Riding the eBook Wave

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Introduction

eBooks are here to stay, or so the signs of the times seem to indicate. A December 2004 press release from **Google** announcing new partnerships for digitizing library collections pushes us ever-closer to the ubiquity of the eBook.[1] However, a word of caution for those poised to toss out print collections: While the continued existence of eBooks is a certainty, the manner of that existence is far from certain.

Librarians are (and should be) key players in the evolution of the eBook industry; thus, librarians need to know the current issues and trends in the eBook market. This article swipes a broad stroke across the eBook landscape. The authors contacted a sample of eBook insiders[2] — publishers, distributors, software and hardware providers, and others — and asked them questions about the state of affairs for eBooks. What follows are some of their answers.

A caveat before we begin our journey into eBooks: All eBooks are not created equal; an online dictionary is a different beast, with different promises and problems, than an online **Stephen King** novel. With this knowledge in hand, it is best to view these questions and answers of various eBook insiders as a small cross-section of the industry as a whole.

Questions and Answers

Question 1: What is your response to conflicting signs in eBook publishing, e.g. BarnesandNoble.com pulls out of the eBook trade while others, such as the Open eBook Forum and Publishers Weekly, report increasing eBook sales (although it is still a small portion of the entire book market)?

Ronald G. Musto and Eileen Gardiner, Project Directors, ACLS History eBook Project

This remains a shifting industry in which patience, persistence and flexibility are key. Businesses will continue to move in and out of it until the industry is more established. Our strategy to avoid these larger shifts is to be specialized by subject (and market) and highly focused on the quality of our list. In an emerging market "scale" still only works if it remains nimble and flexible. "Aggregations" that try to digitize the known universe of print will only replicate the failing print market we have today. The Web itself is the greatest and chief engine of aggregation that we have: we should be concentrating on common interfaces, search methods, and citation and research standards (the cyberinfrastructure) for what exists and not trying to dominate e-space with the single-provider solutions born in print publishing in the 1970s and 80s.

Alix Vance, North American Business Development Mgr., eBooks Corporation, eBook Library (EBL)

Both stances are correct. It made sense for **Barnes and Noble** to withdraw from ebook sales because they were losing money. The present consumer market for downloadable books is extremely small when compared with the consumer market for print books. It's not easy to make a living selling ebooks to the public. It requires a high level of passion and expertise — something that cannot be expected from a massive corporation that has bigger fish to fry. It is nevertheless true that the ebook market is growing at a very healthy rate; sufficient to sustain a number of independent retailers like **FictionWise** and **eBooks.com**. At some point, **Barnes and Noble** will revisit ebooks.

Furthermore, when evaluating ebook market potential, it is helpful to note that one size does not fit all. There are unique needs and expectations for each type of ebook. The distinctions — between trade books/popular novels, textbooks, reference works, monographs, and primary source works — are heightened in an online environment. Each requires its own flavor of technology and offers its own utility, promise, and challenges. When evaluating the promise and prospects of ebooks, it behooves us to look at the types of books themselves, their specific functions, and the end-users and settings by and in which they are used, rather than prognosticating across the board.

David Bass, SVP of Sales and Marketing, ebrary

The trade publishing industry is not interested in selling anything other than print to enable ROI [return on investment]. STM and educational publishers have long been selling electronic content to industry verticals, including the library markets, that have provided extreme ROI to the publishers and aggregators in the market. Trade eBooks are a failure for three reasons, one; they are same as the print book, just digital in format, providing no interactivity like a multi-media CD-ROM, and two; publishers offered eBooks for a fraction of the retail price of print because they believed that the

COGS [cost of goods sold] was lower, therefore, the perception of value to the consumer was lower, and last but not least, the retailing market believes that there needs to a be better device than the PC or tablet PC before trade publishing content adoption takes off. The third point is just simply not true. Price the books at the price of the print book and let consumers choose which format they want.

Kevin Ohe, Managing Editor, Print-Electronic, Greenwood Publishing Group, Greenwood eBooks

I think this reflects sales on the trade side of the business that are growing steadily, but not as profitable or as easy to effect as early entrants like **B&N** had hoped. Also, there are numerous ways (Websites, portals, affiliates) to obtain trade ebooks, perhaps presenting more competition than **B&N** had envisioned.

William A. Woishnis, Chairman & Chief Marketing Officer, Knovel Corporation, Knovel Interactive E-Library

We believe usage of eBooks will grow rapidly in 2005 and beyond. We also believe that people's perception of what constitutes an eBook will change. Simply converting physical paper to electronic paper — even if it is keyword searchable — does not add enough value for most users. True value occurs when, 1) collections of eBooks can be searched simultaneously, 2) not only keyword but fielded searching capability is added, 3) the content of an eBook can be "manipulated" and analyzed by the user, allowing new content ("answers") to be generated. It also helps if the interface is standardized — meaning if the user knows how to use one eBook the user can use them all.

Marge Gammon, Division Vice President, Library & Publisher Services, NetLibrary, a Division of OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc.

