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Michael Giltz

Freelance writer and raconteur

Posted March 3, 2009 | 01:57 PM (EST)



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In the smartest move in years by the troubled book industry, the **Thomas Nelson imprint announced a series of new titles it is releasing this year in the "NelsonFree" format.** Buy a title at the regular hardcover price and you'll get a free audiobook AND free electronic book version included.

Imagine if you bought a DVD and had to decide at the store whether you wanted to watch it on your TV or your laptop. If you wanted to do both, why you'd have to buy it twice. Imagine if you

bought a CD that could only be played on your home stereo. If you wanted to play it in your car, you'd have to buy another copy. And if you wanted to play it on your iPod, why you'd have to buy yet another copy. So instead of paying \$15 for an album, you'd have to pay \$45. Crazy, right?

But that's exactly how most publishers treat bookbuyers, even though the internet has made the distribution of ebooks and audiobooks wildly inexpensive for them. Do you like John Grisham? If you want a hardcover of **The Associate** to put on your shelf and share with your spouse, that's gonna cost you \$27.95. Want to listen to it on your iPod or in your car? Well, the audio version will cost you \$44.95. Is your mother living with you but has poor eyesight? You can buy a large print version also for \$27.95. Oh, but you just bought the Kindle. I bet you'd love an electronic version. That would cost \$10 for the Kindle version...but it's not available in that format yet. Me, I prefer reading Grisham in the mass market paperback format (the small, easily portable version sold at airports). That will be probably \$8 or more -- when it comes out in a year or two. So just to read the new John Grisham any way you want, you would pay about \$120. Of course, no one is going to do that, but being forced to choose what way you want to read a book is crazy.

The book world has idiotically followed the disastrous lead of the music industry, which killed the

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single -- the cheap inexpensive way to start collecting music that turned teenagers into lifelong music consumers. The result? Collapsing album sales softened somewhat by the return of singles via iTunes (which record companies fought every step of the way). Similarly, the book industry has decided you HATE to buy cheap paperbacks at \$7 and would MUCH RATHER buy \$14 paperbacks in the bulkier trade paperback format, which is a lot heavier and harder to carry around. You also have to wait a year or more to do so, even though in other parts of the world the paperback is released the same time as the hardcover.

The book world has sadly imitated the movie industry by haplessly trying to emulate the DVD. They thought that meant including an author interview at the end of a paperback as an "exciting" extra.

In truth, Nelson is the first publisher to recognize the lesson of DVDs. DVDs succeeded because they offered far superior quality than VHS, provided extras like commentary tracks that were previously impossible and -- this is important -- were the same or cheaper than videotape. Now, taking advantage of the internet and cheap distribution methods, Nelson has dragged the book world into the 21st century. Buy the right to read a book and they'll give it to you in every format possible -- a print edition, an audio edition and an electronic edition so you can read it when and where you want. And they did it without raising the price. If Random House and Ballantine and Simon & Schuster and the rest have a brain in their heads, they'll follow suit immediately.

UPDATE: In related news, Amazon -- the maker of the Kindle -- has wisely agreed to begin **selling ebooks for the iPhone and iTouch**. Personally, I'd never read more than a poem or very short story on the iPhone but selling people books any way they want to read them is the right thing to do -- and even better if a version for the iPhone were bundled with your hard copy!

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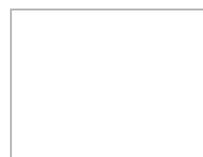
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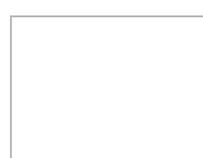
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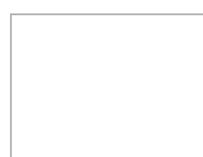
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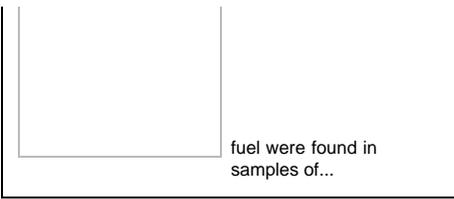
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JDM73 [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of JDM73](#) [permalink](#)

I heartily agree with you about trade paperbacks, Michael. There are still a couple of Raymond Chandler titles I haven't read, and I hate the fact that they're fifteen bucks a pop. The covers are nice, but not that nice!

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Thx! With no one agreeing with me about that, I thought maybe I was the only person around who preferred spending less money on a more portable paperback -- \$7 rather than \$15. Seems obvious to me.

