June 2003

Old Wine in New Bottles: Free eBooks on the Internet and Print On Demand, The New Face of Out-of-Print Books

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Recommended Citation

Riley, John (2003) "Old Wine in New Bottles: Free eBooks on the Internet and Print On Demand, The New Face of Out-of-Print Books," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 15: Iss. 3, Article 9.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4108>

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and several other good popular writers. He paid about \$6 to \$8 a copy for these when he bought them by the carton, most of them left over from personal appearance tours and signings at bookstores. When I last checked there were over 500 copies of **Elmore Leonard** or **Robert B. Parker** signed books on **Alibris** and **ABE**. The bookseller who bought these signed copies admits his investment is now essentially worthless; it costs more to store the books than it would to recycle them.

3 The vast majority of book buyers are not collectors. They are readers, libraries, businesses, researchers, museums, government institutions, nostalgia buyers, etc. who have little or no interest in the o.p. book trade as such. Many have probably never considered entering a used book store. In other words, they are just people, companies, and institutions that want to buy specific books. This appears to be good news until you consider that it takes far more money to reach these buyers than it does to reach collectors. That is because book collectors have always known about the **Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America**, **Interloc**, **ABE**, and individual booksellers and shops that trade in books of interest to collectors because they read the same magazines, go to the same book fairs, and talk to the same people booksellers do. And the collector market is still very small and probably will remain so for a long time. The public market is, however, huge. It represents millions, possibly hundreds of millions, of current and future book buyers.

One problem is that these buyers may purchase only one or two books a year, or a few books over a lifetime. Even so, the opportunity is enormous, but so is the problem of reaching these customers. "Customer Acquisition Costs" is a phrase heard a good deal in the Internet world. What it means is that it costs a certain amount of money to find a person who comes to your site and buys something. A couple of years ago, it was not uncommon to hear companies talking of spending \$100 to \$150 to get each customer to their site to make a purchase. Supposedly, if they had a good experience, the customers would come back, and those high costs could be spread across several purchases. But maybe not.

For listing services, the problem and the expense of reaching end buyers doesn't really exist, because their customers are not book buyers but book sellers who list books on their sites and pay subscription and listing fees. The money these services get from bookseller/subscribers goes back into keeping the site running, upgrading computers, buying more communications bandwidth, hiring more customer service reps, developing software, etc. The listing service derives no direct benefit from getting more book buyers unless it receives a percentage of those sales as either a fee or a commission. It does derive an indirect benefit from getting consumers to purchase books in that more dealers will list with the service if other subscribers are selling books.

Not All Bad News

Since books are one of the easiest, most natural commodities to sell on the Internet (along with CDs, Videos and DVDs), more and more large and small companies are getting into the Internet bookselling business. Just as it was initially easy for book listing services to start up, now individual booksellers are both cooperating with and at times competing against the larger internet book companies, including **Amazon**, **Barnes & Noble**, **eBay's Half.com**, **Buy.com**, **Alibris**, etc., etc. I predict that as these large companies grow their customer lists and their sales, the number of people buying from traditional listing services will dwindle. Collectors will continue to use listing services and any other venues that may have books they want, including auction sites. However, as a rule collectors purchase one book, or very few, at a time. But buyers, including individuals, businesses and libraries, of more general books — fiction, self-help, how-to, reference — are migrating to larger, more service oriented sites. Customers want what customers want, and most Internet buyers want easy one-stop shopping, low prices, and secure transactions. They also want interesting jargon-free content, easier and more natural searching, and they mostly want books that have been published in their lifetimes.

Internet booksellers have also learned much from their customers in the library market, and this customer feedback has caused some of the larger sellers to add services and features directed specifically to the library market. In the mass of books available for sale these days, it is unusual for libraries to find an individual bookseller who has most or all of the titles they want, and that causes a problem because, as most libraries tell us, each book bought from a different vendor costs them more money in processing and staff time. It is, therefore, both reasonable and necessary for libraries to purchase as many books as they can from one vendor.

