Electronic Reading Devices: Are They Hurting or Helping the Print Publishing Industry?

by

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DEDICATION

I'd like to dedicate this paper to my son Jeremiah Eden Wesley. Jeremiah you are my inspiration and the reason I keep going and working hard to better myself. I hope that gaining my Master's degree not only opens doors in my life, but in yours also. It is my sincerest hope that every moment spent away from you in writing this thesis only shows you how sacrifice and dedication to improving yourself can give you a brighter future. I love you my son.

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Abstract

With ever-evolving and emerging technology making an impact on today's society, examining how this technology affects mass media is essential. This study attempts to delve into an emerging media - electronic reading devices - and research how they are changing the publishing industry by looking into the arenas of newspaper, magazine, and book publishing as well as at consumers of print media on a larger scale. Through conducting a survey of around 250 participants, this study looks into consumers' ideas of preference and attitude toward reading habits involving electronic reading devices as well as thoughts about the longevity of the traditional print publishing industry. The research findings include information that points to positive correlations in preference and attitude toward using electronic devices amongst owners of the devices as well as positive correlations with men and the idea that printed materials are a thing of the past. Further research in the area of how long owners of electronic reading devices actually spend reading would offer even better insight into this subject of study.

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Introduction

"It is the nature of change that even world-transforming innovations—electricity, automobiles, television, the Internet—begin as marginal phenomena which gradually (and then suddenly) move toward the center of our lives" (Lichtenberg, 2011 p.101). As this statement proclaims, many overlooked or minimized technologies in the past have quickly become an essential part of everyday life. Some of these innovations are far reaching and very impactful, such as the car and electricity, and others are smaller and more of a trend, but they still manage to find a significant place in day-to-day activities. These innovations include electronic reading devices (i.e. e readers, tablets, smart phones, and other portable electronic devices on which print media can be read). With their recent popularity, electronic reading devices are quickly making an impact on society as well as acting as a catalyst of change on the American print publishing industry.

As Lichtenberg (2011) states, "No matter what shocks modern publishing has endured over the past two and a half centuries, the forces for change have never been as powerful and fundamental as they are now" (p. 102). Today's society is living and evolving in a digital age; one where information is quickly available and people are able to, at the touch of a button, purchase most anything they'd like whether it be entertainment, clothing, or food. In this digital era, nearly everything an American desires is convenient, portable, and interactive; thus comes the pressure for a traditional entertainment medium such as print (i.e. newspapers, magazines, and books) to revamp and be proactive in order to keep up with these changes – and that's where the relevance and importance of electronic reading devices come into play.

Silva (2011) states that now, more than any other time in history, "digital and creativity can be combined in the most appealing ways" (p. 304). For example, in 2010 Apple, an American hardware and software technology giant, introduced the iPad, a tablet that performed nearly every function of a computer, but was smaller and more portable than a laptop. Four months later, *Wired* magazine delivered its first interactive edition in electronic format. Following this, in a relatively short time period, interactive editions of magazines, books, comics, newsletters, newspaper articles, etc. transitioning to digital applications became the logical and somewhat necessary next step in print publishing (Johnston, P., 2012).

Erin Carreiro (2010) points out in her research concerning electronic reading devices, "In contemporary literary culture, 'the written word is increasingly encountered in digital form'. The digital age has spawned an e-publishing revolution and cultivated the growing prevalence of e-books" (p. 232). Along with this digital age comes readers interest in being more involved in the media which they use, this phenomena called *participatory culture* is changing the way in which the print industry publishes its materials, both in hardcopy form and in electronic form. For many publishers, "the decision to go with print or electronic media is determined by various factors, including the type of information, anticipated distribution level and cost of materials" (Vitale, 1997 p.24). However, as more and more readers desire to click a link in order to learn more about a particular item of interest in the article they are reading or view the history quickly noted in a passage of a book, publishers are being pushed to throw out many factors that previously swayed their decisions about digital publishing. "Innovative technologies and emerging ideas surrounding said technology

are forcing publishers to jump on board the bandwagon or be left behind" (Carreiro, 2010, p. 220).

With the print industry (i.e. books, magazines, and newspapers) undergoing a rapid evolution of emergent technology mainly due to the influence of electronic reading devices in today's society, the industry recognizes that these devices have "the potential to alter our reading habits, affect the organization of our intellectual life, and change the venues of our reading experiences'' (Carreiro, 2010, p. 232). As people in today's modern world want technology to transform with their lifestyles, the use of electronic reading devices is sure to become increasingly prolific among people of all ages and backgrounds. Together new technology and the way people use this technology are continually changing modern society – and along with this evolution comes sometimes forced and sometimes welcomed changes in the media industries, in this case the print publishing industry.

Along with the possibility to change reading habits, experiences, etc., e-readers and tablets may also offer a glimmer of hope for publishers. Over the last few decades the print industry has continuously struggled to stay afloat financially – looking for any possible solution to these financial issues they could muster. And now, with the lesser costs of publishing an e-version of a book, newspaper article, or a magazine, some publishers are finding hope for their revenue. As Vitale states, "the cost of delivering that information in print includes the cost of the paper and postage, expenses not applicable for electronic publishing" (p. 24). Furthermore, electronic publishing seems to offer a rare do-over opportunity on the revenue side of the business because it reintroduces the concept of paying for digital content, through the use of applications, an idea that some thought was all but lost

(Palser, 2011 p. 54).

The purpose of this research is to, by taking a look into the print publishing arenas of books, magazines and newspapers, better explore the topic of emergent technology in regards to electronic reading devices as well as electronic publishing in order to discover how this technology is used and perceived by consumers of print media in addition to its effect on the print publishing industry. A primary reason this research is important is that for those working in the print publishing industry electronic reading devices have shifted the way business is conducted.

> A year ago, what publishers thought of as 'innovation' was primarily the creation of e-versions of physical books to be consumed on digital reading devices, especially the Kindle and the Sony e-reader. Revenues from these editions represented on average at best 10% of revenues. This year [2011], in a sense, that has been largely absorbed as accepted business practice, and the edge of ''innovation'' is moving in more complex directions (Lichtenberg, 2011)

- leaving many with only predictions as to what direction in which this technology will take the future of print publishing.

Researching and understanding the relationship between these digital devices, people in today's society, and the print publishing business will help publishers to better prepare for the future as well as to be relevant in today's society. More and more, "publishers are going to want to understand better how consumers are using their content—how much time readers spend with these digital editions, how long they spend with it in one sitting, and so forth" (Johnston, P., 2012, p. 6). Additionally, electronic reading devices are quickly reaching

beyond the everyday consumer to affect students at all stages of their education as more and more material is published in electronic form. Due to this, the following research will also briefly explore how electronic reading devices are impacting education.

This research is designed with the goal of identifying particular issues and opportunities that the traditional print publishing industry will encounter as it begins and continues to evolve in digital publishing. The following research was carried out with the overall intent of shedding some light on whether or not users of electronic reading devices perceive these devices to have a positive or negative impact on sustaining the print publishing industry.

Additionally, questions surrounding the usefulness and authenticity of these emergent technology media devices such as the iPad and Nook will be addressed as well as consumers' preferences concerning reading print media when it comes to this new technology. Are consumers' just resulting to using tablets and e-readers because of the ease, price, and availability, or do they actually prefer this medium for entertainment? Finally, this research hopes to discover what consumers perceptions are pertaining to the idea that the print industry is dying and that it must result to this new technology in order to avoid demise. As Palser (2011) states, "the news industry is wondering – desperately and obsessively – whether tablets will save newspapers and magazines, or just pound a few more nails into the coffin" (p. 54).

Literature Review

Background & History

In order to better understand the effect electronic reading devices have on the print industry as well as the consumers of print media, it helps to understand the background of the three main segments of this industry, book publishing, newspaper publishing, and magazine publishing and how each has evolved with the arrival of electronic reading devices.

The book publishing industry has been stable and constant in its formula for publishing over the last few hundred years, until recently with, "the most recent wave to rock the book industry is the electronic book, or 'e-book,' which has arguably caused the greatest transformation to the long-established publishing industry since Gutenberg and his printing press" (Carreiro, 2010, p. 220). While e-books haven't completely replaced traditional printed books, they have brought a lot of other aspects to the forefront of publishing that were not thought of before such as easy creation and distribution as well as piracy of content.

Electronic books are distinct from books in terms of media, distribution, functionality, management, quantity, copyright and fair use, information technology, cost, typology of e-books, reading device specificity or lack thereof, pricing, accessibility, publishing model, book news and peer reviews, service model, quality assurance, standards and interoperability, user preferences, layout and paging, and contextual reading. Electronic books have an advantage over regular books in terms of creation, revision, dissemination, use, and access control, (Carreiro, 2010, p. 220).

