Alternative Futures for what we currently call Publishing

Introduction

– Jerome Martin

Several years ago a speaker at a publishing conference in Banff proclaimed that the idea of anyone reading a book on a screen was ludicrous and that there would never be any interest or opportunity in creating e-books.

Friends at social gatherings continue to tell me that they would never read a book on a screen and that there is nothing like sitting in front of a crackling fire, with a book and a glass of fine wine.

Fellow travellers on Air Canada now read from iPads, Kobo readers, and Kindles; others enjoy their paper books. They and other readers now have choices with respect to what they read and how they read it.

Publishers – people or firms who create books or other products from material provided by authors – are unsure of the present and the future. Some are excited about the new opportunities and have been producing e-books of various types for several years; others are terrified at the possibility of being something other than a producer of paper books, some of which come out in the spring and some which are produced for the fall market.

This book resulted from an idea that was discussed at a board meeting of the Book Publishers Association of Alberta. We later received funding from the Alberta Ministry of Culture and Community Services for the project.

We brought talented people together for two days at The Enjoy Centre in St. Albert with an assignment of 'Write what you would like to write on the topic of Alternative Futures For What We Currently Call Publishing, then discuss your work and that of others in a two day retreat at the fabulous Enjoy Centre in St. Albert and we'll create a book.'

We formatted the e-book based on the chapters we received, most of which contained links and video, then circulated the chapters prior to the symposium. As I expected, each chapter was unique, but there were distinct threads and common ideas connecting the chapters.

One of the great pleasures of this event was working with Todd Anderson (Henday Publishing), Jessica Legacy, (University of Alberta and Henday Publishing) Mark Lefebvre (Kobo and Stark Consulting), Donna Livingstone (University of Calgary Press, Paul Martin (MacEwan University), and Kirby Wright (KRW Knowledge Resources).

The process was as important as the product: we shared ideas, discussed new technology and applications, and agreed on some common approaches. The process goes on as we complete the book and make it available to people who will be interested in our discussions.

I hope that you enjoy participating in this book (I could say reading but there is more to this publication than words). We would appreciate your comments and ideas (info@bookpublishers.ab.ca). The book is available at no cost at www.bookpublishers.ab.ca

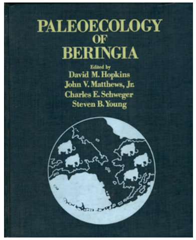
Special thanks to Kieran LeBlanc, Michael McLaughlin, Lu Ziola, and Melanie Eastley for their help in organizing the event and creating the book, to Merle Martin for her editing assistance,and to the Government of Alberta Ministry of Culture and Community Services (through the Alberta Media Development Fund) and the Book Publishers Association of Alberta for funding this project.

Background of Alternative Futures

We are here because of a photography course which I took in January, 1972. This class changed my life in many ways. One of those ways was the people I met, people who became fine photographers as well as professionals in a variety of fields. One of those was Charles Schweger, an anthropologist and photographer.

Charlie was interested in the work that I was doing in agriculture and how it related to work that he was doing at the University of Alberta.

In 1979 I was invited by Charlie and his colleagues to participate in a symposium in a castle called Burg Wartenstein in the Austrian Alps. This twelfth-century castle was owned and operated by the Wenner-Gren Foundation and used to host various symposia. Our symposium, Paleoecology of the Arctic-Steppe Biome, was a great intellectual and social experience, involving scientists and scholars from Europe and North America.



The purpose of the conference was to circulate book chapters, discuss them and create a book about the reasons that large mammals perished in the far north during the Pleistocene Period.

The Wenner-Gren Foundation describes their model for such events on their website.

> Years of experimenting with format and scale led to the emergence of a "Burg Wartenstein model," built on the concept of small, interdisciplinary groups and intense interaction. Organizers worked hand-in-hand with the Foundation's president to develop an idea, decide on the list of participants, and create the final program – a true collaboration that typically spanned 18-24 months.
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> Symposia at the castle were usually week-long affairs, bringing together about 20 scholars with expertise in a topic selected for originality and promise of progress. Presentations were informal, pre-circulated papers were summarized but not read, and maximum time was spent discussing the cross-cutting issues that emerged.
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> Through shared meals and social hours, participants had ample opportunity to build new friendships and new collaborations.
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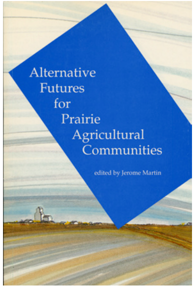
> In the two decades of conferences at Burg Wartenstein, the Foundation hosted more than 2,000 scholars at 86 symposia held

during the summer months. During these years, Wenner-Gren also organized and supported major conferences and experimental workshops in the United States and abroad, but the castle was the heart of the symposium program.

Our papers were written and circulated to the other authors prior to the symposium. Travel arrangements were made by the Foundation, and meals and social activities were provided by staff at Burg Wartenstein. We spent a week discussing papers, debating, arguing – and learning how to yodel.

The book that resulted from this symposium (*Paleoecology of Beringia*) was published in 1983 by Academic Press.



Alternative Futures for Prairie Agricultural Communities

In 1990 my colleague Lu Ziola and I used the Wenner-Gren model as the basis for our Alternative Futures for Prairie Agricultural Communities project. We had an idea, and a $10,000 grant. Our first objective was to choose the participants, many of whom were unsure of what we wanted and why we were including them.

Our symposium included two evening sessions and two days of meetings at the Banff Centre.

We invited a diverse group of speakers: Charles Schweger, an anthropologist; Lorna Crozier, a poet; Ed Tyrchniewicz, Dean of Agriculture; University of Alberta; Norah Keating, a family gerontologist at the University of Alberta; Brett Fairbairn, an academic with expertise in the prairie co-op movement; Walter Archer and Bert Einsiedel, professors from the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta; Stuart Hill, an expert in and a proponent of sustainable agriculture; Don and Norma Connick, farmers from Saskatchewan; Joe Couture; a respected elder, cultural advisor, educator, academic and psychologist; and Noel McNaughton, an agricultural journalist and specialist in holistic management.

Apple loaned us $30K worth of computers and other equipment for this event, while the Banff Centre offered us the use of what was then a very early version of the internet.

Each author presented his or her chapters, then responded to questions. Discussions on individual chapters resulted in changes which were given to Lu at the end of the day's discussions. She made the changes to the chapters in the evenings.

Norah Keating had to be in New Zealand at the time of the sessions. We discussed her chapter on the first day, made suggestions and asked questions. Lu sent her the questions and queries in the evening. That seems quite elementary now, but in 1991 it was unheard of, at least in our circles. What was even more amazing was that by the following morning Norah had responded with changes to her chapters and responses to the queries; Lu made those changes to her chapter in Banff that day.

Lu also typed notes about the discussion, and we recorded the discussion on audio cassettes.

I had hoped that we could leave Banff with a completed manuscript (with the exception of my summary chapter), but several of the authors wanted to make changes after the sessions. However, we walked to the printers on campus thirty days later and presented them with a floppy disk which contained the manuscript. The book was printed shortly after we delivered the disk. It and the CKUA radio program based on the book were well received by rural people, government extension workers, and academics.

The book which resulted from the Wenner-Gren sessions was also published three years after the event, a rather normal session to publishing date interval for academic books then – and now.

DIY Publishing –
All the rules are different

– Kirby Wright

My career as a publisher began in 1987. Given that I have used the words career and publisher the previous sentence requires a bit more explanation. Equipped with an Apple Macintosh Plus computer, a new 300 dpi LaserWriter Plus printer featuring Postscript technology and Aldus Pagemaker desktop publishing software, I was part of a team that launched a small consulting company. As a service, consulting produces primarily intangible outputs. The ability to create high quality printed products – moving from intangible to tangible – provides an important means to differentiate a business.

After our team moved beyond creating products featuring so many fonts, styles and sizes that they could be confused as ransom notes, we became proficient in creating really high quality publications. Our ability to impress clients with reports, documents and publications of the highest design and print quality allowed us to develop a reputation for doing top quality work. The ability to self-publish enabled us to improve our turnaround time, dramatically lower our costs and produce work of the highest quality.

Does being a consultant who used low cost desktop publishing technology to produce more attractive and professional looking documents equate to a "career" as a "publisher"? Perhaps not; however my premise in this paper is that the ability to engage in creative self-expression – the do-it-yourself (DIY) publishing movement that was first stimulated by the launch of the Mac, laser printer and Pagemaker – represents an important disruptive factor in the world of publishing.

In this paper, I propose to explore the rapidly growing world of self-publishing. Using a model called Disruptive Innovation, developed by Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen, I will identify how five disruptive forces supporting self-publishing presents a challenge to existing mainstream publishing practices. Further, using the concept of a value chain, a set of activities that are required to move a product or service from creation to customer, I will identify a number of opportunities to support the growing self-publishing movement.

Ask a simple question

Sometimes when you wish to explore a complex issue you need to step back and ask a simple question. To understand the future of publishing it may be useful to examine why we publish.

Why publish? At its essence publishing is a form of communication. The classic communication model features at least two individuals or parties (the creator and receiver) and a message. Publishing, as a communications process, involves each of these components.

For the creator, the ability to publish provides a vehicle for creative self-expression – the opportunity to articulate and represent to others our values, insights, experiences and ideas. Stories, narratives and artistic works facilitate the transition from tacit thoughts to creating and sharing explicit messages. For the receiver the benefits of publishing lie in the ability to become more informed, learn, gain exposure to novel ideas, become engaged with ideas and be entertained.

Communication, through publishing, links back to our inherent interest in stories and storytelling. For humans, stories are elemental. They provide the means by which people connect with one another. They facilitate meaning making and help us to better understand our complex world. Our books, arts, music and words all provide powerful ways to create and share stories.

The answer to the question why is that publishing supports a basic human desire to express ideas and stories as well as receive them. Through this rich interchange we stimulate dialogue, learning and the sharing of ideas.

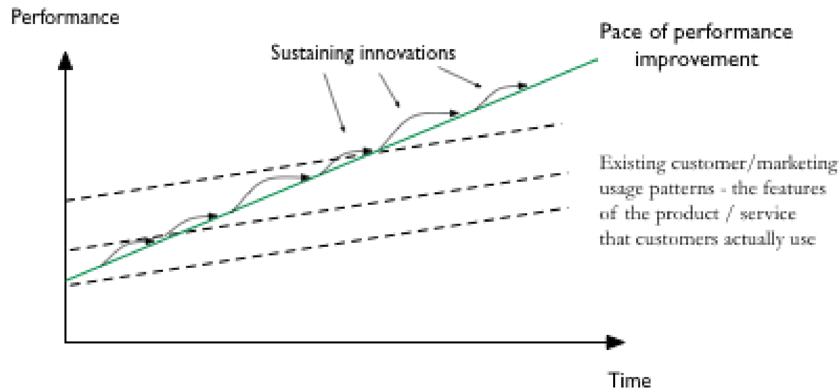
Nowhere in this short discussion is there any reference to the business of publishing. One could argue that we have always published and the business of publishing represents a fairly recent activity.

So we tend to focus on the life, and potential death, of the industry we call publishing because it is immediate and part of our recent experience and habits. But it may be more important to refocus on the question "why" and from that consider whether there are other ways that can be used to support the interest in engaging in creative expression. Perhaps the truest form of publishing has always been about self-publishing and self-expression. The emergence of a dominant and controlling publishing industry may have once served a useful purpose but in many ways theses value-added services have been rendered less important.

The Power of Disruption

Early in his career, Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen observed that many leading firms, all well managed, failed in the marketplace. There appeared to be a series of recurring patterns.

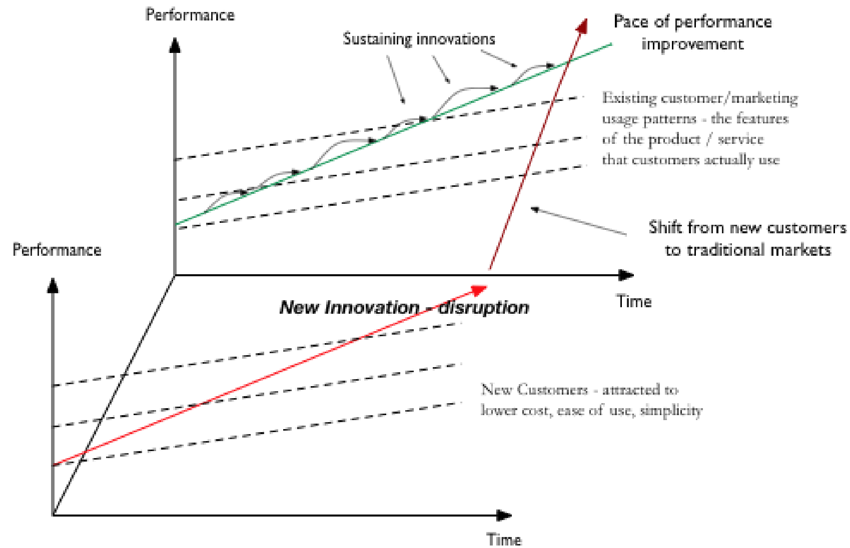
Christensen found that dominant companies focused their attention on meeting the needs of their existing customers. Serving existing customers, especially the most profitable segments had made these firms successful. These leading firms engaged in, what Christensen termed, sustaining innovation.



We tend to examine market changes simplistically. There is a tendency to critique the previous dominant companies as being complacent and resistant to change. However, Christensen in his research found that leading companies did not rest on their laurels. They engaged in frequent improvements and innovations. However, for the most part the changes they introduced sought to maintain or sustain present offerings as a way to increase the performance for existing customers. Changes could be minor and incremental or could be more substantive; the common feature was the focus on serving existing customers.

However as they grew, the leading firms appeared to lose the ability to respond to new market changes. As they served their existing customers they were no longer able to be nimble and responsive. Often new technologies and new business models enabled upstarts to disrupt the status quo.

Christensen found that, frequently, these disruptive upstarts used a unique approach. Rather than directly competing with the established players and their customers, disruptors focused on serving customers who were marginal (i.e., less profitable) or non-consumers by offering products and services that were simpler, of lower quality, containing fewer features but at a significantly lower price.



Once disruptors had established a market foothold, outside of the market space dominated by the powerful incumbents, they moved upmarket and began to systematically compete for core customers in established markets. The chilling news for well-entrenched companies; in most cases, the disruptors win.

Christensen also noticed that it is very difficult for existing market leaders to engage in disruptive activities. The prevailing mindset, business practices and profit models create strong systemic disincentives for disruptive initiatives. At the same time, many disruptions fail; trying to enter new markets is always highly risky. Many firms may try disruptive approaches; few succeed and it is very hard to pick the winners at an early stage.

It was Joseph Schumpter who popularized the concept of creative destruction, the idea that new developments emerged to dramatically change previous structures including economic systems, industries and companies. Christensen's concept builds on these principles. It is important to remember that disruption is not pretty. There are clear winners and losers. The word "disruption" has been selected purposefully as it represents the upheaval and uncertainty that occurs.

As well, early stage disruptive products and services are often crude and underdeveloped. However, as they become more refined, they begin to aggressively compete with existing offerings. They contribute to dramatic changes, often destructive, of previously successful entities. Creative destruction and disruption can be viewed as part of the lifecycle of any product or industry. For those directly involved the experience is often much more stressful.

To illustrate how a disruptive model works, consider the following example from outside of the world of publishing.

Snapshots in time

There was a time, not that long ago when taking a photograph involved a very different process. Building on technologies first invented in the early nineteenth century photography evolved around the camera and film. If we look back ten to twenty years on film-based photography we can observe a very mature and advanced marketplace. It was populated by innovative and competitive camera and accessary manufacturers as well as film companies. There were distinct market segments ranging from high end professionals and consumers down to point and click users who wanted to take pictures of their family around social events. It is important to emphasize that the world of photography was innovative and responsive to changing conditions. These changes were sustaining innovations; film and camera companies focused on serving their existing customer markets. In doing so they were leaders in their field.

Digital cameras, when first introduced, were not a surprise. Film producers, including Kodak, had worked with digital imagery. Initially, the first digital cameras did not cause much of a ripple in a mature, competitive industry. In particular, high end photographers could not have used early versions of digital cameras even if they had wanted to. They simply did not offer the same quality and features.

Digital cameras were first marketed to purchasers who valued the ease-of-use and simplicity of the products. Many were non-consumers; they did not use film-based cameras because they found them inconvenient to use. Film companies had recognized the unique needs of these non-consumers. They had invented film cartridges, where users simply had to drop a container into a camera body. Later they produced single-use cameras; after the single roll of film was finished the users sent the complete camera for processing. It was the additional processing stage that discouraged the non-consumers; they simply did not want the additional effort and cost.

For these non-consumers who first purchased digital cameras, the quality of the digital image was a secondary concern. They did not have to worry about putting film into a camera, taking the finished film to a store for processing and, as so often happens, keeping the finished images in the very same envelop that had been provided by the film processor. The ability to take and save digital images offered the ease-of-use they had been looking for.

Once introduced, digital cameras moved up-scale. Over a very short period of time, digital cameras were competing with even the highest end products. Of interest, the first official presidential portrait made using a digital camera was for President Obama in 2009. When digital has come to replace traditional photography for even the most demanding professional users, it is clear that the disruptor has replaced the incumbent.

In most situations, when disruptors transform existing markets, the results are devastating for the entrenched players. The photography industry is somewhat unique. Many of the camera producers – Nikon, Canon, Olympus, etc. – succeeded in making the transition from film-based to digital products. However, the film producers had more difficulties. Kodak, the dominant film provider is no longer one of the largest and most profitable companies in the U.S. In 2010, it was removed from the S&P 500 Index. In 2011, its stock dropped to an all time low of 54 cents a share. In comparison, in 1962, its stock market price was $111.25. In early 2012, it declared bankruptcy. Kodak, long admired as one of the best corporations had become a case study on the implications of disruptive innovation.

Publishing Disruptions

While some disruptions involve single technologies or forces, in other situations companies and entire industries are buffeted by a number of elements over a short period of time. In the case of publishing, more precisely the publishing industry consisting of newspapers, magazines and books, we have seen a series of disruptive forces that have redefined and are continuing to redefine the industry. One of the challenges we face when looking at disruptive innovations is predicting what the end state will look like. While in the midst of these transformational changes it is possible to observe the magnitude of the change and identify some of the forces that are influencing these changes. However it is very hard to definitively predict outcomes.

The challenges facing the publishing industry are well documented and include shifts in advertising allocations, the emergence of on-line classifieds, shifting consumption patterns, media consolidation, the blending of print and electronic delivery, the growth of new retailing entities (big box stores) and, perhaps most significantly, the impact of on-line retailers. In addition, the rise of self-publishing presents a novel challenge to the publishing industry.

Next, I will discuss five converging sources of disruption that are providing unique opportunities for self-publishing and in doing so are part of the larger environment that will challenge mainstream publishing. Individually, each is transforming existing practices; taken together, they are creating heightened volatility and disruption.

From books to apps

As described by Niall Ferguson in *Civilization: The West and The Rest* (2011), the invention of the mobile type printing press was the "single most important technological innovation of the period before the Industrial revolution" (60). Gutenberg invented the first press (an earlier version had been developed in China but it had never been fully utilized) but it was far too powerful a technology to be monopolized.

Ferguson notes that "within a few years of his initial breakthrough in Mainz (Germany) presses had been established by imitators" (61) throughout Europe. In less than 50 years there were over 200 presses in Germany alone and many more across the continent. Hundreds of thousands of copies of various documents were in circulation. No longer could ideas and knowledge be hoarded by the educated and powerful.

To this day Gutenberg's invention and the printed book serves us well. Few other technologies have been developed that can as effectively and efficiently capture and disseminate information and ideas. As well, the printed book has demonstrated the capacity to withstand the test of time. Copies of Gutenberg's first books can still be found.

Yet, we are witnessing a significant shift. The limits of the book are becoming more obvious as we are able to engage in media-rich information consumption activities. Tim O'Reilly, head of O'Reilly Publishing argues that for many categories the app is going to replace the book. While paper-based books will always exist, O'Reilly noted that apps are a real reinvention. Consider the example of a birding guide book. On paper, the reader is limited to text-based descriptions and pictures. An app can add sound clips, videos, geolocation assistance and even the ability to take pictures of actual observations.

When we think of an app versus a book, what are the features that will make a difference? Rather than consider this a technological question it is more a question of design. Technology serves as an enabler but before tools can be used to good effect it is vital to understand what users want in a book.

In 2010, IDEO, the California-based design consultancy, engaged in a scenario exercise to explore the future of the book. (www.ideo.com/work/future-of-the-book) They used a design process to examine emerging possibilities and different user experiences. In their scenarios the designers felt the need to move beyond the limitations of paper-based products in order to create enhanced offerings. Blogger Willem Van Lancker (www.core77.com/blog/technology/ideos_future_of_the_book_17449.asp) describes the various scenarios.

- The first experience, named Nelson, reinforces the book as a critical thinking tool but added the ability to explore issues from multiple perspectives. Nelson incorporated current conversations and references into the presentation. The layers of information look beyond the book itself and provide additional context and more in-depth examination of issues and ideas. Each time a user identifies an issue Nelson aggregates key resources to provide comprehensive coverage.
- The second experience, named Coupland, addresses the challenge to stay on top of the thinking and writing in our world and professionals. Readers are able to keep up with must-reads and follow what other colleagues are reading. Readers can interact with other readers through virtual book clubs through discussions, suggestions and recommendations. Coupland allows sharing and learning. It enables professionals to keep up to date and current.
- The third experience, Alice, explored new ways for users to interact and engage in written narratives by introducing non-linear and game mechanics to reading. By introducing the reader's active participation, Alice blurs the lines between reality and fiction. Certain interactions allow the reader to transcend traditional media by utilizing geographic location, communication with characters and user contribution to storyline and plot.

Each of these scenarios is possible in the near future. However, more important the scenarios are the conversations we can have about what is possible. It is clear that the features that can be embedded in digital products – apps – can transform our interactions with these products. The paper-based book's limitations become clearer when compared to the possibilities offered by these apps.

Moving from scenarios to reality, two recent examples highlight the shift from books to apps.

- Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth* first introduced the concept of climate change to many people. His latest publication is more than a book. In *Our Choice: a plan to solve the climate crisis*, Gore proposes to change the way that we experience books. His team has created an interactive app. The content examines the causes of global warming and presents insights and possible solutions. The app blends narrative with photography, interactive graphics, animations and documentary footage. The multi-touch interface allows readers to experience content seamlessly.
- The artist Bjork has created the "first app album" *Biophilia*. In addition to releasing a standard CD, Bjork created a series of apps that includes music, live shows and imagery. Users can interact with the songs in unique ways. More than traditional music videos, Bjork has ensured that sound, imagery and words are integrated.

Technology and networks allow us to redefine the book in disruptive ways. Gutenberg's revolution has been eclipsed and we are at a point of transformation.

The quest for personal creative expression

We are witnessing an explosion of interest in creative expression. Think about these numbers. Over 200,000 YouTube videos were uploaded today and three billion videos were viewed. Today, 37 million blog posts were created on Tumblr, a popular blogging platform. There are 28 million bloggers on Tumblr and the platform is but one of many different blogging products. Today, at least 50 million tweets were generated as well as 60 million Facebook updates. Flickr, the popular photo sharing site, received well over 3000 new photographs per minute. Over 6 billion photographs, created by mostly non-professionals, are housed on the site.

In terms of books, it is estimated that there were almost 900 thousand self-published books created last year. For music, independent musicians, using ubiquitous tools such as Garageband are constantly creating and sharing their work around the world. In software, developers have designed and created well over 600,000 apps. Many of these have been created by independent developers or very small software development shops. Over 300 new apps are submitted each day to the Apple App store. Similar numbers are being developed for other mobile platforms.

Songs, videos, pictures, stories, editorials, books, applications – these are all examples of personal creative expression. There is a sense of unbounded passion and energy that exists in the world of publishing.

Ubiquitous tools

The explosion in personal creativity is driven by many factors. One of the most important is the easy access to powerful tools and technologies. Steve Jobs, during his 2011 iPad2 launch presentation, commented, "it's in Apple's DNA that technology alone is not enough. It's technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities that yields us the results that makes our hearts sing." Apple, followed by other technology companies, offers creative people the tools that they need to engage in creative self-expression.

