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The Modern Book: the Forms, the Essence, the Experience

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The Modern Book: the Forms, the Essence, the Experience



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Melanie Renton
Senior Capstone
Writing and Rhetoric
Essay
Professor David Reichard
Division of Humanities and Communication
Spring 2016

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Capstone Proposal- Essay Option

1. My name is Melanie Renton and my concentration is Writing and Rhetoric.
2. How have books changed with the advancement of technology? I chose this topic because we have managed to take books off paper and put them on screens, but many are still nostalgic for printed books. It seems to be an area that technology hasn't fully evolved. My project will focus on the books themselves and how their evolution will affect humanity.
3. My class' theme is "Humans and Technology," and we are all working on projects that will discuss how technology has changed the human experience. My project will explore how technology has changed for those that read. Books have changed the way humans share knowledge, and modernization of books will inevitably lead to a new era of human knowledge.
4. I hope to accomplish a timeline of how technology has advanced books, beginning with the printing press and moving toward eBooks.
5. My working title is "Evolution of Books."
6. Technology has changed the way humans communicate with one another, and one of those methods of communications is books. Beginning with the invention of the printing press, books have been a way to communicate and immortalize ideas to create a more connected existence. With the advancement of modern technology in recent years, I will explore the direction that the modernization of books is taking. Now that paper and ink is no longer necessary to distribute and read a book, humans are moving towards a world where books will be available at the touch of a button. My paper gives a history of how books have improved with past technological advancements and what digitalizing them will mean in the future.

7. I will use the CSUMB library's database for articles and books. The library also has reliable faculty members who will be willing to help me with my research. I will also look at websites for readers and see if any polls have been conducted to use as statistics to support my essay. I hope to also conduct surveys on my own to see how people view the modernization of books.

8. My next step would be to gather sources and divide my paper into subtopics. This way, I can break the topic down into manageable parts.

9. I will follow the class deadlines:

March 8th: Project Title and Abstract (150 words)

Draft of Annotated Bibliography

March 31st: Essay First Draft

April 4th: Revised Essay Draft and Annotated Bibliography

May 5th: Poster Text and Draft

May 12: Finished and Bound Project Due

The Modern Book: the Forms, the Essence, the Experience

By Melanie Renton

HCOM 475

California State University, Monterey Bay

Spring 2016

Abstract: The digital era has changed the way we humans read a book. No longer are words confined to a bound leaflet of pages sitting on a bookshelf. Now, technology has transformed the mediums upon which books are written. Electronic books are sweeping the book market, digitizing the stories to display them to a larger audience. Audiobooks are whispering tales in our ears, resting our eyes while igniting our imaginations. With stories jumping off the traditional medium of print, we are able to experience the new possibilities of how books are published, each with its own advantages and drawbacks. This essay will explore these differences, as well as describe how each medium affects the readers' experiences as well as publishing strategies. By considering the differences between eBooks, audiobooks, and printed books, we as readers can make informed decisions to choose the medium that will meet our needs.

I. Introduction

When a reader picks up a book, there are several characteristics she will notice. She will turn the book in her hands, noting the weight and amount of pages. The cover will be beautifully or simply illustrated, creating an impression and luring the reader with the promise of a quality narrative inside. She will thumb through the pages, breathing in the familiar scent that dwells between the chapters. Meanwhile, another reader is scrolling on his e-Reader, observing the various titles he can download for a mere few dollars each. A third reader is on the treadmill, absorbing a story through his headphones and being comforted by the presence of a narrator. Each of these readers could absorb the same book and have drastically different experiences. The traditional reader appreciates the familiar, nostalgic form of the book that she can hold with her two hands. The digital reader can access his book from his phone or laptop and carry his entire library wherever he goes. The auditory reader will be mesmerized by the pacing, voice, and atmosphere that his audiobook creates.

Currently, the essence of a book is no longer confined to the traditional form of the codex, which is defined as a series of papers with printed text and bound together with a spine. The Internet has become the host to millions of texts that were once only accessible if one possessed the physical copy. The e-Book can now be accessed on e-Readers, tablets, laptops, or smartphones. The audiobook has also inhabited the web, available in compact files that can be downloaded and played on-the-go. As technology continues to make the reading experience more convenient and diverse, readers have the options to choose: nostalgia, convenience, or performance. The traditionally printed book, electronic book, and the audiobook all contribute to drastically different experiences that enhance the readers' understandings in their own

ways. It the readers' responsibilities to choose the form of the book that best caters to their own literary preferences and emotional needs. The essence of each form is the text itself, and all three carry the ability to deliver meaning and pleasure.

