

**OFF-LINE AND ON-DEMAND
THE TYEE'S FIRST ENDEAVOUR IN PRINT PUBLISHING**

by

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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes and analyzes the creation of a print-on-demand anthology from free online content sourced from *The Tyee*. The book, titled *Harvested Here: Delicious Thinking About Local Food*, was created by *Tyee* staff as an experiment in brand extension, reader engagement, and in recruiting new sponsors to fund future journalism on the independent, online news site. The report that follows considers the roadblocks faced by the editorial team during the course of putting “pixels into print,” and catalogues the myriad benefits the first *Tyee Special Edition* has brought to the publication. The report concludes with an assessment of the merits of three print-on-demand options available to publishers in Vancouver (BookRiff, Lightning Source, and the Espresso Book Machine), and considers how *The Tyee* will carry out future publishing ventures.

Keywords: print-on-demand publishing; online journalism; progressive media; social media; anthologies; niche audiences; ebooks; business models for websites; brand extension

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1 INTRODUCTION: *THE TYEE'S PUBLISHING MODEL*

On a sweltering afternoon in late August, 2010, a panicked grad student raced down the Cypress Street bike lane, struggling to balance a lopsided cardboard box on her bike's handlebars. Inside the box were thirty books, hot off the press and very nearly late getting to the Museum of Vancouver where they were supposed to be featured at the opening of a new exhibit.

These thirty, still-warm volumes weren't any ordinary books. They were the first copies of *Harvested Here*, an anthology of articles from the Vancouver-based, independent online news magazine, *The Tyee*. The books had just been printed at a local bookstore on an Espresso Book Machine, a new form of print-on-demand (P.O.D.) technology that transforms a PDF file into a bookshelf-worthy paperback. Though the actual printing of a book on an EBM takes only minutes, the bound-and-glued volumes that filled that precariously balanced box represented months of planning and hard work.

1.1 *Harvested Here: Delicious Thinking About Local Food*

Mechanically speaking, what *The Tyee* published was this: a 179-page, 6"x9" paperback book, perfect bound, with a four-colour cover and black-and-white interior. *Harvested Here* comprises 29 articles, the work of five local authors on food and farming in British Columbia. *The Tyee* website originally published all the articles included in *Harvested Here*, though the writers retain copyright of their work. Some date as far back as 2005, while the most recent work included in the book was published on the site in spring 2010.

The first thirty copies were printed in something of a panic on the day they were to be included in an exhibit opening at the Museum of Vancouver called "Home Grown: Local Sustainable Food." These copies sold quickly and, to date, 220 additional copies have been printed-on-demand. The book costs \$14, with one dollar of every sale donated to FarmFolk/CityFolk,¹ a Vancouver non-profit that promotes local, sustainable eating and farming.

¹ FarmFolk/CityFolk was closely involved with the Museum of Vancouver "Home Grown" exhibit that featured *Harvested Here*. More information can be found on their website: <http://www.ffcf.bc.ca/>

Harvested Here has given new life to *The Tyee*'s tastiest archival content. Since the August release of the book, the stories included in the anthology have seen increased traffic on the site.² David Tracey's six *Good to Grow*³ articles, published in August 2009, another six from *Eat Your History*,⁴ by Joanne Will and Jeff Nield, published in September and October of the same year and, as already mentioned, the original *100-Mile Diet* series by James MacKinnon and Alisa Smith,⁵ which repurposes fifteen articles from the popular 2005 series.

The 100-Mile Diet started as a chain of articles on local eating, published on *The Tyee*,⁶ and grew to an international obsession. It was covered by media across North America, and resulted into a book deal for the authors with Random House Canada. There was even a reality television series.⁷

These details provide an outline; however, to fully understand the relevance of *The Tyee*'s first print-on-demand endeavour, some additional background is necessary. The following section will introduce *The Tyee* and provide context for *Harvested Here*. Following a brief recounting of the publication's history, this introductory chapter will explain the day-to-day functioning of the online news magazine, the staff, the website layout, the editorial workflow and content management systems, the site's outreach and marketing, and the budget. It will also describe the current challenges *The Tyee* faces as an online-only news outlet, competing against larger, better-known, better-funded media in Canada.

1.2 *The Tyee*'s History

In recent decades, Canada's news media has become increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few very large corporations.⁸ According to a 2006 report by the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, "few independent papers remain in Canada and there are barriers to the

² See Appendix B for details on the *Tyee* traffic to the articles included in *Harvested Here*.

³ "Good to Grow," *The Tyee*, <http://thetyee.ca/News/2009/08/18/GoodToGrow/>

⁴ "Eat Your History," *The Tyee*, <http://thetyee.ca/Series/2009/08/06/EatYourHistory/>

⁵ More information about *The 100-Mile Diet* is available at <http://100milediet.org>

⁶ "The 100-Mile Diet," *The Tyee*, <http://thetyee.ca/Series/2005/06/28/100Mile/>

⁷ The 100-Mile Diet reality television series aired in Canada on The Food Network. More information is available here: <http://100mile.foodtv.ca/>

⁸ David Beers, "The Public Sphere and Online, Independent Journalism," *Canadian Journal of Education* 29. no.1 (2006), 114.

establishment of others.”⁹ This *Final Report on the Canadian News Media* is the most recent of a number of similar studies of Canadian media that go back several decades. In 1970, *The Davey Report*¹⁰ documented the passing of media control to a few large corporations. Despite the recommendations of *The Davey Report* and the subsequent findings of the *Kent Committee*, who investigated the same issues of media ownership and control in 1981, “monopoly ownership and the concentration of ownership into fewer and fewer hands have increased in all communications sectors.”¹¹

This concentration is conspicuous enough – one only need look at the masthead of a Canadian newspaper or magazine to understand that, save for a few small-fry exceptions, a handful of large companies control the information that reaches the Canadian public. Rogers, for example, publishes dozens of titles, including *MacLean’s*, *Chatelaine*, *Lou Lou*, *Flare*, *Hello! Canada*, and *Today’s Parent*.¹² Similarly, Transcontinental Media produces several dozen consumer magazines, including *Canadian Living*, *Elle Canada*, and *Style at Home*, as well as over 200 newspapers.¹³ Torstar Corporation publishes *The Toronto Star*, *Waterloo Regional Record*, *Hamilton Spectator*, *Guelph Mercury*, and 95 other community newspapers in southern Ontario, owns a 20% equity interest in CTVglobemedia Inc., and holds almost 20% of the shares for Black Press. The list could go on.

In considering the danger posed by a media monopoly, Harvard professor and author Lawrence Lessig asks, “If the media are owned by a handful of companies, each basically holding the very same ideals, how much diversity can we expect in the production of media content?”¹⁴ Around the same time Lessig posed this question, an experienced journalist and editor named David Beers was grappling with the same issue. In 2003, to counteract what he saw as a troubling trend in Canadian media, Beers created

⁹ Prepared for Parliament by The Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, *Final Report on the Canadian News Media*, June 2006. Part IV, Section B3. http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-e/TRAN-E/rep-e/repfinjun06vol1-e.htm#_Toc138058292

¹⁰ Joseph Jackson, Political and Social Affairs Division of the Government of Canada, *Newspaper Ownership In Canada: An Overview of The Davey Committee and Kent Commission Studies*. December 17, 1999. Accessed February 2011. <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/BP/prb9935-e.htm>

¹¹ Jackson, *Newspaper Ownership*, Conclusion.

¹² “Consumer Publishing,” Rogers, http://www.rogerspublishing.ca/read_sub/CPG.shtml

¹³ “Media Solutions,” Transcontinental, <http://www.transcontinental.com/en/2-product/2-2-0-publishing.html>

¹⁴ Lawrence Lessig, *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World*. (New York: Random House, 2001), 117.

The Tyee, an independent, online news magazine focused on B.C. events and issues. Unlike many news providers, which reach audiences using several platforms, *The Tyee* is only accessible online. With the site, Beers hoped to provide local readers a free, “positive alternative” to mainstream news, to “serve as a counter-balance to corporate media’s biases in British Columbia.”¹⁵

Seven years later, *The Tyee* continues to offer readers an option outside of the catalogue of established producers of Canadian media. Visitors to the website can register and make comments after any article, expressing their enjoyment or perhaps disagreement with the site’s headlines, which focus primarily on issues “sometimes taken up by the wider media, [and] viewpoints marginalized in the local corporate media.”¹⁶

By providing its readers with solutions-oriented, catalytic journalism and excellent coverage of issues relevant to Canadian readers, *The Tyee* has earned credibility that allows it to hold powerful institutions accountable for their actions¹⁷ and acquired several esteemed awards in the process. In 2009, *The Tyee* won the Edward R. Murrow Award, a prestigious North American prize for excellence in electronic journalism awarded by the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA).¹⁸ In the same year, *The Tyee* also won the Canadian Journalism Foundation (CJF) Excellence in Journalism Award,¹⁹ the highest Canadian prize for a media organization of *The Tyee*’s size and scope. The work done in 2009 also earned *The Tyee* three Canadian Online Publishing Awards²⁰ (for Best Website Design, Best News, and Best Community Feature), two Webby Awards²¹ (for Best Website Design and for the site’s news-breaking political blog, *The Hook*), and recognition as a finalist for two Jack Webster Awards,²² One of these was for outstanding coverage of the 2009 Provincial election, the other for “Community Reporting” for a series of articles written by long time *Tyee* contributor, Monte Paulsen,

¹⁵ Beers, “The Public Sphere,” 114.

¹⁶ Information taken from *The Tyee*’s current media kit. See Appendix A.

¹⁷ Beers, “The Public Sphere,” 117.

¹⁸ “Edward R. Murrow Awards,” RTDNA, http://www.rtdna.org/pages/media_items/edward-r.-murrow-awards100.php?g=67?id=100

¹⁹ “Excellence in Journalism Award,” Canadian Journalism Foundation, http://www.cjf-fjc.ca/awards_excellence.htm

²⁰ Canadian Online Publishing Awards, <http://www.canadianonlinepublishingawards.com/>

²¹ Webby Awards, <http://www.webbyawards.com/>

²² Jack Webster Awards, <http://www.jackwebster.com/awards/winners.php>

investigating the prevalent issue of homelessness in Vancouver.²³ The online news magazine may be small, but the journalism it produces is far-reaching and of the highest calibre.

1.3 Staff

The Tyee employs four full-time, in-house staff and one full-time writer. David Beers is the founding editor of the publication, and is currently the only full-time editor. Before he built the online news outlet, Beers had multiple roles in media: formerly the Chief Features Editor at *The Vancouver Sun*,²⁴ he also worked as a senior editor for *The San Francisco Examiner* and *Mother Jones* magazine. He has written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *Harper's*, and *National Geographic*, and penned a weekly essay during his time editing at *The Sun*. Beers' work has earned National Magazine Awards in both Canada and the United States.

Besides Beers, there are four people who make *The Tyee* possible from one day to the next. Michelle Hoar, the Business Director of *The Tyee*, spends much of her time building relationships with members of the community and potential *Tyee* patrons, handling the advertising for the site, keeping track of the site's financials and budget, and rallying supporters for independent media. Geoff D'Auria is the Technical and Front Page Editor for the site; he handles the aesthetics of the homepage, moderates comments from *Tyee* readers, monitors site traffic, and has spearheaded the site's recent "going mobile" initiative. Andrew Macleod, *The Tyee's* legislative reporter, writes full-time from Victoria.

Finally, following a summer internship at *The Tyee* during which I completed the work that this report is based on, I became the fourth and most recent addition to the small staff. As *The Tyee's* Reader Outreach Coordinator, I use various channels to increase the influence and reach of *Tyee* journalism; my time is spent using social media to share articles, setting up partnerships and sponsorships with local, like-minded organizations, writing articles about the work *The Tyee* is doing in the community, assisting Michelle Hoar with advertising, and working with other *Tyee* staff on various ongoing projects, such as

²³ Paulsen's series, *A Home for All*, can be accessed here <http://thetyee.ca/Series/2009/02/10/HomeForAll/>

²⁴ University of British Columbia website, David Beers' biography on the Journalism School page, where he currently teaches, http://www.journalism.ubc.ca/faculty/david_beers/

the development of a mobile version of the site or, as you'll soon see, publishing a print book from online *Tyee* articles.

Since 2003, hundreds of writers have been published on <http://thetyee.ca>. With only one editor, much of the work that appears on *The Tyee* originates from contributors that Beers already knows to be hard working and capable journalists. His editorial policy tends toward trying to financially support a few talented professionals with the small budget *The Tyee* has, rather than underpaying a large number of freelancers. For these reasons, *The Tyee* has a handful of columnists and contributing editors who write on a regular basis and can count on *The Tyee* for a pre-determined amount of work each month. Crawford Kilian, Murray Dobbin, Michael Geist, Will McMartin, Shannon Rupp, Bill Tieleman, Dorothy Woodend, Rafe Mair, Vanessa Richmond, Mark Leiren-Young, and Steve Burgess write on a weekly or monthly basis for *The Tyee*. There are also a few dozen freelance writers who make up the majority of the other editorial content on the site, and write several times a year. Finally, there are four writers who work in-house, and have shorter-term arrangements with Beers – their contracts fall somewhere between the contributing editors and the freelancers who work remotely. Monte Paulsen, Geoff Dembicki, Colleen Kimmitt, and Katie Hyslop are all writers who share space in the *Tyee* offices, and bring the number of people in the office on any given day up to eight.

1.4 Website layout

The Tyee has changed somewhat since 2003. During the first year it was published, *The Tyee* reliably presented readers with one, sometimes two, new feature stories each day. By the second year of reporting, that number had ballooned to an average of 15 stories each week. In 2008, when the site's political blog, *The Hook*, was launched, the number jumped again to close to 50 stories per week, due to the many shorter pieces that appear in the new section. Overall, traffic to the site also increased when *The Hook* went live, perhaps because of the section's attractive "this-just-in" framework, which has an emphasis on breaking news and time-sensitive stories that is absent in many of the longer, more developed features.

The entire website was redesigned, top-to-bottom, in August 2009. The aim was to make *The Tyee* more user-friendly and visually appealing to readers and advertisers alike. A year of planning and wire-framing produced the current homepage, which presents three, four, or five new feature stories each day of the week along with vibrant, eye-catching photographs, a news feed of the latest stories from the *Canadian Press*, a quirky “Reported Elsewhere” section, and a different photograph every day, sourced from images uploaded by readers to *The Tyee’s* Flickr photo pool.

Feature articles are typically between one and three thousand words in length, and are classified according to several categories that delineate the priorities of the site. Usually, *Tyee* stories fit snugly somewhere beneath one of the headings that stretch across the top of the homepage: News, Arts & Culture, Life, Opinion, Mediacheck, or Books.

One category heading on the homepage changes once or twice a year according to which topics are the most popular at that point in time. For example, during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, *The Tyee* created a category devoted solely to stories pertaining to the Games and the Olympic-related hubbub that accompanied them in British Columbia. More recently, because of readers’ current interest in stories about climate change and Alberta’s “tar sands,” *The Tyee’s* homepage now displays a prominent link to articles about “Energy.”

The part of the site that is most popular amongst readers varies. *The Hook*, for example, usually accounts for approximately 10% of the site’s total traffic, but this number grows when rapid-fire coverage of an event is what readers are looking for. On November 3, 2010, the day Premier Gordon Campbell announced his resignation as Liberal Party Leader, traffic on *The Tyee’s* main page was clocked at 15,369 visits (a 25.1% increase compared to the 12,284 visitors that landed on the *Tyee* homepage on the same day a year earlier). On *The Hook*, the part of the site most frequently updated during Campbell’s resignation speech and in the hours that followed, Google Analytics recorded 2,889 unique visitors – a jump of 76.7% in traffic from the 1,635 visitors to *The Hook* on November 3, 2009. The two areas of *The Tyee* – the main page that houses longer, more developed features and *The Hook*, which catalogues the shorter, snappy stories – allow readers to access exactly the kind of news coverage they need.

1.5 An online editorial workflow

Each feature story follows a similar path once it is submitted for editing. Beers first reads the article as a Word .doc and makes any necessary changes to the copy, fixing spelling errors and grammatical mistakes and making substantive changes to ensure the story comes through clearly. When the author has accepted these edits, and the “hed” and “dek” – the headline and subtitle for the article – are written, an image is found to accompany the piece. With no in-house designer on staff, *The Tyee* typically purchases stock photos online for somewhere around \$1 to \$5 apiece. Sometimes an artist (and sometimes Beers’ talented eleven year-old son) is commissioned to illustrate an article. On the odd occasion, *The Tyee* publishes photo essays submitted by freelance photographers.