We are in the midst of a profound technological transformation. To understand the scope of this change, take a trip on local transit to a local university in any city. As you watch the subway car empty on campus and see hundreds of students pick up their backpacks and quickly exit to go to their classes, it is quite remarkable to think that virtually every one of them is carrying a complete and sophisticated self-publishing studio with them. If this was a group of fine arts or design students the idea of taking powerful creative and publishing tools with them would not be as notable, however this group of students are as likely to be in faculties of engineering, nursing, business, law, arts or sciences. Their laptop computers provide access to publishing tools that are easy-to-use, cheap and powerful. What we now take for granted is, in fact a profound shift. These free or nearly-free tools were, until very recently, not available or only used by professionals or businesses that could afford the significant technology and software costs that these technologies required.

Products such as GarageBand, Pages, iBook Author, InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, iMovie, Final Cut Pro, Keynote, the list goes on – all of these products now provide users, from novices to professionals with full suites of creative and publishing technologies. One can debate the ability of neophytes to create high quality products but what is now clear is that access to creative technologies is ubiquitous.

Moving towards free

There is a powerful shift, which is unevenly distributed, in the economic model of publishing. To illustrate it is useful to look outside at the world of software. In 2011, Microsoft priced its standard version of its Office suite at $469. The list price for Adobe Photoshop was $699. While these two packages are the software juggernauts in the business world, they are increasingly competing against a very different offering. For example, OpenOffice is a business productivity suite that is freely available as an open source download. Similarly a range of free open source image editing packages are widely available. A Mac-based product, Pixelmator, offers a powerful competitor to Photoshop for $29.99. In early 2012, Apple announced iBooks Author, an easy-to-use yet powerful software package that allowed users to create media rich publications and textbooks. Cost: free. As well, one of the distinguishing impacts of apps on mobile devices is the dramatic reduction in the cost of software applications.

As with software, in creative publishing there is a move from premium pricing to low cost or free. There has been a shift from business models that ensured that publishers (in all creative fields) carefully controlled distribution, pricing and access to models that include low cost or open source as well as piracy. The result is a radically different business and pricing model that is dramatically changing all parts of the publishing industry.

Music publishing was the first to be blindsided by the shift. The ability to digitally share music created a massive piracy problem. Studios attempted to develop digital locks and to aggressively pursue legal remedies. It was the introduction of Apple iTunes music store that offered the music industry an option. By offering individual songs for 99 cents, consumers were able to legally purchase music at reasonable costs. But the shift from $20 albums to individual songs for 99 cents represents a fundamental restructuring of the perception of value and price.

We are seeing similar shifts in pricing for television shows and movies. For example, for those who are captivated by the HBO series *Downton Abbey*, all nine shows of the second season can be purchased (ownership as opposed to rental) for $14.99. A high quality television drama, available to watch at any time the user wants for as many times as the user wants, can be accessed for slightly more than $1.50 per episode.

Price comparisons for television are more difficult. It is only with on-line distribution that we are able to access these offerings at all. However, if one were to have asked a television producer a decade or even five years ago if they felt that their shows would be sold at $1.50 per episode I suspect that they would have found the question humorous.

For books, consider *Gray's Anatomy* (not the the television show!) Amazon offers the popular university-level anatomy text for a discounted price of $214.35. A version of the book, available for the iPad, is priced at $4.99. While the iPad version is not as fully featured as the traditional text, the price difference is not just dramatic but raises questions about the valuation of publications.

The real challenge on the creative side is that production costs are no longer key determinants. In most cases businesses try to determine pricing based on an assessment of production costs to which they add marketing and administrative expenses as well as a desired profit margin. Increasingly, publishing has become price, as opposed to cost, sensitive.

Channel confusion

Think for a moment about how you purchase and consume creative products and services today versus fifteen years ago. Fifteen years ago, you went to a movie at a theatre. You listened to music on the radio, at concerts or by purchasing an album (usually from a physical retailer). Your books were bought at a local bookstore or from the new big box retailers or borrowed from the library. You watched television shows although the power of the networks had already been diminished by the influence of multiple cable channels.

Fast forward to today and many of these purchasing and consumption patterns have been dramatically altered. In all cases, the internet has emerged as a dominant player. We can purchase or access online from multiple sources, including free and through piracy. We expect to be able to switch between devices seamlessly, sometimes in the midst of consumption – a television show may be viewed on your television, PC, laptop or mobile device.

Further, this is not an example of "or" but of "and" – we expect to be able to purchase and consume in many different ways. It is still possible to view a movie at a theatre as well as through your television and computer. For businesses, the need to support multiple platforms is both an opportunity and a challenge. In all cases, new consumer preferences fundamentally challenge the infamous "four P's of marketing" – product, price, promotion and place.

Exploring a new future?

Five forces. As noted, understanding disruptive innovation is not an exact science. Retrospectively it is possible to examine the many variables and factors that converged to fundamentally transform an industry and market, but in the midst of the disruption it is impossible to fully understand the complex system that is in place. That said, it is easy to argue that the publishing industry is in a state of flux and transformation. Self-publishing is but one facet of this transformation.

As enablers these five forces – from books to apps; the quest for personal creative expression; the availability of ubiquitous tools; moving towards free and channel confusion – are not only challenging the entrenched forces of the publishing industry but creating new exciting opportunities for the emergence of a self-publishing industry.

Independent creative people equipped with easy to use, yet powerful tools developing innovative media-rich products – more like apps than traditional books – offered through networks and virtual retailers sold at a very low cost.

Is this the future for publishing? Perhaps that is not the correct question. Rather, perhaps this is future for a growing number of energetic, DIY creative people who have been ignored or cannot access the services offered by traditional publishers?

To explore the implications of these opportunities it is useful to briefly examine the structure and essence of the existing publishing business model before examining how the world of self-publishing may emerge. The concept of value chains provides a means to conduct this examination.

Value Chains

The concept of value chains, first introduced by management professor Michael Porter in 1985, identifies a chain of activities that occur in an organization in order to create and deliver a product or service to a customer. Products pass through all activities of the chain. At each stage the product gains some value. While some organizations are designed to be vertically integrated, in essence performing all or most activities, many others establish relationships, including outsourcing various activities, with other entities. Within an industry the value chain expands to become a network.

The power of the intermediary

Publishing serves as a value-added intermediary and the value chain reflects this intermediary model. Over the past several hundred years, media and publishing have created some of the most powerful and profitable corporations. In a previous world of information scarcity and underdeveloped communication channels, publishers played a vital role. The function of an intermediary, particularly in situations where the intermediary can control key inputs and processes, provides a very strong and unique competitive position.

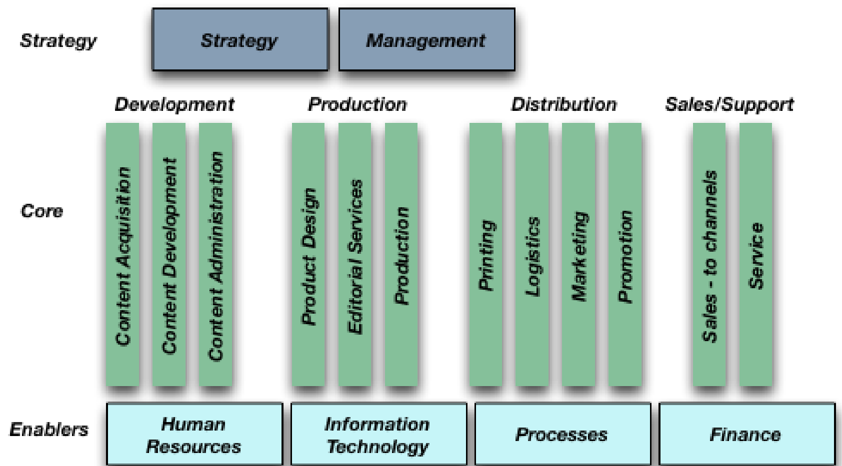
Intermediaries play many roles. In particular, they serve as gatekeepers, determining who is able to participate and what and how information and products are produced. They are well-positioned to add value and charge consumers for these efforts.

Intermediaries attempt to position themselves to control as many elements of the value chain as possible, even if they do not actually engage in the specific activities themselves. Power, and profits, shift to those who control the key elements of the chain. Companies will vigorously defend their ability to control the value chain.

When one reviews the generic publishing value chain presented in the attached diagram it is possible to identify the key ways that the publishing industry has positioned itself to add value. In the past, given their ability to control many of the elements of the chain, publishers could make significant investments in the early stage activities recognizing that their margins for the end product would cover their investments.

Most of the front end development activities are invisible to end users and publishers have always found it difficult to demonstrate the value of these activities. Similarly, while customers may understand the physical elements of production they often undervalue the time and cost required to effectively perform these activities. For the most part, the development and production phases are difficult to outsource to external third parties. Distribution, including the printing of the books, can be delivered by third parties under careful management and quality control processes.

Publishing Value Chain



As well, it is possible to identify many of the issues facing the present day industry by analyzing value chain elements. Many of the value-added activities that publishers previously controlled are now being challenged. As well, new entrants are actively competing to gain control of the value chain. For example, Amazon's recent move to interact directly with writers and offering many of the value added services that were viewed as exclusively within the domain the publishers is a direct attack on the intermediary role. Similarly, the ability of big box retailers to pressure publishers to absorb logistics and returns transfers overhead and inventory costs from the retailer to the publisher.

Not that long ago, the value chain offered a powerful competitive strategy. Publishers, especially larger conglomerates, created and protected their dominant positions. Their infrastructure, financial resources and established channels created strong barriers to entry. The role of the intermediary offered power and control.

The power of the individual

The value chain for self-publishing mirrors the formal publishing value chain. The difference is that the activities are performed by the individual rather than various departments in a larger publishing firm. (This comment acknowledges that in many smaller publishing houses an individual or small team would be responsible for many of these activities.)

Let's quickly work through the various value chain elements from the perspective of the self-publisher.

The front end development phase would be very different. Since self-publishers are also content creators the acquisition, development and administration function would disappear. The author is also the publisher – author relationships should be less contentious!

The production phase is more challenging. Many authors will assume responsibility for design, editing and production themselves. However, more experienced and insightful authors will recognize that these production components involve distinctive skills and expertise. One might consider the production phase as comprising value-added publishing services. The difficulty for many self-publishers is finding the money to pay other professionals to provide these services.

Distribution will also change. For most self-publishers their works will increasingly be digital products. Printing will no longer be necessary. The physical movement of products between printers, warehouses and retailers and back will no longer occur. Marketing and promotion will remain essential activities although new approaches will emerge.

Sales and support will still occur although in different forms. Most sales will occur through virtual retailers, such as Amazon and Apple. Support will be more closely integrated into marketing and promotional efforts.

Finally, self-publishers will need to develop effective planning and management practices. Strong small business practices will need to occur.

So the publishing value chain activities will remain but how these activities are performed will change. As one looks at the value chain from the perspective of the DIY publisher a number of challenges emerge include finding ways to access adequate seed capital to pay for development costs; gaining access to value added publishing professionals such as editors, designers and production activities and effectively marketing and promoting DIY publications.

Re-imagining publishing

What would a new publishing ecosystem – one that was organized to support a vibrant self-publishing world – look like?

Traditional publishing is in the midst of a profoundly disruptive period. Disruptions stimulate diversity. We can expect that within the publishing world we will see many new initiatives and business models. As well, disruption, at least in early stages, is often quite messy. It is easy to look at the refined products and services that emerge from disruptions but forget to include earlier, much more primitive versions. So, an industry in the midst of disruption looks chaotic and partially formed.

The first, obvious, characteristic of a DIY publishing industry is that individual authors, or small teams, will be a key element. For many, self-publishing will be a solitary, isolated practice. That said, we can anticipate that independent authors will seek out other authors. They may form writing cooperatives or vibrant communities of practice in order to share ideas and discuss their craft.

The second characteristic is that self-publishers will need to continue to perform most of the activities in the publishing value chain. Self-publishing involves much more than writing. In fact, the creative act may often be secondary to the many other activities that are involved in creating, producing, distributing, marketing and managing the publishing process. This, I suggest, presents the most significant challenge to self-publishers. Few individuals are able to master all of the necessary skills required to produce a high quality publication. Writing is different from editing which is different from design and production and all of these are quite different from the business and marketing side of the business.

The third characteristic is that self-publishing is uniquely positioned to benefit from the power of the internet. As the we move into a much more dynamic and social web experience we can see a number of initiatives and practices that could support the world of self-publishing.

It is possible to envision a new ecosystem supporting self-publishing. The power of networks and the web allow small independent actors to access services that were once reserved for larger, better funded corporations. Like my initial story of the consultant with the Mac, Laserwriter and Pagemaker, independent publishers can produce high quality work and look and feel like their larger publishing cousins.

The ecosystem needs to include a number of innovations that would support the unique needs of self-publishers. The following section describes five different ideas that could play an important role in supporting self-publishing.

Crowdfunding

One of the challenges in DIY publishing is to obtain sufficient seed capital for the development of the publication. Traditionally, publishers provided upfront financial support as well as in-house expertise in the form of editing, design and production. As we move from books to apps the initial developmental costs for publications will increase as creators integrate more rich media into their work.

For anyone who has been involved in DIY publishing or with small publishing firms they will immediately tell you that traditional financial sources are of little value. There are few banks or lenders who will even consider investing upfront on what, to them, is a speculative venture. Too often our imagination about potential sources of funding is pretty limited. So if not the banks, who? One approach that is emerging involves the concept of crowdfunding.

An example of the way that a small film project pursued funding and the platform that they worked through may have value for DIY publishers.

- Last year, Luisa Dantas wanted to tell the story of how people were rebuilding post-Katrina in New Orleans. She wanted others to understand the challenges of affordable housing, immigration, urban redevelopment and economic development. With a goal of raising $25,000 to support their *Land of Opportunity* documentary film they created a Kickstarter campaign to raise money. In the end Luisa raised over $28,000 from 236 backers in six weeks.

Kickstarter is an online crowdfunding website for creative projects including indie films, photography projects, music, travel journalism and books. Crowdfunding gathers monetary resources from the general public and supports projects that would be ignored by formal sources of investment.

Anyone can submit a Kickstarter project. To begin you create your own campaign and identify the concept, minimum amount to be raised and a project deadline. If the target amount is not raised by the deadline no funds are dispersed. Successful projects return 5% of the fees to Kickstarter as well as an additional 3 to 5% for financial transactions. Over the past three years Kickstarter had generated over 125 million dollars for over 15,000 projects. In addition to raising money, Kickstarter campaigns raise awareness of the project.

Financing is a critical issue for self-publishers. DIY publishers without access to developmental capital will always be constrained in their ability to develop innovative high-quality offerings. For DIY publishers, initiatives such as Kickstarter, or alternatives such as IndieGoGo, provide a potential source of investment capital that can be used to cover media development costs, design, editing and promotion.

Guilds

A key challenge in the shifting value chain for DIY publishers is the ability to access the range of value added services, such as editing, design and production, that mainstream publishing organizations have traditionally provided. In an ideal world, writers would have the ability to develop media (such as pod casts and videos that will form a larger portion of e-publications), edit and revise materials, design layouts and presentations as well as work on product production. Yet, few DIY publishers have all of these skillsets.

Similarly, mainstream publishers have traditionally served as important aggregators and connectors for professionals who are in media production, design and editing roles. In the past, publishers hired or contracted with these experts and facilitated the linkage between writers and these publishing services. Publishers provided an efficient way to connect editors and designers with writers. The shift from aggregation to disaggregation in the publishing worlds presents a significant challenge to editors, designers and media production professionals.

There is a strong practice of value-added publishing professionals, including media developers, editors and designers working as independent contractors. However, many of them worked with aggregators, such as publishers, as a central point of contact. This eliminated the time-consuming and inefficient requirement for independent contractors to find independent writers. DIY publishing removes this source of connection but does not reduce the need for independent writers to be able to access these value-added services.

Further, as we have observed in the software outsourcing movement there are significant downward pressures on the prices paid for professional services. We are seeing an attempt to move to commodity pricing. This has been further exacerbated by the growth of on-line bidding services and service auctions.

Both trends – the difficulty of linking value-added professionals – editors, designers and producers – with independent authors and the pressure to price services as low-cost commodities – are causing harm. One option may be to revisit the concept of professional guilds.

Historically, guilds played a major role in the development of professionals and craftspeople as well as the overall economic development. Traditionally, guilds were associations of craftspeople involved in a particular trade. Guilds played a number of roles. They served as a worker fraternity, trade union, cartel, secret society and benevolent order. Guilds established fee structures and rules of work; scope of practice; training and certification and performance standards.

Guilds have evolved into modern forms. Two of the best known guilds – the Screen Actors Guild and Writers Guild of America – are vital elements in the entertainment and movie business.

Technology now enables guilds to be virtual and multinational as well as local. Guilds could facilitate virtual marketplaces or agoras that would support the ability for publishing professionals to efficiently link with independent writers. The creation of a guild model with an associated efficient, virtual marketplace could replace a vital element of the function previously provided by publishing businesses.

Indie Marketing

Just as traditional sources of financing are unlikely to serve DIY publishers so too are traditional approaches to promotion and marketing. (As an aside, one could argue that the promotional and marketing approaches that mainstream publishers have been using may not have stood the test of time. So regardless of whether we are thinking about DIY publishers or more traditional publishing, new thinking about promotion and marketing may be in order.)

The web and social media are changing the ways that we approach promotion and marketing. In particular, the concept of push advertising that all of us have grown up with, and mostly disdain, is under attack. Rather than look to the past, DIY publishers should consider other exemplars. Indie marketing approaches, itself a continually evolving way of thinking, offers suggestions for DIY publishing.

For example, the well-known comic, Louis CK, through a publisher had always created and marketed DVDs of his concerts. After paying studios, producers and publishers he received negligible royalties. Under traditional publishing, one of the most popular comedians received virtually nothing for his work. He decided to try something different.

He booked a hall and put on a special show and taped it. He then created a downloadable concert video and sold it on his website for $5. He placed no copyright limitations on his work. No publishers were involved. Louis CK managed the whole process, working with his own team, personally. The results were quite remarkable.

On his blog on December 21, 2011, a couple of weeks after launching the video, he noted: (https://buy.louisck.net/news)

- hi. So it's been about 12 days since the thing started and yesterday we hit the crazy number. One million dollars. That's a lot of money. Really too much money. I've never had a million dollars all of a sudden, and since we're all sharing this experience and since it's really your money, I wanted to let you know what I'm doing with it. So I guess I want to set an example of what you can do if you all of a sudden have a million dollars that people just gave you directly because you told jokes.
- So I'm breaking the million into four pieces.
- The first 250k is going to pay back what the special cost to produce and the website to build.
- The second is going back to my staff and the people who work for me on the special on my show. I'm giving them a big fat bonus.
- The third 280k is going to a few different charities. They are listed below in case you'd like to donate to them also. Some of these I learned about through friends, some were recommended through twitter. (The Fistula Foundation; The Pablove Foundation; charity:water; Kiva; Green Chimneys)
- That leaves me with with 220k for myself. Some of that will pay my rent and will care for my children…
- The thing is still on sale. I hope folks keep buying it. If I make another million, I'll give more of it way. I'll let you know when that happens because I like you getting to know what happened to your 5 dollars.

Using the web to promote and distribute content; offering value-added materials at a substantially lower cost; removing any sort of copyright protection and, perhaps most importantly, engaging in an intimate conversation with your audience and fans are all key components of a new approach. The rules are shifting. We want to engage in a dialogue around the things we purchase.

Indie marketing involves a very different approach for DIY publishers. It requires creativity and, increasingly, relies on the effective use of social media. Successful indie marketing involves more interaction with readers, using a variety of channels – Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, YouTube, etc. In addition to sharing ideas and information, interactions tend to be two way. Readers and the general public can provide feedback, recommendations and ideas for future work.

Getting noticed – sorting through the noise

The numbers are mind boggling – 600000 apps, countless videos, pictures, publications. It is clear that the web has served as a liberating force. For people who want to share their creative work the web has provided an easy-to-use, virtually free and non-discriminating platform. With volume comes noise. From the infinite number of sites and creative products that are available very few of them are of much value and quality.

For the DIY publisher the web is both a blessing and a curse. Publication – the physical act of making one's work available for others to consume – is only the first step. We have already discussed the different ways that DIY publishers need to think about how they promote and market their creative products. Are there ways that technology can help as well?

DIY publishers and the potential consumers who purchase their publications face a common problem. From one perspective, publishers must endeavor to get their work noticed. Consumers worry about how to find high quality resources that they want. Both hope to be able to achieve their goal as efficiently as possible. In the the web-based world few people are prepared to engage in extensive searches – we want it now and we want it with little effort.

We see different approaches to trying to tame the wild, unstructured nature of the web. From Yahoo to Google we have seen the evolution of search. Amazon has emerged as a powerhouse of on-line retailing, in particular related to books and creative works. The rise of social media, with word of mouth recommendations, now exemplified in Twitter and Facebook, present a different approach. Web aggregation sites attempt to serve as a convenient point of contact. However, as we can see in the Android app marketplace as soon as one aggregator lays claim to being a one-stop shop several others emerge to make similar claims. Apple, through iTunes and App Store, have tried to create a closed system – if you want to find apps, music or books for any Apple device, you work through the Apple ecosystem.

However, even the Apple approach faces challenges. The sheer bulk of offerings has made it very difficult to search and find items of interest. A recent purchase by Apple (late February 2012) of an Australian-based software firm called Chomp may be of interest and importance to DIY publishers.

Chomp moves beyond simplistic title-based searches and applies rich algorithms to identify products that closely fit search specifications. Sharing, recommendations and comments are integrated into the search to identify a wider range of possible options for users. As the number of creative products has grown traditional organizing taxonomies have proven to be inadequate. The ability to use algorithms that look beyond titles and tags is a first step in being able to sift through the volume and noise that characterizes the web.

Products like Chomp, and the others that will inevitably come along, are important for DIY publishers. In addition to the need to apply creative and proactive marketing the ability for potential purchasers to use technology to find quality offerings allows DIY publishers to compete with mainstream approaches.

Bricoleur

DIY publishing involves much more than a motivated individual with a story to tell, writing a manuscript and presenting it to the world. The comment in the movie *Field of Dreams* "build it and they will come" simply does ring true in the competitive, noisy world of the web. As the role of formal publishers fades away, DIY publishers will assume responsibility, even if they use and manage contractors for media production, editing and design, for all of the functions in the publishing value-chain. While this is liberating it also means that writing becomes only one element in the overall process of publishing. Mindsets and skillsets will need to change. One way to think about this shift is to consider the concept of bricoleur. An example from the indie music business may be of value.

- To survive in the Canadian music business you need to be a jack-of-all-trades. Don and Dave Carroll, two brothers who form the band *Sons of Maxwell* know this all too well. Emerging out of Northern Ontario and now located in Halifax the band has built a solid reputation. They have written original songs, produced albums and engaged in a "perpetual tour." They constantly perform, whether in concert halls or doing corporate shows. Their efforts have led to recognition across Canada as well as the US. Additionally they have performed in China, Europe and Caribbean.
- However in 2010 all this changed. On a trip from Halifax to mid-western United States, with a stop in Chicago, the band's expensive Taylor guitars were severely damaged by the United Airlines' baggage handlers. After trying to work through an impenetrable customer service process, the band felt that their only recourse was to use other approaches. In frustration they wrote and performed three songs and posted them on YouTube. *United Breaks Guitars* became a viral hit. The first day resulted in 150,000 hits. In one year, over 10 million viewers had witnessed the band performing about United Airlines' customer service inadequacies.
- The viral videos resulted in a public relations humiliation for United. Some analysts estimate that their mistakes cost the company hundreds of millions of dollars in reduced stock prices and reputation.
- For Dave Carroll, the social media campaign had a different result. In addition to their creative and entrepreneurial efforts to build and sustain themselves as a Canadian-based band, they found themselves as spokesmen for customer service. Their business has now expanded to include a dedicated web site, Gripevine, where people can talk about customer service challenges.