II. Print Books

The printed book itself was a technology that changed the way books were published. It was introduced to a market that was first dominated by scribes. Scribes were the predominate leaders in book production, and in the 12th century, they ruled the publishing industry from their monasteries (Hargave 224). These scribes painstakingly handwrote the text on scrolls, which was a long process that increased the cost of production. Therefore, books were expensive and limited in circulation. To make them even more exclusive, they were written at a high literacy level so the general public did not have the capacity to participate in the act of reading. The genres of these scrolls were mainly religious, which limited their capacity to spread anything other than religious doctrine (Quan-Haase 26). Information about social, political, and scientific movements were not recorded in these texts. The handwritten form of text left much to be desired in an industry whose purpose was to distribute information to an audience.

Seeing the need for a more effective method to produce a text, Johannes Gutenberg stepped in to revolutionize the distribution of information and and create what we know today as the printed book. In the 13th century, as more universities were founded, the demand for books and and promotion of literacy increased (Hargave 224). In 1439, Gutenberg invented the movable type, which relieved the scribes of manual labor and accelerated the book-making process. According to Quan-Haase, "its use reshaped history and helped bring about early

elements of modernity, including mass production, mass distribution, and the notion of a mass audience (25). With this new method, books no longer took days to produce and could be easily accessed by all. Production costs decreased, so books became more affordable. Books were also printed in a variety of genres and skill levels, so scholars were no longer the only people who could enjoy them (Quan-Haase 27). The printing process was a modern technology at the time, and while the manuscripts of the individual scribes were lost, it was a technology that changed form of the book.

Now that technology has evolved the book, it is more difficult to find a definition that encompasses what the book has become. Johanna Drucker explains that the original codex was designed to fit the needs of medieval readers and scholars at the time of its invention. It contained page numbers, a table of contents, chapters, and running titles at the top of each page. This format was simple and self explanatory (qtd. in Malone 116). This implies that the codex was designed to be easy and organized in a way that can withstand centuries of technological change. Some traditionalists still maintain that the codex is the only true form. Philip Smith holds an old-fashioned perspective of what a book truly is. He coins the term, “bookness,” and defines it as:

The qualities which have to do with a book. In its simplest meaning the term covers the packaging of multiple planes held together in fixed or variable sequence by some kind of hinging mechanism, support, or container, associated with a visual/verbal content called a text. The term should not strictly speaking include pre-codex carriers of text such as the scroll or the clay tablet, in fact

nothing on a single leaf or planar surface such as a TV screen, poster or handbill... (qtd. in Malone 116)

His insistence on a book needing “bookness” clearly limits the possibilities of the forms a book can take. A book can only take the form of paper pages physically bound together by a spine in a particular sequence. He excludes the earliest form of text that is handwritten on scrolls, as well as texts presented on a screen. Therefore, he would reject the modern, lenient notion that an e-Book or audiobook are acceptable forms.

However, there are some who embrace a freer form of a book. In Malone’s article, she captures the experiences of her students who were instructed to create their own book that transcends plain text on paper. Creativity was encouraged when her students brought their writing to life in artistic ways that jumped off the pages, such as popups, large margins, and colors. They concluded that a book can turn into a work of art when it goes beyond the traditional codex form (Malone 117). As long as the artistic form captures the essence of the text, it enhances the reading experience.

The printed book is bound with emotional and nostalgic qualities that make it the preferred form for some readers. The format of the printed book has withstood generations of societal and cultural progress and is deeply imbedded in the human experience. In a study that observed university student’s reading preferences, the majority of students agreed that eBooks were a convenient technology. However, 80% still preferred a printed text over its digital version (Lai and Li 462). Despite the digital revolution that is gripping the 21st century, readers are choosing print over digital. Macwilliam explains our attachment, “reading is an emotive

subject and books are a nostalgic medium” (10). Therefore, those who love books are drawn to the medium that they have known since childhood.

A. M. Bakalar, an avid lover of books, explains that it was the physical existence and qualities of the book that made her fall in love with reading. When picking up her first copy of *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkein, she admired the font, cover, and illustrations that embellished this edition and the aroma that was born between the pages (44). Since then, she appreciates books for their ability to capture and hold human emotion. She explains that a book undergoes changes when possessed by a person: “Hand scribbling on the margins or the front page, underlined sentences, perhaps a torn page; the story of a book which goes through hands of innumerable readers from generation to generation is one of the most intriguing of all” (46). In these ways, the book remembers the hands that held it by creating physical memories on the pages. An eBook cannot create such a close connection between readers because each downloaded edition is fresh and untouched by other hands.

