

eBook Digest



A note about this archive: I wrote and published the eBook Digest on the Internet daily from January 1 to May 12, 2001. Although some of the links will go out of date, the digest can still be read chronologically as a timeline of the growth of the e-book industry during that period.

When I created the digest, the acceleration of news stories about electronic publishing was making it harder to keep up with the news. The news stories were also scattered over a number of sites, and often disappeared after a few days—too much information, vanishing too quickly. The fugitive nature of Web postings meant, in addition, that there might not be a coherent or lasting archive of the rise and growth of e-publishing. I designed the digest to fill the need for a short, quick-to-read record of the industry: e-book news in brief. The digest also covered news outside the United States, as e-books were quickly becoming a global phenomenon. But in May I had to stop publishing the digest; the economic downturn had made it unlikely I would find a sponsor, and the digest was too time-consuming for me to continue doing it on my own.

The eBook Digest is available in an HTML format:

timestwopublishing.com/ebookdigest.htm

In this PDF version of the digest, the Web pages are collected into a single document to allow for easy searching across the entire archive.

—*Donnali Fifield*
Times Two Publishing Company, San Francisco

November 15, 2001

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eBook Digest

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eBook Digest



A summary of the latest developments in e-publishing

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Author's note: the eBook Digest appeared daily on the Web from January 1 to May 12, 2001. The archives for the digest are linked above. I am now a news contributor for eBookWeb.org, the first industry-sponsored e-book news and community site.

For current news, check the site's "News Briefs":



And while you are still at my site, take some time to look at what else is available at the Times Two Publishing Company.

—*Donnali Fifield*



Times Two Audio

(sound clips available for both recordings)

Recorded conversations:

[Marcel Marceau](#)[Jean Cocteau](#)

Binary Books



William & Wendell: A Family Remembered by Donnali Fifield, a critique of the therapy-based view of grief [more](#) ▶

The William Fifield Collection

Digital reissues of published works by William Fifield



In Search of Genius, conversations on the creative process with Picasso, Cocteau, Dalí, and other twentieth-century artists and writers [more ▶](#)



Modigliani, a biography of the artist, with interviews conducted with members of the artist's family [more ▶](#)



Jean Cocteau par Jean Cocteau, a book-length interview of the artist, originally published in France [more ▶](#)

- Fiction, essays, short stories, and wine writings:
[The William Fifield Collection](#)

Finder's CD: Bay Area



"Finder's CD: Bay Area," a database directory of the San Francisco Bay Area [more ▶](#)

Articles on e-publishing (archived PDFs of the Web pages):

- ["Back in Circulation: Using the Web to Reissue Books"](#)
- ["Le Village eBook: A Guide to ePublishing at the Salon du Livre 2000"](#)

Donnali Fifield is the author of William & Wendell: A Family Remembered (Binary Books) and the daughter and literary executor of William Fifield (The William Fifield Collection).

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eBook Digest



A summary of the latest developments in e-publishing

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- [eBook Digest: April 2001](#)
- [eBook Digest: May 2001](#)



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eBook Digest



A summary of the latest developments in e-publishing

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January 2001

January 1

Publishers Weekly publishes its first **New Century Roundtable**, a series of discussions by publishing professionals on the book industry. The topic for the first roundtable: Jason Epstein's *Book Business: Publishing, Past, Present, and Future*.

[more ►](#)

In "**Beyond E-Books: Glimpses of the Future**," *PW* reporter Roxane Farmanfarmaian reports on upcoming reading technologies. [more ►](#)

January 3

British self-publishing service **NoSpine.com** releases a survey on e-publishing and consumers' e-book buying and formatting preferences. [more ►](#)

In a survey conducted by **Versaware** (versaware.com), 62% of college students say that they would prefer an electronic edition of a textbook to a print edition.

Scorpius Digital Publishing (scorpiusdigital.com), an e-book publishing house founded by a mother-and-daughter team in Seattle, announces the publication of its first title, *Ariel*, an out-of-print science fiction work by Steven R. Boyett. Scorpius will publish exclusively in the Microsoft Reader format.

Bertelsmann opens online bookstores in Italy and China. [more ►](#)

According to a newswire story from SABI (South American Business Information) posted on northernlight.com, six new Internet publishing companies were launched in **Brazil** in 2000, in preparation for the arrival of e-books in the Brazilian market.

January 4

Barnes & Noble.com expands its role as a digital publisher, creating a new imprint, **Barnes & Noble Digital**, that will offer writers a higher royalty rate than any current major publisher: [New York Times](#) and [CNET News](#).

Media conglomerate Primedia (primedia.com) and Brill Media Holdings, which runs the Contentville.com site, announce a joint venture, **Media Central**, to be headed by Steve Brill.

An article by Ian Austen in the **New York Times** rates e-book devices and software. [more ►](#)

netLibrary (netlibrary.com) announces an agreement to provide its e-books to the member libraries of SOLINET, a library consortium for the Southeastern United States and the Caribbean.

John Wiley & Sons (wiley.com) and **McGraw-Hill Education** (mheducation.com) each announce plans to produce digital textbooks; the **West Group** (westgroup.com) announces that it will launch a pilot e-textbook program, using the goReader, at the University of Chicago and Wake Forest law schools.

January 5

eBookNet.com managing editor Wade Roush covers the publishing industry's reaction to the creation of **Barnes & Noble Digital**. [more ►](#)

January 6

At the 2001 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Samsung and **DataPlay** unveil product designs for portable consumer electronic devices using DataPlay's miniature optical discs that can store up to 500 MB of data. Image of the technology's application for e-books: [more ►](#)

Qubit introduces its Orbit Wireless Web Tablet at CES. Product image: [more ►](#)

January 8

The American Council of Learned Societies and seven university presses launch the **History E-Book Project**. [more ►](#)

Successful self-published author M.J. Rose posts an essay at eBookNet.com encouraging writers to consider self-publishing, "**Writers: Give up on Giving up.**" The article originally appeared at Themestream.com. [more ►](#)

January 9

Xlibris (xlibris.com) adds e-books, in the Glassbook format, to its services for authors.

In her Wired.com e-publishing column, M.J. Rose reports on **Barnes & Noble Digital; BookVirtual**, a company that designs e-books that look like traditional books; and **Fictionopolis**, which is publishing a free e-book poetry anthology that will be released in March with live readings held around the world. [more ►](#)

Kaplan (kaplan.com) and Simon & Schuster publish *M.B.A Part-Time* in a print and electronic format. The guide is the first e-book published by Kaplan.

BookTech East (<http://east.booktechexpo.com>) announces that it will feature a new pavilion dedicated to e-books at its upcoming trade show in New York, February 12-13; the **London Book Fair** (libf.com) will hold a two-day conference on e-publishing prior to the fair: ePubLondon, March 22-23.

January 10

TrustData (trustdatasolutions.com) introduces RightsShare P2P, a software application that combines digital rights management with peer-to-peer file sharing.

iUniverse.com receives \$21 million in investment funding from Warburg Pincus.

January 11

A report by Kendra Mayfield of Wired.com on the prognosis for e-books and digital textbooks: "**E-Book Forecast: Cloudy.**" [more ►](#)

Elmore Leonard announces that he will publish his first e-book, *Fire in the Hole*, on Contentville.com. The novella will go online January 17.

Bookface.com shuts down, citing an inability to raise financing.

January 12

A review of e-publishing guides by Michael Pastore, publisher of *BookLovers Review*: "**Books about eBooks: Sizing up the How-To Guides.**" [more ►](#)

January 15

ebrary.com announces that Dutch publisher Amsterdam University Press will make all of its titles, published in English and Dutch, available at the site.

Everybook (everybook.net) releases DocAble, a document management tool for PDF files.

New Straits Times of Malaysia reports that e-book devices, storing digital textbooks, have been introduced in 100 primary and secondary schools in **Malaysia**, according to the country's education ministry. The item appeared on the Asia Pulse newswire, featured on northernlight.com.

January 16

"From Rejection to E-Lation": two self-published authors find success online. [more ►](#)

A poet multiplies his readership by going online, noted in an article by *Chicago Tribune* cultural critic Julia Keller on author sites, **"Ether, Ether!"** [more ►](#)

January 17

On Demand 2001 (ondemandexpo.com), a conference for marketing professionals and graphic designers that will take place February 28-March 2 in New York City, announces that it will include a new forum on digital publishing. Among the presentations: "The Impact of e-Books and Digital Content on the Printing and Publishing Industry."

Lightning Source (lightningsource.com), which offers print-on-demand and e-book fulfillment services, enters into a partnership with Digital River, an e-commerce service provider. The partnership will allow Lightning to provide publishers with a complete, end-to-end suite of fulfillment and sales services.

Contentville Press launches Elmore Leonard's first book in an e-book-only format, *Fire in the Hole*. The book's promotional page includes interviews with Leonard and sound clips from his books. [more ►](#)

Fictionwise.com signs up seven new authors, acquiring nearly 100 more works. Several of the authors are critically acclaimed science fiction writers, winners of the Hugo and Nebula awards.

January 18

Sharp releases the **Copernicus** tablet computer; LG Electronics announces that it will ship its tablet PC, **Digital iPad**, later this year. Wade Roush of eBookNet.com reports on the significance of this technology for e-books. [more ►](#)

January 19

Wired News reports that the Library of Congress has completed its **American Memory Project** (memory.loc.gov), putting more than 90 historical collections online.

EPIC, the Electronically Published Internet Connection (eclectics.com/epic), an e-book writers' group, announces that it will hold a national conference in Seattle next year, EPIC-Con 2002, March 14-16, 2002.

"eBook Competitions: The 'e' Stands for 'Exclusive'": new eBookNet.com columnist Roger Sperberg argues that the submission requirements for the two main independent e-book awards may have ultimately prevented the major New York houses from participating. [more ►](#)

eBookNet.com reports on two new product releases: **Royalty Tracker** from e-reads.com and **Mobipocket Publisher** from Mobipocket, a French startup. [more ►](#)

January 22

The French startup **Cytale** (cytale.com) releases the Cybook, the first European e-book reader. The device will go on sale in bookstores and large department stores throughout France.

Questia Media (questia.com) launches its site, an online research library for college students.

Publishers Weekly takes a look at four small, independent e-publishers, Wordbeams, Fictionopolis, Rattapallax, and UndergroundE.com, in **"2001: A Digital Book Odyssey."** [more ►](#)

In an interview about his upcoming novel, *A Painted House*, **John Grisham** mentions that he is considering writing a short work that would be available online for downloading and printing. [more ►](#)

January 23

In partnership with Adobe, **Firstandsecond.com**, an online book retailer based in New Delhi, launches the sale of e-books in India. To promote the venture, the retailer is sponsoring *The Motive*, a free, interactive novel by Tara Deshpande, an Indian actress and writer. Contributing writers can win a trip for two to Goa.

In her *Wired News* column, M.J. Rose writes about a software program that can turn text into an audio file, **TextAloud MP3**. [more ►](#)

netLibrary (netlibrary.com) announces that it will integrate its MetaText digital textbooks with Blackboard 5, a software platform from Blackboard, a provider of online education services. The integration will make the textbooks available for sale to the users of Blackboard's software.

January 24

The *National Post* of Canada runs a lengthy excerpt from **Jason Epstein's** *Book*

Business. [more ►](#)

Xlibris (xlibris.com) announces that cookbook author Marcia Adams will publish *Marcia Adams: Heart to Heart*, her journal about living with heart disease, next month to coincide with a PBS documentary on women and heart disease that will feature her. Adams chose to self-publish with Xlibris to produce the book rapidly so that it would appear in time for the broadcast.

