

5-1-2009

# Technology: Friend or Foe to the Publishing Industry

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## Recommended Citation

Leal, Kendra Mae, "Technology: Friend or Foe to the Publishing Industry" (2009). *Master of Science in Publishing*. Paper 9.  
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Technology: Friend or Foe to the Publishing Industry?

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Submitted: May 6, 2009

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Master of Science in Publishing degree at Pace University.

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## 1.1 Introduction

### 1.1.1 New Technologies

In recent years, publishers, such as Random House and HarperCollins, have been turning to new technologies, such as print-on-demand (POD) and e-ink, to cut costs, to broaden their audiences, and to adapt to the challenging economic climate. Similarly, authors have been turning to these non-traditional outlets to bypass the established acquisition process and publish their works in the manner they want. This does not necessarily mean in just print form.

Technological advances have revolutionized many industries; however, some of the technological developments in publishing arguably may eliminate the book as it currently exists: printed, bound, tangible.

### 1.1.2 Define Publishing

The publishing industry is responsible for the dissemination of all manner of cultural material, such as literature or information (“history of publishing”). For hundreds of years, this process has included the distribution of information in the form of ink on paper and bound, traditionally created with an offset press. However, with the introduction of e-books in the late 1990s (Tiecher), the definition of the tangible book has changed to incorporate its electronic equivalent.

### 1.1.3 Thesis Statement

Two techniques are currently at the forefront in the print evolution: POD and e-ink. Many professionals are predicting that these are the death knells for the printing press. However, are these technologies mutually exclusive or can they coexist in the ever developing Publishing industry? Right now, both are fledglings testing their wings and gaining elevation quickly. Even though these processes are broadening the availability of content and appealing to different

audiences, they will not be able to replace the printing press in some areas of publishing. And in some instances, like the company E-Reads' practices, they are contributing to the demand of traditional printing.

## 1.2 History

### 1.2.1 E-Books

Some of the earliest e-book publishers include BiblioBytes, founded in 1993, DiskUs Publishing, founded in 1995, (Milliot, Reid and Zeitchik), and, most notably, E-Reads, founded in 1999 by publishing agent Richard Curtis (Tiecher). At its introduction, this new technology had industry professionals worried that Publishing was on the precipice of a paper press demise; however, e-books still have not eliminated the physical book.

E-books' started as downloadable documents to a computer. Early formats, as used by BiblioBytes, were PDF and ASCII text (Milliot, Reid and Zeitchik). The first handheld e-book reader, the Rocket eBook, was introduced in 1998. It was 17 ounces, had 8MB of memory (enough to hold 10 books) with upgradeable memory cards, and a backlit 4.75" x 3" display ("Gemstar Rocket eBook"). The Rocket eBook was described to be the size of a paperback; however, it weighed about twice as much as one. This is part of the reason that e-books did not initially do well: the early e-readers were large and heavy, much like early computers and laptops. Yet with innovative technology, such as the introduction of e-ink, e-books have received a second uprising – a rise of 55.7% from 2002-2007 ("Estimated Book Industry Net Sales 2002-2007").

### 1.2.2 E-Ink

E Ink Corporation is the leading developer of electronic ink (e-ink) and electronic paper displays (EPD). It introduced its first flexible tablet-sized EPD in 2005 ("World's First Tablet-

Sized Flexible Electronic Paper Display”), which was later utilized in the Sony Reader Portable Reader System in 2006 (“Sony Reader Out In Time For Holidays”). “EPDs are a technology enabled by electronic ink - ink that carries a charge enabling it to be updated through electronics (“Electronic Paper Displays).” The e-ink technology eliminates the backlit display so it does not strain the eyes which makes for easier reading. Another benefit is the lack of glare so information can be viewed outdoors effortlessly. E-ink technology also consumes less battery life, which not only allows for longer handling but also decreases device overheating. Frequent laptop users are familiar with both eye-strain and increased heat. As explained in E Ink’s “World’s First Tablet-Sized Flexible Electronic Display” news release, “the E Ink Imaging Film uses 100 times less energy than a liquid crystal display because it can hold an image without power and without a backlight.” It’s also lighter, 80% thinner, and more durable than glass displays.

### 1.2.3 Print-On-Demand

Around the same time as e-books were emerging, POD was introduced in the early 1990s. “POD offers publishers the possibility of selling a book before it is printed and then delivering it directly to a consumer, to a store or to a publisher's warehouse (Reid).” While the price of this is still uneconomical for large print runs, roughly \$4-\$5 per unit compared to a little more than \$1 per unit done by off set printing (Reid), it is quite cost-efficient for small, individual orders. Whereas the unit price for off-set printing decreases as the quantity increases, POD’s unit price stays the same for any size order. POD utilizes digital printing, so production is quicker than off-set printers and excess print materials do not need to be kept on hand; “Instead of filling your warehouse and flooding the marketplace with books that may never sell, [POD companies] print only what is needed to meet your current demand-whether that's a single book

or 10,000 (“Lightning Source – Process”).” In addition, there are minimal to no returns to the publisher because most digital print orders are placed once consumer demand is established.

