The Future of the Book | Volume 1

The Future of Publishing

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About the Project

How will people read in the future? What will books look and feel like? How will publishers adjust in the face of technological upheaval? In what new ways will authors engage with their readers? Sprint Beyond the Book, a project of Arizona State University's Center for Science and the Imagination, explores the future of the book from writing, editing and publishing to reading, analyzing and archiving.

We want to imagine the future of collaborative authorship and publishing by doing it. So we staged a series of three book sprints. At each sprint, a diverse group of scholars, technologists, novelists, journalists, publishers, designers and futurists collectively write, edit and assemble a book about the future of the book in just 48 or 72 hours.

Volume 1: The Future of Publishing
Frankfurt Book Fair, Frankfurt, Germany
October 9-11, 2013

Volume 2: Knowledge Systems
Center for Science and the Imagination,
Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ
February 6-7, 2014

Volume 3: The Future of Reading
Center for the Study of the Novel,
Stanford University, Stanford, CA
May 12-14, 2014

The book sprints are designed to recast publishing as an intensely social, collaborative and performative process. Alongside the main text, each book features video interviews with authors and other experts, photos of the collaborative process, and crowdsourced text collected through our website, SprintBeyondtheBook.com. To share your thoughts on the future of the book and become a co-author, visit the website and create an account.

All of our content is free to read at http://sprintbeyondthebook.com, and free to download and share under a Creative Commons license.

Edited by Ed Finn

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Imagination at Arizona State University, introduces
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http://sprintbeyondthebook.com/section-of-book

Introduction

Welcome to the future of the book! The volume you are reading is an experiment in writing and publishing as a kind of performance. The majority of the text and media in this collection is being created at a three-day book sprint on the floor of the Frankfurt Book Fair October 9 to 11, 2013. A small band of writers, publishers, scholars, and journalists is gathering to tackle a series of questions all drawn from one central challenge: to imagine the future of publishing.

The project is inspired by many antecedents. We have been imagining futures for the written word since its very inception. Plato pitted Socrates against the debilitating effects of writing in the *Phaedrus* (360 B.C.E.), envisioning a future where orators could not remember their own speeches. Vannevar Bush's **Memex** (1945) presaged the information economy with a device that merged the encyclopedia and the microfilmreader into a steel desk with the aesthetic lines of a *Star Wars* battle station. Umberto Eco **memorably argued** that many of these thought experiments pursue the logic of Victor Hugo's "ceci tuera cela": in *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), it was the book that would kill the cathedral (1994).

Our mission here is to ask this question in a new frame, exploring the full potential of digital platforms to reinvent the practices of reading, writing, and criticism. We are guided by a central recognition that a good book is a kind of performance between an author and her readers, and that such books become destinations in their own right, spaces that we come to inhabit for years at a time.

Perhaps this makes our experiment a little more understandable: we want to imagine the future of books by doing it, in three days, using tools accessible to anyone. To make it work we're going to need some fresh thinking, a sense of optimism and, most of all, your help. This book sprint is a collaboration with everyone who contributes to the project on our website, **sprintbeyondthebook.com**, as well as those who come up to say hello and share their thoughts in Frankfurt. Won't you join us?

Opening
Reflections

Jane Friedman, Web Editor for the Virginia Quarterly Review, is based at the University of Virginia, where she also teaches digital publishing and online writing. Former publisher of Writer's Digest. Her newest digital media initiative is Scratch Magazine, a quarterly magazine all about the intersection of writing and money.

I am here because, as much as my career has revolved around the reading, writing, and publishing of books, the book, as a content delivery mechanism (whether print or digital), has limitations. The book, in fact, has become very disappointing in comparison with other things I can learn, do, and experience through other mediums. While the book has become a shadow of its former self partly because of how often the form has been exploited and overproduced for profit (for the slightest and most banal of ideas), mostly I just see it as a less compelling way – even a last resort – for sharing ideas. I would rather attend a conference, I would rather read and write online articles, I would rather interact on social media (the horror!).

It doesn't have to be this way. I still thrill at reading a beautifully written passage that fundamentally shifts how I see myself and the world – something that reminds me that most of what I know and believe has in fact come from a lifetime of unforgettable long-form reading experiences. In fact, every one of my major life changes can be traced back to a very influential book.

But the basic physical form of a book, as well as its direct digital corollary, the e-book, has not been successfully integrated into the larger digital network we are all immersed in. I ponder this question every day: Does the book belong apart, or outside of this network, for a focused and sustained reading experience that is quiet and solitary, demanding reflection? Or does it belong inside the stream? Or perhaps it exists in both places at once, and we shift modes based on need and desire.

When I attend writers' conferences, I often tell writers to think beyond the book, to think instead of the story or message they wish to share, rather than focusing on a particular container. There has been so much aspirational focus on writing and publishing a book without consideration for the many other ways we can share ideas in the digital age. I am here to think more deeply about the purpose of the book (to question its very definition) and to explore its place in the ecosystem of ideas, communication, and collaboration.

Dan Gillmor, author and professor at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, is a regular contributor to The Guardian and Mediactive.

I've joined the Sprint Beyond the Book in Frankfurt for two main reasons. First, as a writer who's been trying to push boundaries for years, I'm keen to learn more about where authoring, publishing, and reading (all in the broadest sense) are heading as we evolve away from our traditional manufacturing models. Second, I'm sitting at a table with authors and thinkers I admire.

The word I find most useful in this context is "ecosystem." As Charlie Stross put it in our first brainstorming session, a basic function of a book is to convey ideas from an author's brain to the brains of the readers. One of my goals here is to start to sort out the ecosystem(s) that will make that happen in years and decades to come.

Going "beyond the book" means asking all kinds of questions. I suspect the most important one is this: "In a digital age, what is a book?" But it's only one of dozens we've considered already.

Novelists can answer the "what is a book" question more easily than other authors. Novelists write self-contained entities that start here and end there, and they usually create a single edition that doesn't evolve beyond sequels. I'd imagine that historians are in similar positions, though they always know that new documents and other interpretations may alter the conclusions they've reached.

The books I write – and especially the one I'm working on now – are much more difficult to pigeonhole. Much of what I write is about topics that change rapidly and dramatically. My **first book,** almost a decade old, is wildly out of date. My **last book** is less so only because I decided to play down the technologies that change so fast and concentrate on principles that remain more or less constant.

The lines blur even more when we think about media in a more generalized way. The EPUB format, for example, offers all kinds of ways to enhance and extend text. When does a video-laden book become a series of videos with text annotation? Do links turn books into web pages? If a reader can make choices about where a book goes next, is it a game?

I'm especially hoping to explore how we can turn some kinds of books into living documents that have at least these properties: a) great authoring tools to use all kinds of media, including social tools for collaboration with audiences; b) fast updating to reflect changing circumstances; c) better interaction and annotation for readers; and d) financial models to support them.

I also hope we can thrash out the ecosystem issue. The people and institutions in the ecosystem include authors at the center, as well as editors, designers, agents (literary and speaking), and many others. The traditional methods and institutions still work well for best-selling authors, but for almost no one else.

I'm tempted to say, "let's hack publishing." Too late: It's been happening for years. But we're in the early days, which means the experiments – in writing, reading, producing, and selling – have only just begun.

Charlie Stross is a science fiction writer and contributor to Foreign Policy magazine. The author of six Hugo-nominated novels and winner of the 2005 and 2010 Hugo awards for best novella, he has won numerous other awards and his work has been translated into at least 12 other languages.

I'm Charlie Stross. I write for a living, but I've got a dirty little secret: I don't understand books.

Books: a tool for conveying information – normally (but not exclusively) textual and pictorial information – from one person's head to another's. They're not the only such tool, and they evolved iteratively from earlier forms. Clay or wax tablets, and bundles of leaves or tree bark, gave way to parchment scrolls and then, via Johannes Gutenberg, to bundles of "signatures" – big sheets of paper printed with text and pictures, folded and stitched and then cut along three edges – bound between leather or cloth or board covers. We've been refining the design and manufacture of these physical objects for hundreds of years.

Most recently, with the development of high capacity data storage media and low power/high resolution display panels, we've come up with machines that let us read and display text and graphics without needing the bulky, heavy lumps of bound paper. A 500 page hardback novel weighs roughly 650 grams; it contains up to 1MB of textual data. This was a remarkably compact form of information storage back in the day, but in the past couple of decades it has come to seem laughably restrictive. My iPad weighs the same as that hardback, but has roughly 64,000 times its data storage capacity – potentially enough to store an entire library. Moreover, digital data is searchable and (in principle) mechanically indexable. (Don't mention this to a professional indexer, though, unless you enjoy being mocked; indexing is a highly skilled specialty, and one that is in danger of being destroyed by the reductionist assumptions of the software developers who build "just good enough" indexing tools into word processors.) Digression aside, what does it mean for the function of a book, the transfer of information from an author's mind into a reader's, when the book becomes an easily transferable chunk of data not bound to a physical medium?

We talk of publishing books, but there are many kinds of business that call themselves "publishing." The trade fiction industry is structured and operates along radically different lines from peer-reviewed scientific journals, academic textbooks, dictionaries, map-makers, and graphic novels. All of these industries have the core function in common – transferring textual or graphical ideas between minds – and all of them traditionally ran on ink-on-paper printing, but the source material, editorial processes, marketing, and distribution channels are so radically different as to be nearly unrecognizable. An innovation in production that disrupts and revolutionizes one publishing industry sector may be irrelevant, inapplicable, or laughable to another. They may even surface in an unrecognizable form: the academic paper public pre-print service provided by arXiv.org bears an odd resemblance to some

of the urban fantasy/media fanfic aggregator websites if you squint at it in the right light – the workflow of submitting an astrophysics paper to arXiv.org is eerily similar to that for submitting a *Harry Potter* fanfic to **fanfiction.net**.

We think of authors, especially authors of fiction, as being creative monoliths who have total control over the cultural artifact they produce – the mechanism for transferring ideas from Head A into Head B – but that's not actually the case. Some authors write using an amanuensis or secretary. Some authors collaborate. Their manuscripts are then edited – both substantially, by an editor who reviews the structure and content and suggests changes or even re-writes sections, and at the copy level, by a copy editor who enforces syntactic and grammatical consistency and corrects spelling errors. The author may not be responsible for the final title of their work; they are almost certainly not responsible for the cover or other marketing adjuncts. Authors work as part of

a complex ecosystem that exists to generate inputs compatible with the production pipeline that results in physical books.

Again, we need to ask: how does the shift to books-as-data affect the processes by which books are created? Are some specialties or workflows no longer needed? Are other, new techniques required? The transition from hot lead typesetting in the 1980s rendered human typesetters' skills obsolete but opened up new roles in layout and design for the more forward-looking professionals in that sector (which, while heavily automated by Desktop Publishing (DTP) applications, nevertheless raised standards of book production quality across the board after the initial excesses of the "I've got a font so I'm going to use it!" school subsided). What is the equivalent of the hot metal typesetter to DTP transition, and what new skills and specialties is it going to generate?

I've been writing on this subject for most of an hour, and I've barely begun to scratch the surface. Two decades ago, in 1993, I thought I

pretty much understood what a book was; now, in 2013, I'm far less certain, because the book has acquired a strange, shimmering, protean nature. Books are changing. And I'm here to take a look at how and why, and what they might look like a couple of decades hence.

Brian David Johnson, Futurist at Intel Corporation is an author of nonfiction, short stories and novels, including Vintage Tomorrows and Science Fiction Prototyping: Designing the Future with Science Fiction.

What is the Future of _____?
A Cautionary Tale

What is the future of publishing? How will people read in the future? How will people find new books to read in the future? How will books be produced in the future, and who will produce them? How will books be written and edited in the future? How will the concept of the book evolve in the future? What will the economics of authorship be in the future? In what new ways will authors engage with their readers?

These are all wonderful and engaging questions. But before we begin searching for examples of the future happening today, let's start with a cautionary tale. The future is a tricky thing….

I Upset a Room Full of Journalists

It was my first time in Oslo, Norway and I was super excited. My father's family actually comes from the city. I emailed Dad before I left and asked him to send me a list of the ancestors that lived there. I arrived on a cold clear day and took a walk around to get my bearings.

I had come to Oslo to talk about the future of entertainment and computing to a group of journalists, business leaders and students. I arrived a day early to prepare for the talk and take in a few sights. The harbor and downtown were lovely. The sun was out and the Norwegians were not shy about soaking up every little bit of it. They laid around like well-dressed seals on the steps and piers of the manicured harbor, sunning themselves and chatting. But the most exciting part of my trip was the cemetery.

Vår Frelsers graveyard is set in the middle of the city. Edvard Munch and Henrik Ibsen are both buried among its rolling hills. I crept around the gravestones with my father's list of names in my hand, searching for ancestors. It was a bit haphazard. I didn't really do my prep work, but it was exciting to wind my way through the lovely ground looking for familiar names. I found a few Johnsons and a few Johansens, but no exact matches.

The next day I rose bright-eyed and ready to meet the Norwegians. On stage I started by reading out the names of the ancestors that my father had given me, asking anyone who knew them to raise their hand. That slayed them. They loved it and laughed the entire time, but no luck – nobody raised their hand.

During the question and answer session, a tall, thin journalist with blond hair asked me, "What happens when the machines get too smart? Do you see a future where we humans might be at risk?"

I smiled and replied, "I'm an optimist. You see…."

"You're an optimist?" the reported stopped me. He seemed shocked and began to write furiously.

"Yes," I said. "The future isn't an accident. I believe the future is made every day by the actions of

people. And if that's true, then why would we build a future that is bad? How about we build a future that is awesome?"

"But how can you be a futurist and an optimist?" another reporter asked. I had clearly hit a nerve.

"I'm an optimist because I choose to be an optimist," I answered. "I believe you have to make a decision about your point of view, and I made the decision to be an optimist and to try to build the best future possible." This turned out to be the most radical statement I've ever made as a futurist.

"But what about the rapid advance of technology?" the first journalist asked. "Don't you think that things are moving so quickly that we can't possibly keep control of the machines?"

"I don't think technology is moving that fast," I explained. "I live my life 10 to 15 years in the future. From that perspective, that rapid progression isn't so drastic. The dirty little secret about the future is that it's going to look a lot like today." The place instantly became a madhouse.

"How can you say that the future is going to look a lot like today?" A third journalist stood up, recorder in hand. "You are a futurist. Do you really mean to say that the future will look like today?"

"That's exactly what I mean. The look of the future doesn't change all that much," I started.

"But…" the third journalist tried to break in.

"The world around us doesn't change that fast," I kept going. I knew that I had a perfect example to make my point.

"Look: we are here in your lovely city. There are buildings in this city that are older than my entire country. Of course the future will look like today. And the reason is that people don't want it to change that fast. If you woke up tomorrow and your entire world had been transformed into a science fiction future, you'd be living a nightmare."

The room erupted into laughter. Two of the journalists sat down with smiles on their faces. The third still looked a little upset.

The hardest thing about being a futurist and doing the serious work of futurecasting is something called metacognition. This is simply thinking about thinking. It's what many people think makes us individuals, and what makes us human. But the hardest thing about my job is thinking about thinking about the future.

As we begin to think about the future of books, publishing, narrative and how we act and interact with each other, let's be careful not to Jetson-ize our visions for the future too much. Let's make sure to embrace the inexorable complexity of people and cultures. Can we hold two different futures in our heads – even if those visions are diametrically opposed to one another? Can we explore the extremes of technological progress while maintaining a rich historical perspective? If we can, then we'll be able to map to the middle and explore the beauty and the contradictions of the future we will find ourselves inhabiting.

Here's my caution: the future is going to look a lot like today. Our challenge is to be courageous to populate that future with amazing new experiences and stories that none of us could have imagined before today.

Lee Konstantinou is a novelist, Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Maryland, and Associate Editor for Fiction and Criticism at the Los Angeles Review of Books.

I bring two different perspectives to Sprint Beyond the Book. The first is the perspective of an author. My first novel, *Pop Apocalypse* (2009), is a near-future science fiction satire about a world where the Internet has been consumed by a new, closed platform called the mediasphere. As someone who likes to make fictional predictions, I've been thinking a lot about the future of media.

I'm also a literary scholar. In my academic work, I'm interested in contemporary American writers, the rise of celebrity authors, and the radical transformations of Anglo-American trade publishing since 1960. I've been impressed by new literary scholarship such as Mark McGurl's *The Program Era* (which is about the rise of creative writing programs) and by literary sociology such as John Thompson's *Merchants of Culture* (which is about the social field of trade publishing). These books show how profoundly the literary field has changed over the last four decades. Publishers have been concentrated, often becoming subsidiaries of multinational media companies. Agents and retailers have gained market power, squeezing the bottom lines of publishing companies. Authors, most of whom make little to no money from their writing, have increasingly had to support themselves either through secondary income streams (such as talks) or by seeking patronage from institutions such as the university.

These transformations affect what authors do – and what they can't do. Institutions are always legible on the page. As a fiction writer, I'm intimately aware of how these pressures migrate into my everyday practice. My ability to write, and the content of what I write, is hemmed in by the institutional supports, the community gathered around me, the assumptions editors bring to my manuscripts, the constraints of the current book market, and broader economic and technological trends.

That's why we need to reimagine (and transform) publishing as a *field*, not just as an industry, from production to distribution to consumption. We need to ensure that authors receive the support they need, and that readers have access to well-edited, high-quality writing. What are the forms of support that allow authors to survive and write well? What forms of mentorship and career development are possible today? Who creates and shapes reading publics? What direction do we want to move in?

These aren't only academic questions, but also questions whose answers should guide what actions we take in making a better future. We shouldn't simply submit to the market or to the allure of new technologies, but should make a new literary system that works for readers and writers.

How will people read in the future?

Humans have been inscribing and sharing information since the cave painting was a cutting-edge technology. Looking beyond doorstop dictionaries, featherweight paperbacks, smartphone screens and e-readers, how will we read in the future? What do we need to take in diverse forms of content, from textbooks to journalistic accounts to literary fiction? How will these tools change as texts become more interactive and participatory?

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The Long Now

Ed Finn

Reading on Internet Time

Ed Finn is the founding director of the Center for Science and the Imagination at Arizona State University, where he is an assistant professor with a joint appointment in the School of Arts, Media and Engineering and the Department of English. Ed's research and teaching explore digital narratives, contemporary culture and the intersection of the humanities, arts and sciences. He completed his PhD in English and American literature at Stanford University in 2011.

When we talk about the contemporary novel, we first need to think hard about our sense of time in the present. While the experience of reading a print novel has not changed significantly for well over a century, our sense of temporal place, the horizon of the zeitgeist, has shifted dramatically with the advent of the Internet.

I've been interested in this question for quite a while in my own work on perceptions of the contemporary novel. I started from the observation that we are living more and more

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of our literary lives through online media: shopping for books, reading criticism, and engaging in discussion on websites like Amazon, NYTimes.com, and even Arcade itself. We're all familiar with the deluge of information now available, but what we rarely consider is how these changes redefine the concept of the "new." On Amazon (or *Oprah*), readers looking for books might find Jonathan Franzen and Leo Tolstoy situated in the same context; books spanning decades and genres are regularly linked together. The "long tail" extends the space of cultural possibility, making millions of cultural works newly available. Most of us in the academy have had this experience before – the first time we started using a large research library. Terry Pratchett had it right when he described the potent "**L-space**" that emerges when enough books are shelved together, creating an immediate context that spans centuries or millennia.

In fact, the increasingly social nature of these new virtual catalogs, with

their recommendation engines and review systems, is leading to an active, collective investment in the newness of things that goes well beyond the library's static rhetoric. When we add our own thoughts and ratings to a book on GoodReads or Amazon, we lend it a little bit of contemporaneity, drawing it back into the present no matter how old it is. A teenager exploring Austen for the first time can easily discover a textual community of others going through the same experience in the accumulated reviews of *Pride and Prejudice*. The asynchronous, ubiquitous archives of the web bring us the aggregated new experiences of thousands, channeled into products and topics organized so that we will encounter novelty everywhere.

This system effectively reorders literary encounters with the new. Sure, in the pre-web days you could always dig up critical reviews of a novel that was published ten years ago. But those periodicals

and reviewing publications would themselves be dated, perhaps even weathered, and their interpretations would be physically and conceptually bound to the past. Now, between blogs, reviews, and our own continually extending social media conversations, it is possible to create clusters and conversations of newness around any book, no matter how old. The moment of initial surprise and inspiration is captured (well, a pale shadow of it anyway) through those architectures of literary connection, and then reproduced for the next browser in search of, well, the novel.

Right: novelty everywhere, but what about the novel? My colleague and Sprint Beyond the Book author Lee

Sylvia Petter

Will Louis Braille inspire a new way of reading for the non-blind as well? What if we could read with our fingers? Read forms and shapes, feel temperature? What if words could be translated into impressions and understanding via a tactile experience? Will our fingers be able to change the direction of a story? Will we be able to hold stories in our hands, like little balls, and watch them unravel?

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Konstantinou has asked if "newer technologies, media, and genres more effectively give us a taste of the Zeitgeist than the stale conventions of realism and metafiction?" (2011) I'll take a stand here to say that novels will rise above new technologies and media just as they will rise above those stale conventions, for one simple reason. Novels are always new. That is their defining characteristic (maybe this is really the stand I'm taking). Just like the accumulated reviews on Amazon, they are characterized by their sustained engagement with new experience. To be sure, some accomplish this better than others...there are horribly dated novels, unreadable texts filled with archaic jargon, romans à clef whose keys have been lost. But thousands, millions rise above, floating in the eternal consumer present of the web. As digital reading platforms evolve I think the novel will change with them, and I hope we can discuss those possibilities here, but at the outset it seems important to remember that the "contemporary" is a much bigger place than it used to be.

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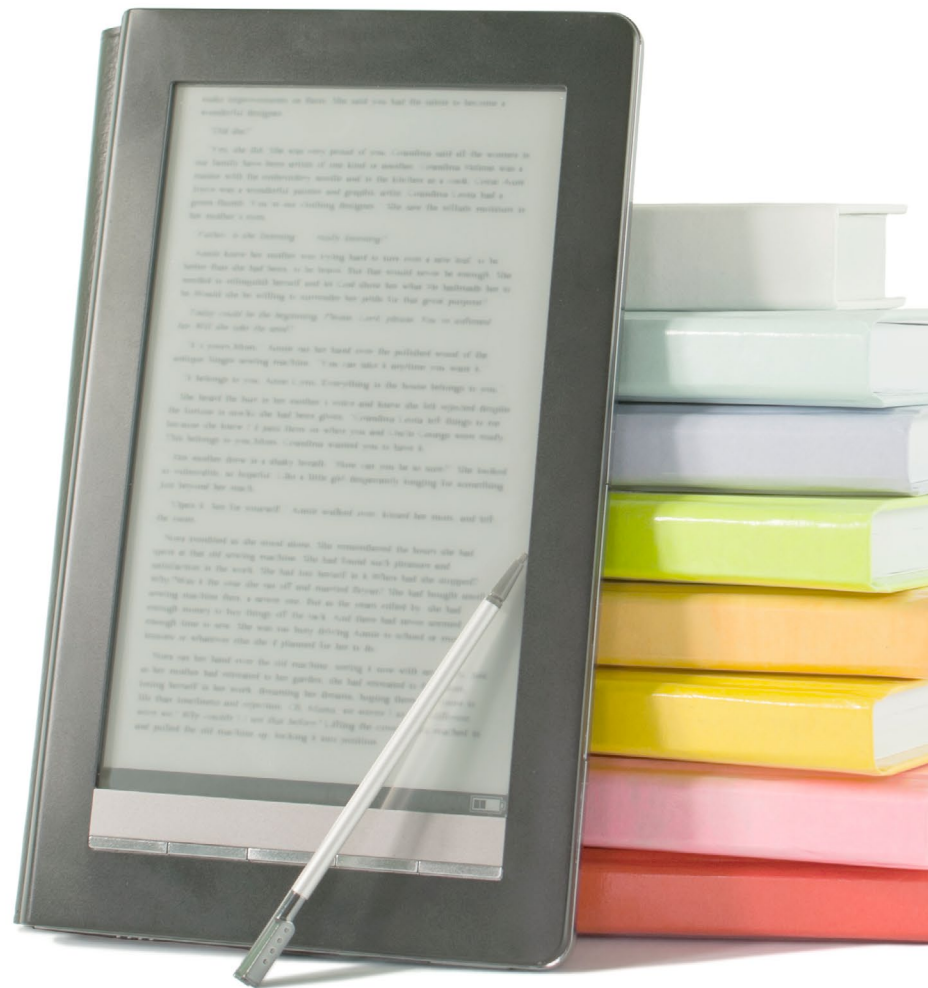
The Blurring Line Between Reader and Writer

Jane Friedman

When I consider how reading will change in the near term, two questions immediately come to mind:

- To what extent is the future of reading social?

- How much involvement will readers have in the writing process and final product (to the extent there is a "final" book)? Or: how much of reading will become part of an interactive process with the author or other readers?

Let's start with the question of social reading. Some of the most interesting

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work in this area has been pioneered by Bob Stein at the **Institute for the Future of the Book.** His argument is that reading has always been a social activity, and that our idea of reading as a solitary activity is fairly recent, something that arrived with widespread literacy. Furthermore, he says, as we move from the printed page to the screen – and networked environments – the social aspect of reading and writing moves to the foreground. Once this shift happens, the lines blur between reader and writer. Stein (2010) writes:

> Authors [will] take on the added role of moderators of communities of inquiry (nonfiction) and of designers of complex worlds for readers to explore (fiction). In addition, readers will embrace a much more active role in the production of knowledge and the telling of stories.

Going a step further, it has even been suggested by Stein (and others) that the future of reading might look like gaming. One can see an example of this in the **Black Crown project**, a work of interactive fiction produced by Random House UK (Sherman 2013). The story begins with a series of questions, then the reader is put

into a number of predicaments, as in a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure novel. There is an author behind it, Rob Sherman, **who said in an interview**, "It's a scary thing because you need to relinquish control and allow for readers to have an experience different from the one you're expecting. […] I think pretty much all authors have to accept now that readers are going to take things and manipulate them and make them their own. Whether you give them permission to or not. And they're going to share them with other people" (qtd. in Agnello 2013).

One area where this phenomenon is strongly apparent is in the genre of fan fiction, which represents one of the earliest social reading communities. The bestselling novel 50 Shades of Grey was fan fiction based on Twilight, and written in progress on a public fan-fiction website; it gathered fans and feedback over time before being formally published. Amazon, recognizing the potential in fan fiction – which is not readily monetizable due to rights issues – launched **Kindle Worlds** to allow fan fiction writers to start publishing

and earning money from their fan works through formalized licensing deals.

This begs the question: How many readers really want to be involved in the writing of the story, and how many just want to be passively entertained? It's true that the digital era has changed the nature of passive entertainment – we no longer have to accept what media corporations produce for us, we can create our own media, we can engage in active consumption (e.g., live-tweeting a TV show). But sometimes it's nice to simply escape into a story without any further obligation.

This reality has been illustrated by Ross Mayfield through his excellent diagram, "**The Power Law of Participation**" (2006). Reading without interaction is classified as a "low threshold activity," which engages the highest number of users. Social reading, on the other hand, involves writing, moderating, collaborating, and possibly leading (depending on the context), and represents high engagement. Yet only a very small percentage of the community will have that level

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of engagement; most users will remain on the low threshold side. Mayfield's point isn't that one mode is more valuable than the other, but that these two forms of intelligence coexist in some of the best communities we see online, such as Wikipedia.

