

**An ethnographic investigation of the publishing Industry's future**

by

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**Abstract**

McLuhan claimed technology is fully part of human culture; significant social change and the meaning of progress can be traced back through technical innovations. How society reads, writes, acts, and thinks are projected in or from books. Studies including those of McLuhan and Eisenstein examined the book's impact on society. Others indicate the Internet is rapidly building influence by increasing society's participation. Readers and Internet users, the general public, are participating and affecting one of society's new technologies, the e-book. This research question asks: how does the general public's actions affect the e-book? Respondents and researchers such as Manovich indicate the publishing and Internet worlds are separate. Studies state book-readers escape inside, while scholars such as Ong and Ferris suggest that the electronic media's new group minded orality cause more conversation and interaction. Today everyone publishes everything. Terms such as public and private, first defined in Eisenstein's newspaper reader studies, need redefining. Lateral conversation overcomes traditional gatekeepers who once judged all published material's acceptability. Statements relating the written word to truth may be influenced by a distinction between the industry and the action "publishing." To stay distinct in an electronic world, publishers should choose their direction and maintain their quality.

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Tags: book publishing, e-book, future, online publishing, self-publishing, publishing education, independent publishing, independent book publishing, independent book publishers association.

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*Le livre est mort. Vive le livre!*

Signifies the transfer of sovereignty after the previous monarch's death  
(Original quote from *le mort saisit le vif*, 2011).

## Chapter 1: The Literature Review

In early 2010, while conducting interviews about new media and the publishing industry with a small number but wide variety of professionals, educators, and students with ties to publishing, questions arose. One question is broached in this paper. How can the general public affect the e-book? The term e-book here represents new media in the publishing industry. The material in this paper represents a final project in a Master of Arts, Communication and Technology (MACT) degree at the University of Alberta. This chapter is divided into three main sections, A. Introduction, B. Review of Literature, and C. Research Question.

### *A. Introduction*

The quote at the top of the chapter suggests life is finite and successive. As one leader ends, another begins (*le mort saisit le vif*, 2011). Changes introduced by the new leader must begin with the structures, technologies, and knowledge left by the previous monarch. As McLuhan (1964) wrote, “any technology can do nothing but *add* itself to what we already are” (p. 11).

Relating change to something familiar is one way of introducing it. For example, the expression, “it tastes like chicken” is used to describe a new taste, a taste beyond one’s knowledge. The expression relates the new experience to something familiar. The statement eases one’s anxiety about change or trying something new. Anything new, food, mode of transport, or an idea must have a recognizable origin or be introduced by a trusted member of one’s group, people with good reputations.

In this paper, the book publishing industry is “chicken.” The publishing industry has been part of society for hundreds of years. Today everyone knows the paper-printed book — now called

“p-books” by publishers to distinguish them from electronic books referred to as “e-books.” P-books are familiar. What we may not be familiar with is how p-books changed us. For example, Eisenstein, (1979) shows that reading newspapers privately and alone allowed people to differentiate between private and public worlds.

Ferris (2002) explores the way electronic writing imposes on the prevailing print metaphor. She states that because oral language is fleeting—having meaning only when going out of existence—it is limited by the memory of the individual, leading to an emphasis on formulas and mnemonic structures. For the same reason, oral language is additive rather than subordinative; aggregative rather than analytic; it is also redundant and conservative and argumentative.

Written language, Ferris writes, pushed civilization forward significantly. Writing encourages abstract and analytic thought detached from the self. Goody and Ong writes Ferris (2002) say that the record of words on paper allows an idea to be read over or backward-scanned. Ideas can be reviewed after some thought. The code (letters) can be combined and recombined to convey meaning. New words can be used with known conventions and rules of usage to create new ideas. But, written language must be related to spoken language so people can read aloud and convey the same meaning. Written language needs structure, whereas structure can vary in spoken language. Print, she writes, arrested linguistic drift, standardized language and eventually led to the deliberate codification of written language. A body of knowledge was accumulated in print.

Now the Internet is causing change. In the past, the book (p- or e-) affected the way we use the Internet. Now, new actions on the Internet affect how we think of and use books. Fisher, according to Forlano (2009) says one way to understand this effect is through in-depth ethnographic studies of communication technologies as they are being developed, adopted, and used.

My research supports the above assertions. While conducting interviews in early 2010 to research new media and the publishing industry, it became evident that people were in fact

introducing new media communication as if it were books. But the Internet is new and different in many ways. If it were food, it would have a unique taste. Even so, we describe it as something familiar or we serve it on the same plate with the trusted book (chicken). The Internet is described as chicken, yet it is a different bird all together.

The book publishing industry and the Internet are two separate and distinct entities. E-books are accessed differently but still read as p-books. Some respondents in my 2010 research suggested that an e-book's link to the Internet creates expectations of that association. Society is faster and more integrated; the e-book should be also.

Society is only at the initial stages of moving the book into the ever-changing world of the Internet. It is impossible to predict what the "new" Internet-ready book will be. This study provides research so the publishing industry can start redirecting itself. Because the traditional publishing industry and the Internet are different, and technology changes at the whim of the public, a question arose, regarding what actions of the general public could affect the e-book. The following section begins the examination of our question by looking at the major and relevant theoretical positions in the literature.

### *B. Literature Review*

Ferris (2002) suggests, because European society has 600 years of history in print traditions, it is as difficult for scholars to objectively study the development of electronic writing as it is for fish to study water. However, we need to do so to understand the sea of changes for traditional writing. Continuing the analogy of describing a new food, with little rigorous scientific research the publishing industry searches its existing chicken recipes to make this new dish, the Internet, taste familiar.

The Internet is not a print medium. The Internet is a conversation (*The conversation*, 2009). Even though people want this Internet dish to be the same, it is different. Because people today are engaged in conversation about the Internet they search for similarities in books. The increasing reliance on the Internet has led to a decline in the publishing industry. But any industry adapts.

According to Leonard-Barton (1995) firms sell their knowledge to survive in our ever-changing world. Any industry changes its familiar product to do something new in a familiar way. For example, when readers find an author they like, they return to that author when they want to read a new story. In the same way, the publishing industry has been attempting to fit itself into the new technology of the Internet. To maintain accountability the publishing industry is refitting itself. The refitting has produced a variation of ways to overcome perceived challenges. One of the changes is the creation of the electronic or e-book.

### How change happens

McLuhan (1962) pointed out that with each new technology, man's experience and mental outlook changed because new translations are made possible. This new experience, new media, and outlook caused new expectations of technology and man. New expectations changed the technology and then caused further changes to us. We are thus continually adapting to change.

According to Carter (1925) the publishing industry grew out of pre-existing technologies. Innovations from Asia and the Middle East culminated in Guttenberg's printing press in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century. After print was accepted, society changed it and in turn it changed society. The e-book is a logical step in technology's progress. The speed at which change takes place made the e-book necessary but at the same time is causing concern.

By looking at the history of the book we see that technology has always been associated with writing. From scratching images in the sand with a stick, through the use of quills or stamps or

movable type to typewriters, and then to computers, technology assisted our written communication. Today's "new" digital revolution is no different. McIlroy (2009) writes, "[t]echnology need not be destructive for book publishers; it can be a very positive force for change" (n.p.).

Rogers (1995) states that when adopting a change external environments are consulted. "The change agency's reputation and credibility in the eyes of its clients rests on only recommending innovations that will have beneficial consequences for adopters" (p. 148). But keeping one's eyes and ears open not only affects choice of new media. Daft and Armstrong (2009) confirm the importance of the external environment on organizational design. They warn that societal demands are unpredictable and, to survive, a business must strive for flexible structure. Unold (2004) and Madrigal (2009) each present how communication technologies influence the process of opinion and how organizations can use these tools to remain responsive to the outside world.

Deibert writes Adria (2008) further describes the complexity of change. Technologies change over time. However, technologies (new media) are difficult to control over the short term because of their sometimes-complex interconnected flows due to the wants and needs of fickle users. McLuhan & McLuhan according to Adria (2008) suggest that over the long-term technologies are also difficult to predict. A technology can change or become part of other technologies, reverse its affect, or people can develop a dependence on society's long held standards and values. Our use of the book has developed some dependencies. The e-book's association with a faster and more communal Internet has society expecting it to be faster and more communal also.

The above represents a brief history of technology and change, with a focus on literacy. Now that we see how change happens, we look at how the printing press changed society.

### How the print industry changed society

The printed book changed society. As Eisenstein (1979) showed, previous religious controls were replaced with those of gatekeepers such as publishers and people with power. As Graff (1991) puts it, those with access, the educated upper class urbanites, benefitted more from the printed word. Graff also states that because it was the printed word that was referenced, rather than myths, rituals, and storytelling of an oral culture, print took on the authority. Information that was printed developed a reputation as more permanent, official, and trustworthy. A reader's access to the trusted information also affected the reader.

Because the printed information was assumed correct, according to Thompson (1995) the solo reader could take time to contemplate or understand information rather than rely on the group to interpret it. He also suggested that books introduced previously unknown thoughts, experiences, and places to readers, and theorized that by reading, an individual felt connected to events that may have an impact in some form or another.