III. Electronic Books

Electronic books, or eBooks, are the products of ambitious readers’ desires for an easier way to read. The first concept of the e-Book was dreamt in 1930, which called for a device that would hold many books at once and be transported with ease (Wilson 5). Then, in 1998, the first physical eBooks were made: the Rocket e-Book and the SoftBook Reader. Major booksellers, Barnes and Noble, and publishers, Random House, invested in these devices as they were perceived to drastically alter the way the world will read. Like Gutenberg’s invention of the movable type, these eBooks could potentially harm the market for books, so publishers and booksellers were eager to jump aboard this new technology that had the potential ruin

them. Unfortunately, neither of these devices took flight (Wilson 5). The world would not be eager to purchase an e-Book until almost a decade later.

Beginning in 2006, a new wave of e-Reader technology was launched. Sony released its new e-Reader, and eBooks became accessible on Palm's PDAs and Apple's iPods. However, Sony and Palm suffered when Amazon released its Kindle e-Reader in 2007. By 2009, there was much more content available to read on e-Readers and this new technology was becoming mainstream. When Apple's iPad was introduced in 2010, the world of e-Book technology became available to Apple fans when the new device offered an e-Reader application within a multifunctional device (Wilson 5). The public was now able to read eBooks on the same devices on which they checked their email or went online. The concept of an e-Reader moved from a single isolated device towards just a small aspect of the role that technology plays in our daily lives.

The e-Book format allows authors the power to self-publish their own works. This, however, poses a threat to the role of the publishing industry in the book market. One of the advantages of self-publishing is that it empowers the authors to make their own decisions about the content of their books. No longer do they need the approval and involvement of a publisher or an editor before their books reach the desired audience. A second advantage is that the self-published books potentially could reach a much larger audience because it is exclusively digitalized and available to all Internet users. Lastly, cost is a huge advantage to self-publishing authors because they do not have to pay for the services that a publishing house would provide (Stommel and Bechter 73). Without the need for an intruding publisher, self-

published books can be churned out to better represent the authors' visions and expectations for their texts.

While the absence of a publisher has perceived advantages, there are also drawbacks. Publishers offer a wide range of services that affect how successful the books will be. Publishers offer cover art, editing, translating, and marketing services that self-publishers will have to accomplish on their own. For some authors, this may be a difficult task and could be detrimental to the success of their works (Stommel and Bechter 64). It may be an added cost if the authors choose to employ that service. In this way, the absence of a publisher could also be a significant disadvantage. Another drawback of self-publishing an e-Book is that when any author can self-publish, it makes it much more difficult for authors to distinguish themselves (Stommel and Bechter 84). While the digitalization of books significantly affects the power of the authors and the publishing process, it also provides a drastically different experience for readers.

There are many benefits that eBooks offer readers. The most significant advantage of eBooks is their accessibility. Just as Guttenberg's printing press did for the handwritten text, digitalization allowed books to be widely accessed. According to Van der Velde and Ernst, "Readers can also find these books through search engines (such as Google), the library catalog ... or the publisher platform, so the primary difference between print books and eBooks is that eBooks are exposed and visible to a larger audience" (570). The form of the e-Book has opened up the text so that readers may search by keyword and select the information they need. Readers also do not have to spend money on a specific device that will allow them to access their eBooks. Now, mainstream products, such as tablets, smartphones, and laptop, have e-

Reader software so that people can read books on the same device they use for other daily tasks (Macwilliam 3). This allows eBooks to become a much more convenient alternative to a print book.

A second advantage of eBooks are that they are much more portable than print.

An e-Reader is a space-saving alternative to bookshelves, as they are able to condense an entire library down to one compact device (Jiang and Katsamakos 387). No longer do readers have to carry or store their entire collection; whether its on a vacation or a daily commute, they can carry all of their books with them. An added bonus is that people can read their eBooks with more privacy (Bakalar 45). An e-Book becomes a personal interaction between the user and their literary collection.

There are a couple disadvantages to reading a text electronically. In Lai and Li's study, many students reported feeling eye strain while reading an e-Book. Since eBooks must be read on a screen that usually has a backlight, excessive use can cause headaches (458). In fact, the most basic form of Amazon's Kindle boasts that its screen is not supplemented by a backlight, creating an experience that is less like a screen and more like an authentic book (Amazon). However, it is also possible that if users are looking at screens on their laptops or phones all day, they may not want to look at screen while reading (Bakalar 47). If leisurely reading is an escape from daily responsibilities, an e-Book on a screen might not be the relaxing activity one would desire. A second disadvantage, and probably the most aesthetic, is that one cannot feel the shape and weight of a book in their hands (Jiang and Katsamakos 387). One might believe that they are not gaining the full reading experience when they are holding a single, small,

modern device that could contain any kind of book. However, it may not be possible to compare a print book to an e-Book when both offer such radically different experiences.

