



Eve of Disruption

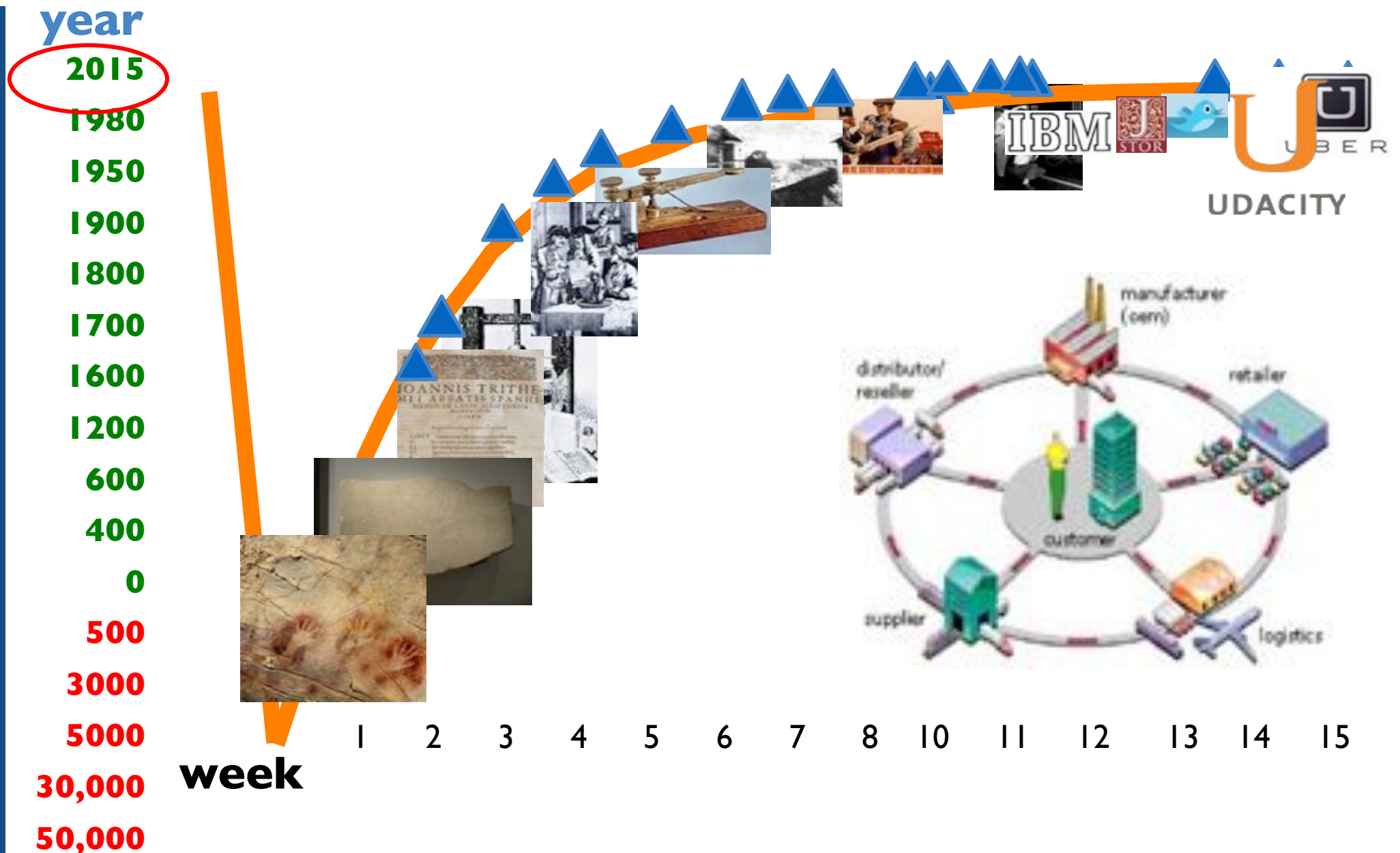
History of Information 103
Geoff Nunberg

Apr 19 2016



History of Information

Eve of Disruption



Itinerary, 4/18

Zackary H.
Marthe W.
Alexandra D.
Thomas V.
Audrey T.
Michael P.

Consequences of the Internet:

The 6 D's...

Disintermediation: Eliminating the middleman

Dematerializing informational goods

What future for the book?

Disintermediating publishing

Assignments

Why form matters

Affordances of material things

Will newspapers go under?

The disaggregation of content

What future for newspapers & news?

Eve of disruption

Borders
Bookstore,
Chicago, April
2012



Amazon is hiring 5,000 remote workers this year — but there's a catch

Marguerite Ward | @forwandist | 1 Hour Ago



Getty Images
Amazon.com founder and CEO Jeff Bezos.

April 17, 2017

Eve of disruption

BUSINESS DAY

Is American Retail at a Historic Tipping Point?

By MICHAEL CORKERY APRIL 15, 2017

April 15, 2017

Sears and Kmart might not have enough money to stock their shelves

Charisse Jones, USA TODAY Published 11:17 p.m. ET March 21, 2017 | Updated 5:36 a.m. ET March 23, 2017



March 21, 2017

BUSINESS DAY

Shoe Chain Payless Files for Bankruptcy Protection

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS APRIL 4, 2017, 5:24 P.M. E.D.T.

NEW YORK — Shoe chain Payless ShoeSource has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, becoming the latest retailer to succumb to increasing competition from online rivals like Amazon.

April 4, 2017

U.S.

Retail Store Job Cuts Deepen as More Buyers Migrate Online

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS APRIL 8, 2017, 3:03 A.M. E.D.T.

NEW YORK — Retail stores are cutting jobs at the sharpest pace in more than seven years, evidence of a seemingly inexorable shift away from employee-heavy stores as Americans increasingly shop online.

April 8, 2017

Sign Of Times: More Local Newspapers Closing

by Erik Sass, Staff Writer @eriksass1, February 10, 2017

The New Year has not brought respite for the newspaper business, as demonstrated by the slow but steady erosion of local newspapers across the United States. The last month has brought a number of new closures, leaving more small and mid-sized towns without a daily

Eve of disruption

Congressman blames U.S. unemployment crisis on iPad

By Jason D. O'Grady | April 28, 2013, 1:25pm PDT

Summary

In the rambling manifesto Jackson claims that the iPad is responsible for killing thousands of American publishing and retail jobs. He claims that Americans are losing their jobs to workers in China.

Topics

Apple iPad, Congressman, Unemployment, Corporate Communication, Marketing, Jason D. O'Grady

Blogger Info

Jason D. O'Grady



"Why do you need to go to & Noble? Buy an iPad and dBarnes ownload your newspaper, download your book, download your magazine."

AUG 12, 2015 @ 04:02 PM 9,028

Textbooks Are Going Digital, But Will That Put College Bookstores Out Of Business?



Lauren Feiner, FORBES STAFF

I write about how money impacts the college experience. [FULL BIO](#)

In the more than \$10 billion dollar college textbook industry, students are captive consumers. Each semester

R.I.P. Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

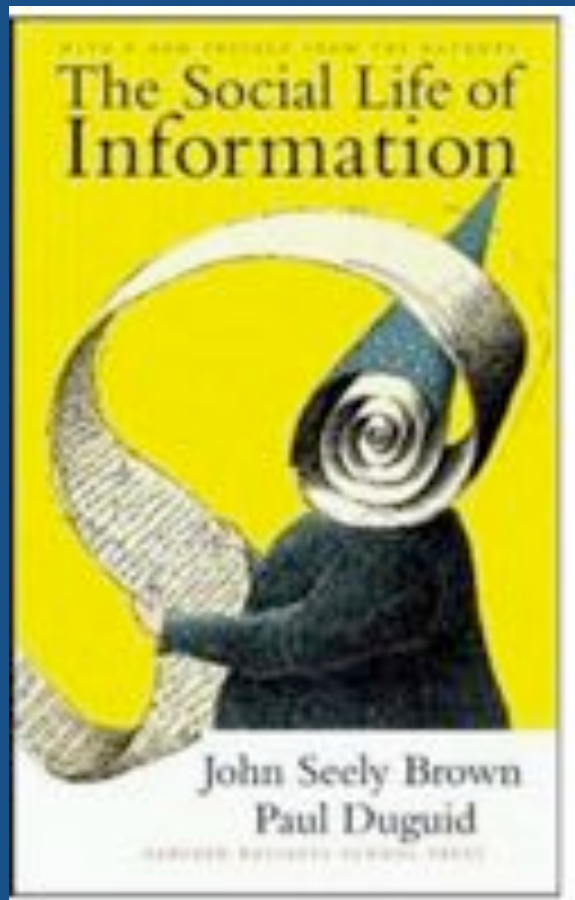
By paulgillin | September 28, 2016 - 8:59 pm - Posted in R.I.P., R.I.P.

We're going to call a time-of-death on the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, despite the fact that the newspaper says it'll live on with a website. Everyone says that these days. The more important news is that the 24-year-old daily will shutter its print edition and lay off 100 staff members. It will maintain an online-only edition, but most dying newspapers say that.

Our favorite quote comes from Jennifer Bertetta, president and chief executive of Trib Total Media, which owns the Tribune-Review: "Our commitment to covering news in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County



6 D's and a 7th



Brown and Duguid's six D's

Demassification

Decentralization

Denationalization

Despatialization

Disintermediation

Disaggregation

And one more...

Dematerialization

The confluence of technological, legal, social, and market factors...

Disintermediation: "Cutting Out the Middleman"



The COLONIAL Power Receiver

Manufactured by the Colonial Radio Corporation of Long Island City. Sold only at the Colonial Factory Branch Stores listed below. There are no distributors or resellers' prices. You buy direct—at less than half. You get the value and service and satisfaction which have already won the praise of more than 7,000 Colonial owners in the Metropolitan district alone.

Direct from Factory
Factory Price and
Service

**JUDGE ITS PERFORMANCE
IN YOUR OWN HOME**

We will install it for a FREE trial. Our Direct from Factory Price with Factory Service will **SAVE YOU MORE THAN HALF**

A Small Payment
Easy Monthly
Terms

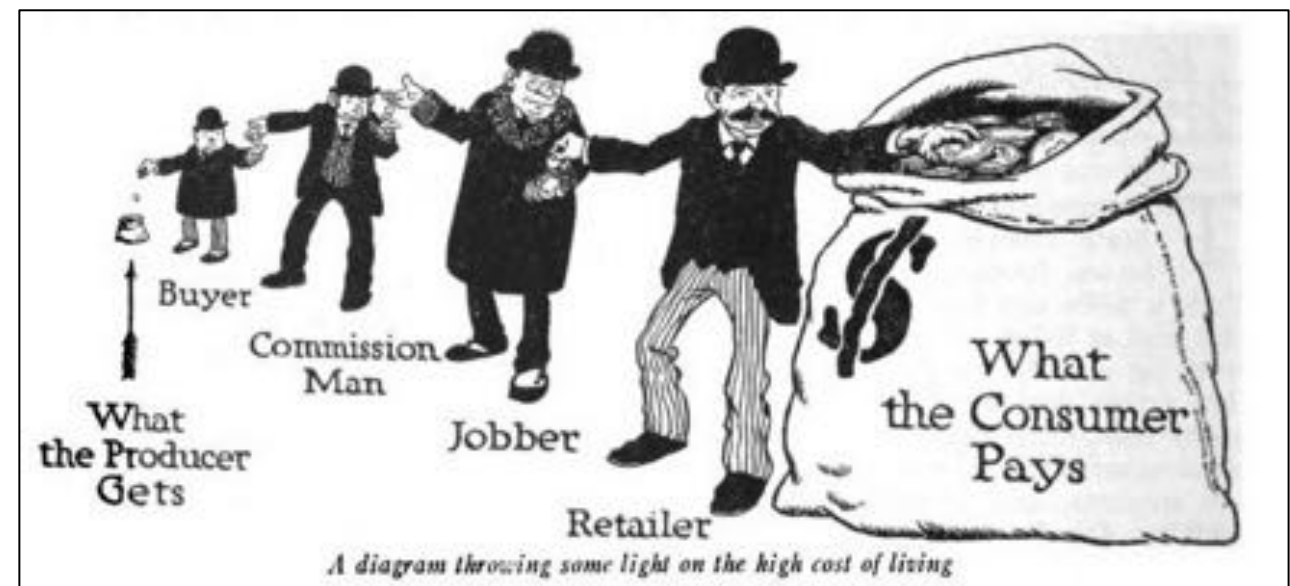
Sold ONLY through Our Own Factory Branch Stores

Disintermediation before “disintermediation”

STURZ PIANOS.

