

Reframing Book Publishing in the Age of Networking

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents preliminary results of an on-going examination of book publishing practices emerging through the complex interaction of technological, economic, and socio-cultural factors in the networking environment of the Internet. The theoretical framework guiding the study is a diachronic definition of book publishing proposed by Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker in “A New Model for the Study of the Book,” first published in *A Potency of Life: Books in Society*, by the British Library in 1993. The Adams/Barker definition of publishing focuses on “the initial decision to multiply a text or image for distribution.” In this paper, we propose what we intend as a friendly amendment to their definition: for our purposes, a book publisher is an individual or a collective that makes the initial decisions and arrangements for multiple copies of books to be publicly available for distribution. The methodology for this work was to study a purposive sample of book publishers found on the Internet that fit our definitional framework. Our final sample, which we call emerging publishers, is just under 300 publishers. This sample was divided into three categories: Category I: Book Publishing Entities; Category II Author as Publisher and Category III Channels to Market. Each category is sub-divided, defined and described. Tables are included which show the publishers in each category. The paper concludes with observations across categories about format, shifts in publishers’ roles, standards of publishing practice, costs, and discovery, reception and reading and survival.

Topics

Community technologies and networking
Cultural information systems
Information technology and services

Keywords

Electronic publishing
Publishing in the 21st Century
Emerging Publishers

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents preliminary results of an on-going examination of book publishing practices emerging through the complex interaction of technological, economic, and socio-cultural factors in the networking environment of the Internet. The theoretical framework guiding the study is a diachronic definition of book publishing proposed by Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker in “A New Model for the Study of the Book,” first published in *A Potency of Life: Books in Society*, by the British Library in 1993 and reissued in 2001 in paperback by the British Library and Oak Knoll Press. They were interested in developing a definition that would accommodate changes in publishing practices from the manuscript book period to the present day. They comment that while the most familiar form of publishing is commercial, models of publishing that are not driven by profit have existed from the rise of the western manuscript book trade forward. They give as examples the publishing activities of governments, religious institutions, and individuals supported by patronage.

The Adams/Barker definition of publishing focuses on “the initial decision to multiply a text or image for distribution,” (Adams/Barker, 2001, p. 15), and identifies four roles involved in this decision: author, financier, manufacturer and distributor, which in any given period of time might be performed by distinct parties or might be done in any combination. The Adams/Barker model also depicts five events in the life of a book: publication, manufacture, distribution, reception and survival. These events are conceptualized as occurring within the context of what they call the socio-economic conjecture, including commercial pressures, intellectual, legal and religious influences, and the realms of social behavior and taste.

A diachronic definition of publishing, i.e. a definition that is generic enough to encompass the study of book publishing as it changes over time, is ideally suited to an examination of the changes that are occurring in the patterns and practices with which books today come into being as objects, are made publicly available, are discovered by potential audiences, read or not read, and survive or do not survive. In this paper, we propose what we intend as a friendly amendment to Adams/Barker: for our purposes, a **book publisher is an individual or a collective that makes the initial decisions and arrangements for multiple copies of books to be publicly available for distribution.**

It is worth noting that this definition, while we believe it gets at the essential activity underlying the diachronic practice of book publishing, does not require features of the publishing practices we know best from the twentieth century, such as commercial mainstream publishing companies with large financial investment for manufacture, tight gate keeping of published material, a body of book writing and publishing expertise interpreted and enforced by editors and publishers, consolidated distribution, and above all,

print format. All these features certainly still exist in publishing, and arguably, still dominate, but by using a definition that does not require these features, we can not only see continuity with publishing from the manuscript book forward, but we are more likely to see changes that are emerging in the technological, economic and socio-cultural world of networking as currently instantiated on the Internet. In addition to their diachronic definition of book publishing, the theoretical context of Adams and Barker's work, including the identification of historically shifting roles and the socio-economic conjecture in which they situate the activities and technologies that comprise the events in the lives of books, shapes our thinking in this study.

The focus of this study is book publishing, although the diachronic definition of publishing above can be applied to other types of content. For our purposes, we have defined a book loosely as any publication of monographic length with a sustained narrative or argument, either textual or visual or in combination, and some familial relationship to the genre we know as the printed book, including some combination author, chapters, tables of contents, ISBN number and other resemblances.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this work was to study a purposive sample of book publishers that fit our definitional framework, continuing to search until we were not retrieving examples that seemed new in significant ways. Our final sample, which we call emerging publishers, is just under 300 publishers. Given the enormity and constantly changing nature of the Internet, this is obviously not a complete universe. We also chose not to examine print publishers who did not use themselves use the Internet for distribution and sales of books, although many of these publishers' works are available through the distributors and aggregators that were included. The ways that digital technologies are changing traditional print publishing practices, excluding electronic books, have been documented thoroughly by John Thompson in *Books in the Digital Age* (2005). Those traditional publishers who are experimenting with the emerging publishing environment on the Internet are represented well in our sample.

3. CATEGORICAL ANALYSIS

Our goal was to organize our sample around categories whose characteristics call attention to key differences among our publishers and their activities. The categories were not intended to be mutually exclusive but to highlight both shared characteristics and some different patterns within categories. After much experimentation, we identified three types of publishing agent, two who make the initial decision and arrangements to publish, and a third category used by both types of primary publishers for publishing arrangements. The first category, **book publishing entities**, was defined as entities (or individuals functioning as entities) who make initial decisions to make books from multiple authors publicly available. The second category, **authors as publishers**, was defined as authors themselves making the initial decision to publish their own work. The third category was defined as groups that assist publishers of both types with a combination of publishing roles. This group was labeled "channels to market," following increasingly common usage among sites studied. Categories were then subdivided, again along common characteristics. The intention is not to make a rigid classification scheme, but to highlight distinctions in a systematic way.

