

**Click lit** - Thursday March 14, 2002, The Guardian: **PUT THE VERBS INTO THE CORRECT FORM**

Bookshops \_\_\_\_\_ (normally, not associate) with the cut and thrust of technology innovation, but in their own quiet way they will become just that over the next five years, as digital technology enhances the way books \_\_\_\_\_ (manufacture, sell and consume).

Of course, paper-based books are a technology that works. They are lightweight, portable, cheap, renewable and recyclable - and free from the bugs, viruses and system crashes that plague your PC.

Small wonder, then, that the "paperback in your jeans pocket", as they \_\_\_\_\_ (promote) to post-war teenagers, \_\_\_\_\_ (never better), despite attempts by software and hardware companies to do so for today's e-generations.

Over the next five years, information \_\_\_\_\_ (sell) by many publishing houses securely over the internet via "e-book" reader hardware, which \_\_\_\_\_ (can, use) to download and interact with selected chapters, for example.

But whatever the pitfalls of replacing a simple, efficient technology with a complex and expensive one, the distribution and manufacturing process behind paper-based books can be wasteful and inefficient, which is where publishing on demand (POD) comes in.

Although it \_\_\_\_\_ (talk) about for years, companies have now put the building blocks in to place for a viable business model. The most visible sign may be your high street shop compiling and printing you a personalised book, while you have a rest. But there are other benefits.

The key to POD is recognising that publishing \_\_\_\_\_ (to be) digital for as long as there have been word processors and desktop publishing. In other words, once a text \_\_\_\_\_ (digitise) and \_\_\_\_\_ (lay out), it exists for as long as the disks it \_\_\_\_\_ (store) on exist, regardless of whether that text \_\_\_\_\_ (ever, make) into a book. It \_\_\_\_\_ (can, reproduce) in any form, and \_\_\_\_\_ (distribute) online and worldwide for next to nothing.

For paper-based books specifically, POD opens up a world of possibilities and solutions to age-old problems for those publishers who see it as a licence to print money. One of paper's unique strengths is also its greatest weakness. While a Harry Potter or a Delia Smith \_\_\_\_\_ (can, pile) high and \_\_\_\_\_ (sell) cheaply and quickly, a first novel in paperback may lie in tomorrow's warehouse full of unsold books.

The simplest publish-on-demand project \_\_\_\_\_ (establish) in some international airports three years ago, so newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ (can,

download and print out), without the publisher covering the expense of having unsold copies returned and pulped.

Since then, publish-on-demand facilities \_\_\_\_\_ (introduce). Xlibris.com, Random House's new internet-based venture, allows unpublished authors to submit texts for publication through its web portal. For their cash they get publicised online - and through traditional distribution channels - books \_\_\_\_\_ (then, printe, bind and dispatch) whenever an order \_\_\_\_\_ (receive) via the web or from a bookshop. In this way new talents \_\_\_\_\_ (can, promote) for nothing (the authors pay!).

Bookshops **are normally not associated** with the cut and thrust of technology innovation, but in their own quiet way they will become just that over the next five years, as digital technology enhances the way books **are manufactured, sold and consumed**.

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Small wonder, then, that the "paperback in your jeans pocket", as they **were promoted** to post-war teenagers, **has never been bettered**, despite attempts by software and hardware companies to do so for today's e-generations.

Over the next five years, information **will be sold** by many publishing houses securely over the internet via "e-book" reader hardware, which **could be used** to download and interact with selected chapters, for example.

But whatever the pitfalls of replacing a simple, efficient technology with a complex and expensive one, the distribution and manufacturing process behind paper-based books can be wasteful and inefficient, which is where publishing on demand (POD) comes in.

Although it **has been talked** about for years, companies have only now put the building blocks in to place for a viable business model. The most visible sign here may be your high street shop compiling and printing you a personalised book, while you put your feet up and have a coffee. But there are other benefits.

The key to POD is recognising that publishing **has been** digital for as long as there **have been** word processors and desktop publishing. In other words, once a text **has been digitised and laid out**, it exists for as long as the disks it **is stored** on exist, regardless of whether that text **is ever made** into a book. It **can be reproduced** in any form, and **distributed** online and worldwide for next to nothing.

For paper-based books specifically, POD opens up a world of possibilities and solutions to age-old problems for those publishers who see it as a licence to print money. One of paper's unique strengths is also its greatest weakness. While a Harry Potter or a Delia Smith **can be piled** high and **sold** cheaply and quickly, a first novel in paperback may lie in tomorrow's warehouse full of unsold books.

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