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I LOVE books. I used to have about 3000. But I downsized to my favorite 300 in my apartment. Now I just get them from the library for free.

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3fingerbrown [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of 3fingerbrown](#) [permalink](#)

As a fellow book-loving apartment dweller, I hear you. My solution to the downsizing problem was to discard most of my books that are reasonably certain to always be in print. I like "The Great Gatsby," but I see no reason why my dog-eared copy has to take up valuable shelf space for years until I get the urge to read it again. I can simply push a few buttons on my computer and amazon or ebay will send me a used copy for a couple of bucks. I see it kind of like Netflix for classic books.

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You both have more self control than me. I can't bear to give up a book I've read and enjoyed. And honestly, I don't even enjoy reading a book I've borrowed from a friend or library. I'd much rather own it and either keep it or give it away myself. That must be why I have thousands of books in storage....

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7. The NelsonFree bundle might be a better price for what you buy--but the article is making an underlying assumption that isn't true: that people will buy multiple versions of the same book and read that book in each version. I don't know anyone who starts reading a book, switches a few chapters in to an audio, then flips over to their laptop to finish. People don't do that not because they can't or its too expensive. They don't do that because that's simply not how people interact with books. Most people only read a book once--in one format all the way through, so owning multiple versions is probably irrelevant---and expensive at the hardcover price.

8. There's a contradiction in criticizing bulky, heavy trade paperbacks then praising NelsonFree for only providing the bulkier, heavier hardcover---and selling it for the top price of all available formats. If the argument is you get the weightless, no-bulk ebook or audio, why bother paying the hardcover price if that's the way you read books?

I think the NelsonFree edition will be interesting to watch, but I doubt it truly a silver bullet for what ails the publishing industry nor providing consumers what they want.

hmmm....I guess I had a lot more to say about this than I thought I did. Sorry for the long post.

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Actually, the book I'm reading -- Dreadnought -- is a good example of the options that open up with ebooks and bundled multiple formats. No book need ever go out of print with ebooks, so that's great. Dreadnought is available in paperback -- for \$21 -- even though it's an 18 year old title. (Somewhat understandable since it's so hefty.) I couldn't find a paperback (though it's available from Amazon) and bought a used hardcover version of it and its sequel for about \$15 each, I think. The publisher got no money for this resale. I might have bought an ebook only just for ease of use at \$10 and been thrilled. (No searching around for a title.) But I knew it would be good and if the paperback at \$20 ALSO contained the ebook version I might have been tempted to buy that so I could put it on my shelf. Instead of a \$10 sale they would have made a \$21 sale they otherwise would have not. Either way, give readers as many options as possible and you win. Force them to choose and you lose.

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8. Again, I believe the multiple formats should be offered at every stage of a book's life, from hardcover to paperback. I hate trade paperbacks compared to mass market because they're so much heavier to carry around. I almost never carry around hardcovers for the same reason. But there are titles I would love to have on my shelf. Currently, I'm reading a 1000 page work of nonfiction called Dreadnought by Robert K Massie. It's actually difficult to read because it's so heavy and I would LOVE it if the book had come with an ebook version I could read on my Kindle, even though I'd still want the hardcover for my shelf. Maybe some would just want the ebook version. That should come cheaper, perhaps at the \$10 compared to the \$25 I paid for the hardcover. Then everyone is happy.

I don't think offering ebooks and audiobooks for free is a silver bullet but it's long overdue and NOT offering it will just frustrate readers and hurt sales.

Thx for reading and sharing your thoughts!

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7. You're absolutely right. People typically wouldn't buy a book in audio and a hardcover and a large print format etc. But the Kindle might change that, just like the iPod allowed people to carry around a lot more music than ever before. I would very rarely buy just an eBook. But if I owned a Kindle, buying a book at the store would be a lot more appealing if I knew I could have the hardcopy at home and take 30 books with me on my Kindle when I went on a trip. And the flexibility of the Kindle, which allows you to increase type size for example -- perfect if I loan the book or the kindle to my mom -- makes purchasing it even more appealing. That flexibility is a huge plus that books could never offer before, just like VHS tapes could never offer commentary tracks or (practically speaking) have room for bonus features like extra scenes, documentaries and so on.