In assessing the market for eBooks, it is important to make a clear distinction between progress in the retail, or consumer, market versus the library community. The adoption of eBooks, as with any new product, is dependent upon timing, readiness of the market, and ability to meet a

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from page 41
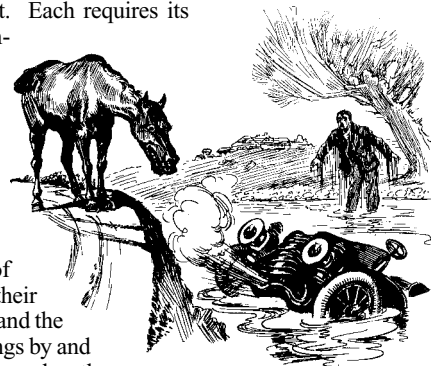
need. **NetLibrary's** experience clearly demonstrates that growth in both adoption and usage of eBooks has been steady within the library community, albeit perhaps at a slower rate than anticipated. The lack of a number of committed, strong players in the market with stable business models, the variety of technology platforms and applications appearing and disappearing from the market, and the general complexities associated with new technologies has served to cause confusion and slow adoption which was further hampered by recent library budgetary constraints. In the consumer market, the lack of any dominant reading device has likely been the cause of mixed results. The fact remains, however, that the first and primary use for eBooks has been for research reference purposes and, in that regard, they are well suited to library needs.

Michael Hart, Founder, Project Gutenberg

My response is that these people have no idea what the world would/should/could be like when everyone has a personal library of millions of eBooks.

Virtually all the million dollar corporate eBook ventures, both hardware *and* software, have been designed with business plans that were fundamentally designed to charge as much as possible for eBooks and/or eBook readers, often to the point of charging *more* for eBooks than their paper counterparts, even though there were no costs for printing, warehousing, shipping, etc., and that editing them was so much easier.

As a result, each of these business plans was ultimately designed to fail, perhaps intentionally, out of a fear that the paper books market might go the same direction as when music switched from vinyl to CDs starting only 20 years ago, and finishing *very* quickly.

Steve Potash, Founder/CEO, OverDrive, Inc.

As with new technologies, the eBook market continues to change, grow and evolve. Both large and smaller independent publishers are seeing growing revenue from eBook sales as more and more consumers begin to use eBooks. We are finding that libraries have an important role in the adoption of eBooks.

Question 2: Currently, there are a large number of eBook formats, which makes it nearly impossible for libraries to cater to multiple devices patrons may own. When can libraries expect standardization in viewing technology?

Tom Prehn, Sr. Business Dev. Mgr. - ePublishing, Adobe Systems Incorporated

Current **Adobe** PDF eBooks are available for the most popular devices, including **PCs**, **Macs**, **Palm OS PDAs**, and **Pocket PC PDAs**. The market will con-

tinue to winnow out viewing technologies that do not meet users needs.

Ronald G. Musto and Eileen Gardiner, Project Directors, ACLS History eBook Project

eBooks can and will take a variety of forms: the CD-ROM, the "Open eBook," and Web-CDs have offered variously successful models for electronic publication. But from the outset the History eBook Project focused on the World Wide Web as the most promising — and convenient — approach to electronic publishing. The best way of ensuring standardization in viewing technology is

to eliminate the inconvenience of proprietary solutions to portable devices and offer books through the Internet on a wide variety of devices adopting common standards.

William A. Woishnis, Chairman & Chief Marketing Officer, Knovel Corporation, Knovel Interactive E-Library

Knovel's delivery platform is proprietary but the content is formatted using standard technologies including HTML and PDF. The Web browser has almost universal adoption and allows for many different "back-end" technologies to be

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BORN & LIVED: Born, Pulaski, Virginia; Lived, most of the Southeastern Conference (Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina, Mississippi and Alabama) and for one very cold year, Maine.

FAMILY: One husband, one son.

EDUCATION: BA, English, **University of Tennessee** at Chatanooga (1994); MA, English, **University of Mississippi** (1998); MS, Information Sciences, **University of Tennessee** (2001).

FIRST JOB: First job ever, Confederama (tourist attraction), Chattanooga, TN; First library job, Instruction Librarian, **Mississippi State University**.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Although I've been a librarian a relatively short time, I have worked in both public and technical services as a reference/instruction librarian and as a serials librarian. My research interests include the linking of scholarly materials. I am involved in the ALA New Members Round Table and the ACRL Instruction Section.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by **Harper Lee** and *Sexual Personae* by **Camille Paglia**.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Those who can't see the humor in all aspects of life.

PHILOSOPHY: It is what it is.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: My research agenda and publishing activities, which came from a wonderful mentoring relationship I had with a graduate school professor, **Dr. Carol Tenopir**.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: I hope I will still enjoy librarianship (whether in technical or public services) on a day-to-day basis.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Generally, I don't make it a practice to prognosticate, but I believe we will continue to experience the transition to electronic-only titles, both serial and monographic. Indeed, while print is certainly not dead, tumbleweeds are blowing through many a deserted periodical reading room. I also believe that linking (via the OpenURL or otherwise) must be at the forefront of any library's agenda. To ignore linking is to ignore our very core purpose of putting the right resource in the right hands at the right time.