Once the image is chosen or created, the story continues along the editorial track and is emailed to posts@thetyee.ca. From here, one of several part-time *Tyee* employees (mainly freelancers working on contract) will open it, load it into the content management system, and ready it for publication on the site. From start to finish, this whole process can take anywhere from several hours to several days.

Compared to publishing a print magazine or newspaper, the editorial workflow at *The Tyee* is faster and more flexible. On *The Hook*, the process is even simpler. A different journalist “edits” *The Hook* each week, which means they are tasked with posting stories by various writers once they have read them and edited them for clarity and mistakes. Many writers who contribute regularly to *The Hook* bypass the week’s editor and instead ask a fellow journalist to read over what they’ve written before posting it themselves. The do-it-yourself publishing on *The Hook* is only possible because of the flexibility of working online and the ease with which corrections can be made if any errors occur.

Similarly, while editors at printed newspapers and magazines must be constantly vigilant about fact-checking, word counts, line breaks, and deadlines before going to press, *The Tyee* enjoys a much more fluid medium. This is not to say that the editorial process is more relaxed; to the contrary, David Beers carries alone the responsibility of editing up to 25 feature articles per week. But there is more elasticity in an online editorial workflow than there is in print. Technically speaking, there is unlimited space for the article to occupy. In the same way, if an author doesn’t submit his or her article on time, or

if there is a factual error or a typo in a story, the correction can be made immediately and at a low cost. *The Tyee's* workflow is constrained only by the fact that there is only one editor preparing stories for publishing.

The malleability of online journalism also means that Beers can give space to a reporter just starting out in the field, to a writer with another full-time occupation, or to an expert on a particular topic that has only one or two stories to publish. The Internet democratizes the media, or enables what two Vancouver authors, Darren Barefoot and Julie Szabo, have called “the mass amateurization of publishing,” in their recent book, *Friends With Benefits*.²⁵ Online, even readers – who presumably have little or no journalistic experience – are encouraged to make comments and contribute to the discussion. Once articles are published online, they remain permanently accessible to anyone who wants to read them, not buried in a box in an archive room somewhere or available only for a fee. The world of Internet news reporting presents a much more inclusive, open editorial policy than is possible at most print papers, and has fuelled a “switch from ‘Why publish this?’ to ‘Why not?’”²⁶ This mentality was also a main catalyst in *The Tyee's* first print-on-demand project, *Harvested Here*.

1.6 Content management and open access

In 2006, Beers wrote, “*The Tyee* could only be a creature of the web, exploiting as it does the relatively inexpensive reach of the Internet to create a new space within BC’s public culture.”²⁷ Seven years after the site launched, though there have been many changes and advances in the world of ePublishing, this is still true. Online news media like *The Tyee* “are able to be interactive, ‘viral’ in distribution, immediately global in reach, and relatively inexpensive to produce.”²⁸ The Internet – that low-cost, wonderfully level playing field – has allowed *The Tyee* to thrive, publishing local news and views five days a week in “an online environment that is collectively more than the sum of its parts...that

²⁵ Darren Barefoot and Julie Szabo, *Friends with Benefits: A Social Media Marketing Handbook*, San Francisco: No Starch Press, 2010.

²⁶ Barefoot, *Friends With Benefits*, 5.

²⁷ Beers, “The Public Sphere,” 120.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

fosters instant and widespread sharing,²⁹ and that allows readers immediate, unpaid access to high-quality journalism.

In the same way the free journalism published and distributed on the site could only be a product of the Net, the reporting couldn't exist without sharing. Thanks to software hobbyists and amateur developers³⁰ who retained that kindergarten-learned lesson, *The Tyee* is built on open-source programs, and the platforms for the site are constantly being updated and improved by their creators. This has contributed to the *The Tyee*'s viability as an online news magazine by enabling it to publish news without having to pay for the software to do so.

By giving content away for free, *The Tyee* keeps with the trend amongst online newspapers and the expectations of web-surfing readers. By being readily available to consume, *The Tyee* enlists readers as sharers and distributors, utilizing the "cut and paste culture"³¹ of the early twenty-first century. Thus, the *raison d'être* of *The Tyee* – providing readers with excellent, free news – has been both the psychological driving force behind the new stories that are published every day, as well as the lifeblood of the site, as *The Tyee* is built on a foundation of two open-source software systems, Bricolage and Drupal.

Bricolage is a free, open-source, enterprise-class content management, workflow, and publishing system released under a BSD license.³² For *The Tyee*, it controls the stories that appear on the homepage and in the archives, and is the portal for managing the Flickr pool hosted on the site. *Tyee* staff consider Bricolage the "content management system," as it keeps all the pages, articles, photographs, videos, and contributor information in order. An external server called OpenX feeds advertising into seven designated zones on the site, but virtually everything else visible to readers on *The Tyee* is administered through the open-source Bricolage system.

²⁹ Lynne Anderson-Inman, "Thinking Between the Lines: Literacy and Learning in a Connected World," *On the Horizon* 17, no. 2 (2009), 125.

³⁰ Sites like <http://hobbyistsoftware.com/> provide a good example of the popularity of do-it-yourself geekery; additionally, many of the widgets available on WordPress (a free site used by many as a CMS or webpage: <http://wordpress.com>) were created by hobbyists, not professional programmers.

³¹ A term used by Lawrence Lessig in *Free Culture*, pp. 105.

³² Bricolage CMS website, <http://www.bricolagecms.org/>

With Bricolage controlling the content, there remains the management of the readers that visit and comment on *The Tye*. Due to complicated historical reasons that are not worth explaining here, a separate system called Drupal is used as the “community management system” on the site. The ever fluctuating “most read/loved/emailed” stories, the colourful comment sections that accompany each article, and the user sign-up and administration are all controlled by Drupal. With both systems, a tone of widespread sharing permeates all parts of *The Tye*: Drupal, too, is a “free software package that allows anyone to easily publish, manage and organize a wide variety of content on a website.”³³

1.7 Social media and outreach

In 2006, the site had over 12,000 eNewsletter subscribers and had published more than 1,300 articles.³⁴ Four years later, in 2010, *The Tye* has over 20,000 eNewsletter subscribers and, in Beers’ conservative estimate, 10,000 archived articles available with 20 or so feature stories and 30 *Hook* posts added to that total each week. The site now receives between 500,000 and 700,000 pageviews per month.

To maximize growth and reader engagement, in the past few years *The Tye* has harnessed the latest trends in online sharing to expand its readership. The site now has rapidly growing followings on Facebook and Twitter, two of the most popular social media networks online today. As mentioned above, devoted readers are generally *The Tye*’s biggest advocates, resolutely emailing, Facebooking, and Tweeting (and re-Tweeting) their favourite stories each day.

Since September 2010, the number of readers engaging with *The Tye* on social media channels has increased; in the latter half of 2010, staff members were able to devote slightly more time to maintaining *The Tye*’s social media presence, and reader interest improved as a result. In early September 2010, the publication had 797 Facebook “fans” and 1,154 “group members.” On Twitter, the number of *Tye* “followers” was 5,045. When the numbers were recorded again in December 2010, after an enthusiastic marketing push, the numbers had grown, some exponentially. *The Tye*, as of December

³³ Drupal website, “About” page <http://drupal.org>

³⁴ Beers, “The Public Sphere,” 114.

15, 2010, had 955 “fans” on Facebook and 1,165 group members, and a satisfying 6,695 “followers” on Twitter.³⁵

1.8 Financials

To find an alternative, independent news source, editor David Beers looked to various local groups for financial help. In a 2006 article, he explained *The Tyee*'s funding model:

I have sought and received funding from labour unions, philanthropists, and socially responsible venture capitalists in British Columbia and launched *The Tyee*... The goal is to fold in revenue from select advertising and readers' contributions to develop a long-term sustainable future...³⁶

In the years since, Beers and *The Tyee* have set about accomplishing this “sustainable future.” Today, *The Tyee* is financially supported by two main bodies. Eric Peterson, the epitome of the aforementioned “socially responsible venture capitalist,” is a one-third investor in *The Tyee*. Working Enterprises, “a Vancouver-based holding company that provides financial, travel, and other services to unions...and the general public,”³⁷ invests the other two-thirds. Even with the support of Peterson and Working Enterprises, *The Tyee* has a limited annual budget: their money provides a stable base, covering predictable yearly expenses like rent, hydro, office supplies, salaries, and part of the content that appears on the site.³⁸ From there, *The Tyee* business team must set out, seeking government grants, advertising revenues, reader donations, and sponsorships with which to pay for additional content, extra staff time, and major (but unexpected) projects.

³⁵ See Appendix B and D for more details on *The Tyee*'s Social Media Progress on Twitter and Facebook in the fall of 2010.

³⁶ Beers, “The Public Sphere,” 114.

³⁷ Working Enterprises, <http://www.wegroup.ca/>

³⁸ See Appendix E for a graph detailing *The Tyee*'s annual revenues.

In order to increase the funds available to pay writers, which, it goes without saying, is essential to the site's survival, the Tyee Fellowship Fund³⁹ was created. In 2005/2006, 2007/2008, and a third time in 2010, Beers called for donations to the Fund, which are used to commission and promote investigative and solutions-oriented journalism. Readers are invited to donate whatever amount they wish, and journalists can apply to receive a Tyee Fellowship by submitting a formal package detailing their plans for the funding, including a detailed outline for a series of 5 or 6 articles that involve "investigative or solutions-oriented journalism." Once all the applications are received, an independent panel reviews them and chooses the winners.

Successful applicants to the Tyee Fellowship Fund are each awarded \$5,000 portions of the total, and as many winners will be chosen as the total funds allow. The articles that are written as a result are published on *The Tyee*, bringing the Fellowship full-circle by putting the content in a place where readers (many of whom were also donors) can enjoy the investigative journalism the Fellowship Fund makes possible. The 2010 Fellowship Drive elicited over \$20,000 in donations from *Tyee* readers. This round of fundraising, combined with a few donations already earmarked for the fund, has enabled the publication to commission five new series of articles from journalists who applied.

As with paying for the additional content that the Fellowship writers bring to the site, before embarking on projects that fall outside of the basic annual expenses covered by Eric Peterson and Working Enterprises, *The Tyee* must find funding. Fortunately, the quality of the site's journalism has won over many readers and organizations, apparent by the liveliness of activity on the site and by the phenomenal response to the 2010 Fellowship Drive. Several local groups, too, have provided capital to help *The Tyee* grow. To produce *Harvested Here*, for example, *The Tyee* sought sponsorship from the Tides Canada Foundation, a local philanthropic organization with an interest in funding projects focused on sustainable farming and food production. They also invested in the "Food and Beers" lectures (hosted

³⁹ David Beers, "Help Us Fund More Great In-Depth Reporting." *The Tyee*, May 20, 2010. <http://thetyee.ca/Tyee/news/2010/05/20/Fellowship2010/>

by *Tyee* editor David Beers) that took place in the fall of 2010 at the Museum of Vancouver, which indirectly promoted the work included in *Harvested Here*.

Sponsorship is only one method *The Tyee* uses to finance extracurricular projects. Additional (equally unreliable) sources of yearly revenues come from advertising and, if all goes well with *The Tyee*'s pending applications, from government grants. Prior to this year, *The Tyee* was ineligible for funding from The Department of Canadian Heritage because although the site is populated nearly entirely with Canadian content, the publication doesn't exist in print. In 2010, the Canadian Periodical Fund,⁴⁰ or CPF, opened up funding opportunities to include digital-only publications; as soon as the requirements broadened, *The Tyee* applied. As of December 2010, the *Tyee* team was still anxiously waiting to hear back from the CPF as to whether they will fund a subscription project tentatively titled the "Reader Advisory Board." Should this funding materialize, *The Tyee* will be able to begin this exciting new project. If not, the team will likely reapply next year, and will work hard in the meantime to find sources of funding elsewhere.

1.9 *The Tyee*'s challenges

Seven years after being founded as one of the only Canadian online publications of its kind – a title it still holds – *The Tyee* remains on a shoestring budget. In part because of a lack of support from governmental organizations like Heritage Canada, and in part because the typical model for online news requires a large advertising income, *The Tyee* has a small, stretched budget, and relies heavily on what are often small, sporadic infusions from sponsors, readers, and ad sales to make fiscal ends meet.

The limited funds have several implications. First of all, the tight budget requires in-house *Tyee* staff – all four of them – to fill multiple roles. The staff must be creative about how they spend the small amount of money that the publication *does* have to work with. As outlined above, *The Tyee* has only a single full-time editor, a business/advertising manager, a technical and front-page editor, and an outreach

⁴⁰ In 2010, the CPF replaced the Periodical Assistance Program and the Canadian Magazine Fund. More information is available at <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1268240166828/1268917925906>

and marketing coordinator. There's also one intern. An advertising sales manager is desperately needed, and an assistant editor would make David Beers' job much more manageable. Two full-time employees would be a godsend, but despite the help that extra staff would be, there are other, more urgent places to spend the annual allotment of funds.

One of the main ongoing priorities for *The Tyee* is audience growth. Everything – the site's very existence, in fact – hinges on how many people are reading *The Tyee*, and so as the audience gets larger, so do the options for new projects, site content, and hiring additional staff. The site was created to “provide an interactive forum to its readers” and to house “feisty, independent, and broad-scale Web journalism.”⁴¹ Although it exists to serve a community of readers who are looking for a different take on local news than the big fish of Canadian media provide, *The Tyee* also needs site visitors in order to sell space to advertisers. Though annual ad revenue is modest, it helps to subsidize the journalism that appears on the site, and keeps the content free for readers to enjoy and to share. Thus, the higher the number of *Tyee* readers, the less it costs *The Tyee* to provide fresh content to each of them.

Unsurprisingly, increasing *The Tyee*'s readership without much in the way of funds has proven difficult. *Tyee* staff have taken advantage of the cheap and connected nature of the Internet, and constantly use open-source software. Most recently, this has involved the addition of easy-to-use social media buttons on every article that allow one-click posting of a link to the story on a reader's Facebook or Twitter feed. As Lawrence Lessig points out, “The Internet makes possible the efficient spread of content. Peer-to-peer (p2p) file sharing is among the most efficient of the efficient technologies the Internet enables.”⁴² A free, online publication like *The Tyee* is well situated to take advantage of this: it is one way to grow readership that *The Tyee* can easily afford.

In addition to making it simple for readers to act as unofficial *Tyee* spokespersons by sharing articles they enjoy, *The Tyee* works to increase reader engagement by cultivating and maintaining a relationship with “fans” on Facebook and Twitter. Though there are no direct costs associated with using

⁴¹ Beers, “The Public Sphere,” 114.

⁴² Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*. New York: Penguin, 2004, 17.

these free, online tools for self-promotion, someone at *The Tyee* must act as the publication's "personality" on Twitter and Facebook and oversee audience engagement. This includes creating contests, polls, and surveys, and making sure to update the sites frequently enough to encourage readers to continue checking back. Though "free," marketing through these social media channels is labour intensive, and requires staff attention several times a day.

Similarly, *The Tyee* produces a free eNewsletter that requires staff frequent upkeep, sometimes twice or three times in a single day. Each morning, the site's technical editor, Geoff D'Auria, puts together an eNews digest comprised of new feature stories and shorter, breaking-news pieces published on *The Hook*. The daily version goes out Monday to Friday to readers who have signed up; there is also a once-a-week version that goes out on Monday mornings that recaps the past week's most popular articles. Both versions of the eNewsletter require time and effort from the technical editor: beyond compiling the day's or week's stories, he also creates an interactive feature, such as a reader poll, and fills in the *Tyee* "Inside Scoop" with an event or issue that readers might be interested to know about.

The eNewsletter requires administration and creativity but – like marketing on the site's various social media channels – it doesn't provide *The Tyee* with the satisfaction of easily measured returns. Certainly, it is possible to measure the numbers of followers on Facebook and Twitter, but the attention those individuals actually give *The Tyee* can only be guessed at. The intangibility of these results makes them difficult figures to use to secure additional funding for outreach and marketing.

The small number of full-time staff also makes it difficult to have a presence at events. If funding made it possible to hire additional employees, *The Tyee* team would have many wonderful opportunities to create buzz about the site and to get potential readers interested in and informed about *The Tyee*. The few times a year *Tyee* staff manage to separate from their keyboards and attend conventions, parties, or other gatherings to promote *The Tyee's* reporting, many people drop by to say how much they enjoy the site's fresh take on BC news. The feedback is welcome, but it is *new* readers and concrete visitor numbers from Google Analytics (not just fluctuating Facebook fans) that investors and advertisers are interested in. It is these factors that will ensure the site's continued growth.

