



# 50 Benefits of Ebooks

A Thinking Person's  
Guide to the  
Digital Reading  
Revolution

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C S  
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L E

**Edition**  
September  
**2009**

"This book is pretty much a 'must read'  
and 'ready reference' for anyone  
considering eBooks."

—Michael S. Hart, Founder  
Project Gutenberg



# 50 Benefits of Ebooks

A Thinking Person's Guide  
to the Digital Reading Revolution  
( Where Ebooks are Low-cost or Free )

September 2009

Edition 2009v09.18

by  
Michael Pastore

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50 Benefits of Ebooks – A Thinking Person's  
Guide to the Digital Reading Revolution  
(Where Ebooks are Low-cost or Free).  
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We did not come here to fear the  
future. We came to shape it.

— Barack Obama  
September 9, 2009

## The Battle of the Books and Ebooks

In my mind – and on my bookshelf and virtual bookshelf – paper books and ebooks live together in perfect harmony. Blogs may be driving newspapers to extinction, but ebooks will never replace paper books.

In a humorous essay, *The Battle of the Books*, Jonathan Swift pokes fun at the intellectual debate which pitted the classical writers against the moderns. A bee, supporting the old books, praises them for “furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light.”

Although old things and new things are often antagonists, it is a mistake to think that paper books and ebooks are at war. Ebooks are simply the latest means of communicating and storing information, that began with stone tablets, advanced to papyrus scrolls, and continued with the invention of paper by a retired Chinese eunuch named Cai Lun. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each unique technology, we can help maintain a lasting peace, and optimize the best of both possible worlds.

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## Foreword

**50 Benefits of Ebooks** is a lively introduction to the brave new worlds of ebooks and electronic publishing. The book makes no attempt to be comprehensive. Instead, the work focuses on 3 areas: 1) the new, useful and most interesting aspects of the ebook experience; 2) the free (and approaching low-cost) ebooks that might inspire a genuine publishing revolution; and 3) how reading good books (whether made of paper or of bytes) might transform our culture and our personal lives.

This book is being published in paperback, and as an ebook, in the formats PDF and EPUB. The book's companion blog and website, ([EpublishersWeekly.net](http://EpublishersWeekly.net)) – urges readers NOT to buy the pocket-sized 372-page paperback, which costs \$ 20. The ebook version costs two dollars, saves trees, and contains all the same content as the paperback – except the paper!

**50 Benefits of Ebooks** is organized into five sections: Benefits of Ebooks and Paper Books; Reading Ebooks; Ebooks for Authors and Publishers; The Value of Reading; and The Education of an Ebooklover.

Ebook newcomers will find the basics here. Scholars and parents, concerned about the dumbing effects of technology, will be gripped

by the essay “The Monster Reads!”. And ebook professionals can debate and debunk my wild predictions for the rosy and thorny future of ebooks, by devouring the essay: “Publishing Ebooks – Ten Tremendous Trends in 2009 .”

This new edition (September 2009) is 25% larger, and contains many updates, new chapters, and an Afterword by Michael S. Hart.

I love paper books, and I hope that they are never completely replaced by their electronic progeny. Nevertheless, every day, ebooks are growing in use, in sales, and in significance. After years of sputtering, the Digital Reading Revolution has at last arrived.

**50 Benefits of Ebooks** is your friendly and reliable guide. In all your reading, on paper and on screens, I wish you joy.

Michael Pastore

[www.EpublishersWeekly.net](http://www.EpublishersWeekly.net)

10 September 2009

Ithaca, New York

## [ 1 ]

## 12 Benefits of Books Made of Paper

I love paper books – I have a large library with 10,000 of them. Ebooks will not make paper books extinct. For booklovers, there is more to fear in the cultural shift — America’s declining interest in reading — than in the technological shift — the way we read, which is turning from paper to screens. The perfect solution is so simple: You can own both embodiments of the books you love: an ebook copy, and a paper edition of the same title.

As technology advances, our lives become cluttered with more gadgets, and filled with more opportunities. Living becomes more expensive. Often, the technologies bring new dangers: monstrous consequences unintended and unimagined. Doctor Frankenstein did not dream that his creation would turn against him. The founders of the Internet never prepared for phishing and pharming schemes, online predators, and Nigerian email scams.

In offering 52 benefits of ebooks, preceded by “merely” 12 benefits of paper books, I am not implying that ebooks are “better” than

paper. This is not a Superbowl football contest, where the victor has blown out the vanquished by a score of 52 to 12. Quantity and quality, often confused, must be carefully distinguished. Ebooks are better for some purposes; and paper books are better for others.

### 1. Paper books are safe.

I've never yet contracted a virus in a paperback book — a virus that wiped out the entire contents of the book, and then destroyed every book on my bookshelves.

Reading electronically carries a greater risk. A recent announcement from Adobe warned users about reading PDF files with Adobe Reader 9 or Acrobat. According to an article in the Washington Post, the security problem “could allow attackers to take complete control over a system if the user were to open a poisoned PDF file.” The problem was reported in the newspaper on February 20, 2009; the article stated that Adobe would not be able to fix the problem until March 11.

### 2. Paper books are inexpensive or free.

With a bit of patience, I can get a copy of just about any new hardcover book, at the local

public library, free. If the book is not owned by the library, there is an interlibrary loan service that currently costs 50 cents.

At the book sale in my town, twice every year, paperbacks and hardcovers are sold, at prices that decline every day as the sale goes on. On the sale's next-to-last day, every book costs ten cents apiece. On the last day you can fill up an entire bag with books and pay one dollar. The number of items available for each sale usually exceeds 250,000 — and that includes books, audio books, CDs, movies on DVDs, records, puzzles, and games.

Serendipity is the best aspect of the sale: discovering books you never knew about. And the book sale is a place to meet old friends and make new ones. Much good comes from online communities; but let us not forget how many great friendships begin with a paper book.

### 3. Paper books are easy to read.

The high contrast of ink on paper is easy on the eyes; the dual page spread lets me see the big picture; and the soft book is comfortable to hold. A sandy environment is not good for electronic devices, but paper books are perfect for reading the beach.

#### 4. Paper books require little or no maintenance.

When your iPod or Kindle battery fails, you'll need to send it back to Apple or Amazon to get a replacement.

If and when my paperback or hardcover begins to fall apart, it's easy to glue in some pages; and it's simple to re-glue the book's cover to the spine. Some of my books are more than 100 years old, and still need no repair.

#### 5. Paper books require no additional fees to read.

Everything you need to read comes complete once you have purchased or borrowed the book itself. There is no device charge; there is no connection fee.

#### 6. Paper books give you all the benefits of ownership.

Here are some things you can do with the paper books you buy — can you do all these things with the ebook you have just purchased?

- Read the book aloud to your child ?
- Loan the book to your brother ?
- Sell the book ?
- Donate the book to a library ?
- Read the book at your office, and also at your home?
- Hold open a door with your book ?

## 7. Paper books can be oversized, or undersized.

There are some stunningly beautiful books, that are very large, and cannot be viewed effectively on your ebook reading device or your iPod.

Some very small paper books — that fit in your pocket — are cool, convenient and fun.

## 8. Paper books are part of history.

Could the Declaration of Independence have been digitally signed?

In January 2009, President Obama took his oath of office with his hand on the historic bible owned by Abraham Lincoln. We can only wonder if, 100 years from now, a future American president will take the oath with his hand, reverently, on Obama's BlackBerry.

## 9. Paper books offer a reading experience that is free from distractions.

Reading my paper book, no email notifications beep, no links can be clicked, no blogs can be perused and no terrible economic news can spoil my reading session. I am not tempted to do anything else other than to relax and read — with complete concentration — the content provided in the book.

Some thinkers have argued that paper book reading is more conducive to concentrated study, to reading longer works, and to “deep reading”. More studies are needed to either disprove, or to verify that claim.

## 10. Paper books give students and authors “the big picture.”

If all my information — all my documents and books — are stored on my laptop or iPod, I can access them only one screen at a time. (Note: with a large computer screen, two to four documents might be visible – but not a dozen.)

When writing a novel or a non-fiction book, that is not the way I work, or the way I want to work. My floor is covered with “project piles” of papers and books. A large wooden desk is



filled with books and papers, carefully arranged according to chapters and themes. Pages of information are printed, and then stuck onto a corkboard behind me. Everywhere I wander, I carry a small paper notebook and 3x5 cards; I am always making notes.

A combination of advanced computer technology and simple paper technology worked together to organize this book.

## 11. Paper books make you technologically-independent.

With a paper book, you can walk into the woods (or anywhere) and simply read. For a short time at least, you are free from the need for advanced technology. You are no longer dependent on an Internet connection, or any power source, or any software programs, or any hardware device.

Paper books can help us to re-connect with a simpler way of living.

And paper books might help us, all of us, cure our addiction to screens, and to live more in the real world — with nature and with interpersonal encounters — rather than the virtual world.

## 12. Paper books are personal.

A reader can own a paper-book for years, and develop a unique connection to the book.

My sets of the works of Oppenheim and Dickens and Dumas were a gift from my grandmother, and started my lifelong passion for reading.

My tattered copy of *Zorba the Greek* has come with me around the world, inside a backpack and strapped to a bicycle. That novel in general is a treasure, and my personal copy is priceless. Through that book I remember persons, places, and illuminated moments. And in the notes written in the margins, I have a record of the history of some of my strangest and most interesting ideas.

## [ 2 ]

## 52 Benefits of Ebooks

Ebooks are books comprised of digitized text, designed to be read on computer screens, ebook reading devices, or portable handheld devices. Like a paper book, an ebook has two main functions: to communicate information and to store information.

Ebooks may be as simple as a plain text file; or more like paper books when “design” is added; or something altogether different when they are infused with sound or video.

Like all emergent technologies, ebooks suddenly bring us new difficulties, and new possibilities. These benefits might be classified into various realms: Personal and Social Benefits; Practical Benefits; Environmental Benefits; Scholarship-Research benefits, and Cost benefits.

I love paper books. Ebooks are worthy and noteworthy companions. Along with a few surprises – this chapter shows how and why.

A.

Thoreau smiled a smile both sour and sweet.

“Panzano,” he said. “Have you seen my books?”

The Buddha-bellied man nodded gravely.

“I was the last man to see them alive. These supine ladies burned them all. They threw them into the fire then danced around the flames.”

To this most unfortunate news Thoreau responded coolly.

“And may I assume that you did your best to save the world’s great literature, the sacred vessels of those deepest feelings, thoughts and deeds which show us how to love life and freedom, and how we can become more fearless, more individual, more wholly alive?”

— *Thoreau Bound:*

*A Utopian Romance in the Isles of Greece*

## 1. Ebooks keep books alive.

In 48 B.C., the Library of Alexandria (with its 500,000 to one million volumes), was burned to ashes when Alexandria was attacked by Julius Caesar. To delay Caesar's invasion, Achilles – the Alexandrian leader – employed an ill-considered strategy: he burned his own ships. The fire spread to the docks, then destroyed the great Library of Alexandria.



The original manuscript of Carlyle's *The French Revolution* was lost when a friend's servant accidentally tossed it into the fire.



Richard Burton's wife, after his death and against his wishes, destroyed his magnum opus, a risque translation of *The Perfumed Garden*, a book he had been working on for ten years.



In May 1933, Nazi supporters burned more than 25,000 "un-German" books.

Ebooks are ageless: they do not burn, mildew, crumble, rot, or fall apart. Ebooks ensure that literature will endure.

## B.

The first known books were made in Babylon and Assyria, more than 5,000 years ago. They were made of rectangle-shaped clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform (wedge-shaped characters). All the tablets of one book were placed in one container, which was covered with a label. If you wanted to read the book you had to get your friends or servants to help you to carry it.



Information explosions resulted after two remarkable inventions: paper, and the printing press. Chinese authors had been writing on either silk or bamboo: but silk “paper” became too expensive; and bamboo “paper” proved to be too heavy. In China around the year 105 A.D., a former court eunuch, Cai Lun, invented a new kind of paper that was cheaper and lighter . He made this paper by mixing bark, mulberries, hemp waste, old silk rags, and fishing nets.

## 2. Ebooks are good for the environment.

Ebooks save trees. Ebooks eliminate the need for filling up landfills with old books. Ebooks save energy, and save transportation costs, and reduce the pollution associated with shipping books across the country and the world.

How many trees are used to produce one week's worth of paper in a Sunday *New York Times* newspaper? ... One weekly issue of the *New York Times* consumes 75,000 trees.

One year of Sunday newspapers, produced by the *New York Times*, is responsible for the destruction and consumption of more than 3,900,000 trees.

## C.

Thamus, an Egyptian King, is visited by an inventor, the god Theuth. About his new invention, writing, Theuth declared, “Here is an accomplishment, my lord the King, which will improve both the wisdom and the memory of your people.”

Thamus replied, “Theuth, my paragon of inventors, the discoverer of an art is not the best judge of the good or harm which will accrue to those who practice it. ... Those who acquire it [writing] will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembering by external signs instead of by their own internal resources. What you have discovered is a receipt for recollection, not for memory. And as for wisdom, your pupils will have the reputation for it without the reality: they will receive a quantity of information without proper instruction, and in consequence be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant. And because they are filled with the conceit of wisdom instead of the real wisdom they will be a burden to society.”



### 3. Ebooks promote reading.

People are spending more time in front of screens and less time in front of printed books. We can easily make the leap from reading web pages and emails, to reading ebooks.

According to an article in TechCrunch (February 10, 2009), American teenagers spend (an average of) 31 hours per week online.

## D.

Books were produced one at a time, by hand. A roomful of monks sit in the scriptorium, each one staring at a book, and copying the book. This system was limited because the number of books available for copying was limited. ... At last, one ingenious monk devised a way to speed up the process, to “mass-produce” scribe-made books. Instead of having his scribes copy the books one at a time, he would read the book aloud — while a roomful of his skilled scribes simultaneously copied his spoken words.

Examine a book made in a medieval monastery, and you’ll discover that the technique of bookbinding has changed very little in the past 600 years. Then and now, sheets of paper were/are folded and sewn together in small segments, then taped, sewn, and covered with protective boards. Machines have replaced humans as book-binders; production speeds continue to multiply. The latest offset printing presses can print up to 26,000 large sheets per hour. Modern bookbinding machines are capable of binding more than 10,000 books per hour.

#### 4. Ebooks, faster to produce than paper books, allow readers to read books about current issues and events.

Why was the Library of Alexandria situated so close to the city's docks? ... Whenever a ship passed near the port city of Alexandria, the ship would be stopped and all the books from the ship taken. (Books in that era were papyrus scrolls.) These books would be copied, and then the copies — not the originals — were returned to the ship. The originals become property of the famous library.

In those days, news did not travel quickly enough to warn the ships' captains that their precious cargo, of original books, would be seized.

## E.

A little after noon I found the sea very calm, and the tide ebbed so far out that I could come within a quarter of a mile of the ship. And here I found a fresh renewing of my grief; for I saw evidently that if we had kept on board we had been all safe — that is to say, we had all got safe on shore, and I had not been so miserable as to be left entirely destitute of all comfort and company as I now was. This forced tears to my eyes again; but as there was little relief in that, I resolved, if possible, to get to the ship; so I pulled off my clothes— for the weather was hot to extremity — and took the water. But when I came to the ship my difficulty was still greater to know how to get on board; for, as she lay aground, and high out of the water, there was nothing within my reach to lay hold of.

... And, first, I found that all the ship's provisions were dry and untouched by the water, and being very well disposed to eat, I went to the bread room and filled my pockets with biscuit, and ate it as I went about other things, for I had no time to lose.

5. Ebooks can be easily updated,  
for correcting errors  
and adding information.

In a passage near the beginning of the novel *Robinson Crusoe* (written in 1719 by Daniel Defoe), when the hero swims out to his wrecked ship, he is not wearing any clothes.

In the same paragraph, he fills up his pockets with biscuits.

F.

Be a scribe! Your body will be sleek, your hand will be soft ... You are one who sits grandly in your house; your servants answer speedily; beer is poured copiously; all who see you rejoice in good cheer. Happy is the heart of him who writes; he is young each day.

— PTAHOTEP (Egyptian scribe),  
written 6,500 years ago

## 6. Ebooks are searchable.

Quickly you can find anything inside the book.

Ebooks are globally searchable: you can find information in many ebooks.

G.

In the Middle Ages, books were considered so valuable that they were chained to the shelves.



## 7. Ebooks are portable and weigh nothing.

You can carry an entire library on your hard drive, on a flash drive, or on one DVD.

Students, even in grammar school, have complained about back trouble due to the excessive weight of their books.

*Art History* (3rd edition), by Marilyn Stokstad, is listed as the world's heaviest textbook. It spans 1,232 pages, and costs (after the discount) \$ 105.99.

The hardcover version of this artistic tome weighs more than 10 pounds.

H.

The blind poet John Milton (1608-1678) memorized every word of the following works: Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and, in addition, every line of every one of his own poems.

If you find a book of Milton's poetry, printed in 1852, it might be the volume that had been bound in the human skin of a convicted and executed murderer, George Cudmore.

## 8. Ebooks can read aloud to you.

Ebooks free you to do other activities while you are listening.

Reading aloud, ebooks are relaxing: you can lie down and close your eyes and listen to the book.

## I.

A library of wisdom is more precious than all wealth, and all things that are desirable cannot be compared to it. Whoever therefore claims to be zealous of truth, of happiness, of wisdom or knowledge, aye even of the faith, must needs become a lover of books.

## 9. Ebooks are amphibious.

Ebooks allow easy transformation into other types of ebooks, or other forms of communication: audiobooks, web pages, or paperbacks.

Ebooks can be printable: and thereby give a reader most or all of the advantages of a paper-based book.

J.

The essays of Francis Bacon, the dramas of Christopher Marlowe, and the plays of Edward de Vere – were all written by a self-educated poet named William Shakespeare.

□

### Hamlet Psychoanalyzed

Sweet Prince! For years we thought we saw  
Your noble strivings as a tragic flaw.  
But now we're told, your self-defeating talents  
Were triggered by a chemical imbalance.

— Michael Pastore

10. Ebooks defy time:  
they can be delivered  
almost instantly.

Ebooks are transported to you faster than overnight shipping: in minutes or in seconds.

Ebooks can be accessed 24 hours a day, every day of the year, any minute of the day or night.

K.

For writing Hamlet, Shakespeare was paid, in the currency of his time, 5 English pounds. Historians disagree about the value of that amount in today's currency: one historian says \$ 300; another says \$ 800; another \$ 1500.

□

Google-searching “Hamlet”, in .05 seconds, yields 20,400,000 results.

Imagine how much that search engine could find — if it took a bit more time.



11. Ebooks defy space:  
ebooks can be read simultaneously  
by thousands or millions  
of people at once.

Ebooks can be shared with your friends and family, without sacrificing your own copy of the ebook.

L.

“The multitude of books is a great evil. There is no measure or limit to this fever for writing; every one must be an author; some out of vanity, to acquire celebrity and raise up a name; others for the sake of mere gain.”

□

“The enormous multiplication of books in every branch of knowledge is one of the greatest evils of this age, since it presents one of the most serious obstacles to the acquisition of correct information by throwing in the reader’s way piles of lumber in which he must painfully grope for scraps of useful matter, peradventure interspersed.”

## 12. Ebooks are cheaper to produce.

Thus, small presses can attempt to compete with media giants.

The savings from the low cost of ebook production might be used to increase profits — or this savings might be passed on to the ebook buyers. ... Which road will publishers take?

## M.

William Prynne (1600-1669) wrote more than 200 books and pamphlets. One of these works, *The Histriomastix*, criticized the practice of allowing female players on stage. Queen Henrietta Maria took offense, and soon after, Prynne was imprisoned. Just before Prynne was to be taken to prison in London, the people in surrounding towns covered the mile-long road from his home to the prison with a thick layer of flowers.

### 13. Ebooks are cheaper to buy.

I predict: Ebook prices will plummet!  
Or I will eat this ebook.

Authors have often been compelled to eat their words, but the operation has seldom been performed literally. In the seventeenth century, owing to the disastrous part which Christian IV. of Denmark took in the Thirty Years' War, his kingdom was shorn of its ancient power and was overshadowed by the might of Sweden. In 1644, Theodore Reinking, lamenting the diminished glory of his race, wrote a book titled *From the Danes to the world on the treachery of the Swedes*. It was not a very excellent work, neither was its author a learned or accurate historian, but it aroused the anger of the Swedes, who cast Reinking into prison. There he remained many years, when at length he was offered his freedom on the condition that he should either lose his head or eat his book. Our author preferred the latter alternative, and with admirable cleverness devoured his book when he had converted it into a savory sauce.

N.

Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) so much loved to read, that he would read everything: even scraps of paper in the streets. Cervantes and William Shakespeare died in the same year, and on the same day.

□

Cervantes's masterpiece, *Don Quixote*, begins when the hero — who has read too many romances — gets a mad idea ...

## 14. Ebooks are free.

The magnificent work of [Project Gutenberg](#), and many other online public libraries, allow readers to read the classics – and some modern books, too — at no cost.

Imagine the ebook-friendly library:

The ebook you want is never checked out.

You don't need to check the book in again.

There's no need to keep track of your book due dates (or your children's books due dates) because there are no library fines for your ebooks.

Your ebooks, with their metadata, help you to discover books you will love to read.

If you want a print copy, you can get one right at your local library, using their print-on-demand printing machine.

O.

In short, he became so absorbed in his books that he spent his nights from sunset to sunrise, and his days from dawn to dark, poring over them; and what with little sleep and much reading his brains got so dry that he lost his wits. His fancy grew full of what he used to read about in his books, enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, wooings, loves, agonies, and all sorts of impossible nonsense; and it so possessed his mind that the whole fabric of invention and fancy he read of was true, that to him no history in the world had more reality in it. ...

In short, his wits being quite gone, he hit upon the strangest notion that ever madman in this world hit upon ...that he should make a knight-errant of himself, roaming the world over in full armour and on horseback in quest of adventures, and putting in practice himself all that he had read of as being the usual practices of knights-errant; righting every kind of wrong, and exposing himself to peril and danger from which, in the issue, he was to reap eternal renown and fame.



15. Ebooks can be annotated  
without harming  
the original work.

P.

A French scholar named Nicolas Lenglet Du Fresnoy (1674-1755), created a reading plan, for reading 6 hours every day. He claimed that on this plan, all world history could be learned, by studying for a total of 10 years and 5 months.

On this plan, the total studying time required to learn world history, up to the middle of the 18th century — was a mere 22,800 hours.

## 16. Ebooks make reading accessible to persons with disabilities.

Text can be re-sized for the visually impaired.

Screens can be lit for reading in the dark.

Ebooks can read aloud.

Ebooks can be delivered directly to the disabled person's computer: there's no need to go to the bookstore, or even to your front porch, to get your book.

Ebooks in the future may have lens-simulating screens that can adjust to your eyesight deficiencies, and allow reading without eyeglasses.

Q.

“I cannot live without books.”

— Thomas Jefferson

17. Ebooks can be hyper-linked,  
for easier access  
to additional information.

The following is not shameless self-promotion,  
but merely a quintessential example of the  
above benefit:

Epublishers Weekly.net

<http://www.EpublishersWeekly.net>

R.

“I say first we have despised literature. What do we, as a nation, care about books?”

— John Ruskin

□

It is estimated that the Library of Alexandria held between 500,000 and 1 million books.

□

How many unique book titles have been published worldwide? ....One estimate guesses: 65 million.

## 18. Ebooks protect the author's copyright.

After sending the ebook to one of the new (and free) registration services, authors receive proof of the date, content and creator of the publication.

With the ebook, the entire contents of the work is recorded. Compare that with the copyright registration process of a paper book: only basic facts about the book are entered into the database.

Future enhancements to these services will allow authors to automatically monitor the Internet for examples of fair use, citations, plagiarism, theft, and unauthorized sales.

S.

“People think I can teach them style!  
What stuff it is. Have something to say and  
say it as clearly as you can. That is the only  
secret of style.”

— Matthew Arnold



## 19. Ebooks can be customized.

Ebooks let you tweak the style. Many ebooks allow readers to change the font style, font size, page size, margin size, colors, and more.

T.

“I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images.”

— Georges Duhamel,  
*Scenes de la vie future* (1930)

Direct and firsthand experience seems to evade human beings, the quantity of busyness keeps increasing and the number of events multiplies with bewildering speed.

— Irving Howe

20. Ebooks may allow the option for the addition of multimedia: still images, moving images, and sound.

An inscription carved into the walls of the Library of Alexandria said:

“The place of the cure of the soul.”

U.

... there are books which are of that importance in a man's private experience ... books which take rank in our life with parents and lovers and passionate experiences, so medicinal, so stringent, so revolutionary, so authoritative; books which are the work and the proof of faculties so comprehensive, so nearly equal to the world they paint ...

— Ralph Waldo Emerson,  
*In Praise of Books*

## 21. Ebooks can be enormous.

Ebooks, with their vast capacity for storage, encourage the publishing of books with many pages. These books would be too expensive to produce (and purchase) in hardcover and paperback.

Paper books can be large, too — and pricey.

For example: *Bhutan: A Visual Odyssey Across the Last Himalayan Kingdom* is available for sale from a major online bookseller.

The book weights 133 pounds.

When open, it measures 5 feet by 7 feet.

The price?

You can add this book to your collection for thirty-thousand dollars (\$ 30,000).

## V.

“And what are you reading, Miss—?”  
“Oh! It is only a novel!” replies the young lady, while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame. “It is only Cecilia, or Camilla, or Belinda”; or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language. Now, had the same young lady been engaged with a volume of the Spectator, instead of such a work, how proudly would she have produced the book, and told its name; though the chances must be against her being occupied by any part of that voluminous publication, of which either the matter or manner would not disgust a young person of taste: the substance of its papers so often consisting in the statement of improbable circumstances, unnatural characters, and topics of conversation which no longer concern anyone living; and their language, too, frequently so coarse as to give no very favourable idea of the age that could endure it.

— Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*

22. Ebooks —  
without restrictive DRM schemes  
— are made for sharing.

Ebooks can be quickly duplicated, and then distributed to strangers or given to your friends. Worry no more about your loaned books that will never be returned.

W.

These novels will give way, by and by, to diaries or autobiographies — captivating books, if only a man knew how to choose among what he calls his experiences that which is really his experience, and how to record truth truly!

— Ralph Waldo Emerson



## 23. Ebooks empower individuals to write and to publish.

Of course, this is a great benefit in itself, for everyone who finds the courage to write.

There are social effects, too. Ebooks help to challenge “the crushing power of big publishing” (coined by Mark Crispin Miller), that excludes so many authors from the corporate publishing circus.

As more authors self-publish, the publishing industry might shift from the impersonal and stressful, to the personal and pleasurable.

X.

“How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book!”

— Henry David Thoreau,  
in *Walden*

## 24. Ebooks encourage literary innovations.

Ebooks — thanks to the simplicity and speed of publication and feedback — allow authors to effectively experiment in many themes and styles.

Y.

In 1851, Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick* was published by one of the leading publishers in New York.

Ten years later it had sold only 60 copies.

Eventually, when his sales dried up, Melville took a job as a customs inspector.

When he died in 1891 his funeral was attended by three persons. The obituary in the newspaper was one single line.

For 30 years the value of the man and his work was completely lost, until two biographies by Raymond Weaver (in 1921) and by Lewis Mumford (in 1929) at last recognized Melville as a world-class writer, and *Moby Dick* as one of our most significant books.

## 25. Ebooks can be interactive.

Ebooks posted online encourage comments, corrections, and feedback — a process which eliminates mistakes, improves accuracy, and develops a writer's literary style.

This is especially important when dealing with scientific and technological issues.

Readers can write constructive comments into ebooks, and then return these annotated ebooks to the publisher. Publishers can use this feedback to improve future editions of the work.

Z.

How badly it would fare with human knowledge if not for the art of writing and printing! This it is that makes libraries the only sure and lasting memory of the human race, for its individual members all have memories, but very limited and imperfect ones.

— Arthur Schopenhauer,  
*On Men of Learning*

## 26. Ebooks encourage a diverse publishing ecosystem.

Ebooks allow publishers to publish (and readers to read) works by a larger number of authors, and works on a wider variety of topics.