#### 1.2.4 Print Publishing

Printing’s invention can be traced back to woodblocking in China circa 600 A.D. China also invented movable type in the eleventh century; however, it did not fully exploit it. Which is why movable type in Europe is popularly attributed to Johannes Gutenberg in the 1400s.

Currently, off set printing, invented in the nineteenth century, is the most popular for large print runs of 1,000 copies or more (“history of publishing”).

#### 1.2.5 Evaluation of Technology

Compared to printing’s humble beginnings in 600 A.D., POD and e-ink rival the space-age inventions touted in early Science Fiction. Yet, these modern technologies may be considered as archaic as the phonograph in another 10 years given how rapidly technology is progressing in other areas such as cell phones, computers, and televisions. Currently, these two production and delivery methods are only a portion of output compared to traditional printing, but their popularity is gaining speed.

In 2007, POD was about a third of all new and revised editions released in the U.S. as reported by R.R. Bowker (“On-Demand Output Soars”). The change in output from POD alone increased 514% from 2006 to 2007 and 313% from 2002 to 2007 where traditional printing had much smaller increases, 1% and 29% respectively. Although both methods showed larger output, POD is growing much more rapidly. “Kelly Gallagher, general manager of business intelligence at Bowker, attributed the increase in the on-demand category to the increase in the use of print-on-demand by mainstream publishers, higher volumes of public domain titles produced using POD and increases in the use of POD by self-publishers and micro-publishers (“On-Demand



Output Soars”).” POD is especially useful for maintaining supplies of backlist titles, reproducing out-of-print or hard to find public domain pieces, and creates a new niche in the industry. In the opinion of Jed Lyons, president of Rowman & Littlefield and National Book Network, “POD doesn't work very well for \$16 trade paperbacks, but is perfect for deep backlist titles and specialized titles where price is not an issue (Reid).”

Many professionals are embracing the advantages of these newer technologies despite the industry's initial alarm. Tamara Stock, co-owner of Daedulus Books in Columbia, MA, shared, “If you had asked me five years ago, I would have said that there's not much of a future [for books]. I was concerned about the rise of the electronic book. I think a lot of people like me overreacted (Rosen).” For instance, prior deliberation over whether a book is out-of-print is close to being settled due to POD, with some negotiations in the works. Simon & Schuster's Executive Vice President for Operations, Dennis Eulau, said, “Most people want POD for the long-tail effect. Most of our authors just want their books to be available (Reid).” Many Pace Publishing graduate students have related that editors at their jobs who previously had to take home loads of galleys now download them to e-readers for easy transport. If necessary, the capability to make notes or highlight can be done in a Kindle 2 or Sony PRS-700.

Another possible advantage is E-ink, POD, and traditional printing can actually work together to promote the other two technologies. For example in large print runs, off-set printing can be used followed by POD for reprints and eventual backlist fulfillment. Also, avid readers can try a new book or author on their sleek e-readers and decide they want the actual book for their book shelves, as will be discussed later. Another way the three can tie in together is initial release electronically with tangible products offered initially by POD then leading to a mass traditional printing once the title has gained enough notoriety. Eulau said, “You just don't know.

We've had [backlist] books go into POD, find a community and have to be moved back to offset (Reid).” In these examples, all three techniques compliment each other. As long as there is a need for a tangible product and price permits, traditional printing will not completely disappear.

## 2.1 E-Ink/E-Readers

### 2.1.1 Devices

Due to e-ink’s revolutionary technology, e-readers have become lighter, compact, and easier to read with increased screen sizes. They also have the capacity to hold more information. For instance, Amazon’s latest e-reader, the Kindle 2 introduced in early 2009, is just over a 1/3” thick with a height and width of 8” x 5.3”, weighs 10.2 ounces, and has a 6” diagonal display. It comes stock with 2GB of memory – enough to hold about 1,500 books, yet it looks similar to a thin tablet of paper. It allows wireless downloading of books (audio and electronic), newspapers, magazines and Microsoft Office documents. Although the battery life depends on usage, it can provide up to two weeks of reading. The Kindle 2 also includes the ability to change font size in order to make it easier to see the text. Another capability offered by Amazon’s latest e-reader is the option to have the screen text read. The Read-To-Me feature provides text-to-speech unless it has been disabled by the rights holder (“Kindle 2: Amazon's New Wireless Reading Device (Latest Generation)”). This is different than an audio book because a user can switch back and forth between listening and reading whereas audio books only provide audio.