Power Law of Participation
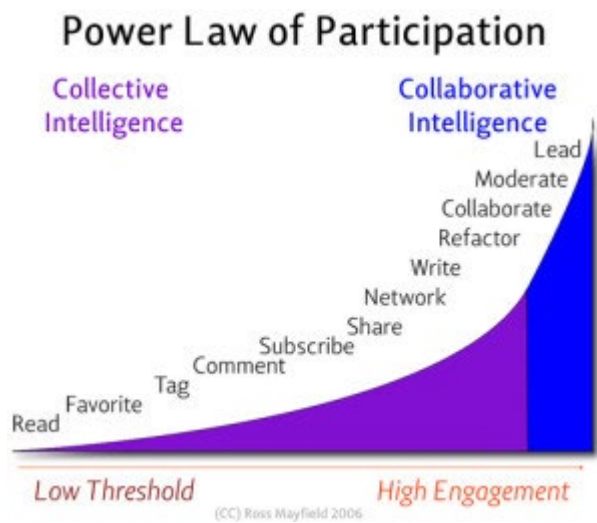
But even for readers who don't wish to be involved in creation, there are ways for them to be unintentionally involved. Amazon collects untold data through their Kindle reading platform, and probably now calculates exactly how people read a particular book: how fast, how slow and the exact paragraph where readers abandon the story. Kevin

Kelly described what he thinks the future holds in a blog post "**What Books Will Become**" (2011):

> Prototype face tracking software can already recognize your mood, and whether you are paying attention, and more importantly where on the screen you are paying attention. It can map whether you are confused by a passage, or delighted, or bored. That means that the text could adapt to how it is perceived. Perhaps it expands into more detail, or shrinks during speed reading, or changes vocabulary when you struggle, or reacts in a hundred possible ways. [...]

> Such flexibility recalls the long expected, but never realized, dream of forking stories. Books that have multiple endings, or alternative storylines. Previous attempts at hyper literature have met dismal failure among readers. Readers seemed uninterested in deciding the plot; they wanted the author to decide. But in recent years complex stories with alternative pathways have been wildly successful in videogames. [...] Some of the techniques pioneered in taming the complexity of user-driven stories in games could migrate to books.

If not already apparent, it's important to differentiate between the evolution of narrative-driven books and information-driven books. We have already seen information-driven materials flourish and make more sense in online environments. It is now highly unusual to refer to a book when researching basic facts or making travel plans, for instance. Most information is superior when presented in hyperlinked, interactive forms that can be continually updated, as well as customized and modified by the reader for her specific purpose.

When we seek to be entertained, however, how much do we want to customize and modify to our satisfaction? Fan fiction indicates that some readers enjoy this, but that has so far remained a fringe activity when considering the universe of readers out there.

Ed Finn, Director, Center for Science and the Imagination, Arizona State University

One of the most beloved stories of how narrative rules the world is Jorge Luis Borges' 1941 fiction "The Garden of Forking Paths."

#LitChat Twitter Session with Jane Friedman – The Future of Reading, Writing, and Publishing

Prior to the advent of the novel, storytelling was largely a social experience delivered through theater and other group settings. The emergence of the novel in the late eighteenth century put stories into the hands of individual readers and created a whole new avenue for vicarious thrills, learning, escape, romance, and adventure. Fan fiction, Choose Your Own Adventure novels, interactive novels, and other digital reading experiences are changing the future of reading, writing, and publishing.

How will fiction change with interactive novels? Is digital publishing circling back to story as a social experience? Inspired by the enriching content emerging from Sprint Beyond the Book, and particularly the Jane Friedman

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How will people read in the future?

essay "The Blurring Line Between Reader and Writer," we discussed questions such as these in the October 14, 2013 session of #litchat. #Litchat is a hashtag-led discussion featuring topics of interest to readers and writers held through Twitter each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 4-5pm Eastern Standard Time.

The one-hour #litchat session drew more than a dozen active participants from the U.S., Canada and the U.K., including Friedman, to discuss how the digital age is changing the way we experience stories. An archive of the #litchat session was created in **Storify.**

The following is the transcript from the one-hour #litchat session:

LitChat

Welcome to #litchat. We're excited to participate today HOW WILL PEOPLE READ IN THE FUTURE discussion. Join us for the next hour. #LitChat

LitChat

While #litchat is underway between 4-5pmET with moderated convo, please don't use the hashtag unless contributing to the topic.

LitChat

#litchat was founded in 2009 and is moderated by @CarolyBurnsBass. We chat M W F, 4-5pmET. http://t.co/6EsesNfJPi

ChatSalad

RT @LitChat: Welcome to #litchat. We're excited to participate today HOW WILL PEOPLE READ IN THE FUTURE discussion. Join us for the next ho…

LitChat

Follow #litchat easily from http://t.co/5uq9fwj4Jg. Simply login/authorize and you're in the convo.

agnieszkasshoes

RT @LitChat: Welcome to #litchat. We're excited to participate today HOW WILL PEOPLE READ IN THE FUTURE discussion. Join us for the next ho…

LitChat

Who's with us today in #litchat? Please introduce yourself and let the convo begin.

MadelineDyerUK

RT @LitChat: #litchat was founded in 2009 and is moderated by @CarolyBurnsBass. We chat M W F, 4-5pmET. http://t.co/6EsesNfJPi

Pendare

@GLHancock You're safe I think! #LitChat

NineTiger

Marianne, here. Still screaming about #governmentshutdown while pursuing other topics. #litchat

GLHancock

retired publisher/editor/writer of a half century wondering why you think people didn't read alone before novels were written? #litchat

LitChat

Today's convo was inspired by SPRINT BEYOND THE BOOK PROJECT and @ JaneFriedman essay THE BLURRING LINES BETWEEN READER & WRITER. #LitChat

Pendare

Patricia here — on Canada's Thanksgiving day. #LitChat

21stCscribe

marc nash here #litchat

LitChat

Here is direct link to the SPRINT BEYOND THE BOOK PROJECT, a 72-hour book collaborative now underway: http://t.co/ q6RHfyObn2 #LitChat

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GLHancock

@Pendare Happy happy – are you thankful still? #litchat

agnieszkasshoes

@LitChat I'm here! I wrote a novel interactively on Facebook back in 2009 so fascinated by the subject #litchat

Pendare

@GLHancock Pretty much! #LitChat

21stCscribe

I've got an interactive digital novel in the works next year hopefully #litchat

LitChat

Here is direct link to @JaneFriedman essay THE BLURRING LINE BETWEEN READER & WRITER: http://t.co/PaUxWKNF2H #LitChat

palefacewriter

Hi readers and writers. #LitChat

GLHancock

@Pendare Good! Good! #litchat

LitChat

We're hoping @JaneFriedman has a moment to stop in to share her knowledge and experience in this fascinating topic. #LitChat

21stCscribe

Interactive in the sense the reader plots their own way through it. But not with treasure at the end #litchat

novemberhill

Hi! Just read the article and have to say I'm not eager to go this direction as a writer or a reader. #LitChat

GLHancock

My disappearing epubs on Amazon are all interactive – linking to others and my website. So? #litchat

rcmogo

Does anyone here know how to define "hypermedia?" #LitChat

LitChat

Let's get right into today's discussion. If you have a question you'd like to submit, please post it here and I'll add to queue. #LitChat

dellasm

RT @MartinBrownPubs: Tips for Writing a Novel: Know the Difference Between Plot and Story http://t.co/rRFrVnLhev #litchat #amwriting #write…

GLHancock

@rcmogo Linked. #litchat

21stCscribe

Nothing knew, BS Johnson did it in print with his book "The Unfortunates" #litchat a book-shaped box, loose chapters read in any order

NineTiger

@LitChat The counter for the 72 hour book is all zeros. Has it been done already? #litchat

GLHancock

@LitChat Why do you think no one read alone until novels were published? Stories, essays, poetry existed in print form. #litchat

agnieszkasshoes

RT @21stCscribe: Nothing knew, BS Johnson did it in print with his book "The Unfortunates" #litchat a book-shaped box, loose chapters read …

novemberhill

Trying to figure out if I have to put in #litchat or if it happens automatically if I'm logged in at nurph… #LitChat

LitChat

I see you here! RT @novemberhill Trying to figure out if I have to put in #litchat or if it happens #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

New to this chat; going to try to follow along best I can on my Android. #litchat

ChatSalad

@novemberhill It happens automatically #LitChat

LitChat

Q1 How will the digital age open new ways of learning, discovering, and experiencing story? #LitChat

novemberhill

@LitChat Okay, great. I can relax and just type. #LitChat

novemberhill

@ChatSalad Thank you. #LitChat

LitChat

Welcome. RT @Arzooman_Edit New to this chat; going to try to follow along best I can on my Android. #litchat #LitChat

LitChat

Welcome, just dive right in. RT @ palefacewriter Hi readers and writers. #LitChat

palefacewriter

Well, I'll never give up my interest in the experience of the traditional book. Power Law of Participation interesting. #litchat #LitChat

21stCscribe

Q1 new narratives that don't have beginnings, middle ends if reader if choosing their progress trough them #litchat & thank god for that

novemberhill

I am still blown away by my Kindle and being able to get a book in my hands within a matter of seconds. #LitChat

GLHancock

A1 Can you spell multimedia? It's already here. People are constantly mishmashing them, experimenting in many way, especially vids. #litchat

21stCscribe

apologies for my awful typing tonight #litchat 2 mistakes in last 2 tweets *sigh*

novemberhill

Am also intrigued as a writer when I open my own books on the Kindle and see the reader highlights – that is true feedback. #LitChat

NineTiger

A1 How could you ever build a saleable collection if all ebook. Collector issues. #litchat

Arzooman_Edit

@LitChat thanks, have not mastered Twitter chats on Hootsuite. #litchat.

palefacewriter

A1: There's an expectation for immediacy. Interactive, digital books seem to work well with that need in newer readers. #litchat #LitChat

21stCscribe

collaboration with other artists too,I've collaborated with designer for kinetic typography short fiction #litchat Now that is new narrative

GLHancock

@Arzooman_Edit Try the Internet-based sites: tweetchat, nurph, and twubs – all dot coms. #litchat

palefacewriter

Yes, the ability to combine many creative aspects to enhance the written/printed word opens up cool possibilities. #litchat #LitChat

rcmogo

Interactivity is changing the way stories are written, too. #LitChat

GLHancock

@palefacewriter Of course, some people find all that annoying. #litchat

LitChat

@Arzooman_Edit Here's a link to our dedicated chat channel: http://t.co/5uq9fwj4Jg. #LitChat

LitChat

Q2 What kind of books/stories might we expect with social and interactive digital media? #LitChat

novemberhill

Can't see myself enjoying a novel as interactive experience – I value the writer's authority in telling the story his/her way. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

Q1 to me there's a value 1st in being able to update nonfiction, but also to quickly correct mistakes, fiction or non. #litchat

palefacewriter

RT @GLHancock @palefacewriter Of course, some people find all that annoying. Yes, all that "incoming" can be so! #litchat #LitChat

GLHancock

A2 That depends on the publishers, but with SP (indies) I'd expect it more in genres. #litchat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill interaction doesn't necessarily mean the reader writes the book, maybe just chooses their own path through it #litchat

GLHancock

@Arzooman_Edit Absolutely. Obviating errata sheets, sites, pages. #litchat

21stCscribe

@GLHancock I'd find that depressing if it comes to pass. #genre #litchat

novemberhill

@21stCscribe How would that work? #LitChat

palefacewriter

Readers have always participated in their/our own minds…interactivity is akin to a sci-fi plot entering real time. #litchat #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

Q1 but the expectation is already there that you should link to sources, or webpages of contributors, or even books like yours. #litchat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill author skilful enough to write a story that doesn't rely on fixed order, but open to many diff paths through #litchat

GLHancock

Right now it appears inevitable that future books will come with built-in social media connections. #litchat

novemberhill

I do love the ability to make corrections and update facts in nonfiction. #LitChat

rcmogo

A2 The experience of the characters and setting can be much richer with supplement of social and interactive digital media #LitChat

palefacewriter

A2: Adventures for sure. Sci-fi. Almost anything, I suppose. Yike. Imaginations cut loose! #litchat #LitChat

GLHancock

@rcmogo Interrupting the flow of the narrative? #litchat

Arzooman_Edit

@GLHancock thanks. I will sign up as soon as I get home to my computer #litchat

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novemberhill

@21stCscribe Not sure how that would play out in actual reading experience. Readers could read in any order in print book form. #LitChat

21stCscribe

i think it's quite limiting just to think about storytelling in these new media. #litchat

soniawrite

@GLHancock #litchat well, all the various ebooks devices already have twitter and fb and all that

GLHancock

@Arzooman_Edit I use TweetChat usually on my Kindle Fire. #litchat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill and yet they don't #litchat

LucidGlow

The most important tonight and ever is clearly WHSmith's treatment of indie authors #litchat It's just fucking unbelievable.

novemberhill

How does writer offer a novel in a form that could be utilized best interactively? #LitChat

rcmogo

@GLHancock More like "post story" experience. After finishing my favorite novels, I am always hungry for more information #LitChat

j4k061n

RT @LucidGlow: The most important tonight and ever is clearly WHSmith's treatment of indie authors #litchat It's just fucking unbelievable.

palefacewriter

A2: Of course, I think of it only as an additional option. Quiet books in printed form will always be welcome in my hands. #litchat #LitChat

GLHancock

Block! #litchat

novemberhill

@21stCscribe Well, I on occasion do – but usually on a second read, not generally the first. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@palefacewriter as a reader, mine too. As a writer, less so #litchat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill exactly. A book readable

in any order is unique experience for each reader #litchat

novemberhill

RT @palefacewriter A2: Quiet books in printed form will always be welcome in my hands.   Mine too!! #LitChat

GLHancock

I have to admit that a few times, I've sought out more info maybe about a setting like Pondicherry, IN or some other novel aspect #litchat

LitChat

Q3 In her essay, @JaneFriedman asks: To what extent is the future of reading social? #LitChat

GLHancock

And I appreciate authors' notes on research in both nonfiction and novels, sometimes. #litchat

novemberhill

So I am envisioning a novel where you put the chapters on shuffle and read it many different ways. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill can be yes #litchat

novemberhill

I have been adding back matter to some of my novels that includes my playlists of songs I listened to while writing. #LitChat

GLHancock

A3 I don't see why it should be any less than it is now and ever has been, though originally storytelling, not reading per se. #litchat

palefacewriter

A2: Some interesting possibilities for enhancing poetry. As a writer, though, I'd be wary of allowing open access. (selfishwriter!) #LitChat

rcmogo

A3 Simply because you can reach so many millions more people. #LitChat

JaneFriedman

Something I didn't write about: new digital book format that Intel is developing, particularly interesting for NF & fan fic (1/2) #LitChat

21stCscribe

A3 the writing of a novel can be crowd sourced social. The reading still solitary, unless live stream author reading #litchat

soniawrite

@LitChat @JaneFriedman #LitChat A lot! It already is somewhat. Wittness this chat. If it werent, authors wouldn't be encouaged to blog/tweet

LitChat

@JaneFriedman Is the Intel project an interactive format for reading? #LitChat

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21stCscribe

@soniawrite @novemberhill well it has been done before and in print! #litchat

JaneFriedman

Allows new chapters or materials to be added by user or publisher, visible to all readers (if reader opts to see them). (2/2) #LitChat

soniawrite

@novemberhill #litchat lol and get a different end each time. Could be an interesting experiment.

novemberhill

Also pondering now how one might mimic the actual act of storytelling – where you write the version you "tell" & listeners continue #LitChat

palefacewriter

A3: I thought that was worthy of pause and consideration. I think of it in degrees I suppose. How much interaction varies. #litchat #LitChat

agnieszkasshoes

RT @21stCscribe: i think it's quite limiting just to think about storytelling in these new media. #litchat

GLHancock

@JaneFriedman Hi Jane! Thanks for that info about the new Intel book platform. Got a link? #litchat

21stCscribe

@soniawrite @novemberhill well hopefully mine will be out next year #litchat

JaneFriedman

Intel project sees each book as a community, w/many different levels of authorship/ contribution, assuming publisher allows it. #LitChat

LitChat

@JaneFriedman Do you know if they will develop proprietary hardware for reading new format? #LitChat

soniawrite

@21stCscribe @novemberhill #litchat which books? got a recommendation?

21stCscribe

@novemberhill why do we have to mimic or even tell stories in conventional/ trad way? #litchat

novemberhill

I have considered that my connected novels could be linked so reader could follow a character link to different book. #LitChat

palefacewriter

A3: Gets complicated. Who's the author? Who holds copyright? Does it matter? (Yes) Does anyone care… #litchat #LitChat

JaneFriedman

Intel project will be completely open source, so any publisher/author could make use of it. Not proprietary. Huge win for everyone. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@soniawrite @novemberhill BS Johnson "The Unfortunates" #litchat

novemberhill

We don't have to – I may be stuck doing that myself but wld love to see what others do that is new and different! #LitChat

LitChat

How much involvement will readers have in writing process and final product (to the extent there is a "final" book)? (Friedman) #LitChat

21stCscribe

in my digital novel project, would like to crowdsource art works for it on the book's theme #litchat

novemberhill

Need to say that I am getting somewhat overwhelmed with this new chat program – not following it as easily as tweetchat… #LitChat

LitChat

Q4 How much involvement will readers have in writing process & final product (to extent there is a "final" book)? (Friedman) #LitChat

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palefacewriter

A3: Possibly we will eventually find that a new definition of 'reading' emerges. Instead of merely reading, we immerse like gamers. #LitChat

GLHancock

A4 None for me. I know how hard it is to write novels. I am a passive consumer, for entertainment only. You work – I read. #litchat

novemberhill

I can see my teenagers immersing like gamers. I am dinosaur. Have never played computer game, ever. #LitChat

LitChat

@novemberhill Give it time. It's easy to follow when your eyes adjust to the different look. #LitChat

JaneFriedman

Q4 Feels like reader involvement will be driven by genre at first. Already see good examples of this in NF, happening w/fan-fic. #litchat

palefacewriter

A4: I've thought of the new age process as kind of an unending, perpetually changing, story unfolding. #litchat #LitChat

LitChat

RT @novemberhill I can see my teenagers immersing like gamers. I am dinosaur. Have never played computer game, ever. #LitChat

rcmogo

A4 – hopefully not much. There's online software for collaborative story writing, probably shouldn't apply to published fiction #LitChat

novemberhill

@LitChat Will do. :) Apologizing in advance for clunkiness today. #LitChat

GLHancock

I've seen immersion books for children, and appreciated the appeal – to children. #litchat

agnieszkasshoes

@LitChat A4 I imagine it will be very like ancient oral communities each creating their own versions of stories #litchat

JaneFriedman

Q4 Right now, it takes great effort to promote reader-writer interaction in the development of a book. Need better tools/platform #litchat

21stCscribe

I'm more interested in the look of a digital text, the way you can drill down to the level of typography for example #litchat

GLHancock

@JaneFriedman Maybe many other readers are like me – don't want to participate but to enjoy the end product only! #litchat

novemberhill

@21stCscribe Love the idea of crowdsourcing art for a book. #LitChat

ampersand_h

Kindle or print version? #litchat #books

21stCscribe

think about if Jennifer Egan's "…Goon squad" was online & really did have a Powerpoint presentation Chapter! #litchat

Midnyghtskie

Just stumbled across #Litchat, I'm so excited.. though waaaay behind.

richmagahiz

@LitChat A4 Maybe more on the business side than on the actual writing side. Think Kickstarter-like process for greenlighting #LitChat

palefacewriter

A4: Maybe a writer could audition potential contributors before granting access to project. Oh..is that elitist? =;-) #litchat #LitChat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill any maybe other aspects too, just not thought of them yet relevant to the book #litchat

Pendare

YES! RT @GLHancock @JaneFriedman Maybe many other readers are like me-don't want to participate but to enjoy the end product only! #LitChat

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in the future?

robynmcintyre

A4: As much or as little as the author wants them to, I suppose. #LitChat

SheanaOchoa

@LitChat @JaneFriedman Do you think interactivity heightens or diminishes critical thinking as a literary tradition? #litchat

GLHancock

RT @ampersand_h Kindle or print version? / Of what? #litchat

palefacewriter

Have any of you experimented with collaborations with other writers? #litchat #LitChat

richmagahiz

@palefacewriter Only in poetry #LitChat

GLHancock

@SheanaOchoa @LitChat @JaneFriedman Well, I, for one, do love footnotes, end notes, author notes, metameta. #litchat

novemberhill

@palefacewriter I have collaborated with illustrator. Very cool to use apps to make collaborating easier. #LitChat

LitChat

Author & former Disney artist @ AurelioObrien created an interactive site for GENeration eXtraTERrestial: http://t.co/GouruyQtht #LitChat

21stCscribe

@palefacewriter no, but other types of artists #litchat

palefacewriter

I tried a short story once with five others. Then we did a public reading and humiliated ourselves. Humility is a virtue? #litchat #LitChat

GLHancock

@palefacewriterI have enough trouble getting along with myself and clients. Collaboration brings shudders! #litchat

novemberhill

@palefacewriter LOL! #LitChat

LitChat

No apologies necessary. Yr insights are great. RT @novemberhill @LitChat Will do. :) Apologizing in advance for clunkiness today. #LitChat

JaneFriedman

@SheanaOchoa Interactivity typically involves collaborating, moderating, creating, questioning – which involve critical thinking? #litchat

rcmogo

@SheanaOchoa Depends on the type of interactivity – but as a rule, I think interactivity makes anything less passive. #LitChat

druchunas

@palefacewriter I am finishing up a book with a coauthor and have another series with a different coauthor/cocreator. #litchat

LitChat

RT @rcmogo @SheanaOchoa Depends on the type of interactivity – but as a rule, I think interactivity makes anything less passive. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

@JaneFriedman I do like the idea of collaboration in fine-tuning a book. It's amazing what others can see that a writer misses. #litchat

novemberhill

Interesting thought – I never think of myself when reading a great novel as being "passive." Nothing abt the experience is passive. #LitChat

rcmogo

Less passive #LitChat

druchunas

@JaneFriedman I don't want reader interaction in the creation of my books. They are my art / products. #litchat

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palefacewriter

RT @druchunas: @JaneFriedman I don't want reader interaction in the creation of my books. They are my art / products. #litchat

Arzooman_Edit

@novemberhill I pretty much agree, but I do love seeing reader feedback. #LitChat

rcmogo

@druchunas What about in the pre-published stages of your books? #LitChat

robynmcintyre

@novemberhill That's what I think. #LitChat

novemberhill

Yes. RT @druchunas I don't want reader interaction in the creation of my books. They are my art / products. #LitChat

Pendare

@Arzooman_Edit ABSOLUTELY. #LitChat

GLHancock

Most authors can benefit from collaborating with professional editors and proofreaders. #litchat

SheanaOchoa

@JaneFriedman Rephrasing: how might it affect the imagination lit up by the experience/leisure of reading in solitude? #litchat

novemberhill

Getting feedback from readers before publishing is a given for me. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

@LitChat oh, thanks. Just logged in! (I'm back at my home computer) #litchat

WheelhouseEdits

Retweet! Retweet! Retweet! RT @GLHancock: Most authors can benefit from collaborating with professional editors and proofreaders. #litchat

gmcgarv

Retweet! Retweet! Retweet! RT @GLHancock: Most authors can benefit from collaborating with professional editors and proofreaders. #litchat

druchunas

@palefacewriter yuck. I am completely immersed in reading. I don't find additional media enhances the experience. It's distracting. #litchat

richmagahiz

@druchunas @JaneFriedman The only visual artists okay with people scribbling on their art are some graffiti radicals #LitChat

LitChat

RT @GLHancock Most authors can benefit from collaborating with professional editors and proofreaders. #litchat #LitChat

Pendare

@novemberhill I'm fiercely possessive of my stories. And nobody ain't gonna mess with my writing! #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

@druchunas I only like graphics and the occasional SHORT video. Long videos, forget it. But sources—Definitely. #litchat #LitChat

GLHancock

@druchunas Ditto! In fact, that's what I said earlier. Thanks for your support! #litchat

novemberhill

@Pendare I absolutely value the author's distinctive voice. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Pendare @novemberhill interactive does not necessarily mean the reader is part writing your story #litchat

novemberhill

Am now envisioning the digital book version of playing albums backwards. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

@Pendare I am possessive once i'm sure the story is done and I'm happy. Will take suggestions during creative process. #litchat #LitChat

rcmogo

Regarding collaboration and story writing, I think most writers seek out opinions and ideas during story creation. #LitChat

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LitChat

Q5 How can authors and publishers expect remuneration from interactive book? Are subscriptions to books on the horizon? #LitChat

palefacewriter

Well, what about music to enhance something like spoken word? I use regularly and find the process creatively motivating. #litchat #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit try this for size – 275 words, 3 mins video, different type of narrative #litchat http://t.co/StJTC5wStz

richmagahiz

@21stCscribe @Pendare @novemberhill Think about how The French Lieutenant's Woman was written with three endings #LitChat

GLHancock

The only suggestions I'd want would be from fellow professionals, not feedback from potential purchasers. Feed me the ca$h! #litchat

21stCscribe

@palefacewriter pproblem is copyright of music #litchat

rcmogo

A5 Subscriptions seem to be lot more popular these days! #LitChat

JaneFriedman

@SheanaOchoa Sounds like a Q for a researcher. But this isn't an either/or debate, reading coexists with interaction. #litchat

palefacewriter

I write the music. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

I think 3 minute video (if you're reading) is too long. #litchat #LitChat

novemberhill

@richmagahiz Oh, great example. I had forgotten that. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit there's no reading as such #litchat try it!

Pendare

@richmagahiz You're right! #LitChat

richmagahiz

@novemberhill Well Fowles wrote that quite a while ago #LitChat

novemberhill

@richmagahiz Yes, long while ago. #LitChat

GLHancock

A5 At least 4 experiments in subscription services are now going. #litchat

Arzooman_Edit

@21stCscribe not during a #litchat, but thanks. #LitChat

palefacewriter

@21stCscribe ...I guess that's collaborating with myself, lol! #LitChat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill I like that idea! #litchat

21stCscribe

@palefacewriter yes if you have the added skills why not? #litchat

GLHancock

A5 Remuneration can be as varied as it is today. Is there anything new on the horizon @LitChat ? #litchat

richmagahiz

@LitChat A5 Maybe you get the basic book (possibly free) but have to pay for remixes and mashups. Or vice versa #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit I meant after the chat! #litchat Just think much of current thinking is too limited, trying new media 4 old narratives

palefacewriter

A5: Contracts 101? Know what you're expectations are before you begin seems like a good idea/ #litchat #LitChat

novemberhill

Subscription to book-in-progress – get rough draft, edits, etc. Interesting. I would pay to do that w/ much-admired writers. #LitChat

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palefacewriter

*your #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

@21stCscribe do you mean storytelling is limited? #litchat #LitChat

21stCscribe

My digital online novel will be subscription. only way to menthes it #litchat

soniawrite

@21stCscribe @novemberhill #litchat thanks!

Arzooman_Edit

@novemberhill I don't know if I would. I would have to REALLY love them. #litchat #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit the way people are conceptualising it for new digital media right now is yes #litchat

GLHancock

Is Amazon still doing that thing where you subscribe and they dribble out a story over weeks or months? Weird, I think! #litchat

novemberhill

I'm thinking Michael Ondaatge and Barbara Kingsolver. Would love to see their process. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit we seem to be talking about interactive editing and beta reading. It can be waaay more than that #litchat

novemberhill

@21stCscribe Yes, you're right. I am just not thinking far enough outside the box. #LitChat

palefacewriter

A5: I would not subscribe to books, but I suppose it's possible that many readers would consider this option if available. #litchat #LitChat

novemberhill

Creaky brain. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill well it';s hard because there are no horizons, people falling off the edge of the world or getting vertigo! #litchat

Arzooman_Edit

I'm for all kinds of art to convey a message, but I'm more into words for myself because that's what I was trained in. #litchat #LitChat

21stCscribe

why would you merely translate a block print from page to screen? Make it non-linear, tell diff type of story on screen #litchat

novemberhill

I am still wowed by Durrell's Alexandria Quartet – 4 POVs on same story. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

I'm always looking at art that I love and thinking of ways to collaborate on a book with an artist. #litchat #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit but words remain the centre of the art #litchat

JaneFriedman

@SheanaOchoa Of course- I think main thing that's forgotten is reading as solitary activity is fairly new, came w/wide literacy #litchat

LitChat

At Carnegie Mellon University, a project is underway: SIX-DEGREES OF FRANCIS BACON, REASSEMBLING THE EARLY MODERN SOCIAL NETWORK. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

If it's created with words, yes … #LitChat

GLHancock

@novemberhill One of my undergrad college days' faves! #litchat

richmagahiz

@LitChat Ernest Cline put together a music playlist to go with Ready Player One. Maybe this can become more popular #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit did you see Foer's "Sea of Trees"? #litchat

palefacewriter

A5: Marketing personnel are no doubt working variables out as we participate here. I'd be interested in the suggestions. #litchat #LitChat

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in the future?

