Poetry and eBooks:
Managing Fixed Layouts in Reflowable Text

by

Andrew P. Chesham

B.A., University of British Columbia, 2003

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Approval

Name: **Andrew P. Chesham**

Degree: **Master of Publishing**

Title of Project: ***Poetry and eBooks:***
                        Managing Fixed Layouts in Reflowable Text

Supervisory Committee:

John Maxwell
Senior Supervisor
Associate Professor
Publishing Program

Mary Schendlinger
Supervisor
Senior Lecturer
Publishing Program

Jesse Finkelstein
Industry Supervisor
Chief Operating Officer
D&M Publishers
Vancouver, B.C.

Date Approved: October 9, 2012

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SFU

Abstract

This report, drawing on an internship at D&M Publishers and work with The Writer's Studio (TWS) at Simon Fraser University, explores the current struggles of formatting poetry in ebooks. The EPUBs of *The Return* (D&M) and *emerge 2011* (TWS), are used as case studies. The report describes the solutions used for these titles, and offers an overview of other ebook formats available for presenting poetry.

Keywords: Poetry; ebooks; EPUB; publishing; PDF; Fixed-Layout ebooks; EPUB 3

To those who admire poetry, even if they don't understand it…

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Over the past five years, ebooks have fast become a staple of today's reading culture. While print sales have decreased, more and more readers are turning to their tablets and smart phones for their reading needs.[1] Ebook sales have increased dramatically every year since they were introduced into the marketplace. In 2008, in the US, ebook sales accounted for 0.6 percent of the trade market. Currently, ebooks make up 6.2 percent of the total book market, which is valued at $27.94 billion (in the fiction category, ebooks account for 13.6 percent of total sales).[2] Combine these statistics with the benefits of zero costs for warehousing and distribution, and it is easy to see the appeal of digital publishing.

Converting front- and backlist titles to digital formats is easier for some publishers than others. EPUB files are a common ebook file format that many publishers use. The core

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[1] Hamblen, Matt. "Tablet Adoption Lowers Reading of Physical Books, Newspapers, Survey Shows." PCWorld.com. Accessed August 6, 2012., http://www.pcworld.com/article/258759/tablet_adoption_lowers_reading_of_physical_books_newspapers_survey_shows.html

[2] p.4. Wischenbart, Rüdiger. "The Global eBook Market: Current Conditions & Future Projections" *O'Reilly Media*, August, 2012.

benefit of EPUB files over PDF files is that the text is reflowable – it adjusts easily to fit any screen, whether it is a smartphone, tablet, or computer screen. Currently, it is easy to place novels, essays, articles, and prose pieces in a digital container. Content that relies on fixed layout, such as poetry, does not easily make the transition to this medium. Many poets use the page as a canvas. They agonize over the length of each phrase and sentence, the placement of each word, and the shape of the surrounding white space. For the most part, by producing poetry as a reflowable ebook the publisher and poet relinquish control of most special formatting. In ebooks, software, screen size, and user settings (including font size, line spacing, margins, etc.) may change a poem's formatting, causing lines to break and words to shift to different spots on the screen.

This report discusses the formatting issues encountered in two ebooks that contain poetry, *The Return* and *emerge 2011*. *The Return* is a novel by the Montreal writer Dany Laferrière, published by Douglas & McIntyre. It contains both prose and poetry. *emerge 2011* is the latest edition of an annual anthology from The Writer's Studio, published by the Writing and Communications Program at SFU. It is a collection of writing by members of The Writer's Studio's 2011 cohort of students. It contains a mixture of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. I converted both ebooks from InDesign files to EPUBs during my time as an intern at D&M, and as part of my regular work duties at TWS.

Chapter 1 of this report gives an introduction of the EPUB format, and explains why formatting poetry in ebooks can be difficult. Chapter 2 provides an overview of D&M Publishers, including a description of its ebook philosophy, a look at its print and ebook production process, and examples of two poetry formatting challenges encountered in *The Return*. Chapter 3 offers a brief overview of The Writer's Studio, the role of *emerge*,

and the production process. It also looks at the question of formatting concrete poetry, and the solution we implemented. Chapter 4 presents an overview of other options for publishing poetry in ebooks, such as EPUB 3, fixed-layout ebooks, apps, and PDF files.

The final chapter discusses the larger questions of producing print and digital content in the future. It includes a brief discussion of poets currently thinking about digitally publishing their work, a discussion of the benefits of collaboration, a description of the updated production processes at D&M and TWS, and a note on why publishers should not think of an ebook as a digital version of a print title, but as another format with its own features and challenges.

This report draws on an internship at D&M Publishers from May to August 2011, when the ebook for *The Return* was created; and my work experience at The Writer's Studio, a creative writing program in the Continuing Studies Department of Simon Fraser University, particularly from May to September 2011, when *emerge* was produced.

The aim of this report is to show the approaches taken to specific poetry formatting issues, and the solutions that were sought and found. This paper is not intended as a best-practices guide to formatting poetry in ebooks, for two reasons. First, there are many different ereading devices (iPad, Kobo, Sony Reader, Kindle, etc.) and ebook file formats (.mobi, .AZW, .KF8, .ibooks, etc.). Outlining an approach that would cover all these ereading devices, formats, as well as all situations, would be a much more comprehensive project. The solutions used were tested on several devices: the original Kobo, the Kobo Touch, Adobe's ebook viewing software, called Adobe Digital Editions, on a PC running Windows 7, and the Aldiko ereading app on Viewsonic's Viewpad

tablet, which runs the Android 2.3 operating system. Second, the solutions applied in these case studies suited the needs of each project at the time. At this writing, new devices are still being introduced to the marketplace, and new approaches to digital publishing are being conceived and tested. I encourage all publishers and poets to think beyond the printed page and find solutions that work best for the digital environments in which they are publishing.

Chapter 1: EPUB and Poetry

EPUB

Despite the availability of other proprietary formats, like Amazon's .mobi, . AZW, and KF8, and Apple's .ibook, many publishers use EPUB as their default ebook format. In a digital environment where new devices that can be used to read ebooks are released into the market each season, it is desirable to have a single, non-proprietary file format that can be viewed across different platforms. Two benefits of the EPUB file format are paramount. First, it offers publishers the greatest distribution potential. EPUBs can be read on many different ereading devices, including smartphones, tablets, ereaders, and computers. Second, EPUB files can be used as input files for other formats, such as those listed above. *The Return* and *emerge 2011* were created in the EPUB ebook standard format.