What the fans and followers on *The Tyee*'s social media channels, the monthly pageviews on the site, and the many devoted eNews subscribers show is that there are many loyal *Tyee* readers and that the numbers are slowly growing.⁴³ And so while email digests, Facebook messages, Tweets, tabling booths, and sponsoring events all help strengthen the commitment of *The Tyee*'s current readers, it will take more than just maintaining slow, steady growth to keep *The Tyee* interesting and relevant, attractive to potential sponsors and, ultimately, able to continue publishing news. *Harvested Here*, and possibly subsequent *Tyee Special Editions*, was seen as one potential solution. As something new and totally different from the work published on the site each day, the staff hoped the curated books would invite a different type of reader (or funder) to visit the site, to invest time (or money) and, in doing so, help *The Tyee* grow.

⁴³ Some of the Twitter and Facebook feedback *The Tyee* received on *Harvested Here* is available in Appendix C.

2 WHY PUBLISH PAID CONTENT WHEN YOU'RE FREE?

The previous chapter introduced *The Tyee*, outlined the publication's history, explained its financial situation, described the day-to-day functioning at the office, and detailed the current challenges faced by the online news magazine. It concluded that in order to grow, the site needs a larger audience: having more readers increases the attractiveness of the site to advertisers, which will result in additional revenue and perhaps more diverse sources of funding. With those details in mind, we can now consider the benefits of anthologizing free *Tyee* content in a paid-for print-on-demand format, as the publication did with *Harvested Here*, the first *Tyee Special Edition*.

Although *The Tyee* publishes quality journalism every day, the expectation of most readers is that online content is free. Realistically, revenue is needed to stay afloat. *The Tyee* has steered away from imposing “paywalls” – boundaries that impose fees before letting a reader access content, and thereby obstruct the flowing, linked cadence of the Internet. These prevent information from being shared, and so were never considered as a way of bringing in funds. In *The Tyee's* experience, free is a price few people will argue with, and has helped *The Tyee* to log over 30 million pageviews since its launch in 2003. “Give a product away and it can go viral,” says Chris Anderson. “Charge a single cent,” he continues, “and you're in an entirely different business”⁴⁴; *The Tyee* agrees with him wholeheartedly. Even so, when transforming free online content into a book, *Tyee* staff had to charge a small amount for the printed iteration of the archived articles to cover the costs of production and printing.

With the goals of growing the number of readers and site traffic and building a greater local awareness of *The Tyee* brand, *The Tyee* business team saw *Harvested Here* as an answer. A printed book was a chance to extend the brand, to reach a (potentially) different audience, and to allow readers to interact with the content in a more traditional way. A book can also be distributed to strategically chosen individuals, organizations, and businesses in order to increase

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Free*, 62.

these groups' awareness of the investigative, solutions-oriented journalism *The Tyee* produces, which will hopefully lead to much-needed organizational growth.

2.1 Brand extension

Repurposing the free online news magazine into an affordable, printed edition is a way of bringing *Tyee* content to the attention of people that might not be aware of it otherwise. Now, instead of being unavailable to the reader who is without Internet access or who has drained the battery on their laptop, a beautiful edition of *Tyee* articles can be purchased, read anywhere, savoured, annotated, and even given as a gift. Similarly, the book format brings *The Tyee* to readers who simply prefer ink and paper to viewing text on a screen.

Existing in print, *The Tyee* elicits a different reaction from readers and critics; *Harvested Here* has opened up a new realm of promotional opportunities and partnership possibilities, and has allowed *The Tyee's* logo to crop up offline. The book is for sale in a few local brick-and-mortar stores⁴⁵ and, although this won't help those without access to a computer, it can also be purchased on *The Tyee* website. Just after the book launch in late August, 2010, I wrote an article to publicize the sale of the book at the Museum of Vancouver's "Home Grown" exhibit⁴⁶ and to inform *Tyee* readers about the Food and Beers talks that David Beers would be hosting at the Museum throughout the fall. The lectures were part of the exhibit, and were a perfect opportunity to promote *Harvested Here*; *The Tyee* team made the most of that chance by using as many channels as possible to spread the word and by including a brief explanation of *Harvested Here* (and an invitation to buy a copy) at the start of each of the four events.

As a book, the articles in *Harvested Here* and the associated *Tyee* brand are charged with the authority earned by centuries of ink-and-paper publishing. *The Tyee* brand is now stamped on something tangible: an anthology that allows readers – what we would call “browsers” on the

⁴⁵ *Harvested Here* can be purchased at Home Grow-In at 14th and Cambie in Vancouver, from FarmFolk/CityFolk at their many local food-related events.

⁴⁶ Shannon Smart, “Eat, Drink, Get Informed,” *The Tyee*, <http://thetyee.ca/TyeeNews/2010/09/02/EatDrinkGetInformed/>

website – to write in the margins, lend the book to a friend, bookmark it, and do all the things one cannot do as easily with online texts or ebooks. “For all their cost disadvantages,” writes champion of free Chris Anderson, “dead trees smeared into sheets still have excellent battery life, screen resolution, and portability, to say nothing about looking lovely on shelves.”⁴⁷

Like *The Tyee*, Anderson nearly always argues for “Free,” but even he admits the importance of monetizing a good product. “You have to think creatively,” he writes, “about how to convert the reputation and attention you can get from Free into cash,”⁴⁸ and a book, a premium edition of free online content that brings *The Tyee*’s content and brand to a potentially new audience, is an effective way of doing this. Many online games use a similar business model: they are available to “demo” for free, and only become paid-for products in their full versions, once people have had a chance to test them out and, as Anderson explains, “understand why they might want them.” This test period ensures “the risk of disappointment is lower and the odds of returning customers is higher. Simply put, you’re charging the people who *want* to pay because they understand the value of what they’re getting.”⁴⁹ *The Tyee* remains open for those who want to consume the content there: the articles in *Harvested Here* spread across *The Tyee* site. They only become a premium, charged-for product when the reader doesn’t have to do the work of searching for the articles or view the advertisements that subsidize the site. In the premium edition, the paying reader gets everything bundled together in a sweet little package.

“There are things paper books can’t do and constraints on paper books that limit how far the knowledge they carry” travels.⁵⁰ Equally, the way online content provides “links to aid the reader or to guide the reader to other related texts”⁵¹ is unmatched by ink-and-paper volumes. So while there are limitations to both print and online formats, having both available in concert helps to avoid some of these. *Harvested Here* offers the benefits of printed works to readers who have

⁴⁷ Chris Anderson, *Free: The Future of a Radical Price*, New York: Hyperion, 2009, 158.

⁴⁸ Anderson, *Free*, 233.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁵⁰ Lessig, *Free Culture*, 122

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 122.

enjoyed the journalism online and want a different or additional experience. The book also, with URLs at the top of each article in the anthology, refers readers back to *The Tyee* website, the source of the book's content, when they finish the book and are hungry for more. The symbiotic connection between the print and electronic versions is brought full-circle by the availability of the book on *The Tyee* website, where it is advertised and available for *Tyee* readers to purchase.

For creating an attractive, unique print edition, *The Tyee* has received acclaim from groups in the Canadian publishing world. *Masthead* magazine noted the website's "quality and propensity to win awards," before praising *The Tyee* for the "interesting turnaround of the direction (print to online) most content takes."⁵² *Books on the Radio*, a program on Vancouver's CJSF 90.1 Radio,⁵³ has been in touch regarding interviewing David Beers about the print-on-demand process.

By cropping up in reviews⁵⁴ and, potentially, on radio programs, *The Tyee* appears on the radar of people who may not spend much time on online news sites, who may not have heard of the website but would be interested in reading it now that they know its quality. It is in this way that carefully curated print editions of *Tyee* content provide an opportunity to bring people to the site that are outside of the regular readership.

2.2 Audience growth

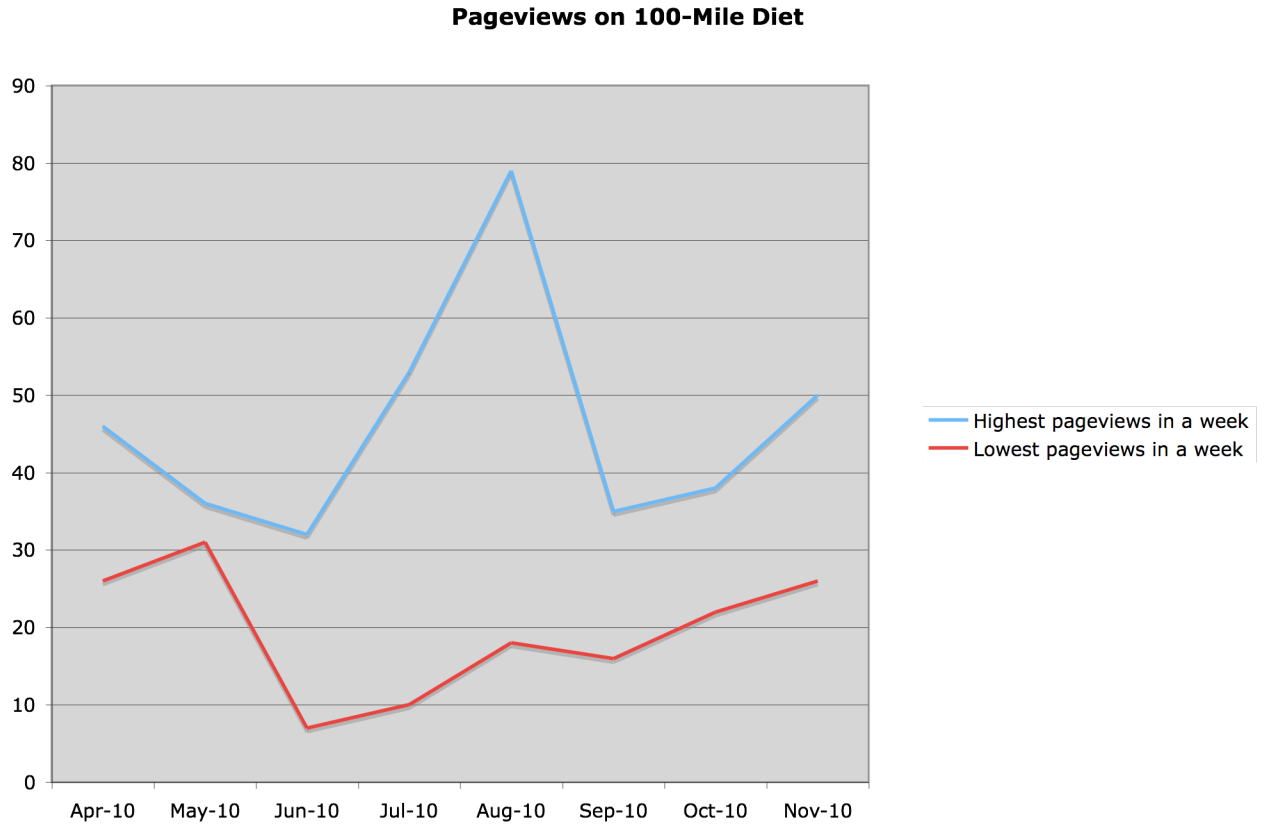
Whether it's due to brand-new readers drawn to the site by the printed volume, established readers taking a revitalized interest in *The Tyee*'s food-related content, or perhaps a bit of both, *Harvested Here* has increased the circulation of the well-researched, well-written, original series on the *Tyee* site.

⁵² Masthead Magazine Online, <http://www.mastheadonline.com/blogs/?blogId=526>

⁵³ More about BOTR on their website. <http://booksontheradio.ca/>

⁵⁴ See Appendix C for *EAT* magazine's review of *Harvested Here*.

As is exemplified by the below graph, before the release of *Harvested Here* the series page for *The 100-Mile Diet*⁵⁵ was viewed an average of 28 times a week (in April, May, and June of 2010). The highest number of views in a week was 46 (in April), and the lowest number of views in one week was seven (in June).



	April 2010	May 2010	June 2010	July 2010	August 2010 (book release)	September 2010	October 2010	November 2010
Highest Pageviews in a week	46	36	32	53	79	35	38	50
Lowest Pageviews in a week	26	31	7	10	18	16	22	26

⁵⁵ “The 100-Mile Diet Series,” *The Tyee*, <http://thetyee.ca/Series/2005/06/28/100Mile>

Leading up to the August 2010 book launch, there was a generally stronger focus on food-related content on *The Tyee*, and in particular on the *100-Mile Diet* series. The trend of increased viewing seen above also took place with the other series included in *Harvested Here*.⁵⁶ As mentioned above, *The Tyee* published an article in early September to publicize the Food and Beers lecture series at the Museum of Vancouver and updated it throughout the fall; David Beers wrote and published four additional articles throughout the fall to promote the four events.

Alongside *The Tyee*'s editorial focus on food and local eating that appeared on the site throughout the fall of 2010, the site was also running an ad for *Harvested Here*⁵⁷ showcasing its local-eating content and connections to *The 100-Mile Diet*. Unlike in the spring and early summer of 2010, in July, August, September, and October of 2010, the *100-Mile Diet* series page was viewed an average of 34 times each week. The week with the highest number of pageviews had 79, while the week where the series page received the least traffic still had more than double the number of visitors compared with a few months earlier. In September, 2010, the quietest week on the *100-Mile Diet* series page had 16 pageviews.

2.3 Reader diversity

Perhaps the best way to describe *The Tyee* is as a proudly independent member of the Canadian news-scape. It is the responsibility of all media, argue scholars Ester de Waal and Klaus Schoenbach, to expand the public's awareness of matters of importance without prejudice or imbalance. The media, the pair continue, "are supposed to help create the public space for the discussion of societal issues – with as many citizens as possible participating in the public discourse."⁵⁸ From the start, *The Tyee* has endeavoured to contribute a moderating voice to the choir of Canadian media and has tried to publish viewpoints "banished from corporate media," to

⁵⁶ See Appendix B.

⁵⁷ See Appendix D for an image of the ad as it appeared – and at the time of publishing this report, continues to appear – on *The Tyee*.

⁵⁸ From "Presentation Style and Beyond: How Print Newspapers and Online News Expand Awareness of Public Affairs Issues." *Mass Communication and Society*, 162.

illuminate issues for readers in “corners of the province Big Media ignores.”⁵⁹ *The Tyee* also speaks to readers that may feel left out of mainstream media, including a few identifiable niche readerships.⁶⁰ Several of these groups are better served by the availability of a print edition of *Tyee* content. They are described in detail below.

The analogue crowd

For those who want to read *The Tyee*, but prefer not to do so online, *Harvested Here* reconciles “the digital era” with “most people’s continuing preference for the reading experience of the analogue, codex-format book.”⁶¹ While some people may already be comfortable with or even “prefer an all-electronic reading experience...they’re a tiny minority.”⁶² One of the demographics *Harvested Here* appeals to, then, is the reader who spends much of their day “plugged in” at work, who longs for analogue after his or her digitized day. As well, a reader who desires a more traditional reading experience, who prefers pages to pixels, is well served by *The Tyee*’s new format.

The foodie crowd

A printed anthology does more than make *Tyee* work available to readers with a preference for paper: it allows the editor(s) to tailor the content to a reader with particular interests. For example, fans of *The 100-Mile Diet* may not read *The Tyee* on a daily basis. Some may not even know the idea was born on the BC-focused news site, pitched to the editor at a backyard barbeque. These readers might, however, be interested in a printed anthology that

⁵⁹ *The Tyee*, <http://thetyee.ca/about>

⁶⁰ More information on *The Tyee*’s readership can be found in Appendix A, which comprises *The Tyee*’s current media kit.

⁶¹ Simone Murray, “Remix My Lit: Toward an Open Access *Literary* Culture,” *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 16, no. 1 (2010), 30.

⁶² Cory Doctorow, *Content: Selected Essays on Technology, Creativity, Copyright, and the Future of the Future*, San Francisco, Tachyon, 2008, 54.

expands on the local eating challenge, a topic which they already have knowledge of or interest in.

The specificity of the curated edition's contents – and, by extension, the certainty of who its audience will be – have made *Harvested Here* an attractive product to local retailers that have a focus on eating and farming locally. The niche appeal of the book has earned it space on shelves across the Lower Mainland, giving *The Tyee* wonderful new channels through which to reach new readers. Even more importantly, the popularity of *Harvested Here* with local shop owners has strengthened *The Tyee's* relationship with individuals with the power and inclination to buy copies in bulk.

