of the trade publishing crisis is a change in book merchandizing. Book publishers are producing as many mid-list books as in the past, and the new title count continues to grow. However, the

mid-list market share is decreasing, and its share of merchandizing dollar is dwindling.

Mid-list book sales have declined as a percentage of total sales and, over the last ten years, in absolute numbers as well. Chains, superstores, and Internet booksellers have made an enormous range of mid-list titles available, but without heavy marketing support, these books get lost. Attention in the chains and superstores often comes at a high price, and publishers are willing to pay it usually only in the case of obviously commercial books. (Kirkpatrick, 2000)

The problem for authors is less one of getting a publishing contract than it is one of getting the publisher's marketing dollars, which are necessary for being reviewed, put on retail shelves, purchased, read, and retained in print. Independent booksellers' voices have become fainter; and the dwindling of their numbers and share of book sales has hurt mid-list books, as has the dwindling library monograph budget.

Consolidation of journal publishers, consolidation of book publishers, consolidation of booksellers, and consolidation of book merchandising into a small subset of bestselling titles, result in a myriad of interdependent issues. These changes and the impact they have on books – the profitability of mid-list publishing, the cost-effectiveness of keeping titles in print, the need for alternative publishing channels, the need for alternative, cheaper, marketing channels for books – form the backdrop for a booming interest in e-books. These issues all have solutions that reside in the digital file and so drive the exploitation of that file.

In contrast to the days of print only, today there is a dazzling diversity in channels for information distribution. *The Wall Street Journal*, for example, produces its paper version (with local editions) and also a web version, a Palm version, an e-book version, and an Avant-Go (also known as web clipping service) version.

Concurrent advances in technological underpinnings of publishing, selling and merchandizing bring opportunities for the exploration and exploitation of technology. There has been much talk of authors and researchers taking control of the publishing process. In scholarly publishing this has come to be known as the Open Access Initiative or the Free Online Scholarship movement, and its aim is to make peer-reviewed research articles in all academic fields freely available on the internet.

In the book world the trend – if it can be called that – is towards 'self-publishing', wherein book authors either edit their own work or contract for their own production, and make their own books available using the web as an essential marketing and distribution channel. More often than not, the book is an e-book. Stephen King's *Riding the bullet* and *The plant* experiments jump-started awareness of this e-book authoring movement. Another striking example of self-publishing is Seth Godin's *Unleashing the ideavirus*. Godin wrote the book and made it freely available on the web. After a gestation period on the web, he made printed hardbound copies available. With web promotion but no advance capital, and with 28,000 pre-publication orders, his book was in profit within nine weeks of the print version's release (Abbott, 2000).

Dot.com companies have been launched to support this trend, and they offer a variety of services at differing rates; some mainstream publishers have launched self-help services for authors as well. Since the mid-list authors suffer considerably from lack of merchandising, this gives them a significant opportunity to market themselves if they have the energy, time and resources to do so, and without significant cash outlay. Many publishers, acknowledging the scarcity of merchandising funds, at the very least encourage authors under contract to market their own books as much as possible.

We already have a significant amount of cross-merchandising; advertisements from bookstores are, for example, substantially funded by publishers. With publishing now owned by media giants, there are new opportunities for cross-promotion and e-commerce.

The conglomerate publishers envisage links between their TV and film properties and their book content sites. Imagine watching 'Sex and the City', and in one corner an AOL logo comes on: 'Buy the book, click here' (Hilts, 2000). These will be convenience buys for consumers, and libraries may well want to find ways to engage in parallel opportunities.

Trends in printing, finishing and distribution

One cannot underestimate the importance of the ubiquity of laser printing, colour printing, digital printing and networking in today's environment. The number of printing machines worldwide, now at 10,000, is expected to double every two years at the present rate of growth (Kenji, 2001). Commercial quick-copy centres are a staple on every campus. Desktop computer owners routinely own desktop printers, and the quality, speed and prices of these have improved dramatically. Individual consumers have been printing on demand for years under US fair use guidelines and perhaps also illegally. Academic libraries have noticed steep drops in library printing recently, doubtless as a result of consumers printing within their own homes and offices.