ContentGuard (contentguard.com) announces a new, customized digital rights management service, RightsEdge. IndyPublish, an online publishing service, and Libronauta, a forthcoming site for e-books in Spanish and Portuguese, sign up for the service.

ESPS founds a new division, **Liquent** (liquent.com). Liquent will introduce a new technology this spring that will convert documents to XML for easy repurposing.

GiantChair.com, a digital distributor for trade publishers, announces that it will use Texterity's TextCafe service to convert its clients' PDF files into e-book formats.

On its site, **eBooksFrance** (ebooksfrance.com) reports that it has made nearly the entirety of its collection available in two formats, a Rocket edition and XDoc, a format for Palm devices. The collection includes more than 600 titles, all free.

Qvadis (qvadis.com) announces that it has released a new version of its Express Reader Pro software for Palm devices, adding new features such as the ability to convert Word files.

January 26

"**A Guide to 2001 eBook Events & Conferences**," a detailed guide by eBookNet's Wade Roush, listing the dates, descriptions, and panelists for e-book conferences in the United States and Europe. [more ►](#)

Former White House press secretary **Marlin Fitzwater** reissues his 1995 memoir on his years at the White House, *Call the Briefing*, self-publishing the updated edition through Xlibris (xlibris.com).

January 27

Holland America implements **NewspaperDirect**'s print-on-demand newspaper service aboard one of its luxury cruises. [more ►](#)

January 29

Adobe releases the **Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader 2.0** (ebooks.adobe.com), an upgrade of the Glassbook Reader, which the company acquired last year. The reader is available for free at Adobe's site and at Barnes & Noble.com. Both sites are offering

several new titles in the format, including a short story by Ray Bradbury and a companion e-book for the "Survivor" TV show. Adobe also announced the release of Adobe Content Server 2.0, a software for preparing PDF files for online sale.

Kendra Mayfield of Wired.com reports on Adobe's e-book marketing focus: "**Adobe's Novel Approach to E-Books.**" [more ▶](#)

A group of periodical publishers found the **Electronic Book Newsstand Association** (ebna.org) to promote the use of e-readers as devices for news and magazine delivery.

The **Virginia Festival of the Book** (vabook.org) announces that it will host the first Independent e-Book Awards on March 24, among the festival's daylong series of events on e-publishing: "The e-Book: Publishing and Promoting Books Online." The festival runs March 21-25.

Announced at e-book site KnowBetter.com: **RD Textos** (rdtextos.com), a new e-publisher in Barcelona, has launched a site that will offer Spanish-language e-books for the visually impaired.

Franklin Electronic Publishers (franklin.com), the maker of the forthcoming eBookMan, releases a free content conversion kit that will allow publishers to prepare e-books for the device.

"**E-Book Readers: Easier on the Eyes,**" a review of RCA's e-book devices by Stephen H. Wildstrom in *BusinessWeek*. [more ▶](#)

Publishers Weekly interviews **Ted Nardin** of the McGraw-Hill Companies. Nardin discusses McGraw-Hill's electronic publishing program and his views of the e-book market. [more ▶](#)

"**Mapping the Internet,**" a *PW* roundup of travel publishers' Web sites. The article includes details of the sites' online partnerships and content licenses. [more ▶](#)

"**A 'Revolution' Waiting to Happen?'**: children's book publishers discuss their e-book strategies. [more ▶](#)

January 30

"**New York Stories Go Electronic'**: the *New Yorker* launches its first set of e-books. In her *Wired News* column, M.J. Rose also reports on the new criteria for the Frankfurt eBook Awards. [more ▶](#)

An analysis of the Adobe-Barnes & Noble.com partnership: "**B&N.com's E-Book Strategy Clarifies.**" [more ▶](#)

January 31

In its January/February issue, *Poets & Writers* (pw.org) explores electronic literature in a special series, "**In the Realm of Possibilities: Literature and Cyberspace.**" Two of the articles are available online at the site.

Noted at French book portal Zazieweb.com: the complete text of a work on Australian hackers, *Underground: Tales of Hacking, Madness, and Obsession on the Electronic Frontier* (underground-book.com), is now available online for free. The book by **Suelette Dreyfus** was published by Random House Australia in 1997.

—*Donnali Fifield*

Donnali Fifield is the author of William & Wendell: A Family Remembered (Binary Books) and the daughter and literary executor of William Fifield (The William Fifield Collection).



Binary Books [more ▶](#)

The William Fifield Collection [more ▶](#)

Articles on e-publishing (archived PDFs of the Web pages):

- ["Back in Circulation: Using the Web to Reissue Books"](#)
- ["Le Village eBook: A Guide to ePublishing at the Salon du Livre 2000"](#)

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A summary of the latest developments in e-publishing

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February 2001

February 1

"**E-Books Are the Next Chapter in Reading Trends**," an overview of e-publishing by Accessmagazine.com, accompanied by a guide to e-book retail and content sites.

[more ►](#)

Launched on January 29, a massive, searchable database of French libraries, the **Catalogue Collectif de France**. The launch was reported in the CyLibris newsletter on French publishing trends. After releasing the news bulletins by email, CyLibris, a French print-on-demand publisher, archives them as PDF files in the "Infos" section of its site (cylibris.com). The site for the online catalog: [more ►](#)

"**Microsoft Wins New Yorker eBook Titles, Looks to Future Devices**," an eBookNet.com article on two stories about Microsoft: its exclusive content agreement with the *New Yorker*, and its recent acquisition of a company whose software makes text adjust to a variety of screen sizes. [more ►](#)

A report on the conference "**What Can the Publishing Industry Learn from the Music Industry?**" Held in New York on January 31, the conference explored some issues, such as piracy, facing both industries as they go online. [more ►](#)

USA Today reports on made-to-order paperbacks, "**Write Your True Love into a Romance Novel**." The link appeared at e-book portal eBookAd.com, which is highlighting its extensive catalog of romance novels, in e-book format, for Valentine's Day. The link for the *USA Today* article: [more ►](#)

February 2

MediaTechnics Corporation, a publishing service for the educational market, announces the creation of **BookOnWeb.com**. The new division will work with

publishers to add interactivity to their print documents.

iCulture, part of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, posts the first of a four-part series on e-publishing, "**Brave New e-World.**" The series begins with a piece on Random House's new digital imprint, At Random. Next in the series: an interview with Canadian e-novelist Douglas Cooper, a review of e-book readers, and a look at the REB 1100 reading device. [more ►](#)

An interview with *In Fidelity* author **M.J. Rose**, whose writing career took off after she self-published a novel and marketed it online. [more ►](#)

February 3

eBookAd.com adds two new interviews in its eBookRadio series of audio interviews with people in e-publishing: **Kevin Nathanson**, the group product manager of Adobe's e-book division, speaks about the release of Adobe's new reader, Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader 2.0; **Kathy Newbern** discusses her print-on-demand company, yournovel.com, which publishes personalized romance novels. eBookRadio: [Nathanson](#) and [Newbern](#).

February 5

In its earnings report for the third quarter, Franklin Electronic Publishers (franklin.com) notes that the **eBookMan** will go on sale later this month.

Versaware (versaware.com) receives a \$2 million investment from ITX, a subsidiary of the Nissho Iwai Corporation, a Japanese trading company, to develop e-publishing services in Japan.

Announced at French book portal Zazieweb.com: the launch of **mozambook** (mozambook.net), which will publish French classics as free downloads formatted for the Microsoft Reader.

"**E-Book Dilemma: Potboiler for the Digital Age,**" *TechWeb News* on the problem of competing e-book standards. [more ►](#)

"**The Quest for E-Knowledge,**" Wired.com looks at the e-library market. [more ►](#)

Peter H. Lewis reviews e-book devices in *Fortune*, "**Read 'Em and Weep.**" [more ►](#)

Also in *Fortune*: textbook publishers become comfortable with the Web, "**Who's Afraid of E-Books?**" [more ►](#)

Publishers Weekly reporter Calvin Reid writes about the forthcoming launch of a new e-publisher, **RosettaBooks**. Headed by literary agent Arthur Klebanoff, RosettaBooks is acquiring the electronic rights to classic backlist titles from the twentieth century, signing up authors such as Styron and Vonnegut. [more ►](#)

Two more items from *PW*: self-help legal publisher **Nolo.com** has entered into a partnership with a British company, Epoch Software, which has developed a program that customizes legal documents online; MemoWare has launched a retail site for e-books formatted for handheld devices, the **PDA Bookstore** (pdabookstore.com).

February 6

"Amazon Wants to Sell Your Stuff," Amazon introduces a voluntary-payment collection service for Web site owners. The article by M.J. Rose also includes information on e-book selling trends among independent e-publishers. [more ►](#)

Seybold Seminars (seyboldseminars.com) announces that its Boston 2001 conference, April 8-13, will include a daylong session on e-books, April 10.

TechBooks (techbooks.com) announces a new service for publishers, XMLpublish, that prepares text for rapid reformatting for print and e-publishing.

February 7

Stephen King nets a profit of \$463,832.27 on *The Plant*, according to an income report posted at his site (stephenking.com).

Amazon plans to charge publishers placement fees for being recommended in the promotional emails it sends out to its customers. CBS.MarketWatch.com conducts an interview on the ethics of the new policy: [more ►](#)

PW Daily reports that self-publishers M.J. Rose and Doug Clegg have launched an online service, **The Intercom** (the-intercom.net), that will help writers and publishers use the Web to build their readership.

netLibrary (netlibrary.com) adds short-run digital printing to the services it offers its publishers.

Inside and *Publishers Weekly* announce that they will hold a conference for the publishing and media industry on March 19 in New York, **2001 Book Publishing Industry Summit**; conference details available at inside.com.

Noted at Zazieweb.com: a link to a detailed report in *Le Monde* on the arrival of major **French publishing houses** to the Web. Sidebars: an article on the British publisher Bloomsbury, and a piece on Italian booksellers and publishers that mentions that the Italian publisher Mondadori is getting ready to put its first e-books online. Article in French: [more ►](#)

"Banned Vietnam Book on Internet," reported by the *BBC News*. [more ►](#)

February 8

The **Open eBook Forum** (openebook.org) will hold its annual meeting in France this year, March 18-21, during the Salon du Livre, the Paris Book Fair. Prior to the fair, the Salon du Livre is hosting the first European summit on e-publishing, eBook Europe 2001, March 16-18.

Reported in *Bloomberg News*: speaking at a conference of the Association of American Publishers, Henry Yuen, chairman of Gemstar-TV Guide International, says that by early 2003, **Gemstar** (gemstar-ebook.com) will offer an e-book device that will weigh less than 8 ounces and cost under \$100.

Digital fulfillment service **Lightning Source** (lightningsource.com) expands into the electronic audiobook market, forming an alliance with Didio Communications, a British provider of digital audio services.

Kendra Mayfield of Wired.com reports on publishers who are testing lower prices for e-books, "**What if E-Books Cost Less?**" [more ►](#)

In *USA Today*: "**E-Books Attract Literary Superstars,**" bestselling writers experiment with e-books, using them as a marketing tool. [more ►](#)

February 9

The e-book writers' group **EPIC**, the Electronically Published Internet Connection, announces the finalists for its 2001 Eppie Awards. The awards will be presented in Las Vegas on March 17. [more ►](#)

"**An ePublisher's Creative Querying Tips,**" advice for writers who are sending out submissions to electronic publishers. [more ►](#)

February 12

Audible.com releases the digital audio edition of *IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation*, read by the author, Edwin Black. The cassette and CD versions of the audiobook will go on sale on February 20. *Publishers Weekly* reports that the print edition was published in the United States today by Crown, with eight foreign editions also being released today. The site for the audio release: [more ►](#)

Michael Cader of *Publisher's Lunch*, an email newsletter on publishing, reports that Time Warner Trade Publishing has acquired a controlling interest in **ipicturebooks.com**, a children's e-book publisher that launched on February 8.