In 1971 Michael Hart at the University of Illinois created what would come to be thought of as the first e-text, a keyed-in text on a computer using software ASCII. This document was an electronic version of the Declaration of Independence, and with it the idea of an e-book was born. This simple text would be the beginning of Project Gutenberg, a site that now hosts more than 20,000 free texts and has over 100,000 books available through their partners with more than 300,000 books downloaded monthly.

E-books began to gain popularity and were largely successful in specialty subject matter such as technology; they were intended to be documents shared by small groups with similar interests. These early e-books could be read on computers using programs such as Adobe's PDF reader. However, that structure quickly evolved as the idea of e-books grew in popularity, gaining the backing of e-book publishers and distributers who would distribute books that were in the public domain in this new format.

The first genre of literature that became largely successful with the public consumer was the romance story. The ability to indulge in a romance story in the privacy of one's own home and without the embarrassment or judgment of picking it up in the store made this category a hit with e-publishing. Shortly following this popularity major publishing companies started to take note of the growing e-book trend around 2001. Though publishers weren't quite sure how this new movement would affect their business they decided to try and leverage e-books to their advantage by establishing online stores and partnering with e-reader manufacturers (ValorEBooks.com, 2014).

As e-books became more popular, demand increased for electronic hardware devices designed for reading them. The first e-book readers to come on the scene in 1998 were the

Rocket eBook and the SoftBook Reader. "These dedicated electronic readers were the size of a (large and thick) book, with a battery, a black and white LCD screen, and a storage capacity of ten books or so. They could connect to the Internet through a computer (for the Rocket eBook) or directly with a built-in modem (for the SoftBook Reader)" (Leibert, 2011, p.1). These first readers gained a lot of attention from book professionals and the public alike, but few people were able to afford them as they cost hundreds of dollars and weren't yet seen as a worthwhile investment because of the limited availability of books available online on the companies' websites.

However, e-readers really gained popularity when Oprah announced on her syndicated day time talk show that the Amazon Kindle was her favorite new gadget. Oprah's television show's popularity and influence with mainstream society ushered in people's interest in e-readers and spurred a buying frenzy of sorts. This is when some say e-books and e-readers found their way into popular culture. Shortly following the popularity of the Amazon Kindle came Sony's PRS505 e-reader with a 6 inch display screen – further spawning the ever-growing desire amongst those interested in popular culture to get their hands on an e-reader (ValorEBooks.com, 2014). Furthermore, "tablet ownership nearly doubled over the 2011 holiday too, with 19 percent of U.S. adults owning a tablet in January 2012. Combine that with people who own an e-reader, and publishers are reaching nearly a third of the population" (Johnston, C., 2012, p. 19).   With this exponential growth, it seems reasonable to suspect that electronic reading devices are here to stay and will only continue to grow in popularity and functionality as time progresses.

Now, with e-books and e-readers being so prolific, this new technology calls for

publishing staff to develop skills working in evolving technological interfaces in order to stay

relevant in this industry. Additionally,

> when technological advances led to the initiation of e-publishing and the creation of
>
> the e-book, many forecasted the death of the book: 'media experts are predicting that
>
> digital publishing will completely replace traditional paper-and-ink printing'. While it
>
> is true that the publishing industry has been struggling, new technology and the
>
> advent of digital devices on which to read books have not handed down the death
>
> sentence to publishers. In actuality, 'computers and other new technologies may in
>
> fact be enhancing our ability to produce and distribute printed books, ensuring that
>
> books will continue to be a part of our future'. Publishing giants all over have
>
> recognized this reality and have tweaked company strategies accordingly, (Carreiro,
>
> 2010, p. 223).

In addition to the impact that electronic reading devices have had on the book

publishing industry, this new technology is also affecting the newspaper industry. Because

of the portability and smaller size of these devices, they are seen to be a less cumbersome

way of reading the news, they "lend [themselves] to being carried around and used more like

a newspaper than a desktop computer" (Palser, 2011 p. 54). Furthermore, online newspapers

offer readers the opportunity to participate in the media by clicking on links within news

stories and even by watching video footage of the latest news. With traditional newspapers,

this ability to participate in the media is not available.

The biggest problem for the newspaper publishing industry is the disparate use

between the print version and the online version. "Since the late 1990s, newspapers have

undergone a steady decline in both circulation and advertising. Industry analysts cite the rise

in Internet use as a major factor in those declines" (Fischer, 2004, p. 174). Furthermore, since

around 2007, over thirteen thousand journalists in America have lost their jobs due to the

declining market and loss of ad sales – the total number of full-time newsroom staff has

currently reached a level that analysts state hasn't been seen since the mid-1970s (p. 175).

Even more, the majority of advertisement sales have gone online. Now with electronic

readers there seems to be a chance to bridge this gap by presenting "a perfect marriage for

news outlets and readers: a new platform with potential for a sustainable payment model and

the means to attract a new audience that's geared toward a user's urge to interact and

explore" (Johnston, C., 2012, p. 22). Fortunately, news sites are robust – containing great

graphics, up-to-the-minute posts, interactive portions, and the ability to connect with social

media. Within news websites there is also an integrated payment model that could lead to a

positive future. At this point, it just seems to be a matter of the news publishing industry

playing catch up and figuring out a way to convince readers to pay for content that up to this

point has been able to be consumed for free (Johnston, C., 2012, p.19).

  While the use of tablets allows for interactivity for consumers, an aspect of digital

newspaper publishing that plays even more into publishers' decisions when thinking about

traditional print publishing versus online publishing is revenue driven. "With print

advertising revenues declining across the industry, executives hope digital initiatives will

generate growth" (Marek, 2010 p. 3). Using the interface of an application on electronic

reading devices, newspaper publishers can allow readers access to a limited amount of

content before they must purchase the rest of the content, thus helping to increase revenue for

this industry. Additionally the application method of providing news content can reel in younger users who are more likely to read the news on an electronic reading device such as a mobile phone rather than in its traditional print paper format (Fischer, 2004, p. 175).

      At the *Chicago Tribune*, initiative is being taken to create compelling content that will inspire readers to click to purchase. Overall, with the creation of this content their "goal is to create newspaper downloads that readers will pay more for than they do currently" (Marek, 2010, p. 4); hopefully gaining enough revenue for the newspaper to keep them from bankruptcy. Throughout the industry both

> newspapers and magazines are experimenting with multiple permutations of [a] subscription model, whether linking it with digital and print subscriptions or letting it stand on its own. Regardless of whether they move through an app, subscriptions or something else, 85 percent of users have never paid for news on their tablets – an overwhelmingly dismal number – according to the same 2011 Pew study, (Johnston, C., 2012, p. 24).

And the industry knows this is a bit of an uphill battle, but still one it sees as a worthwhile endeavor due to the rapid evolution in which news media is undergoing.

Thus far, of the three print media featured in this research, newspaper publishing seems to be the one with the most transition in readership from the print version to the e-version, according to existing research. "A December survey of more than 1,600 iPad users by the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri reported that accessing news content was the most popular use of the device, with nearly 80 percent saying they spent at least 30 minutes per day consuming news on the iPad" (Palser, 2011, p. 54).

Looking at these numbers, one could reasonably assume that the impact of electronic reading

devices such as the iPad is much greater on the newspaper industry than other similar

publishing outlets. This transition could be due to the large, bulky format of a traditional

newspaper, or it could simply be readers' interest in more rapid news updates as well as more

interactive news, but whatever the case, daily consumers seem to migrate toward e-versions

of newspapers instead of printed versions. Palser, the University of Missouri researcher,

discovered in her research that the more a person uses a tablet to view or read the news, the

less likely that person is to read a printed version of the news. "In fact, 58 percent of

participants who had print newspaper subscriptions and spent at least an hour per day

accessing news on their iPads said they were very likely to cancel their print subscriptions in

the next six months" (p. 54). The question that comes from this statistic is as to whether or

not this will actually be beneficial to the livelihood of the newspaper industry.

Another aspect of the print industry that is increasingly impacted by users' transition

from printed versions of materials to electronic versions is magazine publishing. "The

magazine has evolved over several hundred years to become a highly successful form of

mass communication" (Leslie, 2010 p. 24). Historically, around 1982 was the year

magazines began to use electronic technology to advance its reach. With tools such as e-mail

and online alerts, magazine publishers were able to grasp more people's attention and drive

up readership (Silva, 2011). Now, "digital magazines are increasingly capturing the attention

of the media industry due to their ability to attract readers through interactive content,

without involving high costs in production and distribution as traditional magazines" (p.

