

Iterative Publishing

Is this the Final Version?

Author: Chris Jennings



eBook Version available here [cover image](#) uses detail from a fresco in the Museo San Marco, Florence, Italy

Contents

Contents	2
Abstract	3
Introduction	3
Part 1: Public Facing Versions	4
Part 2: Workflow Versioning	10
eBook Editing	12
Editing in the the cloud	13
Part 3: Publishing Incrementally	14
eBooks Only	15
In Print	16
Part 4: Editing Incrementally	18
Part 5: Collaborative Editing	19
Some Further Options under consideration	22
Conclusion	26
Notes	27

Abstract

Why do publishing students (or indeed publishers), save their files with such names as *finalversion1*?

Of course, we all know that it can't be the final version - we all just hoped that it would be!

Books like other created artefacts go through a number of iterations before being ready for public display. The question is, can we observe and record what those changes are and when they happened, and by whom?

In this article we look at the way that the reader of the book will know what version they are reading and the author / editor will know what version they are editing. We look at this in relation to print, digital and author or editor workflows.

Introduction

We should start by announcing a couple of quotes.

Semantic Versioning

The first is from the organisation known as *semver* - short for Semantic Versioning. The Semantic Versioning¹ specification is authored by Tom Preston-Werner, inventor of Gravatars and co-founder of GitHub. Here is the quote from Jurgen Van de Moere², who explains semantic versioning better than I can:

In essence a semantic version looks like this: **Major.Minor.Patch** So v1.3.8 has a major component with a value of 1, a minor component with a value of 3 and a patch component with a value of 1.

Apple's Rules for eBook Versions

Apple are very strict when you want to update an eBook on the iBookstore. Here are the rules from the iBooks Asset Guide³

In general, the first number of the version number represents a major revision; the second number would be used for a revision containing several changes/new information; the third number would be used to indicate minor changes, such as fixing a typo or formatting issues. For example, if the first version of the book was 1.0, a subsequent minor revision could be 1.0.1; a more substantial revision could be 1.1; a total rewrite could be 2.0.

These 2 quotes set the scene for what is to follow.

What do we know about versioning in print and digital publishing and how might we borrow from practices in software development workflows?

¹ semver.org

² <https://www.jvandemo.com/a-simple-guide-to-semantic-versioning/>

³ <https://help.apple.com/itc/booksassetguide/>

Part 1: Public Facing Versions

Definition of Terms

Edition is used together with a date (just the year), to indicate the version of the book. So, if you are reading a later edition of the book then it might say so with the date; thus:

First published in Great Britain 2012 This edition published in 2017

Some changes were made to the book between 2012 and 2017. So, *edition* is equivalent to *version* in meaning, although only publicly available, **not** within the editorial workflow. We have only seen the term *version* used in one place, *The Elements of Typographic Style*, Robert Bringhurst, 2012.

Revise may be used to indicate a stage in the editorial process as in *revise 1, revise 2*. Some publishers may also use *revised edition* on the imprint page as a way to indicate improvement.

Impression is a term used to indicate a new printing. The term is rarely used on the imprint page, although you will see in the illustration here that OUP have recently replaced the *impression sequence numbers* with the term *Impression 4*.

A **Reprint** may be the same book but with some changes, although unless you see something like “with a new preface by ...”, then you may not know. A reprint could be same content but reset with new type. It is different from a **facsimile** which is an exact copy (page-by-page), often used to re-publish legacy content that can only be taken from printed pages.

Errata are corrections to a book when it has already been printed. The corrected errors are printed on a slip of paper and then glued into the front matter of the book before distribution. This happens very rarely, since this give a negative impression of the quality of the book. Since many books now have a companion web site, these corrections are often to found listed there.

In Print

There are a number of conventions that have been used over the years, and some style guides do attempt to establish some kind of standard, if only for their own processes.

In *The Chicago Manual of Style*⁴ we do find:

The publishing history of a book, which usually follows the copyright notice, begins with the date (year) of original publication, followed by the number and date of any new edition. In books with a long publishing history, it is acceptable to present only the original edition and the latest edition in the publishing history.

and also from *The Chicago Manual of Style* with reference to impression numbers:

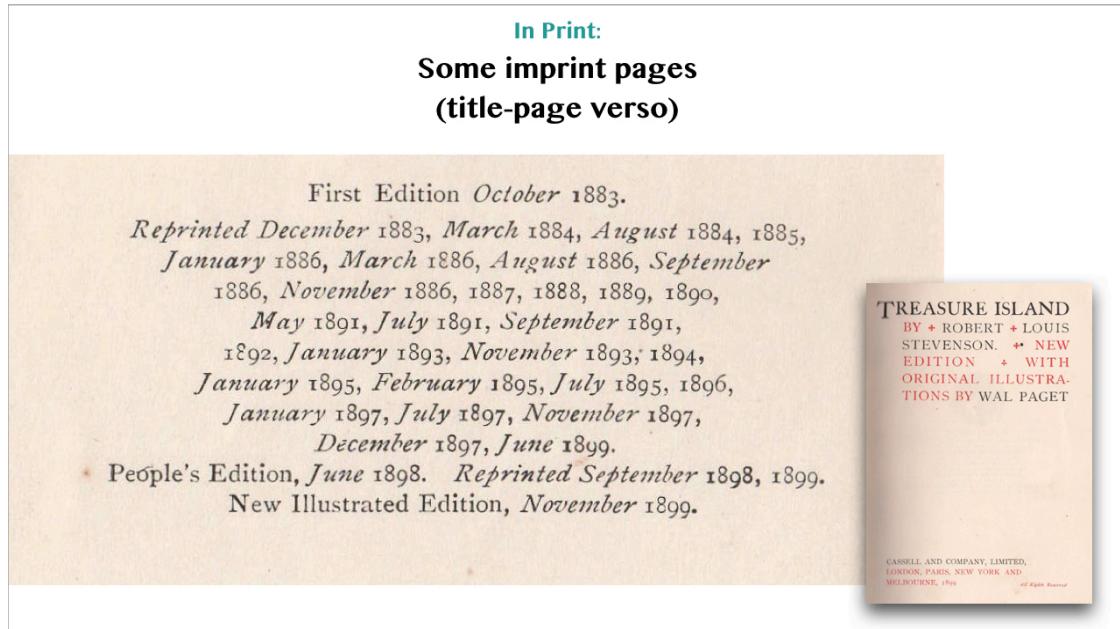
Impression lines work to the advantage of readers and publishers both—a new impression not only reflects the sales record of a book but also signals that corrections may have been made.

⁴ <http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/C/bo8540260.html>

When it comes to marketing advantage, there must always be a benefit it proclaiming *New Edition*, just as there is when we see a food package on the supermarket shelf that announces with a flourish: *new improved Recipe*.