Sold on easy terms direct from
FACTORY WAREROOMS
AT
142 LINCOLN AVE.,
134th Street, block East of Third Ave.
NEW YORK.

Obviously the way to reduce the cost of food is to eliminate the middleman...by co-operation—by combining the purchasing power of individuals, and dealing direct with the producer...*Good Housekeeping* 1912



WOULD "CUTTING OUT THE MIDDLEMAN" REDUCE SELLING COSTS?

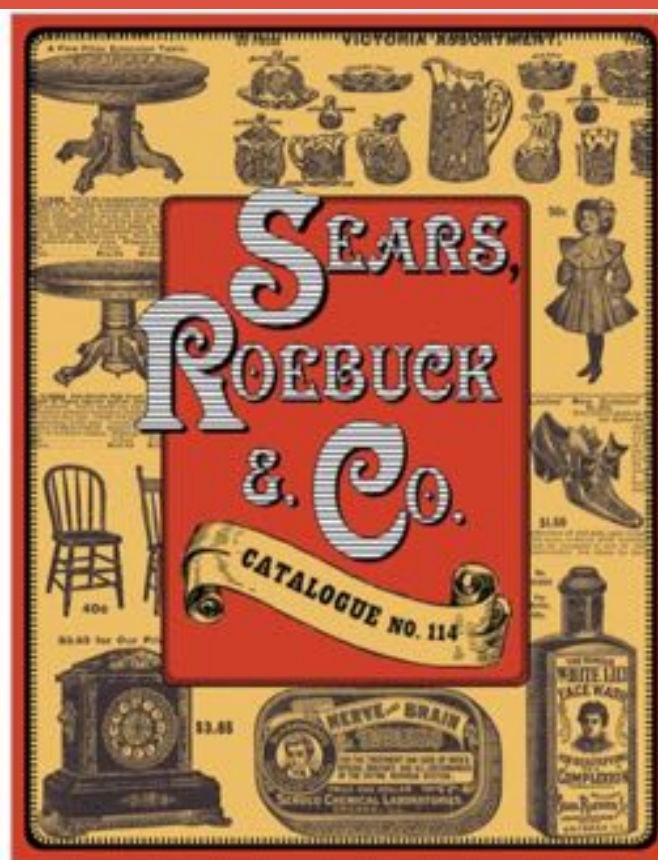
WHAT is the MIDDLEMAN'S SHARE?

Service the Basis of the Wholesaler's and Retailer's Place in Distribution: Do They Earn Their Pay?

"Cutting Out the Middleman"

THERE can be no question that both jobbers and retailers of stationery and allied lines are considerably handicapped frequently by competition with manufacturers who make a practice of selling direct to the consumer. It is true, also, in some instances at least, that jobbers and retailers are

"Cutting Out the Middleman"



1897 Sears Catalogue

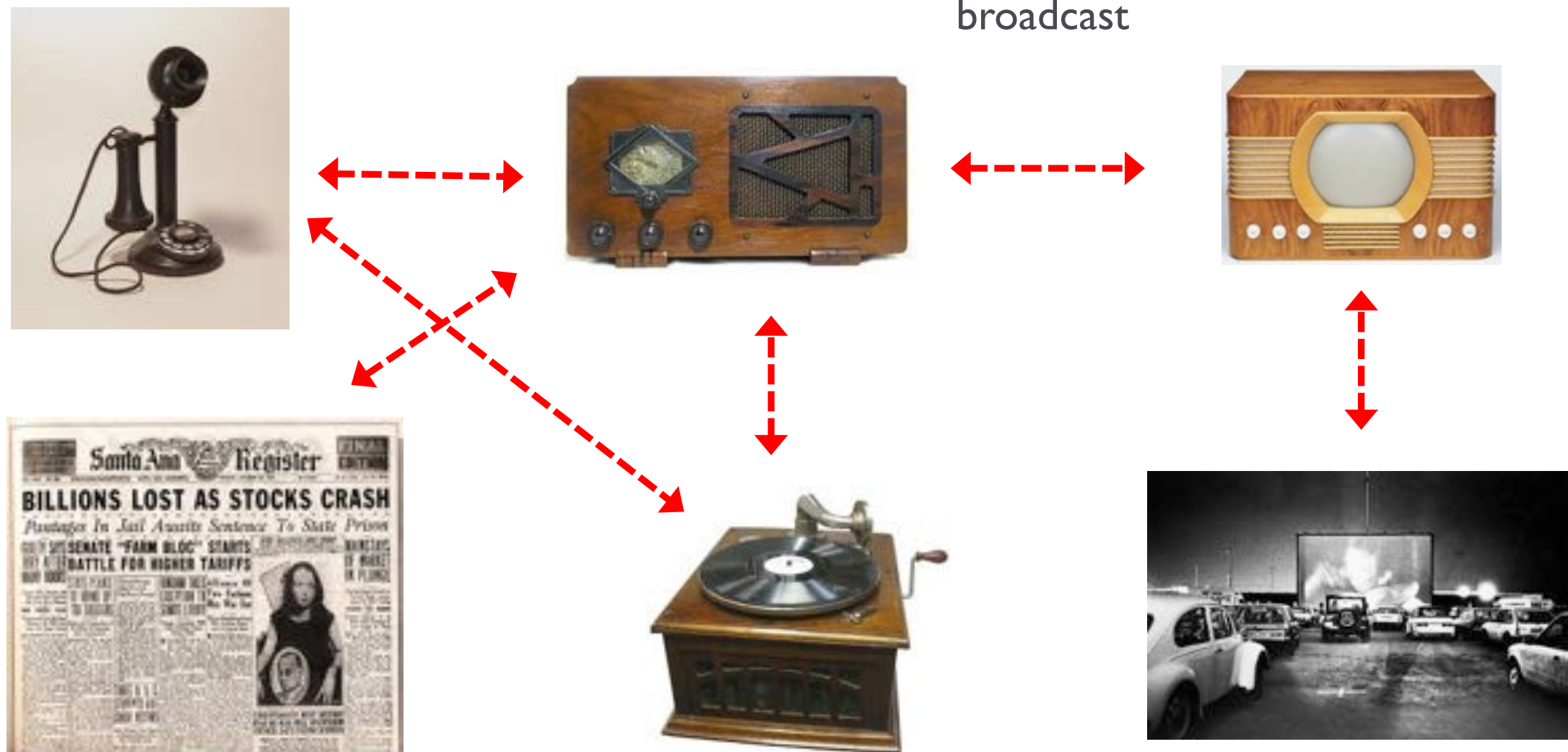


1908



Sears Tower,
Chicago 1906

Competition among technologies



"Cutting Out the Middleman"

What proportion of US retail sales are online?

- a. 7.5%
- b. 21%
- c. 32.3%
- d. 46%

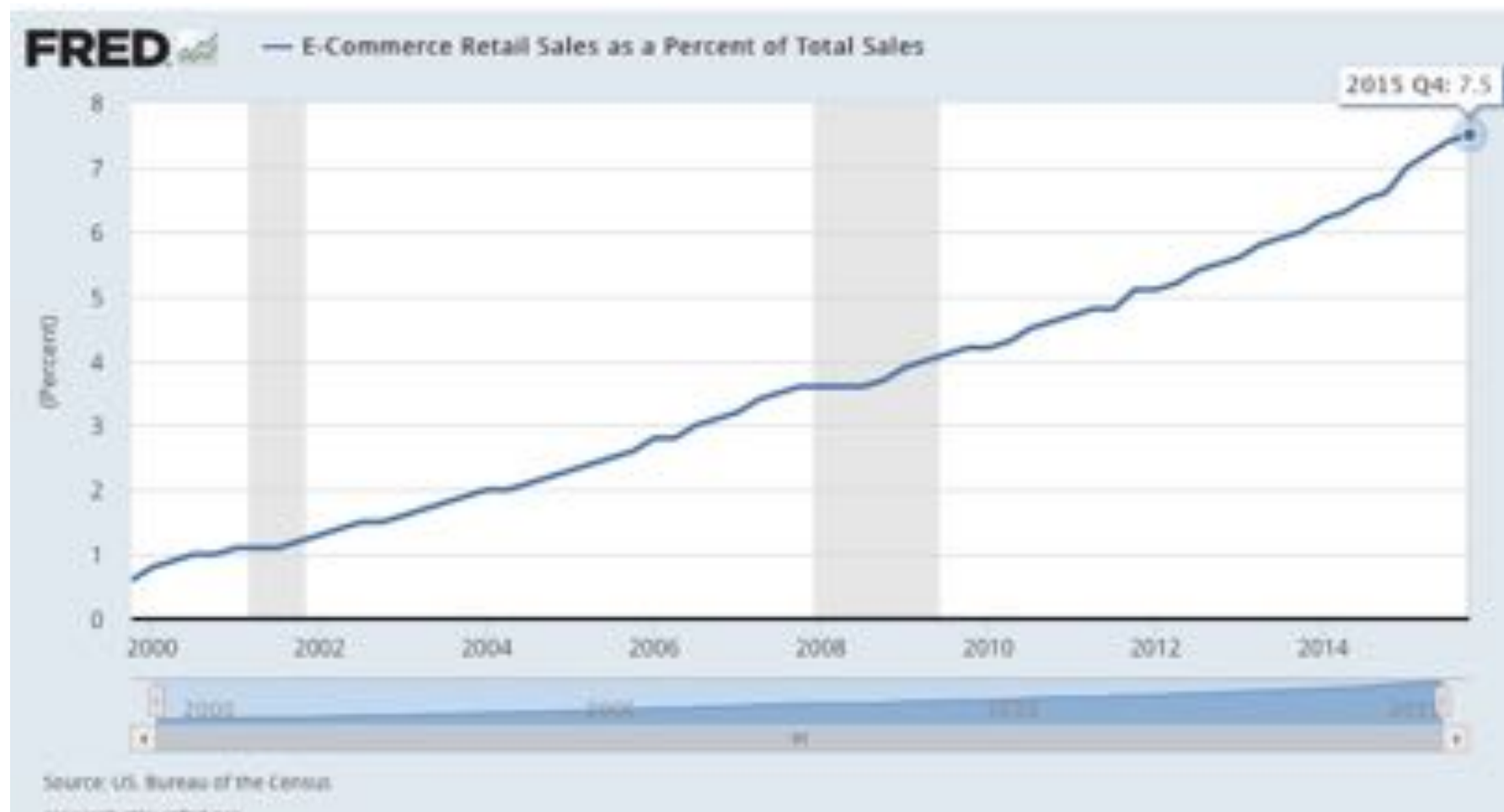
The growth of e-commerce:

"Cutting Out the Middleman"

What proportion of US retail sales are online?