301).

Magazine readers have traditionally been quite loyal to their magazines of choice; subscribing to select niche interest magazines and year in and year out, paying subscription fees, reading the content in the magazines, and keeping magazines for years after the publication date. This same loyalty has spread over to the world of digital magazines. Research shows that "58 percent of digital magazine readers read their edition the day they get it; 51 percent of consumers between 18 and 34 are reading magazines electronically; 41 percent of those who have downloaded apps have paid for magazine content and 91 percent of e-reader owners are magazine readers" (Silva, 2011, p. 301).

Much like the newspaper and book industries, magazine publishers are finding that publishing content on an electronic platform can be a means to help to build revenue. After the first digital magazines, *Time* (launched on April 12, 2010) and *Wired* (launched on June 18, 2010) were made compatible with iPad and e-readers, publishers began thinking of ways to make this new digital platform work for them in more ways than just reaching a larger audience. Through subscriptions to digital magazine content that reaches more readers, publishers are hoping to increase their sales revenue. However,

new subscriptions are not the only way publishers are using tablet publishing. According to a recent report in *Ad Week*, digital subscription options include the ability to buy a single issue, which is turning out to be a great way for publishers to sell back copies of magazines. At Hearst, for example, according to President David Carey, 30 percent of single copies sold on tablets are back issues. Hearst sells iPad editions of many of its titles, including *Cosmopolitan, Esquire* and *Popular Mechanics*. Single editions represent 10 to 15 percent of digital issues volume, with

back issues making up 4 percent of the total (Johnston, P., 2012, pp. 4-5).

On the downside of this inspiring possibility for publishers to gain more revenue through digital magazine subscriptions and one time purchases, Silva notes that, "the truth is that, on the other hand, the publishing industry has yet to develop a viable business model to sustain the costs of a digital magazine. The result is, of course, the poor exploitation of digital tools and the excessive use of replicas of printed versions of journals" (p. 310). Once magazine publishers are able to figure out this cost versus revenue issue, it is plausible that digital magazines will be more prevalent. The digital environment offers many opportunities for digital magazine publishing as well as a format – through the use of e-readers and tablets – that has several advantages over the traditional format; the biggest being the interactivity that can be built into the magazine reading experience. More and more, loyal magazine readers are becoming interested in a digital format for their magazines. According to survey results from the Harrison Group, "Digital subscriptions were most popular to readers of magazines covering information technology, general news and business, adult content, and hobbies and special interests" (Paxhia & Rosenblatt, 2008, p. 12). Additionally, this survey found that many of the magazine subscribers "like the opportunity to click directly on advertisements that are linked to advertiser's web sites. Rich media is an attractive feature for adding sizzle to ads" (p. 12). Overall, it seems digital models of magazines are growing in popularity as well as digital books and newspaper, its rate of growth may just be a bit slower as this new technology flips the market on its head.

"Through a quick review at times it seems that the app version [of books, newspapers,

and magazines] make more sense than the print edition in some respects" (Leslie, 2010 p. 26). However, it is necessary to carry out research to sustain this claim and point publishers in the best direction for their futures. As "publishing finds itself in the midst of a phase shift (like water to ice) from print to a complex new world of digital, where the dimensions of the change, its speed, and its extent are unknown" (Lichtenberg, 2011, p.103), it is important to know how new technology impacts this shift and whether or not this is a positive or negative relationship.

Emergent Technology

Today's society is being inundated with new technology. Every year technology giants introduce new devices. As far as electronic reading devices go, those with e-ink technology, such as the Amazon Kindle, Sony Reader, and Barnes and Noble Nook, just to name three of the most popular in the e-reader realm, are the latest in the digital print technology realm and they provide the most book-like reading experience for consumers (Dunneback, 2011). These new technologies shape the way people interact with the world around them, and as Johnston, C. (2012) mentioned in her essay *Second Chance*, these different technology platforms each have different strengths. But when it comes to electronic reading devices the success of this technology "lies in its ability to connect. To interact. To bring images and words to life with a simple flick, swipe or prod. It radiates cool" (p. 21).

Electronic books, magazines and newspapers have many great features they offer rich additional assets that many traditionally printed books cannot offered simply due to the inset technology. Some of these features include: Rich media – videos, analysis tools, illustrations, and simulations that can be incorporated into the text; searchability and likeability – a digital

book, magazine, or newspaper on a connected platform allows readers to further explore a topic through going to an incorporated link in the text; portability – with electronic reading devices multiple traditionally printed texts can be taken anywhere needed easier; breadth of selection – because publishing electronically is less costly than traditional publishing, publishers are able to quickly produce materials giving consumers more texts to read, and affordability – because of the eliminated costs of materials electronic texts are much more affordable. (Paxhia & Trippe, 2009)

New technology is consistently emerging – beckoning for the attention of new technology enthusiasts – and it often brings with it positive effects on society. As Webb & Romano (2010) state in their book *Disrupting the Future* "technology often has the benefit of mitigating the effect of recessions and other economic downturns" (p. 148). This statement seems to ring true when it comes to electronic reading devices and the print industry, particularly the newspaper industry.

Early adopters of technology enjoy the opportunity to take part in a new experience, which is what these reading devices provide. People who use electronic reading devices tend to enjoy the mobility of these devices as well as the speed and utility offered by this digital platform. As Johnston, C. (2012) notes "Smartphones are perfect for a quick search or Twitter update. The tablet is about experience. Integration and multimedia capabilities provide the opportunity to delve deeper into the layers of a story" (p. 21). Today's readers are consistently influenced by smartphone technology, which leads them to have certain expectations when it comes to their electronic reading devices. They expect a blend of "text, graphics, video, and interactivity at their control that is not present in print and on most

newspaper websites. They also expect integration of social networking functions in a way

unfamiliar to most newspapers" (Picard, 2011, p. 23).

When it comes to the print publishing industry, "digital subscribers are increasing

their online activities and decreasing their print activities" (Paxhia & Rosenblatt, 2008, p.

12). More and more among businesses and general readers alike the commonality of digital

subscriptions to newspapers and magazines is ever growing "demonstrating increasing

acceptance of digital editions" (p. 3). In order to fully step into the realm of digital

publishing and hopefully garner some much needed and new income, some newspapers are

now offering free digital subscriptions to print subscribers. Through these hybrid

subscriptions, the newspaper industry is able to provide a way for travelers as well as readers

who live in remote locations to stay current with their hometown paper while on the road and

allow subscribers to read their digital edition wherever they can access Internet or even use

cellular data connection (p.9). Additionally, apps offer newspapers and magazines the

opportunity to reach readers at a low pay-per-app price, while reinforcing the brand of each

individual outlet (Johnston, P., 2012). And with electronic reading devices such as tablets

growing in popularity, they seem to be the perfect devices to further enable the 24 hour news

cycle due to their portability and wireless functionality. They are also lightweight and easily

able to be carried around in a purse or briefcase and they power up quickly – allowing for

them to be used on a short car or subway ride (p. 20).

Furthermore, with the emergent technology movement of e-publishing in full swing,

advertisers are also reaping benefits, such as easy access to reader habits. Through online

newspapers e-subscriptions, advertisers are able to gain reader activity data that is quickly

available (Paxhia & Rosenblatt, 2008). This ability to access consumer habits opens the door for pointed advertising, making electronic reading devices a platform for change in not only the publishing industry, but also potentially in the advertising industry. Digital publishing and electronic reading devices are quickly showing what a large impact emergent technology can have on modern society.

In an interview with emerging technology information librarian, Ellyssa Kroski, she was asked the question "where do you get most of your news – physical newspapers, online editions, social web link and updates?" and her surprising response was "via Facebook and my news feeds, primarily blogs, in Google Reader" (The Digital Librarian, 2010, p.1). Additionally, when asked "Do you think tablet devices and e-readers will change the publishing industry?" this librarian – who prides herself on being fully versed in upcoming and trending technology, replied "I think they're already doing so. Amazon reported that Kindle e-books outsold hardcover books 143 to 100 in the second quarter of this year [2010]. They have definitely reached mainstream adoption" (p.1). This librarian's statements as well as many other industry professionals' opinions show the immense impact emerging technology can have on many facets of everyday life.

The Distinction between Print and Electronic Reading

As mentioned earlier, digital technology is changing the way people read. The experience of reading is morphing from one of holding a bound paper textile in one's hands, to tapping to read an e-book or swiping an application to a magazine or clicking "read more" to access paid content on a news site. Even what we know as a "library" is transforming as electronic reading devices host many e-versions of printed books in a sleek, easy to browse

"bookshelf" display – fully equipped with covers and all.