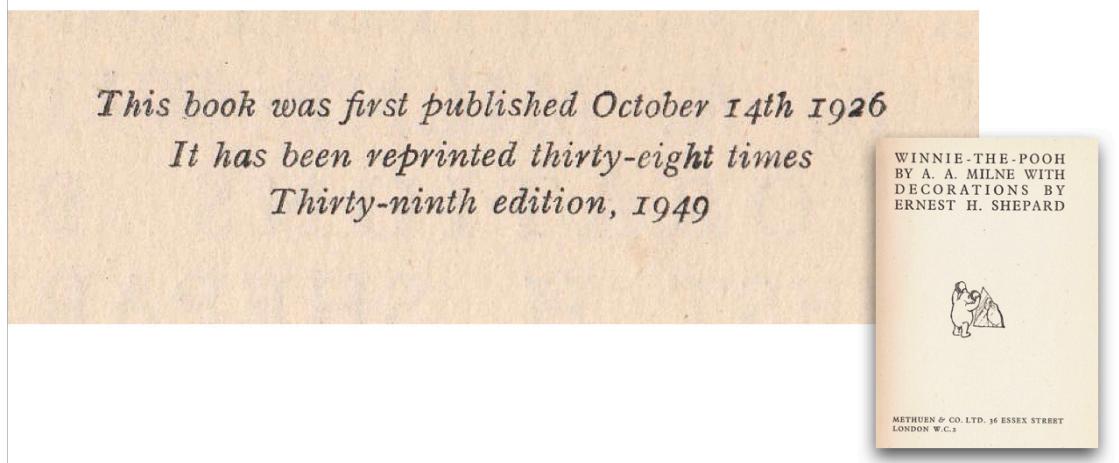
Imprint pages (title page verso)

When we explore imprint pages in the books on our shelves we find some interesting publishing messages.



Book collectors, of course, prefer to own first editions, so in their collections there will be limited information; just the first publication date. On the other hand, popular titles (see here 'Treasure Island'), will have many reprints and new editions up to the date of the edition you have. Many reprints could be an indication of the popularity of the title, although imprint pages do not tell us how many were printed. One could argue that many reprints show that the publisher was not confident enough for a longer print run in the first place.

In Print:
Some imprint pages
(title-page verso)

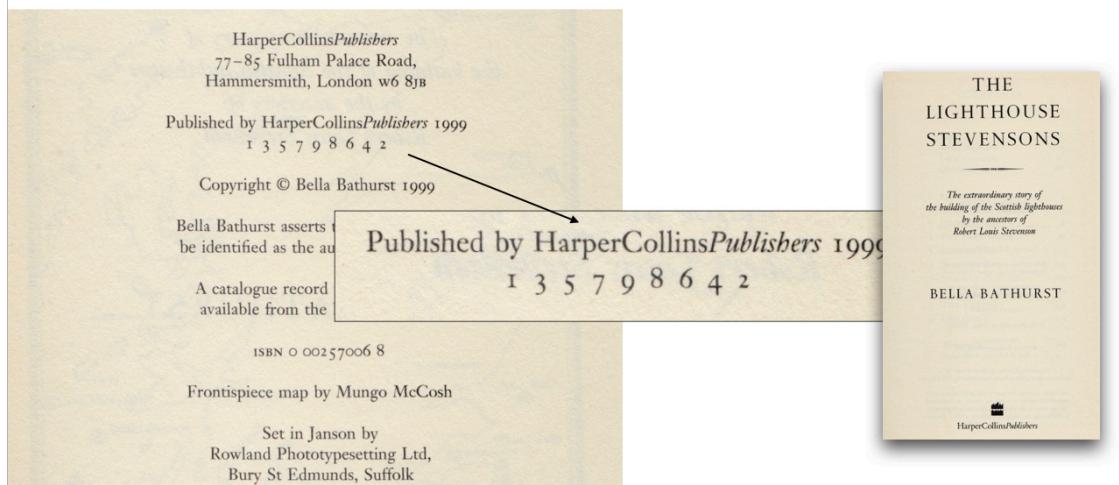


As an alternative to taking a lot of space on the page, you see here from the 1949 edition of *Winnie the Pooh*, that it had been reprinted 38 times before this “Thirty-ninth edition”. This seems to be a misinterpretation of the term “edition”, since a reprint is not usually regarded as a new edition.

Impression Lines are a string of numbers on the imprint page, that are incrementally erased, to show the current printing. It is interesting again, to flip over the title pages of our books to see this little cryptic message that is there for us to interpret. The publisher needs to first decide the highest number, because this suggests how many reprints might possibly happen; a *pessimism / optimism* indicator, I suppose.

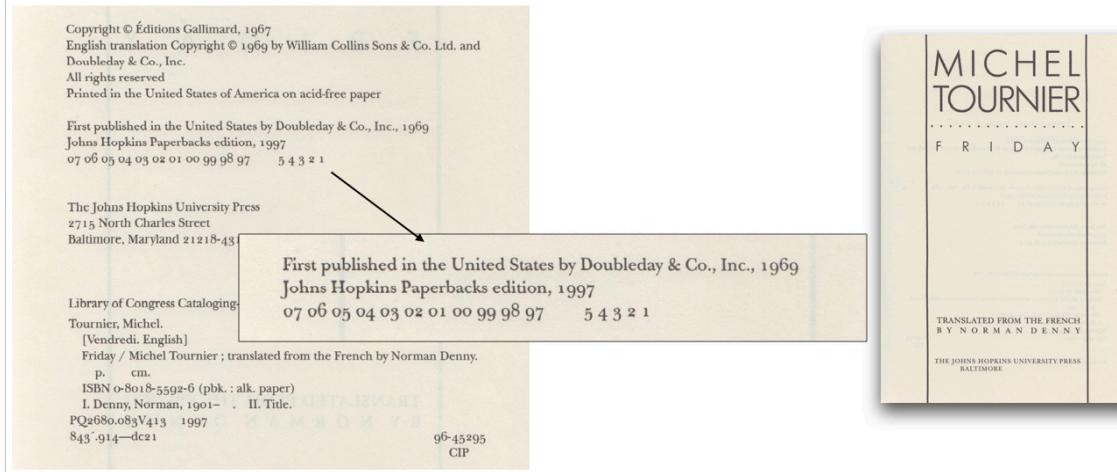
For each printing the lowest number is erased.

In Print:
Some imprint pages
(title-page verso)



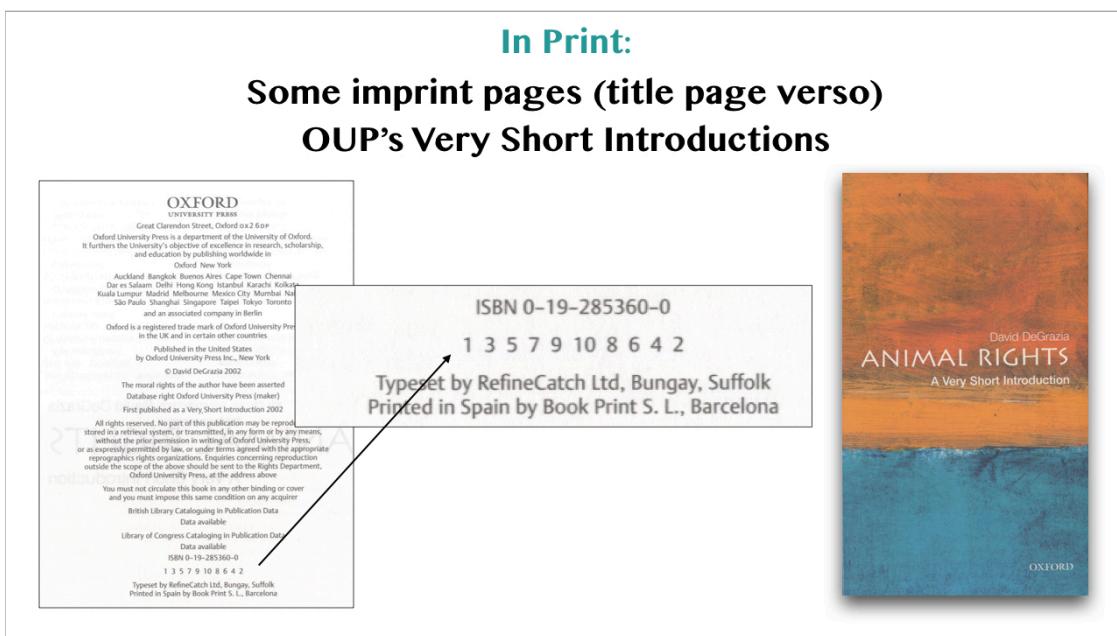
The convention is different in the USA; publishers there tend to include the date as well as the impression number.

