

# Steal These Books Online

**P**AULO COELHO IS NOT THE LITERARY WORLD'S MOST ACTIVE Web aficionado, but he's certainly its most prominent. The Brazilian author has sold more than 100 million books, which include 14 short-story collections and the novel "The Alchemist." He has been a fan of the Internet since the early 1990s. He spends at least three hours a day online, writing e-mails back and forth with readers and posting photos

on flickr.com, MySpace and a blog.

Coelho's online activities also include a somewhat nefarious one: he likes to promote pirated copies of his own books. At the recent Digital, Life, Design Conference in Munich, Coelho told a gathering of tech-company CEOs, artists and de-

signers that since 2005 he's been directing his readers to an online site where they can download his books, in languages from German to Japanese, free of charge. "I always thought that when, at the beginning of your career, you strive to be read, you can't change your mind later and become greedy about it," he said.

Tell that to his publisher, HarperCollins. When reached by NEWSWEEK, a HarperCollins spokesperson, Patricia Rose, said the publisher knew nothing about Coelho's online activities.

With his announcement, Coelho is turning up the heat on an issue that's been simmering in the book-publishing industry for years. In supplementing traditional promotional strategies, such as book signings and reviews, with free downloads, Coelho is championing a model that is gaining momentum among his fellow, if lesser known, authors. Writers of technical manuals, academic books and fiction authors like the science-fiction writer Cory Doctorow have been putting their entire books online free of charge, with the consent of their publishers. Some authors claim that online publishing increases book sales by stimulating word of mouth. Publishers, for the most part, have been reluctant to endorse the practice for

fear that it will undermine their own sales and contracts for foreign rights and distribution. The trouble is, nobody knows what effect free online publishing has on book sales because there's little data to go on. "I think the Internet, for [publishers], is a very strange world, still,"

says Coelho's agent, Mônica Antunes, in Barcelona. "They can't make up their minds whether it's good or not good."

Whereas most authors who embrace online publishing do so openly, Coelho had been deftly hiding behind the anonymity of the digital world. Rather than publishing the books himself, Coelho is harnessing his sizable community of Net-savvy fans, who scan copies of his books and put them up for download to his site. He pays 10 fans scattered across France, Spain, Brazil, Russia and Turkey to help gather versions of his books from BitTorrent, eMule and other sites. Visitors to his blog can click on an image of Coelho, resplendent in a neatly trimmed white beard,

scarf and eye patch (he resembles an affable buccaneer in real life as well) and continue on to the site. Although the copyright for the translations belongs to the various publishing houses he works with, Coelho owns all the digital rights to his work, save for his contract for English editions with HarperCollins.

These online activities, Coelho believes, have only increased his already healthy sales. His fans have downloaded complete editions of his books, in languages ranging from Spanish to Swedish, more than 20 million times in the past seven years. By publishing online, he says, "you give the reader the possibility of reading books and choosing whether to buy it or not."

Since his surprise at the conference on Jan. 20, Coelho has yet to hear from the publisher. "So far, no reaction," Coelho says.



**Paulo Coelho is championing a book-promotion model that is gaining momentum among fellow, if lesser known, authors.**

## HOLOGRAMS

# Pictures That Move In 3-D

**I**N 1947, HUNGARIAN-British scientist Dennis Gabor was tinkering with ways to improve the resolution of the electron microscope when he accidentally invented the hologram. The feat won him a Nobel, but since then nobody has been able to figure out how to make the holographic version of a motion picture—holograms have remained static. Recently, however, researchers at the University of Arizona in Tucson wrote in the journal *Nature* that they have created an updatable holographic film, made of a unique blend of polymers that allows images to be stored, erased and replaced with new images every few minutes. That's too slow for Hollywood but fast enough for a host of new applications, says laser scientist and lead author Nasser Peyghambarian. Doctors could perform keyhole surgery guided by MRI images in 3-D. Soldiers could watch battlefield images from many different angles at once. The next step is to cut the time needed to refresh the 3-D image from minutes to milliseconds, leading to holographic TV or videogames.

—CHRISTOPHER FLAVELLE



**IN 3-D:** A image of Kate Moss