- a. 7.5%
- b. 21%
- c. 32.3%
- d. 46%

The growth of e-commerce:



What do we buy online?

Also:
Auto parts
beauty products
toys & hobbies
jewelry



Disintermediating Commerce



Limited or niche disintermediation

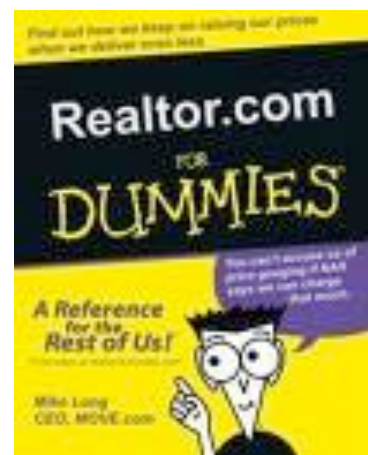
Real estate for sale

New automobiles

Pet food

Furniture

... but price information etc. is disintermediated in all markets





Mixed Retail Models

New models mix brick & mortar and online ordering, service, delivery, shopping etc.



Amazon Proves That Brick And Mortar Retail Will Not Die Off Completely

Bonobos is opening retail stores – but you can't actually take any of the clothes home



The Bonobos flagship guideshop on Fifth Avenue. Bonobos

Dematerialization of Informational Goods

Dematerialization of Informational Goods

Outlook grim for Postal Service as revenue ebbs

Carolyn Lockhead, Chronicle Washington Bureau
Monday, April 19, 2010

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE COMMENTS (202) FONT SIZE

(04-19) 04:00 PDT Washington — The same forces that have newspaper and book publishing industries are aimed at the U.S. threatening much more than the Saturday mail.

MORE NEWS

• Adachi may look at thousands of

Postmaster General John Pott
last week that the Postal Servi



Disintermediating informational goods



E-commerce is dominant or major channel

Downloadable products (software, mp3's, pornography)

Travel/event tickets/etc.

Public records





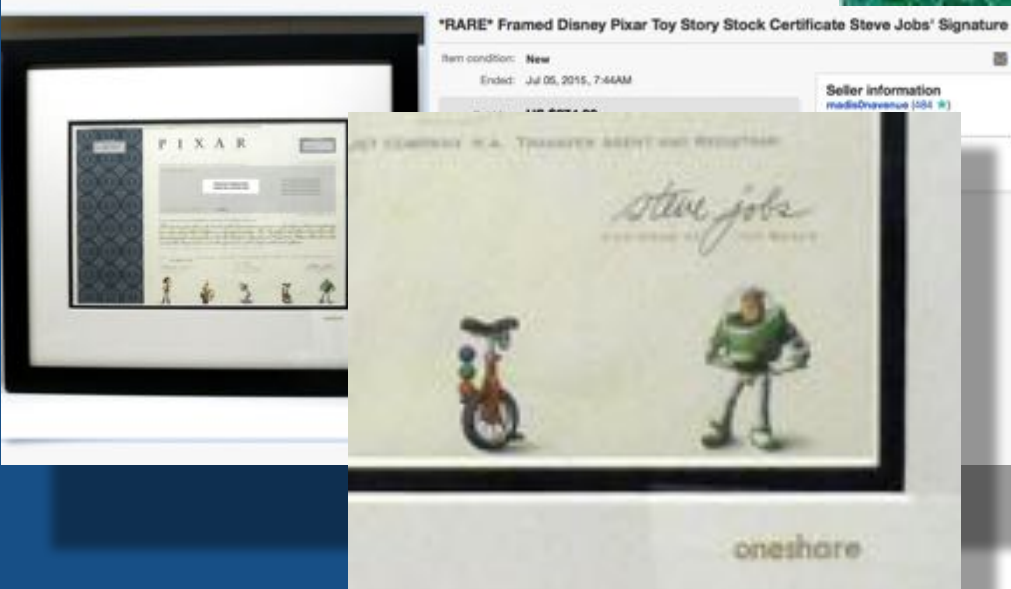
Stock certificate for
Dutch East India Company, 1606

Dematerialization of Informational Goods

Stock certificates



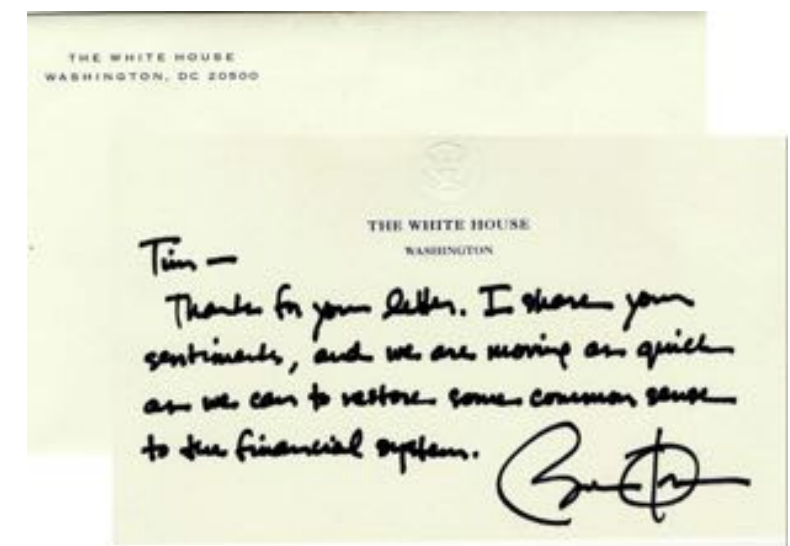
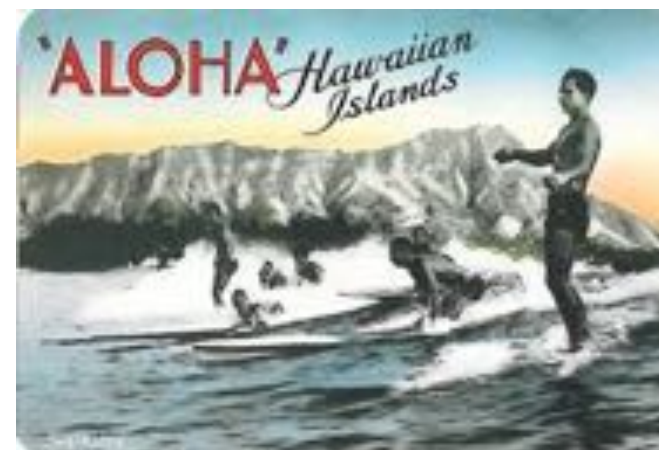
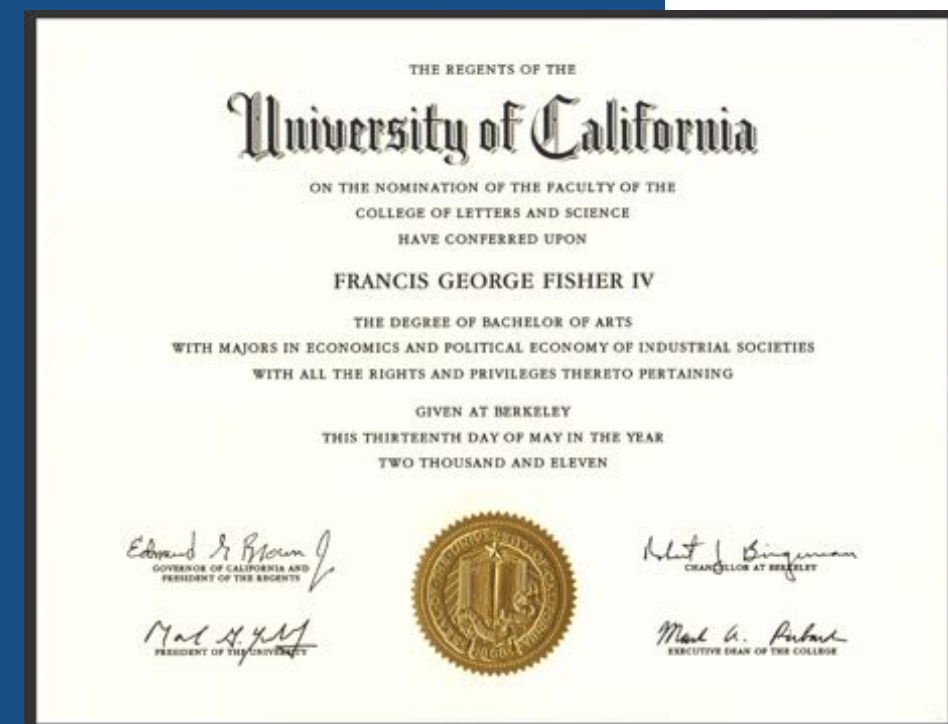
1903



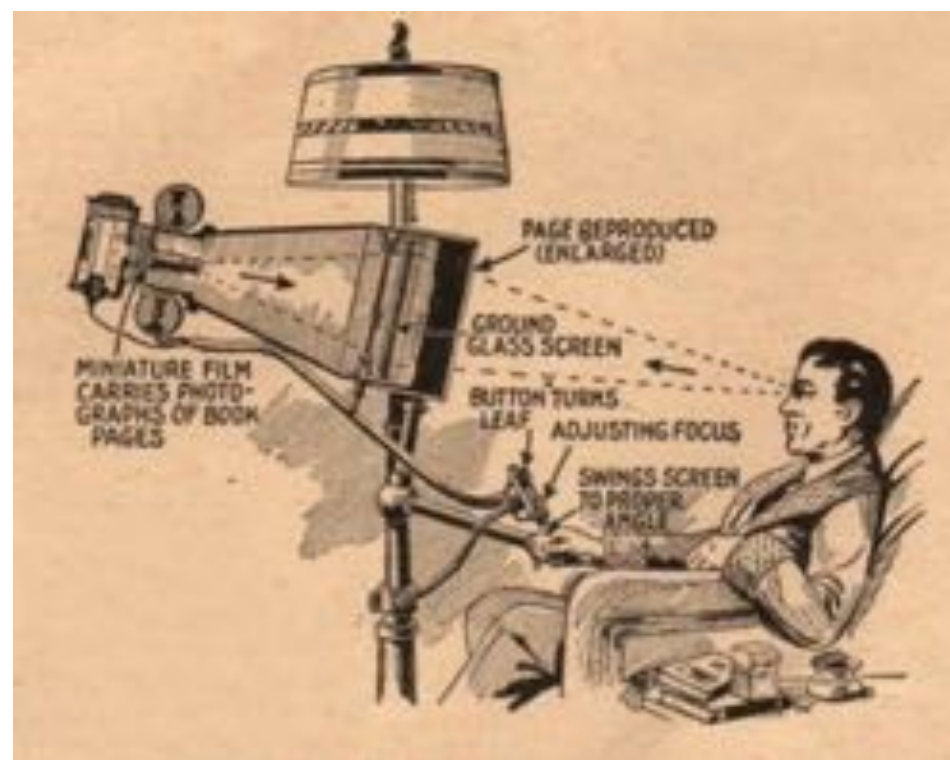
When does paper matter?



When does paper matter?



What future for the book?