In Print:
Some imprint pages
(title-page verso)



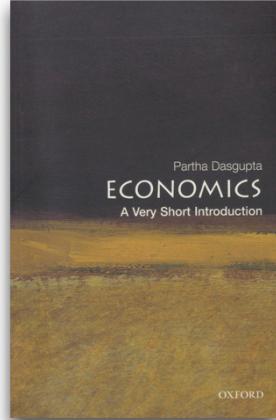
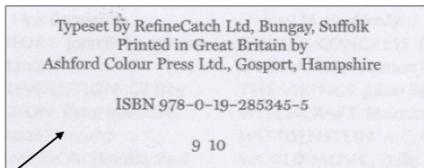
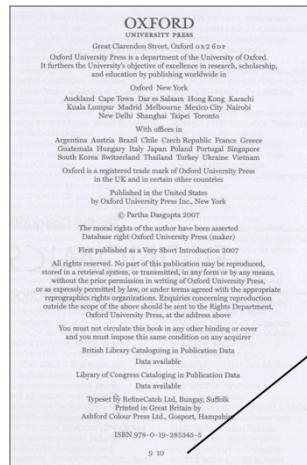
You will see in the illustrations here that Oxford University Press have used impression numbers, and the popular *Economics* title in their *Very Short Introductions* series has lost all numbers 1 through 8, an indication that my copy is the 9th printing.

In Print:
Some imprint pages (title page verso)
OUP's Very Short Introductions



In Print:

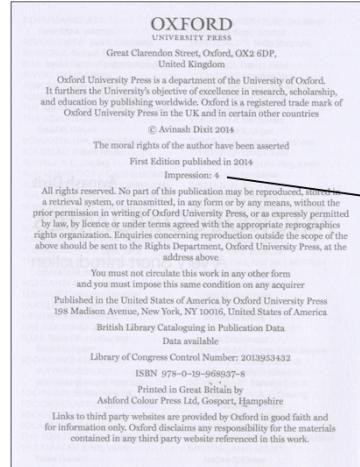
Some imprint pages (title page verso) OUP's Very Short Introductions



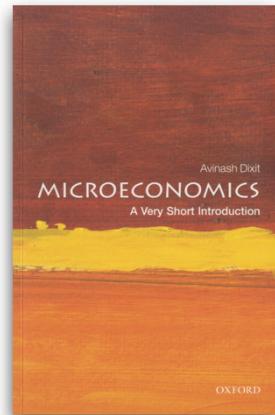
Oxford University Press have followed this convention until their *Microeconomics* title, in this same series. This now uses the less cryptic notation; my copy: *Impression: 4*. A rather sensible strategy, because the purchaser gets clear evidence that this is a popular title and must be good.

In Print:

Some imprint pages (title page verso) OUP's Very Short Introductions

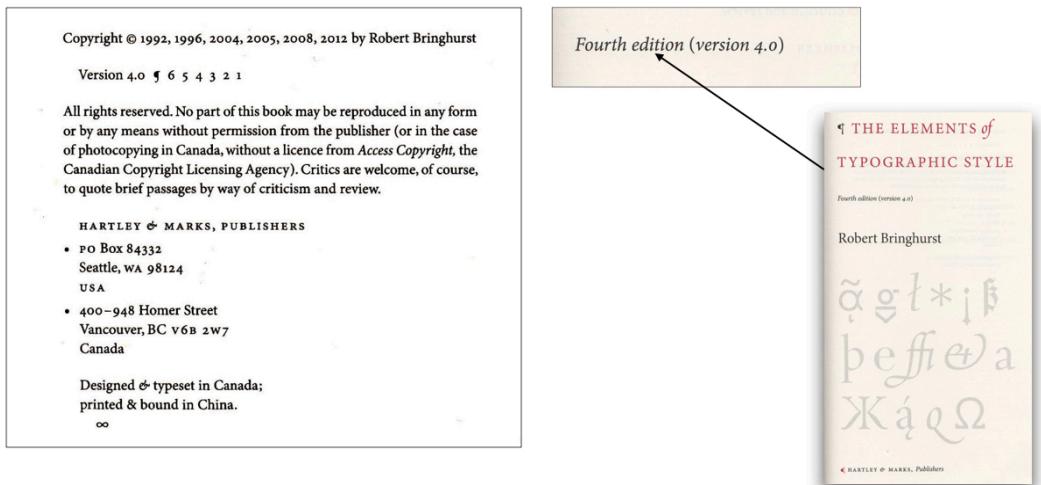


First Edition published in 2014
Impression: 4



A more adventurous and even contemporary approach is found on a new edition of *The Elements of Typographic Style*, Robert Bringhurst, 2012. What has inspired the publisher to label this (even on the title page) "Version 4.0".

In Print:
Some imprint pages
(title-page verso)



By using the term **Version 4.0** the publishers are making a nod towards the digital world as well as giving a positive marketing message.

Part 2: Workflow Versioning

As in the previous section, we can refer to the way authors worked in the past. You can see here a typed manuscript of *The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot⁵, with notes and edits by himself, his wife Vivien Eliot and Ezra Pound. There is no timeline for the notes; in which order they were applied.

Publishing Workflow

The Author

**T.S Eliot - The Waste Land
with edits and notes by
himself, his wife Vivien Eliot
and Ezra Pound**

This is also the case when proof-readers use standard notation to markup corrections to a printed copy. The British standard (BS 5261)⁶ is adopted beyond the UK, but rarely provides times or staging for the corrections.