On the Dow Jones newswire: according to the *Jerusalem Post*, **Harry Fox**, the president, CEO, and cofounder of the e-publishing service Versaware

(versaware.com) has abruptly left the company; the company had no comment on his departure.

Digital Paperbacks (digitalpaperbacks.net) launches. The site offers e-book distribution and formatting services to writers and independent e-publishers.

February 13

Franklin ships the **eBookMan**. The handheld device, which comes in three models, is an e-book reader, and also has MP3, digital audiobook, and PDA functions. Image of the device and product description: [more ►](#)

The *New Yorker* has launched its site: **NewYorker.com**. The magazine's e-books are available through the Barnes & Noble.com link in the site's "New Yorker Store."

Alibris (alibris.com) increases its presence in Europe, acquiring the assets of classicforum.com, an online, European retailer of rare and used books. Alibris will provide rare and out-of-print books to the users of Ingram's Web-based ipage service, launching in April. A comprehensive new database for booksellers and librarians, ipage will include Ingram's inventory, as well as the print-on-demand titles in Lightning Source's digital library.

Among the items in M.J. Rose's "E-Publishing Ink" column: a piece about a free online service from OverDrive, **eBookExpress**, that can convert documents into e-books for the Microsoft Reader, and a story on the success of the e-book release of *Underground*, a 1997 book on hackers by Suelette Dreyfus. The book's researcher, Julian Assange, had the idea of releasing it as a free e-book on the Web. Reissued in multiple formats, the book has been downloaded more than 200,000 times in the past few weeks. [more ►](#)

"**Consumers Balk at Price of E-Books**," a Newsbytes.com report on a study by Arthur Andersen. [more ►](#)

February 14

A federal appeals court lifts the injunction that had prevented **Barnes & Noble.com** from offering one-click shopping. The decision overturns a lower-court ruling in a lawsuit brought by Amazon claiming patent infringement. The case goes to trial in September.

As part of its budget cuts, Xlibris shuts down **Inkspot**, its community portal for writers. Xlibris will keep the site up until March 14. The site's editor in chief and founder, Debbie Ridpath Ohi, discusses the closing and explains what will happen to the content on the site: [more ►](#)

February 15

Powell's Books (powells.com) announces a partnership with the digital fulfillment service Lightning Source, which will begin providing it with e-books in the Adobe and Microsoft Reader formats. The online bookseller already carries titles in the Gemstar format.

Bookmice.com relaunches under a new CEO, Don McGraw. Founded by Aliske Webb, the e-publishing house had closed down its site at the end of December.

Lycos Asia launches a portal for Chinese speakers in Southeast Asia. The site includes search features, *Wired News* in Chinese, and a large online library of Chinese books. A three-page press release about the new portal: [more ▶](#)

"**Thus Spake, with Prescience, Arthur C. Clarke,**" a *New York Times* article on sites devoted to the writer. [more ▶](#)

"**Grove Music Reference Available on the Web,**" a review of the online, searchable version of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2nd Edition*, which takes up 29 volumes in print. [more ▶](#)

February 16

AP reports that **Xlibris** (xlibris.com) will discontinue its free publishing service as of March 1. The minimum fee for the company's file preparation services will now start at \$200.

According to eBookNet.com, e-book portal KnowBetter.com is launching a free service, **eBook Informer**, that will search online retail sites for new e-books in six different genres. The service will report the results in weekly email updates.

February 17

New e-book site spotted on the Web: Vivendi Universal Publishing, a division of French media giant Vivendi Universal, has launched **ePocket** (epocket.fr), a retail site for e-books published by the members of Vivendi's publishing group, formerly known as Havas. The titles, in French, are available for the Microsoft Reader and for the Mobipocket Reader, e-book reading software created by the French startup Mobipocket for PDA devices.

February 18

"**E-Book Roundup: The Latest News,**" recent e-book news from the perspective of the PDF community. The article appears at PDFzone.com, a news and information site about Adobe Acrobat and the PDF format. [more ▶](#)

February 19

CyberRead (cyberread.com), an online retailer of e-books, announces that it will begin offering titles from iPublish.com, the digital imprint of Time Warner Trade Publishing.

February 20

HarperCollins (harpercollins.com) launches its first e-book imprint, PerfectBound. The new imprint will release 15 e-books by the end of March, publishing them in three formats: Microsoft Reader, Gemstar, and Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader. Some of the e-books will include supplementary features, such as author interviews, not available in the print editions. Calling it the world's "first global e-book publishing program," Harper will distribute the titles through online retailers throughout the English-speaking world. Lightning Source and Reciprocal will handle the digital fulfillment. Harper's site for *Faithless: Tales of Transgression*, a collection of short stories by Joyce Carol Oates, coming from PerfectBound on March 8: [more ►](#)

Random House Children's Books (randomhouse.com/kids) releases its first picture e-books, a trilogy about Elmo from "Sesame Street." The e-books, *Elmo Loves You*, *Elmo's Tricky Tongue Twisters*, and *Elmo's New Puppy*, are formatted for the Microsoft Reader.

OverDrive (overdrive.com) opens an office in Amsterdam. The e-publishing service provider's European customers include Vivendi Universal Publishing in France, Planeta in Spain, and Mondadori in Italy. OverDrive also has a partnership with Autotext, a Danish company that distributes OverDrive's e-book and digital management products to publishers in Scandinavia.

Noted at the site for **Mondadori** (mondadori.com): the Italian publisher will release its first e-books on February 24. According to the site, it is the first e-book store in Italy. All of the retailer's e-books will be offered for the Microsoft Reader. To celebrate the launch, the site will make 100 titles in Italian, including *The Divine Comedy*, available for free this weekend.

"**Henry Yuen's Master Plan to Rule the Publishing World**," an in-depth article from Inside.com on the Gemstar CEO. [more ►](#)

Peanutpress.com releases a list of the top-selling e-books at its retail site last year. Stephen King's *Riding the Bullet* leads the list. [more ►](#)

Audible.com announces a partnership with Britannica.com. Starting next month, Audible's downloadable audio titles will appear as results on Britannica.com's search engine.

February 21

Two eBookNet.com columnists offer practical advice: **Roger Sperberg** writes about using colored type for the Microsoft Reader, listing the font colors he found the best looking; **Rusty Fischer** starts his new column at eBookNet, "eBook Marketing Made Easy," with tips on how to use effective signature lines. Articles: [Sperberg](#) and [Fischer](#).

In her Wired.com e-publishing column, M.J. Rose reports on **wordtheque.com**, a portal that lists thousands of texts, in languages from around the world, that can be read online for free. Other items in her column include a piece on **Jason K. Chapman**, who posted a thriller, *The Heretic*, on the Web for free, earning royalties from the ad revenue generated from the pageviews; he has earned enough to pay for a paperback edition of the book. [more ▶](#)

February 22

Google has begun to index PDF documents and has already added nearly 13 million PDF files to its search engine, reports the *New York Times*. [more ▶](#)

Ian Austen of the *New York Times* writes a short piece about the **Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader**. [more ▶](#)

The *Boston Globe* reviews the **REB 1200**. [more ▶](#)

BookSite (booksite.com), a Web site designer and host for independent bookstores, announces a pilot program with the digital fulfillment service Lightning Source. During the pilot program, four BookSite member bookstores will be able to sell e-books from Lightning Source's digital library. The stores will stage e-book events to educate their customers about the titles, which will be in the Microsoft Reader format.

"**Adobe Trips through a Legal Looking Glass with its Restrictions on Alice E-Book**," an Inside.com article on the controversy over the permissions settings in the Adobe version of *Alice in Wonderland*. [more ▶](#)

February 23

Fictionwise.com announces that it has become an independent corporation, spun off from Mindwise Media, an Internet consulting company and incubator. The New Jersey-based e-publisher reissues short fiction in the science fiction, horror, and fantasy categories. Fictionwise has recently begun to offer novel-length e-books in other genres, and is also starting to publish original stories. Fictionwise has grown rapidly since its launch last June and the creation of the new corporation, Fictionwise Inc., will ensure the e-publishing house's continued expansion, says co-publisher Scott Pendergrast.

With the digital release of Gao Xingjian's *Soul Mountain*, **HarperCollins UK** becomes the first major publisher in Britain to issue an e-book. [more ►](#)

"**Bringing eBooks to Bricks-and-Mortar Bookstores**," eBookNet.com's managing editor, Wade Roush, interviews Ed Marino, the president and CEO of Lightning Source, and Dick Harte, the president of BookSite, on their pilot program to sell e-books through independent bookstores. [more ►](#)

Students at the Quaker Valley school district of Pennsylvania will receive e-book readers, stocked with digital textbooks, as part of the state's **Digital School District** program. The school district was one of three winners in a statewide competition for the program's e-learning grants. Two area papers report: the [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#) and the [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#).

February 25

Reuters reports that e-book devices were used to read the names of the winners at the TV Guide Awards, to be broadcast on Fox on March 7. **Gemstar-TV Guide International** owns both *TV Guide* and the technology for the e-book devices. Reuters on the awards: [more ►](#)

February 26

The site for *Time* magazine will run three free excerpts from **Stephen King's** new novel *Dreamcatcher* in weekly installments starting on March 5. Scribner will publish the print edition of the book on March 20. Time.com's site for the excerpts: [more ►](#)

Greg Lindsay of Inside.com reports on the **AOL Time Warner** promotions planned for the online release of the Stephen King excerpts. [more ►](#)

February 27

Random House files suit against RosettaBooks, an e-publisher that has just launched its site and is reissuing classic backlist titles published before 1985. Random House contends that RosettaBooks does not have the electronic rights to books by William Styron, Kurt Vonnegut, and Robert B. Parker originally published by Random House, and is seeking an injunction to prevent the company from selling its e-book versions of the authors' works. News stories: [Dow Jones](#) and [Reuters](#).

More **RosettaBooks** news: the e-publisher announces a partnership with Microsoft, which will feature RosettaBooks' Microsoft Reader reissue of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* exclusively for two weeks when Microsoft relaunches its Microsoft Reader site next month. RosettaBooks has more than 80 titles already available for sale on its site and will soon have them listed at Amazon, Barnes & Noble.com, and other e-book retailers as well. Reciprocal will manage the e-commerce services for the

e-publisher. The site for RosettaBooks: [more ►](#)

Toronto-based e-book portal eBookAd.com and ebook Inc., an e-book manufacturer in Korea, announce that they will launch a new e-book device, **hiebook**, in Canada and the United States later this year. The OEB-compliant e-book reader will have an MP3 player, a built-in microphone, and PDA functions. Features and product image for the hiebook: [more ►](#)

eBookNet.com's Wade Roush reports on the new **hiebook** device. [more ►](#)

Wired.com e-publishing columnist M.J. Rose discusses **BookSite's** pilot program to sell e-books through independent bookstores, reporting on it in her column and in a six-minute audio interview on Wired News Radio: [article](#) and [audio](#).

Fictionwise.com announces that all of its e-books are now available for the Franklin eBookMan, adding nearly 500 more titles to the number of works that can be read on the e-book device, released by Franklin earlier this month.