Sony also has a new e-reader available as of late 2008, the Sony PRS-700. It is .5” thick with a height and width of 6.9” x 5”, weighs 10 ounces, and has a 6” diagonal display. Its stock memory includes 512MB (enough for 350 books), but can be expanded with memory cards. The look is sleeker than the Kindle 2 as it has a black metal casing as opposed to the Kindle 2’s off-white plastic (Pogue). The PRS-700 also comes in blue and red. It does not allow wireless

downloading of books and must be connected to a Windows PC. The battery life also provides up to two weeks of reading. Two more benefits over Amazon's e-reader are the inclusion of a touch screen and an internal light to enable reading in the dark ("PRS-700").

Another device that incorporates e-ink is the Polymer Vision RADIUS cell phone/e-reader. It was due to be released in mid-2008 and claimed as "an enticing contender against Apple's iPhone (Hall);" however, due to financial difficulties, Polymer Vision has not been able to release it yet (Humphries). It features a 5" roll-out screen, a compact design that allows it to fit in a pocket, and weighs a little over 4 ounces. Due to its wireless capabilities, it allows users to download books on the go ("RADIUS: The first pocket eReader"), much like the Kindle 2. It has flexible storage with the ability to increase to 8GB. A user has the option of wirelessly downloading content (e-books, files, music, RSS feeds, and more) or hooking up to a PC via a USB port. Also, due to the e-ink's low power consumption, the RADIUS provides up to 30 hours of battery life.

Despite its function as a cell phone, Apple's iPhone, introduced in 2006, has become increasingly popular to e-book fans (Catone). The iPhone is .48" thick with a height and width of 4.5" x 2.4", weighs 4.7 ounces, and has a backlit 3.5" diagonal display. It comes stock with either 8GB or 16GB of memory and is available in black or white. Users can download content wirelessly or sync with a PC via USB ("iPhone3G Technical Specifications"). Among the iPhone's many other features (cell phone, music, internet, camera with countless others), Apple teamed up with Amazon to provide an app in March 2009 that allows users to download and read e-books purchased from Amazon.com (Belopotosky). For those who own a Kindle 2 and an iPhone, the Kindle app allows syncing between the two devices so there is effortless continuity in reading on either device – it memorizes the last location read on one device and produces the

same place when the other device is utilized. However, Amazon's other app, Amazon.com, is not integrated with the Kindle app, so users cannot easily purchase books from their iPhone, unless they visit Amazon.com through the internet (Belopotosky). Because of its varying capabilities, the iPhone's battery life ranges from 5 to 300 hours.

### 2.1.2 Comparisons

So which is the best e-Reader? According to eBookReaderReviews2009.com, the Kindle 2 is the best for its price of \$359 as compared to the Sony PRS-700 at \$349 due to its memory size, number of supported formats, and clarity of reading. *The New York Times'* David Pogue agrees – despite the PRS-700's added features of a touch screen and internal light (“... a total Kindle-killer, right? (Pogue)”), the Kindle 2 still outshines because of the fundamental clarity of the screen. Unfortunately, the added surface layers on the PRS-700 to support the additional features blur the crispness of the e-ink and produces a glare.

For those who prefer “all-in-one” convenience, the new Kindle app has helped to give the iPhone an advantage by providing the ability to sync with e-books previously bought for the Kindle 2. In addition, the color screen on the iPhone cannot be overlooked (Catone) – even though E Ink Corp. can manufacture color EPDs, they have yet to be utilized by any of the current e-ink e-reading devices. The iPhone currently retails for \$199 or \$299 depending on the model, but also necessitates a monthly cellular plan. One downfall of the iPhone is its screen: 3.5” and the backlight would eventually make long periods of reading uncomfortable. The e-reader that seems to provide some key features of the Kindle 2 and the iPhone would be the RADIUS. It will be interesting to see how well it does if it is ever released.

## 2.3 POD

### 2.3.1 Companies

Lightning Source, a subsidiary of Ingram Industries and sister company to Ingram Book Group, was founded in 1997 and is currently the biggest company providing printing, distribution and digital fulfillment to publishers only (Reid; “Lightning Source – F.A.Q”). Its website is easy to navigate, including tutorial features and file creation tools, such as the Cover Template Generator and the Weight and Spine Calculator. It provides products in different formats (hardcover and paperback with black and white or color print), sizes (5” x 8”, 5.5” x 8.5”, 6” x 9”, etc.) and bindings (saddle stitch or perfect bound). In addition, publishers utilizing Lightning Source have access to the world’s largest distribution channel.

In contrast, LuLu provides services to publishers and individuals to print a wide range of products: books, photo books, calendars, CDs and DVDs, eBooks, Cookbooks, and Poetry Books (“Publishing – Lulu.com”). The website is user friendly, provides a Cost Calculator, a social network, and the ability to buy other people’s products. It proclaims that it “eliminates traditional barriers to publishing and enables authors to sell their work directly to their particular audience – no jumping through hoops to find a publisher who is likely to reject their work (“About Lulu: Corporate Profile”).”