Critics of traditional book publishing (such as Jason Epstein and André Schiffrin) state that economic pressures have reduced and limited the number of authors and topics that traditional publishers will now produce.

AA.

“Tell me where’s your lovely maiden,  
Whom you sang of erst so well,  
As a flame that through your bosom  
Pierced with rare, enchanted spell.”

“Ah, that flame is long extinguished!  
And my heart is cold above.  
And this little book the urn is  
For the ashes of my love.”

— Heinrich Heine



## 27. Ebooks surmount censorship.

Ebooks cannot be banished, burned, bowdlerized or banned.

All these marvelous works were banned:

*Analects* by Confucius

*Lysistrata* by Aristophanes

*Ars Amatoria* by Ovid

*Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* by John Milton

*The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

*Wonder Stories* by H.C. Andersen

*Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman

*The Kreutzer Sonata* by Leo Tolstoy

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by M. Twain

*Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

*Ulysses* by James Joyce.

Many of these books were confiscated, burned, or denied availability in libraries, bookstores and schools. Ebooks guarantee that readers maintain their right to read.

AB.

### The Lovely Shyness of Emily

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) wrote 1,775 poems, yet in her lifetime published only seven of these, and all anonymously. For the last twenty years of her life, she never left the grounds of her father's house; and she was so reserved that frequently she would talk with guests while sitting in room next to the room where the guest was standing.

## 28. Ebooks help paperbook publishers to sell paperbooks.

[Cory Doctorow](#) has explained that the giving away of ebooks, for free, has helped to sell the paperback editions of his stories and novels.

More authors and publishers are now giving away ebooks.

AC.

Leo Tolstoy worked for five years (1864-1869) on his great novel, *War and Peace*. The novel contains more than 563,600 words.

Tolstoy's editor, his 20-year-old wife Sonya, copied the massive manuscript by hand — seven times.

— from *The Ithaca Manual of Style*

## 29. Ebooks are evolving.

As technology develops, ebooks may contain new features.

For example, a book of recipes may contain a recipe calculator to figure how much maple syrup is needed to bake 200 cookies. An ebook that prepares you for the GRE could include an interactive test. An ebook about politics might allow you to click a link and register to vote, or send an email to a Congressman that tells him he is not a good environmental steward.

AD.

I refer, of course, to the Romantic Movement, which was more than a change of style: it was a sudden expansion of consciousness — an expansion into realms of sensibility not previously accessible to the human imagination ... Our duty at the moment, as creative writers and its critics, is to maintain the impetus of that revolution.

— Herbert Read

### 30. Ebooks are good for paperbook publishing.

By setting an example — for diversity, innovation, and freedom of expression — ebooks may motivate the stagnant book publishing industry towards the renewal of small presses, the end of the blockbuster-bestseller publishing mentality, and a healthier balance between the needs of commerce and culture.

AE.

The U.S. Library of Congress (LOC) was founded and funded on April 24, 1800. President John Adams allotted \$ 5,000 to buy books from London, the publishing capital of the world. Most of the books Adams ordered were about history, economics, and law.

How many books does the Library of Congress contain?

The Library of Congress holds more than 32 million books.

Additionally, the LOC contains nearly 106 million maps, manuscripts, photographs, films, audio and video recordings, prints and drawings, and other special collections.



### 31. Ebooks are good for libraries.

Ebooks, in myriad ways, can help our libraries and our librarians.

An overdue ebook does not inconvenience library staff or other library patrons.

Ebooks do not need to be shelved; and there's no problems with a lack of storage space.

Ebooks serve library patrons who cannot visit the library in person.

Ebooks solve the problem of costly and tedious book repair.

Freed from the need to manage the physical books, reference librarians can focus more energy on the difficult tasks of learning about — and then teaching — how patrons can access information, keep up with the Information Explosion, and enjoy reading good books.

AF.

Materials are added to the collections of the Library of Congress at a rate of 10,000 items per working day. Selection officers review materials and decide which should be kept and added to the permanent collections.

Books and other LOC materials are shelved on 650 miles of shelves in three buildings on Capitol Hill and off-site storage facilities.

All the stacks in the Library of Congress are closed.

## 32. Ebooks are good for library patrons.

On January 24, 2009, an Iowa woman was arrested for failing to return a book from her public library. The book, "*The Freedom Writers Diary*", had been checked out since April 2008.

The library contacted the patron four times, with three first-class letters, and one certified letter, which the woman refused to sign for. A police officer stopped at the woman's home to remind her to return it.

After getting photographed, and then fingerprinted, at the local police station, the woman borrowed some money from her mother, paid \$ 250 bond money, and was released.

For this misdemeanor offense, the woman could be sentenced to a maximum fine of 500 dollars, and spend up to 30 days in jail.

The unreturned book could have been purchased online for a few dollars, and has a retail price of \$ 13.95.

AG.

The faculty of attention has utterly vanished from the Anglo-Saxon mind, extinguished at its source by the big bayadere of journalism, of the newspaper and the picture magazine which keeps screaming, "Look at me." Illustrations, loud simplifications ... bill poster advertising—only these stand a chance.

— Henry James,  
letter to William Dean Howells, 1902

### 33. Ebooks are good for children.

Children can look up words and terms that they do not understand. They can have the ebook read to them aloud — again and again and again.

Future ebooks for children may allow adjusting the vocabulary levels, or creating your own stories.

Ebooks can be powerful tools not only for entertainment, but for education. Ebooks could be one of our best hopes to cure the modern child's addiction to television-watching, and playing violent — or useless — video games.

AH.

Reading ... that fertile miracle of a  
communication effected in solitude.

— *On Reading* by Marcel Proust

The first known typewritten manuscript ever submitted to a publisher was *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) by Mark Twain.

About his Remington typewriter which he bought in 1874, Twain said: “it piles an awful stack of words on one page.”

### 34. Ebooks are good for senior citizens.

The capability to change type-size and type-style will be popular with senior citizens.

The read-aloud feature — one day, in the voice of a loved one living or dead — might help with one of the most difficult problems of aging: loneliness.

Ebooks could easily contain games and activities that exercise the brain, and improve memory.

Ebooks could be a link from seniors to the complex technological culture that often perplexes them. New studies indicate that senior citizens are spending more time online. A recent survey showed that retired seniors, in 11 nations, are now spending more time surfing the Internet than they spend at gardening, and many other hobbies. Compared with retired persons around the world, seniors in the USA spend the most time online: approximately 9 hours per week.

## AI.

The solution to the artist's overwhelming problem is to be found only in untiring and unremitting LABOR. In this way, the technical matters will be thoroughly mastered, so that the artist is free for the great struggle to imbue the work with vitality, and the essence of his inner life. If Paganini, who expressed his whole soul through the strings of his violin, spent 3 days without practicing, he lost what he called the *rapport* with his instrument: the sympathy between the wooden frame, the strings, the bow, and himself. If he had lost this alliance, he would have been no more than an ordinary player on the street.

CONSTANT WORK IS THE LAW OF ART, AS IT IS THE LAW OF LIFE, ...Therefore, the great artists and sublime poets never wait for commissions or for buyers. They are ceaselessly creating — today, tomorrow, always. The result is the habit of work, and the profound understanding of the work's difficulties, which keep them in close connection with the Muse and her creative powers.



### 35. Ebooks can be created by one person with a computer.

No team of “experts” is required to create an ebook; nor do you need expensive hardware, software, or machines.

In fact, ebooks can be created completely “in the clouds”.

For example: you can use Google Docs to create your document, and then save it as a PDF. If you do this work at your local public library, then you can create your ebook at no cost to you — except your time.

AJ.

On July 4, 1924, Nikos Kazantzakis began writing *The Odyssey, A Modern Sequel* — a modern epic poem of 33,333 lines.

He completed the work after 12 years of ceaseless labor.

### 36. Ebooks can be personalized.

Ebooks can be customized and personalized. Readers can create “course packs”, chapters from various books combined into one book. Readers can create “mebooks”, books featuring themselves and their friends in adventurous, romantic, and heroic starring roles.

“By my soul!” cried Gilbert. “Art thou the devil in blue, to shoot in that wise?”

“Nay,” quoth Pastore, laughing, “not quite so ill as that, I trust.” And he took up another shaft and fitted it to the string. Again he shot, and again he smote his arrow close beside the center; a third time he loosed his bowstring and dropped his arrow just betwixt the other two and into the very center, so that the feathers of all three were ruffled together, seeming from a distance to be one thick shaft.

And now a low murmur ran all among that great crowd, for never before had London seen such shooting as this; and never again would it see it after Michael Pastore’s day had gone.

AK.

One day seven years ago I found myself saying to myself — I can't live where I want to — I can't go where I want to go — I can't do what I want to — I can't even say what I want to — ....I decided I was a very stupid fool not to at least paint as I wanted to.

— Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986)

### 37. Ebooks prevent unsold goods.

In the Netherlands, every year, more than a million paper books are shredded, and transformed into toilet paper.

Dorling Kindersley is one of my favorite publishers: their books are visual works of art. But they had trouble a while back, when they published the book *Star Wars: Episode I, The Phantom Menace*. They printed 13 million books. By January of the year 2000, only 3 million books had been sold, resulting in a loss of 22.4 million dollars.

The book *Thirteen Moons* was published in October 2006. It was written by Charles Frazier, whose first novel, *Cold Mountain*, enjoyed a stunning success. A bidding war for *Thirteen Moons* had resulted in a cash advance for the author of more than 8 million dollars. From the initial print run of 750,000 books, about 368,000 books were sold. The publishers lost 5.5 million dollars.

Who knows the fate of the remaining books?

AL.

## Great Moments in the History of Information Architecture

Around the year 1200 a traveling scholar had his entire library — of 117,000 books — stored on the backs of 400 camels.

The camels had been trained to walk in alphabetical order, so that the scholar could, with relative ease, find any one of his precious books.

### 38. Ebooks are easy to organize.

Ebooks can be tagged with many labels that cover many categories.

Organizing and finding a large collection of paper books is always a problem. Where on my physical bookshelf should I place, for example, my copy of *The Odyssey*, by Homer? ... The book could be placed on my “Greece” shelf; or my “classics” shelf; or my “read next” shelf; or my “favorite books” shelf; or my “travel” shelf; or my “poetry” shelf.

Ebooks can be given all these “tags” and thus placed on all the virtual shelves at once. These tags might be common tags, for sharing with other persons; or they could be personal tags, for me alone.

AM.

I would tell of the martyrdom of almost all the great masters of every kind of art ... they live in poverty and misery, while fame, honor and riches were the lot of the unworthy ... they were kept up by the love of their work.

— Arthur Schopenhauer



Zora Neale Hurston made a living working as a maid. She died in poverty. She remained in obscurity until her 1937 novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was discovered in the 1970s, and then introduced into the modern canon.



### 39. Ebooks help us to organize information.

We know already that ebooks — whether they reside on my hard drive, or on the Internet — allow us to search and find the information we need.

In addition, we can easily create our own ebooks that focus on one subject area. We can fill this ebook with useable information about the subject; or we can make an ebook containing a plethora of links and references to useable information.

Working with ebooks in the EPUB format is a delight, since we can search the metadata to find ebooks on the topics of our choice.

AN.

Books have value only if they lead to life and make for a better life; every hour spent reading is a waste of time unless it gives the reader a spark of strength, an intimation of new youth, a breath of fresh air.

— Hermann Hesse



Every man who knows how to read has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant, and interesting.

— Aldous Huxley



But perhaps the greatest thing to be gained from the reading of books is the desire to truly communicate with one's fellow man. To read a book properly is to wake up and live, to acquire a renewed interest in one's neighbors, more especially those who are alien to us in every way.

— Henry Miller

## 40. Ebooks could re-invigorate the book-review industry.

The shrinking and eliminating of book review sections in major newspapers is bad news for publishers, authors and readers.

With ebooks, review copies can be sent quickly, efficiently and cheaply. Reviews themselves could be placed inside the ebooks, appended to the ends of the books.

Ebooks filled with nothing but book reviews could be published and distributed free.

AO.

“You must teach me a small part of what you know,” said Dantes, “if only to prevent your growing weary of me. I can well believe that so learned a person as yourself would prefer absolute solitude to being tormented with the company of one as ignorant and uninformed as myself. If you will only agree to my request, I promise you never to mention another word about escaping.”

The abbe smiled. “Alas, my boy,” said he, “human knowledge is confined within very narrow limits; and when I have taught you mathematics, physics, history, and the three or four modern languages with which I am acquainted, you will know as much as I do myself. Now, it will scarcely require two years for me to communicate to you the stock of learning I possess.”

“Two years!” exclaimed Dantes; “do you really believe I can acquire all these things in so short a time?”

— *The Count of Monte Cristo*  
Alexandre Dumas (père)

## 41. Ebooks can be multi-lingual.

“I’ll have a copy of *Siddhartha*, by Hermann Hesse, in the original German language. Toss in the full text of the book in these tongues: English, Spanish, French, Japanese, Turkish and Greek.”

With ebooks, multilingual books are simple to create.

Learning languages is easier and more fun when you’re reading your favorite books. (That was Leo Tolstoy’s secret for learning languages quickly and effectively.)

In the future — when this feature is perfected — the read-aloud feature will understand IPA, and will help you to learn correct pronunciation.

AP.

If only I could live again the moment of that anger which surged up in me when my friend called me a bookworm! I recalled then that all my disgust at the life I had been leading was personified in those words. How could I, who loved life so intensely, have let myself be entangled for so long in that balderdash of books and paper blackened with ink!

— Nikos Kazantzakis, *Zorba the Greek*

## 42. Ebooks reduce stress on workers in the publishing trade.

All the money saved on printing costs can be re-directed for better editing, or more staff, or better salaries for everyone working in publishing.

Collaboration is simplified: editors and authors can work together on the book.

Typographical errors, which in a large-run paperback are often embarrassing and sometimes catastrophic, are simple to fix when the book is an ebook, or produced in paper “on demand”.

AQ.

The human mind . . . operates by association. With one item in its grasp, it snaps instantly to the next that is suggested by the association of thoughts, in accordance with some intricate web of trails carried by the cells of the brain.

— Vannevar Bush,  
*As We May Think* (1945)



### 43. Ebooks promote your social cause.

You can give away your information free, and everybody wins. Whenever you light my torch with your torch, you lose nothing — and the world glows twice as bright.

Lawrence Lessig gives his books away free as ebooks; Lessig is spreading the word about a remarkable revolution in the making, called “free culture.” Cory Doctorow does the same, as he explains the future of ebooks, and the perils of DRM.

Lester Brown (of the Earth Policy Institute), has generously made his book available for free as a PDF download. This important book, titled *Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization* is located on the website, here:

[www.earth-policy.org/Books/PB3/Contents.htm](http://www.earth-policy.org/Books/PB3/Contents.htm)

One could download the free ebook, and then send a contribution to the Earth Policy Institute, to help them to continue their important work.

AR.

The professor stared. “Have you,” he said, “really spent your time in studying such nonsense?”

— Mary Shelley

□

How I had dreamed of college! The inspired companionship of teachers who are friends! The high places above the earth, where minds are fired by minds. And what’s this place I’ve come to? Was the college only a factory, and the teachers machines turning out lectures by the hour on wooden dummies, incapable of response? Was there no time for the flash from eye to eye, from heart to heart? Was that vanishing spark of light that flies away quicker than it came unless it is given life at the moment by the kindling breath of another mind— was that to be shoved aside with “I’m too busy. I have no time for recitations outside of the class hours” ?

— Anzia Yezierska

## 44. Ebooks are good for scholars and for students.

For students and scholars, ebooks save countless hours of effort and time.

Researching using electronic sources is much faster and more efficient than hunting the stacks for paper sources — which could be checked out and unavailable for months.

And many other ebook benefits, already listed, are great for students and researchers. Easy collaboration with teachers and other students. Jumping around from page 4 to page 710 in one second instead of ten. Creating your own “reading order” made of passages in the book that you want to remember and review. Annotation can be taken to a new level. Academics can easily add, and share — and endlessly debate about — marginalia, meta marginalia (beyond the margins), and hypermarginalia (linked marginalia).

AS.

The back cover of the book *The Stallion* by Harold Robbins boasts:

“Reviewers once estimated that, every day, 40,000 persons buy a Harold Robbins book.”

□

James Michener, asked why he wrote long books, explained that he was once standing in a convenience store when two robbers robbed the store. Michener was shot in the back pocket of his pants. He was saved because this back pocket contained one of his novels. The bullet had penetrated only to page 650.

45. Ebooks are disposable and deletable, with almost no effort and zero waste.

Dorothy Parker wrote:

“This is not a book to be tossed aside lightly. It should be hurled with great force.”

And Charles Dickens, perhaps pre-envisioning the state of modern publishing, wrote:

“There are books of which the back covers are by far the best part.”

Even recycling, as significant as it is, requires energy to transform trash to usable goods. Ebooks can be deleted without wasting one iota of resources or energy.

AT.

In 1986 a book was removed from school classrooms in Carlsbad, New Mexico because it defined “obscene” words. The book’s title: *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.

## 46. Ebooks connect authors with other writers and with potential publishers.

Authonomy is a relatively new website from Harper Collins in England. Here, you can post all your book, or part of your book — the minimum is 10,000 words. Other writers can read and comment on your work at no cost to them or to you. With luck, you may ascend the ladder of popularity and get read — and even published — by Harper Collins.

Authonomy: <http://www.authonomy.com/>

I have looked at this site carefully, and I believe that they are doing everything right: all the terms are favorable to authors. There's nothing to lose by posting all or part of your book there.

A similar experiment, iPublish from Time Warner, closed down in the year 2001. When it closed, it laid off its 29 employees, after the company lost about \$13 million. Authonomy has a better chance for survival: its publishing terms are better; and now, eight years later, there are more people using the Net.

AU.

Paper-book lover William Gass wrote:

“No one will ever fall in love or form a friendship with the e-book’s enslaved and disembodied texts. And they are played, not read. And they [ebooks] are as ersatz as soybean steaks.”

□

Mary Higgins Clark:

“Nothing could be more thrilling than knowing that all my works will now be instantly accessible to anyone anytime, anywhere in the world.”



## 47. Ebooks connect authors with readers.

A boggle of new technologies now exist that can help authors connect with readers. Ebooks certainly can play a part in this process: thanks to their low-cost or no-cost, and to the speed they are delivered.

Giving away sample chapters, or entire books, is now possible and affordable.

Publishing novels in serial, one chapter a week, is wildly popular in Japan, where readers are eagerly reading on their cell phones.

AV.

There is reading and there is reading.

— Dr. Linda Reinfeld



There are books and there are books.



### Jewels and Dust

If a gem falls into mud it is still valuable.

If dust ascends to heaven, it remains valueless.

— Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi*

## 48. Ebooks eliminate the problem of paper book theft.

Libraries and book stores need to worry about book theft. And students in university libraries are often victims of thieves snatching expensive books, textbooks that will be re-sold. One could probably make a respectable living selling signs to libraries that say: "Please do not leave your belongings unattended."

With ebooks, a different story comes to mind. There is an old joke: Why do you lock your car in Vermont? ... The answer: So nobody puts zucchini inside.

Certainly, ebook publishers have their own worries, about unauthorized copying and distributing of their works. But there is stealing and there is stealing. If you take my loaf of bread I'll go hungry. But you can smell my soup forever, and my dinner still goes on.

AW.

### A Book

He ate and drank the precious words,  
    His spirit grew robust;  
He knew no more that he was poor,  
    Nor that his frame was dust.  
He danced along the dingy days,  
    And this bequest of wings  
Was but a book. What liberty  
    A loosened spirit brings!

— Emily Dickinson

## 49. Ebooks provide all the benefits of reading paper books.

It's what's inside that counts. Reading the right book (or ebook) can cultivate our imaginations and expand our minds. Reading develops empathy, and increases solidarity with other human beings. Reading reminds us of the lessons of our glorious and gore-ious history. Books stimulate creativity, help us to know ourselves, and inspire us to take action to change our lives.

AX.

No, never has a writer [ Voltaire ] had in his lifetime such influence. Despite exile, imprisonment, and the suppression of almost every one of his books by the minions of church and state, he forged fiercely a path for his truth, until at last kings, popes and emperors catered to him, thrones trembled before him, and half the world listened to catch his every word.

— Will Durant

## 50. Ebooks are charismatic.

Charismatic marine mammals — including dolphins, whales, and manatees — help to boost awareness about these endangered species, and about the plight of the ecosystem of our fragile oceans.

Like marine mammals, ebooks are charismatic. In the popular jargon: “Ebooks are sexy.”

Ebooks are controversial. The mere mention of the electrifying word “ebooks” — and their perceived threat to the survival of paper books — creates heated discussions from both sides, the paper-book lovers and the ebook lovers.

My view is that ebooks and paper books are friends, and that the best thing is to own both versions of the book, the paper and the electronic text. The buzz that ebooks are constantly generating is great for authors, publishers, readers — great for everyone who cares about the significance of reading and the future of the book.

AY.

Man, we have not yet reached  
the end of our struggles:  
a risky, noble, and glorious task awaits us,  
and we must face it without delay.

— Homer



## 51. Ebooks are cloudbable: ebooks can be stored off-site.

With my ebooks stored safely on a web server, I can quickly get access to millions of books, fulfilling the dream of readers and scholars everywhere.

Founder of the Internet Archive, Brewster Kahle, has articulated this glorious dream:

“Universal access to all knowledge.”

Ebooks are a giant leap forward toward this extraordinarily goal.

In 2009, Google announced that their 1.5 million books (posted on their site Google Books) can now be read on any mobile device, such as smartphones or iPod Touch devices.

AZ.

Who troubles himself about his ornaments or fluency is lost. This is what you shall do: Love the earth and the sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and the crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with mothers of families, read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body.

— Walt Whitman

## 52. Ebooks are beautiful.

Printing beautiful paper books is expensive, and getting more expensive all the time. Ebook artists and ebook designers can create almost anything they can imagine, with no concern about the printing costs.

In contrast with the small font size on bland newsprint paper that characterizes the mass-market paperback — the mass-market ebook could be a masterpiece. Colored text, stunning images and original artwork may soon be as common in ebooks as oatmeal on your breakfast table. Skill, imagination, daring — and good-quality drawing software — are all that is required for the ebook artists of the future.

**Book:**

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- Scribd (<http://www.Scribd.com>) keeps only 20% of the sale price — plus an additional fee of 25 cents, or 40 cents, per ebook. Since this cut is small, authors and publishers can pass the savings directly to their customers.

- Smashwords (<http://www.Smashwords.com>) keeps only 15% of the sale price, and gives the rest to the author or publisher. This is a great opportunity for authors and publishers to keep their ebook prices low. You'll find some good ebook bargains there.

- Stanza (<http://www.lexcycle.com/>) is a free application for your iPhone and iPod Touch, that reads ebooks. (There's also a desktop version for Windows computers and Macs). You can use Stanza to download from a vast selection of over 100,000 books and periodicals, and read them right on your phone. "It's a wireless electronic library that stays open 24/7". With the built-in ebook store, you can buy the latest bestsellers and download them straight to your iPhone or iPod.

- O'Reilly Media. I love the O'Reilly vision, and the O'Reilly books. And their ebooks and edocuments are priced right.

Store: <http://oreilly.com/store/>

■ Pan Macmillan leads by example, selling DRM-free ebooks. Check out their selection: [www.panmacmillan.com/Categories/EBooks/](http://www.panmacmillan.com/Categories/EBooks/)

■ MobileRead Forums: Deals, Freebies and Resources. This is a forum where users post information about ebook bargains You'll learn a lot at the MobileRead Forums.

<http://www.mobileread.com/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=26>

## Ebook Stores on the Web

Last evening, my wife asked me if I wanted my pizza cut into 4 slices or cut into 8 slices. I replied: "Cut it into 4 slices. I can't possibly eat 8 slices."

And I can't possibly list all the ebook bookstores, but here are a handful.

■ Amazon.com.

Amazon.com claims to be the largest of all the ebookstores, offering more than 300,000 books, magazines, and newspapers, all proprietarily designed for their ebook reading device, the famous and infamous 'Kindle'. To find the ebooks, start at the Amazon home page (<http://www.Amazon.com>); then from the left-side menu slide your cursor over "Digital Downloads"; then click: "Kindle Store."

- Barnes & Noble eBooks

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/ebooks/>

This is the main page of the B&N eBook store. Bargain-hunters can click one of the tabs on the left-hand side of the page, that say “eBooks Under \$ 5”, or “Free eBooks”. Be careful when you click the “Buy Now” button: it means what it says. One click and you’ve bought the book. Your purchased books are stored on the B&N site, and from there you can transfer them to your computer, iPhone, BlackBerry, or ebook reading device.

- Books on Board

<http://booksonboard.com/index.html>

- Diesel Ebooks

<http://www.diesel-ebooks.com/>

- Ebook Mall. More than 210,000 ebooks.

<http://www.Ebookmall.com>

- Ebooks.com.

<http://www.Ebooks.com>

- Ebookstore from Sony. More than 700,000 titles, including 500,000 free via Google. For more on this store, see our “Top News Stories”.

<http://ebookstore.sony.com/>

- Ereader. “Powered by Fictionwise” which was recently purchased by Barnes and Noble.

<http://www.Ereader.com>

- Fictionwise

<http://www.fictionwise.com/home.html>

■ Microsoft Reader Ebooks

[www.microsoft.com/reader/find/new\\_releases.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/reader/find/new_releases.aspx)

■ Mobipocket

<http://www.mobipocket.com/>

■ Palm Ebook Store.

<http://ebooks.palm.com/>

■ Powell's

[www.powells.com/ebookstore/ebooks.html](http://www.powells.com/ebookstore/ebooks.html)

■ Rosetta Books

<http://www.rosettabooks.com/>

■ Shortcovers

<http://www.shortcovers.com/>

## Giant Lists of Ebook Stores

MobileRead is a great service to the ebook community, thanks to their forums, and to their Wiki pages of useful information. Here, by exploring the two links below (from MobileRead Wiki), you'll find many places where ebooks are sold.

■ Ebookstores

[http://wiki.mobileread.com/wiki/E-book\\_stores](http://wiki.mobileread.com/wiki/E-book_stores)

■ Compare ebookstores

[http://wiki.mobileread.com/wiki/E-book\\_stores\\_table](http://wiki.mobileread.com/wiki/E-book_stores_table)



## [ 5 ]

## Ebook Formats: A Primer

Ebooks are available in many varieties. The multiplicity of formats, which are often incompatible with other operating systems or reading software, is absolutely maddening.

Ebook Format Wars:  
A Cantankerous Ditty

Why so many formats – (selfishness and greed)?  
How many shades of ebooks do we really need!  
PDF for printing, printing P.O.D.,  
For metadata, let the data stay in ODT.  
What the hell is XML that everybody uses?  
With XHTML as large as hippopotamuses.  
TXT for the next century;  
ZIP to squeeze your stuff,  
EPUB for the reading —  
That should be enough.

## 15 Ebook Formats

Here are 15 file formats that you might meet on your Internet travels.

1. EPUB (.epub). EPUB is the swiftly-rising star of ebook formats, for all platforms. EPUB is a zip-compressed file that contains XHTML or XML files, a dash of CSS, and some esoteric metadata — all formatted according to precise standards. There is EPUB without DRM — which can be read easily in many ways — and EPUB with DRM, which limits your ebook to specific software or devices.
2. Adobe Portable Document Format (.PDF). PDF preserves the design and formatting of the document, wherever it goes.
3. Amazon ebooks format (.azw). This is the file format used on Oprah Winfrey's Kindle.
4. DjVu (.djv). Useful for hi-res photographs and scanned images, this format can often compress files to a very small size.
5. eReader (.pdb) is the versatile format — for mobile devices, desktops and laptops — that is used by a reading application called eReader.

6. FictionBook (.fb2) is an XML-derived format, designed for fiction, and for easy conversion. Read it with the FBReader.
7. HTML and XHTML (.html, .htm, .xhtml). (X)HTML is readable with web browsers. These are also essential components of the file format called EPUB.
8. Microsoft Reader (.lit). This format, for Microsoft Reader reading software, works on Windows computers and on the Pocket PC.
9. Mobipocket (.mobi) can be used on just-about every PDA and Smartphone, and on Windows desktop and laptop computers.
10. PalmDoc (.pdb) is for Palm PDAs.
11. Palm Resource Compiler (.prc) is (frequently) an executable file that contains a Mobipocket ebook, or other types of ebooks.
12. Rich Text Format (.rtf) can be read by all platforms, and is “richer” than plain .txt files.
13. Sony Reader (.lrf) works on the Sony Reader and the Sony Librie.