Having said that, it is difficult even for larger companies to create the systems and services librarians need to get their jobs done quickly and efficiently while staying within budget guidelines. One of the values the new breed of Internet booksellers can bring is library-specific services, like customized invoicing, consoli-

dated shipping, and other services libraries want if they are going to keep their cost per book at a reasonable level. An obvious example is the servicing of want lists. Anyone can have a stack of cards or a computer printout at hand and search the Internet for books. All that takes is time, one or many people, and a good deal of patience. This process, or a variation of it involving printed catalogs, has been employed for many years and is still useful providing the list of books wanted is relatively small.

But what happens when a library needs to replace hundreds or thousands of books damaged in a flood or fire? What does an institution do when it needs to add a library to support a new research or educational program? Searching one-at-a-time for a few dozen books is relatively easy; searching for 15,000 is possible but very time-consuming and expensive. Libraries with a sophisticated technical staff might be able to create a system that will automatically search for books wanted, but even if they do, the purchasing of those books from dozens or even hundreds of different vendors still does not address the other expenses involved in purchasing, delivery, guarantees, and forms processing from multiple vendors.

Wants matching is only one example of how new Internet-based companies like **Alibris** and the systems they are creating can help libraries that are chronically faced with budget and staffing shortfalls. Other projects and processes will be developed as libraries identify areas of need, and companies committed to serving this market work with librarians to provide more efficient services at a lower cost.

The changes that have taken place in just the last five years are dramatic, even revolutionary. Sometimes we hear people talk fondly of the good old days. My memory of those days was talking with an acquisitions librarian at **The Ohio State University**, where I taught and chaired the library committee for the English Department, about finding out-of-print books for faculty members doing research. She swiveled her chair around and pointed to a tall stack of large boxes behind her that were filled with printed catalogs from booksellers. "Help yourself," she said.

We have come a long way from that!

Old Wine in New Bottles: Free eBooks on the Internet and Print On Demand, The New Face of Out-of-Print Books

by **John Riley** (Sales Manager, Eastern Book Company) <jdriley@attbi.com>

Old Wine in New Bottles: The Rise of the Free I-Book

It may seem incongruous to have an article about online books in an issue of **ATG** that is dedicated to out-of-print books, but the many digitizing projects now under way will give new

life to many valuable out-of-print books. These new scanning technologies and digitizing projects are giving universal access to many books that would be almost impossible to obtain otherwise. As a reader, book vendor and

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bookstore owner for over 30 years, my heart lies with the printed book, but the ability to search across thousands of rare and hard to find books online is an irresistible draw.

One of the oldest and most interesting projects at this time is the **Online Books Page** (<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu>) located at the **University of Pennsylvania**. It was founded by **John Mark Ockerbloom** in 1993 at **Carnegie Mellon University**. When he came to the **University of Pennsylvania** as their Digital Library Planner the site came with him. He is the sole editor and project manager, and he operates with no funding except for the library's hosting of the Website. He was inspired early on by **Project Gutenberg**, which is a cooperative effort to put copyright free books online. **Project Gutenberg** now has nearly 10,000 books online and they are adding over 50 new titles per week. Most of their titles are listed and indexed on **Ockerbloom's** site.

The **Online Books Page** Website is in actuality a directory of primary sites that host the texts of the books. **Mr. Ockerbloom** selects and indexes the titles that are listed. Only English language titles are listed now and he has managed to list over 18,000 titles with another estimated 10,000 online titles to go. He estimates that there are several hundred thousand online books available on a pay per view basis. But the number of books available free online continues to go up everyday, so it is really impossible to estimate how many such books are available. To give an example of how fast this field is opening, **Carnegie Mellon** is working on the **Universal Library Project** that is scheduled to put one million copyright free books online in the next five years! (More about them later.)