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used by publishers. **Knovel** views eBooks as access to an online collection and not a one-off sale of an individual title. It is our opinion that the best approach to viewing e-content is via Web browser technology. We believe XML will grow as a standard in 2005. We also believe PDF will continue to be a strong contender for display of e-content because of its correspondence to print versions (pagination) and because of its well-designed interface, ease of use, and large installed user-base.

Michael Hart, Founder, Project Gutenberg

When can libraries expect one standard size for all paper books? One font? One margin width? However, there are tens of thousands of eBooks available from **Project Gutenberg** in standard formats, and I don't see many libraries, even those I personally take copies to, using them in any way at all.

When you use plain text and/or HTML, you can read eBooks on virtually any combination of hardware and software . . . the rest of the formatting issues are caused by the kinds of business plans mentioned above.

Libraries have items on CD, DVD, VHS, U-Matic, film, microfilm, etc., and no one worries about all those formats. The format issue, as well as the cataloguing issues, are mostly just red herrings.

Steve Potash, Founder/CEO, OverDrive, Inc.

Today the Web (HTML, XML) and software formats (PDF, Mobipocket) offer good viewing options that each have benefits for different types of content and devices. We do not need a single format.

Question 3: With the popularity of MP3 and palm devices, how will eBook distributors further capitalize on these existing technology standards? Or is the industry still committed to creating its own handheld device like Sony's Librie or some descendant of the Rocket eBook?

Tom Prehn, Sr. Business Dev. Mgr. - ePublishing, Adobe Systems Incorporated

Three factors drive the adoption of ebooks: a critical mass of content, screen technology, and behavioral change of the user. A single purpose device still needs to be proven in the marketplace.

Ronald G. Musto and Eileen Gardiner, Project Directors, ACLS History eBook Project

Unlike many digital innovators today we're old enough to remember the early days of stereo audio systems: only when the industry adopted common standards, plug and play devices, and common interfaces (cables, jacks, etc.) did things really begin to take off. That's what we sorely need now in electronic publishing.

Eventually all eBooks will probably have to be compatible with MP3 and palm devices. The handheld devices specific to certain products will not take off — they are too expensive and too limiting. People want to access information in the most convenient way possible. For this reason, online resources are very practical. The **ACLS History eBook Project**, for instance, is compatible with the new generation of handheld device that can access the Web. These now range from enhanced cell phones to blackberries to pallets and readers, to every size of laptop.

Alix Vance, North American Business Development Mgr., eBooks Corporation, eBook Library (EBL)

When a book can be read on a mobile phone, there is little justification that a dedicated device for eBooks is a practical route. Interoperability is more than just a buzzword, it is a requirement. Looking at the success of devices like **Blackberry**, **Palm** or **Pocket PC**, it seems to be that the more tricks we can get from one small, easy-to-operate-device, the better. **eBooks Corporation** is committed to continued innovation and expanding interoperability. We have recently announced a partnership with **Nokia** whereby **eBooks Corporation** will provide direct links to eBook content from new phones shipping in 2005.

David Bass, SVP of Sales and Marketing, ebrary

I do not believe that the device is the issue. It all depends on what the publishers will commit to from the editorial side to make an eBook more compelling than text and images. Reading content on a **Palm** is not that attractive due to size of the font and image rendering. The **tablet PC** is just an extension of the laptop, and I do not see much value in that device for reading vs. notations. The technology (hardware and software) is available for both types of content (audio and video) to be included with text. The biggest issue is that not all client technologies (i.e., **Windows Media Player**, **Flash Player**, **Adobe Reader**, **Real Player**, and the browsers) can tether the content or protect it as a download (DRM). Most client technologies protect just one portion of the content (i.e., text vs. audio and video, or video and audio vs. text). Portable wireless hardware is the main issue for success in the upcoming years. Initially the **iPod** is the answer. For example, **ebrary's DCP** technology can tether content through storage of text and image meta data on an **iPod**. No one else is doing this today. **ebrary** stores the meta data to the books, journals, maps, etc. on the **iPod** and renders the data stored through **ebrary Reader** in browser on the **PC**. Another area where the download of content will become less of an issue is through wireless laptops. College campuses and offices are fast

becoming wirelessly networked; therefore, the need to download content and take it with you is less of an issue. It will take these types of innovations to make content portable and the rendering through any device and client player.

William A. Woishnis, Chairman & Chief Marketing Officer, Knovel Corporation, Knovel Interactive E-Library

We believe there is a place for "offline" viewing of content, and that devices like the **Palm** and **PPC** offer the best (at this time) platform for distributing such content because of their ubiquity. When we haul out the crystal ball, we can imagine a future not too many years down the road when cell phones, MP3 players (like the **iPod**), and PDA technologies all converge into a single electronic personal communications device. Ahead of that future, we believe the strongest likelihood is that the **Palm** platform, and to some degree the **PPC** platform, will be used mostly for offline eBook viewing. We do not believe dedicated eBook hardware will be adopted in sufficient numbers to be viable.