14. Text (.txt) is the format of choice for the free ebooks from Project Gutenberg.

15. ZIP (.zip) is a compression format, often used to transmit ebooks from the Net to your computer.

### Convert It If You Can

A wise man once remarked: “If something is truly yours, then no-one can take it away from you.”

Here are some wise words about ebooks:

“If an ebook is truly yours, then you can convert it to different file formats.”

There are many ways to convert ebooks to your favorite file formats. Recently, with great enthusiasm, I have been using Calibre and eCub. You might also check sites such as Feedbooks, and Munseys, and Manybooks.net, to see if your ebook has been converted already. Like cars, some ebooks are convertible, and some ebooks are not. Publishers may choose to apply a DRM that prevents conversion.

[ 6 ]

## How to Read Ebooks

Among twenty snowy mountains,  
The only moving thing  
Was the eye of the blackbird.

What is an ebook? ...

Here is my definition of the term:

“An ebook is any book-length piece of writing, in digital form, that is read with the help of some kind of electronic device.”

That is clear and concise — but a little lacking in details.

### Four Methods For Reading Ebooks

Wallace Stevens, who found thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird, might have discovered four ways of looking at an ebook.

1. Read the ebook on your desktop or laptop computer. (The ebook itself might be stored on

your hard drive, or on a CD/DVD, or any storage drive.)

2. Read the ebook on the Web or Internet, using your desktop computer, laptop, or netbook.
3. Read the ebook on a mobile device: a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), a Smartphone, or a media player — such as a Palm Pre, a BlackBerry Storm, a Nokia E71, or Apple's iPhone or iPod.
4. Read the ebook on a portable hardware device specifically made for ebooks. I call these ERDs: Ebook Reading Devices. (Don't search for ERDs on WikiPedia — I am probably the only person in the Universe who uses that name.) Two well known examples of ERDs are the Amazon Kindle, and the Sony Reader.

If you own an ebook reading device, then you can skip this chapter — you know what to do.

If you want to read ebooks on your mobile devices — PDAs or smartphones — you will need some ebook reading software. The MobileRead Wiki maintains a web page with a big list:

[http://wiki.mobileread.com/wiki/E-book\\_software](http://wiki.mobileread.com/wiki/E-book_software)

Three (of many) choices are:

- Stanza from Lexcycle.

Stanza is designed for the iPhone and the iPod Touch, and another version of Stanza is available for Desktop/laptop computers, for Windows and Mac PCs. It's free to download, easy to use, and packed with features. If you need tech support, visit the Stanza website. You can read the well-written FAQs, or submit questions to the forum.

- eReader, for iPhone and iPod touch; BlackBerry; Palm OS, and other PDAs. eReader is also available for desktops and laptops.

- Aldiko. "An ebook reading application that runs on any Android phone and which enables you to easily download and read thousands of books right on your smartphone."



The remainder of this chapter is designed for those of us who want to read ebooks on our desktop computers, or laptop computers. Here I will explore and explain some tools and resources for reading ebooks in two formats — EPUB and PDF ebooks — and for reading ebooks online.

## EPUB: An Overview

I am a total teetotaler, yet it seems as if literature and alcohol always go hand in hand. The ancient Chinese poets, gazing at the bright moon, composed their verse with a writing tool in one hand, and a cup of drink in the other. Gutenberg — Johannes Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg, who lived between 1398 and 1468 — made the first printing press around 1450, using materials from a press that crushed grapes for making wine. And now we have the leading ebook format, EPUB — which sounds like a website for buying beer.

EPUB, in fact, is a superb solution for ending the ebook format wars. The standard was created, and is currently managed by the International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF), located at <http://www.idpf.org>.

The EPUB format has many benefits and useful features:

- EPUB is Easy to Read. It can be read on all platforms (Windows, Linux, Mac) and by many devices and software programs— see below for our list.

- EPUB Reflows. Text that reflows looks great on the screen all the time, even when you change the type size or the margins.

- EPUB is a Good Long-term Solution. If all



the EPUB reading software suddenly or gradually vanished, the essence of EPUB files (which are mostly XHTML or XML files), will still be readable tomorrow, and in a thousand years. Whether humans will still be reading in a thousand years is another question.

- EPUB has Metadata. EPUB's metadata contains information that will help the ebook be efficiently organized and easily found.

- EPUB is Easy to Make. Anyone can create EPUB ebooks, using commercial software (such as the pricey Adobe InDesign); or with shareware (for a small cost); or with freeware, which is free. Before you try a freeware solution, make sure that you understand the license: some freeware does not allow you to make EPUB ebooks if you plan to sell the books. Even the most expensive software cannot make valid EPUB: you'll need to tweak. The EPUB ebook edition of this work (edition September 2009) will be made with freeware.

## How to Read Ebooks in EPUB

Of course, the EPUB format reads beautifully on iPhones, iPods, and a number of PDAs and ebook readers. And it is also very simple to read all the EPUB ebooks on your desktop or laptop computer.

## Read EPUB on Your Desktop Computer or Laptop Computer

- Calibre. Calibre is an open source ebook reader, and ebook library manager, that can read EPUB files. It works with Windows, Linux, and Mac OS X. It stores your ebooks; and converts ebooks in various file formats (such as text, html, PDF) to EPUB without harming the original files. Frequently updated, Calibre has become my one of my favorite applications for managing and reading EPUB ebooks.

<http://calibre.kovidgoyal.net/>

- Stanza from Lexcycle. Stanza comes in a number of editions; to read EPUB on your desktop computer or laptop, you want what is called “Stanza Desktop.” Download the software, install it, and then you can begin to read the EPUB ebooks. Currently, the desktop version is free and in beta; the company has stated that they might begin to charge for the desktop version. Stanza is available for Windows computers, and for Mac computers, at: <http://www.lexcycle.com/>

At the end of April 2009, Stanza was acquired by Amazon.com. Will this enhance the product and keep it open, or make it more

Amazon-centric? ... Before the acquisition, I had been using the Stanza Desktop application on my iMac without problems. In August, when I tried to upgrade to a later version, the upgrade repeatedly failed to install. In my proud opinion (IMPO), Stanza might do well to put more effort into developing their desktop version.

- Adobe Digital Editions. Adobe Digital Editions (ADE) is an ebook reader, and an ebook library manager. (For Windows and Mac OS computers.)  
[www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/](http://www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/)
- FB Reader. This is a free EPUB reader for Linux, and Windows XP and Vista.  
<http://www.fbreader.org/>
- Azardi. Azardi, for Windows and Linux, is now in the beta version.  
<http://www.infogridpacific.com/igp/AZARDI/>
- MobiPocket Reader. In 2008, MobiPocket (bought by Amazon.com in 2005) announced support for EPUB. There's a version for your desktop computer (Windows only), and a different version for many mobile devices.  
<http://www.mobipocket.com/en/downloadsoft/productdetailsreader.asp>

## Read EPUB on Ebook Reading Devices

Except for the Amazon Kindle series, and the Foxit eSlick, just about all the newer ebook devices can read EPUB natively, without first having to convert the EPUB to another format — which often makes ugly-looking EPUBs. See our chapter about ebook reading devices for more information.

## How to Read Ebooks in PDF

PDF is the essential link to print publishing, and also is capable of precise typographic control, so that the ebook can be read easily and look its best. As with EPUB, ebooks in the PDF format can be read on your desktop or laptop computer screen — with PDF there is no extra cost to you, and no need to buy an ebook reading device, or buy special software. The software to view PDF files is free.

## Read PDF Ebooks on a Windows PC

- Adobe Digital Editions  
Reads ebooks, and manages your library,  
[www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/](http://www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/)

- Sumatra PDF Reader

“A slim, free, open-source PDF viewer for windows.”

<http://blog.kowalczyk.info/software/sumatrapdf/>

- Foxit Reader

This link takes you to a Windows version; a Linux version is also available.

[http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/rd\\_intro.php](http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/rd_intro.php)

## Read PDF Ebooks on Apple Computers

- Preview is the default PDF file reader that comes included , free, with every new Snow Leopard OS. Preview is an excellent PDF reader; the new Snow Leopard version is even more feature-rich than the previous one. To learn more about Preview:

- Apple 101 tutorial about Preview:  
<http://support.apple.com/kb/HT2506>

- Article about Preview in Macworld:  
<http://www.macworld.com/article/132468/2008/04/workingmac2504.html>

- Adobe Digital Editions

To read PDF ebooks encrypted with Adobe DRM, you will need this reading software.

[www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/](http://www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/)

- Skim

“Skim is a PDF reader and note-taker for OS X. It is designed to help you read and annotate scientific papers in PDF, but is also great for viewing any PDF file.” Skim is great.

<http://skim-app.sourceforge.net/>

- Firefox-Mac-PDF

A plug-in that allows you to read PDF files directly from your Firefox web browser.

<http://code.google.com/p/firefox-mac-pdf/>

## Reading Ebooks Online

- Bookworm

Bookworm, created by Liza Daly, is now managed by O'Reilly Media. The website explains: “Bookworm allows readers to add EPUB books to their online library and read them on their web browser or mobile device. If you have a portable device that supports EPUB (such as the Sony Reader or iRex iLiad), you can download your books to put on your e-reader. Bookworm is specially optimized for use in the iPhone.”

I have used Bookworm, and I like the interface. It's also useful for testing EPUB ebooks that you create yourself.

<http://bookworm.oreilly.com/>

- Scribd

Scribd works this way: Users upload content, which can then be viewed online, by everyone, through any of Scribd's three viewing modes. It is forbidden to upload copyrighted materials (especially ebooks) even if you have purchased them — unless these works are in the public domain. You can find lots of interesting reading on Scribd, most of it legally uploaded.

<http://www.Scribd.com>

- Book Glutton

This “new way to read online”, is the brainchild of Travis Alber and Aaron Miller. You can store your ebooks here, and download them to your computer or iPod. You can read your EPUB ebooks online all alone; or you can enjoy a lively interaction with other booklovers.

<http://www.bookglutton.com/>

## [ 7 ]

## Ten Popular Myths About Ebooks

To promote the growth of this young ebook industry — and to nourish the aspects of the digital reading revolution that can make us a nation of readers again — publishers and authors need to educate the reading public about the brave new worlds of ebooks and electronic publishing. Here are ten myths about ebooks that would be better placed in *Bullfinch* than in *Britannica*. First, the 10 myths are listed; and then — myth by myth — the opposite point of view is humbly explained.

- Myth # 1. The only way to read ebooks is to read them on a dedicated ebook reading device.
- Myth # 2. There are not very many ebooks available to read.
- Myth # 3. Buying ebooks instead of paper books does not really help the environment.
- Myth # 4. DRM (a.k.a. Digital Rights Management) is used by many major ebook sellers, so DRM must be good for ebook buyers.
- Myth # 5. There is no end in sight to the



ebook format wars.

- Myth # 6. Ebooks have short lifespans, because it's so easy to delete an ebook.

- Myth # 7. If I publish my book in ebook format, it will be stolen by ebook pirates.

- Myth # 8. Books published as ebooks are books that are not good enough to be published in paperback.

- Myth # 9. Ebooks, and electronic publishing, are killing the print publishing industry.

- Myth # 10. Ebooks are not ready for prime time: the digital reading revolution is years away.

- Myth # 1.

The only way to read ebooks is to read them on a dedicated ebook reading device.

Not at all. Ebooks can be read on your desktop or laptop computer; or online, using a nice interface such as BookWorm; or on your mobile device such as a BlackBerry, an iPhone or iPod, and many more.

- Myth # 2.

There are not very many ebooks available to read.

There are more than 1.5 million public-domain

ebooks — free, as in absolutely free — available through sites such as Project Gutenberg; Internet Archive; Feedbooks, Manybooks.net, and Google Book Search. And many more ebooks are available from online ebook bookstores.

■ Myth # 3.

Buying ebooks instead of paper books does not really help the environment.

To quote Mr. Dickens: “You are wonderfully mistaken!” ... Ebooks save trees. Ebooks eliminate the need for filling up landfills with old books. Ebooks save energy, and transportation costs, and reduce the pollution associated with driving and flying books across the country and around the world.

Ebooks eliminate the problem of “unsold books”, which are often shredded. In the Netherlands alone, more than one million books are shredded every year, and transformed into toilet paper. ( A smart step, but still a waste of energy and resources.)

Electronic publishing saves paper. How many trees are used to produce one week’s worth of paper in a Sunday New York Times newspaper? ... One weekly issue of the New York Times consumes 75,000 trees. ... One

year of Sunday papers produced by the New York Times is responsible for the destruction and consumption of more than 3,900,000 trees.

■ Myth # 4.

DRM (Digital Rights Management) is used by many major ebook sellers, so DRM must be good for ebook buyers.

Said Cervantes's Don Quixote: "You are a million miles from the truth."

DRM (Digital Rights Management) refers to a method of protecting digital content that a publisher can apply to videos, music files, images and ebooks. Adding DRM has three drawbacks. Always, DRM makes your digital products cost more. Sometimes, the DRM does funny things to your computer. And often, DRM limits what you can do with your own purchase. For example, many DRM-afflicted ebooks do not allow you to print the files.

Ebooks were never meant to be hidden like the lost city of Atlantis, buried like the treasures of Monte Cristo, or guarded like the gold in Fort Knox.

■ Myth # 5.

There is no end in sight to the ebook format wars.

There is EPUB.

EPub, in fact, is a superb solution for ending the ebook format wars. The standard was created, and is currently managed by the International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF), located at <http://www.idpf.org>. The EPUB format has many benefits and useful features.

■ Myth # 6.

Ebooks have short lifespans, because it's so easy to delete an ebook.

On the contrary: ebooks preserve books. You can easily make copies of your ebooks; and you can store them "in the clouds" for safekeeping. It is paper books that are more likely to be destroyed by prudes, tyrants, water, fire, theft, carelessness, and old age.

■ Myth # 7.

If I publish my book in ebook format, it will be stolen by ebook pirates.

If you publish your book in paperback, it can be stolen by e-pirates, just as easily. The cutting-edge ebook blog, TeleRead, recently reported a quote from an article in Times Online:

"Publishers and agents representing the authors J. K. Rowling and Ken Follett were

battling last night to get free copies of their novels removed from [Scribd] a Californian website that claims to be the most popular literary site in the world.”

The *Times Online* article states that Follett’s publisher, Macmillan, was unaware that the book had been posted there — for 5 months.

Scribd is not the problem: Scribd will remove any pirated copies as soon as these are discovered. A much more difficult to manage issue concerns the file sharing websites, and the bit torrent sites, where copyrighted works can be plucked as easily as peaches from a peach tree. Here you will find ebook editions of paper copies that have been skillfully scanned.

Epiracy is a problem equally challenging for publishers of ebooks and of paper books.

#### ■ Myth # 8.

Books published as ebooks are books that are not good enough to be published in paperback.

That notion is so old it has whiskers. At the dawn of electronic publishing, authors were publishing books in “e” formats when they could not find a major publisher. Now, everything is different. Many major publishers are publishing in paper and in the ebook format. Some University presses are shifting completely

to ebooks. And many authors and independent publishers are bypassing New York, and choosing to publish independently.

Independent publishing is flourishing. More and more authors are rejecting the status quo. We are creating a new publishing paradigm, one where authors, not publishers or online booksellers, keep the lion's share of the profits.

■ Myth # 9.

Ebooks, and electronic publishing, are killing the print publishing industry.

Scapegoating is lame. To say that ebooks are the cause of print's demise is like blaming solar energy for the troubles of the oil industry.

Print publishing is struggling for many reasons. To survive, print publishers will need to embrace electronic publishing, transform their business models, and renew the original vision of publishing, where books are published not for profit only, but to enrich and renew our culture. If the current publishing model is heading for extinction, then a new (and better!) — model will rise from the ashes of the old.

Tim O'Reilly has said "Obscurity is a far greater threat to authors and creative artists than piracy." Wise words! And let us remember that individuals and small presses who publish

ebooks are the solution, not the problem. “The loss of personal integrity is a far greater threat to authors and creative artists than the threats of obscurity and piracy combined.”

■ Myth # 10.

Ebooks are not ready for prime time: the digital reading revolution is years away.

When Benjamin Franklin first visited the Queen of France, the bright Queen asked him:

“Mr. Franklin, you are famous for discovering that ‘Lighting is electricity.’ But what use is your discovery?”

Mr. Franklin coolly replied:

“My dear Queen. What use is a newborn baby?”

Ebooks and electronic publishing are young. But ebook sales this year will surpass 100 million dollars. (And this does not even account for the rapidly-increasing influx of “free culture” works: the more than two million ebooks and electronic publications that are available at no cost.) That 100 million dollars is still a small part of total print publishing sales. Yet ebooks are by far the fastest growing segment of this otherwise-troubled industry.

The digital reading revolution is here right now.

[ 8 ]

## Future Ebook Reading Devices

These questions below might be used to develop the ideal ebook reading device, or to compare and evaluate current devices. These standards, that I have arbitrarily established, are almost impossible to meet. You won't find them on the best of the Netbooks, nor on any reading devices in this galaxy.

Can we get the best of both worlds: the convenience of a mobile device, with the features of a laptop? Someone once tried to make a hybrid bicycle for touring and for mountain riding. It wound up with the worst features of both its parents, not the best.

In reality, some of the features below are more significant than others. For me, the ability to read EPUB is indispensable. But just for fun, you could give 4 points for every "yes" answer to the questions below. The best possible score would be 100 points.



## 25 Questions For Evaluating The Ideal Ebook Reading Device

### Format Support

1. Does the device read the essential formats: TXT, ODT, RTF, HTML PDF, and EPUB?
2. Does it play mp3 files ?
3. Can it convert documents and ebooks from one format to another ?

### Viewing

4. Is viewing as easy on the eyes as reading a paper document ?
5. Can you read in bright sunlight? Can you read in bed, with all the room lights out?
6. Does it have a color display ?
7. Is the screen a high-end electrophoretic display (planned for 2011), or a high-end LCD (planned for 2010) ?

### Convenience and Practicality

8. Is the touch screen well-designed ?
9. Does the device work for more than two weeks without needing a recharge ?
10. Does it provide two options for recharging: an AC adapter, and a USB cable ?

11. Does it have a replaceable battery that the user can easily replace ? (Subtract points if you need to replace the battery by sending the entire device back to the manufacturer).

### Capacity

12. Does it have at least 10 GB of memory ?
13. Is this memory expandable ?

### Internet Connection

14. Does the device easily access the Internet, via wired and wireless connections?
15. Does the Internet connection allow me to check email, web-search, and do “cloud computing” ? (Or only to buy more ebooks?)

### Read-Aloud Capabilities

16. Will the device read aloud to me ?
17. Does it read in a natural-sounding voice?
18. Can it change reading speeds?

### Text and Document Management

19. Can it read any text, rtf, odt, or html document that I import?

- 20. Can I annotate the documents ?
- 21. Can it share documents, and share them on a different device ?

#### Value

- 22. Is the price of the device reasonable, and are the prices of the ebooks reasonable ?
- 23. Is the Internet connection cost included in the price ?
- 24. Does it connect me — for immediate download — to the millions of free ebooks available on the Internet ?

#### CRM (Consumer Rights Management)

- 25. Does the device automatically reject — and prevent everyone from purchasing — DRM-afflicted ebooks?

## [ 9 ]

## Ebook Reading Devices in 2009

Years ago — when I was young, fun and foolish — I tossed 300 paperback books into a denim laundry bag, strapped the bag with bungee cords onto the back rack of my touring bike, and then wandered through Europe for a trip bicycling, hiking, and camping outdoors.

The books — piled high on the back of the bicycle — stood up like a gigantic anthill. In the Netherlands, busloads of tourists would stop their bus, exit their seats, then snap my photograph. After falling on the sidewalk laughing, a policewoman in Brussels ordered me not to move, and then returned fifteen minutes later to hand me a bag of fruits, vegetables, cheeses and fresh breads. In Munich, a group of physics professors attempted to prove that my bicycle was so theoretically unstable that it could not stop, turn, or even ride. Four times, in the South of France, the raging winds blew me down, on top of my bicycle. And when, after great struggles, I managed to stand up again, the winds roared more then blew the bicycle on top of me.

I didn't have much choice: I had to travel and I had to study, too. In those days, how I would have loved to own an ebook reading device that could have carried all my books (and more!), searched those books, let me annotate, let me read at night without disturbing my companions, and read aloud to me as I tuned up the bike or fixed flat tires.

Today, I do not own any ERDs (Ebook Reading Devices). My expectations for these devices (see the previous chapter) are too high. I won't even think about buying a device until the ERDs give me many more features at a much lower price.

The remainder of this chapter lists some of the popular devices, available now and coming in the near future. For more information about them, follow the links.

If you've got the cash, then you should also look at some interesting alternatives: Netbooks. A Netbook is a small and cheap notebook computer, designed primarily for reading email and searching the Web. Someday, it might evolve into an ideal ebook reading device.

Your best source of information about reading devices is not a book or magazine, or an ebook, or even this ebook. Everything changes too quickly. Visit the Mobile Read Forums, and the TeleRead blog, and Epubisher Weekly.net.

Curmudgeon's Guide to  
Ebook Reading Devices  
Now Available  
(September 2009)

An asterisk (\*) after the name of the device signifies that this device is listed in this edition of this book for the first time.

▣ Amazon Kindle 2

Kindles are creating more buzz than a hive of killer bees. Buyers seem to love them — as long as the price of ebooks stays below ten bucks. Critics are slamming the DRM, and asking: “Got EPUB?”.

<http://www.amazon.com/>

▣ Amazon Kindle DX \*

This latest model of the Kindle has a larger screen than its baby brother, and handles PDF files better — but not as well as it might. With a list price of \$ 489, one would expect native EPUB support — but no, at least not yet.

<http://www.amazon.com/>

▣ Astak EZ Reader \*

Reads ebooks and plays mp3 music files. There are a number of models: the latest two are the 6" EZ Reader (EB-06EZ), and the 5" EZ Reader

Pocket Pro (05EZWHT). The Pro is now on sale through September 2009, from the company's website, for the list price of \$ 199.  
<http://www.astak.com/product.asp?serial=EB-06EZ>

<http://www.astak.com/product.asp?serial=05EZWHT>

#### ▣ BeBook One Reader

Supports a wide range of file formats, including mp3, PDF and EPUB. Lists for \$ 249.

[http://mybebook.com/p5/reader-bebook/product\\_info.html](http://mybebook.com/p5/reader-bebook/product_info.html)

#### ▣ Bookeen Cybook Gen 3

Supports these formats: HTML, Txt, PRC, PalmDoc, PDF, Secured Mobipocket (TM) — but no sign of EPUB. Price: \$ 350. There is a newer Bookeen device, the 'Cybook Opus'.

<http://bookeen.com/shop/productdetails.aspx?ProductID=417>

#### ▣ Bookeen Cybook Opus \*

This is Bookeen's newest reading device. It fits in your pocket, and weighs 5.3 ounces. Priced at \$ 280, it reads HTML, PDF, TXT and EPUB.

<http://bookeen.com/shop/productdetails.aspx?ProductID=445>

▣ COOL-ER ebook reader \*

COOL-ER supports all the essential ebook formats. You can expand its memory with SD cards. The price: \$ 249. It comes in 8 bright colors. The current edition of COOL-ER has no wireless connection, but the company's recent partnership with Google might cause that to change, very soon.

<http://www.coolreaders.com/default.asp>

▣ ECO Reader \*

This new device, made in Australia, supports more than 20 file formats. If you study the specs on the website, you'll see that it comes with all the standard features: SD card, rechargeable battery, multi-language support, and so on. It sells for \$ 449 Australian dollars, which is now \$ 387.40 in U.S. dollars.

<http://www.ecoreader.com.au/>

▣ ECTACO jetBook

Small in size, the jetBook supports many formats, and contains built-in dictionaries for many languages.

<http://www.jetbook.net/>

▣ Foxit eSlick Reader

eSlick plays mp3, and reads PDF and text files. For some documents in other formats, it



first converts them to PDF, and then lets you read the PDF. The price is \$ 259.59.

[www.foxitsoftware.com/ebook/index.html](http://www.foxitsoftware.com/ebook/index.html)

#### ▣ iRex iLiad

In addition to reading documents, you can write notes and underline text with the Wacom Penabled technology that's built right in. iRex sells a three different ebook readers. Strangely, when I checked their website in September, all (priced from \$ 599 to \$ 859) were out of stock.

[www.irextechnologies.com/products/iliad](http://www.irextechnologies.com/products/iliad)

#### ▣ Neolux Nuut2 (NP-602)

Made in Korea, and the website is in Korean. The Nuut2 was released in June 2009.

<http://www.nuutbook.com/>

#### ▣ Pixelar Hanlin e-Reader

Made in Great Britain, Pixelar reads many formats, including PDF and EPUB. Priced, in U.S. dollars, at \$ 288.

<http://www.pixelar.co.uk/ebook.php>

#### ▣ Sony Reader

The two models we mentioned in the previous edition of this book — the PRS-700 and the PRS-505 — are now no longer sold by Sony. There are three new models, two available now,

and one more coming soon.

▣ Sony Reader Pocket Edition (PRS-300) \*

Priced at just under \$ 200, this device has a 5" display, supports EPUB and PDF, gives you two weeks of reading on a single charge, and connects you to the million Google books in EPUB.

<http://www.sonystyle.com/>

▣ Sony Reader Touch Edition (PRS-600) \*

For \$ 300 you get a 6" display, touchscreen navigation, freehand highlighting and annotation, and access to the million Google public domain books in EPUB. Need wireless connectivity? ... See the Sony PRS-2121.

<http://www.sonystyle.com/>

## Ebook Reading Devices Coming in the Near Future

If the present trend continues, there will soon be more varieties of Ebook Reading Devices than types of baklava in a bakery in Athens.

Here below are some devices that have been officially announced, or unofficially rumored.

▣ Apple iPod reader

Just a rumor: Apple may be working on a large-screen iPod Touch, that could be an ideal ebook reader, or an iTablet that does lots

of things, including reading ebooks. This would be the apple of my eye-reader ...

<http://www.apple.com>

#### ▣ Asus Eee Reader \*

Scheduled to debut at the end of 2009, and priced in the neighborhood of \$ 160, this item may become the world's cheapest dedicated device for reading ebooks. Rumors and photos say that it will have two screens, and open like a book.

But why not buy Asus's best-selling netbook, the Eee PC 1005HA, for \$ 374 ?

<http://usa.asus.com/>

#### ▣ Boox E-reader (from Onyx International)

The software on this reader makes it a missing link between an ebook reading device and a Netbook with a genuine operating system. The device was shown at CeBit ("the world's largest computer conference") in March 2009, where the company announced that it would be available three to four months later, at a price lower than the cheapest Sony Reader.

This device has a very impressive set of features, but we're still waiting for the launch.

<http://www.onyx-international.com/en/product/booxseries/>

▣ Hearst Cosmo-Reader

Rumors are flying that the Hearst Corporation, publishers of *Cosmopolitan* and other slick mags, will produce a sexy ebook (and emag) reading device in the near future. Is it called “Cosmo-Reader” ? ... I made up the name.  
<http://www.hearst.com/>

▣ iriver Story \*

From Korea comes this new device (launching on September 16) that will feature a small QWERTY keyboard beneath the 6" screen.  
<http://www.iriver.com>

▣ Plastic Logic Reader

To be released early in 2010. It has an 8.5" x 11" screen; it weighs less than a typical magazine. The company has partnered with Barnes & Noble. The ads keep mentioning that it is “for business professionals”, which tells us something off-putting about the probable price.  
<http://www.plasticlogic.com/>

▣ RADIUS

RADIUS claims that it will be the first pocket-sized eReader. It looks like a “communicator” from the William Shatner enabled, *Star Trek*. Of all the devices I’ve seen, this is the one I’d like to try. <http://www.radius.com/>

▣ Sony Reader Daily Edition (PRS-2121) \*

Boasts a 7 inch touch screen and wireless connectivity, but only to the Sony ebookstore.  
<http://www.sonystyle.com>

▣ Txtr Reader

Txtr claims that it is one step ahead of other devices: faster and with more features. Made in Germany, it will debut at the Frankfurt Book Fair, in October 2009.  
<http://reader.txtr.com/>

## [ 10 ]

## Ebooks and Independent Publishing

In many ways, ebooks are revolutionary. They have the potential to transform the publishing industry. They could make us, once again, a nation of readers, and — for the first time — a nation of writers.