Publishing Workflow

The Editor

(based on BS 5261 part 2)

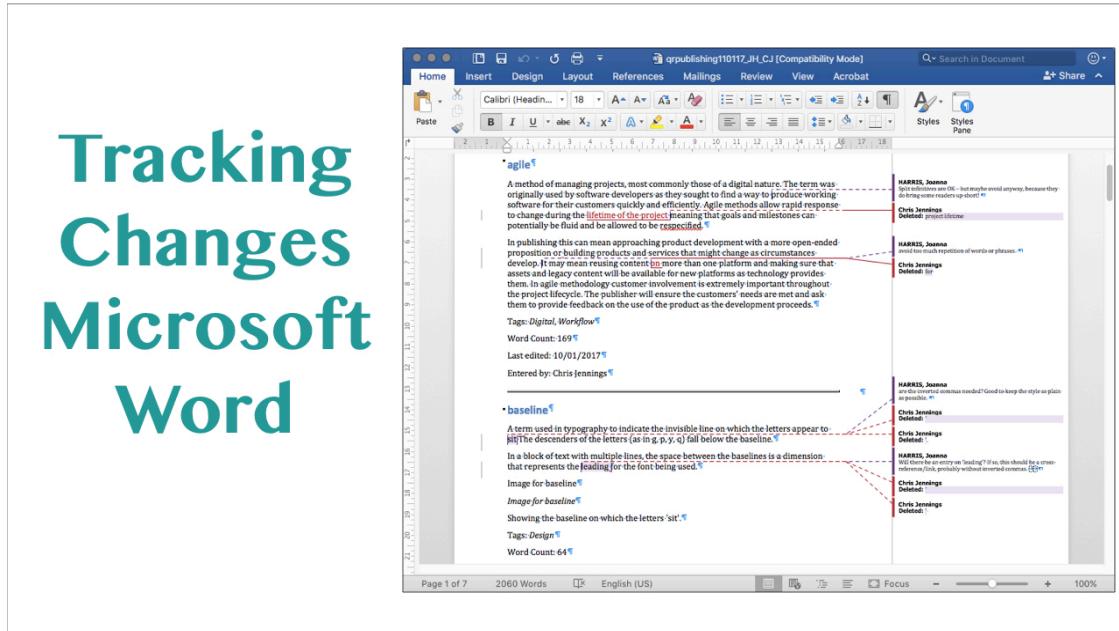
Instruction	Textual mark	Margin mark	Comment
No corrections on this page	[None]	/	Mark indicates that the page has been looked at.
Leave unchanged ('stet')	InterColor consortium	✓	Often added to cancel an instruction wrongly requested.
Remove unwanted marks	under no circumstances	✗	May be applied to blemishes in reprographics
Refer to appropriate authority	InterColor consortium	?	For use when the proofreader is unsure, or where a style guide can be referred to
Insert new matter	The red hen	little /	
Insert additional matter	required / However, as	KA	Additional matter is supplied on a separate sheet marked with reference letter.
Delete	See the table on page 5.	Ø	(In practice, these are usually the same in modern typesetting; 'close up' can be inferred from context.)
Delete & close up	See the table on page 5.	Ø	
Substitute character	The little red hen	e	

⁵ *The Waste Land Facsimile*, T.S. Eliot (Author), Valerie Eliot (Editor) - Faber and Faber 2011

⁶ Further details can be found on the Society for Editors and Proofreaders web site: <https://www.sfep.org.uk/standards/standards-in-proofreading/>

Digital Tools

Many authors and editors will use **Microsoft Word** and the *track changes* feature of that software has become the often used method to get changes, additions or corrections approved. The system provides the means to edit the text and leave comments. Individuals involved in the process are named with their comments. There is no hierarchical control; we can accept changes or not with no overall approval workflow. It does work up to a point, but can get very complex when changes overlay one another.



Another approach may be to annotate a PDF of the pages. **Adobe's Acrobat Reader** software (there are others on the market) provides sophisticated annotation tools, as you can see here in the images. Not all software can easily edit the text within the PDF, so the proof reader is simply making suggestions for the editor to make in the original text.

Annotation with PDF



4.1 Piping Commands Together
The pipe character, "|", is used to chain two or more commands together. The output of the first command is "piped" into the next program, and if there is a second pipe, the output is sent to the third program, etc. For example:

```
ls -la /usr/bin | less
```

In this example, we run the command "ls -la /usr/bin", which gives us a long listing of all the files in /usr/bin. Because the output of this command is typically very long, we pipe the output to a program called "less", which displays the output for us one screen at a time.

4.2 Redirecting Program Output to Files
There are times when it is useful to save the output of a command to a file, instead of displaying it to the screen. For example, if we want to create a file that lists all of the MP3 files in a directory, we can do something like this, using the ">" redirection character:

```
ls -l /home/vic/MP3/*.mp3 > mp3files.txt
```

A similar command can be written so that instead of creating a new file called mp3files.txt, we can append to the end of the original file:

```
ls -l /home/vic/extraMP3s/*.mp3 >> mp3files.txt
```

Digital annotation is certainly useful but can never be as powerful as direct editing and version control of the text.

eBook Editing

I add this as a slight deviation, but in my own experience, publishers of eBooks really need a good method of proof reading and annotating eBooks ready for distribution. Apple's iBooks software, does provide annotation tools (see in this attached figure from my own book), but sharing these annotations is not currently so easy. The annotations are nicely overlaid, but you can (as I write this) only email the annotations as a text; detached from the pages themselves.

Sidetrack Annotate an eBook

Potentially we could annotate an eBook as part of an editorial workflow, but there limited ways to share these annotations.

I use this to note changes to my own eBook.

The Apple iPad and iPhone as well as the Apple Mac itself, can view the standard ePUB format eBooks (both ePUB2 and ePUB3). The proprietary Books format (created with the free iBooks Author on the MAC), can only be viewed on the Apple devices. Adobe Digital Editions software is available for both MAC and PC and supports all ePUB formats..

Other devices accept the ePUB format, although (depending on the age and OS versions), they may not support all elements of the ePUB3 format. Not only do we have the devices, but the version of the operating systems and the eReader software. Devices other than the Apple systems use versions of the Android OS, that in turn will effect the quality of the level of support for ePUB.

read on the PC as well as the MAC mention a development in software, that has although Radium does not support the iBooks format built with Books

Methods of Distribution
When an eBook is created it simply consists of a file. As an example, in this book we will create an ePUB of the Shakespeare play and the result will be a file named thus: mnd.epub

The name of the file is arbitrary and chosen by the creator. In this case 'mnd' is used as a short acronym for 'Midsummer Night's Dream'. Further information about the file and eBook is held within the metadata. We will learn how to add the metadata to the eBook later during the various chapters. This file could be distributed to anyone by email or simply saving on a USB flash stick or sharing on a cloud service such as Dropbox or GoogleDrive.

The file itself then needs to be added to the user's device (iPad, Samsung tablet etc). Mechanisms to achieve this are not that simple and may require attaching cables from computers or transferring via special apps. Tablet devices are somewhat easier to achieve this transfer, because you can use other apps such as email (emailing yourself from a PC and then grabbing the attachment through the device email app), or cloud storage solutions such as Dropbox, eInk devices (Kobo, Nook

Editing in the the cloud

Cloud services such as **Google Drive** and **DropBox** do provide some version control although Google do provide apps that allow direct editing of files (Google Docs and Google Sheets), when those documents are shared for editing. Sharing documents is a nod forward to Part 5: Collaborative Editing.

Edit in the Cloud

The screenshot shows a Google Docs document titled "Chapter Two". The main content area contains a paragraph of text about a character named Morgan. A sidebar on the right is open, showing a list of comments from users Eileen Sharp and Alyssa Auch. The comments are timestamped and show their interactions regarding the text in the document.