LitChat

Link to the CMU SIX DEGREES OF FRANCIS BACON: http://t.co/6bmlsFKWVS #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

@21stCscribe no, what is it? #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit personally words are all I have. But can still do different things with them as building blocks. #litchat

novemberhill

@GLHancock Still one of my all-time faves. Love love love it. #LitChat

LitChat

Twitter feed for SIX DEGREES OF FRANCIS BACON: @6bacon. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@richmagahiz @LitChat my previous novel has a DJ & all the songs he plays are on a spottily playlist the novel links to #litchat

novemberhill

The reason I read is because of the way the words are put together by the writer. That will never change for me. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit it's a novel that is highly visual in that sections of pages are cut out, giving into view future sentences etc #litchat

Pendare

RT @novemberhill The reason I read is because of the way the words are put together by the writer. That will never change for me. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

@21stCscribe I am interested, but part of me keeps hearing, "A good novel isn't enough anymore" #litchat. #LitChat

LitChat

Q6 The @6bacon project seeks to assemble early social networks. What kind of early social networks might they study? #LitChat

palefacewriter

@novemberhill Agreed. =;-) #LitChat

GLHancock

Not sure I'd want someone else's music preferences inserted into my mind while reading. Like what I like! #litchat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill but all we are saying is digital offers new & diverse ways of putting those words together on a screen #litchat

novemberhill

I wouldn't dare read any kind of interactive spin on a novel I have previously read and dearly loved. #LitChat

LitChat

RT @novemberhill The reason I read is because of the way the words are put together by the writer. That will never change for me. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit well Foer has a reputation as a decent novelist… #litchat My disappointment was that he basically adapted pre-existing book

GLHancock

If I want to listen to music while I read, I turn on what I like to hear. #litchat

palefacewriter

A6: ICQ maybe? #litchat #LitChat

Pendare

@GLHancock If the music on the playlist wasn't to my liking, I wouldn't read the book! #LitChat

druchunas

@LitChat @rcmogo @SheanaOchoa reading is not at all passive. Page turning is interactivity. #litchat

21stCscribe

@Pendare you won't like my book then! #litchat

Arzooman_Edit

I do have Jodi Picoult's "Sing You Home," which has a CD you're supposed to play w the book. Haven't had time yet… #litchat #LitChat

LitChat

I think they mean earlier than that. RT @ palefacewriter A6: ICQ maybe? #litchat #LitChat

novemberhill

@21stCscribe Yes, I know. I would love to see stellar examples. #LitChat

21stCscribe

@Arzooman_Edit I can't actually read when music is playing #litchat

Pendare

@21stCscribe Sowwy! #LitChat

palefacewriter

A6: like the partyline? lol #LitChat

GLHancock

Early networks? Like campfires, church choir pactice, camp meetings, seances? Or BBS, forums, mailists? #litchat

21stCscribe

@Pendare no problem #litchat

SheanaOchoa

Lol"@druchunas: @LitChat @rcmogo @ SheanaOchoa reading is not at all passive. Page turning is interactivity. #litchat"

richmagahiz

@21stCscribe @Arzooman_Edit It can be hard to write when there's music with words going on #LitChat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill well a non-fiction example is Kafka's Wound – just google it #litchat

Arzooman_Edit

It's supposed to enhance the story, one character is a songwriter. I'm not sure, you might have to pause your reading. #litchat #LitChat

novemberhill

But of new work to me – at least initially. #LitChat

richmagahiz

@GLHancock I was thinking of whether there were brothel-based Elizabethan social networks #LitChat

21stCscribe

@richmagahiz @Arzooman_Edit see I can write to music, but not read or edit #litchat

novemberhill

@21stCscribe Okay, I will check it out. #LitChat

palefacewriter

Music… sometimes when I travel by air I play AC/DC or Bob Marley while reading. My preference to sniffing/chatter. =;-) #litchat #LitChat

Pendare

@21stCscribe It's classical all the way for me – which I also have on when writing. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

I can sometimes write with a lot of noise, but hardly with just a little bit of noise. #litchat. #LitChat

GLHancock

@richmagahiz UK has long history of men's clubs for all levels of society. #litchat

21stCscribe

@richmagahiz 18th century writing in tea rooms & literary societies there #litchat

palefacewriter

With headphones, of course. Wouldn't want anyone else to be disturbed by my habits. #litchat #LitChat

novemberhill

Usually I listen to my playlists as a way to get into the story. Not so much while I'm writing. #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

Seems it's time to go. my LitCat keeps interrupting my #litchat. #LitChat

richmagahiz

@Pendare @21stCscribe But if the book is about punk anarchists classical might not be the most appropriate accompaniment #LitChat

GLHancock

I pretty much go deaf when I'm working. #litchat

novemberhill

@Arzooman_Edit Ha!! Love it. #LitChat

novemberhill

But the songs are picked specifically for the story I'm writing. #LitChat

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21stCscribe

@richmagahiz @Pendare yeah I choose a soundtrack selection for each book & stick to it rigidly #litchat

palefacewriter

@Arzooman_Edit Meow Disturbance? #litchat #LitChat

21stCscribe

@novemberhill me too #litchat

Pendare

@GLHancock Me too. Comes from tuning out four small boys! #LitChat

Arzooman_Edit

Nice chatting. Glad I was able to use Nurph; it was so much easier to tweet! I'll try to make the next one. #litchat #LitChat

GLHancock

Needing to hear certain music to write smacks of needing "emotional support" to be a writer. I'm just sayin' #litchat

palefacewriter

A bientot, @Arzooman_Edit! #LitChat

LitChat

What a blazing session of #litchat thanks to all of your brilliant minds. We're going to submit the archive to #beyondthebook. #LitChat

GLHancock

@Pendare For me, tho, it means I don't hear dryer ding, washer end, doorbell … #litchat

Pendare

@21stCscribe Mind you, when writing the WWII memoir, I did listen to all the appropriate music of the war years. #LitChat

novemberhill

Terrific chat today – thanks for introducing me to nurph. Got to run get daughter from driver's ed! #LitChat

21stCscribe

@GLHancock no, it's about the rhythm or the setting #litchat

palefacewriter

Thanks for sharing your thoughts, #litchat ers! Out… #LitChat

soniawrite

Great chat! Wish I could have been here for all of it. #LitChat

GLHancock

@21stCscribe "needing" anything not between your ears sounds like a deficit to me #litchat

LitChat

Sending up a shout of THANKS to @JaneFriedman for stopping in today. She's a beacon of light in this murky publishing climate. #LitChat

Pendare

RT @LitChat Sending up a shout of THANKS to @JaneFriedman for stopping in She's a beacon of light in this murky publishing climate #LitChat

Adult_ADHD_Blog

@LitChat @JaneFriedman She sure is! 'Was a huge help to @Jeff_Emmerson (me) #LitChat

LitChat

Come back for WritingWednesday when we discus KILLING THE CLICHES. #LitChat

GLHancock

RT @LitChat Sending up a shout of THANKS to @JaneFriedman for stopping in today. .. #litchat

richmagahiz

@GLHancock @21stCscribe Then needing coffee is a widespread deficit among writers #LitChat

StoryStudio

RT @LitChat: Come back for WritingWednesday when we discus KILLING THE CLICHES. #LitChat

Pendare

@LitChat That sounds like a great subject. Looking forward to it! #LitChat

GLHancock

@richmagahiz Pretty sure coffee is addictive substance. #litchat

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GLHancock

RT @LitChat Come back for WritingWednesday when we discus KILLING THE CLICHES./Ooo that's a great topic for #writing #litchat

Pendare

Bye all. #LitChat

LitChat

Let's welcome new voices: @Arzooman_Edit @rcmogo @druchunas @palefacewriter. We're here MWF, 4-5pmET. http://t.co/6EsesNfJPi #LitChat

LitChat

See you on Friday when actress & author Kathryn Leigh Scott @Dark_Passages joins us to discuss DOWN & OUT IN BEVERLY HEELS. #LitChat

LitChat

RT @chriswhitewrite: .#LitChat @6Bacon Hellfire Clubs (or just gentleman's clubs in general.) The Mohoks, maybe…

21stCscribe

if anyone from #litchat wants to see a possibility for the new digital fiction, here's a 3 min video story http://t.co/vyRufkjFpk

Erin Walker, Assistant Professor, School of Computing, Informatics and Decision Systems Engineering, Arizona State University:

Technologies for reading are increasingly becoming ubiquitous and tangible. Instead of needing to visit a computing device in a fixed location to access digital content, people now carry around tablets and mobile phones and have access to content anytime and anywhere. While I think there will still be a place for e-readers in the future, I think we will increasingly be seeing information further and further integrated into the physical world. With the growth of augmented reality devices such as Google Glass, people may soon be reading virtual text by using contact lens-like devices to overlay it over the physical world. One might also imagine digital text built into large-scale physical objects like walls, so people can navigate through a book much in the same way they move through physical installations like museums.

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Readers and Anonymity

Dan Gillmor

You can walk into a random bookstore, browse through the shelves, buy a book with cash, and take it home to read. No one but you and your family will know. You can visit a library and read to your heart's content, and you'll be the only one who knows.

When you buy a book with a credit card, in a store or online, you become part of an ecosystem that has data at its core. This means, as we move into a digital-first era, that you are giving up anonymity. We need to fix this.

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Data has enormous value for everyone (including readers at times) in the emerging publishing ecosystem. As an author, I would love to know more about how my readers use what I write, including what passages they find difficult or boring, what words they look up in a dictionary, and how they annotate. For publishers, sellers and middlemen, increasing amounts of data in all parts of the publishing process means vastly better understanding of supply chains, internal systems, sales, readers' preferences, and so much more. Readers can benefit from the data-ization of books, too; for example, I rather enjoy knowing how much time it will take me, at my current reading speed, to finish a Kindle book.

But readers' privacy shouldn't be just an artifact of an analog era. We may, in a general sense, have no objection to others knowing what we're reading, or even how we're reading it. But there are times when we want to keep such information to ourselves. This is just as true for books as for web searches; if you or someone you care about contracts a socially awkward virus, for example,

you are wise to keep your research about that as closely held as possible. And it's downright dangerous to hold politically unpopular views, or even read about them, in some societies. What you read may not be who you are, but you should always have the right to read what you want without fear of it being used against you.

We can't trust the middlemen – old or new – with this information. They may sell or trade it. They may be forced by lawyers with subpoenas to hand it over to third parties. Governments will just collect it, in bulk, for analysis later. The need for anonymity in reading has never been greater.

One of the most obvious impediments to getting this right is digital rights management, or DRM, which at some levels is designed as a user-tracking system. But it's far from the only one. We need to create systems that restore anonymity and privacy. If they're software-based, they can't be bolted onto the platform after it's built; they need to be part of the building process.

A few months ago I asked **Richard Stallman**, the free software

leader who's been thinking about these issues for a long time, for suggestions on how we could buy e-books (and movies, magazines, newspapers, etc.) anonymously. He had four off the top of his head:

1. Pay with a money order. (You write a code on it and use the code to get your purchase.)
2. Buy them through bookstores (or other suitable stores) where you can pay cash.
3. If **Paynearme** manages to become usable for smaller companies, that would do the job.
4. Set up a system of digital cash for such payments.

The sooner the publishing world takes this seriously, the better. If we create only systems that abrogate our right to privacy, we are creating a society that breeds conformists, not free thinkers.

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http://sprintbeyondthebook.com/future-of-books-reading-with-suzy-morgan

Suzy Morgan - Digital books, Socioeconomic Status and Accessibility

Suzy Morgan, preservation specialist at the Arizona State University Libraries, discusses the ways that digital books may affect people's lives differently based on socioeconomic and disability status.

Joey Eschrich, Research and Operations Coordinator, Center for Science and the Imagination, Arizona State University

As a lover of printed books, I'm interested in the possibility of flexible display screens that could enable us to have thin digital readers that bend or fold in half to allow two-page spreads and more closely approximate the tactile and optical experience of a paper book.

Michael Dannenberg

In this age of constant digital immersion, more and more people are using digital devices for exploration and education. Digital technology enables young people to see words early in life during interactive experiences like video games; they can begin to formulate a visual language through this continual exposure. Schools and universities are also adopting digital textbooks, taking advantage of an easy way to share information with a large number of people without the need for huge amounts of storage space. The pervasive use of visual reading mediums such as laptops, tablets and smartphones gives people the ability to carry many different books, magazines, reference materials and the like at all times for immediate and easy access. Digital publishing also enables publishers to disseminate materials worldwide without shipping costs, so people in developing nations can access digitally published materials in their own language where this was cost-prohibitive in the past.

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Reading and Our Addiction to Distraction

Lee Konstantinou

My name is Lee Konstantinou, and I'm an addict. I'm addicted to distraction, diversion, and inattention.

I haven't reached bottom yet, but I'm still embarrassed to be making this admission in public. After all, as an English professor, it's my job to pay attention. You could say that having a literature Ph.D. means claiming to have a capacity to pay attention. It's called *close* reading for a reason. An addiction to distraction is extremely

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inconvenient for aspiring close readers.

However, I've become increasingly convinced that my struggle against distraction isn't incidental to my job. As distractions escalate, cultivating close attention only grows more important. It's my job to teach students how to focus, how to overcome the same distraction-addiction I struggle with daily. This is why I ban laptops – and grouse when students ask to bring e-books – in class. They get in the way of clear thinking and sustained attention, I say.

Which is true. But I'm also skeptical of narratives that vilify technology. If online media weren't distracting us, something else would get in the way (a lovely summer day, for instance). Before the Internet stoked my distraction addiction, TV did a fine job of keeping me away from what some second-order part of me wanted to be doing. Complicating matters further, the Internet has become a vital part of my literary scholarship, a necessary tool for writing. Google Books and Google Scholar are the greatest resources ever invented for academics. If anything, these services haven't

gone far enough in making text electronically available.

So which is it? Is the Internet a scourge or a boon for the reader? By saying that I'm addicted to distraction rather than something more amorphous – like "the Internet" or "social media" – I hope my view is plain. Our discussions about the future of the book often devolve into a comparison of so-called *e-books* and *p-books*. This discourse is apocalyptic in tone, often zero-sum in its logic. P-book partisans such as Sven Birkerts and Jonathan Franzen fear the diabolical reign of e-books. Others argue for the superiority of e-books. In *The Late Age of Print*, Ted Striphas claims that e-books can help us examine "unexamined assumptions about the moral, intellectual, and archival worth of paper and print" (2009, xiv). P-books, meanwhile, are historically implicated in perpetuating "customs of excluding, intimidating, defiling, and behaving violently toward those who are perceived as social or economic inferiors" (xii).

This way of talking incorrectly

assumes that books are somehow autonomous. It isn't ever books – whether e- or p- – that exclude or defile. It's people or groups of people who do, with technological assistance. This means that any discussion about the future of reading needs to think not only about the form of new reading devices but also about the context or situation of reading.

The real division isn't between e- and p-books, but between reading platforms that facilitate long-form attention and those that don't. When I say I'm addicted to distraction, what I mean is that my current reading habits don't mesh well with existing reading platforms. That's why people want software like Freedom or Anti-Social. Internet-enabled readers make it hard to resist the temptation to divide our focus.

If this is the case, why not just stick with good old p-books? They're quite good at keeping us on task. It's true. This is why laptops, mobile devices, and (when possible) e-books ought to be banned from classrooms. This is why, when I moved into my current apartment, I decided to convert a large walk-in closet into a dedicated

G. Pascal Zachary - Does Reading Have a Future?

G. Pascal Zachary, professor of practice at Arizona State University and a former writer at The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, discusses the features that will help reading thrive even as formats and technologies change.

reading room. I put in a bookshelf, an IKEA Poäng, and a footstool, and I made a pact not to allow electronic devices into the reading closet. Freedom requires limitation. Fulfilling our second-order desires depends on our ability to regulate our less enlightened impulses.

The problem is that I'm not only a reader but also a scholar, and my scholarship would be impoverished if I didn't have access to online resources. To do my job effectively, I have to sit in front of a temptation machine for hours at a time, which makes it hard to treat my distraction addiction.

What I want is a book that transcends the distinction between *e-* and *p-*. I want a book – maybe I should call it a *book system* – that travels with me into different contexts of reading without

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losing its identity. Sometimes, I want to sit down with a book, walled off from the Internet, and just read it. At other times, I want to be able to annotate a book, to search it, to write a commentary linked to specific passages in it, to link my commentary to a community of discourse on the book, to construct longer-form reflections on it. Sometimes I want my book system to help keep me focused on reading; sometimes I want it to allow me to access larger networks. Different form factors – and reading contexts – facilitate different stages in this process. At the moment, we live in an ecology of incompatible, often poorly designed devices and reading platforms. A better reading world would allow seamless movement between contexts and platforms. A better system would help readers do the kind of reading they need to do at the times they need to do it.

My reading closet has more to teach us about the future of reading than any particular new e-reader platforms. It's my machine for managing attention. It's a space – I might go so far as to say an *institution* – within which new

reading habits can emerge. In *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf argued that women very literally need *room* to facilitate writing. Readers too, just as much as writers, need a room, a material infrastructure, to facilitate reading. A reading closet is one technology for doing this. If I'm addicted to distraction, it's my recovery program.

So: ignore the gadget-obsessed, platform-mongering technologists. The future of reading is the future of situations, institutions, and habits of reading.

Diana Stevan

I don't think we can begin to understand what reading in the future will look like. It may come to us through glasses we wear or through texts projected on our walls from libraries around the world. The printed word will always be with us. I don't believe that books as we know them today will disappear. There is something about paper, our link with nature, that will keep all those treasured books in our midst.

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Michael Burnam-Fink
Doctoral Student, Consortium for Science,
Policy and Outcomes, Arizona State University

Books demand commitment.

Text is everywhere; splashed on bus stops, T-shirts, the backs of cereal boxes, scrolling across the bottom of CNN, down our Twitter feeds, and popping up on our phones. We live in a world dense with cheap, utilitarian, garish, and irrelevant text, but there remains an aura around the book.

I'm Jewish, and the People of the Book take books very seriously. Simchat Torah is the holiday that celebrates with yearly cycle of reading the Torah: finishing the Torah, unrolling it, reading Genesis 1:1, rolling it back up, and then taking the Torahs dancing around the synagogue and into the streets. The Shas Pollak were supposed to have memorized all 5000 pages of the Talmud such that a pin could be driven into the book and a page named, and they would be able to say what word the pin penetrated on that page. The Jewish community is built around one book, reread each year. The Shas Pollak burned a photographic version into their memories.

Judaism is a monomaniacal extreme, but lesser books than the Torah demand commitment as well. Many people describe an encounter with a book as life-changing. Even a disposable airport novel takes an hour or three of sustained attention. The respect that we have for books is multifaceted. There's the content itself, the idea that someone must have had something so burning to tell us that they were willing to spend months or years writing it down (this project aside). We respect the fact that this book got chosen and published, and not sent back to the slush pile. And finally, there's respect for the object itself: for the care and craft that goes into binding pages together, for the authoritative account that will, with luck and care, last for centuries.

Commitment, attention: two things that are very scarce in this modern age. Readers are drowning in a sea of text, and books have to compete with everything else in life. I'm not even sure if transmedia books are really books, the disintermediation into movie tie-ins, fan communities, participatory publishing, and all that is about engaging with everything but the book itself.

In the future, people will probably read in dribs and drabs. Five minute breaks snatched in the check-out line or during breakfast. But there will still be some of the old-school who read books properly – marking out hour- and day-long chunks and delving deep into new worlds and conversations. We are the new People of the Book, and it's not so much what we read but that we read that matters.

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Reading Machines

Charlie Stross

One of the key attributes of reading is that – with very

few exceptions – nobody else can do it for you. You have to plow through the whole thing yourself, or bounce from chapter to endnote, as is your wont: but nobody else can absorb the information on your behalf. (If a text can be reduced to a pre-digested summary, it was too long to begin with: or the digest is an incomplete representation.)

Reading is a rivalrous activity. You can listen to music or watch TV

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while doing something else, but you can't (or shouldn't) read a book while driving or mixing cocktails. Listening to audiobooks is only a partial work-around; studies suggest that knowledge retention is lower. Furthermore, they're slower. A normal tempo for spoken English language speech is around 150-200 words per minute. A reasonably fast reader, however, can read 300-350 words per minute; a speed reader may absorb 500-1000 words per minute (although issues of comprehension come into play at that rate).

So, what kind of environment facilitates reading?

About 15 years ago, I stumbled across my perfect reading machine – and didn't buy it. It was on display in the window of an antique shop in Edinburgh, Scotland: a one of a kind piece of furniture, somewhat threadbare and time-worn, and obviously commissioned for a Victorian gentleman who spent much of his time reading.

In form, it was an armchair – but not a conventional one. Every available outer surface, including the armrests, consisted of bookshelves. The backrest (shielded from behind by a built-in bookcase) was adjustable, using a mechanism familiar to victims of badly-designed beach recliners everywhere. Behind the hinged front of the chair was a compartment from which an angled ottoman or footstool could be removed; this was a box, suitable for the storage of yet more books. A lap-tray on a hinge, supporting a bookrest, swung across the chair's occupant from the left; it also supported brackets for oil lamps and a large magnifying glass on an arm. The right arm of the chair was hinged and latched at the front, allowing the reader to enter and exit from the reading machine without disturbing the fearsome array of lamps, lenses, and pages. The woodwork was polished, dark oak: the cushion covers were woven and somewhat threadbare (attacked either by moths or the former owner's neglected feline).

While the ergonomics of the design were frankly preindustrial, the soft furnishings threadbare, and the price outrageous, I recognized instinctively that this chair had been designed very carefully to support a single function. It wasn't a dining chair, or a chair in which one might sip a wee dram of postprandial whisky or watch TV. It was a machine for reading in: baroque in design, but as starkly functional as an airport or a motorway.

I knew on the spot and of an instant that I had to own this reading machine. For that is what this thing was: an artifact designed for the sole purpose of excluding distractions and facilitating the focused absorption of information from books. Unfortunately, in those days I was younger and poorer than I am today – and the antique store owner, clearly aware of its unique appeal, had priced it accordingly. I went away, slept uneasily, returned the next afternoon to steel myself for expending a large chunk of my personal savings on an item that was not *strictly* essential to my life...and it had already gone.

Beverly Schlee - Gene Roddenberry
and Reading in the Future

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Beverly Schlee, conservator at the Arizona State University Libraries, shares her vision of how people will read in the future, shaped by a prediction by Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry.

Lounge Chair and ottoman by Charles Eames (1955); image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

These days, I do most of my reading on a small and not particularly prepossessing sofa in one corner of my office. I'm waiting for the cats to shred it sufficiently to give me an excuse for replacing it with a better reading machine. When the time comes I will go hunting for something more comfortable: an Eames lounge chair and ottoman. Combined with an e-ink reader (with an edge-lit display for twilight reading), it approximates the function (if not the form, or the bizarre charm) of the eccentric Victorian reading machine that still haunts my dreams to this day.

How will people find new books to read in the future?

Humans have been inscribing and sharing information since the cave painting was a cutting-edge technology. Looking beyond doorstop dictionaries, featherweight paperbacks, smartphone screens and e-readers, how will we read in the future? What do we need to take in diverse forms of content, from textbooks to journalistic accounts to literary fiction? How will these tools change as texts become more interactive and participatory?

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How will people find new books
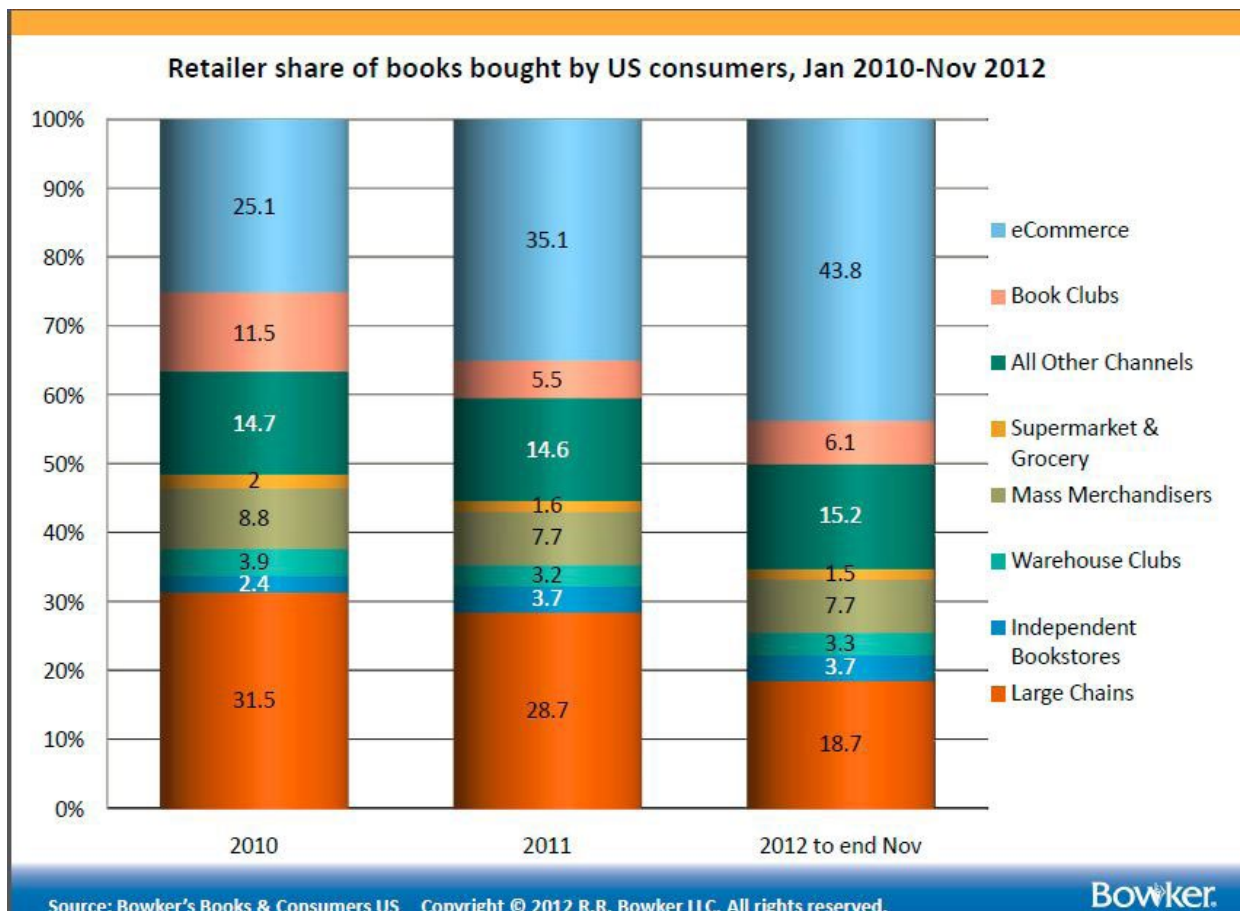to read in the future?

The Importance of Metadata in Book Discoverability

Jane Friedman

One of my favorite recent infographics on publishing came out of **Bowker** (Greenfield 2013), showing the percentage of book sales by major distribution channel:

Chapter 2
How will people find new books
to read in the future?

All this to say: the bookstore has long been the primary means of book discovery, but soon it will be a minor player in how books get marketed and sold. As sales increasingly move online, very different dynamics take hold, such as search optimization, algorithm-driven recommendations, and social conversations. Probably the biggest buzzword these days in publishing insider circles is "metadata," particularly ever since Nielsen **released a study** (Breedt and Walter 2012) showing a dramatic increase in sales for books that satisfied the industry's core and enhanced metadata requirements.

Core metadata includes: ISBN, title, author, category, price, and publisher. Enhanced metadata includes: cover, blurb, author biography, sample chapters, quotes, and reviews.

Metadata has different purposes depending on the context. For now, I want to primarily focus on the importance of metadata for a population of readers who are more likely to be discovering books online rather than in a store. In the online

Retailer share of books bought by US consumers, Jan 2010-Nov 2012

	2010	2011	2012 to end Nov
eCommerce	25.1	35.1	43.8
Book Clubs	11.5	5.5	6.1
All Other Channels	14.7	14.6	15.2
Supermarket & Grocery	2	1.6	1.5
Mass Merchandisers	8.8	7.7	7.7
Warehouse Clubs	3.9	3.2	3.3
Independent Bookstores	2.4	3.7	3.7
Large Chains	31.5	28.7	18.7

In this graph, "eCommerce" represents book sales (both print and digital) happening through online retailers such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Wal-Mart, etc. In roughly a two-year period, the percentage of books sold online jumped from 25.1 percent to 43.8 percent. Meanwhile, large chain bookstores, such as Barnes & Noble and Borders, fell from 31.5 percent

of book sales to 18.7 percent of book sales.