The diehard crowd

For the readers that donate to every *Tyee* fundraising drive, attend every special event, subscribe to *both* the weekly and daily eNewsletters, and have tried several times to “friend” David Beers on Facebook, there's no such thing as too much *Tyee*. Large organizations with much broader fan bases have found ways to turn this interest into income, sometimes using “transmedia” products to promote their brand and increase revenue. In an article published in *The New York Times* in January of 2010, the author, Manohla Dargis, discussed the power of “stories – think of the *Star Wars* and *Matrix* franchises – [that] unfold across different platforms” including films, action figures, comics, novels, and games.⁶³ In the case of a massive story-maker like Disney, whole locations (Disneylands and Disneyworlds) become part of the consumer's transmedia experience, amalgamating to become “part of the understanding and experience of the original, originating work.”⁶⁴

Until now, *The Tyee's* small, independent operation hasn't had much to offer fans looking for another way to engage with the content or *Tyee* brand. There are no movies. There are

⁶³ Manohla Dargis' article “Declaration of Indies: Just Sell it Yourself!” *The New York Times*, Jan. 17, 2010. Sec. AR, 1.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

no games. There are certainly no dolls or figurines (now with spawning action?). Over the years, there have been a few products (tote bags, buttons, and t-shirts) and various events that *The Tyee* has hosted, endorsed, or attended, but never something that transformed the content – the “story” – into an entirely independent commodity. *Harvested Here* is the first transmedia addition to the *Tyee* canon: branded as a *Tyee Special Edition*, it allows readers to interact with the writing they enjoy in an entirely different way.

The “what’s a Tyee?” crowd

Amongst *Harvested Here*’s latent print audience and foodie readers alike, *The Tyee* website may or may not already be part of the known world. The book brings attention to the site and its archived content, as the first page of each article in the book includes the URL for the online version. This makes it easier for interested readers to return to the site. This information may have contributed to the rise in web traffic to the articles from the anthology that staff tracked following the launch of *Harvested Here* and into the winter of 2010.⁶⁵

Besides pleasing the average book-lover, the new print format has garnered interest from individuals who read and review books for a living, such as the editors of *Masthead* magazine, or *Vancouver Is Awesome*’s Lizzy Karp. She requested a review copy as soon as the print editions arrived in *The Tyee*’s office.⁶⁶ *Vancouver Is Awesome*’s Editor-in-Chief, Bob Kronbauer, then purchased an additional book on *The Tyee*’s “Shop” page for his personal shelf (he also somewhat sheepishly requested that David Beers sign it. Beers, of course, happily obliged).

2.3 Sponsorships, fundraising and strategic distribution

A printed edition of *Tyee* content provides a neat little package to send to individuals and groups that have supported *The Tyee* in the past, and to potential new sponsors to encourage them

⁶⁵ More on this in Appendix B, which details the web traffic during the fall of 2010 to each of the articles included in *Harvested Here*.

⁶⁶ Vancouver Is Awesome, <http://vancouverisawesome.com>

to fund *Tyee* journalism. It is a tidy way to say both “thanks for helping, look what we did with your \$\$” and “look what we could do if we had more \$\$.” Sponsorship dollars are essential if *The Tyee* is to produce projects outside of what is possible with the annual funding. These projects have the potential to improve the publication’s influence and help to grow the readership, hopefully securing an amount greater than the cost of production in additional revenue. In short, investing money in projects like *Special Editions* will hopefully result in more money coming in.

This first endeavour in print has taught *The Tyee* that convincing advertisers or sponsors to contribute money to products that consumers *pay* for is much easier than finding backers for the free online news magazine. In *Free: The Future of a Radical Price*, Chris Anderson discusses the merits of advertising in a publication that readers pay for: “Writing a check or entering a credit card number,” he writes, “*regardless of the amount*, is an act of consumer volition that completely changes how an advertiser sees a reader. Writing a check for any amount means you actually want the magazine, and will presumably read it and treasure it when it arrives.”⁶⁷

As Anderson has explained, advertisers assign a much higher value to a product that readers have spent money on. The same cannot be said for advertising space alongside the free content on <http://thetyee.ca>, where advertisers can only assume that readers are doing their best to avoid paying for anything. Often, advertisers purchasing space on a website will prefer to pay for the number of click throughs (not pageviews) their ads receive. This is an attempt to guard against promoting their products to readers who have trained themselves to ignore advertisements. Anderson stresses that “advertisers will pay as much as *five times more* to be part of that [paid-for] relationship that they’ll pay for a free magazine that may be treated as junk mail.”⁶⁸ For advertisers who are not close readers of *The Tyee* and are perhaps not familiar with the quality of the publication, being able to assume a higher level of reader engagement is worth

⁶⁷ Anderson, *Free*, 58.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

the cost: the paid-for content in *Harvested Here* assures advertisers that they have a captive audience.

Harvested Here does not have advertising space for sale.⁶⁹ Instead, *The Tyee* relied on sponsorship to cover the majority of the book's production costs, while book buyers pay for the printing of their copy plus a little extra to pay for staff time. The curated edition model for this and possible future *Tyee Special Editions* involves specific, discrete goals and costs, and can be sold to groups that enjoy or relate to any subset of issues investigated by *Tyee* journalists. Tides Canada Foundation, an organization that "provides project management services for change makers – philanthropists, foundations, activists, and civil organizations," sponsored the first *Special Edition*.⁷⁰ Essentially, Tides Canada Foundation helps generous individuals and groups allocate funds in support of various charitable organizations. In particular, Tides has an environmental focus, which made *The Tyee's* anthology of articles on local, sustainable growing and eating a perfect fit. By pitching the idea of *Harvested Here* to Tides Canada, Michelle Hoar, *The Tyee's* Business Director, was able to solidify sponsorship of a new series of articles comparing sustainable agricultural practices in British Columbia and Ontario.⁷¹ She and the representatives from Tides had been in discussions about sponsoring the journalism for some time; the idea of a Tides Canada-sponsored book was an attractive addition to the deal, and the sponsorship was confirmed shortly after.

The journalists that write for *The Tyee* are also involved in researching and writing about several other issues (local education, healthcare in B.C., and sustainable building techniques, for

⁶⁹ Though, as a sponsor, Tides Canada was given a two-page spread to promote their organization.

⁷⁰ The Tides website continues, "Tides Canada identifies environmental and social challenges and brings the resources and leadership to make change happen. We pool the best ideas, strategies, people, and capital to achieve the greatest impact on the key environmental and social issues of our time." See <http://tidescanada.org/about> for more information.

⁷¹ This series of articles, called "Growing the Local Bounty," was also sponsored by two local philanthropic groups: The Metcalf Foundation, and VanCity. The articles can be accessed at <http://thetyee.ca/Series/2010/10/28/GrowingTheLocalBounty/>. More information about The Metcalf Foundation can be found at <http://www.metcalffoundation.com/index.html>, and more about the work VanCity does in the Lower Mainland can be found at <https://www.vancity.com/MyCommunity/>.

example) that dovetail nicely with the missions of various sponsoring bodies in Vancouver and the surrounding area; the staff is confident that future editions will be possible with their help.

Besides helping *The Tyee* to build new relationships in the community, publishing *Harvested Here* also strengthened an existing partnership with a Vancouver organization called FarmFolk/CityFolk (FF/CF). As I mentioned in the introduction, FarmFolk/CityFolk is a non-profit organization that endeavours to “provide access to and protection of foodlands; support local growers and producers; and engage communities in the celebration of local food.”⁷² Because of their integral place amongst BC’s eat-local activists, from the start of this print-on-demand project *The Tyee* planned to donate a portion of the proceeds from the book to the hard-working folks at FF/CF. By aligning with FF/CF, *The Tyee* received assistance from the organization with marketing the book and selling it at various events. It has worked out well for both organizations; the cooperation around promoting and selling *Harvested Here* has cemented the relationship between *The Tyee* and FarmFolk/CityFolk for some time to come, and has already resulted in increased collaboration on other initiatives the organizations have in common.

With the book’s main sponsor, too, *Harvested Here* has proven to be a useful relationship-strengthening tool. In November 2010, Cristina Velez, the Tides Canada representative who helped secure funding for *The Tyee*’s print-on-demand experiment, showed a copy of the book to a local philanthropist who was considering putting his money into similar Tides Canada projects. *Harvested Here* “sealed the deal,” as she put it. Velez offered this testimonial about the partnership between Tides Canada and *The Tyee*:

We are very pleased to have partnered with B.C.’s award-winning online independent magazine, *The Tyee*, on the publication of the special edition book *Harvested Here: Delicious Thinking About Local Food* – a hand-picked collection of *Tyee* writing devoted to sustainable food sourcing, local eating, and urban farming. The book created a common point of discussion about the myriad

⁷² FarmFolk/CityFolk’s website offers more information, <http://www.ffcf.bc.ca>

of social, political, and personal issues that are involved in the simple act of eating, the huge rise in urban gardening, farmers markets, and the revival of lost nutritious local crops.

Hopefully, the book will be equally successful as a relationship-starter with organizations that are considering funding future *Tyee* work.

2.5 Reader interaction

“Literature,” asserts Simone Murray in her work on open-access literary culture, is “a profoundly *social* practice.”⁷³ If this needs confirming, one need look no further than the comment section at the end of any *Tyee* article, where readers are permitted to add their two (or three, or four...) cents worth, and seem to relish doing so. Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of *The Tyee* as a part of Canadian media is the interaction it affords between its journalists and their audience, creating in the comment forums “an intertextual space of communicative exchange” between the two often quite separate groups.⁷⁴

Constantly swimming against the current, *The Tyee* has made a business out of that participatory possibility by inviting online readers to speak up about issues that are important to them, to comment on articles, and to contact journalists directly. The publishers plan to continue to be guided by the same principles in print. Although *Harvested Here* doesn’t allow *exactly* these same conversations to take place, it does broaden the potential audience and give additional options to current *Tyee* readers. The hope for future *Tyee Special Editions* is to allow readers to mix and match their favourite articles into a customized book. “The Internet has unleashed an extraordinary possibility for many to participate in the process of building and cultivating a culture that reaches far beyond local boundaries.”⁷⁵ Giving readers an option to build their own

⁷³ Simone Murray “Remix My Lit: Toward an Open Access *Literary* Culture,” *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 16 (2010), 30.

⁷⁴ Doctorow, *Content*, 28.

⁷⁵ Lessig, *Free Culture*, 9.

Special Edition isn't far off; until readers can interact with content on that level, *The Tyee* will continue to curate editions based on the staff's knowledge of the readership.

By existing both in print and online, *The Tyee* utilizes the strengths of both media, and can cater to readers who prefer each. Beyond reader preference, by appearing in two formats, *The Tyee* may reach completely different readerships. Some scholars have posited that "the Internet may further a different kind of learning" than print. Online, a reader can browse through "a wealth of information, links, and details along the way."⁷⁶ The new avenues open up with each and every Google search, bringing new meaning to the research done over two decades ago by psychologists like Albert Bandura.⁷⁷ His work showed that if individuals are allowed to forge a path based on their interests, their motivation to learn is likely to be greater.⁷⁸ Information on the Internet – including that found in *The Tyee's* articles, on the political blog, and in the comment sections – doesn't just allow, but *encourages* this type of highly motivated curiosity by providing many avenues down which a reader can wander, many tangents and links that provide myriad learning opportunities.

Printed articles, on the other hand, "essentially *guide* their readers through the content." They offer a chaperoned tour of chapters and sections while still giving the reader the freedom to skip ahead or backtrack, should they feel the need to. The "linear structure and finiteness," of "traditional newspapers encourage a paging-through behaviour,"⁷⁹ and books are no different. While they don't offer all the tangential opportunities that online reading does, printed materials tend to provide less distractions; there are benefits to both mediums.

⁷⁶ Ester de Waal and Klaus Schoenbach, "Presentation Style and Beyond: How Print Newspapers and Online News Expand Awareness of Public Affairs Issues," *Mass Communication and Society* 11, (2008), 163.

⁷⁷ Albert Bandura, "Self Efficacy Mechanism in Human Agency." *American Psychologist* 37, (1982), 122. www.des.emory.edu/mfp/Bandura1982AP.pdf

⁷⁸ Bandura's work is also discussed in "Presentation Style," by de Waal and Schoenbach, published in *Mass Communication*, (2008), 164.

⁷⁹ de Waal and Schoenbach, "Presentation Style," *Mass Communication*, 164.

To be sure, the way a reader interacts with print isn't as community-based or as open to immediate response as online encounters with identical content, but it may be more meaningful. Research by Ester de Waal and Klaus Schoenbach shows that printed works are "still more successful [than digital] when it comes to learning about societal issues," that readers learn more effectively from printed works than they do from on-screen documents.⁸⁰ The pair also found that, "printed newspapers are a good source for public affairs topics...[particularly if readers are] already convinced of the value of [the newspaper] as a source of information,"⁸¹ as feedback shows that readers are with *The Tyee*. Readers can now utilize both formats and reap the benefits offered by each.

2.6 Improving the experience of current *Tyee* readers

In *Imagined Communities*, cultural theorist Benedict Anderson explains that modern communities are established by the telling and re-telling of common stories, the creation of communal myths, and the sense of belonging that grows from these practices that involve participating with one's fellows in the same daily narratives of life.⁸² Anderson considers as well the role of printed works in the formation of communities, of nations, and concludes, "the novel and the newspaper...provided the technical means for 're-presenting'...the nation"⁸³ and laid the groundwork for an "extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely simultaneous consumption ('imagining') of the newspaper-as-fiction," or as a cultural narrative.⁸⁴

In Margaret Atwood's *Survival*, the author discusses the importance of a national literature in a specifically Canadian context. Atwood emphasizes the importance of written works

⁸⁰ Ibid., 164.

⁸¹ Ibid., 170.

⁸² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso, 2003, 80.

⁸³ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 35.

as a point of reference for a community: “a reflection of a national habit of mind.”⁸⁵ She was writing in the early 1970s, when Canlit was just beginning to define itself in opposition to the national canons of the United States and Britain; however, Atwood’s words are as relevant today as they were when she first wrote them, particularly with the Internet-enabled proximity of art and media from all over the globe. She sees literature as a “geography of the mind” and “a product of who and where we have been” that readers use to learn about themselves. “We need to know about here,” Atwood says, “because here is where we live. For the members of a country or a culture, shared knowledge of their place, their here, is not a luxury but a necessity. Without that knowledge we will not survive.”⁸⁶

The Tyee, as Anderson and Atwood suggest, serves as a hub for a devoted community of readers and provides, through news and opinion, a version of the cultural topography that Atwood advocates. Using the content as common ground, *Tyee* readers circle around topics and issues that interest them, actively and enthusiastically engaging with the material on the site and with one another. In this way, *Harvested Here* provides a new outlet for this *Tyee* “nationalism” by allowing readers to own a special little piece of it, and commits to paper a contemporary Canadian conversation.

In searching for the benefits of returning to the simple, centuries-old print format in an increasingly “e” age, we can step away from socio-cultural theory and the heavy tomes of Canada’s national literature, and find a little wisdom in the words of a science fiction writer. Canadian author Cory Doctorow succinctly describes why *Harvested Here* matters: “having an ebook is good. Having a paper book is good. Having both is even better.”⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2004, 19.

⁸⁶ Atwood, *Survival*, 26-27.

⁸⁷ Doctorow, *Content*, 110.

3 WHAT DOES *HARVESTED HERE* ACCOMPLISH?

In the previous chapter, I discussed the brand extension, the audience growth, and the sponsorship opportunities that *Harvested Here* created for *The Tye*. I also chronicled various types of reader that are well served by a print-on-demand anthology of *Tye* articles. The book of collected stories may be easier for some readers to consume: reading from a book is more in line with the “traditional” reading experience, and ink-on-paper is still most people’s preferred method of receiving information. In the following sections, I will discuss what *Harvested Here* does for readers, and why this book and future *Tye Special Editions*, created from content accessible for free online, are worth paying for.

3.1 *Tye Special Editions* provide readers with exactly what they want

Harvested Here is a collection of hand-selected, thoroughly researched, investigative articles written by professional journalists and experts in sustainable food and farming. The articles were published online, read by thousands (or, in the case of some articles, tens of thousands), and commented on before being printed and bound. Unlike the material that makes up most printed books, the content was available for a pre-press dialogue, which occurred in the comment sections, in emails, through phone calls and follow-ups, and involved the readers, the writer, and editor of the article. Those same conversations continue on each new article that is published on *The Tye*.

This is a practice *The Tye* hopes to encourage with upcoming *Special Editions*, perhaps as a part of a separate project that has been given the working title, “The Reader Advisory Board.”⁸⁸ Essentially, this Board will be a subscription-based service that charges a small amount – perhaps \$5 a month – and gives paying readers access to exclusive services on *The Tye*. One of these special benefits will be the opportunity to act as part of a consulting team to help *Tye* staff

⁸⁸ The Reader Advisory Board is still in the early stages of planning. *Tye* staff hope to start working on it more seriously in spring 2011.

plan and execute forthcoming *Special Edition* books, perhaps assisting with choosing a topic, or helping to select articles to include in the anthology. Members of the Reader Advisory Board may even be given a review copy of the book as a subscriber gift, or be invited to the launch party. There are endless ways that future *Special Editions* could involve Advisory Board subscribers, and each offers an accompanying opportunity for site promotion and growth.