Question 4: How will eBook searching capabilities and eBook interfaces improve?

Tom Prehn, Sr. Business Dev. Mgr. - ePublishing, Adobe Systems Incorporated

Search capabilities with **Adobe** PDF are currently extensive and include searching the title, searching across your bookshelf collection, and even searching the Internet from the single title. The interface for reading documents on a screen will continue to become easier to use, more intuitive.

Ronald G. Musto and Eileen Gardiner, Project Directors, ACLS History eBook Project

Both interfaces and searching capabilities will continue to improve, but librarians have to insist that the best searching capabilities drive the industry, not the biggest and most simple. "Good enough" is no good at all. High quality can be achieved through the adoption of common standards, workflows, and *best* practices.

Alix Vance, North American Business Development Mgr., eBooks Corporation, eBook Library (EBL)

eBooks will need to become more fluid to keep up with our growing expectations of how the technology *should* work. The ways that eBooks can be searched and retrieved is already changing. Identifying and manipulating books at the chapter level is already being standardized through protocols such as DOIs. Full-text searching, embedded linking, and interactive diagrams and formulas are already emerging. Ideally, we will find ourselves in a place where we are not reliant on proprietary software or hardware to read eBooks — but this will not likely happen in the immediate future.

Kevin Ohe, Managing Editor, Print-Electronic, Greenwood Publishing Group, Greenwood eBooks

Linking between diverse publisher products seems to be gaining momentum. More advanced indexing and metadata tagging should also enable better performance.

William A. Woishnis, Chairman & Chief Marketing Officer, Knovel Corporation, Knovel Interactive E-Library

The ability to search across collections of eBooks will be an important near-term trend. The ability to search by fields and data values will also hasten the development of eBooks. Want to know all of the alcohols with a boiling point between 100-200 Celsius, and a melting point between 50-100? With **Knovel's** fielded searching (values from the print text keyed into a database) you can search for ranges of values just like the example listed. And you can get an answer in a few seconds. That's the power of fielded searching — a power that keyword searching alone cannot match.

Interfaces will continue to improve. We believe the Web browser and standardized technologies like it hold the most promise for eBook interfaces. As for offline viewing, screen resolution is key. As it gets better we believe more people will adopt and use the technology for those times when they are away from the desktop.

Marge Gammon, Division Vice President, Library & Publisher Services, NetLibrary, a Division of OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc.

NetLibrary consistently studies trends in searching technology. We see the following as key trends that will drive changes in search capabilities in the coming months.

- More focus on the user in terms of personalization features and the ways in which search engines will interact with users.
- Greater granularity of searching and access, allowing a patron to get to an entry, page, section, or paragraph, and not just a title.
- Search capability that extends beyond the use of metadata to full-text searching.
- Increased partnering with leading search vendors and technologies to create multiple avenues of discovery.
- Greater integration of search functionality across multiple types of content.

Question 5: One trend we've seen with e-journals is the removal from inclusion in full text databases to an increasing number of titles offered only from publishers. Are we seeing the same thing from eBook publishers as well (ABC-Clio, Gale, Wiley, Dekker)? Does this mean higher prices for libraries?

Tom Prehn, Sr. Business Dev. Mgr. - ePublishing, Adobe Systems Incorporated

The business models will change as both publishers and libraries gain more experience and comfort with eBooks (e.g., rental models, electronic facilitation of interlibrary loans, multiple simultaneous access to a single work). This does not necessarily mean higher prices, however.

Ronald G. Musto and Eileen Gardiner, Project Directors, ACLS History eBook Project

Except for reference, every attempt we've seen by individual publishers to dominate the market by moving into their own line of electronic titles has been unsuccessful. Subscribing to a collection makes sense, whereas individual eBooks — or books by any one publisher — do not. Titles offered by single-source providers would result in higher prices for libraries and replicate outmoded print distribution models.

Alix Vance, North American Business Development Mgr., eBooks Corporation, eBook Library (EBL)

Some publishers feel that their list is big enough or sufficiently specialized to garner library interest directly. Those publishers are also choosing to partner with aggregators because they understand that not all libraries want to manage a multiplicity of data sources. In the journal world, even very significant publishers disseminate content individually and through aggregations, such as **HighWire**. While this is an emerging question, librarians have a great deal of influence in determining the path that this will take. As independent entities and consortial purchasers, libraries are making the case that they value the efficiency of centralized purchasing sources.

Publishers of different size and structure have varying levels of interest in selling content directly. Libraries of different size and structure have different purchasing requirements. There is room in the market for both aggregators and publishers selling direct. Different offerings will have different appeal to different buyers. In any healthy market, there is more than one way to buy the same product. Aggregators have been an essential part of the distribution chain because they enable publishers to focus on what they do best, publishing relevant content, and aggregators enable libraries to focus on what they do best, disseminate and facilitate access to relevant content. The electronic world may seem frictionless compared to that of print but, in reality, the task of innovation in distribution is still a specialized discipline. The role of aggregator will be alive and well for some time to come.