With this technological shift from printed text to digital text comes a new, distinct way in which readers interact with the material at hand as well as how consumers read in general. As Paxhia and Rosenblatt (2008) explain about the inset features in digital magazine in their book *Digital Magazine and Newspaper Edition,* "the key enabling technology is the ability for users to search magazine content through both the magazine's Web site and the major Internet search engines" (p. 72). This notion of connectivity to the Internet through a digital device can be expanded to include both newspapers and books as well.

Furthermore, Tewksbury and Althaus (2000) delve into the differences in the way readers of digital resources understand and interpret the material compared to those who read from the traditional printed source. They believe that digital content is ingested differently than printed content, which in turn changes the power that the publisher has to direct the route the reader takes through the content. For example, "Internet-based papers provide fewer cues about news story importance and give readers more control over story selection. As a result, readers of an online paper may acquire less information about national, international, and political events than would print readers" (Tewksbury & Althaus, 2000, p. 457). Additionally, they feel that the way in which reading material over the web includes visuals, graphics, and features that connect readers to social media and other websites may prompt people to process online news stories, magazines, and books differently from how they would typically process that information, leading to an overall different experience for the reader than what was intended (p. 459). Though one cannot say for sure if this change in

reading experience leans in a negative or positive direction, what can be said for sure is that it is very different than how people have interacted with print material in the past.

Digital Platforms and Electronic Reading Devices in Business

Digital technology has revolutionized many sectors of the media business. Apple's iPod has changed the way that people buy and listen to music. Google has drastically changed the way that people find and consume information. YouTube enables both individuals and organizations to bring their messages and products to the masses in a much more vivid fashion…book publishers are now at the threshold of a similar revolution as they plan their next generation of products, (Paxhia & Trippe, 2009, p. 2).

As this statement boldly pronounces, digital technology is shaping nearly every facet of human life; even long-standing institutions such as business practices and the library business are affected by this new format.

In a study by Paxhia and Rosenblatt (2008) they learned that digital magazine subscriptions in the business realm began to increase with the number of digital subscriptions seeing an astounding 222% growth from 2007 to 2008 (p. 3). Furthermore, in their research they learned about a magazine company that commissioned a study of its digital magazine and found some enlightening information regarding business use of digital magazines, especially those focused on business-to-business relations. Some of the information in their study showed that subscribers of digital business magazines tend to open their digital magazine within several days of receiving it, that 70% of readers spend anywhere between 15 to 45 minutes reading each issue, and that the readers appreciate the ability to go directly

to the advertiser's Web sites (Paxhia & Rosenblatt, 2008). In addition to this study Hearst

Electronics Group also did some research into the digital platform of business publications

and found that "many international readers prefer to receive and read digital editions of

business to business publications. This is especially true in the Far East, where 80% of

engineers use e-books in their academic training" (p. 42). With the knowledge garnered from

these studies, one could reasonably say that the business magazine publishing industry is on

the right track with digital subscriptions.

Another facet of society that is greatly affected by the booming electronic reading

devices industry and digital platforms is the library business. As Dunneback (2011) states,

"books are the brand of libraries. All formats of books. All" (p. 327). This means that the

library business is not only impacted by this new technology, but that they also need to learn

to somehow incorporate it effectively into their business in order to not just survive but to

thrive in today's society.

Digital collections of books affect the library business and call for librarians to

acquire knowledge of this new technology medium. Many libraries are embracing e-

collections of books as the use of electronic reading devices has impacted their traditional

system of providing printed books, calling for more e-books. One positive impact this digital

medium can have on libraries is an ability to save them money over the long term. "With the

cost of setting up a digital collection as well as the cost of the materials themselves, small

and medium-sized libraries may find it more cost effective to create or join a larger

consortium to provide a wide range of digital content" (Dunneback, 2011, p. 328). While

some libraries and librarians are playing a bit of catch up learning the digital technology and

how to make it work for their business, others have been pioneers in this technological realm, experimenting with how to have a valuable digital book and magazine collection as well as a hardcopy one. "Some libraries are already invested in the process, licensing e-book collections from vendors and even circulating preloaded e-book readers to users" (p. 325).

No matter how libraries and businesses go about incorporating this new technology into their everyday work flow, it is apparent for the time that it is here to stay and maybe only evolve.

Digital Platforms and Electronic Reading Devices in Publishing

With the ever-growing use of electronic reading devices, the publishing industry will see sweeping changes as e-publishing grows in dominance. The technology will continue to get better; publishers will move to a true cross-media publishing strategy; collaboration techniques will change the current authoring and reviewing metaphors; online communities will become even more important to the brand building; and the population of 'Web natives' will continue to increase, driving the increased readership of digital editions. The future of this market is bright, and the rewards for innovation will be substantial (Paxhia & Rosenblatt, 2008, p. 127).

In the wake of all of this digital content and electronic publishing, publishers still have to find a way to make money and grow revenue, not just lie stagnant. Electronic publishing can be seen as a double-edged sword for those in the publishing industry in that it offers a glimmer of hope for progress in the future, but it also presents the issue of revenue loss. Traditionally printed materials, especially books, retail, for a hardcover, anywhere from $20-$50, while e-books are at $9.99 on average. The lower up-front costs for materials do

help publishers to save, but there is still the overall worry that electronic materials won't

garner enough money to recoup what can be lost. This is why many in the industry feel that

publishers need to become more innovative with their electronic resources; in other words,

the e-version of a book, magazine or newspaper simply cannot be just a PDF version or just

words version of the actual printed book. This shift in style of reading calls for more

interactivity and something that catches the reader. "Publishers really have to ask themselves

whether reading the same old package on a tablet or e-reader is going to change that pattern

(of decreasing readership) or whether a new content bundle with new presentation styles is

needed" (Picard, 2011, p.22).

 With this hurdle of cost-effectiveness continuously on the minds of publishers, they

have to consider the consumer of the electronic media. As Picard (2011) states about

publishing newspapers in e-form "Why would someone who won't pay $12 for a print paper

decide to pay $250 for a reader and then $8-12 a month for the paper?" Studies have even

shown that early users of tablets have on average 60 apps, but around only 6 of them are paid

apps and of those paid apps none are monthly subscriptions" (p. 22). And this notion not

only rings true for newspapers, but magazines and books alike. One pitfall of the web is that

it does allow for so many free options for reading printed material. So as mentioned before,

publishers either have to do something to dazzle the reader into purchasing content or lower

their costs in order to be competitive. However, according to Paxhia and Trippe (2009) there

may be a small glimmer of hope that can also come out of reducing costs of electronic

materials. They state that "lower publishing and channel costs are making it possible for

publishers to offer their digital titles at lower prices. This represents greater value for readers

and fair compensation for all stakeholders in the publishing enterprise" (p. 1). But no matter which side of the ideology publishers fall on, they will need to revamp something in order to stay relevant.

Digital Platforms and Electronic Reading Devices in Education

Emergent technology seems to catch on with and shape the lives of younger generations much more quickly than other generations. This could be due to the eagerness young people have to obtain the latest and best new thing or merely because this is the direction their lives are taking – towards a co-existence of media, technology, and everyday life tasks.

These young people inhabit a world of ubiquitous twitch-speed content in which they can connect to peers, ideas, and information almost instantaneously, as well as tailor their own online spaces that promote a sense of freedom and individuality. As such these changes present both complex challenges and opportunities for institutions such as schools and libraries, and those digital immigrants who manage them, (Patterson et al., 2010, p. 67).

The challenge with this type of technology is somewhat two-fold, being there can be an issue with keeping students engaged in learning and not being distracted by other media at their fingertips, as well as helping students balance the costs of new technology if needed to enhance their education.

And on the other side of the spectrum comes the opportunity to teach students on a whole new platform and give teachers a trendy way in which to reach learners who may have become bored with traditional teaching methods as they live in a world filled with advanced

video games, smart phones, and 3-D digital world interaction through movies and television.

Overall, the main interest for teachers and librarians alike has always been promoting

reading and developing lifelong reading habits as well as developing information literacy that

is easily accessible to students through their integrated school library programs (Doiron,

2011). One such experiment tried to explore what this development of reading habits and

library programs would look like through a study entitled *Teaching for the 21st Century: A*

Pilot Project on E-Reading with SD62. This study involved two Canadian high schools in

which online libraries were specifically created for two classes in each school. The students

and teachers alike were able to access electronic course materials and supplementary texts

through these libraries in order to enhance their educational experience in literacy. The

project used digital reading materials to enhance the learning experience providing e-learning

technologies for students including customizable profiles and organization features and rating

features for students. The result of this project was an engaged classroom learning experience

– integrating technology in the classroom (Patterson et al., 2010). One could reasonably say

this was a successful venture and as time has progressed educational institutions have seen

similar experiments in digital education become more prolific. This movement toward

digital platforms in education leaves one wondering if there will ultimately be a shift in

learning from the traditional classroom setting as time progresses. As Dorion (2011) states in

his essay on using e-books and e-readers to promote education, "since technology is seen as

occupying more and more of students' time out of school, it would seem important to explore

how these two areas might unite to explore how new technologies such as e-books and e-

readers support the goals of motivating students to read" (Doiron, 2011).