Ferris (2002) refers to Ong to say how intimately the book has woven itself into our culture. Print, she writes, played protagonist in our sense of personal privacy and private possession. It laid the foundation for models of commercial writing and introduced concepts of ownership and mass publication. The printing press is thought by many to have led directly to the industrial and electrical age that produced the computer.

Beniger (2003) builds on this concept of books causing change by discussing their production. He writes that the printing press when upgraded and combined with other technologies and ideas contributed to mass media, consumerism, and the growth of intellectual technology. Logical decisions replaced intuition, and converged information-processing and communication technology could be digitized. These digitized data are how society defines itself today. Our new digitized definition translates into increased speed of communication, coordination, and social

forces. The developed need for speed outpaced the paper book's (p-book's) abilities. A new technology was expected that would respond more quickly.

Carr Jr. (2009) technology is considered the primary cause of social change. New technologies are developed to fill needs such as speed. The digitized technology, in the words of Day & Schoemaker (2000), "produced a major disruption to the established trajectory of technical advances by drawing on new or different science bases..." (p. 10). It brought people together. The interconnectivity of society on the net has increased the speed at which knowledge is formed. Publishers cannot keep up. Changes became necessary. Change came in the form of technology.

Technology, in the form of the Internet for example, has brought us closer together spatially, intellectually, and culturally. People now interact with other cultures on a daily basis. Spatially, Buist (2008) writes that a community exists as a strategic, transparent framework with a purpose. Without a purpose to exist, a community will not. However, the idea of a local purpose has changed. The Internet gives community the reach to connect with geographically dispersed members. With a click of a key one can be chatting with a person on another continent.

Intellectual closeness involves finding like-minded others. The Internet's technological innovations changed how people communicate by defining and developing techniques. Shirkey (2008) writes people exchange information in networks. He writes that people co-create, share, collaborate and flow information in networks, which attribute to cost-effective, fast, direct communication with no limit of time and space.

According to Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Clinton, K., Weigel, M., and Robison, A., (2006), people increase visibility and expand influence by interacting. The expanded influence is an expansion of their worth on the net. Increasing one's stories or reach also increases the numbers of people hearing the message and in turn distributing it. On the Internet, choices involve negotiation and talking. Publishing has changed.

## How the Internet Changes Publishing

Steenburgh & Avery (2008) suggest content on the web is made democratic. For consumers, online experiences became largely social rather than individualistic. According to Ong (1982) and Ferris (2002) our stories have become conversations. Truth is determined through our own research, lateral communication, and logical argument. On the Internet it is the group who decided what is expressed. Because expression is a group product, it is difficult to charge for it in the same way one would charge for the individual product, the book.

Prusak (2001) says that the experience and bias of the source taint the knowledge shared. Mittman and Jackson (2001) feel people converse and arrive at decisions together. However, Markus (1987) expresses it differently. She writes that the interactive medium “is a vehicle that enables and constrains multidirectional communication flows among the members of a social unit (two or more members)” (p. 492). Group members change because interests change.

Davenport, DeLong, and Beers (1998) feel that the Internet allows people to take ownership of the knowledge production. McLuhan (1962) shows that there is a cycle of need that leads to technology that uncovers another need that is filled with new technology. Shirkey (2008) points out that cooperation identifies, creates, and disperses information quickly and efficiently. These data seem to say that gatekeepers of information are now the groups to which we belong.

Markus (1987) also describes a community as “a group of individuals with some common interest and stronger communication flows within more than across its boundaries” (p. 492). Because of lateral communication, as Ferris (2002) discussed, electronic publishing can be considered an interactive medium. It joins like-minded individuals as an information system. It is the group that makes decisions not the individuals.

Mittman and Jackson (2001) agree that individual gatekeepers make fewer decisions today. There is a democratization of the information sharing process that takes place on modern social media. People converse and arrive at decisions together. Data are adapted to the group.

Unold (2004) introduces the notion of a social subsystem within an information system. He explains that information has unique human and organizational aspects. Diverse users of the net must be considered as groups rather than individuals. "Users of local, regional, and global telecommunication networks create a specific form of a 'virtual crowd,' accessing the same sources of information and reacting to the same sets of stimuli" (p. 54).

Clancy (Clancy, D., Hollar, J., Keller, M., and Linberg, D., March 1, 2009) suggests the absence of individual gatekeepers has led to everyone trying to get their own voices heard, leaving no one to listen. His comment suggests the development of two audiences. Those who just want open access and others who need the more traditional vetted information.

Richler (2009) seems to suggest that publishers are in a continuous state of playing catch up. He sees publishers in constant alert. They sit poised and waiting for the seemingly ever-changing market to tell them their next move. His interpretation suggests the publishing industry has become followers. No one is taking the lead.

Manovich (2003) suggests the digital revolution continues. By seeing and hearing what is happening now and what users of technology say, future direction might be determined. This corresponds to Tapscott's statement, "the future is not something to be predicted it is something to be achieved" (heard on Mansbridge, 2011). Manovich (2003) adds that the selection of New Media must account for both personal and public realms, inside and outside.

Reiss (2009) analyzed the industry and described what is different. Her suggestions of marketing on the net, which includes direct contact with readers, eliminating traditional book stores, and by passing traditional media opinion leaders who were granted early access to texts so as to

build “a buzz” so as to interest readers. Her strategy tastes like chicken; however, what we don’t know is what it should actually taste like.

Hollar (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) suggests that the Internet has increased the ability of readers to learn from published material. The Internet and its technologies should make it easy for readers (learners) to interact with content. In some cases readers may want to do that. But, little research is available.

The industry continues to evolve without much direction. Whereas, Markus (1987), Keller (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009), and Manovich (2003) say it is the product that is different. Yesterday’s opinion leaders are losing their audience as information and opinion spread like the aroma of freshly baked bread in a restaurant. Levitt (1965) has never been more right. In today’s asynchronous world where everyone is only a keystroke away, reputation truly affects buying decisions.

Ferris (2002) reminds us that the Internet introduces an oral culture back to writing that emphasizes the importance of interactivity. The conversation has writers and readers exchanging information and roles as the story is developed collectively. This collective discourse contributes to the lack of marketplace and development of bonding and bridging capital. Buist (2008) supports Ferris’ view by describing the importance of community on the net. For some, “who you know” is more important than “what you know”, when writing for the Internet.

Jenkins *et al* (2006) states that any decision today will be participatory. Everyone has a soapbox on the net. Steenburgh and Avery (2008) also describe the web (Web 2.0) as social and democratic. Rogers (1995) states that communication brings people together in their understanding of the world. Bonder (2003) agrees. The Internet, she says, creates a global consciousness. The literature seems to suggest that individuals participate but need to work towards a common understanding. However, those individuals on the net are very well defined as group members.

“In a seemingly paradoxical way,” writes Unold (2004), “openness to the environment, to information from outside, leads to higher levels of system autonomy and identification” (p. 56). Members compare themselves with outside dwellers so as to strengthen the group’s identity as different from the other.

Steenburgh and Avery (2008) described the influx of personalized experiences that have had unintentional consequences in the publishing field. Now everyone and anyone can produce and disseminate written material (whether read by others or not). Consumers are inundated with information and must act as their own gatekeepers, a role previously held by the publisher.

Technology according to Davenport, DeLong and Beers (1998) is a place that stores knowledge and information. However, as Shirkey (2008) writes, because the Internet has allowed users to seek, create, and interpret information through conversations and interaction, we have become the creators and keepers of our own knowledge. We do that in our technology.

Keller (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) says the technology provides more data faster so the information is absorbed in many ways at once. The technology also accesses interactivity in the e-book. Embedded files help provide unique views. Unique views lead to a new literacy and new expectations of the book.

### **How the Internet and books are Used by Readers**

The book and the Internet are different. A book is still “a self-contained story, argument, or body of knowledge that takes more than an hour to read. A book is complete in the sense that it contains its own beginning, middle, and end” (*What Books Will Become*, 2011, para. 1). Readers escape into the book to compare or examine its contents with what is already known. Answers are sought internally.

The *Technicum* article goes on to compare the p-book and even the e-book to on-line texts. It also reaffirms the idea that on the web “a reader's attention tends to flow outward, wandering from the central narrative or argument. The velocity of shifting focus creates a centrifugal force which spins readers away from the pages of the book” (*What Books Will Become*, 2011, para. 6). On the Internet, when questions arise, we seek other people for answers. With the book we search inwardly.

Manovich (2003) concurs. His comparison of the two realms shows that they are as different in logic as the Art World (described here as the book) and the New Media World (described here as the Internet). The book is taken inside the observer and romanticized. It has a single author and its topic is unique and one of a kind. The Internet is outside the observer and the opposite of romantic, (unromantic, indifferent, or rational), collaboratively authored and/or ever changing, many copied, and broadly distributed.

Ong (1973-1974) wrote that a new medium reinforces the old. He also suggested that the two media affect each other. A new medium or technology (in whatever form) rejuvenates the old to make it sound new. The Internet, the new medium, reinforces the reliability and predictability of the book, the old medium. That reliability and predictability of the book is what the Internet lacks. It is also what society seeks through new technology.