Dave Carroll found that he had to become more creative and entrepreneurial to achieve their goals. The *United Breaks Guitars* campaign was an innovative and effective way to pressure an unresponsive corporation. It was also a means to promote the band in a different way. As an indie musician sometimes the music is only one part of what it takes to be successful.

The concept of bricoleur is a useful one for DIY publishers to consider. If we return back to the value chain model, all of the elements in the publishing value chain are still important even if a dedicated organization is not in place to handle the various responsibilities. A bricoleur is variously viewed as a creative and resourceful person who is able to work with whatever materials they have available to a do-it-yourselfer who is able to improvise and engage in multiple activities to a jack-of-all-trades. Bricoleurs are able to develop knowledge in a variety of areas and skills, engage in careful observations, trust in their own ideas and engage in continual self-correction and learning.

The self-publisher as bricoleur recognizes that all of their efforts contribute to their goals. They need to act in the same way that Indie bands function, combining their creative products with performances, media coverage, social media, public and private events and "T-shirt sales." To be successful without the benefit of a production and promotional organization supporting your individual product requires a comprehensive and mutually supporting strategy. There is a need to seamlessly blend creative skills with a entrepreneurial and business mentality.

The future?

Traditional publishing faces many disruptive pressures. Some observers predict that publishing as we know it will disappear. That is probably overly harsh. However, even if publishing survives it will be fundamentally different. At the same time as the publishing business is in despair the emerging world of self-publishing is filled with enthusiastic, optimistic and energetic people. In contrast to despair, they see opportunity and potential.

The digital world and world wide web, which has been the cause of much of the pain for mainstream publishers, offers self-publishers with access to technology, markets and networks that will enable many of them to succeed.

While it is easy to characterize self-publishing as a world of disconnected independents there are opportunities for those who are considering ways to support independent writers and publishers. While the approaches would need to be fundamentally different most of the elements of the publishing value chain still apply to self-publishers. In the previous section I have identified a number of different ways of looking at supporting the needs of self-publishers. The examples provided are not specific to the needs of publishers and, as such, there may be opportunities to reinvent approaches to provide access to capital, linking writers to value-added publishing professionals, supporting social media marketing efforts, etc.

Beginning with the question of why we publish, this paper has attempted to examine the role of self-publishing. We have discussed a number of converging forces that offer new opportunities for self-publishers while creating strong disruptive pressures for mainstream publishing companies. The image of *independent creative people equipped with easy to use, yet powerful tools developing innovative media-rich products – more like apps than traditional books – offered through networks and virtual retailers sold at a very low cost* presents an optimistic and creative future for publishing. While mainstream publishers may continue to exist the innovation space is likely to be driven by independent self-publishers. However, it is important to explore different approaches to supporting self-publishing. Using networks and technology there are number of possible areas for exploration including crowdfunding; professional guilds for writers and publishing professionals such as designers, editors and production staff; new approaches to promotion and marketing; mechanisms to identify high quality products and reimagining the role of the independent publishers as bricoleur.

The future is bright for self-publishing. Interest is growing. The pace of activity is expanding exponentially. Disruptive forces and converging technologies offer an exciting vision for the future. Without stretching too far it is fair to assume that the locus of creativity and innovation will lie in the hands of independent publishers.

Reinventing the Book World from the Bottom Up

Birthing pains, growing pains, and the family ties of an evolving industry

— Mark Leslie Lefebvre

Hypothesis:

In this article I will attempt to assert my position that, in order to survive these turbulent times the book industry has to accept the fact that there's a lot to learn, and that the best learning will come from three key factors: experimentation, embracing change and listening, with an open mind, to players operating within every realm of the field.

I honestly can't remember what bookish tech-style conference I had heard this. It was either at one of the annual BookNet Canada Tech Forums or perhaps it was the first BookCampTO event; but somewhere in the tweet-stream, during a hearty discussion about the state of the book and publishing industry, the forthcoming digital apocalypse and the advent of the ebook era, an audience member from one of the sessions pushed out an intriguing tweet.

> "The book isn't dead; it just had babies."
>
> — unattributed Twitter quote

I retweeted it, as did several others. It was a cute sentiment. It was simple, yet it spoke volumes.

And, when you come to think about it, it's a pretty accurate assessment for what the publishing industry has been going through.

Though, unlike a typical labour (quick intense pain, and regardless of medical or trained professionals or not, regardless of administration of painkilling medication or not the baby is going to arrive within a limited period of time), the publishing industry's birthing experience has been extremely long and painful. Something in the realm of 10 to 12 years.

Some would even suggest longer.

Ouch.

Let's picture it for a moment.

You can hear the voices screaming loudly on one side of the room. "Okay breathe. Breathe. Now push! Push! Puuuuush!"

A voice growls in response, suggesting where they can shove their "breathing" and "pushing" advice. "Just get me some more painkillers!"

From the opposite side of the room an intense voice pipes up with a call for more medication, some clinical tools, orders on exactly how to adjust the table, the stirrups, the overhead lights.

There is yet another call in a different voice insisting on pushing, followed by a responding cry of: "You! You! You did this to me!"

In another corner, there's a mad scream for someone to boil water.

Yet another person suggests what's needed are some warm towels.

Beside them, someone is laughing in an insane voice.

A lone figure, stands like a stand-up comic, trying to crack jokes to the two people in the room who are paying any attention.

Beside that gathering another person stands, completely averting their eyes from the whole mess, focusing, instead on a small smudge on the wall.

Still another voice adds to the fray, shouting out in panicked tones: "I'm not ready for this! I'm not ready to be a father!"

Beside them, another person has fainted to join the other two already lying in a heap on the floor.

A soft voice asks if it is too late for an abortion.

And in the middle of it all, the screaming, the debating about what to do, the disagreements about the process and the necessary steps, the tools required, the preparedness of the participants, the baby is coming.

The question is, will somebody catch it or will it get lost in the amniotic fluid, drop into the afterbirth bucket and not even be noticed while chaos reigns?

Okay, I had some fun taking the analogy to the extreme.

But when you look at what has been happening in the publishing industry this past decade, and even more dramatically, in the past 3 years, there's a kind of chaos and panic similar to the scene I just outlined in my own farcical way.

At one end of the spectrum within the book industry you'll find naysayers who continue to stick their heads in the sand, believing that digitization couldn't possibly change a centuries-old industry, and at the other end you'll find those who believe "The End is Nigh!", that all traditional players should just pack it in.

But mostly, like in the *bizarro* scene of a delivery room that I just painted, you'll find a strange cross-section of reactions and activities.

It's important, I think, to first understand at least a bit about why this has been such a difficult transition, what models seem to exist and what experiments and, yes, I say experiments. Because we're living in the midst of a significant digital change. The product of "book" is becoming something a bit more malleable. And yes, I use the word malleable specifically for a reason, because the term typically refers to a solid that can be bent into other forms and shapes without breaking.

Let me repeat that: *Without breaking*.

For the first time in hundreds of years the book is undergoing a significant change.

I'm reminded of a popular viral video clip from a Norwegian television program called *Øystein og meg* (Øystein and I), which appeared in 2001 on NRK, the Norwegian television network. The sketch was written by Knut Nærum and performed by Øystein Bache and Rune Gokstad.

The video, in a nutshell, features a monk who is sitting frustrated at his desk when the "IT Support" person shows up to help him. It seems as if our hero needs help trying to figure out how to work a book. It's a strange bound item, and not at all easy to understand how to read like the popular scroll.

The tech support person explains the concept of "opening" and "closing" the book as well as demonstrating how the text ends on one page but then begins at the top of the next one. Our hero marvels at this new concept of "turning the page" and then tries it out himself. He is pleased to understand.

Then he closes the book by flipping the front onto the back cover. And when he goes to open it again, his hand pushes against the spine, and he is unable to. He throws his hands up in frustration.

The tech support guy demonstrates how to flip the book over and open it again.

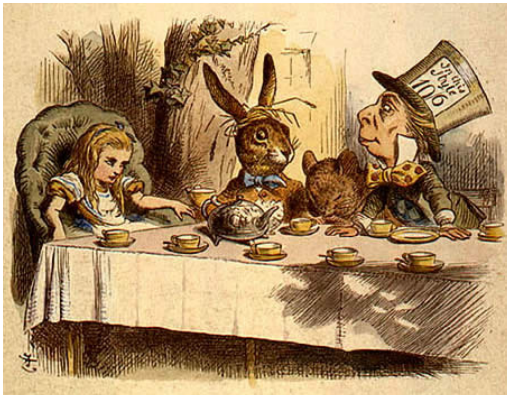
The day is saved.

As an aside, the scroll video is also funny at an entirely different level (perhaps more for tech nerds who are engaged in the creation of ePub and other ebook files) when you consider how the ebook is almost like an ode to the scroll. When you think about it, an ebook is, in many ways, nothing more than a type of long scrolling web page with specific coding that allows for free-flowing text to morph to specific sizes and shapes dependent upon controllable settings determined by the user.

But apart from that interesting similarity which might suggest, as the French say: "*Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose*," it's certainly funny to laugh at this skit of a confused monk who can't figure out how to open a book, understand the concept of turning pages and is worried that when he closes the book he will lose his text.

The book industry, these past few years in particular, is, in many ways, reacting the same way this poor monk is.

We just have a job to do, after all – connect writers with readers. And the distribution model for doing that, something that has been in place for a long



A mad game of musical chairs

Sir John Tenniel's original illustration for Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*

period of time, is being turned on its head. Not only is the product we cherish and revere undergoing a lightning quick metamorphosis, but everyone in the distribution chain is trying to figure out their place.

It's like a mad game of musical chairs, with all parties scrambling around trying to ensure when the music stops they'll all have a seat.

One of the things that I have seen work well is when the players refuse to play by the mad rules of musical chairs – ie, one in which there can only be a single winner – and, instead, try to figure out a way to work together so that as many people as possible will have a seat.

The musical chairs analogy is as ridiculous an approach as the nuclear arms race concept of MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) – it is fruitless to pursue such a downward spiral. After all, you're likely just playing the game of musical chairs on the deck of the Titanic. How can we, as an industry, steer this ship around, turn the Titanic into a new type of Noah's Arc?

While I'm mixing metaphors, it comes down to the concept of a delicate ecosystem. An ecosystem exists because of the relationships between various entities within it; in this case (at a very high level): author, agent, bookseller, distributor, editor, librarian, printer, publisher, publicist, reader, retailer and salesperson. Arguments continually evolve regarding which members of this ecosystem are necessary, particularly when the whole thing is designed around connecting author and reader. At the end of it all, following a Darwin-like mindset it should be clear: Those who actually add real value in the realm of connecting author and reader are important. Those who don't add value, will "die-off" and cease to remain relevant.

I should pause to insist it's not necessarily cut and dry depending on the particular needs of the reading consumer. And, because of that, and depending on the specifics of the author/reader connection, there will be times where one or more of these players is relevant, and others where they are less relevant. I don't see it as an "all or none" proposition; but, instead, a complex one depending upon the situation.

This fact makes it very difficult for the industry to discuss and debate the issue. Emotions, and long-standing traditions, and that threatened feeling of being cut out of the loop plays a huge role in the "musical chairs" scrambling that our industry continually faces.

So let's go back to that video and that scenario.

What happened in the video? The monk who wanted to read a book needed help. He called upon the "IT Support" character to assist him. They went through the process together. The monk had trouble learning, but the support guy was patient and re-explained. He demonstrated. He allowed the monk to try it out himself.

Various players within the book world, particularly within the writing community, and in particular, those engaged in the Self Publishing world have been doing that very thing. Not only have they been experimenting, but they've been openly sharing what they have learned in order to assist others.

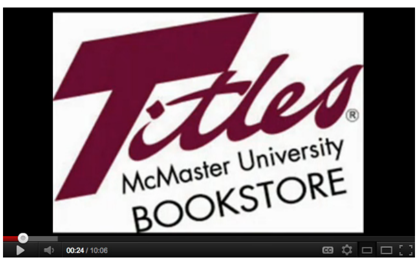
This type of collaborative activity, which seems to fly in the face of capitalism and competitiveness, is, from my perspective, one of the solutions we need to focus on so we can ensure our industry doesn't sink below these turbulent waters.

The book and publishing industry is a delicate ecosystem. Yes, Darwinism prevails, but there's also something to be said for one species having to rely on the other for ensured survival. Yes, different species will evolve, roles and defined needs will change, but recognition of the benefits of working together should prevail.

Between 2006 and 2011 I learned about the amazing power of open and transparent communication through a group of 24 campus bookstores from across Canada who worked together, shared resources and met, in person, twice per year. The goal was not unlike the benefit that various industry associations offer, but the smaller size and focused perspective of the campus stores allowed them to move and act quick, react to change and assist one another.

They used to be known under the name of CCRA (Canadian Campus Retail Associates), but are now known under the campusebookstore.com banner. This group of stores spend a great deal of their time helping one another by exposing various successes and failures in different business practices and experiments. Pooling resources, they can often afford to build things, such as a dynamic way for booksellers to easily connect with a company like Google to offer ebooks to their customers.

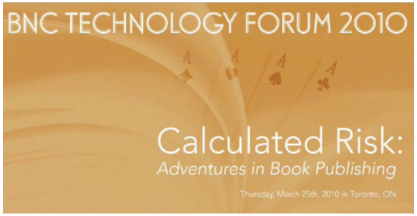
It was through CCRA that, back in 2007, I listened, intently, to my colleague Todd Anderson explain how his store had investigated this bold new invention called an Espresso Book Machine. He explained how he was going to use the machine to get digital files from publishers and print custom textbooks right in his store at the cost of pennies per page. It would solve various shipping issues and delays with getting books from a Toronto-area warehouse and into his store in Edmonton. But he would also use it to save students money.



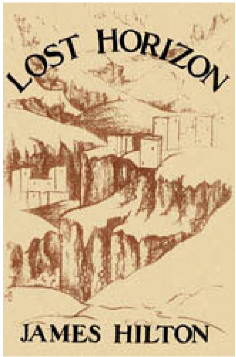
Not long after Anderson installed his machine (the fourth location in the world to own an Espresso Book Machine, the 2nd bookstore and the 1st in Canada,) I took a trip out to see how it all worked, because I wanted to convince my own boss and my own institution (McMaster University Bookstore) that this would be a worthwhile investment.

I saw that this machine wasn't just a great way to save students money, but it was a brand new way to re-conceive of our business. By focusing on the fact that my goal was to sell books, to connect authors with readers, I could employ this machine to distribute digitally and print locally.

Of course, saving students money, ensuring I was always in stock was a leading desire. That is, after all, what POD offers, particularly convenient POD such as having an Espresso Book Machine in your store. But there was also the benefit of being able to offer millions of titles to customers, via special order, at the click of a mouse.



VIDEO: Trailblazing – Leading the Way to a New Kind of Supply Chain – Hugh McGuire & Mark Lefebvre – from Booknet Canada Technology Forum, 2010



The first of ten numbered Pocket Book titles

Priced at 25 cents and featuring the logo of Gertrude the kangaroo (named after the artist's mother-in-law), Pocket Books' editorial policy of reprints of light literature, popular non-fiction, and mysteries was coordinated with its strategy of selling books outside the traditional distribution channels. The format size, and the fact that the books were glued rather than stitched, were cost-cutting innovations.

— Wikipedia

I often bragged to customers and in demonstrations of our Espresso Book Machine, that Amazon (a chief competitor to physical bookstores for over a decade) might offer to ship that book to you in 24 hours, but we could get it for you in about fifteen minutes.

The Espresso Book Machine and POD are, of course, merely one way of bridging the gap between print and digital; one way of satisfying the needs of a consumer who desires the printed product while reducing the costs and various logistical issues related to storing and distributing books.

Changes within the publishing industry seem to run in a parallel to Moore's Law, particularly with the merger of technology with publishing. The significant changes in publishing were initially within the printing press, ie Gutenberg in the realm of 1450.

Mass market paperbacks were initially introduced by a German publisher (Albatross Books) in 1931; but the experiment was cut short by World War II. Penguin Books brought the concept back to life just a few years later (about 1935) which led, about five years later, to Simon & Schuster creating a line/imprint known as Pocket Books. The mass market paperback introduced a new type of business calculation for publishers. It meant lower margins than hardcovers offered; but it also meant higher volume, and potentially increased sales.

For a brief aside, let's contrast that with a recent February 2012 statement from Simon & Schuster regarding sales (as reported in *Publishers Weekly* on February 15, 2012)

In 2011, total sales at Simon & Schuster went down 1% in 2011 (to $787 million), but their adjusted operating income increased 31% to $85 million. In a nutshell, Simon & Schuster saw a decrease or loss in sales revenues, but a jump in margin, which is attributed, in good part, to their ebook sales.

But back, in the timeline of publishing, to the changes affecting the industry, there hasn't been a significant change within publishing since the mass market paperback. New formats, such as audio books, were introduced. But it wasn't until the advent of such technologies as the personal computer (the early 1980's) with desktop publishing following closely on the heels (allowing for the creation of WYSIWYG editing and digital documents to be modified and previewed before being transferred to moveable type), and shortly thereafter the advent of print on demand technology such as Trafford Publishing (founded in Victoria, BC in 1995), Lightning Source (a division of Ingram), founded in 1997 and the Espresso Book Machine, which first appeared in 2007.

Despite publishing having used print on demand (POD) technology since the mid 1990's (Lightning Source's digital library boasts 7.6 million books and have printed more than 120,000,000 books for over 24,000 publishers worldwide), the major publishers have been slow to embrace the technology for more than their backlist titles.

The economics of POD mean a higher printing cost for a lower print run. For a business that is used to printing in high quantities with the goal of simply pulping the excess printing, publishing has long been taking extreme gambles by employing a shot-gun approach to their catalog lists.

A standard figured bandied around publishing falls closely within the 80/20 rule. About 20% of the books published in any year account for more than 80% of a publisher's positive revenue. This means that 80% of their annual catalog doesn't make money, or, in fact, loses them money. The challenge, of course, is, despite perhaps a handful of titles from the large branded authors (Stephen King, J.K. Rowling, Stephanie Meyer, Susanne Collins, John Grisham, Danielle Steel and other well known house-hold names), publishers don't know which titles are going to fall into that 20% and which will fall into the 80%.

Economics of publishing would suggest that 20% of those titles are carrying the other 80% – and the trick, for a long time, has been trying to understand which of a given year's catalog will be the winners.

So mass quantities of each are printed, mass quantities of many of the titles are pushed out into bookstores, and then a good number of people within publishing (the author, the agent, the publisher, the distributor, the bookseller) cross their fingers and hope that those books end up in the hands of consumers and not on a skid in a truck heading back to the publisher's warehouse to be remaindered (in the case of hardcover and trade paperbacks), or pulped, with the front covers being mailed back in a small envelope (in the case of mass market paperbacks).

Ebooks, which, one can argue, debuted when Michael S. Hart typed the Declaration of Independence into a computer in 1971, turned 40 in 2011. A popular phrase this writer has long heard uttered, particularly since I crossed the threshold into my fourth decade a couple of years ago, is that life begins at 40. It was 2011, then, when ebooks seem to have really finally caught the attention of publishing.

Ebooks had many "false starts" or low-uptake incarnations since 1971, but that was mostly because the ability to access the books conveniently and easily didn't exist.

In 1999, Jim Pain and Eric Flint created the Baen Free Library, offering a hundred plus science fiction titles from the Baen (an imprint of Simon & Schuster) in digital format for free. They were ahead of the game, putting no DRM on their books and remaining one of the least pirated book publishers.

It wasn't until more affordable e-ink readers, such as ones released by Sony in 2004, Amazon's Kindle in 2007, and the advent of readers through Apple's iPad (2010), and further retail distribution by players like Kobo, partnering with Chapters/Indigo and Borders in 2010, and the introduction of Barnes & Noble's Nook in their own chain within the US to place ereaders directly in bookstores across Canada and the United States, that ebooks really started to take off.

The accumulation of this penetration into the reading public, and not just the pioneers and early adopters meant that the ebook as a popular retail commodity could really start to take hold and capture the attention and imagination of consumers and publishers in 2011.

At the writing of this (February 2012), a report showed that in Canada 10% of all book sales were ebooks. An APP (American Association of Publishers) report shows that despite a reduced growth rate in the final quarter of 2011, e-book sales rose 117% for the year, generating revenue of $969.9M. Sales in all trade print segments fell in 2011, with the mass market paperback segment showing the largest decline with sales down almost 36%, to $431.5 million. Adult hardcover and trade paperback sales were off 17.5% and 15.6%, respectively. In children's, the young adult/hardcover segment sales fell 4.7% and paperback sales fell 12.7%.

The year 2011 is also often called the year of the self-published author.

It was the year in which authors such as Amanda Hocking, John Locke, and others demonstrated that they could take their work and employ the new ebook technology available to everyone (not just major publishing houses), and build an audience and sell; ironically, capturing the attention of major publishing houses, who now saw them as among that 10 to 20% of the "moneymakers" they so sought.

Hocking and Locke and others like them weren't the first to employ digital distribution to capture a wide audience.

Authors have been using podcasting, particularly platforms like Podiobooks, to push out the audio versions of their books for free, and growing their audience, thus increasing print sales of their books.

In 2005, Scott Sigler released a novel, *EarthCore* as the first podcast-only novel, served out in twenty weekly episodes. He picked up over 10,000 subscribers. Subsequent podcast novels, such as *Ancestor*, drew 30,000 subscribers and over 700,000 episode downloads; Sirius Satellite Radio picked up the novel, marking it as the first audiobook serialized on that satellite network.

Sigler provided that, using social media to build a following could result in major sales, leveraging his fans to help rocket his titles into the Top Ten lists on Amazon, and ultimately capturing the attention of major publishers. Crown Publishing (Random House) released his novel *Infected* in hardcover in 2008, and it sold over 5000 copies in the first two weeks of release, proving that by offering a free audio version of his novel, he could boost print sales.

Canadian author, Terry Fallis, who is now well known, took a similar path when major publishers weren't paying any attention to his novel *The Best Laid Plans*. Fallis, already familiar with podcasting via his role in a public relations firm, released a podcast version of his book for free, and shortly thereafter used the POD company iUniverse to create a POD version of his novel. Sales of the print version were doing well, and allowed him to submit the book to the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour. As a long-shot underdog in that year's campaign, Fallis made it to the shortlist, competing against such well-loved humorists as Douglas Copeland and Will Ferguson.

When Fallis won the Leacock Medal in 2008, he got the attention of McClelland & Stewart (Random House), who picked up the rights (as part of a three book deal) and re-released the book in September of 2008. The sequel, *The High Road*, was released in 2010 (with the weekly chapter by chapter podcast, again for free, starting a dozen or so weeks prior to the paperback release). In 2011 Fallis won another prestigious award – the 2011 edition of CBC's Canada Reads. This catapulted him further into the public eye and made him Canada's darling of proof that proper timing, execution of a promotional strategy combined with raw talent, hard work and a touch of luck, are part of the recipe for success.

Authors like Fallis and Sigler, like Locke and Hocking, are examples that experimentation, often performed at a grass-roots level, by indie authors and small publishers, demonstrate innovation and lead the way for others to follow suit.

Within my own experiences of the POD world, I was fortunate to partner with several smaller publishers who were willing to take a chance and begin to change the publishing world.

I worked with Playwrights Canada Press to help breathe new life into an out-of-stock, virtually out-of-print book, fulfilling the needs of a university professor for her class. Blue Butterfly Books was open to allowing the use of the Espresso Book Machine to fulfill what has, in my twenty year history of bookselling, become the world's fastest special order – going from not even knowing about a book at 9 am to having a POD version of it printed in my store by 3 pm that same day.

My POD mentor, Todd Anderson, who now runs a successful print on demand based publisher, worked with Jerome Martin of *Spotted Cow Press* on his own Espresso Book Machine, and in September of 2009 made publishing history with a "Double Espresso Book Launch" of S. Minsos' novel *Squire Davis and the Crazy River*.

Spotted Cow Press made the book available through the Espresso Book Machine. Minsos appeared at an Edmonton book fair event on September 18, 2009 at the University of Alberta Bookstore. But due to the novel, and the author's ties to the local Hamilton area, the event was linked to an audience at the bookstore at McMaster University in Hamilton, where the book was available via the Espresso Book Machine at McMaster.