The large decline from 2011–2012 in bricks-and-mortar bookstore sales is attributable to the Borders bankruptcy. Barnes & Noble's future is far from certain; they plan to close about 10 percent of their stores in the coming years, and one wonders if it will end up being more.

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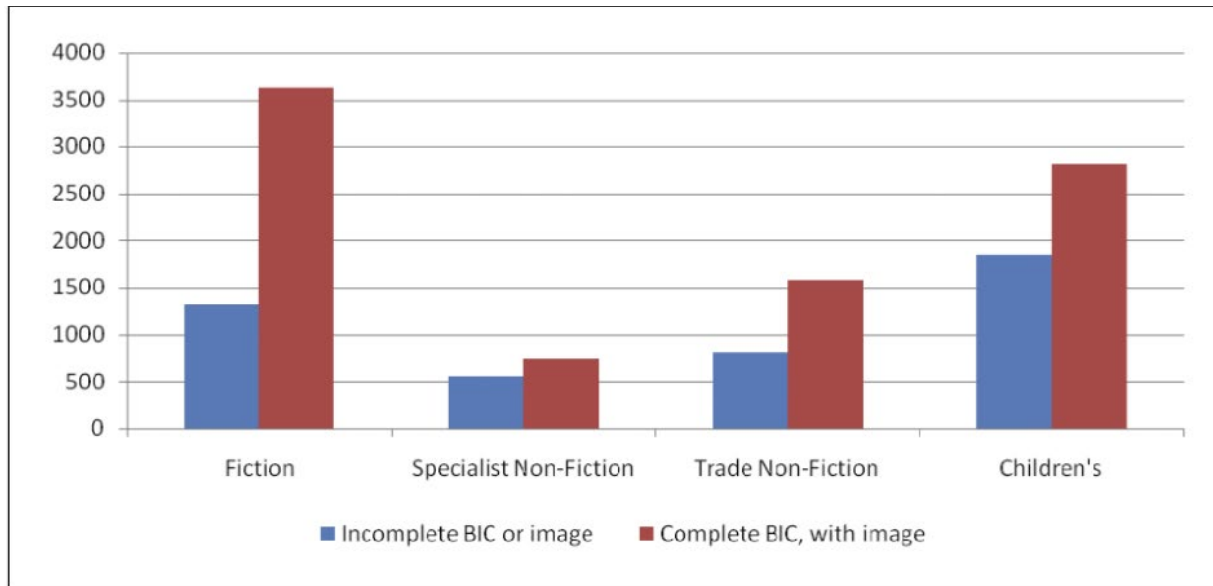How will people find new books
to read in the future?

fig. 1.4 Average sales for records with complete or incomplete BIC Basic data across different genres

shopping environment, a reader has no personal guidance, but there is an unlimited selection of books. Results are based on recommendation algorithms, search algorithms driven by keywords and the book's metadata.

In a talk by Ronald Schild at Frankfurt Book Fair's CONTEC 2013 conference, called "The Future of Metadata," he emphasized the need for semantic analysis, which relates to identifying the "core concept" of a book. Without semantic analysis, recommendations are less valuable; people do not search for books by ISBNs, but by themes (e.g., gay coming-of-age story set in Communist Czechoslovakia) and emotional topics.

What's most fascinating about the metadata discussion thus far is how much it can affect the sales of fiction; conventional wisdom might have led us to believe that it would be most important for information-driven books, but Bowker's data indicates just the opposite. In a talk at 2013 BookExpo America, Phil Madans from Hachette said, "If you don't want your books to be found ever, use the Fiction: General category as your BISAC code." Perhaps historically publishers have been

less detailed with fiction metadata, thinking it doesn't matter, but they have now changed course, delivering dramatic lifts in sales. The same discussion has also been happening in the self-publishing community, where authors have discovered that being very careful and intentional with their categories, keywords, and summary descriptions has resulted in better visibility and thus sales.

The metadata discussion doesn't just stop with filling out the fields appropriately when cataloging a book. Veteran book marketer Peter McCarthy has argued that there are far more potential readers for each book than is ever reached, and that if publishers are to keep their value to authors, they need to be the best at connecting authors and titles to the most right readers. When he develops a marketing campaign, he uses a subset of 100 tools to triangulate, plan, and execute, including a range of social analytics, search-engine optimization and other support tools, to help him understand how "ordinary" readers (not publishing insiders) go about searching for things – and to make sure those people find the right

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Michael Dannenberg

The key to finding books to read in the future is metadata: embedded information within the digital file that assists in the search for keywords. Adding information about publishers, subject matter, date, or just key terms that cover the salient points of the book or article all help readers find the information they are looking for. In future, search engines and web portals for reading materials and resources, web developers, and publishers need to give careful consideration to metadata tagging to ensure that their materials are found by the target readers.

book. A good part of what McCarthy suggests amounts to uncovering and analyzing how online conversations represent potential markets for a book.

This falls in line with a keynote talk that journalist Sascha Lobo recently gave on how the Internet will change the book. His argument is that selling books has always been social, and – in fact – the social element has always been most important. People buy books that are talked about, and his contention is that the bestselling tool for books, on the Internet, is buzz. And buzz is exactly what McCarthy is attempting to quantify with his subset of 100 tools, and what metadata experts want to see captured, analyzed, and displayed with book search results.

But the one question that often bothers more astute industry observers: Do readers really

have trouble finding books, or is discoverability a problem of the publisher (and/or author)? If you take a look at the magazine/periodical world (or other media surveys), you often find that people's biggest problem has nothing to do with *finding* stories, information, or entertainment, but with having *time to consume* everything they find. One strategy in the self-publishing community, which has been a double-edged sword for authors, is keeping their prices very low (even free) and posing a low risk, to encourage a large volume of readers to buy. However, this can have the unintended effect of encouraging readers to download or buy many more books than they could ever read, with no or reduced consequences for not consuming what is bought.

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What Are You Reading? Reading and Reputation

Dan Gillmor

In the legacy publishing world, an oligopoly of gatekeepers decided what books would be available. Publishers chose which authors deserved attention. Reviewers, librarians, and bookstores winnowed the field further. (If you could get Oprah Winfrey to recommend a book, its future was golden.) The system assured a certain level of quality at the top of the ladder. But discovery,

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apart from recommendations from friends and colleagues, was largely a top-down method.

Reputation was integral to that system. Publishers put their own reputations on the line by choosing their authors. Similarly, we learned to trust reviewers and their organizations, or not. And when our local bookstore owner recommended a book we hated, we were much less likely to take his word in the future.

The digital revolution hasn't done away with the top-down recommendation model, even though news organizations have dumped book reviews, traditional bookstores are disappearing, and the big publishing companies focus as much as possible on books they already know will sell. The most important recommender today may be Amazon*, which makes some corporate editorial judgments but mostly suggests books based on what "people like you" buy according to complex and proprietary algorithms.

Those highly customized online recommendations, in a variety of media formats such as video (Netflix) and audio (Spotify),

suffer from their own imprecision. Sometimes the results are utterly laughable. They can often be amazingly right. They are based on deep dives into data, and over time the recommendations become more refined as we use them. But they rely much more on correlation than reputation.

In a system where readers' choices are part of the formula, their own reputations can and should carry more weight. Some of those readers are our social media contacts. Others are bloggers whose work we've come to admire. They are part of an edge-in rather than top-down recommendation engine where readers make more or less explicit choices about who to trust. This is how I find much of the news I read (listen to/watch/etc.), but much less so when it comes to books.

That will change in coming years as we combine human and machine intelligence in more sophisticated ways. Here's an extremely simple example: Suppose I could designate three people whose work I trust in a specific arena to tell me what they're reading – as well as any three

people each of them recommends in that arena. That would aggregate expertise and recommendations in ways I can't easily do today. Someone will build a big business by creating better reputation-based tools for discovery.

How can we avoid finding out mostly (or only) about books we're predisposed to liking, and thereby missing out on books we didn't know we'd enjoy? I worry about the fact that Amazon tailors recommendations based on what it thinks I want. One of the joys of traditional bookstores is serendipity: the discovery of a nearby volume that I browse through and then decide to buy. This isn't entirely random; the bookstore manager decided what books to put on the shelves, and a clever jacket design can entice me to check out a book I wouldn't otherwise notice.

At some level we'll need to create our own serendipity in the e-book era. This won't be difficult, but we'll probably need to do it more consciously, by going outside our zones of comfort and the recommendations of people we trust. Discovery can't be a passive act.

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Erin Walker, Assistant Professor, School of Computing, Informatics and Decision Systems Engineering, Arizona State University

While I think intelligent predictions of which books people will like will become more sophisticated over time, I think in the future the social element of reading will be a huge factor in which books people choose. People will form niche communities around their particular literary tastes, and use those communities to find new books. This is a good example of the long tail, where with the growth of Web 2.0 technologies, people can now find like-minded individuals across the world for any set of tastes and preferences.

Melissa Mariano

For professionals seeking new knowledge in their fields, recommendations from members of communities of practice will continue to play an important role in finding new books to read..

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The Future of the Bookstore

Lee Konstantinou

Is there a future for the bookstore in a digital age?

Despite the death of independent bookstores, despite the failure of major booksellers like Borders and Barnes & Noble, I think the answer is yes. Bookstores may well survive, if we're open to the possibility that they may not, strictly speaking, be stores or physically house books. It might be better to say that the function of the bookstore will persist, albeit in a new material

form.

Bookstores had an important mission: They physically distributed books to readers. They curated the books that they stocked. They guided individual readers to new books. They were (and still are) community centers, hosting readings, effectively serving as reading rooms, at their best creating not only readers but also reading publics. In what follows, I will assume the continued value of print books (see my previous essay, in the chapter "How will people read in the future?").

Beyond existing modes of distribution – indies, big booksellers, and mega-retailers like Costco – how will we find new p-books in the future? How should we? Here are a few suggestions.

Amazon Store for Books

Just as Apple has an Apple Store where it displays its sleek wares, Amazon might consider creating a bricks-and-mortar establishment meant to showcase its papery products. It's possible, just possible, that customers will come into such stores, browse through physical books, and then decide to, you know, buy them. It's a crazy idea, but if

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any innovative forward-looking technology company can make it work, Amazon can.

Book Pop-Up

As physical bookstores increasingly go out of business, we might imagine a version of pop-up retail for the book sector. Such pop-up stores would by necessity be small, but they could colonize existing retail spaces, either legally or (what would be neater) extra-legally. With the aid of social media we might organize flash bookstores, which feature curated collections of the very coolest books, past and present, all handpicked by what we might call Book DJs (let's all agree not to call them Book Jockeys, for obvious reasons), whose reputations will depend on their meticulous taste. No self-respecting hipster should buy her book from any other sort of store.

POD Machine

Some independent booksellers, like McNally Jackson in New York, have brought Espresso Book Machines into their store, allowing the printing of public domain books on demand. Such machines could populate

many different retail locations, or even in time be part of every home. There's also no technical reason that every book, both public domain and private, shouldn't be available via POD Machine. Until technologies like 3D printing make it possible to print a high-quality book on demand in the home, let's install a fast POD machine in every café in the land (Starbucks: I'm looking at you), set them up among vending machines wherever fine sugar drinks and fatty snacks are sold, and incorporate them into every airplane, where airline carriers can take their predatory cut from text-hungry frequent fliers. The whole human library should be available on demand, as a beautiful physical print-off, at any time.

Public Library

A radically socialist scheme, the public library is a place where stuffy government bureaucrats purchase books using tax dollars, store these books, and then make them available to the general public. In the future, public libraries may become a key resource for preserving

John Risseeuw - Finding books
to read in the future

**John Risseeuw, professor of printmaking
at Arizona State University's School of Art,
director of ASU's Pyracantha Press and
proprietor of Cabbagehead Press, shares his
perspective on the variety of ways that people
will find books in the future.**

literary culture, if rapacious capitalists don't kill them off first.

These are all ideas that could be pursued now, with a little bit of will, either on the part of private or public organizations. The future of the book is in our hands. We should make sure that readers can find the books they want, and that our institutions of book discovery work in their (that is, our) interests.

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How will people find new books to read in the future?

Jennifer Apple, Tempe, AZ

My initial thoughts about the "future" of books are almost always rather cynical – I instantly flash on images of myself as a child, breathing in the scent of a new book, lounging on the porch, luxuriating in that unmistakable rustling sound as I turn each page, or even that feeling of immense satisfaction when I underlined and starred a line that was somehow, in that moment, the answer I was seeking. Will this "future" world of books still allow these kinds of tactile memories that have played such an important role in an understanding of self and a love for the printed word?

Thinking about how people will find new books in the future necessarily makes me think about the future of bookstores. I adore the local independent bookstore (here in Tempe, Arizona, that's Changing Hands) and thinking about the changing landscape of publishing and the rise of digital books generally leads me to a dark place. Will those bookstores become smooth Minority Report consumerist spaces in which I am identified as I walk through the door as a walking embodiment of my most recent purchases? An accent-less woman's voice welcoming me to the store and asking me if I enjoyed the latest Paluhniuk? Will I be guided towards items that an algorithm has already decided I will enjoy rather than freely wandering through the aisles, pausing to run my fingers over a deliciously textured cover and stumbling upon a new author?

I know that I don't want to lose the feeling of strolling through that space, the scent of the books themselves, or the opportunity to chat with that one clerk whose encyclopedic knowledge is deserving of reverence. Maybe I'm too pessimistic. Maybe the future of books (and bookstores) will bring many new readers into the fold who do not find the local scene as romantic and endearing as I do...or maybe we'll end up with a store bursting with poorly written self-published erotica and teen dystopias that lack the complexity and subtlety of those authors that may not make it through the algorithmic filter.

Laura Fillmore

Digitized content is centrally-controlled content, and, as we saw on the side of the barn in Orwell's Animal Farm, centrally-controlled content can be changed with a single stroke. Readers of the future should be ensured both of the comprehensiveness of online scanned content and of its fidelity to the printed word. Is it time for a popular library? Perhaps some new, extra-institutional publishers will crank up and take a populist approach to building and maintaining personal libraries around the world, creating a multilingual, freely available online library. Instead of bookmobiles bringing books for people to read in outlying communities, a U-Haul Bookmobile carrying a state of the art scanner could roll into town, funded by the local Rotary or Chamber of Commerce, and spend a Saturday at the Community House scanning people's rare books and documents, creating a people's library that could be accompanied by a rich semantic index created and maintained by university-based indexers and metadata experts.

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Feral Spambooks Charlie Stross

In the future, readers will not go in search of books to read. Feral books will stalk readers, sneak into their e-book libraries, and leap out to ambush them. Readers will have to beat books off with a baseball bat; hold them at bay with a flaming torch; refuse to interact; and in extreme cases, feign dyslexia, blindness, or locked-in syndrome to avoid being subjected to literature.

You think I'm exaggerating for effect, don't you?

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Today, roughly 40-50,000 books are published commercially each year in the English language. But the number is rapidly rising, as traditional barriers to entry are fading away. Meanwhile, the audience for these works remains stubbornly static. The limits to reading are imposed by its time-rivalrous nature, in conjunction with the size of the English-reading population and the number of hours in the day. Tools that make writing and publishing easier work to increase the volume of work because the creation of books is to some extent an exercise of ego: we are all convinced that we have something of value to communicate, after all. It therefore seems inevitable that in future, there will be more books – and with them, more authors who are convinced that the existence of their literary baby entitles them to prosper from the largesse of their readers.

A burgeoning supply of books and a finite number of reader-hours is a predictor of disaster, insofar as the average number of readers per book will dwindle. The competition for eyeballs will intensify by and

by. Many writers will stick to the orthodox tools of their profession, to attractive covers and cozening cover copy. Some will engage in advertising, and others in search engine optimization strategies to improve their sales ranking. But some will take a road less well-trodden.

Historically, publishers attempted to use cheap paperback novels as advertising sales vehicles. Books incorporated ads, as magazines and websites do today: they even experienced outbreaks of product placement, car chases interrupted so that the protagonists could settle down for half an hour to enjoy a warming dish of canned tomato soup. Authors and their agents put an end to this practice, for the most part, with a series of fierce lawsuits waged between the 1920s and 1940s that added boilerplate to standard publisher contracts forbidding such practices: for authors viewed their work as art, not raw material to deliver eyeballs to advertisements.

But we have been gulled into accepting advertising-funded

television, and by extension an advertising-funded web. And as the traditional verities of publishing erode beneath the fire-hose force of the book as fungible data, it is only a matter of time before advertising creeps into books, and then books become a vehicle for advertising. And by advertising, I mean spam.

The first onset of bookspam went unnoticed, for it did not occur within the pages of the books themselves. Spam squirted its pink and fleshy presence into the discussion fora of Goodreads and the other community collaborative book reading and reviewing websites almost from the first. And we shrugged and took it for granted because, well, it's spam. It's pervasive, annoying, and it slithers in wherever there's space for feedback or a discussion.

But that isn't where it's going to end. An EPUB e-book file is essentially an HTML5 file, encapsulated with descriptive metadata and an optional DRM layer. The latest draft standard includes support for all aspects of HTML5 including JavaScript. Code implodes into text, and it is only a matter of time

Ruth Wylie - Big Data and Book Discovery

Ruth Wylie, a Learning Scientist at Arizona State University's Learning Science Institute, shares her perspective on the social element of finding books in the future.

before we see books that incorporate software for collaborative reading. Not only will your e-book save your bookmarks and annotations; it'll let you share bookmarks and annotations with other readers. It's only logical, no? And the next step is to let readers start discussions with one another, with some sort of tagging mechanism to link the discussions to books, or chapters, or individual scenes, or a named character or footnote.

Once there is code there will be parasites, viral, battening on the code. It's how life works: around 75% of known species are parasitic organisms. A large chunk of the human genome consists of endogenous retroviruses, viruses that have learned to propagate themselves by splicing themselves into our chromosomes and lazily

allowing the host cells to replicate themselves whenever they divide. Spammers will discover book-to-book discussion threads just as flies flock to shit.

But then it gets worse. Much worse.

Authors, expecting a better reaction from the reading public than is perhaps justifiable in this age of plenty for all (and nothing for many) will eventually succumb to the urge to add malware to their e-books in return for payment. The malware will target the readers' e-book libraries. The act of reading an infected text will spread the payload, which will use its access to spread advertising extracts and favorable reviews throughout the reader communities. You may find your good reputation taken in vain by a second-rate pulp novel that posts stilted hagiographies of its author's other books on the discussion sites of every book you have ever commented on (and a few you haven't). Worse, the infested novels will invite free samples of all their friends to the party, downloading the complete works of their author just in case you feel like reading

them. Works which will be replete with product placement and flashing animated banner ads, just in case you didn't get the message.

Finally, in extremis, feral spambooks will deploy probabilistic text generators seeded with the contents of your own e-book library to write a thousand vacuous and superficially attractive nuisance texts that at a distance resemble your preferred reading. They'll slide them into your e-book library disguised as free samples, with titles and author names that are random permutations of legitimate works, then sell advertising slots in these false texts to offshore spam marketplaces. And misanthropic failed authors in search of their due reward will buy the ad marquees from these exchanges, then use them to sell you books that explain how to become a bestselling author in only 72 hours.

Books are going to be like cockroaches, hiding and breeding in dark corners and keeping you awake at night with their chittering. There's no need for you to go in search of them: rather, the problem will be how to keep them from overwhelming you.
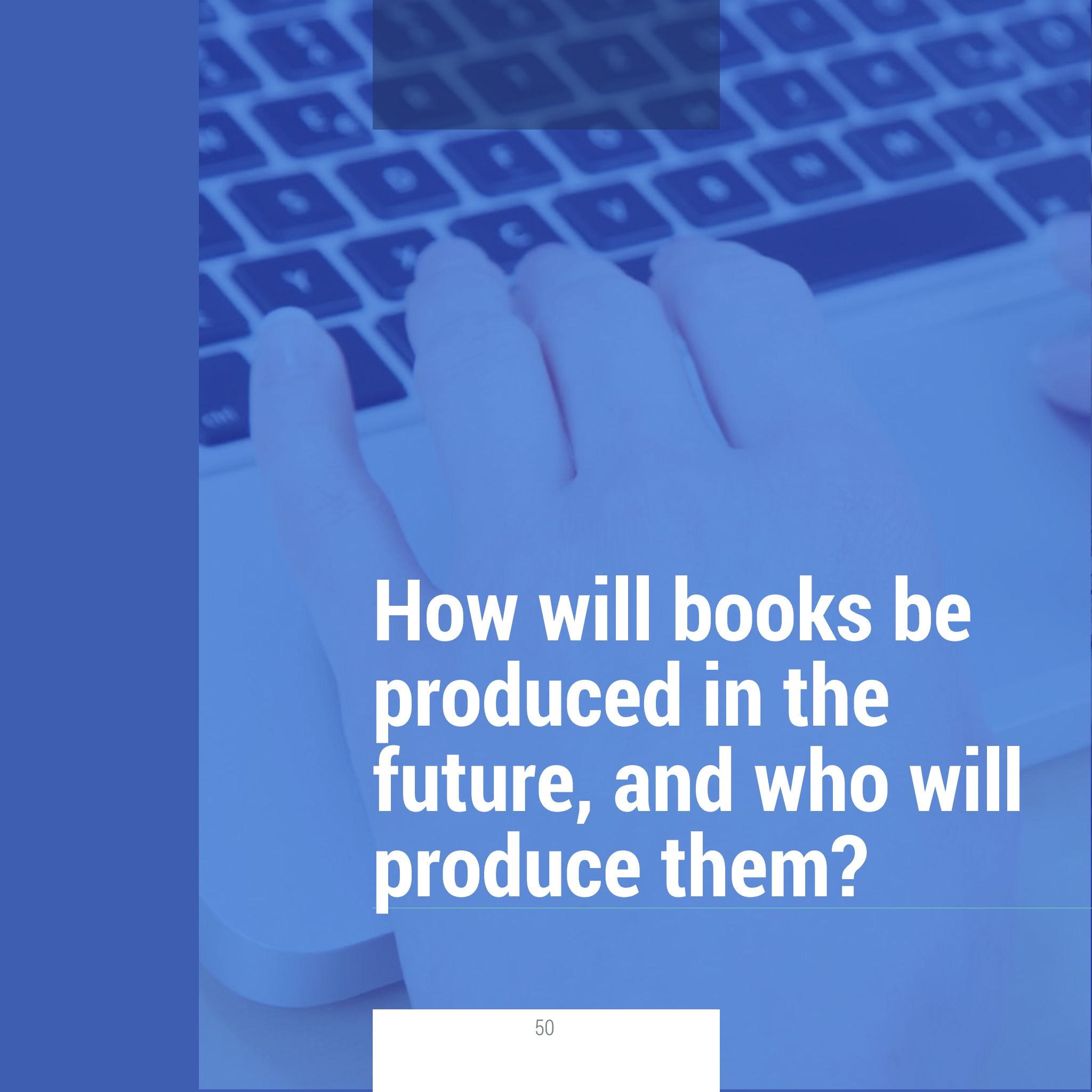
Chapter 2
How will people find new books
to read in the future?

Yasmine Jraissat

Being given the possibility to find a book one wants to read is a pleasure, and an opportunity, that we do not enjoy in many parts of the world. This possibility comes with the availability of information. And information is often scarce outside North America and Western Europe. In other parts of the world, like Lebanon, a historical capital of publishing, our modes of discovery for books are most of the time either pragmatic (the title I was told to read for a specific purpose) or straightforward (people around me told me about this specific title). What we miss, and what readers in the West take for granted, is the opportunity to discover. While the challenge faced in the West is managing too much information, the challenge we face in the East is producing quality information. The web exposes us to more books we might like, but deprives us of true discovery. It keeps us so well contained within the limits of our pre-identi-fied tastes that we are no longer aware of them, and are less open to new things. From this per-spective, the future of finding books has to take into consideration the need for true discovery – free, but well-guided. It should follow the model of the physical independent bookstore, rather than the physical hyper-bookstore.

How will books be produced in the future, and who will produce them?

Traditional publishers bundled together a variety of important services to connect authors with readers, from editing and publicity to distribution and intellectual property management. Cheap and easy digital tools threaten to automate many of these tasks, but are we losing something vital? What roles should publishers play this new landscape and what will the full ecosystem of editors, agents, publicists and other players look like?

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The Atomization of Publishing

Jane Friedman

What gets published in 2013 can be divided into three broad categories:

1. Traditional publisher output: represented by all the publishers that exhibit at events such as Frankfurt Book Fair, Book Expo America, etc.

2. Self-publishing output: represented by the many distribution and publishing services available to authors, such as Amazon KDP, Smashwords, Lulu, CreateSpace, etc.

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3. Custom publishing output: represented by the vast number of businesses and institutions outside the traditional publishing industry who might produce one or many titles per year.

In the future – assuming the container or attention unit of the book has not disappeared or become anachronistic – I believe we're going to see vast expansion in the third category, given that the function of publishing is now far less difficult and specialized, and book distribution and production pose less of a challenge and expense than ever before. Any business or institution can feasibly start their own press or imprint and publish works that are in line with their mission and values, and distribute or sell them to a target audience they likely know better than a traditional publisher. This doesn't preclude the possibility and likelihood of partnerships between traditional publishers and institutions (as there are now) – nearly a necessity for widespread bricks-and-mortar distribution – but certainly it's not a requirement for success to have

such a partnership, particularly if the content works best in a digital environment. Industry expert Mike Shatzkin (2013) has called the trend "**atomization**":

> Publishing will become a function of many entities, not a capability reserved to a few insiders who can call themselves an *industry.* […] This is the atomization of publishing, the dispersal of publishing decisions and the origination of published material from far and wide. In a pretty short time, we will see an industry with a completely different profile than it has had for the past couple of hundred years. […] Atomization is verticalization taken to a newly conceivable logical extreme. The self-publishing of authors is already affecting the marketplace. But the introduction of self-publishing by entities will be much more disruptive.

If the publishing function does in fact disperse across many entities, then what will the so-called traditional houses focus on? One imagines the realm of fiction will

remain a mainstay and focus, but I'd also like to propose that publishers will turn increasingly to analytics, data, and consumer research to make publishing decisions – for both fiction and nonfiction – since this would produce more profitable publishing decisions and might not be pursued by other, new competitors.

Research-driven publishing decisions aren't exactly new. During my tenure at F+W Media, we had a very strong consumer research component to every acquisition because we were (in part) publishing to satisfy our homegrown book clubs, where consumers were automatically sent a new book every month unless they proactively declined it. Of course, the book-club model has all but died, but F+W, as well as other direct-to-consumer publishers, often use research to ground their acquisition decisions.

Now that research often takes the form of search engine optimization (SEO) and keyword analysis, publishers can identify what people are searching for and quantify demand for a particular book

Mark Tebeau - Dynamic, Collaborative Books

Mark Tebeau, director of the Public History program at Arizona State University, talks about the exciting opportunities for living books and collaborative authorship in the future.

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concept or title. Online publications and magazines already use SEO and keyword analysis to determine what gets published, and as such analytics become more rich and detailed. And as purchasing continues to move online, we can expect that trade publishers focused on profit will be gathering all the data they can to make the best acquisition decisions. (F+W now keeps an SEO specialist on staff who assists with book titling decisions, to ensure discoverability.)

In other media industries, consumer research has long been part of the process, whether for good or ill. Movies, TV, and music are all extensively market-tested and modified based on consumer reaction. It has become a widespread cliché in the movie business how little creative control a director retains if the test audience reacts negatively. There has even

been software development to help predict blockbusters, which **Malcolm Gladwell wrote about** in The New Yorker in 2006.

Such a proposition likely sounds deadening and offensive to anyone who works in publishing, which is seen as an aesthetic pursuit (even an elitist or snobbish one, if compared to movies or TV) focused on producing important work or creative work, without concern for demand. Yet because the function of publishing is now more like pushing a button and less like a specialized process, there is less and less reason for publishers to dominate the playing field. We can already see how both new and established authors (especially when they band together) can successfully self-publish and produce their books with as much sophistication as their publisher. And for any institution that reaches its audience directly, the value a publisher provides is fairly minimal; it would make more sense to hire a consultant or freelancer, or hire someone away from the publishing industry if a long-term program is envisioned. This is

happening already, in fact.

