



BlueLoop Concepts, Inc.

The eBook Platform Landscape

8 Trends and 29 Companies Shaping a Market

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An Introduction

From A Simple Question Came Complex Answers

When executing a relatively simple search query - publish an ebook - you are met with over 30M results from Google alone. If you are slightly more specific, say you know you're looking for a specific ebook publishing process and query - ebook publishing software - you get a smaller set of results, only 2.44M. If you are confident you're looking for a platform solution, you can narrow your search down to - ebook publishing platform - and receive only 1.65M results.

The moral of this story is that the processes by which ebooks are created and published is seriously confusing. Besides an unmanageable volume of readily available resources, the ebook market is evolving in leaps and bounds on a nearly daily basis.

In mid-July, 2012, BlueLoop Concepts asked our contacts in the publishing industry a related, also relatively simple question: Which companies are developing ebook authoring platforms or offering independent authors ebook production services?

The answer to this question...

“I don’t know. Lots of them. When you find the list, will you share it with me?”

This report seeks to begin answering this question. Our intent is to provide insight on a highly dynamic market and its participants - the organizations that are actively shaping the publishing and ebook markets - the organizations that will hopefully continue to do so for many years to come.

Please note this report is not a complete analysis. It was not intended to be one. Rather, this report was designed to serve as the beginning of an ongoing conversation that can help all of those who participate in and care about the publishing and ebook markets better understand the landscape, its direction and the myriad opportunities available to authors, illustrators, storytellers, publishers, marketers, retailers and distributors.

Welcome to the conversation. Your comments and insights are truly encouraged.

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Methodology

The Process

BlueLoop Concepts developed a list of target organizations with a self-expressed or self-defined solution / service for independent authors or publishers.

From this list, formal briefing / interview requests were made and conducted as follows:

- 92 Organizations were identified
- 60 organizations received a formal briefing / interview request
- 34 briefings / interviews were conducted
- 29 profiles created and included in this report

Each briefing was conducted with the same questionnaire, focused on capturing insights into the company's vision and business model.

Please Note: *These one-page profiles are designed to provide an introduction to each company. These profiles are not intended to, nor should they represent, an analysis of the company's vision or business model.*

Upon completion of a briefing, each organization was asked, again, to confirm their interest in participation in the report. Five (5) companies who provided briefings were not included in the report. They were purposefully (and jointly) omitted as their focus or status extended beyond the desired bounds of this study - production-level independent ebook author or publisher platforms and services.

Each company was provided with the opportunity to fact check their [Company Profile](#) to ensure they were not misrepresented in the creation of this report.

To conclude the research, a series of key findings from the briefings have been extracted and further analyzed, independent of these companies. These analyzes are contained in the [Key Trends](#) section of this report.

Larger, more established organizations including, but not limited to, Adobe, Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Google, Kobo and Sony were purposefully not included in this report as their market presence is generally well recognized and understood.

Key Trends

What Can We Learn?

In conducting 34 individual briefings it was surprising to see such consistency in the identification of key trends for the sector. While dozens of topics were introduced, the following trends were most frequently cited:

A Dynamic Definition of Cloud

Meta Formats v. Rapidly Evolving Standards

Quality Matters for Sustainable Market Growth

Multimedia v. Interactivity

Non-Traditional Distribution

A Global Game

Shorter Attention Spans Require Different Structures

DRM

Taking this list as a baseline, BlueLoop Concepts' conducted its own primary research on each of these key trends to provide the following analysis, insights and opinions.

BlueLoop Concepts' analysis, insights and opinions are not intended to directly reflect the participating companies position(s) on these trends. This section reflects BlueLoop Concepts' position(s) on these trends.

For additional information regarding the BlueLoop Concepts analysis of these trends, please [contact us](#).

Trend: A Dynamic Definition of Cloud *

The definition of, and requirements for, the cloud are rapidly redefining the ebook sector.

Once merely a buzzword, the cloud has become the key to at least four core components of ebook success:

- **Collaboration.** Enabling all participants in the composition and production process to work together, seamlessly, from anywhere in the world. This collaboration enables authors and publishers to work with the highest quality people to provide the highest quality content both of which contribute to stronger recognition, sales and reader satisfaction;
- **Discovery.** When a book is in and of the cloud, the book is able to leverage one of the core strengths of the cloud - search. The more easily a book can be indexed and cataloged, the more effectively it can be found, evaluated and (ideally) acquired or recommended. When books are available in the cloud, either in part or in whole **, discovery can extend well beyond the walled gardens of traditional ebook retailers and reach broader potential audiences and expand control and engagement to the author;
- **Distribution.** No longer are books confined to a particular geography or a limited set of ebook retailers. The best works by the best authors will be available around the world, accessible instantly by the widest possible audience. This will be a key to long-term author success as new markets are tapped and new sales opportunities introduced;
- **Connection.** When a book is in and of the cloud, the book is able to leverage another of the core strengths of the cloud - social. When a book is a living and breathing work it can connect not only the story but its author with readers around the world, in real-time. This connection enables authors to engage with their global audience with as much personality as they see fit to achieve their objectives, whatever they may be (e.g. financial success, total readership, etc.).

The commitment being shown to leverage the cloud in these ways (v. a more simplified universal access mechanism) is significant. Simply put, it has proven extremely difficult for content to outrun the web - and books will not be an exception. Authors and publishers should see their cloud-based efforts begin to deliver benefits in the next 3-4 months. Those who are sleeping on this trend are going to find themselves in peril in very short order.

* For simplicity, consider the use of the term "cloud" interchangeably with the term "web".

** Availability of the work in part, or in whole, to aide in discovery will need to be provided at the discretion of the author and/or their publisher.

Trend: Meta Formats v. Rapidly Evolving Standards

The race to establish best-of-breed meta-formats (the formats used by a platform to standardize inputs before creating the KF8, ePub3, etc. outputs) will continue to be fierce. This is a battle that will shape how publishers and service providers differentiate their services / platforms in the near term. These formats will have an impact on the end product's quality and ability to quickly and easily support major distribution platforms.

As the ebook reading / rendering formats continue to evolve in capability and complexity (see ePub3, KF8, native apps, etc.) the meta formats that stay as close to standards-based HTML5 and CSS3 will ultimately prove the most effective for meeting the changing needs of the ereading platforms. This is a highly technical outlook but it is one publishers are going to have to become comfortable with in support of their authors and one independent authors are going to have to be aware of in making informed platform / partner selections.

Ultimately this issue will be resolved as standards are recognized and adhered to - but it's going to take some time. Expect this landscape to remain shifting for at least the next 2-3 years. As unfortunate as this is (requiring this level of technical expertise in the author community) it's going to be unavoidable as standards continue to shake out and retailers seek defensible product differentiation.

Look for savvy authors and publishers to seek platform solutions that stay as true to core HTML5 and CSS3 standards as possible. This will provide them with the most future-proof foundation to support the escalating battle on the ereading application front.

Trend: Quality Matters for Sustainable Market Growth

Quality, while typically a buzzword (just like cloud), is of paramount importance to sustainable market growth. The ability for authors and publishers to deliver consistent quality across divergent ebook platforms (Kindle, Nook, Kobo, Google Books, Sony, etc.) is going to be critical.

Readers will not stand for poor quality products that do not work properly within their desired reading application (e.g. scale, flow, image presentation, etc.). Instead of accepting such errors as a matter of course (which early adopters did in spades), mass market readers will quickly be turned off from the ereading experience and exit the market altogether.

A belief that if a web page can be properly formatted for reading on a mobile device, so can a book, is far more pervasive than many people are willing to acknowledge.

Every briefing touched on the importance of the quality of the output (the actual file that is read / engaged with by the reader). It's easy to say, "we deliver quality outputs". It's an entirely different thing to do it and to stand by it - especially as the ereading platforms continue to push standards in highly customized ways. The authors, publishers and retailers who make a strong commitment to end-to-end quality will be well rewarded. Those who don't aren't likely to last long.

Trend: Multimedia v. Interactivity

When the topic of enhanced ebooks comes up, the default reaction is to assume the book will include multimedia - specifically embedded video, audio, photo galleries, maps, timelines, etc. This is quite different than the inclusion of interactivity - where assets in the story (characters, locations, objects, etc.) are able to be engaged in and of themselves as part of the story.

Right now it's most common to see ebooks (or enhanced ebooks) heading the multimedia direction. This is where the rapid evolution and adoption of the ePub3 standard continues - and rich media assets are most easily implemented.

It's far less common, at least today, to see true interactivity coming into play. This is likely the result of a number of factors including:

- **Expense.** It remains quite costly and difficult to design engaging interactive elements;
- **Engagement.** It remains (and will remain) extremely difficult to intelligently weave interactive elements into stories where these elements are adding to the experience v. detracting from it; and
- **Platforms.** ebook development and ereading platforms - those with the ability to develop and support embedded interactive media development - are rare today. When these capabilities are supported, they are supported in inconsistent ways that make it extremely difficult for authors and publishers to deliver high-quality products.

Questions regarding viability of (and interest in) enhanced ebooks will remain for quite a while yet (perhaps 2-3 years) as everyone (authors, publishers, illustrators, animators, etc.) continues to grapple with the opportunity (and limitations) of multi-media interactivity.

