

Free research paper on impact of technology on the publishing industry

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The publishing industry is currently undergoing a state of transition due to the influence of digitization. While new formats of publishing are being introduced by developers on a regular basis, manufacturers are tasked with assembling new gadgets that can support these formats. These developments are offset by the formation of new business models by the publishing companies. Modern readers feel comfortable with the concept of eReaders and eBooks. However, this segment of consumers remains small when compared to those who still either prefer print or have not yet moved to digital books. The promotion of eBooks is limited geographically as well, with countries such as China and India - with large masses of population unable to afford eReaders - not showing sufficient interest in developing the industry. On the other hand, digital books have gained tremendous popularity in developed nations. In these locations, digital publishing faces several challenges pertaining to digital copyrights, piracy, and pricing. However, the inclusion of eReaders in most ' smartphones' today is likely to strengthen the industry.

Technology has had a profound impact on the publishing industry. Even though digital publishing in the early stages, the effects are all-encompassing. While some sectors have developed clear practices, others remain in an evolutionary phase . Within a limited period of time, digital publishing has managed to approach critical mass. The majority of the consumers in recent times understand the concept of eBooks as well as eReaders, due to large scale coverage by the media and electronic firms. The development and release of sophisticated, new eReaders in the global market has also drawn attention to the influence of digital technology on the

publishing sector .

The marvelous growth of the internet remains at the core of the digital impact on the publishing industry since the internet forms the support system for much of the digitization process of print publication, from eBook readers to commercial promotional efforts to alliances with educational institutions .

Despite the spread of electronic culture among readers and publishers, their knowledge of eBooks and eReaders seems to be limited since they tend to overlook the larger picture. Many consumers have been able to adapt to eBooks and eReaders but a large section is still unable to grasp the great concepts behind digital publishing. They remain ignorant of the advantages and disadvantages of reading electronic books over printed ones.

A striking difference has been noticed in the attitudes of the Western and Eastern countries towards eBooks and eReaders, especially the United States and China, respectively. While the former has amended the publishing industry to accommodate eBooks, the latter views digital publishing as a necessary evil. Thus, publishers in China exhibit less interest than their American counterparts in actively promoting the eBook market. They often express their doubts about the effect of digital on the industry .

There is no doubt that eBooks and eReaders are gaining importance throughout the world and may end in a breakthrough that alters the entire book industry. However, the full implications of this inevitable transformation are not yet understood and this makes it tough to gain a clear picture of the future market. Pricing and quality may play a large role in shaping the opinion of the public. It is necessary to determine the formats that will

become the norm for the publishing industry in future along with the extent of the change .

In order to get a clear idea of the opportunities, potential risks and importance of the digital transformation of the publishing industry, it becomes necessary to take the current trends in the book industry into account. The present leaders of the publishing industry include senior executives from various book publishing houses, online bookstores, physical bookstores, device manufacturers, intermediaries and libraries. A comprehensive analysis reveals that the publishing industry is on the verge of a breakthrough and eBooks are poised to achieve a large share of the mass market within a few years' time but numerous limitations still exist in terms of the spread of this development.

The promotion, development methods and decreasing price of eReaders have managed to attract the interest of customers since the device simulates the reading experience without many of the hassles associated with storage, safety and space. The behavioral patterns of buyers are changing as the internet becomes more prevalent in most of the spheres of life. Electronic devices have slowly integrated themselves into the lives of the public, becoming constant companions. Consumers have come to terms with the idea of carrying devices since they have familiarized themselves with technology and have become accustomed to reading onscreen. This makes them highly receptive to eReaders. Some electronics companies have developed gadgets that have contributed to raising the profile of eReaders and tablets in the modern world. The number of electronic books available is much greater than in the past and more content is becoming accessible on a

regular basis. The absence of proper content was responsible for hindering the spread of the eReader in the past .

It remains to be seen whether eBooks are going to be established in the field of professional books or not but most of the evidence points in its favour.

This should not come as a surprise since eBooks have already made significant contributions to revenue in that particular market segment for many years .