BookSurge, a brand of On-Demand Publishing LLC, a subsidiary of Amazon.com Inc. and founded in 2000, also provides book publishing, printing, fulfillment and distribution services to both authors and publishers (“About Us – BookSurge”). It provides products in different formats (hardcover and paperback with black and white or color print), sizes (any between 4”-8” x 6”-11”) with perfect binding. Amazon caused controversy in 2008 by demanding the use of BookSurge by all POD publishers using Amazon.com to sell their books (Milliot, “Amazon: Friend or Foe?”); however, it has not followed through with threats to disable non-users’ buy button on their titles.

Xlibris, founded in 1997, is publisher services provider, but not a publisher. Its staff handle design, layout, shipment, fulfillment, royalties calculation and issuance, as well as marketing, distribution, and editorial support (“FAQ – About Xlibris”). It offers black and white printing as well as color in different formats and bindings. It also offers services to authors who are after a book publishing service specific to their genre, such as Poetry, Christianity, and Science Fiction. The entire publishing process through this site ranges from 90 to 120 days once they receive an author’s completed submission (“FAQ – About Xlibris”). It also provides users the options to purchase other authors’ books. It plans to implement an affiliate program with publishing websites in order to provide “an even better self-publishing experience” to its customers.

### 2.3.2 Comparison

Lightning Source and BookSurge provide services to publishers, whereas BookSurge, Lulu and Xlibris focus on services for authors. BookSurge does not provide as many product options as Lightning Source. For increased access to Amazon.com, authors would probably prefer BookSource; however, if they are looking for increased options and hands on control of the look of their works, Lulu would be their best choice. For more guidance through the publishing process, Xlibris offers the most features. Pricing differs from each POD company, based on which specifications authors or publishers choose for their orders. One element that all companies have in common is high quality products. It is very difficult to tell the difference between POD and traditional off set printing (Reid).

## 3.1 Social Trends

### 3.1.1 Leisure

As mentioned before, as long as there is a need for a physical book, traditional printing will be around. It has been said time and time again, “I love the *feel* of a book.” Whenever these bibliophiles are confronted with the idea of reading a novel from a screen, they may respond, “I stare at a computer screen all day. The last thing I want to do is look at another screen when I want to relax,” or “I’d be afraid to get sand in it,” or “I can’t curl up in bed with a device.” Others may have similar criticisms to audio books. But “the United States [is] an information society, dependent on the creation, use and communication of information for its economic and social well-being (Haigh 162).” Americans have varying tastes and desires, so while some critics may oppose e-ink technology for leisure, they may embrace it for something more discerning, like news, current events, or work-related materials. Dissemination of information is quicker with e-ink and POD as compared to the traditional publishing process. It takes less than a minute to download content to Amazon’s Kindle and a book can be printed in about two hours with POD and can be delivered in days. The traditional planning, implementing, and distributing of large print runs can take months.

### 3.1.2 Economic

This shortened dissemination time and “on demand” distribution also leads to better economic and environmental experiences for consumers and sellers alike. Whereas large print runs can initially save pennies on the unit cost, much can be lost on returns and pulping, the process of destroying unsold mass market paperbacks, not only in revenue, but in materials and time.

Retailers and publishing professionals find the returns process increasingly detrimental. Steve Riggio, CEO of Barnes and Noble, declared the tradition “insane” and expensive,” stating that changing the policy would lower costs for both sides (Milliot, “Riggio Says Time is Right to

End Returns”). Publisher Weekly’s Chip Fleischer, suggests, “...offer[ing] stores deeper discounts and the prospect of greater profit margins by discontinuing or altering the practice of accepting returns for full credit.” Several decades ago, making books non-returnable may have caused controversy between bookstores and publishing companies; however, there are currently numerous retail outlets via the internet that most sellers and consumers show little concern for this practice and are usually unaware of the long tradition of returns.

When a book is printed POD, only the material for that order is consumed. As mentioned before, Lightning Source sets general parameters for page color, binding, and trim size, but anything specialized beyond that is an additional cost. Similar to the cost savings provided by traditional print runs, the same types of materials can be purchased in bulk and kept on hand for a variety of products, not just for one book from one publisher. Similarly, bookstores do not need to keep extra copies of books in inventory because they can order from a distributor and have the book in stock within days. It keeps necessary funds in bank accounts since they do not need to tie it up in inventory. It also cuts down on paperwork due to returns of books that are slow-sellers or non-sellers. In 2008, “[r]etail sales fell off dramatically, credit markets tightened and booksellers returned waves of inventory to be able to get the new books they'd need for the last-gasp holiday season...” However, books did not fare as well as expected during the gift-giving season. “An inevitable second wave of post-holiday returns will be expensive to process, and for some publishers may be fatal to absorb (Fleischer).”