There are several recent trade innovations as well: improvements in quick binding, and fast finishing. These technological improvements offer the potential for new distribution methods and new business models. A digitally printed page in 1988 cost 29 cents; it now costs 10 cents or less.

In the past publishers estimated the number of copies needed, then printed that number, then shipped them to distributors and then from there the copies were shipped to booksellers. The 'print and distribute' model results in significant costs for the shipping, warehousing and reshipping of books, and then the return shipping of unsold books. Networking combined with high-speed, high-quality printing and binding/finishing enables the publication industry to switch to a 'distribute then print' model, obviating the need for print

overruns and warehousing of stock. It also obviates the need for shipping, since printing centres around the world can be sent digital files. Print on demand, as this is called, is the ability to use a digital database and actually print from it a physical book that looks like and feels like a normal physical book.

The goal concept is that a person will be able to go into a bookshop, to a kiosk or a website, decide that he or she wants a book and have it printed on demand – in a matter of minutes. Today the book would have to come from a central warehouse, but in the next couple of years, with distributed computer processing technology developing as it has been developing, we will be able to print that book in a shop (or a library) and have it bound while drinking coffee. This is an 'inventory on demand' model. The independent presses have jointly negotiated purchase of some print on demand systems for their members. Barnes and Noble anticipates having print on demand capacity in its stores in a few years – but they will have manufacturing capacity for music on demand sooner.

Some publishers have discussed developing a huge central catalogue of digitized books, complete with the metadata needed to search for and identify works, facilitate print on demand worldwide, and (presumably) manage rights and administrative record-keeping for this shared, co-operative, print-on-demand utility (Epstein, 2001). This catalogue would interact with point-of-sale print-on-demand machines.

Print on demand, though it is often thought of as a single, monolithic entity, is actually many different kinds of machines and systems being applied in different ways to different publishing markets: educational and technical publishing, libraries, computer manuals, and now reaching into the general trade (Hilts, 1998). In the educational market it permits last-minute changes to textbooks to ensure that text is up to date with important discoveries and events. It also enables local versions where, for example, particular social issues may be viewed in a unique way. It permits instructors to create courseware customized for their syllabi and produced in paper form. In libraries it has potential to reduce the number of acquisitions the library buys;

fewer books need to be purchased prior to user requests, since the book can be made available in short order. In commercial and not-for-profit publishing it has potential to keep back-list titles available for new requests; a book need never go out of print. With the resolution of digital rights, print on demand may also have potential for the creation of customized books.

It can also enable printing books far from their original source. A book that can be transmitted over the web, and printed locally, can evade export and customs fees, and can also evade customs censorship. This is a critical asset in countries where cultural heritage may otherwise be lost and where cultural policing is commonplace. The Kurdish language, for example, is forbidden in Turkey. With print on demand, a Kurdish–Turkish dictionary has been created elsewhere and made available in Turkey – the print version, shall we say, of Radio Free Europe (Curman, 2001). The 1979 Iranian revolution was in large part fomented by smuggling audio tapes into Iran made by the Ayatollah Khomeini while exiled in France. A single smuggled tape could be copied and heard by millions. Today, other ayatollahs and politicians use digital technology to challenge the very state brought about by Khomeini’s revolution (Mahloujian, 2001). Words will always be a powerful force, and networking and print on demand expand their reach.

To summarize, printing on demand:

- offers a ‘distribute then print’ model to reduce shipping and warehousing overheads
- enables jumping borders to subvert censorship
- facilitates short print runs, which salvages the market for low-demand genres such as poetry, literatures of minority cultures and endangered languages, and print runs adapted to a highly specific and targeted market
- offers liberation of literature from the bestseller mentality
- facilitates personalized and customized printing, which is important among other features for accessibility

- enables an items to be 'always in print', or at least in print as long as the digital format is supported
- provides competitive benefit to independent presses.

Shored up by an available web-based catalogue of titles, the independent presses and mega-bookstores do not need a large book stock inventory. Print on demand also can contribute to compiling editions in a new way, reviving out-of-print titles, achieving cultural policy goals, restoring the vibrancy of small bookshops, meeting the needs of foreign-language readers, and bringing literature into the world at large.