Current e-Readers or other devices offer tools that enhance our capabilities as readers. As possible with printed books, users can still bookmark pages and take notes in the margins. Unlike a printed book, they also have built-in dictionaries for quick reference and a search option to scan a book for keywords (Jiang and Katsamakos 387). The ease and accessibility of these tools show how an electronic book could prove superior to text on a page. Some may agree that these extra gadgets could distract us from the act of reading, but MacWilliam believes that these applications could enhance the dedicated reader (3). When e-Readers and eBooks diverge from the traditional format of a printed book, they are taking full advantage of their capabilities.

The reading experience of an e-Book includes multimedia and tools that would never be possible on an old-fashioned text. An enhanced e-Book would go beyond a simple digital copy of a printed text. MacWilliam explains the various possibilities to an e-Book: The enhanced e-Book combining all the iPad, iPhone, and other smartphones has to offer- full colour, moving images, audio, web interactivity, GPS technology- is in the ascendancy" (4). Video, sound, and images inputted into an e-Book could provide a more interactive experience for readers. A story can easily come to life when it includes other forms of narrative. As our gadgets expand their realms of capabilities, eBooks have the potential to obtain them as well. If an e-Book's only purpose is to replicate a text, then it would be missing out on all the possibilities that the new, digital medium has to offer.

The future glorified eBooks would transcend the four-sided page of codex. Peter Meyers has dreams of how an enhanced e-Book may fulfill its capabilities and cater to our needs. Examples of these possibilities would be to “round up passages in which we come to know a character’s personality,” “extract a timeline of key events,” and “Show me the scenes in which two people interact” (1). These ideas take advantage of how eBooks are so open to searching by keyword because they are digitalized. Meyer’s argument is that our habits as readers are changing as our need for instant access and information has been fostered by the Web. When selecting a book, an e-Book could be structured to give us various depths into the book. It could give us a heavy account of what the book entails, or it could give us a quick summary. An even briefer book description would be delivered in the form of a news feed: a short, abbreviated blip of what an entire book could entail (Meyers 1). These ideas are ambitious, visionary, and insightful as to how our modern society may cater to our changing needs.

IV. Audiobooks

The concept of recording the spoken word has a long history that eventually birthed the audiobook. When Edison invented his phonograph, he envisioned the recording of speech rather than music (Pedersen and Have 80). While the technology for recording text was available, it was not practical or accessible. After both of the World Wars, many soldiers returned with eye injuries and there was a growing demand for entertainment they could enjoy with their ears. The first audiobook was introduced in reels, where one book occupied about twenty reels and weighed about ten pounds (Pedersen and Have). The technology was still far from being convenient and practical enough to gain popularity.

Throughout the 20th century, new developments were made. In 1952, Caedmon Records introduced their audiobooks, when two women began recording classic poems and other literary works. Then, in 1973, Duvall Hecht realized that a significant amount of Americans was wasting their time sitting in cars or on trains while commuting to work. He cultivated the idea that these Americans could be enriching their spare time with reading material that they could enjoy while traveling. Duvall founded Books on Tape, which would become one of the major audiobook publishers (Whitten 3). Also in the 1970's, the wave of popularity of cassettes brought players into new cars, and so audiobook publishers were able to provide reading material for their commuting audience. Not only Books on Tape, but also Recorded Books and Books in Motion became the major publishers that recorded full books on tape (Whitten 4). The 1980's gave way to the compact disk, and in the 2000's, audiobooks were available online to download as mp3 files. The digitalization of audiobooks surged its popularity because the files were now available to a wider audience and in a more compact format; no longer was a single book divided onto several tapes or CDs (Pedersen and Have 81). This new format of recording and distributing text made more people eligible to become readers.

The audiobook publishing industry has not been fully integrated into the rest of the publishing industry. This is mostly due to the fact that the audience of audiobooks consisted of the disabled and learning-impaired. However, this portion of the publishing industry has been the most adaptive as technology evolved. Audiobooks were available on reels and cassette tapes, and finally on CDs and digital formats (Colbjørnsen 89). The versatility of the audiobook publishing industry is an example of how an industry can impressively welcome the emergence

of technology rather than rejecting it. By transforming throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, the audiobook was able to grow and become available to a wider range of readers.

The concept of the audiobook has faced negativity. Some may view an audiobook as a remediation of a paper book, meaning that it is a casual shortcut to a more demanding activity. A common perspective is that an audiobook stunts the imagination by providing audio for the reader and silencing an opportunity for critical thought. Even more damaging, the audiobook is associated with illiteracy (Pedersen and Have 82). However, the audiobook may engage the reader's mind in simply a different way, rather than a less taxing way.