Will traditional publishers lose their "best" books and authors? Perhaps some can hang onto their business if they retain a brand or prestige that remains desirable to authors. This seems an unreliable strategy, and publishers certainly can't depend on distribution and production services to provide value. To survive in an era of atomization, general trade publishers will likely have to focus on other ways they add value to the process, which probably involve their editorial function and their marketing function. One thing the mainstream publishers can do beautifully, if they put the money behind it and fire on all cylinders, is launch, package, and place a book with impeccable presentation, so that no one can possibly not know about its existence – a marketing and promotion campaign of global proportions. That's something you won't find a self-published author or most institutions capable of pulling off.

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Toni Ressaire

With the advent of self-publishing and the refinement of the technology and platforms that make it possible, we have already seen a massive number of new books coming directly from authors publishing in digital format and using POD services to get their work into the marketplace. Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Apple iBooks have been leaders in facilitating this movement. But readers are finicky and I have already heard many complaints through online forums about the poor quality of many self-published books.

I believe we have seen an extreme swing from big publishing houses producing books to authors producing their own. In the future, I believe the middle ground will involve an emerging industry of small and independent publishers or technology specialists who will aid authors in publishing their work.

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Author-Centric Ecosystem

Dan Gillmor

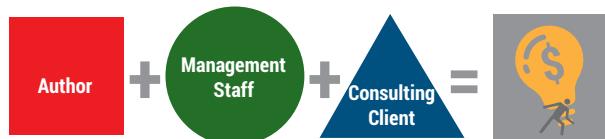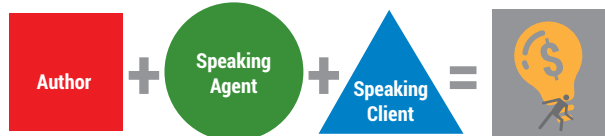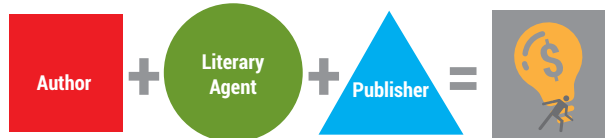**A new production and financial ecosystem is** emerging in book publishing, and it's no longer centered on the publisher. The new ecosystem, more than ever, is author-centric.

Consider the people and institutions involved in a nonfiction author's career. They include a literary agent, editor, publisher, publicist, speaking agent, and more. They work to help create and promote various products that derive from the author's ideas and writing: books,
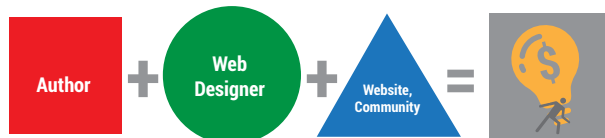
speaking/consulting gigs, websites, and consulting, among other things. These produce different revenue streams, in distinct silos, and they oblige the author to make a variety of separate deals.

Author + Literary Agent + Publisher = $

Author + Speaking Agent + Speaking Client = $

Author + Management Staff + Consulting Client = $

And don't forget:

Author + Web Designer + Website, Community = $

Author + Agent/ Manager + Educational Modules = $

Author + Publicist et al + Coverage Word of Mouth = $

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The relationships get complicated fast.

It's an inefficient system, and needs updating to reflect today's realities.

What realities? For one thing, most authors should regard their books as elements of a larger career. For me, books are at least as much about promoting ideas that have made me more interesting, hence more valuable, as a speaker, teacher, and short-form writer. Speaking/ consulting agents and managers regard books as excellent calling cards for their clients.

How can we align these interests more efficiently? Other creative

businesses have tried, with varying success. The music industry's **"360" deals of recent years** have been one of the more notable attempts. In this model, a company (usually a record label) provides all management – including booking and promoting tours, not just recording and selling music – in return for percentage of all revenues the artist generates in record sales, live shows and ancillary sales. As The New York Times' Jeff Leeds reported in 2007:

Like many innovations, these deals were born of desperation; after experiencing the financial havoc unleashed by years of slipping CD sales, music companies started viewing the ancillary income from artists as a potential new source of cash. After all, the thinking went, labels invest the most in the risky and expensive process of developing talent, so why shouldn't they get a bigger share of the talent's success?

Critics of this approach called the advantages for musicians dubious at best. Why cede even more control to an industry that has demonstrated

Novelist Barry Eisler talks with Dan Gillmor about how the shift to digital publishing gives authors more choices to make about how to sell and distribute their work.

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vastly more concern for its own bottom line than its artists?

What should the new ecosystem look like? It's not this:

It's this:

The publishing industry has made forays into this field in small ways. Many publishers have in-house speakers bureaus for their authors, but this isn't the publishers' specialty, raising questions about the value of the exercise.

I'm proposing new kinds of business arrangements where everyone involved in this collaborates and takes risks. Everyone needs an incentive to make the overall project a success. Each party should get a cut of all revenues, but at a lower percentage than they do today for their single slice. Done right, if everyone's helping to promote the author's career, there should be a bigger pie.

Authors may decide to take more control themselves. They may farm out the overall management to a single person or firm. Among others in the current system, agents (literary and speaking) will have to rethink their roles.

We'll see new kinds of business arrangements and contracts, where all participants see value in helping the other parts of the project. (If some of them say, "Aha, free money," this won't work.) We'll need to see

lots of experiments, many different kinds of deals. Some will fail despite the best efforts of all concerned, but that's the nature of trying new things.

Above all, changing the ecosystem will require a willingness to experiment – and a decision by authors to take more control of their own lives.

Ihsan Sonmez

The books of the future will be written by committees of ghostwriters, editors and marketing experts.

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Our Friend the Book DJ

Lee Konstantinou

In the future, book producers will not produce books. They will manage brands.

Authors are already told they have to behave like brands. They need to run their own websites, have a presence on popular social media sites, cultivate reader communities, and market their own books (publishers won't bother). Under such conditions, who needs publishers? Aren't they little more than parasites on the reputation and

Ruth Wylie - Protecting Quality

Ruth Wylie, a Learning Scientist at Arizona State University's Learning Science Institute, talks about the importance of protecting quality as more and more books are published in the future.

income stream of authors? Won't publishers wither away?

No, they won't. They'll become more important than ever. Paradoxically, as it becomes easier for authors to establish direct relationships with readers, publishers will become more significant, not less. This will happen for two reasons, both related to their essential future function as brand managers. Because these likely future entities won't resemble contemporary publishers, let's stop calling them publishers. Let's call them Autonomous Literary Imprints, or imprints for short.

Readers will want imprints. Imprints will help them navigate the confusing, effectively infinite digital graphosphere. In my previous essay, I evoked the farcical figure of the Book DJ. Well, he's back, and he's here to stay. In his function as an embodied imprint, he may even be the same person running your

local pop-up book retailer. His job is to have good taste. His livelihood will depend on his reputation. He will make – and break – canons. His stock will rise and fall with literary history. His culture will be his capital. He may, of course, be part of a multi-person imprint. Imprints may consist of one person or one million. They may interlock or be nested within each other. The point is, you will have a relation with the imprint. You will trust it as much as you trust your friends on Facebook or the people you follow on Twitter. Imprints are people too, not only legally but also as vibrant presences on social media.

Writers, too, will need Autonomous Literary Imprints. In your role as a writer, you will look to imprints because they have the power to confer upon you a slice of their accumulated cultural capital. Earning the brand mark of the right imprint will shape your career. It will launch you toward fame or disrepute. It'll determine whether you can get that university teaching gig that'll pay your rent.

Whether you're invited to that posh writer's retreat. Whether you can generate income streams from speaking engagements. Whether you're invited to write essays for prestigious magazines and book collections. Whether readers will even (yes, it'll still be possible) *buy your books* and (who knows) maybe even *read them*.

More importantly, in your role as a writer, you will need imprints because you won't know who to believe in the shark-filled marketplace for author services. Do you trust that freelance editor? That book designer? In the future, the imprint will be a kingmaker and a node of trust for various literary actors. The imprint will be an orienting map in a confusing supply chain of authors, agents, editors, designers, and academics.

In a field of production populated by a ragged surplus army of desperate, hungry, fame-seeking writers – in a world where more *pretty good books* will be published in one second than any reader can read in a lifetime dedicated to nothing other than

reading – mediators will become more, not less important.

So a popular techno-utopian buzzword like *disintermediation* is deceptive. It suggests that we're moving into a world of no limits or controls. Instead, we're moving into a world of total branding. Whether this new world is desirable or not is another question. I'm ambivalent about this likely future, but I'm sure our friend the Book DJ is pretty stoked.

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A.M. Khalifa

Why do people love printed books? They love flipping pages and seeing each printed leaf visible in the same dimension, rather than a virtual one as in the case of e-books. They love the artwork and the ability to hold a book in public and silently tell the world what they are reading. Readers also love to gauge how much they've read and how much they have left. It gives them an incentive to continue reading. The e-book progress bar just doesn't cut it. Imagine if in addition to our e-readers, a new sort of book "vehicle" is invented. It looks and almost feels like a printed book, but it isn't quite so. It's a hybrid between the printed and the electronic book. Let's call it the "Pelectronic Book." An advanced book shell made of an indestructible paper-like membrane with tiny electronic vascular circuits. Every time you want to read a specific book from your collection, you load it on your Pelectronic device through a USB-like port on the back. Maybe even wirelessly. Within milliseconds the 400-500 blank pages of your device get populated with electronic ink that's virtually indistinguishable from real ink.
Have a particularly long tome like *War and Peace* that will not fit in your standard 400 leaf Pelectronic book *Frankenstein*? Have no fear. You can buy page expansions in 50-page units. Install them for the duration of your long read, then remove them when you are back to standard length books to avoid lugging around a heavy device.

Philip Ralli

It seems clear that consumers may want different formats: a library may desire a sewn hardback that will last centuries; a traveler may want a read-once paperback that fits in a handbag; an older reader may desire larger print. A student may want not whole books but only the must-read chapters for his course.
All of these scenarios point to production on demand for books, either by ordering online or via printing machines in bookshops. So there will be fewer, larger physical bookstores, and workers in the stores will need to understand publishing software. This comes with a risk that copyright owners fail to get paid, so shop managers and production people will need to be conscious of security as well.
Gutenberg would recognize a world where books are personalized, expensive, and made to order, but he would be surprised that there is also the cheap alternative of buying the e-version.

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Publishers: What Are They Good For?

Charlie Stross

I think it's important, when discussing the future of the book and the future of publishing, to start with an understanding of what publishers do today.

The job of the publisher is to take a manuscript (a written text or collection of text and illustrations) supplied by an author, turn it into a book and distribute the book to readers.

The publisher and the author may be the same person or organization, or they may be a publishing house – a company or organization that

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publishes other people's work. The publisher may be for-profit or non-profit. It may range from the author distributing their own work for free all the way to a multi-billion dollar turnover multinational with divisions that handle other kinds of media. But whatever the *business model* of the publisher, the *job* is what I outlined in the previous paragraph.

This sounds simple enough, but there are a lot of intermediate steps in publishing. Manuscripts aren't usually publishable as delivered. In the old days they may well have been handwritten; these days they're usually prepared on a computer, but they may contain typos, spelling mistakes, internal contradictions, libelous statements (which might get the publisher and/or author sued if they are published without alteration or fact-checking), and other flaws.

The general process of publishing a book resembles the old-school **waterfall model** of software development, with feedback loops between author and publishing specialist at each stage. The stages are, broadly speaking:

- Substantive editing: An editor or reviewer reads the manuscript, and calls the author's attention to errors, problems or high-level structural flaws in the book. The author then fixes these.

- Copy-editing: A copy editor checks the manuscript for grammatical and typographical consistency, correcting spelling mistakes and punctuation errors, preparing lists of names, titles, and other uncommon terms for reference, and imposing the publishing house style on the book if appropriate. The author then reviews the copy edited manuscript and approves or rejects the CE's changes.

- Book design: Cover art is commissioned. A cover layout/design is prepared, using the cover art. Flap copy/advertising material is prepared. Review quotes are commissioned. The book package is then ready for typesetting.

- Typesetting: A typesetter imports the copy-edited manuscript into a layout program – typically a DTP package such as Quark Publishing System or Adobe InDesign, but it may be a formatting command language such as LaTeX – then corrects obvious layout options: ladders, runs, orphans and widows, hyphenation. The typesetter also prepares front matter and back matter such as a table of contents.

- Indexing: Optional – an indexer prepares a list of keywords and generates an index from the typeset file; this generally goes into the back matter. The author may provide feedback on the keywords to use, or even provide the initial list.

- Proofreading: A proofreader checks the page proofs – typically PDF files these days – for errors introduced at the typesetting stage. The author may also check the page proofs. Corrections are collated and fed back to the typesetter.

- Bluelining: Final page proofs are prepared and re-checked for errors. The author is not usually involved at this stage, which may be described as second-stage proofreading.

Rachel Giles

There will always be a need for people who are great at finding, shaping, and selling content, whatever the platform. That is a unique skill that publishers have.

- Registration and marketing: The publisher registers an ISBN for the book and a Library of Congress (or other national library of record) database entry. A copy will be lodged with the relevant libraries. Additionally, Advance Reader Copies may be laser-printed, manually bound, and mailed to reviewers (or electronic copies may be distributed). Advertisements may be placed in the trade press. Other marketing promotional activities may be planned at this stage (if there's a marketing budget for the title and advance orders from booksellers indicate that promotional activities will generate sufficient extra sales to justify the expense).

- Manufacturing: The publisher arranges to have the book blocks printed, bound into covers, and guillotined and trimmed. A dust jacket may also be printed and wrapped around the hardcover book. Alternatively, paper covers may be printed and the book block perfect-bound (glued into the cover using thermoplastic glue). Alternatively, a master

e-book is generated from the typeset file and, optionally, uploaded to the DRM server (or distributed as-is without DRM).

- Distribution: Copies of the physical book are shipped to warehouses or retailers. The e-book is released to the various commercial e-book store databases.

This waterfall process generally operates on a 12 month time scale. That's not because it *has* to take 12 months – in extremis a trade publisher can rush a topical current affairs title through in as little as eight weeks from start to finish, including writing time (by editing and typesetting chapters as they are handed in by a team of authors) – but because publishers operate a *production pipeline* – essentially a conveyor belt that takes in a number of manuscripts and emits the same number of finished books on a monthly basis. Everything runs in lockstep *at the speed of the slowest supplier*, because to do otherwise risks the production line stalling due to lack of inputs.

As much of the process as possible is

Andrew Crofts

I believe that almost all the innovations that Amazon has brought to/forced on the publishing and bookselling industries over the last couple of decades have eventually worked to the advantage of authors and readers. If I were a publisher or a bookseller I would feel very differently about the rise of Amazon to virtual world dominance, but I'm not. As both an author and a reader I love the many ways in which they have enriched my life. There have been rumblings recently of "mysterious and secret" deals being done between Amazon and some of the biggest and brightest literary agents. The "White Glove" service is a brilliant innovation for authors whose agents love their books but are unable to persuade traditional publishers to take them on.

Last year I wrote a novella, *Secrets of the Italian Gardener*. I sent the manuscript to one of the biggest and best agents in London, and he came back brimming with enthusiasm. He wanted no re-writes and he was sure he could get a sale.

Six months later he had to admit that he had failed to convince any publishers to come into business with us on this one. In the old days that would have been the end of the story. Simple self-pub-lishing was an option, but with Amazon's "White Glove" service we had another alternative.

Highly skilled staff at the agency proceeded to do a professional copy-edit and did all the heavy lift-ing with getting the book onto Amazon, ready for print-on-demand and electronic publication. It has become a team effort rather than a lone author's voice in the crowd. Should the book "gain traction" in the marketplace the agency is ready to handle the business side of taking it to the next level.

This template offers future roles for all the authors and agents who are unable to persuade anyone else to come on board with a project. The result-ing books stand as good a chance of success as anything published in the traditional way, avoiding the "ordeal by rejection" which has made life as a professional author such a nightmare for the last 200 years.

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outsourced. Publishers do not own printing presses. Copy editors are freelance workers, paid a piece rate per book copy-edited. Typesetting is carried out by specialist agencies. Artwork and design may be outsourced. In some cases, sales are outsourced. The only core activities that are always kept in-house are editorial, marketing, and accounting, and editorial is as much about workflow management and marketing is as much about product acquisition as they are about their official job titles.

A major commercial publisher's genre imprint may be emitting a handful of books a month – but the volume may be considerably higher. Tor, the largest science fiction and fantasy publisher in the United States, publishes approximately 300 books per year. Ace, Daw, Del Rey, Orbit – other genre imprints – emit 50-150 titles per year. In-house staffing levels are low: Tor employs 50-60 people full-time, so the ratio of books published to workers is roughly one book per employee per 2 months (plus perhaps another two months' work by external contractors).

The upshot is that major publishers today operate extremely streamlined production workflows, with a ratio of perhaps five authors (content creators) per production worker (or a 3:1 ratio if we include external contractors).

A handful of final notes bear repeating:

- The cost of manufacturing a book is surprisingly low – around 50 US cents for a paperback, rising to $2-3 for a hardback.

- The cost of manufacturing an e-book is surprisingly high – if a publisher requires DRM, the DRM provider may charge up to 10 percent of the suggested retail price of the e-book for the (dis) service.

- Of the retail price of a book, the publisher receives roughly 30-50 percent. The lion's share of the revenue – 40-70 percent of the gross price – goes to the retail supply chain.

- In general, trade publishers aim to make a profit on each book published equal to the physical manufacturing costs plus the (fixed) production costs (i.e. the costs of editing, typesetting, marketing, and so on).

- If the author's agent has done their job properly, the author's profit (a royalty paid per copy sold) will be approximately the same as the publisher's profit. (The publisher makes themselves useful to the author by organizing the production workflow, marketing and distributing the product, accounting for sales, and giving the author an advance against royalties – a non-returnable loan secured against anticipated future sales – which they can notionally live on during the writing and production phase of the project.)

This is what publishers do. Topics I haven't covered include: the contractual basis for licensing publication rights to a book, the sales channels and pricing structure through which trade books are sold, how this spatchcock mess of an industry evolved, and what the prospects are for its future development.

How will books be written and edited in the future?

Will traditional editors be eclipsed by digital technology and crowdsourcing? Wikipedia and Google News are testaments to the power of collective publishing and algorithmic editors. What technologies and tools will authors and editors use to create complex, interactive digital texts? How will they collaborate? What needs to be fixed in the tools we have now?

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The Future of Editing

Jane Friedman

Beta Readers and Agile Publishing

Perhaps it is my personal history as an editor that leads me to believe that no computer or algorithm can successfully replicate the role and work of a professional development or content editor. Regardless of how publishing changes, editors who offer valuable editing and feedback will always be in demand, at least until such a time that telepathy or brain downloads are invented.

That said, there could be considerable transformation in

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what it means to be a "professional" editor. With the rise of self-publishing (a 60 percent increase in 2012 alone, **according to 2013 Bowker data**), we've only seen the demand for editors increase, with authors more acutely aware of the need for some level of assistance in rewriting and polishing their work. But very few authors can afford professional-level, deep editing. Given how writing processes are evolving – with more online and collaborative work, more serializations, and more works-in-progress being undertaken – one can envision a world in which smart readers serve as an author's first editors.

While some career authors – who likely had to improve on their own and struggle for approval from the gatekeepers – may believe that emerging authors are publishing too early and too quickly without regard for quality, a new model is emerging that allows for those first manuscripts to be published, and for authors to improve as they go, with the feedback of beta readers.

We see this model already in progress in the fan fiction communities. The bestseller *50 Shades of Grey* started as work-in-progress within such a community, and was a riff on the *Twilight* series. Wattpad, with more than 18 million users, provides a sandbox for many authors to experiment, practice, and gather early readership (even Margaret Atwood is giving it a shot with zombie fiction).

As authors gain experience and titles under their belt, they may progress from beta readers to more formal, paid editing teams, which may consist of trusted content editors, copy editors, and proofreaders. In some community and digital publishing models that already exist, editors are rewarded by receiving a percentage of book sales, which presumably makes them more invested and incentivized to do their best work.

Another possibility, particularly for nonfiction, is crowdsourcing as a replacement for some level of development and content editing. Sourcebooks, a trade publisher, is experimenting with this type of authoring and editing process, which they call their "Agile Publishing Model." People coming from the technology world are very familiar with this type of iterative process and framework, which makes content available faster, gets real-time feedback from the target audience, and shapes the final product based on collaboration. **CEO Dominique Raccah says**, "The traditional publishing model – long schedules, creating in a vacuum, lack of involvement with the readers of the end product – drives some authors crazy. This model is a great fit for experts who are highly immersed in their field and where the field is evolving rapidly" (qtd. in "Sourcebooks Announces Agile Publishing Model" 2012). (Hopefully it's not lost on readers of this essay that the very thing being read right now is a collaborative, multimedia project that is iterative and crowdsourced, and similar to the agile model used by Sourcebooks.)

A final thought: Future editors may struggle to hang onto their gatekeeping role, and only remain tastemakers if their name carries currency with readers, meaning they become brands that signify

Christine Szuter - The Power of Editing

Christine Szuter, director of Arizona State University's Scholarly Publishing program, on the importance of editing

something important to both authors and the target audience. Are editors open to marketing and publicizing themselves as brands? It may be a difficult future for today's editors to accept, since the predominant view in publishing is that good editors "disappear" and are not spoken of; the attention goes to the writer.

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Simon De Nicola

Books will always be written by people, whether by single authors or by the coordinated efforts of many. I don't think that a book can be like a video clip: an accumulation of small parts only related by the visual story it tells. A book has a direct link with the reader and needs to tell a story. Even if edited by many – as you are now doing – the reader still needs to follow a storyline.

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GitHub for Books?

Dan Gillmor

When I started writing my first book in 2003, I'd been blogging for more than three years. I'd learned the value of a conversation with my readers. Most importantly, I'd absorbed the obvious truth that they knew more than I did. So, with the permission of my publisher, I posted chapter drafts on my blog. The result was a variety of comments and suggestions, some small and some major, that in the end helped us produce a much better book.

That process was an early stab at bringing the Internet's widely collaborative potential to a process that had always been collaborative in its own way: authors working with editors. The notion of adding the audience to the process was, and remains, deeply appealing.

The tools of online collaboration are still relatively primitive, and often discouragingly awkward. But they're improving, and I'm seeing glimmers of hope that in a few years we'll have vastly more capable systems.

As Charlie Stross notes elsewhere in this book, Microsoft Word, ubiquitous today for authors and their editors, needs to be replaced. I rarely use it myself, but there are times when it's the only way I can communicate with an editor. (I prefer to write in a plain text editor and then, if necessary, format in LibreOffice Writer; however, I find Writer even less stable than Word.)

The Track Changes feature in Word (and Writer) is, of course, a primary reason we all use it. Google Docs
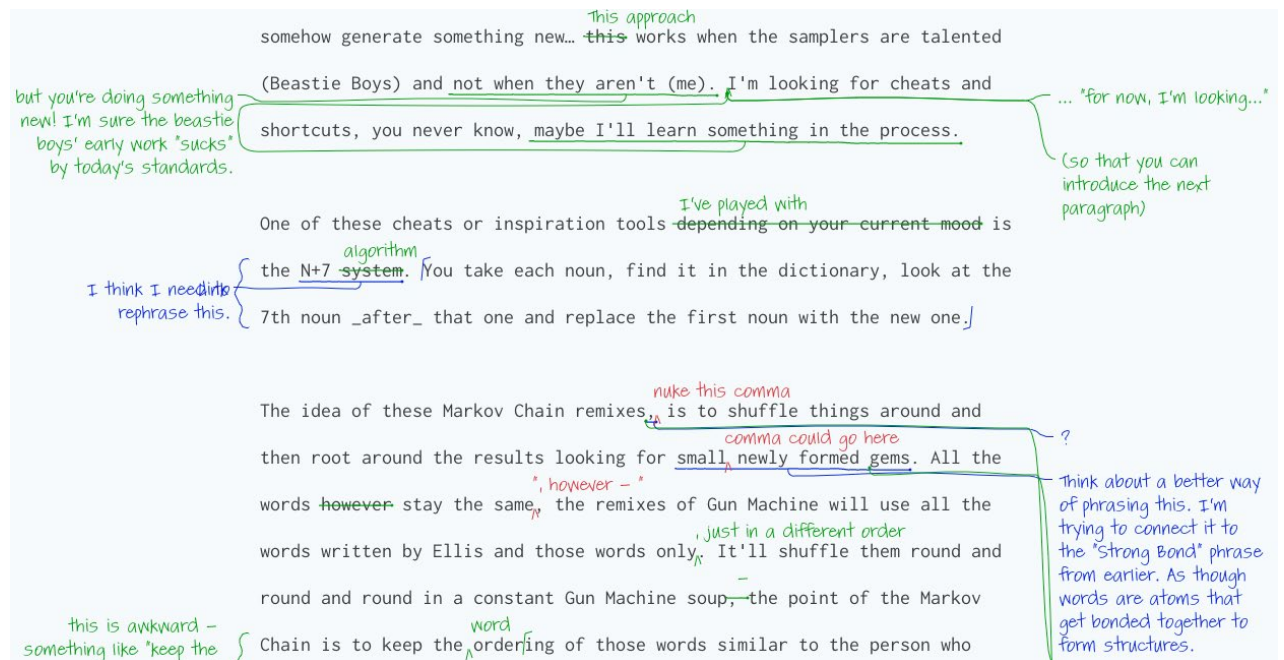
doesn't offer this feature. It should. The closest thing I've found on the web for this kind of collaborative editing is **Poetica**, an early version of an editing tool that recreates much of the style – and I believe value – of traditional editing.

But we don't do just text anymore. We "write" in mixed-media formats, incorporating charts, videos, and more into our work, and e-book formats still aren't supported as well as they should be. I'm still looking, for example, for a great EPUB-native editor. The open-source **Sigil** is a fine start, but also very much a work in progress.

Collaboration is going to get a lot more complex. The most famous Internet collaboration is the one almost everyone uses, at least as a reader: Wikipedia. Editing isn't terribly difficult, though not nearly simple enough for true newbies. Even if it was, Wikipedia isn't a book with an author's voice, and isn't meant to be. Yet it shows many of the ways forward, including the robust discussions in the background of the articles.

Wikipedia articles are also living documents, changing and evolving over time. Could books be like that?

They could in the editing process

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if we use powerful tools from the software world. I'm thinking here of GitHub, the version control system used by many software teams. What might a book look like created in GitHub? A team at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study has shown us with a dense (to non-mathematicians) volume called *Homotopy Type Theory: Univalent Foundations of Mathematics* (The Univalent Foundations Program 2013). As **Wired.com** noted in a story about the project, this was more than just an enjoyable project for some reasonably geeky folks: "If they'd tried to write this book by emailing each other files or using something like Dropbox, it would have been a complete mess.... But GitHub made it fun" (qtd. in McMillan 2013).

At least one writer (with programming skills) is working on a project to make this kind of collaboration easier than it is with GitHub. It's called PenFlip, and described as "**GitHub for Writers**." I'm signing up for the beta.

If books are to become living documents after their original publication – and I believe they

should in many cases – we have another major hurdle: the book-numbering system called ISBN, or International Standard Book Number, a unique identifier created for commercial purposes. But the Library of Congress insists that any significant change to a book requires a new ISBN number – and that system is controlled by a single company that charges extortionate rates for individual authors.

There's actually a good reason for this. If we cite a passage from a book, we need to know what version of the book we're citing, not just what page (or URL if it's posted online). Wikipedia archives every edit made to an article, and you can cite any version of the article you choose.

It will get complex, fast, to apply this notion to books. But in an era where some books can and should evolve, we should try. We should hack ISBNs, with or without the Library of Congress' help (preferably with), and create a system that lets

us constantly update our e-books and print-to-order physical books in a way that doesn't break citations even as it gives readers the most current versions.

Angela Huber

In the future, editors will know much more about the readers and their reading biographies. By analyzing the data that can be collected from e-readers, apps, and online communities, editors can provide an enhanced and updated second or third edition that is tailored to the needs and preferences of readers.

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What Is the Future of the Editor?

Lee Konstantinou

In his classic essay "What Is an Author?" Michel Foucault (1969) offered an analysis of authorship that questioned received ideas about authorial authenticity and originality.