While *The Tyee* isn't yet asking readers for direct input on what to print or reprint, academics have considered similar projects where individual readers have had an opportunity to influence the editorial process and have successfully contributed to an end product. For example, cultural theorist McKenzie Wark collaborated with the Brooklyn-based organization, The Institute for the Future of the Book, to make the draft versions of nine chapters of his novel available for Internet browsers to comment on.⁸⁹ Wark incorporated the most insightful comments into the hard copy, which was then published by Harvard University Press.⁹⁰ In the *Tyee* version of this scenario, reader or Advisory Board member comments might influence the direction a journalist's research takes or might expose the writer to a new source or lead, which could then be incorporated into the article.

Even more extreme is another practice studied and promoted by some cultural theorists: readers who create their own "digital scrapbooks" from a collection of others' creative texts, assembling their choice of materials into one, unique volume. Ellen Gruber Garvey, a historian of print culture, has analyzed the way in which readers, since the Victorian era, have fulfilled their desires to "exert some creative, producerly control in an era positively awash with cheap print materials...by collecting, arranging, and pasting-up an assortment of such disposable texts."⁹¹

Scrapbooking tools have changed considerably since then and, although word processing software still uses the old lingo, digital scrapbooking requires much less effort than actual cutting

⁸⁹ McKenzie Wark's *Gamer Theory* page on Institute for the Future of the Book website, <http://www.futureofthebook.org/mckenziemark/>

⁹⁰ McKenzie Wark, *Gamer Theory*, Boston: Harvard UP, 2007. Available at <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?recid=29029>

⁹¹ Qtd. in Simone Murray, "Remix my Lit," 30.

and pasting. In the printed past, using a pair of scissors and glue, “scrapbook makers thus asserted their role as discerning contributors to – no mere satiated consumers of – print culture.” It’s now possible to use software (ranging from basic text editing programs to sophisticated design software) to compile information from many sources, to “cut” and “paste” snippets of text from, essentially, anything that can be read on a computer screen; a scrapbooker could create a custom edition from online newspapers, digitized archives, so long as they’re respectful of copyright, the possibilities are endless.

Adobe CS4 InDesign – the program I used to create the pages for the interior of *Harvested Here* – is one program that can be used to digitally scrapbook. It can also be used to transform text housed in an online content management system (CMS) into an ePub file. An ePub file, as SFU Master of Publishing students learned during their “Book of MPub” project in the spring of 2010, is really just “XHTML in a wrapper...within the ePub file [is] a relatively clean XHTML document.”⁹² Creating this type of file from an online CMS, such as Bricolage, is a process the SFU team described as “almost too easy.” Content in ePub form is malleable: it can be read as-is on a Kobo or an Amazon Kindle as an ebook, or can be modified and formatted into a print-friendly state in Adobe InDesign. This is because XHTML content can be converted into an InDesign compatible format called IDML.⁹³ If *The Tye* intends to continue printing-on-demand anthologies like *Harvested Here*, creating ePub and the derivative IDML files of articles would allow the content to move from the web, where it lives initially, to an ePub file, and from there it can be prepared for e- or p-book publishing. Simon Fraser University researchers Maxwell and Fraser describe the possibility succinctly in the excerpt below.

...the book is simply available, in the first place online; in the second place in derivative digital formats; and third, but really not much more difficult, in print-

⁹² John Maxwell and Kathleen Fraser, “Traversing the Book of Mpub: an Agile, Web-first Publishing Model.” *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, 13. (Dec 2010). <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=jep;view=text;rgn=main;idno=3336451.0013.303>

⁹³ Much more on this – including greater technical detail that is beyond the scope of this project – is included in Maxwell and Fraser’s article.

ready format, via the usual InDesign CS print production system publishers are already familiar with.⁹⁴

At this point, because of the small staff and the time it would take, transforming all the articles on *The Tyee* into ePub or IDML format is not feasible, nor is it necessary. The long-term plan is to streamline the “scrapbooking process” for readers to the point where they could create an ink-and-paper or ePub custom edition of their favourite articles by simply clicking a button beside the article. A system like this would bridge the discrete realms of ebooks and print, “grafting the interactive capabilities of digital communication onto the traditionally read-only form of the analogue book,”⁹⁵ and producing custom volumes that would reflect the values and interests of the remixing reader at a particular point in time.⁹⁶ Not only would the reader be satisfied, but the final printed product would provide a fascinating snapshot of a particular moment in British Columbia’s history.

BookRiff,⁹⁷ a project of the Canadian publisher Douglas and MacIntyre, has talked of offering a content aggregation service similar to the one *Tyee* staff have dreamed up. In BookRiff’s vision, articles are individually loaded into the BookRiff database, and readers pick and choose to create customized mash-ups of whatever stories they like. Adding each article costs a nominal fee, set by *The Tyee*, and when the reader is ready, BookRiff prints and delivers the finished volume to the remixer’s home address. This is a collaboration to consider in the future: as I’ll discuss later, BookRiff has experienced a few challenges and is behind schedule in launching their online custom publishing service.

Though offering reader-made digital scrapbooks using ePub/XHTML or BookRiff is not a current priority for *The Tyee*, it is an idea to keep in mind. For now, less advanced and technically demanding examples of collaborative publishing can offer *The Tyee* direction and

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Simone Murray, “Remix my Lit,” 28.

⁹⁶ Simone Murray, “Remix my Lit,” 30.

⁹⁷ BookRiff is discussed in detail later in this report. For more information, see pages 42 and 43.

inspiration. With the possibility of Reader Advisory Board-edited *Special Editions* on the horizon, *Tyee* staff have discussed making these reader-made anthologies available to other readers as well, changing the (currently hypothetical) book building process from a solitary, primarily self-serving endeavour to a communal exercise, a crowdsourced editing.

3.2 *Special Editions* that give readers a chance to participate

Within the Canadian publishing scene, Montrealer Hugh McGuire is using crowdsourcing to speed up the proofreading process on unedited manuscripts. The pair created BookOven: “an online toolset that helps individuals and groups to make, improve, publish, and sell print books and ebooks” designed with small presses and independent writers in mind.⁹⁸ “BiteSizeEdits”, a part of the BookOven project, gives would-be editors one- and two-line snippets of text from manuscripts uploaded to the site by their authors. The system accelerates the editing process and makes a mundane task into something of a game; it also allows the author to benefit from the opinions and editing skills of numerous readers.

Individuals and companies outside the publishing world are also looking to crowdsourcing as a marketing tool and a way to increase their interaction with fans and customers. A few years ago, the pop band, The Beastie Boys, gave 50 concert attendees video cameras and used the footage they recorded to create a movie, enthusiastically titled *Awesome: I Fuckin’ Shot That!*

Similarly, iStockphoto,⁹⁹ the online photography database, relies on amateur photographers to populate the site by uploading images. These members then charge others a fee to license them for private or public use. Some make a very comfortable living from the profits.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ BookOven, “FAQ” section: <http://bookoven.com/faq/>

⁹⁹ iStockphoto, <http://www.istockphoto.com/>

¹⁰⁰ Jeff Howe, “The Rise of Crowdsourcing.” *Wired*, June 2006. <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.06/crowds.html>

Etsy¹⁰¹ is another retail site that lets designers and artisans create individual storefronts online, list items, set prices, and sell to customers all over the globe. Even John Fluevog Shoes – a company that has, historically, needed no help coming up with one-of-a-kind designs – is experimenting with “Open Source Footwear,” which lets shoe-lovers submit design ideas.¹⁰²

Businesses don’t just use crowds to improve their products or increase their brand’s reach; sometimes, crowdsourced material comprises the entire company. Threadless.com is a perfect example. The company started out, as many great ones seem to, in the bedroom of one of the two young founders. The premise of the site is simple: users submit original artwork, and customers can order the designs screen-printed on shirts. For a business plan that relies almost entirely on other people to do the work, Threadless has been immensely profitable: in 2006, the revenues topped \$17 million. With annual costs now hovering at around \$1 million (the founders have upgraded from the bedroom office), the company is turning a healthy profit. There are no artists to pay, no designers to argue with, and no limitations on what will become popular next. The design staff of Threadless is as big as the Net. Author Jeff Howe notes of the Threadless phenomenon that, and this is promising news for *The Tyee*, “Threadless isn’t really in the t-shirt business. It sells community.”¹⁰³

To be part of the *Tyee* community is free. The articles and the comment forums are open and available for anyone who wants to access them. It is only the readers who want a tactile and more traditional reading experience, to have hand-selected articles arranged, catalogued, and presented in an eye-catching little volume that need to pay for the otherwise open-source *Tyee*. In the future there will be an opportunity for readers who want to be part of the *Tyee*’s creative process to contribute ideas or suggestions – just like user-made designs on Threadless – as part of the “Reader Advisory Board” project that *The Tyee* has in the works. Once this project launches,

¹⁰¹ Etsy, <http://www.etsy.com/>

¹⁰² From Jeff Howe’s June 2006 article in *Wired*, “Look Who’s Crowdsourcing.” The examples of businesses using crowdsourcing have grown exponentially since then, but Howe’s article provides a good variety. <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.06/look.html>

¹⁰³ Howe, “Look Who’s Crowdsourcing,” *Wired*, 6.

the hope is that this same devoted demographic can also serve as an ideal test group for reader-created anthologies, future *Tyee Special Editions* made by and for *Tyee* readers, and available as ebooks or in print.¹⁰⁴

3.3 But *will* anyone pay?

Stepping back a moment from the forward-looking “digital scrapbooking” and crowdsourced editorial board ideas and speaking only of the staff-curated books of articles repurposed in print, there are publishers experimenting with selling a permanent, printed version of work that can be accessed for free online. Publishers have bandied hopefully about the chance that free content could not only coexist agreeably with but even increase the value of paid-for content, but because e-publishing is a relatively new endeavour, there have been few conclusions reached. There is, however, some interesting anecdotal evidence that people are more still interested in purchasing a “premium” version of something they can get in a “basic” format for free.

Whether content is charged for directly or not, as Tim O’Reilly has said, “obscurity is a far greater threat to authors and creative artists than piracy.”¹⁰⁵ That free content might increase the value of a non-free product is also a subject of much discussion in Lawrence Lessig’s *Free Culture*. This idea “was confirmed by Peter Wayner, who wrote a book about the free software movement entitled *Free For All*,” and released a free ebook version of it once the book was out of print.¹⁰⁶ Wayner’s book, released in 2000 and licensed through Creative Commons,¹⁰⁷ is still available for download from his website.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Either using BookRiff to produce the printed books, or possibly following the route of SFU’s MPub students in their “agile, web-first publishing model.” More on that in Maxwell and Fraser’s article, published in the *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=jep;view=text;rgn=main;idno=3336451.0013.303>

¹⁰⁵ Tim O’Reilly, “Piracy is Progressive Taxation, and Other Thoughts on the Evolution of Online Publishing.” *OpenP2P.com*, Dec. 2002, <http://openp2p.com/lpt/a/3015>

¹⁰⁶ Lessig, *Free Culture*, 284-85.

¹⁰⁷ Creative Commons describes itself as using “private rights to create public goods: creative works set free for certain uses. Like the free software and open-source movements,” they “are cooperative and

Cory Doctorow, a Canadian science fiction author and proponent of all things open source, provides an even more convincing example. Doctorow has made a living out of giving his novels away. Unlike Wayner, Doctorow doesn't wait until his titles are out of print to release them for free electronically. "His first novel, *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*, was released online and for free, under a Creative Commons license, the same day it went on sale in bookstores."¹⁰⁹ The author discusses his experience:

Most people who download the [free electronic] book don't end up buying it, but they wouldn't have bought it in any event, so I haven't lost any sales, I've just won an audience... A tiny minority of downloaders treat the free ebook as a substitute for the printed book – these are the lost sales. But a much larger minority treat the ebook as an enticement to buy the printed book. They've gained sales.¹¹⁰

Doctorow's publishing philosophy draws on the same "freemium" hierarchy, to borrow a term from Chris Anderson, that *The Tye* has created by printing *Harvested Here*. He certainly isn't regretting the authorial decisions he has made: Doctorow travels frequently to give lectures, and makes a living out of his original attitude toward intellectual property.

Wayner's experience, too, bodes well for *The Tye*. In a blog entry dated January 20, 2010, Wayner discusses how "free" has changed in the past fifteen years:

Many writers, musicians and content creators are starting to toss around the word 'sustainable' and asking whether we're just like the settlers who moved onto the Great Plains and discovered that the bison herds are not infinite. When that ecology collapsed, the settlers fenced it in...

community-minded, but our means are voluntary and libertarian. We work to offer creators a best-of-both-worlds way to protect their works while encouraging certain uses of them — to declare 'some rights reserved.'" This is from <http://creativecommons.ca/index.php?p=history>; more information can be found on the Creative Commons site.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Wayner's *Free for All* – among others – is available at <http://www.wayner.org>.

¹⁰⁹ Lessig, *Free Culture*, 284.

¹¹⁰ Doctorow, *Content*, 71.

In doing so, Wayner describes, the settlers “destroyed the romantic vision that anyone could go anywhere.” But fencing things in wasn’t all bad: it “gave the owners the incentive to care for the land.”¹¹¹ He brings the metaphor full circle by relating early settlers to digital publishers: “as the content creators begin to fence in the Internet, they don’t need to destroy the free areas” but instead should prepare “for a future when information is not entirely free.”

Wayner would likely support *The Tyee*’s paid-for publishing gamble with *Harvested Here*: “it’s time to stop using words like ‘free’ and ‘volunteer’ to describe all collaboration on the web and start to think in terms of what will result in a sustainable system. Wayner assures his readers that, “there will be many corners of the Internet that continue to thrive with the free model” but those will only be the ones that distribute the burdens of upkeep and curation among many people. Wayner ends his blog entry with this:

The world at large has to stop expecting that all information should be free, all wisdom should be created by crowds of volunteers, and all data must be held in some grand commons. While information sharing online is dramatically cheaper than working with physical goods, gathering and even curating the information is just as labor intensive as any physical task.¹¹²

It is because sharing information online is relatively cheap that *The Tyee* can offer its journalism for free to readers willing to overlook a bit of advertising, as these revenues offset the costs incurred by the creation of the content and the upkeep of the site. Physical goods, however, have direct physical costs that are harder to avoid; once readers have had a chance to sample the wares online, and can see why they’re worth paying for – as Doctorow and Wayner’s anecdotes show – there’s a market for products like *Harvested Here*.

For other types of creative content, it seems having a basic free version and a paid-for premium version can lead to success. Doctorow and Wayner published their fiction and non-

¹¹¹ Peter Wayner, “The Problem With Free” Jan. 20, 2010. <http://www.wayner.org/node/67>

¹¹² Ibid.

fiction as paid-for-print editions and free online books, but Radiohead pioneered the “freemium” model in the music biz. Their 2007 album, *In Rainbows*, was available for download for whatever price a fan was prepared to pay for it, even if that meant nothing at all. Their leap of faith showed that giving away content – and not just books – can translate to income if a premium version is also made available to those who can or want to pay for it.¹¹³ To apply Radiohead’s experience to what *The Tyee* has done with *Harvested Here*: the content is available online where it “is available to anyone anywhere – including people who can’t afford to purchase that particular work,”¹¹⁴ and is also for sale in a premium print edition, for readers who prefer that method of consumption.

The answer to the question that started this section, “will anyone pay?” is “yes.” Readers who want a premium experience will foot the bill, and allowing them to sample the contents first, on *The Tyee* site, makes this even more reliable. As noted in an earlier discussion of how *Harvested Here* contributes to brand extension (2.1), it is the same principle that has beauty salons offering new clients half-price on their first visit, or ice cream parlours providing miniature spoonfuls for taste tests. Doctorow notes that “giving away [his] books is selling the hell out of them,”¹¹⁵ and that authors who can “insert themselves into their readers conversations will be set for life”; the free website allows readers to do this in a low-risk way. No commitment or payment required. Thanks to the experiments of authors like Wayner and Doctorow and bands like Radiohead, we can tally the numbers and find that free distribution in addition to a paid-for version that has more features can be more lucrative for the creator of the work.¹¹⁶ “Free opens

¹¹³ *In Rainbows* went on to become the band’s most commercially successful album, selling 3 million copies worldwide. The “Freemium” model also earned them over 100,000 sales of an \$80 special edition box set of the album, and 1.2 million concert ticket sales for their next tour. This issue is discussed further in “Take It! No, It’s Yours! Really!: The Excellent Inevitability of Free,” an academic paper by the author of this report. The full-text is available at <http://tkbr.ccsf.sfu.ca/bookofmpub/take-it-no-its-yours-really-the-excellent-inevitability-of-free-by-shannon-smart>

¹¹⁴ Lessig, *The Future of Ideas*, 122.