Clancy (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) described books as a set of ideas, stories, opinions, and scholarships that are communicated in some way. He suggested that because of the participatory Internet, the publishing industry needs a combination of open access and gatekeepers to improve quality but ensures global access. The open access and change in gatekeeper's status led to the realization of Ong's (1973-1974) predictions. In the foreseeable future, Ong continues, there will be more books than ever, but books will no longer be what they used to be. Ong's foreseeable future is here. Books are starting to be used for their reputation rather than content.

Wilkov (July 8, 2010) provides an example of Stenmark's (2008) findings when she suggests publishing books has allowed her to advertise a "get started writing" workshop and access to "coaches (ask the coach.com, n.p.). Ratzlaff and Kinney according to Wilkov (July 6th, 2010) say, "the book is an anchor to a larger brand that links to lectures, television shows, and a broader way to communicate" (n.p.).

One respondent from this researcher's interviews has been asked by publisher to sign a digital rights contract for her next poetry book. She also knows of other authors who have published – some good stories, some bad. Self-publishing, one respondent suggests, is mostly bad stories. If she were still teaching she would have students create blogs, because these are "outward looking" and she considered them group initiatives. When we want to know something in our connected world, it's easy to ask a friend.

Ong (1982) said the new secondary orality is like the old but it is also group minded. Ong was speaking of the influence of the telephone, radio, and television on a print media. The message moved from the eye to the ear. However, the new electronic medium, the Internet, also encourages feedback from peers (lateral communications).

Sudol, (1993) and Langston (1986) cited in Ferris (2002) explain that lateral media is fragmentary and malleable. Electronic writing is also characterized by oral over traditional conventions, argument over exposition, and group thinking over individual thinking. It is changing presentations of text and conventions of grammar.

Lateral media is also changing the way a publisher markets books. Richler (2009) suggests that book publishers are anticipating change and therefore able to get ahead of problems arising by the introduction of new technologies such as the Internet. He provides examples of publishers who are addressing changes. Companies are enabling readers to choose favorites, and others allow

readers to sample book chapters “Charles Dickens Style” before buying. But the way people read also affects the industry.

The book market is made up of writers and readers who Linberg (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) says must be considered when discussing the future of books. With new media, he says, readers can combine a number of pieces of information in interactive ways. Linberg also suggests ways to improve a reader’s understanding. He suggests the inclusion of technical innovations and other media, such as heartbeat sounds, would assist readers in understanding material. However, this is already how readers interact with words. But they do it through technology.

Stenmark (2002) suggests the innovation provides an environment in which users can seek, create, and interpret information; the technology must be designed in such a way to allow it to exist within that environment. The e-book introduces a new way of absorbing information.

Universal access to information on the Internet also involves literacy. In terms of the printing press, diffusion of literacy to lower classes and more remote areas acted as a “brake” on universal literacy. In fact, write Shprintsen and Bjarnason (2006), universal literacy is still a goal to which many societies aspire. Even in Canada, it is estimated that forty-two percent of adults are semi-literate. The Canadian Council on Learning suggests the percentage of semi-literate will stay under fifty percent at least until 2031 (*Canada’s literacy rate*, 2009). The ever-changing technologies are also maintaining or slowing literacy. Changes in the way we read are being studied.

The Transliteracy Research Group focuses on the development of literacy, now referred to as transliteracy (*Transliteracy*, February 2010). The group confirmed that readers are reading differently suggesting that the ability to read, write, and interact crosses a range of platforms, tools, and media from signing and orality through handwriting, print, TV, radio and film, and digital social networks (<http://nlabnetworks.typepad.com/transliteracy/>). In terms of literacy the e-book still only serves literate and transliterate readers and includes the act of talking with friends.

Communication is essential to modern business and so is the Internet. Levitt (2004) says companies are organized and operated to create and capitalize on growth opportunities. They cannot simply rely on expanding population, lack of competition, keeping prices down, or the precision or scientific method to maintain their advantage. Organizations must continually identify opportunities and challenges while fortifying strengths and decreasing weaknesses. The way they identify these is through lateral communication.

As Rogers (1995) and Prusak (2001) discussed, the reputation of the change agent is important to the acceptance of the message. Because, precision and objectivity may be lacking in lateral communications that take place on the net, the reputation of the individual provider of information gives a clue to its worth. A good reputation adds weight to the information provided. Another group or network looking at the same tacit knowledge could draw different conclusions or change previously made decisions. Without someone with a good reputation to take responsibility of the communication it could become just an argument between rival groups.

New media undeniably impact the publishing industry as quickly changing technologies expand self-expression and modify the way we work, think, and play. Yet there is little research that defines who decides the technologies for the publishing industry. Instead technologies are being developed by anyone to fit everyone. This is observed in the games we play online.

According to McGonigal (2003) gaming enterprises build audience for new games through lateral communications on the Internet. The games can be described as interactive stories. Peers are engaged by watching or taking part in staging live interactive scenes in alternate reality games (ARG). The games involve other potential players (group members) in interactive stories. Players become totally engaged.

McGonigal (2003) equates the total engagement or what she terms “immersive aesthetic,” to the total immersion that happens in a theater or when spectators are wholly engaged and in the

“collective empowerment” or strong sense of community (p. 9) and ownership. Other gamers learn from peers that the game is fun. Attitudes become positive and the group adopts the game. These group endeavors entice media interest. Media articles reach others that in turn attract the general public’s interest. All this interest creates momentum that has the potential to reach critical mass and make the game a hit. It begins and ends with people talking and making recommendations. The gaming model provides a lead that the publishing industry could follow.

Richler (2009) and Reiss (2009) write publishers are keeping track of an ever-changing marketing target by keeping their eyes open. Anticipating change and following it has allowed publishers to maintain. However, even the book’s high reputation cannot carry them forever.

Ferris (2002) points out, marketplace does not exist in some, or many, parts of the Internet so the currency spent online is time and personal recommendations, which is lateral communications. However, writing on the Internet will continue to be judged by traditional conventions, Ferris says. But, the communal Internet is changing these traditional conventions also.

Sheikh (2008) quotes Pietsch (n.d.) saying, “The best thing about the digital world and books is that people buy books when trusted people recommend them, and the Internet has accelerated word of mouth a million fold” (para. 4). To take advantage of the interconnectivity of the web one should also understand the concept of social capital.

Putnam (2000) describes social capital as networks, norms, and trust, which facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. She describes two types, Bonding and Bridging. Bonding is between individuals in tightly knit emotionally close relationships (family and close friends). Bridging is between individuals who might provide useful information or new perspectives for each other. But as Granovetter (1982) writes, Bridging capital is not typically emotional support. Paxton (1999) described two distinct components, “Trust,” passive emotional sentiments and

“Association,” behaviors that produce familiarity (lending a tool, informal socializing). The familiarity helps distribute ideas and the acceptance of innovation.

As the literature reviewed above demonstrates, print has greatly affected society, and as technology changes, readers’ relationship with books change. The literature, in conjunction with this researcher’s interests, led to the development of the following research question.

### *C. Research Question*

This study asks: How can the general public affect the e-book? The answer provides information through which the publishing industry can examine its self and consider redirecting itself in response to changes introduced by the Internet. During interviews in 2010 that were the impetus for this study, respondents each had a personal definition of what new media is. In this study the e-book is representative of new media. Furthermore, the e-book is defined as a traditional print book published and accessed in an electronic format.

The book (paper or electronic) publishing industry includes three factions: writing, editing, and marketing/distributing. The three factions are separate but the same industry. Writers express an idea but are more attentive to writing than selling; their focus is not marketing, but writing . Editors guide writers’ ideas or ways of expression towards an audience so that a readership will find the story interesting and spend money to buy it. Publishers recognize a need, real or manufactured, and find or create a story (fiction or non) to fill the need. Publishers then market and distribute the product. For the purpose of this paper, publishers are considered marketers and distributors.

## Chapter II: Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a dual focus: an examination of the literature to identify themes and interviews, and interviews. Interview data was obtained in 2010 at the University of Alberta, using convenience sampling. Data from interviews were analyzed using themes from research literature that suggest attitudes, opinions, and actions of the general public that could affect the e-book, as representative of new media.

This chapter includes three sections: A) Design, B) Themes from literature, C) Discussion, and D) Conclusions. The Design provides details on how the study was conducted including the selection and descriptions of respondents, what data was collected, why, and how. The Themes from Literature section describe data from the literature and respondents. Discussion considers the Themes and coordinates the findings from the literature to the comments of respondents. Conclusions summarize and suggest areas where more research is needed.

### *A) Design*

This study takes a qualitative approach. It synthesizes themes from literature focusing on the activities of the general public affecting change in the e-book, and compares the themes with responses from 14 interviews.

#### **Procedures.**

The 2010 survey asked eleven questions. Of these, seven are used to gather information about respondent's experience with, opinions of, and attitudes about, new media and publishing (see the Interview Data section below). The questions were asked to determine the range of understanding of the topic, personal definitions, and an initial look at the interest shown in offering a course on the topic. During the interviews, questions initiated informal conversations with

stakeholders that revealed themes such as practical experiences (actions), opinions, and attitudes. These were then compared with themes found in the literature.