However, within the next 9-12 months, expect to see a number of extremely well thought-out platforms brought to market that will make the creation and embedding of interactive elements easy enough for authors and publishers to seriously consider including these capabilities in their work. These works will all initially be focused on presenting the outputs as apps to ensure the most consistent (and quality) reader experience. Ideally these apps will evolve into ebooks as the standards support for interactivity continues to increase.

What remains to be seen is whether interactivity and multimedia will be a retrofit (e.g. added after the story is written) or a core development component (e.g. created inline with the story itself) and whether there will be consistent support for presentation of these elements in ereading applications.

Trend: Non-Traditional Distribution

To date the ebook market has been dominated by large players. Whether it's Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Google, Kobo or Sony - in each case we're talking about multinational organizations with significant reach and resource availability. For mass market titles (best sellers) expect to see these players continue to gain share.

For niche readers, those focused on a specific genre, non-traditional distribution points are going to play a far more significant role in a reader's discovery, acquisition and consumption of ebooks.

As authors and publishers look for new points of distribution that offer them more control over the presentation of their works (and more direct connections to their customers, the readers), look for a number of non-traditional sources to become major players in key niches including sports, news / politics, non-fiction, science fiction, high-tech, finance and romance.

The opportunities these non-traditional distribution partners will offer authors and publishers to engage their audience will quickly outpace anything possible from the incumbent ebook retailers.

Trend: A Global Game

As books become more cloud based (as defined above), the ability to reach a global audience becomes inherent. Savvy independent authors and publishers are going to recognize the opportunity to add a 5% - 10% increases in sales of their titles by opening their distribution to a global audience, and do so on day one.

The competition for reader's attention and money in a global market will increase dramatically as well. Improved quality of content and ebook "files", improved quality and availability of metadata through search and social channels and a holistic embrace of the cloud (again, as defined above) to support and author-to-reader engagement will all be critical success factors.

The broader the market becomes, the more important it will become for readers to feel connected to their authors and for authors to feel connected to their readers. This connection is the strongest way to establish recurring purchase relationships.

Trend: Shorter Attention Spans Require Different Structures

Reports of the book's death are greatly exaggerated. There will remain markets for long-form works for generations to come.

This being said, we are also seeing a tremendous (and accelerating) discrepancy in the information consumption habits between generations. Consequently we will continue to see a tremendously rapid rise in short-form works, led by younger generations (those under 30 years of age).

These requirements will be met in a number of ways including, but not limited to: social reading / authoring communities (e.g. Wattpad); short-form fiction / non-fiction specialists (e.g. Atavist, Byliner, Kindle Singles.) and, perhaps most importantly, segments of longer-form works.

Short-form works are self explanatory. Segments of longer-form works aren't quite as clear cut. Retracing steps back to the Cloud and Non-Traditional Distribution trends, look for chapters, excerpts, works-in-progress and other custom slices of longer-form works to become far more prevalent in the next 1-2 years. Available as both free and for-purchase works, these smaller pieces will aide in discovery, improve reader engagement and enable a broader selection of readers to meaningfully engage with authors in tighter time intervals than traditional novels allow.

There are many moving (and converging) parts here, but recognizing and capitalizing on shorter attention spans and new book structures are going to be critical to long-term author and publisher success.

Trend: DRM

It is noteworthy that while Digital Rights Management (DRM) was highlighted as a key trend in a number of briefings, it wasn't discussed with the same frequency as the other trends noted above. It is also impossible to have a discussion about eBook trends and not have any reference to a topic as polarizing as DRM.

While generally lauded as an inhibitor to a number of market growth and customer satisfaction opportunities and initiatives, DRM appears to be comfortably accepted as a necessary component of the ecosystem - for now. It should be noted, however, that those who discussed DRM as a key trend all saw DRM as clearly being on its way out, albeit via a very slow moving and painful process.

Company Profiles

A Look At Organizations Shaping The Industry

The best way to tell a story or share a vision is to do so in the creator's words.

The following organizations have graciously agreed to be profiled. Without them, and their support for the process, this report would not have been possible.

52 Novels	Ingram Content Group
Aerbook	Lilbook
Arcade Sunshine	MAZ
Atavist	Meograph
ASI / Booktango	Moglue
BiblioCrunch	Pressbooks
BookBaby	Publification
Booktype	SharedBook
Contentment / Padify	Slicebooks
Demibooks	Smashwords
eBook Architects	Unbound
eBookIT!	Vook
Graphicy	Wattpad
Hyperink	Werdsmith
Intuary	

We have attempted to provide as clear and concise an introduction to each company as possible.

If you would like more information on a particular company, please visit their websites (included with each profile).

Additionally, if you have a specific requirement (e.g. are looking for a particular partner, solution provider, etc.) or would like additional information about the report, please do not hesitate to contact [BlueLoop Concepts](#). We will do our best to help guide you in the proper direction(s).

For more insight on each company, please read on or click through to their individual profiles.

Company Profile: 52 Novels

Briefing: Rob Siders, Founder

Location: Sylvania, Ohio

URL: 52Novels.com

Tag(s): eBook Design / Production

Introduction

Founded in 2010, 52 Novels provides turnkey ebook design and production services for independent authors and publishers. The company utilizes a proprietary workflow and technologies to transform manuscripts into XHTML and CSS and deliver major retailer-ready eBook files.

Detail

52 Novels provides authors and publishers hand-built eBook files optimized for each major distribution platform including Amazon, Apple iBooks, Barnes & Noble, Google, Kobo, Sony and more. All of the development work is done internally, including quality assurance, via a clear, simple, easily understood and transparent collaboration with the author or publisher.

The company is committed to working closely with each author / publisher so that they receive the best possible digital product for their work. Whether it's guidance and coaching to help the author or publisher stay on the right path with respect to their digital works, or helping them create a distinctive voice and tone for their works when they're presented on a screen, the 52 Novels team is there with the author / publisher each step of the way.

While it may take a bit longer (and costs a bit more) for 52 Novels to fully understand the intentions, desires and goals of their authors / publishers - and to provide hand coded ebooks created by designers who take deep pride in their craftsmanship - the company has built a very solid and well earned reputation for its work.

The company's commitment to this level of personal engagement and high-quality, artisanal work delivers a very strong product that any author or publisher would be very proud to call their own.

What To Watch

As likely to pass on a project as they are to accept it, 52 Novels efforts to help authors and publishers find the tone for their digital works are exceptional. As interactivity and graphical / visual capabilities within the ePub standard increase, watch for a series of very high quality works to originate from 52 Novels. The company won't be the first to provide authors / publishers with these products, but when they do, they will truly be works of art.

--- End 52 Novels Profile ---

Company Profile: Aerbook Cloud Publishing

Briefing: Ron Martinez, Founder & Principal

Location: San Francisco, California

URL: Aerbook.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, Visual / Graphical / Interactive Content

Introduction

Founded in 2011, Aerbook is designed to support authors and publishers in their creation of visual books and ebooks and apps - without writing code. The Aerbook Maker platform works where layout truly matters to the quality of the story and the story is equal parts visual content and text.

Detail

At its core, the Aerbook Maker platform has been architected and designed exactly as you would design a publishing platform for a web-based, cloud-driven, socially networked planet - one where print is an important output but not a fundamental pillar of the industry.

Equally important to the technology is the company's core tenant that Aerbook Maker be a rational basis for a sustainable, cross-platform P&L for authors and publishers.

The platform establishes all works in a lightweight, proprietary XML format. This is the foundation from which platform-specific assets are built to accommodate multiple points of distribution and consumption including Amazon's Kindle, Apple's iBooks & iOS App Store, Barnes & Noble's Nook, Google Play Books, Kobo and Sony - as well as standard ePub, print-ready PDF (coming soon) and HTML. Any title developed in Aerbook can also be exported as a true native app project for easy compilation using popular mobile development platforms.

Interactive elements can be custom designed by authors and publishers or selected from a rapidly expanding list of "stock" elements offered within the platform.

Perhaps most importantly, authors and publishers can enable the sharing of any component of the work on the web from within the Maker platform. By establishing a phrase, page, section or chapter as "discoverable" a link is generated which enables a reader to access the particular section of the work. This is not a copy of the complete work. Rather, this is a specific page, indexable by Google, Yahoo!, Microsoft, etc. to aid in potential reader's discovery and evaluation of the work itself.

--- Aerbook Profile Continued ---

What To Watch

The completeness and vision of the Maker platform is substantial. Coupled with the founding team's experience in architecting and delivering massively scalable cloud services, the statement that Aerbook is re-modeling the publishing industry as a series of highly social, web-connected cloud services is certainly true. An acute awareness of and responsiveness to the economic and expressive needs of publishers and authors as new platforms (and technologies) like Aerbook arrive is also worth noting.

--- End Aerbook Profile ---

Company Profile: Arcade Sunshine

Briefing: Aziz Isham, President

Location: Brooklyn, New York & Washington, D.C.

URL: arcadesunshine.com

Tag(s): Creative Services, Multimedia Production, Publisher

Introduction

Founded in 2010, Arcade Sunshine was established to help non-profit institutions, authors and organizations produce the media necessary to tell their story, the way they want it told, via apps, enhanced (multimedia) ebooks, social media TV and the web. Technology is just another vehicle for storytelling. Arcade Sunshine will build new tools when they're needed, as well as employ of existing technological architectures.