Table I: Categories of Emerging Publishers

Our descriptions of these categories in the text below follow roughly the same pattern: a label and definition that attempts to capture defining feature of each category; a description of

<p>Category I: Book Publishing Entities: Entities (or individuals functioning as entities) who arrange to make books from multiple authors available electronically</p> <p>I.1 Publishers of born-print books providing electronic distribution (print to digital)</p> <p>I.2 Publishers of born-electronic books, some providing POD print distribution (digital to print)</p> <p>Category II: Author as Publisher: authors themselves making the initial decision to publish their own work</p> <p>II.1 Using publishing services</p> <p>II.2 Using automated publishing websites</p> <p>II.3 Using author-created and controlled website infrastructure</p> <p>Category III: Channels to Market: Third-parties assisting publishers of both types with a variety of publishing functions.</p>

common characteristics; and then a brief discussion of a handful of examples that illustrate either characteristic or distinctive features within a category. Tables accompanying each discussion show the publishers in each category. At the end of the descriptions of categories, we bring together some observations about shifts in book publication practices resulting from the analysis of the sample across categories.

3.1 Category I: book publishing entities:

This category comprises entities who make the initial decisions for making multiple copies of books from multiple authors publicly available. Most of these entities appear to be commercial, for-profit companies.

It is useful to think of these publishers in two groups: (I.1) those whose primary production of books is print and who then may make decisions to distribute electronically; and (I-2) those whose primary production of books is electronic and who then may make decisions to distribute in print POD format;

Publishers of Born-Print E-Books: The key characteristic highlighted by this category is the electronic offering of books that first appeared in print. Our sample includes fifteen print publishers with substantial electronic distribution announced on their sites, by no means all that exist but enough of a variety to show some common characteristics and some different arrangements. As with born-print e-journals, born print e-books bring with them all the standard value-added services of a print publisher; they are simply distributed electronically. Format of distribution and availability, along with related changes in discovery mechanisms, are features distinguishing this category of electronic publisher. In other respects, they follow commercial print publishers publishing practices, including the acquisition and preparation of manuscripts and the compensation of authors. Having said that, it is highly likely that the pressures and competition of the emerging publishers discussed below will over time change more print publishing practices, as it is clearly influencing distribution and marketing now.

Simon and Schuster E-Books serves as an example for this category: <http://www.simonsays.com/content/index.cfm?pid=523087&tab=6>. It is a section of the Simon and Schuster website; it shows covers, blurbs, and publication information, and available formats. At present, Simon and Schuster e-books are downloadable in Adobe, Microsoft and Palm e-book formats. eHarlequin.com eBook Boutique, <http://ebooks.eharlequin.com>, and ePenguin, <http://www.penguin.co.uk/>, follow a similar pattern.

Several other models can be seen within this group. Norton eBooks.com, <http://www.nortonebooks.com/welcome.asp>, offers two options for electronic books: reading for a year online, purchased through Norton, or downloading through [Powells.com](http://www.powells.com), a vendor of e-books in Adobe, Microsoft and Palm as well as new and used traditional print books. Cambridge University Press has a site, Cambridge eBookstore, which serves as a catalog of Cambridge University Press eBook offerings. Purchase and download of e-books is handled through a distributor, eBooks.com. Hachette Book Group USA, for book publishers owned by Hachette, <http://www.hachettebookgroupusa.com/>, serves as a “union catalog” for its publishers. A “Where to Buy” link has extensive lists of booksellers’ websites, audio book vendors and online retailers.

Table II provides a list of publishers of born-print e-books from our sample.

Table II: Publishers of Born-Print E-Books

- Cambridge University Press eBookstore <http://www.cambridge.org/ebookstore>
- Del Rey online <http://www.randomhouse.com/delrey/ebooks>
- eHarlequin.com eBook Boutique <http://ebooks.eharlequin.com>
- ePenguin <http://tinyurl.com/2h92o3>
- Franklin.com <http://www.franklin.com/about/profile.asp>
- Hachette Book Group, USA <http://www.hachettebookgroupusa.com>
- The Hindu eBooks <http://www.thehinduebooks.com>
- Imagine eBooks <http://imagine-ebooks.com>
- MTB Europe <http://www.mtbeurope.info/books/ebooks.htm>
- Mythic Island Press <http://www.mythicisland.com>
- NortonEbooks.com <http://www.nortonebooks.com/welcome.asp>
- Simon & Schuster <http://www.simonsays.com/content/index.cfm?pid=523087&tab=6>
- Tanner Ritchie Publishing <http://www.tannerritchie.com>
- Taylor & Francis eBookstore <http://www.ebookstore.tandf.co.uk/html/index.asp>
- White Wolf <http://www.white-wolf.com>

Publishers of Born-Digital E-Books: This category features publishers of electronic books that have not been preceded by print books, in other words, born-digital e-books. We found over 90 examples of publishers that fit this definition. In general, many patterns and practices of these publishers resemble those of print publishers. These publishers make editorial decisions in determining which manuscripts to select, either from open submission or by invitation; they do not charge authors any fees for publishing; they have contracts specifying royalties and rights; they provide the typical value-added services of print publishers including arranging for the publishing infrastructure, financial underwriting, quality control editorial and design services, and marketing through their website, acting like an online bookstore or catalog.