Readerville (readerville.com), a community site about books run by Karen Templer, a former art director at Salon.com, opens an online bookstore on its site.

E Ink (eink.com), a company that makes electronic ink for digital displays, receives a \$7.5 million investment from Philips Components to develop electronic ink for handheld devices. In return, Philips Components will have the global rights to manufacture and sell handheld displays using the technology, which is supposed to make reading on-screen easier. The companies plan to have a prototype ready by June.

February 28

AP reports that the suit brought yesterday by **Random House** against the e-publisher **RosettaBooks** will have a preliminary hearing on April 20. RosettaBooks has hired the law firm of David Boeis, who represented the Justice Department in its antitrust suit against Microsoft. Two articles on the legal issues involved in the Random House case: the [New York Times](#) and [eBookNet.com](#).

Steve Outing, a columnist for *Editor & Publisher Online*, suggests that e-book manufacturers are pursuing the wrong strategy by concentrating on books: "**Can News Content Save e-Books?**" [more ►](#)

"**EBook Publishers Face High Costs**": speaking at a conference, Laurence J. Kirshbaum, the chairman of Time Warner Trade Publishing, says that while e-publishers are saving on printing costs, they are incurring unexpected expenses because of format conversion errors and other infrastructure problems. [more ►](#)

"**Gemstar: The HBO of eBooks**," eBookNet.com columnist David Palmer analyzes the e-book strategy of Gemstar's CEO, Henry Yuen. [more ►](#)

—*Donnali Fifiield*

Donnali Fifiield is the author of William & Wendell: A Family Remembered (Binary Books) and the daughter and literary executor of William Fifiield (The William Fifiield Collection).



Binary Books [more ▶](#)

The William Fifiield Collection [more ▶](#)

Articles on e-publishing (archived PDFs of the Web pages):

- ["Back in Circulation: Using the Web to Reissue Books"](#)
- ["Le Village eBook: A Guide to ePublishing at the Salon du Livre 2000"](#)

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eBook Digest



A summary of the latest developments in e-publishing

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March 2001

March 1

BusinessWeek runs a cover story on **Gemstar-TV Guide International CEO Henry Yuen** in its March 12 issue. The issue is available online now at the magazine's site. The cover package looks at Yuen's interactive TV enterprises and main business partnerships, and includes a sidebar on e-books and the REB 1200, which will be featured at the TV Guide Awards. The devices were used to read the names of the winners of the awards, which will be broadcast on Fox on March 7. [more ►](#)

Of interest in an Inside.com report on a conference on bookselling: **Michael Fragnito**, the vice president of e-books for Barnes & Noble.com, talks about adding a link in the forthcoming Dean Koontz e-book, *The Book of Counted Sorrows*, to the writer's other books on the retailer's site. Koontz's e-book will inaugurate the bookseller's new publishing imprint, Barnes & Noble Digital. [more ►](#)

"**E Ink: Your Hands Will Thank You**," Kendra Mayfield of Wired.com reports on the electronic ink technology being developed for handheld devices by E Ink, a startup in Cambridge, Massachusetts. [more ►](#)

"**The World in Your Hands**," an article by the BBC News on e-publishing in Britain. [more ►](#)

March 2

In "**A Report from the Brussels Foire du Livre**," Eric Hanuise, an information technology specialist who lives in Belgium, writes about his impressions of the e-book devices on display at the book fair, including the newly released Cybook, the first European-made e-book reader. He also relates some unofficial news about Gemstar: according to a Gemstar product demonstrator at the fair, Gemstar will release its e-book devices in Europe this fall, setting up a call center in Ireland to

provide customer support; Gemstar is also working on an operating system revision that will allow both the REB 1100 and the REB 1200 to use the same e-book format.

[more ►](#)

March 4

In a final newsletter from **Bookface.com**, which shut down its site in January, the site's executive editor, Lou Anders, announces the release of *Outside of the Box: The Best Short Fiction from Bookface.com*, a print edition of eighteen short stories that appeared on the site. Published by Wildside Press, the stories are in the science fiction, fantasy, horror, and suspense genres. The site for the anthology: [more ►](#)

March 5

Time.com releases the first of three free excerpts from **Stephen King's** *Dreamcatcher* in multiple formats: Flash, HTML, downloadable PDF, and audio. Time.com's presentation of the excerpt also includes a biography and magazine stories about the author. The next excerpts will be on March 12 and 19, leading up to the book's print publication on March 20. Excerpt: [more ►](#)

"BookTech Looks at E-Publishing," *Publishers Weekly* reports on the recent BookTech East conference. The article is accompanied by other stories on e-publishing: a piece on Fictionwise.com; a sidebar on the University of Virginia press, which has received a grant to create a new digital imprint; and an article on Reciprocal, a digital rights management company. [more ►](#)

PW on **Random House's** suit against **RosettaBooks**; the article concludes with information on Random House's e-book plans, disclosed through the publisher's legal brief: [more ►](#)

"Preparing for Tomorrow," small presses discuss their print and e-publishing programs. [more ►](#)

"Beyond Hypertext: Novels with Interactive Animation," the *New York Times* looks at electronic literature. [more ►](#)

Audible.com announces that it has begun a digital audiobook lending program for libraries, initiating the program on March 1 with the Kalamazoo Public Library.

MightyWords.com enters into an agreement with Digital Goods, which will provide targeted marketing and viral distribution services for MightyWords' top 200 titles, mainly electronic texts on business and technology.

Fnac.com, the online retail site for the Fnac, a major bookseller in France, launches DigiFnac, a downloadable service for books, music, and software.

French publishing group Havas, part of the newly created media conglomerate Vivendi Universal, relaunches its site under its new name, **Vivendi Universal Publishing** (vivendiuniversalpublishing.com). The English-language version of the site will go online on March 19.

March 6

Slate.com announces the launch of an e-book club, which will feature a column on e-books and a monthly email newsletter on the online magazine's book and e-book coverage. In the inaugural column of the Slate eBook Club, Justin Driver, an assistant literary editor at the *New Republic*, proposes the establishment of a reliable e-book bestseller list. [more ►](#)

Slate.com also releases a free e-book excerpt, in the Microsoft Reader format, of *Slate* columnist Jacob Weisberg's *George W. Bushisms: The Slate Book of the Accidental Wit and Wisdom of Our 43rd President*. [more ►](#)

Verizon Wireless launches the United States' first wireless service for "smart phones," a wireless phone with PDA functions and Web access. Users will be able to read e-books on the device. Product image: [more ►](#)

"**DataPlay Disks Poised to Become Industry Format**," Reuters on DataPlay's miniature optical discs: [article](#) and DataPlay's [site](#) for the discs' use for e-books.

"**E-Authors Fight for Their Writes**," Wired.com columnist M.J. Rose gives an audio-interview version of her e-publishing column. News in her column that is not included in the audio interview: *People* and *Yahoo Internet Life* are planning to start reviewing e-books. Rose: [audio](#) and [column](#).

March 7

"**Random House Rejects E-Fiction**," the publisher's digital imprint, AtRandom.com, will focus on nonfiction for its fall e-book list, reports Hillel Italie of the Associated Press. [more ►](#)

March 8

Signaling its intent to expand its downloading program, Amazon.com announces the creation of the **Amazon Worldwide Digital Group**. Amazon's press release notes that the group's general manager, Jeff Blackburn, would join executives from Microsoft and Random House for a special event planned today for the launch of Random House's digital imprint, AtRandom.com.

USA Today reviews AtRandom.com's e-book anthology *Men Seeking Women*, short stories by male writers on finding romance online. [more ►](#)

Item noted in the news section of the *Seybold Reports'* newly launched **E-Book Zone** (seyboldreports.com/ebooks): a brief item dated February 20 reports that Microsoft has released versions of its free Microsoft Reader in several European languages: French, Italian, Spanish, and German.

"Multitasking eBookMan Packs Power in Palm-Size Box," a review of Franklin's e-reader in the *Boston Globe*. [more ►](#)

March 9

PerfectBound, HarperCollins' digital imprint, announces the e-book release of **Joyce Carol Oates'** *Faithless: Tales of Transgression*, posting one of the short stories in the collection online for free: "The High School Sweetheart: A Mystery." The link to the story: [more ►](#)

In a test to investigate the illegal distribution of e-books without copy protection, Jerry S. Justianto, the Djakarta, Indonesia-based publisher of the Web log **Pocket PC eBooks Watch**, discovers no instances of pirated copies of the two books he tracked, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and *Pay It Forward*. His discussion of the test is in the March 9 entry of the log. [more ►](#)

"Putting the Franklin eBookMan through Its Paces," a very thorough review, with scanned images of the device, by Eric Hanuise, an information technology specialist from Belgium. [more ►](#)

BOL.fr, the Bertelsmann-owned French online bookseller, has launched an e-book store. The e-books are in the Mobipocket Reader format for PDA devices.

March 12

Barnes & Noble (bn.com) creates an e-book partnership with CPI, a European manufacturer of books headquartered in France. CPI's data conversion facility in the Philippines will provide e-book preparation services for the bookseller's electronic imprint, Barnes & Noble Digital.

In the "News Shorts" section of its site, *Publishers Weekly* reports that the **Frankfurt Book Fair** is adding a daylong conference on digital publishing to its program; *PW* also has a short piece on **Contentville.com**, which is seeking to expand its partnerships with independent booksellers. [more ►](#)

March 13

Slate releases **Bill Hill's** *The Magic of Reading* as a free e-book in the Microsoft Reader format. The 1999 white paper by the researcher in Microsoft's e-book group details the principles of comfortable reading that were considered when Microsoft developed the Microsoft Reader. [more ►](#)

"eBook Software Capabilities: Pushing the Envelope," new eBookNet.com columnist Tim Cooper, the former chief technology officer for LiveREADS, lists the capabilities of the leading e-book formats in eight categories, including multimedia and interactivity. News item: Cooper writes that a company in Italy, IPM-NET, will release an e-reader, **Myfriend**, this summer. The device, the first e-book reader from an Italian manufacturer, will display e-books in the Microsoft Reader format. Links: Cooper's [article](#); image and product features of [Myfriend](#).

In the second half of her weekly audio interview at Wired.com, e-publishing columnist M.J. Rose discusses the **e-book market**; in her Web column, she also writes about science fiction publisher **Baen Books**, which is releasing some of its titles as free e-books: [audio](#) and [column](#).

Knopf has launched a sign-up page for readers who would like to receive a poem a day by email from the publisher during April, National Poetry Month. [more ►](#)

March 14

"Another Dot-Com Dream Punctured: Random House Scaling Back E-Books," writing on the retrenchment at Random House's electronic imprint, AtRandom.com, the *New York Observer* notes that e-books are starting to be seen as marketing tools for print sales. [more ►](#)

Microsoft announces that HanDBase, a Palm database application, and MemoWare, a content site for Palm devices, will now support the **Pocket PC** (pocketpc.com), adding more than 6,000 databases, e-books, and reference titles to the works available for the Pocket PC platform.

"Pocket PC Gains on Palm in Europe," an article from CNET News.com. [more ►](#)

"Vanity Publishers: Thy Name Is Rapid Change," Inside.com reports on Xlibris, iUniverse, and 1stBooks Library. [more ►](#)

Fictionwise.com offers four stories that are on the final ballot for the 2001 Nebula Awards for free. The science fiction stories are available at the site at the tab marked "Specials."

Harcourt College Publishers (harcourtcollege.com) announces that it will provide forty of its bestselling business and science titles for the goReader, an e-book reader designed specifically for students. The electronic textbooks will become available to college students this summer.

