

- 13 Douglas Adams: One of the objections to e-books of course is that people don't like reading off computer screens. That's not surprising. Books are usually printed at six hundred or twelve hundred or even twenty-four hundred dots per inch whereas a computer screen only gives you a resolution of seventy-two or ninety-six dots per inch. It's not comfortable to read. But that's just technology. It doesn't work yet, but it will. Stewart Brand.

Stewart Brand: As soon as we get anything like electronic paper, or there is a really pleasant surface to read electronic text on, it really is very quickly a, a new game. But at the same time, I think, people ... as these technologies rapidly move along, a lot of people don't want to bother with keeping up. It's too much of a nuisance. And so two things happen. One: they stick with what they know, which would be bound books, and the other thing is, they become, er, more in love with bound books than ever.

- 14 Douglas Adams: It's important to remember that the relationship between different media tends to be complementary. When new media arrive they don't necessarily replace or eradicate previous types. Though we should perhaps observe a half second silence for the eight track ... There! That's done. What usually happens is that older media have to shuffle about a bit to make space for the new one and its particular advantages. Radio did not kill books and television did not kill radio or movies. What television did kill was cinema newsreel. TV does it much better 'cause it can deliver it instantly. Who wants last week's news? Let's look at my bookshelf. Now, here's some PG Woodhouse, some Jane Austen. Well, I want those for life. Prime candidates for good paper and strong bindings. And next to it is a manual for a laser printer. Complete waste of shelf space! Put it on the web, update it when necessary, but otherwise don't bother me with it.

- 15 Douglas Adams: Here's Martin Eberhard, who has created a device called the rocket book.

Martin Eberhard: The book is in electronic form and delivered electronically, but you're not reading it on your computer screen, you're reading it in an a hand-held device that's made for reading. The rocket book, for example, today is the size of a paperback book. It holds about two hundred books at a time, allows you to download books electronically over the Internet in a, in a matter of minutes and a battery life that's suited for reading twenty hours on a charge, the backlight allows you to read in any lighting conditions that you can set, the print size whatever you like, and mainly it's a, it's very easy to use. You don't need to use the owner's manual ever. You turn it on and you read the book. I love the feel of an ordinary book in the right circumstances but it's not exactly pleasant to read a stack of ten books on the airplane with you, and I don't think that the mass-market paperback is really designed to give you that pleasurable feeling.

- 16 Douglas Adams: E-books will work if they're not only convenient to read, but easy to use and integrated into everything else we're doing. It would be a nightmare if for reasons which had nothing to do with technology, program makers compelled you to buy their device to listen to their programs. Peter Kumik of Sealed Media thinks this may be what publishers have been trying to do.

Peter Kumik: In the early days, and I think this is, this is rapidly changing, erm, but in the early days their initial reaction was, 'We can't maintain control on the Internet, so therefore we're going to have to think of another ki-, kind of device, that we can actually sell on, er, er, a physical device that we can actually sell, that allows us to maintain our interest and maintain copyright control. Many people have access to the Internet, many people have PCs, not many people have e-books. So therefore, if you launch a new book, er, your potential audience for that book is very, very limited if you launch on e-book, it's massive if you launch so-, launch on a PC.