In addition, it has yet to be widely determined how much consumer cost savings is actually earned purchasing an e-reader and e-books compared to buying actual books. One estimate by *The New York Times*’ Damon Darlin figured that consumers would need to purchase 40 books for the Kindle before they began to save money. Nor has it been determined how many



customers purchase multiple formats of a single title (i.e. hardcover, trade paperback, mass market, e-book, audio book, etc.).

### 3.1.3 Environmental Consciousness

The environmental factor is not a new concept; however, it is a hot one. ABA's 2008 Winter Institute addressed the fact that, "[t]he best chance independent booksellers have to survive in today's hyper-competitive retail market is to be an environmentally-sensitive store... (Milliot, "ABA Winter Institute Puts Emphasis on Alliances, Going Green")." Publishers can benefit from implementing and following environmental practices. One way to do this would be to print less unnecessary copies using POD. Unfortunately inventory that never gets distributed does not count for a recycling credit for companies; so even though returned books can eventually be recycled if they are warehoused too long, they usually are not. So POD does not only decrease expenses, it also decreases waste for all facets of the industry.

In comparison, e-ink does not require materials to be printed. Consumers can try a newly released title for a fraction of the retail price, such as Stephanie Meyer's *Breaking Dawn* for \$9.99 as a Kindle 2 download versus \$22.99 for a hardcover edition of the same title, as it is only the digital file as compared to a physical product. Even though the initial benefits of paperless distribution seem great, research is still determining the environmental impact of the materials used in technological devices. Yet the demand for instantaneous knowledge is fulfilled much quicker than either of its tangible competitors.

## 3.2 Current Discussions

### 3.2.1 Royalty Rates

In traditional printing, it is said by many major publishing houses that only a small percentage of titles actually earn out their advances. As described by *Publishers Weekly's* Sara

Nelson, “astronomical advances, the kind that don’t even make money even if the books land on the lists [need to go].” In response, there has been some outcry by authors about publishers eliminating advances all together and offering only higher royalty rates. Colette Bouchez, author of *Your Perfectly Pampered Menopause*, responds, “With publishers no longer subsidizing book promotions in any kind of meaningful way, and the online venue doing away with the need for traditional distribution power, take away that advance, and I question what’s left as an incentive to sign (Andriani, “Vanguard Press and Authors Weigh In on No-Advance Deals”).”

E-Reads, an online publishing imprint, is at the forefront of this controversy. It splits net earnings 50/50 with authors. “[Richard Curtis, owner] estimates that on both e-book and POD editions of E-Reads titles, the net profit is about \$4 per title, meaning the author gets \$2 - a higher royalty rate than trade houses usually give on paperbacks...” Since Curtis specializes in backlist and out-of-print titles, he can arguably make a nice profit on “books that were previously lost in the ether.” And Curtis also, “...believes e-books will take center stage in reading culture when ‘everyone carries one device in his or her pocket that they can do everything on.’” Which is why in June 2008, he signed a distribution contract with MPS’s Global Reader, a platform for distributing and viewing content on cell phones (Teicher).

### 3.2.2 “Out of Print” Definition

With the ability to reprint formerly out-of-print titles, the definition of these books in contracts has changed. Since the introduction of e-books, publishers have been scrambling to redefine prior contracts as they did not foresee the acquisition of these potentially profitable rights. It has also caused lasting revisions to boilerplates so publishers may anticipate new technological rights. Simon & Schuster actively redefined “out-of-print” in its contract. In a statement released May 2007 in the light of concern over its then “new rights policy which

would seem to indicate ownership in perpetua,” S&S spokesperson Adam Rothberg explained, “... We are embracing print on demand technology as an unprecedented opportunity for authors and publishers to keep their books alive and available and selling in the marketplace in a way that may not have been previously possible for many authors, and are confident in the long term that it will be a benefit for all concerned (“PW on S&S rights ‘grab’”).”

In response, the Authors Guild urged writers and agents to exclude S&S from book auctions. Traditionally, authors were allowed to request the publishing rights be returned to them once a book was unavailable in hardcover, trade paperback or mass market paperback or if sales fell below a minimum annual threshold. Once they owned the rights again, authors could choose to revise their works, publish with another company or distribute copies themselves. One example cited in *The New York Times* of an author who had rights reverted to her was Paula Fox. When her work was cited by Jonathan Franzen, the author of *The Corrections*, in a magazine article, her career was revived after she resold her six out-of-print titles to W.W. Norton (Rich).

With POD, rights reversions have become one more point to be negotiated – either at the time of contract signing or later when the author is dissatisfied with his book’s handlings. In addition, if an author remains mid-list at one company then becomes a best seller at another company, the rights for the previous titles are going to be more difficult to acquire.