The EPUB file format is based on web standards. It is an open-format, which is free to use and can be distributed to a wide variety of online distribution channels. The core feature of an EPUB file is reflowable text. Regardless of the reader's screen size, the content will always reflow in order to fit that size, making the file portable between a smartphone, ereader, tablet, and computer screen.

The EPUB format was developed by the International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF) to enable publishers to produce a single digital file that can be distributed to consumers and be read on a variety of electronic devices.[3] At its core, an EPUB is a zip file that contains "semantically enhanced web content – including XHTML, CSS, images, and other resources."[4] It was designed as a successor format to the Open eBook Publication Structure, developed in 1999. EPUB 2, the format in which *The Return* and *emerge 2011* were created, was standardized in 2007. EPUB 3.0, the newest version, was released in October 2011 and is currently supported by a small number of ereading devices.

Another benefit of EPUB, as an ebook file format, is its potential for archiving. Johan van der Knijff recently completed a study for the National Library of the Netherlands, titled "EPUB for Archival Presentation," that assesses EPUB's suitability as an archival format. In the "Conclusions and Recommendations" of his report he states: "EPUB has a number of strengths that make it attractive for preservation. It is an open format that is well documented, and there are no known patents or licensing restrictions. It is largely based on well-established and widely used standards such as ZIP, XML and XHTML. Consequently, the format scores high marks for transparency and re-usability."[5] He

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[3] "EPUB." *idpf.org*, 2012. Accessed on June 30, 2012, http://idpf.org/EPUB

[4] Ibid.

[5] Johan Van der Knijff, "Epub for Archival Preservation," (Netherlands: National Library of the Netherlands, *OpenPlanetFoundations.org,* July 2012), 27.

does raise concerns regarding the recent adoption of the new EPUB standard, EPUB 3, and current lack of viewer support for the standard, but acknowledges that this is likely to improve soon.

Special Challenges of Formatting Poetry

Reflowable text is a core feature of an EPUB file. For most content, including fiction, news stories, essays, and other prose pieces, reflowable text does not impede readability and is unlikely to change the author's message. Unfortunately, the same is not true for poetry. When poetry is reflowed, its rhythms and even its meaning may change.

In formal verse, such as sonnets and villanelles, line lengths are based on meters, the number of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line. For example, the English (or Shakespearean) sonnet's line length is based on the iambic pentameter.[6] This means each line has five "feet," one foot being an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Ideally, the lines in this type of poetry will never be broken – in a print publication, the book's dimensions can be changed to avoid such line breaks. If this type

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[6] "Sonnet," *PoetryFoundation*.org, accessed August 6, 2012, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/glossary-term/Sonnet.

of poetry is produced as a reflowable-text ebook, line breaks are inevitable and unpredictable when the poetry is viewed on some screens.

Understandably, many poets want to keep their lines intact. Jen Currin, the poetry mentor in The Writer's Studio and the author of *Hagiography* and *Inquisition Yours* (both published by Coach House Books), explains it this way: "the line breaks are very carefully considered. It is a very important part of the poem and the form. I think about them; I revise them, because the unit of meaning in a poem is the line. That's how we take in information, one line at a time. It is imperative that I think about those line breaks. As a result, I get very upset when my line breaks get messed up."[7]

A number of factors will cause a line to break on the screen of an ereading device. One factor is the device's size, which forces line breaks so that text will fit a particular screen width. Another factor is a device's software. The screen size of the ereading device affects where lines are broken. Each device, from a smart phone to the iPad, has a different screen size. What is more, each device has its own software, which controls how text is displayed. For example, in Aldiko, an ereading app for Android devices, there is an option to "override the publisher's formatting."[8] This means the software will use its

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[7] Jen Currin, interview by author, Mar 14, 2012
[8] Found on the Aldiko ereading app (version 2.1.0) from Google Play, August 2012.

own CSS definitions to display paragraphs, headers, fonts, text size, line spacing, margins, and other elements. A publisher may define chapter titles in an ebook to be displayed in a large, bold, italicized serif font., but when the publisher's formatting is turned off, the ereader may display chapter titles in a default-sized san-serif font, without bold or italics. Other aspects of text appearance can also be affected a device's software default settings. Text could be justified rather than left-aligned. The default line spacing could be double-spaced rather than single-spaced, which may have been what the publisher wanted.

A third factor that can cause unwanted line breaks is user settings. Different devices and ereading software give the user different formatting options. On most devices the user can control font size, font style, font colour, margins, text alignment, and line spacing. For a poetry ebook, this means that the user's preferences can cause lines to expand or shrink, or to align left or align right, and unwanted line breaks can be introduced in the process.

Chapter 2: D&M Publishers / *The Return*

D&M Publishers

D&M Publishers is an independent Canadian publisher with offices in Vancouver and Toronto, comprising three imprints: Douglas & McIntyre, Greystone Books, and New Society Publishers. Founded in 1971, Douglas & McIntyre (D&M) is the original imprint of D&M Publishers.[9] While D&M is "deeply rooted in the culture of the Pacific Northwest,"[10] its mandate is to publish nationally and internationally. Over its forty-year history, D&M Publishers and its authors have received many awards for writing, design and production, including nominations for the Scotiabank Giller Prize.

Douglas & McIntyre's primary focus is non-fiction. Each year it publishes around thirty-five titles in the areas of current affairs, politics, art and architecture, First Nations culture, food and wine, and Canadian culture. D&M has also published many

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[9] "About Us," *DMPIBooks.com*, accessed: June 4, 2012, http://www.dmpibooks.com/douglas-mcintyre
[10] Ibid.

distinguished literary authors, including Douglas Coupland, Farley Mowat, Wayson Choy, and Dany Laferrière.[11]

eBook Philosophy

D&M Publishers tries to create simple ebooks. As Peter Cocking, D&M's art director, explained in an email, "we try to produce ebooks that are clean and simple, that suit a wide variety of devices, and we try to do it quickly and cheaply… at present the market seems to only want cheap, simple, no-frills text-only ebooks – generic stuff, small files, that read on pretty well any device. Visually rich ebooks, enhanced ebooks – they're not really selling. People who like to read just want to read."[12]

To this end, EPUB is the company's primary ebook file format. As D&M Publishers' current Print and Digital Production Coordinator, Lara Smith, explained in a telephone interview, D&M tries to make the formatting of its EPUBs as simple as possible. "We don't know where people are going to be reading it, so we have a very simple look to our EPUBs, with very minimal styling so it works well across a variety of devices."[13]

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Peter Cocking, email to author, March 19, 2012.
[13] Lara Smith, interview by author, July 18, 2012.