### **Selection of respondents**

Convenience sampling was used to identify respondents. While not an ideal sampling method, it was used to access experts and vested individuals. Convenience sampling is a recognized form of identifying respondents. Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) write, sometimes “researchers find the selection of informants boils down to who is available, who has some specialized knowledge of the setting, and who is willing to serve in that role. This type of sampling is known as a ‘*convenience sample*’” (p. 71).

Beginning with known individuals, convenience sampling was supplemented by snowball sampling. Each respondent was asked to suggest another who have knowledge of, interested in, and time for the topic. Fourteen potential interviewees were identified in this manner. They were subsequently contacted, given background about the study, and asked to participate for 30 to 60 minutes so as to answer questions dealing with the future of new media. None refused even though they were provided that option. Five interviews were conducted in-person and nine were completed on the telephone for a total of fourteen interviews.

### **Interview Questions**

Questions initiated informal conversations with stakeholders. Respondents expressed thoughts and articulated feelings. The average time taken to conduct the study was 45 minutes. Where possible in-person interviews were conducted. However, respondents were located across North America. In most cases, busy schedules deterred the arrangement of face-to-face meetings. The telephone provided access to people who were unavailable spatially or temporally. In this case other technologies were not as convenient as the phone. Interview questions follow.

The 2010 survey asked eleven questions gather information about respondent's experience with attitudes of new media and publishing. Of these seven are used in this research. The questions were asked to determine the range of understanding of the topic, personal definitions, and an initial look at the interest shown in offering a course on the topic. The seven questions relevant to the general public's activities that affect the e-book are provided below.

### **Questionnaire**

The conversational tone allowed respondents to express thoughts and articulate feelings.

1. What is your definition of New Media?
2. What is your definition of Publish?
3. "How have you used technology to write, edit, or publish? What and when?"
4. What skills are important today for someone, such as yourself, who want to publish?
5. What challenges are inherent in writing, editing, and publishing industries today?
6. What kinds of things would make an online course interesting?
7. Can you suggest any books that could be used in a course called New Media in Writing, Editing, and Publishing?

### **Description of the Respondents**

All respondents are published authors. Respondents include students, educators, practitioners in the publishing industry, or members of professional organizations dealing with publishing, communications, and/or public relations. There were fourteen respondents. Thirteen are Caucasian. One is Asian. Each respondent's connections or experience in the publishing industry is provided in the individual descriptions below. The following table provides the number of respondents by age and sex.

**Table of respondents by age and sex**

Age	20s	30s	40s	50s	Total
Male	1	1	1	2	5
Female	1	3	3	2	9
Total	2	4	4	4	14

**In-person respondents**

Five people were interviewed in-person. A short description that includes the individuals association with publishing is provided below. Two were male. The five included:

- A university professor in the humanities and author of academic papers.
- A published poet and Professor Emeritus from a practical writing degree program.
- Two university students in Arts (One was investigating graduate studies, and the other is looking forward to starting a career). Both are in the professional writing degree program.
- A writer/editor for the government, considered an early adopter of Social Media.

**Telephone Respondents**

Association of each respondent with the publishing industry is provided below. Six of the nine telephone interviewees are female. The female group included the following:

- A professor in Communications also involved with international and multidisciplinary research about new media stories.
- A retired communications leader from a Quebec University, who continues to consult and speak internationally about communications in general and more specifically about her work to improve continued education in professional organizations. Her published work is practical advice and theory for professionals.
- A consultant freelance editor, college instructor, and board member of a professional editor's association. Apart from teaching editing, she works as an acquisition editor.
- A member of a visible minority working on a MA Communications in Ontario. This respondent works with a publisher in marketing educational storybooks to an international audience.

- A graduate of the MACT program who is an instructor at a western university and has been a member of the boards of two international communications and PR organizations. Publishing involves articles for professionals.
- An Executive Director of a university business program where she develops and publishes curricula while managing learning & development for an international energy company.

Three of the nine telephone respondents are male. This group included the following:

- A Dean of a communications department at a major university in the USA. He has overseen broad programming areas including international development, online and distance education, and community professional programs. He has also been involved with planning and speaking at major writers conferences and writing symposiums.
- An instructor at a technical university with experience in PR in the private and public sectors. His experience and writing involves advice to professionals and students about issues management, stakeholder relations, media relations, and marketing.
- A journalist who taught at a major Canadian University and has many years experience as the chief editor for an international science magazine. He is now in communications for government.

### Interview Data

With the study's procedures, questions, and respondents defined and explained, this section provides summaries of the informal interviews described above. During the interviews notes were taken. The notes were summarized directly after the interview and returned for the respondent's approval. Each respondent was able to make changes at that time only. Few did. Interview data follows. (The initial detailed interview notes are available by contacting the researcher.)

Although the original questionnaire, conducted in 2010, had eleven questions, only the seven questions (provided above) asking for specific information about New Media and publishing are utilized in this study. Four questions on new media and education are excluded. Responses are discussed and related to the literature to develop Themes.

### *B) Themes from the literature*

More than ever before, the publishing industry is attempting to refit itself to survive imposed changes. The refitting has produced a variation of ways to overcome perceived challenges. Today people use media to interact, control, and learn (overcome uncertainty). This section uncovers the themes found in the literature and interviews.

The interviews were conducted in the early months of 2010 with a small but varied group of students, educators, and other professionals described above. These interviews served as an initial foray. The respondents provided practical, personal insight and suggested themes. The themes suggest similar attitudes (the mood of society), opinions (the prevailing view), and actions of the general public that could affect the e-book, as representative of new media. This section looks at the literature and information gathered from respondents to develop themes. The themes include: new media; publishing; relationship between using technology, writing, and publishing; and skills and challenges inherent today.

#### **New Media**

When asked to define new media, respondents provided no single unanimous definition. In fact, “new media” was said to be in a constant state of flux. One respondent preferred to use the term “born digital,” i.e., constructed entirely on and within the electronic medium. Another interviewee differentiated between new media and electronic media. Even print can be considered new. These were said to have specific audience, language, and layout. An example was described. Printed posters that are fully exclusive to other audiences such as 8.5 x 14 size posters. Even hand written notes left on employees’ desks was said to be new media by another respondent (proving Ong right – The new rejuvenates the old).

The literature explains that the printing press has been with us since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Then, it was new technology and its product (the book) changed society and the individual. Successive adjustments to the technology caused more changes. McLuhan (1962) and Carr Jr. (2009) and Beniger (1986) write that technology causes change and helps us control. It is a cycle that keeps society in a state of flux. Now the book has taken on a new format because of the Internet.

When Manovich (2003) compares the Art World and the New Media world, he could be talking about the printing press world and the Internet world. His description of New Media most closely resembles the “born digital” description of new media described by a respondent. Manovich’s comparison of communication in the two worlds indicates Art World communication happens internally. In his New Media world, communication happens with others, outside the self.

Without a single reliable definition to rally around, groups seem to be creating one specific to the group. Respondents described new media as:

- Electronic, internet-based communication.
- Anything digital, even something produced electronically in MS Word.
- Computer printed books.
- One student respondent quoted her instructor “No more printed material in next 20 years.”
- The other student respondent equated new media as more choice listing social networking sites such as Facebook, twitter, and user generated stuff such as blogs and videos.

## **Publishing**

Similarly to the answers provided in number one, here too, respondents provided many and varied definitions of publishing. Most respondents said publishing is professionally vetted, edited, paid submissions that are printed and released to the public in some lasting format. After purchasing an e-reader to save space while on holidays, one respondent said the old definition of “artifact” (something tangible) is no longer relevant. But, she still likes the idea of beginning, middle, and end while reading.

One respondent said, everything is fast, fast, fast, there is no time to proof or verify. Also, the communal nature of the Internet makes everyone a contributor. Sometimes no author is named. Without a named author, no one has responsibility for the content. The reader is then responsible for verification, which, as previously stated, may not be done. Checking facts is more often corroboration; people talk to others within and between groups. However, respondents suggested that the challenges communicating across cultures and disciplines and staying safe inhibit fact checking outside known contacts, familiar groups. We no longer have a trusted gatekeeper.

One respondent said publishing had to do with books, but included publishing on-line or self-publishing that are directed by the individual. She then included Role Play Games (RPGs). The literature suggests these RPGs are one new way to tell stories. McGonigal (2003) tells how the attitude or group mentality developed in these games lead gamers to become (perform/act) totally engaged when playing what she calls an Alternate Reality Game (ARG). From this engagement evolves a “strong sense of community” with other players (p.9). This strategy, she writes, also gives players a vested interest. It becomes their game, and they recommend the game to peers. Corporations can then step back and let peers converse. McGonigal also suggests that peers are seen as having a better reputation and more trustworthy than corporations because peers have nothing to gain by making the suggestion.

On the other hand, respondents did have a more clear definition of “Publish.” It was defined by respondents as professionally vetted, edited, and distributed but not necessarily as something tangible. They also suggested publishing is sharing information. Publishing is a business. The industry shares information or stories in exchange for cash and to maintain that association with trust. Leonard-Barton (1995) said, “firms are knowledge” (p. xi).