### 3.2.3 Additional Concerns

Joni Evans, former Senior Vice President in the book department at William Morris, contributed to a book published by HarperCollins in February 2008 entitled, *What’s Next: The Experts’ Guide*. In this compilation of predictions by 50 “experts” on their respective fields, such as law, the beauty industry, and gossip, Joni Evans had some choice ideas for publishing: work out fair royalty structures with the “Googles” as opposed to suing them, get rid of old systems

(like returns) and old attitudes (like embracing technology and "...think[ing] of the internet as an also, not an instead of"), "[o]nce digital publishing becomes common, [she] believes that all the publishing industry and all writers will have an explosion in sales," and that "[b]ooks, the ultimate software, should be available on all platforms [print, digital, online, print-on-demand, CDs, wireless audio, etc.] (Andriani, "Joni Evans On 'What's Next' in Publishing")."

Evans mentions several key aspects of how the Publishing industry needs to evolve in order to meet the demands of a new technological era. Rather than viewing Amazon or Google as threats, publishers need to put aside their fear and be proactive in bargaining. For instance in March 2009, the Kindle 2's text-to-speech caused publishers to revisit their contracts to see who owned the rights. "The Authors Guild argued that TTS was an unauthorized right, and the organization had the quiet support of most publishers (Milliot and Deahl)." While Amazon held that it was legal to include this function on the Kindle 2, it has conceded to revise its policy so that authors and publishers have the choice to disable TTS. Agents who spoke to *Publishers Weekly* anonymously stated that, "...industry members fear Amazon, as the e-tailer gains more and more control over pricing and now electronic distribution of books (Milliot and Deahl)." Yet, if publishers and authors were more open to technological advances, this issue may have been resolved prior to the Kindle 2's release. By partnering with Amazon, the publishing industry can reap benefits rather than constantly raging battles.

Another aspect that has yet to be discussed in this paper is viewing books as "the ultimate software." Rather than using "book" to refer to a format, it should be used to encompass the creative content captured within a format. This mindset would enable more possibilities for the material to reach different audiences. For instance, readers who have newly discovered time to read due to their e-readers. *Publishers Weekly's* Elizabeth Bluemle admits that she initially,

“dismissed e-books as handy tools for business travelers;” “But then something happened, something unexpected, embarrassing, and a little worrisome: I read *Peter Pan* on [an iPhone with a] screen the size of a playing card, and I loved it.” She justified her initial endeavor by saying she could not justify picking up the hardcopy due to the overwhelming amounts of ARCs in her home. If the e-book was not available to her on her iPhone, it would have taken her longer to revisit this beloved story.

#### 4.1 Predictions

##### 4.1.1 Competition

Similar to the rivalry between HD and Blu-ray disc players or cell phone interfaces, the platforms for e-readers need to be taken into consideration when distributing e-books. As mentioned earlier, e-ink technology is used in the Sony PRS-700, the Kindle 2, and the yet to be released Polymer Vision Readius. In addition, cell phones like the iPhone are used as e-readers. Yet, they all support different e-book formats: Kindle (AZW), TXT, PDF, DOC, BBeB format. Harkening back to Curtis’s prediction that people will eventually carry a device that can do everything, Amazon’s founder, Jeff Bezos, has a different theory. He likened an e-reader to a camera. While he enjoys the option of taking pictures with his cell phone, he also has an SLR for more serious picture taking (Besos and Anderson). Similarly, while it may be nice to have several engrossing manuscripts via an e-reader to keep a delayed professional occupied in an airport, a working mother may love her paperback to relax with in the tub. The best way for publishers to reach every member of their potential audience is to be as educated as possible the different e-reader devices and the formats supported by them. By providing a book in each applicable format upon the book’s publication date, they decrease the chance that a reader is left out due to incompatibility problems.

#### 4.1.2 Future Technologies

E-ink and e-readers are not limited to books. Companies are looking for ways to save magazines and newspapers by providing new electronic life other than the internet. Plastic Logic, Amazon and Apple are planning to release their own versions of an e-reader roughly the size of a standard sheet of paper (Stone). This would provide news enthusiasts an alternative to searching a website for breaking news or receiving information via text messages and alerts on their cell phones. “These devices from Amazon and other manufacturers offer an almost irresistible proposition to newspaper and magazine industries. They would allow publishers to save millions on the cost of printing and distributing their publications, at precisely a time when their businesses are under historic levels of pressure (Stone).” Although glossy magazine companies, like Condé Nast, may wait for the color editions. Tom Wallace, the editorial director of Condé Nast, stated, “I don’t think we would be anywhere near as excited about anything in black and white as we would about high-definition color... But technology changes at a pretty high clip these days, and if we are now in the Farmer Gray days, it will be only a very short while until we are in the video game era (Stone).”