Detail

A boutique multimedia publishing and production company, Arcade Sunshine believes in the value of platform agnostic storytelling, as well as the need for efficient marketing practices during this period defined by discoverability issues. Their goal is to help storytellers operate successfully at the intersection of books, movies and video games, especially for mobile platforms (e.g. Tablets, Mobile Phones, etc.) and to take advantage of these opportunities, not shy away from them.

While some organizations and storytellers will approach the company with a clear vision of the enhanced / multimedia / interactive elements of their work, many seek Arcade Sunshine's creative expertise in developing various media assets.

Arcade Sunshine will be ideally suited for organizations seeking expert production help in telling their story – with a background in non-fiction television, they are equipped to field high-quality video production, animation and design teams, not just coders. However, given the engaging and high quality of their work, it's not likely to be long before we hear Arcade Sunshine's name popping up more and more in relation to mass-market enhanced (multimedia) ebook projects.

What To Watch

What makes Arcade Sunshine unique is their focus on both the successes and the failures that will need to occur as this transition to enhanced (multimedia) ebooks and interactive storytelling continues. A clear recognition that there will be many failures along the path to success in this new arena - many of them public - bodes extremely well for their clients as they will be selecting an organization unafraid of taking risks and unafraid to put their names and efforts on the line to push forward brand new storytelling experiences.

--- End Arcade Sunshine Profile ---

Company Profile: Atavist

Briefing: Stefanie Syman, Head of Strategy & Business Development

Location: Brooklyn, New York

URL: atavist.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, Interactive Content, Publisher, eBook Store

Introduction

Founded in 2010, Atavist set out to develop a platform capable of helping anyone tell rich, beautiful and entertaining stories on mobile devices (phones and tablets). Today, the platform is used not only to support Atavist authors but a number of major publishers who seek to produce enhanced content once and publish it anywhere as an app, eBook (ePub) or on the web (HTML).

Detail

In order to build the initial Atavist app, the company had to build the publishing tools and platform to deliver on its vision of enhanced, rich-media storytelling that can be produced once and published anywhere.

Today, there are three (3) core components to the platform that are available to all authors and publishers:

- A content management system for authoring, editing and asset management;
- The ability to produce native Apple iOS apps; and
- The ability to produce eBooks (ePub, KF8, iBooks, etc.) and audiobooks (MP3) for distribution on all major ebook retail platforms (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple, Kobo, etc.)

The Atavist platform provides an author and publisher friendly platform where any HTML5 compatible interactive elements are capable of being embedded within a work. The Atavist platform then produces retail platform specific files which utilize the rich media capabilities as supported by the reading applications.

In addition to the core / traditional publishing assets for an eBook, enhanced eBook or app, the Atavist platform also supports a number of unique social hooks which enable a reader to quickly and easily share elements of a story on Facebook, Twitter and the web. These capabilities, when properly utilized by the author / publisher, should have a material impact on discoverability of a title.

--- Atavist Profile Continued---

In addition to the platform, the company also produces The Atavist. The Atavist publishes nonfiction stories that are longer than a typical magazine article yet shorter than a typical book. The Atavist published selections are a great barometer of how far the platform can be pushed.

What To Watch

The intersection of platform and publisher for Atavist is quite interesting. As the social and marketing capabilities of the platform continue to evolve (further aiding discoverability of titles), and the strength of (and recognition for) The Atavist published works continues to increase, the company is going to be in a very unique and enviable position - especially with the upcoming introduction of a web viewer capability and native Android app.

The experience the company can bring to authors and publishers in understanding exactly how short-form nonfiction works, how works can be optimized by platform to best engage readers and what's needed to be sure authors are building proper brands and supporting readers will be a significant asset to the entire Atavist ecosystem.

--- End Atavist Profile ---

Company Profile: Author Solutions / Booktango

Briefing: Keith Ogorek, Senior Vice President of Marketing

Location: Bloomington, Indiana

URL: AuthorSolutions.com / Booktango.com

Tag(s): eBook Design / Production

Introduction

Author Solutions introduced their do it yourself (DIY) book and ebook publishing platform, Booktango, in 2012. This new DIY platform has been designed from the ground up to utilize Author Solutions' decade plus of experience in assisting self-published authors bring their works to market around the world.

Detail

Authors begin working with Booktango by uploading an existing manuscript (in Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx), ePub, RTF or TXT format).

Once the manuscript is onto the platform, authors have a choice between three (3) different levels of service:

- Freetango: Including a free ISBN assignment, online ebook editor, online cover designer and direct connections to sell the work through to major ebook retailers.
- Time Saver: Freetango in addition to formatting and correction services, interior images and a free copy of the ebook, for \$49.00; or
- Trendsetter: Freetango, Time Saver and U.S. Copyright Registration and 20 BookStubs (ebook gift cards), for \$189.00

In addition to these basic service packages, there are a host of additional publishing, publicity, video and promotional services that authors can select depending upon how aggressively they wish to pursue them. Author's can select something as (relatively) simple as cover design or select a custom set of services (editing, line editing, press release design) to be sure they are producing the highest quality of work possible - and reaching the largest possible audience.

Once the book is complete to the author's satisfaction, it is a push-button process to have the digital (or physical) book distributed through all major distribution platforms in the U.S., UK, Singapore, Australia / New Zealand and Spain.

--- Author Solutions / Booktango Profile Continued ---

Each Booktango service is built on top of Author Solutions' decade plus of experience in publishing print and digital books - and is available for author's and publishers at their discretion. Booktango simply breaks out (fractionalizes, if you will) these various services and enables authors to select exactly what they want to produce their desired work.

What To Watch

Booktango represents a pretty significant departure from the traditional Author Solutions lines of business. From its strong experience in assisted self publishing to a completely do it yourself platform with Booktango, the company has taken a major stride to bring its expertise to the widest possible audience. While competition for authors attention is certain to continue to increase, the recent acquisition of Author Solutions by Penguin certainly won't hurt Booktango's position as author's see a more clearly defined path to garnering major publisher attention (and hopefully interest).

--- End Author Solutions / Booktango Profile ---

Company Profile: BiblioCrunch

Briefing: Miral Sattar, Founder & CEO

Location: New York, New York

URL: BiblioCrunch.com

Tag(s): Author Services

Introduction

BiblioCrunch is a book publishing marketplace where independent authors can identify and engage with freelance talent to help them create their book or app and get it to market.

Detail

Each author and freelancer is pre-screened by BiblioCrunch to ensure all members of the community are qualified and capable contributors. The BiblioCrunch market consists of hundreds of book publishing professionals who have hands-on operational and management experience in the industry and thousands of experienced authors.

Whether it is authors looking for an editor, cover designer, proof reader, ebook formatting / conversion, marketing / publicity assistance or any number of other services or freelancers looking for quality authors with whom to work, BiblioCrunch members can be sure they are working with and receiving high quality services.

To begin, both authors and freelancers create profiles on the BiblioCrunch platform. When an author is looking for a particular service (or set of services) they simply create a project request and freelancers can bid on the project. Authors are provided detailed pricing comparison tables, service provider ratings - everything they need to make a well informed selection.

After a freelancer is selected, the BiblioCrunch platform provides a complete set of collaborative tools to keep everyone connected and the project on time (and budget). All financial transactions are completed using the BiblioCrunch platform so both parties know they will be efficiently billed / paid upon the completion of each project.

Once the projects are complete and the author has their finished work (either eBook or app), the BiblioCrunch platform supports one-click publishing in the three major formats (ePub, KF8 and PDF). These files can then be submitted by the author to their desired distributors / eRetailers as well as offered for sale in the [BiblioCrunch ebook store](#).

--- *BiblioCrunch Profile Continued* ---

What To Watch

Today the BiblioCrunch marketplace focuses on independent authors and freelance service professionals. As the market for independent authors continues to mature, there's certain to be an opportunity for more established service providers (and authors looking to get out on their own) to become a part of the BiblioCrunch market / community. The fast and efficient provision of high-quality services from vetted service providers is a value that will only increase in importance for all members of the ebook and publishing sectors.

--- End BiblioCrunch Profile ---

Company Profile: BookBaby

Briefing: Brian Felsen, President

Location: Portland, Oregon

URL: BookBaby.com

Tag(s): eBook Design / Production, Publishing, Marketing Services

Introduction

Established in 2010, BookBaby is a member of the CD Baby family. The company brings over a decade of experience working with major physical and online retailers, distributors and content creators to help authors bring their books to market and promote them.

Detail

From conversion, formatting and cover design to publishing, print-on-demand, large print runs and distribution to the world's largest ebook retailers (including Apple, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Sony, Kobo, Copia, Gardners, Baker & Taylor and eBookPie), BookBaby provides a complete suite of high-quality services for independent authors.

One factor that truly sets BookBaby apart is its customer support team. Authors can call to speak with a real live BookBaby representative (M-F, 9-5 PST) who'll help them work through the entire process of bringing their book to market.

While this approach requires additional resources (and cost for BookBaby), the company believes providing step-by-step assistance, guidance and advice to deliver the highest quality support for an author (and the best possible final work product) are paramount to the author's and the company's success.

Authors then upload their manuscript to BookBaby (in Word, PDF, Text, InDesign, Quark, etc.). BookBaby then converts that manuscript into an attractive eBook and delivers the finished product to any/all of their distribution partners (iBooks, Kindle, Nook, etc.). BookBaby provides these services for a flat fee, ensuring the author receives 100% of the available royalties from each sale of the book.