March 15

PW Daily reports that the Palm 500 series, coming in April, will be bundled with the **Peanut Reader**. Peanutpress.com now sells about 500 e-books a day, according to

PW, and expects that number to rise significantly with the inclusion of its e-book software in the new Palm devices.

eBookNet.com's managing editor Wade Roush on the new e-book reader coming from Italy: "**Myfriend: The Perfect eBook Device?**" [more ▶](#)

March 16

FlipBrowser Gold, a software from E-Book Systems, wins the "Best of Show" award in the client software category at the Internet World Spring 2001 show held in Los Angeles. The software is used to create a FlipBook, a multimedia Web browser, photo album, and text reader with pages that turn like the leaves of a book. The site for the software: [more ▶](#)

Korea holds its first e-book standards forum. [more ▶](#)

March 19

Palm acquires peanutpress.com from netLibrary, becoming a distributor for e-books. The Peanut Reader, which will be bundled with the forthcoming m500 and m505 Palms, will now be known as the Palm Reader, and peanutpress.com will be renamed Palm Digital Media. The company's inventory of 2,000 fiction and nonfiction titles has been transferred to a new site: palm.com/ebooks. In addition to e-books for consumers, Palm intends to expand into electronic textbooks and business e-books. Palm has published an extensive press release on the acquisition: [more ▶](#)

Franklin Electronic Publishers (franklin.com) announces that it will provide reference e-books, including a combined dictionary and thesaurus, on storage cards for the new Palm 500s.

The *New York Times* has two stories on the effect of the Web on the book industry: an article on science fiction publisher **Baen Books**, which has used online serialization and a free e-book program to develop a community of readers, increasing its print sales, and a piece on **BookSense**, a marketing campaign for independent booksellers whose email recommendations list is boosting the stores' influence with publishers: [Baen Books](#) and [BookSense](#).

Publishers Weekly reports on Jupiter Research's "**Publishing in the New Economy**" seminar, followed by a short piece on E Ink's electronic ink technology and another on the bundling of the Peanut Reader with the new Palm 500 series; in a separate article, *PW* writes about the revenue growth at **Thomson** spurred by electronic publishing: [seminar](#) and [Thomson](#).

eBookNet.com posts the names of the winners of the **2001 Eppie Awards**, given by the Electronically Published Internet Connection (EPIC) at a ceremony in Las Vegas on March 17. [more ▶](#)

Hungry Minds a la Carte (alacarte.hungryminds.com) launches, letting users create custom electronic and print-on-demand books from Hungry Minds' imprints, which include the "Dummies" series and Frommer's travel guides.

1stBooks Library (1stbooks.com) enters into a marketing agreement with Digital Goods, which will provide the print-on-demand and e-book publisher with email marketing and other promotional services for its e-books.

Texterity (texterity.com) announces a partnership with iMakeNews, an electronic newsletter service. iMakeNews will offer its customers Texterity's TextCafe service, which can convert the clients' newsletters from a PDF format into XML or HTML for repurposing.

March 20

Scribner releases **Stephen King's** *Dreamcatcher* simultaneously in hardcover and in an e-book edition. The version for the Palm Reader, formerly the Peanut Reader, and the PDF format, offered by Digital Goods, are available at special introductory prices for a limited time. Excerpts are available at Time.com, which has published them in weekly installments since March 5. *Dreamcatcher*: [Palm Reader](#) for Palm devices and Pocket PCs, [PDF format](#), excerpts at [Time.com](#).

Le Livre Virtuel, the site on e-publishing posted by the French newspaper *Libération*, has a number of new articles generated by the Salon du Livre, the Paris Book Fair, which was preceded by a conference on e-publishing, eBook Europe 2001. One article introduces an interesting new term: "**lyber**," a free e-book available in its entirety on the Web, allowing readers to sample it before buying the print edition. This word, probably coined from "cyber" and the Latin word "liber," which means both "free" and "book," appears in an article on the fear of e-book piracy, "La grande peur du piratage." Olivier Pujol, the CEO of Cytale, argues that only a dedicated reading device, such as his company's Cybook, can protect against piracy. Two publishers from the south of France, Michel Valensi of the Editions de L'Eclat and Thierry Discepolo of Editions Agone, have found on the contrary that publishing works online as lybers has led to higher print sales. *Libération* also writes about a new French e-publisher that launched on March 15, **manuscrit.com**, which will work with traditional publishers and use the Web to discover new writers, screening the submissions through reading committees. The site for Le Livre Virtuel: [more ►](#)

"**For Medical Journals, a New World Online**," the *New York Times* reports on how the Internet is changing the medical journal industry. [more ►](#)

netLibrary (netlibrary.com) integrates its e-books into Blackwell's online book-ordering system for libraries, Collection Manager. The press release notes that netLibrary has more than 34,000 titles in its digital library.

March 21

Hyperion (hyperionbooks.com) announces that it will launch an e-book imprint, Hyperion eBooks, this July. Hyperion plans to release about five e-books a month, distributing them through iPublish.com, Time Warner Trade Publishing's e-book division. Hyperion also announced that it is creating an audiobook division, Hyperion AudioBooks, which will launch in the fall.

Jerry Justianto of **Pocket PC eBooks Watch** reports that pirated e-book versions of Stephen King's *Dreamcatcher* are appearing on the Web, apparently created from a scanned copy of the book. His posting is under the March 21 entry of his Web log.

[more ►](#)

The National Writers Union and Contentville launch a licensing system that will provide writers with royalties for works that appear on Contentville.com. The Contentville section of the **Publications Rights Clearinghouse** site of the National Writers Union is at nwu.org/prc/cv1.htm.

James Felici, a contributing editor for the *Seybold Reports'* new E-Book Zone site, has two reports from eBook Europe: a short piece on **Cytale**, the French e-book maker, which has had a rough start, and an article on **Echyon**, an e-book company in Korea, where, according to a company spokesman quoted in the article, every e-book development in Korea makes the evening news. Echyon's three e-book products include an authoring program, a reader, and a reading device, WalkBook, coming this fall. E-Book Zone: [Cytale](#) and [Echyon](#).

The **eBookMan** is now available in a French and a German edition. Franklin Electronic Publishers (franklin.com) has also updated the device's handwriting recognition software to interpret characters with accent markings.

News brief reported by the French paper *Libération*: **Mondadori.com**'s new e-book store had 30,000 downloads of free e-books during its opening launch on the weekend of February 24-25. The Italian publisher gave away the e-books to promote the new site.

March 22

"**Writers Fight for E-Rights**," a Wired.com article on a case going before the Supreme Court on March 28 that will decide if publishers owe freelance writers royalties for the online republication of their work. [more ►](#)

Contentville.com has launched a monthly column on e-books, "**The E-Book Report**," written by Charlotte Abbott, an editor at *Publishers Weekly*. In the second part of her column, she writes about some of the established writers from around the world who are following Stephen King's lead and publishing online, and mentions a forthcoming e-book from James Ellroy, *Breakneck Pace*, to be published by

Contentville Press. [more ▶](#)

"**The Bearable Lightness of E-Books**," *BusinessWeek* on using a Palm as an e-book reader. [more ▶](#)

Henry Yuen, the CEO of **Gemstar** (gemstar-ebook.com), says 50,000 of the REB e-book devices have sold so far, with expected sales this year of 200,000, according to a report on the Paris Book Fair in *Le Monde*.

PerfectBound, the e-book imprint of HarperCollins (harpercollins.com), has released a new novel in the bestselling Sharpe series by **Bernard Cornwell**, *Sharpe's Trafalgar*, as an e-book, nearly two months before its hardcover publication.

March 24

The first **Independent e-Book Awards** are handed out in Charlottesville during the Virginia Festival of the Book. The names of the winners and finalists: [more ▶](#)

March 26

Announced at the London Book Fair: the British bookseller **W.H. Smith** (whsmith.co.uk) will launch an e-book store on its site, offering the titles in the Microsoft Reader format.

Also announced at the fair: **ebrary.com**, an online library, signs a content agreement with Cambridge University Press and with another academic publisher, Palgrave, a division of Macmillan.

Texterity (texterity.com), a document conversion provider, and Reciprocal, a digital rights management company, join to offer a package of combined e-book services to small and medium-sized publishers. Texterity also announces a partnership with the content marketer Digital Goods, which will begin offering Texterity's automated conversion service, TextCafe, to its content partners.

March 27

Microsoft has redesigned its **Microsoft Reader** site. Some of the new items at the site include featured e-books, links to publishers who are using the Microsoft Reader format, and the addition of versions of the site in French, Italian, and Swedish, with links to Microsoft's European e-publishing partners: in France, ePocket, the e-book division of Vivendi Universal Publishing, formerly Havas; in Italy, Mondadori.com; and in Sweden, AdLibris. [more ▶](#)

The editors of Seybold Publications select their "hot picks" among the products that will be featured at the **Seybold Seminars Boston 2001** exposition, April 10-12. The editors' picks in nine categories, which include e-books, PDF, and cross-media

publishing, are listed on the left of the screen. The hot picks for the e-book category: the Palm m500 series and the goReader. [more ▶](#)

Publishers Weekly has a story on **Royalty Tracker**, a software that tracks royalties for e-books, and a report on the **2001 Book Publishing Industry Summit**, held in New York on March 19. The second article ends with some e-book news: Night Kitchen will release its new **TK3** e-publishing software by the end of this week. Articles: [Royalty Tracker](#) and [Book Summit](#).

This week's program on **Publishers Weekly Radio**, *PW's* new half-hour radio program on books, concludes with a brief segment on Stephen King's e-book ventures, with more to come on e-publishing from Charlotte Abbott, the interviewed *PW* editor, on next week's edition of the program. [more ▶](#)

March 28

The British trade magazine *Publishing News* has posted a series of reports on the **London Book Fair**. Several of the stories cover British e-book topics, among them, the launch this summer of the bookseller W.H. Smith's e-book store, which will sell titles in the Microsoft Reader format, and the agreement signed by a wholesaler of computer books, Computer Bookshops, with Microsoft to provide Microsoft Reader e-book services in the United Kingdom. [more ▶](#)

Kelly Ford, the founder of e-book portal KnowBetter.com, reviews the **REB 1100**, comparing it with its predecessor, the Rocket eBook. [more ▶](#)

Follett Higher Education Group, which runs more than 650 campus bookstores, opens an e-book store on its site (efollett.com). The store offers students e-books formatted for the Microsoft Reader.

March 29

"**Justices Consider Status of Digital Copies of Freelance Work**," the *New York Times* reports on a case argued before the Supreme Court yesterday in a suit filed by freelance writers against newspaper and magazine publishers; at issue was whether the republication of the writers' articles in electronic databases infringed on the writers' copyrights. [more ▶](#)

A *New York Times* article on the impact of email and Web chats on writing: "**A Comeback for Writing, but Not Necessarily for Eloquence**." [more ▶](#)

The **American Diabetes Association** launches an online store for books on diabetes (ebookstore.diabetes.org). Versaware is hosting the store and providing the e-publishing services.

ICON Group International (icongrouponline.com), a publisher of industry research

reports, announces that it will make its reports available as e-books and in a print-on-demand format, using the digital fulfillment services of Lightning Source.

March 30

"**At Issue: E-Rights for E-Writers,**" Kendra Mayfield of Wired.com reports on the copyright-infringement case filed by freelance writers. [more ►](#)

"**Great Minds Think Alike: E-Paper on the Way,**" an article in the *Philadelphia Daily News* on electronic paper. The article has a link to a detailed piece by Charles C. Mann on e-paper, published this month in *Technology Review*. [more ►](#)

Pearson Education (pearsoned.com) announces that netLibrary's MetaText division will create digital versions of hundreds of Pearson's college textbooks over the next year, integrating parts of the textbooks into Pearson's custom e-learning software platform, CourseCompass.

