
BARISTA

heartstarters for the hungry mind

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JUNE 13, 2004

THE RETURN OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PRINTER

We are waiting for the book publishing industry to be truly transformed by digitisation. The [e-Book](#) hovers on the edge of large scale possibility while text is still printed on paper, shipped around the world, offered in bookshops and then taken off to the warehouse of shame, there to be remaindered or simply pulped.

I grew up with the idea that books were somehow permanent, were a form of immortality for the writer. Now, if you don't grab it when you see it, the thing disappears forever.

The [NYT](#) is detailing the various print on demand options, which reduce vanity publishing to very short repeatable runs, with some risks and profits shared by publisher and writer.

Perhaps the most intriguing version is Victor Celerio's Instabook machine, where bookshops can print a proper book of your MS complete with cover and cover art, ready for the bookshelf.

Costs? "\$150 for printing 10 copies of any work up to 200 pages. Larger books are priced higher, and subsequent 10-book orders are discounted. All royalties are kept by the author. The store also offers editing and marketing services through associates at an additional cost." In US dollars, of course. For academic texts, I think that is generally **cheaper** than conventional publishing.

"Customers can also choose to print any of 10,000 public-domain titles stored on InstaBook's servers. Using a high-speed Internet connection, the store downloads the file and prints the title within minutes.

Mr. Boyer believes that the print-on-demand machine helps distinguish independent booksellers from the large discount chains. "Our goal is to have lots of booksellers across the country hooked into a print-on-demand network," he said. "Anything that makes us different from the chain bookstores is useful."

I don't think it will last, because the e-Book will become ubiquitous in the end. But it is a step...

(via [Library link of the day](#))

Posted by barista at June 13, 2004 05:35 PM

Posted to

COMMENTS

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And I think you're wrong, e-Books will sweep away paper around about the time robot maids start vacuuming our carpets.

Posted by: John Hardy at June 15, 2004 01:31 PM

I'm not talking about the death of the LP. It's more like the relationship between live and recorded music. It's everywhere but real is special...

And digital publishing offers colour and graphics and pictures... and movement and song if we want it.

Posted by: [David Tiley](#) at June 15, 2004 01:52 PM

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