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3. The analogy to CD and DVD is false. A CD or DVD is using the SAME format in multiple machines. That doesn't equate to MULTIPLE formats for the same book. The former is one product; the latter is many.
4. The publishing does not hate any format. Just because they time-release (i.e., hardcover first, then trade, then mass market) does not mean they are anti-consumer or anti-reader. You can try to argue that a mass market buyer is a lost buyer if only the trade paperback is available, but, really, so what? If the publisher is making money via trade paperback, they would be dumb to cut their own revenue stream.
5. eBook and audio sales are minuscule compared to other formats. Their price point is generally between paperback and hardcover and they sell fewer copies than hardcover or paperback. All NelsonFree is doing is giving away something they make little to no money on in the first place.
6. NelsonFree isn't "dragging the book world into the 21st century." They are bundling what all publishers already sell --giving away the eBook and audio version is a sales gimmick, no different than buy one/get two less desirable versions free. An eBook version is not an "extra" included with the hardcover--it's the same thing. Again, the DVD analogy is false---commentary included in a DVD is an actual extra thing included--it's IN ADDITION to the movie, not a different format.

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5. eBooks are so new I don't think we can talk about a price point yet though hopefully Amazon will prevail in making \$10 a strong figure. Hopefully eBooks of classic titles long out of print will be say \$3 or \$4. But unabridged audio books are FAR more expensive, thanks to the multiple CDs or cassette tapes they needed. With digital versions, this argument collapses and there is no need to charge \$40 or \$60 or more for a digital audio version of a book that costs \$25 in hardcover. And sales are not minuscule: audio books are \$1 billion slice of the \$20 billion consumer market in the US. Nonetheless, they would be wise to trade that short term profit for the goal of making buying books more appealing.

6. Again, I'd compare the eBook to the digital download of a movie that comes with many DVDs and allows you to watch it on your laptop or iPhone or whatever without lugging around the physical copy, just like an eBook lets you do with a novel you've just bought. Nelson isn't doing what other publishers are doing. It's the first to see eBooks and audiobooks as multiple ways of consuming a particular title, rather than forcing you to choose one format or charge you twice. It is exactly as if you had to buy a CD for \$15 and then buy it again at iTunes if you wanted to play it on your iPod. That's crazy.

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4. I have no particular argument with publishers going from hardcover to trade over a year or two, just like movies are released in theaters and then three months down the road come out on DVD and then on cable via video on demand. However, that window is collapsing. It used to be six months to a year before a movie came out on VHS or DVD (if at all). Now it's a matter of weeks and a number of tiny films are being released in theaters day and day with video on demand. So that's happening more and more often. And as I said below, they do often release popular books in hardcover and paperback on the same day in the UK. Making people wait a YEAR has always seemed unsmart to me. Finally, many MANY books are no longer available in mass market editions of \$6-8. Now the dominant version for softcover is the trade paperback which is \$14-18 or more. They've effectively doubled the cost of paperbacks and wonder why sales are moribund. This is especially annoying when they want you to buy, say, 12 titles in a series like Horatio Hornblower, which is 50 years old. Not a smart business tactic. They are losing sales.

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I'm not sure the relevance of a 12 title series being 50 years plays into it. Cost of production does not go down simply because a book is old---or public domain. A series like that has limited appeal and making them cheaper is not going to double their sales. It might increase slightly, but probably not enough to justify the print costs from an economies of scale point of view--which is a business decision, not a disappointed consumer one. I can see an argument for an ebook only edition, but then you'd have to convince a publisher that it's still worth the production cost.

In light of that, I think your numbers are wrong---according to the AAP website, in 2007, total trade sales were 8.5 billion, audio was only 218 million---and ebooks on 67 million. Audiobooks and ebooks combined make up less than 0.5% of trade sales. The market just isn't there to sustain the industry with those formats, so I still think the NelsonFree package is just a sales gimmick.

If something like the Kindle was going to have the impact of an iPod, it hasn't happened. Maybe it will eventually, but iPod succeeded because it met a real, existing demand. The Kindle hasn't proved it's such a thing because readers--who have had ample opportunity to buy ebooks prior to Kindle--still aren't buying them in big enough numbers to call it the savior of the industry.