¹¹⁵ Lessig, *The Future of Ideas*, 136.

¹¹⁶ Anderson, *Free*, 26.

doors, reaching new consumers,” writes Anderson, “it doesn’t mean you can’t charge some of them.”¹¹⁷

To return to the larger question of what *Harvested Here* accomplishes for *The Tyee* and its readers: in this increasingly digitized era, it is conversation – not content – that is king,¹¹⁸ and authors, artists, and even independent online newspapers must take advantage of all channels available to them to. Eventually, the business team hopes to be able to offer readers customizable editions of *Tyee* content, created at the click of a button in the sidebar of each article on the site. Before embarking on that project, *The Tyee* will promote reader subscription to the crowdsourced editorial team that is currently in the works: the Reader Advisory Board. While *Harvested Here* caters to readers interested in local eating and farming, future books will offer readers exactly what they want. These future endeavours will make *Tyee Special Editions* more attractive to readers, and will help *The Tyee* continue to grow.

Standing alone, *Harvested Here* gives readers – for a small fee – a chance to experience *Tyee* content in a different, more traditional way. The project brings articles from the online news magazine to an audience that favours books, and the economical option of on-demand printing allows this without the need for a warehouse to store thousands of offset-printed copies. *Harvested Here* takes a few steps toward extending the reach of *The Tyee*, while future *Tyee Special Editions* will push on.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 242.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 81.

4 TURNING PIXELS INTO PAGES: *THE TYEE'S* FIRST P.O.D. EXPERIENCE

The Tyee's financial situation doesn't allow for projects such as publishing a book to be undertaken without extensive planning. The original plan, drafted in June 2010, was to print 200 copies. Between September and December, 2010, a total of 250 copies were printed: there were 30 printed in August, 100 in September, 40 in October, and then another 80 in December. For these small runs, printing as larger publishers do on offset machines would have been prohibitively expensive. Offset printing requires high volume to be cost effective, while printing on the Espresso Book Machine eliminated storage and warehousing costs, as well as the need to make a large initial investment and to print numerous copies. From the start of the project, *Harvested Here* was intended to be a small-scale publishing operation.

With offset printers out of the question, staff at *The Tyee* researched numerous options for printing the book on-demand. There were three main contenders: BookRiff, Lighting Source, and the Espresso Book Machine (EBM)¹¹⁹ at Oscar's Art Books. The EBM is "a fully integrated patented book making machine" capable of automatically printing, binding and trimming books.¹²⁰ As I'll discuss in the following sections, each of the printers would have brought unique benefits to the project; in the end, *The Tyee* chose to print at Oscar's, the local bookstore that houses an Espresso Book Machine.

4.1 BookRiff

In early discussions about putting *Tyee* content into print, the plan was to use BookRiff to create the first special edition. BookRiff is a self-described "revolution in publishing technology," that allows book and periodical publishers, authors, and anyone else who is so inclined to mix

¹¹⁹ The Espresso Book Machine (EBM) is a high speed printing and binding machine, created by On Demand Books. More information is available at <http://www.ondemandbooks.com/home.htm>

¹²⁰ From the "About: Hardware" section of the OnDemand Books website, <http://www.ondemandbooks.com/home.htm>

published books or sections of books, free Web content, and even their own work to create unique custom editions.¹²¹

For *The Tyee*'s P.O.D. project, it sounded perfect. The business team contacted BookRiff in May 2010 and discussed the project. At that point, BookRiff was still in beta-testing mode, but their plan was to be ready by mid-summer. Of course, the time it will take to pioneer a “revolution” is hard to estimate, and while everyone involved in the print-on-demand project – both at *The Tyee* and BookRiff – hoped the service would be up and running by the time *The Tyee* was ready to turn pixels into pages, it simply did not work out.

Although the timing wasn't right for a partnership between *The Tyee* and BookRiff, both parties are planning to revisit the idea once BookRiff has worked out all its beta-related kinks. When the site is functioning properly, *The Tyee* team hopes to be able to house all its published articles there in book-ready form, and potentially – as I have already noted – have a widget or button on each *Tyee* article on the *Tyee* site to allow readers to “Add This Article to My Custom Edition,” and make their own, one-of-a-kind book as they read.

4.2 Lightning Source

After reluctantly shelving the idea of a partnership with BookRiff, *Tyee* staff began looking at other options for printing *Harvested Here* and found Lightning Source. In addition to offering full-colour interiors, hardcover books with jackets, case laminate, or cloth binding, Lightning Source also provides basic services that fit with *The Tyee*'s budget-conscious publishing plan. The printer offers affordable soft-cover volumes with four-colour covers, black and white interiors, and the 6”x9” trim size *Harvested Here* was designed with.

With those technical requirements met, *Tyee* staff began tallying up what it would cost to print 200 copies of *Harvested Here* with them. Lightning Source charges an initial \$75 fee for setup of a digital title. After that, the price per book varies depending on the number of copies

¹²¹ BookRiff, <http://BookRiff.com>

being printed, the cover and stock being used, the page count, and the trim size. For 200 copies of a 180-page, black-and-white paperback measuring 6”x9,” printed on regular stock, with a four-colour cover, Lightning Source charges \$3.23 for each copy.¹²²

Once the books are printed, Lightning Source offers several options for distribution, including direct shipment from the U.S. printer to customers anywhere in North America. Direct shipment was unnecessary for the *Tyee*’s first print-on-demand project; the books could be best distributed by *The Tyee* itself, brought to events and to the exhibit at the Museum of Vancouver and sold to customers from there. For future anthologies, though, Lightning Source’s distribution network could be a way to save *The Tyee* staff time and shipping fees, as with Lightning Source – just like if they were ordering books from Chapters/Indigo or Amazon – the customer is responsible for paying the shipping.

With all the above information taken into account, the reader is likely wondering why *The Tyee* bothered looking any further. As has already been explained, for any future print-on-demand projects, *The Tyee* will likely switch to Lightning Source, but at the end of August 2010, working on a tight deadline, the local bookstore with the EBM was the best option.

4.3 The Espresso Book Machine at Oscar’s Art Books

Oscar’s Art Books is located in Vancouver, about a ten-minute drive from *The Tyee* office. Nearby, staffed by helpful people, and open until 9:00 pm every day: the proximity and accessibility alone gave Oscar’s a great advantage in the competition for *The Tyee*’s patronage. When I inquired about printing *Harvested Here*, the manager promised to have the proof copy ready for pickup in a matter of hours. As the project progressed, the locally housed EBM and obliging employees at Oscar’s Art Books became even more valuable: they permitted *Tyee* staff to make changes as needed to the print files, and were quick to respond to requests and inquiries.

¹²² For a small paperback, Lightning Source charges a base price of \$0.90 per book plus an additional \$0.0015 per page. These rates were current as of January 2011, and can be downloaded at <https://www.lightningsource.com/ops/.../pod/USPODOpsManual.pdf>

The proximity of the EBM combined with the speed of production at Oscar's – eight minutes per copy – allowed *The Tye* to provide excellent customer service to local readers. If there were some kind of local-eating crisis (or a forgotten birthday) and a customer needed a copy of book immediately, they could, hypothetically, have *Harvested Here* in their hands less than half an hour after ordering it, which wouldn't be possible with Lightning Source or BookRiff, no matter how quick their fulfilment teams move.

Finally, despite it being slightly more expensive (copies were estimated at approx. \$5.50 per book), Oscar's won *The Tye*'s business because it was easier to use. Becoming a “publisher” with Lightning Source requires a great deal more time and energy than it takes to walk into Oscar's on Broadway and request pricing information. If the manager has a moment, he'll probably offer a demonstration of how the EBM works. Time and energy trump even cash as scarce commodities at *The Tye*. And so, for printing the first *Special Edition*, Oscar's it was.

Long-term, there is no question that Lightning Source makes more sense. The availability of outsourced distribution and fulfilment and more affordable pricing will be essential if *Tye* *Special Editions* become an ongoing part of *The Tye*'s business model. For the purposes of this first project, however, the proximity of Oscar's won against the packing tape and boxes promised by Lightning Source.

4.4 Putting *Harvested Here* together

Harvested Here was created using content that existed online only. To be able to manipulate the design and layout, *Tye* staff copied and pasted the text into a template created in Adobe InDesign. The fonts are simple and readable (Georgia for the body text and Lucida Bright for titles and section heads), and the layout is clean. There are no unnecessary flourishes or extraneous design elements (in part because the person responsible for the interior layout has little book design experience, but also because that is the editor's preference). David Beers wrote an editor's note and came up with the book title, while I put together jacket copy, a table of contents,

a copyright page, a list of acknowledgements, and a directory of local food-related organizations. The *Tyee* team also compiled a number of recipes that are associated with the articles and grouped them together at the end of the book. Tides Canada, as a sponsor, was given two pages at the front of the book to use to describe some of the local food and farming initiatives they have funded.

When the text had been fed into the InDesign template, Alex Grunenfelder, a graphic designer who often freelances for *The Tyee*, created the book's cover.¹²³ Once the PDF files of the cover and book block had been sent to Oscar's and a proof copy was in hand, it was just a matter of editing before a larger run (of thirty) could be printed and taken down to the Museum of Vancouver for the opening night of the Home Grown exhibit. The experience redefined "just-in-time publishing" – the books barely made it.

¹²³ See Appendix F for the book's cover and images of two spreads.

5 THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ON- AND OFF-LINE LITERATURE

5.1 Copyright logistics

Unlike journalists with many newspapers and magazines, *The Tyee*'s writers retain copyright of their articles once they are published on the site. *The Tyee* does take first serial rights, but all subsequent serial rights, anthology rights, and volume rights stay with the author. In fact, editor David Beers is always happy to allow another publication (print or online) to republish *The Tyee*'s content: it means more exposure for the journalist and, potentially, more readers coming to *The Tyee*. Having stories picked up by other sites is something that *The Tyee*'s editorial, marketing, and writing teams actively work toward; many of *The Tyee*'s frequent contributors inform other media outlets of the work they're doing whenever they post a new story, and encourage editors in other newsrooms to re-post their work.¹²⁴ Considering *The Tyee*'s policies on sharing freely with readers, it's no surprise that the online news magazine encourages writers to shop the products of their hard work around, and keeping the rights to republish is essential if this is to happen.

In repurposing articles from the site, *The Tyee*'s staff could safely assume the writers would want the extra exposure and wider readership that comes with being included in the print edition. The staff wanted to be careful, though, and took into account any potential profits that might (eternal optimism is an essential part of publishing) come from the sales of the printed product. With the limited budget and a print run of 200 in mind, the *Tyee*'s editor and business director awarded the anthologized authors an honorarium calculated according to the number of articles each writer contributed. James MacKinnon and Alisa Smith earned the largest honoraria, as their work made up nearly sixty percent of the anthology.

¹²⁴ Geoff Dembicki, one of the few staff writers at *The Tyee*, did a great deal of work on Alberta's oil sands in 2010. He made a point of sending the URL linking to his articles to each and every individual or corporation he thought would be interested in his work. Several of these recipients posted Dembicki's work on their sites or distributed the website link to their colleagues and friends. Dembicki, who is quite soft-spoken and humble in person, proved while working the "Tar Sands beat" not only to be quite a talented journalist, but a master of self-promotion.

As staff suspected, the writers were thrilled to hear their work was going to be republished in print form. Unsurprisingly, they had no objections to (1) *The Tyee*'s request for permission to include their work in the first anthology of *Tyee* content, or (2) to being paid *again* for work that, in some cases, had been published years earlier. Alisa Smith, James MacKinnon, Joanne Will, Jeff Nield, and David Tracey were all on board. The question *The Tyee* heard most often when getting permission from the writers to reprint the articles was “when can I see a copy?”

Though the first edition went off without a copyright-related hitch, the smooth execution of securing permissions for *Harvested Here* may not hold for future anthologies. Perhaps these writers were particularly amenable to small, unsolicited sums of money coming their way. That may not always be the case; some authors may refuse to permit reprinting, or may want to extract more than a small honorarium from what is, at this point, a break-even endeavour. It would be prudent, then, for *The Tyee* to consider making up a contract for writers who publish on the site to secure permission for the content to be used in any format *The Tyee* chooses to publish in.

5.2 Marketing and advertising

“The world,” said Malcolm Gladwell in a recent *New Yorker* article, “is in the midst of a revolution. The new tools of social media have reinvented social activism.”¹²⁵ This is fortunate for *The Tyee*, a producer of “catalytic journalism”¹²⁶ that has virtually no marketing budget to speak of.

Gladwell goes on in his article, “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted,” to both extol the virtues of various trendy social media tools and to dismiss them as ineffective on a larger scale. For the purposes of *The Tyee*, though, small scale is just fine. Social media sites, *The Tyee*'s best methods of marketing with the current budget, have been

¹²⁵ Malcolm Gladwell, “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted,” *The New Yorker*, October 4, 2010, 42.

¹²⁶ As described by Michelle Hoar, Business Director for *The Tyee*.

indispensable in promoting this new way of distributing the site's content. "With Facebook and Twitter and the like," Gladwell writes, "the traditional relationship between political authority and popular will has been upended." For "the powerless," a term that could equally apply to the political underdog that Gladwell intends, or to an independent, online local news magazine like *The Tyee*, social media has made it possible to "collaborate, coordinate, and give voice to their concerns." By using the free channels of Facebook and Twitter, posting an article about the book, and displaying an ad for *Harvested Here* on the website, *The Tyee* informed current readers of the new product at almost no cost.

Other thinkers and commentators have picked out additional ways in which social media can benefit online journalism. Beyond being a useful tool for the promotion of new stories, excellent reporting, or new products like *Harvested Here*, Twitter and Facebook are also great research tools for *The Tyee*. In a recent article on the website *Mashable*, e-journalist Vadim Lavrusik discusses this phenomenon:

Because the social web gives both citizenry and journalists access to officials and companies at the click of a mouse, social question and answer tools can be used to collaboratively investigate issues and keep powers accountable...

Lavrusik goes on to discuss the ways in which social tools make it much easier for online journalists to connect to the community or get readers' input for a story. "The collective wisdom on social media is far beyond the knowledge of the individual reporter or even the collective newsroom."¹²⁷ Reporters at *The Tyee* are well aware of this, and spend a great deal of time creating relationships with experts and readers alike. Perhaps especially because *The Tyee* is an online news magazine, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media tools have been an essential part of building up sources and fans. When it came to promoting *Harvested Here*, *The Tyee* was

¹²⁷ Vadim Lavrusik, "How Investigative News is Prospering in the Age of Social Media." *Mashable*. Nov. 25, 2010. <http://mashable.com/2010/11/24/investigative-journalism-social-web/>

able to use these already-established channels to spread the word. As the Reader Engagement Coordinator, I took up the task of informing *Tyee* fans of this new way of accessing the site's content, sending messages on Facebook and posting updates and responding to feedback about the book on Twitter.¹²⁸

The book also featured prominently at each of the Food and Beers events at the Museum of Vancouver. It was sold not only to patrons of the Museum of Vancouver and the Food and Beers talks, but was picked up by vendors who saw it there. Deb Reynolds of Home Grow-In¹²⁹ came to the first event in September, and took ten copies of the book with her to sell at her community store in Mount Pleasant. She quickly sold out of them, and within a few weeks was asking *Tyee* staff to provide her with additional books.

The Tides Canada Foundation, the sponsor of this first *Tyee Special Edition*, is thrilled with the result of their investment. Marketing and promotions staff at other influential local organizations, such as the VanCity Foundation and the City of Vancouver, have been equally vocal about how impressed they are with the publication, and have expressed their interest in being involved with the next Special Edition. Even if the exciting possibility of a crowdsourced print edition of *Tyee* content takes a while to materialize, this first book has shown *The Tyee* that printed books are a worthwhile project to which to dedicate the organization's scarce time and resources. *Harvested Here* has helped with brand extension, reader engagement, garnering interest amongst possible patron organizations, and getting the attention of audiences *The Tyee* might not have reached as an online-only news magazine.

¹²⁸ Evidence of this can be seen in Appendix C, which includes a number of screenshots of the conversations that took place promoting the book on Twitter and Facebook.