Books? Where we're going we don't *need* books



A clash of fetichisms

"Nobody is going to sit down and read a novel on a twitchy little screen. Ever." — E. Annie Proulx, "Books on Top," NY Times, 1994

"Paper is just an object that [some] information has been sprayed onto in the past..." — Ted Nelson, ca. 1990

In the future, physical books will be of interest mainly to those "addicted to the look and feel of tree flakes encased in dead cow tree flakes encased in dead cow... old volumes could live out their days in safe and dignified retirement in climate-controlled book museums." William Mitchell, Dean of the School of Architecture, MIT, 1996

Slowing ebook sales may embolden publishers in Amazon spat

Is the e-book inevitable?

As E-book Sales Decline, Digital Fatigue Grows

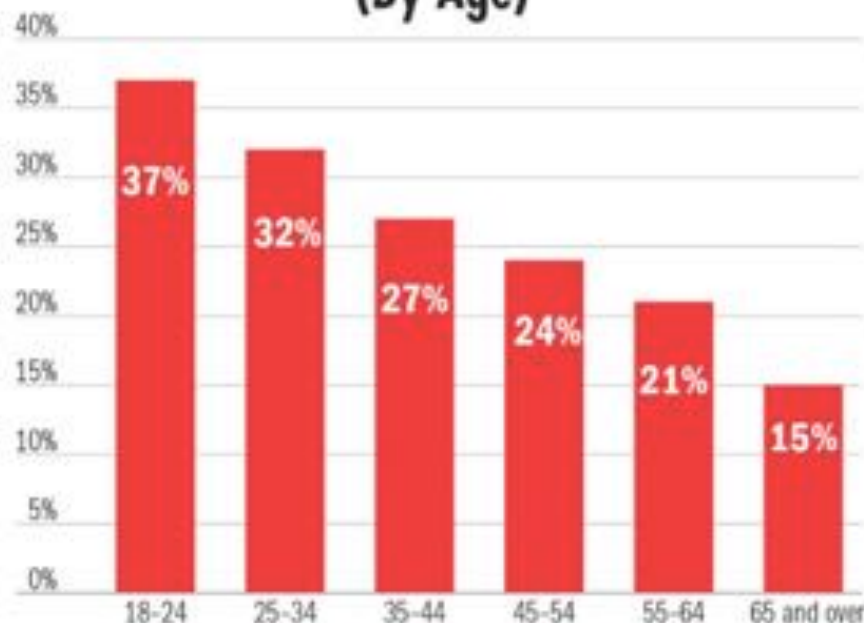
Limitations of e-reading devices and "digital fatigue" are cited as causes of decline in sales of the format

By Jim Milliot | Jun 17, 2016

Like 1.8K Share Tweet Comments

PW SUBSCRIBE by the Month

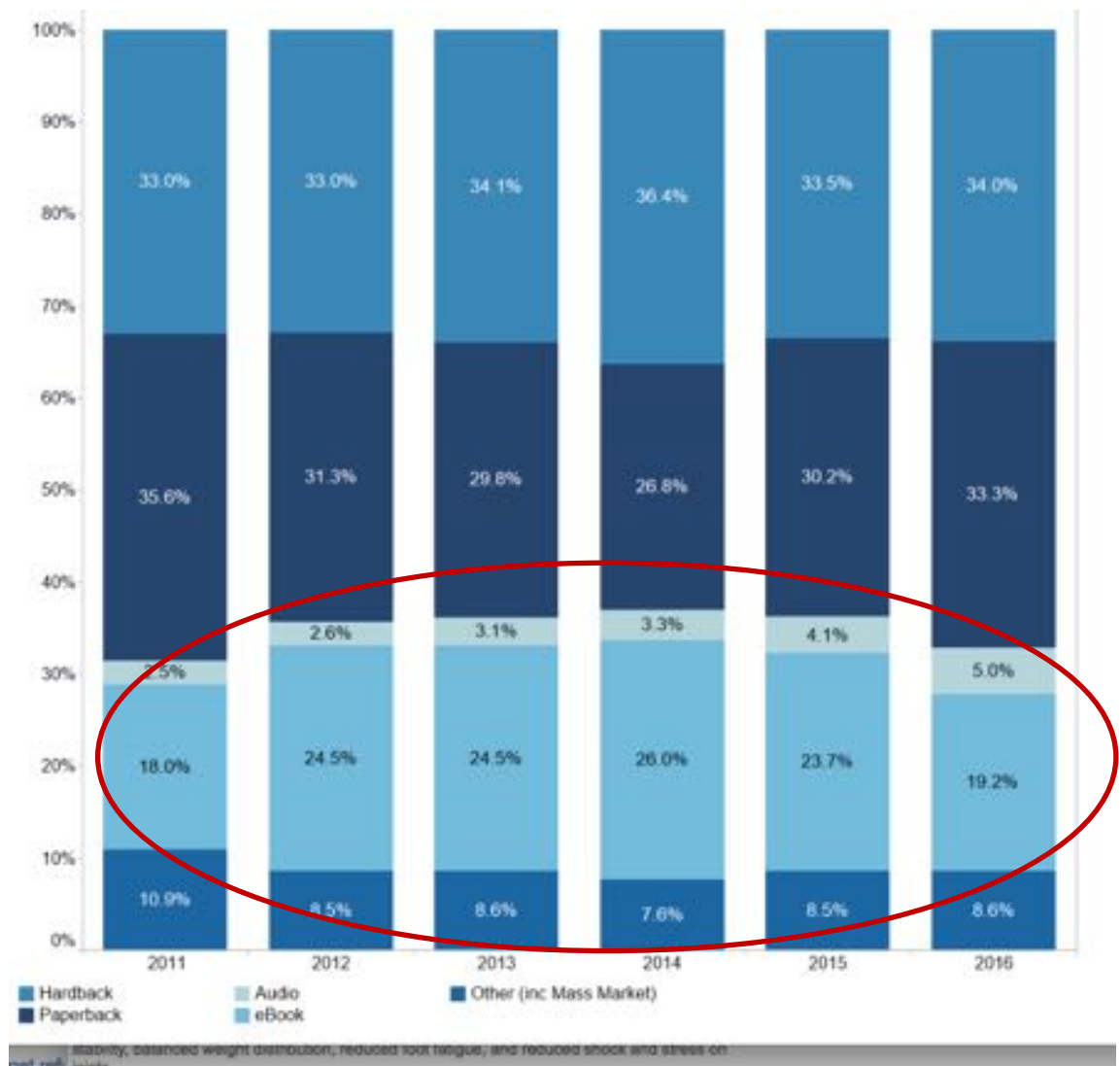
Percentage of Book Buyers Who Want to Spend Less Time on Digital Devices (By Age)



Ebooks

Ebook sales continue to fall as younger generations drive appetite for print

Nielsen survey finds UK ebook sales declined by 4% in 2016, the second consecutive year digital has shrunk



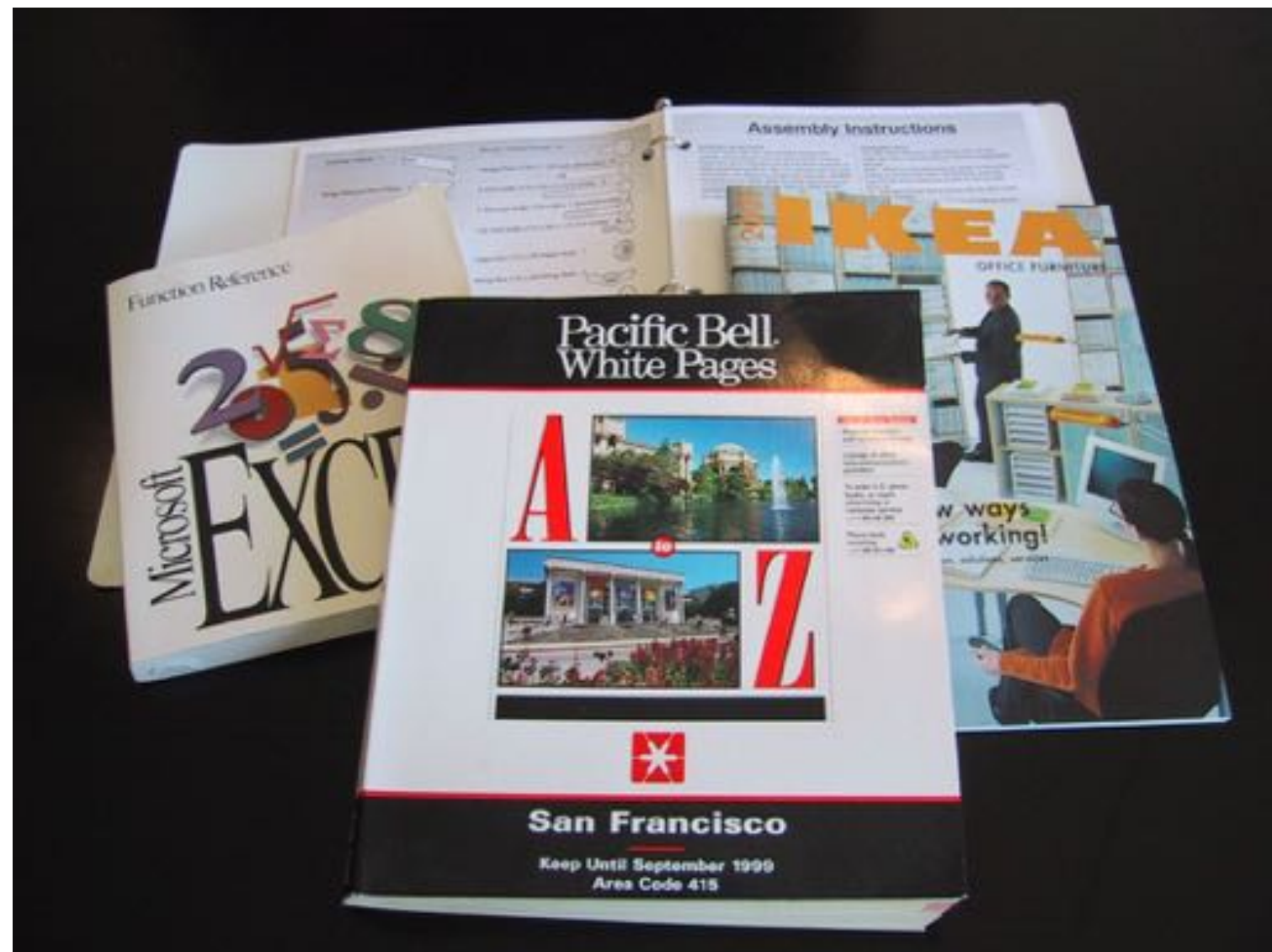
Book Sales by channel, 2011-2015

Why Form Matters

"THE BOOK"



books. . .



. . . and the books we actually read



The affordances of everyday things

Affordance



Picture: closed apple unibody MacBook Pro

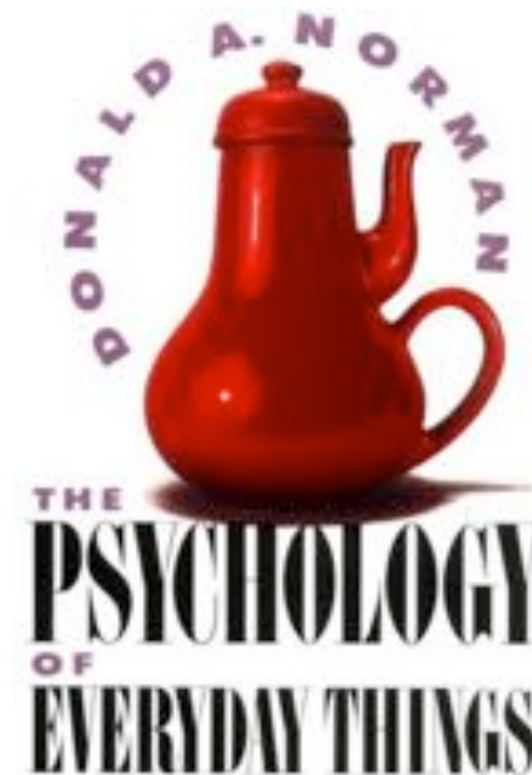
Fine line

Dint in the aluminium frame

Affordance: the only irregularity on the plain front of the notebook invites the user to place a finger. A gentle push opens the top part of the notebook like a clamshell. (The fine line evokes curiosity to find out if the object can get divided into 2 parts.)