The BookBaby platform also provides authors with a detailed accounting dashboard. This dashboard enables the author to track and manage all of their assets and sales performance across each of their retail / distribution channels in one place.

--- *BookBaby Profile Continued* ---

Another unique feature of the BookBaby platform and service offering is author websites. Powered by HostBaby (another CD Baby company), author websites are professionally designed sites enabling authors to have a high-quality web presence in a matter of minutes (not days or weeks).

What To Watch

BookBaby's history in understanding digital content and long-standing working relationships with distributors and retailers puts the company in a unique position to capitalize on a rapidly changing market. Understanding how companies like Apple, Amazon, etc. operate and work with digital content is a baseline of experience that can't easily be recreated. This experience should continue to yield quality results for BookBaby authors throughout the continuing evolution of ebook formats.

--- End BookBaby Profile ---

Company Profile: Booktype (Sourcefabric)

Briefing: Adam Hyde, Project Lead

Location: Prague, Czech Republic

URL: Sourcefabric.com/en/booktype

Tag(s): Authoring Tools

Introduction

Booktype (Booki) was initially developed and implemented in 2007 by FLOSS Manuals. The solution was renamed and brought to market in 2012 by Sourcefabric. The company wanted to build a platform that allowed creators to create the way they wanted to / needed to. Coming from outside the book publishing industry, Booktype has evolved based upon the needs for creators and publishers today, not retrofitted to meet a series of processes that were, or should be.

Detail

At its core, Booktype is all about collaboration and the web. A complete workflow solution for authors and publishers, Booktype seeks to bring as many assets into the development process as needed, when and where they are required.

The platform is built upon a completely federated, standards-based architecture designed to leverage everything the web has to offer an author and publisher in the creation of a story. Because Booktype is developed on top of well known, standards-based technologies, the solution can be customized to meet many different workflows and use cases.

Whether it's writing and editing, peer review, mentor collaborations or final file production (iBooks, ePub, KF8, Print-Ready PDF (in one of thirty pre-set size formats), Screen-Ready PDF or Open Document format), Booktype delivers a complete workflow for author and publishers . To support these output capabilities without standard conversion processes, the company utilizes standard HTML, JavaScript and CSS for the creation of web and ereader friendly works vs. proprietary XML schemas.

The platform may be used as a SaaS offering (both free and professional versions are available) or downloaded as open source software for implementation by an author or publisher.

Booktype is truly focused on the browser as the next step the evolution of the type setting machine - as well as being the "front-and-center way" creators will create and readers will read going forward. In this evolution, a book will become a collection of assets that live on the web in and beyond the traditional definition of a book itself.

--- Booktype Profile Continued ---

The company sees participation in the creation process becoming far more valuable - and far more sought after by creators. The desire to work with peers of a high caliber to produce super high quality work - this is where the book itself and authoring / publishing is really going to evolve.

The company and platform openly (and aggressively) ask authors and publishers how they can challenge the definition of an author, a publisher and a book - and from this challenge utilize a new series of collaborative tools to create the highest possible quality works.

What To Watch

Booktype helps authors and publishers get beyond the vision of a creator sitting in solitary, writing and brings forward a platform to meet the needs of the next generation of writers and publishers.

The company fully recognizes that Booktype is working on a problem many authors and publishers have yet to recognize - a way of publishing few have yet to adopt. However, as discoverability becomes an increasingly difficult and critical aspect of author's and publisher's success, the truly open nature of Booktype is setting the platform and company up for considerable success.

--- End Booktype Profile ---

Company Profile: Contentment / Padify

Briefing: Michael Kowalski, Founder & CEO

Location: Shoreditch, London, England

URL: Getcontentment.com / Padify.net

Tag(s): Authoring Tools

Introduction

Launched in 2012, Contentment's first product, Padify, is a low-cost, low-risk platform architected to help publishers extend their existing workflow and production processes to support digital and enhanced (multimedia) digital publications including ebooks, periodicals (e.g. magazines, news) and corporate documentation.

Detail

Padify delivers three (3) types of stock output formats:

- HTML5 - for use on the web or within a native mobile app framework
- Flow Layout ePubs - for traditional novel style works; and
- Fixed Layout ePubs - or replica-style works

These stock output formats are extended by the platform's plugin support where Contentment (and others) can add interactive or enhanced features to the content to help an author quickly and easily add to their vision of their story (e.g. movie elements, interactive maps, etc. if applicable). The goal of the plugin-based architecture is to provide as rich a resource as possible for off-shelf and custom animation / interactive elements built both by Padify and by other developers who wish to make their applications / services available from the platform.

All formats are available with the end product returned to the publisher / author for their management and submission to distribution.

What To Watch

Contentment has invested heavily in the platform's ability to support both traditional ebooks and digital magazines as well as enhanced (multimedia) works. Noting the importance of responsive design for managing multiple screen sizes across all types of media, Contentment's experience in helping small and mid-sized publishers extend their workflow should result in extremely friendly independent author tools in the near future.

--- End Contentment / Padify Profile ---

Company Profile: Demibooks

Briefing: Rafiq Ahmed, CEO, Co-Founder

Location: Chicago, Illinois

URL: Demibooks.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, Visual / Graphical / Interactive Content

Introduction

Founded in 2012, Demibooks delivers software and services to help independent storytellers and publishers deliver engaging, visual/graphical and interactive book apps for mobile devices. Demibooks aims to empower everyone to be able to author and create their interactive stories and content - regardless of age or skill - without having to write a single line of code.

Detail

Demibooks made a conscious decision to enable Apple's iPad as the initial point of creation for interactive book apps with its Composer platform. The iPad is a device where content can both be created and consumed. Composer allows story creation right on the iPad in a simple, clean and easy fashion - with interactivity - enabling anyone to bring a story to life. The democratization and ready availability of these capabilities is at the core of the company's mission, vision and daily operating objectives.

The company provides a free version of [Composer](#), as well as the upcoming paid Composer Pro. Books created with Composer can be published to the App Store via the Demibooks [Printshop](#) service. Demibooks has also recently launched its own ebookstore, [Demibooks Storytime](#), a curated multi-publisher marketplace for books created with Composer.

While the expectations of and comfort level with interactivity in ebooks continues to grow, Demibooks will (in parallel) expand its partnerships with print and ebook distributors, designers and developers to provide its clients with an increasingly complete suite of code-less creator tools. Demibooks is extremely open to working with illustrators, authors, developers and others to help expand these capabilities as the company clearly recognizes it is not feasible to provide all of these capabilities itself.

--- Demibooks Profile Continued ---

What To Watch

It is easy (perhaps too easy) to view Demibooks only in light of children's stories. The company's Composer Pro creation platform however, is well suited to developing any type of highly-visual content for easy mobile / tablet consumption. As the company continues to mature, watch for the evolution of the Composer Pro suite to incorporate additional capabilities to support creative requirements well beyond those needed (and expected) for just children's stories.

For a glimpse of this vision, and its implication on more traditional ebook content, take a close look at the company's Silkscreen platform.

--- End Demibooks Profile ---

Company Profile: eBook Architects

Briefing: Joshua Tallent, Founder & CEO

Location: Austin, Texas

URL: eBookArchitects.com

Tag(s): eBook Conversion, eBook Formatting, eBook Process Development

Introduction

Founded in 2009, eBook Architects (eBA) is an eBook service firm that provides conversion, formatting and consulting services which deliver high quality, QED-certified, future-proof assets for all ebook distribution platforms. For eBA, ebook development is as much design as it is code - an artisanal approach to creating timeless works.

Detail

The company's 100% U.S.-based staff works with authors and publishers to deliver fully compliant, responsive ebooks guaranteed to display properly on all ebook distribution platforms.

All eBA ebooks are QED certified independently via a partnership with F+W Media. This unique feature enables authors and publishers to know they are receiving the best possible products for their customers.

Whether it's a fixed layout, a reflowable layout or a custom specification for a truly one-off work, each eBA ebook is built with the unique requirements of the author or publisher in mind. The company utilizes its own internal technology and staff to simultaneously create ePub and KF8 files with complete and proper platform-specific support for interactive, graphical, and tablet / graph-based elements.

eBA is committed to delivering a complete suite of services for authors and publishers. The company enables its author and publisher clients to do what they do best - write and distribute / market books - not worry about the myriad technical requirements necessary to deliver premium-quality products to market.

What To Watch

eBA's greatest asset (beyond the quality works for which they are widely known and well respected) is its responsiveness. Authors and publishers have the ability to reach out to their project team at any time and get an expert on the phone - someone to help them resolve any issues associated with the creation of their eBook - someone with multiple years of experience in creating hand-crafted ebooks.

--- End eBook Architects Profile ---

Company Profile: eBookIT!

Briefing: Bo Bennett, CEO & Founder

Location: Sudbury, Massachusetts

URL: eBookIT.com

Tag(s): eBook / Audiobook Conversion, Design, Production and Distribution

Introduction

eBookIt was founded in 2011 to enable independent authors and publishers to efficiently and cost effectively create quality books, ebooks, audiobooks and get them into major U.S. distribution.

The company believes the writing, look, feel and overall technical quality of a work all reflect the values of an author or publisher - and that each of these components must be optimized in order to develop a proper audience and a sustainable and profitable author / publisher business.

