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## Instant Gratification

New print-on-demand equipment could change book buying habits.

By *Erin Malone*  
for *Office.com*

**Nov. 22, 1999** — When you think of bookstores like [Borders](#) or [Barnes and Noble](#), you probably picture room-length bookshelves filled with tomes of every topic, from classic literature to do-it-yourself henna tattooing, all printed and available for immediate purchase.

When Victor Celorio pictures a bookstore, he very likely sees something more like a Kinko's. Celorio, president the [InstaBook Corporation](#) in Gainesville, Fla., has engineered a piece of equipment that he promises will eventually be like "having a Library of Congress in your bookstore." And it takes up about as much room as a photocopier machine.

It's a publish-on-demand bookmaker — an instant bookmaker, if you will — that allows a customer to print a book at the store while she waits. For consumers, this type of equipment could mean never having to wait for the bookstore to order a volume they don't carry or have run out of. For writers, it could mean never having their books go out of print. And for publishers, it might just eradicate some of the most difficult aspects of getting a book into the market.

"InstaBook solves the three major problems of the publishing industry — storage, distribution, and the extensive capital layout that is required to publish a book," Celorio says.

With Celorio's patented invention, books would be stored as digital text, thus eliminating the need to store physical books and making the problem of distribution non-existent. Books would be printed only when the customer orders them. Customers could search an online catalog of titles from home on the network or at the store. Celorio's machine does the rest. When the system is initially installed, Celorio, who produces the catalog, will have 10,000 titles available, and is expecting at least 100,000 titles by the end of the year 2000. Publishers

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retain the copyrights to the book. It's simply stored as a digital file in the InstaBook Maker, or on the publisher's own server for download, if they prefer.

"The book is unloaded, formatted, printed, bound " Celorio says. "Our [system] is automatic, click one time and that's it." InstaBook perfect-binds the book, and hard or soft covers are available, although soft cover is more economical.

Most importantly for publishers, Celorio estimates that the cost per book would be around 75 cents. Bookstores would then set a price taking into account the royalty the publisher sets for their book and the production costs, and the profit they hope to make. The initial purchase price of equipment is around \$29,000, or it can be leased for \$650 per month.

Right now, Celorio's equipment has been placed in publishers' offices to "work the kinks out," but if all goes well the first 200 systems will be installed early next year at both bookstores and publishing companies.

The equipment is a boon to booksellers, according to Celorio, because bookstores will be able to keep a higher percentage of the total book sale and offer a bigger selection while reducing overhead. They also will be able to market and promote a book without wondering if the publisher will print enough copies to make specific titles available to them. Publishers would reduce their production costs while selling titles they might not normally have sold.

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