One such way that electronic reading devices and digital platforms are uniting to change the face of education is through enabling students access to digital textbooks. One such venture called CourseSmart founded in 2006 is supported by the five largest textbook publisher – Pearson, Cengage, McGraw Hill, John Wiley and Sons, and Bedford Freeman Worth – and has started to offer electronic versions of text books. Their mission is to "improve teaching and learning by providing instructors and students better exposure and access to digital course materials. CourseSmart brings together thousands of textbooks across hundreds of courses in one eBook format on a common platform" (Paxhia & Trippe, 2009, p. 69). Using this technology instructors are able to review and compare multiple textbooks and course materials and students are able to download the electronic version of the text book at about fifty-one percent less cost than having a print text. Additionally having an electronic textbook allows students access to bonus materials, web search functionality, and electronic note taking ability. So far this initiative is really taking off and there has been an increasingly growing acceptance of digital textbooks among universities. As of 2010 the online download ratio was 60/40 and just as in normal textbook sales the amount of digital texts saw a spike in sales at the beginning and end of semesters. Additionally as of 2010 there were more than 5,000 titles available through CourseSmart and was rapidly growing (Paxhia & Trippe, 2009).

Finally, not just textbook publishers are finding ways to impact education, "many newspapers are now providing digital editions for classroom use. According to industry executives, this trend is growing rapidly. The cost savings are significant, and the archive feature is very useful to both teachers and student" (Paxhia & Rosenblatt, 2008, p.9) It

seems that the possibilities for digital technology and electronic publishing are just barely

being tapped into and there is so much more to explore in the upcoming days.

The Future of Digital Platforms and Electronic Reading Devices

It is apparent that as time progresses electronic versions of printed materials such as

newspapers and magazines will become increasingly more prevalent. Many digital editions

of print media are already formatting their digital editions to be more reader friendly on

electronic reading devices "utilizing larger text and an aspect ratio that is more appropriate

for digital devices" (Paxhia & Rosenblatt, 2008, p. 69). It seems that publishers, educators,

and businesses alike are finding ways to be successful with the technology of electronic

reading devices as they incorporate more and more digital practices into everyday life.

Moreover, it seems that traditional print publishing is 'finding its way' and realizing that "as

a result of the changes in the way people access and interact with content, changes need to be

made in the nature of the print business. That is, print has to bridge the gap between the

'then' and the 'now'" (Webb & Romano, 2010, p. 111). The question is how successfully

they can do this and whether or not electronic reading devices will be that bridge or only

widen the gap.

While most people tend to believe that the future of electronic reading devices is

bright, there are still the few naysayers such as George F. Colony, CEO of Forrester

Research, who stated in one discussion panel about the future of this technology and the web,

"There's one advantage to those things and that's that they can be read on the beach, that's

not enough" (The Web is Dead, 2011, p. 9). However, the demand for these devices only

seems to be growing for the time being. In fact, studies have shown that by 2010 "more than

half of all people living in developed countries make use of computers and the Internet to read newspaper pieces, magazine and journal articles, electronic copies of books, and other similar materials" (Patterson et al., 2010, p. 67).

The future of digital publishing isn't exactly clear, but many technological and economical advances have come from producing digital content, which leaves the door open to endless possibilities in the future. For example, through participating in electronic reading, targeted information about consumers' reading habits and preferences is acquired by publishers of digital content, which further enables them to be able to produce content that is relevant to consumers of print media. Going forward, this gathering of information will allow for new applications to emerge "that will be able to predict what information will interest you and deliver it to your desktop automatically" (Paxhia & Rosenblatt, 2008, p. 119), making for more a more purposeful and easily accessible reading experience.

As Paxhia and Rosenblatt (2008) state, "it has been said that this is the most exciting time to be in publishing since Gutenberg invented the printing press. The digital publishing era is in its early stages, and while the innovation to date has been impressive, there are many new opportunities for further innovation" (p. 127).

Theoretical Framework

In order to better understand this literature and research surrounding electronic reading devices and their impact on the print publishing industry, it is helpful to put this subject into theoretical context and examine it.

To begin, Sherry Turkle (2007) in her essay *Authenticity in the Age of Digital*

Companions offers insight into human perceptions of digital devices. Turkle calls into question how dependent people are on technology – to the point of viewing it as having human qualities such as emotions or the ability to comfort. People become so immersed in technology they begin to think of it something they cannot live without. Though Turkle addresses the subject of robots, one can reasonably understand that devices such as the iPad or Nook and other electronic reading devices may also have the same effects on people's mentality as robots. Often people are heard saying phrases such as "I can't live without my iPad," or "I don't know what I'd do without my computer." And as Palser (2011) states, "a tablet is totally mobile, tactile, intimate and – for many users – intuitive" (p. 54), lending it to be seen in a more relational way than some other technology. These devices are given a value and people relate to them as a companion. So, aside from their impact on the print industry, one must think about their impact on human society as well.

As Turkle states, "with the advent of 'thinking' machines, old philosophical questions about life and consciousness acquire[d] new immediacy" (p. 501). During this digital age, it is pertinent to not lose what makes people special in the midst of assimilating technology into everyday life. Relationships with people must be fostered over those with cellphones or tablets. Though "computationally rich software…have challenged our values and caused us to ask new questions about ourselves" (Turkle, 2007, p. 501), as a nation we don't have to allow technology that we create define us. Instead, it would be wise to use the technology to aid us, whether that be by garnering more revenue, or aiding in the classroom.

However she now questions whether people's relationships with new electronic technologies is going in a direction that is detrimental to mental and social well-being. In her

new book, published in 2012, *Alone Together*, Turkle addresses her concerns explaining that she feels technology now reshapes people's emotional lives; that new technology is more than just a companion to people but instead that people are losing themselves in these new technologies.

In his review of Turkle's most recent writing addressing these concerns, Edward Cornish (2011) explains how Turkle feels that in today's fast-paced society with ever evolving technology we are now overwhelmed by demands on our time and because of this we turn to technologies because of their promise to make our life easier. Cornish states, "technologies like BlackBerrys and cell phones do connect us to friends all over the world, and robots can serve us as helpers, friends, lovers, and play things. But such technologies also impose serious costs." The issue with these emergent technologies such as electronic reading devices is that they tend to distract people from interacting with one another on a personal level, further isolating individuals, especially young people who tend to be early and quick adopters of new technology. As Cornish states, "young people now expect to be continuously connected to their friends wherever they are and to be always 'on.' Meanwhile, people have become increasingly impatient with dealing face to face with other people. Hardly anybody now seems to have time for a relaxed conversation; instead, people compulsively text-message while driving to work, despite the risk" (Cornish p. 53). Overall, Turkle, though still an emergent technology enthusiast, does now acknowledge that there is a potential for some lasting negative effects that come along with having these 'electronic partners' involved in human daily life.

In addition to keeping tabs on the relational value society places on digital devices

such as electronic reading devices, one must also consider their authenticity. In his 1936

essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin talks about

how reproduced works of art and media artifacts create a new and different experience for

the audience. As Benjamin states,

> in principle a work of art has always been reproducible. Man-made artifacts could
>
> always be imitated by men. Replicas were made by pupils in practice of their craft, by
>
> masters for diffusing their works, and, finally, by third parties in the pursuit of gain.
>
> Mechanical reproduction of a work of art, however, represents something new.
>
> Historically, it advanced intermittently and in leaps at long intervals, but with
>
> accelerated intensity…but now with technology this reproduction has reached a new
>
> level that is quite enlightening, (Benjamin, 1936, p. 2).

Benjamin points out how in the 1900s technical reproduction reached a standard that

allowed for reproduction of transmitted works of art, causing a profound change in their

impact upon the public…one that would affect the way people view art and even what would

be considered art. To many people literature is a work of art, book covers are art, and

pictures in magazines are art. With the printing press, the value of this art was already

slightly changed and diminished with its replication, but one cannot help but wonder if

through the use of electronic media, this art is even further cheapened. For example,

magazines and books are treasured for their beauty, whether that be in words or in the photos

on the cover. Now it is important to remember that "the experience of reading magazines

[and books] on an iPad or on the Web cannot escape what differentiates them: the beauty and

aesthetic pleasure of consumption. Usability and aesthetics must therefore go hand-in-hand,
together" (Silva, 2011, p. 303).