(i hope I'm not overposting)

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Yes, but...movies went to video sooner due to market pressure and a way to maximize profit. For them, their video sales are maximized because they can benefit from the advertising dollars spent on the theater release, plus the first-run period shrank so video is not undercutting theater. Director-to-video is the equivalent of direct-to-paperback with no hardcover edition. Publishers simply do not expend the same marketing dollars per book--or even any dollars on some books. Therefore, two-marketing-budgets for the price of one does not exist for paperback coming out sooner for most books. Don't forget---the glitzy marketing campaigns you see for books is reserved for a fraction of books sold. The simultaneous edition might work for them---and it would be interesting to see if a Stephen King or Danielle Steele says sure let's try it. But there is zero marketing budget for most books other than the sales force calling on bookstores.

Yes the cost of a trade paperback is double mass market, but I don't think it's true to say the publishers are purposely doing it wrong. Trade format is the preferred format by consumers and absent the trade paperback, consumers do not buy mass market versions except in genre (sf/fantasy/romance etc.)

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3. The comparison to CD and DVD is I think, fair. A CD can be played on your home stereo, your car stereo and elsewhere. You can also legally make a digital copy and store that on your computer and your iPod and your phone, giving you the ability to listen to it in many different ways. A movie can be watched on the disc or your portable DVD player and many of them now come with a free digital copy you can download to play on your iPhone or laptop without having to lug around the physical DVD. I think that is VERY similar to the ability to download an ebook version you can read on your iPhone or Kindle or laptop. Yes, the audio version must be produced, but most of them are very simply done with the author (though the talented readers can make a book very special and some audio books are elaborate radio plays).

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While I think the NelsonFree program is interesting (I read the PW article) and am curious how successful it will be, your article presents several misconceptions:

1. The NelsonFree "version" sells at the hardcover price. Publishers sell mass market and trade paperback versions for a reason--price. Ten paperbacks at year at \$80 is a significant discount from ten hardcovers at year at \$250. Given the option, people wait for the paperback--the numbers demonstrate that. Paperback editions always sell more than hardcover.
2. Complaining publishers make you wait a year for a paperback is, well, complaining. It's like complaining movies don't come out on cable before theater release. Again, it's marketplace: the highly motivated reader with disposable income will buy the hardcover absent a paperback edition. The publisher does not have an obligation to give instant reader satisfaction for format (and, from my own experience, an ebook format is almost always available before or simultaneous with the paperback). If they weren't making money doing it this way, they wouldn't do it. They are in business to sell a product, and the point of any business model is to maximize revenue. It is only a failed business model when it is not meeting its market. The current model apparently works for them. It's only a bad business model if they make the consumer wait and the consumer doesn't buy. That isn't happening. Just because someone is disgruntled they have to wait, does not make it a failed business model.

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Thx for reading and taking the time to share your thoughts, a lot of which are interesting and good.

1. I expect and would urge publishers to keep offering the book in every format (audio, ebook and print copy) at every stage. If a year from now you bought one of these NelsonFree books in trade paperback for \$14, it should offer the multiple formats. I don't know if that's what Nelson is planning, but they should. When you're buying a 10 year old book for \$8, that too should offer the multiple formats. Or at the most maybe give you the option of getting them for an extra \$1. (Though I'd discourage even that.)
2. As I said, they do it overseas. In the UK, books often come out in hardcover and paperback at the same time. And why not? As you said, many people wait a year or two because they WON'T buy a book in hardcover. Why squander all the money and energy you spend on advertising or promotion by making people wait so long to buy a book in paperback? Some fans will buy hardcover, some trade, some mass market. Ad ALL of them should come with ebook and audio versions. In fact, their business is not working -- they are facing a longterm decline in sales and fewer and fewer outlets (especially indie bookstores). They could def use a shot in the arm.

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Your points show the difficult issues facing publishing, but a viable business model has to support your proposals, and from what I'm seeing of the numbers, it's not making sense. I agree the industry needs to do something to improve both its bottom line and meeting the demand for consumer but, unlike the music industry, publishing is trying different formats and sales models (the NelsonFree is a case in point). The argument I think you are presenting is more about the cost to consumer--everything should be cheaper and readily available---than it is about the realities of costs and production--everything is more expensive and production should be spent where profit can be made. The trick, as in any business, is finding the sweet spot between the two.

To your point 1, I think you're dismissing publishing as a business--a businesses goal is to provide a product that maximizes revenue for that business---not throw all its products at the consumer all at once for the same price. We can't complain that publishing is losing money and complain that they're sales model maximizes their profit. While I think publishing does a lot of things wrong, I don't think rolling out formats over time is necessarily one of them. You'd have to convince me that, say, Random House would make more money but putting out all formats simultaneously yet refuses to do it simply because no other publisher is doing it. That makes no sense.