Affordances: (perceived?) "action possibilities" latent in the environment



J. J. Gibson

Sorting out the affordances of new technologies

Material features of documents enable:

Characteristic modes of interacting with documents

Symbolic & iconic roles of documents

Social practices that determine use & interpretation of documents

Beyond "twitchy little screens"



Material limits as features: the fixity of representation, interaction with the body



"My readers... will see in the tell-tale compression of the pages before them, that we are all hastening together to perfect felicity."

Jane Austen, in the final chapter of *Northanger Abbey*

“Twitchy little screens” and the future of the book



2000 Microsoft Reader debuts

2009 E-books begin to outsell paper

2016 Last print newspaper

2020 Dictionary definition of *book* changes

2019 Paper books remain popular among collectors...

More on TechnologyTell: [Gadget News](#) | [Apple News](#)

A piece of history is gone – Microsoft Reader to be discontinued

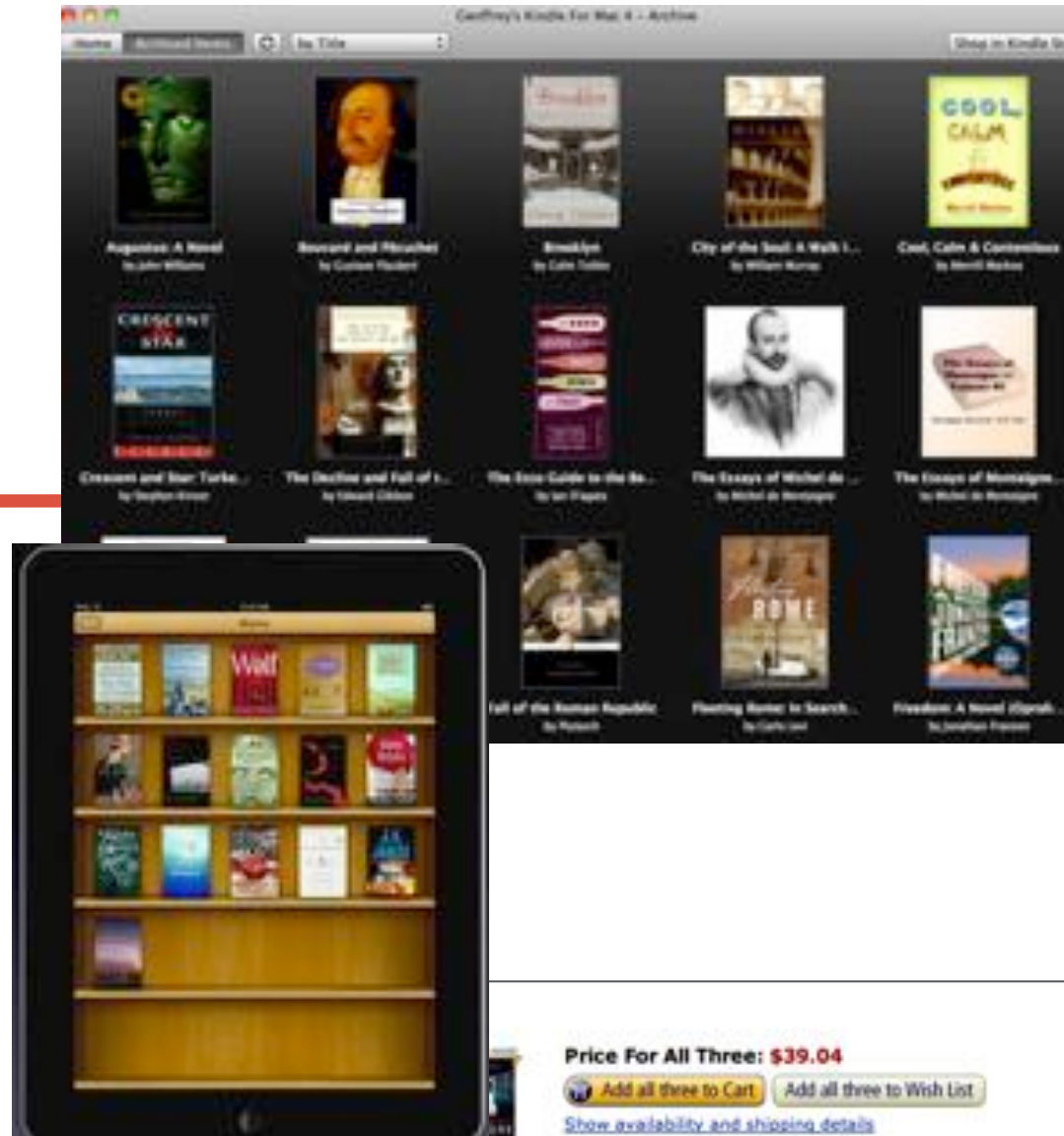
August 15, 2011 | 9:57 am

AAAAAAA

The Epigraphic Book



Simulating the Epigraphic Book



What's lost & gained online?
Bookstores as showrooms...

Brick-and-mortar outlets hang in there

Bookstores: Finally Turning The Page?

Bookstore sales in the first half of the year in the U.S. from 2009 to 2016 (Jan-Jun)



“While independent bookstores can't compete with Amazon or big box retailers on price or selection, the truth is they don't have to. That customers keep coming back despite other available options suggests they aren't looking for a bargain. They're looking for an experience...”

The indie bookstore resurgence

by Verne Kopytoff @vkopytoff SEPTEMBER 20, 2013, 3:10 PM EDT



Amazon may have the bargains, but independent booksellers are trading in the importance of real-life community — and are seeing an uptick in business.

FORTUNE — John Evans, co-owner of Diesel, a small California bookstore chain, gives an emphatic “no” when asked if he’s crazy for remaining a retailer in this



4 reasons why independent bookstores are thriving



AP Photo/Steve Delaney

Brick-and-mortar outlets hang in there

Bookstores: Finally Turning The Page?

Bookstore sales in the first half of the year in the U.S. from 2009 to 2016 (Jan-Jun)



The indie bookstore res

by Verne Kopytoff @vkopytoff SEPTEMBER 26, 2013, 3:10 PM EDT

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FORTUNE — John Evans, co-owner of Diesel, a small California bookstore chain, gives an emphatic “no” when asked if he’s crazy for remaining a retailer in this



Amazon or big don't have to. available options looking for an

A choice we have to make?



Disintermediating Publishing?



Disintermediating Publishing?



“...someone used the word *disintermediation*. I said, ‘Oh my God, that’s the end of the publishing business.’ ” At a time when a writer can post a novel online and watch the revenue pour in by direct deposit, the publishing industry’s skill at making books, selling them by hand to bookstores, and managing the distribution of the product threatens to become irrelevant. In Epstein’s vision, the writer may need a freelance editor, a publicist, and an agent who functions as a kind of business manager, but authors will keep a bigger share of the proceeds with no lumbering media corporation standing in the way.

Evan Hughes in *Wired*, 2013

Assignment for 4/18

...Evan Hughes writes in *Wired*: "In the long term, what publishers have to fear the most may not be Amazon but an idea it has helped engender—that the only truly necessary players in the game are the author and the reader.... At a time when a writer can post a novel online and watch the revenue pour in by direct deposit, the publishing industry's skill at making books, selling them by hand to bookstores, and managing the distribution of the product threatens to become irrelevant. In [Jason] Epstein's vision, the writer may need a freelance editor, a publicist, and an agent who functions as a kind of business manager, but authors will keep a bigger share of the proceeds with no lumbering media corporation standing in the way."

In a digital world, is it still necessary to have a separate firm or organization to perform the functions of traditional book publishers? If so, do you see a continuing role for publishers in some of these functions, or can they be undertaken by someone else —such as Amazon—or the authors themselves?

Yes, sort of...

Zackary H.

...the evolution of the e-book and multimedia books....has presented [publishers] some worries as the “power in publishing might just be shifting in the authors' favour” (Connolly). Self-publishing has increased due to an increase in accessible formats and platforms, like Amazon. Even though these formats are expanding, there still should be some content oversight, and this must be done through a combined effort from publishing companies and corporations like Apple and Amazon. As Horowitz mentions, the benefits of publishing companies are their ability to “provide an imprimatur, a sort of quality control.” Along with this, amazon and apple have created platforms to reach the masses and provide more marketing and promotion than the traditional bookstore (Auletta).

Yes

Marthe W.

Auletta claims that “No matter where consumers buy books, their belief that electronic media should cost less – that something you can’t hold simply isn’t worth as much money – will exert a powerful voice.” It takes us back to the conversation of pirating – what should and what should we not pay a lot of money for?... In a way it is good that any author gets to voice work through online systems, however **the reader loses the writer’s confirmation of trustworthiness when the work is self-published. A publisher would make sure that the work is well fashioned,** which is important to the reader, even for fictional literary work, such as that of Hugh Howey.

Yes

Alexandra D.

...traditional publishers are still needed...because, as Horowitz warns, self-published books are not vetted as heavily as books published by traditional means. Editing is an immensely important step in publishing -- one that often gets overlooked by self-published versions. ...Hughes mentions that Steve Jobs said "people don't read anymore" -- if people are no longer reading as much as they were in the past and every book they have the option to read contains grammatical slip-ups and other flaws, the level of literacy is bound to decline. ...Until Amazon finds the means to copyedit books before authors publish them on their site, the role of traditional publishers will remain prominent.

maybe not...

Thomas V.

...companies like Amazon and Apple are democratizing the e-book market, allowing the distribution of knowledge at very low costs. ...

There evidently is a need for a publishing system, to maintain the quality of published content and helping authors through the whole publishing processes. However, artificial intelligent agents that analyze books and make suggestions to the authors could soon replace it. This could lead to a pipelined and automatized infrastructure that performs publisher's main contributions to published content.

maybe not...

Audrey T.

[W]hile the publisher concerns over the content, the digital market is primarily concerned over the profit. As Auletta stresses, “good publishers find and cultivate writers, some of whom do not initially have much commercial promise....[but] self-published writer Connolly explains how the digital publishing world has allowed him to find a sizeable audience online and experiment the gamut of literary works through this way (while earning his fair share). A separate publishing firm may no longer be required in this digital market, but publishers are not necessarily irrelevant: it’s important to distinguish art (in this case, writing) and its goals among business goals...

No

Michael P.

...I believe that in due time the traditional publisher will be obsolete. In a digital world, the author can distribute online, affordably market their books online, and hire freelance editors. For the less tech savvy, they can use services provided by distribution sites like Amazon and Apple. For example, author Ray Connolly decided to develop a website to distribute his work and market them on his own. Overall costs went down, which in turn reduced risk. More authors will opt for this route as the cost of a publisher begin to outweigh its benefits.



Publishers as brands

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS



Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.



UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA PRESS



HARVARD BUSINESS
SCHOOL PRESS



W.W. NORTON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

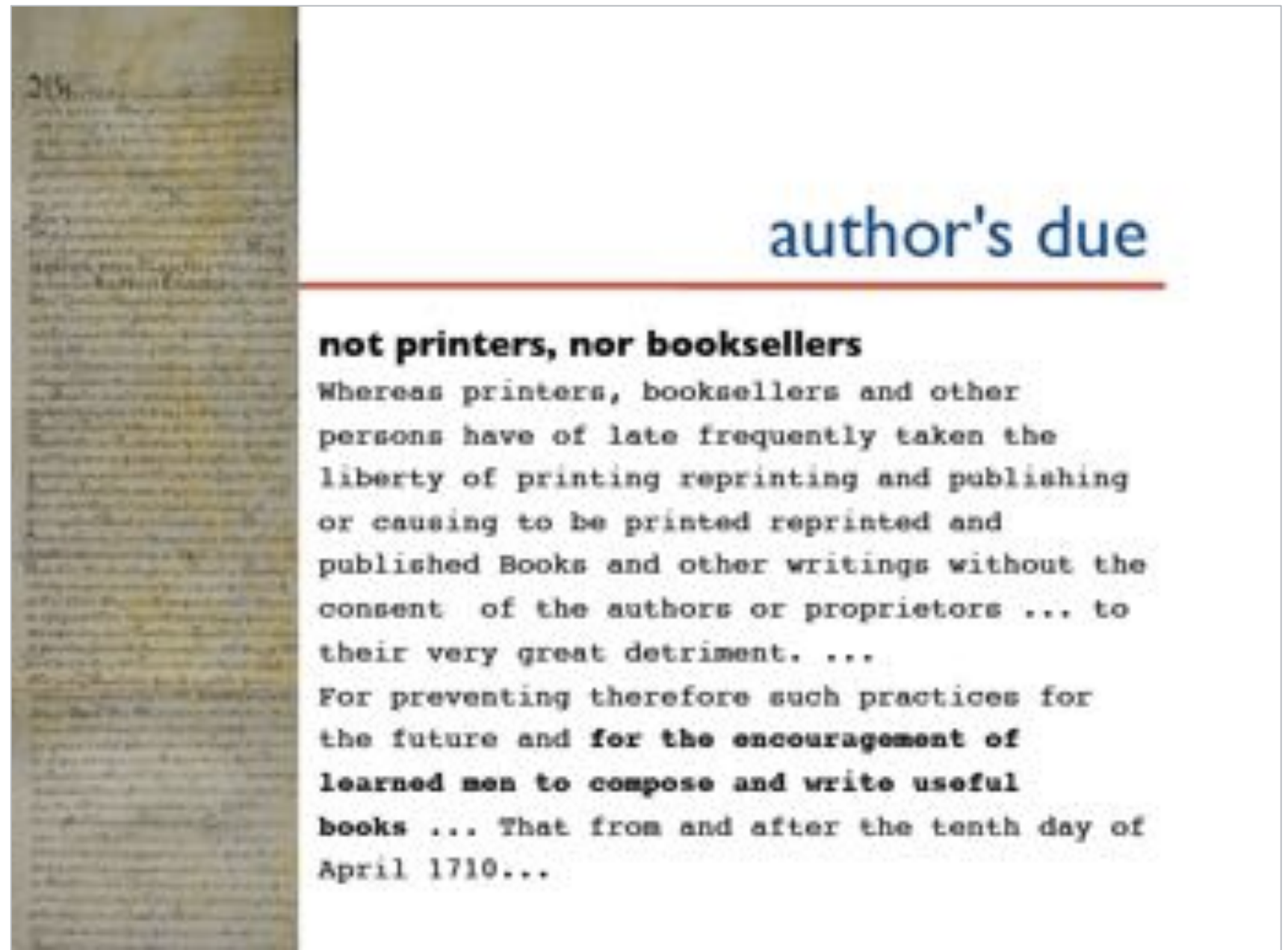
“Brands matter because authors think they do. The best brands attract the best authors — a virtuous circle, in which good authors strengthen brands and brands confer their aura on authors...

Whether John Consumer knows anything about Duke University Press or HarperCollins is one thing, but the store where he shops certainly does.... The distribution channels, that is, are not “dumb pipes” but a series of value-added filters whose aim it is to place the books with the greatest possibility for sale before the consumer. The publisher’s brand serves as a key way to identify the best books.” Joseph Esposito, 2010

”[Fifty Shades of Gray] became a massive commercial success only after Random House got involved, placing giant stacks of paperbacks in bookstores everywhere and buying huge ads in the London Underground.” Evan Hughes

Revisiting an old battle

PD, 2/23:



Will newspapers go under?



The affordances of newspapers



The affordances of newspapers



BLD017160 [RF] © www.vitalphotos.com

Spot the Out-of-Towner

The affordances of newspapers



The Subway Fold

The New York Times subway fold. It's the hallmark of a true New Yorker – up there with the cab-hailing whistle and ordering your coffee “regulah.” Simply follow the instructions below and please, stand clear of the closing doors ...



1) Fold the newspaper in half, lengthwise, and create a crease down the middle fold.



2) Fold again, horizontally, creating quadrants.



3) Flip and fold, as necessary, to read each portion of the page.



4) To jump to the continuation of an article, turn to the continuation page.



5) Fold continuation in half, lengthwise.



6) To read stories that fall in the center sections ...



7) Fold back over, creating two lengthwise portions ...



8) Then fold again into four parts.

End of the newspaper?



THE NEWS BUSINESS

OUT OF PRINT

The death and life of the American newspaper.

BY ERIC ALTERMAN

MARCH 21, 2006

The American newspaper has been around for approximately three hundred years. Benjamin Harris's spirited *Publick Occurrences, Both Forreign and Domestick* managed just one issue, in 1690, before the Massachusetts authorities closed it down. Harris had suggested a politically incorrect hard line on Indian removal and shocked local sensibilities by reporting that the King of France had been taking liberties with the Prince's wife.

It really was not until 1721,



The New York Times

March 17, 2010

L.H.T. OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

The End of Newspapers?

By MARIE BÉNILDE

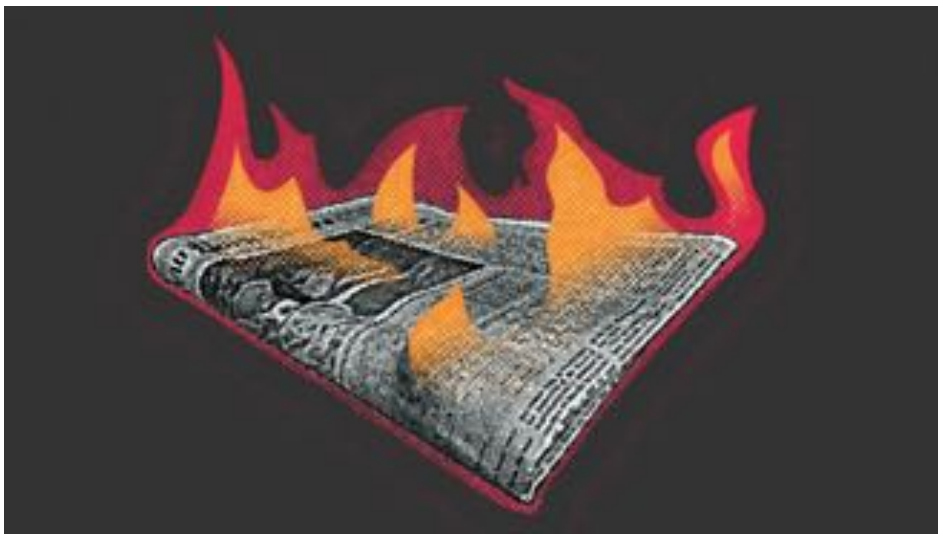
Journalists are now in the same situation as steel workers in the 1970s: They are destined to disappear, but they don't know it.

COMMENTARY

Print Is Dying, Digital Is No Savior: The Long, Ugly Decline Of The Newspaper Business Continues Apace

January 26, 2016

"The newspaper model - putting text on paper - is becoming a dinosaur; much like the horse and buggy disappeared when the automobile came on the scene."



A Perfect Storm for the Old Media

Craigslist etc. divert classified advertising

News aggregators, blogs & social networks capture audience

National sources displace local sources online ("Last man standing")

	Print	Digital Replica	Digital Non-Replica	Total
Wall Street Journal				
2014	1,358,745		916,402	2,275,207
2013	1,358,065		917,702	2,273,767
USA Today				
2014	1,083,200	52,198	1,366,629	2,522,027
2013	1,316,865	61,286	1,484,078	2,862,229
The New York Times				
2014	639,857	20,437	1,359,369	2,019,663
2013	676,633	15,043	1,206,214	1,897,890
The Washington Post				
2014	377,456	16,230	7,664	401,350
2013	405,035	16,646	9,840	431,521





Birmingham Metro
1st UK freesheet 1984

A Perfect Storm for the "Old Media"

Competition from circulars, free dailies and weeklies (since 1950's)