Publishers in this category distributed multiple copies of original work made publicly available for the first time primarily through a variety of electronic means, in a variety of formats for viewing on the consumer’s computer or on a variety of viewing devices, with a variety of controls over use. A brief discussion of e-book formats, reading devices and digital rights management (DRM) is necessary here, but will inevitably be out of date quickly, since the volatile and rapidly changing market is conditioned by multiple business arrangements among publishers, channels to market, and device manufacturers. An industry standard has yet to emerge, and some argue that the difficulty of choosing formats and actually downloading to devices, rather than an aversion to reading on screens or a predilection for the print book as an object, has prevented an explosion of consumer preference for electronic over print. In December 2005, Michael Hyatt, CEO and publisher of Thomas Nelson Publishers, in a blog posting titled “The Death of the Traditional Book,” popularized the now oft-repeated phrase, “one device away” from a digital book revolution. Some have suggested that Amazon’s Kindle, discussed below, is, if not the one device that will revolutionize digital books, at least a harbinger of that device.

The overview of e-book formats and devices from Fictionwise (discussed below under the category of channels to market, <http://www.fictionwise.com/help/help.htm>), is reproduced below as an indicator of the variety of formats and devices now available:

- Sony Reader (Sony Reader PRS-500 and PRS-505 [.lrf])
- Kindle (Kindle [.mobi])
- Personal Computers (Microsoft Reader [.lit], Adobe Acrobat [.pdf], Mobipocket [.prc])
- Palm OS Handhelds (Palm Doc [.pdb], iSilo [-is.pdb], Mobipocket)
- Pocket PC Handhelds (Microsoft Reader [.lit], Mobipocket [.prc])
- Win CE Handhelds (Palm Doc [.pdb], Mobipocket [.prc])
- Rocket/Reb1100 Devices (rocket files only [.rb])
- Franklin eBookMan (Mobipocket, eBookMan files [.fub])
- Hiebook (Hiebook [.kml])
- Symbian OS Organizers and Smartphones (Mobipocket [.prc])
- Other Devices (many can read Palm Doc)

Fictionwise describes their electronic offerings as either multi-format or secure format. The key difference here is encryption or digital rights management. The Fictionwise discussion of this difference (<http://www.fictionwise.com/help/ebook-formats-FAQ.htm#difference>.) is an excellent introduction to devices, formats and digital rights management, and their FAQ offers some insight into the business decisions that shape the conditions of availability.

Many of these publishers also offered POD print versions, either at their discretion depending on sales, or less frequently, at the author’s choice. It is common for these publishers to use third parties for both manufacture and simultaneous distribution of print copies. Most books have ISBN numbers. In general, most of

these publishers do not pay advances but royalty percentages could be larger than print percentages, keeping in mind that costs per copy was often less than print.

Although many publishing practices of these emerging publishers are similar to patterns from commercial print publishing, it is important to recognize ways in which these emerging publishers are pushing the traditional boundaries of publishing established in the print world. Content is one of the most obvious differences. Fiction, and particularly romance and other genre fiction, dominated our sample, although non-fiction was available. Imprints, or series with specific characteristics, are frequently used to direct niche audiences to their work. The categorical lists which comprise the primary subject finding tool for all categories of publishers show some categories that arguably have not been well represented across print publishing, such as erotica, dark fantasy, and others.

Lower entry costs for these publishers, compared to traditional print publishing, may account for the flourishing of niche publishing, publishers and imprints within publishers that are targeted to specific, and frequently non-mainstream, audiences.

Double Dragon Publishing, <http://www.double-dragon-ebooks.com/index.php>, is an example chosen for this category. Founded in 2001, it is primarily an e-book publisher, although it chooses some titles for POD print distribution through lulu.com, especially in large print versions. It provides 30% royalties paid on a 6-month cycle; it buys electronic rights and copyright is retained by author or institution. It does not charge fees to authors. According to their website, 90% of their sales come from Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror and Speculative Fiction.” In 2004, they opened a romance line. Services provided to authors include editing services, cover and banner design, free copies for use in promotion, and an authors-only forum. In addition to a long list of genre fiction, they have more than 10 titles in the non-fiction category and also in the self-help category. They provide e-books in the following formats: Rocket-eBook, Hiebook, Adobe PDF, MS-Reader, Mobipocket, iSilo, Franklin eBookMan, and Palm Doc, and the website assures readers that they will keep up with new technologies.

New Concepts Publishing, <http://www.newconceptspublishing.com/authorfaqs.htm>, another example, was the first totally electronic romance publishing house. Like most other examples in this category, NCP assigns ISBN numbers, pays royalties (30%-40%), provides cover art, and buys exclusive electronic rights for a specified amount of time. NCP decides, based on interest and sales, whether a title will be printed as a POD or trade paperback. E-books are provided in RTF, HTML, MS Reader, MobiPocket, and PDF.

Writer’s Exchange E-Publishing differs from the two examples above in that authors have the option of paying set-up print fees and having the book appear in print as well as electronically. Writer’s Exchange publishes e-books which they distribute through their online store, Reader’s Eden. They also distribute electronic books by other authors.

Awe-Struck E-Books, <http://www.awe-struck.net/>, publishes genre fiction and provides an example of niche publishing with their Ennoble imprint, claiming to be unique in featuring heroes and heroines with disabilities.

Table III provides an incomplete list of publishers of born-digital e-books in our sample. Please email authors for complete list.