The range of definitions of publishing from respondents ranged widely, including: publishing is a confusing mess, its definition depends on who and why one is defining it, publishing depends on

the intention of the author (i.e., intentionally writing something to be put into some permanent form to a defined audience), to sharing information anywhere. All respondents agreed publishing is a business. However, one respondent added that today there is a spectrum of items from childish pranks and fun interchanges to share, peer reviewed scientific findings and they are all termed publishing.

Reiss (2009) analyzed the publishing industry and described what is different since the intervention of the Internet. In the end, her suggestion is to market all books on the Internet.. Manovich (2003) points out that P-books and the Internet are different entities. P- and e-books slow down to allow personal or inward reflection; the Internet speeds up to provide communal and outward search.

The literature demonstrates that the publishing industry continues to evolve without much direction. Markus (1987), Keller (Clancy *et al.*, 2009), and Manovich (2003) say it is the product that is different. Yesterday's opinion leaders are losing their audience as information and opinion spread like the aroma of freshly baked bread in a restaurant.

A book is a decision. It has a manufactured beginning, middle, and end. When knowledge building was less dynamic and interactive than it is today on the Internet, books were instrumental in the dissemination of knowledge. But the speed of change inhibits even an e-book's ability to keep up-to-date. In the electric world, change is everything. If there is a beginning, middle, and end on the Internet as in the book, these are manufactured by the people in the conversation. Prusak (2001) states that conversations are not necessarily referenced to literature but are expressions of one's assumptions, or experiences.

### Relationships: Readers, Publishers, and the Internet

Interview question three dealt with the actions of respondents using technologies, writing, and publishing. When asked, “how they used technology to write, edit, or publish; what and when” respondent’s experience varied. Their use of relevant technology included a range from that of a self-professed early adopter to others who said they were reluctant to keep up with the technology until they saw it as a great advantage. Comments included: I love computers; technology helped in that it removes the need for proofreading or knowing how to spell; and technology makes it more efficient because it provides access to sources. Everything is fast, fast, fast, now, now, now.

Books, on the other hand, as Eisenstein (1979) and Thompson (1995) indicate, have always connected readers with themselves as well as with the thoughts and ideas of others like them. When silently reading in a public place became an acceptable activity, readers no longer had to engage others. But, Thompson (1995) writes, the idea of two-way communication prevailed. People continued to discuss what they had read after taking it in and relating it to their lives. Thompson continues to state that writing connected us with others. Eisenstein (1979) agrees that print allowed thought groups to form. Graff (1991) wrote that the permanent quality of print led to it being more trusted. Today, books blanket the author with the credibility of the written word. In contrast, the Internet is anything but permanent. There are many differences between the worlds of the printing press and the Internet.

As discussed in the interviews, groups are creating the medium that fits their needs. These included everything from Internet based social media to computer printed books on-demand. Two respondents related stories of leaving hand-written notes on desks or washroom doors to ensure people see the information. Today, it seems, we use the technology that gets the job done. Therefore ease of use can be important.

Daft and Armstrong (2009), Unold (2004), and Madrigal (2009) suggest how marketing of e-books relies on the Internet. Taking part in conversations on blogs and other social media augments traditional means of marketing. Sheikh (2008) provides another example of how the interconnectivity of the Internet affects e-books. Purchases are made when recommended by a friend. The Internet connects friends so as to build social capital.

Connections are also used to obtain information on the Internet. Anticipating change and following it has allowed publishers to maintain according to Richler (2009) and Reiss (2009). The tracking of changes is accomplished on the net by lateral communication, says Ferris (2002). Linberg (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) agrees, readers combine a number of pieces of information in interactive ways. Stenmark (2002) suggests those ways of piecing information is cooperative. As always, we seek, create, and interpret from numerous sources. Now we do it faster.

Keeping up with the speed of knowledge creation is one need that Carr Jr. (2009) and Day and Schoemaker (2000) state new technology can fill. Publishers cannot keep up using the existing printing press technology. The speed at which technologies change is a challenge discussed by the respondents also. Because technologies are altered so quickly, respondents expressed frustration about the lack of awareness and skill in the emerging technologies. However, McIlroy (2009), Tapscott (2011), and McLuhan (1962) saw that technology could have a positive influence.

Putnam (2000) describes social capital, such as that gained on the Internet, as networks, norms, and trust, which facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. She describes two types, Bonding and Bridging (described more fully in the earlier Literature Review) whose familiarity helps distribute ideas and the acceptance of innovation. This is a practical example of what Ferris (2002) discussed. It describes one's reputation. But other challenges face us.

Graff (1991) says similar effects as what happened with the advent of the printing press are taking place in society today because of the introduction of the Internet. Changes are basic to

society. Reading, writing, and responsibility are at the forefront of the changes discussed by the respondents in this researcher's interviews. These changes involve universal access but still include restrictions to use such as access to and ability to use technology, research ability, membership, language and cultural differences.

Changes happening in the way we write were a concern for the interview respondents. The same concerns are reflected in the literature.

People wade through the data, or at least skim over huge amounts of information, while navigating through constantly changing technologies in interactive, face-paced environments. Markus (1987) suggests interactive media attached to the Internet seem to involve a good feedback mechanism (two-way communication), fun (to attract followers), and intelligence (or a reputation of trustworthiness that builds momentum). Conversations are no fun if no one is listening. But they are even more important when they involve celebrities. If books are to be integrated into the electronic realm, the outward motion of books should probably involve some amount of feedback, fun, and trustworthiness.

“Users of local, regional, and global telecommunication networks, create a specific form of a ‘virtual crowd,’ accessing the same sources of information and reacting to the same sets of stimuli” (Unold, 2004, p. 54). Group dynamics and behavior is predictable. Group activities can be predicted (Unold, 2004) because people participate on the Internet. This participation Jenkins *et al* (2006) suggests increases the participant's visibility and expands influence. Visibility and influence are tradable, like money in the paper world.

Mittman and Jackson (2001) say ubiquitous communications enables information flow to create knowledge horizontally rather than vertically. Leadership is cooperative. Lateral diffusion quickly spreads information among social network nodes on the net. However, if one is only sharing

information with like minded others, a *group think mentality* can result. Laterally obtained information is not necessarily proven. The group can easily accept propaganda or misleading information as fact.

One interview respondent discussed how the changes discussed above move peers away from authority figures. Lateral communications, he said, is individuals viewing an organization's messages as subjective. People will take the word of an "online friends" as having more validity – despite the fact that a great deal of online conversation is based on the opinions and perceptions. The respondent suggests PR practitioners need to establish relationships within online groups so that we can provide fact to the conversation. But PR practitioners should not be seen as trying to control the conversation or pushing an agenda. Publishers may need to do the same.

As Sheikh (2008) quoted Michael Pietsch, "[t]he best thing about the digital world and books is that people buy books when trusted people recommend them, and the Internet has accelerated word of mouth a million fold" (para. 4). Even though books are enjoyed internally they too provide a sense of belonging. The *J. K. Rowling* Harry Potter series or Stephanie Meyer and the *Twilight* series both provide a sense of group, of belonging, and submerge the reader in the cult as the act of reading takes place. It is an experience they can share. "The enormous success of the *Twilight* saga – both as books and movies – may be one of the triumphs of the Social Media decade" (*Is Twilight THE Social Media Phenomenon?*, January 15, 2010, para 1).

Individual expression, writes Ferris (2002), was traded for function as clarity and readability became more important than appearance with mass-produced literature. Ferris (2002) also refers to both Sudol and Langston to explain that electronic writing is different. It is also characterized by the use of oral conventions over traditional conventions, of argument over exposition, and of group thinking over individual thinking. All interview respondents mentioned that all this working with others was a challenge.

Steenburgh & Avery (2008) described an influx of unverified material that inundates readers. Unold (2004) concludes that the Internet uses a form of virtual crowd, because they access the same sources and react to the same stimuli. He stresses that knowing or predicting behavior is possible. The cohesion within a group indicates that decisions are collective. As Ong (1973-74) explained, the older technology is rejuvenated by the new. Even though we now see the book through the eyes of the Internet, a book is still a book even if it is read on different technology and called an e-book.

Despite the publisher's diligence there are no definitive plans used by the industry to attract a critical mass and will move the industry in a sustainable direction in marketing. In some cases, the reputation of the book is being used rather than the contents. For example, Wilkov (July 8, 2010) sells the idea that books provide the writer "a leg up on credibility and [they] appear as an authority in their respective worlds" (paragraph 6). Self-publishing through blogging provides Wilkov with expert status here.

## Skills

Questions four through seven solicited interview respondents' opinions. When asked about skills that are important today for someone wanting to publish, all the usual skills were discussed including: good grammar, clear writing, a strong and varied background in the liberal arts and sciences to back up research and ideas, experience writing for the audience, and design skills. However, interviewees noted extra skills. For example, ability to interact with the media on the Internet (described as being in a state of constant flux), ability to cooperate as much as possible with other groups and experts to round out the experience, and logic so the writing has beginning, middle, and end progression. Frustration and fear were associated with the forced use of many varieties of technologies that continually change.