David Bass, SVP of Sales and Marketing, ebrary

This only makes sense if librarians and end-users believe that having to search individual collections is the best use of their time spent finding, indexing, and archiving valuable authoritative content. **ebrary** believes there is a place for "individual branded collections" and integrated/aggregated collections. It depends on the audience (i.e., academic vs. career colleges) and budgets.

William A. Woishnis, Chairman & Chief Marketing Officer, Knovel Corporation, Knovel Interactive E-Library

Knovel's publishing model is based on aggregation. **Knovel** partners with the world's best science and technical publishers, like **Wiley**, **McGraw-Hill**, **Kluwer** and others, to offer full-text access to their premium titles. So in **Knovel's** experience the answer is "no," we do not see a trend in eBooks of publishers going it alone. The trend we see is aggregation and cooperation.

Lisa Nachtigall, Director, Online Reference Product Development, Oxford University Press

Oxford's databases have always been viewed as appropriately and affordably priced. **Oxford Digital Reference Shelf**, our e-reference program, offers libraries a new option for incorporating electronic resources into their collection development programs. This allows the collection development decision to remain with the librarian, while keeping prices affordable.

Bonnie Hawkwood, Program Director, eBook & Distributed Database Programs, Thomson Gale, Gale Virtual Reference Library

There are already a number of eBook models that seem to be working; aggregation is an acceptable model as long as publishers obtain adequate royalties to offset direct purchases.

Question 6: Mick O'Leary has commented that institutional customers, not individuals, are a clear eBook trend ("eBook Scenarios Updated," Online 27, no. 5, Sep/Oct 2003, p59, 2p). To what extent will libraries be involved in the success of eBooks? Furthermore, how can libraries affect the evolution of the eBook industry?

Ronald G. Musto and Eileen Gardiner, Project Directors, ACLS History eBook Project

The future of the eBook is very much tied to libraries. Librarians are involved in the success of eBooks both through their internal development efforts and by subscribing to the resources that they feel worthwhile. The **ACLS History eBook Project** is unique in that it was created by librarians working with scholars and scholarly societies — the goal was to create a resource that made sense in the library world. Librarians are key to the future of eBooks. They offer and monitor constantly the widest variety of e-resources on a level playing field and are therefore best positioned to speak to the needs of eBook users and the quality of solutions.

Alix Vance, North American Business Development Mgr., eBooks Corporation, eBook Library (EBL)

The success of eBooks in a library setting is classic case of form following function. There is no doubt that the expectations of convenience and temporary access drive the adoption of eBooks within the library or institutional environment. eBooks are well-suited to facilitate the way that academic content is searched, referenced and read.

Input from libraries has driven the development of the **eBook Library (EBL)** access and pricing models. **EBL** has worked as a sort of advocate and intermediary between libraries and publishers to create an innovative lending platform that suits the needs expressed by our library advisors. Academic and research use will drive a significant portion of the eBook marketplace in the near future — and technical developments in this sphere may differ significantly from those of trade-facing eBooks used for pleasure reading by individuals in their non-academic or professional time. Public and corporate libraries, however, will play an interesting role in uniting the technologies and encouraging publishers and software developers to create consistent standards across eBook types.

Libraries serve as effective advocates for large communities of readers and researchers and will continue to play an ongoing role in helping define the ways in which people want to access different content.

David Bass, SVP of Sales and Marketing, ebrary

This is data that everyone should be in tune with. Libraries will always be a place for people to know that authoritative, well defined, vetted, content sets are available. Whether the libraries have walls or are "virtual" remains to be seen, but libraries and librarians will always have a place for information discovery and retrieval. The pricing models and usage models will change when librarians make the conscious decision to include digital monographs on the same "value" level as journals, reference databases, etc. The time is here for this to be embraced and I believe that the trend is moving in that direction today as the client rendering technologies and available authoritative content is being placed into the market for consumption.

Kevin Ohe, Managing Editor, Print-Electronic, Greenwood Publishing Group, Greenwood eBooks

Libraries are critical to the success of scholarly and reference eBooks. They are our target audience, and they have shown how to successfully integrate

Beth Ashmore

Reference Librarian, Samford University
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BORN & LIVED: Born Kankakee, IL; Have lived all over the great state of Illinois; Now settled in the much warmer Southeast.

EARLY LIFE: I grew up in Springfield, Illinois, the Land of Lincoln (sorry Kentucky) and at one time knew Lincoln's home like the back of my hand due to numerous school field trips. I have considered being everything from a comedy writer to a veterinarian for stuffed animals (I was 6), however librarianship has come to suit me well.

FAMILY: Two exceptional parents, three beautiful sisters, a couple of goofy brothers-in-law and a niece upon whom the sun rises and sets. I'm also thinking of getting a dog.

EDUCATION: BA in Creative Writing from **Loyola University Chicago**, MS in Library and Information Science from the **University of Illinois - Champaign/Urbana**.