Via a two-way video link projected between the two bookstores, the audience in Hamilton could see a live feed of the author and publisher doing a talk and reading. They could even participate in the following Q&A session and book signing afterword, where customers in Hamilton purchased a book, and the author signed book plates that were later mailed to them for insertion into the book.

I collaborated with Anderson and May Yan of the University of Waterloo to release a campus-themed anthology specifically to help promote the Espresso Book Machines in our three locations. Following a project that was conceived less than nine months earlier, in October of 2009, a simultaneous release of *CAMPUS CHILLS* (an anthology of horror stories set on campuses across Canada) occurred in Hamilton, Edmonton and Waterloo. (There were also events at two non-EBM locations in Ottawa and Halifax, marking this as the first time an anthology was launched in which all 13 authors participated in simultaneous readings/signings).

These examples illustrate how much of the creativity, much of the experimentation and much of the bold new changes and risks are being taken by independent authors and smaller publishers.

Major publishers are, as seen above in the cases of Amanda Hocking, Scott Sigler and Terry Fallis, paying attention.

And they seem to be making efforts to embrace both POD and ebook, this distribute digital concept, more and more.

September 22, 2011, in fact, is a day, in my mind that might just become known as a historic turning point for the publishing industry. That was the day HarperCollins Publishers announced a program called "Comprehensive Backlist," implemented in partnership with On Demand Books, makers of the Espresso Book Machine (EBM).

The program allows any physical bookstore with an EBM to offer thousands of backlist trade paperback titles from HarperCollins to their customers. This means walking into your local bookstore only to find that the title you want is out of stock and that you'll have to wait anywhere from one to three weeks for that special order to arrive could soon become a thing of the past.

Now, all the bookseller will need to do is search for the title in the EBM catalogue, press a few buttons and a perfectly bound trade paperback version, complete with a full-colour cover, will be produced right there in the store in a matter of minutes, most likely right in front of the customer.

But as intelligent and crafty a move as this is for HarperCollins, one must remember that they seem to be following a lead where self-published authors, often filled with pioneering spirit, discovered the profitability of the POD model for getting their works out well before the major industry players paid much attention to it.

In the official press release announcing the HarperCollins/Espresso Book Machine project, Brian Murray, CEO at HarperCollins, said: "Bookstores continue to be an important place for customers to shop for physical books. The goal of this initiative is to give the local bookseller the capability to provide customers with a greater selection of HarperCollins titles in a physical environment."

Dane Neller, visionary CEO of On Demand Books, applauds HarperCollins on this move: "By committing thousands of titles to the program, HarperCollins is showing its clear support for bookstores and authors, and reaching more readers." Neller goes on to state that "Digital-to-Print at Retail" services will become a powerful new sales channel, helping to reduce the loss of sales that currently results from out-of-stock inventory.

As mentioned this announcement from one of the big six publishers marks a day I dreamed of when I first watched the EBM roll into the bookstore at McMaster University in the fall of 2008. I knew digital books and ebooks would continue to grow in popularity and availability, and that they would eventually become a dominant force within the publishing market. But I have also long held the belief that there is a need for digital distribution with a "print local" element – giving customers who still prefer to purchase printed books from their friendly neighbourhood bookshops an easy way to access more titles than can be physically held in a small and often high-rent retail space.

Attempting to stock upwards of 100,000 titles on their shelves was not always a fully sustainable business model for bookstores. The McMaster bookstore, for example, which used to keep 40,000 titles in stock, eventually recognized that the cost of doing so was simply not justifiable. It was the Espresso Book Machine and the continually growing digital catalogue of print-on-demand titles that allowed McMaster to finally make the change and stop carrying so much overstock. We knew that the day would come when that backlist of titles would be available in a more convenient fashion thanks to our Espresso Book Machine.

Now that HarperCollins has stepped up to the plate, I'm hopeful that the other major publishing stakeholders will follow suit sooner rather than later. This is a winning opportunity for publishers, authors, bookstores, and customers, and one that will profoundly impact the industry as we know it.

But the nice thing, for indie authors, is the knowledge that they were there first, paving the way for the rest of the industry.

I foresee that indie authors, those who choose to test out the waters of new opportunities, new ways of getting their titles into the market, new ways to use the new digital markets to their advantage, will continue to lead the path for all the rest.

The long-lived distribution model depended upon physical distribution. This involved warehousing, and transportation costs. The concept of returns built out of a need from the great depression has resulted in a "consignment" setup that has made it harder and harder for publishers to actually make their money back. When the book was created, scroll-writers were suddenly out of work. When the car was created, horse and buggy drivers faced a dwindling career. A similar thing perhaps happened back in the Bronze Age when clay tablets were being replaced by wax tablets, and later when wax tablets were replaced by papyrus scrolls.

If you are in the book and publishing industry, you might be fearful that the changes taking place now are going to render your role, your position, your strength and what you offer, as unnecessary. That is definitely a debilitating place to be. And, as someone who has been a bookseller for 20 years, I can certainly sympathize.

I still see a value in the role of bookseller, particularly in the curatorial role. However, I have recognized that my role, though still curator, had evolved.

Consumers have more choice than ever before, which makes the value I offer more important. I just need to be able to ensure that the curation I offer is of value to the consumer. Some consumers won't recognize that value, but others will.

In 2008 I embraced print on demand as a way of maintaining relevance and offering consumers more of an ability to decide what THEY want, rather than having it pre-selected and sitting on a shelf. Of course, it wasn't an "all or none" thing – some consumers want that realm of serendipity; others want to completely control their experience. They know what they want, or have a solid idea of the type – the trick is to offer them the ability to call up, on demand, that which they desire.

In this age of new technologies, and a dramatically changing landscape, there are really two choices. Continue on as you have always done, refusing to change despite the statistics and reality; or consider the alternative, entertain the concept of experimentation.

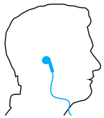
Embrace the idea of distribution as digital, and consumption as being in the hands of the consumer.

Two options that I see which are currently available and still relatively untapped when you consider their share of the overall industry are:

> Distribute digitally – print locally.
>
> Distribute digitally – consume locally.

Thinking that 10% of all the titles published represent 90% of the revenue, embracing a digital distribution and local consumption removes a significant amount of cost from the publisher and allows the hedging of bets on perhaps more titles, allowing consumers to continue to determine the things they want to consume.

One must always remember that these changes, these challenges, these evolutions, are driven by the desire of connecting authors with readers; part of that is recognizing the different way that people are reading, and that it's not just all about words being read from a piece of text printed on paper material, but rather, a wonderful, complex and dynamic combination of reading.



The Mark News Discussion with Mark Leslie Lefebvre about the future of reading – January 2010.

– from the Mark News website

Looking back, we can see how, just in that past decade, the publishing industry has faced significantly more change and upheaval than in so many of the preceding decades.

I'm reminded of *Tom Sawyer*, a 1981 song from the Canadian band *Rush*, with lyrics written by Neil Peart and Pye Dubois. The song describes this modern day warrior as "always hopeful yet discontent," and that Sawyer recognizes that "changes aren't permanent – but change is."

Change is the one permanent thing we can count on.

We understand POD and ebooks are here. But along with that, we should also understand that these things, too, will evolve, and likely into something new.

The key is that we need to be accepting of this change. We need to be willing to experiment. We need to make a lot of mistakes, and learn from them, and move on.

credit: http://katereali.blogspot.com/2010/10/baby-mondays-book-of-love.html

The publishing world will continue to change – permanently. We need to be able to roll with those changes, embrace the evolution, and continue to grow.

For a moment, let's hark back to the baby analogy. If this is true, then what needs to happen? We need to care for and nurture the baby as it grows into a child and adult, assuming a larger place in the world. But we should also care for the mother and father and recognize that they too continue to grow and change.

It's very likely that this baby, the ebook, will likely have another sibling, and perhaps one that is as different, and as similar, as its other siblings, the audio book, the mass market paperback, the print on demand and the podcast.

And we'll need to embrace it and nurture it, while always considering ways to support the entire family's needs.

Alternative Futures in Academic Publishing

– Todd Anderson

I am sitting in the boardroom on the 30th floor of a building in lower Manhattan. Out the window I can see the gradual rise of two towers of the new World Trade Center. For the past day and a half I have gone through sales strategies, forecasts, marketing plans, royalty discussions and production reports. Exactly what one would expect in a meeting at any publisher's office. We reach the "road-mapping" portion of our meetings. We are going to discuss some of the new features we think are important for our customers and that will also differentiate us from others in the marketplace.

But before we get into any sort of triage, we get treated to something described as "skunk works." The term "skunk works" typically describes something that is very advanced or a secret project. We spend the next 30 minutes marveling at what the developers have been doing. They have spent their own time, during weekends and late at night working on this particular project. They aren't sure how it will be received because it's kind of "out there." Will there be a market in academia for this? Will it be sufficiently "cool enough" to attract attention? Or is it so far out of the norm in terms of what people expect from textbooks that it won't gain any traction with academics? And if we are working on this, what is everyone else doing?

Academic Publishing is changing as fast as every other type of publishing.

Although the decision-making paradox in higher education is one in which the end-consumer has little to say in the process and is slow to change, at least student needs are beginning to be considered a little more. Previously, if a student received any consideration it was typically when the professor considered price in making an adoption. However, many professors have started working with custom publications in an effort to decrease the workload as well as lower cost for students. This effort to give students "only what they need" has led to a revolution in custom publishing and the rebirth of course packs.

Every course is different. Professors like to develop a concept on their own terms, in their own style and in their own time. Very few traditional textbooks are built that are readily adaptable by professors. Moving chapters around, shifting back and forth and even omitting whole sections of a book are quite common. This practice results in the "extra-chapter" tax that students complain about. The "extra-chapter" tax is the cost of all those chapters the student does not have to read and yet still has to purchase because they happen to be in the textbook required for the course.

Building course packs is not new. Taking a few chapters from a textbook, some journal articles, a book review, some newspaper clippings, a syllabus written in-house and combining them all to create a course pack that has exactly what the student needs has been a common practice for decades. What has changed in this field is the level of automation by which these things are created and how royalties get distributed. This particular side-door to revenue allows publishers to charge by the chapter for works they have rights to. A twelve-chapter book that sells for $49.95 in the store or online can also sell for five dollars a chapter in the course pack world. The difference is that the $49.95 will typically get split between the store, the distributor and the publisher, with stores taking 20% and distributors taking their cut that varies widely leaving the publisher with anywhere between 50 – 80% of the sell price at best. When working with course packs a publisher can receive 100% of the royalty charge. If a publisher charges $5 a chapter, the publisher receives $5 a chapter.

At a time when publishing is struggling to keep their collective heads above water, as discount demands get steeper, as digital pricing declines (along with revenues) and as costs continue to climb, one would think that any incremental revenue would be seen as heaven-sent. This is not the case. Publishers have exhibited a tremendous fear and resistance to chunking content. Some of the fears occur around the threat of piracy or the opportunity cost of selling a chapter versus an entire book. Other anxieties exist around the work involved in actually "chunking" a book and then tagging those chunks. There are even the occasional rumblings around the loss of "look and feel" that the book designer and publisher have spent so much time on. The notion of "destroying our brand" has popped up (although one could probably argue that selling nothing actually destroys the brand even faster). Designing your content and workflows from the beginning to allow for easy chunking and tagging takes care of the extra-work concerns.

Building books would seem, at least to those not involved in publishing, to be a very simple process. An author delivers you a manuscript, it's perfect, someone cobbles together a cover that everyone loves, and then "file: print" and you have your book. Perfect. The only decision is really "how many?" In fact there are many steps involved, each one depending on the work that was done in the previous. There are tears, arguments, delays, imperfect manuscripts, agents, book designers, production editors, printers and a wide range of problems that pop up along the way. And now we want to add chunking and digital? Forget it.

Unfortunately it is too late to "forget it." As John Thompson points out

> "Or is this something of a watershed – a moment in the long history of the book when the path of gradual evolution tips over into something else, when the key players in the field find their customary way of doing things no longer works and they no longer have the wherewithal to meet the new challenges they face." [1]

Maybe it's the term. "Chunking." Not really a pretty term, however, in the case of textbooks an appropriate term. Taking a book that has been created as a cohesive unit, that flows from one chapter to the next and then breaking it up into parts seems ridiculous when you consider how much work went into building it in the first place. When you change a book from a format that looks like this:

> <start-of-book> text <end-of-book>

to a format that looks like this:

> <start-of-book> <start-of-chapter>text<end-of-chapter><start-of-chapter>text<end-of-chapter><start-of-chapter>text<end-of-chapter><start-of-chapter>text<end-of-chapter><end-of-book>

With proper tagging associated to each "chunk" the amount of incremental revenue that can be generated is substantial and nothing precludes the publisher from selling the complete book. For example a book like **Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages** www.utppublishing.com/Pilgrimage-in-the-Middle-Ages-A-Reader.html from the University of Toronto Press contains 72 source documents that retail from around $42.95 when purchased as a complete book. If those documents were sold for $2.00 each you would need to sell 17 articles to generate the revenue received from selling the complete book.

Book Revenue: $42.95 (less 20% Bookstore Discount)	$34.36
Chunk Revenue: 17 articles @ $2.00 per article	$34.00

So less than a quarter of the book has the potential of generating the same revenue as the entire book.

Tagging does become a very important part of this exercise. In a typical publishing environment whole books are tagged like this:

Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages: A Reader
(Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures)

The tags might look like this:

<pilgrimage, middle ages, sourcebook, culture, Brett Edward Whalen>

However, if a book were to be chunked by the chapter, tagging becomes crucial. Discoverability and usage relies on good tagging. For instance, the first source document from **Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages** is “Pausania’s Guide to Greece.” Using the tags from the book alone would not indicate that this article is included in the collection and if you put all the tags from every article in the book tag you would be stuck with only the complete book. Tagging the “chunk” as follows:

"Pausania's Guide to Greece"

tagged as:

<Pausania, Greece, Epidaurus, Ionia, Delphi>

would allow course pack creators to identify the article required. The extra work at the beginning of the process can really pay off in the end.

Once all this wonderful chunking and tagging has taken place a publisher needs to be sure that their content is free from piracy. Unfortunately, even with the most advanced digital rights management software, any content on the Internet is threatened. Criminal piracy will always be a problem. If there is a sophisticated digital lock being developed somewhere in the world, there is likely a hacker in a basement working on a way to crack it. Making content available in an easy-to-consume, reasonably priced format is the best defense against casual piracy.

The debate between EPUB and PDF rages on. In the world of academic publishing the difference between the two are important. The ability to re-flow an EPUB, which makes it so important in the trade book publishing world is a diminished attribute in the scholarly world. Imagine a professor referring to a specific figure on a specific page number "Students turn to the diagram of the Heart on page 35." Now imagine the difficulty of pointing out the same diagram on a re-flowed document. The page number has changed and the position of the figure on the page has changed. Bookmarks in a trade publication mark your progress through the text, however, bookmarks in a textbook mark important reference points for study. EPUBs allow you to move and re-flow the bookmarks based on where you are in the text, PDF bookmarks designate points in the text that you may be studying and they don't move.

In 2005 Arnold Hirshon said,

> "The race may not necessarily be won by the largest, or the strongest, but by the most agile and customer responsive provider."[2]

Course packs today should contain embedded rich media and working links. Students expect to see a link and click through to the content promised by that link. Professors expect to be able to include youtube videos and any audio in a course pack. Publishers should be able to use the skills they have developed over the years to develop content such as author lectures, interactive problem sets and audio presentations that can be sold as "chunks" along with the text developed by the author.

All of this leads to the question "What do you develop for first?" Do you follow the approach of a company like INKLING www.inkling.com and develop exclusively for the iPad? Or do you develop PDFs that can currently be read on any device? The cost of developing for an exclusive platform comes with the threat that the platform will shift. Anyone remember the iPod? Until a standard is determined for a long period of time the best course of action is probably one of platform agnosticism. Something that can be used on most, if not all systems, something that users are familiar with and that does not require an esoteric piece of software. However, it is hard to ignore the user-friendliness and utility of Apple-designed products.

All of these technological advances in course packs and course pack delivery allow for another step-forward in the development of content. There is a clear path forward for a professor to create and distribute content that may not have ever been developed. There is no longer a need to sign with one of the "big five" publishers to get your content into a classroom. It is a perfect time for small, focused, agile publishers to develop many different kinds content that can be used in multiple formats and in many different "chunks." A professor can write most of the content required to deliver a course and then find chunks of content to complete their custom course material. This "mash-up" of a textbook becomes exactly what a student needs to succeed at a reasonable price. From a competitive advantage for a publisher it becomes something that cannot be easily replicated, is typically non-returnable and generates strong net revenue.

The opportunity for publishers isn't just in creating new academic materials it is in adapting the materials that already exist. Mark Zuckerberg said "Don't start communities, communities already exist, they are already doing what they want to do. The question that needs to be asked is "how can you help them do that better?"[3] Making content as customizable as possible, for as many platforms available as you can and for a price that your customers don't expect will allow those communities to use your content in ways you didn't expect.

Back on the 30th floor we have all had our say. It is time to vote. We all pick the next big thing. We are told it will be ready by June.

Notes

1. Thompson, John B. *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century.* Cambridge: Polity, 2010
2. Hirshon, Arnold, *A Diamond in the Rough: Divining the Future of E-content*. EduCAUSE January/February 2005, http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/erm0512.pdf
3. www.buzzmachine.com/2012/02/01/facebook-goes-public-zuckerberg-in-public-parts-wwgd

Look Who’s Talking, Really: The Dialectic Relationship Between Author, Reader, and Publisher

– Jessica Legacy

As the evening drew to an end of the 53rd annual Grammy awards, the five nominees for Album of the Year sat at the edge of their designated seats trying to appear quintessentially characteristic. Katy Perry was wide-eyed and thickly lipsticked, Lady Gaga was decked out in haute couture looking pleased with everything in her monster-filled universe, Eminem was doing his best to look like he wasn’t enjoying himself, the country cross-over band Lady Antebellum looked relieved, as though they had finally convinced enough people they did in fact receive an invitation to the ceremony, and Arcade Fire appeared as though they couldn't wait to break open the micro-brew and begin the after-party. Then, something unexpected happened.

When the envelope was opened and the audience sucked in an anticipatory breath, it was not Eminem, nor was it Katy Perry, it wasn't Lady Gaga or even Lady Antebellum who were called to claim the prize of the night. The award went to the eclectic jazz-inspired indie rock band from Montreal who boasts over half a dozen members wielding, among other instruments, a French horn, mandolin, hurdy-gurdy, and a glockenspiel. As the hipster parade wound their way toward the stage, a reactionary wave was already stirring on the internet. Bloggers and tweeters the world over exclaimed, "who the expletive is Arcade Fire?"

The trend exploded on twitter, blanketing the music scene with hash tags spouting "nobody" and "robbed." Viewers demanded to know how a less than mainstream group of artists had infiltrated the 'gala of the year' popular music. The backlash prompted a blog on the popular site Tumblr titled "Who is Arcade Fire," which compiled screenshots of all the buzz surrounding the lesser-known band. Remarks were summarized by one succinct twitterer who questioned, "How can a band I've NEVER heard of win Album of the Year? Who is #Arcade Fire?"

Yet as one writer from the blog Urlesque explains, at this time Arcade Fire was "so well-known in indie rock circles that many music snobs have totally stopped dropping their name" (Hathaway). Indeed, the social media that was now flooded with complaints about the winners had initially helped to give the band its following. Before they hit the radio-waves, Arcade Fire established a reputation through intimate performances and word of mouth. Art and entertainment learned a valuable lesson by the end of the 2010 Grammy Awards. There is a conversation occurring beyond the boardrooms of music, film and television, and yes, even publishing.

At the moment, this global dialogue still remains somewhat beyond the ear of traditional marketers and elected experts who tell the audience what they want to hear, watch, or read. This conversation transcends region and demographic. Urbanites and country dwellers, teenagers as well as their parents, the overeducated and the underpaid, all these preconceived categorizations are interrupted by the unconditional conversation regarding art and taste that is chattering ceaselessly at the international water cooler. Instances such as the unexpected success of Arcade Fire reveal that audience has an increasing amount of agency among industries that seek to inform and entertain.

Where should publishers place themselves in this conversation? Of all the art and entertainment industries, the book industry arguably makes the least amount of public appearances. Thankfully, we are not made to walk across a carpet and answer inquiries about who we are wearing. In fact, publishers might tell you they leave the speaking to the authors, and many authors will herald that their work speaks for itself. In a culture of conversation, what is the appropriate level of engagement, indeed even the personal relationship, between publisher, author, and reader? Is it enough to simply have a blog or a Twitter account? How are these platforms used most effectively? Does the responsibility ultimately lie with the author or publisher to engage with the reader? Is this type of engagement genre-specific? Is this the future of publishing?

In an article from the Sunday Book Review section of the New York Times, Anne Trubek investigates authors who tweet and postulates whether it is a good idea. She argues that in the current climate of publishing, many publishers are pushing their authors to create Facebook and Twitter accounts in order to bolster book sales. Trubek goes on to say that the stereotypical attitude of the author is to cloak him or herself in a curtain of anonymity so that attention and criticism remains upon the work and not the author. There are indeed many authors who identify with this type of persona. J.K. Rowling has tweeted nine times, all but two of those tweets are merely reiterations that hers is the account of the verified Rowling, but she prefers to keep writing books over tweeting. However, there are also a growing number of authors who have taken to Twitter for an outlet of creative expression. Margaret Atwood and Salman Rushdie are both very active tweeters and use the media as a platform for both opinion and play.

Recently, Rushdie took to Twitter to respond to his cancelled trip to Mumbai for the Jaipur Literature Festival in light of alleged assassination threats. It was later revealed that the threats were fabricated in order to keep Rushdie from attending and reading from his book *Satanic Verses*. Incensed, Rushdie fired off a string of tweets aimed at his critics. “The hate tweets dribble on.” he writes, “Moronic thinking + bad grammar: good combo. Keep ’em coming, if you want to make your faith look ugly & fascist." He also responded directly to supporters, tweeting back thanks to sympathetic followers. The following month Rushdie used Twitter to propel a campaign to have the book in question removed from the banned books list in India. Once again, Rushdie responded directly to his critics with characteristically biting rebuttals. When one user tweeted "please RUSHDIE dont prmote ur viewz we are sick and tired… [sic]" Rushdie responded, "Feel free to unfollow. I would hate to think of you sick, or even just tired." Rushdie's personal relationship with this media is almost an exception. Certainly not all authors take to Twitter with the same degree of intimacy. Indeed it could be argued that such personal responses to critics from another author might result in a significant amount of PR smoothing by the publisher. Nevertheless, Rushdie has over 230 thousand followers, and you can be certain that more than a few have purchased his books since they began following him.

Margaret Atwood is even more active on Twitter than Rushdie. With over 300 thousand followers, Atwood's Twitter feed boasts over seven thousand posts. Often her comments are characteristically funny and standoffish. For example, recently a follower asked, "I'm giving an in class presentation on *The Door*. Any advice/thoughts for a classroom full of young aspiring poets?" One can assume that the follower was a student and not a teacher, given the label "in class presentation" and not "lecture," and so one might expect Atwood to offer some inspirational advice for the budding poet to share with his peers. Instead Atwood responded "Apart from Get a Day Job? Cause [sic] unless you play guitar + sing, hard to make a living from poetry alone? How about: 'Listen…'" Perhaps this is closer to what we might expect from an author: ask my work what to think of it; don't ask me.

Atwood is almost more personal on Twitter than she can be in person. Recently she retweeted a petition to keep high-rise apartment buildings from being erected near Niagara Falls. The result was a spontaneous conversation generated with a user named "Rotating Skull" who had a profile picture with an appropriately rotating skull.

> Atwood: How do you get the skull to rotate?
>
> Rotating Skull: Pure Evil.
>
> Atwood: Aw c'mon! Share the Secret!
>
> Rotating Skull: I googled for rotating skull .gif, saved it, set it to my Twitter profile, and then offered a sacrifice of goats to Ba'al.
>
> Atwood: I can't believe I'm in a dialogue with a rotating skull. Is this Twitter thing going too far?