Ebooks are an essential aspect of the Independent Publishing movement that is flourishing worldwide. This is not a new activity, it is a resurgence of an old one.

In 1855, Walt Whitman set type at his friend's printing company, then paid for the printing of the first edition of his unappreciated masterpiece, *Leaves of Grass*.

With the help of his wife, William Blake — considered by his contemporaries to be a madman, and now regarded as one of the world's great poets — handcrafted all his books in his own workshop at home.

Other once-ignored and now-famous writers who have published independently include Benjamin Franklin; Henry David Thoreau; Mark Twain (*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*); Carl Sandburg; Rudyard Kipling; William Strunk, Jr. (*The Elements of Style*);

D.H. Lawrence; Gertrude Stein; Beatrix Potter; the Bronte Sisters; John Galsworthy; Edgar Allan Poe; Robert Browning; George Bernard Shaw; Samuel Butler; William E.B. Du Bois; James Joyce (*Ulysses*); Anais Nin; and Virginia Woolf.

No longer does it take expensive equipment — not affordable for the average person — to typeset and produce a work of fiction or non-fiction. Publishing an ebook can be accomplished with nothing more than a computer and an Internet connection. With today's cloud computing capabilities, not even the computer is needed. Novels can be created, edited, formatted, uploaded, and then offered for sale using a cheap cell phone.

We are still far from the day when a work published independently can earn attention and respect from the mainstream media. That day will come. Until that new era dawns, all creative persons may be inspired by spirited words of John Keats:

“I should write for the mere yearning and fondness I have for the beautiful, even if my night's labors should be burnt every morning and no eye shine upon them.”

[ 11 ]

## Why the Ex-Perts Call Them E-Books

✧

### An Open Letter To the Usage Panel at the OED

What's wrong with the hyphen in the word "e-book"? ... It was not designed for electronic publications and modern ebook formats, such as EPUB and the Web. In print documents, we can harden the hyphen, to prevent the "e" and "book" from splitting when they hit the right-margin edge. In an EPUB ebook or a web page — when the text is justified — the "e" may easily be separated from the "book."

The resultant trauma from this separation will continue to divide book and ebook, unwilling antagonists, who foolishly remain at war like Capulets and Montagues. Our goal, of course, is to harmonize these star-crossed lovers, the past and the future of reading, into one enlightened present.



Therefore, I respectfully submit that the hyphen in this word be permanently abolished, and the esteemed dictionary updated to reflect the simpler, wiser, more ecological and more efficient usage: ebook.

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

When I find the man  
Who first spelled “rhythm” —  
You don’t want to know  
What I’ll do whythm.

/ / / / / / / / / /

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Email is now officially spelled with or without the hyphen. According to the website [Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com), there are three ways to spell ‘ebook’: e-book, eBook and ebook.

The ebook world has plenty of technology; we can use a bit of humor and a dash of art.

Here is a poetic parody that gripes about the ludicrous hyphen in the word “e-book”. It is written by a man who is unafraid to put his name at the bottom of a beautiful heap of nonsense.

## Why The Ex-Perts Call Them E-books

“You say e-books, and I say ebooks! Let’s call the hyphen off.”

— George and Ira Gershwin

A travesty against our race!  
Of every creed and sex —  
The adding of the hyphen  
By the pompous scholar ex-  
Perts, for no other reason  
Than to obfuscate the poor  
And humble e-book  
Which requires nothing more.

“But why not?” ask the ex-  
Perts as they while away the hours  
Sipping fresh-frapped Capp-  
Uccinos in the slippery ivory towers.  
“All these lexographic capers  
Add a dash of cold romance,  
Makes for more grad-student papers,  
And more fedly-funded grants.”

(continued 🐼 )

See the superfluous hyphen  
As it separates the “e” —  
From the book’s beloved wife an’  
Paper-viewing family.  
As we who love this brave new place,  
Cannot but stop and think:  
O, what a waste of precious space!  
O what a waste of ink!

Somewhere in the thankless cold,  
A poet longs to e-  
At night when all his tales are told  
To deaf posterity.  
With every lovely line I write —  
From heart, and hope, and mind,  
The “e” stands all alone at right —  
The book is left behind.

— Michael Pastore

## [ 12 ]

## Size Matters: Ebooks and Bytes

When we talk about paper books, we describe the size by asking “how many words?” and “how many pages?”. Ebooks are described by the number of words, and the number of bytes.

You know already that each single byte is made of 8 bits. A bit (binary digit), the smallest unit of computer data, holds either a 1 or a 0. When you type with your keyboard, for example, the letter “a”, you send a message to your computer, which translates the “a” to ASCII number 97, which is represented as the 8-digit binary number: 01100001 (64 + 32 + 1).

Fortunately, there’s no need to sweat the small stuff: the computer takes care of the bits. For authors and publishers who work with ebooks, it is useful to understand the bytes.

■ 1 byte (1 B)

One byte represents a single alphanumeric character: such as the letter “a”, the number 6, a punctuation mark, a blank space, a long dash, and so on.

■ 1 kilobyte (1 K or 1 KB)

Approximately 1,000 bytes (precisely, it is 1,024 bytes, 2 to the 10th power)

1 Kilobyte is about one-fourth as many characters on a typewritten page (assuming the page is single-spaced with one-inch margins and elite type).

A small novel — containing 50,000 words — (at an average of six characters per words) will need about 300 KB.

■ 1 megabyte (1 M or 1 MB)

Approximately 1,000 kilobytes  
(precisely: 1,024 kilobytes, or 1,048,576 bytes)

One megabyte is about the amount of storage that will hold one 250-page book, assuming that the book has single-spaced typewritten pages.

- a CD-ROM holds about 750 MB.
- a DVD-ROM (single-sided single-layer) holds 7 times as much, about 4.7 gigabytes.
- a DVD-ROM (single-sided double-layer) holds about 8.54 gigabytes.

■ 1 gigabyte (1 G or 1 GB)

One gigabyte (pronounced “gig-a-bite”) is approximately 1,000,000,000 bytes; slightly more than billion bytes

To understand bytes, kilobytes, megabytes, and gigabytes — is probably enough. To understand the impact of the Information Revolution, here below is a bit more about bytes.

■ 1 terabyte (1 TB) is 1,024 gigabytes.  
One terabyte is slightly more than a trillion bytes, about 1,000,000,000,000 bytes.

■ 1 petabyte (1 PB) is 1,024 terabytes.  
One petabyte is about 1,000,000,000,000,000 bytes (1 quadrillion bytes)

In the year 2005, it was estimated that the amount of all the world's information contained in paper sources — in books, and libraries and in government and home filing cabinets, etc. — totaled to about 200 petabytes.

■ 1 exabyte (1 EB)  
1 exabyte is about 1 quintillion bytes

■ 1 zettabyte is 1,000 exabytes

■ 1 yottabyte is about 1,000 zettabytes

■ 1 brontobyte is about 1,000 yottabytes  
One brontobyte is 1 followed by 27 zeros worth of bytes:  
1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

## [ 13 ]

### How to Publish Without DRM

Ebooks were never meant to be hidden like the lost city of Atlantis, buried like the treasures of Monte Cristo, or guarded like the gold in Fort Knox.

#### What is DRM?

For decades, pundits have debated the meaning of this unpleasant three-letter acronym. DRM has been called Dead Read Meat; Damned Restrictive Measures; Disney Reaps Mickey; Dictators Reign Malevolently; and Don't Read Me. Colorful as they are, these definitions must yield to a less subjective description of the disadvantages.

DRM (Digital Rights Management) refers to a method of protecting digital content that a publisher can apply to videos, music files, images and ebooks. Adding DRM has three drawbacks. Always, DRM makes your digital products cost more. Sometimes, the DRM does funny things to your computer. And often,

DRM limits what you can do with your own purchase. For example, many DRM-afflicted ebooks do not allow you to print the files.

## Should Ebooks Be Treated The Same Way as Music or Videos?

Ebooks are books. And books are not the same as digitized content, so it is unwise to treat them that way. Using DRM to restrict the rights of the user has three serious after-effects:

- It increases the book's price while diminishing the book's worth;
- It cheats the reader out of features she is entitled to; and
- It harms society by chilling the latest ideas that are necessary to help individuals and cultures think freely, act responsibly, and grow.

Books are not the same as digitized content. Clifford A. Lynch, Director of CNI (Coalition for Networked Information), writes:

“Books are serious, they capture our knowledge, our intellectual heritage, our cultural discourse. Books have significance that transcends quarrels about who gets paid, and when, and how often, for playing popular tunes.”



## For Publishers, What is the Problem?

There is a danger in publishing DRM-less ebooks: they are easier to steal than the protected kind. Authors who spend a great deal of time, sometimes years, to create a significant book, may be concerned that their labors of love might be so easily lost.

The problem is parodied in a bit of doggerel written by Michael Pastore:

### Publishers' Lament

Sweet Publishing is Chaos!  
A war of Us and Them.  
Will Readers ever pay us,  
If we don't use DRM?

In the world of music, the problem was faced and partially resolved by the iTunes model: selling the songs for cheap made much more sense than going after students and grandmothers for allegedly illegal downloading.

Could this plan work for ebooks? ... If publishers do not use DRM or lawsuits, will readers respect an author's rights?

My guess is that the vast majority of persons will do the right thing. And as more people

become creators, not merely consumers, they will increasingly respect the difficulties of the creative process, and be happy to support one another.

## We Oppose DRM: What Can We Do?

For authors and publishers who believe that DRM is harmful to us and to our readers, here are 5 things we can do:

- 1. Lower your prices.

Start by insisting that your ebooks are published without DRM. And since you're not paying for DRM — or losing a big cut to sellers who require it — you'll be saving some money. All this savings can be passed on to your readers. Can you sell your ebook for \$ 10 ? ... Or \$ 5 ? ... What about \$ 2 ?

- 2. Register your Ebook.

Register your ebook with a free Registration service. The purpose is not to harass your readers, but to protect you from anyone who tries to re-sell your work, without your knowledge or permission.

- 3. Join Together.

There should be a guild for everyone who opposes DRM: authors, publishers, and readers. We could educate one another, exchange resources, and share success stories.

- 4. Make friends with your readers.

Start a blog. Get on Facebook or MySpace. Keep up with the latest technologies, so you will be able to communicate. Let your readers see that you are a good human being, not a greedy corporate empire.

- 5. Actively promote consumer education.

For me, consumer education means that the consumers will educate me. At the same time, authors can gently explain to readers why we hope that they will buy our ebooks — and maybe even buy our paperback editions.

Every one of my ebooks contains a chapter near the end of the work — a message to readers — titled: *Why This Ebook Has No DRM*. I believe that most people are good-hearted, and that people will respect my efforts. Rather than steal my work, they will prefer to pay a fair price.

## Coda: The New Ebook Pricing Model

Is this concept of “low-price ebooks” nothing but a Utopian fantasy? No, it’s real, and it is happening now.

On March 2, 2009, the publisher Faber (in the United Kingdom) announced that their book *What Price Liberty?*, by Ben Wilson, will be sold as a paperback for 14.99 (British pounds), and sold as an ebook for — can you guess? — readers can pay whatever price they want to pay. Or, the reader may download the ebook, free. The free download period lasted from April 27 until the book’s official publication date, June 4.

More information — about DRM-free publishing, ebook piracy, and finding free and low-priced original ebooks — can be found at this book’s companion website:

Epublishers Weekly.net

<http://www.EpublishersWeekly.net>

[ 14 ]

## Publishing Ebooks: Ten Tremendous Trends in 2009

Ah, the Digital Reading Revolution!

Every week I wander in a dark wood, asking myself how great literature might be rescued from oblivion — and hoping, once again, we can become a nation of readers! Could the answer be right before us, in the bumbling, stumbling, humbling world of ebooks?

Numbers-wise, ebooks are now only a small part of the publishing business. And the publishing business — made of paper books, ebooks, newspapers and magazines — is an industry in trouble deep. There are many hopeful signs, and some exemplary publishing companies doing creative, innovative, and important work. Yet, on the whole, it is difficult to deny that print publishers have lost the way forward.

Print publishing has one foot in the grave and the other foot on a banana peel. Whether you read the *Times* or the tabloids, examine the spreadsheets or the bedsheets, swear at Steve

Jobs for saying what we all fear most

— “the fact is that people don’t read anymore,” —

wail at the sale of *Publishers Weekly*, gnash your teeth at the shrinking book review sections in newspapers (and at the entire newspaper industry itself, now hospitalized in intensive care ...) — all the evidence screams: The publishing industry is sinking fast. Publishing today reminds me of the narrow-minded Marie Antoinette (infamous for laughing: “Let them eat cake!”), as depicted in Thomas Carlyle’s work, *The French Revolution*:

“Ill-fated Queen! Her hair is already gray with many cares and crosses; her first-born son is dying in these weeks: black falsehood has ineffaceably soiled her name; ineffaceably while this generation lasts. Instead of *Vive la Reine*, voices insult her with *Vive d’Orleans*. Of her queenly beauty little remains except its stateliness; not now gracious, but haughty, rigid, silently enduring. With a most mixed feeling, wherein joy has no part, she resigns herself to a day she hoped never to have seen. Poor Marie Antoinette; with thy quick noble instincts; vehement glancings, vision all-too

fitful narrow for the work thou hast to do! O there are tears in store for thee; bitterest wailings, soft womanly meltings, though thou hast the heart of an imperial Theresa's Daughter. Thou doomed one, shut thy eyes on the future! — ”

Vision all-too fitful narrow for the work thou hast to do!

Publishers are drowning because they refuse to understand and face the obvious: the reading world is experiencing a seismic shift. Readers, writers and publishers are not simply drifting with this transformation: we are creating it. We want better-quality writing; we want lower prices; we want our ebooks delivered faster than FedEx overnight express.

Is this the best of times, or the worst of times? Is this the spring of hope, or the winter of despair? Can the perilous profession of publishing be saved? ...The situation is hopeless but not serious — and might be summarized by the inspiring words attributed to Leonid Kravchuk, the former president of the Ukraine:

“Today we stand at the edge of a great abyss. Tomorrow, we take a giant step forward.”

## Six Questions About Ebooks

Ebooks are at last emerging as a significant force. Every month, more “name” authors are making their works available as ebooks, and some sell directly from their own websites. Sales for the year 2009 may reach or exceed 100 million dollars.

In August, 2009, the Association of American Publishers reported that ebook sales were up by 136.2 percent for the month of June: 14 million dollars worth of ebooks were sold in June. This is an increase of 149.3 percent for the year 2009.

That sounds good and it is good, because it is a sharp rise from the previous year. But keep in mind that in the year 2000, a major research company predicted that ebook sales would exceed 400 million dollars— by the year 2004.

There is far more to books than the narrow realm of dollars and cents. Is it too much to hope for a change that matters? For a reading revolution that changes essential things, so that the business of publishing expands to become far more than a business only?

Here are six questions that need to be considered in depth. The one-sentence answers below are not proper answers, they are merely hints to indicate the direction of my thinking



right now. Not all of these questions will be addressed in this essay, but this essay might serve as a starting point.

1. Will ebooks catch on ?

They have already.

2. Will ebooks kill paper books ?

The opposite: ebooks will help paper books.

3. Does the flood of ebooks necessarily mean the fall of high-quality writing ?

No. As more people write, the level of literary quality and appreciation will slowly rise.

4. How will ebooks be protected from piracy, without restrictive DRM ?

Bold authors and publishers are already answering that question with surprising tactics. Lawrence Lessig, Cory Doctorow, Paulo Coelho and others have realized that giving ebooks away free, or allowing ebooks to be pirated, spreads a buzz about the books, and results in greater paperback sales.

5. In the new publishing model that emerges through the next five years, which of these groups will become unnecessary and then extinct: Booksellers and online booksellers ? ... Publishers ? ... Or Authors ?

Extinction is the final reward for everyone who fails to change.

6. Can ebooks help to transform publishing and make a genuine revolution — one where small presses emerge and flourish, and great books are read, appreciated, and discussed?

“Hope and pray, but keep on rowing toward the shore.” ... To renew the lost art of reading will take a lot of work from many smart and dedicated persons. Ebooks can help.

## The Two-Party Publishing System

Today’s information revolution is driven by two forces: corporate publishing, made up of large publishing conglomerates; and Free Culture, a burgeoning movement that encourages everyone to create, and then freely share, our digital creations: ebooks, images, videos and music files. Corporate publishing has occasionally been compared to a ***T. Rex***: the

dinosaur is large and sluggish, turns slowly (due to rotational inertia), feeds on others, needs huge quantities of nourishment to maintain its lifestyle, and by nature is not very adaptable to change.

In stark contrast, Free Culture is innovative, spontaneous, experimental, capricious, swiftly moving, thrives on uncertainty, nourishes everyone, changes continually, and evolves before our eyes. Regarding ebooks, the Free Culture movement has greatly enriched us, thanks to many selfless contributors, including Michael Hart (Project Gutenberg); Brewster Kahle (Internet Archive); and the Google company (Google Books Project).

### Four Goals of a Sustainable Revolution in Publishing

Ecosystems love variety, with good reason: a diverse ecosystem is a healthy one.

Here are my four goals for expanding the playing field, promoting variety, nourishing culture, and saving publishing from an evitable demise.

- 1) Independent Publishing Grows and Flourishes.

What is needed is a third force: book and ebook publishing by small presses, independent presses, not-for-profit presses, and individual authors. Certainly, this movement is happening now. What is needed is a change in conditions, and consciousness, so that this movement can rise, and then stand beside the current two contenders.

## 2) The Entire Publishing Industry Achieves Financial Stability.

Although I am often critical of the crushing power of big publishers, and big booksellers, too — with just a slight shift, these organizations could become forces for great public good. Google, years ago, transmogrified the entire Web by the simplest act of integrity. Google created a search system where the high rankings could not be purchased. Everyone on the Web would have an equal opportunity to be found. The world loved this radical approach, and Google skyrocketed to fame and fortune.

Publishing — at all levels — can be profitable and stable, if publishers and booksellers are willing to change, share their profits more equitably, and meet the future with innovative minds.

### 3) Free Culture Continues To Thrive.

The Free Culture movement, which includes software as well as digital media, enriches the world immensely. That it should continue to do so is the simplest and most realizable of the four goals. However, there are potential dangers, which must be grasped and vanquished. Our current copyright laws are too strict — they inhibit sharing and creativity for too many future years. Our government must ensure that electronic information — I am thinking of the Net Neutrality scare — can never be controlled by corporations, and must always be available equally to everyone, rich or poor.

To follow and participate in these urgent issues, visit the [Electronic Freedom Foundation](#) online.

### 4) Great Literature is Published, Read, Appreciated, and Discussed.

Friedrich Nietzsche, who has been described as the loneliest man who ever lived, made one of his characters shout: “God is dead — and we have killed him!”

In the manner of Dr. Nietzsche, Steve Jobs proclaimed that reading is dead. Jobs said: “the fact is that people don’t read anymore.”

Certainly that is not true. But if someone did believe it, then that statement might have been followed by something akin to this one: “Books matter, and ideas matter: they help culture to grow, and they keep us free. People are spending fewer hours reading: what can we do to change this sad fact?”

Promote great books! ... That is our joyful responsibility. Everyone who writes and publishes should make some kind of contribution — in money, in knowledge, in resources, or in time — to encourage young persons — and encourage everyone — to read the books that matter most. And to discuss ideas that matter, using the Internet, and in small groups, face to face.

### Wild Nights, Wild Nights!

Some wild things — things difficult to imagine — have been happening in the arena of electronic publishing. As if a ferocious lion, surrounded by a stadium filled with a shouting crowd, rushes at the helpless gladiator, and then instead of pouncing on him with sharp teeth and claws — suddenly drops to his feet, purring, and affectionately licks the astonished man’s hands.

Consider this:

- There is a new literary form called “cell phone ebooks” — or, in a Japanese transliteration, “keitai shosetsu”. These novels are downloaded to cell phones; they are read on cell phones; and they are written on cell phones. In 2007 — according to an article in *Time Magazine* — of the five best-selling novels in Japan, four of these five were cell phone novels.
- Paulo Coelho, the best-selling new-age author from Brazil, recently spoke at a conference where he described his awakening to the value of ebook giveaways. Coelho had sold only 1,000 copies of his hardcover book in Russia. Then, he put his own ebook version onto a “pirate” website. In the next weeks and months, he watched in amazement as his hardcover sales increased, in Russia, to 100,000 copies.
- O’Reilly Media had been selling an ebook version of a paperback for \$ 4.99 (the paperback sells for \$ 24.99). They raised the price to \$9.99, discovered that sales fell 75 percent, and then dropped the price down to under \$ 5 again.
- Some customers on the Amazon.com Kindle forum talked about a boycott, saying that they would consider not purchasing any ebook

priced higher than \$ 9.99.

■ **Faber Does It For Love.** (We have reported this story earlier in this book, but it is well worth repeating here.) In March of 2009, a U.K. publisher named Faber announced that their book *What Price Liberty?* will be sold as a paperback for 14.99 (British pounds). And the ebook version will sell for — hold on to your scones — readers can pay whatever price they want to pay! Or, the reader may download the ebook, free. The ebook will be available for download 6 weeks before the paperback is released.

If this experiment fails utterly — if everybody takes the book and nobody pays — then a new expression may enter the culture, “Don’t do me any Fabers.” Meaning: Don’t give away your ebooks, free. But my guess is that this experiment by Faber will be a stunning success.

Let’s think again: if 100,000 persons download the ebook without paying: would that be called a failure? ... Some might see that as a resounding triumph.

■ **Ebooks as the Prize in the Box of CrackerJack® Candy.** A publisher just announced that when you buy the hardcover



copy of the book, they will give you — free — the audiobook and the ebook.

O'Reilly Media, and other publishers, give you three versions of the ebook for the price of one: PDF, EPUB, and MOBI.

■ **The Birth of the Two-Dollar Ebook.** Some idiot in Ithaca is selling his ebook about ebooks for two dollars (the paperback edition, 372 pages, is 20 dollars). He hopes to spark a trend, and to prove that low-cost ebooks, without DRM, could be the NBT — the next big thing.

The fact that all these scenarios have actually happened, tells me that enormous changes are blowing in the fickle winds. Raise your sails if you want to raise your sales.

## Hail Freedonia! ... Changes in Publishing That Make A Genuine Difference

There is a Yiddish saying: “The same old yenta, except for the veil.”

Sometimes things change, but the changes don't matter very much. In a famous scene from the Groucho Marx film, *Duck Soup*, Groucho, as the leader of Freedonia, starts a war, in order to boost his country's economy. When the enemy army shoots a missile directly at the

window of Groucho's office, Groucho shouts: "We've got to do something!" And he does ... He pulls down the window shade.

Groucho, by the way, for his entire life, was "a voracious reader. He often pointed out that he had only a grammar school education, and he compensated for this by reading everything he got his hands on. His knowledge of literature from all eras was extraordinary."

Does it matter so much if I read the bodice-ripping romance "How I Found Rome-ants at a Picnic in Italy" on a reading device, instead of a paper book? To me, it makes hardly any difference at all. Suppose Pastore's Pioneering Pizza Parlor offered you the choice between getting your pizza delivered by car, or from a lightning-swift military helicopter — and both delivery options were free ? ... The helicopter is faster and "cooler", and maybe the pizza that arrives is slightly hotter than the one that would have been delivered by the kid in his old mustang. But the same greasy, pepperonied, fattening dinner remains.

And of course Pastore's PPP, due to better technology and more cash to invest, gradually crowds out all the other "we-deliver" restaurants, and becomes the only game in town.

Change is often necessary, and always

difficult. To bring about a sustainable publishing revolution, we will need to actively encourage the growth of the following ten trends.

### Ten Trends To Nourish a Revolution in Reading and Publishing

Here are the Ten Trends in short; continue reading to find details about these trends. These notes may also be seen as a Manifesto for the future of a Sustainable Publishing Revolution.

1. Publishers will lower the prices of their ebooks.
2. Everything that can be digitized, will be digitized.
3. EPUB will become the standard format for book-length works of fiction and non-fiction.
4. DRM will diminish and disappear, as consumers learn that a DRM-afflicted ebook reduces the ebook's features.
5. More people, and especially more young people, will write book-length works, not for money, but because they love to write.
6. Ebook Cooperatives (co-ops) will be created, so that authors and independent publishers can sell directly to readers.
7. A comprehensive ebook catalog, and an

efficient ebook search engine will be created and maintained.

8. Authors will develop a rapport with their readers, and develop communities of readers, via blogs and social networking sites.
  9. A renewed integrity and joyful passion inspires authors, publishers and everyone who works in the re-invented publishing industry.
  10. “The Value of Reading” will be actively promoted by non-governmental organizations, by authors and by publishers in a national movement to educate readers of all ages.
1. Publishers will lower the prices of their ebooks.

Either inspired by a new passionate vision, or forced by dwindling sales — publishers will lower prices to attract a larger segment of readers. Price drops will begin with books published by small presses and by self-publishing authors; continue to university presses; and at last reach the larger publishers. Significant price drops ripple outward, and cause other positive changes in the publishing process.

Do not be shocked if a daring manufacturer of ebook reading devices announces that they will be giving the device away for free — just

like the book clubs, where you could get \$ 200 worth of free books now, when you agree to buy more books later on.

2. Everything that can be digitized, will be digitized.

All the books, magazines, images, audio and video — present and past, from every nation, will oneday become available as ebooks, or (for non-print matter) as downloadable files.

Once in digital format, buyers will have the choice of buying the digital product, or the physical counterpart.

3. EPUB will become the standard format for book-length works of fiction and non-fiction.

We need a standard, and EPUB has all the right features, along with a smart group of creators working to optimize it. Its XML roots mean that EPUB can grow in features, easily be converted to other formats, and contain useful metadata.

4. DRM will diminish and disappear, as consumers learn that a DRM-afflicted ebook reduces the ebook's features.

DRM will be replaced by alternatives — such as registration services, and digital watermarking — that protect the publisher from anyone who attempts to sell illegal copies of the work.

Selling the work illegally will always be unacceptable. But publishers will lighten up on the issue of ebook sharing. It is not inconceivable that publishers will say something like this: “Here is our ebook: if you like it — and if you want additional books by the same author — then buy a copy after you have read it.”

Other experimental models may arise. For example: You get the ebook free. But only after 10,000 dollars worth of reader purchases or donations, will that ebook author release her next book for free. People on fixed incomes get to read free; people who are employed can pay a small price; and people who have a lot — and love the book — can pay a little more to support the author.

Consumer education — the consumers teaching the publishers — will help publishers to find ways to make ebooks a win-win deal for everyone.

5. More people, and especially more young people, will write book-length works, not for money, but because they love to write.

Cell phone novels are often written by non-professional writers, and then uploaded (by the writer) to various websites, where readers read the work.

Fan fiction (also called fanfic, or FF) is another case of writing for love not money. Fan fiction writers, from age 10 to senior citizens, compose hundreds of thousands of stories every year, about their favorite characters. The popular website Fanfiction.net, right now (September 2009) contains 420,638 stories and novels about the Harry Potter characters, all of it written by fans. In March 2009, the site hosted 391,240 stories and novels about HP. Almost 30,000 new works have been added in the last six months!

There are many books far superior to the Potter series, but few that inspire readers with the same level of enthusiasm.

6. Ebook Cooperatives (co-ops) will be created, so that authors and independent publishers can sell directly to readers.

These ebook co-ops will be 100 percent “employee owned”. Here’s how it could work: authors post their works to the co-op selling site, where the ebook is thoroughly examined and tested by paid staff members. A certain

percentage of each sale is returned to the co-op, to pay for site management, site maintenance, book promotion, and so on.

The co-op is owned by all the authors and workers who participate. Employee-owned is becoming an increasingly popular option for businesses; and one of the most successful of these is the short-run book printing company, Thomson-Shore, Inc.

And the booksellers? They will be able to survive by becoming employees of the co-ops, and use their expertise to increase sales — which increase the profits for everyone.