The changing nature of book production and distribution is just another step in a long history of change in the book world. The book as an object has undergone innumerable metamorphoses, and so has our notion of the book. During the 16th century stationer-booksellers typically maintained workshops in which binding was carried out. In the next century these merchants served as brokers for bindery services, and the actual binding was done by independent master binders. Note that it was not the publisher who bound the books. Book buyers purchased loose bunches of printed paper (folios and signatures), and booksellers served as middlemen for binding. Indeed, for significant periods of history booksellers were legally enjoined from selling bound books directly to the public unless registered as a stationer. Purchasers could select common bindings – trade bindings, as they came to be called – or more sumptuous bindings such as silk and damask. The book collector chose bindings to suit his/her taste and income, or, as some did in the 17th century, to ensure that all their fine books looked aesthetically identical on the bookshelf.

Only in the 19th century, with the industrial revolution, did this practice change.

Although cloth binding as we know it was first adapted to bookbinding in 1823, 'a style of binding uniform for all copies of the same book' did not appear until around 1830, when

machinery was introduced to letter the clothbound cases that could be fitted over the printed guts of a book. This development ushered in a new chapter in the way books were made and sold. Whereas the bookseller would bind or have bound, by hand of course, only as many copies as were likely to be sold in the immediate future – a form of just-in-time manufacturing – with the advent of machinery the publisher itself began to bind an entire edition of a book in the common style of the time. (Petroski, 1999)

Books, in other words, were not entities defined by the publisher as a specified bound unit linked to a title. A bound edition was a function of the owner's taste and income – and interior decor – and not the publisher's predetermined construction. One cannot help but ponder the sameness of this business model and the just-in-time binding model we now face with electronic books.

Blurring of boundaries

With the rapid changes brought about by the digital file has come a blurring of boundaries in the division of labour that developed over centuries of technological advances related to the printed book. Authors are experimenting with being their own publishers. Entertainment and media companies are exploring new roles as book publishers. University presses are assuming titles that are increasingly under-served by trade publishers as a way of leveraging their core competencies and so becoming mid-list publishers. With print on demand, publishers are becoming printers, and printers are becoming publishers and binders. Publishers are also becoming direct book-sellers via the web. Libraries are joining the fray, and as they digitize items, collect and make widely known local collections via the web, they assume the publisher's role. Readers themselves, by editing and compiling works to suit their own individual needs, are becoming authors of new, singular, works and of anthologies. Authentic books

– books produced with the explicit approval and quality check of a publisher with rights to the item – blur into pirated print copies. Authorized copies of the electronic work may blend into unauthorized versions. Text, images, audio formats are increasingly synchronized or integrated, and books simply cease to have any boundaries whatsoever.

It is likely that all the specialists will eventually return to their core competencies, but armed with better tools. Electronic books, on the other hand, are here to stay. Networked distribution of an electronic document, with or without print output, has already become a staple of the information seeker's portfolio.

Despite the brouhaha of recent years about e-books, they have already made strong inroads into the information sector: it is commonplace for electronic abstracting and indexing databases to have replaced paper reference works in libraries, businesses, government and private homes. Hard-copy law books have all but disappeared; people in law firms do not use them any longer, relying on electronic books or online services almost exclusively. Online and CD-based encyclopedias have replaced or augmented bound encyclopedias. Desktop software, previously distributed via CD-ROM with accompanying paper-based technical documentation, is today almost exclusively distributed with electronic documentation. CDs have made inroads into many formerly paper-based book segments such as nature guides, tutorial products and self-learning. E-journals have made huge 'e-strides' in the past few years, and studies show that library users greatly prefer them. Computerized 'help systems' have supplanted external paper-based reference works. Websites of all sorts have replaced paper-based communications ranging from wedding and holiday albums to technical documentation. Apparently, as the paper and bound form of communication is eclipsed by an electronic version, the successor ceases to be thought of specifically as an e-book.

Trends in content, reading and e-books

Content, as ever, remains the *sine qua non* of the book. Ultimately a book is nothing without its content, and the content is nothing without some means to enable the human brain to interact with it. The electronic form of the book is simply one more modality that enables a person's brain and the content to interact.