Respondents also provided comments about reading and writing. They stated that how one reads really depends on “why” the person is reading. Fiction is as usual. There is a beginning middle, and end. Non-fiction is explored. The person will skip around on the page to gather the information needed. Because writing in new media (on the net) is communal, everyone becomes the author and sometimes no one is named as author. Without a name attached, who is responsible for or owns the idea? Responsibility is changing from writer to reader somewhat, but even sights such as Wikipedia are now insisting on citations.

Another respondent said that collaboration is difficult for writers. She thought the collaboration of technologies should be considered. Comprehending the way various technologies are used together to create a product for an audience is a needed skill. Technology is changing, but the older technology remains. One respondent related a story of writing urgent information on notes and sticking the note to washroom doors. “Sometimes this was the only way to ensure everyone would see it,” she said, thus arguing in favor of much older, non-digital technologies in certain contexts.

## Challenges

Question five asked respondents their opinion about challenges. Given that respondents included an increasing acceptance of plagiarism and poor grammar as challenges, it is interesting to note that there was no mention of mash-ups by any respondents. But then, technologies were also mentioned as being frustrating. These included the number of options available that can be overwhelming. Use of templates, the do-it-yourself culture, and the constraints of each technology were also mentioned. Accessibility was seen as a challenge too because of the availability of miss-information

Frustration was expressed about the need to return to basics in English and writing skills as well as a lack of awareness and skill in the new and emerging technologies. Speed was also seen as being both a help and hindrance by new technologies. Communication was used as an example. Messages were composed and delivered faster after a technology was learned, but then the number of messages increased and quality decreased. New technologies are presented to engage, collaborate, and communicate but few are actually used. There is a gap between technology and the use of that technology that was blamed on the changes that are perceived as constant.

Question six also asked about the challenges. In this question respondents were asked what would allow them to know what needs to be understood. This particular question initiated lots of discussion. Access, collaborative work (group forming), and safety were topics discussed. Access to information allows for an individual to stay informed and educated, but all respondents empathized that access to intellectual property should be protected as an important quality. Quantity of data was also felt to be a potential hindrance.

Other responses included the following information: Group forming (virtual or real) is a way to understand technologies beyond our expertise and provides other perspectives. Working with others injects more challenges such as communicating across cultures and disciplines and staying safe. Individuals have an obligation to protect themselves in terms of rights, intellectual property, and privacy.

Respondents also raised the idea of literary value of writing and being suspicious of content, agendas, and sources. What all the rhetoric leads to is that whatever the question, we decide the answer as a group.

Most respondents expressed a need for writers in electronic media to get back to basics. The new electronic media has caused changes in how we think, write, and read. However, as Ferris

(2002) says, because European society has 600 years of history in print traditions, it is as difficult for scholars to objectively study the development of electronic writing because we live in it.

As Ong (1982) suggests an older technology continues because of its accountability. But it must also be flexible. The Internet will increase the books adaptability. Books will need to be translatable in both language and culture. Rogers (1995) wrote that the innovation must be seen as being useful and easy to use. Hall (2001) said it should relate to the formality of the group. The community or group that has its own culture and beliefs, not the individual, accepts or rejects the innovation.

Ong (1982) and Ferris (2002) agree. They say electronic, oral technology and interaction is verbal, like conversation. People discuss before making a decision. This interactive medium has also affected our stories. They too have become more interactive and participatory. Individuals on the Internet now impose their interpretation on stories. Readers are the new gatekeepers; everything is available, and we control the flow of messages and decide what to accept or not. Truth is determined through our own research, lateral communication, and logical argument. On the Internet it is the group who decided what is expressed. Because such expression is a group product, it is difficult to charge for it.

Because of today's electronic interactions, respondents also suggested that new skills should be promoted. These new skills include cooperation to work with other disciplines and logic to ensure the traditional beginning, middle, and end scenario. Readers today seem to skip around both on the page and in various media to gather needed information.

Transliterate readers using the new easy access move within an article and to other sources (*Transliteracy*, February 2010). Research shows that transliterate readers cross a range of platforms to obtain information (*Transliteracy*, February 2010). Levitt (2004) writes that companies must do the same in order to collect and verify changes that affect them. Rogers (1995) and Prusak (2001)

discuss the importance of reputation when providing information on the Internet. In the printing press world, Graff's (1991) trusted printing and Thompson's (1995) group forming led to the association of ideas to authors and reputation took on even more significance. What a person knew, thought about, and shared became that person.

One interviewee's responses agreed with this idea and pointed out that the reputation of the message provider helps identify the message as information or mis-information. Another respondent discussed a practical example of information being the person. The message provider's reputation, helps identify the message as information or mis-information. Lateral communications, he suggests, should include readers checking information on the Internet even when information is from a friend. When confirmed, information can be shared. The verification of information raises other concerns mentioned in the interviews.

Fletcher, F., Logan, D. Hermida, A., & Korell, D., (May 11, 2011) indicate that Internet users crave the trust and reputation associated with the book. But, the book needs to be fast, connected, and friendly for the Internet. Both Beniger (1986) and McLuhan (1962) state that technology adds control, alleviates uncertainty and acceptance of the technology, and changes our expectations. Eisenstein (1979) provided an example of technology making changes and moving control from Church scribes to politically backed printers. Reading newspaper accounts in the privacy of one's own home rather than in public spaces, she wrote, allowed readers to differentiate between public and private. However, as Ferris (2002) says, the Internet is totally interconnected. When we have a conversation it is available to everyone. The distinction between public and private and published or not are blurred.

An Alternate Reality Game (ARG) continues a tradition that was appreciated by one respondent. An ARG, a respondent noted, has a beginning, middle, and end as in the book.

However, the individual as part of a group playing the game decides the points at which these traditional organizing sections of beginning, middle, and end happen.

Groups of users also decide on the technology, according to the interview respondents. They provided a wide range of answers to the question of what technology they used. Sheikh (2008) tells us that the Internet brings like-minded people together to share likes and dislikes. This indicates that each respondent belongs to his/her own group. Putnam (2000), Granovetter (1982), and Paxton (1999) explain the Internet's information exchange. They write that the Internet's information exchange is a developing of social capital, which involves trust (sentiment) and association (action or behavior) to disseminate ideas and build acceptance of "new."

Shirkey (2008) suggests that people co-create, share, and collaborate. The interview respondents confirmed his findings, but also suggested that an adjustment is necessary for the industry to accept the collaboration. Shirkey (2008) also wrote that information flows in networks, more is done faster, which maintains a gap between literate and illiterate. Interviewees confirm the gap suggested by Shirkey. The interconnectivity of society on the Internet has increased the speed at which knowledge is formed.

As Leonard-Barton (1995) writes, knowledge is what the publishing industry sells, and what they need to survive in our ever-changing world. An industry adapts but must maintain its reputation for trust, accuracy, and connection. Just as readers return to an author they connect with, Internet users return to a source they connect with. Ferris (2002) says this when she suggests currency on the Internet is not money. Ferris (2002) writes that lateral communication and personal recommendation (reputation) is what is traded. Capital or currency on the Internet is social. To take advantage of the interconnectivity of the web one should also understand the concept of social capital.

Beniger (2003) writes that having print materials is a stepping-stone towards the construction of our society. Printed material allowed reproduction and distribution faster and continued us on a path for more speed. In time printing technologies became too slow. Transfer of information needed to be faster. As McLuhan (1962) recognized, society's needs are filled by technology. This in turn changes the way society thinks and acts which in turn create new needs. Change is a spiral movement. Today huge amounts of information are available.

According to Thompson (1995) the book has contributed to the uplifting of mankind. Thompson indicates readers bond with other like-minded readers and raise self-esteem. With the new found self-esteem, readers were able to know facts that led them to ask questions or find answers. Readers and writers were driven forward to achieve more. Books are inward looking but link us to like-minded readers.

While a book engages an individual, the Internet engages an individual as part of a group. The difference is that a book is inwardly focused and a game or the Internet is outwardly focused. After a reader has taken in the book it can be discussed online. For example, one respondent suggested self-publishing is mostly bad stories. They have the reputation of stories that would not be accepted by a legitimate publisher. If this respondent were still teaching she would have students create blogs, because these are "outward looking" and she considered them group initiatives.

The Internet is always connected and carries participants into the ongoing action. McGonigal (2003) equates the "immersive aesthetic," to the total immersion that happens in theater or when spectators are wholly engaged and in the "collective empowerment" or strong sense of community (p. 9). The same is true when one is immersed in a book. But as discussed by the 2010 respondents today's technology enables groups.

Research reports the conversation in social media is affecting lateral communications online (*The conversation*, 2009). Levitt (2004) and Daft and Armstrong (2009) write that organizations must

continually identify opportunities and challenges while fortifying their strengths and decreasing weaknesses. Communication is essential, and so is the Internet. Companies must be responsive and participate in the conversations taking place on the net.

Access to others, according to the 2010 interview respondents can also provide extra skills. For example having the ability to, interact with the media on the Internet, cooperate as much as possible with other groups and experts, exchange ideas to round out the experience, and get feedback that increases logic so the writing has beginning, middle, and end progression. Ferris (2002) suggested, books allow the reader to reflect on standard and mechanical words and language.