¹²⁹ Home Grow-In is a "neighbourhood community store" that sells only products from BC. Their mission is to shorten the distance between producer and consumer, and to promote buying and eating locally. Their website includes a great deal of useful information, such as location and business hours and a list of the local producers whose goods they carry. <http://www.home-growin.com/>

6 CONCLUSION: WHAT *HARVESTED HERE* TAUGHT *THE TYEE*

6.1 Future *Tyee* Special Editions:

Just as *Harvested Here* was published, *The Tyee* began co-curating a series of lectures at the Museum of Vancouver. As I've mentioned, these four talks, framed around discussing and promoting local, sustainable food sourcing and farming, were called Food and Beers. They each featured *Tyee* editor David Beers as the moderator and invited various local farmers and food celebrities to take part in the conversations. The authors of *The 100-Mile Diet*, James MacKinnon and Alisa Smith, headlined one event with stories of sustainable eating from their recent trip around North America, while another event had Meeru Dhalwala, cookbook author and co-owner of the world-renowned Granville Street Indian restaurant, *Vij's*, on a panel with the Chair of the *Vancouver Farmers Market Society*, Amy Robertson, the President of *Local Food Plus*, Lori Stahlbrand, and the President of *Left Coast Natural*, Ian Walker. There was also a "100-Mile Iron Chef" competition, modelled after the wildly popular Japanese cooking show, and a final event that brought together a group of local writers – including Timothy Taylor – to discuss the current popularity of writing inspired by a culinary muse.

What this long-winded description is meant to reveal is that *Harvested Here* – from the moment it was glued and bound – was spring-boarded into Vancouver's culinary community through a series of food-related events attended primarily by guests who would be interested in the book. It was a gentle introduction into print-on-demand publishing, as the content of the book had already proved to be popular on the website and the Food and Beers lecture series gave *The Tyee* four different occasions (with a captive audience of food-lovers) to sell the book.

In measuring the success of *Harvested Here*, it is useful to think of the project as a little, local farm, such as the small-scale, specialty farms that stock the booths at Vancouver's farmers' markets each summer. These farmers bring bushels, not tonnes, to market, and grow their produce in land they work with their own hands. Their priority is improving a part of life for members of the local community. Similarly, *Harvested Here* was created with readers in the Lower Mainland

in mind. It is made up of stories picked “by hand” from *The Tyee*’s archives, and – like any fruitful crop – a great deal of sweaty work went into its development. Like the farmers at the market, the team that created *Harvested Here* was aiming for quality, not quantity. With the goals of keeping costs down, catering to a local audience, printing in short, sustainable runs, and building relationships within the community, this on-demand publishing project has been a thorough success.

The Tyee learned from this experiment that the success of future *Special Editions* will depend (perhaps entirely) on three factors: whether staff have adequate time to create and promote any new products, whether *The Tyee* has enough financial support to see the project through, and whether a large enough audience can be engaged to sell copies. Though it has garnered interest from sponsors and broadened potential audiences for the work, *Harvested Here* has not earned *The Tyee* any money. While creating the book was an illuminating exercise in repurposing content and a creative monetization of otherwise “free” goods, to undertake another book without the promise of greater gains – financial or otherwise – would be unwise.

With that in mind, the *Tyee* business team is considering embarking on print projects that will give readers a book-like experience but at less cost to the publisher. Specifically, the team is looking at customized collections in PDF format: articles from the site will be assembled in attractive, printable packages for readers at their request. With the wealth of journalism on local issues and popular topics that is amassed on the site, there are many potential subjects for future anthologies and an equal number of potential audiences. These custom PDFs could be created more quickly (and with less associated costs) than *Harvested Here* was. They could be put together on short notice to provide a reader with, for example, a package of information on labour issues to distribute at their next union get-together, or a primer on the most recent cuts to BC’s education budget for the BCTF’s annual general meeting.

Though *The Tyee* isn’t likely to repeat the process of *Harvested Here* any time soon, the project gave staff an intimate understanding of the options available for print-on-demand

publishers. Having partnered with a sponsor organization to create a printed book and tested on-demand publishing, and after working with the Museum of Vancouver to promote the book to audiences there, *The Tyee* is well equipped to go forward and consider new opportunities afforded by this very old medium.

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Appendix A: Tyee Media Kit, 2010



THE TYEE.CA ADVERTISING OVERVIEW

demographics

AD SPECS

examples

The Tyee allows you to reach the most discerning, highly-educated, active, and web-savvy opinion shapers in BC.

BC's best independent online connection.

HIGH VISIBILITY The Tyee has an audience of over 150,000 unique visitors/month and counting. This includes more than 20,000 subscribers who receive our headlines by email, and more than 3,500 who actively comment on stories.

AN INFLUENTIAL, QUALITY READ The Tyee is BC's cutting-edge source of news and views. We get behind the scenes, break stories, and keep other media on their toes.

A VALUED VOICE Regardless of political stripe, our readers trust us to provide intelligent and credible journalism that takes seriously the need for healthy economies, environmental sustainability, and social equality.

“ADVERTISING IN THE TYEE GETS RESULTS. *Here's what some of our advertisers say:*”

“The response to our ads on The Tyee has been extremely positive. It puts our books in front of the reading audience we are seeking. Even in tough times, The Tyee is one ad that is consistently on our list.”

EJ Hurst
MARKETING CO-ORDINATOR,
NEW SOCIETY PUBLISHERS

“Advertising with The Tyee was not only pleasurable, easy, and inexpensive, but our ads performed far better on The Tyee than they did with major Canadian and American newspapers. We'll definitely advertise again, and again and again!”

Stacey May Fowles
DIRECTOR OF CIRCULATION
AND MARKETING
WALRUS MAGAZINE

Recent Recognition



2009 EXCELLENCE
IN JOURNALISM
AWARD (CDN)

This is the highest Canadian prize in journalism. The Tyee won in the Small, Medium or Local Market category. We also received an Honorable Mention in 2007.



WEBBY
HONORABLE
MENTION (INTL)

Our blog, 'The Hook', got mentioned for outstanding journalism in the 'Blog - Political' category, alongside heavyweights such as TIME, Vanity Fair, BBC, and The Guardian.



2009 EDWARD
R. MURROW
AWARD (NA)

The Tyee is the first Canadian non-broadcaster to win this prize, one of the most prestigious prizes in journalism.

BC BUSINESS MAGAZINE (BC) The Tyee was featured in their "Top Ten Innovative Companies" list, referred to as a "groundbreaking online news magazine," and sharing the honour with established leaders like Lululemon and Vancity.

“Lively, fearless and hard-edged. The Tyee is just the kind of media this country needs.”

- Naomi Klein

Who reads The Tyee?

Our voluntary October 2008 online survey was completed by over 2,800 readers.

The survey's findings? Tyee readers are:

- highly educated (95% post-secondary)
- active, informed and environmentally conscious (81% seek out ethical products)
- generous supporters (83% have donated to a non-profit in the past 12 months)
- loyal connectors (92% agree that The Tyee is an invaluable member of the BC news media)

AGE	%
Under 35	21
Over 35	78

ACTIVITIES	%
Donated to a non-profit organization	83
Sought out green, fair trade or certified organic products	81
Protested, volunteered or written a letter to a politician	79
Spent time gardening	70
Attended a concert	69
Attended a conference or speaker event	69
Taken a vacation, which involved air travel	53
Bought those airline tickets online	52
Blown the budget at the bookstore	43

PERSONAL INCOME	Tyee readers %
\$100K +	18
\$60K – 99K	29
\$30K – 59K	27

PROFESSION	%
Unionized Professional/Employee	22*
Non-Union Professional/Employee	17
Freelancer/Consultant	15
Executive/Manager/Business Owner/ Self employed	13

* comparable to BC average as reported by McAllister Opinion Research

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION	Tyee readers %
Metro Vancouver	50
Victoria	10
Rest of BC	26
Rest of Canada	11

The Tyee's readership over the past 3 years has grown fastest outside of Metro Vancouver

The Tyee gets between 500,000 and 700,000 pageviews per month (real pageviews – all robot and web trawler traffic excluded from totals) and between 150,000 - 200,000 unique visitors per month.

Every day our site traffic and readership grows.

Your campaign can run across the whole Tyee site, can be included in our daily and weekly eNewsletters, or can be targeted to our political blog, *The Hook*.

There's a solution for every budget and marketing need on The Tyee. Please contact us and we'll help you find a great fit.

Graphic ad types

Top of page, above masthead

Ad Type	Size (WxH pixels)
Leaderboard	728 X 90

Right and left side columns

Ad type	Size (WxH pixels)
Skyscraper	120 x 600
Vertical Banner	120 X 240

Within articles

Ad type	Size (WxH pixels)
Story Block	300 x 250

eNewsletter ad types

Our weekly eNews has nearly 18,000 subscribers, plus an additional 2,000 to the daily version.

Only one ad is sold per week so your message commands attention. A surefire way to drive results.

eNewsletter

Ad Type	Size (WxH pixels)
Skyscraper	120 x 600
Vertical banner	120 x 240

Other advertising services

Let us create effective [online contests](#) that tap into our [social media](#) channels, boost performance, and [generate new leads](#). And talk to us about our [digital ad buying services](#) to increase your reach beyond Tyee. Coming soon: [mobile Tyee](#).

More Recent Recognition



JACK WEBSTER AWARD (BC)

The Tyee was a finalist for two awards: Excellence in Online Journalism and Community Journalism, both in 2009.



CANADIAN ONLINE PUBLISHING AWARDS

The Tyee was awarded three prizes: Best Website Design, Best News, and Best Community Feature, all in 2009.

Leaderboard 728 x 90

MOST PROMINENT POSITION runs across the top of all Tyee pages

Story Block 300 x 250

MOST READER ENGAGED located on Tyee article's mid way down the left side of the page nestled within the body of the story.

Vertical Banner 120 x 240

MOST ECONOMICAL found in several locations, the upper right and central portions of the page



These images are relative in scale to each other. Due to variations in screen size and resolution, these images may appear different when viewed on the web.

Skyscraper 120 x 600

LARGEST located on the lower right hand side of all Tyee pages

WHY THE TYEE?

Because your campaign deserves a smart, responsive audience. And our award-winning coverage and commentary keep that audience coming back every day.

- **DESIRABLE AUDIENCE** Tyee readers are highly educated, savvy, discerning, and actively engaged in their communities.
- **DAILY FEEDBACK** Track your campaign performance through an easy-to-access online account. Monitor performance stats whenever you like, and create customized reports.
- **OPTIMIZATION** Run multiple ads simultaneously, equally distributing the overall campaign's impressions. Then figure out which ads perform best, and we'll optimize the rest of your campaign.
- **FLEXIBILITY** Target your ads to different geographic regions, site sections or days of the week to maximize visibility to your target market.
- **CUSTOMIZED SERVICE** Talk to us about your marketing goals, and we'll help you build a strong, successful campaign. There's more to Tyee advertising than just banner ads too: talk to us about contests, event sponsorship, and social media outreach.



Michelle Hoar
BUSINESS DIRECTOR
adsales@thetyee.ca
604-689-7489

Contact us today to start building an effective, customized online ad campaign.


Appendix B: Pageviews for Articles in *Harvested Here*


Article Series/Title	Month Posted	# of Pgviews in First 30 Days	# of Pgviews in June 2010 (control)	August 2010 # Pgviews	Sept. 2010 # Pgviews	Oct. 2010 # Pgviews	Nov. 2010 # Pgviews	Dec. 2010 # Pgviews
Promotion for HH & Food and Beers lectures								
Eat, Drink, Get Informed	Sep-10	1229	-	-	1212	708	418	119
Sizzling Event! Who's the Best 100-Mile Chef?	Sep-10	963	-	-	925	67	76	42
Can Vancouver Feed Itself?	Oct-10	1401	-	-	-	1394	17	5
Top Local Food Ideas From 100-Mile Diet Creators	Nov-10	1647	-	-	-	-	1598	55
Hungry for New Food Writing? This Event's For You	Dec-10	679	-	-	-	-	-	679
100-Mile Diet Series								
Living on the 100-Mile Diet	Jun-05	-	225	168	287	457	357	183
Wanted: A Perfectly Local Chicken	Jul-05	-	33	35	27	22	35	14
A Local Eating Rhapsody	Jul-05	-	71	25	9	9	21	5
Why We Pay Too Little for Well Travelled Food	Aug-05	-	19	21	18	26	34	15
The 100-Mile Diet Goes North	Aug-05	-	11	30	18	15	13	8
In Praise of the Lowly Pink Salmon	Sep-05	-	8	47	67	20	28	6
Getting Canned	Sep-05	-	9	28	8	8	14	5
Thanksgiving on the 100-Mile Diet	Oct-05	-	8	13	20	9	7	1
With the Grain on the 100-Mile Diet	Dec-05	2766	2	111	68	83	99	108
The Incredible Expanding 100-Mile Diet	Jan-06	2176	22	12	14	12	17	18
End of Road for 100-Mile Diet?	Apr-06	2329	8	15	11	10	10	2
Local Eating's Unlikely Capital	Aug-06	2148	12	15	16	19	10	7
100-Mile Diet's Winter Menu	Nov-06	2633	14	58	52	38	58	27
100-Mile Chef Doesn't Have Cold Feet	Nov-06	1964	17	23	925	67	76	42
100-Mile Diet: Hand Picked from the Blog	May-07	1235	13	9	6	13	27	6
Eat Your History Series								
An Oyster to Fight For	Aug-09	1231	6	14	18	18	14	5
A Healthy Handful of History	Aug-09	1469	10	13	11	5	3	1
BC's New Wheat Kings	Sep-09	2065	29	50	33	35	34	30
The Outlaw Spud	Oct-09	2979	74	65	64	40	21	25


Appendix B: Pageviews for Articles in *Harvested Here*


Hunting the Elusive Wapato	Jan-10	2292	36	34	31	37	56	45
Lambs to Slaughter	Mar-10	2,758	88	86	79	90	73	
Good to Grow Series								
Why Urban Farming is the Future	Aug-09	4124	113	166	158	177	152	138
Replanting the City Farming Movement in BC	Aug-09	2075	16	26	29	16	25	22
Lots of Food, But for How Long?	Aug-09	2479	10	14	9	8	8	7
Peak Oil? Urban Farms? Cuba's Been There, Done I	Aug-09	3220	11	41	27	24	21	43
Small Farmers: Vital Work, Slim Wages	Sep-09	1388	14	27	13	21	65	21
Ten Ways to Make BC a Model for Urban Farming	Sep-09	1741	19	24	23	77	24	16
Other Pages								
Traffic to Tye "Shop" Page	-	371	-	91	289	133	107	112


Appendix C: *Harvested Here* Social Media Twitter


Leaders of BC's Slow Food revolution, the Tyees have a new book about Local Food RT @alta_bistro @ffcf @TheTyees <http://thetyee.ca/About/Shop/>
 pemygrl Dec 6, 2010 [retweet](#)


Great book: "**Harvested Here**: Delicious Thinking About Local Food" Edited by David Beers @ffcf @TheTyees <http://thetyee.ca/About/Shop/>
 alta_bistro Dec 6, 2010 [retweet](#)


RT @TheTyees: snail-mailed a copy of first Tyees book, Harvested Here, to @viawesome book reviewer GET YOURS! <http://bit.ly/aSrGKO>
 viareads Sep 5, 2010 [retweet](#)

RT @VIAwesome: @TheTyees just published their first book and it's called Harvested Here: <http://bit.ly/aSrGKO>
 onseeeproject Sep 4, 2010 [retweet](#)

Hear the @TheTyees made a book? What's next?? GET YOURS! <http://bit.ly/aSrGKO>
 robynchirps Sep 4, 2010 [retweet](#)

Yea! Local book about Local Food. From the Tyees: "Harvested Here: Delicious Thinking About Local Food" <http://bit.ly/c3RPjk>
 surreymarket Sep 4, 2010 [retweet](#)

And another great book from The Tyees... Harvested Here: Delicious thinking about local food <http://thetyee.ca/About/Shop/>
 getlocalbc Sep 4, 2010 [retweet](#)

RT @kortakova: Coolest book ever! RT @shannonsmart: shameless self-promotion, but @thetyee has reversed technology and printed a book! <http://bit.ly/aSrGKO>
 thetyee **Highly Influential** Sep 3, 2010 [retweet](#)

RT @TheTyees: fish fans - we're now available IN PRINT <http://bit.ly/aSrGKO>
 deanbuscher Sep 3, 2010 [retweet](#)

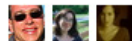


@EatMagazine
EAT Magazine


The Tyees publishes a new book on local food: Harvested Here. (Gosh they're using paper!). <http://bit.ly/eaLH3q>


3 Jan via [TweetDeck](#) ☆ [Favorite](#) ↻ [Retweet](#) ↩ [Reply](#)


Retweeted by [BCbrews](#) and 3 others




Congrats @tyee on the book and highlighting local food! <http://thetyee.ca/About/Shop/>
 clbc_connect Nov 18, 2010 [retweet](#)

RT @EatMagazine: Tyees goes to print w/ book of fav food articles. **Harvested Here**: Delicious Thinking About Local Food <http://bit.ly/c3RPjk>
 conniekretz Nov 11, 2010 [retweet](#)

RT @eatmagazine: Tyees goes to print - w/ a book of their favourite food articles. Delicious Thinking About Local Food <http://bit.ly/c3RPjk>
 nestandsparkle Nov 11, 2010 [retweet](#)

Best read to give meaning to your Thanksgiving table - @thetyee's **Harvested Here** <http://ow.ly/2RRWG>
 viareads Oct 11, 2010 [retweet](#)

RT @TheTyees Thanks @VIAwesome @granvillemag we're thrilled with the book! TYEE SPECIAL PRINT EDITION! <http://ht.ly/2KCp0>
 engagethechange Sep 1, 2010 [retweet](#)

Appendix C: *Harvested Here* Social Media
Facebook and *EAT* magazine



Shannon Smart The Tyee has published a book. That's right. We've gone from pixels to pages. Order your copy today!



