

The Written Word

NO. 1 • VOL. III • 1ST QUARTER 2011

QUOTES FOR WRITERS
AND PUBLISHERS

"Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous mind."

Samuel Johnson

E-books—Wave of the Future?

DEBORAH K. FRONTIERA

A flurry of email discussion among UPPAA members gave this newsletter editor an easy job for this edition. For over a week, I simply copied and pasted the contents of various emails into a file. The following is a compilation of that discussion for all members to digest in trying to decide whether, when, and how to convert their print books to e-books. In a few instances, I failed to copy whose comments were whose, and I do apologize for that.

The discussion involved technical questions about conversion, whether or not to have an ISBN on an e-book, and where to turn for help. Everyone did agree that they felt e-books are rising, there will be constant change and that change will continue to happen quickly.

One member reported e-books sales going "from nothing to 20% in a year. Finally a level playing field for small publishers that doesn't require a review by Publishers Weekly or handing off 65% of the List Price to a distributor."

Tyler Tichelaar stated: All my books, of course, except my newest are on kindle, and I think the book purchasing statistics are correct, since I have been seeing

my kindle sales slowly increase over the last few months.

Walt Shiel says: Our e-book sales have steadily risen over the past 12 months. Our combined e-book sales (Kindle, iBooks, Nook, Kobo plus a smattering of others) are now very close to 50% of our total book sales without seeming to decrease the sales of print books. For comparison, our sales of PDF e-books (another common e-book format, although one that is slowly losing ground) has been flat to maybe slightly decreasing. One other thing worth noting -- although we price our e-books significantly below the corresponding print edition, we make more actual profit on the e-books.

Jen Brady and Donna Winters had quite a conversation about whether e-books also apply to kids and teens. There was the thought that parents wouldn't be likely to give a kid a Kindle. This editor's two cents there is that they will. Parents already spend hundreds on electronic games. I've made an investment in my picture books converting them for iPad, iPod, etc. through a company called Pic Pocket Books. Early results are encouraging.



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Will e-books replace print?

Not likely. Donna Winters commented, “As for the chatter about e-books and print books, I bought Tyler’s print book and then the kindle version after getting the device. Since I like the book and would want to keep it in my library to share with others, I’d certainly want the print version. As for reading it, I realized after getting the kindle that I didn’t want to hold the weight of the book and I wished for a larger print size. Also, I hate taking ‘keeper’ books on the road to read in the car or motor home, because they get beat up.”

Some technical points:

Having a conversion provider is recommended if your knowledge of HTML format is

INTERQUEST Announces Digital Book Printing

MARKET ANALYSIS & FORECAST (2010-2015)

INTERQUEST, a leading market and technology research and consulting firm serving the digital printing and publishing industry, has released a comprehensive new study of digital book printing. The report—an in-depth analysis of the market, including the key issues, trends, size, and technological developments—complements and extends INTERQUEST’s groundbreaking 2005 and 2007 studies of the market. The study is based on 71 in-depth interviews with major publishers and book printers specializing in trade, education, professional, and photographic book applications and also includes input from printing equipment vendors and findings from other research related to digital production. The study assesses the overall book publishing market in North America: the

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Handling the Inevitable Negative Book Review

VICTOR R. VOLKMAN, LOVING HEALING PRESS INC., WWW.LHPRESS.COM

Everyone (including me) gets negative book reviews. All books get them; what you do with them is up to you. I defy you to find a best seller without a negative review: J.K. Rowling, John Grisham, Dean R. Koontz. Congratulations – you have joined the fraternity of abused authors. John Grisham just got 66 “one-star” reviews for his last book. Maybe he deserved it; I don’t know; that’s not the point.

A book with nothing but 5-star reviews is suspicious in a different way; it looks like the jury might have been bought. It might be fun to try to keep your “straight ‘A’” grade point average but you do not actually have any control here. I do know people who head straight for the low-starred reviews to see if the reviewer is just a crank and then go back to the high-starred reviews and decide for themselves on that basis.