The audiobook offers an experience unlike the traditional method of silent reading. In human history, the natural form of storytelling was once orally communicated; audiobooks retreat back to the oldest form of narration, which is through another person's voice (Jackson 164). Colbjørnsen describes the essence of the audiobook format: "An audiobook in its most general definition is a recording of a text, typically an existing book, being read by the author, a professional actor, a celebrity, or an amateur. Some recordings also include music, multiple actors, and more intricate soundscapes that bring them close to the genre of radio drama" (85). This means that the narrator has the ability to influence the reader and the comprehension of the text. For example, having the author narrate can create an intimate relationship with the reader and also a genuine presentation of the text. The embellishment of sound effects and music is another way of setting up the reader to be fully engaged with the plot and the experiences of the characters by making the reader experience them as well. The audiobook requires listening skills that is unlike those acquired through visual reading. Unlike a text, the reader's body and eyes are free to roam his surroundings as he absorbs the story through his

ears. A listener is no longer bound to a page or reading device while requiring a focused mindset and sufficiently quiet environment (Pedersen and Have 93). Rather than sitting and staring at a text, a reader can do errands, chores, or travel while simultaneously listening to a narrator. Usually, a reader will use an audiobook to occupy a part of their day where sitting down and reading is not an option (Pedersen and Have 89). Instead, it is a way to entertain their minds so that they can feel engaged and enriched while continuing to go about their daily tasks.

The audiobook also creates a personal, submerged state of mind that can bring privacy and tranquility. The voice of a narrator can be a calming presence and good company in an otherwise isolating experience. According to Pedersen and Have, “listening to audiobooks can establish a mental private space, and everyday ritual like other (old) everyday media (books, radio, television), but in line with new digital mobile media the digital audiobooks afford new kinds of ritualized practices” (84). This roots the audiobook experience in an old-fashioned mindset, one that has always existed and is not new to the modern age. While listening, the reader will absorb the narration and setting of the audiobook and it will shape how they perceive their own surroundings.

V. Conclusion

All introductions of new technologies cause some degree of disruption. The printed book was solidly rooted in our society but is now being accompanied by other ascending forms. When the three forms, meaning the print book, e-Book, and audiobook, are evaluated together, it is important to note the significant advantages and drawbacks that make them preferable in a certain context. For example, the pages of eBooks mimic those of the printed

book, but the medium offers more than a simple imitation. EBooks are more easily accessible and transported because of their compact, digital nature and may be preferred when practicality is desired. A traveler or commuter with limited space in his bag would prefer an e-Book for its portability and storage. That same commuter might desire to free up his eyes and hands by enjoying literature through his headphones. The soothing voice of a narrator and lively sound effects would capture his attention as he freely moves about his daily routine. He would be able to easily download all the files to the audiobook to his smartphone, so he is once again benefitting from a portable and an exciting form a book.

At the end of the day, that same individual may come home to a small, cramped apartment with walls lined with shelves, each containing rows of his favorite literature to form a proud and impressive collection. He would admire the old and new editions of his favorite books, brushing his hands across intricately ornate covers and those with crumbling spines, remembering the day on which he bought each book or the person who gave it to him. His passion for literature might be fulfilled by eBooks and audiobooks on-the-go, but in his apartment, it manifests itself as a small library with a tranquil atmosphere and rich aesthetic.

Pessimistic and traditional readers may mourn the role technology has played in the world of books, but the classic codex, e-Book, and audiobook may be enjoyed by the same person in different settings. Instead of sparring with the notion of modernity and innovation, it is more productive to applaud the e-Book and audiobook for the unique experience it can provide the reader. One might fret over the disappearance of the printed book rather than recognizing the aspects of it that technology lacks, which is its reliable and sturdy properties and the ability to elicit the emotions that human nature craves. While some debate whether or

not e-Books and audiobooks are still considered “books,” these forms have to same ability to capture the hearts and minds as their predecessor.

Annotated Bibliography

Ballard, Robert M. "What is the Future of Books and Print Journals?: Are Archival Journals and the Printed Book Obsolete?" *The International Journal of the Book*, 7.3 (2010): 77-82.

This article is about how technology has changed humanity's exchange of information. It talks about how scientific and academic journals have changed the way they publish articles to adapt to the digital age, thus expanding the audience that reads them. This article does not focus solely on books, but also newspapers, magazines, as well as journals. The section that does focus on books will be useful because it will tell me about the publishing industry and how the publication of books has changed. Plus, it will show what happens when the availability of information (and books) drastically expands with the invention of digital publishing.

Bakalar, A. M. "The Future of Paper Books." *Wasafiri: The Magazine of International Contemporary Writing*, 29.3 (2014): 44-47.