Detail

The company's focus on being a full service provider is based upon hands-on experience with the costs and inefficiencies of working through the book creation and distribution processes. eBookIt seeks to provide a complete solution for authors and publishers enabling them to focus on what they do best - writing and publishing / marketing (respectively).

eBookIt complete in-house process delivers quality works, regardless of format (print, digital (ePub, KF8, PDF, HTML, etc.), Audio (MP3)) to all major U.S. distributors. This is all executed by a U.S.-based staff at what are very market-competitive prices.

The scope and depth of eBookIt's services is quite unique as it crosses digital, print and audio production - enabling authors and publishers to have a single partner for these key services.

What To Watch

One of eBookIt's key benefits for authors and publishers is the ability to reach a team member on the phone when they need help resolving issues associated with the creation of their work.

As authors and publishers become more familiar with the technical requirements of digital products (and seek to gain additional control of and involvement in their production processes), look for the company to bring it's policies, processes and tools to market to empower its clients to do as much of the work as they like - while eBookIt takes care of the rest.

--- End eBookIT! Profile ---

Company Profile: Graphicly

Briefing: Micah Baldwin, Founder, CEO & Chief Community Caretaker

Location: Palo Alto, California

URL: Graphicly.com

Tag(s): eBook Conversion, Visual / Graphical / Interactive Content

Introduction

Founded in 2009, Graphicly has evolved considerably from its original vision as a marketplace for visual / graphic content. Today the company has opened its platform to independent authors and publishers as a simple, fast and easy way to convert their visual / graphic content to the most popular eBook marketplace formats. For Graphicly, it's all about how they can make authors and publishers better - and get more people creating high-quality stories - by making the development of enhanced ebooks simple.

Detail

The Graphicly engine, the core of the company's conversion process, is completely focused on supporting authors and publishers with post-creation processes. Each submitted work is automatically converted to a standard Graphicly-designed ePub format. It is from this format that each work is run through a manual QA process to ensure the highest quality asset. From here distribution platform specific files are created, as requested, for Apple iBooks and native iOS apps, Barnes & Noble Nook, Amazon Kindle, Google Books, Kobo, Print-Ready-PDF or HTML for use on the web and Facebook's nascent app market as well as other ebook marketplaces. The process is wrapped up with push-button submission of the book to the author's or publisher's desired digital marketplaces.

Graphicly is committed to remaining as invisible as possible in the production process. To this end the company seeks to empower authors and publishers by integrating the Graphicly engine into their existing workflow and platforms - establishing the most effective toolset for the delivery of high-quality, visually intensive digital works.

What To Watch

Recognizing the need to and pivoting an organization, as smoothly as Graphicly did, is not an easy task. The company's experience with and understanding of the tools and features needed by independent authors and publishers to be successful in the visual / graphic content sector is second to none - and the desire to be the toolset, not the focal point of the process - should serve the company well. Additionally, don't underestimate the company's early recognition of and experience with Facebook's app market.

--- End Graphicly Profile ---

Company Profile: HyperInk

Briefing: Kevin Gao, Co-Founder

Location: San Francisco, California

URL: HyperInk.com

Tag(s): eBook Conversion, Visual / Graphical / Interactive Content

Introduction

Launched in May, 2012, Hyperink is a digital book publisher designed to help authors and publishers with text heavy content and large audiences (e.g. web traffic) curate and repurpose their content as ebooks and bring this content into new distribution channels. Hyperink provides the curation, editing and marketing services to help their partners get their ebooks to market quickly.

Detail

In somewhat traditional publisher fashion, Hyperink works with a selective set of authors and publishers. Submissions to work with the company are reviewed internally with roughly 10% - 15% of submissions making the cut.

The Hyperink platform, an in-house designed and developed solution, enables the company to cost effectively create high quality ebooks for distribution in all major print book / ebook retail environments, including their own ebookstore.

Hyperink takes care of everything for their authors / publishers and shares revenue from sales at a 50/50 split with the creator. There are no up-front fees for authors or publishers as the company is steadfast that it should only share in the success of a project, not create an author or publisher facing fee structure for experimentation.

The company's business model (financially and its focus on enhancing and repurposing existing content) enables the Hyperink brand to stand out in an increasingly crowded market. They've worked with many big bloggers including Penelope Trunk, Alexis Ohanian, and Brad Feld. The company is completely committed to reflecting a guaranteed level of quality for ebook content as well as the finished ebook product itself.

What To Watch

Behind the scenes, Hyperink maintains a very robust database of book selling data. Their continuous analysis of what's selling well, why, where and key topics of interest and opportunity is a guide to help their authors and publishers understand what they should be focused on publishing, when, where and why.

--- *HyperInk Profile Continued* ---

The company's ability to assist authors and publishers in quickly putting together ebooks that will sell successfully is an asset in and of itself - one that shouldn't be overlooked. The ability to produce a high-quality work in hours or days (not weeks, months or years) is another strength - and an industry trend that is only going to accelerate.

--- End HyperInk Profile ---

Company Profile: Intuary / FarFaria

Briefing: Ajay Godhwani, CEO & Co-Founder

Location: San Francisco, California

URL: Intuary.com / FarFaria.com

Tag(s): Visual / Graphical Content, Publisher, eBook Subscription Service

Introduction

Intuary released its flagship app, FarFaria, in 2012 to build a better story time for parents / guardians and children and - most importantly - to get children excited about reading. The company firmly believes that a love of reading begins at an early age and is the result of positive parent - child interactions around story time. The company has built FarFaria and the story discovery process to accomplish this goal.

Detail

FarFaria is offered as a subscription service (a Netflix for story time, if you will) for a very important reason - to enable parents and children to cost effectively explore a wide variety of books that are age, category, length and topically appropriate. For \$3.99 per month, subscribers receive a robust library of over 200 stories - plus the release of five (5) new stories each week. FarFaria makes sure subscribers are receiving their money's worth each and every month.

Stories are released into one of nine (9) different "lands" which are tightly focused genres / themes. Books range in reading level from pre-readers to fluent readers.

The company closely watches the engagement with and response to each story and "land" so that it knows what to create, when and in what order. This process, as well as the company's commissioning of each story from both established and up-and-coming writers, is designed to provide the highest quality experience - one that truly engages both parents and young readers.

The adventure of finding a book is a quality that is core to developing a love of reading and one not to be overlooked. With FarFaria, Intuary delivers a strong balance between the fun of finding a great story to read without getting lost in the process itself.

--- Intuary / FarFaria Profile Continued ---

What To Watch

With FarFaria there is always something new to engage young readers. As the depth and quality of the catalog and daily engagement factors continue to increase, look for the platform to expand with a tighter integration into the educational process as well as collaborations with publishers to enhance the platform and reading experience.

Reading is too important to the educational process, and the company too focused on its importance, for a vision this well defined and executed to not become a critical component.

--- End Intuary / FarFaria Profile ---

Company Profile: Ingram Content Group

Briefing: Marcus Woodburn, Vice President, Digital Products

Location: Nashville, Tennessee

URL: IngramContent.com

Tag(s): Book / eBook Distributor, Digital Asset Management, Print-On-Demand, Wholesale

Introduction

Ingram Content Group Inc. is one of the world's largest distributors of physical and digital books. Ingram provides the industry with integrated print and digital services paired with comprehensive, global distribution. The company provides print-on-demand and distribution through its worldwide network of global manufacturing facilities and channel partners, and it also provides e-book conversion and e-book distribution services to a substantial retail network.

Through its diverse operating units, the company provides books, music and media content to over 38,000 retailers, libraries, schools and distribution partners in 195 countries, and, more than 25,000 publishers use Ingram's fully integrated physical and digital programs to realize the full business potential of books.

Detail

Through its operating units, Ingram Content Group offers integrated digital, print, wholesale and distribution services for publishers of every size. It's digital and print-on-demand offerings are highlighted in this report.

Digital: Ingram provides services that allow publishers to provide their e-books and metadata to a worldwide network of up to 200 retailers, library providers and other e-book sales points through its CoreSource® system. Used by many publishers, including some of the largest publishers in the industry, at the time of writing, over 1800 publishers use CoreSource as their e-book platform. CoreSource also offers options that allow publishers to integrate with their distribution network without having to negotiate and sign direct agreements with each retailer.

Print/Distribution: More publishers (both large and small) are utilizing a print-on-demand model for the physical side of publishing. Through Ingram's Lightning Source®, books are manufactured on-demand as orders are placed from the publisher, or books are manufactured on behalf of the publisher as retail orders are placed. What sets Lightning Source apart from other book manufacturers is the seamless link to the industry's largest book distribution network. From the largest of the big-six publishers, to independent publishers of any size, Lightning Source has print and distribution solutions to match any need.

--- Lightning Source / Ingram Content Group Profile Continued ---

What To Watch

While many independent publishers and authors may be wary of working with such a large company, the ability to increase sales an additional 5% - 10% by expanding title availability globally and extremely mature PoD solutions demands attention.

--- End Lightning Source / Ingram Content Group Profile ---

Company Profile: Liibook

Briefing: Federico Roma, CEO

Location: Buenos Aires, Argentina

URL: Liibook.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, Publisher, eBook Store, eBook Library

Introduction

Founded in 2009, Liibook was established to deliver a complete ecosystem for independent authors to write, publish and sell their digital books in Argentina (and ultimately beyond). The company believes authors should maintain complete ownership of their works and receive 100% of the royalty for their sale - and has developed a business model, platform and virtual currency that supports this vision.