Table III: Publishers of Born-Digital E-Books

●Alt-X Ebooks http://www.altx.com/ebooks/altx_frame.html

- Amber Quill Press (Also Amber Heat and Amber Allure imprints) <http://www.amberquill.com>
- Amira Press <http://www.amirapress.com>
- Aphrodite’s Apples <http://www.aphroditessapples.com>
- Arch eBooks <http://www.archebooks.com>
- Artemis Press <http://www.artemispress.com/html/e-bookstore.html>
- Asylett Press <http://www.asylett.com>
- Atlantic Bridge *includes nonfiction <http://www.atlanticbridge.net>
- Awe-struck ebooks <http://www.awe-struck.net>
- Baen Books <http://www.baen.com>
- BellaOnline <http://www.bellaonline.com/ebooks>
- Belgrave House <http://www.belgravehouse.com>
- Best Buy Ebooks (only two authors, Print through lulu) <http://store.buy-best-ebooks.com>
- Books for a Buck <http://www.booksforabuck.com>
- Books Unbound <http://www.booksunbound.com>
- BookShaker *nonfiction only <http://www.bookshaker.com/index.php>
- Bosun Books <http://www.bosunonline.com/bosun>
- Bowbridge Publishing <http://www.bowbridgepublishing.com>
- Carnal Desires Publishing <http://www.carnaldesirespublishing.com>
- Champagne Books <http://www.champagnebooks.com>
- Changeling Press Erotic Fiction <http://www.changelingpress.com>
- Chippewa Publishing LLC <http://www.chippewapublishing.com>
- Cobblestone Press <http://www.cobblestone-press.com>
- Computer Classics <http://www.computer-classics.com>
- Connexions *nonfiction <http://cnx.org/lenses/cnxorg/books>
- Creative Guy Publishing <http://www.creativeguypublishing.com>
- Cybereditions *nonfiction <http://cybereditions.com>
- Dark Eden Press <http://www.darkeddenpress.com>
- Derlinger’s Publishers *includes nonfiction <http://www.thebookden.com>
- DiscoverABook.com <http://www.discoverabook.com>
- DiskUs Publishing <http://www.diskuspublishing.com>
- DLSIJ Press *includes nonfiction <http://dlsijpress.com>
- Double Dragon Publishing <http://www.double-dragon-ebooks.com>
- Dpdotcom.com <http://www.dpdotcom.com>
- Dragonfly Publishing <http://www.dragonflypubs.com>
- Drollerie Press <http://www.drolleriepress.com>
- Eastgate <http://www.eastgate.com>
- Ebooksonthe.net <http://www.ebooksonthe.net>
- Ebooks on Disk <http://www.ebooksdisk.com/index.php>
- Ebooksonthe.net *also sells previously published books <http://www.ebooksonthe.net>

Incomplete list. Please email authors for complete list.

3.2 Category II: author as publisher:

The second category highlights the author acting as publisher: the person who makes the initial decisions and arrangements to make multiple copies available for public distribution. Digital technologies have opened many new avenues for authors to create books and make them publicly available, and authors are using them in great numbers. To provide an overview of the burgeoning world of authors as publishers, we have organized these efforts in three sub-categories. These categories, even more than the ones introduced previously, are an oversimplification of the great variety that exists in these efforts, but they have the virtue of bringing some order to an examination of this phenomenon. The three categories examined here are authors using fee-based

commercial services, authors using automated websites designed for uploading books, and authors providing their own web infrastructure for making their work available, and sometimes sharing their space with other authors.

3.2.1 Authors using fee-based publishing services

Adams and Barker point out that authors arranging for the publishing of their own work, often with the assistance of patronage, has a long history. In the twentieth century, author-financed publishing carried the pejorative title of vanity publishing, with the implied assumption that if authors were any good, they would not have to finance the publication of their own works. Authors who arranged for the manufacture of their own printed books faced major obstacles in distributing them. In the pre-Internet print book world, distribution of books was in the hands of a few wholesalers, who supplied retailers, libraries and schools. Amazon pioneered the “channel to market” approach on the Internet, providing for the discovery, distribution and sales of print titles, soon expanded to media and other commodities, and thus breaking up the distribution bottleneck.

In early January, 2008, the Associated Press distributed an article by Candace Choi, “Got a Manuscript? Publishing Now a Snap,” highlighting the skyrocketing use by authors of fee-based commercial publishing services. Our searching identified over fifty of these services, of which Lulu.com, Amazon’s CreateSpace, and Blurb.com were featured by Choi. The basic idea behind these services is that authors can purchase publishing infrastructure, manufacturing, distribution and marketing services previously provided for free by print publishers for their selected authors, shifting both the decision to publish and the financial burden to the author, but giving them opportunities to reach audiences previously dominated by commercial companies. While the main thrust of most services is to provide print books, many provide electronic distribution as well. Two examples of fee-based publishing services will be discussed: iUniverse and Amazon’s CreateSpace.

iUniverse is a useful example to describe briefly because they have organized their services into packages, ranging from under \$400 to under \$1400, with add-ons in all categories. The most inexpensive option is most like traditional vanity publishing of the past, providing the author with professionally manufactured POD print copies for family and friends, with the added limited distribution mechanism of availability through the iUniverse book store. Increasingly expensive options provide more professional quality and services, and increasingly wide retail availability through channels to market, such as Barnes and Noble.com, Amazon and many others. The high-end services provide the essentials of commercial print publishing, including marketing efforts such as the distribution of review copies.

Amazon’s CreateSpace calls itself “on demand” publishing. They manufacture and sell physical objects, including POD books, audio books, audio CDs, video CDs and other products one at a time, as ordered. The price is set by the author and royalties are paid to the author as they are generated by sales. The author or creator is entirely responsible for the content which is uploaded to CreateSpace for production. CreateSpace products are sold via Amazon.

While theoretically the consumer can identify a self-published book by recognizing the publisher, the increasing number of these services, plus the increasing mix on channel to market sites of commercial publishers, traditionally printed books, and emerging publishers of POD books and electronic books of many varieties

means that in practice, the distinction between commercial publication and author-subsidized publication is increasingly blurred.

Table IV provides a list of the fee-based publishing services in our sample.