His essay describes authors not as persons but as a "function of discourse," whether historical, social, or technological (124). Really, his essay ought to be called "What *Was* an Author?" since he ends by saying that "We can easily imagine a culture where discourse would

Prasad Boradkar - The Future of Editing is Now

Prasad Boradkar, associate professor of industrial design at Arizona State University, thinks editing in the future will be much the same as today.

circulate without any need for an author" (138). You can't help but suspect he'd prefer to live in such a culture.

This is an alienating way to think of authorship, partly because the figure of the author turns out to be not someone who *writes* but rather someone who is, in a sense, *written* by circulating social discourses. Your former illusions of writerly mastery turn out to be an effect of your context. A lot of working writers might not find imagining such a world as "easy" as Foucault does.

This way of talking may be less jarring if you realize that you, as an aspiring author or working author-function, are always also contributing to those circulating discourses. So it might be more accurate to say that the author doesn't disappear in Foucault's account, but in some sense gets *smeared* across a variety of locations, persons, and institutions, joining a good old-fashioned cybernetic circuit.

Which brings me to the question of my title. The first step in figuring out the future of the editor is to ask a prior, more important question. What *is* an editor? The editor, like the author, is also a function of discourse. But the editor also *has* a function. The editor's job is to be a switching station, a resistant medium through which the writer's message travels *en route* to readers (where we understand that reader and writer refer not to persons but to functions).

Without the medium of transmission, communication isn't possible. Without editorial friction or resistance, writers and readers instantly disappear. Writing wouldn't be communication but instead be a sort of telepathy or merging of minds. So editing is an ineradicable part of what any author tries to do. It's not only a good thing that editors exist, but logically necessary that they do.

So the real question of the future of editing is the question of who will edit, not whether someone will edit. Online, writers get to be self-editors, and readers, via various channels (comments, click statistics) also act as various types of editor. The writer's fantasy of escaping editors is just that: a fantasy. You are always being edited, always self-editing. The question isn't whether you'll be edited, but by whom and how. What future platforms will editing happen on? What forms of editing will these platforms encourage and discourage? How will editing be visualized, communicated, and incorporated into new drafts?

We might be able to imagine a culture without authors – though I admit I find it hard too – but in any culture with authors we'll never eliminate editors. Which is a good thing. We should, instead, celebrate them. And pay them, while we're at it.

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Diana Stevan

Editing as we know it today employs both the heart and the mind. Perhaps for some nonfiction books, a robotic editor or some software program will be able to improve upon a writer's work, but I doubt that any technical discovery can ever replace the human spirit. How an editor feels upon reading a book and how that translates into his or her critique will ensure their continuing existence. With the growth of self-publishing, we've seen too many books that have reached the public without being edited, with disastrous results. The reading public has noticed and has become twice shy about self-published books. Because of this problem, I foresee a growth in this part of the industry.

Why Microsoft Word Must Die

Charlie Stross

I hate Microsoft Word. I want Microsoft Word to die. I hate Microsoft Word with a burning, fiery passion. I hate Microsoft Word the way Winston Smith hated Big Brother. Our reasons are, alarmingly, not dissimilar....

Microsoft Word is a tyrant of the imagination, a petty, unimaginative, inconsistent dictator that is ill-suited to any creative writer's use. Worse: it is a near-monopolist, dominating the word processing field. Its pervasive near-monopoly status has

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G. Pascal Zachary, professor of practice at Arizona State University and a former writer at The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, talks about the dramatic changes in the editorial process during his career as an author.

brainwashed software developers to such an extent that few can imagine a word processing tool that exists as anything other than as a shallow imitation of the Redmond Behemoth. But what *exactly* is wrong with it?

I've been using word processors and text editors for nearly 30 years. There was an era before Microsoft Word's dominance when a variety of radically different paradigms for text preparation and formatting competed in an open marketplace of ideas. One early and particularly effective combination was the idea of a text file, containing embedded commands or macros, that could be edited with a programmer's text editor (such as ed or TECO or, later, vi or Emacs) and subsequently fed to a variety of tools: offline spelling checkers, grammar checkers, and formatters like Scribe, Troff, and LaTeX that produced a binary page image that could be downloaded to a printer.

These tools were fast, powerful, elegant, and extremely demanding of the user. As the first 8-bit personal computers appeared (largely consisting of the Apple II and the rival CP/M ecosystem), programmers tried to develop a hybrid tool called a word processor: a screen-oriented editor that hid the complex and hostile printer control commands from the author, replacing them with visible highlight characters on screen and revealing them only when the user told the program to "reveal codes." Programs like WordStar led the way, until WordPerfect took the market in the early 1980s by adding the ability to edit two or more files at the same time in a split screen view.

Then, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, research groups at MIT and Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center began to develop the tools that fleshed out the graphical user interface of workstations like the Xerox Star and, later, the Apple Lisa and Macintosh (and finally the Johnny-come-lately imitator, Microsoft Windows). An ongoing war broke out between two factions. One faction wanted to take the

classic embedded-codes model and update it to a graphical bitmapped display: you would select a section of text and mark it as "italic" or "bold" and the word processor would embed the control codes in the file and, when the time came to print the file, it would change the font glyphs being sent to the printer at that point in the sequence. But another group wanted to use a far more powerful model: hierarchical style sheets. In a style sheet system, units of text – words or paragraphs – are tagged with a style name, which possesses a set of attributes which are applied to the text chunk when it's printed.

Microsoft was a personal computer software company in the early 1980s, mostly notable for their BASIC interpreter and MS-DOS operating system. Steve Jobs approached Bill Gates to write applications for the new Macintosh system in 1984, and Bill agreed. One of his first jobs was to organize the first true WYSIWYG word processor for a personal computer – Microsoft Word for Macintosh. Arguments raged internally: Should it use control codes or hierarchical style sheets? In the end, the decree went out: Word should implement *both* formatting paradigms. Even though

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they're fundamentally incompatible and you can get into a horrible mess by applying simple character formatting to a style-driven document, or vice versa. Word was in fact broken by design, from the outset – and it only got worse from there.

Over the late 1980s and early 1990s Microsoft grew into a behemoth with a near-monopoly position in the world of software. One of its tactics became known (and feared) throughout the industry: embrace and extend. If confronted with a successful new type of software, Microsoft would purchase one of the leading companies in the sector and then throw resources at integrating their product into Microsoft's own ecosystem, if necessary dumping it at below cost in order to drive rivals out of business. Microsoft Word grew by acquiring new subsystems: mail merge, spelling checkers, grammar checkers, outline processing. All of these were once successful cottage industries with a thriving community of rival product vendors striving to produce better products that would capture one another's market share. But one by one, Microsoft moved into each sector and built

one of the competitors into Word, thereby killing the competition and stifling innovation. Microsoft killed the outline processor on Windows, stalled development of the grammar checking tool, stifled spelling checkers. There is an entire graveyard of once-hopeful new software ecosystems, and its name is Microsoft Word.

As the product grew, Microsoft deployed their embrace-and-extend tactic to force users to upgrade, locking them into Word, by changing the file format the program used on a regular basis. Early versions of Word interoperated well with rivals such as Word Perfect, importing and exporting other programs' file formats. But as Word's domination became established, Microsoft changed the file format repeatedly – with Word 95, Word 97, in 2000, and again in 2003 and more recently. Each new version of Word defaulted to writing a new format of file which could not be parsed by older copies of the program. If you had to exchange documents with anyone else, you could *try* to get them to send and receive RTF – but for the most part casual business

users never really got the hang of different file formats in the "Save As ..." dialog, and so if you needed to work with others you had to pay the Microsoft Danegeld on a regular basis, even if none of the new features were any use to you. The DOC file format was also obfuscated, deliberately or intentionally: rather than a parseable document containing formatting and macro metadata, it was effectively a dump of the in-memory data structures used by Word, with pointers to the subroutines that provided formatting or macro support. And "fast save" made the picture worse by appending a journal of changes to the application's in-memory state. To parse a DOC file you virtually have to write a mini-implementation of Microsoft Word. This isn't a data file format: it's a nightmare! In the 21st century they tried to improve the picture by replacing it with an XML schema...but somehow managed to make things worse, by using XML tags that referred to callbacks in the Word codebase, rather than representing actual document semantics. It's hard to imagine a corporation as large and (usually) competently-managed as Microsoft making such a mistake by accident....

This planned obsolescence is of no significance to most businesses, for the average life of a business document is less than 6 months. But some fields demand document retention. Law, medicine, and literature are all areas where the life expectancy of a file may be measured in decades, if not centuries. Microsoft's business practices are inimical to the interests of these users.

Nor is Microsoft Word easy to use. Its interface is convoluted, baroque, making the easy difficult and the difficult nearly impossible to achieve. It guarantees job security for the guru, not transparency for the zen adept who wishes to focus on the task in hand, not the tool with which the task is to be accomplished. It imposes its own concept of how a document should be structured upon the writer, a structure best suited to business letters and reports (the tasks for which it is used by the majority of its users). Its proofing tools and change tracking mechanisms are baroque, buggy, and inadequate for true collaborative document preparation; its outlining and tagging facilities are piteously primitive compared to those required by a novelist or thesis author; and the procrustean dictates of its grammar checker would merely be funny if the ploddingly sophomoric business writing style it mandates were not so widespread.

But this isn't why I want Microsoft Word to die.

The reason I want Word to die is that until it does, *it is unavoidable.* I do not write novels using Microsoft Word. I use a variety of *other* tools, from Scrivener (a program designed for managing the structure and editing of large compound documents, which works in a manner analogous to a programmer's integrated development environment if Word were a basic text editor) to classic text editors such as Vim. But somehow, the major publishers have been browbeaten into believing that Word is the *sine qua non* of document production systems. They have warped and corrupted their production workflow into using Microsoft Word DOC files as their raw substrate, even though this is a file format ill-suited for editorial or typesetting chores. And they expect *me* to integrate myself into a Word-centric workflow, even though it's an inappropriate, damaging, and laborious tool for the job. It is, quite simply, unavoidable. And worse, by its very prominence, we become blind to the possibility that our tools for document creation could be improved. It has held us back for nearly 25 years already; I hope we will find something better to take its place soon.

Laura Fillmore

For independently produced, multimedia, kinetic books of the present and future, will there continue to be one single umbrella entity called a "publisher," providing a quality control, funding, and distribution for publications produced by editors practicing their traditional roles, plus all the new editing roles – hyperlinks, video, translation, and display editing? I doubt it.

Roaming about the digital plains today we find editors of all stripes – most of them freelancing as book doctors or consultants, outside of publishing houses. Who, if anyone, will harvest their knowledge and skills in author support, in book enabling for a digital age? And who will train and build the generation of editing people and programs to come? Will readers be able to continue to rely on traditional publishers' logos to ensure that what lies inside a book's covers is true?

We digital publishers are akin to the first amphibians flopping on the beach, gasping for air as we emerge from the sea of traditional paper- and product-based publishing. Our old analog ways of doing things like editing do not map to this new world of immediate creation and publication. We see the Tower of Babel rising before our eyes, rapidly erecting itself. Our search for answers happens urgently, in real time. Thanks to ASU and the Frankfurt Book Fair for leading the industry to define and assume its role in the new world.

How will the concept of the book evolve in the future?

When we think of a book, we still think of a tangible, printed object with pages and a spine. As books become digitized in more sophisticated ways, how will the definition of "book" change? How will social reading, multiple pathways and rich media transform the meaning of the word "book"?

Weather Cast

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UNLOCK

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A New Word for *E-Book*

Ed Finn and
Joey Eschrich

When's the last time you sat down to read a book for several hours? Or even one hour? We are both card-carrying humanities scholars, but even we can barely scrape 15 minutes together for sustained engagement with a text. And yet humans are reading now more than ever when you think about the billions of hours we collectively spend on email, Facebook, Twitter, texting, sexting, and reading illicit things online. This is more than just information

overload: When we change how we read, we are changing our brains. Researchers have proposed that we **play out literary scenarios with mirror neurons** and fire up complex, full-brain patterns of activity when asked to practice "close reading," in contrast to the patterns associated with **reading for pleasure** (Keen 2006; Goldman 2012).

Neurological effects, different types of media, totally new reading habits – just a few reasons why **e-reading is a fundamentally different experience** than curling up with a dead-tree book. Print books are a highly refined technology that isn't going anywhere soon, but there are ways in which the digital is superior to the old-fangled, and vice versa: They're horses of different colors.

And yet publishers keep trying to recreate the print experience online, with the faux wood of the iOS bookstore and the fake page-turning animations on many e-readers. It's time for that to end. We need to embrace digital reading as its own medium, not just a book under glass. That means imagining a new language for reading as an experience, starting with a new word to use instead of *book*.

It's still no easy trick to figure out a name for this thing, though. Throughout the writing of this volume, we acted as ringmasters for a crack team of novelists, journalists, and publishers conducting a gonzo experiment in the future of publishing. Sprint Beyond the Book aimed to upend the publishing industry's centuries-old model for book production. We wrote in public, on the crowded and noisy floor of the fair. We moved from concept to final product in just 72 hours. We crowdsourced the writing, featuring dozens of contributions collected through our website. We shot and embedded videos throughout. We're even giving the thing away for free. But despite our pretensions to renegade chic, we couldn't stop returning to the word *book* to talk about what we were building.

The fact is that every other name we came up with sounded boring or silly. *Text* was a strong early contender – after all, it's used by humanities geeks like us to refer to everything from political speeches and Hungarian rap lyrics to recipes for gumbo. Sadly, it's totally misleading: We're hurtling toward a future in which reading means making decisions, watching videos, writing back, and getting lost in vast virtual spaces. *Book system* is too stodgy (as are *reading system, platform,* and *service*) and doesn't even get rid of the word *book*. We gleefully entertained and discarded many bad ideas like *graphies*. Some of us liked *plat*, a shortening of *platform* that sounds like something out of a Golden Age science fiction story, but the more we said it, the more it sounded like a comic book sound effect for something gross.

Rather than grope forward, we decided to look back. With some trepidation, we would like to nominate *codex*, a word with a rich history that most of us don't know anything about. *Codex*, derived from the Latin *caudex* (meaning "trunk of a tree") even happens to contain the English word *code*, which will be central to the future of reading in a variety of ways. The things we'll be reading in the future will not only involve a lot of programming; they'll also require readers to decode complex, multilayered experiences and encode their own ideas as

contributions in a variety of creative ways. Since standard printed books are technically codices, we propose (with significantly more trepidation) to distinguish our variant with one of those annoying midword capitals: *codeX*, to remind us that these new things involve experience, experimentation, expostulation...you know, all those X things.

This also works nicely because it reminds us of the X-Men and the X Games: We see the future of reading as an arena with the social dynamics of competition and play, scoring points and showing off, rather than a LeVar Burton **rainbow** of love and generosity. (Twitter works like this now, as a performance space where we're all more or less openly vying for the award for "most clever person on the Internet this minute.") Books have always been potent weapons in the **cultural battlefield** for prestige and distinction, and they won't magically turn into utopian spaces anytime soon. At the risk of sounding too academic, we think the X highlights the jousting and (hopefully friendly) conflict inherent to digital reading.

From social reading platforms like **Medium** to digital pop-up books like 2012's *Between Page and Screen*, we're already building the future of reading, and there's no going back. So let's agree on a new term and stop pretending these utterly new ways of reading are anything like the singular and lovely experience of thumbing through a printed book.

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Book as Fluke: A Thought Experiment

Jane Friedman

What if the existence of books were a cosmic accident, not something irrevocably part of our evolution, not intrinsic to the human experience, but more or less the most profitable thing to be produced from a printing press, a function of commerce and retail and/or a function of religious or scholarly systems? What if the book perpetuated itself not out of necessity, but through a human desire for profits, ego inflation and prestige? Particularly when looking

at contemporary attitudes toward the book, as Richard Nash discussed in his essay "**What Is the Business of Literature?**" (2013), books might be seen as culturally "important" partly because of a public relations campaign mounted by the father of spin, Edward Bernays:

> "Where there are bookshelves," [Bernays] reasoned, "there will be books." So he got respected public figures to endorse the importance of books to civilization, and then he persuaded architects, contractors, and decorators to put up shelves on which to store the precious volumes.

There is so much mythology and self-important discussion surrounding books that we sometimes forget the book is a technology, so old a technology it has disappeared into the background. A book as set of bound, typeset pages has nothing in particular to do with the survival of storytelling, reading, or writing. But the advent of the printing press and the advent of the book are so closely connected that we tie the benefits and importance of the printing press (cheap and quick distribution of information) to the benefits and importance of the book (the vessel carrying the information). Perhaps they are inseparable throughout much of their history, but now that we're undergoing another paradigm shift – a new way of distributing information quickly and cheaply, through the Internet – one has to question whether the book, which is tied so closely to the advent of the printing press, will retain its meaning, relevance, and utility in the digital age.

The great growth of reading and writing we're now experiencing is connected to the Internet's abundance of information and instant publishing opportunities, not books. In fact, books have been mostly absent from the Internet (for reading and reference) because they're closed off in separate universes, not often made available for search, and not as freely distributed, copied, and subscribed to as other digital media. In Google's attempts to bring books inside the fold of the web, they have faced innumerable challenges and legal battles from people who wish to strictly protect the copyright and profits related to books.

But it may not matter in the end, because the book – either as a unit of commerce or as a unit of attention – may not be the best way to satisfy the needs and desires of people who can instantly access information from mobile devices and be entertained by an unlimited amount of media. As Marcus Dohle said at the 2013 Frankfurt Book Fair, "We want [customers] to choose books as a future, and not Netflix – and that is a big task." Industry consultant Mike Shatzkin has also said that the biggest challenge facing publishers isn't the digitization of books or Amazon's retail practices but the consumer deciding to pass the time by playing *Angry Birds* or scanning Facebook rather than reading a book.

This challenge, as Dohle says, is a big one. Some controversial articles have argued that the best storytelling today is found on TV, not books. Some have accused literary fiction of becoming irrelevant to contemporary life. Tim O'Reilly famously said the following to Wired.com in 2012:

> I don't really give a shit if literary novels go away. They're an elitist pursuit. And they're relatively recent. The most popular author in

the 1850s in the US wasn't Herman Melville writing *Moby-Dick*, you know, or Nathaniel Hawthorne writing *The House of the Seven Gables*. It was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow writing long narrative poems that were meant to be read aloud. So the novel as we know it today is only a 200-year-old construct. And now we're getting new forms of entertainment, new forms of popular culture. (qtd. in Levy 2012)

Recent innovations in delivering stories have not typically come from book publishers, but from start-ups or online-based companies that can closely evaluate reader reaction and behavior. Amazon, following the lead of other media start-ups, has launched digital initiatives such as Kindle Singles (to deliver stories between 10,000 and 30,000 words), Kindle Serials (to sell story subscriptions), and Kindle Worlds (to deliver fan fiction). None of these genres or formats really fit into the existing paradigm of the book or the legal strictures surrounding it; therefore the traditional publishing business, concerned about profits and marketability, has rarely

pursued such content. Now that such areas are flourishing in the digital environment, we begin to recognize the artificial construct of the book – that its length, shape, and purpose is based on manufacturing, marketing, and other commercial considerations.

Yet some do effectively argue that the book has evolved to encompass the perfect unit of attention and the perfect length to expound on an idea. Maybe this is true, or maybe this is just what we're used to; after all, attention spans appear to be changing. Still, it's difficult to envision that a book-length work of fiction – the novel – will become extinct any time soon. It seems likely to continue, but as a less popular form. Consider how the invention of the LP once led musicians to focus on the art and craft of the album: now the digitization of music has ushered in the age of the single. Perhaps fiction is headed in the same direction, something more befitting our short bursts of attention or time when we're seeking 5-10 minutes of entertainment while standing in line at the grocery store or waiting at the doctor's office.

The idea actually under threat is the book as information vehicle. Much of the publishing industry – especially the educational sector – is acutely aware that the typical book doesn't necessarily do the best job of imparting information. Many nonfiction publishers have completely stopped talking about "books" and now focus on *content strategy* and *media agnosticism*, recognizing the need to deliver information in many different channels, formats and environments. Wiley's CEO Steve Smith has said in a range of talks that his company's job as an educational publisher is not to deliver information or content, but to develop *services*. By that he means: servicing universities, students, and professionals with online courses, assessment, workflow tools, communities and, yes, digital books.

I also wonder about the feasibility, particularly in the nonfiction realm, of culture continuing to deify the author, according him great respect, authority, and prestige for producing a book. For writers that subject themselves to the wisdom of the crowd, whether through an agile

Suzy Morgan - Physical Formats and Cultural Roles

Suzy Morgan of the Arizona State University Libraries talks about the changing form of books.

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publishing model that collects reader feedback or a series of blog posts, they're deeply aware that their own knowledge and perspective, without the knowledge and input of others, often falls short. Case in point: the British journal *Nature* found that Wikipedia is **about as accurate** as *Encyclopædia Britannica* ("Wikipedia Survives Research Test," 2005). Wikipedia of course has its weaknesses (mainly in structure and style), but the resource is still in its infancy when compared to *Britannica.*

As far as the role and primacy of the author in storytelling, I can't help but refer once again to the strength of current TV writing, where a room of writers debate and produce a story arc collectively. While there is usually a creator or visionary, someone who has come up with the premise (as in the case of Vince

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Gilligan of *Breaking Bad*), most show creators are quick to give equal credit to the many writers they work with.

Bottom line, we forget that the idea of authorship – and the creation of copyright – came along with the printing press. Before the printing press, there really wasn't any such thing as an "author." There were scribes and historians, but authorship is a relatively new idea. With the digital age, we may see the role of the author start to disappear or diminish. Futurist David Houle has predicted this and **said in an interview** that the younger generations are not as concerned with control as they are with influence. They are more interested in completing projects in a collaborative manner, rather than the ego- and identity-centered "I've got to go off by myself and create my work of art" (qtd. in Friedman 2013). This latter attitude pretty much nails the primary mode and concern of novel writers today, who find themselves in dramatic opposition to the technology surrounding them (see: Jonathan Franzen and Dave Eggers).

Erin Walker, Assistant Professor, School of Computing, Informatics and Decision Systems Engineering, Arizona State University

Part of the current conception of a book is fixed text that a reader proceeds through in a pre-determined order. We may find books becoming more interactive, with more detail presented on characters or storylines that a given reader finds more interesting. We may also find books becoming more social, with the opportunity to discuss your thoughts on the book with a community of like-minded individuals as you read it. We may find that authors can receive real-time feedback on books and then adjust the text based on people's responses, creating a better product overall. Finally, I think we will be seeing the content of books integrated more with physical spaces, where if you are in a particular location or context (e.g., on a bus versus reading at home) you receive a different reading experience.

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What is a book? Discuss

Dan Gillmor

In the news sphere, there can be endless arguments over whether this person or that person is a journalist. It's a pointless conversation, because the real question is: What is journalism? Edge cases are easy. The New York Times is journalism. The "BlahBlahBlog" isn't. But it gets blurry fast, and that's where the conversation gets interesting.

We're starting to have the same discussion in the book world. Again, the edge cases are easy. Here's a

Charlie Stross' **novel** comes in print – bound pages – and in several e-book formats. It's a book, period.

Not all books in the traditional realm are based on text, of course, though I'm hard-pressed to name a book that doesn't include at least some text. Graphic novels and the heavy oversized volumes of photography we put on our coffee tables are just as much books as Charlie's novel or *Moby-Dick.* But just as a collection of blog posts isn't a book, the latest installment in some comic series isn't either (though we do call them comic books).

This is also a collection of bound pages. It's not a book, at least not in the context I want to use here:

The little notebooks I carry around, and into which I write notes of various kinds based on ideas and conversations, isn't meant to be seen by others. It doesn't start here and end there. It's random. Book? Nope.

What about this volume, called **Between Page and Screen** (Borsuk and Bouse 2012):

Its authors call it "an augmented reality book of poems." Here's a video of **how it works**. Come back when you've watched it.

Is this really a book? Or is it something else, even if part of it fits between two covers?

Now check out "**The Elements**" on the iPad.

I love it. Is it a book? Probably, but I'm not sure what I'd say if I had to give a yes or no answer.

Christine Szuter - Deep Knowledge

Christine Szuter, director of Arizona State University's Scholarly Publishing program, on books and deep knowledge

Barry Eisler - Evolving Uses of Books

Novelist Barry Eisler on transformations in the ways that books will be used

Welcome to the blurry world of tomorrow's books – blurry in precisely the same way that some other media forms have become. It's all about digital technology, of course, which subsumes everything that existed before, and then extends it into new realms. Things bleed into each other: The New York Times posts excellently produced video online, and the BBC publishes text-based articles.

The experimentation in book publishing today is great to see. People are using technology to push out the boundaries. At some point, though, what they create no longer seems to fit into any category with historical antecedents.

I've asked any number of people in recent months what a book is. The answers have ranged about

as widely as you'd expect. Several zeroed in on a fairly simple but powerful notion: a book starts here, holds your attention for a non-trivial period of time, and ends there. Then again, so does a walk in the woods, or a film.

I suspect a book will be anything we decide to call one. Traditional books, after all, span an enormous range of presentation methods, not just topics and styles. Maybe we're just adding new methods.

Words take on new meanings in any case. When was the last time you dialed a phone number by turning a little wheel on a landline telephone with a wire connected to a wall plug? But you knew what I meant by dialing.

I do worry that our shrinking attention spans will make traditional reading less and less relevant. But, ever optimistic, I'll predict that books – whatever that means – do have a future, because we need them.

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Stephen Hill

How will the definition of "book" change?
The Neverending Story, the German fantasy novel by Michael Ende, features a rather peculiar book of the same name that is central to the story. The book allows the reader to become part of the story, because the progression of the story is dependent upon the qualities of the reader. The reader becomes part of the story, and therefore the story is different (if only slightly) depending on who reads it. Indeed, the story might very well be different for a single person if read several times over a lifetime. A traditional book is the encapsulation of various and sundry ideas of an author (or authors) and editors, and once it's bound and shipped it remains just that until a revised printing comes along. Those ideas reach out and transport the reader along, albeit in a passive way. The reader is an observer, incapable of changing anything about the encapsulation. She can only consume.

As access to wireless bandwidth increases, as flexible display technology gets closer to paper in texture, we're getting closer and closer to the book described in Neal Stephenson's *The Diamond Age* in terms of technological sophistication, a leather-bound tablet computer with gilt pages instead of Gorilla Glass, with a smorgasbord of functionality, and you well may have the last book anyone needs to buy or lend (in terms of saving space on the bookshelf, at any rate). But what about the stories themselves? Will they remain static?

In certain instances that's going to be necessary. It would be a mistake to let trolls hack the text of *The Odyssey*, right? Or would it? What about while an author is living and interacting with their work? The video game industry had a hit with *Grand Theft Auto V*: some billion dollars for one instance of interactivity in a digital sandbox. What happens when books and video games blend together finally? And when the data is analyzed for trends, what will we learn about the dreams that people want to see made real?

"Book" is going to become more and more about the totality of available experience and less about something that gathers dust on a shelf, or merely takes up byte-space on silicon.

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Building Worlds Out of Books

Lee Konstantinou

We've been writing about the future of the book without having given much thought to the question of *what a book is in the first place.* Is it a physical, papery artifact, a thing? An autonomous textual unit of attention made up of meaningful bite-sized subunits? A word whose persistence in language is merely a matter of convention, a residue of more bookish times?

I'd like to propose that a book is a window onto a world. If this is true, we have good reason to believe that

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books will survive in a form that will remain recognizable to us.

Books project worlds by objectifying thought. They freeze in place a story, a longish idea, or a description of life. Books are one means of taking a world, real or invented, and compressing it, encoding it, and presenting it. Books shrink space and crush time. So long as we enjoy shrinking space and crushing time, we'll crave book-like things.

Then again, in the same breath that they create worlds, books also destroy themselves. When I read a science fiction novel (and not only science fiction), I read for worlds. I define the word *world* as the sum total of relations – among things, characters, settings, laws, etc. – within a bounded imaginative space. If the book does its job, its bookishness will dissolve into the reader's concern for characters and situations and plots. Even the most intensely avant-garde poetry (think Kenneth Goldsmith's American trilogy) or the boldest experiments in book design (think Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes*) construct worlds. Even the most book-conscious books are finally self-effacing.