Detail

Liibook has created a unique business model where readers, through the purchase of a proprietary virtual currency on the Liibook platform, are the source of Liibook's revenues.

When a reader purchases credits, Liibook takes a small commission on the sale of the credits to fund the business. This, in turn, enables Liibook to deliver a platform for the creation, publishing, sale and management of books without having to receive payment from the creators (author and publishers) for the provision of the tools and market. This unique model enables Liibook to ensure proper tools are available for authors / publishers while executing their vision of delivering 100% royalties to the creators.

Authors and readers are able to use credits to promote books on the site or through an upcoming featured called SocialBids which are book promotions presented on Liibook's public social timeline.

Layered within the platform are a number of collaborative tools to support both the author / publisher in the creation process as well as enabling authors / publishers to engage with readers (should they choose). Books may be produced as ebooks or paperbacks and can be purchased without geographic restrictions / territory rights.

Liibook is ideally suited for independent authors looking for a platform to engage their readers and develop a global audience.

--- *Liibook Profile Continued* ---

What To Watch

Lilbook has two unique assets that are worth watching.

1. The Business Model. Lilbook makes money not from providing services to authors and publishers, but realized revenue from the sale of a currency that delivers 100% royalty to the authors and publishers. While it can be argued that this feature can be easily copied, it's a difficult value proposition for an organization not fully committed to the betterment of authors and publishers.
2. AuthorScore. Lilbook has created an author / publisher facing rating system called AuthorScore. This is used to help an author/publisher understand exactly where they rank on the platform relative to other contributors. AuthorScore is a pretty complex ranking algorithm taking into consideration the number of reads and downloads on an author/publisher's works, the quality of comments, the number followers on Facebook and Twitter (and their sentiment) and other proprietary influence metrics relative to the platform. Today the AuthorScore feature is unique to the Lilbook platform. However, in the near future, look for this capability to be significantly extended beyond Lilbook to other platforms.

--- End Lilbook Profile ---

Company Profile: MAZ

Briefing: Paul Canetti, Founder & CEO

Location: New York, New York

URL: MAZDigital.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, Visual / Graphical / Interactive Content

Introduction

Founded in 2010, MAZ developed its platform to help authors, journalists, storytellers and other creative professionals create high quality, interactive digital products without having to write a single line of code.

What happens if a book never ends? What happens when a work remains eternally in progress as it follows history, a life in progress, etc.? What happens when this work is best consumed on a TV and a tablet? These types of questions are at the core of how MAZ seeks to enable authors / creators.

Detail

MAZ is a simple, easy to use and cost effective platform for content creators. Authors / designers create their works in whatever tools they wish (inDesign, Word, etc.). Once the work is complete they upload their file to the MAZ platform where they have the ability to add any interactive elements they want within the work including audio, video, images, web pages, etc. Adding interactivity or rich media elements is as easy as creating a Tumblr post. It's super simple.

Once added to the work, all of the interactive elements are hosted in the MAZ cloud and cached within the app (on-device) when downloaded. When the app is launched (and the device connected), the app will look for any updates to the content. This unique architecture enables authors to create completely live content which can update as frequently as they desire - without requiring a reader re-download the app itself.

All aspects of the content's engagement (e.g. app use) generate statistics for the author which are available via the MAZ platform. Whether it's time spent reading, time on page, number of engagements with an interactive element or simply how many times an author's app is opened, MAZ offers a very robust set of analytics to help authors better understand and meet the needs of their readers.

Presently the MAZ platform output is confined to native Apple iOS apps which the author / creator submits to Apple for approval. Native Android apps will be an available output option later this year.

--- MAZ Profile Continued ---

What To Watch

With the depth of analytics and ease of use of adding interactivity, it will be worth watching, closely, the types of works coming from the MAZ platform. The company's experience in working with all types of content (books, magazines, catalogs, news, etc.) provides authors / creators with an incredible amount of flexibility in how they tell their stories. Perhaps most importantly, the real-time visibility of reader engagement will help them know they are on (or are not on) the right path.

--- End MAZ Profile ---

Company Profile: Meograph

Briefing: Misha Leybovich, Founder & CEO

Location: San Francisco, California

URL: Meograph.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, Visual / Graphical / Interactive Content

Introduction

Founded in 2012, Meograph seeks to become the standard storytelling layer for any digital objects. Regardless of the content, whether it's locations / maps, timelines, multimedia, links or text, Meograph enables anyone to quickly and easily tell high quality, interactive stories without writing a single line of code.

Detail

Meograph delivers a foundation for rapid story development - one that is predicated upon engaging readers / viewers with interactivity and multimedia. The company believes creative expression won't have a "winner takes all" platform - simply because the bounds of creativity are too broad.

Meograph has architected its platform to help authors / publishers accomplish the development of interactive stories without having to know or understand complex interactive development environments and their capabilities (e.g. timing, transitions, etc.). These capabilities are core to the platform and designed to be used when and where the storyteller sees fit from a library options.

Instead of being presented with a blank screen upon which a story must be created, Meograph prompts the storyteller with a series of simple inputs (facts, locations, links, etc.) to automatically render a rich media consumption experience.

The ideal Meograph author / publisher is an individual (or organization) who has a clear story to tell and is seeking an elegant and efficient way to tell it vs. becoming bogged down in the technical details of creating proper interactive / animation / workflow for their story.

By removing the technical aspects of the creation process, Meograph has created a welcoming environment for journalists and storytellers of all ages and abilities - one that can be integrated with existing author and publisher workflows to improve reader engagement.

--- Meograph Profile Continued ---

What To Watch

With the addition of more sophisticated prompts to engage storytellers in the creation process coming online soon, watch for the platform to quickly expand beyond its journalism roots. The ease of use of the platform will make entertainment-based storytelling a simple extension of its core value - one that will fit in extremely well with expectations of today's web-first / mobile-first readers.

--- End Meograph Profile ---

Company Profile: Moglue

Briefing: Taewoo Kim, CEO & Chris Riley, CMO

Location: New York, New York & Seoul, South Korea

URL: Moglue.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, Visual / Graphical / Interactive Content, eBook Store

Introduction

Founded in 2010, Moglue is an interactive ebook / app authoring platform designed to help storytellers bring their works to life on mobile devices (phones and tablets) without writing a single line of code.

Detail

Utilizing the free MoglueBuilder application, authors and publishers can quickly and easily load their existing assets and begin to layer in interactivity. Whether it's simple movements, sounds and buttons or a more complex full-motion activities, the MoglueBuilder application provides a true WYSIWYG foundation for building interactive stories.

With a robust set of standard actions, sounds, images and animations, MoglueBuilder is more than robust enough to enable authors and publishers of any age to begin working with interactive stories. The platform truly does support as much sophistication as an author / publisher would want - including the ability to upload completely custom visual, audio and animation / motion / interactive assets for inclusion in the story. Previews of the app are available for the author / publisher on their mobile devices so they can see and experience exactly what they are submitting to the app stores.

When the author / publisher is finished with their work, they receive a file from Moglue that can be submitted to the Apple iOS store for certification. Should an author / publisher choose, they may also save their books to the MoglueViewer app's library, for offline viewing and sharing of these enhanced works. Beginning September 2012, native Android apps will be available as an additional output format as well as preview capabilities for the author / publisher on their Mac or PC.

What To Watch

Moglue is deeply committed to the extensibility of their platform. Watch for an increasing number of third-party visual / graphical, audio and interactive assets to be added to the platform in the next twelve months, including a formal "app store" where more sophisticated assets may be purchased or requested from contractors.

--- End Moglue Profile ---

Company Profile: Pressbooks

Briefing: Hugh McGuire, Founder

Location: Montreal, Quebec, Canada

URL: Pressbooks.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools

Introduction

Officially founded in 2009, Pressbooks believes that it is only when books live on the web and are fully networked that authors and publishers can truly look at new ways of making and defining books AND THE NEW BUSINESS MODELS THAT GO WITH THEM. Once books are fully networked (with the content, metadata, etc. available to the web at the author or publisher's discretion), monetization models (purchases, subscriptions, advertising, paywalls, etc.) can be layered on top of the content based upon the author's or publisher's specific objectives.

Pressbooks is designed to support authors and publishers efforts as the business models for books and publishing are re-written.

Detail

Pressbooks is built on over 5 years of hands-on experience architecting and delivering open source publishing tools - and this is clearly reflected in the simple elegance of the platform.

When looking at the best possible platform architecture, the team decided to focus on Wordpress Core (because of its extensibility) instead of building completely from scratch. This decision was made to reflect an author's and publisher's familiarity with Wordpress-style tools as well as to enable the team to focus on what matters most - collaboration in authoring and discovery - not core editing functions.

Pressbooks delivers a fully networked versions of ebooks whether the final output format is an ePub, HTML, PDF, Mobi file, KF8 file, inDesign-ready XML, print-on-demand or another, yet to be defined, custom format. This core capability of the platform enables authors and publishers to leverage the power of the web in helping to aid discovery of the work whenever (and at whatever levels) they choose.

The company's business model is based upon providing a free service and extending the capabilities of the platform with a suite of premium services for authors and publishers - similar in fashion to Wordpress.

