

The
Wow

e-newsletter

by Ken and Dahlynn McKowen

Principles

Volume 7 No. 12 December 2011

www.PublishingSyndicate.com

E-books: Take Two

In January of this year, I shared with you an op-ed piece about e-books (the newsletter is on our website if you have yet to read it). Known as being opinionated, I didn't hold back when it came to my views about the future of e-books and their impact on the publishing industry. Having just revisited the article myself, I was on point regarding my observations.

The publishing industry has seen more than its fair share of twists and turns in 2011, from distributors trying to recreate themselves to the slow, agonizing death of Borders. And well-known authors began expanding their backlist into the digital age. For example, larger-than-life author Ray Bradbury, now 91, this year agreed to have his book *Fahrenheit 451* sold as an e-book. The reports state that Bradbury wasn't too thrilled with the idea, but his agent convinced him that all publishing contracts now included a digital clause and if Bradbury wanted to extend his soon-to-expire contract with his current publisher, he had better agree.

As I pen this, the date is December 13th. This sunny but very cold day finds Ken and me enjoying a condo on the north shore of Lake Tahoe. As travel writers, we're on the road a lot, but the purpose of this week's trip is to get some uninterrupted writing done and game plan both our business and personal goals for 2012. And it's the only

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Happy Holidays!

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Publishing Syndicate

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time we get to work on a jigsaw puzzle, which is sharing the kitchen table with me and my work at this moment. (Yes, big distraction!)

Earlier this morning, we found today's issue of *USA Today* on our front porch. A story in their "Lifestyle" section focused on e-books and how this year authors are finding great success sharing their prose with digital readers. Intrigued about finding an article that directly relates to the topic I had planned to write, I read the article twice. I learned that many authors are



opting to release their books themselves, offering them solely as e-books marketed directly to consumers, thus eliminating the need for agents, publishers, distributors and brick-and-mortar book stores. The article stated that the Association of American Publishers reported the total net revenue of e-books for 2010 was \$878 million with 114 million e-books sold. They also noted that adult fiction e-books are now 13.6% of the e-book market.



Upon reading the *USA Today* article, I accessed *Publisher's Weekly* (8/9/11) online and found their numbers for 2010: total revenue from book sales in the United States was \$27.9 billion, an overall gain of 5.6%. This gain was due to digital book offerings, which offset the decline of print-book formats. They went on to list that [gross] revenue from e-books across all categories rose 38.9% to \$1.62 billion. Again, the numbers in the prior paragraph were net revenues, while the numbers in this paragraph are gross sales.

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Let's break down sales of traditional print-form books with the help of another article I found in *Publisher's Weekly* (7/8/11). During the first six months of 2010, sales for the following genres dropped across the board:

- Adult fiction: -25.7%
- Adult nonfiction: -2.7%
- Juvenile fiction: -7.4%
- Juvenile nonfiction: -6.7%
- Hardcover books: -9.5%
- Trade paperbacks: -6.8%
- Audio books: -11.5%

It's safe to say that while most consumers continue to re-evaluate their discretionary purchasing due to the struggling economy, dedicated readers continue to purchase books. But in looking at the numbers, it appears that these readers are opting for less expensive alternatives to their book-buying ways. In most cases, e-books are much less expensive than the physical book's retail price, and the convenience of downloading a book instantly onto a digital reading device is a plus, especially considering time lost and money spent driving to a bookstore.

While those numbers don't seem too bad, remember, these numbers were for the first six months of 2010. I found more current numbers, also from *Publisher's Weekly* (12/1/11), showing numbers from the first nine months of 2011:

- E-book sales up 137.9%, totaling \$727 million in sales
- Mass market paperback sales fell a stunning 54.3% in the month of September, and hardcover sales fell 18.1%

What's interesting about the second bullet is that August and September are what we authors consider the make-or-break royalty months, when distributors are busy placing their holiday sales orders. This particular article did not give any reasons for the decline found in the last bullet, but a few questions come to mind. Are distributors hesitant to buy? Are there just not any good books for them to consider? Does this drop have something to do with Borders closing? Or do these numbers reflect a trend among book buyers that they are opting for e-books instead of paperbacks and hardcover books? I would lean toward the latter.



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This rapid move by consumers to e-books is something you—as an author and writer—must not ignore. The old-school publishing world is being forced to quickly recreate their industry in order to keep up with the demanding needs of digital customers. And don't forget that publishers and distributors have also lost considerable direct-to-market shelf space at physical stores such as Walden Books and Borders and they are in a collective panic.

Whether you're a novice novelist or seasoned author, the power in the publishing industry is now yours. And the stigma of being a "self-published" author is quickly becoming a thing of the past. What are you waiting for?

The completed puzzle!



— Dahlynn 

January Wow Announcement!

In order to better meet the needs of 21st century authors like you, Publishing Syndicate is expanding its publishing services beginning in January 2012. Our new program is best described as a hybrid traditional publisher and e-book publisher. If you have a book manuscript completed,

Publishing Syndicate would like to review it for possible publication. We'll introduce this new program in January's *Wow Principles* e-newsletter, so don't miss that issue!

Have a great holiday story to share? We would love to consider it for *Not Your Mother's Book... On Holidays* and *Not Your Mother's Book... On Special Occasions*. If your story is selected and published, you'll receive royalties! More info on our website and Page 5 of this newsletter--CHECK IT OUT!

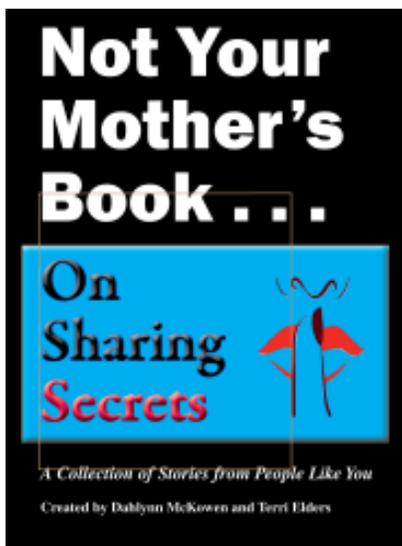
GET PUBLISHED!



The Wow Principles e-newsletter

HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!

As of December 13, 2011



Not Your Mother's Book & *OMG! My Reality!*

We are now sharing a portion of the royalties from the *Not Your Mother's Book* and *OMG! My Reality!* series with those contributors who make the final cut. More information can be found on our website, along with a listing of 28 *NYMB* titles and three *OMG!* titles that need stories. Check it out! It's time to get published!

www.PublishingSyndicate.com

My Story is Out: High School Years by Lyndsey D'Arcangelo



Lyndsey

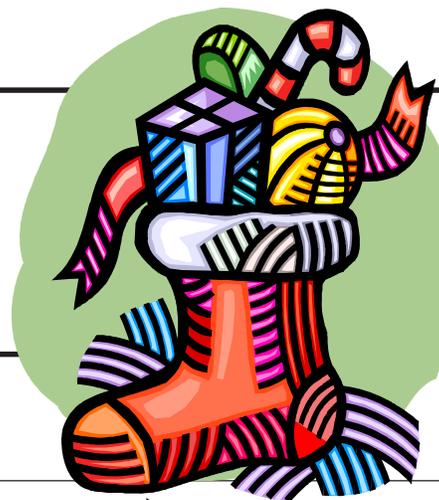
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