Bury me not on the lone prairie

After some five or six years of dealing with this, my best strategy to is to “bury ‘em” with positive reviews. Find five other reviewers to review your book. How do you do this? Find competing books in your niche, locate their reviews on Amazon, contact the reviewers and ask them if they would like a review copy of your book. Many of them will have blogs or be relatively easy to find on Google. Sometimes they copy their reviews verbatim from their blogs into Amazon so you can just Google a phrase from the review.

Too much work for you? If you’re willing to part with some cash, Clark R. Covington offers

the most affordable book review service on the planet. To get the best rate, you need to provide an electronic version (Word or PDF is fine) to the reviewer and you can order as many reviews as you want for \$15 each. Get on Clark’s mailing list and there are even “sales” on reviews up to 40% sometimes <http://www.readerspoils.com/get.html>

Don’t shoot the messenger

Retaliation is off-the-table, it never works. If you feel you must, you can “vote down” the review as unhelpful. That is anonymous, so it can be done. Resist the temptation to comment (“reply”) to the review unless it addresses an issue which was fixed in a later printing or edition. In that case, you can offer them a free review copy if you like. What you should NOT do is try to refute the review point-by-point, even if you know there are mistakes in the review. Remember what Mom said, “If you can’t say anything nice, then don’t say anything at all.”



What If I Still Get A Negative Review?

If you have put painstaking work into your book, including professional proofing, editing, typesetting, and cover design and you still get a negative book review, all is not lost.

Most importantly, don’t lose your temper. A negative review may point out weak aspects of your writing that will help you become a more effective writer of your next book or even the second edition of your current work.

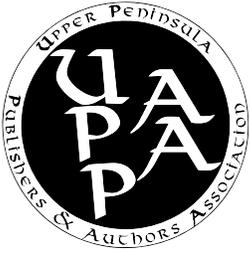
Don’t hide from the world. The review is just one person’s opinion. It’s highly possible good reviews will still come.

Learn from your mistakes. If you get several negative reviews, you have work to do. You can republish the book with revisions.

Find something good in the review. You may still find a quotable passage to promote your book. The reviewer might not like your characters, but he might remark that the book is well researched. He may complain about the proofreading, but he may still like the story concept.

Build a relationship with the reviewer. Send a thank you note and tell the reviewer you appreciate his honesty. The reviewer will be impressed by your professionalism, and this will leave open a line of communication and a possible good review for your next book.

Remember, even a negative review is better than no book review. In the long run, you will become a better writer and hopefully sell more books. □



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1ST QUARTER 2011

(INTERQUEST cont. from page 2)

impact of the recession on key players, including publishers, book sellers, distributors, and book printers; and key trends impacting the industry as a whole. "If anything the recession has added urgency to the efforts of publishers to squeeze waste out of book distribution, and this remains one of the key contributions of digital production," said Davis. Digital Book Printing: Market Analysis & Forecast (2010-2015) is immediately available for \$995.00. The 300-page report, which includes more than 170 exhibits illustrating and highlighting key findings of the research, can be ordered by contacting INTERQUEST at 434-979-9945, or through the company's website: www.inter-quest.com.

Founded in 1989, INTERQUEST is a market and technology research and consulting firm in the field of digital printing and publishing. P.O. Box 6568, Charlottesville, VA 22906. Contact: Annick Boizard, Phone 434-979-9945, Fax 434-979-9959, [mailto: press@inter-quest.com](mailto:press@inter-quest.com)

(Editor's note: I called to confirm the price of the report, and, yes, that's Nine-hundred-ninety-five dollars. Not in my budget, but good to know it's out there.)



UPPAA Needs Your Input

The annual conference will be held Saturday, May 21, at Peter White Public Library in Marquette. We are looking for session topic ideas. Also, remember that the board is up for election this spring and most of the board members will not be renewing their terms of service. If you are interested in serving on the board, or have conference ideas, email Tyler Tichelaar at tyler.tich@charter.net. □