Increased online competition lowers ad rates

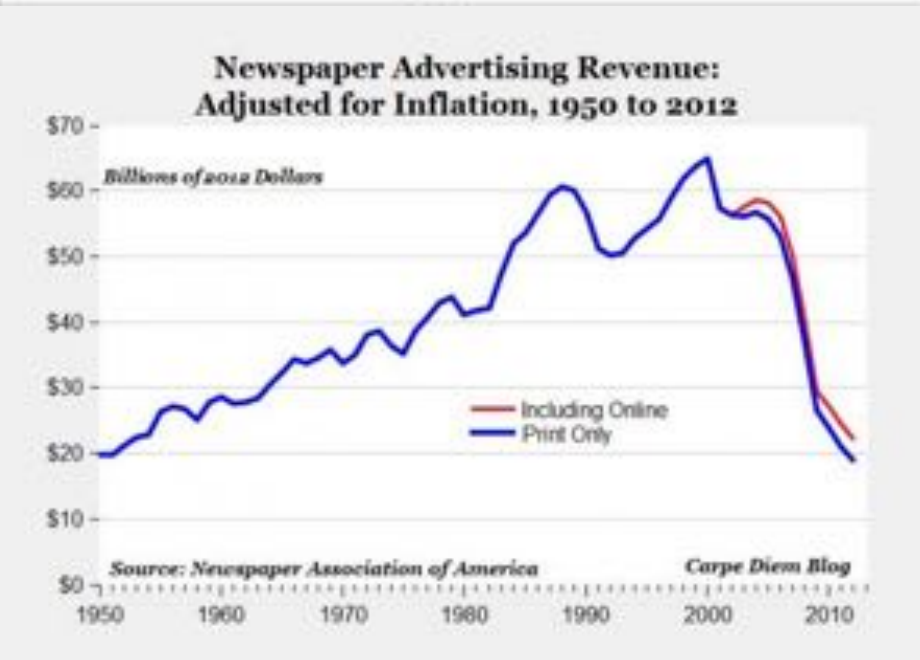


Alternative Weeklies

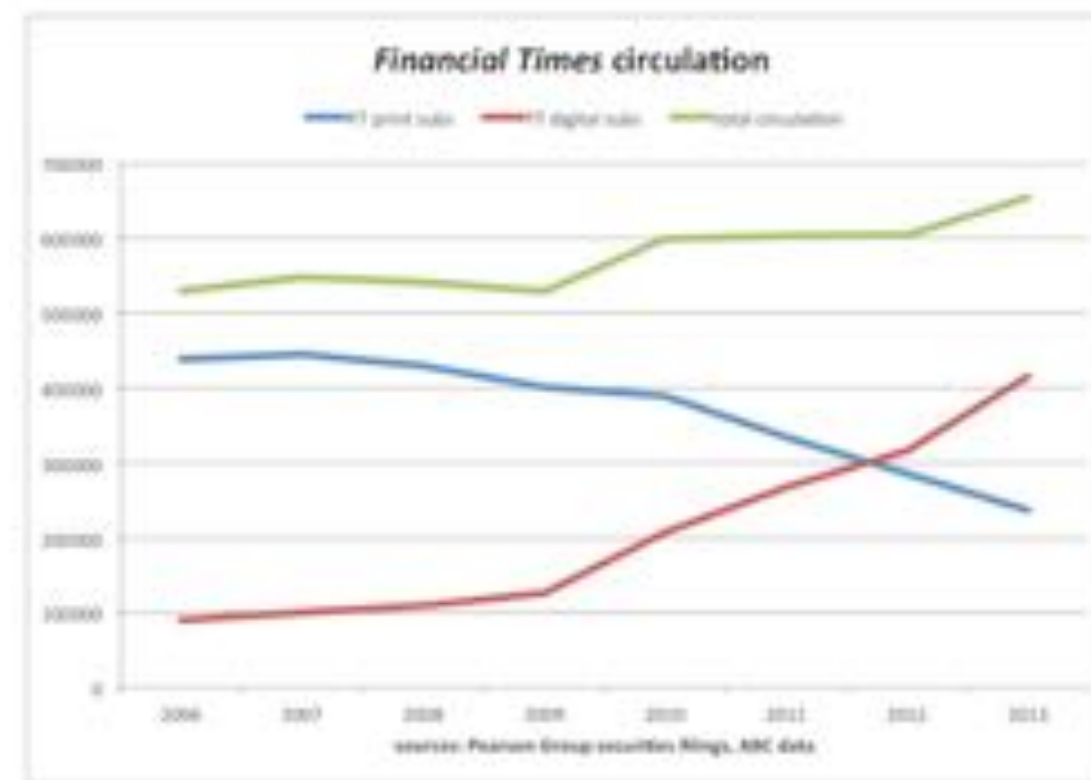




The abyss?



Precipitous declines in print circulation, advertising revenues, workers employed



Digital growth for some papers, or even paywalls, doesn't take up the slack



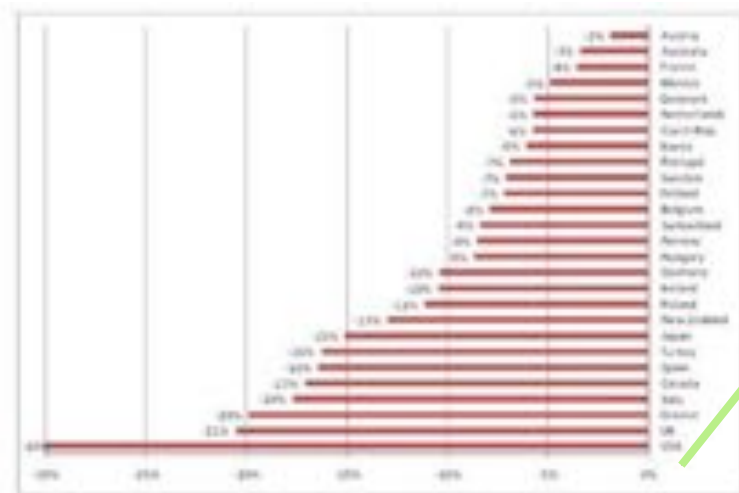
Dire Predictions

Date of extinction

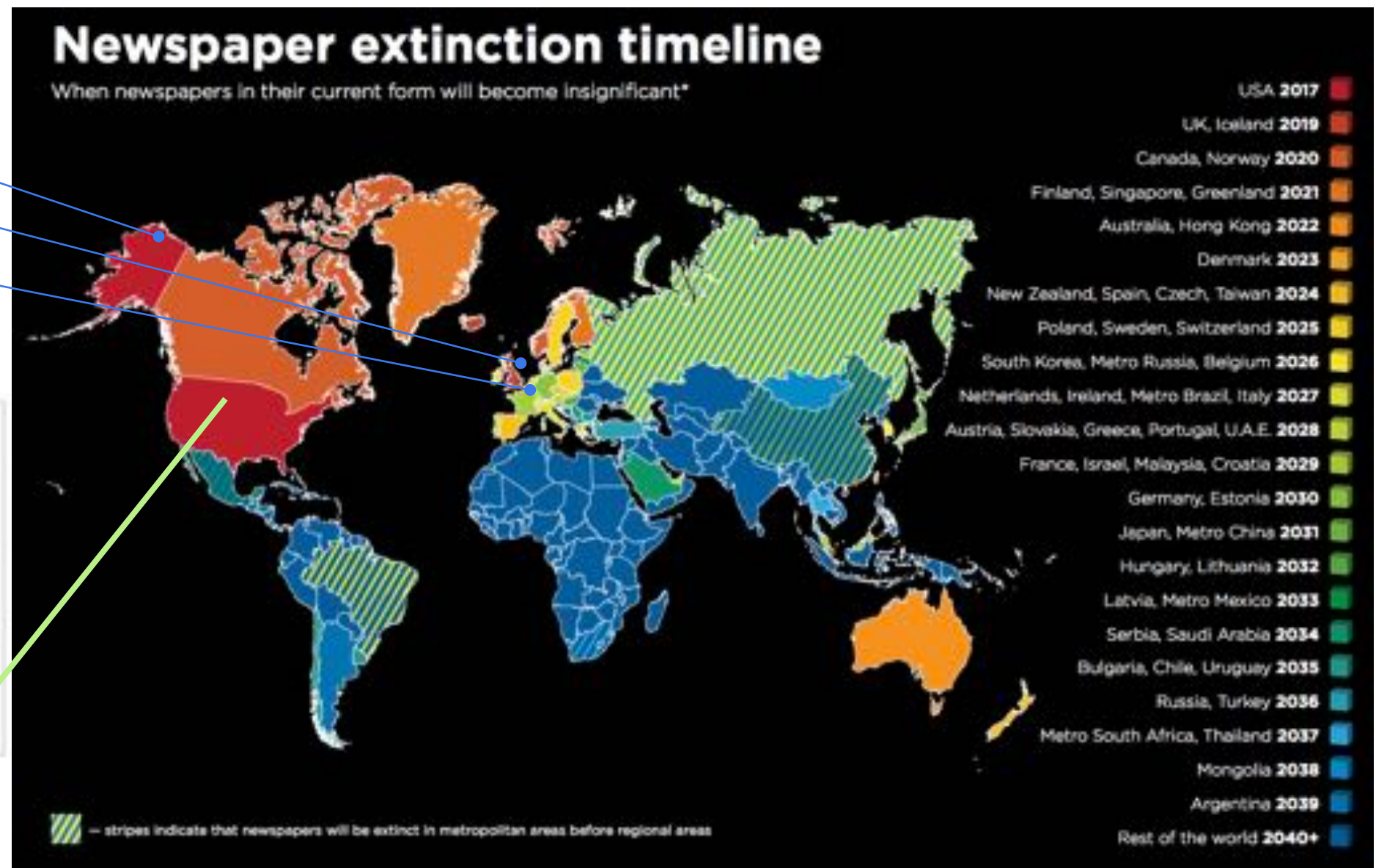
2017

2018

2029



Drop in newspaper circulation



The Disaggregation of Content



The Disaggregation of Content

Return of the “side”

Unbundling the modularities imposed by physical packaging of informational goods.

The Neighbor (Short Story) (Kindle Single) Jun 3, 2014
by Dean Koontz
Kindle Edition
\$0.99
Auto-delivered wirelessly

Glitch: A Short Story (Kindle Single) Jun 16, 2014
by Hugh Howey
Kindle Edition
\$0.00 Kindle Unlimited
Subscribers read for free. Learn more.
\$0.99 to buy
Whispersync for Voice-ready
Audiobook Edition
\$1.95
Whispersync for Voice-ready
Other Formats: Audio CD

Ask Me Twice (Kindle Single) Mar 6, 2015
by Helen Childress
Kindle Edition
\$0.00 Kindle Unlimited
Subscribers read for free. Learn more.
\$1.99 to buy
Auto-delivered wirelessly

Building Your Book for Kindle Apr 15, 2012
by Kindle Direct Publishing
Kindle Edition
\$0.00
Auto-delivered wirelessly

Throttle (Kindle Single) Apr 17, 2012
by Joe Hill and Stephen King

M Follow Search Sign in / Sign up

Long form

Collections of great narrative nonfiction, essays, and journalism from around the internet. Plus a couple of meta lists.

LATEST TRENDING FEATURED

Giving Up the Guns

How I got rid of the handguns was easy: I couple dozen rounds of ammunition, down like that, you can turn in guns, no question bag and took out the .22, which he dry-fired

Click. “Where’d you get this?” he asked, c

Continue reading · 7 min read

Michael Erard
Nov 1, 2013

Ralph Richardson
Oct 16, 2013



Music > Rock > The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain

Live in London #1 (Live)

#	Name	Time	Popularity	Price
1	Running Wild	3:20	100%	\$1.29 Buy
2	Born to be Wild	3:18	100%	\$1.29 Buy
3	Miami	3:44	100%	\$1.29 Buy
4	Life on Mars (simultaneous segue)	3:47	100%	\$1.29 Buy
5	Anarchy in the UK	3:36	100%	\$1.29 Buy
6	Hot Tamatoes (They're Red Hot)	4:23	100%	\$1.29 Buy
7	Teenage Dintag	4:10	100%	\$1.29 Buy
8	Pinkell Wizard	2:20	100%	\$1.29 Buy
9	It's a Ministry Garden	3:43	100%	\$1.29 Buy
10	You Sir, I Can Boogie	2:28	100%	\$1.29 Buy
11	Satellite of Love	3:25	100%	\$1.29 Buy
12	Whispering Heights	3:25	100%	\$1.29 Buy
13	Whistling Bach	1:48	100%	\$1.29 Buy
14	Sex and Drugs and Rock and Roll	3:00	100%	\$1.29 Buy

Top The Ukulele Or...

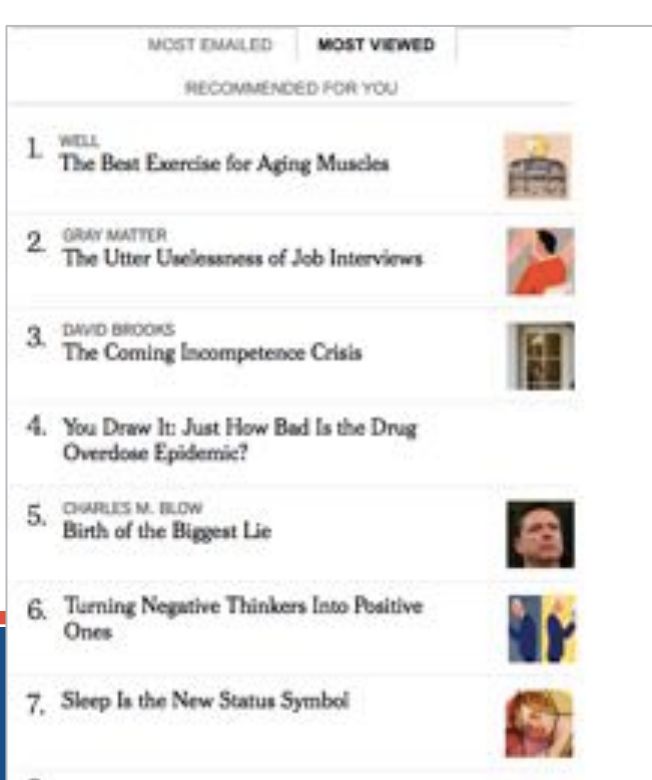
Single Albums

The Disaggregation of Content

Specialized sites displace newspapers as sources of information about sports, business, entertainment, weather, listings, opinion, etc.