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NEVER give one company control of your personal library. Especially Amazon.

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Here's an astonishing solution--- cheaper books.

Especially public domain authors.

do I really need to pay \$15 for Canterbury Tales?

Here's a failed model:

Step 1: release an overpriced hardcover.

Step2- When the buzz is over-- and only then-- release the paperback.

Step 3: Sell hardcover for \$2.00 in a remainder bin.

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I agree completely. That's why I'm such a strong proponent of the all but disappeared mass market paperback (which typically sell for \$5-\$8 dollars. I go nuts when I want to buy a classic title and only find it in trade with an "exciting" new forward that's supposed to justify my paying \$15 or \$18 or more for a book that's more than 100 years old.

Just as annoying is when I dive into a mystery or scifi or adventure series (like the Aubrey Maturin sailing books) and they expect me to buy five or 10 or 15 books at \$15 each. Absurd.

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GeeBee [See Profile](#) *I'm a Fan of GeeBee* [permalink](#)

Hey, long may that model continue. The hardcovers usually go for \$5.99 or \$6.99 at the big stores, i.e. a buck or two less than the paperback, which has just come out. That's when I usually buy the hardback.

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Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger *I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz* [permalink](#)



[See Michael Giltz's Profile](#)

Yep, I just say some hardcovers at my library for \$5. They buy a lot of copies to meet demand for reading copies and then sell off the ones they don't need once desire to get it slows down. So the hardcover of Paolini's *Brisinger* is \$5 and the paperback (which will cost \$13 in trade and later \$8 in mass market) isn't even out yet.

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ESerafina42 [See Profile](#) *I'm a Fan of ESerafina42* [permalink](#)

I love books on audio (audible.com!) but I can see why I would have to pay separately for them, though not the outlandish prices charged for CDs versions, etc, and even on iTunes, where there's no excuse because there's no packaging. They DO need to be separately produced with a reader (and I'm sure good ones are expensive), director, sound equipment, etc. Maybe you could pay a reduced price for the audio version if you own the book in some other format, to cover just those extra costs.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) *Posted 11:33 AM on 03/04/2009*

Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger *I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz* [permalink](#)



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Top-notch readers are indeed wonderful. When you've got Jim Dale doing Harry Potter or virtually a radio play for the Philip Pullman fantasy books, it's great. But many, many books are just read by the author or one of those professional readers who are good but by no means highly paid. Their services should be considered part of the cost of producing a book for consumption, just like movie studios don't blink twice at the tens of thousands if not more they spend on extras for DVDs like documentaries, audio commentaries, bonus scenes and the such. Since audio books will be mostly digital as opposed to the bulky CDs or cassettes, the argument for why they should cost twice as much as the hardcover collapses. If they recorded an audio version for a book in the Eighties or early 90s and it's more than a decade later and you're buying say a \$6 paperback, why not include the ebook and audio book for free, or say give buyers the option of paying \$1 extra for either of them?

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) *Posted 03:34 PM on 03/04/2009*

LaJu [See Profile](#) *I'm a Fan of LaJu* [permalink](#)

But people who don't listen to audiobooks or read either of the written versions will resent paying for them. They will argue that the cost of the book should be halved as they only want half the content. And people who don't want the hard copies will

buy them and sell or otherwise pass on the books after they've downloaded the audio/digital versions, and then the publisher (and author) will lose out.

Another issue is that only books in series or by authors that are already popular are usually made into audiobooks. Publishers already spend loads of money on books that aren't successful, this would be asking them to spend even more, if they are meant to record audio versions of every book.

Thirdly, publishers don't necessarily buy the audio rights to the books they buy the rights to print, or if they do, they may then sell them to another company. Authors may not want to sell them, or may in some cases have sold them before selling the print rights.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 02:47 PM on 03/10/2009

Charity [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Charity](#) [permalink](#)

to follow up on others here who mentioned libraries, one doesn't even have to go to the library to take advantage of some of its offerings since most libraries have a strong internet web site that includes something called "net library" and "overdrive." there is even an online movie viewing application albeit with not a great selection of films, but still, it's there for our pleasure.