—*Donnali Fifield*

Donnali Fifield is the author of William & Wendell: A Family Remembered (Binary Books) and the daughter and literary executor of William Fifield (The William Fifield Collection).



Binary Books [more ►](#)

The William Fifield Collection [more ►](#)

Articles on e-publishing (archived PDFs of the Web pages):

- ["Back in Circulation: Using the Web to Reissue Books"](#)
- ["Le Village eBook: A Guide to ePublishing at the Salon du Livre 2000"](#)

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eBook Digest



A summary of the latest developments in e-publishing

[Author's note](#)

[Archives](#)

[Search page](#)

April 2001

April 2

LiveREADS, the publisher of Jack Kerouac's *Orpheus Emerged*, releases its second e-book, *Opening Day*, a novella by Les Standiford based on the history of the Negro Leagues. The e-book will be available for free this week, April 2-9, the opening week for major league baseball. *Opening Day*, formatted for the Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader, includes hyperlinks, streaming audio and video, and rare photographs; it is also available as a paperback in a print-on-demand format. Salon.com is presenting an audio excerpt from the book. Links: [book site](#) and [audio excerpt](#).

"**Science Friction**," an *Industry Standard* article on science fiction writer Harlan Ellison's campaign against e-book piracy. [more ►](#)

Publishers Weekly reports on **Audible.com**'s audiobook version of Edwin Black's *IBM and the Holocaust*. The digital download went online the same day as the print version was published, February 12, a week before the cassette and CD editions were available. The article is followed by a piece on the annual **Audio Publishers Association Conference**, which will be held in Chicago on May 31. One discussion at the conference will be about combining audio with e-books, "The New New Thing?: The E-Book/Audiobook Connection." [more ►](#)

An article on the arrival of e-book devices in the libraries of **Dakota County**, the first in the state of Minnesota to have them, notes that users who damage the devices are liable for up to \$450 in replacement costs. [more ►](#)

Steven Brill's Brill Media Holdings acquires **Inside.com**, which covers the media industry, including publishing.

McGraw-Hill Higher Education (mcgraw-hill.com) announces that netLibrary's MetaText division will prepare digital versions of about thirty of McGraw-Hill's textbooks. The textbooks will be integrated into McGraw-Hill's e-learning software,

PageOut, and will become available to students in the fall semester.

April 3

Gemstar shuts down **eBookNet.com**, a pioneering e-book Web site founded by Glenn Sanders in 1998. The site was acquired by NuvoMedia, and later by Gemstar, when it bought NuvoMedia in January 2000. In an email to subscribers of *eBookNet Insider*, Glenn Sanders explains that Gemstar closed down the site to focus on its e-book strategy: e-book content and technology, not industry news and a community site. The leading e-book portal in the United States, eBookNet.com was an important resource for the e-book community worldwide. For the past year and a half, under the guidance of managing editor Wade Roush, the site has published extensive articles on e-books and the e-book industry, many of them written by Roush, a science and technology writer. In a special report on the site's closing, Dustin Revin, the executive vice president of Toronto-based e-book portal eBookAd.com, writes that it is not clear whether the site has shut down permanently, but that its existence as a source for e-book coverage is over. Links: Dustin Revin's [report](#); the personal sites of Glenn Sanders, [MiaMedia.com](#), and of Wade Roush, [ScienceScribe.com](#).

Author's note: at the bottom of this Web page are links to two articles I wrote for eBookNet.com. They are now linked to archival PDF files I made of the Web pages. If you are publishing online as a contributor to a site, I would urge you to protect your own writing by archiving your stories. —*D.F.*

Publishers Weekly Radio has two brief e-publishing segments at the end of the radio program: a discussion by *PW* business editor Jim Milliott of the electronic-rights case argued before the Supreme Court last week and the second part of *PW* nonfiction editor Charlotte Abbott's overview of e-publishing. [more ►](#)

Link noted on Michael Cader's *Publisher's Lunch* email newsletter: a story in *USA Today* on electronic developments in **U.S. libraries**. More than fifty libraries in fifteen states have an e-books program, according to the article. [more ►](#)

"**The E-Book as Print-Edition Ad**," among the items in her weekly Wired.com column, M.J. Rose writes about the ads LiveREADS placed in its *Opening Day* e-book for the paperback version. [more ►](#)

"**Will E-Books Ever Get Reviews? Can They Sell without Them?**" Inside.com reports. [more ►](#)

Booksurge.com, a new online bookstore for e-books and print-on-demand titles, launches its site.

April 4

eBookAd.com forms partnerships with three online bookstores, Fictionwise.com,

CyberRead, and Booksurge.com, to offer books for the hiebook. In February, eBookAd announced an alliance with ebook Inc., the Korean manufacturer of the reading device, which the e-book portal will help launch in North America later this year.

Xlibris (xlibris.com), a provider of publishing services for writers, upgrades its site, adding an automated online submission procedure for manuscripts, faster bookstore searches, and more sales reporting features.

ContentGuard (contentguard.com) announces that the global management and technology consulting company Accenture, formerly Andersen Consulting, will include ContentGuard's RightsEdge technology in the company's suite of services for its clients. The technology provides rights management for e-books and other digital products.

April 5

The **Open eBook Forum** (openebook.org) announces that EBX, the Electronic Book Exchange, has merged with the OeBF. The members of the two groups are now part of a single, unified e-book standards organization.

"Stock Focus: E-Book Companies," Forbes.com evaluates the stock of seven companies that have invested in e-book technologies: Gemstar, Palm, Adobe, Microsoft, AvantGo, Franklin, and Handspring. [more ►](#)

Starting with the May issue, *Yahoo Internet Life* will begin reviewing e-books. Former *New York Times* book reviewer **Christopher Lehmann-Haupt** will start his new column by reviewing e-books by Elmore Leonard and James Ellroy, both published by Contentville Press. The story from Inside.com: [more ►](#)

The PEN American Center, a membership association of literary writers and editors, has launched a new literary journal, *PEN America*, which is available in print and online. Umberto Eco, Susan Sontag, Joyce Carol Oates, and other contributors discuss classic modern writers. A tribute to Virginia Woolf includes a talk by Mary Gordon on Woolf's masterwork *The Waves*. Other honored writers in the collection: Italo Calvino and Borges. [more ►](#)

Bibliofind (bibliofind.com), a portal for rare and out-of-print books that Amazon acquired in 1999, will become integrated into Amazon's Marketplace and zShops programs as of May 7.

April 9

OverDrive launches **Content Reserve**, a free distribution service for publishers and online book retailers. Content Reserve handles e-books and print-on-demand titles. Steve Potash, the CEO of OverDrive, has published an e-book with advice for booksellers and commercial publishers, *The eBook Industry Survival Guide*. The

e-book is available for free at the new site and is offered in three formats: PDF, Microsoft Reader, and Word 2000. [more ▶](#)

Sales at **Booklocker.com** jump by 20% in March. An article published by marketingsherpa.com outlines the e-book seller's pricing and marketing recommendations. [more ▶](#)

Wired.com posts two articles on the problem of creating and preserving **archives** in the digital age. Links: electronic archiving at [libraries](#) and by the [U.S. government](#).

Franklin Electronic Publishers (franklin.com) receives a patent on the microprocessor in its eBookMan reader and announces that it has begun a licensing program for the processor and the company's other eBookMan technology.

Ansy (ansyr.com) introduces new software lines at Seybold Seminars in Boston: Ansy Mobile Office, Ansy PageSharing, and Ansy Components and Tools. The new software groups include new products and expanded versions of earlier programs. Ansy's software allows users to read PDF files on handheld devices.

Liquent (liquent.com) releases Liquent Xtent, a software that converts documents into XML for repurposing.

DocuRights (docurights.com), a PDF digital rights management program from Aries Systems, now supports the Linux operating system. The DocuRights technology serves scientific, technical, and medical publishers.

Digital content marketer **Digital Goods** (digitalgoods.com) enters into a partnership with Groove Networks, the creator of a peer-to-peer computing platform, to develop a peer distribution system for Digital Goods' content.

Beginning this fall, **goReader** (goreader.com), the maker of an e-book device for students, and The Douglas Stewart Company, a distributor of products for the education market, will provide electronic textbooks to campus bookstores. The Douglas Stewart Company distributes and markets computer products and student supplies to a network of more than 3,000 college bookstores.

Texterity (texterity.com) announces that Publishing Dimensions, a new data conversion house for publishers, will integrate Texterity's TextCafe into its production process. Texterity's service will convert PDF files into the Open eBook format, which Publishing Dimensions will use to create e-books in multiple formats. Publishing Dimensions is the first conversion house to include TextCafe's automated service in its conversion process, eliminating the cost and time of manually converting the PDF files. The automation will cut the production cycle from weeks to hours, according to Kenneth Brooks, the president of Publishing Dimensions. Before founding the company, Brooks was the vice president of digital content at Barnes & Noble.com.

Publishers Weekly leads its "Epublishing" collection of e-book news with a story on Australian-based e-book retailer **eBooks.com**. In a report on the **London Book Fair**,

PW writes about the e-book discussions at the fair, noting that Microsoft, according to Michael Fragnito, the vice president of Barnes & Noble Digital, will soon come out with a "killer device" that will help e-publishing take off. The article has a link to a story on **ePub London**, a two-day conference on e-publishing that preceded the fair. Links: [Epublishing](#) and the [London Book Fair](#).

PW also reports that the Italian publishing group **Longanesi** has launched a Web site ([infinitestorie.it](#)).

Forbes runs a short profile on the founder of the online library Questia Media, **Troy Williams**. [more ▶](#)

April 10

Amazon.com adds titles in the Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader format, expanding its digital library by nearly 2,000 titles. Over the next year, Amazon will begin offering e-books in the Adobe format in its online stores in France, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

Adobe releases a beta version of Acrobat Reader for Palm devices. Adobe also announces that it has shipped Adobe Content Server 2.0, an encryption and distribution system for PDF documents, and that an upgrade to Adobe Acrobat, version 5.0, is now also available. Adobe's site for the Palm beta: [more ▶](#)

Hewlett-Packard ([hp.com](#)) licenses Adobe's PDF technology for its products and services. The first HP products to use the technology will include scanners, multifunction devices, and digital cameras and will become available as of next spring.

Barnes & Noble.com opens an "Articles for Download" store, offering thousands of short texts for purchase and printing. The articles, primarily on business and computing, are sold in partnership with [MightyWords.com](#).

Agfa Monotype ([agfamonotype.com](#)) introduces a font licensing program for e-book publishers, the E-Book Font License. The company's font library includes more than 3,200 TrueType and PostScript fonts.

ContentGuard ([contentguard.com](#)), a digital rights management company, and Digital Goods, a digital content marketer, form an alliance, combining their services. ContentGuard will integrate its RightsEdge technology into Digital Goods' e-commerce and marketing suite, Amplifi.

In an article by Kendra Mayfield of [Wired.com](#), bestselling erotica writer **Susie Bright** explains why she has chosen to self-publish her latest book as an e-book and a print-on-demand title. [Wired.com](#) "E-Publishing Ink" columnist M.J. Rose writes about the sudden closing of **eBookNet.com**, which has caused the loss of hundreds of reference articles on e-publishing. Rose's article also has an item about the **American**

Revolutionary Archive, a collection of documents from the period, now available as free e-books. Links: [Mayfield](#) and [Rose](#).