The site Smashwords.com is an admirable pioneer, and an almost-prototype of these future ebook co-ops. Smashwords, very easily, could shift its business model slightly, and make publishing history by becoming the world's first ebook cooperative.

7. A comprehensive ebook catalog, and an efficient ebook search engine will be created and maintained.

When you want to find any published paper book, it is very simple to do, by using WorldCat, Open Library, or even one of the online bookstores. Used books are easily found, and prices instantly compared, by used book



search engines. Ebooks sales will fly upward when these services — a comprehensive catalog and a search engine — let customers find ebooks with ease.

Right now, ebooks are everywhere, scattered on thousands of sites. We need one site that lists and finds them all. This site would also serve to level the playing field: small presses would have as much chance to be found as large ones. The search should work like Google search, so that no-one can pay for placement, or in any way skew the search results.

The new ebook revolution is dedicated to the proposition, that all ebooks are created equal.

8. Authors will develop a rapport with their readers, and develop communities of readers, via blogs and social networking sites.

In the past, authors were solitary creatures. And still, it requires long stretches of solitude to produce a genuine book. But today, authors have opportunities to connect with readers. This rapport benefits everyone. Authors get to know what readers are thinking; readers see that the authors are people like everyone else. This relationship, in addition to its other benefits, will reduce piracy. You might steal an ebook

from a giant corporation, but will you take that same ebook from a guy who talks with you, who works hard to make a living in an extremely difficult profession?

These online interactions will increase mutual respect between authors and readers.

Readers benefit too, in many ways. Readers get to discuss ideas with other readers, and with the authors themselves. Readers will be provided with sample chapters, to help them to discover if (or if not) they are interested in the books. Readers may also benefit because authors, who are experts in certain subjects, might be willing to lead real-time discussions and seminars. The technology exists for large numbers of persons to tune in to live broadcasts.

These broadcasts — and this author interaction with readers — has been happening for years. I foresee that in the near future, it will happen even more.

9. A renewed integrity and joyful passion inspires authors, publishers and everyone who works in the re-invented publishing industry.

Publishing books and ebooks should be 10% about money, and 90% about love. If you love

books, if you love great writing, if you appreciate the author's struggles, if you believe that reading makes a difference in the culture and in personal lives — then work joyfully in publishing.

“Work is love made visible,” writes Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet*, “And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy. “

Albert Einstein said: “Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.” In the new publishing model, we first must become persons of value — and then success will follow naturally.

President Barack Obama said: “We must ask, not just “Is it profitable?”, but “Is it right?”

10. “The Value of Reading” will be actively promoted by non-governmental organizations, by authors and by publishers in a national movement to educate readers of all ages.

Everyone in publishing should commit themselves to helping to promote reading, and to teach readers (and non-readers) the value of

great books. Aliteracy, as well as illiteracy, must be eradicated. The new media and the “old media” can learn to co-exist in harmony.

### The Future of Ebooks is An Open Book

Herbert Read has written something that has impressed me greatly, and I have quoted it already once in this book, and many times elsewhere:

“I refer, of course, to the Romantic Movement, which was more than a change of style: it was a sudden expansion of consciousness — an expansion into realms of sensibility not previously accessible to the human imagination ... Our duty at the moment, as creative writers and its critics, is to maintain the impetus of that revolution.”

It would be wonderful to see that expanded consciousness arise from the ashes of popular culture, to inspire us toward the noblest heights. More likely, though, it will be economic pressures that make us — authors, booksellers, scholars, critics, and publishers — realize that we need to change, and to change now.

We may choose to watch events unfold; or we may choose to become leaders of the digital

reading revolution. To lead responsibly, we must put profit in its proper place: reduce prices, increase quality, encourage Free Culture, promote reading, and respond to the modern reader's genuine needs.

***Kairos*** is an ancient Greek word, meaning: “the right time for action.” In today's publishing crisis, the right time for action is right now. By working sincerely and passionately, we can create a newer, smarter and freer publishing ecosystem, filled with happy readers and worthy books.

Michael Pastore

[EpublishersWeekly.net](http://EpublishersWeekly.net)

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Reflections on Books  
and Reading

Throughout history, writers and readers have made extraordinary claims about the joys, the mysteries, and the benefits of books and reading. Here is a small selection of that wild — and well-deserved — praise.

All that mankind has done, thought, gained or been: it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of books.

— Thomas Carlyle

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.

— Richard Steele

How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book!

— Henry David Thoreau

It makes a great difference to the force of any sentence whether there be a man behind it or no. In the learned journal, in the influential newspaper, I discern no form; only some irresponsible shadow; oftener some moneyed corporation, or some dangler who hopes, in the mask and robes of his paragraph, to pass for somebody. But through every clause and part of speech of a right book I meet the eyes of the most determined of men; his force and terror inundate every word; the commas and dashes are alive; so that the writing is athletic and nimble, — can go far and live long.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

No entertainment so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting.

— Mary Wortley Montagu

Read in order to live.

— Gustave Flaubert

I cannot live without books.

— Thomas Jefferson

Why read? ... The best books give us timeless hours of portable joy, expand our empathy and imagination, remind us of our past, bring hope to our future, caution us to live wisely, empassion us to seize the moment, show us ideals embodied in heroes and heroines, inspire us to be great lovers and rebels, give us courage to dare to be ourselves, corroborate our most sublime feelings, and point the way to deeper meaning in our everyday lives.

— Michael Pastore

Books have value only if they lead to life and make for a better life; every hour spent reading is a waste of time unless it gives the reader a spark of strength, an intimation of new youth, a breath of fresh air.

— Hermann Hesse

Reading ...

that fertile miracle of a communication effected in solitude.

— Marcel Proust



Every man who knows how to read has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant, and interesting.

— Aldous Huxley

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them.

— Mark Twain, attributed

If you would not be forgotten,  
as soon as you are rotten,  
either write things worth reading  
or do things worth the writing.

— Benjamin Franklin

Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height.

— E. M. Forster

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## Reading

by

Henry David Thoreau

*Here, complete, is the third chapter in Thoreau's masterpiece Walden — or, Life in the Woods. Rapturously, the book describes Henry's experiment building a cabin on the shores of Walden Pond, and living there — in relative solitude and serenity — for 22 months. This is Thoreau's incomparable tribute to the art of deep reading, the appreciation of glorious books, and the vital connection between books and life.*

— MP

With a little more deliberation in the choice of their pursuits, all men would perhaps become essentially students and observers, for certainly their nature and destiny are interesting to all alike. In accumulating property for ourselves or our posterity, in founding a family or a state, or

“acquiring fame even, we are mortal; but in dealing with truth we are immortal, and need fear no change nor accident. The oldest Egyptian or Hindoo philosopher raised a corner of the veil from the statue of the divinity; and still the trembling robe remains raised, and I gaze upon as fresh a glory as he did, since it was I in him that was then so bold, and it is he in me that now reviews the vision. No dust has settled on that robe; no time has elapsed since that divinity was revealed. That time which we really improve, or which is improvable, is neither past, present, nor future.

My residence was more favorable, not only to thought, but to serious reading, than a university; and though I was beyond the range of the ordinary circulating library, I had more than ever come within the influence of those books which circulate round the world, whose sentences were first written on bark, and are now merely copied from time to time on to linen paper. Says the poet Mîr Camar Uddîn Mast, “Being seated to run through the region of the spiritual world; I have had this advantage in books. To be intoxicated by a single glass of wine; I have experienced this pleasure when I have drunk the liquor of the esoteric doctrines.” I kept Homer’s *Iliad* on my table through the summer, though I looked at his page only now

and then. Incessant labor with my hands, at first, for I had my house to finish and my beans to hoe at the same time, made more study impossible. Yet I sustained myself by the prospect of such reading in future. I read one or two shallow books of travel in the intervals of my work, till that employment made me ashamed of myself, and I asked where it was then that *I* lived.

The student may read Homer or Aeschylus in the Greek without danger of dissipation or luxuriousness, for it implies that he in some measure emulate their heroes, and consecrate morning hours to their pages. The heroic books, even if printed in the character of our mother tongue, will always be in a language dead to degenerate times; and we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits out of what wisdom and valor and generosity we have. The modern cheap and fertile press, with all its translations, has done little to bring us nearer to the heroic writers of antiquity. They seem as solitary, and the letter in which they are printed as rare and curious, as ever. It is worth the expense of youthful days and costly hours, if you learn only some words of an ancient language, which are raised out of the trivialness of the street, to be perpetual suggestions and

provocations. It is not in vain that the farmer remembers and repeats the few Latin words which he has heard. Men sometimes speak as if the study of the classics would at length make way for more modern and practical studies; but the adventurous student will always study classics, in whatever language they may be written and however ancient they may be. For what are the classics but the noblest recorded thoughts of man? They are the only oracles which are not decayed, and there are such answers to the most modern inquiry in them as Delphi and Dodona never gave. We might as well omit to study Nature because she is old. To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written. It is not enough even to be able to speak the language of that nation by which they are written, for there is a memorable interval between the spoken and the written language, the language heard and the language read. The one is commonly transitory, a sound, a tongue, a dialect merely, almost brutish, and we learn it unconsciously, like the

brutes, of our mothers. The other is the maturity and experience of that; if that is our mother tongue, this is our father tongue, a reserved and select expression, too significant to be heard by the ear, which we must be born again in order to speak. The crowds of men who merely *spoke* the Greek and Latin tongues in the middle ages were not entitled by the accident of birth to *read* the works of genius written in those languages; for these were not written in that Greek or Latin which they knew, but in the select language of literature. They had not learned the nobler dialects of Greece and Rome, but the very materials on which they were written were waste paper to them, and they prized instead a cheap contemporary literature. But when the several nations of Europe had acquired distinct though rude written languages of their own, sufficient for the purposes of their rising literatures, then first learning revived, and scholars were enabled to discern from that remoteness the treasures of antiquity. What the Roman and Grecian multitude could not *hear*, after the lapse of ages a few scholars *read*, and a few scholars only are still reading it.

However much we may admire the orator's occasional bursts of eloquence, the noblest written words are commonly as far behind or above the fleeting spoken language as the

firmament with its stars is behind the clouds. *There* are the stars, and they who can may read them. The astronomers forever comment on and observe them. They are not exhalations like our daily colloquies and vaporous breath. What is called eloquence in the forum is commonly found to be rhetoric in the study. The orator yields to the inspiration of a transient occasion, and speaks to the mob before him, to those who can *hear* him; but the writer, whose more equable life is his occasion, and who would be distracted by the event and the crowd which inspire the orator, speaks to the intellect and heart of mankind, to all in any age who can *understand* him.

No wonder that Alexander carried the Iliad with him on his expeditions in a precious casket. A written word is the choicest of relics. It is something at once more intimate with us and more universal than any other work of art. It is the work of art nearest to life itself. It may be translated into every language, and not only be read but actually breathed from all human lips; — not be represented on canvas or in marble only, but be carved out of the breath of life itself. The symbol of an ancient man's thought becomes a modern man's speech. Two thousand summers have imparted to the monuments of Grecian literature, as to her

marbles, only a maturer golden and autumnal tint, for they have carried their own serene and celestial atmosphere into all lands to protect them against the corrosion of time. Books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations. Books, the oldest and the best, stand naturally and rightfully on the shelves of every cottage. They have no cause of their own to plead, but while they enlighten and sustain the reader his common sense will not refuse them. Their authors are a natural and irresistible aristocracy in every society, and, more than kings or emperors, exert an influence on mankind. When the illiterate and perhaps scornful trader has earned by enterprise and industry his coveted leisure and independence, and is admitted to the circles of wealth and fashion, he turns inevitably at last to those still higher but yet inaccessible circles of intellect and genius, and is sensible only of the imperfection of his culture and the vanity and insufficiency of all his riches, and further proves his good sense by the pains which he takes to secure for his children that intellectual culture whose want he so keenly feels; and thus it is that he becomes the founder of a family.

Those who have not learned to read the ancient classics in the language in which they



were written must have a very imperfect knowledge of the history of the human race; for it is remarkable that no transcript of them has ever been made into any modern tongue, unless our civilization itself may be regarded as such a transcript. Homer has never yet been printed in English, nor Aeschylus, nor Virgil even, — works as refined, as solidly done, and as beautiful almost as the morning itself; for later writers, say what we will of their genius, have rarely, if ever, equalled the elaborate beauty and finish and the lifelong and heroic literary labors of the ancients. They only talk of forgetting them who never knew them. It will be soon enough to forget them when we have the learning and the genius which will enable us to attend to and appreciate them. That age will be rich indeed when those relics which we call Classics, and the still older and more than classic but even less known Scriptures of the nations, shall have still further accumulated, when the Vaticans shall be filled with Vedas and Zendavestas and Bibles, with Homers and Dantes and Shakespeares, and all the centuries to come shall have successively deposited their trophies in the forum of the world. By such a pile we may hope to scale heaven at last.

The works of the great poets have never yet been read by mankind, for only great poets can

read them. They have only been read as the multitude read the stars, at most astrologically, not astronomically. Most men have learned to read to serve a paltry convenience, as they have learned to cipher in order to keep accounts and not be cheated in trade; but of reading as a noble intellectual exercise they know little or nothing; yet this only is reading, in a high sense, not that which lulls us as a luxury and suffers the nobler faculties to sleep the while, but what we have to stand on tiptoe to read and devote our most alert and wakeful hours to.

I think that having learned our letters we should read the best that is in literature, and not be forever repeating our a b abs, and words of one syllable, in the fourth or fifth classes, sitting on the lowest and foremost form all our lives. Most men are satisfied if they read or hear read, and perchance have been convicted by the wisdom of one good book, the Bible, and for the rest of their lives vegetate and dissipate their faculties in what is called easy reading. There is a work in several volumes in our Circulating Library entitled Little Reading, which I thought referred to a town of that name which I had not been to. There are those who, like cormorants and ostriches, can digest all sorts of this, even after the fullest dinner of meats and vegetables, for they suffer nothing to be wasted. If others

are the machines to provide this provender, they are the machines to read it. They read the nine thousandth tale about Zebulon and Sephronia, and how they loved as none had ever loved before, and neither did the course of their true love run smooth,— at any rate, how it did run and stumble, and get up again and go on! how some poor unfortunate got up onto a steeple, who had better never have gone up as far as the belfry; and then, having needlessly got him up there, the happy novelist rings the bell for all the world to come together and hear, O dear! how he did get down again! For my part, I think that they had better metamorphose all such aspiring heroes of universal noveldom into man weathercocks, as they used to put heroes among the constellations, and let them swing round there till they are rusty, and not come down at all to bother honest men with their pranks. The next time the novelist rings the bell I will not stir though the meeting-house burn down. “The Skip of the Tip-Toe-Hop, a Romance of the Middle Ages, by the celebrated author of ‘Tittle-Tol-Tan,’ to appear in monthly parts; a great rush; don’t all come together.” All this they read with saucer eyes, and erect and primitive curiosity, and with unwearied gizzard, whose corrugations even yet need no sharpening, just as some little four-year-old

bencher his two-cent gilt-covered edition of Cinderella, — without any improvement, that I can see, in the pronunciation, or accent, or emphasis, or any more skill in extracting or inserting the moral. The result is dulness of sight, a stagnation of the vital circulations, and a general deliquium and sloughing off of all the intellectual faculties. This sort of gingerbread is baked daily and more sedulously than pure wheat or rye-and-Indian in almost every oven, and finds a surer market.

The best books are not read even by those who are called good readers. What does our Concord culture amount to? There is in this town, with a very few exceptions, no taste for the best or for very good books even in English literature, whose words all can read and spell. Even the college-bred and so called liberally educated men here and elsewhere have really little or no acquaintance with the English classics; and as for the recorded wisdom of mankind, the ancient classics and Bibles, which are accessible to all who will know of them, there are the feeblest efforts any where made to become acquainted with them. I know a woodchopper, of middle age, who takes a French paper, not for news as he says, for he is above that, but to “keep himself in practice,” he being a Canadian by birth; and when I ask him

what he considers the best thing he can do in this world, he says, beside this, to keep up and add to his English. This is about as much as the college bred generally do or aspire to do, and they take an English paper for the purpose. One who has just come from reading perhaps one of the best English books will find how many with whom he can converse about it? Or suppose he comes from reading a Greek or Latin classic in the original, whose praises are familiar even to the so called illiterate; he will find nobody at all to speak to, but must keep silence about it. Indeed, there is hardly the professor in our colleges, who, if he has mastered the difficulties of the language, has proportionally mastered the difficulties of the wit and poetry of a Greek poet, and has any sympathy to impart to the alert and heroic reader; and as for the sacred Scriptures, or Bibles of mankind, who in this town can tell me even their titles? Most men do not know that any nation but the Hebrews have had a scripture. A man, any man, will go considerably out of his way to pick up a silver dollar; but here are golden words, which the wisest men of antiquity have uttered, and whose worth the wise of every succeeding age have assured us of;— and yet we learn to read only as far as Easy Reading, the primers and class-books, and when we leave school, the “Little

Reading,” and story books, which are for boys and beginners; and our reading, our conversation and thinking, are all on a very low level, worthy only of pygmies and manikins.

I aspire to be acquainted with wiser men than this our Concord soil has produced, whose names are hardly known here. Or shall I hear the name of Plato and never read his book? As if Plato were my townsman and I never saw him,— my next neighbor and I never heard him speak or attended to the wisdom of his words. But how actually is it? His Dialogues, which contain what was immortal in him, lie on the next shelf, and yet I never read them. We are under-bred and low-lived and illiterate; and in this respect I confess I do not make any very broad distinction between the illiterateness of my townsman who cannot read at all, and the illiterateness of him who has learned to read only what is for children and feeble intellects. We should be as good as the worthies of antiquity, but partly by first knowing how good they were. We are a race of tit-men, and soar but little higher in our intellectual flights than the columns of the daily paper.

It is not all books that are as dull as their readers. There are probably words addressed to our condition exactly, which, if we could really hear and understand, would be more salutary

than the morning or the spring to our lives, and possibly put a new aspect on the face of things for us. How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book! The book exists for us perchance which will explain our miracles and reveal new ones. The at present unutterable things we may find somewhere uttered. These same questions that disturb and puzzle and confound us have in their turn occurred to all the wise men; not one has been omitted; and each has answered them, according to his ability, by his words and his life. Moreover, with wisdom we shall learn liberality. The solitary hired man on a farm in the outskirts of Concord, who has had his second birth and peculiar religious experience, and is driven as he believes into silent gravity and exclusiveness by his faith, may think it is not true; but Zoroaster, thousands of years ago, travelled the same road and had the same experience; but he, being wise, knew it to be universal, and treated his neighbors accordingly, and is even said to have invented and established worship among men. Let him humbly commune with Zoroaster then, and, through the liberalizing influence of all the worthies, with Jesus Christ himself, and let "our church" go by the board.

We boast that we belong to the nineteenth

century and are making the most rapid strides of any nation. But consider how little this village does for its own culture. I do not wish to flatter my townsmen, nor to be flattered by them, for that will not advance either of us. We need to be provoked,— goaded like oxen, as we are, into a trot. We have a comparatively decent system of common schools, schools for infants only; but excepting the half-starved Lyceum in the winter, and latterly the puny beginning of a library suggested by the state, no school for ourselves. We spend more on almost any article of bodily aliment or ailment than on our mental aliment. It is time that we had uncommon schools, that we did not leave off our education when we begin to be men and women. It is time that villages were universities, and their elder inhabitants the fellows of universities, with leisure — if they are indeed so well off — to pursue liberal studies the rest of their lives. Shall the world be confined to one Paris or one Oxford forever? Cannot students be boarded here and get a liberal education under the skies of Concord? Can we not hire some Abelard to lecture to us? Alas! what with foddering the cattle and tending the store, we are kept from school too long, and our education is sadly neglected. In this country, the village should in some respects take the place of the nobleman of



Europe. It should be the patron of the fine arts. It is rich enough. It wants only the magnanimity and refinement. It can spend money enough on such things as farmers and traders value, but it is thought Utopian to propose spending money for things which more intelligent men know to be of far more worth. This town has spent seventeen thousand dollars on a town-house, thank fortune or politics, but probably it will not spend so much on living wit, the true meat to put into that shell, in a hundred years. The one hundred and twenty-five dollars annually subscribed for a Lyceum in the winter is better spent than any other equal sum raised in the town. If we live in the nineteenth century, why should we not enjoy the advantages which the nineteenth century offers? Why should our life be in any respect provincial? If we will read newspapers, why not skip the gossip of Boston and take the best newspaper in the world at once? — not be sucking the pap of “neutral family” papers, or browsing “Olive-Branches” here in New England. Let the reports of all the learned societies come to us, and we will see if they know any thing. Why should we leave it to Harper & Brothers and Redding & Co. to select our reading? As the nobleman of cultivated taste surrounds himself with whatever conduces to his culture, — genius — learning — wit — books

— paintings — statuary — music — philosophical instruments, and the like; so let the village do,— not stop short at a pedagogue, a parson, a sexton, a parish library, and three selectmen, because our pilgrim forefathers got through a cold winter once on a bleak rock with these. To act collectively is according to the spirit of our institutions; and I am confident that, as our circumstances are more flourishing, our means are greater than the nobleman's. New England can hire all the wise men in the world to come and teach her, and board them round the while, and not be provincial at all. That is the uncommon school we want. Instead of noblemen, let us have noble villages of men. If it is necessary, omit one bridge over the river, go round a little there, and throw one arch at least over the darker gulf of ignorance which surrounds us.



[ 17 ]

## On Books and Reading

by

Arthur Schopenhauer

*Schopenhauer — described by Tolstoy as “the greatest genius who ever lived” — is now notorious for his pessimism and his archaic attitudes toward women. In this sparkling diatribe, he warns about the dangers of too much reading, and reading the wrong books. Included here is the first half of this essay only, translated by T. Bailey Saunders. The remainder of this essay can be found online.*

— MP

Ignorance is degrading only when found in company with riches. The poor man is restrained by poverty and need: labor occupies his thoughts, and takes the place of knowledge. But rich men who are ignorant live for their lusts only, and are like the beasts of the field; as may be seen every day: and they can also be

reproached for not having used wealth and leisure for that which gives them their greatest value.

When we read, another person thinks for us: we merely repeat his mental process. In learning to write, the pupil goes over with his pen what the teacher has outlined in pencil: so in reading; the greater part of the work of thought is already done for us. This is why it relieves us to take up a book after being occupied with our own thoughts. And in reading, the mind is, in fact, only the playground of another's thoughts. So it comes about that if anyone spends almost the whole day in reading, and by way of relaxation devotes the intervals to some thoughtless pastime, he gradually loses the capacity for thinking; just as the man who always rides, at last forgets how to walk. This is the case with many learned persons: they have read themselves stupid. For to occupy every spare moment in reading, and to do nothing but read, is even more paralyzing to the mind than constant manual labor, which at least allows those engaged in it to follow their own thoughts. A spring never free from the pressure of some foreign body at last loses its elasticity; and so does the mind if other people's thoughts are constantly forced upon it. Just as you can ruin the stomach and impair the whole body by

taking too much nourishment, so you can overfill and choke the mind by feeding it too much. The more you read, the fewer are the traces left by what you have read: the mind becomes like a tablet crossed over and over with writing. There is no time for ruminating, and in no other way can you assimilate what you have read. If you read on and on without setting your own thoughts to work, what you have read can not strike root, and is generally lost. It is, in fact, just the same with mental as with bodily food: hardly the fifth part of what one takes is assimilated. The rest passes off in evaporation, respiration and the like.

The result of all this is that thoughts put on paper are nothing more than footsteps in the sand: you see the way the man has gone, but to know what he saw on his walk, you want his eyes.

There is no quality of style that can be gained by reading writers who possess it; whether it be persuasiveness, imagination, the gift of drawing comparisons, boldness, bitterness, brevity, grace, ease of expression or wit, unexpected contrasts, a laconic or naive manner, and the like. But if these qualities are already in us, exist, that is to say, potentially, we can call them forth and bring them to consciousness; we can learn the purposes to

which they can be put; we can be strengthened in our inclination to use them, or get courage to do so; we can judge by examples the effect of applying them, and so acquire the correct use of them; and of course it is only when we have arrived at that point that we actually possess these qualities. The only way in which reading can form style is by teaching us the use to which we can put our own natural gifts. We must have these gifts before we begin to learn the use of them. Without them, reading teaches us nothing but cold, dead mannerisms and makes us shallow imitators.

The strata of the earth preserve in rows the creatures which lived in former ages; and the array of books on the shelves of a library stores up in like manner the errors of the past and the way in which they have been exposed. Like those creatures, they too were full of life in their time, and made a great deal of noise; but now they are stiff and fossilized, and an object of curiosity to the literary palaeontologist alone.

Herodotus relates that Xerxes wept at the sight of his army, which stretched further than the eye could reach, in the thought that of all these, after a hundred years, not one would be alive. And in looking over a huge catalogue of new books, one might weep at thinking that, when ten years have passed, not one of them

will be heard of.

It is in literature as in life: wherever you turn, you stumble at once upon the incorrigible mob of humanity, swarming in all directions, crowding and soiling everything, like flies in summer. Hence the number, which no man can count, of bad books, those rank weeds of literature, which draw nourishment from the corn and choke it. The time, money and attention of the public, which rightfully belong to good books and their noble aims, they take for themselves: they are written for the mere purpose of making money or procuring places. So they are not only useless; they do positive mischief. Nine-tenths of the whole of our present literature has no other aim than to get a few shillings out of the pockets of the public; and to this end author, publisher and reviewer are in league.

Let me mention a crafty and wicked trick, albeit a profitable and successful one, practised by littérateurs, hack writers, and voluminous authors. In complete disregard of good taste and the true culture of the period, they have succeeded in getting the whole of the world of fashion into leading strings, so that they are all trained to read in time, and all the same thing, viz., *the newest books*; and that for the purpose of getting food for conversation in the circles in

which they move. This is the aim served by bad novels, produced by writers who were once celebrated, as Spindler, Bulwer Lytton, Eugene Sue. What can be more miserable than the lot of a reading public like this, always bound to peruse the latest works of extremely commonplace persons who write for money only, and who are therefore never few in number? and for this advantage they are content to know by name only the works of the few superior minds of all ages and all countries. Literary newspapers, too, are a singularly cunning device for robbing the reading public of the time which, if culture is to be attained, should be devoted to the genuine productions of literature, instead of being occupied by the daily bungling commonplace persons.

Hence, in regard to reading, it is a very important thing to be able to refrain. Skill in doing so consists in not taking into one's hands any book merely because at the time it happens to be extensively read; such as political or religious pamphlets, novels, poetry, and the like, which make a noise, and may even attain to several editions in the first and last year of their existence. Consider, rather, that the man who writes for fools is always sure of a large audience; be careful to limit your time for reading, and devote it exclusively to the works



of those great minds of all times and countries, who o’ertop the rest of humanity, those whom the voice of fame points to as such. These alone really educate and instruct. You can never read bad literature too little, nor good literature too much. Bad books are intellectual poison; they destroy the mind. Because people always read what is new instead of the best of all ages, writers remain in the narrow circle of the ideas which happen to prevail in their time; and so the period sinks deeper and deeper into its own mire.

There are at all times two literatures in progress, running side by side, but little known to each other; the one real, the other only apparent. The former grows into permanent literature; it is pursued by those who live for science or poetry; its course is sober and quiet, but extremely slow; and it produces in Europe scarcely a dozen works in a century; these, however, are permanent. The other kind is pursued by persons who live on science or poetry; it goes at a gallop with much noise and shouting of partisans; and every twelve-month puts a thousand works on the market. But after a few years one asks, Where are they? where is the glory which came so soon and made so much clamor? This kind may be called fleeting, and the other, permanent literature.

[ 18 ]

What is a Classic?

by

Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve

*How can we tell if a book is truly great? ...  
A difficult question! This graceful essay by the  
French critic Sainte-Beuve — himself a master  
of prose style — provides some illuminating  
answers. The full essay is on the Net.*

— MP

A delicate question, to which somewhat diverse solutions might be given according to times and seasons.



A true classic, as I should like to hear it defined, is an author who has enriched the human mind, increased its treasure, and caused it to advance a step; who has discovered some moral and not equivocal truth, or revealed some eternal passion in that heart where all seemed

known and discovered; who has expressed his thought, observation, or invention, in no matter what form, only provided it be broad and great, refined and sensible, sane and beautiful in itself; who has spoken to all in his own peculiar style, a style which is found to be also that of the whole world, a style new without neologism, new and old, easily contemporary with all time.