Production Process

To understand D&M Publishers ebook production process we must first look at its print production process, on which the ebook process is based. Typically the creation of a print book is as follows. Peter Cocking, D&M's art director and graphic designer, receives a text file of the manuscript formatted to his specifications, usually as a Word document. He takes the document and prepares sample pages in InDesign, which he shows to the book's editor. After the sample pages have been approved, he composes each page in the interior of the book and applies styles to chapter titles, headers, subheads, and other elements.

Once Cocking has finished designing the book, the proofs are sent to the proofreader and author. At this point the proofs may go through three or four rounds of revisions and corrections. Substantive edits, and a copy-edit, are done between the author and the editor in a word document well before this stage of the production process. That said, early revisions of the proofs may include a large number of corrections, which can cause reflow of the designed pages. Once this final round of editing is complete, Cocking finishes composing the document and sends it to the printer.

When the document is signed off by the printer, the process for creating the ebook begins. During May–August 2011, all of D&M's ebooks were created off-site, through a conversion house named Innodata. The InDesign file was sent to Innodata with a list of specifications. The EPUB file was created based on the specifications, and after about two weeks, the EPUB file was sent to D&M for review.

Julie Morris, Digital Production Coordinator at the time, would then review the EPUB file for errors. This can be the most time-consuming task in the process. D&M kept a checklist of things to look for. For example, if the book contained lists or images, Morris would ensure that the lists were properly formatted and that the image's quality matched the specification. She would also check the image captions, to ensure that they did not split across pages. Throughout the process, Morris would note any errors and infelicities she found.

If there were only a few minor errors or formatting problems, Morris would revise the files in-house. If there were many errors in the coding, or any major mistakes, the file would be returned to the conversion house for repair. Quite often there were issues, as Morris explains:

> *Depending on the source file we send, we see a wide variety of errors…*
> *spacing around hyphenated words, hyphenation of words at line breaks,*
> *typos, and so on. In the case that we send InDesign files, we generally see*
> *fewer typos and spacing errors, as well as cleaner overall design, but we run*
> *across other problems: small caps not being represented, italics and other*
> *text formatting not showing up, line breaks where forced line breaks were*

carried over from the print edition, missing chapter divisions, and sometimes

even missing text.[14]

To resolve these issues in-house, Morris had to correct the code inside the EPUB, using Dreamweaver, a web development and editing program by Adobe Systems, to update the EPUB's HTML and CSS files.

The Return

The Author

Originally from Petit-Goâve, Haiti, Dany Laferrière has published nineteen novels.[15] Laferrière first gained popularity in Montreal, in 1985, with the release of his first novel, *Comment Faire L'amour avec un Nègre Sans se Fatiguer* (translated as *How to Make Love to a Negro Without Getting Tired)*,[16] which was later made into a movie. The screenplay won a Genie award in 1990. *Heading South,* a collection of his short stories, was also made into a film in 2005. Over his career, he has won several awards for his

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[14] Julie Morris, email to author, March 31, 2011.

[15] "Dany Laferrière," *DMPIBooks.com,* accessed: June 4, 2012, http://www.dmpibooks.com/author/dany-laferriere

[16] Juliet Waters, "Returning North," (*Quill and Quire,* September 2009), 12.

writing, including a 2006 Governor General's award.[17] Douglas & McIntyre has published

the English translations of five of his books: *Down Among the Dead Men* (1997),

Heading South (2009), *I Am a Japanese Writer* (2010), *How to Make Love to a Negro*

Without Getting Tired (2010), and *The Return* (2011).

The Book

The Return was Laferrière's latest book. Narrated through a mixture of prose and poetry,

the story follows Laferrière, who upon learning of his father's death, leaves New York

and returns to his birthplace in Haiti, thirty-three years after he left. Since its publication,

The Return has been a bestseller in France and Quebec. It won the *Prix Médicis*, the

Grand Prix du Livre de Montreal, and was shortlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize. The

design for D&M's English edition received an Honourable Mention at the 2012 Alcuin

Society Awards, in the prose fiction category.

The eBook

Prior to *The Return,* D&M had never published a poetry book, let alone a poetry ebook.

An ebook for *The Return* had not been planned when the title was acquired. Compared

to an ebook for a simple novel, an ebook for this title would cost more to create, due to

[17] Ibid.

the extra time required to format the poetry. The cost could be justified if the projected

revenue would cover it. But, as Cocking said in an interview, the ebook for *The Return*

was not expected to achieve high sales, as the book was thought to have "a relatively

small market… with an audience that skews to a little older."[18]

While other ebook options were available, they were not considered. A PDF file would

be simple to produce, but given the feedback from D&M's ebook vendors, EPUBs were

seen as the format of choice. "(EPUBs) are what the vendors wanted," stated Cocking,

"so we put it out that way."[19] There was also the option of creating a fixed-layout EPUB;

however, this was not viable, for reasons explained below. As an alternative, D&M

decided to have the ebook produced in-house by me, the intern. This would save costs

and allow staff to see the process of converting an ebook in-house.

Design-wise, *The Return* is a simple book, which made exporting the EPUB from

InDesign simple. [20] It has only two sections, Part 1 and Part 2, each consisting of a

collection of poems, with a title for each poem. I edited the EPUB using Sigil, on open-

source EPUB editor. I cleaned up the CSS file by removing the font colours and

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[18] Peter Cocking, interview by author, 17 July, 2012.

[19] Ibid.

[20] If you would like to know more about exporting EPUBs from InDesign, you can read a "Better Practices
　　Guide" created by the author and fellow MPub students here:
　　http://tkbr.ccsp.sfu.ca/files/2011/04/ePublicans_FinalReport.pdf

changing the default font size to "normal," instead of specifying font sizes, such as 1.2 ems.