Table IV: Fee-Based Publishing Services

- Antony Rowe Ltd. <http://www.antonyrowe.co.uk>
- AuthorHouse <http://www.authorhouse.com>
- Authors Online <http://www.authorsonline.co.uk>
- Aventine Press <http://www.aventinepress.com>
- Blitz Print <http://www.blitzprint.com/index.htm?aim=c01k002g>
- Booklocker <http://www.booklocker.com>
- Bookstand Publishing <http://www.ebookstand.com>
- Booksurge <http://www.booksurge.com>
- CafePress
<http://www.cafepress.com/cp/info/sell/products/books>
- Cheap eBooks *eBook POD <http://www.cheapebookshop.com>
- CreateSpace
- Dog Ear Publishing
<http://www.dogearpublishing.net/getstarted.aspx>
- Ebookomatic (operates more like a POD but produces ebooks only) <http://www.ebookomatic.com>
- EbooksLib *also multilingual, also distributor
<http://www.ebookslib.com>
- Equilibrium Books <http://www.equilibriumbooks.com>
- First Choice Books <http://www.firstchoicebooks.ca>
- Foremost Press <http://www.foremostpress.com/authors>
- Fultus Publishing <http://www.fultus.com>
- GASLight Publishing (traditional and subsidy pub)
<http://gaslightpublishing.net>
- GLB Literary Corner *includes nonfiction
<http://www.glbpubs.com>
- Golden Pillar Publishing <http://www.goldenpillarpublishing.com>
- Illumina Press <http://www.illumina.com>
- Infinity Publishing <http://www.infinitypublishing.com>
- Inkwater Press <http://www.inkwaterpress.com>
- Instabook Publisher
<http://www.instabookpublisher.com/files/faq.htm>
- iUniverse <http://www.iuniverse.com>
- Ka-Blam <http://www.ka-blam.com>
- Keystone Digital Press <http://www.greenepublicationsinc.com>
- Lightning Source <https://www.lightningsource.com>
- Lulu.com <http://www.lulu.com>
- Net Publications Inc.
<http://www.netpub.net/newservices/pubserv.asp>
- Outskirts Press <http://www.outskirtspress.com>
- Page Free Publishing <http://www.pagefreepublishing.com>
- Pleasant World – Christian Print on Demand Self Publishing
<http://www.pleasantword.com/Default.asp>
- Poseidon Books <http://www.poseidonbooks.com>
- Private Ice Publications <http://www.skatefic.com>
- Publish America <http://publishamerica.com>
- Publishers Row *fee based epub
<http://www.publishersrow.com>
- Star Publish, LLC <http://starpublish.com>
- Tate Publishing <http://www.tatepublishing.com>
- Trafford Publishing <http://www.trafford.com>
- U-Publish <http://www.u-publish.com/testbook.htm>
- Universal Publishers <http://www.universal-publishers.com>
- Unlimited Publishing <http://www.unlimitedpublishing.com>
- Virtual Bookworm <http://www.virtualbookworm.com>
- Wheatmark <http://www.wheatmark.com>
- Wing Span Press <http://www.wingspanpress.com>
- Writers Print Shop

<http://www.writersservices.com/wps/index.htm>
 ●Writersworld <http://writersworld.co.uk>
 ●Xargol *Hebrew and English
http://www.xargol.com/index.php?cat=2&name=o_fiction
 ●xLibris <http://www2.xlibris.com/pubservices/index.asp>
 Xulon Press <http://www.xulonpress.com>

3.2.2 Authors using automated websites to upload books

This category illustrates automated sites that exist solely to provide mechanics for authors to upload and share their work, free for the author and free for the reader. Our sample includes sixteen of these sites. Mechanics, conditions, registration, and membership all differ. Although sites vary, many have a high proportion of uncompleted or abandoned work. Four examples will be highlighted: FictionCentral.net, NaNoWriMo, Writing.com and Buried.com.

FictionCentral.net, <http://www.fictioncentral.net/index.php>, describes itself as a “place to write and read original fiction stories.” Authors need to register; readers are encouraged to register and are requested to leave a review of what they have read. Works can be posted chapter by chapter, and a notation indicates when it is completed. The site administrators have articulated rules for writing and reviewing, including a system of ratings and warnings, including the requirement to rate material as 12+ for people over 12, and the notation of SLASH for material including single-sex pairings, and courtesy rules such as no rudeness or swearing.

NaNoWriMo, <http://www.nanowrimo.org/>, is an engagingly original attempt to encourage people to jump in and write a novel. In November, registrants have one month to complete a 50,000 word novel. The NaNoWriMo website says “It’s all about quantity not quality.” Unlike many other sites to upload work, the author’s work on NaNoWriMo work remains private unless the author posts excerpts or shares with others. At the end of the month, an author’s word count can be verified and if it exceeds 50,000, the author is listed as a winner.

Writing.com, <http://www.writing.com/>, describes itself as “the online community for writers and readers of all interests and skill levels.” It requires registration, in which the registrant provides a username that will be used as his/her online identity, and required personal information for the site administrators. Many features include space for authors’ writing profiles and many interactive community venues.

Buried.com is an example of a site containing content around a theme, in this case, “everything that is horror...,” and includes mechanisms for authors to upload their own writing, again in this case horror fiction.

Table V lists the automated publishing websites in our sample.