FIRST JOB: Washing dishes for the weekend warriors of the Air National Guard. Needless to say it was character building.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Have worked at **Mississippi State University** Library and currently at **Samford University** in Birmingham, AL; Active member of ACRL Instruction Section and current committee chair of their Teaching Methods Committee; Maintain The Researching Librarian Website: *http://www.researchinglibrarian.com*.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Read, go to the movies, talk endlessly to my sisters on the phone.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *The Metamorphosis* by **Franx Kafka**; anything by **David Sedaris**, *The Adventures of Kavalier and Klay* by **Michael Chabon**.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: People taking things too seriously and allowing me to do the same.

PHILOSOPHY: If it ain't fun, it's funny.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Having a career at all. I have done much better than I ever thought I would.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Getting that dog.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Five years from now I think the library world will seem pretty much the same, at least philosophically. The fact is libraries have always been in the business of saying "You can't find what you need? Let me help." No number of search engines and databases is going to change the fact that people still can't find things that they need. If you doubt that, do some laundry. I guarantee a sock will go MIA and while I don't know that we will go into the sock business anytime soon, I do think we will continue to be in the business of finding things with and for people. The tools to do just that will just keep getting bigger and better.

eBooks into the mix of their collections. Libraries can affect the evolution by offering real-time feedback on user response and behaviors. It's been my experience that publishers and vendors are more than eager to obtain feedback from librarians — I know we are.

William A. Woishnis, Chairman & Chief Marketing Officer, Knovel Corporation, Knovel Interactive E-Library

Knovel believes that the library will continue to play a key role in the adoption and use of eBook technology. There is no doubt that the role of the library and the librarian or information specialist is changing — but the function of locating information is not going away. The names of positions may change and the format of the information may change, but there will always be a need for a librarian and a library function. **Knovel** is proud to work with some of the world's best librarians, and our focus will continue to be to create services that will help the librarian. Institutional customers are the clear trend in the science and engineering space and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

Companies Interviewed

ACLS: The ACLS History eBook Project provides a focused, online collection of high-quality titles in the field of history chosen by historians and available through library subscriptions. [*http://www.historyebook.org/*]

eBooks Corporation launched *eBooks.com* in 2000, offering the first dedicated eBookstore on the Web; in June 2004, **eBooks Corporation** launched **eBook Library (EBL)** an innovative eBooks platform for academic and research libraries that delivers sought-after features, including: perpetual ownership of eBooks; title-by-title eBook selection; unlimited multiple-concurrent patron access; short-term circulation or "rentals" as an ILL alternative; and chapter-level lending and purchasing via electronic reserve and course packs tools. [*http://usa1.ebooks.com/*]

ebrary offers an integrated client server platform that enables the most effective delivery of electronic monographic content to library patrons in the market. Products include **Dynamic Content Platform**, **ebrary Reader**, and **InfoTools**. [*http://www.ebrary.com/*]

Greenwood is a media-neutral publisher, publishing high quality information and letting customers decide how they would like to purchase it. [*http://www.greenwood.com/*]

Knovel provides an online information service for engineers, scientists and librarians that leverages their productivity through careful aggregation of leading science and engineering handbooks, databases, and analytical tools. [*http://www.knovel.com/knovel2/default.jsp*]

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Steve Potash, Founder/CEO, OverDrive, Inc.

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Lisa Nachtigall, Director, Online Reference Product Development, Oxford University Press

Libraries are responsible for developing a collection — of print and electronic resources — that reflects patron needs — whether in public, academic, special, or school libraries. If they regard eBooks as another medium for delivering information that needs to be included in that collection, as they did with video tapes or books on tape, they will move the publishing industry to regard them as a key market for eBooks.

Michael Hart, Founder, Project Gutenberg

I worry that libraries will wait too long to adopt eBooks, and so will the publishers, and thus the public will get used to getting eBooks on their own . . . and thus the answer to your question will continue to be that "the evolution of the eBook industry" will continue to be from basement inventors and idealists such as myself . . . witness the formation of:

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There are several times more legal eBooks that can be downloaded from these sites as are contained in the average US public library. Soon we will see single sites with twice as many books as this average. I already have 2 DVDs that each have 20,000 eBooks on them, and am expecting a 3rd for Christmas . . . and more after that. Can you imagine making and shipping someone 20,000 eBooks for $1 ?!?!?! It only takes one first class stamp to mail a DVD in a sandwich bag, or less if you use media rate.

We are also working on a DVD that will have nearly 40,000 eBooks on it, over $1,000,000 in hardback retail pricing. What kind of future will it be when everyone can have a one million dollar library on a single DVD? In a year I hope to have a sec-

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ond such DVD.

Bonnie Hawkwood, Program Director, eBook & Distributed Database Programs, Thomson Gale, Gale Virtual Reference Library

There are a number of pioneering librarians who participate in discussions with industry members through the Open eBook Forum. This organization provides an opportunity for librarians to impact the industry, particularly to educate vendors that are not traditional players in selling to libraries.

Question 7: How will eBooks affect intellectual property?