Poetry Formatting Challenges

Line Breaks

As discussed previously, several factors can cause a line of digital text to break in a given spot, including screen size, font size, and ereader margins. Longer lines wrap in order to fit the viewing pane. On larger screens, such as a computer monitor or an iPad, lines are less likely to break. However, on smartphones and other smaller screens, a line can wrap several times.

The print edition of *The Return* is a trade paperback with a trim size of 5 x 8 inches. Figure 1 shows the opening section of *The Return*.[21] In the print book, due to the line lengths and page size none of the lines had to wrap. On most devices, including tablets and ereaders, the screens are wide enough to accommodate the full lines. On smartphones the lines would wrap, as shown in Figure 2. For example, the last line in the second stanza changes from "The way my life will be from now on" to "The way my life will be / from now on," with a break between "be" and "from." In the current formatting, it is not clear that these two lines were meant to be one.

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[21] Dany Laferrière, *The Return,* (Canada: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011), 3.

The Phone Call

The news cuts the night in two.
The inevitable phone call
that every middle-aged man
one day will receive.
My father has died.

I got on the road early this morning.
No destination.
The way my life will be from now on.

I stop along the way for breakfast.
Bacon and eggs, toast, scalding hot coffee.
I sit by the window.
A sharp sun warms my right cheek.
A quick glance at the paper.
A bloody image of a car wreck.
Death is sold anonymously in America.

Figure 1: The print version of The Return

The Phone Call

The news cuts the night in
two.
The inevitable phone call
that every middle-aged
man
one day will receive.
My father has died.

I got on the road early this
morning.
No destination.
The way my life will be
from now on.

I stop along the way for
breakfast.
Bacon and eggs, toast,

Figure 2: The ebook for The Return on a small screen

As recommended in *The Chicago Manual of Style,* we used a hanging indent to resolve this problem. Section 13.25, "Long Lines and Runovers in Poetry," states "Runover lines (the remainder of lines too long to appear as a single line) are usually indented one em from the line above."[22] Runover lines treated in this way are called hanging indents, a style in composition where the first line of a paragraph is set to the full measure, and all the following lines are indented,[23] as seen in the example here:

> A hanging indent leaves the first line in place,
>   but will indent the second with extra space.

To create hanging indents in the ebook, we tagged each line of poetry as a paragraph.[24] Here is an example of the code for the first stanza of "The Phone Call" with paragraph tags around each line:

```
<p>The news cuts the night in two.</p>
<p>The inevitable phone call</p>
<p>that every middle-aged man</p>
<p>one day will receive.</p>
<p>My father has died.</p>
```

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[22] *Chicago Manual of Style, 16th ed.,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), section 13.25, p. 629.

[23] James Craig, *Basic Typography: A Design Manual.*(USA: Watson-Guptall Publications, 1990), 92.

[24] If you would like to learn more about HTML and CSS, the W3 Schools are an invaluable resource. You can access their website here: http://www.w3schools.com/

In the CSS for EPUB there is no definition for hanging indents. As a work around, we

adjusted the CSS margins and text indents to create hanging indents, using a style titled

".BodyPoem". We set the left margin for the text in these paragraphs to be indented by

15 pixels (px). We then set the text indent to –15px, which would make the line align

flush to the left of the screen. This is what the CSS looks like:

```
.bodypoem {
        font-family: Georgia, serif;
        font-weight: normal;
        font-style: normal;
        font-size: normal;
        text-align: left;
        text-indent: -15px;
        margin-left: 15px;
        }
```

By tagging each line in the poem as a paragraph, then associating the ".BodyPoem"

class to it, we were able to create a hanging indent for each individual line, as seen in

Figure 3. This is what the HTML code of the first paragraph looked like (the class

"BodySpaceBefore" will be discussed later):

```
<p class="BodySpaceBefore">The news cuts the night in two.</p>
<p class="BodyPoem">The inevitable phone call</p>
<p class="BodyPoem">that every middle-aged man</p>
<p class="BodyPoem">one day will receive.</p>
<p class="BodyPoem">My father has died.</p>
```

The Phone Call

The news cuts the night in
    two.
The inevitable phone call
that every middle-aged
    man
one day will receive.
My father has died.

I got on the road early this
    morning.
No destination.
The way my life will be
    from now on.

I stop along the way for
    breakfast.
Bacon and eggs, toast,

Figure 3: The ebook for The Return with hanging indents

Stanza Breaks

A stanza is "a grouping of lines separated from others in a poem."[25] Similar to a

paragraph, a stanza is a unit of information. It can be used to mark a shift in mood, time,

or thought. In the print edition for *The Return,* no stanzas were split across pages. If a

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[25] "Stanza," *PoetryFoundation*.org, accessed August 6, 2012,
    http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/search-glossary-terms?q=stanza

stanza was too long to fit at the bottom of one page, then the whole stanza was moved to the top of the next page. Keeping stanzas together kept these units of information whole, preserving the poet's rhythms and preventing confusion on the part of the reader.

Figure 1 shows the first three stanzas in the opening section of the print version of *The Return*. Figure 3 shows how those three stanzas would look on a small screen. In this example, due to the reduced space, the third stanza is broken after the second line, which begins with: "Bacon and eggs, toast…" There is nothing to indicate that the stanza continues on the next screen. On a computer screen the user can scroll down to see the rest of the stanza. However, if they are reading on a smart phone or ereader, then there is no way to know that this is not the complete stanza.

We tried several solutions that would either keep the stanzas from breaking, or indicate that a stanza had ended. The first solution was to define each stanza as a block element, an element that "takes up the full width available, and has a line break before and after it."[26] Headers, paragraphs, and divisions, (also known as "<div> tags") are block elements. In an HTML document, the <div> tag defines the elements contained within it as one section. We applied a <div> tag to each stanza in the first section. Here is an example of the first three stanzas:

[26] "CSS Display and Visibility," *W3Schools.com*, accessed on August 6th, 2012,
http://www.w3schools.com/css/css_display_visibility.asp

```
<div class="stanza">
     <p class="BodySpaceBefore">The news cuts the night in two.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">The inevitable phone call</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">that every middle-aged man</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">one day will receive.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">My father has died.</p>
</div>
<div class="stanza">
     <p class="BodySpaceBefore">I got on the road early this
     morning.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">No destination.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">The way my life will be from now on.</p>
</div>
<div class="stanza">
     <p class="BodySpaceBefore">I stop along the way for breakfast.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">Bacon and eggs, toast, scalding hot coffee.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">I sit by the window.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">A sharp sun warms my right cheek.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">A quick glance at the paper.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">A bloody image of a car wreck.</p>
     <p class="BodyPoem">Death is sold anonymously in America.</p>
</div>
```

Figure 4: The Return using <div> tags

We then created a CSS definition called *.stanza* and added the properties shown below.