All of the books in the **Online Books** site are copyright free, either in the public domain or allowed copyright free by publishers. Books published before 1923 in the U.S. are in the public domain. A growing number of publishers are following the lead of such publishers as **National Academy Press** who has found that providing free access to their books actually boosts sales of their printed books. There are other publishers who have found this to be true as well. **University of California** has allowed access to some of their titles in order to stimulate interest. **Mr. Ockerbloom** notes that many of the titles on his site have links to "Print On Demand" publishers.

Most of the books that the **Online Books Page** link to are scanned in, but some people have typed them in (Shades of Borges' *Funes the Memorius*, the tale of the writer who writes *Don Quixote* again word for word, but finds it to be a very different work). The best online book sites have HTML as well as page image versions of their titles. **Mr. Ockerbloom** points out that HTML versions are easier to read, but PDF files are easier to print. Within the site's database books can be searched by title, author, LC classification and general subject area. New listings are another way to search the database.

Books as diverse as *The Dance of Death in Pictures*, *The Nuclear Energy Option* (1990, Plenum) and *How to Use the Federal FOI Act* all appear in the New Listings. Books chosen for inclusion have to meet the criteria of actually being in a library somewhere. "Google" also picks up large portions of the books. For example, with the words "...reader, I married him," a key phrase in *Jane Eyre*, **Google** will take you to the text of that book in the **Online Books Page** site.

The site gets over a million hits per month from all over the world. Many areas of the U.S. and overseas that have few libraries have found the site invaluable and **Mr. Ockerbloom** regularly gets emails from small libraries thanking him for his service. Some of the site's users increase the size of the font to produce instant "Large Print" versions. There are other readers who use software that allows them to listen to the books and others who translate the books into Braille. The flexibility and potential of online books is just beginning to be realized.

Another interesting project that **Mr. Ockerbloom** is working on is the "**Genizah Project**" to study thousand of pages of ancient Hebrew texts found in the **Genizah** (storage) chamber of the **Ben Ezra Synagogue** in Cairo in the late 19th century. The documents date from about 1000 to 1250 and represent "a treasure trove from the golden age of cultural and intellectual productivity." The project is a collaboration between libraries and museums scattered throughout the world that hold various portions of the trove. They have digitized their holdings and put them online, giving access to all of the fragments. It is then possible for researchers to work to match the fragments and to try to piece together whole texts like a virtual jigsaw puzzle. As an international project this is a scenario that can only be carried out online.

"A Celebration of Women Writers" can also be found at **Online Books**. It is a collaborative effort of **Mary Mark Ockerbloom** and her husband to create a comprehensive listing of women writers from all countries and all historical periods. Writings include novels and poetry as well as travelogues, scientific treatises, political manifestoes and other wide ranging topics. Authors can be searched by time period, such as 3000 BC-1000 AD, 11th century, 12th century and so on up to the 20th century. They can also be searched geographically for a wide ranging number of countries, from Russia, France, and England to Belize, Papua-New Guinea and Rwanda, to name only a small portion. The section on American authors is very extensive and includes full texts by **Harriet Beecher Stowe**, **Louisa May Alcott**, and **Gertrude Stein** as well as many more hard to find texts, such as *The Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851-52* by **Louise Clappe** or *Studies in the Sources of J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings* by **Gloria Ann St. Clair**. Most

authors have a biography and a bibliography and within the bibliographies can be found free online books linked to the title.

As mentioned earlier, the **Universal Library** (<http://ul.cs.cmu.edu>) or **Million Book Library** project at **Carnegie Mellon** is just getting off the ground, but they plan on reaching their goal of putting one million copyright free books online within five years. Their more long range goal is to put 10 million books online within ten years. They have received initial funding from the **National Science Foundation** and they are working in collaboration with universities in China and India that are doing the actual scanning. Partners include **Stanford University of California**, **Indiana University**, the **National Agriculture Library**, **OCLC**, **Pennsylvania State**, the **University of Washington** and 17 libraries in India and China.