Comments

Eileen Sharp
Selected text:
qualified
O Victim of Your Mother's Pronunciation--the word is
"coffee"
Reply · Resolve

Alyssa Auch
Selected text:
Nevermind. What is a Nexus and why can I do
lol
Reply · Resolve

Eileen Sharp
Selected text:
he has agreed to give us the key to his study.
more brilliance
Reply · Resolve

Eileen Sharp

Google Docs

Systems can be built and customised for revision control using Content Management Systems. Illustrated here are screens from an application that I have used to manage remote authors contributing to a global cookery book. Authors can input and edit their own recipes, with overall editorial control given to the chief editor, who then exports the data out as XML for use in page layout software for final 'print-ready' output.

Revisions in the Cloud

Bespoke system for editing content.

I have built systems for collaborative editing such as this one for multi-author editing of recipe book

The screenshot shows a web-based application for managing recipe entries. On the left, there is a sidebar with a tree view showing categories like "Buckwheat Pancakes" and "Country of Origin". The main content area displays the details of a recipe entry for "Buckwheat Pancakes", including its title, origin, and a preview of the body text. At the bottom, there is a text editor with a word count indicator (Words: 27, Characters: 142).

Not only do these systems provide the means to see versions but also they provide multi-author access. This is something to look at later in this article.

Part 3: Publishing Incrementally

In Progress Publishing

There are some publishers who provide the tools for their authors to write and edit their own work directly. Not only is this a good strategy to manage the workflow but it can also give potential to the idea of *in progress* publishing. Authors and publishers can engage with the public before the work is finished.

O'Reilly Publishers have an authoring system called *Atlas*⁷ that authors and editors have access to. At some stage in the workflow, the book available as an *Early Release* title. You can see in the accompanying image from the O'Reilly web site⁸ a title that was available with some chapters completed.

The screenshot shows a web page for an eBook titled "JSON at Work: Practical Data Integration for the Web" by Tom Marrs. The page features a large "eBook Publishing" heading on the left and a "O'Reilly Early release scheme" sub-heading. On the right, there's a thumbnail of the book cover with a red "Early Release" badge. The main content area includes the book's title, author, publisher, release date, and page count. It also shows a rating of 0.0 and a "Write a Review" button. Below this, a note explains the benefits of early release. A "Full description" link is present. At the bottom, a table of contents lists 10 chapters, all marked as "AVAILABLE".

Note: Since this article was started, O'Reilly Publishers have stopped selling books from their web site.⁹ The early release eBooks are only available through their Safari Books Online subscription service.⁹

LeanPub is a self publishing system¹⁰. Authors use the online authoring and editing tools to create the book and then decide when to make available. You can see from the image here that this book is only 20% complete, but the author makes this much of the book available.

⁷ <https://atlas.oreilly.com>

⁸ <http://shop.oreilly.com/product/0636920028482.do>

⁹ <https://www.safaribooksonline.com>

¹⁰ <https://leanpub.com/about>

The Jackson Cookbook

JSON Recipes in Java

Ted M. Young

Jackson is a popular, high-performance JSON processor for Java, but with its wealth of features can come complexity. This book helps you with its cookbook approach: each recipe discusses and then solves a problem, showing you how to best use Jackson to get your work done.

```

{
  "title": "Jackson Cookbook - JSON Recipes in Java",
  "subtitle": "Jackson Cookbook - JSON Recipes in Java",
  "author": "Ted M. Young",
  "publisher": "Leanpub",
  "format": "public",
  "status": "under review"
}

```

\$4.99 \$9.99 \$9.99

MINIMUM SUGGESTED

YOU PAY: \$9.99

AUTHOR EARNINGS: \$8.49

YOU PAY (USD): \$9.99

EU customers: Price excludes VAT. VAT is added during checkout.

Add Ebook to Cart

Add to Wish List

This book is 20% complete

LAST UPDATED ON 2013-09-04

In progress publishing

Authoring Incrementally

So these systems do offer the author and their editors ways to keep track of the workflow from writing to public release. The key here is that each set of staged additions and changes need to have attached some metadata that will indicate the status of the work in progress. Is the work *under review*, *a release candidate* or *needs checking* etc.

The authoring tools needs to give an indication of the status and there might even be alerts displayed to communicate tasks for completion.

```

layout: book
title: Chapter 4 - eBook Production with InDesign
published: false
date: 2017-06-14
version: 0.11
images: medium
order: 6
status: [add overview]

```

Status of this page: add overview Version: 0.11 | June 14, 2017

Chapter 4 - eBook Production with InDesign

Overview

Important Tips for InDesign Users when Making eBooks

Note: There are differences between these 4 scenarios:

- You have already designed for print and are intending to export for the re-flowable ePub.

eBooks Only

This approach to publishing can only be implemented for digital products that use an online distribution system.

Apple iBooks needs specific version details:

eBook Publishing

Information

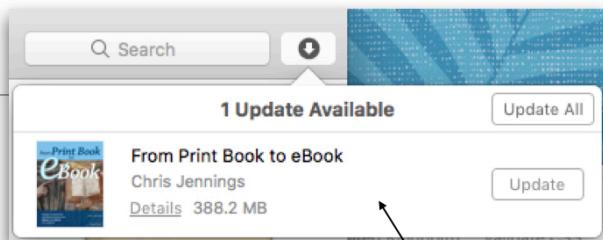
Language	English	Published	30 Mar, 2015
Genre	Design	Updated	24 May, 2017
Publisher	Page to Screen	Pages	217
Version	1.3	Size	376 MB

Version History

Version 1.3 — 24 May, 2017
Some minor typos corrected.
Removed references to Adobe Edge Animate which is no longer available.
Added some corrections to the external references.

Version 1.2 — 19 Feb, 2016
InDesign CC moved to CC 11.2 so some screen grabs have changed.
Noted the change for deprecated orientation locking for Apple devices.
Corrected some spelling mistakes and added further details on Footnotes in eBooks.
iBooks now uses 'Scrolling View' rather than 'Portrait Mode', and so the text has been changed to reflect this.
Some bugs in InDesign have been fixed in version CC 11 and the text is edited to reflect this also.

Version 1.1 — 25 Sep, 2015
Corrected some spelling mistakes and added further details on Footnotes in eBooks.
iBooks now uses 'Scrolling View' rather than 'Portrait Mode', and so the text has been changed to reflect this.
Some bugs in InDesign have been fixed in version CC 11 and the text is edited to reflect this also.