Atwood's real conversations with other very real users provide welcome insight into a notoriously private writer who famously does not travel or grant interviews often. It is thanks to Twitter that many readers who will never have an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the author in person have a chance to do so digitally.

Yet both these authors are established personalities with a fan base established far before the invention of Twitter. How are lesser-known authors successfully promoting themselves and their work? New services such as the Independent Author Network (IAN) connect independent authors keen for cross-promotion and support. With the ease and growth of self-publishing, there is a sea of new material available with only their authors invested in marketing. Communities such as IAN facilitate a co-operative public relations organization, for a cost. In essence IAN will accept any author into its database for a one-time low fee. As we have seen time and time again, the crux of self-publishing is the inability to police standards. It takes a lot of work to weed through independent books for one with a high standard of writing. Therefore, it is still ultimately the author's responsibility to maintain personality and accessibility until his or her writing garners enough attention to speak for itself.

One fine example of this new brand of authorship is the recent sensation, Amanda Hocking. A prolific writer since the age of seventeen, Hocking boasts hundreds of rejections from literary agents and publishers. Finally in April of 2010, driven by the need for a quick few-hundred dollars, Hocking elected to place *My Blood Approves*, one of her many unpublished novels on Amazon. Six months later, Hocking had generated over twenty thousand in sales, moving 150 thousand digital units by October of the same year. To date, she has a dozen books available, all self-published. Hocking is not a rags to riches story. She is an example of resilience, hard work, thick skin, and a familiarity of digital services.

Hocking is quick to admit that she has room for improvement. In a post on her blog from August 27, 2010, she speculates that her success has derived from good covers, competitive pricing, a popular genre, book blogger endorsements, and good writing, "although, believe me," she writes, "some people would argue that point." However, Hocking is also dedicated to remaining accessible: "I'm on Twitter, Facebook, Goodreads, Amazon, KB. I'm anywhere I can be. I always try to respond to readers, even though most of my responses are lame. I'll spend about an hour replying to fan mail and it only amounts to about 2 sentences that pretty much say thanks." Six months later and over a million dollars in sales, Hocking still updates her blog at least weekly, and she has rightly described herself as an "obsessive tweeter" with over sixteen thousand tweets to date.

On January 24, 2012 Hocking signed a four book deal with St. Martin's Press. The self-publishing success has agreed to work with the very industry that initially rejected her. Some self-publishing supporters may be inclined to consider this a step backwards; rather, it is evidence that "traditional" publishing houses are relevant, even to the likes of authors heretofore exclusively represented by operations such as Kindle and Smashwords. To begin, publishers have the benefit of reliable editors that will work with the author and relieve some of the pressure of solo production. The editors are familiar with the publisher's continuity and the types of audiences where they have found success, and while it may sound formulaic, it can be a relief to an author like Hocking who has built herself from the ground up.

This is not to say that traditional publishers and new digital publishers are on opposing sides. In an article from The Guardian on January 12, Ed Pilkington quotes Jeremy Trevathan, Macmillan's fiction editor who states "There's a lot of talk about publishers being left out of the loop. But this whole thing is an opportunity for writers and publishers to find each other." Elsewhere, in an article from USA Today on Hocking's success, when asked about the switch to traditional publishing, she expressed her simple desire to reach more readers, remarking that most of her teenaged audience does not own an iPad or an e-reader. Furthermore, publishers know successful self-publishers are less of a gamble than undiscovered talent. Andrew Martin of Minotaur Books at St. Martin's Press remarks that self-published stories are "pre-tested" online before being signed: "It's like the old-fashioned slush pile being road tested -- with the cream rising to the top."

Amanda Hocking's story resembles Arcade Fire's experience at the Grammy's. Bypassing the mainstream, traditional method of distributing creative content, these creators established popularity through grassroots campaigning and personal interaction. Like Arcade Fire, Hocking is only an overnight sensation to audiences who were not privy to the brewing firestorm of success fanned by years of dedication. There is no doubt when Hocking's books go to print there will be a new generation of readers oblivious to her history.

How does the realistic dialogue between author and reader appear online? Is there more to this dialogue than the fan appreciation and a quick thank you from the author such as Hocking suggests? At its core, Twitter is a messaging service. Authors can choose to interact with their readers as Atwood, Rushdie, and Hocking do or, like Rowling, they can let Twitter be. The nature of this platform is that it is spontaneous, organic, unmediated. Yet readers are formalizing discussion in the digital space. With sites such as Goodreads and Amazon relying on user-generated reviews as a key component of their business model, the reader has more agency in this industry than ever before.

In 2010, Barbara Hoffert wrote an article in The Library Journal about the changing landscape of the book review. In it, she suggests that with the increasing popularity of these sites, book talk is thriving. "Reviewing is no longer centralized with a few big voices leading the way," Hoffert explains, "but fractured among numerous multifarious voices found mostly on the web. In turn, readers aren't playing the captive audience anymore" (22). Readers are claiming their significance in the evaluation of literature. New media offers readers a platform to express their opinions, and they are doing so with enthusiasm. It is this empowerment that has redefined the role of the reader from "captive audience" to active participant.

Unfortunately, much like the flood of mediocre books in the self-publishing field, reviewing-made-easy creates a congestion of poor reviews. "Anyone can blog," Hoffert writes, "or post a consumer rating or review, or register an online comment, but, famously, not every blog is bearable reading, not every consumer review insightful, not every comment exactly what's needed to nail the book. Some judgments are worth more than others; the question is how we judge" (23). Yet before judging the quality of the reviews, it is worth examining the quantity of reviews. Even if the majority of reviews for a popular book encompass simple comments such as, "I liked this," or "this was boring," the sheer volume of reviews unquestionably reveals that a book is being read. In addition, simple reviews breed critical readers. Hoffert explains that "the pervasive anonymity of the web can make following standout writers a challenge, so dedicated readers focus on what grabs them, cultivate an ability to spot fakes and grandstanders, and recognize that some subjects (e.g., genre fiction) are better treated by committed amateurs than others (e.g., history)" (24). In other words, the volume of reviews running the gamut from poor to exceptional conditions the reader to approach reviews critically in order to judge who is a reliable reviewer.

True, this type of critical thinking requires a substantial amount of reading heretofore unnecessary when relying on professional reviewers. However, reading more accumulates a review with multiple voices, and acknowledges that literature addresses a multitude of needs and opinions. Hoffert remarks:

"The golden ideal of the authority-driven review has been challenged by the conversation the Internet facilitates, where special interests are pursued energetically. A blog offers an impassioned reader's personal slant, and a consumer review is perhaps an informed read and perhaps a stab in the back by a jealous competitor. Anyone can post, and an opinion is just an opinion until you start winkling out the depth of understanding behind it. But most book talk on the web isn't trying to emulate work by seasoned critics. It's a different beast entirely, generally striving for conviction rather than objectivity, advice but not hierarchy; the goal is ultimately participation" (23-24).

The crux of the user-generated review lies in the act of participation. Book forums, along with other forms of digital media, facilitate a culture where the elite authority no longer has the loudest voice. Furthermore, unlike professional reviewers, reviews generated on virtual bookshelves are not driven by economics. Instead, comments evidence the desire to participate in a conversation. "Some want to be part of a conversation for the sake of conversation," suggests Hoffert, "others to contribute to that conversation so they can see their names on the screen (why else would anyone want to be the 1,562nd commenter on Larsson?). Some want to learn about the subject, others simply to be entertained or to confirm impressions of a book they've finished" (25). Online reading communities create a designated space where readers can participate in the discussion of literature without regurgitating the acclaimed authoritative voice of the professional reviewer. As a result, the discussions generated in these digital spaces are more authentic than the unidirectional relationship of professional reviewer and captive audience.

Online industry leader, Amazon has recognized the flood of reviewers and incorporated a useful qualifier into its platform. Not only can a user review and rate content, but they also allow users to rate reviewers. This type of self-aware criticism is a product of the anthologized and unending conversation that continues well after the book is released.

One of the most successful online reading communities is Goodreads. Launched in December, 2006, its members track books they have read or want to read, compare book lists to other users, and form book clubs on the website. Its mission statement declares that it intends to "get people excited about reading. Along the way, we plan to improve the process of reading and learning throughout the world." There are a number of innovative services offered by the site; for example, Goodreads offers an author program, where an author can make a free profile in order to publicize recent work, advertise public appearances, communicate through a blog, and share his or her own virtual bookshelf with followers. Goodreads also enlists the assistance of volunteer "librarians" to edit and tag content in order to improve Goodreads' catalogue, providing a significant role in a burgeoning community.

Goodreads also offers a large network of user-generated reading groups centered on specific theme or genre. There are groups for fans of Victorian literature, vampires, mystery novels, and groups centered on role playing (an entirely different cultural phenomena generated by online communities which publishing might do well to examine) inspired by fiction. Not only can users read book-specific reviews generated by the greater community of users, they can also chat about common themes within a specific community, participate in a chapter-by-chapter discussion of a specific novel, or contribute to the group's own virtual bookshelf. In addition, Goodreads has a monthly newsletter which not only informs users of all new releases, but specifically points to new releases by authors featured on the user's bookshelf. The ability to interact with specific types of readers through these specialized groups, along with a customized newsletter creates a dialogue between users and providers, and the generated content provides important information about what is considered popular to the general masses, and not simply the professional reviewer.

So far I have demonstrated how authors acknowledge readers, and how readers discuss books. It would seem the most productive arrangement in digital media would be to have authors and their readers discuss books with each other as well as the organization that created the books. Traditionally, book tours with scheduled public readings have been an established way to generate public interest. Now with the convenience and accessibility of digital media, authors can do virtual book tours, gaining access to a readership heretofore limited by geographic location. Goodreads has achieved great results with these types of author events.

There are three notable ways that Goodreads bridges the gap between readers and the authors they read. First, Goodreads sponsors live chats with authors roughly twice a month where readers are able to ask questions and interact with other users in a casual setting. These events are moderated due to the large volume of participants; however, the tone of the conversation is most often informal and inviting. Often these chats are accompanied by video so the audience can see the author, which provides an intriguing level of intimacy because the authors may choose to conduct the chat in their home office or place of personal sentiment.

In addition to the sponsored live chats, Goodreads also features "Goodreads authors." These are authors who have accounts where they blog, join discussion groups, and participate in reviewing and supporting other books they enjoy. It is a symbiotic relationship in that the more an author participates in the culture of the site, thereby generating more traffic, the more Goodreads will feature the author, whereby the author then generates more visibility among users. There is an interesting dynamic at play in this process, because as much as the exposure is controlled by the author and not the reader in this instance, the author is gaining such exposure by participating in this service as a reader. That is to say, readers are able to view the author's virtual bookshelf complete with his or her current reads, favourite books, and books slated to read in the future. In this sense, the author propels his or her image by participating in the same types of activities as the readers, creating a sort of empathetic bond. It turns the old adage of I write because I am a fan of literature with something to say into a marketing platform.

Finally Goodreads has allowed its users a space to conduct their own author discussions. Reading groups are at liberty to use Goodread's provided forums for discussion with authors who agree to participate. These discussions are run entirely by the users who seek out, invite, and organize interviews, discussions, or question and answer sessions with authors who agree to participate. Typically, the authors who participate in these reading group discussions are self-published, or represented by independent publishers. One such group that has successfully conducted a large number of these "Q and A" sessions is the group "Writers and Readers," created and moderated by self-published author from Nova Scotia, A. F. Stewart. In 2010, Stewart began hosting discussions with authors, beginning with members of her own community. Soon word of mouth spread regarding the success of these discussions, and eager authors began to contact her, requesting to participate. For over a year, Stewart has arranged nearly bi-weekly author Q and As with readers who may or may not be familiar with the author's work. The result has been free promotion for the author, a modest surge in sales around the date of the discussion, and reader exposure.

It may seem as though this model only suits authors of fiction. Is online discussion only fit for fiction and fans? While examples are easier to come by when dealing with fiction, in fact, authors in all genres are participating in digital discussions on sites such as Goodreads as well as Twitter. On the Goodreads site there is a small science subcategory under the authors heading with discussions centering on authors and recent publications with topics including health, biology, anthropology, and neuroscience. Its current most popular discussion is "Neuroscience of Reading and Writing," hosted by Livia Blackburne, author of *From Words to Brain* (2010). While these discussions certainly don't take the place of peer-reviews, they are a valuable tool for determining whether a target audience and an actual audience are cohesive.

In addition, scholars are increasingly migrating to Twitter in order to share ideas and articles with their peers. Jason Priem recently conducted a study on academics and Twitter, and found that one in forty academics use Twitter and at an average rate of five times a week. He notes that the benefit of these tweets is the ephemeral anthology of ideas which would not otherwise survive for the posterity of future scholarship. "These backstage activities," Priem writes, "are now increasingly tagged, catalogued, and archived on blogs, Mendeley, Twitter, and elsewhere." Academics share links to articles of interest, update peers on current projects, and they even use the social media to socialize. George

Hoberg, an environmental/natural resource policy professor at the University of British Columbia is an active Twitter user. He shares articles of importance as well as personal findings regarding environmental policy, and his twitter feed is flooded daily with followers joining the conversation. In addition, Hoberg is a contributor to the blog GreenPolicyProf where in at least one post he cites content from climate blogger for the New York Times, Andrew Revkin's Twitter.

With dialogue running through the channels of Twitter and blogs, it is only natural that ideas sparked from these conversations eventually make appearances in conferences and subsequent publications. Certainly many of us have already experienced the announcement of predetermined hash tags at conferences so that we may tweet along as the events progress. These types of discourse not only act as preliminary discussion leading up to conferences, they also allow the conversation to continue on a grand scale once the participants disperse from the physical gathering place. Indeed, these hash tag discussions are arguably conferences in and of themselves.

Where should the publisher fit in this unit? Is it not the publisher's job to take a backstage role in the author/reader relationship? Is it not the sign of a good publisher when it appears as though it was never there? Certainly it is the publisher's job to market the creator and his or her content, but shouldn't the author's name and not the publisher's be at the forefront of the reader's mind? In the current state of the book industry, I would argue that the publisher should have a public persona. It should be bold, boisterous, and enthusiastic.

Publishers are foremost a brand with a cohesive line of products. They publish what they know and what is known to work well for them. They also admire their authors. Work is chosen because the decision makers at the publishing house find talent and intrigue in the content the author develops. Here readers and publishers have something in common. Publishers are fans too.

Some publishers are already successfully using this level of intimacy in their public relations. Random House has a fantastic social media co-ordinator. The publisher's Twitter feed is extremely active with almost twelve thousand tweets to date. It boasts a followers list of over 280 thousand, and more impressive than that, Random House follows over 27 thousand Twitter users. It is evident that Random House is plugged into the culture surrounding art and entertainment, and they are most certainly informed of real time changes in the pop culture climate. Among promotional material for upcoming titles, tweets include quotes from famous authors, articles of interest to current events, creative writing prompts, and even personal current reads. In addition, the website provided in the profile section of Random House's Twitter is not their official website, but instead it is a link to their Pinterest page. A quick perusal of this page reveals a library of images featuring not only their publications, but thoughtful lists such as banned books, favourite books from our childhood, and amazing places to read. The content and tone generated by Random House's twitter feed exemplifies the real, passionate individuals working extremely hard to produce the content that its readers enjoy.

Another publishing house that has embraced digital media, reader interaction, and Jeremy Trevathan's comment about the pre-tested slushpile is Pubslush Press. Part innovative publishing house, part charity, Pubslush is taking reader involvement to a new level. Authors submit a synopsis and a ten page sample of their work along with a larger excerpt. The work then goes through a reader review process. First the reader browses the brief synopsis. If it is intriguing enough then the reader can access the brief sample. If there is still interest in the work then he or she may download the larger excerpt. Finally, if the piece has generated enough interest then the reader may "support" the book. This is essentially like pre-ordering, only the user does not pay unless the book is published. If 1000 users contribute to the book within 120 days then it will go to print and all those who supported the book receive a copy.

A key component of Pubslush's production model is user interaction. Their open forum allows readers to provide feedback directly to the author while the book is still in the editorial phase. Readers are provided with the agency to influence the type of storytelling they want to see, while authors gain first-hand information about the type of writing their readers want to read. In addition, Pubslush has a charitable component embedded in their marketing plan: for every book sold Pubslush promises to donate one book for a child in need. It is unclear whether this book will be one of Pubslush's own titles, or perhaps something guaranteed to be child appropriate.

At the time of this publication, Pubslush is still in its infancy and has yet to meet a target and publish a book. However, similar models such as Kickstarter (the charitable inspiration for Pubslush) have recently garnered enough attention to prove successful. In addition, there are a number of concerns with Pubslush's publication agreement. To begin, Pubslush agrees to an initial print run of 2500 copies. In an already flooded market, this seems like a large run for an author's first publication. In addition, if the book is selected for publication the author will receive a publishing bonus of $5000 on top of royalties for books sold beyond the users who initially supported the book. For a company that has yet to publish, let alone profit from a single book, it seems perhaps too optimistic to be offering signing bonuses so large to all its authors. Finally, it is unclear what Pubslush intends to do in order to market its publications outside of its already established social media outlets. If Pubslush lacks the resources to market beyond these platforms then there is no real reason for an author to choose Pubslush over successful self-publishing options already on the market. Nevertheless, whatever their future success, Pubslush has acknowledged that the consumer is informed with a strong opinion, and eager to engage in a conversation about the products he or she is willing to purchase.

What would I as a reader like to hear, or rather read, in the voice of the publisher? I would like to know someone's name. I would like to be told that Anne in public relations read my twitter post and agrees that books about wizards are better than books about vampires. I would like to know that their senior editor has a goldfish named after her favourite brand of pen. I would like to be asked my opinion on dust jackets and french flaps—even if ultimately my opinion won't change an upcoming book design. I would like to know that the division in charge of updating Twitter and the company blog are elated that the new publication is off the presses. I do not want to read a press release that says such; I want a conversational remark.

I think Goodreads should partner with publishers and allow them to set up profiles complete with virtual bookshelves, author Q and A, and forum discussion. Readers should have the opportunity to recognize publishers as one might know film studios or even sports teams. Publishers are more than the sum of their parts, their authors. We should remember the "golden age of publishing" when famed editor Maxwell Perkins had his trifecta, Hemingway, Wolfe, and Fitzgerald. Publishers should cross promote their authors to maximize audience exposure. Readers should be fans of the house as well as its tenants. I am not suggesting that traditional publishing is out of touch with all readership. In fact, I would argue that publishers are more in touch with the changing climate than the music or film industry. We have had the luxury of witnessing the commotion brought on by pirating and dissension toward corporate authority in these other art and entertainment sectors, and we have fought hard to ensure we will not fall into the same ruts. I am merely suggesting that it is easier now more than ever to interact with the consumer and it would be unwise to appear hesitant. In any customer-based service it is essential to appear attentive and express interest in the client's needs. Satisfying clients generates brand loyalty which carries great economic strength. To put it bluntly, there is no way to determine the future of publishing. With rapidly changing technology and fluid trends it is impossible to predict what publishing will look like in five years – even one year – from now. What we can determine is our behaviour, and we need to embrace open and intimate communication.

I would like to finish with a brief case study of the merits of author accessibility. Submitted here is an example of the sort of loyalty created by interaction and the author/reader community. What might have been a publishing fiasco and a public relations crisis was, in fact, a lesson on class, loyalty, and professionalism.

John Green is the author of four novels and co-author of a fifth. His first novel, *Looking For Alaska* was published in 2005 and won the Michael L. Printz award in 2006. His second book *An Abundance of Katherines* was a Michael L. Printz Honor book and a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in 2007. That same year, Green began posting a series of Youtube videos with his brother Hank Green. Posting under the title "Vlogbrothers," the Green brothers have amassed a viewership of over 664 thousand with a combined total of over twenty million views. The brothers have since launched subsequent Youtube channels, are both very active on Tumblr and Twitter, and they created a popular charity called *Project for Awesome* which recently raised over seventy thousand dollars for a variety of user-chosen charities. They have also created a loyal community of followers who call themselves Nerdfighters. In summary, the Greens have harnessed the vast opportunities present in the digital universe and created a multi-channelled, poly-focused presence.

John Green on *The Fault in Our Stars*

There Will Be No Spoilers!

In June of 2011, Green announced the release of his much anticipated fifth book, *The Fault in Our Stars*. Green and his publisher went to great lengths to ensure this was a special publication. Green personally autographed the first print run of 150 thousand copies. His brother and wife also signed a small number of copies, creating variants of which book collectors dreams are made. A nationwide tour was booked which included not only Green the author, but also his musician brother who provided a musical component to the event. Pre-orders rolled in like a printing press and the book was slated to be Green's most successful to date.

Then, on December 22, three weeks prior to the official publication date, Green released a statement on his blog stating that Barnes and Noble had accidentally shipped over one thousand pre-orders prematurely. Green explained that he and his publisher, Penguin, had worked very hard to ensure that every reader had the opportunity to read the book on the same day, spoiler-free. This meant that they had abstained from sending advance copies to reviewers, foreign publishers, and film executives, all in the spirit of communal fairness. For a shipping error to ruin the surprise was to Green a great disappointment. However, despite the error, Green remained humble in his response. He treated the parties involved at Barnes and Noble with courtesy and respect, and responded with humility and restraint. Green implored his readers to keep the upcoming book spoiler free and in his later Youtube video thanked Amazon and other independent book sellers for respecting the original publication date[1].

1 http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=fOuGTNYGi7Y

The community reacted the way one might expect a loyal community to react. They respected the author and the work. Dozens of readers pledged publicly to abstain from reading the book. Others explained they would read it, but promised not to spoil it. This video is evidence that personal interaction with readers is in and of itself the most positive publicity. What might have been the publishing scandal of the year was instead a brief statement, hundreds of reader responses in solidarity, and a conclusive video message.

I am not suggesting that publishers adopt a level of discourse involving virtual hugs and serenading plush toys or that authors must reiterate the value of community during all their public appearances. The type of interaction between Green and his readers has been cultivated through years of communication, and this type of community spirit is valued by his readership. In addition, it is unrealistic to assume that all authors have as entertaining personas as Green. Certainly not all authors are expected to have a way with verbal rants. What I am suggesting is that loyalty generated by any type of intimacy mitigates an environment where readers are less likely to show frustration and more likely to empathize. Keeping readers informally informed fosters an invested brand loyalty. I am also suggesting that publishers are strength in numbers. What will always set the traditional publisher apart from the self publisher is a staff of experts. It is imperative that in a culture where everyone has a voice the publisher insures that its voice is worth hearing. That it belongs to someone worth talking to.

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Special thanks to John Green for permission to repost his video "There Will Be NO SPOILERS!!!" in this chapter.

Three thoughts about the Alternative Futures for the Business We Currently Call Publishing

– Donna Livingstone

1. Academic publishers can lead the way.

Academic presses enjoy a privileged location within knowledge incubators that nourish innovation, encourage experimentation, and showcase new ways of thinking. We are surrounded by library colleagues who have a pipeline into how our audiences want to receive information and by technologists who are seeking innovative new means of delivering content. Why aren't we taking advantage of that?

Academic publishers brandish the gold standard of peer review as a confirmation of academic excellence in monographs, journal articles, and edited volumes. It justifies our existence, sets us apart. But research takes many shapes and academic excellence shines through many forms, all of which can be considered a way of publishing – of making the story public. What would it mean if we developed peer-review for dance, music, or theatrical performances, and gallery and museum exhibitions? What about datasets? Can we develop new ways of peer-reviewing First Nations oral history accounts? Does peer-review always have to be blind?

In most university settings, academic presses are considered "ancillary" services, like parking lots. Parking lots make money, the reasoning goes, and you sell things; therefore, you should make money. This thinking, if it ever worked, makes absolutely no sense in a time of closing bookstores, digital-preferred library buying, and high shipping and storage costs. We are stumbling over 19th century delivery models, paralyzing bibliographic entries, and trying to cram 300-page monographs into a hand-held device without considering new ways of presenting the information.