Respondents expressed concern about communicating across cultures and disciplines. The Internet has shrunk the size of the globe; various cultures previously separated by spatial and temporal differences are now virtually only one click away. The conversations taking place are with people from other cultures. The Internet also forces experts together in order to complete tasks such as producing an e-book or sharing its message that is integral to marketing books.

Jenkins *et al* (2006) state that any decision today will be participatory. Everyone has a soapbox on the net. Rogers (1995) states that communication brings people together in their understanding of the world.

Thus the literature supports what was learned in the interviews. Individuals participate but need to work towards a common understanding. However, those individuals on the net are very well defined as group members.

Because, as Unold (2004) states, people using the Internet are group members, group activities can be predicted. Visibility contributes to acceptance and that in turn builds towards a critical mass that is needed in order to have a new technology accepted. Critical mass may be possible according to McGonigal (2003). She suggests that the Internet is collective and is able to obtain tacit information through lateral communications. Andrews (1984) agrees suggesting that if

one wants, one can overcome challenges introduced by the relevance paradox by consulting with many groups. The Internet allows us to do just that.

While as Richler (2009) suggests as publishers search for a way to bring the masses back with their distribution and control of output, more people continue to have electronic access and even expect free access to digital materials. At the same time, digital technology allows booksellers to eliminate bookstores and sell directly to the reader.

As part of the larger general public, the publishing industry has both taken direction from society and provided a way of thinking or being to society. When asked the seventh question in the interview, i.e., to name or suggest books that could be used in a course called New Media in Writing, Editing, and Publishing, most respondents had none, two suggested writing and grammar books, and one interviewee suggested the name of a book used in one of her classes, ironically the p-book entitled, *Print is Dead*.

### *C.) Discussion*

In similar words that were used in *le mort saisit le vif*, (2011) to signify the transfer of sovereignty after the previous monarch's death "Le livre est mort. Vive le livre!," the e-book is ascending to the throne over the previous ruler, the p-book. The literature suggests that the e-book is not necessarily new. It is the p-book in a different body, and it continues to adjust to the "new" connected electric world that seems to be changing everything. Even though the Internet's major influences are causing a flux in the publishing industry's technology, it needn't. The Internet is an entirely different ruler.

This section considers the themes found in the literature review and discusses them in consideration with comments of respondents. The themes are used to segregate discussions. They

include: new media; publishing; relationship between using technology, writing, and publishing; and skills and challenges inherent today.

### **New Media**

With the Internet sovereign, things change. Writers and audiences today are diverse, geographically dispersed, informed, and involved. The technology that started as verbal communication, then writing and print, is now an electronic pulse and travels at the speed of light. Everyone now has the ability to write and publish. Yet, the written word is still revered.

Ong (1982) and Ferris (2002) state, information exchange on an Internet can be a virtual oral conversation. The challenges are finding the information to verify something after it has been disseminated, arguing that the information is still relevant and legitimate in the new and changed context and time, and maintaining the official and trustworthy status of the new orality.

### **Publishing**

At the same time, well-established publishing traditions are being replaced with strategic or sometimes random marketing models, whose success is significantly dependent on general (and various) publics according to Richler (2009). Adria (2008) suggests a possible reason for the seemingly chaotic mis-starts. He points out one cannot predict all shifts taking place in the electronic age. One of the changes brought about by wide spread access to publishing technology is a leveling of social status as seen by the expert status afforded self-publishers such as Wilkov (July 8, 2010).

Today people communicate easily within the “new” communicative environment, the Internet. Manovich (2003) suggests Thompson’s (1995) solo reader is fading. All communication seems to be moving outside the individual to the group. As soon as something is said or written on the Internet, it is no longer private but is widely accessible. Publishing has changed.

*The Technicum* article reinforces this by discussing the many attempts to fit the “book” into the Internet. However, in the end it too states, “A book is an attention unit. A fact is interesting, an idea is important, but only a story, a good argument, a well-crafted narrative is amazing, never to be forgotten (*What Books Will become*, 2011, para. 1). As Rukeyser (n.d.) said, ‘the universe is made of stories, not atoms.’”

Rukeyser’s (n.d.) sentiment about stories replacing atoms echoes King (1993): we are our stories. Responses from the interview data and the literature indicate that the e- book should become faster and more communal. Languages and means of communications are being changed. Audiences can be more wide spread but smaller. Amalgamations of the small groups increase the numbers in an audience until a critical mass (threshold) is reached. When the threshold is reached an exponential growth in numbers of users accept the item or idea.

Rukeyser’s (n.d.) comment also indicates the importance awarded stories and books in our society. The book has been a technology used to transfer reliable and trusted information from knowledgeable groups for centuries. The Internet, as a new technology has not replaced the book in this capacity, but it allows for much more interaction between peers. We, in our groups, make decisions of what to read and write and what to believe. There is strength and comfort in numbers.

To return to the initial analogy, Publishing (p- and e-book) is mom’s kitchen, grounded, recognized, and personal. Here one can reflect inwardly. *Technicum* described a book as, “a self-contained story, argument, or body of knowledge that takes more than an hour to read. A book is complete in the sense that it contains its own beginning, middle, and end” (*What Books Will Become*, April 15, 2011 at 4:44 AM, para. 1). However, today, the speed of change on the Internet makes clear the successive transformations that McLuhan described.

### Relationships: Readers, Publishers, and the Internet

The book industry is a commercial endeavor. The Internet is not. The book and Internet also have divergent purposes and uses. McIlroy (2009) and McLuhan (1962) suggest technology could consider accountability and adaptability functions to be a positive force. When the challenge is identified, a solution can be created. This suggests that we need to identify the challenge and then determine an answer.

Clancy (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) suggests that there is a complete absence of gatekeepers because the Internet is a reflection of the outdated book mentality. The idea of gatekeeper has changed. Now readers decide. The Internet is not a cacophony of voices leaving no one to listen it seems more to be a well-organized arrangement of nodes. As Unold (2004) states, group members contribute and listen to leaders within their groups. Leaders in turn are reaching out to others and conversing. To maintain its trustworthy reputation in these changing times the publishing industry needs to adjust its course. What Unold (2004) suggests is predicting behavior, which is really what Tapscott suggests: realizing the future. The group is accessed to evaluate needs. Then the needs are met .

The Internet makes the creation of knowledge part of us. Study is needed to discover whether the loss of external gatekeepers makes Internet users more responsible. Will the publishing Industry take ownership of its knowledge? Direction no longer comes from outside; individual gatekeepers no longer decide what is published.

Publishers exploit its rich resources for ways to reach groups who pay for what the book offers—inward reflection and reputation. Levitt (1965) has never been more right. In today's asynchronous world where everyone is only a keystroke away, reputation truly affects buying decisions.

Clancy (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) suggests the development of two audiences, those who just want open access and others who need the more traditional vetted information. Clancy states someone must be accountable for quality. But the Internet today allows the reader to be responsible for what he or she reads. The Internet also gives readers a voice to announce pleasure or displeasure. The Internet is participatory, as Jenkins *et al* (2006) and Steenburgh and Avery (2008) note.

Linberg (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) suggests readers have quick access to lots of information and lots of other readers on the Net to create new knowledge, but the Internet inhibits access to one's self. Access seems to be different in the two media (publishing and the Internet) according to a respondent and the Transliteracy Research Group (*Transliteracy*, February 2010). The Internet has increased access to other media and other people. But, readers must be off line to personally reflect on data. Because the Internet always involves a crowd, it is difficult to contemplate. On line, the dynamics of a conversation persist. We create our own realities.

On the Internet, our knowledge is part of us (individually and collectively) according to Davenport, DeLong, and Beers (1998). It is realized personally and then verified by trusted members of our group. Information from books are gathered and verified in the same interactive way only very much slower. Stories too, which is a large part of our knowledge base, become communal. Ferris (2002) refers to Goody and Ong to say that the record of words on paper allow an idea to be re-read or backward-scanned.

As Mumford (1947) and Ryan and Conover (2004) suggest, publishers have been moving society to larger more uniform audiences, but the Internet takes a sledge hammer to mass production. On the Internet, as Mittman and Jackson (2001) state the gatekeepers of yesteryear have given way to group decision makers.

The change from p-books to e-books is a movement not unlike the change from scribe to printing press as Eisenstein (1979) discussed. The e-book has not changed how we relate to it. It is

still a book and as such we take it internally. Once obtained and consumed, the information is then moved outward to the Internet where it is discussed and criticized externally. There the masses have a chance to accept or reject or comment on the contents almost immediately. It is the speed at which readers seek other information about characters, others thoughts, lending possibilities, access to dictionaries, or discussions with others who have read the book that is requested.

Answers to the seventh interview question are telling in that they indicate the influence of the book on respondents. They collectively held on to the “correct” grammar as presented in the book’s presentation. The Internet is an entirely different medium, therefore is making changes that have not entirely been embraced.