The e-book market is expanding at a tremendous pace across every publishing sector. This happens to shape the public perspective on what defines a book, how the public ' reads', academic standards, literacy and publishing. E-books have impacted the mode of communication as well as the way people view information and learning. The e-book must not be considered as another form of paper but instead a defining factor for literacy, access to information and learning. Reading has not lost any of its appeal in the modern world, but the paper book seems to be losing its position of as a means for the presentation and organization of information .

The main reason for the popularity of the eBook is the freedom it offers from the printed hard copy format that normally defines a book as well as its capacity for embedded links and information. The eBook has lots more potential than its printed predecessor, being a collection of information that borrows from the structure of a print copy. Therefore, the eBook not only manages to retain the element of familiarity for the sake of the reader but it combines the form to the internet resources to develop something denser with opportunities and information to connect with others, compared to a print book. So, the eBook is not merely a read-only object but something that

possesses an unlimited library of social media connectivity and resources . Steve Jobs, the late founder of Apple Inc., had declared back in 2008 that people have lost interest in reading. Though he might have been partially true at the time, eBooks and eReaders have fuelled resurgence in the book buying and reading habits of people. The public has now begun to do more and various kinds of reading. In fact, Jobs might have been more accurate had he predicted the demise of the conventional model of publishing. Publishers must be able to overcome digital and copyright issues in order to address author support and user requirements. Otherwise, they might find themselves as readers and authors find innovative ways to get in touch with each other .

eBooks would not have become accessible to the public without the development of eReaders. The eReader provides customers with an easy, computer-free reading experience. The devices use the electronic ink or eInk feature which enables them to replicate the experience of reading an actual book due to the stable and precise characteristics. eInk displays have no need for backlight and can be read comfortably, even in direct sunlight. eReaders are extremely handy and portable since they consume very little battery. A fully recharged gadget can be used for a duration of several weeks, based on the intensity of reading .

It is wrong to consider eReaders as a recent phenomenon. They were introduced as early as the ' 90s and the early ' 00s but the public felt that the devices were too expensive in light of the technological limitations. Within a decade, however, eReaders had been developed that could be used to purchase books at the push of a button. This facility encouraged impulse

buying since it was constantly available and easy to operate. The level of connectivity, simplicity and integration with digital book retailers offered by these eReaders has proven to be rather attractive. Consumers have access to large number of books as well as a variety of international and national periodicals and newspapers. In addition, some online bookstores offer numerous free, public-domain books. In general, the cost of eBooks is almost the same in various parts of the world .

Though the eBook is still in its infancy, it poses a serious threat to the publishing industry, particularly for mass market publishers. The attractiveness of the devices and the availability of varied content will considerably enhance the development of the digital publishing market. Customers are offered numerous choices when it comes to selecting the right eReader. The devices address a large section of consumers, and allow eBooks to be downloaded directly from the internet.

The number of eBooks available to download appears to increasing daily. Large publishing houses, in particular, have emphasized the expansion of their eBook portfolio, and the majority of them now publish all their new books in digital and print format. However, the process of digitization poses new problems for publishers. Most of them possess the marketing rights only for the audio and print content, especially for older books. Hence, fresh negotiations with the authors are necessary for the digital rights. These negotiations tend to fail often as the authors are unable to respond to the request of the publishers or they do not support the digital publishing format. They may also fail owing to the large discrepancies between the fees of the author as well as the prices that publishers are willing to pay. Moreover,

eBooks need a level of investment that may prove to be a burden for niche publishers .

eReaders usually offer a user-friendly experience but it was long thought that these models would lead to frustration and lack of acceptance since consumers happen to be critical about access restrictions. Additional updates and content increase the popularity of eReaders among customers .

Despite the factors that contribute to the increasing popularity of the eReader, there are certain market barriers. One of the most significant obstacles happens to be the cost of the electronic reading devices, the absence of compatibility between the devices and the digital limitations. The attractiveness of eReaders is still overshadowed by their price that makes them too expensive for the mass market. Online and physical bookstores tend to complain about the technical complexity of the gadgets and suggest that eReaders need to increase their intuitiveness. In case of publishing experts, however, technical complexity happens to be less important. They consider the main problem to be the willingness of the consumers to handle the issues connected with the new book reading devices. Even though some consumers like to hold a physical book in their hands and thumb through the pages, industry representatives feel that this attitude is bound to undergo a change once consumers have used eReaders and eBooks .

eReaders have been accused by traditional print book readers and publishers of wrecking the publishing industry. It is implied that the rise of digital readers and books marks a frightening change for the traditional publishing industry since the sales of book distribution and printing have been declining at a rapid pace ever since the rise of digital publishing. It

cannot be denied that the introduction of eReaders has changed the face of the publishing industry to a considerable extent. However, it would be wrong to state that they have not helped to generate interest in reading among a wider section of the public .