--- Pressbooks Profile Continued ---

What To Watch

Pressbooks delivers fully networked versions of ebooks from the start - whether the final output is destined to be ePub, PDF, Mobi, KF8, print-on-demand or other, to be defined custom formats. This enables an author or publisher to define exactly how discoverable each component of the book is (e.g. sentences, paragraphs, sections and chapters can be available and accessible without exposing the whole work).

Pressbooks is a useful tool right now, with something more radical behind it: the belief that in the long run the open web is where books will have to be to compete for attention.

The Pressbooks platform and business model have been built with the next step in mind - with a clear understanding that the uncertainty and rapid evolution of the market will have a significant impact on authors, publishers and readers in ways that can't (yet) be fully defined. Their commitment to leveraging everything the web has to offer relative to creation, collaboration and especially the connection between readers and writing is a model that authors, publishers and readers, alike, would be well served to get behind.

--- End Pressbooks Profile ---

Company Profile: Publification

Briefing: Yrjö Ojassar, Co-Founder & CEO

Location: Tartu, Estonia & Newcastle, England

URL: Publification.com

Tag(s): Author Tools, Distributor, eBook store

Introduction

Founded in 2011, Publification seeks to democratize the publishing business by connecting authors directly to their readers. By leveraging a socially-enabled, HTML5 (browser-based) authoring and reading experience, Publification helps authors create and promote ebooks that can open with just one click on over 2 billion devices worldwide and can deliver a completely social reading experience where readers can interact with each other and the author in real-time within the eBooks.

Detail

Publification has spent an incredible amount of time and energy getting the authoring process and author dashboard just right. It's simply beautiful.

Whether it's providing incentives to write by highlighting potential reach (and monetization opportunity), showing you exactly how far you are down the book writing path or presenting real-time statistics about engaged readers and unit sales, authors should find the experience very rewarding (and motivating).

The entire creation process is controlled by the author from within their browser. Whether it's enabling co-creators and editors to help in the creation process, opening up limited peer reviews or providing for the open, public sharing of a work in progress, it is at the author's discretion to decide just how collaborative and social their works become before, during and after the creation process.

Once a book is created, an author has the option of putting the book up for sale on the Publification store as well as one-click submission to Amazon, Apple iBooks, Barnes & Noble, Sony and others. The Publification platform creates the native ebook file formats for each platform and submits them to the retailer on the author's behalf.

When a book is sold through the Publification platform (and read on it's browser-based ereader), readers have real-time social interaction with each other and the author. Authors also receive real-time statistics on reader engagement, comments, etc. so they have complete visibility and control of the entire experience. Books sold through third-party retailers (noted above) do not yet support these social and analytics features - much to the chagrin of the company's founders.

--- *Publification Profile Continued* ---

What To Watch

Publification's focus on mobile reading (reading that occurs away from desktops) and ever shrinking attention spans (met with shorter fiction / non-fiction works) should be watched closely. They are ahead of the curve in recognizing the creation and consumption requirements necessary for success in meeting both of these trends. The completeness of the company's vision, platform, social integration - coupled with its overall execution to date - should bode well for Publification's success.

--- End Publification Profile ---

Company Profile: SharedBook

Briefing: Caroline Vanderlip, CEO

Location: New York, New York

URL: SharedBook.com

Tag(s): Publisher

Introduction

Founded in 2004, SharedBook helps companies, institutions, educators and consumers to dynamically produce personalized and customized books and documents. Whether it's a collection of chapters, presentations, web pages or other documents (HTML, PDF, .DOCX, etc.), SharedBook pulls it all together regardless of source or format and publishes the work as a print or eBook.

Detail

To begin working with SharedBook is beyond easy. Customers simply upload their works, regardless of format, and within approximately 30 seconds they will receive back their book complete with pagination, a table of contents - everything they would (and should) expect to see in a print or eBook. This entire process is completed for an astoundingly low price of roughly \$7.95 per file.

Should a customer wish to have their book physically printed, SharedBook works with Print-On-Demand partners to print and deliver the physical work, typically within 5 days.

Everything about the SharedBook platform is built for speed, ease of use and convenience - regardless of the complexity of the desired output. This is accomplished via the company's patented publishing and compilation platform which performs all of the tasks necessary for their customers to receive a finished work in what has to be record time.

In the Academic market, with their product AcademicPub (<http://www.academicpub.com>), SharedBook allows professors to create custom course materials. In this case, qualified users can select content from the AcademicPub Library of more than 5 million chapters and journal articles from more than 150 academic publishers, all copyright cleared for use in the classroom.

Additionally, for companies and institutions, the SharedBook platform has a fully developed and documented API which enables anyone to embed the SharedBook capabilities to create a book from their content - within any desired (business) processes.

--- SharedBook Profile Continued ---

All completed works (whether physical or digital) are returned to the customer with complete rights - enabling the customer to take their work anywhere they want or pursue any type of distribution relationships desired.

What To Watch

While the transition to digital continues to increase, we're likely a long way away from print disappearing. The ability to create a physical work for display and/or distribution is still an incredibly important aspect of the authoring process. With an inherent ability to use chunks / slices of content to create completely new works quickly and cost effectively, SharedBook is incredibly well positioned to meet the rapidly increasing print and digital demands of educational institutions and corporations for proprietary content bundles.

--- End SharedBook Profile ---

Company Profile: Slicebooks

Briefing: Ron Tomich, Co-Founder & President

Location: Denver, Colorado

URL: Slicebooks.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, eBook Store

Introduction

Founded in 2011, Slicebook's delivers an Apple iTunes-like platform enabling authors and publishers to make any trade book, textbook or journal available for purchase either in parts (slices), whole, or customized (remixes) - just like songs, albums and playlists.

This platform offers web tools publishers and authors can use to quickly slice or remix their works into completely new, purchasable forms.

Detail

Slicebooks has developed a simple and very clean process for slicing existing works into fully packaged and publishable micro content. Whether it's a single page or chapter, multiple chapters, or a collection of connected (or disconnected) pages from one or more works, Slicebooks makes it easy for authors and publishers to slice content, edit metadata and create custom remixes by mixing and matching content from various sources in minutes - all within just a few simple mouse clicks.

What you want, when you want it, on any device you need it are the core tenants of the Slicebook platform (including ePub, iBooks, PDF, Print-Ready PDF, KF8, HTML). Authors and publishers can download their new digital products and place them for sale wherever is appropriate for their readers - as well as placing them on Slicebook's eBookPie.com ebook store - currently the only ebook store designed to present ebooks whole or sliced on one product page.

The Slicebooks service is currently available to publishers and content owners only. However, later this fall the company will be introducing its Remix Service API which will enable publishers and ebook retailers to integrate the Remix tool on their own websites so their customers can create their own custom ebooks. It is at this level that Slicebooks ability to serve its customers will truly shine.

--- *Slicebooks Profile Continued* ---

What To Watch

Not surprisingly, professional and educational publishers have been quick to embrace the Slicebooks service, while traditional trade publishers have been more cautious about the concept of slicing and remixing. But bottom-up customer demand for more flexibility and choice in gaining instant, searchable access to micro and customized content is pushing trade publishers to slice and remix their catalogs as well.

Given the massive demand for fractional works in educational and professional publishing, and its resulting trickle-down to personal (trade publication) reading, it shouldn't be long before we see the slice concept taking a significantly more aggressive hold across the ebook landscape at the author, publisher and retailer levels.

--- End Slicebooks Profile ---

Company Profile: Smashwords

Briefing: Mark Coker, Founder & CEO

Location: Los Gatos, California

URL: Smashwords.com

Tag(s): Independent eBook Publisher / Distributor

Introduction

Founded in 2008, Smashwords is the largest indie ebook distributor in the world. The company makes it fast, free and easy for independent authors and publishers to reach all major ebook retailers with a single file upload - including the centralized management of all book and metadata for each of these distribution channels. As of August, 2012, the company has published over 140,000 ebooks from over 45,000 authors around the world.

Detail

For four years, Smashwords has helped independent authors and small independent publishers get their works into the world's major ebook retailer catalogs. The company has done this with a business model solely predicated upon the success of the author / publisher. In the Smashwords model, the company doesn't make any money until an author's or publisher's ebooks sell. Only at the time of sale does the company nominally share in the net proceeds from the sale of a work.

Smashwords believes it is the authors' / publishers' job to create a great work, one that is well written and will resonate with readers. Author's and publishers shouldn't have to know all of the technologies necessary to make an eBook. In an ideal model, these aspects are hidden in the process - one that is designed to deliver the best possible reading experience for consumers.

Authors / publishers upload their work to Smashwords via the company's website and submit all relevant metadata for the title. The company then provides all of the conversion services necessary for each work to be presented in all proper formats (ePub, MOBI, PDF, etc.) for inclusion in each of the major ebook retail catalogs including the Apple iBookstore, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Sony, and many others. At present, Smashwords distributes only a limited subset of its titles to Amazon, pending Amazon's creation of bulk ingestion tools. Smashwords also distributes to libraries via library aggregators such as Baker & Taylor.

For Smashwords, it truly is all about making it fast, free and easy for authors / publishers to reach the widest possible global audience.

--- *Smashwords Profile Continued* ---

What To Watch

What isn't readily apparent to the average Smashwords.com visitor is the strength of the global Smashwords author / publisher community. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter, Smashwords.com or any number of other platforms, the number of people work together to support each other, and the Smashwords platform, is staggering. When an author / publisher chooses to work with Smashwords, they are also availing themselves of one of the widest peer resource and reference groups on the planet - should they wish to participate.