The breadth of their vision is truly audacious. The project seeks to make all one million books free and available to anyone at anytime. The founders seek to aid countries with poor libraries and encourage research. The research they hope to foster is not only within information-poor countries but also in the advanced field of managing massive databases. They project the final database to consist of 50 petabytes (a petabyte being 1,024 terabytes). The site will be mirrored at many sites around the world, allowing universal access.

To get the books online they will be running 100 scanners on a three shift workload with each scanner producing 6,000 to 10,000 pages per day. The **Minolta PS7000** they are employing can scan books without having to disband them. Books are being shipped from US libraries and from libraries in China and India.

I hope to go into more depth about this project in a future paper. In the meantime, check out their Website and those of many complementary online book sites such as the **Electronic Text Center** at the **University of Virginia** (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu>), the **Internet Public Library** at the **University of Michigan** (www.ipl.org), the **Making of America Project** also at the **University of Michigan** (<http://moa.umdl.umich.edu>), and of course, the granddaddy of them all **Project Gutenberg** (<http://gutenberg.net>).

Saving Books, Saving a Culture: the National Yiddish Book Center's Digitizing Project

The **National Yiddish Book Center** (www.yiddishbookcenter.org) is pioneering the resuscitation of out-of-print books with POD (print on demand). Since 1998, they have been digitizing the books from their library and offering them as POD books. Not only is the **Center** saving rare books, they are saving a culture and a literary heritage. The Yiddish language and culture have been given new life by the **Center**.

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The **National Yiddish Book Center** is a combination library, cultural center and museum located on the campus of **Hampshire College** in Amherst, Massachusetts. It is housed in a group of connected buildings resembling a shtetl (a small Jewish town or village, formerly found in Eastern Europe of the 19th century). The **Center** was founded in 1980 by **Aaron Lansky** who was then a student of Yiddish literature at **McGill University**. During his studies he realized that many of the books written in Yiddish were being discarded as native speakers grew older and succeeding generations stopped speaking the language. He began a focused effort to save the remaining books before they disappeared. There was even a legendary midnight foray to New York City on a phone tip to rescue books from a dumpster that reflected the urgency of their work. **Mr. Lansky** was aided by "zamlers" throughout the world. **Zamler** is Yiddish for "compiler." "It means a person who gathers scattered things to form a collection. **Zamlers** make their collections pursuing a mission, passionately committed to their purpose," **Mr. Lansky** stated.

It is estimated that there are approximately 35,000 discreet titles in Yiddish, not counting pamphlets and other ephemera. The **Center** has now collected over 1.5 million copies of those books and they have stored them in their library and warehouse. They have shared their collection by donating books to over 450 libraries and institutions throughout the world. They continue to receive over 1,000 books per week from all over the world. They recently received a collection from Zimbabwe where a Jewish farming community had died out.

For nearly 1,000 years Yiddish was the language of over three-fourths of the Jewish world. It was spoken by 11 million people before the Holocaust and it is now spoken by around 4 million people worldwide. Yiddish is used by nearly 250,000 people in the U.S. (mainly in Orthodox and Hassidic communities), 750,000 in Russia, and in communities throughout the world. Yiddish (which simply means Jewish) is written in the Hebrew script while its vocabulary is basically German with borrowings from Hebrew, Slavic and the Romance languages. It was the *lingua franca* for the **Ashkenazi Jews** throughout Eastern Europe and it reached a peak of literary expression between 1864 and 1939. The beginning of this modern period of Yiddish literature is popularly attributed to the works of **Mendel Mocher Sforim** ("Mendele the Itinerant Book Seller") who wrote stories about the common people and life in the shtetls. Another important writer of that period was **Sholom Aleichem**. In the U.S., Yiddish was central to Jewish theater, film, radio, journalism and literature during a period between 1880 and 1930. In 1978 the Yiddish writer **Isaac Bashevis Singer** won the **Nobel Prize** for literature.