When the codex began to replace the scroll, paper had to be improved, and binding processes honed. Basic organizational tools of pages, sections, chapter, and volumes, and embedded metadata such as title pages, had to be invented by authors and adapted over time. Never before could the reader flip through an entire work; never before did the reader have free hands with which to write; never before was navigation so enhanced as it was by tables of contents, indexes and page numbers. Storage containers had to be developed. All of this took time, invention, promotion and user acceptance (Chartier, 2000).

Several authors have discussed the adaptive change over many generations from 'intensive reading' to 'extensive reading' (Darnton and Kato, 2001). When readers owned only a few books, they read them over and over. When all sorts of printed material became available, readers changed their activity pattern, reading a text once and then moving on to the next one. Undoubtedly we are in the process of a parallel shift illustrated by our hopping from one website to another. Surfing is thought to be a right-brained activity, whereas reading words on a page is traditionally thought to be a left-brained activity.

The use and manipulation of books is not just a matter of immersion, but of scanning, clipping, bookmarking, forgetting, later reference and 'manhandling'. One study about how readers interact with texts has found that

scholars read relatively little of most of the books that they review for their work The introduction, a few pages to a couple [of] chapters, and the bibliography, footnotes, and index are browsed or read in some other books Only a

few books are read at great length They want to be able to flip between pages, to follow the line of reasoning, to move from reference to footnote, from index to text easily They feel that given navigational flexibility, speed, and design that takes advantage of interactivity, as well as substantial collections, scholars would increase their use of online books.

(Summerfield, 1999, cited in Hughes and Buchanan, 2001)

The irony is that, with all the transformation in word processing, production, digitization, distribution and presentation of information, books today are not all that different from 40 years ago, or for that matter 1500 years ago when the codex first emerged. Though digitization brings with it unique capabilities of separating the work from the object that supports its transmission, book text continues to be pretty much the same sequential material it has always been, with a few illustrations interrupting the flow of text. The electronic file remains a snapshot of the pages, sections, chapters and volumes of which the printed book consists. We are simply pouring post-print text into a digital container without restructuring it and without rethinking the medium for the powerful message the medium can be.

The possibilities of the electronic text should increasingly inspire us to organize it differently. An example of the possibilities is the elegant and intriguing electronic book *Midnight play* by Pacovská (1999), which translates a classic children's picture book into an interactive, kinetic, multi-sensory experience. A new wave of content can emerge involving new hypertext authoring, multimedia authoring, and hypertext teaching mechanisms. The hyperlink permits us to make non-linear relationships among sounds, text and imagery, and among an unlimited number of documents so organized. It is possible that writers and curriculum designers will 'atomize' or deconstruct the content and restructure it into personalization mechanisms to permit readers and learners to follow just that path that their personal cognitive style requires. Scholarly works can be layered, with a concise report on the top layer, followed by a second layer containing 'expanded versions of

different aspects of the argument . . . as self-contained units that feed the topmost story. The third layer would be composed of documentation . . . each set off by interpretive essays'. Subsequent layers 'could be pedagogical, consisting of suggestions for classroom discussion and a model syllabus . . .', and so on (Darnton, 1999).

Books are already being developed that rely heavily on the internet for added content; books that dynamically update themselves can also emerge. The accompanying danger, of course, is the spectre of e-books dynamically or surreptitiously censoring themselves and each other. Also, with the electronic text, intertextuality – interweaving of various texts – is easy. A unique rapport can develop between the author of the document and the reader: the author establishes the basic elements with multiple pathways and relationships, and the reader engages in a creative, cognitive ordering of elements. One might say that electronic writing adapts to our needs, while print adapts to the needs of mass production.

There may well come a day when the population looks back on the quaint period when scholarly documentation about dances lacked holographic references to the actual event, when pronouncing dictionaries did not pronounce, when readers had to purchase audio books separately from paper books, when one interacted with texts through keystrokes and writing rather than through machine-audible verbal instructions, when patrons viewed metadata separate from the item represented by the metadata, when books were not able to be tailored to the lighting, eyesight and dexterity of the reader, and when books did not afford readers a multitude of choices, interactions and opportunities to discuss, query and create.