Table V: Automated Publishing Websites

●ABC Tales <http://www.abctales.com>
 ●Afterglare <http://afterglare.com/browse.php?type=titles>
 ●Badosa <http://www.badosa.com>
 ●eStories *German, English, Spanish, Dutch, French, Italian, Portuguese <http://www.e-stories.de>
 ●Fanstory.com <http://www.fanstory.com>
 ●FictionCentral <http://www.fictioncentral.net>
 ●Fiction Press <http://www.fictionpress.com>
 ●FicWad <http://www.ficwad.com>
 ●NaNoWriMo <http://www.nanowrimo.org/>

●NoviceWriters <http://www.novicewriters.net/index.html>
 ●Shur*tugal <http://fanfiction.shurtugal.com/categories.php?catid=12>
 ●Slash Cotillion <http://cotillion.slashcity.org>
 ●UseNet (Google Groups) <http://groups.google.com>
 ●Writing.com <http://www.writing.com>
 ●Buried.com <http://www.buried.com/features/novels.shtml>
 ●Cosmos Magazine Fiction Serials
<http://www.cosmosmagazine.com/fiction/online/serials>

3.2.3 Authors creating their own infrastructure to publish their work

The relative ease of website construction has enabled numerous authors to create sites as venues for their own work. Some sites exist solely for the author’s content, with some or all items free to consumers, and some sites exist primarily for the author’s work but accept works from other writers, again with variation in fee or free. Since a great deal of variety exists here, those interested should explore the lists of sites created and controlled by authors in Table VI.

Table VI: Websites Created and Controlled by Authors

Single-author only

●Anisky’s Abode
<http://www.geocities.com/melsstories/index.html>
 ●Back in School: A Love Story
<http://www.alovestory.net/92.html>
 ●Backpacking on Little Money
<http://backpackingonlittlemoney.wordpress.com>
 ●Caring for God’s Laptop <http://www.important.ca/godslaptop>
 ●Cheek.org <http://www.cheek.org/fiction/index.htm>
 ●The Circle of Ceridwen <http://octavia.net/books/booklist.html>
 ●Coyote <http://www.hauntedhousedressing.com/coyote.htm>
 ●Dark Icon <http://www.darkicon.com/Library>
 ●Darkfin <http://www.darkfin.com/main.html>
 ●Diary of a Heretic <http://www.diaryofaheretic.blogspot.com>
 ●D. S. Bauden Original Fiction
http://www.dsbauden.com/original_fiction.shtml
 ●Fiction by Junkfood Monkey

<http://www.junkfoodmonkey.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Fics/ficindex.html>
 ●Fields of Night <http://users.california.com/~sarapeyton>
 ●From in the Shadows <http://fromintheshadows.blogspot.com>
 ●Furry Magic <http://www.furymagic.org/disclaimer.htm>
 ●Hopcott ebooks <http://hopcott.net>
 ●If He Should Lose His Own Soul
<http://www.fables.co.uk/grownups.htm>
 ●Jackee’s Corner <http://fiction.jackeescorner.com>
 ●Kuroiyusei Original Fiction
<http://www.kuroiyusei.net/Ofiction.htm>
 ●Lady Jaida original fiction
<http://ladyjaida.livejournal.com/tag/original+fiction>
 ●Maximilian Lückenhaus *German http://www.wahre-kunst.de/Lueckenhaus/m_sfi.html
 ●Metropoppyfield <http://www.metropoppyfield.com/buy.html>
 ●Moments of Existence
http://www.freewebs.com/moments_of_existence/home.html
 ●Mortal Ghost <http://mortalghost.blogspot.com>
 ●Nate Simpson <http://www.natesimpson.com/writing/#Novels>
 ●Nicole West Original Fiction <http://www.nicolewest.net>
 ●Paddy – Original Fiction
http://www.originalpain.com/paddy/fiction_paddy.html
 ●Prose Dreams <http://www.prosedreams.net>
 ●The Relic Triangle <http://www.relictriangle.com>
 ●Richard A. Bartle Original Fiction

<http://www.mud.co.uk/richard/fiction.htm>
 ● Salamanders <http://home.earthlink.net/~salamanders/>
 ● ScribeScribbles
<http://www.angelfire.com/grrl/scribescribbles/mainmenu.htm>
 ● Setisia <http://www.freeonlinereading.com>
 ● Starving Writer <http://www.starvingwriter.com>
 ● The Talespinner <http://www.angelfire.com/home/talespinner>
 ● The Wonderful World of Bradley Stoke
<http://bradleystoke.0catch.com>
 ● Xenacast Original Fiction
<http://www.xenacast.com/xc/originalfiction.htm>
 ● Zvi's Palm Jewish Fiction Page
<http://home.att.net/~fiddlerzvi/PalmLit.html>

Single Authors and Sharing:

- B.L. Miller's Site <http://blmiller.net>
- Free Novels Online <http://starry.com/novel/authors.htm>
- Shoujo-Ai Canada
<http://www.katandnekomanga.ca/writing/shoujo-ai.htm>
- A Room of Her Own: A Dynamic Anthology of Lesbian Fiction
<http://blmiller.net/room/index.html>
- Aphelion Webzine <http://www.aphelion-webzine.com>
- The Cobweb's Short Stories
<http://www.angelfire.com/ego/thecobwebs/stories.htm>
- Dark Lethe <http://reactivewriting.com/dark-lethe>
- Elfwood <http://www.elfwood.com/libr/entrance.html>
- Free the Writer <http://www.freethewriter.com/Archives.html>
- Ideaomancer <http://www.ideaomancer.com/main/ideoMain.htm>
- Iyinka's Original Fiction

3.3 Category III: channels to market: third parties who acquire rights to manufacture, distribute and sell print or electronic books

Channels to market, as mentioned in the definition of categories, is the term increasingly used to represent the combination of manufacture, distribution, discovery and sales mechanisms that is flourishing on the Internet. In the pre-Internet print book world, distribution of print was tightly controlled by a few book wholesalers, who supplied titles from multiple publishers to sellers and institutions, such as schools and libraries. Discovery of titles was accomplished primarily through publishers advertising and marketing, reviews, compendia such as Books in Print, library catalogs and browsing bookstore shelves. Amazon pioneered the “channels to market” concept of providing a mechanism for consumers to find and order print titles from multiple publishers, extending to used as well as new books and into other media, including electronic books. “Channels to market sites,” contract with publishers and sometimes publishing services to sell print and electronic books on their sites in specific formats, readable on specific devices.