"**The eLitists vs. the eBook**," Justin Driver's second article for *Slate*'s new e-book club, considers the resistance among some writers and critics to e-books, which he parallels to the snobbery shown when paperbacks appeared in the 1940s. [more ▶](#)

April 11

Borders turns over the operation of its online store, **Borders.com**, to Amazon. The store will relaunch in August. Customers will have the option of buying a book online and picking it up at a Borders store. Borders has retail outlets in the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore.

Le Journal du Net reports that the French e-book software developer **Mobipocket** (mobipocket.com) has raised a second round of financing, receiving 7 million francs (about \$950,000) from its initial investors. The largest investor is Viventures, the venture capital group for media conglomerate Vivendi Universal. In the next three months, Mobipocket is planning to license two new products: a software tool that will allow companies to transfer their documents to a variety of handheld devices, and a service that will let employees access a company's intranet on their PDAs.

Mobipocket is also planning to license its software. In the future, according to the article, the company hopes to start an e-publishing venture with Vivendi subsidiary Vivendi Universal Publishing. The venture would focus on publishing texts for the professional market.

"**E-Libraries Hoping to Profit from Term Paper Blues**," a Reuters article on online libraries, including ebrary, Questia, and netLibrary. [more ▶](#)

April 12

PW Daily reports that the author site **PreviewPort** (previewport.com) will create Web pages for 3,000 Random House authors, adding the authors to the site's International Author Index. In addition to the Random House deal, PreviewPort is about to conclude an agreement with the Society of Authors in Britain, which will add another 6,000 writers to the index.

Amazon's e-books section begins to offer works from **MightyWords.com**, a publisher of eMatter, articles and texts under 100 pages in length. Most of MightyWords' titles are on business and computing.

Pearson Education France, a French subsidiary of the Pearson Group, selects SealedMedia, a digital rights management company headquartered in San Francisco, to secure and distribute the French company's multimedia publications at its information technology learning site, InformIT.fr. The U.S. counterpart of the site is InformIT.com.

April 16

"**Sales Growth in Books Online Is Leveling Off**," according to the *New York Times*. [more ►](#)

Publishers Weekly reports on the lawsuit brought by Random House against the e-publisher **RosettaBooks**. [more ►](#)

April 17

"**Authors, Agents on E-Books' Side**," more on the RosettaBooks lawsuit, from Wired.com. [more ►](#)

Seybold Reports' E-Book Zone has a news item on two market studies by **Philips Electronics** on e-book devices. In the first study, conducted last fall, consumers expressed a preference for devices with screens between 5.5 and 8 inches, costing under \$160, and including email and PDA functions. The findings of the second study, a survey on screen sizes and types, will become available this summer.

[more ►](#)

News noted at the French book portal Zazieweb.com: the **European Union** has adopted a directive on copyright policies. The directive, which will also apply to digital media, was the result of three years of discussion and will be implemented by the EU's member nations within the next year and a half. An announcement from the European Union: [more ►](#)

The **American Management Association** (amanet.org) signs agreements with Digital Goods and DigitalOwl. Digital Goods will provide content marketing services for the organization's e-books on business and management, and DigitalOwl will handle the digital rights management. DigitalOwl will also make the e-books available in custom editions.

April 18

"**Why Paper Is Still Better Than Plastic**," *USA Today* reviews the eBookMan, the REB 1100, the Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader, and the Microsoft Reader. [more ►](#)

"**I Bought the Electronic Rights, but What Do I Own?**" KnowBetter.com's columnist on copyright issues, John Rutledge, responds to an e-publisher's questions about print and audio rights. [more ►](#)

Fictionwise.com, an e-book publisher, expands into distribution, signing distribution agreements with LiveREADS, the publisher of Jack Kerouac's *Orpheus Emerged*, and ElectricStory, a publisher of fantasy and science fiction e-books. Fictionwise has developed a number of systems, including micropayments, promotional discounts, and coupons, to sell its own works, and will use them to help sell the two publishers' titles.

Audible.com displays its wireless audio service, AudibleWireless, at the e-Learning Conference and Expo in Washington. The service will allow companies to send audio bulletins and reports to the handheld devices of their customers and employees. The service's users would also have access to Audible's audiobooks and other digital titles.

Digital Goods (digitalgoods.com), a content marketer for e-books and other electronic texts, enters the audio market, announcing a joint sales agreement with MediaBay, a seller of audiobooks and recordings of classic radio programs. The two companies will add stores to their sites featuring each other's digital catalogs.

April 19

MemoWare's **PDA Bookstore** (pdabookstore.com), a retailer of e-books formatted for handheld devices, announces that it is now offering more than 150 original e-books on business management. The titles are from PocketManager.com, an Irish firm that publishes e-books on management.

April 21

"**The Paperless Office? Not by a Long Shot**": at the end of this article, the *New York Times* reports that Microsoft will release the Tablet PC next year, priced at about \$3,500. [more ►](#)

April 23

Toshiba has developed an e-book prototype with a two-panel screen. [more ►](#)

Publishers Weekly has a story on the e-book portal **eBookAd.com** and its forthcoming North American launch of the Korean-made hiebook. Among the other items in *PW*'s e-publishing column is a piece on **ebrary.com**. The e-library has reached an agreement with Yale University Press to put thousands of titles from the publisher's backlist online. [more ►](#)

PW Daily reports that **ipicturebooks.com**, a publisher of e-books for children, will release three movie tie-ins for the animated movie "Shrek." The first-ever film tie-in e-books, according to the company, they will be released on May 18, the day the film opens, and will be featured on the sites for the film and for its producer, DreamWorks.

April 24

MightyWords.com forms a partnership with the digital fulfillment service Lightning Source, which will provide MightyWords' titles in the Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader format to Amazon.com. MightyWords began to offer its titles on Amazon on April 12 and plans to have its entire catalog, which includes more than 5,000 titles, available at the retailer's site within the next three months. MightyWords publishes articles and

short texts on business, computing, and general-interest topics.

Fictionwise.com enters the wireless market. The e-publisher will provide e-books, formatted for the Microsoft Reader, to the subscribers of Versaly Games, a Seattle publisher and distributor of interactive games and digital content for mobile phones.

In her weekly Wired.com column, M.J. Rose has a story on the Versaly partnership and other recent developments at **Fictionwise.com**. [more ►](#)

Jerry Justianto, the publisher of the Web log **Pocket PC eBooks Watch**, has launched a newsgroup for Pocket PC e-book users. He also reports that another site for Pocket PC readers, **Ojster's World**, has started a Web ring on e-books that are compatible with the Pocket PC. The information on the two lists is in the April 20 and April 21 entries of the log. [more ►](#)

PerfectBound, the e-book imprint of HarperCollins (harpercollins.com), which launched at the end of February, begins the release of its April/May list with the e-book edition of Louise Erdrich's *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*, which came out in hardcover on April 8. The e-book version of the novel includes an interview with the author and a reading group guide.

April 25

Adobe releases **Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader 2.1**. The upgrade includes several new features: CoolType, a font rendering technology that allows users to choose the font resolution they prefer; an interactive dictionary; and the ability to give or lend an e-book, if the publisher has permitted it. Adobe has also released a free plug-in for Acrobat 5.0, **MakeAccessible**, for converting untagged PDF files into tagged documents. Tagged PDFs can be saved in the Rich Text Format for repurposing. Adobe's download sites: [Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader 2.1](#) and [MakeAccessible](#).

Salon.com launches **Salon Premium**, a version of the online magazine that will offer exclusive features and the option of turning off the ads. The subscription service will cost \$30 a year. In a message to readers, *Salon's* editor, David Talbot, discusses the state of online journalism and the magazine's decision to charge for content. [more ►](#)

"**Down and Out with E-Books**," an article about the writer's misadventures during his first encounter with e-books. [more ►](#)

April 26

"**eBooks on Your Mobile Phone—Coming Soon**," a Newsbytes.com story on the new alliance between the e-publisher Fictionwise.com and the content distributor Versaly Games. [more ►](#)

Adobe is restricting the number of download sites for the **Adobe Acrobat Reader** to

prevent older versions of the software from being distributed, according to this news item at PDFzone.com, a site that will be allowed to continue as an official source for the software. [more ▶](#)

"Where Are We Headed with eBooks?": Ted Padova, the author of the *Acrobat PDF Bible* and an authority on Adobe products, makes some predictions about e-publishing, giving the reasons why he thinks print publications will become nearly extinct. [more ▶](#)

Newsweek publishes an article on Microsoft's **Tablet PC**, which will be available next year; the piece includes a sidebar on a tablet device from Sony, **Air Board**, coming to the United States this fall. [more ▶](#)

April 27

"How to Crack Open an E-Book," a hacker claims to have cracked the encryption for Gemstar's Rocket eBook format, reports M.J. Rose in *Wired News*. [more ▶](#)

BusinessWeek Online releases an e-book excerpt from the *BusinessWeek Guide to the Best Business Schools*. The excerpt ranks the top ten business schools in the United States. The full edition, which rates the top fifty schools, will be published as an e-book next month and in a print version in July. *BusinessWeek's* e-book store: [more ▶](#)

netLibrary (netlibrary.com) adopts the Open eBook format for its collection of e-books. The company had been using a proprietary format. Switching to the Open eBook format will lead to a faster conversion process and to a greater number of frontlist titles, according to the company. netLibrary also announced that it would start farming out the electronic conversion of its titles, resulting in a staff cut of ninety jobs. The remaining employees will focus on customer and publisher support. Other netLibrary news: the **Council of Federal Libraries**, a consortium of federal government libraries in Canada, announces that it has purchased 462 e-books from the e-library for the use of its members.

April 29

iPublish.com, the e-book imprint of Time Warner Trade Publishing, has launched its site. The site includes a store for Time Warner e-books, a community site for writers, and a section for manuscript submissions. The submissions that receive the highest ratings from site visitors will be reviewed by iPublish's editors for e-book publication. Works that are longer than 100 pages will also be released in a print-on-demand format. If the electronic version does well, iPublish will then consider the text for a standard trade edition, the only publishing house making such an offer, according to the publisher. iPublish.com's site: [more ▶](#)

April 30

AOL Time Warner officially launches **iPublish.com**. Articles: [CNET News.com](#) and [Wired.com](#).

According to this article on the launch of **iPublish.com**, the site has already received forty submissions. [more ►](#)

PBS's "**NewsHour with Jim Lehrer**" presents a special report on e-publishing. The show's Web site has a RealAudio version of the segment and includes transcripts of the full interviews, which were edited down for the broadcast. Featured guests: author and Wired.com columnist M.J. Rose; Time Warner Trade Publishing chairman Larry Kirshbaum; and *Wall Street Journal* technology columnist Walter Mossberg. [more ►](#)

Wall Street Journal Books releases an e-book on MBA programs in the United States, *The Wall Street Journal Guide to Business Schools*, presenting it with a series of companion discussions at the paper's career site, CareerJournal.com, this week. The 1,257-page guide, a ranking by corporate recruiters of more than 150 business schools, is being published as an e-book because the format is searchable, says the company. Wall Street Journal Books is an imprint of Simon & Schuster. The site for the book: [more ►](#)

"**Gemstar Deal to Buy Versaware Falls Through**," *Publishers Weekly* confirms a report that appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* on April 23: [PW](#) and [Jerusalem Post](#).