In the literature of the e-book, there seem to be three main benefit strands that motivate the use of electronic documents. The first is convenience. Readers of trade paperbacks who also carry PDAs, for example, love the convenience of always having reading materials on hand wherever they are, for unforeseen reading opportunities. The second is the improved access and search/navigational abilities that the electronic document brings with it, including immediate gratifi-

cation via web distribution, full-text searching, and inter-relatedness with other reference materials such as dictionaries.

Third – mostly projected at this time – are the ways that the electronic books defeat the disadvantages of physical books. Loved as they are, physical books are far from ergonomically and aesthetically perfect: people with vision problems, fine motor co-ordination problems, and wrist strength problems have significant reading challenges with physical books; people who cannot bend down or reach high, or who are wheelchair bound have significant access problems with book stacks. Surprisingly large areas of the USA, and indeed of other countries, are not served by libraries, and many parts of the world are not presently served by bookstores or news stands. Only approximately 10% of texts published today are ever made available in Braille or as Talking Books, and they are only available some time after the book is first published for the sighted reader. Furthermore, Braille on paper and Talking Books on audio cassette cannot be used as flexibly as print or digital books. In short, neither paper, nor codex, nor book stack, nor traditional library are flexible and universal; none promote the vision of 'books everywhere, for everyone, at every time'. Electronic books and digital libraries, however, can hold that promise, and this is certainly a vision worth working toward.

Conclusion

Most currently created literature, scholarly or otherwise, resides in electronic form at various phases of its production. These digital files are exploited because various partners in the chain – from authors to publishers to distributors to collection managers to readers – need the benefits and features that are available in the electronic medium. Benefits include reduction of printing and distribution overhead, merchandizing advantages, print-on-demand opportunities, playfulness of the medium, and expansion of cognitive opportunities.

Electronic books have already made strong inroads into our lives. Digitized text has been with us more than 30 years. We overlook this,

and we lose sight of ‘the book’ when books transform themselves from paper to electronic form and as they become transparently integrated into our daily activities. Of course, we have not reached the future as yet. We still lack the regular convergence of those additional ingredients necessary to integrate the e-book into our lives with even greater regularity and consistency: effective, efficient, human-oriented search software that will enable us to locate texts quickly and with ease when we do not particularly know what we are looking for; website designs that enable us to find what we are looking for quickly, when we do know what we are looking for; portals that are reliable and well maintained; decision support; improved metadata; unique identifiers to distinguish one object from another; credibility mechanisms, to ensure that a retrieved text can be trusted and is from an authoritative source – to name just a few matters awaiting future developments.

Publishers will need a shared sense of the standards (formal or de facto) for e-book formats, and those standards will need to be compatible with the reading appliances and reading approaches preferred by readers. Rights need to be sorted out, agreements will be needed, and acceptable licensing and pricing mechanisms will eventually be determined. Much of that convergence is likely to come, over time, with patience and work. Nevertheless, the book itself will likely just keep changing, passing through additional mutations, exacting further changes from us.

References

- Abbott, C. (2000) Godin moves from e-book to hardcover p-book, *Publishers Weekly*, **247** (38) (18 September), 21.
- Brown, G. J. (2001) Beyond print: reading digitally, *Library Hi Tech*, **19** (4), 390–9.
- Burk, R. (2001) E-book devices and the marketplace: in search of customers, *Library Hi Tech*, **19** (4), 325–31.
- Chartier, R. (2000) Death of the reader?, *100-day dialogue: what has happened to reading*, available at