Initially, we had classified channels to market as a secondary type of commercial publishing entity, along with primary born-print and born-digital publishers of electronic books. However, toward the end of our analysis, we put them in their own category because of the increasing tendency of both commercial publishers and authors who use publishing services to be combined in channels to market. Not all channel to market sites include books from publishing services, but Amazon as one of the largest channels to market companies does, and for numerous other publishing services, it is a fee-based alternative authors can

choose. As a result, channels to market are increasingly including titles from a mix of publishing sources. In other words, authors who publish their own work can be included in some of the most used channels to market.

Twenty-seven “channel to market” sites were identified in our sample. Several examples have been chosen for short descriptions: eBooks, Fictionwise, NetLibrary and Overdrive, and Mobipocket and Kindle Store (both Amazon companies), and LightningSource.

eBook.com calls itself “the digital bookstore.” It sells electronic copies of print titles and also born-digital titles. It contracts with publishers to buy a non-exclusive Internet right to digitally store, reproduce and transmit titles; royalties are paid to the author through the publisher. e-Books distributes books in Adobe PDF and encrypts books using Adobe Content Server.

Fictionwise, an e-book and audio-book publisher <http://www.fictionwise.com/AuthorInfo.htm> mentioned earlier, is interesting because in addition to contracting with publishers, it will contract directly with authors who have more than 10 published print books. It offers books in unencrypted formats and in Adobe, Microsoft and Mobipocket Secure (i.e. encrypted) formats.

NetLibrary and Overdrive are examples of companies that do not sell primarily to consumers but to third parties. NetLibrary is the eContent division of OCLC. When accessing NetLibrary from a member library system, the NetLibrary site shows the titles owned by the member. Overdrive targets multiple third parties, including libraries, schools, retailers, and enterprises and tailors the product it sells to each market. Overdrive also hosts the Digital Media Locator, <http://www.ebooklocator.com/>, which locates libraries that have contracted with Overdrive to provide patrons with free downloads of specific titles. The Locator is a strategic alliance with OCLC, utilizing Worldcat.

Mobi-Pocket (since 2005 an Amazon company) and Amazon are examples of channel to market sites that have their own branded devices but also act as channels for content for other devices. Amazon has recently introduced the Kindle, which has many of the features Hyatt mentioned as necessary for the “one device” that would spark consumer interest in digital books. Kindle downloads digital content, including books, newspapers, magazines, and blogs, from the Kindle Store, <http://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=133141011>, either directly from your Kindle or from the Amazon site to your Kindle via wireless. The device itself is the size of a paperback book. Experts and consumers alike have varying opinions of reading quality. The Fictionwise Kindle FAQ offers insights into Amazon’s business decisions with regard to channels other than Amazon for distributing to the Kindle and illustrates the jockeying for position that now characterizes the e-book market. At this writing in late January, 2008, the Amazon site lists the Kindle as temporarily out of stock, but is taking orders.

LightningSource, <https://www.lightningsource.com/>, describes itself as “demand-driven book manufacturing and distribution” services. They provide rapid print-on-demand electronic book fulfillment services for publishers to retailers and libraries. LightningSource is illustrative of the emergence of a stream of print POD books from either print or electronic files supplied by the publisher, as well as electronic books from digital files provided by the publisher. Interestingly but perhaps not surprisingly, LightningSource is a subsidiary of Ingram Industries, owners of Ingram Book Group, one of the largest

wholesalers of books in the United States. LightningSource does not reveal their criteria for what and who constitutes a publisher, but it is highly probably that small niche publishers, even individuals acting as publishers, can enter the publishing arena through LightningSource. According to the LightningSource website, they print a million books a month and the average print run is 1.8 books.

Table VII: Channel to Market Sites

- Fictionwise
- ACLS Humanities E-Book
<http://www.humanitiesebook.org/intro.html>
- Adobe Digital Media Store
<http://www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/library>
- Amazon.com (also distributes born digital ebooks)
<http://tinyurl.com/33xrm2>
- Aneas eBookStore <http://www.aneas.net/ebookstore>
- Audible.com *audio books <http://www.audible.com>
- Books on Board <http://www.booksonboard.com>
- Bookshare.org *ebooks for the visually impaired
<http://www.bookshare.org>
- Campus eBookstore <http://www.campusebookstore.com>
- Cartoon eBooks <http://www.cartoonebooks.com>
- Cyberread <http://www.cyberread.com>
- Diesel Ebooks <http://www.diesel-ebooks.com>
- eBook Mall <http://www.ebookmall.com>
- ebooks.com <http://www.ebooks.com>
- eBooks from Tess http://www.tessebooks.com/index.php?cPath=25_10
- EbooksLib *also multilingual, also POD
<http://www.ebookslib.com>
- eFollett.com <http://ebooks.efollett.com>
- eLibrary <http://e-library.net>
- eReadable.com <http://www.ereadable.com>
- eReader.com <http://www.ereader.com>
- MemoWare PDA Bookstore <http://www.pdabookstore.com>
- Mobipocket <http://www.mobipocket.com>
- NetLibrary <http://company.netlibrary.com/AboutUs.aspx>
- Numilog eBooks <http://www.numilogebooks.com>
- Powell's Books
<http://www.powells.com/ebookstore/ebooks.html>
- TecknoQuest <http://www.tecknoquest.com>
- OverDrive <http://www.overdrive.com/>

4. OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SHIFTS IN BOOK PUBLISHING PRACTICES IN THE AGE OF NETWORKING

A number of observations can be made about emerging shifts in publishing practices by looking across the categories analyzed above. Many of these observations are not new to this paper, but they have arisen here from empirical examination of a large number of instances, and therefore they provide some evidence toward validation of these shifts.