"**The Next New Hope?**" a writer and bookstore owner, Susan Taylor Chehak, writes an article for *PW* on her success with the print-on-demand format. [more ►](#)

In a report on a conference for computer publishers, *PW* writes about the custom e-book and print-on-demand editions being produced by **Hungry Minds** and **Microsoft Press**. [more ►](#)

Publishers Weekly also reports that **Doug Bennett**, a former executive at Macmillan, has been named president and chief operating officer of iUniverse.com, an e-publishing service for writers and publishers. The company's founder, Richard Tam, is turning over the position of president to Bennett but will remain CEO. According to *PW*, Warburg Pincus, which invested \$21 million in the company in January, had wanted an executive with more experience than Tam, an entrepreneur, to handle the day-to-day management of the company.

"**Making e-Books Better**," Alexis D. Gutzman, a writer on technology, makes the case that the e-book industry ought to capitalize on the advantages of electronic publishing: immediate distribution, searchable text, and the ability to publish documents that can be shorter than print books. In the article, she also describes DigitalOwl's custom publishing program. [more ►](#)

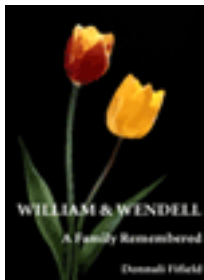
Franklin Electronic Publishers (franklin.com) announces that it will be launching a

national advertising campaign for its eBookMan line of reading devices, which are now available at Best Buy, CompUSA, J&R Electronics, and Electronic Boutique, as well as at Staples and Amazon.com. In addition to their expanded distribution in the United States, the devices are now also being offered in more than eighteen countries.

Noting that it has had a record year, **OverDrive** (overdrive.com), an e-publishing service provider, announces that it has expanded its offices at its Cleveland headquarters and is recruiting 250 new employees for its home and overseas offices.

—*Donnali Fifiield*

Donnali Fifiield is the author of William & Wendell: A Family Remembered (Binary Books) and the daughter and literary executor of William Fifiield (The William Fifiield Collection).



Binary Books [more ▶](#)

The William Fifiield Collection [more ▶](#)

Articles on e-publishing (archived PDFs of the Web pages):

- ["Back in Circulation: Using the Web to Reissue Books"](#)
- ["Le Village eBook: A Guide to ePublishing at the Salon du Livre 2000"](#)

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eBook Digest



A summary of the latest developments in e-publishing

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May 2001

May 1

MightyWords.com adds a new distribution partner, announcing that its catalog of digital titles, predominantly works on business and computing, will be available at a store linked to the more than 160 sites operated by internet.com, an Internet and information technology network.

Digital Goods, a content marketer for e-books, lays off most of its staff and begins to shut down, saying that it was unable to get funding to maintain operations. The company's statement: [more ►](#)

The *Jerusalem Post* reports more departures at **Versaware**. [more ►](#)

Wired.com's M.J. Rose reports on the apparent closing of **Rocket-Library.com** and also writes about the problems writing sites have had raising money through subscription drives. **Steve Outing**, featured in Rose's article, shares the lessons he learned from his pledge drive, giving advice to other site owners who might want to try the approach. His article is published at Content-Exchange.com, the site he runs. Articles: [Rose](#) and [Outing](#).

May 2

Completing a stock transaction announced on September 27, Rupert Murdoch's **News Corp.** acquires a 38.5% stake in **Gemstar-TV Guide International**: [Dow Jones](#) and [Reuters](#).

"**E-Book Devices Yet to Hit Bestseller's List**," Gemstar leads the market, but has sold only 60,000 e-book readers since it began releasing them last fall. The company has 4,000 titles available for its devices, says CEO Henry Yuen. [more ►](#)

Adobe (adobe.com) plans to shut down its U.S. offices for the first week of July,

reports AP. The cost-cutting measure will save the company about \$4 million.

"Pulp Friction: Random House v. RosettaBooks": an article from the *American Lawyer* on Michael Boni of Kohn, Swift & Graf, the Philadelphia law firm representing e-publisher RosettaBooks in the case brought against it by Random House. [more ▶](#)

Seybold Reports' E-Book Zone has two short articles on the cutbacks and other recent changes at e-library **netLibrary** and digital rights management company **Reciprocal**; following each report is the site's analysis of these developments: [netLibrary](#) and [Reciprocal](#).

May 3

The Jerusalem office of e-publishing service **Versaware** appears to have laid off all of its remaining employees, according to the *Jerusalem Post*. [more ▶](#)

Authorlink.com editor in chief Doris Booth interviews **Steve Riggio**, vice chairman of Barnes & Noble.com, on the company's new e-book imprint, Barnes & Noble Digital. Booth has published the interview with a lengthy analysis of the **e-book market**. One of the news items in Booth's report: Barnes & Noble will no longer stock titles from print-on-demand publishers in its stores, according to a letter sent to one such publisher in January. Articles: [interview](#) and [report](#).

Next fall, **Harcourt College Publishers** will begin to offer textbooks that will link the books' text to the Web through print codes that can be read by the handheld CueCat scanning device, available for free from RadioShack. [more ▶](#)

Kendra Mayfield of Wired.com writes about **Octavo**, a Silicon Valley firm that uses digital technology to produce PDF files of rare books. The company was founded by John Warnock, who co-founded Adobe. [more ▶](#)

Stealth Press, a publisher of hardcover editions of out-of-print novels, has launched a viral marketing campaign that will test whether sending a free chapter of a book by email as a PDF file will get buyers for the hardcover title. [more ▶](#)

May 4

"Commentary: E-Books Remain Niche Reads," the Meta Group, a research and consulting firm on information technology, contends that e-books will remain a niche consumer market for the next several years. [more ▶](#)

The Narrative Press ([narrativepress.com](#)) launches a collection of first-person adventure books, offering works by pioneers, archeologists, and explorers in a paperback and a Microsoft Reader edition.

May 7

Random House responds to e-publisher **RosettaBooks'** brief; the case goes to court tomorrow: [Publishers Weekly](#) and [CNET News.com](#).

Reporting on the Seybold Boston conference, *Publishers Weekly* takes a look at **Adobe Acrobat 5.0**. *PW* also notes that the next release of the **Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader** may feature reflowable PDF. [more ►](#)

News from *PW*: Night Kitchen has released its **TK3** products, a multimedia authoring tool and a free e-book reader; Princeton University Press is starting a program, **Digital Books Plus**, that will let writers respond to readers and critics in a follow-up e-book after their books' original e-book and print publication; Simon & Schuster Audio has launched the first enhanced CD, also called **CD+**. The CD, *Killing Pablo*, combines an audiobook with video footage, and is about the hunt for the Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar. Articles: [TK3](#), [Digital Books Plus](#), and [CD+](#).

Rough Guides (roughguides.com) selects Texterity, a digital conversion service, to convert more than twenty of its travel guides and phrase books into the Microsoft Reader format. The e-books will support the Pocket PC and will be featured in Microsoft's demonstration of its wireless and handheld device technologies, "The Mobile Experience Tour!" The tour (May 3-July 1) will go to eleven U.S. cities.

The online library **ebrary.com** is adding electronic facsimiles of rare documents from early American history to its collection. The titles are from the PDF library of historical books prepared by the DSI Publishing Group, a division of Digital Scanning Inc., a conversion and scanning service. The works include George Catlin's *North American Indians* and the journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Colligo Corp., which creates electronic books on history and art, releases a multimedia CD series, the **ULTIMATEBOOK** (ultimatebook.com), for students. The first titles in the series: *The Memorial War Book*, a text on the Civil War, with photographs by Mathew B. Brady, period maps, illustrations from the era, and audio; *Images of Stealth*, a work on stealth aircraft, produced in cooperation with Lockheed Martin; *Pioneers in Brass*, a history of concert bands; and *Mt. Baker*, a title on the mountain in Washington state, with vintage maps and photographs. A CD on the impressionists is forthcoming.

May 8

"Dilbert" cartoonist **Scott Adams** self-publishes his first e-book, *God's Debris*, a 99-page story about metaphysical questions. The e-book portal eBookAd.com posts an audio interview with Adams, and publishes an article about the e-book, followed by Adams' press release. In the release, Adams tells why he decided to publish the work exclusively as an e-book. [more ►](#)

ForeWord Magazine launches a fee-based review site, **ForeWordreviews.com**. The

service will start next month. M.J. Rose of Wired.com on some reactions to the concept of this new site. [more ▶](#)

Targeting the mobile business market, **Adobe** (adobe.com) announces the availability of more than 200 e-book business titles that can be read on laptops with the Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader. The e-books are offered through Amazon and Barnes & Noble.com.

May 9

Reports on the May 8 hearing in **Random House's** copyright infringement case against **RosettaBooks**: [Inside](#), [Internet World](#), and the [Washington Post](#).

"**Tales from a Modern Gold Rush**," an early employee of America Online, Julia L. Wilkinson, has published an e-book about the company, *My Life at AOL*. Her book is available as a PDF file and in print formats. The *Washington Post* article includes the terms of her self-publishing agreement with 1stBooks Library. [more ▶](#)

Inside.com looks at trade publishers, including AOL Time Warner affiliate **ipicturebooks.com**, that are hoping to develop a market for e-books among young readers. [more ▶](#)

Children's book publisher **Scholastic** (scholastic.com) and Microsoft launch an e-book science fiction series for children, *Remnants*. The first work in K.A. Applegate's series will be available as a free e-book in the Microsoft Reader format, and is being offered in five installments. The final installment will be on June 25, ten days after the book's print publication. The companies' marketing campaign for the e-book includes a sweepstakes to win one of ten Pocket PCs.

Fictionwise.com adds e-reads' catalog to the titles it distributes. Founded by the literary agent Richard Curtis, e-reads reissues out-of-print books by popular authors, such as Harlan Ellison and Janet Dailey, in electronic and print formats. The company's catalog includes nearly 1,400 fiction and nonfiction titles.

Franklin Electronic Publishers (franklin.com), the maker of the eBookMan, and Hungry Minds, the publisher of CliffsNotes and Frommer's Travel Series, announce that they will make the study and travel guides available for the e-book reader beginning this summer.

netLibrary (netlibrary.com) signs distribution agreements with Coutts Library Services, which serves the United Kingdom and North America, and with BTJ AB, which has offices in Scandinavia; the companies will work to distribute the online library's e-books to the libraries in their regions.

May 10

"**Evolving E-Books Let Authors Answer Critics**," the *New York Times* on the

recently announced Digital Books Plus program from Princeton University Press.

[more ▶](#)

New French e-book site: **BookenStock.com**, a personal Web site with classic works from French literature available for free downloading. The books are usually offered in a couple of formats, including PDF, Mobipocket, and Microsoft Reader. The site has a forum on contemporary books and also features a short e-book news section. The site: [more ▶](#)

May 11

Two useful articles in *Pocket PC Magazine*: tips on how to **create e-books** in the Microsoft Reader format and a step-by-step guide on how to **access Audible.com's content** on a Pocket PC: [Microsoft Reader](#) and [Audible](#).

May 12

"**The Future of Electronic Paper**," the technology's greatest impact may first be on handheld devices, according to this opinion piece in *ZDNet*. [more ▶](#)

- **For current e-publishing news, see the main page for the eBook Digest** [more ▶](#)

—*Donnali Fifield*

Donnali Fifield is the author of William & Wendell: A Family Remembered (Binary Books) and the daughter and literary executor of William Fifield (The William Fifield Collection).



Binary Books [more ▶](#)

The William Fifield Collection [more ▶](#)

Articles on e-publishing (archived PDFs of the Web pages):

- ["Back in Circulation: Using the Web to Reissue Books"](#)
- ["Le Village eBook: A Guide to ePublishing at the Salon du Livre 2000"](#)

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