Purchaser gets this in iBooks when update available

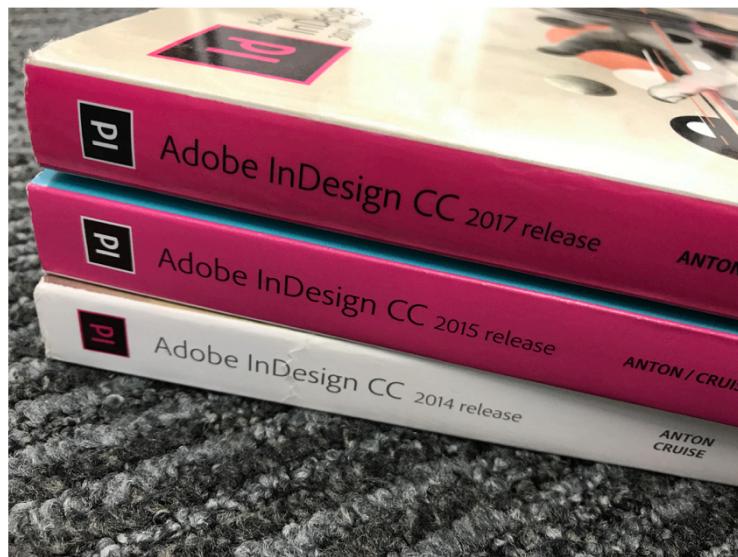
eBooks published through Apple's iBooks store can be updated with some limitations. Apple are very strict about how much an eBook can be modified and how a version must be identified. You can see in this image how a purchaser of an eBook is notified of a new version and the display of the version history that has been provided by the publisher / author.

In Print

It is really very difficult to update books in print, and from the customers' point of view, it can represent an impact on budgets. Companion web sites can be a help here; new material or errata can be provided on a web site as well as multimedia content that relates to the book.

Print Book Publishing Challenges

Software manuals soon out of date!



In the image here, we see that when Adobe (and their publishing partners, Peachpit/Pearson) release new versions of their software, they then re-version their *Classroom in a Book* titles. These are more than new editions; they are new books with new ISBNs.

Part 4: Editing Incrementally

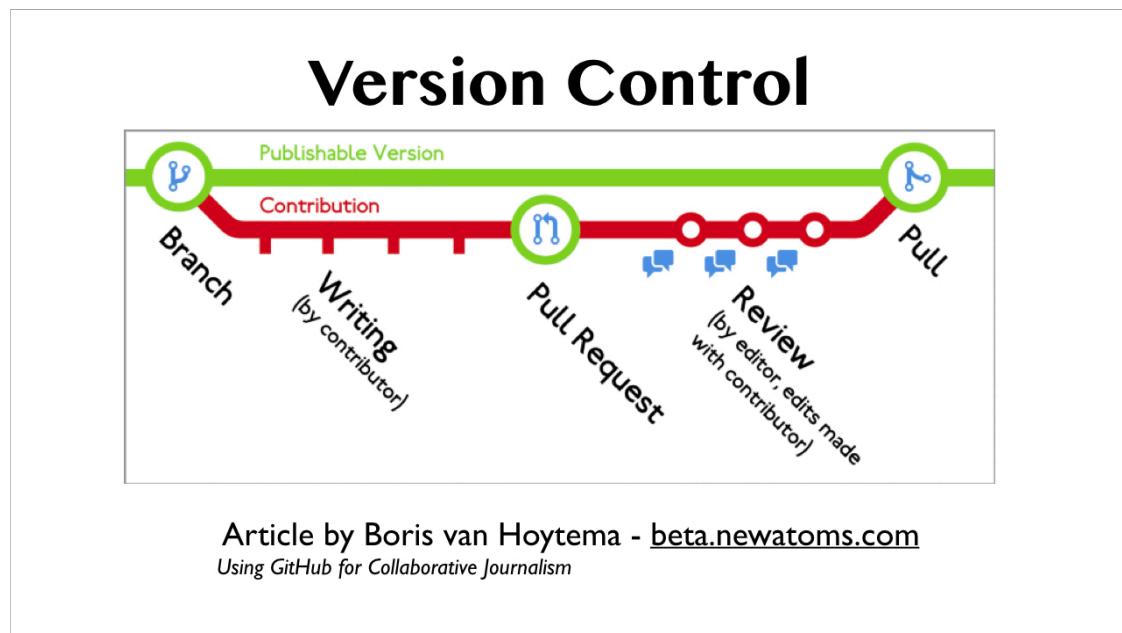
Versioning for Software Code

Software engineers have used version control for a long time, so we should look at a few examples of how this works. The point is though, that these systems are wrapped-up with a `working in teams` model. Version Control systems for coding solve a problem, that individual writers don't have. Having said that, it is incredibly useful for *this* author to be able *roll-back* to a previous version of a text. It should also be said that most publishing will involve more than the author. There are the copy-editors and proof readers.

We can see how the version control model works from the diagram illustrated here. When a new writing session is started, a new branch is created. Then when this version is ready a *pull request* is made asking effectively `can I merge my version with yours`, then, after a possible discussion with the team, this is agreed and the merge happens.

Images here show what this looks like with a version control system like **GitHub**.

Git is known as a distributed version control system (DVCS), because the edits take place remotely from the master copy. Each collaborator owns their own version (a fork) and makes a request to merge their changes to the master. Centralised version control systems keep only one copy that is *checked-out* by an editor, and thus, locked until they have completed their session.



Part 5: Collaborative Editing

Using a version control system means collaboration.

A distributed version control system like Git, hosted at GitHub.com, is robust and reliable. Repositories can be public or private, with access controlled by primary owners or teams.

Content can be *forked* and then worked on by individuals and then *pulled* back in to the master copy. Edits or *commits* are recorded and can be accepted. Every committed change represents a different version.

The screenshot shows a GitHub commit interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with the title "Version Control Used in Software Development". Below it, the text "GitHub, GitLab, BitBucket" is displayed. In the center, a diff viewer shows the changes made to a file named "splitbeforehere.jsx". The commit message is: "splitbeforehere.jsx @@ -5,31 +5,33 @@ StorySplitter". The changes are as follows:

```
@@ -5,31 +5,33 @@
5  A InDesign CS/CS2/CS3 JavaScript by FourAces
6  @ The Final Touch 2006
7  Version 3.0.0
8  -#
9  -#
10 Splits the selected Story to separate Text Frames, while
11 maintaining their contents.
12 -----
13 Update by Naomi Kennedy
14 With modification by Chris Jennings
15 */
16 #targetengine "session"
17 app.scriptPreferences.enableRedraw = 0;
18 var myScriptVer = "3.0";
19 -#
20 -#
21 -#
22 if(app.documents.length != 0){
23     mySplitBefore();
24 if(app.documents.length != 0){
25     mySplitBefore();
```

The diff viewer highlights changes with red and green backgrounds. Lines 8 and 9 are deleted, while lines 10 through 25 are added. Line 14 is a comment, and lines 16-18 are script preferences. Lines 22-25 are conditionals for document length.