We set the "page-break-before" definition as "auto." We then set the orphans and

widows definition at 4 lines, which makes the minimum number of lines that must be

displayed on the screen as 4, otherwise the stanza will begin on a new page. We then

set the stanza to display as an inline-block. This is what the CSS looked like:

> *.stanza{*
>   *align: left;*
>   *display: inline-block;*
>   *page-break-before: auto;*
>   *orphans: 4;*
>   *widows: 4;*
>   *}*

We used the "inline-block" definition, rather than "block," because the page breaks would

only occur when the CSS display definition was "inline-block." When the definition was

"block," the stanzas continued to break across pages. For example, on the Aldiko

reading app, when the "display : block;" definition was used, the stanzas would break

across pages; however, when the "display : inline-block;" definition was used, the stanzas would not break across pages. If a stanza was too long to fit the bottom of the screen, it would begin on the next screen. The result was the same on the Kobo Touch, the EPUB reader add-on in Firefox, and Adobe Digital Editions ebook viewer on a PC. However, this solution was not consistent across ereading devices. When we viewed the ebook in a different ebook viewer called Calibre, or online using the EPUB reading site Ibisreader.com, neither the "display : block;" nor "display : inline-block" definitions kept the stanzas from breaking across pages.

In instances where the "inline-block" definition was recognized, this approach worked very well, especially for smaller screens. It kept the stanzas from breaking across the screen. Unfortunately, as seen in Figure 5, on larger screens the stanzas spread out horizontally across the screen. In this example, shown below, stanzas 1 and 2 are parallel to each other. The two lines "that every middle-aged man" and "I got on the road early this morning," which are from different stanzas, look as if they are part of the same line, with extra word spacing in between. There is no CSS definition which will cause the block elements to only display vertically, instead of horizontally. As a result, we decided not to use <div> tags.

The Phone Call

The news cuts the night in two.
The inevitable phone call
that every middle-aged man   I got on the road early this morning.
one day will receive.   No destination.
My father has died.   The way my life will be from now on.

I stop along the way for breakfast.
Bacon and eggs, toast, scalding hot coffee.
I sit by the window.
A sharp sun warms my right cheek.
A quick glance at the paper.
A bloody image of a car wreck.
Death is sold anonymously in America.

Figure 5: The ebook for The Return using <div> tags with the "Display : inline-block"

Our second solution was to insert a visual element between the stanzas. The pilcrow, ¶, was a typographical symbol used by early printers to show paragraph breaks within a solid block of type.[27] For *The Return* we wanted to insert a symbol, a visual cue, to indicate the start of a new stanza. Our hope was that visual cues would allow stanzas to break, and not confuse the reader. During testing, we found that a visual cue was effective in indicating the end of one stanza and the start of another. However, we did not use this solution, because the visual cues had an unintended negative effect. They

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[27] Craig, *Basic Typography: A Design Manual,* 92.

broke the flow of the stanzas, making each stanza feel isolated from the others, as if they were independent, rather than a connected series.

Our third solution was to expand the space between stanzas. Section 13.23 in *The Chicago Manual of Style,* "Setting off Poetry," recommends that "A half line to a full line of space should appear between stanzas."[28] Perhaps increasing the space between stanzas would help maintain readability, and still clearly indicate where one stanza ended and another began. As seen in the HTML code of the stanza on page 20, the first line was formatted with the class: "BodySpaceBefore". In the CSS for this definition we set the top margin at 14 pixels, whereas on the regular poetry lines, the top margin was zero pixels. This is what the CSS looks like:

```
.BodySpaceBefore {
        font-family: Georgia, serif;
        font-weight: normal;
        font-style: normal;
        font-size: normal;
        text-align: left;
        text-indent:-15px;
        margin: 14px 0px 0px 15px;
        }
```

While this modification did increase the spaces between stanzas, it was not an ideal solution, since it did not stop the stanzas from breaking. However, it was simple to

[28] *Chicago Manual of Style,* 16th ed., section 13.23, p. 628.

implement, and it worked within the production schedule. We accepted that this was a

facet of the EPUB medium that could not be controlled. If we had been able to restrain

the <div> tags from displaying the stanzas horizontally on wider screens, we would have

applied that solution. Since we could not do so, we used the solution that brought us

closest to our objectives.

Chapter 3: The Writer's Studio / *emerge 2011*

The Writer's Studio

The Writer's Studio (TWS) is a creative writing program in the Continuing Studies department at Simon Fraser University. Founded in 2001 by Betsy Warland, a Vancouver poet, author, and teacher, The Writer's Studio began with the core tenet of "learning in community." A cohort enrols for one year, during which TWS teaches students the craft, process, and discipline required to be a working writer. The key components of The Writer's Studio include: mentoring and workshopping, with supporting classes on process, form, ethics and legal issues, book production, manuscript development, and getting published. The cohort is divided into three groups, each with its own mentor and genre: fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. The students meet biweekly with their mentor and the other students in that genre group. During these sessions, students workshop their writing and receive feedback from the mentor and fellow students.