One of the major problems facing periodicals and magazines is the lack of advertising dollars. Because the e-reader services are subscriber based, companies can gather better demographic information to entice media advertisers. “Publishers could possibly use these new mobile reading devices to hit the reset button and return in some form to their original business model: selling subscriptions, and supporting their articles with ads (Stone).” If online advertising can be changed from intrusive pop-ups on screens (like the ones that cover the entire screen, forcing the unsuspecting viewer to search for the close button) to informing consumers about

quality products to better their lives, then people would not mind receiving advertisements tailored to their needs and tastes.

E-readers will become more advanced as time goes on and could revolutionize the academic world if students could read, annotate, and highlight textbooks. As mentioned earlier, Kindle 2 users need to purchase an estimated 40 books to see a cost savings over physical books. Students purchase dozens of books and would ultimately benefit from carrying a small device compared to several textbooks at a time (Darlin). In addition, students are receiving laptops for academic purposes in some states. Even if they were able to get textbooks in electronic form, laptops can be heavy and awkward to carry around. If e-readers could sync to the laptops like the Kindle 2 can sync to the iPhone, students can take their textbooks wherever they go and still have the same information on their laptops to search through when needed. Although funds may be scarce for education, student loans, grants, and scholarships would cover this device for academic use.

#### 4.1.3 Won't Replace Traditional Presses

While the current generation of traditional booklovers are still around, the death knell will not toll for traditional presses. There is still too much wanting in technology to satisfy habits that have been ingrained for thousands of years. Or in a conventional sense, to reproduce all types of print in high quality and at cost effective prices. Beautiful coffee table books have yet to be created cheaply. In addition, there is a wide variety of specialty books with die cuts, pop ups, and other hard to create qualities that would not fare well in POD or as an e-book (Bluemle). For instance, could anyone imagine reading Dr. Seuss on a gray-scale, pixilated screen? Or trusting a toddler with a device that was bought for over \$300?

Another factor that makes printed paper a benefit over electronic paper is the fact that sharing e-books is not possible. If a fan wants to let a friend borrow a book, all she has to do is hand it to him and neither has to pay a fee. In contrast, electronic files can only be downloaded to the e-reader device and other devices synced with it, but each recipient application needs to be included under the owner's account. So like with iTunes, files can only be distributed to people who know the account password. This needs to change if authors and publishers want to acquire new fans. One option for publishers may be to allow e-reader users to share the first chapter with friends so they may decide whether they like it. Another option would be the ability to share with one non-account user for an additional fee. So fans who enjoy sharing books among their friends can still enjoy electronically the flexibility that physical books have brought for years.

The possibilities are only as limited as the imagination and, for the time being, technology allow. Technology is about making lives easier; yet, what can be simpler than ink on paper? Pens or highlighters can be used to mark key passages, dog-eared pages remind readers where they left off or where they'd like to return, and holding a book is a tactile experience that is rivaled by none. The smell of the paper, the feel of the cover, the memories that are invoked by doing the same process time and again will never die. And if anyone has had a computer crash and lost valuable information, printed information can survive through hundreds and thousands of years.

Considering the technology that was used at the beginning of the 1900s, it is difficult to find working devices to play movies on reels and records on players; however, books and other documents can still be read from this era. In turn, some of the shelf lives of some storage devices, like Ataris, 8-tracks, tapes, VHS, floppy disks, 3.5" diskettes, etc., are limited and many of them are obsolete. As of now, printed paper is the best documentation for historical purposes.



Peter Hite, President of Media Management Services, a consulting firm in Houston, TX, says, "To save a digital file for, let's say, a hundred years is going to take a lot of work." Because not even the experts have figured out how to preserve electronic materials for the next decade, let alone a century (Hafner). In addition, once a CD is scratched or a file becomes corrupted, it becomes unusable. "It is a global problem for the biggest governments and the biggest corporations all the way down to individuals," said Ken Thibodeau, Director for the Electronic Records Archives Program at the National Archives and Records Administration (Hafner). While the current technology works for now, Publishing needs to consider its limitations regarding long term storage.

## 5.1 Conclusion

### 5.1.1 Applying Concepts

Even as companies are trying to mass produce and mass appeal content, the United States is moving toward a more individually catered, self-sufficient purchasing model. Customers have become more self-reliant and people want to tell retailers what they want as opposed to retailers telling consumers what they should buy. Amazon understands this and this understanding has contributed to its success. Jeff Bezos is about bettering the customer experience, so anything he can do he does and in a profit-driven way (Besos and Anderson). For instance, in order to provide customer savings on shipping, Amazon requires a purchase of at least \$25 so it can bundle products together rather than shipping them separately. Not only does this save the customer money on shipping, but forces them to spend more money than they would have initially at Amazon. Another strategy is to show customers what people similar to them purchased or what Amazon recommends for them based on their previous purchases. These suggestions personalize a customer's experience and introduce products that he may not have

considered previously. In addition, the products are included in an email to the customer and upon log in to Amazon.com, so it becomes an automated part of her life. This overall business strategy coincides with today's consumers' desires of personalization because it's tailored to their needs and is non-intrusive.