Though with today's ability to mass produce, the authenticity of an individual book is
lost, the application of print publishing to electronic formats further loses the authenticity that
comes with unfolding a newspaper or smelling a perfume sample in a magazine, or even just
carrying an old book to the park on a sunny day. While "the processes of paper manufacture,
page creation, printing and distribution have been endlessly improved and refined" (Leslie,
2010, p. 24), the use of e-readers and tablets create an entirely new arena for publishing – one
in which the art of this industry is all but lost.

As Benjamin states when addressing the subject of authenticity "print is merely a
special, though particularly important, case" (Benjamin, 1936, p. 2). As he goes on to talk
about how art replication evolves with technology, one dwells on how in the past to replicate
a work of art considered a "masterpiece" was a great feat and usually received much praise
but now, with the double edge-sword of technology, replication is commonplace. On the one
hand replication is good for the culture industry because it allows the common person the
ability to enjoy aspects of "higher art forms," but it is also a vice because it seems that the
majesty of the work is diminished.   Though, on a lesser scale than a work of art such as the
Mona Lisa, print work has the ability to be diminished by the use of electronic files, so it too
is a double-edged sword of sort for modern society.

Benjamin accurately describes the sentiment one is trying to address in this essay
regarding the loss of authenticity experienced through the use of electronic publishing.

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its

presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.

This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was

subject throughout the time of its existence. This includes the changes which it may

have suffered in physical condition over the years as well as the various changes in its

ownership. The traces of the first can be revealed only by chemical or physical

analyses which it is impossible to perform on a reproduction; changes of ownership

are subject to a tradition which must be traced from the situation of the original (p. 3).

Though the print industry thrives on replication, this concept of changes is still very

applicable in that there is a loss of what is original already, and this is only further enhanced

through the use of electronic versions of printed materials. As he states, "the situations into

which the product of mechanical reproduction can be brought may not touch the actual work

of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated" (Benjamin, 1936, p. 3).

Furthermore, Benjamin addresses authenticity by explaining how the authenticity of

art, and in this case media artifacts, is in what is

transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its

testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests

on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive

duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical

testimony is affected is the authority of the object, (p. 3).

So though many may see no harm in electronic publishing, take a step back and one can

notice that with this decision comes a loss of authenticity to the work.

It is also beneficial to understand Marshall McLuhan's theory of technological

determinism when examining the effects of electronic reading devices on society. This idea is the belief that technological development determines social and cultural change. In his essay "The Medium is the Message," McLuhan explains that media are technologies through which people relate to the world around them and media that are dominant in society determines how people experience the world.

As McLuhan (1964) states, "the 'content' of any medium is always another medium" (McLuhan p. 107) meaning that one medium such as the writing is the content of print and print is the content of (in this case) electronic reading devices. Furthermore, as McLuhan explains, because the medium shapes the way humans interact it is often that the 'content' of the medium, such as printed words, distracts us from the 'character' of the medium, such as an electronic reading device. He believes that, unlike what other theorists have stated, the technology on which a certain type of media is viewed is just as essential, if not more essential, than the media within the technology.

Relating this concept McLuhan sets forth to the impact of electronic reading devices on the publishing industry and even further to society is seamless. The technology of electronic reading devices definitely shapes the way people relate to the world around them. Having the ability to read printed text on a digital platform in addition to surfing the web and interacting with the media changes not only the way the printed word is read, but also the expectation for what print publishing should provide consumers in their entertainment and information media. As McLuhan mentioned technology is right in our faces, but often we are 'blind' to it and just as Gutenberg's technology changed and formed the American way of life (McLuhan, 1964), there is a very real chance that electronic reading device technology

has and will continue to change and form peoples' way of life.

One last person's ideologies to consider when studying electronic reading devices and the print publishing industry is Ted Striphas (2011). In his book *The Late Age of Print*, Striphas examines many facets of print media – its past, present, how technology affects it, and what its future holds. Striphas delves into the subject of electronic books and discusses how this industry, just like the traditional book industry suffers from economic upswings and downturns and how it cannot be considered the end all for the publishing industry because although it reels in previously untapped profit, it too can come to a halt, such as what was seen with Simon and Schuster after the 9/11 attacks and more recently as the housing market dropped.

Striphas touches on how e-books and digital print technology act as a double-edged sword of sorts in that it does give hope to the print industry and a way for it to stay relevant, but it also creates a loss of authenticity and a shift in consumerism. He notes when discussing e-books that, "it's not enough simply to say they're complex and contradictory cultural artifacts. Most – perhaps all – such objects are. What's crucial to explore, rather, is the intricate web of social, economic, legal, technological, and philosophical determinations that collectively have produced them as such" (2011, p. 22). Through this exploration he finds that e-books and digital technology are ever-evolving themselves, and with this changing the print industry – and even further society as a whole.

By understanding Turkle, Benjamin, and McLuhan's theories and placing them in the context of the print publishing industry and print media consumer society, one can see how electronic reading devices and even the electronic publishing industry as a whole have the

ability to propel society successfully into the future; yet it also has the ability to change the way people relate to and view society through what they are given on these media. This coupled with Striphas' ideologies on e-technology and the future of print, help one to more fully understand how emergent technology is shaping the print industry as well as its consumers.

Research Questions

With this research one hopes to answer a few questions:

R_1 What determines whether consumers of print media (i.e. books, newspapers, and magazines) prefer to read the information within these media in its traditional hardcopy form or in an electronic format?

R_2 Do consumers of print media have overall positive or negative thoughts concerning electronic reading devices?

R_3 Do consumers of print media feel that electronic reading devices will have an overall positive or negative effect on the publishing industry's future?

Method

Participants and Procedures

In order to carry out research concerning ideas and perceptions about electronic reading devices' as well as their effect on the print publishing industry, a survey was constructed and distributed. The survey was distributed in two different manners, the first was through a snowball sample sent via email with a link to the survey online at www.surveymonkey.com. Additionally, the survey was distributed using a convenience

sample of Middle Tennessee State University undergraduate students. Participation in the survey was an option in order to meet the research component requirement of their introductory communications courses. The participants registered for a session online and freely selected from several sessions in which they could participate. The survey was then distributed via paper and pencil format to the students with no indicators of personal identity.

Once the survey results were in the data was analyzed using various measurements to come up with three dependent variables: overall preference for reading, attitude toward electronic reading, and thoughts of print as a thing of the past. In order to construct the dependent variable for overall preference for reading the measurements of preference for how to read a book, magazine, and newspaper were all combined into a single variable (survey questions 8-10). To construct the dependent variable for attitude toward reading on an electronic device the measurements of peoples' likelihood, enjoy ability, and convenience of reading books, magazines, and newspapers on an electronic device (survey questions 20-28). And the third dependent variable of thoughts of print as a thing of the past was constructed using the three different measurements of people's thoughts about printed books, magazines, and newspaper being a dying industry (survey questions 14-16). These dependent variables were measured against the independent variables of age, gender, electronic reader ownership, and employment in the publishing industry.

Reasoning

There are a couple of reasons for using these two methods of sampling – snowball and convenience. Both types of sampling are non-probability methods, meaning that the sampling technique probability of getting any particular sample is not able to be statistical

calculated and though it is representative of a portion of the population, it cannot be

generalized to the larger population. However, there are some advantages to non-probability

sampling such as the lower cost associated with the research and availability of participants,

which is the reason this type of sampling was chosen for a project of this nature.

Using a snowball sample technique for a portion of the survey results helped the

survey to reach a broader group of participants than those readily available to the research,

who tend to be have many of the same demographics. According to Baxter and Babbie

(2004), "snowball refers to the process of accumulation as each located participant suggests

other participants" (p. 135). Through this process the results of the research were able to be

more conclusive than drawing on a single, similar population such as college undergraduates.

While snowball sampling is useful in reaching a larger demographic of people, using

the convenience sample of college undergrads is also beneficial for this research because it

allowed for a larger collection of data, which would not have been feasible otherwise.

However, one does recognize that "even when this method is justified on grounds of

feasibility, you must exercise great caution generalizing from your data," (Baxter & Babbie,

2004, pp. 134-135). But due to the high rate at which college undergrads tend to adopt

technology, one could most reasonably say that they are a good sample pool to draw from for

a study such as this. As Tausend (2013) states, "technology has made it easy for students to

use their computers and mobile devices to continue learning outside of traditional

classrooms." According to Tausend, college students become early adopters of new

technology in order to ease their study load and conserve time. College students use

electronic reading devices to gather source information for essays, take notes, and upload

content to share with their peers – all traits that make them a good subject of study for this research.