The Tyee - Tyee Special Editions

thetyee.ca

Remember when "book" meant a paper-and-ink thing? An object you could hold in your hands, take notes in the margins of, fold over the pages of, lend to friends, and use without batteries? Well, we do. While we've been online-only up until now, we thought it would do us well to at least try printing ...

📅 03 September 2010 at 18:53 · Like · Comment · Share



Shannon Smart



The Tyee photos

📅 25 August 2010 at 09:42

Tyee Special Editions Have Arrived!

◀ Back to Sent

Mark as unread

Report spam

Delete

To members of The Tyee



Shannon Smart 25 August 2010 at 12:25

Dearest Tyee Fans,
Some of our superb online-only articles are now available in a special edition book, called *Harvested Here: Delicious Thinking about Local Food*. Created to go along with the Museum of Vancouver's brand-new Home Grown exhibit, it comprises the entire best-selling 100-Mile Diet Series, a series called *Eat Your History* about forgotten foods indigenous to BC, and a third series called *Good to Grow*, which covers urban farming movements from Vancouver to Cuba. It will be available for purchase at the Museum of Vancouver, or you can send me an email to secure your copy! If you'd like to order a copy for \$14 (one dollar of which is donated to FarmFolkCityFolk), email me at ssmart@thetyee.ca - you can see pictures of the finished product on our Facebook fan page. Thanks!



WINTER ROMANCE PACKAGES STARTING AT \$275

Includes: Couples Massage, Chocolate Fondue, Sparkling Wine and \$50 Gift Certificate

[CLICK FOR DETAILS](#)



EAT™

Celebrating the Food & Drink of British Columbia

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The Tye publishes New Book on Local Food



If you've been enjoying the Tye's food series (*Growing the Local Bounty*) as much as we have, then you will be equally excited to hear of their newest project - a special edition entitled *Harvested Here: Delicious Thinking About Local Food*. Here's the blurb:

"The Tye has turned some of our pixels into pages and created a special edition book, comprised of our favourite food-related articles. Harvested Here is a hand-picked collection of Tye writing devoted to sustainable food sourcing, local eating, and urban farming, printed thanks to a generous sponsorship from the Tides Canada Foundation."

If this wasn't enough to feel good about, \$1 from each sale goes to [FormFolk/CityFolk](#). Keep an eye out for a full review coming later this month on [eatmagazine.ca](#).

Text size: [Regular](#) | [Large](#) | [Larger](#)

[culinaryarts.ubc.ca](#)



UBC CONTINUING STUDIES

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The Tye Thanks for the shout out Eat Magazine! We can't wait to see your review!



The Tye Publishes New Book on Local Food – EAT Magazine – Celebrating the Food and Drink of British

[www.eatmagazine.ca](#)

EAT Magazine – celebrating the food and drink of British Columbia

2,523 Impressions · 0.16% feedback

[📅](#) 04 January at 14:24 · [Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#) · [Promote](#)

[👍](#) 4 people like this.

Appendix D: Harvested Here Promotion on The Tye and FarmFolk/CityFolk

The screenshot shows the homepage of 'THE TYEE' website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Register/Login', 'About Us', 'Donate', 'Ads', 'Subscribe', and 'RSS'. A search bar and a 'GO' button are also present. Below the navigation, there are categories: 'NEWS', 'ARTS & CULTURE', 'Life', 'OPINION', 'MEDIACHECK', 'Books', 'BLOGS', and 'Energy'. A banner for 'TYEE NEWS' mentions 'Picked this pack of picky pixels just for you...'. A 'Click Here TO SIGN UP FOR THE TYEE E-NEWSLETTER' link is also visible.

The main content area is titled 'Tye Special Editions'. It features a section for 'Harvested Here: Delicious Thinking About Local Food', edited by David Beers. The text describes the book as a hand-picked collection of Tye writing devoted to sustainable food sourcing, local eating, and urban farming. It lists featured articles by Alisa Smith, James MacKinnon, David Tracey, Joanne Will, and Jeff Nield. A 'Buy Now' button is provided, with a note that for \$14 (plus GST and shipping), one can own a copy of 'Harvested Here'. It also states that one dollar from each sale goes to FarmFolkCityFolk, and the rest of the proceeds go to supporting the Tye's independent journalism.

Below the main text, there is a 'Sign Up for THE TYEE E-NEWSLETTER' form. To the right, there is a 'MOST READ' list with five items:

1. World's Coolest Public Urinal, and How It Was Invented
2. Harper, Autocrat
3. How Alberta's \$16-billion Electricity Scandal Plunged into the Oil Sands
4. BC's Most Likely Next Premier? George Abbott
5. Christy Clark's Chances? Will McMartin Sets Odds

At the bottom, there is a section for 'YOUR BC: THE TYEE'S PHOTO POOL' with a photo of a person in a winter jacket.

Harvested Here: Delicious Thinking About Local Food

Edited by David Beers.

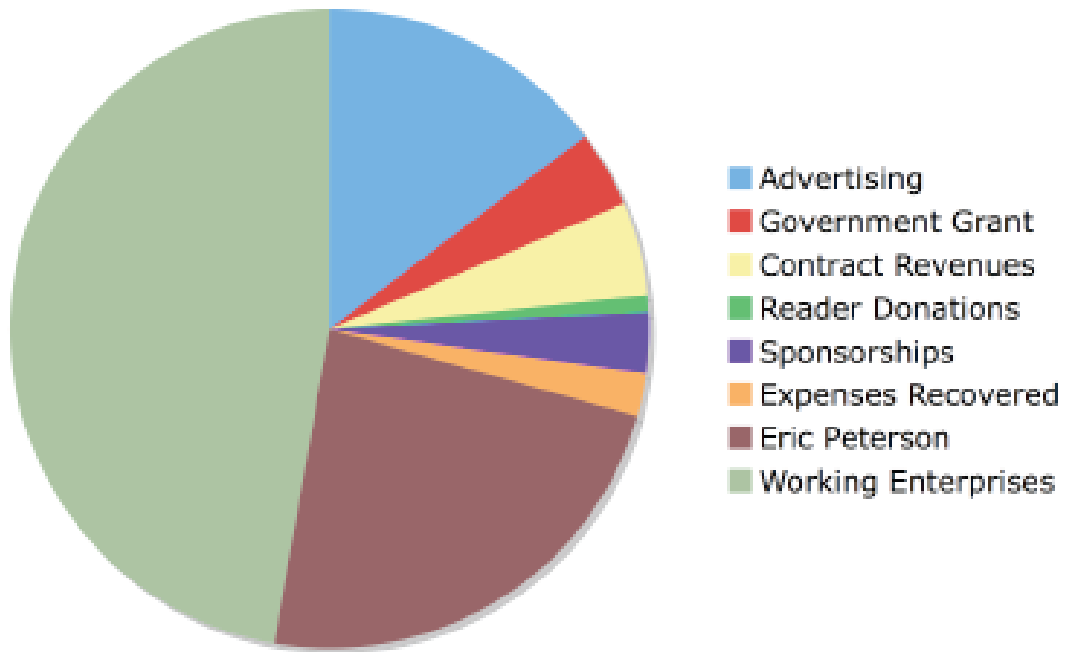
Featuring articles by Alisa Smith, James MacKinnon, David Tracey, Joanne Will, and Jeff Nield.

The Tye has turned some of our pixels into pages and created a special edition book, comprised of our favourite food-related articles. Harvested Here is a hand-picked collection of Tye writing devoted to sustainable food sourcing, local eating, and urban farming. Including Alisa Smith and James MacKinnon's 100-Mile Diet, David Tracey's Good to Grow, and Jeff Nield and Joanne Will's Eat Your History series, this delicious collection chronicles the groundbreaking food articles we have published over the past few years. For \$14 (plus GST and shipping), you can own a copy of Harvested Here. One dollar from each sale goes to FarmFolkCityFolk, and the rest of the proceeds go to supporting the Tye's independent journalism. [More](#)

The vertical banner features a top section with the text 'From pixels to print:' in a handwritten style. Below this, the main headline reads 'THE TYEE is now AVAILABLE IN PRINT!' in large, bold, green letters. Underneath, it says 'Order a copy of ...' in a cursive font, followed by 'Harvested Here' in a large, bold, black font with a red cherry icon. At the bottom, it says '...and you can enjoy our tastiest food writing, even if the power goes out.' in a cursive font. The background of the banner is a light beige color with a subtle pattern.

Appendix E: *Tyee* Financial Information

Tyee Sources of Annual Revenue



Advertising	15%
Government Grants	4%
Contract Revenues	5%
Reader Donations	1%
Sponsorships	3%
Expenses Recovered	2%
Eric Peterson	23%
Working Enterprises	47%

Appendix F: Cover and Pages from *Harvested Here*

Hand-picked stories from The Tye



Harvested Here

**Delicious Thinking
about Local Food**



City Farming
David Tracey
100-Mile Diet
James Mackinnon and Alisa Smith
Eat Your History
Jeff Nield and Joanne Will

Harvested Here Delicious Thinking about Local Food

Edited by David Beers

\$14 CDN

This compilation began, as many great things do, over a meal. Standing around the coals at a backyard barbeque, a chat between a couple of writers and *The Tye*'s editor turned into a series of articles that launched an international movement towards eating locally. Within a few months, Alisa Smith and James Mackinnon's *100-Mile Diet* had been covered on every major news outlet in North America. The idea kept expanding to become a best-selling book and a reality television show, and has put down formal roots as the *100-Mile Diet Society*.

At *The Tye*, our food coverage has continued to grow, too. Since our founding in 2003, sustainable food production has been a major focus of our attention. Inside this volume – the first *Tye Special Edition* – you'll find not only the original *100-Mile Diet* series but also a subsequent series guest edited by James Mackinnon and written by Joanne Will and Jeff Nield. *Eat Your History* investigates historic, almost forgotten British Columbian foods. Additionally, we have included David Tracey's series on urban farming, *Good to Grow*, which takes readers all the way to Cuba and back in search of the best urban growing techniques.

Since the first *100-Mile Diet* article was published on *The Tye*, Canadian communities have become ever more interested in sustainable food sourcing, local eating and farming, and in being informed about where their meals come from. As *The Tye*'s founding editor, David Beers, puts it, "when the history of the amazing growth of the local food movement gets written, not only James and Alisa but many other British Columbians will be central characters in the story." We like to think of this anthology as the first chapter.

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Eat Your History

Guest edited by J.B. MacKinnon, co-creator of the 100-Mile Diet and written by Jeff Nield and Joanne Will this series tells the stories of foods, from Ruckle beans to Wapato tubers, that are woven into the history of British Columbia and are being revived through the dedication of local farmers and keepers of the old ways.

Harvested Here

Olympia oyster was fast becoming one of a long list of marine species to crash under pressure from human activities.

Threats to the Oly over the past 150 years have ranged from overharvesting and pollution to habitat loss and the introduction of non-native parasites and predators, according to a new Department of Fisheries and Oceans report. Add the oysters' natural sensitivity to temperature extremes and a relatively low reproductive rate, and it's a wonder there are any Olympias left in B.C. at all. The DFO designates them a species of "special concern," with a population that "appears to be stable at low levels relative to historic accounts."

Yet the Olympia oyster survives and, in places, thrives. Last summer, Kingzett and a handful of colleagues, including representatives of the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, organized an expedition to Nootka Island off the west coast of Vancouver Island. There, in the distant past, thousands of sacks of oysters had been harvested for sale in Seattle and Vancouver. Kingzett had seen plenty of Olympias on Nootka's shores in the early 1990s, and was relieved to see the oyster beds were still full.

"We learned that Olys and humans can live well together," writes Rowan Jacobsen, an author who joined the expedition while researching his upcoming book *The Living Shore*. "Olys don't need to be coddled or walled off to thrive. They have been and can continue to be an important source of food and habitat for a variety of creatures in the area, including Homo sapiens."

Small oyster, big flavour

Yet getting a taste of local history is harder than I expected. I'd heard rumours that Olys turn up at Rodney's Oyster House in Yaletown, but crew chief Jesse Bray says they don't carry them often. People are "looking for bang for their buck," says Bray, and customers tend to choose the introduced varieties, which are larger. It's the same story at local seafood shops.

The place to find Olys is south of the border along Puget Sound. There, a handful of oyster farmers raise Olympias for buyers who've fallen in love with the story and the taste of our coast's original oyster. Rather than

An Oyster to Fight For

Bringing BC's native Olympia back from the brink and on to the table.

By Jeff Nield

I've lived on the Pacific shore for more than a decade, yet I have never knowingly eaten an oyster. Then again, most British Columbians have never eaten an oyster that is actually native to this coast. That's right — the famous Fanny Bay oyster and other familiar varieties from local fish shops and restaurants are introduced species. The exception is the Olympia oyster, *Ostreaa conchaphila*, and I have five dozen of them heaped in front of me for shucking.

I'm really going to earn that first taste of oyster.

Until about 1923, any oyster I ate on the coast from at least northern B.C. to southern California would have been an Olympia — making the "Oly" (as it's known to its fans) a potent symbol of our historical relationship to the sea. Today the Olympia oyster has largely vanished both from our shores and our collective memory.

"Although there was such a large Native population here and I think they had fished them down a bit, the real kiss of death was black liquor pulp mills," explains Brian Kingzett of the Centre for Shellfish Research at Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo. The region's first kraft pulp mill, in Puget Sound, began dumping the toxic liquor into the inside waters in 1927. Within a year, the oyster industry there had disappeared, and the:

hitting the road for your fix, though, you can call Fanny Bay Oysters on Vancouver Island; their parent company, Taylor Shellfish, cultivates Olys on six farms in Washington, selling 15,000 dozen last year.

At U.S. \$8.50 per dozen and a five-dozen minimum order, an Oly purchase is an excuse for a party. With a more experienced friend giving tips, I get down to shucking. A typical Olympia oyster is not even a quarter the size of its big, non-native cousins, and fits neatly in the hand like a perfect skipping stone. The outer shell is swirled with muted blues, greys and greens, while the interior is a luminescent counterpoint to the delicate, creamy grey flesh. I quickly get into a satisfying groove. With 60 Olympias lovingly shucked and laid out on ice, the payoff could begin.

Though small, Olys are famously flavourful. Because they are a different genus from the introduced Pacific oysters, they taste completely different. "People wax on about how French Belon oysters are the best oyster. Well, the Olympia oyster is related to those," says Kingzett. "A little tiny Olympia oyster that only has a tablespoon of meat in it will actually have as much flavour to it as a cup of the Pacific oyster."

In his book *Consider The Oyster*, chef and champion shucker Patrick McMurray writes that "a classic Oly tastes of sea salt to start, sweet cream, seaweed, earth, fresh-cut grass — a taste unique among oysters. Its dry metallic finish will last for up to 15 minutes, if you let it." To me, it tastes like nothing I've ever experienced. The flavour is primal, and it suddenly seems as though the sea is lapping gently at the edge of the table.

"This is a thinking man's oyster, to be eaten without condiments," writes McMurray, and I find myself nodding in agreement. Then again, they also taste sensational with a dash of local blackberry vinegar or a drop of good gin.

Bring back the Oly

The salty-sweet taste of the Olympia oyster may not be so elusive for long. In 2003, Slow Food USA added the Oly to its *Ark of Taste*, a catalog of "delicious foods in danger of extinction." Meanwhile, the efforts of the Puget Sound Restoration Fund are growing.