We all speak some Yiddish everyday, probably without realizing it. The pithy phrases and down to earth vocabulary of the language are a natural for Americans. Words such as **Mike Myer's** "firklemp," as well as nosh, schlep,

kibitz, zaftig, golem, and less obviously Yiddish words, such as glitch, mishmash and klutz have all entered the mainstream of English where they give us a glimpse into the earthiness, humor and directness of the language. Check out **Leo Rosten's** *Joys of Yiddish* or www.ariga.com/yiddish.shtml for more examples.

With the rebirth of interest in Yiddish the **Center** soon found itself pressed to supply the growing need for books. Even with more than 1.5 million books in storage, the **Center** experienced more demand than ever for copies of their scarce titles. Trying to preserve their thousands of books in storage became a pressing issue as well. After studying some of the newer technologies available for preserving their collection, they decided to digitize the collection and offer the books as Print on Demand. Two of the key people in starting and running the project are **Faye Zipkowitz** and **Gabriel Hamilton**. **Ms. Zipkowitz**, the cataloger at the **Center** and a long time educator and librarian, initiated the cataloging and organizing of the collection, while **Hamilton** has spearheaded the digitizing and POD effort.

Now over 11,000 scarce Yiddish books have been digitized and they are offered as Print on Demand books. The **Center** plans on digitizing all 35,000 extant titles (20,000 from their own collection and 15,000 borrowed from other libraries). The seed money for the project was given by **Steven Spielberg** and it has been named in his honor as the "Steven Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library." **Spielberg** was drawn to the concept of preserving the Jewish heritage in a new medium. Nearly 3 million dollars has been donated since his initiative.

Storage, scanning and digitizing is handled by the **Pitney Bowes Company** at their Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania plant. The books are all printed in a standard 6x9 inch format on acid free paper. Depending on the

fragility of the pages, it can take from 40 minutes to 2 1/2 hours to scan a book, but only 3-4 minutes to print one from the stored text. The books all share the design of the renowned book designer **Paul Bacon**. One of the added benefits of having the texts stored digitally is the ability to easily create anthologies and collections. The flexibility that comes with digitizing will also allow the **Center** to offer their texts on the Web one day.

VTLS manages the project for the **Center**, handling cataloging and database management. Books can be purchased from the **Center's Website** (www.yiddishbooks.org). The cost is \$29.00 per volume or \$21.75 for members. The turnaround time from ordering through printing to delivery is an astounding three to four days.

The latest project that the **Center** has undertaken is the preservation of a collection of "Yizkor Books," memorial books produced after World War II to collect documents from vanished villages, cities and neighborhoods. Survivors pooled memorabilia, maps, birth certificates and other documents and then printed them in facsimile in beautiful large format editions for the sponsoring association. These volumes were printed in very short print runs and so are very rare. Approximately 800 of these **Yizkor Books** are known to exist and they are in growing demand mainly for the primary source social history that they represent. **VTLS** is managing the scanning of these volumes.

As reported at the time: "**Aaron Lansky** finds it 'sweet' that such a venerable literature is leading the way into the future of book preservation and distribution." Every day we read more about scanning, digitizing and offerings of POD collections from libraries, archives and museums worldwide. It is truly a renaissance for out-of-print books.

Out of the Box and Into the Bookstore: Non-Traditional Use of the Bookstore

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Abstract

This paper deals with the use of the bookstore in the library acquisitions process, focusing on two non-traditional projects that utilized a large discount wholesaler and library-sponsored faculty book-buying trips to retail bookstores. We hope to show through our own experiences that in certain circumstances libraries can benefit by stepping out of the usual acquisitions channels.

Overview of Bookstore Use

Libraries use bookstores for a variety of reasons. Bookstores can be a good source for materials of local interest, especially items published by small local or regional publishers that may not be carried by the jobbers. And, of course, libraries have long turned to used bookstores for out-of-print titles, although typically the transaction is conducted over the phone,

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