Bakalar argues that while eBooks make reading more convenient and accessible, they are far from replacing the printed book. Her article provides a personal and creative narration for how books played an important role in her childhood, and her experience with using an eBook as an adult. Since my essay will have an emphasis on the readers' experiences, this story-like article will show the emotional ties we have to books, and how the eBook provides similar or different emotions. Rather than a formal academic article, this source will give me a more personal account of how books affect our lives.

Colbjørnsen, Terje. "The Accidental Avante-garde: Audiobook Technologies and Publishing Strategies from the Cassette Tape to Online Streaming Services." *Northern Lights: Film and Media Studies Yearbook*, 13 (2015): 83-103.

This article discusses the history of the audiobook publishing industry throughout technological progress. It provides a basic description of what audiobooks consist of, as well as how the format gained popularity. This article is useful to me because of its simple, straightforward nature of describing one of the forms of books that I am researching.

Danet, Pierre. "The Future of Book Publishing: Seven Technology Trends and Three Industry Goals." *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 30.3 (2014): 275-281.

This article is about how recent technology is changing the publishing industry. The describes the various trends that are changing the way books are accessed and used, and how the publishing industry is changing to those trends. For example, the Internet has allowed for texts to be copied online to reach a wider audience. For my essay, it provides useful statistics I can use to support my research, as well as how technology has changed the reading experience.

Have, Iben and Birgitte Stougaard Pedersen. "Conceptualising the Audiobook Experience." *Sound Effects*, 2.1 (2012): 79-95.

This article discusses the difference of experience an audiobook vs. reading a book. The authors explain how audiobooks have certain advantages over print books that make them preferable in certain situations. The audiobook can be listened to when doing other tasks, while a book ties down the body and mind to a single object. This article is incredibly useful to me because it provides a clear analysis of the audiobook experience. Not only does it describe the advantages, but how it is an acceptable alternative to a printed book.

Jackson, John E. "Reflections on Reading." *Naval War College Review* Autumn 2010: 164+

This article gave a brief description of audiobooks and e-Books. Jackson praised both mediums as equals to the traditional printed book, and provided pros and cons to both forms. This article can be useful to me because even though it was short, it was clear, straightforward, and provides supplemental facts to my research.

Jiang, Yabing, and Evangelos Katsamakos. "Impact of E-book Technology: Ownership and Market Asymmetries in Digital Transformation." *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 9.5 (2010): 386-399.

This article discusses the effects that eBooks have had on the book market. The authors explain the benefits that eBooks provide over print to show how the technology is accomplishing more than a traditional book could do. For my paper, this article will give me a better idea of how eBooks compare to regular print and its various abilities. I hope that it will contribute to how eBooks provide the reader with a richer experience.

"Kindle e-reader." *Amazon*. Amazon, 2016. Web. 21 April 2016.

This source consists of a product description of one of the most basic forms of the Amazon Kindle. It contains general information such as software specifics, features, price, and availability. Since Kindle is one of the leading e-Books, it is beneficial to look at what their e-Readers offer and use the information to supplement the characteristics of e-Books in my project.

Kudva, Sonali and Yin Zhang. "Ebooks Vs. Print Books: Readers' Choices and Preferences Across Contexts." *Proceeds of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 50.1 (2012): 1-4.

This article argues that while eBooks have a strong presence in today's technological society, that have not quite taken the place of print books. Both mediums have advantages and disadvantages, and it is up to the readers own needs and preferences to make a choice what is

bet for them. This article is useful to my research because it compares the benefits of print and eBooks, and explores what draws certain readers.

Lai, Hokyin, and Marco Li. "A Study of University Student Behaviors in Using eBooks in Hong Kong." *Knowledge Management & E-Learning: An International Journal*, 5.4 (2013): 455-467

Since this is a Chinese study, I am more cautious when using the information to apply it to the United States. This study analyzed the behaviors of college students who use eBooks and traditional books for their studies and leisure. I believe that the behavior of Chinese readers will be relevant to American readers when describing the reading experience. The subjects in this study were asked about their reading habits and how they preferred certain forms of books to another. This study is useful in learning about the habits of readers and how they internalize information from different forms of books.

MacWilliam, Angus. "The Engaged Reader: A Human-centred Evaluation of Ebook User Experience." *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 29.1 (2013): 1-11.

This article is about how the most recent advances in eBook technology up until its publication date of 2013. It discusses not only the new abilities of these eBooks and devices, but how they are received by the readers. By explaining the effects that these devices have on readers, it is describing the reader experience. This article is useful to my research because it shows how convenient eBooks have become. There are many more ways to access the eBooks other than designated reading devices. This article will help me understand the progress the eBook is making in terms of convenience and accessibility.

Malone, Cynthia N. "The Future of Books: Technologies and Forms." *The International Journal of the Book*, 6.1 (2009): 115-118.