Personalization: the daily "me"



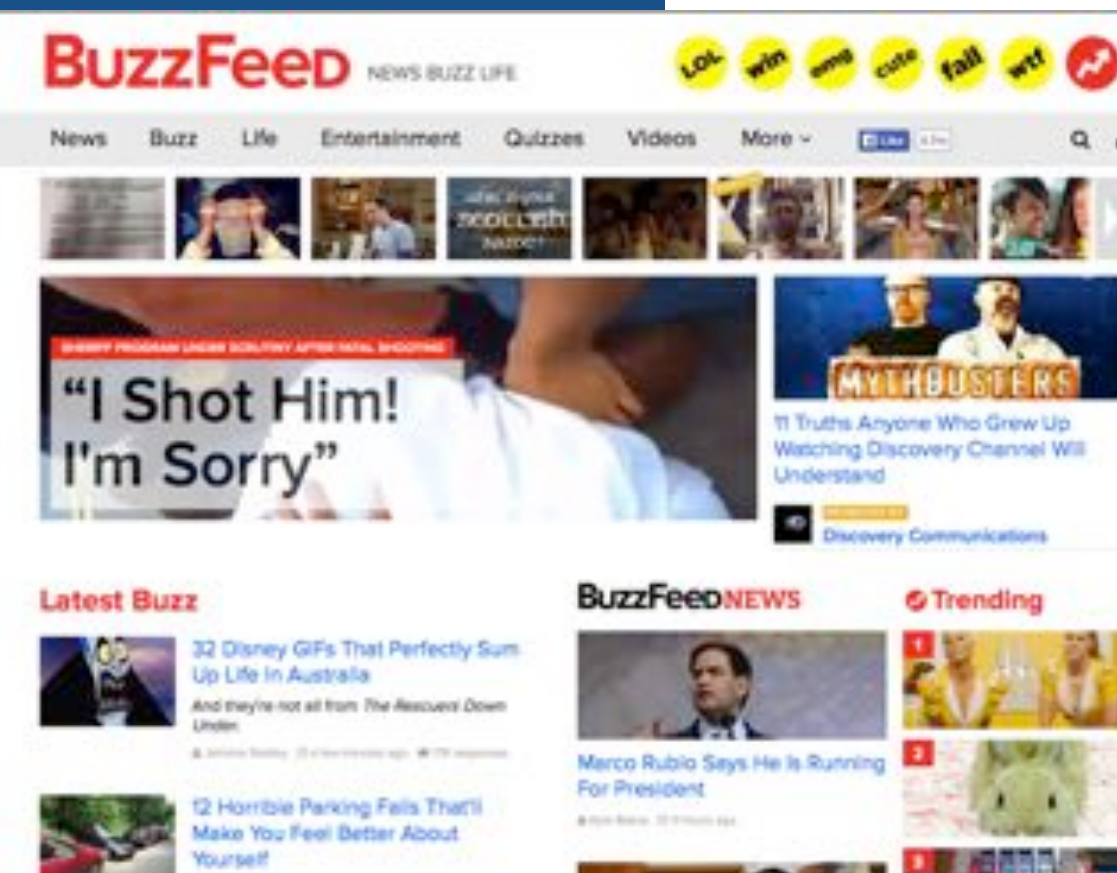


The Disaggregation of Content

The rise of "pay per view journalism"

Stories are "'naked little creatures that have to go out into the world to stand and fight on their own." Gabriel Snyder, *Newsweek*

"The traffic game is over, and BuzzFeed has won." Nick Denton



Gawker's "Big Board"

For News Outlets Squeezed From the Middle, It's Bend or Bust

Mediator

By JIM RUTENBERG APRIL 17, 2016

Competing for Clicks

At one point on an ordinary Friday, more than 800,000 people were watching two BuzzFeed employees trying to make a watermelon explode with rubber bands.



Earlier this month, a couple of inventive young go-getters at BuzzFeed tied enough rubber bands around the center of a watermelon to make it explode. Nearly a million people watched the giant berry burst on Facebook Live. ...Traditional journalists everywhere saw themselves as the seeds, flying out of the frame. How do we compete with that? And if that's the future of news and information, what's next for our democracy? President Kardashian?

These days, news articles — be they about war, voting rights, the arts or immigration policy... are competing for attention against zany kitchen experiments; your friend's daughter's bat mitzvah; and that wild video of a train whipping through a ridiculously narrow alleyway in India.

Why BuzzFeed's Exploding Watermelon Won't Destroy Journalism

Just look at the New York Times' long history of cat coverage.

By JACK SHAFER | April 18, 2016

Competing for Clicks

At one point on an ordinary Friday, more than 800,000 people were watching two BuzzFeed employees trying to make a watermelon explode with rubber bands.



... Must all news outlets create their own page view-attracting watermelon trick to hook readers? It's not even clear that exploding watermelons can, by themselves, save journalism. As Rutenberg notes, BuzzFeed appears to be having trouble meeting its revenue goals.

But the “core values” of the New York Times (and other top newspapers) to which Rutenberg refers have long included generous doses of the fun, the frivolous, the entertaining, the diverting and the exploding—just like BuzzFeed.

Jack Shafer, Politico

Kittens Under the Keys
 OROVILLE, Calif., March 19 (UPI)—There was no music at early mass today at St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church. The parish cat gave birth to five kittens inside the organ.

TOMCAT MOTHERS 3 ORPHAN KITTENS; Not Only Poses Willingly for Artist but Adopts Litter of Strangers

Competing for Clicks

CAT HURT IN 'FIGHT' WITH SODA MACHINE

Brooklyn 'Tough Guy' Picks on Whirling Wheel in Cellar of Candy Store.

CAUGHT, RESISTS RESCUE

Police S, SUNDAY, JUNE 29, 1952.
 Brave
 Re

Alley Cat and 2 Kittens Find a Home—in Jail

A mother alley cat and two kittens reversed the usual procedure yesterday by breaking into jail.

Patrolman Joseph Lazzara, acting keeper of the detention pens at Police Headquarters, 240 Centre Street, was making his rounds at 7 P. M. when he heard strident meowing in a vacant cell and discovered the trio under a bench.

Providing milk and a saucer, he said the cat and kittens could stay so far as he was concerned. How the intruders got into the cellblock undetected was a Grade B mystery.

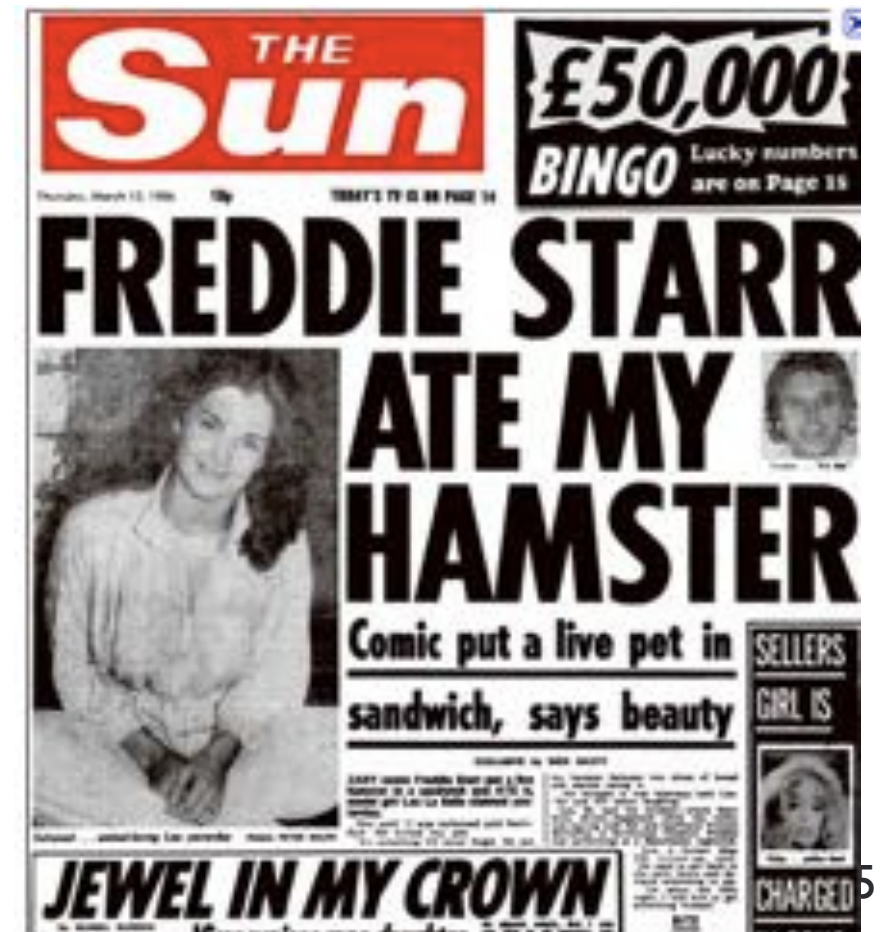
The shockwave from the watermelon that BuzzFeed playfully detonated online last week has shaken New York Times media columnist Jim Rutenberg... Must all news outlets create their own page view-attracting watermelon trick to hook readers? It's not even clear that exploding watermelons can, by themselves, save journalism. As Rutenberg notes, BuzzFeed appears to be having trouble meeting its revenue goals.

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4 TRAPPED KITTENS SAVED; Police Extricate Animals Caught Behind a Refrigerator

Nothing new under *The Sun*

Not that the principle is new...



The Future of News

Where Americans get their news

About four-in-ten Americans often get news online

% of U.S. adults who *often* get news on each platform



% of each age group who *often* get news on each platform

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
TV	27%	45%	72%	85%
Online	50	49	29	20
Radio	14	27	29	24
Print newspapers	5	10	23	48

Note: Just 1% said they never get news on any platform (not shown).

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 12-Feb. 8, 2016.

"The Modern News Consumer"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

But who is producing the news?

The Future of News



2008: "Free" newspaper readership exceeds paid readership

"We don't have a crisis of audience. We have a crisis of revenue."

"People are used to reading everything on the net for free, and that's going to have to change,"
Rupert Murdoch, 4/6/09





The Future of News

Economic models for digital newspapers or news gathering:

advertising

"pay wall" (VWSJ, NYTimes) or "freemium" (NYT until recently)

pay-per-view via microcredit

monthly "all you can read" for group of publishers à la cable packages

"tax" on ISP fees

Subsidized by foundations & universities

"Last man standing"



In sum

Digitization alters the material base...

But how things fall out depends on economic, social, and political setting...

“Conversion” goes genre by genre; digital and analog sit side-by-side

Readings for April 20: Shazeda Ahmed

In our discussion of the debate between Google and Axel Springer, we briefly touched upon the potential Google has to turn user data over to the U.S. government. How might concerns about internet surveillance conducted by major technology companies be regarded in the Chinese political context? As a seemingly new system of centralized data collection and credit scoring of citizens emerges, what are some the trade-offs people might make for the sake of convenience and financial inclusion?

2016. "Big data, meet Big Brother: China invents the digital totalitarian state." *The Economist*, Dec. 17.

Ahmed, Shazeda. 2017. "Cashless Society, Cached Data: Security Considerations for a Chinese Social Credit System." *Citizen Lab*, Jan. 20.