Ronald G. Musto and Eileen Gardiner, Project Directors, ACLS History eBook Project

The rules with regard to rights for electronic information are still evolving, but there is a mounting body of evidence that the negative effect is less than originally predicted. There are still a lot of decisions to be made on the side of publishers and author/producers, and there remains a creative tension between the push to expand access and the struggle to ensure their own sustainability. However, the **ACLS History eBook Project** is committed to fair use and to expanding the rights of the user. We must continue to defend our right to access information in this new world of e-resources. That's the only way that authors and publishers can continue to access the resources they need to continue to create.

Alix Vance, North American Business Development Mgr., eBooks Corporation, eBook Library (EBL)

IP rights define what people may do with a book, while technical developments push the boundaries of what they *can* do with a book. Already we have seen authors and agents negotiating separate royalty structures for certain electronic rights; and on the other side, publishers are tending to demand electronic distribution rights when they sign a book contract. Territorial copyright is being challenged by the success of online booksellers, who are building businesses around their ability to ship books to customers internationally. A similar dynamic applies to eBooks, and we are careful to respect the rights of authors and publishers. One of the early concerns expressed by publishers was the potential "Napsterization" of the book industry; where millions of titles could be circulating for free on P2P networks. Fortunately, this scenario did not occur, primarily because — unlike music on CDs — every commercial eBook begins life in encrypted form, making it difficult for

unsophisticated users to re-distribute an eBook.

David Bass, SVP of Sales and Marketing, ebrary

The same way that any content based assets is structured today. IP is IP. We as an industry need to place value on the IP, otherwise, publishers will not create IP. It is as simple as that. Any content, audio, video, or text, needs to be protected and laws to protect copyright need to be enforced. Pricing the assets accordingly and showing end-users the value of the asset is still the same as it has always been. If the asset is desired, marketed well, and consumed by end-users, there is a cost for purchase. If the asset is not desired, not marketed well, and ultimately not purchased by end-users, then that publisher and distributor will not make money, and future investment in either that subject set, and/or author will not arise in the future. The main problem with IP on the Internet today is that there have not been enough enforcements and monitoring have taken place to deter end-users from copying and illegally sharing IP. It is getting better, and the rules in the future through the **DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act)** should assist. Let's face the facts, kids today are digital, and they want to consume digital assets in the fastest, most accurate way possible. Workers in the Global 2000 and medium and small size business across the global economy spend an exorbitant amount of time in front of a **PC**, therefore, they want efficient ways to find, use, and save digital content that lets them make more money. Publishers and distributors of digital content today are realizing what the cable industry realized 25 years ago, "paying for content that is valuable" can be charged for, and eventually the majority of the entire market will "pay for content." It is just a matter of time before publishers today will charge equally for digital and print content.

William A. Woishnis, Chairman & Chief Marketing Officer, Knovel Corporation, Knovel Interactive E-Library

Technology is now available to enable a high degree of security with eBooks. The eBook trend is the beneficiary of the music world in this regard. The resolution of copyright issues and subsequent technological developments have made online music hugely popular. We believe eBooks will follow that trend. Now that eBooks can be encrypted to prevent unauthorized access, we believe intellectual property rights are protected. However, vigilance is key. eBook vendors must continue to demand even better technologies to protect the investments of publishers.

Michael Hart, Founder, Project Gutenberg

They already have.

What do you think is causing WIPO to push through copyright extensions all over the world . . . *three* in the US between 1909 and 1998 . . . which extended copyrights about 80 years in a period of only 89 years.

If you ask the publishers, they will tell you they want permanent copyright. And the reason, as for *all* copyright laws that have ever been made, is a simple reactionary response to new publishing technologies.

The original copyrights were reactions to the **Gutenberg Press** by the Stationers/Scribes? And the 1909 US Copyright Act to the steam and electric presses? And the 1976 US Copyright Act to the **xerox** machine? And the 1998 US Copyright Act to the Internet?

It's *one* thing to try to enforce an old copyright law in the face of a new technology that allows truly mass publication . . . books for the masses, as on the dates mentioned above . . . *but* . . . it's *another thing entirely* to *void* those copyright laws and replace them with laws that are even *more restrictive*, just to keep from having to compete with the new technologies.

These new laws make it clear that it's *only legal to copy when the average person can **not** make copies* . . . once the masses have access to information, the laws are inevitably changed.

Publishers don't just want to *enforce* copyright, they want to *eliminate the public domain*. Wipe out the competition . . . by making copyright permanent.

Who are the "pirates" in this case? Those who make what would have been legal copies under the old laws, or those who take away the public domain with more repressive laws?

Bonnie Hawkwood, Program Director, eBook & Distributed Database Programs, Thomson Gale, Gale Virtual Reference Library

Online databases have existed for decades; the same concerns that have been addressed in the past with periodical databases, newspapers, and other types of intellectual property will exist with eBooks. Librarians and publishers have worked together to address these concerns and will continue to do so.

Question 8: Other comments about current trends in eBook publishing?