BTW, i've been getting my DVDs - all the popular movies one could possibly want to see - by reserving them online at the library web site, and waiting "in line" for them as they circulate around the county. i absolutely no longer rent DVDs. i can't recall the last time i was in a blockbuster - eight years ago?

lately however, i've become slightly addicted to "net library" and "overdrive." one can download audio books to listen on your computer and/or download them as mp3s for your IPOD or other device - or burn them to a CD.

one can also download books as an adobe pdf and read it that way. you don't get a too wide of a selection of titles just yet; not all books in the library are available.

using "net library" and "overdrive" one also has access to a selection of film titles, documentaries, old TV shows, old radio broadcasts - aside from the other film application i mentioned earlier.

in these budge conscious times, i certainly believe libraries are the way to go.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 11:27 AM on 03/04/2009

Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)



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Libraries are great. And the more these multiple formats are seen as just different ways of making a book available (as opposed to treating an audio or ebook as an entirely different product), the more libraries will be able to make them available to the people who use them. Hence the move by Nelson should be a boon to library users down the road if it catches on.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 03:36 PM on 03/04/2009

Vanitha [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Vanitha](#) [permalink](#)

Although the analogy of the publishing industry to the music industry is apt in many ways, one can't forget the disparity in wealth between the two. The average author (and I say this as a writer with my debut novel coming out by Avon Books next year) doesn't see much in terms of royalties per book. For us, the money comes in the form of advances. Royalties, if we see them at all, is much better for hardcover than soft, better for trade paperback over cheap paperback. So writers and publishers push for formats that readers find too costly to buy. Until the publishing industry is revolutionized, everyone in the chain suffers--publishers, authors and consumers. It's too soon to tell yet if digital media will be the means of making writing and reading profitable but if something doesn't change, the literary industry will fail, to the detriment of all.

www.vanithasankaran.com

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Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)



[See Michael Giltz's Profile](#)

There are of course many differences. Knowing many midlist writers, I certainly feel for them. I also feel that what's good for readers and gets more people reading will ultimately be good for authors. I believe authors have been fooled into seeing trade paperbacks (at \$15 or \$18 or more) as "prestigious" while mass market paperbacks are

seen as trashy. It's crazy when even 20 or 30 year old mystery series (with 10 titles in the series) are only in trade paperback and thus cost much more. That has kept me from diving in many times and I can't be alone to price sensitivity, especially for a title that's decades old. I don't think ebooks and audio books can jumpstart the industry or bring back indie book stores. But NOT embracing them would be a fatal mistake. A book is a book is a book and someone who buys it should be allowed to read it in as many ways as possible, be it ebook or audio or paperback or hardcover, on their computer or Kindle or at the beach with the cover bent back. And congrats on having your first book coming out! That's a huge accomplishment. Thanks to ebooks I hope it never goes out of print (but check your contract :).

   [Flag as abusive](#) [Posted 03:41 PM on 03/04/2009](#)

 **nellieh** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of nellieh](#) [permalink](#)

I enjoyed Grisham's "The Associate" about a week after it arrived at our local library. As long as I returned it within the allotted time, I did, it was FREE. I have taken library books on planes, vacations, to dr. and dentist appointments. Of course I'm 75 years old and have been able to do without all the supposed conveniences most of my life. I discovered the library very early in life and have become addicted to it. I am not technical challenged. I retired as an electronic technician.

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 **Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger** [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)



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Libraries are great and economical. My mom (who just turned 80) is there constantly checking out hardcovers and audio books for the car or trips. If Nelson's approach catches on, it should make it easier for the library to provide more and more books in more and more formats for everyone to enjoy.

   [Flag as abusive](#) [Posted 03:44 PM on 03/04/2009](#)

 **Megley** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Megley](#) [permalink](#)

I guess I'm just old. I love the way a book feels in my hands, awkward or not. I love little paperbacks because I can manipulate them to fit the way I read: bend the book in half, even though the pages tend to fall out after a while. (When I'm done with it, I donate it to my local library for their used book sales). I actually welcome the neck ache I get after spending hours in a bookstore or library reading titles. But NelsonFree may be on to something: I can get the actual book for myself, and the audio version for my brother-in-law who commutes an hour each way to work every day--FOR NO ADDITIONAL FEE! A company that is NOT trying to gouge me!!!

What a concept!!!