The alumni of The Writer's Studio are an active part of Vancouver's writing community. They organize and host the TWS Reading Series, a monthly reading held at various venues around Vancouver. The Reading Series is open to the public, and for many young writers it is their first opportunity to read in front of a live audience. Two TWS alumni, Elee Kraljii-Gardiner and Anne Hopkinson, coordinate and run the Thursdays

Writing Collective, which offers, "free, drop-in creative writing classes at Carnegie Community Centre for members of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside."[29] Kraljii-Gardiner is also the publisher for Otter Press, which produces *The Writer's Caravan*, an anthology of writings from the Thursdays group. Another TWS alumnus, Daniel Zomparelli, is a published poet and editor-in-chief of *Poetry is Dead* (PID) magazine, a semi-annual publication devoted to poetry in Canada with a strong emphasis on the West Coast. PID's mission is to "provide a bridge between the poetry readers and non-poetry readers. To widen the audience of poetry in Vancouver, and to promote the art of poetry in all forms."[30]

emerge

Since the inception of The Writer's Studio in 2001, TWS has published an annual anthology of the current cohort's writings, a mixture of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Each anthology is guest edited by a local author. Past editors have included Lee Henderson, author of *The Man Game* (Viking Canada) and *The Broken Record Technique* (Penguin Canada), Brad Cran (Vancouver Poet Laureate 2009 – 2011), and Evelyn Lau (Vancouver Poet Laureate 2011 – Present). Each anthology is published as

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[29] "The Writer's Caravan," *ThursdaysWritingCollective.ca*, accessed on August 6, 2012, http://www.thursdayswritingcollective.ca/

[30] "Profile," *PoetryisDead.ca,* accessed on August 6, 2012, http://poetryisdead.ca/pages/profile.html

a perfect-bound trade paperback book. The page design has a simple structure, with basic styles: chapter title, author name, epigraph, body paragraphs, and author bios. The average print run is 250–300 copies, and the cover price is $20.

Role of emerge

The publishing of *emerge* is intended as an introduction for the students to the process and business of book publishing. Students gain hands-on experience in book editing, production, marketing, and sales. With the exception of the cover design, interior design, and typesetting, *emerge* is wholly produced by the students. Many of the obstacles faced by students during the production of *emerge* are the same as those faced by small independent publishers. The students work with a small budget to create, produce, and market the book to the public.

emerge 2011

Until 2011, *emerge* had never been made into an ebook. That year, I converted the title from InDesign to EPUB, and formatted the ebook with the help of James Lang, a colleague in the Writing and Communications Program. We created the EPUB for *emerge 2011* using the same process I used for *The Return*. I prepped the InDesign file for export by converting all localized formatting, such as italics, to styles in the style sheet. I then used InDesign 5.5 to convert the file to EPUB.

Formatting Challenges

Poetry accounted for roughly 25 percent of the book's content. Three poems, "Language Electric," "Barnacle Skin," and "St. Elmo's Fire," all written by Jaime Lee Kirtz, required

the most time to format, as they relied on word spacing and precise stanza placement to set the pacing of the poem. The first two poems, "Language Electric" and "Barnacle Skin," had a fairly simple structure. Both poems were centre-aligned, with spaces between some words. The line lengths in these poems were short enough that on most screens unintended line wraps would not occur.

For smaller screens, we used hanging indents to indicate that the line had wrapped. Unfortunately, since the poem is centre-aligned, a hanging indent was not an effective visual cue that the line had wrapped. Unable to find a solution for this, we added a note to the ebook, stating the ideal settings for viewing the poetry in *emerge 2011* (details below).

The layout in the third poem, "St. Elmo's Fire," was the most complex because the poet employed elements of concrete poetry, "verse that emphasizes nonlinguistic elements in its meaning."[31] Figure 6 shows the opening stanzas of the poem, as formatted in the print edition of *emerge 2011*.[32] The stanzas are aligned differently from other poetry discussed in this report; they are staggered down the page, as if they were pinned to a corkboard.

[31] "Concrete Poetry," *PoetryFoundation.org,* accessed on August 6, 2012,
http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/glossary-term/Concrete%20poetry
[32] Hiromi Goto, ed., *emerge 2011,* (Canada: The Writing and Communications Program, SFU, 2011), 48.

ST. ELMO'S FIRE

"Drops full salt"[1] fall
tobacco leaves
corn husks
gnarled boards
nostalgia for rigging
barrelled back
empirical forests loom

Blue white spirits
thunder waves curl
canwyll yr ysbryd glân[2]
ghosts on and under seas
frightened vengeance in sailor's
knots

Electrified plasma gyrating
around mast heads
    dissociating electrons and atoms
    ions caught in avalanches

"Death-fires danced at night
The water, like a witch's oils
Burnt green and blue and
white"[3]

"Water with luminous particles"[4]
as wingtips through
volcanic ash

Deliverance and Patience
    rebuilt with hand and foot
      heart and entrails buried
in sandy graves toes

Figure 6: Opening section of the print version of "St. Elmo's Fire"

We tried different methods of transferring this structure from the page to the screen. The first attempted solution was to treat lines that shared a baseline (though they belong to different stanzas) as a single line. In Figure 6 the reader can see that the two lines "nostalgia for rigging" and "blue white spirits" are from two different stanzas, but they align horizontally. We added non-breaking spaces, ' ', between them as a way of keeping the stanzas separated. Gauging the number of non-breaking spaces required between the words to keep each stanza properly aligned was painstaking. Through trial and error, and lots of " "s, we did our best to match the digital to the print version. Below is an example of the HTML for this verse:

```
<p class="Bodypoetry">nostalgia for rigging
          &nbsp
;   Blue white spirits</p>
```

We needed many non-breaking spaces to create enough separation between the stanzas – in some spots, thirty or more were necessary. Even then, we were unable to align the stanzas perfectly (see Figure 7). What is more, as seen in Figure 8, when line breaks are introduced on a smaller screen, the poem becomes disjointed and chaotic.

```
                        ST. ELMO'S FIRE
"Drops full salt"1 fall
tobacco leaves
corn husks
gnarled boards
nostalgia for rigging          Blue white spirits
barrelled back           thunder waves curl
empirical forests loom                 canwyll yr ysbryd glân2
                ghosts on and under seas
                frightened vengeance in sailor's
                knots


Electrified plasma gyrating
around mast heads
dissociating electrons and atoms        "Death-fires danced at night
ions caught in avalanches                 The water, like a witch's oils
         Burnt green and blue and
              white"3
```

Figure 7: The ebook version of "St. Elmo's Fire," using non-breaking spaces

ST. ELMO'S FIRE

"Drops full salt"[1] fall
tobacco leaves
corn husks
gnarled boards
nostalgia for rigging   Blue white spirits
barrelled back   thunder waves curl
empirical forests loom   canwyll yr
ysbryd glân[2]
   ghosts on and under seas
   frightened vengeance in sailor's
   knots