The paradigm has to shift and we have to move it. We must position ourselves as an integral part of the academic process. People come to universities to be inspired, to research, to create, and finally (and crucially) to *disseminate* their findings. University research doesn't have a point if no one reads it, discusses it, or challenges it. As academic publishers, we need to boldly claim our leading role as an "essential" service to the scholarly process.

Open access publishing offers an inclusive, hospitable approach to the dissemination of research. Since much research has been supported through public grants, there is a clear obligation to make the material freely available. More important, the open access movement, driven now by students, calls for a loosening of control over how knowledge is shared.

And sometimes it just makes sense.

The University of Calgary Press publishes a series called Africa: Missing Voices. We publish emerging African scholars on topics of local governance and issues such as the role of traditional chiefs at a time of HIV AIDS. Important research, but we publish it in Calgary with a small print run. It costs $50 to ship a book to Africa and distribution systems there are shaky at best.

The motto of our Press is "Making a difference. Making you think." We knew that the writing made you think, but it wasn't making a difference if no one had access to it. So we went to our authors and asked them for permission to make their research open access. They were glad to do this. Happy to think that their research might make a difference, might help build capacity in Ghana, Botswana, or South Africa. That it might change public policy.

If this works in Africa, why wouldn't we want the whole world to have access to all of our research?

Changing our thinking and our approach hasn't affected our bottom line. We are finding that the online version allows people to browse, then order the printed book which we are usually able to provide print on demand.

It's not enough to post up a pdf of a book, pat ourselves on the back, and say we are open access publishers. If a paradigm is to truly shift, we need to be able to prove to our authors, our institutions, and our readers, that the way we are now working is having a greater impact. That our reach is greater and stronger than traditional publishing methods.

There are no clear tools for measuring publishing success. Sales and citations have been the traditional indicators, and tools such as Google Analytics give us tantalizing glimpses into readership. It's exciting to think that our book has been viewed by 176 people in Russia, but what does that mean?

In 2011, the University of Calgary Press worked with a consultant, Go-to-Group of Calgary, in identifying ways of embedding an open access approach into the entire publishing system at the Press. It was clear that we go beyond simple surveys once the book was published, we needed to engage them in the process much earlier through Web 2.0 activities and more dynamic interaction with our authors and partners.

There are encouraging signs. The University of Calgary Press is proud to partner with NiCHE, the Network of Canadian History in Environment, http://niche-canada.org/ a group of some 300 educators and scholars looking at the history of the country through an environmental lens. NiCHE came to us because we are open access and we are working with them on a five-book series. Our first book, *A Century of Parks Canada 1910–2009* edited by Claire Elizabeth Campbell, received national attention, was promoted extensively with podcasts, websites, social media and course adoptions. We have already sold out the first print run of a thousand copies and are now printing on demand. We have learned a great deal from NiCHE about the value of working with an open and innovative group of both distinguished and emerging scholars who are looking at the world in fresh ways. Their website is dynamic with podcasts, fresh news, streaming videos, and research ideas. It is a breathing publication on its own.

2. Publishing is a verb

Publishing books isn't done for the money or for the fame. Funding is limited, sales are decreasing, and even a warm review may take several years. Authors and publishers want to make a difference. They want to change the way you look at the world. They want to start a dialogue.

Thomas King, the First Nations, in his powerful collection of essays, *The Truth About Stories* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 2003) speaks to this responsibility of storytellers and, by extension, publishers. Each essay is about some aspect of First Nations experience, from baseball to Genesis, often juxtaposed with a White perspective. At the end of each chapter, King "gives" the story to the reader, saying they can pass it on, turn it into a play or a blog, or just forget it. But he ends each story with an admonition: "Don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now."

King's message speaks to an open, inclusive publishing model. He acknowledges the exchange between the reader and the writer and suggests there is a life and a consequence of our stories beyond their first appearance.

Then he "gives" the story away, inviting the reader to shape the story in new ways.

Maybe it's time for a "slow publishing" movement in which we spend more time with our authors, form deeper networks around our publishing themes, become more creative in how we promote what we do.

The people we are trying to reach are on the move, downloading movies into their palms, mixing up music and sound. They may be fourteen years old or they may be seventy. They want to be consulted, they want to talk back, to take the conversation to the next level. While the world around us is living in the very active tense, are we doing our authors and their readers a disservice by presenting only one "hide-bound" approach?

John Seeley Brown, visiting scholar at the University of Southern California, has written several books on radical innovation, learning and pedagogy. He says that when students are passion-driven, they are voracious readers and will turn out astronomical amounts of stuff about what they're reading. The traditional model of a "sage on stage" teacher pushing content to students no longer works. Students have to be engaged, they learn collaboratively from each other, peer mentorship is key, and they use digital media as "curiosity amplifiers".

(Seeley was part of a radio panel on Open Source Knowledge for CBC Radio's fascinating "Recivilization" series starting on January 24, 2012.

Do our books amplify curiosity and do we provide resources to satisfy that curiosity in timely and provocative ways? For example, we recently published a wonderful book called *Hearts and Minds, Romance in Canada, 1900 to 1930* by Dan Azoulay. We should be Twittering quotes from that book in time for Valentine's Day to make a connection between early love-advice columns and online dating today.

A breath-taking example of the potential of new books is the iPad digital book developed by Mike Matas and announced, appropriately enough, through a TED talk, "Our Choice," Al Gore's sequel to "An Inconvenient Truth." is a beautiful blend of images, text, background content, browseability all available at the touch of a gliding hand. This is the model we should be looking to, not trying to force a 19th century constructed text into the technology in our lap or hand.

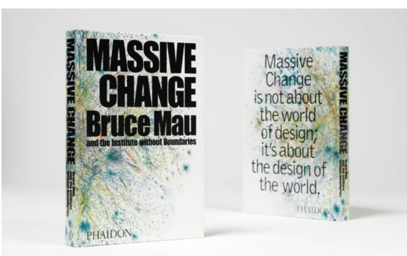
The key to our future, I think, lies in that blurry boundary land where the content "goes live" with the audience. When the audiences starts to talk back. When what we do really starts to make a difference. When the noun changes into a verb.

Tom Wayman eloquently discusses the unexplored potential of boundaries in the introduction to his book, *Boundary Stories* (2007) where he writes:

> The stories of this collection reflect my interest in the places and moment we encounter a boundary. My concerns include the line between self and others, between individuals and their community. Fascinating to me is the limit that distinguishes employment from

servitude, education from indoctrination, the artificial from the natural. I am intrigued by the location in space and time where love first manifests itself, or crosses into obsession, or dissipates. I consider important where history becomes memory, a goal stiffens into an expectation, desire transforms to belief, and the ghosts of rejected possibilities haunt the choices we have made or that have been imposed upon us.

WAYMAN, THOMAS, BOUNDARY STORIES
(SASKATOON: THISTLEDOWN PRESS, 2007) P. 9



The examples, more often than not, can be found outside traditional publishing. Robert LePage's recent production Blue Dragon combined visual effects, music, theatre, sound and story in an evocative and inclusive way. The production was accompanied by a beautiful large-format graphic representation of the production. Simply written with stunning artwork, the book serves as a theatre guide for future productions. Instead of simple stage instructions, it illustrates the possibilities, including three alternate endings.

3. It's not about the world of publishing, it's about publishing the world.

For three months, from October 2, 2004 to January 3, 2005, the Vancouver Art Gallery hosted *Massive Change*, a huge messy, in-your-face exhibition by Bruce Mau and the Institute without Borders.

The exhibition, with the tagline "It's not about the world of design, it's about the design of the world," challenged audiences' expectations of art exhibitions, introduced guerilla marketing through lawn signs and social media, and had the whole town talking through a combination of exhibition, interactive website, talks by leading thinkers and challenges to concepts of sustainability, third world commerce, military, image overload, and recycling beauty.

It worked because the art gallery understood that its audience – young, visually savvy, and concerned about the planet – wanted to receive information in many ways. That they were ready to receive it from a trusted institution. Membership in the gallery doubled. There are lessons here for publishers about understanding our audience, diversifying our messages, and strengthening community-based marketing.

At the London Book Fair in 2009, in a session called "Who are the Writers of Tomorrow?" a panel of publishers spoke about new genres, graphic novels, and the latest *Harry Potter* phenomenon. Then a young Asian man got up and introduced himself as a writer from Korea now living in the UK. The writers of tomorrow, he said, are coming from countries where traditions, expectations and social mores are being challenged. They are writing out of places of upheaval and enormous change. And they are writing on their phones, their laptops, in manga, in gangsta rap lyrics, and in books. We need to listen.

Publishers often feel like monks whose robes are caught in Gutenberg's printing press. Technology is transforming our industry every day and there is no room on the corner of our desks to reinvent ourselves or even experiment.

It's easy to break into a rash at all the choices and challenges and to cling to structures that are dissolving around us. The futures of our business lie in our audiences as much as our authors. They are inventing the new vocabularies, new ways of reading the world, and we need to listen with open hearts and minds.

In the midst of all this change and uncertainty, there is one consoling thought to guide us: It doesn't matter how you read the world, only that you do.

Publish or Perish: reinventing academic publishing in the wake of the University's collapse

– Paul Martin

The prevailing pragmatism forced upon the academic group is that one must write something and get it into print. Situation imperatives dictate a 'publish or perish' credo within the ranks.

– Logan Wilson, *The Academic Man: A Study in the Sociology of a Profession*

The beaneries are on their knees to these gents. They regard them as Santa Claus. They will do 'research on anything' that Santa Claus approves. They will think his thoughts as long as he will pay the bill for getting them before the public signed by the profesorry-rat. 'Publish or Perish' is the beanery motto. To get published they must be dull, stupid and harmless. (226)

–Marshall McLuhan, letter to Ezra Pound, June 22, 1951

"It's snowing still," said Eeyore gloomily.

"So it is."

"And freezing."

"Is it?"

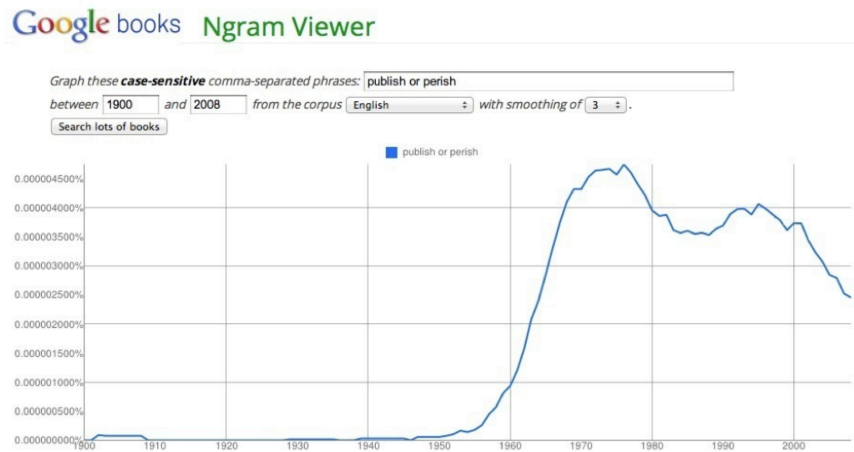
"Yes," said Eeyore. "However," he said, brightening up a little, "we haven't had an earthquake lately."

– A. A. Milne, *The House at Pooh Corner* 11

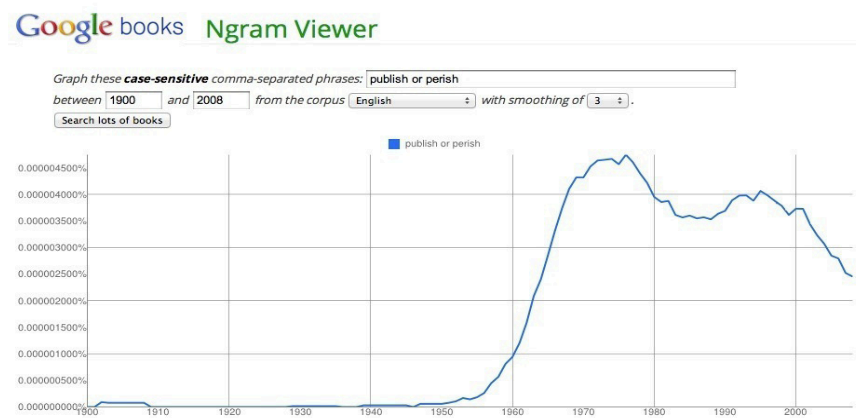
Publish or Perish

The notion of "publish or perish" is so commonplace that it is one of the few things non-academics will routinely mention when casual conversation occasionally turns to the question of one's own scholarly writing. For a junior faculty member or graduate student, though, this phrase is more than a maxim reminding them that publishing is important; it is the omnipresent, internalized mantra that seems to draw a clear line between the arduous path to academic success and the quick and easy road to, at the very least, failure. While one might imagine the imperative to publish or perish to be a relatively new phenomenon, a symptom of the age of academic hyper-specialization and the ever-growing dismissal of teaching as a university's primary mission, this is far from the case. Although a search of Google Books now reveals to us examples of this phrase being used as early as 1927, attempts to discover the origin of this phrase nearly always cite Logan Wilson's 1942 book *The Academic Man: A Study in the Sociology of a Profession* as the first published instance. Wilson sees this pressure as one that is mostly connected to the acquiring of prestige: "the prevailing pragmatism forced upon the academic group is that one much write something and get it into print" (197). Note in Wilson's description that writing and publishing are two separate activities, seemingly of equal value. He goes on to indicate, however, that the act of publishing is the most crucial for survival: "Situational imperatives dictate a 'publish or perish' credo within the ranks" (197).

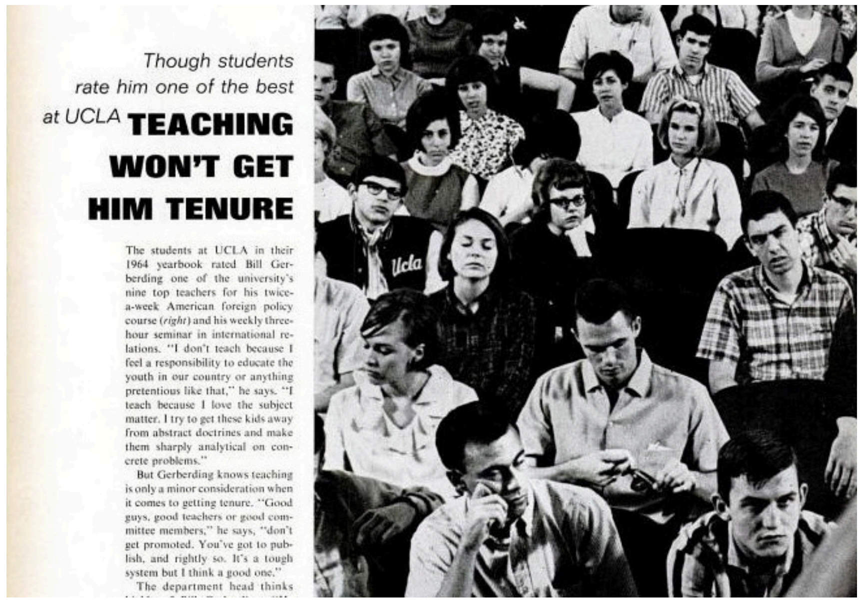
A second frequently noted use of this term comes in a 1951 letter from Marshall McLuhan to Ezra Pound in which he mocks the universities (the "beaneries" as he and Pound call them) and their "professory-rat" who will publish anything to please those who will fund their research. The incessant call to publish or perish – "the beanery motto" – does not yield, in McLuhan's eyes, worthwhile or cutting-edge scholarship; he describes as "dull, stupid and harmless" those who blithely answer this call by publishing unimaginative scholarship solely in order to get work in print (McLuhan 226). One finds throughout the early use of the phrase "publish or persish" the same general idea, though not the savagely critical tone, of McLuhan's excoriation of those who focus more on the goal of getting published than on the production of sound scholarly work. Indeed, in 1939 there are two instances of this phrase being used in relation to Harvard University after it gained some notoriety for denying reappointment to two faculty members in Economics, ostensibly due to their lack of promise as scholars. In Harvard's "Report on the terminating appointments of Dr. J.R. Walsh and Dr. A.R. Sweezy," one of the faculty is said to have argued that "the 'publish or perish' legend … has led me to publish material that could have been improved by further research." This "pressure to publish," he argued, "is without any question harmful to intellectual development in most cases" in that it "increase[s] quantity at the expense of quality" (58). Two years later, the British review *The Fortnightly* lamented the growing influence in England of those "who introduced the principle of 'publish or perish' with a vengeance into America's oldest university. Indeed English universities, even Oxford and Cambridge, which have been most scornful toward these German-American methods, are adopting them rather shamefacedly.”



As one this report from the Google Books Ngram Viewer reveals, the term “publish or perish” saw a peak in its usage in the 1960s and 1970s as both academia and the popular media began to question increasing professionalization and hyperspecialization of university faculty.



There might be no better example of the popularization of the "publish-or-perish" approach to academic merit and promotion than the Life Magazine feature "A Teacher Sweats it Out" from 1965. The feature, the third part of a series on "College Pressure," follows "crack political scientist" (61) William Gerberding who struggles to complete the book necessary to gain tenure. "In today's pressures for excellence in college education," the article explains, "the professor is the man pressed by everybody. [...] Today's ideal college teacher is a powerhouse scholar who is also a mover and a shaker, both on campus and in the outside world" (57). At UCLA, according to Life, of the 175 new instructors hired annually, "nearly half never get tenure" (57). "Unless [Gerberding] finishes [his book] and it is good, he says, 'the university will tell me, 'We've milked you for years, here's your pink slip.''" With the demands of family, teaching – “STUDENTS PURSUE HIM” a headline proclaims–and the “irrelevant pain in the neck” committee meetings – the odds of winning tenure do not look to be in his favour. Furthermore, his annual salary at UCLA ($9000 a year) is so low for Los Angeles standards that it “leaves nothing over for babysitters, concerts, or liquor” (62).


Though students rate him one of the best at UCLA **TEACHING WON'T GET HIM TENURE**

The students at UCLA in their 1964 yearbook rated Bill Gerberding one of the university's nine top teachers for his twice-a-week American foreign policy course (*right*) and his weekly three-hour seminar in international relations. "I don't teach because I feel a responsibility to educate the youth in our country or anything pretentious like that," he says. "I teach because I love the subject matter. I try to get these kids away from abstract doctrines and make them sharply analytical on concrete problems."

But Gerberding knows teaching is only a minor consideration when it comes to getting tenure. "Good guys, good teachers or good committee members," he says, "don't get promoted. You've got to publish, and rightly so. It's a tough system but I think a good one."

The department head thinks

The story about Professor William Gerberding is followed immediately in the magazine by a further warning of the dark side of academic pressure, this time told by someone who "perished" rather than published. In his piece "It's 'Publish or Perish,'" Woodrow Wilson Sayre, formerly an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Tufts, argues against the practice of defining "productive scholarship" in terms of the quantity of work someone has published and the discounting of teaching in tenure decisions. The way in which the "publish or perish" approach so heavily weights scholarship over teaching, he contends, has not only diminished the quality of teaching at American universities, it has also produced a surplus of second-rate scholarship: "The publish-or-perish policy does not even help a university toward its avowed goal of expanding knowledge. As the policy is adopted more widely, volume of publication becomes unmanageable and quality deteriorates. There simply is not that much to say that is important; what a hopeless flood of words it would be if every faculty member in United States should publish just one article a year! The volume of most subjects is already so great that the finished material cannot be evaluated or appreciated – or often even found" (66). While Gerberding is pictured over and over again in an extensive photo essay, Sayres is not depicted whatsoever. In fact, the only photograph on the one page devoted to Sayre's take on the issue depicts William Gerberding in a serious conversation with his department chair, Richard Longaker, the caption of the photo noting that the Chair finds Gerberding "brilliant" (66). As the Editor's introduction to this piece remarks, to no one's surprise, the publish or perish policy Sayres attacks is one "which both Bill Gerberding and the officials at UCLA strongly support" (66).

Although Sayres is quite right that the ever-increasing pressure to "publish or perish," whether today or back in 1965, is rooted in the desire by universities for prestige and the appearance of rigor and professionalism, his opinion on the matter seems even then to have been a minority one. After all, who cannot but admire the hard work and dedication of "crack political scientist" Bill Gerberding, who will, undoubtedly, expect the same sacrifices of young faculty who will endeavour to follow in his footsteps. What makes this model so pervasive and so effective in its own self-preservation is, first, its very appeal to that Protestant work ethic and to the American dream; the guarantee is that if one works hard enough and publishes enough then one will be rewarded with tenure, which offers both security and prestige. Second, this system stays in place because of the power that the institution has to insist that young scholars suffer the same trials and rites of initiation their elders underwent. Tenure, by rewarding people with the ultimate job security, also rewards the institution with the certainty that those employees will likely never leave. This helps protect that institution, making it safe from outside or disruptive influences that could challenge the status quo. The power of the tenured professoriate has remained a crucial component to the functioning of universities from their earliest origins of the tenure system. This hegemony, however, I will argue, is in a downward slide from which it may never recover. The reasons for this are twofold: first, because the university's ability to reproduce itself effectively is, admittedly at some institutions more than others, on the verge of collapse and, second, because virtually every university has failed to imagine that this could ever happen.

Between today's anemic academic job market and the increasingly challenged world of academic publishing, the either/or bargain at the heart of "publish or perish" is no longer a certainty. While it is true that few if any current PhD graduates will ever land a tenure-track job without publications in hand and that few faculty members will achieve tenure without "significant" publication, it is also entirely possible (and indeed quite likely) that one might both publish AND perish. Tenure-track jobs continue to diminish in number despite an aging professoriate and growing rates of university attendance. This is because teaching positions at universities throughout North America are increasingly held by adjunct faculty who work on semester-by-semester contracts, often in part-time positions so that universities can further reduce costs by not having to pay any benefits at all (Coalition on the Academic Workforce). Because adjunct faculty are often paid so poorly—in the United States some receive less than two thousand dollars per semester for each course they teach—and are evaluated solely on the effectiveness of their teaching, the challenge to write and publish one's way out of the trenches is frequently insurmountable. To add insult to injury, this temporary workforce is created by the very universities that exploit it; the overproduction of PhDs is necessary at some universities to staff introductory undergraduate courses for even lower wages than those paid to adjunct faculty. In the end, then, one can argue that universities doubly exploit this same group of people; first, by allowing, in some fields, more PhD students than the tenure-track job market will ever be able to accommodate and, second, by continuing to exploit them by hiring them into jobs with poor salaries and no benefits, jobs that adjuncts grudgingly accept in the hope that they may someday ascend to the vastly more privileged class of tenure track faculty. This vicious circle perfectly illustrates Pierre Bourdieu's contention that the fundamental goal of any institution is to preserve itself, to secure its own future, in other words, by strengthening the power structures already in place. Universities protect their bottom line not only through the low wages and lack of protection they give to non-tenure-track faculty, but also through making the barriers to publication and research so high for these faculty that they are unable to move up the ladder to gain access to both material or symbolic capital held by those with tenure or on the road to achieving it.

For the last twenty or thirty years, this model has been effective in keeping public and, to a lesser extent, private universities afloat. In the United States particularly, we have seen the number of overall university budgets devoted to instruction decrease at the same time as budget allocations for administration are on the rise. One of the ways universities have been able to achieve this and still offer seats to a growing number of students is by reducing their investment in tenure-track faculty; on a purely economic scale, a contingent and, in the employer's eyes, more *agile* workforce offers a better return on investment. By shamelessly continuing to produce more and more PhD graduates in fields with lower outside demand, these universities ensure themselves and non-research institutions a large supply of potential faculty, thus keeping their value low. The neoliberalist approach to higher education today has brought about an increasingly bureaucratized university structure, an approach that has been permitted in part because there are now fewer full-time tenured faculty to fill all sorts of administrative roles. Furthermore, the shrinking number of tenure-track or tenured faculty are under so much pressure to produce scholarship that those who do serve the university first and their research agenda second are lauded for their efforts, rewarded with more service opportunities, but ultimately punished for their lack of scholarly "productivity." The incentive for faculty to serve the university in any administrative capacity has become incredibly low. Thus, universities find themselves hiring more and more administrators who are disconnected from the concerns of faculty and can therefore more ably run as a business what was once a primarily a school.