Demographics

This study gathered survey information from a pool of 244 participants. Of these participants 97.5 percent were not employed in the publishing industry while a minor 2.5 percent were. Additionally of these participants 48.8 percent were female while 50.4 percent were male and 0.8 percent did not report their gender. The age range of participants was also recorded showing that 81.1 percent were between eighteen and twenty-five years old, 9.4 percent were between twenty-six and thirty-five years old, 3.3 percent were between thirty-six and forty-five years old, 4.1 percent were between forty-six and fifty-five years old, and 1.2 percent were over fifty-five, while 0.8 percent did not report their age range. Finally, this study gathered information pertaining to whether or not participants own any type of electronic reading device. Of the 244 participants, 72.5 percent do own an electronic reading device of some sort whether that is an e-reader, tablet, or smart phone; while 26.2 percent of participants do not own an electronic reading device of any kind, and 1.2 percent of the participants did not report this information.

Furthermore, the dependent variable of overall preference for reading either electronically or traditionally printed material was measured on a scale of yes or no with a mean of 1.052 (std. dev. = 0.867). The dependent variable of average attitude toward electronic reading devices was measured using a likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" with a mean of 4.019 (std. dev. = 1.178). And the dependent variable of thoughts of print as a thing of the past was measured on a yes or no scale with a mean of

0.818 (std. dev. = 0.973).

Results

In order to evaluate the findings of this survey I ran multiple simple linear regressions measuring the independent variables of gender, age, owning an electronic reading device, and working in the publishing industry against the dependent variables of overall preference for reading, attitude toward electronic reading devices, and the idea of whether print is a thing of the past. The findings are recorded below.

Recall that R_1 asked what determines whether consumers of print media (i.e. books, newspapers, and magazines) prefer to read the information within this media in its traditional hardcopy form or in an electronic format? The results suggested that participants who owned an electronic reading device tend to prefer reading digital information rather than traditional printed information (b = 0.465, p < .05). This regression model explained 6 percent of the variability in overall preference for reading.

Table 1.1

Summary of Overall Preference for Reading on an Electronic Reading Device Over Traditional Print.

Variable	B	SE (B)	β	t	Sig. (p)
Intercept (Constant)	.682	.225		3.023	.003
Gender	.220	.155	.126	1.420	.158
Age	-.072	.080	-.080	.0899	-.370

*Owns Electronic Reading Device	.465	.191	.212	2.431	.016
Works in the Publishing Industry	-.148	.614	-.021	-.241	.810

Note

$R^2 = 0.060$ *$p < .05$

R$_2$ asked if consumers of print media have overall positive or negative thoughts concerning electronic reading devices. The results suggested that males had a generally more positive attitude toward using an electronic reading device instead of traditional print than females (b = 0.511, p < .05). Additionally, participants who own an electronic reading device had an overall more positive attitude toward using an electronic reading device instead of traditional print (b = 0.831, p < .05). This regression model explains 12.5 percent of the variability in attitude toward electronic reading devices.

Table 1.2

Summary of Attitude Toward Reading on an Electronic Reading Device.

Variable	B	SE (B)	β	t	Sig. *(p)*
Intercept (Constant)	3.089	.208		14.820	.000
*Gender	.551	.149	.216	3.427	.001
Age	.047	.091	.033	.514	.608

*Owns Electronic Reading Device	.831	.165	.311	5.026	.000
Works in the Publishing Industry	-.168	.573	-.018	-.293	.770

Note

$R^2 = 0.125$ *p <.05*

R$_3$ asked if consumers of print media feel that electronic reading devices will have an overall positive or negative effect on the publishing industry's future. Males were more likely to agree that print publishing is a thing of the past than females (b = 0.494, p <.05). This regression model explains 6.7 percent of the variability in thoughts toward print being a thing of the past.

Table 1.3

Summary of Thoughts of Print as Something of the Past.

Variable	B	SE (B)	β	t	Sig. *(p)*
Intercept (Constant)	.392	.188		2.084	.038
**Gender	.494	.135	.126	.255	.000
Age	.027	.080	.024	.336	.737

Owns Electronic Reading Device	.197	.156	.087	1.265	.207
Works in the Publishing Industry	.019	.560	.002	.035	.972

Note

$R^2 = 0.067$ **$p < .001$

Conclusion and Further Discussion

To sum up these findings along with the research from related research, one could borrow Carreiro's (2010) words and simply say, "the…industry as a whole is merely 'undergoing a rapid reconfiguration'" (p. 219). Additionally, the shift from traditional print publishing to electronic publishing is not huge, nor devastating to the industry, but significant in that "the big difference is the interactivity the digital platform can offer" (Palser, 2011, p. 54). One anonymous participant to this survey research offered an opinion on the whole matter, stating, "Whether it is an e-product or print there will always be a want and need for people to read content. So why not embrace all formats, current and future, to capitalize on and reach the widest audience of readers and consumers."

This research analysis points to a couple of key elements that would be beneficial to discuss as well as some areas that could enhance this research through further study. One such area of discussion come from the results of the survey given to consumers of print media technology; the question of why it seems that men seem to be more favorable to electronic reading devices and less favorable to the traditional print publishing. According to Auren Hauffman (2008), a researcher in the field of emergent technology and social media, men tend to be early adopters of technology. Through her research she has discovered that

men favor purchasing and learning new technology while women enjoy technology for more social aspects such as social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), thus women are slower to purchase new technology than men. It would be reasonable with this understanding of men's desire for new technology to suggest that this could be why they respond more favorably toward electronic reading devices than women. However, further study into this subject would certainly benefit this research.

The results of this study also bring about thoughts surrounding the self-fulfilling idea of owners of electronic reading devices favoring digital reading and platforms over traditional print media. One wonders whether a future study of consumers will still show the same results due to the popularity of electronic reading devices. At some point it seems everyone who would like to own an electronic reading device will own one and those who do not like them won't; this would lead to a market that has reached a plateau and study into the area of whether consumers' prefer digital over print will show essentially the same results across the board – leading to a need to change what about this emergent technology is being study. Maybe considering taking this study past consumer's ideas and thought and on to how they use the technology itself could be more beneficial in the long run.

As mentioned in the literature review section of this research, e-devices dramatically grew in popularity from 2010-2012. The noted reason here was due to the endorsement from Oprah, a powerful and influential woman in modern society. However, it could be beneficial to look into other reasons as to why this boom happened during that time. For instance, during this time the price point of some older tablets and e-readers dropped as newer devices came on the market, making them more accessible to a larger portion of the population.

Another aspect of discussion in light of this research is the subject of the evolution of what an e-book, e-magazine, or e-newspaper really is. As digital platforms transform printed text into a multimedia experience, do these digital texts really even carry the same characteristics of a book, magazine, or newspaper or will they become something all of their own? It seems that the definition of these media is becoming a bit blurred in the digital realm as remediation of texts causes a loss of authenticity, as Walter Benjamin discusses. Maybe digital print technology is creating a new medium of its own…an e-text. This could be a very interesting area of study and further discussion.

Additionally, an area of study that could really be pivotal to research concerning consumers' perceptions and ideas toward electronic reading devices and the print publishing industry would be to examine the amount of time people spend actually reading printed material on their devices as well as the amount of time spent reading printed material in its traditional form. Knowing this information could really help researchers to better understand the relationship between electronic reading devices and the impact they have on modern print publishing. This information could also help to categorize readers into groups based on how much they interact with the print industry both in its traditional format and electronically by placing them on a scale from "light reader" to "heavy reader." It is strongly suggested that further studies be conducted to gain a better grasp on the impact of time spent using an electronic device for reading and how consumers perceive the print industry in relation to this emerging technology.

In conjunction with developing this research further to include amount of reading time on electronic devices, more specific individualized studies into each perspective area of

the print publishing industry presented here could be very beneficial. This research acts more as an overview and introduction into the questions, issues, and discussion surrounding the emergent technology of electronic reading devices on a spectrum from those specific to reading such as the Kindle to tablets with e-reading functionality such as the iPad and their effect on the print publishing industry as a whole. But delving into each individual arena of this industry and gaining an understanding of how this technology is shaping it as well as consumers' thoughts on this transition could go a long way to gaining a better researched, and more well-rounded understanding of the subject as a whole.

Additionally, it is important to discuss the source or research sample; in this case snowball sampling and convenience sampling. Because both of these sampling options are non-random they are not the most representative type of sample one could gather, thus they leave room for data that could be more skewed. A completely random sample could draw from a smaller pool of subjects and potentially produce a more representative sample of the population at large, while a non-random sample, such as the two I used, needs more participants in order to be better representative of the larger population.