Which might lead us to doubt that books need to survive. If I can watch a skillfully made rendition of Frank Herbert's *Dune*, of what special use is the novel? It's true, literary style is only one sort of window onto interesting worlds. But it's a window with strengths and weaknesses, zones of clarity and opacity. Despite a century of efforts to do so, no novel will ever offer the visceral experience of a play or film or television show or video game. Contrariwise, non-literary modes of world-building still stink at dramatizing thought or deploying metaphor. Within the domain of prose fiction, moreover, short stories can only hint at the fullness of an imagined or real world, a job the novel does with ease.

There are also economic reasons why books will likely survive. In an age of vertically integrated multinational media conglomerates, books remain useful as vehicles for the creation of worlds on the cheap, worlds that subsequently spawn other higher-margin worldish media products. A company like DC Comics sustains its comics division almost

purely as a means of research and development for its profitable films. Film producers often outsource creativity to popular novels or book series. The book (whether of poetry, drama, or prose) fits snugly in curricula and on syllabi at every level of education. Finally, the novel is still at the peak of the pyramid of narrative and cultural prestige. No other form comes close to capturing the imagination of a world-hungry public. These are forces that will, fortunately, be hard to dislodge.

The future of the concept of the book is therefore the future of the book's capacity to facilitate the reader's access to worlds. As long as humans are hungry for fully evoked worlds that include figuration or densely packed information or renditions of characters (or people) whose inner lives are richly accessible, something very much like the book will survive.

John Risseeuw - Defining a Book

Professor of printmaking John Risseeuw talks about the unchanging concept of books.

Charles McDaniel

Many have written my obituary, on more platforms than you can imagine; in old media newspapers, new media blogs, on-line magazines, e-alerts for smart phones. You name the venue and someone has rejoiced at or opined about my demise.

But most of the blather has been misdirected. True, books are evolving, but more in the way that birds and reptiles evolved from a common ancestor. Aspects of the DNA of one organism remain genetically embedded in the other.

That's what's happening with me. Part of my DNA has been spliced, creating spin-offs that will diverge from me, blurring our connection until it becomes almost invisible. Within a short span, children will be enjoying interactive "experiences" that include text, pictures, embedded video, soundtracks – a plethora of options. A paper-bound book will seem as unrelated to these as chiseled hieroglyphics seem to modern word processing.

But I will survive, surprisingly intact. Of course, I am not immune to the force of evolutionary change. Already many experience me via dedicated e-book readers, tablets, and phones, and wipeable, changeable smart paper beckons from the horizon.

But my magic remains undimmed by these new methods of access. I still have the power to transport a child or parent into a world of mystical wonder where pirates battle brigands, where grieving daughters mourn fathers, where a son seeks vengeance for an untimely murder.

I myself provide a unique experience: the opportunity to actually lose yourself in words. No other medium can do that. And no technological innovation can destroy the siren song of my power.

So do not fret. Not only am I alive and well – in a world of technological cacophony, I'm growing stronger.

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Corey Pressman taught anthropology for 12 years before founding Exprima Media, a software design and development company that partners with content providers to envision, design and develop compelling and effective interactive experiences. Corey delivers presentations on a variety of topics including the future of publishing, interaction design and global mobile initiatives

Ancient Marginalia:
The Watershed Manifesto Corey Pressman

The arithmetic magicians of old did not know what fire they handled, what heat they hefted, when they considered the humble "1" and the mystical "0." Certainly, they knew of power there, but none could have guessed what this dynamic digital duo would be up to come the 21st century. Indeed, heroic "one" and the Enkidu "zero" are a pair on a journey – and we are all along, passenger and crew.

The recent achievements of this binary couplet are many – but one in particular concerns us here. Binary has (re)turned content into a fluid. By content, I mean the stuff we generate to fill pages and the grey between our ears. Story telling, information transmission, all outward expression has been touched and transformed by digitization.

Continue reading at Digital Book World....

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How will the concept of the book evolve in the future?

A.D. Winch

The definition of a "book" will not evolve until paper copies of books cease to be published. Vinyl records are no longer mass-produced, but the notion of an album still exists on iTunes, when the physical product is almost dead. A collection of songs in a particular style will continue to be defined as an album, just as a collection of words on a specific theme will continue to be defined as a book. What will evolve, however, is the notion of a story in fiction or a designated expert writer in non-fiction. Around a campfire or when reading to children, many people can contribute to a story orally, or change stories that they tell. Digitized fiction books will expand our ability to play with stories. In digitized nonfiction books, there will not be one single expert; instead, books will feature a number of contributors who are all accessible to the reader – in much the same way as the Sprint Beyond the Book project.

Chapter 5
How will the concept of the book
evolve in the future?

Do Zimboes Dream of Electric Sheep

Charlie Stross

The act of reading is inextricably linked to the

intertwined structures of language and consciousness.

We are conscious beings; as mammals, when we experience the world around us we weave a narrative account of our existence that gives us a retrospective timeline in which to anchor our viewpoint and sense of unitary identity. We possess a "theory of mind" which allows us to ascribe intentionality to other organisms – the dog bit the

postman because it was frightened (and fear provokes a fight/flight response) – a valuable survival ability during our prehistory on the plains of Africa. And we possess language with syntax and deep semantics and grammar, a possibly unique and very powerful capability that allows us to encode behavior and insights and transfer them from one mind to another.

Cognitive philosophers have, over the years, chewed on the concept of consciousness until it is grey and mushy about the edges – but with little digestive success. One thought experiment they use to examine this phenomenon is the **idea of the zombie**. In cognitive science, a zombie is a philosophical thought experiment: a human being with no interior state, no sense of identity, no "I." Philosophical zombies do not, as far as we know, exist, but they possess a number of interesting attributes: they presumably eat, sleep, breathe, and respond to stimuli, but possess no personhood. If you ask one who he or she is, or what they are experiencing, they won't be able to frame a reply that

encodes any sense of identity: they observe but they do not experience.

To probe some questions arising from philosophical zombies, Daniel Dennett (1991) proposed a new category: the "zimbo." A zimbo is a special type of zombie which, when asked, will deny that it is a zombie. That's its sole specialty. It's like an empty house where the lights are on and nobody's home, but the absent householder has left a tape recording of a dog barking or a baby crying playing on a continuous loop to convince burglars that it's a bad prospect. If you ask a zombie about themselves they can't tell you anything. If you ask a zimbo about themselves they will spin a convincing yarn, but it's a lie – they don't feel anything. Detecting a zimbo is next to impossible because they claim to be conscious; we might be surrounded by them, or even married to one, but we might never know.

When we read fiction or autobiography or any other narrative text that encodes a human experience as opposed to some assertion about the non-human

universe, we are participating in an interesting process that Stephen King (2000) described as the nearest thing to telepathy that humanity has yet developed. An author has encoded their interior experience, serialized it as text, and handed it to the reader in some kind of package. The reader then inputs the text and, using their theory of mind, generates a simulation of the interior mental states the writer was encoding.

What happens when a zimbo reads Pride and Prejudice and Zombies?

The lights are on, but there's no consciousness present and therefore no theory of mind to be deployed to generate an emulation of the interior states of Jane Austen's characters. You can quiz the zimbo about their reading matter and they can answer factual questions about the text, but they can't tell you why Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are feeling any given emotion, because they lack the theory of mind – the cognitive toolkit – necessary to infer interior states and ascribe them to other entities.

We may therefore expect zimbo lairs to be curiously deficient in the kind of reading matter that provokes

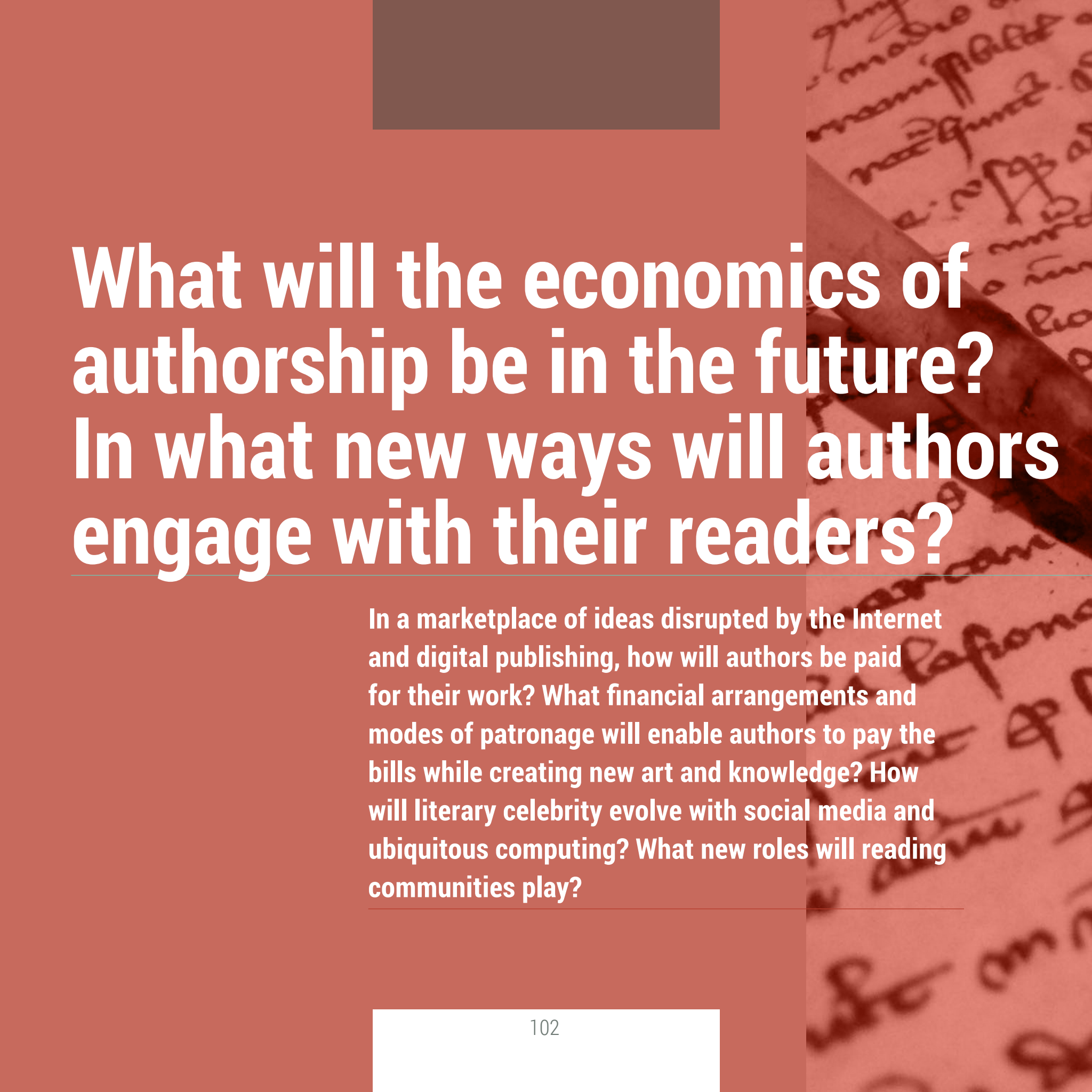Prasad Boradkar - Books and Tactile Pleasure

Prasad Boradkar, associate professor of industrial design at Arizona State University, talks about books as tactile, designed objects

emotional engagement and long interior arguments with recalcitrant fictional protagonists who need to recognize the error of their ways, pull their heads out of their fictional asses, and sort themselves out.

And, more fundamentally, we may infer the existence of a cast-iron test for whether a person is a person or a zimbo...because zimboes can't write fan fic. Not even bad fan fic. They probably can't write any kind of fiction at all, or even reliably recognize the distinction between fiction and narrative fact.

Zimboes don't dream of electric sheep. And, come the zombie apocalypse, we can use this fact to defend ourselves from them!

What will the economics of authorship be in the future? In what new ways will authors engage with their readers?

In a marketplace of ideas disrupted by the Internet and digital publishing, how will authors be paid for their work? What financial arrangements and modes of patronage will enable authors to pay the bills while creating new art and knowledge? How will literary celebrity evolve with social media and ubiquitous computing? What new roles will reading communities play?
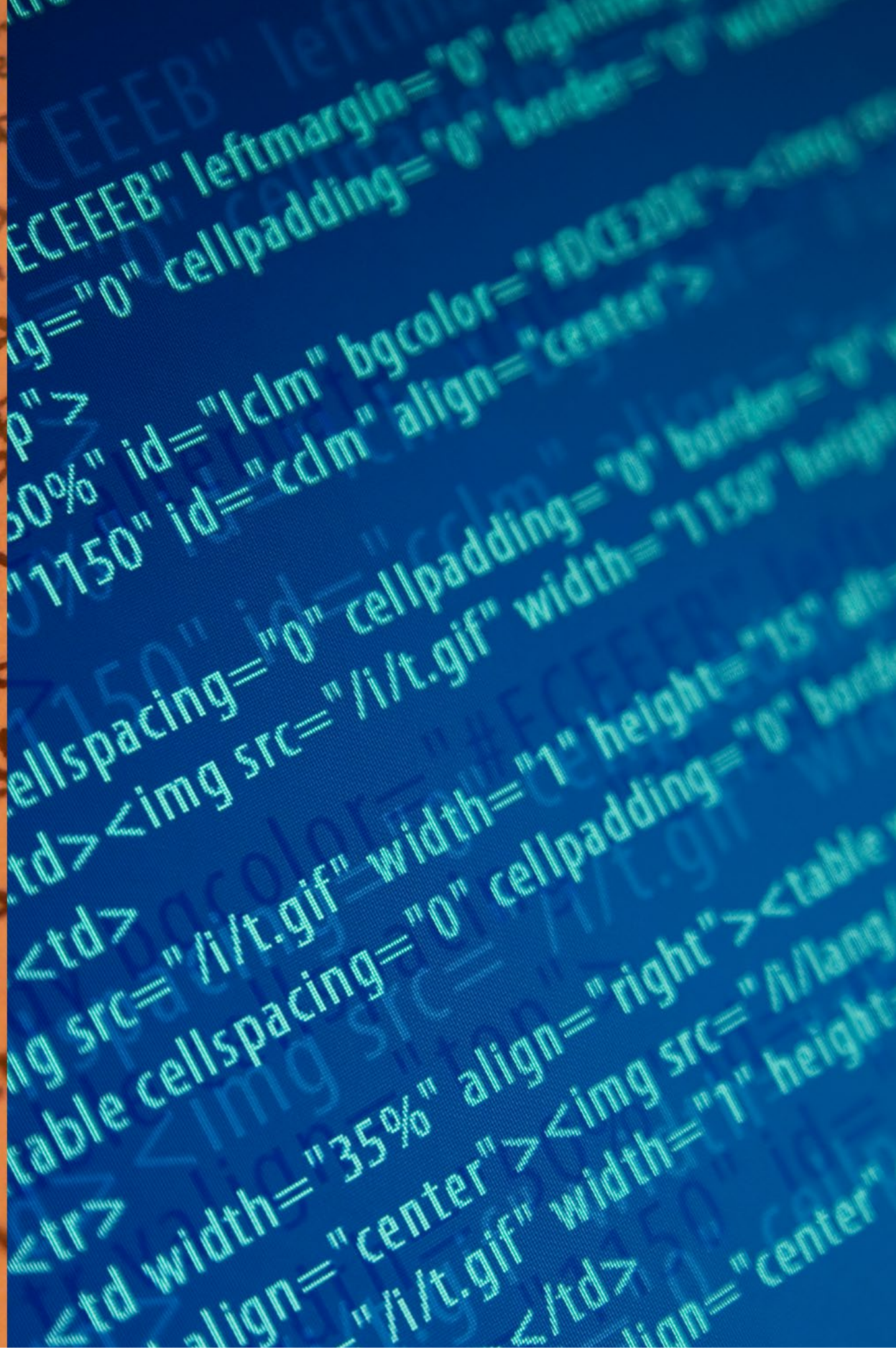
This piece originally appeared in the **Future Tense department** on Slate. Future Tense is a partnership of Slate, the New America Foundation, and Arizona State University.

Jonathan Franzen's Worst Nightmare

Ariel Bogle

Ariel Bogle is a research associate for Future Tense, a collaboration among the New America Foundation, Slate and Arizona State University. Her research focuses on emerging technologies and their implications for society. Before joining Future Tense, Ariel was a publicist and blogger for Melville House Publishing and a public policy and government affairs intern for Google.

To many devoted readers, bookstores, and collectors, a book is good, but a signed book is best – and the absence of a title page to autograph is just another reason for purists to eschew those newfangled e-readers. A signed copy of a favorite book can be intensely meaningful to an avid fan. And in the world of rare-book collecting, something inscribed by the author can catapult a book's price into the stratosphere.

But apparently Apple hopes that this charm of print publishing may have

a digital equivalent after all.

The website **Patently Apple** recently posted the details of a **proposed Apple e-book patent**. (Purcher 2013; Dougherty 2013). The method would allow two e-readers to communicate, so that the publisher or the owner of the content could create a special autograph page in the reader's device, ready to accept an image of the author's autograph. The inscription could be transmitted when in the vicinity of an author at a book event or in a special online forum. Apple's patent would also offer a certificate of authenticity and give readers the chance to add a photo or video of themselves with the author to the page.

There aren't too many sacred cows left in publishing, and it's unlikely that the industry will go to battle with Apple in defense of the real-world author autograph. Nevertheless, the commodification of this one tradition seems like it won't offer Apple many rewards. Although the e-book market in the United States **is showing signs of maturity, digital migration has leveled off** (Owen 2013; Cader 2013), and it's doubtful that e-book signing capabilities will be the carrot that

attracts the last remaining print loyalists. That's because an inky signature has a certain personal quality that won't translate easily to digital.

And naturally, for Apple to roll out this new capability, they'd need to have authors on board.

David Rees, a comedian and the author of ***How to Sharpen Pencils*** (2012), says that he'd sign a reader's e-book to be polite. But he thinks Apple's patent sounded like a debasement of what an author's signature is meant to be – the meeting of a reader and author in real space. "It sounds so sad," he said "because they're trying to figure out how to reproduce the physical authority that real books have. Next there will be a button for that musty old book smell."

And how eager will bookstore proprietors – who usually host signings – be to accommodate the bells and whistles of a medium that has played a part in undermining their business?

According to Lacey Dunham, marketing director at Washington, D.C.'s **Politics and Prose**, it might

depend on the retailer. If Amazon's Kindle e-books were to take on this capability, the bookstore would have to have an internal conversation about whether they would allow Kindle e-books to be signed in their stores, she said. That's because of the uniquely fraught relationship Amazon has with brick-and-mortar bookstores. But bookstores may be amenable to working with Apple, which has **20 percent of the U.S. e-book market** (Reid 2013).

In the world of rare and antiquarian book-selling, the question goes beyond the author-fan relationship: A signed book can be immensely valuable. Yet according to Allan Stypek, rare-book appraiser and owner of **Second Story Books** in Washington, D.C, the idea of a signed e-book is artificial – nothing more than a facsimile. It just won't have the historical or literary value that a physical signature has and would appeal only to those seeking to be completest about a particular author.

"I wouldn't categorically refuse to handle an exclusive, signed e-book," he said, "but it's unlikely, unless I found it was a justifiable commodity in the market place."

E-book retailers are exploring ways to let readers sell "used" e-books. But the truth is that you never really own a digital title – you're more or less leasing it. These blurred lines have produced some horror stories, like Amazon disappearing an e-book copy of Orwell's *1984* or when Apple was uncomfortable with the male nudity in a graphic novel of *Ulysses* (Stone 2009; Barrett 2010). And in its patent description, Apple doesn't detail a means of transferring ownership of the autograph, ensuring that any attempt to resell an autographed e-book, in a market that barely exists anyway, will be doubly difficult.

But if you wait for hours to have Jhumpa Lahiri sign your copy of *The Lowland* (2013), wouldn't you want your rights to her personal inscription to be a little more permanent? And what happens if you decide to dump your e-reader and change to a new device – does the autograph move with you? Or when Amazon "bricks" your Kindle for transgressing their terms and conditions, will you lose that meaningful signature, too?

By all means, e-retailers are free to experiment with additions to their still fledgling medium. As Dunham said, "A signed book is not a concept that [a bookstore] owns. There are lots of things that an e-retailer can do, but they cannot replicate everything that a bricks and mortar store does, it's just not possible."

And should e-retailers even want to?

Apple's patent illustrates just how surprisingly unimaginative e-book and e-reader retailers have been over the past few years – attempting to replicate nearly every feature of a book's physical incarnation, just a little more portably and with a little less permanence. There have been some strong examples of enhanced e-books, like Mark Z. Danielewski's *The Fifty Year Sword* (2012), and there's talk of creating what could be a new and unique form of storytelling. So far, though, e-retailers have displayed a strong inclination toward copying publishing's more dusty traditions, but without the charm.

Most people that come in to have a book signed seek that brief relationship with the author, Dunham told me. "The decision readers will have to make in the end is what they will connect to the most – something signed, visible on their shelf or a signed copy they cannot see on their e-reader."

Of course, Apple may never use its patent, but it might be better off if it left this one thing to the world of pen and paper. The future of digital publishing would be more exciting if they didn't simply take all the traditions of print as their template, and tried something slightly more innovative. After all, if you really want his autograph, you can always just get Jonathan Franzen to sign the cold, hard plastic of your e-reader for posterity.

Chapter 6
What will the economics of authorship
be in the future? In what new ways will
authors engage with their readers?

The Idea of the Author Is Facing Extinction

Jane Friedman

I spent more than ten years working at Writer's Digest, a media brand that provides information, education, and services to writers both new and established. In the span of those ten years, a lot happened. Most of the U.S. population got online, social media and Web 2.0 evolved, and e-books took off.

Expectations for authors have changed dramatically. Perhaps we never lived in a world where a writer could just focus on his

writing to the exclusion of all else, but certainly there was less to worry about if you were writing novels pre-Internet. Your publisher wasn't asking you to tweet, be on Facebook, write blog posts, have a website, or build a platform.

On the other hand, pre-Internet, an author had few options for making a living that didn't involve working with a publisher. Today's authors live with the burden and opportunity of being able to reach their readers directly, without anyone's help. In fact, an author can make a full-time job out of marketing, promotion, and audience development, waking up to find that, somewhere along the way, the writing became secondary. Steven Pressfield has talked about this phenomenon, what he calls the "shadow career." He writes in *Turning Pro* (2012) of people who get distracted by activities that lie outside of the work (in our case, the work of writing):

> **Instead of composing our symphony, we create a "shadow symphony," of which we ourselves are the orchestra, the composer and the audience. Our life becomes a shadow drama, a shadow start-up**

> **company, a shadow philanthropic venture. [...] The amateur is an egotist. He takes the material of his personal pain and uses it to draw attention to himself. He creates a "life," a "character," a "personality."**

There is a danger in the industry's call to authors to build relationships with readers, to be responsive and engaged, to be in "conversation." How big of a danger, however, totally depends on the values and goals of the writer. If the goal is sales and long-term readership growth, there might not be any harm at all. But if the activities impede the writer from pursuing his primary purpose (however that may be described or quantified), then we can see the call to engagement as seriously detrimental and distracting.

This has been the conclusion of many "literary" authors, or those people who see their purpose as producing art and meaning, something that goes beyond entertainment or "satisfying" the reader. Author Will Self said in **an interview with The Guardian**: "I don't really write for readers. I think

that's a defining characteristic of being serious as a writer" (qtd. in Day 2012). What happens to such writers in the future of publishing, if it is defined or driven by author-reader interaction?

I've often tried to tell writers (of all stripes) that the Internet is the best thing to happen to the introvert. Before the Internet, an author would probably be put upon by a publisher to do tours, talks, and other public appearances that can be time-consuming and draining. Post-Internet, the introverted author can decide exactly how, when, and where they want to interact with the public – do it completely on their own terms. There's a great deal of control and planning that one never used to have over marketing, promotion, and networking activities. The Internet, in short, is a great blessing for introverts.

But that doesn't really solve the problem of the author who has zero interest in putting on a show or being revealed. Another serious author, Benjamin Anastas (2013), argued:

> **Distance is the writer's friend. It's nice to break out from your**

seclusion every now and then and give a reading to a room of actual people, or visit a college class that's reading one of your books, or introduce yourself to someone on the subway who's got his nose in your first novel. […] But for the most part the old adage holds true: You should never meet your heroes. And if your heroes are writers, you really don't want to meet them. Writers are generally vain, and needy, and shut inside for most of the day listening to the voices in their head, so when they come out, their behavior can be erratic. […] Mystery plays a big role in our love of books, and by using social media to promote yourself, you're only demystifying your work for everyone who follows you. And that makes you lose potential readers.

What is to come of the author who holds this philosophy? Does such a species survive? Does the future of publishing, which is becoming more and more focused on reader interaction, favor a very particular type author, one who is comfortable

serving his customers? Or is there a class of readers out there who, just like the authors, prefer no interaction and recognize the wisdom of never meeting your "heroes"? Perhaps a patronage system will evolve to support such authors and their art, if they can neither support themselves (through entrepreneurial activities) nor gain publisher support.

What nags at me, however, is that our culture's idea and concept of authorship is destined to change. As Richard Nash pointed out in his essay "What Is the Business of Literature?" (2013), the concept of the author is a fairly recent one, which was invented side by side with the printing press. The digital era may entail a new type of authorship, one that is built on resampling, remixing, and collaboration. Authors may evolve to be leaders, moderators, and synthesizers of information, rather than dictators in control of it.

Bob Stein, at the Institute for the Future of the Book, **has advised**, "Go back and study […] what McLuhan called the shift to print, the place

where an idea could be owned by a single person. One of McLuhan's genius insights was his understanding of how the shift from an oral culture to one based on print gave rise to our modern notion of the individual as the originator and owner of particular ideas." We are outgrowing the era where someone owns an idea. Or, as Stein eloquently says, "If the printing press empowered the individual, the digital world empowers collaboration" (qtd. in Bustillos 2011).

Ruth Wylie - Individualized Books

Arizona State University's Ruth Wylie ponders the future of the individualized book

Chapter 6
What will the economics of authorship be in the future? In what new ways will authors engage with their readers?

Joey Eschrich, Research and Operations Coordinator, Center for Science and the Imagination, Arizona State University

As we see scores of amateur authors invest enormous amounts of time and effort to build audiences through social media, perhaps we'll see more successful authors withdraw from these activities completely. Chuck Palahniuk and Jeffrey Eugenides come to mind as examples of authors who are not nearly as reclusive as J.D. Salinger or elusive as Thomas Pynchon, but do certainly make an effort to avoid overexposure.

I can imagine a future in which participation in or abstinence from social media becomes a generally agreed-upon marker of stature and cultural value. In a world where constant media exposure is almost obligatory, mannered obscurity might be the only way to really get noticed.

The question, of course, is whether these authors will need to use social media and similar platforms to become name brands in the first place. Maybe these media will be a tool exclusively for early-career or undiscovered authors, and once established, the online presence will gradually wither, then disappear entirely.

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Authors: Develop Communities, Not Just Audiences

Dan Gillmor

In 2008, Kevin Kelly, author and former editor of Wired magazine, posted an incisive and influential essay, "1,000 True Fans." He noted that the "long tail" in media is great for the aggregators (Google, Amazon, etc.) and the general public, but a problem for artists who aren't stars. He wrote:

> **A creator, such as an artist, musician, photographer, craftsperson, performer, animator, designer, videomaker, or author –**

in other words, anyone producing works of art – needs to acquire only 1,000 True Fans to make a living.

A True Fan is defined as someone who will purchase anything and everything you produce. They will drive 200 miles to see you sing. They will buy the super deluxe re-issued hi-res box set of your stuff even though they have the low-res version. They have a Google Alert set for your name. They bookmark the eBay page where your out-of-print editions show up. They come to your openings. They have you sign their copies. They buy the t-shirt, and the mug, and the hat. They can't wait till you issue your next work. They are true fans.

I'd experienced this several decades earlier, when I spent seven years playing music for a living. My band had the kinds of fans Kevin describes here. We played mostly around New England, and almost no matter where we appeared, at least a few of them would show up. They were, for us, much more than a friendly audience. They were friends and part of a community.

Later, as a journalist practicing my trade relatively early in in the digital age, I discovered something else: My readers knew more than I did. This was blindingly obvious in retrospect, if not at the time. Not only did they know things I didn't, but they could easily let me know via online communications.