Essentially the file has many different states which can be retrieved. Git is a set of tools to help manage change.¹¹

¹¹ *Git for Humans*, David Demaree, A Book Apart, 2016

Version Control Used in text editing

GitHub, GitLab, BitBucket

Differences displayed in mobile app: *working copy*

File: anchoring_wrapping.md

```
1 12:40
2 6d14262
3 anchoring_wrapping.md
4 13+33 lines
5
6  that the image will be anchored
7  to the text at the selected
8  position. This because we need to set
9  certain parameters for this anchored
10 image, but just like paragraph and
11 character styles we can also need to
12 make an object style to fulfill the
13 desired relationship to the text.
14
15 63 ## Anchored Object Options
16 64
17 65 [[Anchored object options]](images/2007/02/
18 2017/02/anchor_wrap/image4.png)(images/2007/02/
19 2017/02/anchor_wrap/image4.png)(images/2007/02/
20 2017/02/anchor_wrap/image4.png)
21
22 66 The position needs to be a custom one
23 rather than inline and you will see in
24 this image that the object has a top
25 centre reference point and the position
26 reference point is also centre so we can
27 move the image into the desired place
28 relative to the anchor point in the text,
29 but we must also set up the text wrap
30 options.
31
32 67 [[Put some text here]](images/2007/02/
33 2017/02/anchor_wrap/image5.png)(images/2007/02/
34 2017/02/anchor_wrap/image5.png)
35
36 68 ## Object Styles
37
38 69 We can (and should) use Object Styles
39 wherever possible, so that we can use
40 seeing consistently throughout the
41 publication. In the image here, you can
42 see how the book design uses an
43 object style called scene_image, because
44 this example book design uses an image to
45 illustrate where the scene takes place.
46
47 70 [[Put some text here]](images/2007/02/
48 2017/02/anchor_wrap/image6.png)(images/2007/02/
49 2017/02/anchor_wrap/image6.png)
50
51 71 ## Object Styles
52
53 73 We can (and should) use Object Styles
54 wherever possible, so that we can use
55 seeing consistently throughout the
56 publication. In the image here, you can
57 see how the book design uses an
58 object style called scene_image#
59 because this example book design uses an
60 image to illustrate where the scene takes
61 place.
62
63 76 [[Anchored to the end of a line of text]](im
64 ages/2007/02/anchor_wrap/image7.png)(im
65 ages/2007/02/anchor_wrap/image7.png)
66
67 77 [[Text Wrap options]](images/2007/02/
68 2017/02/anchor_wrap/image8.png)(images/2007/02/
69 2017/02/anchor_wrap/image8.png)
69
```

Student Example with *The Student Guide to Oxford*

Git can be hosted anywhere, since the software, itself is Open Source.

Version Control Used in text editing

GitHub, GitLab, BitBucket

Graphical representation of workflow with GitX

the-student-guide-to-oxford (branch: master)

Author	Date
Chris Jennings	27 September 2016 at 15:58
Lucy	27 September 2016 at 15:58
Chris Jennings	27 September 2016 at 15:58
Chris Jennings	27 September 2016 at 15:51
Chris Jennings	27 September 2016 at 15:47
Lucy	27 September 2016 at 15:19
Lucy	27 September 2016 at 15:04
Chris Jennings	27 September 2016 at 15:46
Chris Jennings	27 September 2016 at 15:23
Elliehatley	27 September 2016 at 15:12
Elliehatley	27 September 2016 at 15:07
Chris Jennings	27 September 2016 at 15:19
Chris Jennings	27 September 2016 at 15:19
ugraasee	26 September 2016 at 13:32
ugraasee	26 September 2016 at 13:26
Chris Jennings	24 September 2016 at 23:01

Updated chapter-1.md

Author: Elliehatley<150600138@prokes.ac.uk>
Date: Tue Sep 27 2016 15:18:20 CMT+0100 (BST)

SHA: 9c8484913c1659205962d05b2a0b7fb7c199
Parent: e697081dd277800417d074f1bd69c807f8b7db

Content of the commit message:

```
17 **The John Radcliffe Hospital** is world renowned for its innovative treatments and research. A lesser known fact is that after
18 the hospital was built, it was named after the man who funded it, John Radcliffe. John Radcliffe was a wealthy landowner and
19 **The Headington Shark** is one of the most well known residents of Headington. Bill Heine commissioned it in 1986, and still li
20 Oxford has more published writers per square mile than any other city in the world. Among the most famous are C. S. Lewis, who
21 **Famous Authors**+
22 Heine, the shark
23 Heine, the shark
24 Oxford is also well known for its famous detective, Morse. Colin Dexter did not reveal the detective's first name, Endeavour,
25 Heine, the shark
26
```

323 commits loaded

Console

For a student project where 30 students are contributing to a guide book about Oxford, we used a free system called **Penflip** (www.penflip.com).

Penflip

30 Students contributing to the editing of this text

The Student Guide to Oxford

About The Student Guide to Oxford

This project is for students in the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies to develop a text for a book that forms the content for a book design and production assignment for the module U65031 Publishing Media Workflow.

Help! What do I do with all this?

You should read the text and then add or edit the text. You can comment on your proposed changes when you save (see the disk icon to the right in edit mode). The changes will come to the master version and be merged with it when it is approved by the owner (me - CJ).

You are effectively editing your own version of the book text (known as a fork), and when you have saved these changes are ready to be merged back with the master copy.

And then? What will we do?

When the text has reached perfection :-) you will be instructed to download the source for conversion to *ICML* and then placing into *InDesign*.

What about pictures?

Yes of course, you will need some. *I thought of that*. I will send you all a link on Google drive (soon) where you will find some sample pictures that you are able to use, but you will need to go out and about to take your own. We will encourage you to do this.

Discussions 1

Pending changes 2

Contributors

Download

Share

pageboy less than a minute ago opened project

pageboy less than a minute ago updated version master

pageboy 6 minutes ago updated version master

See all activity

Version: master

You can see in the images here that the complexity of having a lot of editors is handled perfectly by this kind of system.

In terms of the actual workflow and details of the process, the text is edited with *markdown* ¹²

Penflip > from Markdown source to InDesign via ICML

Project

chapter-1.md — the-student-guide-to-oxford

1 # Getting to Know Oxford

2 The origins of Oxford date back to the Saxon late 12th century; it was to be the first English-speaking world.

3 Over time tension between the academics and conflicts peaked in the *St. Scholastica Day* around 90 deaths of both scholars and townsfolk.

4 The next event worth knowing took place during the **English Civil War** served as the country's capital and King Charles, who had fled from 1642.

5 Some 260 years later, **William Morris** started producing his famous tiny gr

Download

- Download PDF
- Download ePub
- Download HTML
- Download Word doc
- Download text
- Download source (archive)

Publishing options Close

Open Script Editor

Open Scripting Dictionary

Open Scripts Folder

About the Scripts Menu

Duplicate Removal

Sorting Lines

Web Sites

Balance Tags Plus

BBpandoc-master

decreasefontsize ⌘⌘-

increasefontsize ⌘⌘=

pandoc-docx

pandoc-html5

pandoc-icml

pandoc-md

pandoc-opml

pandoc-pdf

pandoc-xml

README

Id

lc

Once the edit process was complete (a milestone previously set) the text was converted to ICML for InDesign using Pandoc.¹³

¹² First created by John Gruber: <https://daringfireball.net/projects/markdown/syntax>

¹³ Pandoc is an open source universal document converter created by John MacFarlane. <http://pandoc.org>

Some Further Options under consideration

We can find several places where version control for text authors and editors has been developed to try to make these process easier.