This article is about the definition of the word "book" and how that definition applies to forms of books other than print. Many still consider that eBooks and audio books aren't real "books" because the traditional definition of a book describes it as print. This article is useful to me because it brings up the interesting point that a book is no longer defined as bound pages. Instead, it is taking new forms that require us to rethink what a book is.

Meyers, Peter. "Physics and the Future of Books." *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, 18.2 (2015): 18 paragraphs.

Peter Meyers imagines what the future of the eBook holds for readers. With a tablet, computer, or phone as its medium, books will become an interactive, searchable body of text that we can cater to our needs. He explains how texts can be moved around, summarized, and simplified based on information that we need from them. I can use this article for my paper because it provides insights as to what eBooks could do for the future of books. It goes beyond

what can be described about the eBook, and paints a picture of what an eBook could become in the future.

Miller, Laura Newton. "Preference for Print or Electronic Book Depends on User's Purpose for Consulting." *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 9.3 (2014): 95-97.

This article contains the results from a survey that reviewed the reading habits of students, faculty, and staff members. The questions in the survey asked about the subjects' eBook usage, format preferences, and experience when comparing print to eBooks. The results found that an overwhelming majority of people prefer print books to electronic books. This article can be useful to me because it shows quantitative facts about who prefers traditional to electronic books, as well as reasons why. It will also help me get an idea of how students who use both use them for different reasons.

Peter Meyers Interviewed at TOC 2012. Youtube, 17 Feb. 2012. Web. 5 Mar. 2016.
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dP4Z0MbCQtI>>.

Peter Meyers expands on his article in this interview. According to him, the traditional eBook is simply a digital copy of a physical page, with a left, right, top, and bottom. He believes that this design is preventing the eBook from its true potential. Paper is no longer the medium, so eBooks should be able to have pictures, sound, and videos. This interview is useful to my research because it supplements his article that I am using. He explains the potential of the eBook and how it might use the medium to maximize the reader experience.

Schreurs, Kathleen. "Children's E-books Are Born: How E-books for Children Are Leading E-book Development and Redefining the Reading Experience." *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 8.2 (2013): 1-14.

This article argues that children are greatly benefitting from the electronic flexibility of the modern eBook. It implies that the new generation is going to have a different relationship with eBooks than the generation that grew up on printed books. The behavior of these young readers will be useful for parents, teachers, and librarians to learn about how children respond differently to the interactive benefits of the eBook. This article will be beneficial to my research because if children are part of the eBook's audience, I want to know how they are gaining a rich experience that cannot be gained from a print book.

Stommel, Yves Gorat, and Clemens Bechter. "Challenges, Chances, and Risk Sharing when Self-Publishing eBooks- Research into Author Preferences." *International SAMANM Journal of Marketing and Management*, 1.2 (2013): 63-95.

This article conducts a study that researches the reasons some authors choose to self-publishing their works. The study surveys authors and provides advantages and disadvantages of using a publishing house versus self publishing. This article is useful to me because the birth

of e-Books has created the opportunity to change the way books are published by making them digitalized and available online.

Whitten, Robin. "Growth of the Audio Publishing Industry." *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 18.3 (2002): 3-10.

This article provides a comprehensive history of how the audio book entered the book market and how it has grown up until the publishing date. Though this article is from 2002, it will still help me understand how the industry began. Since the audiobook was conceived in 1977, the article will show how audiobooks changed throughout the years. I believe this article will provide me with a basic understanding of the audiobooks background that I can use to profile this medium.

Wilson, Tom. "The E-book Phenomenon: A Disruptive Technology." *Libellarium: Journal for the History of Writing*, 6.1 (2014): 3-12.

Wilson discusses how the online book market has changed the way books are published and distributed to the masses. Self-publishing has become much more common online. Also, publishers are able to cut down on production costs with eBooks because they do not require the materials needed to print and bind a traditional book. Unfortunately, the rise of eBooks and self-publishing has caused independent book stores and libraries to decline. This article is useful to me because it gives a brief timeline of how the eBook came into the market. This will give me a better idea of how the eBook was developed and track its progress to the present day. Since I plan on including a brief history of each form of book, I can use this information for my paper.

Synthesis Essay

I have always been fascinated by the possibilities and limitations of a technological society. Even as a young, soon-to-be graduate, I have witnessed developments in technology that have changed the way I live on a daily basis. I have watched cell phones evolve from clunky bricks to sleek, multi-functional screens. In this way, technology has a powerful role in how we live and interact with one another. In other HCOM classes, we have discussed how technology can affect our face-to-face interaction with others, as well as communication patterns. However, in my capstone section, we explored more than just social issues. We examined the direction that technology is moving and how we as humans and users of that technology can prepare and adapt.