When blog software pioneer Dave Winer launched one of the first blogging platforms in 1999, I jumped aboard. It became an essential part of my newspaper column at Silicon Valley's San Jose Mercury News and the comments became a vital part of the conversations I was having with my readers.

As noted elsewhere in this e-book, I used the blog to post chapter drafts of my first book. The suggestions from readers were amazingly helpful, and the book was vastly better as a result.

Since then, our ability as authors to interact with our audiences has only grown – and I'm more convinced than ever that we need to move past the word "audience" and think about "users" and "community" in this context.

My more recent book, **Mediactive**, isn't just a book. It's also a toolkit for modern media literacy. I offer blog-based lesson plans for teachers and make everything available under a Creative Commons license to help spread my ideas on what I believe is an essential skill for the 21st century. I also have great conversations in email, on Google+ and Twitter, and of course on my blogs, with people who want to talk about this.

Creating users and communities has meaning for an author's bottom line as well. As crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter and self-publishing tools of various kinds give artists ways to go around the traditional publishing industry cartel, authors can leverage their communities into support. We can reach our 1,000 fans much more easily, with less and less conversational and financial friction, than we ever could before.

A caution: Community development and management skills don't come naturally to everyone. I failed badly at this in a digital news start-up some years back and I don't claim to be an expert now. But having a conversation isn't a chore for me, and what I gain from it is more than worth the effort.

Barry Eisler - Immersive Reading Experiences

Novelist Barry Eisler talks about the role of enhanced features in his books

Mark Tebeau - Author-Reader Interactivity

Historian Mark Tebeau discusses deep interaction between future authors and readers

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Where can we take conversation and community? For one thing, we can recognize that a single price point – a book's list or street price – is an absurdly limited view of the emerging book ecosystem. Some authors are experimenting with higher-priced special editions for what we might call their 250 Super Fans who not only buy everything but are happy to spend more for a special version. Or maybe there's a premium-priced "dinner with the author" when he or she is visiting a new city.

One more caution: Conversations and communities take time. Authors have to ask themselves how much time they can afford to divert from their most essential job: writing and re-writing. If they neglect that, the rest won't matter.

Two Paths for the Future of the Author

Lee Konstantinou

Let's pretend you're an author. What do you most want from life? More likely than not, you want readers to read what you create, and you want enough money to keep writing what you'd like to write (in relative comfort). In the future, who is going to read your books? Who is going to give you money to keep paying your rent? The most common answer, the author's fantasy, is that she will earn money *from the people who read her work*.

You dream of living comfortably *because* you're able to attract readers. This is more or less a fantasy of market justice. I'm sorry to report that reality bears little relation to this fantasy. The people who read you and the people who pay your bills are probably not going to be the same. It is exceedingly rare for an author to be able to generate enough of an income to survive from book sales. In almost every case, non-readers subsidize your writing.

This is true today, and will continue to be the case. Let's take a look at two possible futures for the author which have their foundations in already existing institutions.

Literary Investors

My novel *Pop Apocalypse* (2009) imagines a future world in which aspiring celebrities can float their names on a reputation stock market. After your IPO, you capitalize on your potential, build your human brand, and pay dividends to shareholders. There are primitive examples of systems like this that exist today. For example, the novelist Tao Lin sold shares of the profits of his novel *Richard Yates* (2010) to readers. The minor-league pitcher

Randy Newsom sold shares of his future earnings. Kickstarter and similar crowdfunding sites promise to generalize these phenomena.

You may think of these sites as a means of forging a direct relationship to readers. But this is a mistaken view. Such sites are only indirectly related to whether you connect to readers. On these services, enthusiastic investors may pony up cash because they like a particular project. They may indeed want to read your book. But they may also have purely financial motivations. If the author is offering to share a portion of the book's profits, the book itself is secondary. Investors may, as Ian Bogost suggests, have an almost purely imaginative relationship to the project in question. Bogost (2012) writes:

We don't really want the stuff. We're paying for the sensation of a hypothetical idea, not the experience of a realized product. For the pleasure of desiring it. For the experience of watching it succeed beyond expectations or to fail dramatically. Kickstarter is just

another form of entertainment. It's QVC for the Net set. And just like QVC, the products are usually less appealing than the excitement of learning about them for the first time and getting in early on the sale.

Your investors may want to be seen as the sort of person who supports a particular kind of literary project. They may be fans of your literary brand, not your books. So literary investing would become a kind of entertainment media. Admittedly, part of the symbolic fulfillment of a particular entertainment-investment might involve the author-brand completing her proposed book. Investors might also feel happier if their favorite author is a bestseller. Who doesn't love a winner?

But whatever the case may be, you shouldn't nurse the fantasy that you're earning your keep because readers *love* – or even *read* – your books. Whether or not a literary investment fulfills its promise, its success is only incidental to its material realization.

State Subsidies

Norway offers another model for your literary future. As Wendy Griswold documents in her book of

literary sociology *Regionalism and the Reading Class* (2007), Norway invests in its authors in a serious way. I outlined the dramatic scope of this investment in a post on Stanford's Arcade blog (2011) co-written with Andrew Goldstone:

Norway buys 1000 copies of every book a Norwegian author publishes. It provides a $19,000 annual subsidy to every author who is a member of the Authors' Union. The Association of Bookstores is allowed to have a monopoly on the sale of books – but is prohibited by law from engaging in price competition. It requires, by law, that bookstores keep books in stock for two years regardless of sales. And it exempts books from its very steep sales tax. Not surprisingly, Griswold finds, "Norwegians everywhere read, and they read a lot; Norway has one of the world's highest reading rates."

Under this system, authors receive generous support, literary culture thrives, and readers presumably have a wide range of appealing books to buy on the market. Which is all to the good. As an author, I'd like to live in a country with a literary system that resembled Norway's. Though you would be materially enriched if you lived under

such a system, the relation between you and your readers is anything but pure or simple. You presumably receive your subsidy whether or not you are productive in a given year. You're ultimately being paid by taxpayers, not readers. These taxpayers may or may not also be readers. At the top of the literary pyramid of success, you may earn substantially more than your allotted subsidy, or you may not.

The state presumably doesn't subsidize authors because they love you as an individual author – sorry! – but rather because it reflects the priorities of the population. A people who choose to direct tax dollars toward authors presumably care about fostering a healthy and sustainable national literary culture. The goodness or badness of a particular author is beside the point. The health of the literary field as a whole is what is at stake. We may debate the desirability of such a system – the question of whether Norway's system is optimal will require much more discussion – but the point is that your capacity to pay your rent and your readership is heavily mediated.

. . . .

What conclusions can we draw from juxtaposing these two models? First, the writer-reader relationship is never simple. You may think that you are fostering communities of loyal followers or readers, but you're actually interacting through a much vaster set of mediating institutions. Someone educated your readers. Labor law shapes the amount of leisure time that your readers have to enjoy your books. The state may facilitate your bodily survival, either through the provision of social welfare benefits (like health care), through tax breaks and other subsidies, or through other indirect means. When you put your wares on the market or make a promise to put your wares on the market, you may think you are forging a more direct connection to your readers. In fact, you are fostering the fantasies of readers, possible readers, and others who may not read word you write.

Is this a depressing state of affairs? No, it's just as it should be – and, moreover, just as it must be. The real question goes beyond the situation of the individual writer. The question is: What kind of literary system do you want to live in? What policies, institutions, and economic arrangements would foster the world you want to write in? If

you believe you have some hand in determining the future of the book – if you believe that, working together, we can direct the Shape of Things to Come – then the real task ahead is to build this better, alternate world. You'll have to become a writer of something like political science fiction.

Laura Fillmore

Publishers have been struggling to modify product-based, reader-paid business models for an online, digital environment. This recompense model needs to be flipped on its head so that humans are paid to think out loud in the secure, trusted, selected, and recorded environment of their choosing, either anonymously or for attribution (different pay scales for each). Publishers will license "cogniright" instead of copyright, in this instance, and cognactivity would include such online actions as:
- Generating original prose or commentary
- Footnoting: linking to related sites or publications to buttress one's original thoughts
- Opinionating: endorsing or damning other publications
- Living out loud: publishing one's online pattern of thoughts and activities

This reader-paid model might be first implemented in medical publishing, as the life and death motivation has a way of sharpening the business need (and truth and timeliness in this arena is critical). Also, in STM (Scientific, Technical and Medical) or Technical publishing, we frequently see cycles of defined content domains where authors who are also readers are also authors. What's missing is the business model that compensates readers (and editors) specifically for their online editorial and publishing duties. Also, when I say "compensate" I don't mean just a one-time hourly or retainer fee, but an ongoing residual for contributing to and assuming responsibility for the validity of online content.

Google Should Buy the Entire Publishing Industry

Charlie Stross

The creation of books is a cottage industry: solitary

artisans or small teams labor away in private to produce eccentric products tailored to the recondite needs of an audience which may be tiny (in extreme cases of academic publishing, the reader community may number a couple of hundred, worldwide) and is in any event very small by mass media standards. Even a wildly successful global-scale bestseller is unlikely to rival the audience (much less the profitability) of a mid-ranking Hollywood movie. Publishing *as an*

industry is only large because it is so prolific, with roughly 300,000 trade books published per year in the US (Wikipedia contributors, 2013) it may come as a surprise to realize that the *global* turnover of the publishing industry is around the $20 billion mark.

Moreover, much of this turnover is absorbed by the supply chain. Amazon alone has three times the turnover of the Big Five multinational publishing conglomerates (who account for 80 percent of the industry's revenue). Publishing is, quite simply, not a very profitable industry sector – it's labor-intensive, inefficient, and the only reason we put up with it is (to paraphrase Winston Churchill) because all the alternatives are worse.

Part of the reason we put up with the system is because it gives authors (the "we" in this context) a mechanism for remuneration. Writing is hard brain-work. Worse, non-authors underestimate it. (Most people have the basic literacy skills to read a book, and also to construct a sentence or write a paragraph. Books are, to a first approximation, just lots of paragraphs strung together: "so why shouldn't *I* write a novel?" thinks the lay reader. This ignores the fact that a novel is structurally different from a high school

essay the way a wide-body airliner is structurally different from a balsa-wood toy glider: there's a complexity angle that isn't immediately obvious. But I digress.) So books and the labor that goes into making them are persistently undervalued.

The mechanism by which working authors currently earn a living is copyright licensing. We automatically own copyright – literally, the right to control copying – over material we have invented. If we're successful, we license the right to make copies to a publisher, who sells copies to the general public and pays us a pro-rata share of their receipts (a royalty).

There's an interesting paradox implicit in the copyright/royalty licensing paradigm, of course. The more expensive the product, the more money the author receives per copy – but the fewer the number of customers. Consumers are convinced that anyone can write a book: how hard can it be? So the idea of charging, say, $10,000 a copy for a novel strikes them as ludicrous, even if the work in question took the author years of hard work to produce. In economic theory, the term for the change in demand as the price of a product increases is the **price**

elasticity of demand.

Books are problematic: It turns out that e-books in particular suffer a drastic drop in demand if the cover price exceeds a very low threshold – around $4.99 in the US market. This is considerably lower than the price of a mass market paperback, much less a hardcover: consumers, it would appear, value the information content of a book less highly than the physical object itself.

As an author I have two goals. I want to maximize my income, and I want to maximize my readership. But by seeking to maximize income per copy sold, I may inadvertently *minimize* the number of copies sold, i.e. minimize my readership. The two goals are not merely orthogonal; they may be in conflict.

Anyway, this brings me to an interesting thought experiment: what would be the consequences if a large Internet corporation such as Google were to buy the *entire* publishing industry?

Bear in mind that Google and Apple have sufficiently large cash piles that either could take out a majority stake in all of the Big Five – it would only take on the order of $10 billion. Also bear in mind that the paper publication side

Christine Szuter - Access to Interaction

Publishing scholar Christine Szuter explores the issue of access in interactions between authors and readers

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of these organizations could remain largely unaffected by this takeover, insofar as they could still be operated as profitable commercial business units. The focus of the takeover by Google would be on the electronic side of the industry. The purchaser would effectively have acquired the exclusive electronic rights to roughly 300,000 commercial-quality books per year in the U.S. market space. They could provide free public access to these works in return for a royalty payment to authors based on a formula extrapolating from the known paper sales, or a flat fee per download; or they could even put the authors on payroll. The cost would be on the order of a few billion dollars per year – but the benefit would be a gigantic pool of high-quality content.

From an author's point of view, the benefits should be obvious. Having your books given away free by FaceAppleGoogBook maximizes your potential readership, while retaining print royalties and some sort of licensing stipend from FaceAppleGoogBook should maintain your income stream. Win on both counts!

Such a buyout would amount to a wholesale shift to a promotion-supported model for book publishing. Google would presumably use free book downloads to drive targeted advertising and collect information about their users' reading habits and interests. Apple might use the enormous free content pool as a lure for a shiny new proprietary iReader hardware device. Facebook could target the authors, wheedling them to pay for promotional placement in front of new readers. The *real* questions are: Is there enough money in a new shiny iReader device or the AdWords market (indeed, the advertising industry as a whole) to support the publishing sector as a promotional loss-leader? And, would this get FaceAppleGoogBook something they don't already have?

Perhaps we should ask why they haven't done this already.

The dismal answer probably lies in the mare's tale of contracts and licensing agreements and legal boilerplate that underpins the publishing industry. The 300,000 books per year figure points to 300,000 *legal contracts* per year. Contracts which in many cases ban advertising, or place bizarre constraints on licensing and sub-licensing and distribution through anomalous channels such as Edison wax cylinder reproduction rights and talking stuffed character toys. Untangling the e-publishing rights and renegotiating the right to distribute them for free in return for a flat payment would be a nightmare; only an algorithmic approach to massively parallel contract negotiation could succeed and such an exercise might strain even Google's prodigious programming capabilities. And as an afterthought, why should FaceGoogleBook try to buy books so that they can advertise through them, when they can plaster advertisements all over the search pages that lead readers to the books, or the commerce sites that sell them?

Looks like my utopian future as a salaried Google employee churning out Creative Commons licensed, freely downloadable novels for my enthusiastic audience (enthusiastic because everything is suddenly *free* – in return for their eyeballs, of course) will have to wait.

Field Notes from the Future of Publishing

by Ed Finn

End Scene

Well, we did it! Our mission was simple: write, edit, and publish a book in three days from the floor of the Frankfurt Book Fair. By the end of the third day we had more than twenty-five essays and a number of videos, brief interjections, excerpts, and other ancillary material to fill out a respectable volume.

To be honest, I knew we would: get a few professional writers lined up, ply them with lattes, lay down a few deadlines, and you will inevitably see results. The main surprise was my naïve assumption that I would

have time to write alongside them rather than working with our excellent support team to keep the cameras rolling, the editorial engines churning, and our visitors to the booth nodding and smiling.

Now that we have the benefit of hindsight, why did we do it? What did we accomplish? The basic answer is that this was about performance. We wanted to take the distinctive energy, the imaginative space that writers require for creative production, and put it on display. I admit, unashamedly, that one of my inspirations for this exercise was the great, underappreciated *Monty Python* skit where novel-writing **has become a national pastime** that can fill a stadium with cheering fans. It's a little silly, sure, but why *don't* we celebrate writing like this?

So we put up a big clock and gave everyone status updates on the project. We had a film crew (there is no better way to signal a happening than to have someone record it). We staged the event as series of individual "sprints" where we would all brainstorm ideas around a particular question, turn to individual writing time punctuated

by occasional queries and sardonic commentary, and then gather for a brief review and reflection period. And, in fact, by the end of three days our little group of collaborators did feel something like a team in a stadium, or maybe a newsroom: working hard together on a shared goal under tight constraints.

The effort to plan and execute this at a frantic site like the Frankfurt Book Fair was non-trivial. We spent hours discussing the layout of our space, the people we should invite, the larger goals and specific agenda items, all the way down to the optimal spacing of coffee breaks to allow for maximal productivity (key insight: make caffeine available *all the time*). Ultimately, the setting was crucial to creating a physical network effect: people stopped by our book...smart, connected people who were going to take this back to their executive boardrooms or their vast online communities.

This brings us back to the notion of performance. Somehow for all the openness of digital culture, the way we share our innermost thoughts, our half-formed ideas and streams

of consciousness, writing itself has remained unchanged. Writers compose in private, even when communicating with millions in real-time. You don't see novelists sitting down and letting people watch them crank out prose, with a **few notable exceptions**.

The gulf between writer and audience has many consequences. The absence of the artist at the heart of the literary work, the way in which all of those false starts, dead-ends and **commodius vici of recirculation** are elided in the final text, is a form of loneliness that many writers have struggled with. Ironically, we have made the written word – this deep expression of the self; the telepathic, mind-projecting transmission of thought and feeling from one brain to another – into a new barrier. I suspect this has been true for centuries – that writers like David Foster Wallace find fiction to be a source of redemption, a way out of the lonely **Skinner box** of human existence, but also an endless deferment of direct, live contact.

Staging Writing

Turning writing and publishing into a live act also takes its inspiration from the performance

of literary culture, the idea that extemporaneous discourse is an art in and of itself. So how do we create a space for live writing? Walter Ong (1982) called our transition into the space of contemporary letters the move from orality to literacy, noting that the explosive impact of the written word has involved losses as well as gains. The culture of auditing – privileging speech and listening as the primary formal and legal modes of communication – has given way to the culture of silent reading and, increasingly, silent writing. We lose something in these silences, as the spoken word can never be unsaid, according to the French literary theorist Roland Barthes (1975). Too often the silently written word can be silently erased, and the Internet's textual cornucopia tempts us to forget all that Google does not know.

The notion of live writing and the performance of writing has interested poets and literary scholars for decades, leading to **many experiments** in creating more nuanced spaces on the page and in public readings for the performance of poetry and other literature. At its roots these modes of performance serve to construct

our own identities as players on the cultural stage: Adam Smith more or less founded his entire theory of moral philosophy on the importance of knowing how to express your thoughts effectively on the fly in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). In our Frankfurt experiment we challenged ourselves to imagine how the process of writing itself could become more fluid and more open to observation.

This reflexivity creates a space for collective processing and authorship to take place as well, with writers responding to one another on the fly rather than engaging in a more traditional essay-response format. By organizing ourselves around a series of "sprints" where each writer discussed and then staked out a claim on a particular topic, we were able to work in concerted parallel, explicitly and implicitly weaving together the threads of ideas like Dan Gillmor's notion of iterated, perpetual beta books and Charlie Stross's nightmare of feral spam literature.

We could have conducted this experiment with quill and

parchment (maybe the Declaration of Independence is a good precedent for writing as performance), but instead we chose to run our experiment online, using Intel's Professional Grade E-Book platform and a WordPress blog.

Computational tools hold huge potential to create new forms of collaboration between authors, editors, publishers, and their audiences and we are only just beginning to imagine the possibilities. Crucially, they open up the practice of live writing, of shared composition, to become a space of creative performance. While our experiment in Frankfurt relied primarily on closed writing tools (Microsoft Word, the WordPress text editor and the like), I am fascinated by the potential for new modes of collective, live composition. Despite their individualized editorial interfaces, sites like Wikipedia and Reddit rapidly assemble collective narratives about world events as they unfold (the Boston Bombing, for example), creating a collaborative, performative composition space as pages are continually refreshed with new contributions. Likewise social media is rapidly becoming

a tool for collective storytelling through hashtags and call-and-response narratives that can involve thousands of voices in the same emergent "story."

Publishing Performances

In terms of composition, most digital publishing tools are still discrete, private booths into which we pour our words. They are deceptively simple in their front-end operations: users see some kind of text box, maybe some tag or categorization options to direct their conversations towards the right audience, and a big, enticing "submit" button. The real sophistication lies in the algorithms and sharing platforms that curate and transmit all that text to networks of readers. As it stands, most of these systems function as black boxes, specifically fortified against those who seek to "game the system." All of the most interesting heavy lifting takes place behind the veil, so authors, readers, and texts are put in touch according to proprietary notions of serendipity.

Many of these processes – recommendation engines, social media feeds, discoverability – remain beyond the scope of what we

set out to accomplish in Frankfurt. Nevertheless a major ambition of our Sprint Beyond the Book is to make this backend as visible as the front, to demonstrate how easy it is for publishers and authors to create digital versions of their work without resorting to expensive software. The platform we were using from Intel, the Professional Grade E-Book system (PGE), was intended to serve this role: a simple, transparent set of tools to ingest PDFs on one end and create a graceful digital book on the other.

Getting this done in practice was a reminder that every performance needs its gaffers, grips, technical directors, and stage managers. The PGE tool is a proof of concept at this stage, a working prototype of a platform that in the future could be more flexible (running on multiple computing platforms, not just Windows), more adaptable (ingesting multiple text formats in addition to PDF), and more supportive of the increasingly iterative nature of digital publishing, where a book might be published and republished many times as various pieces of its content are

updated. In practice our workflow at Frankfurt was still radically simplified and accelerated from the traditional publishing model, with new iterations of our evolving text going online several times a day and a freshly formatted edition coming out roughly once a day. However, we could glimpse even greater efficiencies in the promise the PGE platform has for full commercial deployment: a system that allows anyone to create a high quality e-book using a single, simple production system.

The experiment in Frankfurt ultimately centered on a different kind of staging: not writing but publication itself as a performance. Bringing our authors together in public, creating the book out in the open, on the fly, is an homage to what I see as the core aesthetic of the publishing industry. Publishers are businesspeople, running companies that serve market needs and must turn a profit, but they are also cultural arbiters. They support writers (who are usually *not* businesspeople), they watch trends, and above all they define a certain kind of *style*. The world's great publishing houses still have

this, a sense of brand identity and cultural purpose that extends beyond a simple profit motive. This intangible aesthetic is its own form of performance, a long-running improvisation where books and market seasons are the individual episodes of a larger drama.

The book sprint in Frankfurt and our upcoming experiments at Arizona State University and Stanford University highlight this bigger picture. Expanding what Pierre Bourdieu called "habitus" in terms of individual actors in the drama of cultural systems (1972), we are using PGE and the framework of new digital platforms to ask how a new transparency might transform the relationships between publishers, readers, authors, and critics. We already see writers publishing drafts and readers responding, publishers crowdsourcing new books, and authorship collectives short-circuiting the old rules to bring new books to life. The processes of writing, reading, and publishing are *already* happening in tumultuous parallel – what happens when we bring them together into the same room, into the same conversation?

Whither the Reference List

Joey Eschrich

Joey Eschrich coordinates research and operations for Arizona State University's Center for Science and the Imagination. He earned his master's degree in Gender Studies in 2011 and his bachelor's degree in Film and Media Studies in 2008, both from ASU. Joey also helps coordinate Future Tense, ASU's collaboration with Slate magazine and the New America Foundation on emerging technologies, policy and society.

This book probably shouldn't have a reference list at all. After all, hasn't hypertext eliminated the need for exhaustive, seldom-read lists of works consulted? Shouldn't we just effortlessly jump from resource to resource unfettered by alphabetical indices and Kafka-esque citation styles?

Despite the obvious merit of these points, we still opted to include the references list. To understand why, and to crack open some of the complications and contradictions of documenting your sources in

a digital publication, let's start by considering some of the functions of a traditional reference list:

Lends the publication cultural authority by demonstrating expertise in the field

Situates the publication within a particular field of inquiry, arena of discussion, or disciplinary heritage based on the constellation of citations the author chooses

Helps readers get a rundown on a particular subject or field and get familiar quickly; this could be abbreviated as "provides a reading list for newcomers"

Provides a reverse-lookup for the book, allowing readers to find interesting bits based on where the author cites certain things

Enables readers, peers, interlocutors, and critics to validate and fact-check an argument

Authenticates the exhaustiveness of the author's research – you know the feeling of being breathlessly impressed with yourself, even for just a moment, when you finish compiling a reference list and you can see, definitively, how incredibly long it is.

Replacing a "Works Cited" page or references list with inline hypertext links accomplishes some, but not all, of these tasks. It lacks the gestalt of a list – a compilation that presents itself to us simply and immediately for perusal in all its alphabetized glory. Most importantly, this means that hypertext is more work for the reader. It puts the onus on them to create the geography of references, to see what's included and what's left out, accidentally or intentionally. It forces the newcomer to compile a separate list as they read, or to return to the book afterwards to sleuth out the resources they need. It even seems sneaky, against the backdrop of a tradition that requires a thorough, organized and centralized statement of sources.

We can all agree that the hyperlink is great and powerful. But it does something different than the footnote or the parenthetical citation, which are wayposts that move you back and forth, to and fro, within my book, my map of the universe. The hyperlink is more gregarious, more generous, because it gives the reader a line of flight, a way out of the grid I'm imposing on reality to make sense of it. Hyperlinks

transport you away and send you into someone else's perhaps-more-capable hands. Hyperlinks aren't purely references, nor are they just expansions or digressions, like footnotes (although they can be). A hyperlink is a relay to an entirely different diegetic world. A hyperlink isn't syntactical. It's geographic – it means movement, and with it comparison of worldviews, intellectual friction, and happenstance, especially as hyperlinks branch into more hyperlinks in an ever-expanding tree diagram. While a reference asserts the existence of the source it points to, a hyperlink takes you there to see for yourself.

Because of these profound ontological differences, we included hyperlinks throughout *Beyond the Book*, but we also stuck with the reference list. We're still impressed by all of the tricks it can do.

We're humanities folk, so we started with MLA Style references, but streamlined them, stripping out information that you don't need. You'll notice that the ever-elusive City of Publication is absent here. We can't imagine why you would need this. Are you writing the publisher a formal letter to order a copy of

the book in question? This piece of information is especially useless in digital books, where the reader already has demonstrated that she has Internet access and can simply visit the publisher's website if she has a burning desire to know their physical location.

Granted, the city of publication is occasionally important to differentiate the version of the text being cited – although for printed books in the current market, the year of publication usually takes care of that. (It can, admittedly, get complex with older books – especially novels, and especially those in the public domain. For instance, there are dozens of editions of *Frankenstein* in circulation produced by different publishers in the U.S. and U.K. with different forewords, critical essays, supplementary material, and so forth. But even in this extreme case, publisher name and year are usually sufficient.) Future digital nonfiction books will almost certainly be "living" and change frequently and fluidly. As Dan Gillmor discusses in "GitHub for Books?" in this volume, this shift will require unique URLs and version numbers as well as dates to reliably track different versions and updates. Any way you look at it, we're not particularly interested in the location of your publisher's cubicle.

Another feature of MLA that we omitted is the identification of Web or Print at the end of each entry. In our list, if you see a URL, it's a web source. If not, it's print. Or maybe both: maybe it's been scanned by Google or another indexing service. Authors and editors don't always have all of the information to confidently make this distinction, and even if we did, that information would quickly go out of date.

Finally, we took liberties and shamelessly broke the rules as necessary – for example, to indicate if a book available in print, like Dan Gillmor's *Mediactive*, is also available for free online. After all, you need to know this stuff, and who's going to tell you if we don't?

For the future, we're dreaming of a system in which the reader hovers over a hyperlinked source and sees the citation information right there, along with a link to the references list, and a preview of the actual source pops up. If you click on that, you're sent right to it. If it's a publicly-available image on something like Flickr or Google Images, you can see a pretty legible preview right in the book. If it's an audio or video file on a free, public repository like SoundCloud or YouTube, you can play it right in the in-book pop-up. This would encourage authors to include more audio, video, and image citations in their work, and it bundles the citation, the references page, and the hyperlink in one convenient package.

The reference list is a mature, efficient technology that is widely understood by both writers and readers. It's reassuringly low-tech and low-cost. One worry is that the "both/and" future of our dreams might make the process of writing and editing a thoroughly-researched book too onerous for authors and editors (reading the work of our talented team of authors on *Beyond the Book*, and doing all of the editing ourselves, has thoroughly sensitized us to these issues). As we create the future of citations through our writing and editing practices, we should think carefully about what lists of references do well and what hyperlinks do well, and develop a strategy that uses both tools to their greatest advantage.

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Barry Eisler Interview, The Future of the Book

Throughout Beyond the Book, you'll see short snippets of our own Dan Gillmor interviewing novelist Barry Eisler, a best-selling writer of international thrillers including the John Rain series and an incisive thinker about the future of the book and the publishing industry. Here is the entire conversation between Dan and Barry, running 25 minutes:

http://sprintbeyondthebook.com/2013/10/future-of-books-barry-eisler-full

Credits

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Website Design: HB Design

Project Sponsor: Intel Corporation