One issue that presents itself with snowball sampling is that, though it is a bit further reaching than a convenience sample of college students, as in this case, it (the survey in this study) is sent from one participant to that participant's friends and acquaintances, who then sends it out to their friends and acquaintances and so forth, which could potentially lead to people with similar ideas and thoughts and even backgrounds responding to the research at hand. This issue could keep the data from being diverse and could skew the results of the study as well. On a different end of the spectrum lie the issues with using a convenience

sample of college students for research. College students, though readily available, tend to fall in a similar category of thought, age, and life stage due to the fact that they are currently all in enrolled at the same university in a set location and going through a similar life experience of navigating higher education; this can present an issue when trying to gather a diverse response to one's research.

In conclusion one could easily say that "digital technologies have turned the…publishing industry inside out" (Lichtenberg, 2011, p.112). However the transition to complete electronic publishing is not exactly what people want right now. It will probably take people a few generations removed from traditional print publishing before a completely new way of reading is embraced.

At this time publishers don't have to clearly choose between print or electronic publishing, but it is clear that electronic publishing is an accepted and appreciated supplement to the print publishing industry. Additionally, "the fact that many people are willing to pay for content on any digital platform may offer a glimmer of hope" (Palser, 2011, p. 54) when considering providing publishers with the finances to continue to produce content.

Through further research and with time, there "will come a better understanding not only of how to manage and market tablet publishing, but of how the industry itself needs to operate in today's environment. The best and hardest- thinking publishers are going to figure out how to integrate these digital editions with their Web sites and their print editions so that they are operating with a comprehensive media strategy rather than trying to figure out how to monetize a clutch of isolated, separate products" (Johnston, P., 2012, p. 6). But as for

now, one can reasonably say that though readers very much enjoy this emerging technology

and there is a noticeable shift in the print publishing industry, consumers also still greatly

enjoy reading printed material in its traditional format.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Print Media Survey

Please take a moment to fill out this survey regarding electronic reading preferences and the future of the print publishing industry. The results of this survey will be used as part of a graduate student thesis. You can skip any questions that you do not want to answer for any reason. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you are able to withdraw at any time. If you agree to participate please continue on to the survey below.

Note: Any reference to an "electronic reading device" is inclusive of tablets, e-readers, and smart phone that you use as a way to read books, newspapers, and/or magazines.

1) How often do you read a printed newspaper?

   a) never   b) rarely   c) sometimes d) all the time e) don't know

2) How often do you read a printed magazine?

   a) never   b) rarely   c) sometimes d) all the time e) don't know

3) About how many printed books do you read for enjoyment in a typical year?

   a) None   b) 1-2   c) 3-5   d) more than 5 e) don't know

Do you own a/n…

4) Kindle

   a) Yes   b) No c) don't know

5) iPad

   a) Yes   b) No c) don't know

6) Nook

a) Yes   b) No   c) don't know

7) Some other tablet or e-reader *note this includes smart phones which you use as an

electronic reading device*

a) Yes   b) No   c) don't know

(if "Yes" please name) _____

8) How do you prefer to read the news?

a) in its printed form   b) on a tablet/e-reader/smart phone   c) some other way

d) I don't read the news e) don't know

9) How do you prefer to read a magazine?

a) in its printed form   b) on a tablet/e-reader/smart phone   c) some other way

d) I don't read the news e) don't know

10) How do you prefer to read a book?

a) in its printed form   b) on a tablet/e-reader/smart phone   c) some other way

d) I don't read the news e) don't know

11) Whether you own one or not, what do you think is the best reason for having an

electronic reading device?

a) to read books   b) to read the news   c) to read magazines   d) some other

reason

e) there is no good reason   f) don't know

12) Do you feel that tablets and e-readers are worth the cost?

a) Yes   b) No   c) don't know

13) If given the choice between having printed reading materials or electronic reading materials which would you choose?

   a) Printed   b) Electronic   c) Both   d) Neither   e) don't know

14) Do you feel that the printed (paper version) newspaper is a thing of the past?

   a) Yes   b) No   c) don't know

15) Do you feel that the printed (paper version) magazine is a thing of the past?

   a) Yes   b) No   c) don't know

16) Do you feel that the printed (paper version) book is a thing of the past?

   a) Yes   b) No   c) don't know

17) Would you prefer to purchase a book or an eBook?

   a) Printed book   b) EBook   c) Both   d) Neither   e) don't know

The next series of questions will gauge your opinion regarding ereaders and tablets affect on the print publishing industry.

20) The ability to read a news article on my electronic reading device would make me more likely to read the news.

   a) Strongly Agree

   b) Agree

   c) Slightly Agree

   d) Neutral

   e) Slightly Disagree

f) Disagree

g) Strongly Disagree

h) don't know

21) Using an electronic reading device to read a book makes the experience more enjoyable.

a) Strongly Agree

b) Agree

c) Slightly Agree

d) Neutral

e) Slightly Disagree

f) Disagree

g) Strongly Disagree

h) don't know

22) Using an electronic reading device to read the news is more convenient than picking up a printed newspaper.

a) Strongly Agree

b) Agree

c) Slightly Agree

d) Neutral

e) Slightly Disagree

f) Disagree

g) Strongly Disagree

h) don't know

23) A person is more likely to read magazines if she or he has an electronic reading device.

    a) Strongly Agree

    b) Agree

    c) Slightly Agree

    d) Neutral

    e) Slightly Disagree

    f) Disagree

    g) Strongly Disagree

    h) don't know

24) Using an electronic reading device to read a news article makes the experience more enjoyable

    a) Strongly Agree

    b) Agree

    c) Slightly Agree

    d) Neutral

    e) Slightly Disagree

f) Disagree

g) Strongly Disagree

h) don't know

25) Using an electronic reading device to read a book is more convenient than picking up a

printed book.

        a) Strongly Agree

        b) Agree

        c) Slightly Agree

        d) Neutral

        e) Slightly Disagree

        f) Disagree

        g) Strongly Disagree

        h) don't know

26) A person is more likely to read books if she or he has an electronic reading device.
        a) Strongly Agree

        b) Agree

        c) Slightly Agree

        d) Neutral

        e) Slightly Disagree

f) Disagree

g) Strongly Disagree

h) don't know

27) Using my electronic reading device to read a magazine makes the experience more

enjoyable.

a) Strongly Agree

b) Agree

c) Slightly Agree

d) Neutral

e) Slightly Disagree

f) Disagree

g) Strongly Disagree

h) don't know

28) Using an electronic reading device to read a magazine is more convenient than picking
up a printed magazine from the rack.

a) Strongly Agree

b) Agree

c) Slightly Agree

d) Neutral

e) Slightly Disagree

f) Disagree

g) Strongly Disagree

h) don't know

Now, some questions about yourself.

29) What is your current class year?

    a) Freshman b) sophomore c) junior   d) senior   e) other

30) What is your age?

    a) 18-25   b) 26-35   c) 36-45   d) 46-55   e) over 55

31) What is your gender?

    a) Male   b) Female

32) Are you employed in the publishing industry?

    a) Yes   b) No

Thank you so much for participating!

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/S8WZQ2K

APPENDIX B: IRB Approval

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

October 30, 2013

Savannah Wesley, Dr. Jason Reineke

Mass Communications

sns4d@mtmail.mtsu.edu, jason.reineke@mtsu.edu

Protocol Title: "Ereaders and Tablets: Are They Hurting or Helping the Print Publishing Industry?"

Protocol Number: 14-106

Dear Investigator(s),

I have approved your study at the exempt level. The exemption is pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b) (2). This is because the research being conducted involves the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior.

You will need to submit an end-of-project report to the Compliance Office upon completion of your research. Complete research means that you have finished collecting data and you are

ready to submit your thesis and/or publish your findings. Should you not finish your research

within the three (3) year period, you must submit a Progress Report and request a

continuation prior to the expiration date. Please allow time for review and requested

revisions. Your study expires on **October 30, 2016.**

Any change to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB before implementing this

change.

According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has

contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol

and needs complete the required training. **If you add researchers to an approved project,**

please forward an updated list of researchers to the Office of Compliance before they

begin to work on the project. Once your research is completed, please send us a copy of

the final report questionnaire to the Office of Compliance. This form can be located at

www.mtsu.edu/irb on the forms page.

Also, all research materials must be retained by the PI or **faculty advisor (if the PI is a**

student) for at least three (3) years after study completion. Should you have any questions or

need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kellie Hilker

Compliance Officer

615-494-8918 **:** Compliance@mtsu.edu