Prose.io is a server based *markdown* tool that can be used to edit text held in a GitHub repository. While this system is effective and very easy to use, the prime focus is editing for a web site, rather than for other platforms.¹⁴

The screenshot shows the prose.io interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with the prose.io logo and two text blocks: "edit GitHub repository with free cloud service." and "Content downloaded from GitHub at the end of the workflow." The main area is a code editor for a file named "2 - Eating and Drinking.md". The editor has a toolbar at the top with buttons for h2, h3, bold, italic, and other text formats. The content itself is written in markdown:

```
# Eating and Drinking
If you fancy a bite to eat out in the city of Oxford, then the possibilities are endless! It is filled with a variety of restaurants, bistros, cafeterias, diners, bars, and pubs – all suiting different wants and needs!

## A Taste of Home
Living in a new place can be a bit of a culture shock for international students, especially if you are not familiar with European food. Large supermarkets like Sainsbury's and Tesco on the ring road have "World Food" sections, stocking popular staples from Indian, Asian, Caribbean, and Eastern European cuisines. However, Oxford also has a number of specialist food shops (predominantly along the Cowley Road) where you can buy groceries from around the world, often at a lower price than at the big supermarkets. Here are just a few of them.

### For Chinese, Thai, Japanese and Korean supplies
- Thong Heng, 6 Windmill Road, Headington, OX3 7BX
- Lung Wah Chong, 41-42 Hythe Bridge Street, OX1 2EP
```

GitBook, as the name suggests is built to edit (also with *markdown*) a book under revision control within a Git repository. This goes beyond the prose.io instance described above, because the content can be exported as PDF or eBook. The management of the edits by multiple authors can be hard to resolve.¹⁵

¹⁴ <http://prose.io/#about>

¹⁵ <https://www.gitbook.com>

GitBook

edit **GitHub** repository
with free cloud service, or
free desktop software

Content downloaded from
GitHub at the end of the
workflow.

The screenshot shows the GitBook interface. On the left is a sidebar with a navigation menu including 'Introduction', 'Getting to Know Oxford', 'Eating and Drinking', 'Arts and Culture', 'Sports and Health', 'Travel and Transport', and '+ Add an article'. The main content area displays a section titled 'Getting to Know Oxford' with text about J.R.R. Tolkien and Colin Dexter. Below this is another section titled 'Sights and Places of Interest' with a sub-section for 'University Church of St Mary the Virgin' featuring a photo of the tower and details about its opening times and admission fees.

OmniBook is based on an open source system developed under the name of **BookType**. The OmniBook instance is free up to a point. The *BookType* software can be installed on a server but requires technical knowledge to do so.¹⁶

Publishing Systems

OmniBook is
an Open
Source system

Here we see Chapter
History

OmniBook is based on
the *BookType* system

The screenshot shows the OmniBook interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with icons for users, groups, and files. The main area has a toolbar with various editing tools. A preview window shows a photograph of the Carfax Tower. The right side features a sidebar titled 'Chapter History' which lists revisions made to the chapter. The first few entries are:

Date	Time	Revision
Jun 11, 2017	17:26:20	5
Jun 11, 2017	17:17:30	4
Jun 11, 2017	17:17:03	4
Mar 24, 2017	23:48:11	3
Mar 24, 2017	23:45:04	2
Mar 24, 2017	23:41:53	1

Editoria is a web-based open source, end-to-end, authoring, editing and workflow tool¹⁷. As I write this article, this software is under development.

¹⁶ BookType is open source software. <http://sourcefabric.booktype.pro/booktype-22-for-authors-and-publishers/what-is-booktype/>

¹⁷ <https://editoria.pub>

Publishing Systems

editoria is currently a development project

The screenshot shows a web-based editing interface for a document titled "From Ads that dances". On the left, there's a sidebar with a tree view of styles and structures: HEADERS (Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3), TEXTS (Paragraph, Extract, Bulleted List, Numbered List, Undecorated List), EXTRACTS (Poetry, Prose), and DIALOGUE (Question, Answer). The main content area contains the text of the document. In the top right corner, there are user profile icons for "john" and "Logout". Below the user icons are buttons for "Recording changes" and "Hide changes". The text itself discusses the rise of "rich media" in advertising. Two annotations are visible on the right side of the page. The first annotation, from "john", reads: "this is a comment. And this is what happens when I sit at least three times and you can add stuff you want to say." The second annotation, from "hereticviewswen", reads: "this is a comment. And this is what I can believe it anymore." Both annotations have small circular reply and delete icons next to them.

Social Reading and Annotation

It has to be mentioned that there are also some eBook reading platforms/systems that do provide an online space for sharing comments and annotations. While these systems are devised for the concept of shared reading, there is a potential to use these systems to suggest corrections to work in progress texts. Here are some examples:

Glose is a website¹⁸ that requires account authentication, where you can read existing books or upload your own.

SocialBook is a collaborative reading platform¹⁹, where readers can share annotations as they read and observe other readers annotations. As I write this, SocialBook only seems to support ePub2 and not ePub3 format eBooks.

There are also annotation tools available for web sites, and **The Hypothesis Project** is one such tool²⁰. This open platform provides bookmarking for your browser, so you can annotate web pages.

¹⁸ <https://glose.com>

¹⁹ <http://www.livemargin.com/socialbook/>

²⁰ <https://web.hypothes.is>

The size of our example paperback book will be 216mm x 140mm. This relates to the standard paper size call demy although we have based the exact dimensions on a Lighting source template for a print on demand book.

Text block and Margins

Once we have made a decision about the size of the page, then we need to consider the proportions and space given to the text block. Once again you can read up on this topic in the two books mentioned above. You will find that many books do not follow the margins that I am about to show you, and this may be for reasons of economy; after all, the larger the margins, the less text will fit on the page and more pages will be needed, costing the publisher more to print! However, we are going to put into practise a page layout that goes back to medieval times.

The basic grid that we use, divides the page 9 horizontally and 9 vertically. You can see the arrangement in the following image from InDesign.

The margins are calculated by dividing the width and height by nine. Thus we get:

$$\text{topMargin: } 216/9 = 24\text{mm}$$

$$\text{Bottom margin: topMargin} \times 2 = 48\text{mm}$$

$$\text{innerMargin: } 140/9 = 15.556\text{ mm}$$

$$\text{Outer margin: } 140/4.5 = 31.111\text{ mm}$$

You will also see the underlying construction lines that can also be used to make the text block sit harmoniously within the page. More on this here.

The grid is displayed on the InDesign spread by using the setting in preferences for the document grid.

hypothes.is and several other projects use an open source javascript library called **Annotator** which is freely available²¹ to add to web sites.

Version Control Systems

- Git
- GitHub
- Gitlab
- Bitbucket
- Perforce
- Plastic
- Subversion
- Mercurial

²¹ <http://annotatorjs.org>

Conclusion

- Should publishers use clever version control software?
 - Version control for text is possible with open source tools like **git**, but versioning large binary files need enterprise systems such as [Perforce](#) or [Plastic](#).
 - Should publishers adopt semantic versioning?
 - When publishing eBooks to the Apple ecosystem, then yes, versions need to be labelled correctly according to Apple's rules.
 - Can media and publishing students benefit from using clever version control as individuals or in teams?
 - I have used collaborative editing methods for text with my students.
 - We need to encourage a more robust approach to version control to avoid the confusion that comes from using arbitrary file naming, such as *finalversion*.
-

Notes

Version control for ebook publishing Pierre Thierry July 2013

<https://www.w3.org/2012/12/global-publisher/statements-of-interest/34-vc.pdf>

An Introduction to Version Control Using GitHub Desktop

By Daniel van Strien

<http://programminghistorian.org/lessons/getting-started-with-github-desktop>