Ronald G. Musto and Eileen Gardiner, Project Directors, ACLS History eBook Project

Since eBooks first appeared on the market over seven years ago, there has been a general acceptance of electronic publishing across the board, among the librarians, publishers, students and scholars. Though standards will continue to evolve to include things like SFX, open URL's and common XML standards and workflows, the eBook is basically an established fact at this point. Though the industry continues to evolve, this common acceptance is the single most important change in the marketplace.

eBooks are now poised to change rapidly from a marginal "disruptive technology" to a dominant market and intellectual force. They are beginning to shape every aspect of literate life: from authoring and research, to editorial, and production, to pricing, distribution, storage, and access, to reading and reflection. How this paradigm shift will affect our modes of deeper thought is only now beginning to be felt and understood.

Marge Gammon, Division Vice President, Library & Publisher Services, NetLibrary, a Division of OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc.

NetLibrary has stimulated, encouraged, and witnessed the growth in the acceptance of eBooks within the publishing community. Today, the more than 450 publishers we work with all view the electronic opportunity as a significant one and have shifted workflows to accommodate the growing trend. Many questions remain about pricing and access models, copyright protection, and pricing strategies given the potential for easy, widespread exposure of content to a degree never possible in the print world. But, the publishing community remains open to change, partners closely in these discussions with **NetLibrary**, and views the challenges in an optimistic light. **NetLibrary** will continue to demonstrate leadership in eBooks and will significantly enhance the availability of other forms of electronic content via the **NetLibrary** platform in the coming months. The availability of these extended and integrated content products will be supported by significant enhancements to our own platform and search capabilities. Finally, **NetLibrary's** content strengths, combined with the wide range of programs and capabilities provided by our parent, **OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc.**, provides libraries with an unprecedented array of products and services fully focused on supporting both the mission and methods of libraries worldwide.

Lisa Nachtigall, Director, Online Reference Product Development, Oxford University Press

The value of e-reference publishing for **Oxford** is that it offers librarians a way to take valuable reference resources off the library shelves and put them where the students are — connected to their keyboards. This generational effect will continue to demand that publishers look for new ways of making electronic resources more responsive and more essential to student research and learning.

Michael Hart, Founder, Project Gutenberg

I predict that there will be sites with 50,000 freely downloadable eBooks in less than a month, and 100,000 only a year or two later, and sites with a million eBooks in my lifetime. [Note from authors: **Michael Hart's** above comment was stated before the **Google Print** news blitz, and he still predicts that these sites will exist before **Google** presents that many eBooks of equal quality and stature.]

My final goal is to have all 10 million public domain eBooks online and freely downloadable, and available in translation in 100 languages, for a total of 1 billion free eBooks . . . before 2025!!! And to get them to 1 billion readers!!! For a total of **Project Gutenberg** giving away 1 quintillion eBooks.

Google says there are 15 million such books, but I'm betting they will be scraping the bottom of the barrel by the time they get 10 million.

The real question is how useful the different kinds of eBooks will be to John Q. Public . . . I'm betting the full text eBooks that you can *own* from **Project Gutenberg** sites will turn out to be more useful, simply because *you* can own them, and read, search, quote and copy them ad infinitum until everyone has a copy, not to mention that you can listen to them as audio books through various programs.

Project Gutenberg eBooks have been around for a third of a century, about as long as most of the Muppets, and people have been using them any way they pleased. We'll just have to wait to see what the half century mark brings . . . hopefully a billion dollars worth of books to every person who wants them.

Conclusion

During our foray into eBooks, we quickly discovered that answers to our questions simply spawned more questions. Whether discussing PDFs or **PDAs**, the options for the eBook future are endless and it is clear that libraries and librarians will have a large role in what eBooks are to become. Libraries represent a major market, a major link to users and early adopters, and, in the case of **Google**, a source of material for future eBooks; in short, our responsibility is huge.

While there are no easy answers to how librarians can best use and integrate this burgeoning wealth of information in brand-new packaging, there are some things that we can take away from these industry insiders. eBooks are only going to get better and much of that improvement can be guided by our feedback. Issues of intellectual property and standardized formats are far from decided and libraries will be instrumental in ensuring that fair use and a commitment to access for all will remain a priority in this new climate. Whether our users want greater interactivity, a wider range of publishers and types of books, or the ability to download the collected works of **William Shakespeare** to a cell phone, it is incumbent upon libraries to make their thoughts and experiences, and thereby the thoughts and experiences of their users, known to those in the industry. This communication will ensure a bright future for eBooks and libraries.

Endnotes

1. John Markoff and Edward Wyatt, "Google Is Adding Major Libraries to Its Database," *New York Times*, December 14, 2004, Late Edition - Final, Section A, Column 6, p1.

"Harvard Libraries and Google Announce Pilot Digitization Project with Potential Benefits to Scholars Worldwide," Available at: *http://hul.harvard.edu/publications/041213news.html*

2. Adobe produces DRM copy protection technology as well as a ubiquitous reading platform. Products include Adobe LiveCycle Policy Server, Adobe Content Server, Adobe Reader, Acrobat. [*http://www.adobe.com/*].