### Skills and challenges

Even with Shirkey’s (2008) observations of information flows in networks confirmed, respondents were of the opinion that traditional skills such as grammar and clarity in writing are waning while acceptance of what was once considered plagiarism is increasing. Shirkey (2008), Carr Jr. (2009), and Day and Schoemaker (2000) say that interconnectivity, access to a huge quantity of information, and the faster paced exchanges are moving society away from the traditional ways of thinking about grammar, and intellectual property.

Intellectual closeness involves finding like-minded others. The Internet’s technological innovations changed how people communicate by defining and developing techniques. Shirkey (2008) writes people exchange information in networks, and Jenkins *et al*, (2006) add that people use the interconnectivity to increase visibility and expand influence. The expanded influence is an increase of their “net” worth. Increasing one’s stories or reach multiplies the numbers who hear the message and in turn pass it on.

Linberg (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) also argues to include other senses such as sounds placed into a book would give a context that just descriptions in words would not. This, he suggests, could improve the readers understanding. However, transliterate readers already have this function. It is how they read now on the Internet (*Transliteracy*, February 2010). As the need arises they search for the extra information such as the various auditory functions Linberg mentions. Also, his example does nothing for readers who wish to escape into a story and get away from reality.

Keller's (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) view of integrating electronic technology into reading so as to enable faster uptake seems not to consider that interactivity with the information that takes place in public. The interaction involves the consideration of others as well as oneself.

#### *D.) Conclusions*

This study asks: How can the general public affect the e-book? To answer this question, the paper examined how things change, how technologies such as the book and the Internet have changed us in the past, and how the new us has changed them. This section interprets the material, analyzing and evaluating the main points while considering general implications, and then recaps the major ideas.

#### **Material interpreted**

Society is in a constant state of change according to McLuhan (1962). As Rogers (1995) and Carter (1925) write, change happens when a recognized need is filled by a new technology. The new technology is created by combining past experience with new understanding. The filling of the need with the new technology provides society with different perspectives that may lead to innovative actions. Novel actions cause other ways of seeing and doing, which leads to recognition of new needs.

However, as Adria (2008) and Manovich (2003) point out, just knowing the past is not enough to predict technological changes. Variables affecting changes are complex and many. Literature points to the book as a technology contributing to countless aspects of modern society. It has been part of us for many generations. The book at first influenced our use of the Internet. However, now the Internet has begun to usurp the book's influence. As discussed by respondents and in literature the Internet is quickly affecting how we think of and use books (*Transliteracy*, February 2010).

Using interviews and a literature search, this paper shows that the publishing industry should not try to fit the book as it is today into the connected and conversational Internet. Instead it should recognize the book as the inwardly focused medium and accept the changes in society that affect the book and as such the industry itself, so as to adjust accordingly. The main points and their general implications are discussed next.

### **Main points and general implications**

As Ong (1982) and Ferris (2002) wrote, the Internet promotes interaction, when ideas are thrown out to the online crowds the inner contemplation suddenly becomes a conversation that can go in many directions. The thought loses focus and reverts back to oral language. On the Internet, readers have access to a very connected world that allows us to explore outside ourselves. Now the e-book offers ease of access to literate and transliterate readers. Literature and many of the 2010 respondents believes where and how one reads depends on why one is reading (*Transliteracy*, February 2010).

Eisenstein's (1979) solo newspaper reader example reflects what is happening in today's communal, interactive conversations on the Internet. Because of the interconnectedness of the Internet conversations, we again have to make the decision of what is private and what is public. As

the interview respondents noted, authors are now responsible for protecting our self, our rights, and our intellectual property.

Today, we still learn about life, culture, and ourselves by reading and writing. Our world is shaped by our stories, and as such the publishing industry continues to wheedle much power. In early times, gatekeepers with the titles of Writer, Editor, or Publisher steered the production of ideas and maintained the quality of publication. Today the gatekeepers are changing to be readers and writers, us, on the Internet.

As McIlroy (2009) and McLuhan (1962) suggest, technology can be a constructive influence. But in order to apply the technology a need must be identified. The publishing industry makes money by selling knowledge and entertainment. Contributors on the Internet spend time and make personal recommendations for community and competitive advantage. Publishing industry's and the Internet's products are divergent. According to Clancy (Clancy *et al.*, March 1, 2009) we are the users and the gatekeepers. As Unold (2004) points out, group leaders elicit discussion and arrive at solutions to identified problems or challenges. If we are to realize our future, as Tapscott said to Mansbridge (2011), we should stop trying to predict it and take it to where we want to be.

Respected and educated individuals (members of the fifth estate, gatekeepers such as publishers, editors, and writers) judged quality and acceptability of published material. As Graff (1991) put it, if it is written, it is true. There are still uncertainties that need to be addressed. When technology is involved there are complex interconnections and societal relationships that affect choices. Because of these the time it takes to make a decision increases. It seems no choice is made; all options are accepted.

The book's introduction to the Internet and the Internet's replacement of what a book represents seems to be one of these prolonged decision making processes. As Adria (2008) reminds

us, their complexity, because of the volatility of the Internet and the instability of choices made by Internet users, make the next step impossible to predict.

Without gatekeepers to limit choice, everything is available. Everything is a lot. This tsunami of information has ripped away the world we knew and forced us to make choices. What will we keep and what will we change? The wide array of definitions of publishing and new media from just the small number of respondents interviewed in this study suggested that more research is needed into what should be guiding the actions of the North American publishing industry.

As Shirkey (2008) suggested we work together on the Internet, but there are technical drawbacks. Interview respondents stated that it is not only difficult for writers to collaborate (writing has traditionally been a solo activity), but also the various technologies are creating difficulties. The difficulties include a lack of understanding of the workings of the technologies themselves and choosing a technology that will be accessed by all collaborators equally.

Carr Jr. (2009) and Day & Schoemaker (2000) state that technology fills a need. Deciding on what that need is would go a long way to easing some of the challenges that must to be met. Frustrations of the interview respondents were associated with the forced use of a wide variety of technologies that continually change.

Markus (1987) describes a community as “a group of individuals with some common interest and stronger communication flows within than across its boundaries” (p. 492). Because of lateral communication, as Ferris (2002) discussed, electronic publishing can be considered an interactive medium. However, according to Steenburgh and Avery (2008) we are communicating laterally with peers not necessarily with experts. The following paragraphs reiterate major ideas.

### Major ideas reiterated

Just as a child learns by mimicking, we too mimic. The Internet has been injected into a society tied to the book. As stated in the introduction of this research paper, we want to use the new technology as we have the old. We want the new dish to taste similarly to the old. But it does not.

We grew up on paper, the p-book. Feeling safe, balanced, and vetted, we can search for self without wondering if we fit in. Like mom's kitchen the p- or e-book is where we feel safe and at home. But, the speed of change imposed on us today through the interconnected Internet makes us choose the destination before we get there. On the Internet there are no end points just locations or directions along a path where we can say this is the point we call the end. Even if the voyage continues for others.

The book offers a quiet place to absorb, contemplate, and analyze will be necessary at some time. The Internet provides access to others and other materials and media that will be needed at other times. Because the publishing industry is a for-profit business and the Internet is not a single business of any sort, the two should remain separate. Books continue to be produced and therefore must be marketed.

The Internet is a very efficient marketing tool. On the sea of global communication, Internet users seem to be skipping across the surface making momentary contact at various points along their way. Their understanding is wide but shallow. No depth seems to be achieved in their many contacts. Study, such as what the Transliteracy Group is doing, is needed to examine if this vast but shallow contact is transferring to traditional readers. There seems to be a distinction between the industry publishing and action publishing. Further study will help confirm or narrow the broad strokes taken here.

On the Internet, ideas can rarely be reviewed and discussed after some thought. Discussion changes it as soon as it is made public. Everything is available and the group decides what is worth

accessing. As soon as something is linked to the Internet it undergoes change. If necessary the reader adapts the story to a very specific audience, him/herself or his or her group. Discussions hone the information in the direction of knowledge. Continuous change prevents it from ever getting there.

There also seems to be a gap between technology and its use. The publishing industry's refusal to accept that the Internet and the book are different has created an influx of tools that try to fit the two distinct technologies together. Instead, the two technologies should be described as different and treated as such. The book is inward and reflective. The Internet is outward and argumentative. At the same time, the book remains as the vetted and verified truth that can be referenced while communicating on the Internet with people who think like us and who verify our conclusions. This can be a conscious decision or not.

On the Internet we are our own gatekeepers. The Internet is connected and group oriented. The virtual conversations return society somewhat into some aspects of the oral culture. To be heard on the Internet, one must be connected and respected, say Rogers (1995) and Prusak (2001). More often we are relying on group members to inform and confirm and corroborate. Viral marketing as well as conversational and social networking sites are accessed. We as gatekeepers must synthesis knowledge from various groups to fit the audience needs. Study is needed to determine if public learning is more efficient than private contemplation.

Also, the Internet has changed the way we do business. The book brought us private ownership and many other social ideas including a way of seeing the world through story. The Internet is showing us an entirely different world. Ferris's (2002) discussion of oral culture emphasizes the Internet's interactivity and the development of stories collectively. This collective discourse contributes to the lack of marketplace and development of bonding and bridging capital.

For some, as Ferris describes, “who you know” is more important than “what you know”, when writing for the Internet.

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