In the age of technology, eBooks and eReaders have helped foster a new generation of bookworms. The value chain in the publishing industry is being changed due to eBooks and though numerous challenges will present themselves to all the parties involved, the opportunities will be equally great. Libraries, for instance, have tremendous potential in the promotion of eBooks. However, if they continue to consider themselves preservationists of physical pieces, they might not be able to keep up with the new eBook platforms. They need to work in harmony with the concept of digital publishing instead of resisting it; otherwise, their existence might be threatened in the future .

The publishing industry and the public of the United States have embraced the new formats of reading faster than any other nation in the world. eBooks have become the permanent and natural choice along with print books. The publishers have responded in an effective manner to the fast-growing acceptance of the eReaders and expanded the concept of books. The growth rates in the United States indicate the popularity of eBooks and apps. From 0.6 per cent in 2008, the total share of eBooks has risen to almost 6.4 per cent in 2010 in the trade market. Dedicated eReaders and multifunctional devices have become the book format of choice in the States in recent times while computers have lost ground. Revenues of print books, especially hardcovers, have decreased in recent times. The rise of digital textbooks has

cemented the position of the digital publishing industry in the educational sector. They have proved effective for students attending distance learning schools, traditional degree programs and for-profit institutions. Digital textbooks will soon become mainstream as is evident from the increasing online usage of educational content. The lack of price regulation in the United States is one of the key market parameters in the United States . The development of eBooks in China occurred much faster than the States, in the 1990s. It flourished into an industry almost a decade later. China at present has one of the biggest single-language electronic libraries in the world. This is owing to the fact that apart from eBook integrators and publishing houses, several libraries have also digitalized and offered eBook services. Libraries in China tend to digitize special collections needed by users into home grown eBooks. However, in contrast, the introduction and usage of foreign eBooks in China has not become a widespread trend. The political system in China also presents some hassles in the approach to book publishing in the nation. Not only do publishers need to stick to the publishing rules laid down by the government of the country, they may be subject to censorship if the government feels the need. Thus, the interference of the government in the publishing industry affects its growth . The impact of eReaders and eBooks on print book sales has received lots of attention in the publishing industry . Canada, especially, presents an example where digitization has affected every aspect of the Canadian book publishing industry. The Association of Canadian Publishers as well as individual members are in the process of developing measures capable of meeting the challenge of dealing with the impact of digital publishing. The

recommendations focus on helping publishers remain up-to-date and evolve their business tactics in an effort to keep up with the rapid change of pace through numerous professional development opportunities. One of the drawbacks faced by the Canadian publishing industry happens to be its small scale. Made up in large part by a number of resource-strapped, small to mid-sized companies, the Canadian publishing industry needs to secure additional resources without which they will not be able to develop their skills and corporate capacity to adapt to an environment that is changing fast. They need to form new business methods .

Conclusion

eBooks signify both the present and the future. They give customers access to features that printed books will find impossible. eReaders will not just transform the reading of a single book; it will provide the public with the capacity to read a passage from any existing book at any time of the day. The facility to click on the hyperlink, experience multimedia, share passages and add notes makes them indispensable and this pace will accelerate in future. The development of new devices other than eReaders, capable of supporting eBooks, will serve to promote their benefits. eBooks have their fair share of pros and cons but it cannot be denied that they present innumerable opportunities for the publishing industry. It seems likely that the future scenario will witness printed books and eBooks existing side by side. In some instances, print editions will replace digital editions and vice versa. In short, they will be complementary to one another. eBooks can serve as replacement for printed books in case of travel and special interest books along with areas in which just sections of books are read.

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