My capstone class consisted of seminars in which my classmates and I openly discussed our thoughts and perspectives about the readings. My professor played a passive and facilitative role that allowed my classmates and I to be the sole contributors to the discussions. I believe that seminars were the appropriate form of a Capstone class because we read controversial topics that needed to be discussed openly. We were able to listen attentively to alternate perspectives and the comfortable environment allowed the unpopular opinions to come forth without judgment. The future of the human race is a controversial topic because many fear that too much progress could be detrimental and lead to a complete redefinition of society. For example, many fear that social media and other forms of electronic communication are distracting us from authentic face-to-face interaction. Almost all of my classmates and I have used the apps and websites that are leading electronic communication, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. We all had our own experiences to share and how those

experiences could be representative of a larger phenomenon. We also explored new topics that baffled us, such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, robotics, and immortality. These topics sound like they belong in a science fiction movie but are actually projected expectations for the future. This section's topic was an effective foundation for mind-boggling conversations and for imagining what continual progress of technology would mean for the human race.

Since humanity and technology has many fascinating subtopics, I decided to choose a subtopic that would be relevant to me personally, which is how technology has affected the way I read. When I was a shy and introverted child, reading is how I learned about the world and kept myself entertained. I read often and intently. With the invention of the e-Book, I and many other avid book readers did not feel that an electronic version of a book satisfied our love for reading. However, the idea of a device holding thousands of books for lower costs sounds like an incredible step towards expanding the accessibility of information. A book can be uploaded and downloaded all over the world on the Internet. I am, however, a huge fan of audiobooks and I love incorporating them into my reading habits. I use them when doing chores and running errands and they allow me to read when I'm otherwise too busy. Both audiobooks and e-Books are the products of a technologically advancing society and have expanded the power of the book. Since the theme of my class is humanity and technology, I thought that a research paper that highlighted the ascension, properties, and experiences of the different forms of books would be a great way to see how readers are affected by technology. My research was beneficial in that it taught me how many benefits each form has, and how they can be useful in certain contexts.

My research and the seminars of my Capstone class taught me that technology is not automatically a negative thing. It is easy to get caught up in bitterness by clinging to the old ways of the past and how things have been done for generation. However, my capstone class taught me to be more optimistic about the future while still remaining critical. While not all progress is good progress, wanting technology to be stunted altogether is dampening the possibilities of the human race. When I began my research about the different forms of books, I had a strongly negative view of e-Books. I thought they were weak imitations of an authentic and traditional form and I refused to participate in the movement. After researching their characteristics from a more objective stance, I realized that there are many instances in my life where I could benefit from an e-Book. While I love collecting beautiful editions of my favorite classics and lining them up on cluttered bookshelves, I can appreciate the convenience of being able to download a book with the click of my finger. In order to successfully incorporate technology in our society, we need to remain optimistic about change and realize that humanity will need to evolve with that technology.

Technology has always lead to a drastic change in the way people lived their lives, and in an era of rapid technological advancement, us humans need to remain flexible and on our toes. My capstone class conducted important seminars about how we as humans can evolve with technology and embrace it with an open mind. My own research leads me to the fact that digitalizing books has many important benefits that makes it an important stepping stone for humanity. Now that text can be digitalized, we may be heading toward a more literate and informed society. While I can make my own decision to read mostly traditional books, I can now

accept that the purpose of technology is to make life easier and that rejecting it simply because it is new is unwise and unproductive.



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PROFILE

I am a recent graduate of California State University, Monterey Bay, with a degree in Human Communications. I am actively seeking new career opportunities.

EDUCATION

BACHELOR OF ARTS, MAJOR IN HUMAN COMMUNICATION
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, MONTEREY BAY
2011 - 2016
GPA: 3.9

EXPERIENCE

SEASONAL CUSTOMER ASSOCIATE

ANTHROPOLOGIE, | NOV 2015 - MAR 2016

- Answered incoming phone calls with professionalism.
- Assisted customers in finding clothing that fit their style. Acted as a consultant.
- Maintained up-to-date knowledge of customer buying habits.
- Recognized by management for selling the most candles in one day

CUSTOMER ASSOCIATE

BIGLIERI FARMS | JUN 2013 - AUG 2015

- Managed the store while owner was away.
- Provided exceptional customer service.
- Organized items in a visually appealing manner.
- Listened to customer needs & preferences to provide outstanding advice.

SKILLS

- Microsoft Office Suite
- Grammar & Spelling
- Kind & Personable
- Detail Oriented
- Organized
- Can Prioritize Tasks
- Active Listening
- Enthusiasm
- Clear Communication
- Intermediate Japanese Proficiency

ACHIEVEMENTS

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

DOKKYO UNIVERSITY- SAITAMA, JAPAN
AUG 2013-JUN 2014