Electrified plasma gyrating
around mast heads
dissociating electrons and atoms
   "Death-fires danced at night
ions caught in avalanches   The
water, like a witch's oils
  Burnt green and blue and
   white"[3]

*Figure 8: The ebook version of "St. Elmo's Fire,"
using non-breaking spaces, on a
smaller screen*

To avoid these awkward line breaks, and extreme shifts in word placement, we tried

using the <pre> tag, an HTML tag that preserves both spaces and line breaks. It is

displayed in a fixed-width font (usually Courier),[33] which allows the layout to be

maintained across different screens and platforms. In the code of the EPUB, we placed

all the content of "St. Elmo's Fire" into the <pre> tag element, then formatted the poem

to replicate the print layout. This was easy to copy, because the content could be placed

anywhere on the page and would not move unless we moved it – essentially the content

was frozen in place. Here is an example of the first two stanzas of the poem in a <pre>

tag:

```
<pre>

"Drops full salt"1 fall
tobacco leaves
corn husks
gnarled boards
nostalgia for rigging          Blue white spirits
barrelled back                 thunder waves curl
empirical forests loom         canwyll yr ysbryd glân2
                               ghosts on and under seas
                               frightened vengeance in sailor's
                               knots


</pre>
```
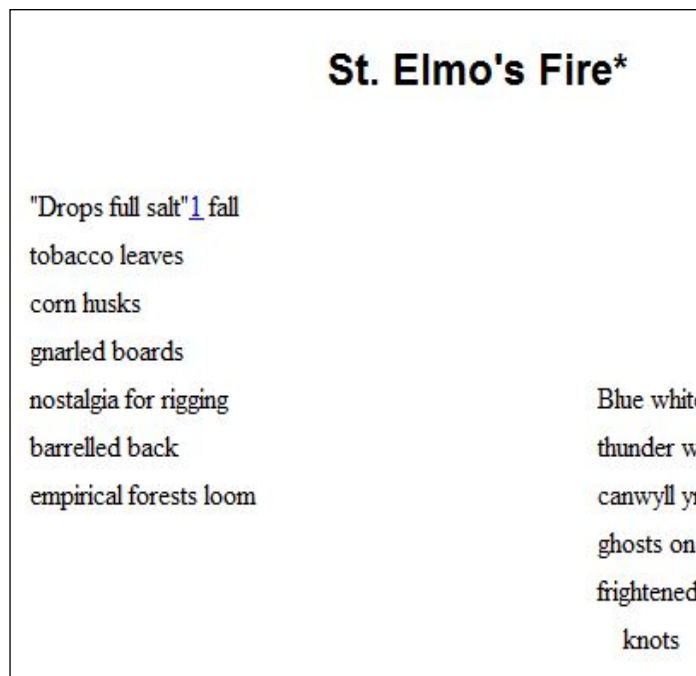
Figure 9: "St. Elmo's Fire" in a <pre> tag

As seen here, it is not necessary for each line within the <pre> tag to be tagged with

HTML. The text will be displayed exactly as it appears between the opening and closing

---

[33] "Pre Tag," *W3Schools.com*, accessed on August 6th, 2012, http://www.w3schools.com/tags/tag_pre.asp

<pre> tags, and because it uses a mono-space font, it is easy to accurately align the content. What is more, when we viewed the poem on different devices, like the Aldiko reading app on a tablet, Adobe Digital Editions on a PC, and the Kobo Touch ereader, we found that the structure of the poem was maintained.

However, this solution was unusable, because the user could not see all the content. When the poem was viewed on the tablet, Kobo, and Kobo Touch, the text that exceeded the margin could not be brought into view, even by scrolling across the page. On the tablet the screen could be rotated to landscape mode in order to see the full content, but in portrait mode it could not be seen, as shown in Figure 10.

St. Elmo's Fire*

```
"Drops full salt"1 fall
tobacco leaves
corn husks
gnarled boards
nostalgia for rigging           Blue white
barrelled back                  thunder wa
empirical forests loom          canwyll yr
                                ghosts on
                                frightened
                                knots
```

Figure 10: "St. Elmo's Fire," using the <pre> tag on a smaller screen. Right side of poem is not viewable.

In the CSS definitions there is the option "whitespace : pre-wrap." Using this option, the browser/ereading device will preserve the white space around the text, causing text to

"wrap when necessary, and on line breaks."[34] We did not use this definition because we did not want the text to move from its original position. We needed a solution that would keep the stanzas in place, and not move lines from the right side of the page to the left when content was viewed on a smaller screen, as in Figure 9. The <pre> tag would have been the ideal solution, if only the full content could be viewed on small screens.

Our final attempted solution was to place "St. Elmo's Fire" into a three-column table. Ordinarily, tables are avoided in ebooks and web pages, because they restrict reflowability. However, our core goal for this poem was to keep the stanzas in place. Moving the content in a table enabled us to do that, since the cells containing the lines would remain in the same spot, no matter how the screen size changed. We placed each line into its own cell in the table. The content on the left side of the page was placed in the first column. The content on the right side of the page was placed in the third column, and all the content in between was placed in the second column. We set the columns to span the width of the screen, at 33 percent for each column, so the columns occupied equal space. Figure 11 shows the first two stanzas of "St. Elmo's Fire" coded as a table.