So long as universities continue to hold their monopoly on higher education credentialling, tenure-track faculty continue to buy into the "publish or perish" model of career advancement, and non-tenure track faculty remain willing to teach an overwhelming number of students under poor conditions in the blind hope of a tenure-track job in their field, universities will continue to profit from this model and faculty of all types will find themselves more and more removed from positions of administrative power. There are growing signs, however, that we are approaching a point in the history of higher education in North America where none of these three conditions remains a certainty.

The Unthinkable Scenario

In his widely read March 2009 blog post "Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable," Clay Shirky proposes that the newspaper industry's current troubles are not due to the fact that they failed to plan for the influence of the Internet. Rather, as he explains in some detail, they considered and acted upon many potential scenarios. They failed, however, to foresee the potential for an unthinkable scenario, one which would turn the industry on its head. Very few people foresaw how walled gardens or other means of enforcing copyright to prevent content sharing would soon become irrelevant to the way users would interact with information. As Shirky writes,

> Revolutions create a curious inversion of perception. In ordinary times, people who do no more than describe the world around them are seen as pragmatists, while those who imagine fabulous alternative futures are viewed as radicals. The last couple of decades haven't been ordinary, however. Inside the papers, the pragmatists were the ones simply looking out the window and noticing that the real world increasingly resembled the unthinkable scenario. These people were treated as if they were barking mad. Meanwhile the people spinning visions of popular walled gardens and enthusiastic micropayment adoption, visions unsupported by reality, were regarded not as charlatans but saviors. ("Newspapers")

For a small but growing number of faculty in universities across North America, it is difficult to read Shirky's piece without wanting to replace the word "newspaper" with "university." The perfect storm, the unthinkable scenario, is on the verge of battering a university system that is almost entirely ill-prepared. This is, in part, because, like newspapers first grappling with the influence of the Internet, many universities are still looking to how they can protect their content, control the dissemination of their research, and, ultimately, limit open access to the resource that the public have funded themselves. As I argued above, universities today can continue to preserve the way they currently do business only so long as they

- continue to maintain a monopoly over the delivery and, more crucially, the standard credentials that demonstrate an agreed-upon level of academic achievement.
- can maintain the status of formal academic publishing as the standard for proving and disseminating academic expertise and highly specialized knowledge.
- ensure that their workforce accept the current hierarchy and differentiation of roles between tenure-track and non tenure-track faculty

It is my contention that all three of these necessary conditions are on the verge of collapse and that this will inevitably have an enormous impact on academic publishing and what we come to see as "scholarship."

Before turning to the effects on (and opportunities for) academic publishing – and by this, to be clear, I mean the publishing of scholarly works, not textbook publishing – let us consider somewhat briefly the imminent demise of these three assumptions made by most institutions of higher education and their employees. Together these form the unthinkable scenario that is poised to *transform* higher education in a radical way.

I say transform rather than destroy, for two reasons. First, I do not think universities will altogether disappear. The value, presumed or real, of an interactive, face-to-face post-secondary education is not going to be challenged so profoundly that people altogether stop attending universities and colleges. These institutions will need to transform how they deliver content and credentials, but they and their role in society will not vanish. Second, it is important that we not confuse some of the vast challenges facing the heterogeneous American college and university system with those awaiting university systems in the rest of the world; while some of the issues of course and credential delivery are the same, the real chance that the "higher education bubble" in the United States will burst is rooted in the particularities of its current system and its history. It has long been a widespread belief in the United States that everyone deserves or can benefit from "a college education" (which I place in quotation marks because there is no single definition of what this means) and that going to college will inevitably lead to greater prosperity and opportunity. While government statistics do demonstrate that higher education today still leads to higher earnings and lower chances of unemployment among degree earners, graduating students throughout North America today find themselves increasingly saddled with both student loan debts in the tens of thousands of dollars[1] and, in many cases, limited job prospects. As both student debt and youth unemployment rise in both Canada and the United States, the economic return on one's investment can seem more questionable today in ways that it has not been in recent memory. The massive Quebec student protests against rising tuition ("Le printemps érable") might be a sign of what is to come for all higher education, but it is also possible that students and society may just begin to search for less expensive and more customized personal learning opportunities. The latter possibility is what should most concern colleges and universities across North Americ

The end (of the monopoly) is nigh

This could be (and has been) the topic of a book unto itself (*Alternative Futures for What We Call Higher Education*?), but it is worth addressing here. North American universities continue to assume that a university education delivered in the traditional manner of requiring courses taught in a face-to-face environment on centralized campuses over the span of three to four years culminating in a degree from an accredited college or university is so unassailably sound that any alternate approaches to this model will only ever be adopted by an insignificant minority. What universities rely on here – and this is one of the core elements of the unthinkable scenario that threatens to shake this model at its core – is a mainstream perception of a university *degree* as the primary indicator of competence and achievement on the part of the

1 In 2012, the amount of student loan debt in the United States reached $904 billion, exceeding consumer credit card debt, an increase of nearly $300 billion since 2008 ("New York Fed Quarterly Report Shows Student Loan Debt Continues to Grow")

student/future member of the workforce. Most have not taken seriously the call by industry and forward thinkers to examine alternate modes of credentialling such as "badges" that could demonstrate competency acquired by students via non-traditional, Open Education models. While many universities openly dismiss these movements as being unable to compete with the "value" of a four-year university degree, industry (including Mozilla, Google, and The Manufacturing Institute), the MacArthur Foundation, and even Arne Duncan, the US Secretary of the Department of Education, have argued that the "badge model" could soon provide credential comparable to what was previously only available through colleges and universities. "Badges," proposed Duncan in a 2011 speech announcing a $25,000 prize for the development of a badge prototype aimed at helping veterans seek work, "can help speed the shift from credentials that simply measure seat time, to ones that more accurately measure competency. We must accelerate that transition. And, badges can help account for formal and informal learning in a variety of settings." One can only imagine the chills that went (or should have gone) through the spine of every university president to hear Arne Duncan suggest that a university degree can be seen as something that "simply measures seat time." As Brigham Young University professor and Open Education advocate David Wiley recently told the New York Times, "Who needs a university anymore? […] Employers look at degrees because it's a quick way to evaluate all 300 people who apply for a job. But as soon as there's some other mechanism that can play that role as well as a degree, the jig is up on the monopoly of degrees" ("Beyond the College Degree, Online Educational Badges").

Again, one cannot help but be reminded here of Shirky's description of how newspapers strategized about the role the Internet would play in their futures. That someone might someday come up with a way that open and, worse, *free* education could lead to a credential or "badge" (imagine or, for some of us, recall the laughs that have burst from the mouths of university administrators and faculty at the use of this word) that employers might take seriously is one of the unthinkable scenarios that has never come up as North American universities have pondered how they could use the internet to deliver education to paying students who, in their eyes, would automatically pay highly for that privilege. To see why, one only need look for example to the pompous slogan utilized by the University of Alberta in the mid-1990s as part of its fundraising campaign and marketing to potential students. "It makes sense" was derived from an earlier "Research makes sense" campaign and was prominently displayed on campus signs, University websites and letterhead. That the University should ever stoop to explain to the public or to itself why or how it "made sense" (which played on both senses of it creating meaning and simply being a logical thing for Alberta to have, if not also the notion that it literally made money) clearly made sense to no one in the administration or marketing department. The presumption that everyone would agree with this statement epitomizes the arrogant and elitist assumption across many higher education institutions that the value of a higher education and a university degree is self-evident and eternal. Even today, in the face of extensive discussions in the media about badges, open learning, and the perhaps imminent bursting of the higher education bubble in the United States, this hubris remains pretty much intact. This part of the unthinkable scenario, that the Titanic of the university degree could ever be affected by the iceberg of alternate credentials, remains an unimaginable prospect for most tenure-track academics, who are quite content to rearrange the deck chairs rather than looking for the nearest lifeboat.

The Death of the (Monograph) Author

As my brief history of the phrase "publish or perish" reminds us, it has long been the practice of universities to measure scholarly productivity for tenure and promotion by the amount and, to varying degrees dependent on the institution, the quality of a faculty member's peer-reviewed publication. This is nothing new, but the standards have become more demanding over the last three decades. Furthermore, in many fields, the academic job market is so abysmal that job candidates must already have publications in hand to be at all considered by university hiring committees. Particularly in the Humanities, the standard to achieve tenure is often the publication of a monograph with a reputable, if not esteemed, scholarly press. While the nature of academic publishing in Canada causes our universities to be more flexible in this regard, allowing a number of quality peer-reviewed articles and solid progress toward a book to count for tenure, most universities in the United States require a published, peer-reviewed monograph, if not more, to gain promotion and tenure. This fetishization of the monograph in the Humanities and Social Sciences as the sole valid exemplar of scholarly "productivity" and achievement has been tenable and virtually unquestioned partly because of the willingness and ability of American scholarly publishers to produce legions of books each year. This is made possible because of the enormous number of university libraries that exist there to help purchase (and thus make profitable) scholarly monographs. With a population of one tenth of the United States and perhaps even a smaller relative number of university libraries, the size of the Canadian market for scholarly presses makes it even more challenging to produce monographs. It has only been in the last decade, with the economic challenges faced by American Universities, that the primacy of the scholarly monograph has come to be openly questioned by influential scholarly societies such as the Modern Language Association.

In 2002, then MLA President Stephen Greenblatt issued a "special letter" to the organization's members to warn of the threat that shrinking budgets at university presses and academic libraries posed to the ability of younger scholars to publish the books required for them to earn tenure:

> "These faculty members find themselves in a maddening double bind. They face a challenge–under inflexible time constraints and with very high stakes–that many of them may be unable to meet successfully, no matter how strong or serious their scholarly achievement, because academic presses simply cannot afford to publish their books. [. . .] We are concerned because people who have spent years of professional training–our students, our colleagues–are at risk. Their careers are in jeopardy, and higher education stands to lose, or at least severely to damage, a generation of young scholars." (Greenblatt)

What is remarkable about Greenblatt's letter is how he goes on to remind members that "the central issue is systemic" and that the diminishing capabilities of traditional academic publishing should be "taken into account" in making future tenure decisions. Greenblatt takes a further step to ask MLA members "Should our departments continue to insist that only books and more books will do?" and to suggest that "[we] could rethink what we need to conduct responsible evaluations of junior faculty members. And if institutions insist on the need for books, perhaps they should provide a first-book subvention, comparable to (though vastly less expensive than) the start-up subvention for scientists" (Greenblatt). From what we know about the ways in which institutions work to preserve themselves with incredible efficiency, it should not be surprising to anyone that, from all accounts, few English departments responded by decreasing or making much more flexible their standards for tenure or to act on Greenblatt's excellent suggestion that institutions assist new faculty with a subvention for publishing costs.

Although, as Greenblatt reminded his members in 2002, "[the] book has only fairly recently emerged as the sine qua non" for tenure, the book's perceived value for demonstrating academic achievement seems only to have gotten stronger. Were there not then and today a huge surplus of recent PhD graduates and non-tenure-track faculty waiting at the gate to replace those scholars who found themselves in the dire situation of which Greenblatt warns, English departments (and universities) might have heeded these warnings in a meaningful way. Particularly when university administrations over the past two decades have seized any opportunity to replace a tenure-track line with two (or more) lower paid non-tenure-track positions, departments seeking to make such changes may also not have found any sympathetic understanding from their Dean's or Provost's office. So long as there remained enough tenure-track and tenured faculty to publish works that would bring prestige to the institution, what could possibly be the harm of creating a more "agile" (i.e. less expensive and always temporary) workforce to deliver instruction?

The Rise (and eventual ascendance) of the New Faculty Majority

One of the things that scholars and the broader media have mostly overlooked in connection with the challenges faced by scholarly publishing is the changing dynamic of the academic workforce. While McLuhan was able to joke about the professional ambitions of the "professory-rat" it is hard to imagine that many of his generation would have foreseen the fundamental shift over time to where nearly 70% of faculty teaching today in the United States (with a smaller majority in Canada) are doing so in "adjunct," "sessional," or "non-continuing" positions. Regardless of the nomenclature used by an institution to describe such faculty, they share a common role in the 21st Century university. These "contingent" faculty members provide inexpensive labour and teaching services to institutions both by teaching more and larger classes than the increasingly elite tenure-stream faculty. Universities exploit this "agile" workforce by paying them lower wages and, by hiring them on a part-time or "temporary" basis (many of them must reapply for their jobs each year), by refusing to offer them benefits (healthcare, pensions etc.) comparable to those received by tenure-track faculty. One of the factors that has allowed this practice to continue (and to grow) is the hope among non-tenure-track faculty that such temporary work will eventually lead to an opportunity to move into a tenure-stream position. This does happen in some cases and has, though mostly in the past, has occurred frequently enough that these faculty, like many PhD students in popular fields like English and History, imagine they could be the exception to the rule and escape from the front-line unscathed. As these faculty are hired to do only teaching and at wages so poor that they must teach many courses in order to support themselves financially, their ability to produce traditional forms of research and publication that might allow them to earn a tenure-stream position elsewhere is severely compromised.

Over the last twenty years, non-tenure-track faculty have become increasingly politically active, pushing to have their work recognized and to be treated fairly by the universities that employ them. More important, they have come to recognize that they are, in fact, the majority of faculty working today and that, as a result, they should hold more power and receive far better treatment than they do; post-secondary institutions in the USA and Canada are relying more heavily than ever on such faculty and yet still have, for the most part, done little to acknowledge this. Organizations such as the New Faculty Majority coalition and the Adjunct Nation website have helped greatly to publicize these issues, particularly the poor working conditions faced by many non-tenure-track faculty in the United States. The Coalition on the Academic Workforce's 2012 survey (PDF) about the issues faced by part-time faculty drew over 30,000 responses and paints a picture of stagnant wages, little institutional support for professional development, and, most importantly, a work force that is anything but temporary:

"While over 75% of the respondents reported that they were actively seeking full-time

- Over 80% of respondents reported teaching part-time for more than three years, and over half for more than six years. Furthermore, over three-quarters of respondents said they have sought, are now seeking, or will be seeking a full-time tenure-track position, and nearly three-quarters said they would definitely or probably accept a full-time tenure-track position at the institution at which they were currently teaching if such a position were offered" (Coalition on the Academic Workforce 2).
- What this part of the data reveals is that a majority of these faculty are likely to stay connected to academia for a substantial period, despite the tenuous nature of their employment and the lack of advancement opportunities. Although most of the respondents may well be holding out hope for landing the ever-elusive tenure-track position, it is clear that a significant percentage stay in these positions for years, and even decades. Whether recognized or not by department colleagues, chairs, and deans, these faculty, simply by virtue of teaching more courses and students than their tenure-stream colleagues, make an extraordinary contribution to their institutions and to student learning.
- While the shrinking number of tenure-track positions throughout North America continues to serve university leaders managing tight budgets and

an administrative class growing in both numbers and institutional power, the decline in tenured and tenure-track faculty is also an ongoing threat to university presses and, indeed, the future of the scholarly monograph. The scholarly monograph published by a reputable academic press remains, for better or worse, the gold standard for tenure and promotion in fields throughout the social sciences and humanities, especially at research universities. Indeed, receiving tenure and promotion is one of the primary motivators for young faculty to publish monographs at such an early point in their careers. As Stephen Greenblatt reminded MLA members in 2002, financial constraints on university presses and decreasing library acquisition budgets have already made publishing monographs by new scholars more difficult, as such books frequently have a limited financial return on investment for publishers. What may be an even greater challenge for university presses in the not-too-distant future, though, is when the number of tenure-track positions drops to such a degree that there may be more capacity for presses to publish monographs than there are scholars to write them. Even today, the percentage of faculty who are paid to do research alongside their teaching is shockingly low; this undoubtedly has an impact on the volume and type of scholarship being produced, not to mention its potential readership. For those part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty who aspire to publish longer scholarly works – and one would imagine that many do – the institutional barriers they face (low pay, high workloads, larger class sizes than tenure-track faculty) make this extraordinarily difficult to achieve. Furthermore, these scholars also recognize that their institutions, which hire and retain them solely on the basis of their teaching, seldom value or reward them in any way for their publication record. Those non-tenure track faculty who do manage to continue to publish books or articles in peer-reviewed scholarly journals either do so with the aim of earning a tenure-track job and or to satisfy their own needs to make a contribution to their field. Publishing in order to move into a tenure-track position can sometimes be a successful strategy, but it is frequently the exception and not the rule; many faculty on the non-tenure track path are simply unable to maintain a strong, traditional research agenda due to the constraining demands of their significant teaching commitments.

- It is unsurprising that, given the symbiotic nature of their relationship, the health of traditional academic publishing and the numbers of tenure-stream faculty at North American universities have weakened simultaneously over the last thirty years. From a traditional faculty and scholarly perspective, the alternatives to both a robust system of university presses and well-financed scholarly journals and established standards for tenure and promotion have seemed very limited; faculty have viewed the "death of the book" and the gradual demise of tenure as being equally devastating outcomes. Yet, new alternatives to both of these traditions are becoming more viable each day. As the New Faculty Majority movement has shown us, a better future for faculty off the tenure track may not lie in an increase in the number of tenured positions, but rather in more stable, better-paying contracts for "adjunct" faculty that offer a level of job security. Such a system would be advantageous to both faculty and their departments, making both parties more capable of planning for the future. Similarly, as we have seen with the rise in personal and group academic blogs such as Profhacker, the University of Venus, or British Politics and Policy at LSE, there are considerable opportunities for faculty to share ideas and cutting edge scholarship in new, open, and much more immediate ways than through books or scholarly articles published in traditional ways. As Patrick Dunleavy and Chris Gilson, editors of the multi-author blog "British Politics and Policy at LSE," explain,

- "Blogging (supported by academic tweeting) helps academics break out of all these loops. It's quick to do in real time. It taps academic expertise when it's relevant, and so lets academics look forward and speculate in evidence-based ways. It communicates bottom-line results and 'take aways' in clear language, yet with due regard to methods issues and quality of evidence. In multi-author blogs like this one, and all our blogs, it helps create multi-disciplinary understanding and joining-up of previously siloed knowledge" (London School of Economics and Political Science).
- The move away from associating the value or prestige of scholarly work with how restricted one's access is to it, is one of the ongoing effects of the ubiquity of the Internet. Open Access has made many online journals widely available to more readers and libraries while at the same time demonstrating that they are as rigorous and as valid a site of publication as traditional journals whose articles online are hidden behind costly firewalls. The very notion of very limited peer review before publication as an

unquestioned marker of academic rigor has also been challenged by projects such as the innovative use of open review by *Shakespeare Quarterly* or by Kathleen Fitzpatrick for her book *Planned Obsolescence*. Fitzpatrick boldly envisions a continuous process of "peer-to-peer review" that could use online reviewing and commenting on a text as a form of "post-publication filtering—seeing to it that the best and most important new work receives the attention it deserves. […] Today, in the current system of print-based scholarship, this work takes the form of reviews, essays, articles, and editions; tomorrow, as new mechanisms allow, these texts might be multimodal remixes, mashing up theories and texts to produce compelling new ideas" (Fitzpatrick 80). As she notes, such an approach could transform our understanding of the work of "publishing" from the labour of an individual or set of individuals (writer, editor, publisher, reviewer) to the contribution and engagement of a scholarly community. Fitzpatrick's vision of "authorship as dialogic, diffuse, and mobile" and of "the need for new publishing structures that reflect a turn from focusing on texts as discrete products to texts as the locus of conversation" (155) is one that also offers a considerable opportunity to reframe the role "scholarship" can play in the work of faculty regardless of whether one is in a tenure-stream position or not.

Universities and those academics employed in tenure-stream positions expound, it seems, at every opportunity on the direct connection between teaching and research; one's writing and publishing, so the argument goes, helps one to become a better teacher and vice versa. The irony is not lost on non-tenure-track faculty that much teaching at research universities is done by those rarely encouraged or afforded the chance to do research, let alone to publish it; furthermore, non-tenure track faculty who do seize the opportunity to do research are rarely rewarded (or even recognized) by their own institutions. More crucially, the absence at many institutions of Professional Development funding for non-tenure-track faculty makes it difficult and costly for those faculty to attend conferences where they can present their scholarship and network with others in their field. In 2009, Brian Croxall, then a Visiting Assistant Professor at Clemson University, made this very point when he cancelled his attendance at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association. As he shared openly on Twitter, in the few days leading up to the MLA, with a "lack of job interviews, insufficient travel funds, and the low salary of a visiting professor" he simply could not afford to attend ("On Going Viral" B11). Rather than having his paper go unread, the chair of the panel on which Croxall was to speak read it on his behalf; at the same time, Croxall posted the paper on his blog and shared news of his decision on Twitter B11). That paper, entitled "The Absent Presence: Today's Faculty" quickly went viral and became, as the Chronicle of Higher Education described it, "'the most talked about presentation'" at that year's MLA convention (B11).

Croxall's paper, and the explosion of commentary it prompted, is significant for two reasons. First, the paper itself drew real attention to the plight of the "new faculty majority" and how the lack of financial and other support for these faculty members works insidiously to reduce the chances that they will ever make a successful transition into the diminishing ranks of the tenure-stream professoriate. As Croxall writes, "When the majority of faculty (who are, again, contingent faculty) cannot attend the MLA (or any other conference), it results in a faculty that cannot advance, that does not, in other words, appear to be doing the things that would warrant their conversion to the tenure track. Our placement as contingent faculty quickly becomes a self-fulfilling event" ("Absent Presence"). Croxall's argument and the attention it received help bring new energy to the fight for better conditions for "contingent" faculty. The second reason for the importance of Croxall's paper is even more pertinent to our discussion here. By drawing attention to these issues and his paper through social media, Croxall actually wound up having a far greater impact than he would have had he simply attended the conference. As he explains in a later piece for the Chronicle entitled "On Going Viral at the (Virtual) MLA," "Within 24 hours, some 2000 people had read my paper […]. By the end of the convention, my blog had received over 7000 page views. […] Instead of being heard by a small group of people who attended the panel at which I was to speak, my paper had been read by more people–and colleagues! – than I could ever reasonably expect to read any article or book that I might write in the future" (B11).

Croxall's experience with his own paper and what he calls "the virtual MLA" – where interested people from around the world followed the events of much of the conference via Twitter – leads him to make two key conclusions that are highly pertinent to our discussion of the future of academic publishing. "First, scholarship will be freely accessible online. […] Second, scholarship in the age of the virtual MLA will become increasingly collaborative and participatory" (B12). There is, I would argue, an important third conclusion one can draw from Croxall's experience of his work (and his situation) going viral: some of the key barriers which have kept contingent faculty from being a greater part of mainstream academic discourse are being lessened significantly thanks to social media and forms of online publishing such as blogs and open access journals. When one of the most resonant presentations at a major international conference can come from the "absent presence" of a member of the new faculty majority, it is clear that a sea of change is underway in how we understand and gain access to scholarship. With the rise of microblogging via Twitter and the sharing by scholars like Croxall of their work online, scholarly conferences and meetings can now be open to broader audiences, including non-specialists and people outside of academia altogether.

The extraordinary reach that Croxall and others have found when openly sharing scholarly work or ideas reminds us that as scholars we have the potential to reach an exponentially larger number of readers online than if we publish our work only in a high-priced scholarly book or in a prestigious journal to which few readers have easy access. Choosing the latter options for publishing have, as we know, been fundamental requirements for tenure in most universities; although many scholars and scholarly associations have lobbied to have less formal types of publishing counted significantly toward tenure decisions, progress on this front has been very slow. Strong resistance to the free and open sharing of one's work is still found among those faculty pursuing or in possession of tenure. If anything, it would seem that tenure and the quest for it can often be an inhibitor of academic freedom rather than a protector. Many faculty on the tenure-track, in particular, are remarkably hesitant to devote time to writing or working on something that "will not count" (toward tenure); senior colleagues routinely (and perhaps rightly) caution them against such work, and encourage them to submit their work to the more prestigious journals or publishers. Once faculty receive tenure, these practices frequently continue as faculty set their eyes on an even greater prize, that of being a full professor. Those junior tenure-track faculty who eschew these norms, typically do so by making sure that their public, openly shared scholarship is also backed up by work published in the traditional forms which, as any CV reviewer will tell you, should always be listed first. When most traditional academics speak of publishing instead of perishing, then, they are still referring to a very narrow understanding of the act and the point of publishing. One can be a prolific academic blogger and a major contributor to online research communities, but these are not typically viewed by tenure committees or hiring committees for that matter as indicators of scholarly "productivity." The sweet irony here, of course, is that while departments and deans, committees and chairs cling to these ideals of peer-review and sanctioned forms of publication, those faculty either off the tenure track or bold enough to see beyond this limiting vision of scholarly merit are reaching audiences sometimes in the thousands and engaging in enriching, ongoing, and immediate conversations with scholars of similar interest around the world.