Such a classic may for a moment have been revolutionary; it may at least have seemed so, but it is not; it only lashed and subverted whatever prevented the restoration of the balance of order and beauty.



Indeed, before determining and fixing the opinions on that matter, I should like every unbiassed mind to take a voyage round the world and devote itself to a survey of different literatures in their primitive vigour and infinite variety.



But why speak always of authors and writings? Maybe an age is coming when there will be no more writing.

[ 19 ]

## Of Kings' Treasuries

by John Ruskin

*This selection from Ruskin's essay is part of his book [Sesame and Lilies](#). Ruskin, who strongly influenced Tolstoy and Gandhi, wrote more than 250 works about art, literature and social progress. In a later reprint of the book, Ruskin wrote that considering all his works, this book and one other — [Unto This Last](#) — contained the chief truths which he had hoped to convey to his readers. Despite a personal life filled with turmoil, Ruskin focused his great genius and energy toward the goals of raising awareness and improving living conditions for women and men everywhere.*

— MP

The first lecture says, or tries to say, that, life being very short, and the quiet hours of it few, we ought to waste none of them in reading valueless books; and that valuable books should, in a civilized country, be within the

reach of every one, printed in excellent form, for a just price; but not in any vile, vulgar, or, by reason of smallness of type, physically injurious form, at a vile price. For we none of us need many books, and those which we need ought to be clearly printed, on the best paper, and strongly bound.

And though we are, indeed, now, a wretched and poverty-struck nation, and hardly able to keep soul and body together, still, as no person in decent circumstances would put on his table confessedly bad wine, or bad meat, without being ashamed, so he need not have on his shelves ill-printed or loosely and wretchedly-stitched books; for though few can be rich, yet every man who honestly exerts himself may, I think, still provide, for himself and his family, good shoes, good gloves, strong harness for his cart or carriage horses, and stout leather binding for his books. And I would urge upon every young man, as the beginning of his due and wise provision for his household, to obtain as soon as he can, by the severest economy, a restricted, serviceable, and steadily — however slowly — increasing, series of books for use through life; making his little library, of all the furniture in his room, the most studied and decorative piece; every volume having its assigned place, like a little statue in its niche,

and one of the earliest and strictest lessons to the children of the house being how to turn the pages of their own literary possessions lightly and deliberately, with no chance of tearing or dog's ears.



My friends, I do not know why any of us should talk about reading. We want some sharper discipline than that of reading; but, at all events, be assured, we cannot read. No reading is possible for a people with its mind in this state. No sentence of any great writer is intelligible to them. It is simply and sternly impossible for the English public, at this moment, to understand any thoughtful writing,— so incapable of thought has it become in its insanity of avarice. Happily, our disease is, as yet, little worse than this incapacity of thought; it is not corruption of the inner nature; we ring true still, when anything strikes home to us; and though the idea that everything should “pay” has infected our every purpose so deeply, that even when we would play the good Samaritan, we never take out our two pence and give them to the host, without saying, “When I come again, thou shalt give me fourpence,” there is a capacity of noble passion left in our hearts’ core. We show it in our

work-in our war, — even in those unjust domestic affections which make us furious at a small private wrong, while we are polite to a boundless public one: we are still industrious to the last hour of the day, though we add the gambler's fury to the labourer's patience; we are still brave to the death, though incapable of discerning true cause for battle; and are still true in affection to our own flesh, to the death, as the sea-monsters are, and the rock-eagles. And there is hope for a nation while this can be still said of it. As long as it holds its life in its hand, ready to give it for its honour (though a foolish honour), for its love (though a selfish love), and for its business (though a base business), there is hope for it. But hope only; for this instinctive, reckless virtue cannot last. No nation can last, which has made a mob of itself, however generous at heart. It must discipline its passions, and direct them, or they will discipline it, one day, with scorpion whips. Above all, a nation cannot last as a money-making mob: it cannot with impunity, — it cannot with existence, — go on despising literature, despising science, despising art, despising nature, despising compassion, and concentrating its soul on Pence. Do you think these are harsh or wild words? Have patience with me but a little longer. I will prove their

truth to you, clause by clause.

I. I say first we have despised literature. What do we, as a nation, care about books? How much do you think we spend altogether on our libraries, public or private, as compared with what we spend on our horses? If a man spends lavishly on his library, you call him mad-a bibliomaniac. But you never call any one a horsemaniac, though men ruin themselves every day by their horses, and you do not hear of people ruining themselves by their books. Or, to go lower still, how much do you think the contents of the book-shelves of the United Kingdom, public and private, would fetch, as compared with the contents of its wine-cellar? What position would its expenditure on literature take, as compared with its expenditure on luxurious eating? We talk of food for the mind, as of food for the body: now a good book contains such food inexhaustibly; it is a provision for life, and for the best part of us; yet how long most people would look at the best book before they would give the price of a large turbot for it? Though there have been men who have pinched their stomachs and bared their backs to buy a book, whose libraries were cheaper to them, I think, in the end, than most men's dinners are. We are few of us put to such trial, and more the pity; for, indeed, a precious



thing is all the more precious to us if it has been won by work or economy; and if public libraries were half so costly as public dinners, or books cost the tenth part of what bracelets do, even foolish men and women might sometimes suspect there was good in reading, as well as in munching and sparkling: whereas the very cheapness of literature is making even wise people forget that if a book is worth reading, it is worth buying. No book is worth anything which is not worth *much*; nor is it serviceable, until it has been read, and re-read, and loved, and loved again; and marked, so that you can refer to the passages you want in it, as a soldier can seize the weapon he needs in an armoury, or a housewife bring the spice she needs from her store. Bread of flour is good; but there is bread, sweet as honey, if we would eat it, in a good book; and the family must be poor indeed, which, once in their lives, cannot, for, such multipliable barley-loaves, pay their baker's bill. We call ourselves a rich nation, and we are filthy and foolish enough to thumb each other's books out of circulating libraries!



IV. You have despised Nature; that is to say, all the deep and sacred sensations of natural

scenery. The French revolutionists made stables of the cathedrals of France; you have made race-courses of the cathedrals of the earth. Your *one* conception of pleasure is to drive in railroad carriages round their aisles, and eat off their altars.{1} You have put a railroad-bridge over the falls of Schaffhausen. You have tunnelled the cliffs of Lucerne by Tell's chapel; you have destroyed the Clarens shore of the Lake of Geneva; there is not a quiet valley in England that you have not filled with bellowing fire; there is no particle left of English land which you have not trampled coal ashes into {2}—nor any foreign city in which the spread of your presence is not marked among its fair old streets and happy gardens by a consuming white leprosy of new hotels and perfumers' shops: the Alps themselves, which your own poets used to love so reverently, you look upon as soaped poles in a bear-garden, which you set yourselves to climb and slide down again, with "shrieks of delight." When you are past shrieking, having no human articulate voice to say you are glad with, you fill the quietude of their valleys with gunpowder blasts, and rush home, red with cutaneous eruption of conceit, and voluble with convulsive hiccough of self-satisfaction. I think nearly the two sorrow-fullest spectacles I have ever seen in humanity,

taking the deep inner significance of them, are the English mobs in the valley of Chamouni, amusing themselves with firing rusty howitzers; and the Swiss vintagers of Zurich expressing their Christian thanks for the gift of the vine, by assembling in knots in the "towers of the vineyards," and slowly loading and firing horse-pistols from morning till evening. It is pitiful, to have dim conceptions of duty; more pitiful, it seems to me, to have conceptions like these, of mirth.

Lastly. You despise compassion. There is no need of words of mine for proof of this. ...



Measure!-nay, you cannot measure. Who shall measure the difference between the power of those who "do and teach," and who are greatest in the kingdoms of earth, as of heaven-and the power of those who undo, and consume-whose power, at the fullest, is only the power of the moth and the rust? Strange! to think how the Moth-kings lay up treasures for the moth; and the Rust-kings, who are to their peoples' strength as rust to armour, lay up treasures for the rust; and the Robber-kings, treasures for the robber; but how few kings have ever laid up treasures that needed no

guarding-treasures of which, the more thieves there were, the better! Broidered robe, only to be rent; helm and sword, only to be dimmed; jewel and gold, only to be scattered; — there have been three kinds of kings who have gathered these. Suppose there ever should arise a Fourth order of kings, who had read, in some obscure writing of long ago, that there was a Fourth kind of treasure, which the jewel and gold could not equal, neither should it be valued with pure gold. A web made fair in the weaving, by Athena's shuttle; an armour, forged in divine fire by Vulcanian force; a gold to be mined in the very sun's red heart, where he sets over the Delphian cliffs; — deep-pictured tissue; — impenetrable armour;— potable gold! — the three great Angels of Conduct, Toil, and Thought, still calling to us, and waiting at the posts of our doors, to lead us, with their winged power, and guide us, with their unerring eyes, by the path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye has not seen! Suppose kings should ever arise, who heard and believed this word, and at last gathered and brought forth treasures of — Wisdom — for their people?

Think what an amazing business *that* would be! How inconceivable, in the state of our present national wisdom! That we should bring

up our peasants to a book exercise instead of a bayonet exercise! — organise, drill, maintain with pay, and good generalship, armies of thinkers, instead of armies of stabbers! — find national amusement in reading-rooms as well as rifle-grounds; give prizes for a fair shot at a fact, as well as for a leaden splash on a target. What an absurd idea it seems, put fairly in words, that the wealth of the capitalists of civilised nations should ever come to support literature instead of war!

Have yet patience with me, while I read you a single sentence out of the only book, properly to be called a book, that I have yet written myself, the one that will stand (if anything stand), surest and longest of all work of mine.

“It is one very awful form of the operation of wealth in Europe that it is entirely capitalists’ wealth which supports unjust wars. Just wars do not need so much money to support them; for most of the men who wage such, wage them gratis; but for an unjust war, men’s bodies and souls have both to be bought; and the best tools of war for them besides, which make such war costly to the maximum; not to speak of the cost of base fear, and angry suspicion, between nations which have not grace nor honesty enough in all their multitudes to buy an hour’s peace of mind with; as, at present, France and

England, purchasing of each other ten millions sterling worth of consternation, annually (a remarkably light crop, half thorns and half aspen leaves, sown, reaped, and granaried by the ‘science’ of the modern political economist, teaching covetousness instead of truth). And, all unjust war being supportable, if not by pillage of the enemy, only by loans from capitalists, these loans are repaid by subsequent taxation of the people, who appear to have no will in the matter, the capitalists’ will being the primary root of the war; but its real root is the covetousness of the whole nation, rendering it incapable of faith, frankness, or justice, and bringing about, therefore, in due time, his own separate loss and punishment to each person.”

France and England literally, observe, buy *panic* of each other; they pay, each of them, for ten thousand-thousand-pounds’— worth of terror, a year. Now suppose, instead of buying these ten millions’ worth of panic annually, they made up their minds to be at peace with each other, and buy ten millions’ worth of knowledge annually; and that each nation spent its ten thousand thousand pounds a year in founding royal libraries, royal art galleries, royal museums, royal gardens, and places of rest. Might it not be better somewhat for both French and English?

It will be long, yet, before that comes to pass. Nevertheless, I hope it will not be long before royal or national libraries will be founded in every considerable city, with a royal series of books in them; the same series in every one of them, chosen books, the best in every kind, prepared for that national series in the most perfect way possible; their text printed all on leaves of equal size, broad of margin, and divided into pleasant volumes, light in the hand, beautiful, and strong, and thorough as examples of binders' work; and that these great libraries will be accessible to all clean and orderly persons at all times of the day and evening; strict law being enforced for this cleanliness and quietness.

I could shape for you other plans, for art-galleries, and for natural history galleries, and for many precious-many, it seems to me, needful-things; but this book plan is the easiest and needfullest, and would prove a considerable tonic to what we call our British constitution, which has fallen dropsical of late, and has an evil thirst, and evil hunger, and wants healthier feeding.

You have got its corn laws repealed for it; try if you cannot get corn laws established for it, dealing in a better bread; — bread made of that old enchanted Arabian grain, the Sesame,

which opens doors; — doors not of robbers',  
but of Kings' Treasuries.

Ruskin's Notes to  
*Of Kings' Treasuries*

{1} I meant that the beautiful places of the world-Switzerland, Italy, South Germany, and so on-are, indeed, the truest cathedrals — places to be reverent in, and to worship in; and that we only care to drive through them: and to eat and drink at their most sacred places.

{2} I was singularly struck, some years ago, by finding all the river shore at Richmond, in Yorkshire, black in its earth, from the mere drift of soot-laden air from places many miles away.



[ 20 ]

The Monster Reads !

Mary Shelley Warns About Technology  
and the Loss of the Inner Life

by Michael Pastore

But often, in the world's most crowded  
streets,

But often, in the din of strife,  
There rises an unspeakable desire  
After the knowledge of our buried life.

— Matthew Arnold

In 1816, the wild poet George Gordon (Lord Byron) challenged his friends, Percy and Mary Shelley, to a contest about writing the best ghost-story. A few evenings later, the three friends discussed the possibility of using galvanism (direct-current electricity produced by chemicals) to bring a corpse back to life.

That night, lying in her bed unable to sleep, Mary Shelley conceived the kernel of her novel,

*Frankenstein*. About that conception she wrote: “Frightful it must be, for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handiwork, horror stricken ...”

Published in England in 1818 when Mary was merely 21, the novel instantly became a smashing success. It is still popular today, although many people mistakenly believe that “Frankenstein” — the surname of the inventor — is the name of the monster.

The story spins around the lives and minds of three main characters. Victor Frankenstein leaves home to study science, then spends two years building an artificial man from spare anatomical parts he has picked up — not on eBay — from butcher shops, dissecting rooms, and vaults that housed dead bodies. Elizabeth Lavenza — kinder than an angel and lovelier than a summer night — waits her entire life to marry Frankenstein, and then experiences the worst wedding night in the history of literature.

The monster himself remains unnamed throughout the story, and cannot find one friend or sympathizer in the entire world of not-so-human human beings. The monster’s central problem is his low self-esteem caused by his

grotesque appearance: tall, dark, and gruesome; awkward in motion; ferocious in strength; cursed with a hideous face that sends everyone who sees it screaming and sprinting for their lives. Alienation increases his frustration. When the monster fails to find human companionship he becomes destructive, perceptively explaining his dysfunction by shouting “I am malicious because I am miserable!”

For a brief span, Frankenstein’s creation finds solace, comfort, insight, and wisdom in the imaginary worlds of books. In the middle of the novel, it is books and reading that give the monster courage and self-awareness to reach out to human beings, to reveal his unbearable loneliness, and attempt to change his life. When he secretly observes a family as they read aloud from a work by Volney — *The Ruins, or, Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires and the Law of Nature* — the monster tells how the book “gave me an insight into the manners, governments, and religions of the different nations of the earth.” In addition, the reading of *The Ruins* develops his ethical sensibilities: “These wonderful narrations inspired me with strange feelings. Was man, indeed, at once so powerful, so virtuous, so magnificent, yet so vicious and so base? He appeared at one time a mere scion of the evil principle and at another

as all that can be conceived as noble and godlike.”

The turning point in the novel comes soon after the monster discovers a leather portmanteau filled with three profound books. From Goethe’s *Sorrows of Young Werther*, the monster learns about the agonies of thwarted love. In *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, Plutarch “taught me high thoughts, and elevated me above the wretched sphere of my own reflections, to admire and love the heroes of past ages.” Milton’s *Paradise Lost* impresses the monster with emotions even deeper. He identifies with Adam and with Satan; feels wretched, helpless, envious and alone; and is “moved with every feeling of wonder and awe.”

Leo Tolstoy, Herbert Read, and Erich Fromm are three philosophers who believe that reading, like creativity, makes us more sensitive, empathetic, non-violent and compassionate. What is the cause of the world’s widespread violence? .... One cause is the fact that we have not been trained to read great literature, to reflect about books and ideas, and then to develop a humane inner self.

The 20th Century may come to be known as the Age of Extinction, and a provocative book by Barry Sanders (*The Private Death of Public Discourse*) tells us about yet another

endangered species: our inner lives. He means what Marcel Proust called "the deep self," the self that is revealed to us whenever we reflect, whenever we engage in a true dialogue with another person, whenever we read books of real significance.

What are the bleak consequences of forgetting our inner space? ... Nothing except escape into unsatisfying substitutes: a conquistadorial zeal for the exploration of outer space; a flighty interest in the paranormal and occult spaces; and an atrophous skydive into cyberspace, the most seductive cyren of them all. Without inner lives, our outer lives become poor, nasty, isolated, brutish, and short on meaningful responses. Anger and meanness pervade our day-to-day existence. Ours is a pent-up aching hostility which too-often erupts into violence: violence in our work, our entertainments, our personal relations, our antagonistic politics.

Sanders's argument begins by examining a number of festering social crises. The bombings of Iraq in 1996. The rising rate of crimes committed by juveniles. The staggering number of Americans in prison or jail, or on parole, or awaiting sentences: 5 million strong. And the 6 million children in America under the age of 6 who live in poverty. What, if anything, can

reverse these terrifying trends? Not the shouting and raving on tv-talk shows and the floors of the Congress. Sanders says that the solution is public discourse: talking about these problems in a manner that is calm, intelligent, sincere.

Public discourse is only possible when people possess authentic inner lives. What does this mean, this thing called “inner life”? Inner calm. The slowness of reflective thinking. The richness of a personal imagination. Sanders thinks out loud before us. This inner space, he says, can be nurtured by talking from the heart, and by literacy: by persons capable of reading, “serious and analytical reading, in which people must follow the mazy paths of an argument.” He adds: “The passing of literacy also carries to its death analytical thinking and the emotional life.”

Our culture has confused the outer and the inner worlds. What happened to talking about — not shouting about — serious issues? The public has become private, and the private has become public. And since nobody is reading anymore, they never the Twain shall meet. As author Neal Gabler points out in *Life The Movie*, our private lives are spectacles, commodities to be sold to talk-show hosts or tabloids. We are dominated by a new and jealous god — Entertainment — which has

invaded all aspects of contemporary life: politics, economics, education, business, art, and interpersonal relations.

The result, says Sanders, is “The collapse of a self-sustaining interior life,” — which, he claims, may be the most profound change in human development in the whole 20th Century. He writes: “I maintain that interiority began to disappear as reading and writing began to drop out of people’s lives, replaced by hours and hours of staring at screens.”

“Reading,” writes Marcel Proust — in an introduction to a work of Ruskin that hardly mentions either Ruskin or his work — “is that fertile miracle of a communication effected in solitude.” Perhaps that is where the problem lies; for Andre Maurois has reminded us that “Men fear silence as they fear solitude, because both give them a glimpse of the terror of life’s nothingness.” We fear solitude but we need it. For solitude is one necessary condition not only for creative activity, but for the self-reflection that leads to integration and healing of the self.

The most frightening facet of Mary Shelley’s novel is this one: that the self-educated monster, who has read three books only, has read more significant literature — and is vastly more self-aware — than the average American male. And thus, *Frankenstein* the book — part science

fiction, part horror novel, part gothic romance, and part novel of ideas — remains interesting to this day. It explores questions that still haunt us: Why do children lose their innocence, joyfulness, and goodness when they grow up? Why do men do evil things? How can we distinguish technologies that are dangerous and dehumanizing from the technologies that are beneficent and safe? What are the responsibilities of scientific creators to their inventions, and to these inventions' unintended consequences? and, How can we become fully-human human beings, in spite of the knowledge and technologies that drive us from our essential quests?

In portraying Victor Frankenstein as a fallible human — an admixture of wisdom and folly, courage and cowardice, knowledge and ignorance — Mary Shelley has captured our double relationship with knowledge and technology. In his drama *Faust*, Goethe tried to show that the quest for pure knowledge alone is always futile, and often self-destructive. Science can tell us how to make new inventions, yet it never comments about values, about whether or not these inventions are helpful or harmful to humankind. Men who tamper with the bare bones of Technology must always remember what Frankenstein grasped



too late. The warm whims of a science that destroys things are at least as prevalent as the scientist's creations that bring us healthier and more comfortable lives.

Prometheus is best known for stealing the gods' fire and giving it to humankind: fire that symbolizes knowledge, science, power, destruction. England had brazenly seized this fire, and the years encompassing the Shelleys' lives were overwhelmed by chaos and uncertainties. The world of 1812 (when Percy Shelley was aged 20 and Mary a teenager of 15) was not so different from our own troubled world. War was in full force: in that year the U.S. declared war against Britain; and Napoleon would march an army of 550,000 into Russia then limp back to Paris six months later with merely 20,000 men. In 1812, too, the arts were flourishing. Beethoven completed his 7th and 8th symphonies; Goethe finished his remarkable novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*; the Grimm brothers first gave us their now-famous fairy tales. And Lord Byron brought "Byronic unhappiness" into our lexicon when he published the first parts of his poem *Childe Harold*, about a man so bored and disgusted with English society that he tries to flee himself by roaming the European world.

What connects us — denizens of the 21st

Century — most closely to the era of Mary Shelley is that throughout her lifetime her world was shocked by an unprecedented invasion of technology and rapid change. During the years 1782 to 1812 England was pummeled by scores of inventions that transformed daily life: the steam engine, the oil burner, the threshing machine, the steam-powered rotary motor (which powered cotton-spinning factories), the nail-making machine, the cotton gin, the preserving jar for foods, the first horse-drawn railroad, lithography, electricity from a cell, muskets with interchangeable parts, the submarine, iron trolley tracks, the steamboat, street lighting by gas, the isolation of morphine, rockets introduced as military weapons, and — pardon the pun — the flax machine. And perhaps something that might have better been left undiscovered: techniques for canning food.

The thirty years that followed, 1813-1843 (Mary Shelley is ages 16 to 46) were no less inventive. Here the world acquires the steam locomotive, roads made from crushed stone, the kaleidoscope, the stethoscope, new chemical elements, the flat-bed cylinder press, electromagnetism, thermoelectricity, sound reproduction, iron railroad bridges, waterproof fabric, Portland cement, the galvanometer, Ohm's Law, photography, the typewriter,

matches, the telegraph, the reaping machine, the bicycle, rubber, hypnosis, ether for anesthesia, and scientific proof — at last! — that the sperm is essential to fertilization.

The rural life was yielding to the burgeoning urban existence, where the overstressed winners of the rat-race dreamed of building houses in the country hoping to recapture the tranquility of rural life. There were wisps of resistance to this new mechanized culture which threatened to vacuum up the old. In 1811 the Luddites in Northern England began their rebelling by destroying the new machines which whirled their jobs away. But for better or worse, the world of England welcomed this Industrial Revolution which so much determined Shelley's life and literary work.

Mary Shelley — sensitive, perceptive, beautiful soul! — looked into the abyss, and the abyss stared back. She grasped the future and was terrified at what she saw. Mary pre-*envisioned* the decline of the Romantic spirit: Reason and Science run amok with a god's power without the goddess's compassion. Feeling and Nature would be throttled between the monster's paws. In the desperate loneliness of Frankenstein's monster, we see Mary Shelley's strength and solitude, and chillingly we feel our own. Love would have healed her;

and the true anecdote that follows lets us glimpse the depths of her fearful solitude and her need for love.

In July 1822, 30 days before his 30th birthday, Percy Bysshe Shelley drowned (along with his friend Edward Williams) when the small boat that carried him sank in the Bay of Spezia, off the coast of Italy. His heartbroken friends — Lord Byron, Edward Trelawney, and Leigh Hunt — built a pyre and attempted to burn the corpse. The friends wept as they watched the body disintegrate to ashes, but they were astonished to discover that the writer's heart would not burn. For years, the heart was kept by Shelley's friend, Hunt, until at last he was persuaded to return the heart to the devoted widow. For the remainder of her life, Mary kept the withered heart inside the desk where she would write.

## [ 21 ]

## 200 Ebooks Worth Reading Twice

This chapter contains two lists of my favorite books, one list for adults sorted by author, and another for children arranged by title. An asterisk (\*) before the number means that the work is in the public domain, and available free.

