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SUPERBOOK Research Project at UCL

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In practice, scholars use a much wider range of digitally delivered content and materials to achieve their research, teaching and learning goals. Determining how these digital resources are used is vital for commercial and academic reasons. We need to know how scholars and students use this online resource and whether the emergence of the eBook marks the beginning of the end for the paper textbook.

It is also important for publishers to establish what kinds of business models will work best for eBooks. Internet users are accustomed to receiving all kinds of content and services for free. Publishers cannot survive in that kind of market. Users must expect to pay for access to eBooks, but how much and in what ways?

There has been much talk about the potential of eBooks, especially in a higher education context and the need for user studies of eBooks by staff and students has been articulated strongly and recommended in a number of the JISC-funded research reports. But a lot of the information available is based upon studies of insufficient depth and robustness. Traditional print-runs of academic titles will diminish to one-off, on-demand volumes. Research will take on new forms, with monographs, theses, and dissertations being at times entirely digital, including film clips, audio samples, and hyperlinks.

ATG: What do you do for fun and what do you read in your spare time?

PA: For fun, I listen to more music than Nipper, crave Tarheel basketball when it's not in season, love to fish from my kayak, and play Scrabble with friends at Cold Spring, New York's finest, the Foundry Café; every chance I get. As far as reading I try to keep one fiction and one nonfiction going. Right now, though, I'm grinding away only at Stephen Pinker's Blank Slate. The Modern Denial of Human Nature. Averaging two paragraphs per night before falling asleep, I hope to finish that by Christmas 2012. My last nonfiction was Dan Brown's Digital Fortress; nothing else's in the wings. 🤚

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