   [Flag as abusive](#) [Posted 09:02 AM on 03/04/2009](#)

 **Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger** [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)



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I agree about loving to hold books in my hand. But I wouldn't mind with the thousands of dollars I spend on them getting an ebook version I can put on my Kindle and take to Europe without filling up an extra suitcase and breaking my back. And before the publisher flips out about you giving the audio version to your brother, you could already share that paperback or audio version you bought with anyone you want. Ease of use will encourage people to buy more books. Loads of stupid restrictions that don't stop the real thieves anyway will just annoy people like you and me.

   [Flag as abusive](#) [Posted 03:45 PM on 03/04/2009](#)

 **David Leach** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of David Leach](#) [permalink](#)

Here at Thomas Nelson, we think NelsonFree is very cool--and frankly--overdue. I love that it actually one-ups all the fuss Roy Blount, Jr. and the Author Guild made about the text-to-speech function. Just as you did the math on why NelsonFree works financially for the consumer, I demonstrated why authors are better off with a program like NelsonFree financially at my blog yesterday <http://consequentialvalue.com/2009/03/03/hit-with-a-blount-instrument/>.

Also in response to a couple of comments above--1) The libraries ARE working feverishly to develop ways to add more platforms to their offerings. 2) McCain didn't just sign off on the audio, he did it himself.

   [Flag as abusive](#) [Posted 08:51 AM on 03/04/2009](#)

 **Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger** [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)



See Michael Giltz's Profile

Thanks for the link and the info. I wonder, do you have plans to bundle the multiple formats for titles when they come out in paperback as well?

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 03:46 PM on 03/04/2009

[David Leach](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of David Leach](#) [permalink](#)

Right now, our plan is to roll out all business books with the NelsonFree features, regardless of binding. No plans at the moment to go backwards into the backlist, but current hardcovers that go to paperback will be NelsonFree...or at least that's my understanding.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 11:15 AM on 03/05/2009

[JamezQ](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of JamezQ](#) [permalink](#)

I'm not buying any books or music that wont come downloadable. If its not available for my Kindle or my Ipod I wont buy it.

I don't have room in my apartment for books or CDs but I have plenty of space on my Kindle and Ipod.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 07:12 AM on 03/04/2009

[MagisterLudi](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of MagisterLudi](#) [permalink](#)

You mean you only read downloadable books and nothing else?
You probably don't t read much.

Let's see what happens to your content in about 5 years or so.
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[Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger](#) [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)



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JamezQ, I know many people like you, especially when it comes to music. I can't imagine not having the actual physical CD or book in my reach, but others don't care. IGiven the highly limited number of titles available (it's something like 250,000 but that many titles get released every two years), I also can't imagine limiting myself to ebooks. I'm not a John Grisham fan but his latest title for example is not available on the Kindle. MagisterLudi makes some valid points but I don't think it's too pie in the sky to see copyrights and intellectual property as having a sea change in the next 50 years. With Google's book imaging project and ebooks proliferating why wouldn't every single public domain title be available free just like you can get text versions online? I think because of digital ease of access, that 50 years from now just about everything from movies to TV shows to books to albums will just be out there, just like they're in your local library and everyone will have access to everything, certainly everything made 30 years ago and back. It's gonna be great. I don't know how writers like me will make money, but it's coming MasterLuigi.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 03:51 PM on 03/04/2009

[Taurus](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Taurus](#) [permalink](#)

I hate mass market paperbacks: the print is too small, the bindings don't last, the package itself is too small. Trade paperbacks are easier to slip into luggage because they're flatter, usually have larger print, and are simply more comfortable to hold. And that all may be why mass market paperback sales are way down.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 05:58 AM on 03/04/2009

[justmeinAz](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of justmeinAz](#) [permalink](#)

I have the same preference, and for the same reasons. I'm quite curious about the Kindle, but frankly, as long as Amazon won't budge on the price, I'm sticking with print.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 10:39 AM on 03/04/2009

[Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger](#) [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)



[See Michael Giltz's Profile](#)

Hey guys, thanks for reading. If you prefer trade paperbacks, great! I'm glad you have the option to buy it in that format and annoyed that I DON'T have the option to buy the same title in mass market. You wanna pay \$15 for the same book in trade that I can get for \$7 in mass market, cool. I understand why it's appealing. They last longer and are def sturdier. But mas market sales are down because very few bestsellers are released in that format anymore. JustmeinAz, I agree that the Kindle is pricey. I'm sure it'll come down to below \$200, though I think \$150 might be the sweet spot for mass consumption. And I HOPE they make ebooks they sell available to every ebook out there, which is exactly what seems to be happening.

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