--- End Smashwords Profile ---

Company Profile: Unbound

Briefing: Justin Pollard, Co-Founder & Creative Director

Location: Salisbury, United Kingdom

URL: Unbound.co.uk

Tag(s): Crowd funded eBooks, Publisher

Introduction

Unbound was founded in 2011 by three writers who felt they could continue to listen to complaining about publishers and the economics of the industry, or they could do something to change the game. The company reverse engineered the author / publisher processes, found out where the inefficiencies existed (and the money went / was lost) and built out a completely new type of publisher - one that is sustainable for authors and their readers.

Detail

Unbound is committed to helping authors bring books and apps to market in a financially sustainable fashion. To accomplish this, the company went back to the soul of the earliest book creation processes - patrons - and brought this forward to the social age via crowd funding . Unbound is about helping authors be present in a community of invested readers - about working for someone who wants to see what they're writing come to life.

When an author's work is selected to be published by Unbound, the author is engaged in a completely transparent and well-defined production and economic processes to bring the book to market. In addition to helping authors get their books funded, Unbound provides all of the behind the scenes services necessary to get the book published including editing, type setting, printing, binding, ebook development and distribution. Unbound is a complete turnkey solution for authors.

To begin, a book is presented to the Unbound community and readers are able to invest in the works they wish to see published. Once a book reaches its minimum support level (determined by Unbound and the author for each work), the formal creation process begins.

During the creation process, the Unbound platform supports an author's ability to share their works at any point in the process - in any way they wish. This may include providing early access to a chapter, whatever the author desires.

--- Unbound Profile Continued ---

Once the book is finished there is a specific distribution path to help maximize awareness and availability of each work. Hardbacks for each funded work are created and are presented to the people who invested in the project. Trade editions are a slightly lower spec and are distributed through larger publishers who sell-in on Unbound and the author's behalf to UK and online booksellers, help establish and manage foreign rights, etc. Digital editions (both eBooks and apps) are done in partnership with Padify and submitted to online distribution - including the Unbound website.

Unbound and the author split the royalties 50/50 - which covers all of the publishing, marketing, etc. needed to bring the work to market - while requiring no upfront investment from the author.

What To Watch

With Unbound each book becomes a social object - an active form of participation in a tightly defined, closely-knit social group - one with high relevance and engagement. As discovery and author-to-reader engagement become increasingly important (and expected with the purchase of a work), look for these core social tenets of the platform to set a completely new stage for authors and readers alike.

--- End Unbound Profile ---

Company Profile: Vook

Briefing: Brad Inman, CEO & Founder

Location: New York, New York

URL: Vook.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, Publisher, Visual / Graphical / Interactive Content, eBook Store

Introduction

Founded in 2009, Vook was established to integrate the video and interactive capabilities of mobile devices with the tradition of text and deliver a complete storytelling experience. The company began with hand-built experiments to gauge author / publisher and, most importantly, reader response. The success of these experiments evolved into the platform offered to authors and publishers today.

Detail

Vook as a company and a platform, is all about enhanced ebooks. The company has architected its platform to be a open, simple and easy to use for everyone from independent authors to Big Six publishers.

With a singular objective to help their customers bring their enhanced ebooks to market, Vook provides the end-to-end capabilities necessary for authors and publishers to succeed including:

- Enhanced eBook Authoring Tools providing WYSIWYG capabilities for all features, including interactivity / multimedia
- Landing pages for authors and publishers to promote their work, including an HTML5 reader for reader accessibility in the discovery process
- The Vook store where readers can purchase content directly from the author / publisher
- Direct connections with all major eBook distribution platforms
- A real-time sales dashboard for managing all aspects of a book's progress

Vook is committed to delivering authors and publishers an open platform - one that enables the creation of what books are today as well as what they will be in the future, regardless of format, while retaining ownership of the work and 85% of their royalties when sold through Vook and 100% of the net royalties when sold through Vook's direct connections to eTailers.

--- Vook Profile Continued ---

What To Watch

Vook's encouragement of and support for experimentation in the burgeoning enhanced ebook market is a critical success factor. Assisting in authors and publishers experiments to help them push the envelope as far as it can be pushed is a hidden gem of a feature of the platform and company.

Expect the Vook platform too see continued, aggressive development from the company as well as an increase in third-party developers who are working to extend the capabilities available to authors and publishers (and being aggressively recruited by the company).

--- End Vook Profile ---

Company Profile: Wattpad

Briefing: Amy Martin, Product Marketing Manager

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

URL: Wattpad.com

Tag(s): Authoring Tools, eBook Reading Platform

Introduction

Founded in 2006, Wattpad is the world's largest community of readers and writers. These readers and writers spend over 2 Billion minutes per month on Wattpad reading over 5 million total stories - and posting over 500,000 new stories each month.

Detail

Wattpad is 100% focused on the mobile reading and authoring experience. Whether it's short-form fiction, romance, fan fiction, science fiction or any other genre you can think of, there are countless works to choose from - and a global audience equally ready for and awaiting your unique contribution.

Wattpad's model is based on free, user-generated content. What also sets Wattpad apart from many other authoring tools and ereading platforms is the fact that everything contained on the platform is optimized for mobile (tablet or phone) consumption. Whether it's discovery, reading, writing or engaging with other Wattpad members, the entire experience is as (or more) compelling on a mobile device as it is on your desktop.

To date, many writers have written and published their works on Wattpad because it is their hobby. While most writers don't see themselves as professionals, they care so much about creating that they want to contribute to the strength of the very supportive reading / writing community in which they participate. Authors also deeply value the immediate and thoughtful feedback they receive from their fellow Wattpad members when they do contribute.

An increasing number of self-published writers are also working to build their personal brands on Wattpad and see the platform as a new marketing tool. So, the company's hobbyist-first model, is evolving quite dramatically. A recent partnership with acclaimed author Margaret Atwood is serving as the catalyst for this rapid transition. Ms. Atwood's validation of the platform has drawn significant attention to Wattpad as a community for writing, reading and literary exploration. Wattpad hopes to see this transition occur as an even larger number of readers become writers and continue to contribute meaningfully to the global community.

--- *Wattpad Profile Continued* ---

What To Watch

Wattpad's free, mobile-first approach to writing and reading perfectly positions the company for growth on a global scale - one where the primary computing device is a smartphone. The company was founded, and the platform developed, to reach the next generations of authors and readers - not to reach backwards.

Already looking well beyond North America, expect to see the depth of Wattpad's opportunities (and the strength of its success) come from a well balanced global footprint. While the company has yet to pursue its monetization strategy, there should be numerous possibilities and opportunities at the ready when they decide the time is right.

--- End Wattpad Profile ---

Company Profile: Werdsmith

Briefing: Nathan Tesler, Founder

Location: Sydney, Australia

URL: [Twitter.com/nathantesler](https://twitter.com/nathantesler)

Tag(s): Authoring Tools

Introduction

Created in 2011, Werdsmith was developed to provide one place, accessible from a mobile device (iPhone or iPad), where all of an author's writing projects and ideas could live. Werdsmith was built to be as useless as possible for a lawyer or account and a useful as possible to a creative writer.

Detail

Werdsmith is designed to "just make sense" for authors. The native Apple iOS app is structured the way a write things about their works - as drafts, ideas for future drafts and completed works.

The app is super clean and easy to use with a really handy "writing ritual" feature. This feature enables you to set reminders that it's time to write at any time(s) you configure. Additionally, each work contains a progress meter designed to help the author quickly and easily see exactly where they are relative to each work in progress.

All works are able to be backed up to the author's account for safe keeping in the Werdsmith cloud. Additionally, coming soon, Werdsmith will be introducing a desktop writing tool to complement the iOS apps.

What To Watch

The continued excitement for and growth in short-form fiction and non-fiction shows no signs of abating. Apps like Werdsmith, created by a writer for writers, should increase in popularity and prominence as smaller and smaller segments of works are presented for feedback (and even sale) throughout the authoring process. With an increasing amount of complexity being added to writing platforms, Werdsmith is clearly taking the less is more approach - and succeeding.

--- End Werdsmith Profile ---

--- End of Section ---

End Notes

Open Research

This research report is published under the principle of [Open Research](#).

Open research is research conducted in the spirit of free and open source software. Much like open source schemes that are built around a source code that is made public, the central theme of open research is to make clear accounts of the methodology freely available via the internet, along with any data or results extracted or derived from them. This permits a massively distributed collaboration, and one in which anyone may participate at any level of the project. (via [Wikipedia](#))

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About BlueLoop Concepts

Who Are These Guys?

BlueLoop Concepts is a boutique research and advisory firm focused on the mobile and digital media markets. Located in suburban Chicago, IL, we help companies evaluate market opportunities, design and launch products, and establish defensible competitive positions in global markets.

The company was founded in 2003 by Chris Rechtsteiner, a 20+ year veteran of the mobile, digital media and global software markets. We invite you to learn more about BlueLoop's founder and chief strategist via [LinkedIn](#), [his blog](#), [Twitter](#) and his newsletter, [Thinking Out Loud](#).

For more information on BlueLoop Concepts, please contact Mr. Rechtsteiner via email chris@blueloopconcepts.com or via Skype at [chris.rechtsteiner](https://www.skype.com/people/chris.rechtsteiner).

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