## 108 Great Books and Stories for Adults

- \*1. Andersen, Hans Christian — Fairy Tales
- \*2. Anonymous — 1001 Nights of Adventure (Arabian Nights)
- \*3. Aristophanes — Lysistrata
- \*4. Arnold, Matthew — Culture and Anarchy
- \*5. Austen, Jane — Emma
- \*6. Balzac, Honore de — Father Goriot
- \*7. Blake, William — Poems
- \*8. Boccaccio, Giovanni — The Decameron
- \*9. Bronte, Charlotte — Jayne Eyre
- \*10. Bronte, Emily — Wuthering Heights
- 11. Buber, Martin — I and Thou
- 12. Cary, Joyce — The Horse's Mouth
- \*13. Casanova — Memoirs
- \*14. Cervantes, Miguel de — Don Quixote
- 15. Charriere, Henri — Papillon
- \*16. Dante — The Divine Comedy

- \*17. Dickens, Charles — Great Expectations
- \*18. Dostoyevsky, Feodor — The Brothers Karamazov
- 19. Durant, Will — The Story of Philosophy
- \*20. Eliot, George — Middlemarch
- \*21. Emerson, Ralph Waldo — Essays
- \*22. Euripides — The Bacchae
- \*23. Fielding, Henry — Tom Jones
- \*24. Flaubert, Gustave — Madame Bovary
- 25. Forster, E. M. — Howard's End
- \*26. Franklin, Benjamin — Autobiography
- 27. Fromm, Erich — The Art Of Loving
- 28. Gandhi — An Autobiography
- 29. Giono, Jean — The Song of the World
- \*30. Goethe, J. W. — Faust
- \*31. Goethe, J. W. von — Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship
- \*32. Goldsmith, Oliver — The Vicar of Wakefield
- \*33. Gontcharoff, Ivan — A Common Story
- \*34. Gorky, Maxim — Autobiography
- \*35. Haggard, Rider — She
- \*36. Hamsun, Knut — Growth of the Soil
- \*37. Hawthorne, Nathaniel — The Scarlet Letter
- \*38. Herodotus — The Persian Wars
- \*39. Hesse, Hermann — Siddhartha
- \*40. Homer — The Odyssey
- 41. Huxley, Aldous — Brave New World
- \*42. Ibsen, Henrik — Hedda Gabler
- \*43. Jacobsen, Jens Peter — Niels Lyhne
- \*44. Joyce, James — Ulysses
- 45. Kazantzakis, Nikos — The Odyssey, A Modern Sequel

46. Kazantzakis, Nikos — Zorba the Greek
- \*47. Keats, John — Poems
- \*48. Lao Tzu — Tao Te Ching
- \*49. Lawrence, D.H. — Women In Love
- \*50. London, Jack — Martin Eden
51. Mann, Thomas — The Magic Mountain
- \*52. Manzoni, Alessandro — The Betrothed
- \*53. Marx, Karl — Das Kapital
- \*54. Melville, Herman — Moby Dick
55. Miller, Henry — The Colossus of Maroussi
56. Montagu, Ashley — Growing Young
- \*57. More, Thomas — Utopia
- \*58. Morris, William — News From Nowhere
59. Neill, A.S. — Summerhill
- \*60. Nietzsche, Friedrich — Thus Spake  
Zarathustra
- \*61. Oppenheim, E. Phillips — The Great  
Impersonation
- \*62. Oppenheim, E. Phillips — The Yellow  
Crayon
- \*63. Plato — The Dialogues
- \*64. Plutarch — Lives of the Noble Greeks and  
Romans
65. Powys, John Cowper — Wolf Solent
- \*66. Proust, Marcel: In Search of Lost Time
- \*67. Pushkin, Alexander Sergeyevich — Eugene  
Onegin
- \*68. Pyle, Howard — Robin Hood
- \*69. Rabelais — Gargantua and Pantagruel
70. Read, Herbert — To Hell With Culture
- \*71. Rolland, Romain — Jean Christophe
- \*72. Rostand, Edmund — Cyrano de Bergerac

- \*73. Rousseau, Jean Jaques — Emile
- \*74. Ruskin, John — Unto This Last
- 75. Russell, Bertrand — Autobiography
- \*76. Sand, George — Consuelo
- \*77. Scott, Walter — Ivanhoe
- \*78. Shakespeare, William — (all his plays)
- \*79. Shaw, Bernard — Man and Superman
- 80. Shaw, Bernard — Saint Joan
- \*81. Shelley, Mary — Frankenstein; or, The  
Modern Prometheus
- \*82. Shelley, Percy Bysshe — Poems
- \*83. Silone, Ignazio — Bread and Wine
- 84. Steinbeck, John — The Grapes of Wrath
- \*85. Stendhal (Marie Henri Beyle) — The  
Charterhouse of Parma
- \*86. Stephens, James — The Crock Of Gold
- \*87. Sterne, Lawrence — Tristram Shandy
- \*88. Thoreau, Henry David — Walden
- 89. Thoreau, O — [Thoreau Bound](#): A Utopian  
Romance in the Isles of Greece
- 90. Tobias, Michael — [The Adventures of Mr  
Marigold](#)
- \*91. Tolstoy, Leo — War and Peace
- \*92. Turgenev, Ivan — Fathers and Sons
- \*93. Twain, Mark — Adventures of Huckleberry  
Finn
- 94. Uris, Leon — Exodus
- \*95. Van Gogh, Vincent — Letters
- \*96. Voltaire — Candide
- 97. Ward, Lynd — (all his graphic novels)
- \*98. Wells, H.G. — Ann Veronica: A Modern  
Love Story



- 99. West, Nathaniel — Miss Lonelyhearts
- \*100. Whitman, Walt — Leaves of Grass
- \*101. Wilde, Oscar — The Importance of Being Earnest
- 102. Wolfe, Thomas — Look Homeward Angel
- 103. Woolf, Virginia — To The Lighthouse
- \*104. Wordsworth, William — The Prelude
- \*105. Yeats, William Butler — Poems
- \*106. Yezierska, Anzia — Hungry Hearts
- 107. Yutang, Lin — The Importance of Living
- 108. Zweig, Stefan — Master Builders



## 101 Great Books and Stories For Children

- \*1. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain
- \*2. Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by A. Conan Doyle
- \*3. Aesop's Fables by Aesop
- \*4. Aladdin and The Wonderful Lamp
- \*5. Alice's Adventures In Wonderland by Lewis Carroll
- \*6. Andersen Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen
- \*7. Anne of Green Gables by Lucy Maud Montgomery
- \*8. Arabian Nights Entertainments edited by Andrew Lang

- \*9. At The Back Of The North Wind by George Macdonald
- \*10. Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin by Benjamin Franklin
- \*11. Beautiful Stories from Shakespeare by E. Nesbit
- \*12. Beauty and The Beast by Mme. Le Prince de Beaumont
- \*13. Black Beauty by Anna Sewell
- \*14. The Blue Fairy Book by Andrew Lang.
- \*15. The Bold Dragoon & Other Ghostly Tales by Washington Irving
- 16. The Borrowers by Mary Norton
- \*17. Celtic Fairy Tales, & More Celtic Fairy Tales by Joseph Jacobs
- 18. Charlotte's Web by E. B. White
- \*19. The Children's Homer by Padraic Colum
- \*20. A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
- \*21. The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas (père)
- \*22. The Cricket On The Hearth by Charles Dickens
- \*23. Danish Fairy Tales by Svend Grundtvig
- \*24. David Copperfield by Charles Dickens
- \*25. East O' The Sun, West O' The Moon by George Webbe Dasent
- \*26. English Fairy Tales by Joseph Jacobs
- \*27. Five Children and It by E. Nesbit
- \*28. Five Little Peppers and How They Grew by Margaret Sidney
- 29. Golden Treasury Of Children's Literature by Louis Untermeyer

- \*30. Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
- \*31. Green Mansions by W. H. Hudson
- \*32. Grimm's Fairy Tales by the Grimm Brothers
- \*33. Hans Brinker by Mary M. Dodge
- \*34. Heidi by Johanna Spyri
- 35. The Hobbit by J. R. Tolkien
- \*36. Indian Fairy Tales by Joseph Jacobs
- \*37. Irish Fairy Tales by James Stephens
- \*38. Jo's Boys by Louisa May Alcott
- \*39. The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling
- \*40. Just So Stories by Rudyard Kipling
- \*41. Kidnapped by Robert Louis Stevenson
- \*42. The King Of The Golden River by John Ruskin
- \*43. King Solomon's Mines by H. Rider Haggard
- 44. [Lark's Magic](#) by Michael Pastore (Zorba Press)
- \*45. The Light Princess by George MacDonald
- \*46. Lincoln's Yarns and Stories by Alexander McClure
- 47. The Lion, The Witch, And The Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis
- 48. Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder
- 49. The Little Prince by Antoine St. Exupery
- \*50. Little Women by Louisa May Alcott
- \*51. Lorna Doone by R. D. Blackmore
- 52. Lord Of The Rings by J. R. Tolkien
- \*53. The Maid of Sker by R. D. Blackmore
- 54. The Man Who Planted Trees by Jean Giono
- \*55. Master of Ballantrae by Robert Louis Stevenson

- \*56. The Merry Adventures Of Robin Hood by Howard Pyle
- \*57. My Antonia by Willa Cather
- \*58. Myths That Every Child Should Know by H. W. Mabie
- \*59. Most Interesting Stories of All Nations by N. Hawthorne
- \*60. The Nightingale by Hans Christian Andersen
- \*61. The 1,001 Nights by Padraic Colum
- \*62. Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens
- 63. The Odyssey by Homer, translated by W. H. D. Rouse
- \*64. Old Hungarian Fairy Tales by Baroness Orczy
- 65. The Once And Future King by T. H. White
- \*66. Perrault's Fairy Tales by Charles Perrault & G. Doré
- \*67. Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie
- \*68. The Adventures Of Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi
- \*69. The Princess And The Curdie by George Macdonald
- \*70. The Princess And The Goblin by George Macdonald
- 71. [Professor Parrot and the Secret of the Blue Cupboard](#) by Michael Tobias
- 72. Ring Of Willows by Eric Barker
- \*73. Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe
- \*74. The Rose and The Ring by W. M. Thackeray
- \*75. The Secret Garden by Frances H. Burnett

- \*76. The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde
- \*77. She by H. Rider Haggard
- \*78. The Snow Queen by Hans Christian Andersen
- \*79. The Story Of A Bad Boy by Thomas Bailey Aldritch
- \*80. Story Of My Life by Helen Keller
- \*81. Story of The Champions of The Round Table by Howard Pyle
- \*82. Story Of King Arthur And His Knights by Howard Pyle
- 83. Stuart Little by E. B. White
- 84. The Sword In The Stone by T. H. White
- \*85. The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter
- \*86. The Three Musketeers by Alexandre Dumas (père)
- \*87. Through The Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll
- \*88. Tom Brown's School Days by Thomas Hughes
- \*89. Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson
- 90. The Trumpet Of The Swan by E. B. White
- 91. The Twenty-One Balloons by William Pene du Bois
- \*92. Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea by Jules Verne
- \*93. Uncle Remus, His Songs And Sayings by Joel Chandler Harris
- \*94. Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe
- \*95. The Water Babies by Charles Kingsley
- 96. Watership Down by Richard Adams

\*97. The Wind In The Willows by Kenneth  
Grahame

\*98. A Wonder Book by Nathaniel Hawthorne

\*99. The Wonderful Wizard Of Oz by Frank L.  
Baum

100. World Tales by Idries Shah

101. Zlateh The Goat And Other Stories by  
Isaac B. Singer

## [ 22 ]

## Epublishing Glossary

- **aliteracy** ... The condition of a person who has the capability to read, but does not read, due to a lack of interest in reading. See also: functional illiteracy; thrilliterate.
- **aspect ratio** ... The width of an image divided by its height. For an ebook cover, for example, with a page size of 6" by 9", the aspect ratio of the cover image would be 2:3, which is pronounced "2 to 3".
- **bibliotherapy** ... Therapy that heals by using reading, either reading alone or reading followed by discussions of the books. In 1781, Denis Diderot attempted to cure his wife of "the vapours" (depression) by reading to her, three times per day, comic works by Alain-René Lesage, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, and François Rabelais.
- **brontobyte** ... The largest known (to me) unit of computer data storage, consisting of 1 followed by 27 zeroes worth of bytes.
- **censorship** ... The attempt to eliminate "undesirable" books (or other media), or certain passages from books. Ebooks make censorship

almost impossible. As a character in a book by Uncle Remus said: “You can hide the fire, but what you gonna do with the smoke?”

- **cloud computing** ... In “traditional” computer work, you create, edit, manage and store your files on a computer in front of you. When “cloud computing”, the files you are working with reside on a computer “in the clouds” — somewhere in cyberspace. An excellent, and free, cloud computing project is [G.ho.st](http://G.ho.st).
- **copyright** ... A legal right — which varies according to the laws of different nations — to publish, sell, and use intellectual property and other media. Currently, in the U.S., works published on or after January 1, 1978, are protected by copyright all during the author’s/creator’s lifetime, and for 50 years afterwards. Many critics argue that this period is far too long, and hence causes a “chilling” effect on creativity. Had current U.S. copyright laws been effect in Shakespeare’s days, the bard would never have been permitted to use the stories he transformed into his plays. The first copyright law in the U.S., in 1790, granted the copyright for 14 years, with a possible renewal (if the author was still alive) for 14 additional years.
- **Creative Commons (CC)** ... A non-profit organization that offers alternatives to



traditional copyrights, in the form of Creative Commons licenses. These licenses offer content creators (authors, artists, musicians, filmmakers) various options for sharing their works.

- **CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)** ... A stylesheet language, developed and maintained by the W3C, used for formatting web documents in HTML, XHTML and other markup languages. By separating presentation from content, CSS offers numerous advantages for creators and end-users.

- **DAISY Consortium** ... An organization whose mission is to “actively promote the DAISY Standard for Digital Talking Books.” This is a standard for audiobooks, designed for persons with reading disabilities. DAISY, a standard based on XML, stands for Digital Accessible Information SYstem.

- **digital watermarking** ... The process of adding information — sometimes visible, sometimes invisible — into a digital file, such as a video, an image, an audio file, or an ebook. Some publishers are wondering if digital watermarking is a benign alternative to DRM — one that merely identifies the buyer of the work, but does not restrict any of the user’s rights.

- **DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act)**... A U.S. copyright law that makes it a

criminal offense to reproduce, share or re-sell digital content, such as music or videos. It was signed into law in 1998 by President Clinton, after passing unanimously in the U.S. House. Not everyone is happy that their grandmother can be prosecuted for copying a DVD. Widespread opposition to the Act is easy to find on the Internet: see the website of the EFF.

- **DOI** (Digital Object Identifier) ... Like a Social Security Number for electronic documents, a DOI is a unique identifier that may contain numbers and letters. It can be used to identify content on the web, and ebooks.
- **Dōjinshi** ( often transliterated as Doujinshi ) are self-published Japanese works, usually manga or novels. They are often the work of amateurs, though some professional artists participate as a way to publish material outside the regular industry. [ Thanks, Wikipedia. ]
- **double keying** ... The painstaking process of examining and correcting scanned documents, by comparing the OCR-ed scan with the original print document.
- **DRM** (Digital Rights Management) ... DRM is a method of protecting digital content that a publisher can apply to videos, music files and ebooks. Adding DRM has three drawbacks. Always, DRM makes your digital products cost more. Sometimes, the DRM does funny things

to your computer. And often, DRM limits what you can do with your own purchase. For example, many DRM-afflicted ebooks do not allow you to print the files.

- **DTD** (Document Type Declaration) ... A tag — placed at the top of XHTML and XML documents — used in order to verify the document's validity. Ebooks in the EPUB format require a correct DTD in each of their XHTML and XML files.
- **e-book** ... An ebook, pompously spelled with a superfluous and time-wasting hyphen — thanks to a panel of antiquated nitpickers entombed in the dusty halls of Academe.
- **ebook** ... Ebooks are books comprised of digitized text, designed to be read on computer screens, ebook reading devices, or portable handheld devices — such as BlackBerrys, Palm PDAs, or iPhones and iPods. Like a paper book, an ebook has two main functions: to communicate information and to store information.
- **electronic paper** (e-paper) ... A high-resolution display used for viewing electronic documents. Electronic paper is used as the screen for many ebook reading devices, such as the Amazon Kindle, the Sony Reader, and others. E-paper, designed to be easy on the eyes to read from, is energy efficient, and does not

use additional energy until you turn a page.

- **electronic publishing** ... The practice of publishing — creating, producing, promoting and sometimes selling — ebooks, journals, articles, web sites, blogs and other electronic documents.
- **encryption** ... The art and science of using cryptography to render information unreadable. To read encrypted information, the reader needs a “key” — specific knowledge, or a technology, that makes the information human-readable.
- **epiracy** ... The theft of digital information, including videos, audio files, and ebooks. A few authors encourage epiracy of their own work, believing that it brings new readers, and increases paper-book sales. Epiracy is one of those illegal activities that are hard to control.
  - **EPUB** ... A file format for ebooks and electronic documents that uses XHTML / XML, CSS and metadata. The EPUB format standard is overseen by the IDPF. EPUB’s simplicity makes it efficient and versatile. Many publishers, readers and authors (including this writer) hope that it will become the standard format for ebooks.
- **fair use** ... A facet of the U.S. Copyright law that allows a small part of copyrighted material (such as books and documents) to be used by an author, without formal permission from the

copyright holder. There are four factors that determine whether or not the reproduced material can be considered “fair use”.

- **FPO** (For Position Only) ... A pre-press production term, meaning that the image (or text) provided is not the final one, but has been inserted merely to indicate the position of the actual image, which will be supplied later.

- **Gutenberg** ...Johannes Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg (1398 to 1468) — made the first printing press around 1450, using materials from a press that crushed grapes for making wine. Despite his genius that transformed Western Civilization, Gutenberg lost his printing workshop in a lawsuit, and years later was sent into exile.

- **illiteracy** ... The inability to read or write. Functional illiteracy is the inability to read or write at more than a very low level.

- **ISBN** (International Standard Book Number) ... An identifying number for books and ebooks. ISBNs are purchased from R.R. Bowker company, and managed via their website. Recently, due to the vast quantities of new books published, ISBNs evolved from 10-digit to 13-digit numbers.

- **keitai shosetsu** ... A cell phone novel in Japan, wildly popular with teenagers. Also called an “mbook”. The novels are delivered

like Charles Dickens's novels: serialized, appearing one piece at a time. They are not only read, but often written on cell phones, via text messages typed with skillful thumbs. Some, such as *Sky of Love*, have been made into films. By the way, in Japanese "shosetsu" means "novel", and "keitai" means "cell phone".

- **kilobyte** (KB) ... A unit of computer information, containing 1,024 bytes. A small novel — with 50,000 words — (at 6 characters per words) will take up about 300 KB.
- **LCD** (Liquid Crystal Display) ... A thin, flat-panel screen used in computers and in other small devices. Regarding ebook reading devices: new advances in LCD technology may soon make LCD screens competitors with the now-popular electronic paper.
- **mbook** ... A cell phone novel in Japan. Also called "keitai shosetsu". See: keitai shosetsu.
- **metadata** ... Additional information, added to electronic files, that is not readily visible to the reader. Metadata tucked into EPUB ebooks tells you the name of the author, the date of publication, and other information about the work. Metadata is useful for classifying and for finding electronic documents.
- **Netbook** ... A small and inexpensive laptop computer, designed primarily for reading email and searching the Web. Some people believe

that Netbooks could evolve into the ideal ebook reading device.

- **novel** ... A narrative work of prose fiction, containing 50,000 words or more.
- **OCR** (Optical Character Recognition) ... the process of converting an image file (usually from a book or document) to editable text.
- **PDA** (Personal Digital Assistant) ... A computer that fits in your hand, now often featured with a touch screen, memory cards, wired connectivity, and wireless connectivity. Most PDAs today can download and read ebooks.
- **PDF** (Portable Document Format) ... An essential file format for preparing paper books for printing; and a popular format for creating and reading ebooks and electronic documents.
- **Pirate Bay** ... A brash and swashbuckling directory of torrent files, and the lighthouse to many a pirated ebook. Some authors are pleased to have their book achieve wide readership via these disputed waters; others authors would rather walk the plank. [www.thepiratebay.org](http://www.thepiratebay.org).
- **P.O.D.** (Print On Demand) ... A method for printing and binding books (using a digital printing machine) as they are ordered, often one book at a time. For most books, the quality of P.O.D. now equals the quality of books printed from an offset press. POD is a boon for self-

publishing authors, and for all publishers who want to avoid the risk of unsold books, as well as the costs of shipping and storage. Currently, the single most serious disadvantage of using POD is that the cost per book is much higher, compared with the cost of printing 1,000 or more books using the offset presses at a short-run printing company.

- **public domain** ... The “space” where books and digital media happily fall after their copyright has expired (and has not been renewed), or whenever a content creator (author, artist, musician, film-maker) desires to place his creations there. Works in the public domain may be used freely by anyone.

- **quality of ebooks problem** ... Some ebook critics have written that ebooks will cause the death of literary writing — and endanger the literary profession itself — by flooding the market with low-quality ebooks made by amateurs to be consumed by other amateurs. I strongly disagree.

- **RTF** ... A file format that allows basic formatting, such as bold and italics, and is easily readable all types of computers: Windows, Linuxes, and Macs.

- **Smartphone** ... A mobile phone with added features, such as a camera, a touch screen, an operating system, and Internet access.



Smartphones can, and often do, download and read ebooks.

- **thrilliterate** ... A person who reads nothing but the sensational: newspaper headlines, advertisements, tabloids, horror stories, bodice-ripping romances, or pornography.
- **TPM** (Technical Protection Measure) ... A generic term for any of the many copy protection methods that might be added to a digital file.
- **Unicode** ... A computing standard, currently at version 5.1, that describes more than 100,000 characters in many languages.
- **UTF** (Unicode Transformation Format) ... An encoding method that comes in various manifestations (UTF-1, 7, 8, 16 and 32). Currently, UTF-8 is popular for web pages, email and EPUB ebooks.
- **XHTML** ... A markup language that combines HTML with XML, and reaps the benefits of XML. XHTML is often the main file format used in EPUB ebooks.
- **XML** (Extensible Markup Language)... XML is a language for creating customized markup languages. In HTML, all the tags are pre-defined. Using XML, you can create your own tags. XML is an essential component of ebooks in the EPUB format.

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## Key Resources About Ebooks

Here is my list of essential resources about ebooks, and tools for reading or creating them. The tools I recommend are tools that I use often. The resources listed here have either influenced my thinking about ebooks, and/or interested me enough so that I return to these places frequently for more information and ideas.

It is impossible for one person to know everything in a field of study. I regret that there are sources that should have been included here (and in the following chapter) — but are not. Omissions in the book may be remedied on the website.

- 50 Benefits of Ebooks: A Thinking Person's Guide to the Digital Reading Revolution. By Michael Pastore. Available as paperback, and an ebook, in PDF and EPUB. A friendly introduction to the wild world of ebooks and epubliishing, infused with a leitmotif about the joy and value of reading. Available from <http://www.EpublishersWeekly.net>

- Adobe Digital Editions (ADE)

Drop-dead gorgeous ebook reading software, that manages your ebook library, and reads PDF and EPUB.

<http://www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/>

- Arts Journal (AJ)

Edited by Douglas McLennan, AJ provides the latest news about publishing and the arts.

<http://www.artsjournal.com/>

- Bookworm

A free platform for reading EPUB books online.

<http://bookworm.oreilly.com/>

- Brewster Kahle video: Building a Free Digital Library. A wonderful TED talk by Kahle who explains his Internet Archive, and his vision for universal information access.

[http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/brewster\\_kahle\\_builds\\_a\\_free\\_digital\\_library.html](http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/brewster_kahle_builds_a_free_digital_library.html)

- Content: Selected Essays on Technology, Creativity, Copyright, and the Future of the Future. Another free gift from Cory Doctorow. Download the free ebook or audiobook.

<http://craphound.com/content/>

[http://www.archive.org/details/CoryDoctorow-Content\\_268](http://www.archive.org/details/CoryDoctorow-Content_268)

■ Creative Commons (CC)

CC offers alternatives to traditional copyrights, in the form of Creative Commons licenses. Also provides a search engine for free digital content that uses these licenses.

<http://creativecommons.org/>

<http://creativecommons.org/about/>

■ The Creative Penn

Created by Joanna Penn, this excellent site consistently provides useful ideas and resources. The site contains original articles, links, some video presentations, and audio podcasts. Penn's site has evolved into one of the leading sources of information for independent authors and small-press publishers.

<http://www.thecreativepenn.com>

■ The Digitalist

A blog by the digital team at Pan Macmillan.

<http://thedigitalist.net/>

■ EbooksJustPublished.com

Created by Mark Gladding, EJP lets authors and publishers list their just-published ebooks. EJP is an important addition to the Indie Publishing movement. Create an account, write about your book, and sign up for the weekly newsletter.

<http://www.ebooksjustpublished.com>

- eCub EPUB Creator

Julian Smart calls eCub “a simple to use EPUB and MobiPocket ebook creator,” — and it is. eCub is free. It is not open source, but it is offered for personal and commercial use. (This is a welcome distinction from some other EPUB-making tools, that allow personal use but not commercial.) eCub works on many platforms: Windows, Linux, Mac, FreeBSD and Solaris. eCub has many capabilities and features. The main feature is its beautiful simplicity. eCub does not produce EPUB ebooks that are valid: but to my knowledge there is no software available — for any price — that can do this. eCub does produce EPUB ebooks that can be read easily on BookWorm, in Calibre, and in Stanza. I have been hand coding my EPUB ebooks; I may soon switch to eCub and then tweak the results.

<http://www.juliansmart.com/ecub>

- EPUB Validator at ThreePress

<http://threepress.org/document/epub-validate>

- EPUB Resources and Guides

Keith Fahlgren has assembled this excellent page of resources about EPUB.

<http://labs.oreilly.com/2009/03/epub-resources-and-guides.html>

- EpublshersWeekly.net

The companion website to this book and ebook (50 Benefits of Ebooks), organized into 10 categories of resources about ebooks, electronic publishing, print-on-demand publishing, and the value of reading.

<http://www.EpublshersWeekly.net>

- Feedbooks

“... a universal e-reading platform compatible with all mobile devices where you can download thousands of free e-books.” You can also publish and share your own content, in many formats. <http://www.feedbooks.com/>

- Google Book Search (GBS) and GBS Mobile  
Google has digitized more than 1.5 million books, which you can read free, from your computer or mobile device. In addition to PDF, these ebooks are now available in EPUB!

<http://books.google.com/>

<http://books.google.com/googlebooks/mobile/>

- Internet Archive

Brewster Kahle’s extraordinary project, to host ebooks and digital content that anyone can access for free, and then use for any purpose.

<http://www.archive.org>

- Internet Marketing For Writers and Businesses. “A site for writers with or without published work. A comprehensive resource that every writer should have in their library in order to learn how to publish, promote, and market themselves on the Internet.” This excellent site, by author Sylvia Hubbard, provides practical information that you can use to spread the word about your books.

<http://internetmarketingforwriters.blogspot.com/>

- iPhone and iPod Touch

Despite Steve Jobs’s comments that reading is dead, lots of people are reading using reading software for the iPod touch and iPhone.

<http://www.apple.com/iphone/>

<http://www.apple.com/ipodtouch/>

- MobileRead

Managed by Alexander Turcic, MobileRead is an online community dedicated to ebooks and technology. It has an active blog, forums for interesting questions and ideas, and a Wiki packed with ebook information. Along with TeleRead and PG, MobileRead is the most significant ebook site on the entire Net.

<http://www.mobileread.com/>

<http://www.mobileread.com/forums/>

[http://wiki.mobileread.com/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://wiki.mobileread.com/wiki/Main_Page)

■ Project Gutenberg (PG)

A digital library, founded in 1971 by Michael S. Hart, that stores thousands of ebooks for anyone to read, download and use. PG is an indispensable resource, that seems to get better with age.

<http://www.Gutenberg.org>

■ Publetariat

“An online community and news hub built specifically for indie authors and small, independent imprints.”

<http://www.publetariat.com>

■ Read an Ebook Week

Celebrates and promote ebooks, every year, during the second week in March. Founded by Rita Y. Toews and Steve Jordan.

<http://ebookweek.com/>

■ Safe Creative

Registration services like this one, by Mario Pena, could be a smart alternative to DRM.

<http://www.safecreative.org>

■ Scribd

An online repository of documents and ebooks, where users upload their content, and also read content from others. Scribd claims to serve



more than tens of millions of readers, and receive 50,000 new document uploads — every day. The biggest drawback of the Scribd ebookstore — where authors and publishers can sell their content — is that they do not send a payment to the publisher until the amount reaches \$ 100.

<http://www.scribd.com/>

#### ■ Smashwords

Smashwords, by Mark Coker, is “a self-publishing platform and online bookstore for independent ebook authors, publishers and readers.” It’s an extraordinary opportunity for authors to sell their ebooks, and benefit from terms of service that are 100% author-friendly.

I am one of Smashwords biggest fans, and biggest critics. When I think of them, I think of the ancient saying: “On a journey of one hundred miles, the ninety-ninth mile may be considered the halfway point.” Smashwords is close to greatness, but for me, there is one aspect of their selling system that is a colossal disappointment. Authors and publishers upload files to Smashwords, and their software converts these to the finished ebooks in many formats. For beginners who know nothing about ebook conversion, this system is a blessing. For experienced authors and publishers who take

pride in their ebook design, this system is a dealbreaker. Smashwords should learn from Lulu: give your authors and publishers two choices. You can let our software make the ebooks for you, or you can make your own ebooks yourself.

<http://www.smashwords.com/>

■ Smultron by Peter Borg.

“Smultron is a text editor written in Cocoa for Mac OS X Leopard 10.5 which is designed to be both easy to use and powerful.” It is a superb tool, especially valuable for making and editing EPUB ebooks. Despite an announcement that development had ceased, a Snow Leopard patch was just released on September 13, 2009. You can download the latest version of Smultron (Mac only) here:

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/smultron/files/>

■ Stanza (from Lexcycle)

“Stanza is a free application for your iPhone and iPod Touch. Use it to download from a vast selection of over 100,000 books and periodicals, and read them right on your phone.” A version of Stanza is also available for desktop and laptop computers, for two platforms, Windows and Mac.

<http://www.lexcycle.com/>

- TEBC (The Ebook Community)

TEBC is a discussion list on Yahoo Groups, where you'll find interesting exchanges about "ebooks, the ebook industry, and related topics." Founded in 1996 by Jon Noring.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ebook-community/>

- TeleRead

David Rothman and Paul Biba now coordinate a staff of exceptionally-talented bloggers who provide the latest information about all things related to ebooks and epubublishing. Consistently great for its breaking news, informed opinions, and captivating comments. TeleRead ranks with MobileRead as one of the two most important ebook resources on the entire Net.

<http://www.TeleRead.org>

- Tools Of Change for Publishing (TOC) blog

<http://toc.oreilly.com/>

- World Ebook Fair

The 5th annual World eBook Fair will take place in 2010, from July 4 though August 4. During that time, visitors to the website will have free access to more than 2 million ebooks.

<http://www.worldebookfair.com/>

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## Ebookology: A 10-Part Subject Guide

My goal for this chapter is not to create a comprehensive encyclopedia of links: that job is far better accomplished on the Net.

My goal is to organize the ever-growing rain forest of ebook-related information into ten useful realms.

Here are the ten realms. Below this list, you'll find the realms filled with a sample of exemplary resources. Many more resources, organized into these same 10 categories, will — eventually — be added to this book's companion website.

1. The Value of Reading
2. Overview of Ebooks (basic resources, benefits, history, paper books)
3. How to Find Ebooks, Low-Cost and Free
4. How to Read Ebooks: Formats, Software, Hardware, Accessibility
5. How to Make Ebooks
  - How to Make PDF ebooks
  - How to Make EPUB ebooks

- Exemplary Ebooks in various formats
- 6. Important Issues About Ebooks
  - Censorship
  - Copyright and Public Domain
  - DRM
  - Epiracy
  - Ereading versus paper reading
  - Information Explosion
  - Pricing: How much should ebooks cost?
  - Social issues
- 7. Ebooks, Authoring and Publishing
  - Ecommerce
  - POD
  - Publishing in general
  - Sales
- 8. Connect: Ebook Groups, Communities, Newsgroups, Organizations and Events
- 9. Panmediaography about Ebooks and Electronic Publishing (Ebooks about ebooks, paperbooks, websites, periodicals and journals, audiobooks, podcasts, videos. Articles may be classified under one of headings above.
- 10. Ebook News and New Ideas (Blogs, Future Trends, Articles, Essays, Factoids, Humor).