4.1 Formats

While it is startlingly clear that the appearance of books in electronic format, either born-print or born-digital, and indeed the burgeoning number of new born-digital publishers, is a major phenomenon occurring on the Internet, focusing only on electronic books masks the reality that re-formatting goes in numerous directions, certainly from print to various electronic

forms, but also to audio books, and from digital to print, enabled by POD.

The growing quality and popularity of POD, and its growing transparent use by publishers, either directly or through services like LightningSource, and channels to market like Amazon, is increasing the number of print titles available and diluting at least the traditional notion of the technological origins of a printed book and arguably the traditional print-publisher based notion of the book itself. The popularity of POD print copies for authors publishing their work through publishing services also illustrates that the flow of formats is complex. Some channels to market offer format as a consumer choice, and one may speculate that that trend may continue. Commercial channels now exist for the direct ordering of POD books by libraries, schools and retailers, although the extent of their use is not clear. The impact of POD on book publishing is, we believe, in its infancy and will have possibly as dramatic a change on publishing patterns and practices as electronic books are having now.

4.2 Shifts in publishing roles

Our theoretical model arose out of notion that component roles of publishing have shifted over historical time from the rise of the western book and has directed our attention to dimensions of these shifts now occurring in the technological, economic and socio-cultural environment of the Internet. A central result of using the amended Adams/Barker definition of a publisher was a clearer understanding of the extent to which authors can act, and are acting, as their own publishers, and making available a wide variety of books, from products that can not be distinguished from the products of traditional publishers in appearance, and arguably in quality, to incomplete, informal, and unfinished explorations in writing books.

Another central recognition for us was the extent to which traditional publishers' patterns and roles in manufacturer, distribution and sales are changing. The rise of channel to market services which offer remanufacture, reformatting, multiple-format distribution directly to customers or through third parties, and new marketing approaches through interaction with authors and readers, while not eliminating publisher's decision-making certainly tends toward uncoupling or expanding functions that were once directly controlled by publishers.

4.3 Standards of publishing practice

Andrew Keen (2007), author of *Cult of the Amateur: How the Internet Is Killing Our Culture*, is just one of many voices who are concerned about the loosening of standards in publication and public discourse. Increasingly, the fact of publication is not a promise to the reader that the book has been vetted by the writing and editing professional elite who have dominated print publication, although many publishing services either offer or recommend the services of fee-based publishing professionals. The emergence of niche publishing, especially in areas that have not been well represented in mainstream publishing, either because of small market size or some form of stigmatization in mainstream society, can also be seen as a loosening of the gate keeping role of mainstream publishing in determining the body of book content available to the public. Not everyone decries this increasing inclusion of previously excluded content, both in substance and style, but the effects on society are certainly being vigorously debated.

4.4 Costs

Many changes are occurring in the cost structure of book publishing, which this study only hints at. It seems highly likely that arguably lower entry costs for publication of electronic books foster the expansion of electronic publishers that seems to be occurring. We have heard some evidence that the number of new print book publishers is growing, due in large part to lower entry costs through POD services, but that needs confirming. Certainly the cost of distribution and reaching markets is being redistributed, not only in electronic publication but in traditional print publishing, as marketing support of publishers of all kinds shifts.

We have not seen a definitive study of the costs to the consumer of electronic books; the received wisdom is that costs of electronic books are lower, but that needs systematic documentation. Although this study uncovered numerous examples of authors who are distributing their work for free, the motivations are not clearly understood; surely readership and recognition is in the mix, but the extent to which authors see subsidized publication and free distribution as a path to recognition by a traditional print publisher is uncertain. Certainly well publicized examples exist, but how frequently they occur and how they affect the motivation for an author to self publish is, in our minds, still unclear.

4.5 Discovery, readership and reception and survival

In this arena, there are even more unanswered questions than in the areas above. In *The Long Tail*, Chris Anderson has extensively documented the shift from scarce resources in all media to abundance and the presence of many niche products and markets, and he has suggested that in an environment of abundance and small niche markets, the reader's ability to discover titles of potential interest to them is crucial (Anderson, 2006).

Channels to market play an important role in discovery, primarily through the creation of genre lists and search strategies. Increasingly, commercial publishers, authors, channel sites and niche interest sites of many varieties are experimenting with social forms of book discovery: reviews, recommendations, blogs, tagging, and other ways of sharing with like-minded people. In the romance arena, for example, reviews on popular sites like *Coffee Time Romance* or *Romance Junkies* cover print and electronic books in niche markets as well as mainstream ones.

An obvious question to ask in view of the increasingly abundant supply of books is whether they are finding readers. Anderson's

argument, in terms of economics, is that a large number of small purchases, in the long tail, can be economically viable. Perhaps implied in that assertion is some restructuring or shifting of economic models of publishers and channels to market. Another question begging for hard data is how much electronic books, from whatever publishing source, are being purchased or borrowed, and read.

Survival of electronic, and indeed POD books, is also an issue that raises more questions than answers, as in all areas of digital preservation. John B. Thompson (2004) documents the struggles of publishers to shift from the mindset that their chief asset is a published book in a warehouse to understanding their assets as electronic files saved and available in reformatable condition. And the debates around the preservation of e-journals in an environment where access has shifted from ownership to licensing under restricted conditions can be extended to electronic books, as can the on-going conversations of the long-term viability of today's electronic formats.

5. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study is our initial look at shifts in publishing practices in the age of the Internet and raises many more questions than it answers. Each of the observations above, and others, needs to be probed in greater detail. Data-driven studies of all sorts will be useful in documenting the emerging dimensions of shifts in book publishing in the 21st century.

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