How can book publishing simulate Amazon's customer strategy? In Joni Evan's words: "Publishers need to stop behaving like venture capitalists (running away the first week the book doesn't sell ) and really stick with the books and authors over the long haul (Andrianni, "Joni Evans On 'What's Next' in Publishing")." The general public does not have favorite imprints, but they do have favorite authors or favorite books. By sticking with authors who are self-promoters or who generate a lot of buzz within the house, publishers can market and brand quality work. It is rare for authors to be best sellers on their debut title, so by investing in them like products publishers can reap long term profits. Everything prior to the book's release is funded by the company and only does it (hopefully) earn back its expenses if the book does reasonably well. Yes, it can be difficult to predict best sellers, but if a title and author are promoted like a best friend recommended them, with sincere concern for a reader's tastes, then publishers could continue to reinvest profits in household names.

Stina Forsell, founder of Maximus Books, a bargain book retailer in Tannersville, PA, related a key piece of advise from her mentor, Albert Haug of Book Club of America, "[He] taught me not to buy something I couldn't sell... (Rosen)." This seems so obvious; however, many editors try to catch up with trends and sometimes purchase titles that they cannot avidly promote. Editors should hold fast to this idea – if they don't think that there is an audience for it, they won't acquire it. POD and e-ink/e-books have allowed more self-publishers to print their books exactly to their specifications. If an author takes the necessary precautions to ensure a

quality product, she can then promote herself and reap the benefits. For instance, after receiving seventy rejection letters, Laurie Notaro, author of *The Idiot Girls' Action-Adventure Club*, paid \$99 in 2002 to publish on her own (Taub). Several months later, she accepted a six-figure sum from Random House for her book and the concept for a new one.

Another way that authors have been self-promoting is reminiscent to Charles Dickens' serials - they release one chapter at a time in order to grow demand. Scott Sigler used this exact approach when promoting his books, *Earth Core*, *Ancestor* and *Infected* (Gomez, Powazek, Hanley, and Sigler). He explained that releasing chapters through podcasts he was able to increase awareness of his work and promote his book, *Ancestor*, to number seven on Amazon.com. All of this was done prior to him receiving a "major" publishing contract.

E-Reads has also benefited from this practice. When talking about a serial based on the Obama campaign during the primaries, Curtis claimed, "We've just had a ball doing it, and it's drawn a good deal of traffic. We're hoping a general publisher will want to extend the story [through] the general election, but we're ready to publish the book as it is (Teicher)." The book by Carla Dickens was published in August 2008 and is currently sold on Amazon.com. Smart businesspeople can use this model to market new authors or books. Given the current fascination with reality TV and blogs based on people's own experiences, perhaps serials can be created by lengthening blog posts.

### 5.1.2 Summary

POD and e-ink offer valuable time and cost savings while broadening the audience of books. For the technologically savvy, e-readers made possible by e-ink provide a sleek, compact, and easy-to-use device to help them read multiple books on the go. And with the rise of hard-to-find out-of-print and public domain titles being reprinted with POD, new generations of readers

can be exposed to forgotten or obscure writers. These technologies also promote each other: if someone happens to read an e-book and would like a hardcopy, she can get it readily or if someone wants a title for her e-reader for easy transport, she will most likely be able to order it in minutes. And without the economical use of off-set printing, how would the demand be filled for the new James Patterson or Nora Roberts? Or specialty print runs for children's board books?

With an uprising of self-publishers and specialty presses who have found an economical way to do small print runs with no necessary inventory space, competition for readers' time is greatly increased. And other books are not the only competitors; Americans leisure time is becoming increasingly limited. Currently, e-readers are making it easier for busy people to fit in reading time. They promote convenience and avid readers are able to benefit from having hundreds of thousands of books at their fingertips. Rather than having to plan to bring a newly released hardcover with them on the subway, they can simply keep their e-reader in their suitcase, briefcase, purse, etc. And with the low battery consumption provided by e-ink technology these commuters do not need to worry about charging the batteries for several uses.

### 5.1.3 Thesis Statement

As discussed, despite the benefits of the new technologies, POD and e-ink, traditional off set printing will continue to be needed to accommodate large print runs and specialty book specifications. As time progresses and technology develops further, more research will need to be done to evaluate traditional printing's value to the publishing industry. Currently, all three methods, POD, e-books, and off set printing, are valuable and compliment each other. If one was to be eliminated, authors, publishers, and readers would suffer.

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