Here below are the ten realms again, this time with some exemplary content filled in.

## 1. The Value of Reading

- Brown, Mandy. In Defense of Readers.  
<http://alistapart.com/articles/indefenseofreaders>
- Center for the Book. Established in 1977 to stimulate public interest in books, reading and libraries. <http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook>
- Gass, William H., "In Defense of the Book," Harper's Magazine, November 1999, pp. 45-51.
- Lifelong Literacy  
<http://www.loc.gov/literacy/>
- Pastore, Michael. The Ithaca Manual of Style.  
[www.zorbapress.com/books/ithacastyle.html](http://www.zorbapress.com/books/ithacastyle.html)
- Powys, John Cowper. One Hundred Best Books.  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/12914>
- Reading At Risk. A U.S. Government study about the decline of reading. Free PDF:  
<http://www.nea.gov/news/news04/ReadingAtRisk.Html>
- Reading is Fundamental (RIF)  
<http://www.rif.org/>
- Royal Society for Encouragement of the Arts (RSA). <http://www.thersa.org/home>
- Virginia Festival of the Book  
<http://www.vabook.org/index.html/>

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## 2. Overview of Ebooks

- Bruce's Australian E-book Newsletter  
<http://www.e-book.com.au/main.html>
- Centre for the History of the Book  
<http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/chb/>
- Darnton, Robert: The New Age of the Book. The New York Review of Books; March 18, 1999. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/546>
- D.J. McAdam (website about books)  
<http://www.djmcadam.com/index.html>
- EcoLibris: plant a tree for every book you read. <http://www.ecolibris.net/>
- Glaser, Mark. Your Guide to E-Books. This article is an excellent history and overview of ebooks.  
<http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2009/02/your-guide-to-e-books043.html>
- Grossman, Lev. Books Gone Wild: The Digital Age Reshapes Literature. *Time*.  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1873122,00.html>
- International DOI Foundation (IDF)  
<http://www.doi.org/>
- Lynch, Clifford A. The Battle to Define the Future of the Book in the Digital World. Brilliantly argues that books are more than bits.  
<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/864/773>

- Man, John. 2002. Gutenberg: How One Man Remade the World with Words.
- Powers, William. Hamlet's BlackBerry: Why Paper is Eternal.  
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/3562724/Hamlets-Blackberry-Why-Paper-Is-Eternal>
- Siracusa, John. The Once and Future E-book: on reading in the digital age.  
<http://arstechnica.com/gadgets/news/2009/02/the-once-and-future-e-book.ars>

### 3. How to Find Ebooks, Low-Cost and Free

- ACLS Humanities Ebook  
<http://www.humanitiesebook.org/>
- Baen Free Library (Eric Flint).  
<http://www.baen.com/library/>
- Bookshare.org — Accessible Books and Periodicals for Readers with Print Disabilities.  
<http://www.bookshare.org/>
- Epubbooks.com  
Mike Cook's site featuring well-made EPUB ebooks. <http://www.epubbooks.com>
- Michigan Electronic Library (MEL)  
<http://www.mel.org/>
- NIH Publications about Healthy Aging  
<http://www.niapublications.org/shopdisplayproducts.asp?id=30&cat=Healthy+Aging>



- PLOS (Public Library of Science)

<http://www.plos.org/>

#### 4. How to Read Ebooks: Formats, Software, Hardware, Accessibility

- Classics (reading software for iPhone & iPods Touch). <http://classicsapp.com/>

- Comparison of Ebook File Formats (on WikiPedia).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison\\_of\\_e-book\\_formats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_e-book_formats)

- My eBook

<http://www.myebook.com>

- Daily Lit

<http://www.dailylit.com>



#### 5. How to Make Ebooks

- Atlantis Word Process (for Windows)

<http://www.atlantiswordprocessor.com/en/>

- Azardi (for Windows and Linux)

Read, Validate, and Edit your EPUB Ebooks

<http://www.infogridpacific.com/igp/AZARDI/>

- Distributed Proofreaders

Volunteers proofread public domain books.

<http://www.pgdp.net/c/default.php>

- EPUB Tutorial by JediSaber  
<http://www.jedisaber.com/eBooks/tutorial.asp>
- The Non-Artists Guide to Creating an Ebook Cover.  
<http://www.ebooksjustpublished.com/2009/03/02/the-non-artists-guide-to-creating-an-ebook-cover/>

## 6. Important Issues About Ebooks

- Banned Books Online  
<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/banned-books.html>
- Boyle, James. The Public Domain.  
<http://www.thepublicdomain.org/download/>
- Copyright Spot  
<http://copyrightspot.com/>
- Copyscape  
<http://www.copyscape.com/>
- Electronic Freedom Foundation  
<http://www.eff.org>
- My Free Copyright  
<http://myfreecopyright.com/>
- Plagiarism Today  
<http://www.plagiarismtoday.com/>
- Schwartz, Barry. A video about “Practical wisdom”.  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/barry\\_schwartz\\_on\\_our\\_loss\\_of\\_wisdom.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_on_our_loss_of_wisdom.html)

## 7. Ebooks and Publishing

- The History of Visual Communication  
[http://www.citrinitas.com/history\\_of\\_viscom/](http://www.citrinitas.com/history_of_viscom/)
- Book Industry Study Group  
<http://www.bisg.org>
- Kiqlo (Sell digital content, keep 100%.)  
<http://www.kiqlo.com>
- Tizra Publisher  
<http://tizra.com/>

## 8. Connect: Book and Ebook Groups, Communities, Newsgroups, Organizations and Events

- Association of American Publishers (AAP)  
<http://www.publishers.org/>
- Authonomy  
<http://www.authonomy.com/>
- BookCrossing  
<http://www.bookcrossing.com/>
- The Book Oven  
<http://bookoven.com/>
- The Center for the Book (U.S. LOC)  
<http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/>
- Coalition for Networked Information  
<http://www.cni.org/>

- Digital Library Federation  
<http://www.diglib.org/>
- Editeur  
<http://www.editeur.org/>
- Electronic Literature Organization  
<http://eliterature.org/>
- EPIC (the Electronically Published Internet Connection). <http://www.epicauthors.com/>
- IDPF ... International Digital Publishing Forum. <http://www.openebook.org/>
- NetGold — A Yahoo group, managed by Linda Bee, and David P. Dillard, for sharing “important, informative and useful Internet and sometimes other resources for learning and improvement of skills”.  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Net-Gold/>
- New Zealand Digital Publishing Forum, coordinated by Martin Taylor.  
<http://digitalpublishing.org.nz/>
- The Royal Literary Fund  
<http://www.rlf.org.uk/>
- Sunoasis Writers Network (David Eide)  
<http://sunoasis.ning.com/>
- Wattpad  
<http://www.wattpad.com/faq>

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## 9. Panmediaography about Ebooks and Electronic Publishing

- Pastore, Michael. 50 Benefits of Ebooks — A Thinking Person's Guide to the Digital Reading Revolution. Edition September 2009. [www.EpublishersWeekly.net](http://www.EpublishersWeekly.net)
- Kasdorf, William E. (editor). The Columbia Guide to Electronic Publishing.

## 10. eBook News and New Ideas (Blogs, Future Trends, Articles, Essays, Factoids, Humor)

More of these kinds of epubliishing blogs and news sources can be found on the right-hand menu of this book's companion website: [www.EpublishersWeekly.net](http://www.EpublishersWeekly.net)

- Digital Fiction Show  
<http://www.digitalfictionshow.co.uk/>
- Guardian (section on Ebooks)  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/ebooks>
- If:Book (A blog from the Institute for the Future of the Book).  
<http://www.futureofthebook.org/blog/>
- MobyLives  
<http://mhpbooks.com/mobylikes/>

- Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog  
<http://www.digital-scholarship.org/sepb/sepw/sepw.htm>
- The Shatzin Files (by Mike Shatzin).  
<http://www.idealogue.com/blog/>
- The Shifted Librarian  
Libraries are changing, and SL tracks the shifts.  
<http://theshiftedlibrarian.com/>

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## Top News Stories of 2009

### Story # 1.

### The Google Book Search Settlement Demystified

On September 4, 2009 — the last possible day — I opted out of the Google Book Search settlement. It was a difficult decision; I had hardly had time to read the 84-question FAQ, let alone the 303-page legal document describing the settlement.

In the end, I chose to opt out for two reasons. I wanted to retain all the rights to my the electronic versions of my books. For the literary world in general, it seemed to me that no one person or one organization should have the exclusive right to profit from books that are part of the public domain.

The issue has turned into a soap opera; a feast for journalists in the USA and around the world. Here are the essential aspects of this ongoing saga.

## Google Digitizes Millions of Books

The story began in 2004, when Google announced that it would be partnering with some of the world's largest libraries in the USA and Great Britain, to scan millions of books.

Years later, when the dust settled over Google's state-of-the-art scanners (which process 1,000 pages per hour), Google had scanned more than 7 million books. The PDF versions of these books were placed on the Google Books website, where anyone could view them — sometimes whole, sometimes just small parts — for free.

When a book was featured as “full view”, the entire book could be viewed online, and/or downloaded. These “full view” books were books in the public domain. Nobody had any issues with these.

In addition, for many of the scanned books, Google displayed them online with a “limited preview” — only a small part of the book could be seen.

A small part? ... In the year 2005, the lawsuits began: some authors and publishers argued that when Google placed these limited previews on the Web, Google was violating their copyrights. Google disagreed, claiming that it was perfectly legal for them to put a



small part of the book online, because this was covered under a doctrine known as “fair use.”

The question of whether or not this use was fair was never decided in the courts. Instead, in October 2008, the issue of the “Google Book Settlement” seemed to settle things. Google agreed to pay 125 million dollars to the Authors Guild and to the Association of American Publishers. In return for this payment, Google would get to sell many books online, and divide the profits between the publishers and Google.

Individual authors were given a deadline of September 4, 2009, to decide if they wanted to remain in (be a part of the settlement agreement) or opt out. If you did not reply to Google, the law states that you agree to the settlement. Which means that Google would have the right to sell electronic copies of your books, and split the profits this way: publishers/authors getting 63%, and Google getting 37%. There would also be possible revenue from ads that Google placed on the web page with the books: this ad revenue would also be split in the same proportion.

For a while, it looked as if this settlement settled the issue. But here the plot not only thickens, it emulsifies.

The courts, located in New York City, stated that in October 2009 they would rule on

whether this settlement agreement was valid or not. Groups and individuals worldwide had the opportunity to write to the courts, to express their opinion. Most of the media reports that I have read over the past weeks seem to focus on individuals and groups who oppose the settlement — including Brewster Kahle and his Internet Archive, the National Writers Union, the American Society of Journalists, the Open Book Alliance, France, Germany, New Zealand, and the state of Connecticut.

Google scanned roughly 7 million books; this settlement is largely about the 4 or 5 million books that are in copyright but out of print. These books had been virtually ignored; Google's efforts brings them to the light again.

It must be noted that the Google Book Settlement does not affect the millions of books that were published in 1922 or before: these are officially and indisputably in the public domain, and everyone has equal rights to these works.

Perhaps the most hotly-disputed issue is the large number of books, published after 1922, whose copyrights have expired but not been renewed, and the copyright holders cannot be found. Technically, these books belong to the public domain. But under the settlement, Google would be able to profit from selling the electronic versions of them.

For this reason mainly, I oppose the Google Book Search settlement. Google and the great publishing powers have no right to strike a deal involving these public domain books.

Google is not evil. But sometimes, they lose their way.

/ / / / / / / / / / /

Story # 2.

## Pirate Bay:

## Heading for the Plank or the Bank ?

It is very difficult to find PDF copies of the Harry Potter books. Someone who is an expert on the theory and practice of “bit torrents” could find one very quickly, probably by starting with something called “e-mule”. They might add some privacy to their search, using something called “torrent privacy”.

Not being an expert digital thief, all I could think of doing was to visit the infamous website, Pirate Bay, and then typing “Harry Potter” into the search box.

On the first results screen, nothing pertinent appeared. When I clicked the second screen, however, a long list of items appeared, and had I been so inclined, I could have downloaded seven files worth of the misadventures of this

young wizard. It took me a full minute to discover the complete works.

Pirate Bay, as you know, is one of many bit torrent tracking websites. Based in Sweden, they do not host files on their site, they merely provide a service, to more than 3.5 million registered users, that connects people with bit torrent files for easy downloading. Access to the site is free: it requires only an Internet connection and some torrent software, which is also free. Films, audio files, ebooks, and other digital content are all available from this free, one-stop, Internet shopping mall. No cash, checks, or credit cards are required to download the latest media sensations.

Piracy is difficult to manage. In 2006, the Swedish authorities raided the Pirate Bay offices and confiscated the computers. This shut down the Pirate Bay — for three days. On August 24, 2009, the courts ordered the ISP that hosts the Pirate Bay site to block all traffic to the site. Once again, the Pirate Bay was shut down, this time for a full 24 hours before resuming service.

In April 2009, four of the men who manage Pirate Bay were tried and convicted of copyright infringement, and sentenced to jail time and a fine of about 3.5 million U.S. dollars. The appeal trial has been scheduled for

November 2009. On Facebook, there is a support group that endorses Pirate Bay, which now boasts about 200,000 members.

In June, a company offered to buy Pirate Bay for 60 million dollars. They planned to charge users for downloading materials, and then pay the copyright owners a share of these fees. As of September 8, 2009, Pirate Bay has not been sold and commercialized.

I oppose digital piracy, but I understand that digital piracy, and ebook piracy are difficult problems to manage. What is needed is a middle-ground solution between doing nothing at all about it, and playing a cat-and-mouse game in our legal systems, where nobody wins — except the well-paid attorneys on both sides of the struggle.

/ / / / / / / / / /

### Story # 3.

## Amazon Apologizes for Kindle Swindle

In July 2009, some customers who bought ebook copies of George Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm* received a strange gift from Amazon.com. They were notified that their payments for these ebooks had been refunded, and that the ebooks had been removed from their Kindles.

Who knew that the ebookseller could reach into your Kindle and swipe your stuff?

Amazon explained that these particular ebook editions of those works were copies which could not be legally sold in the USA. These books had been added to the Amazon bookstore by a publisher who did not own the rights to sell them.

The outcry was immediate and thunderous. Jeff Bezos himself apologized, saying that the action was “stupid, thoughtless, and painfully out of line with our principles.”

A class-action suit against the company is now pending, initiated by one 17-year-old student, who said that the annotations he had made in the ebooks vanished when his ebooks were removed.

Amazon emailed their affected customers on September 3, offering to replace the removed ebooks, and the notes; or instead, to give those customers \$ 30 per book.

No-one in the ebook industry — not the ebooksellors, not the ebook device makers, not the ebook software makers — should have this kind of power, to remove any documents from our devices. This is yet another unanswerable argument against the proprietary format that Amazon is clinging to, like a barnacle on a slimy rock.

Story # 4.  
Barnes & Noble Launches  
the World's Largest Ebookstore

Once upon a time, years ago, Barnes & Noble sold ebooks. When they closed down their ebookstore, some customers' ebooks were lost.

In July 2009, Barnes & Noble launched another ebookstore, a larger and a smarter one. Larger, because it contained more than 700,000 titles, with the promise that more than a million titles would be available in 2010. Smarter, because the ebooks that you buy from them will be readable on most Windows and Mac desktop/laptop computers, and many portable devices, such as iPhones, iPod Touches, and BlackBerry smartphones.

This inflated number of 700,000 titles includes about 500,000 public domain ebooks from Google, which are of course, free. Barnes & Noble ebooks are read using their free reading software called eReader. When you download an ebook from the B&N site, they keep a copy of it for you, so that you can download it again, if needed, at a later date.

You'll need a credit card to get anything from Barnes & Noble, even the free ebooks. Don't plan on reading them on paper: all the B&N ebooks are not printable.

## Story # 5. Scribd Opens an Ebookstore for the People

It seems like yesterday when people were asking: ‘How can I read and buy ebooks?’ — and the answer was hardly more than two words: ‘Kindle and Amazon’. Now there are dozens of ebook reading devices (and most of them natively read EPUB), and a growing number of ebookstores.

The Scribd store will sell works not only from the big publishers, but also from independent presses and individual authors.

When Scribd first started, you could upload your documents for anyone to view. Everything was free. Now when you upload your documents or ebooks, you can choose to let your readers view them freely, or try to sell them on the new Scribd bookstore. For now, to access the Scribd bookstore you must be using a computer from a location in the USA.

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The biggest drawback to selling your ebooks via Scribd is their payment timetable: like Amazon associates, they don’t pay you until you’ve reached \$100 in sales.

Scribd already has a large following: more than 35 billion words are posted there, with documents in 90 different languages. Changing the payment timetable to “every month” instead of every Franklin would help to attract more authors and publishers to this promising store.

Story # 6.  
Google Offers One Million Public-  
Domain Ebooks in EPUB

On August 26, 2009, Google added a new format to its collection of more than 1 million PDF public domain ebooks: EPUB. The project's blog, 'Inside Google Books' explains:

“By adding support for EPUB downloads, we're hoping to make these books more accessible by helping people around the world to find and read them in more places. More people are turning to new reading devices to access digital books, and many such phones, netbooks, and e-ink readers have smaller screens that don't readily render image-based PDF versions of the books we've scanned. EPUB is a lightweight text-based digital book format that allows the text to automatically conform (or “reflow”) to these smaller screens. And because EPUB is a free, open standard supported by a growing ecosystem of digital reading devices, works you download from Google Books as EPUBs won't be tied to or locked into a particular device. We'll also continue to make available these books in the popular PDF format so you can see images of the pages just as they appear in the printed book.”

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Story # 7.

## EPUB Standards Are Being Updated

The EPUB standards are created and coordinated by IDPF, the International Digital Publishing Forum. IDPF is “a trade and standards organization dedicated to the development and promotion of electronic publishing.” IDPF is supported by income from its membership dues, which ranges from \$ 650 per year for non-profit organizations, to \$ 3,000 per year for organizations with a yearly revenue of more than 250 million dollars. Members include Adobe Systems, Ingram Digital Group, the DAISY Consortium, the Digital Library Federation, Harlequin Enterprises, Ltd., Overdrive, Inc., and Random House.



At Apple's September Rock & Roll event, starring Steve Jobs, the miracle machine failed to make an appearance. Rumors are still soaring nevertheless. Recently, the prognosticators guessed that the iPad would cost \$ 600, would have a touch screen, an operating system (and maybe OS X), and would be a hybrid of a Netbook and a Tablet computer. The new target date for its launch is early in 2010.

Breaking news: the iTunes store is selling its first digital book: *Mayhem* by Tyrese Gibson.

### Story # 9.

#### IPhones and iPod Touches Proliferate

You have a phone already, or a portable media player. So why not read ebooks on your phone or mobile device?

More than 30 million iPhones have been sold; and more than 20 million portable media players known as the iPod Touch. That's 50 million units. One in every six Americans owns an iPhone or an iPod touch!

The new iPod Touch devices with Internet connectivity hold as much as 64 gigabytes of data. If the average-sized EPUB ebook is 500 kilobytes, then your iPod Touch could hold about 128,000 EPUB ebooks. Enough to get you through your summer reading list.

Story # 10.  
Free and Low-Cost Ebooks  
Multiply Like [Tribbles](#)

The biggest publishing story of the year 2009 is the proliferation of free and low-cost ebooks.

And not in the USA only. The [New Zealand Electronic Text Centre](#) (NZETC) collection contains more than 2,600 texts, and receives over 10,000 website visits every day. Many other nations have collections of ebooks that focus on their native authors.

[Europeana](#) (in a New York accent, it's pronounced "You're a piano!") connects you with more than 4.6 million digital items. You can view images, texts (books, newspapers, letters, diaries), sounds and videos. The website states that in 2010 they will host links to more than 10 million digital items.

Of course, it was all started by [Project Gutenberg](#) (PG), in 1971, only two years after the beginnings of the Internet. PG inspired two other enormous digital collections: the [Internet Archive](#), and [Google Books](#).

The glorious dream — that all the world's knowledge, and wisdom, will be readily available to every person on our planet — is moving closer and closer to reality. If only we have eyes to see, and sense to read.

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## Will DEPUB Devour EPUB?

Throughout 2009, the EPUB format has made enormous leaps toward the goal of becoming the standard format for ebooks and other electronically-published documents. Google released 1.5 million ebooks in EPUB; the new line of Sony Reader reading devices adopted EPUB; and publishers large and small are beginning to produce their ebooks in this friendly and flexible format.

The story that is not getting enough publicity — except, of course, in the blogosphere — is that most of the EPUB that is sold in your online ebookstores will be encrypted with that nemesis of reader's rights: DRM.

What can we call copy-protected, feature-reduced, EPUB ebooks? ... DEPUB.

EPUB was created to solve certain problems, to include valuable features, to view easily, and to share with others. If DRM disables these features, or restricts our access to them, then calling the format EPUB is a titanic stretch of the English language and our imaginations.

## [ 27 ]

## Why This Ebook Has No DRM

My readers are very important to me. I want you to read and to discuss my books. Not now, and not in ten thousand years would I want to fight you, to sue you, or to restrict your rights to an ebook that you have purchased.

Some authors — and some groups that represent authors — seem to believe that readers are their enemies. They promote the adding of DRM to ebooks, not realizing how simple it is to steal any ebook, even when these ebooks are “locked” with the best available measures.

Do I lock my house when I leave for the day? Sure, I do. There are a handful of people in my town who might walk in and steal my rubber duck. I like people; I believe that most people are honest and good. If I leave my door open, I don’t think that ten-thousand evil people will rush to my home and clear out everything. That’s what many publishers seem to think, “when they lock up their ebooks with DRM.

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- Damned Restrictive Measures;
- Dictators Reign Malevolently; and
- Don't Read Me.

Dear Reader Mine, read on: to learn more about DRM, and about how you can help authors and publishers to feel comfortable publishing their works without it.

## What is DRM ?

DRM (Digital Rights Management) refers to a method of protecting digital content that a publisher can apply to videos, music files and ebooks. Adding DRM has three drawbacks. Always, DRM makes your digital products cost more. Sometimes, the DRM does funny things to your computer. And often, DRM limits what you can do with your own purchase. For example, many DRM-afflicted ebooks do not allow you to print the files.

## One Calabash of Wine (A Story About Trust)

There's an African tale about a king who wanted to celebrate his wedding, so he invited all the members of his village to his grand hut, to enjoy a spectacular feast. He asked each person to bring one calabash of wine. (A calabash is a large gourd, which, when dried, can be used to carry liquids.) On the night of the feast, hundreds of persons lined up in front of the king's hut. Each one poured from his calabash into an enormous kettle. When the kettle had been filled to the top, the king's servant dipped a cup inside, and served one cup of wine to the king.

The king drank from the cup and then shouted: "It's a miracle!"

Hundreds of persons around him looked up and waited for the explanation.

"We have all heard," said the king, "that water can be changed to wine. Here we have a case of wine being changed to water!" And the king dipped his cup into the enormous kettle, and again there was nothing but water there.

The king understood the secret, and laughed out loud. And then slowly, the people understood, and they laughed, too. Each person

had thought that they could save some of their own resources. Instead of bringing wine to the king's kettle — each person added a gourd filled with water only. Each person had thought: “this is only one cup of water, only one. My contribution does not matter at all.”

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— Michael Pastore

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## Envoi

### The Island of Ebooks

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so you are old by the time you reach the  
    island,  
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,  
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Afterword:  
The Media's Best Kept Secrets  
About Books and eBooks

by  
Michael S. Hart  
Inventor of eBooks  
Founder, Project Gutenberg  
Co-Founder, World eBook Fair

Mainstream media is not telling you the truth about books or eBooks.

This can be powerfully illustrated with just two examples concerning the prices of books and numbers of eBooks.

Secret #1:  
Book Prices Up Faster Than Gas Prices

When I was a kid, and buying my first new paperbacks back around 1955 at 8 years old the average pricing was \$0.25.

A quarter.

A quarter was also the price of an average gallon of gas.

We are all painfully aware of gas price increases, as the media have relentlessly pounded this into our heads via a thousand headlines and a billion dollars in news coverage to make sure we know the price of gas today is 10 times as much as it was then.

The price of oil is an international buzzword.

What about books?

Today you go through the bookstores and see prices of \$10 [and more!] for the same titles that were \$0.25 then.

40 times as much. No press. No radio. No TV. No media of any kind has put any emphasis on the fact that pricing of books went up 4 times as fast as the price of gas.

My favorite example is the first James Bond book that was a family favorite at a quarter. When the new Bond movies started coming out the books were up to \$14–\$15.

The publishing industry has taken us to the mat far worse than the petroleum industry.

It's far more expensive to feed the tank between the ears than the one in your car, and

yet they have some nerve to ask why people aren't buying more books.

### Secret #2: “Million Seller” eBooks

eBook “Million Sellers” have been around for years, but a quick look through all the prophesying pundits would show that they never mention such things, but instead want the focus to only be on Amazon's Kindle and Sony's Reader.

For example, on just day one alone, The World eBook Fair, 2009 edition, gave away 50,000 copies of “Emma,” by Jane Austen, 32,000 of Louisa May Alcott's “Little Women,” and about 30,000 copies “Nostromo,” by Joseph Conrad. Follow those kinds of numbers for the 33 1/3 days the eBook Fair was in progress and you have “Million Seller” status in a period just over a single month.

Given the 133 1/3 days The World eBook Fair has been open over the past 38 months, it only takes about 7,500 eBooks per day to achieve “Million Seller” status, bringing many more book titles into play, not to mention that



there are multiple editions from multiple sources available, beyond just those counted above.

### Michael Pastore's “50 Benefits of eBooks”

The highly paid pundits don't want you to read this book, but, if you have read it, even if you have only gotten 1% of the potential value, you've already seen these pundits are totally on the wrong page. Such pundits want to have you be concerned with only the commercial eBooks, readers and such products counted up by accountants and MBAs, but not at all with the 10 million eBooks you can look at for no charge whatsoever already on the Internet [though your full access to many Google eBooks may be limited].

10 million free eBooks!

In forthcoming editions (to be updated twice every year— on September 8 and March 8) this book will point out such milestones of this nature that are not getting many press headlines they deserve.

After all, it's not Amazon's Kindle and

Sony's Reader that are changing the face of the eBook world. In fact they've not yet announced they have sold a million of these.

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GO FOR IT!!!

[Michael S. Hart](#)

September 8, 2009

Dateline: Cyberspace

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## Acknowledgments and Credits

To write a book is a difficult journey. The work requires escape from the everyday world, and complete concentration on the task. This joyful solitude is made possible by one's family. My brother's scintillating intelligence, and love of laughter, are an ever-present standard I attempt to emulate. My wife, the incomparable Dr. Ann Warde, made valuable suggestions about the book's design and content.

Special thanks to Michael S. Hart, "inventor of ebooks", and founder of Project Gutenberg. Michael read the first edition, made insightful comments, and wrote an inspiring Afterword.

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- Dr. Linda Reinfeld, for Japanese translations;
- David Rothman and Paul K. Biba, for their indispensable resource, TeleRead;
- Alexander Turcic for his indispensable resource, MobileRead;

For the image on this book's cover (The Thinker by Rodin), I am very grateful to the superb photographer, innoxius.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/innoxius/>.

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Thanks in advance to the forward-thinking persons who will review (or mention) this book in their blogs, websites, forums, newspapers.

To other persons who helped in various ways, I can offer only my wholehearted gratitude — and maybe a small discount on the paperback.

○ Claire & Seraphina; Mark Allen; Tom Blecher; Kathy & Rudi; Charles Elliot; Tony Gaenslen; Jenny Goldenberg; Dorothee Krahne; Robin Loev; Dena McCarthy; Barry Palm; Tim Reap; Don Reinfeld; Colin Wilson.

Michael Pastore

08 September 2009

Ithaca, New York

[EpublishersWeekly.net](http://EpublishersWeekly.net)

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## About the Companion Website

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