- www.honco.net/100day/02/2000-0531-chartier.html
(accessed 13 March 2002)
- Connaway, L. S. (2001) Bringing electronic books (e-books) into the digital library. In *National Online 2001: proceedings*, Medford, NJ: Information Today, 115–20.
- Connaway, L. S. (2001) A web-based electronic book (e-book) library: the netLibrary model, *Library Hi Tech*, **19** (4), 340–9
- Coyle, K. (2001) Stakeholders and standards in the e-book ecology: or, it's the economics, stupid!, *Library Hi Tech*, **19** (4), 314–24.
- Curman, P. (2001) Distance publishing: a world of possibilities, *The Book and the Computer*, (27 April), available at www.honco.net/100day/03/2001-0427-curman.html
(accessed 13 March 2002)
- Darnton, R. (1999) The new age of the book, *The New York Review of Books*, (18 March), 5–7.
- Darnton, R. and Kato, K. (2001) The bookless future: an online exchange between Robert Darnton and Keijo Kato, *The Book and the Computer*, (7 June), available at www.honco.net/100day/03/2001-0607-dk1.html
(accessed 13 March 2002)
- Dorner, D. G. (2000) Blurring of boundaries: digital information and its impact on collection management. In Gorman, G. E. (ed.), *International yearbook of library and information management 2000/2001: collection management*, London: Library Association Publishing, 15–44.
- Epstein, J. (2001) *Book business: publishing past, present, and future*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Epstein, J. (2001) The next golden age of publishing: an interview with Jason Epstein, *The Book and the Computer*, (23 April), available at www.honco.net/100day/03/2001-0423-jasonepstein.html
(accessed 13 March 2002)
- Fischer, R. and Lugg, R. (2001) E-book basics, *Collection Building*, **20** (3), 119–22.

- Forrester Research (2000) *Books unbound*, available at www.forrester.com (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Hawkins, D. T. (2000) Electronic books: a major publishing revolution. Part 1: General considerations and issues, *Online*, **24** (July/August), 14–28.
- Hawkins, D. T. (2000) Electronic books: a major publishing revolution. Part 2: The marketplace, *Online*, **25** (September/October), 18–36.
- Hilts, P. (1998) Approaching the point of no returns, *Publishers Weekly*, **245** (25) (22 June), 64–5.
- Hilts, P. (1998) On beyond on demand, *Publishers Weekly*, **245** (43) (26 October), 36–7.
- Hilts, P. (2000) Looking at the e-book market, *Publishers Weekly*, **247** (47) (20 November), 35–6.
- Hilts, P. and Lichtenberg, J. (1998) Redefining distribution, *Publishers Weekly*, **245** (51) (21 December), 23–4.
- Hughes, C. A. and Buchanan, N. L. (2001) Use of electronic monographs in the humanities and social sciences, *Library Hi Tech*, **19** (4), 368–75.
- Jensen, M. (2001) Academic press gives away its secret of success, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, (14 September), B24, available at <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v48/i03/03b02401.htm> (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Johnston, D. and deBronkart, D. (2002) Digital print is coming of age, *Printing and Converting Decisions International*, 39–41, available at www.podi.org/library/pdf/Printing_and_Converting_Decisions.pdf (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Kenji, M. (2001) *The book & the computer online journal*, available at www.honco.net
- Kirkpatrick, D. D. (2000) *Report to the Authors Guild Midlist Books Study Committee*, available at www.authorsguild.org/prmidlist.html

- (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Lynch, C. (2001) The battle to define the future of the book in the digital world, *First Monday*, **6** (6), 1–49, available at www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue6_6/lynch/ (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Mahloujian, A. (2001) A vital role for electronic publishing, *The Book and the Computer*, (3 August), available at www.honco.net/100day/03/2001-0803-azar.html (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Pacovská, K. (1999) *Midnight play: a fantasy theatre for young minds*, New York: Simon & Schuster Interactive.
- Petroski, H. (1999) *The book on the bookshelf*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Smith, T. (2001) *E-book evolution*, Public Broadcasting Service, available at www.pbs.org/newshour/media/ebooks/index.html (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Snowhill, L. (2001) E-books and their future in academic libraries, *D-Lib Magazine*, **7** (7/8), available at www.dlib.org/dlib/july01/snowhill/07snowhill.html (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Sperber, D. (2001) Reading without writing, Text-e.org, available at www.text-e.org/conf/index.cfm?fa=texte&confText_ID=12 (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Summerfield, M. (1999) Online books evaluation project, available at www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/digital/olbdocs/focus_spring99.html (accessed 13 March 2002)
- Vanilla, J. (1993) Print . . . on demand', *Communications World*, **10** (8), 34–6.
- Wilson, R. (2001) Evolution of portable electronic books, *Ariadne*, (2 October), available at www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue29/wilson/intro.html (accessed 13 March 2002)