Envisioning "publishing" in this much broader form that includes an open and immediate sharing of one's scholarship can help to reduce *some* of the non-financial inequities of opportunity between non-tenure-track faculty and those in pursuit or possession of that status. Non-tenure-track faculty may actually hold a distinct advantage, in that, for them, the issues of what types of publishing will "count" do not apply. They can publish their work and ideas in a variety of forms purely for the sake of sharing their knowledge and engaging in academic debate.

For a non-tenure track faculty member faced with vastly higher course loads and larger courses, finding the time and space (many do not even receive dedicated office space) to write a lengthy article or book is incredibly challenging. Smaller forms of "publishing," though, are not only more manageable, but can also make a contribution to one's field. A single tweet, blog post, or contribution to a Digital Humanities project such as the modernist versions project can quickly reach thousands of people and, on the merit of her ideas and not her employment status, connect that faculty member to a larger scholarly community. As Paul Fyfe put it in a 2010 presentation he posted simultaneously on his blog, "This is scholarship at warp speed, especially compared with its conventional forms, or with publishing in a 'glass box.' Of course, the compression of time and space isn't necessarily the point. Rather, it is the connections facilitated by the open network, and the cascading productivity of the text and media and people which constellate it" (Fyfe). In this way, one could well argue that reaching such a vast audience so rapidly is more "productive" and potentially influential than writing an article that might be read by vastly smaller number of readers. Those tenure-track or tenured faculty members who are reticent to share their research openly have, as Dan Cohen argues, misread the shifting direction of our symbolic economy. What "counts," or earns symbolic capital is not – or, at the very least, not always – the exclusivity of your publication or status of your publisher, but instead how many people are reading and discussing your work:

"[…] in their cost-benefit calculus they often forget to factor in the hidden costs of publishing in a closed way. **The largest hidden cost is the invisibility of what you publish.** When you publish somewhere that is behind gates, or in paper only, you are resigning all of that hard work to invisibility in the age of the open web. You may reach a few peers in your field, but you miss out on the broader dissemination of your work" (Cohen).

It is the ease with which non-tenure-track faculty members, the aptly described "new faculty majority," can now enter into the broader scholarly discourse of their fields that is, I propose, the final piece of the "unthinkable scenario" facing North American universities today. As those faculty members who already do the majority of the undergraduate teaching become more actively engaged in their respective scholarly communities, freely sharing their work and ideas online, those tenure and tenure-track colleagues who have staunchly held the line and avoided sharing their work openly may well find themselves struggling to keep up with their contingent colleagues. Universities and departments have long profited by this separation between the role of those faculty who are paid (more) to do research and teach and those who are paid (far less and with little to no job security) simply to teach. Moreover, as the numbers of contingent faculty continue to grow, there still seems to be little desire on the part of universities to connect more deeply the worlds of teaching and research; this system "makes sense" universities like to tell students and the public, with little more justification than that. But as the financial constraints on universities increase and the rise of competing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and alternate forms of credential such as badges accelerates, universities will, I anticipate, need to find better ways to share with the public what they do and why they are important. Those faculty who have already been openly sharing the work they do in and out of the classroom will be best suited to lead such efforts. While those who have managed to publish in traditional ways will have avoided perishing, it may be those in the new faculty majority who, having openly published in a variety of forms, have the broader perspective and engagement with the public required to renew the modern university.

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The Next Chapter

– Summary comments by Jerome Martin

Self-Publishing as a Viable Model

Kirby Wright described his introduction to self-publishing in 1987, when new technology allowed him to learn about publishing and to create high-quality documents with a Mac Plus computer, a printer and Aldus Pagemaker software.

Using Clayton Christensen's Disruptive Innovation model he discussed the converging sources of disruption that are providing opportunities for self-publishers to compete successfully with traditional publishers.

We can also see from Kirby's discussion that large, established companies (the major publishers, in this case) have great difficulty dealing with or engaging in disruptive activities.

He deals with five converging sources of disruption: from books to apps; the quest for personal creative expression; ubiquitous tools; moving towards free; and channel confusion.

Kirby's statement on the last page of his chapter summarizes his feelings about self-publishing:

> The image of independent creative people equipped with easy to use, yet powerful tools developing innovative media-rich products – more like apps than traditional books – offered through networks and virtual retailers sold at a very low cost presents an optimistic and creative future for publishing.

Currently authors depend on publishers for editing, design and marketing of their books. While some can and will learn to produce, edit and market paper books and products which are more like apps than traditional books others will need the assistance that publishers have traditionally supplied.

In the meantime, most publishers are concerned and confused about how to create products such as those that Kirby describes. Self-publishers and publishers may pool their resources and talents so that they can produce what clients want.

While the term self-publishing has had negative connotations in the past, it is gaining credibility as authors who have publishing skills (or authors who hire people who do have those skills) have been successful in producing quality books. However, as Mark Lefebvre suggested, perhaps we should now call self-publishers Publishers.

E-Books, Apps and Other Products

> The book is not dead: it is evolving
>
> – Mark Lefebvre

In 2000 I was one of the 400,000 people who paid $2.50 for Stephen King's e-book *Riding the Bullet*. I read it on my Palm Pilot V. It was the world's first mass-market electronic book. Our company, Spotted Cow Press, produced and sold e-book versions of our books that year and have continued to create other e-products since then.

While *Riding the Bullet* was unique in 2000, other types of e-books have been published recently with great success.

E-books are here. We can create them, sell them, or provide them at no direct cost to our clients.

Kirby Wright discussed pricing apps and how he had expected to charge perhaps $6.99 for a new app he had produced, but after the powerful and innovative GarageBand app came out at a price of $4.99, he felt that the most he could charge was $3.99.

There are excellent, multimedia apps and books available online for reasonable prices.

I've seen original Ansel Adams prints and portfolios, and I own several books of his photographs. While I love the qualities of his photographs and books I also enjoy the Ansel Adams iPad app which features photographs, letters, video, and more. The price: $6.99.

I had never read Jack Kerouacs's On the Road before buying the app ($16.99), which features not only the book but also photographs, video interviews, maps, margin notes, and information about Kerouac, his friends and beat culture. After experiencing this enhanced e-book (another descriptive term that needs refreshing) one feels ready to get on the road again, but this time with an iPad, a good friend or two, and a credit card that will last all the way to Texas and back.

The seemingly eternal marketing of pipelines and politics makes me appreciate the text, audio and photographs in Al Gore's Our Choice app, one of the leaders in the next generation of apps and e-books. The price of this app is $4.99.

Other e-book companies build on the traditional reading experience. BookTrack, according to the company's website, "… creates synchronized soundtracks for e-books that automatically matches music, sound effects and ambient sound to your reading speed to create an immersive reading experience."

Messiness and Complexity

In an article entitled "Why Untidiness is Good for Us", David Weinberger, a senior researcher at Harvard University's Berkman Center for the Internet and Society, said that messiness is what knowledge looks like in the internet age. Knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, is not defined and controlled by a finite book or peer-reviewed journal; it spills over the edges and continues to change and grow.

Knowledge is messy: it does not fit conveniently in a paper book nor in any document that is not flexible and able to be updated and expanded.

Paper, Weinberger says, fails to scale because there are limits to the number of papers which can be published and there are also limits to the amounts of data and literature review which can be included in a publication. Paper cannot link: each book or paper is independent.

Paper publishing in science tends to be a slow process, whereas new electronic journals can be published and circulated rapidly.

Books of any type may take several years to write, edit and publish. If they are paper books they cannot be changed except by readers who write in margins and insert notes and clippings from other sources.

Traditional books of fiction and poetry may seem invulnerable to change: but very few writers in these genres have investigated the potential of incorporating links, audio sidebars, or video into their work.

How often have we sat by a crackling fire with a glass of wine to read a fine hardcover book? People who love hardcover books say that this is what they want to do. That will continue to be a possibility, but for most of us the majority of our reading is done on a screen.

The experience of reading from non-paper materials is changing significantly and even now provides a rich medium which gives its own brand of satisfaction and enjoyment through links, audio and video.

While several of us involved in the creation of this book have produced many e-books and related products we continue to debate the use of terms such as page and book, the length of a chapter, and how we should use links, video, side-bars etc.

Note that we have designed this as an e-book only, and while you could print it, there are no right or left pages.

– Jerome Martin

Publishing is Communication

Gabriel Zaid said in *So Many Books*, the 2003 English translation of *Los demasiados libros* (1996) "…to publish a book is to insert it into a conversation…" and, "Of course, if there is no conversation, if there are no people interested in a particular area, and if the book/author/publisher have little to contribute to a conversation the book, the author, the publisher will fail."

Small publishers – and I'm now using that term to also include what up to this point we have called self-publishers – have opportunities to test markets and interests to determine which form of communication will be appropriate to a conversation. Will that be a paper book, an app or a work with text and other media?

The title of this book includes the phrase "…what we now call publishing". We may soon use new terms to describe how and what we are doing. Will the word publishing continue to be linked to only paper books?

Marketing

Many publishers believe ethat marketing is the most difficult part of publishing. Traditionally, a book is launched, then promoted to book reviewers in major newspapers and advertised in print media. At this point publishers are continuing the marketing program that was created while the book was being developed (which may include book tours and media interviews), but they are also working on other books at various stages of production and success.

Many writers feel that it is the publishers' responsibility to market their books so that they can continue to write more, uninterrupted by commercial exposure. However, readers want to meet authors and to communicate with them.

Authors and publishers (large or small) can now promote their work using social media, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs. Anyone with a computer can potentially reach millions of people, provided that people have some interest in the work and the work is unique and of high quality.

Most book publishing has focused on producing a product, then trying to establish a market for it. Another strategy used by businesses – including some publishers – is to find a need and meet it.

Seth Godin (Q, CBC Radio, April 3, 2012) says that today's authors are in a race to build connections with their readers and potential readers.

> You build a following because your books come out regularly, your blog is interesting and people suggest it to their friends, and because the interviews you post online are interesting to hear or read. You have to earn that following.
>
> That opens the door for any author who cares to do the work or to hire someone to do it.

Engaging With Readers

Jessica Legacy reminded us that "the reader wants to have a conversation with the author."

Mark Leslie told us a story of how he published a novella – with a little help from his friends. He knew the beginning and the end, but did not know where he wanted to go with the rest of this work.

Mark is a very active blogger so he asked his readers for their help. Their responses helped him decide where the novella should go.

> Engaging with the reader was the most satisfying experience in the creation of this work.

Mark and many other authors are on social media every day, learning, writing, communicating with readers and with other authors.

Jessica agreed that authors have to maintain a web presence and communicate with readers, but she said that since publishers employ people who are good communicators they can do much of the communicating, leaving writers more time to write.

> Every author does not want to do this (some cannot) but every publisher should be able to hire someone to do it.

Jessica suggested that we need something like Kickstarter ("A New Way to Fund & Follow Creativity") in Canada to allow readers to invest in new work. At least one of the participants in the symposium had contributed to Kickstarter projects in the USA.

Embracing Change

In 2006 Todd Anderson and I presented a paper entitled "Competing With Free" at the Fourth International Conference of the Book in Boston. One of the speakers was Jason Epstein, a legend in the publishing industry who was part of On Demand Books, the company which created the Espresso Book Machine.

As we walked out of the session Todd said, "We (the University of Alberta Bookstore) are going to buy one of those." The machine was delivered in November, 2007 and put to work immediately.

Mark Lefebvre tells the story of that purchase and what it and other machines purchased in Canada and elsewhere have meant to the publishing industry, especially to small publishing firms.

The Espresso Book Machine and the provision of short run, print-on-demand (POD) services from printing firms have created opportunities for publishers to print only the copies what they need, when they need them. Now that there are Espresso Book Machines in many parts of the world publishers can also send files to be printed in other countries rather than sending paper books.

Mark used the metaphor of birth to describe the difficulties, challenges, and the pain involved with the transition of the book industry from the traditional ecosystem – author, agent, publisher, editor, printer, distributor, publicist, retailer, bookseller, salesperson, reader, and librarian – to what it is now (or what it will be next week).

"Print on demand, e-books, open access: these will never work." We've all heard this at publishing meetings and cocktail parties. However, some publishers and some authors have shown how new approaches to publishing can work.

Mark discussed the successes of self-published authors, including Terry Fallis, who went from publishing his first novel free as a podcast, then moved to Print on Demand, winning the Leacock Medal, and re-publishing his novel with MacLelland & Stewart.

Kirby discussed an essay by Steve Johnson entitled "The Genius of the Tinkerer" in which Johnson discusses the adjacent possible. Johnson describes the adjacent possible as "… a kind of shadow future, hovering on the edges of the present state of things, a map of all the ways in which the present can reinvent itself."

> The strange and beautiful truth about the adjacent possible is that its boundaries grow as you explore them. Each new combination opens up the possibility of other new combinations.

Academic Publishing

Publish or perish, which Paul Martin refers to as the "…omnipresent, internalized mantra that seems to draw a clear line through the arduous path to academic success and the quick and easy road to, at the very least, failure," was discussed in our sessions from the viewpoints of both academic and university presses.

Having a book published, in academic terms, means that the book is academic in nature and, naturally, is published by a university press, an organization which, like academics and universities themselves, is under pressure to demonstrate and clarify its value.

Young scholars in the USA and Canada are having difficulty finding academic publishers with sufficient funding to publish their monographs. Without such publications they have little chance of being granted tenure.

Donna Livingstone discussed peer review, which is viewed by academic presses as a gold standard:

> But research takes many shapes and academic excellence shines through many forms, all of which can be considered a way of publishing – of making the story public. What would it mean if we developed peer-review for dance, music or theatrical performances and gallery and museum exhibitions? What about datasets? Can we develop new ways of peer-reviewing First Nations oral history accounts? Does peer-review have to be blind?

Should work be reviewed only by people who work in the same area? Surely, there is logic in having people who have expertise in other subject areas and other members of the public involved in reviewing books and other material or providing comments on the work.

Surely, the preoccupation with peer review limits the type of publication, the medium, and the style of the work. Our group questioned peer review and felt that university presses were unfairly saddled with it.

Paul felt that a university press is really a service to a university and a community.

Young professors are publishing through open sources such as FaceBook, blogs and online journals. Giving them credit for their work in this form would take pressure away from academic presses and academics who currently are trying to publish in the conventional, paper-based world of academia.

Kirby and Todd discussed the lack of availability of many online journals to any outside of a university. The public pays for research and scholarship, but then cannot access the results.

We agreed that academics could become publishers of their own work and could benefit both professionally and economically by doing so. Open access to research results and scholarly work will allow for a public and democratic evaluation. Non-tenured professors would find this method of publishing particularly valuable.

New Faculty Majority: The National Coalition for Adjuct and Contingent Equity

The Adjunct Project

Paul Martin discussed in his chapter the difficulties that adjunct professors have in gaining tenure and that 75% of the classes taught in American research – teaching institutions are taught by sessionals. He suggested that we learn more about The New Faculty Majority.

While universities assume that their degrees will continue to be the standard credentials required by most people entering the job market new approaches, such as free education leading to a badge rather than a degree, will result in institutions making significant changes to ensure their survival.

Kirby Wright discussed how new professions could use new credentials and badges.

In summary, Mark suggested that Paul's phrase 'publish or perish' should be 'engage or extinction', a phrase which probably fits the larger publishing theme as well as academia.

On a lighter note, discussions like these lead to unexpected gems. Donna Livingstone told us about an exciting series of courses taught in the Department of Drama at the University of Calgary. I wonder if they might be available online in the future.

Free E-Books

No one wants to work for no return, but providing free e-books in some circumstances may lead to more income from sales of paper books, enhanced e-books, presentations, workshops, grants or promotions.

In his section *Moving Towards Free* Kirby Wright discusses the trend towards low-cost software, apps, songs and books. Part of this trend relates to people being able to buy only what they want online. We buy songs on iTunes for $0.99 and software updates – without clunky boxes, manuals and discs – for the cost of two or three lattés.

Some others, including Seth Godin, have provided new e-books at no cost for a short period, then charged for them.

Laurence Lessig, author and creator of Creative Commons, has made Free Culture available at no cost as a PDF e-book, but the book is also available for sale as a paper edition.

Some of us create free e-books because we want to communicate ideas and experience which we expect will have beneficial effects for both us and the reader, the same reasons we write and publish blogs.

New Ways to Supply Content

Todd Anderson discussed ways of building digital course-packs and how tagging and chunking chapters and sections from books can make course-packs more useful and inexpensive for students.

> The opportunity for publishers isn't just in creating new materials: it is in adapting the materials that already exist. The problem is discoverability.

The potential for chunking and selling chunks as well as complete books is significant for publishers and authors.

> While many people in the publishing business have felt that EPUB is the way to go we have agreed that PDF is a far better approach for our course packs.

Kirby mentioned that Dickens created his books by selling a chapter at a time, then extending the book by more chapters than he had planned if it was particularly popular.

Jessica said that tagging is very important in this process, and Kirby agreed, saying that user tagging creates new opportunities.

Publishers have resources in their current list and in their backlists which could be sold to students if the resources are accessible and tagged appropriately. Selling chapters or sections of a book which can be combined in course packs or used by private firms could be an excellent source of revenue for publishers and authors.

Paul said that we lose context and content when we take only one chapter from a book.

The Future of What We Currently Call Publishing

> We already know a lot about learning, but we don't put it into practice.
>
> We probably do know what will happen in five years: utter chaos and lots of choice.

Kirby Wright reminded us that we and other publishers can make ongoing excuses and generalizations about gradual change, but that publishers, be they small or large, have to realize that the world has changed and that it continues to change rapidly.

"Publishers, therefore, will survive only if they provide value," he added.

Value, thus far, has apparently been provided through what some people call full-service publishing, in which publishers provide editing, design, marketing, and sales. If they can show that they provide value in these areas they may survive.

Authors who publish their own work must understand the importance of these factors if they are to succeed.

Lu Ziola, on FaceTime with us from Vancouver, said that most people think that producing e-books is all about technology. But it isn't. It's about good writing, editing, layout, design and marketing.

Kirby added that new publishers also have to find start-up capital and contact mechanisms. Then, of course, they have to know or learn how to market their books.

www.ideo.com/work/future-of-the-book

In his discussion of how authors must be cautious about becoming publishers Kirby used the metaphor of a cook who, because he loved cooking and was good at it, decided that he would open a restaurant. Running a restaurant is very different from cooking, just as running a publishing firm is very different from writing a novel.

Seth Godin agrees. In an interview with Jian Ghomehsi on Q (CBC, April 3, 2012) Godin, a very successful author and marketer, he said that 150,000 books were published last year (in the USA, presumably) and that the expected number this year is 15 million.

"The e-reader has eliminated scarcity," declared Godin. The book industry can no longer control what is published in a scarcity model in which paper, shelf space and bookstores are limiting factors.

Todd Anderson: "I think the big players are going to get into trouble and the Mad Men version of how it's going to work will not work and that operations like Mark's which have done a lot of things for a lot of people will continue to work."

Mark: "We're now seeing the democratization of everything."

Jerome: "We, being very small, have the agility to stay involved in publishing."

Mark: "The agility is certainly a huge benefit. Traditionally it was the money and the power and the "I've got three secretaries and you've only got two" attitude that prevailed. Now it could be a small, agile company or a guild or a cooperative effort between two small companies, something that works for the customer…"

Kirby: "Smaller, more nimble companies have to be jacks of all trades. The people who have those abilities need to link to others to lower transaction costs."

Two days of discussions were not quite enough. We continued to talk as we walked out of The Enjoy Centre and into the parking lot.

There are no clear beginnings or ends to symposia such as this, and we were planning our next activities, discussions, and cooperative projects.

Watch for more about alternative futures for what we currently call publishing.

The Authors

Todd Anderson

Todd Anderson is the President of Henday Publishing inc. a publishing, media and technology company. Previously he was the Director of the University of Alberta Bookstore. Todd has spoken in Canada, U.S. and Australia about the future of the publishing industry. He was on the founding board of BookNet Canada, the book supply chain agency in Canada. He is a member of several customer advisory boards. Active in the Canadian bookselling and publishing community, Todd was President of the Canadian Booksellers Association for two-years.

Mark Leslie Lefebvre

Mark has been writing since he was 13 years old and spent the summer pounding out an epic fantasy adventure on his mother's Underwood typewriter. While the novel he wrote was epicly forgettable, his passion for writing was something he never let go of. It was this passion for writing and for reading that led him to a career in bookselling, where, over the course of twenty years, he has worked for independent, chain, campus and online booksellers.

Over the years Mark has been active in various book industry associations, was recently President of Canadian Booksellers Association and also sits on the Board of Directors for BookNet Canada. He has a thirst for innovation, was one of the first booksellers in Canada to adapt an Espresso Book Machine into a retail operation, and continues to inspire others in ways to re-visualize the publishing and bookselling professions.

Mark currently works as Director of Self-Publishing and Author Relations for Kobo.com. He has three books coming out in 2012. *Haunted Hamilton*, a non-fiction book of ghost stories about his home town, is coming in August 2012 from Dundurn. Mark is the editor for *Tesseracts 16: Parnassus Unbound*, a science fiction anthology, which is being released by Edge Publishing in September 2012. And in November 2012, Mark's horror novel *I, Death* will be coming from Atomic Fez. When asked about the various hats he wears as a bookseller, POD and digital advocate and writer, Mark likes to say that the title "Book Nerd" nicely covers it all.

Jessica Legacy

Jessica received her Master of Arts from the University of Alberta in April of 2012. Her thesis is a novel based on medieval alchemy and the huntress. She has been published in *Portal Magazine* and also served as its managing editor in 2010. During her Masters she was a research and editorial assistant for *English Studies in Canada* where she first gained interest in open access scholarship. She is currently the editor for Henday Publishing. She also writes fiction as well as features with an Alberta focus. For more information, visit www.jessicalegacy.com.

Donna Livingstone

Donna Livingstone joined the University of Calgary Press as Director in April 2008. Under her leadership, the Press has initiated a new vision of "Making a difference. Making you think," and is playing a key role in the development of open access publishing in the country. Donna is committed to developing a new paradigm for scholarly publishing which increases its reach and impact and moves it from being an "ancillary service" on campus to being an "essential" part in the scholarly process. The University of Calgary Press is a proud to play a lead role in the new Centre for Scholarly Communication at the University of Calgary. Donna says that a key element of the Press's success moving forward is its integration with Libraries and Cultural Resources at the University.

Jerome Martin

Jerome Martin is the publisher of Spotted Cow Press. He is also a photographer, a musician and a storyteller, with a background in science and the arts. He was born in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan and is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Alberta.

Jerome is the author of Cappuccino U: A new way of learning and working (www.spottedcowpress.ca/CappuccinoU.pdf) and the editor of *Alternative Futures for Prairie Agricultural Communities.*

Paul Martin

Paul Martin teaches and writes about the literatures of Canada. Prior to joining MacEwan University as Faculty Development Coordinator in 2011, he was an Assistant Professor of English and Director of the Canadian Studies Program at the University of Vermont. His book *Sanctioned Ignorance: the politics of knowledge production and the teaching of the literatures of Canada* will be published by the University of Alberta Press in early 2013.

Kirby Wright

Kirby Wright PhD is president of an Edmonton-based consulting and applied research firm, KRW Knowledge Resources. His work focuses on professional learning, knowledge management, and organizational innovation.

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