---

[34] "CSS white-space Property," *W3Schools.com*, accessed on August 30, 2012,
http://www.w3schools.com/cssref/pr_text_white-space.asp

```html
<table>
    <col width="33.3%" />
    <col width="33.3%" />
    <col width="33.3%" />
    <tr>
    <td colspan="3">"Drops full salt"<a class="footnote-link"
      href="#footnote-4043-1" id="footnote-4043-1-backlink">1</a>
      fall</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
    <td colspan="3">tobacco leaves</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
    <td colspan="3">corn husks</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
    <td colspan="3">gnarled boards</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
    <td colspan="2">nostalgia for rigging</td>
    <td>Blue white spirits</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
    <td colspan="2">barrelled back</td>
    <td> thunder waves curl</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
    <td colspan="2">empirical forests loom</td>
    <td> canwyll yr ysbryd glân <a class="footnote-link"
      href="#footnote-4043-2" id="footnote-4043-2-
      backlink">2</a></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
    <td colspan="2"></td>
    <td>ghosts on and under sea</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
    <td colspan="2"></td>
    <td>frightened vengeance in sailor's</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
    <td colspan="2"></td>
    <td>knots</td>
    </tr>
</table>
```

Figure 11: HTML for "St. Elmo's Fire" coded into a table

Due to the short lines of the poem, coding it into a table worked quite effectively, especially if the viewer read the poem in landscape view.[35] Figure 12 shows the poem coded in a table, and displayed as the user would see it on a screen. On a smaller screen, as seen in Figure 13, stanzas moved closer to each other without touching. More important, the lines did not wrap to a different section of the screen. Plus, the hanging indents signalled that certain lines had been broken.

Note on the eBook

A "Note on the Ebook" was inserted in the ebook of *emerge 2011*. The note briefly explains the challenges of formatting poetry in ebooks, and says that despite our best efforts, it was very difficult to place poetry into a fluid medium, yet stay true to the look of the print edition. The note suggested that the reader view the poetry in landscape mode with the text in a small font, as this would allow them to see the author's original intent.

[35] A "note on the ebook" was inserted into the EPUB of *emerge 2011* to advise the reader of this.

St. Elmo's Fire*

"Drops full salt"1 fall
tobacco leaves
corn husks
gnarled boards
nostalgia for rigging   Blue white spirits
barrelled back   thunder waves curl
empirical forests loom   canwyll yr ysbryd glân2
                                                   ghosts on and under seas
                                                   frightened vengeance in
                                                   sailor's
                                                   knots

Electrified plasma gyrating
around mast heads
   dissociating electrons and atoms   "Death-fires danced at night
   ions caught in avalanches   The water, like a witch's oils
                                                   Burnt green and blue and
                                                   white"3

Figure 12: The ebook version of "St. Elmo's Fire" coded as a table

St. Elmo's Fire*

"Drops full salt"[1] fall

tobacco leaves

corn husks

gnarled boards

nostalgia for rigging

barrelled back

empirical forests loom

Blue white spirits

thunder waves curl

canwyll yr ysbryd glân[2]

ghosts on and under seas

frightened vengeance in sailor's knots

Electrified plasma gyrating around mast heads dissociating electrons and atoms

ions caught in avalanches

"Death-fires danced at night

The water, like a witch's oils

Burnt green and blue and white"[3]

Figure 13: The ebook version of "St. Elmo's Fire" coded as a table, on a smaller screen

Chapter 4: Other Options for Displaying Poetry in eBooks

For the reasons outlined in chapters 1 and 2, we created ebooks for *The Return* and *emerge 2011* in the EPUB ebook format. When creating these ebooks, our primary goal was to stay as true as possible to the appearance of the print editions. As seen from these case studies, it is difficult to replicate fixed-layout content in a fluid medium like EPUB ebooks. To resolve these formatting issues it was necessary to hack the HTML; for instance, using work-arounds to create typographical effects like hanging indents. What is more, we found that there was no one method that would work for all screens, devices, user settings, and ereader software; and not all problems had solutions.

This chapter will discuss other options available to publishers for displaying poetry in ebooks, including: EPUB 3, fixed-layout ebooks, apps, and PDF files. Each of these options offers more reliable formatting, but there are costs associated with all of them.

Formats

EPUB 3

EPUB 3, the newest EPUB standard, is still embryonic, but for many in the publishing industry it offers hope for the future of displaying poetry in ebooks. Compared to EPUB 2, the EPUB standard in which *The Return* and *emerge 2011* were created, EPUB 3 gives publishers more control over the final layout of their content. For example,

publishers can embed fonts, control display options, choose fixed- or reflowable-layout, and state which settings the end-user can change (such as font size and screen orientation). As well, more CSS classes are available to ebook designers in EPUB 3, because it uses CSS 3.[36]

Fixed-Layout eBooks

Fixed-layout ebooks enable a publisher to create an ebook without sacrificing the page layout in the print edition. Fixed-layout eBooks are fully functional HTML-based ebooks that "can keep the same layout and design as their print book counterparts."[37] As Jean Kaplansky outlines in "Keeping up with Fixed Layout Support: What, Where, and Huh?" on DigitalBookWorld.com, fixed-layout ebooks differ from traditional reflowable text ebooks, such as EPUBs, in the following ways:

- Content is fixed in the reading application "page." Fixed can mean to a region on a single page, the left or right hand page of a page spread, or down to pixel positioning driven by pre-determined screen resolutions.

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[36] The full specifications can be found here: http://idpf.org/ EPUB/30/spec/ EPUB30-changes.html#sec-new-changed

[37] "Fixed-Layout eBooks," *eBookArchitects.com, a*ccessed on August 6, 2012, http://ebookarchitects.com/conversions/fixedlayout.php

- When fixed layout production is required, emphasis shifts away from producing ebooks that are layout agnostic and suitable for any ebook reading device or application. Every detail of a fixed layout format is specified by either the content creator or ebook designer.[38]

As Liz Castro notes on her blog, in a post titled "Fixed Layout EPUBs for iPad and iPhone," this type of control is ideal for children's books, graphic novels and manga, the "coffee table" book, science and medical books, technical books, textbooks, and poetry books.[39]

Many online book retailers support fixed-layout ebooks. According to the eBooks Architects' website, "the four largest ebook retailers (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple, and Kobo) all support fixed layout ebook files."[40] What is more, they will support fixed-layout displays across a variety of dedicated devices, as well as "retailer specific apps intended to extend a retailer's support across a variety of operating systems and device

[38] Jean Kaplansky, "Keeping up with Fixed Layout Support: What, Where, and Huh?" *DigitalBookWorld.com,* June, 2012, accessed on August 18, 2012, http://www.digitalbookworld.com/2012/keeping-up-with-fixed-layout-support-what-where-and-huh/

[39] Liz Castro, "Fixed Layout Epubs for iPad and iPhone," *PigsGourdsandWikis.com*, February 2011, accessed on August 6, 2012, http://www.pigsgourdsandwikis.com/2011/02/fixed-layout-epubs-for-ipad-and-iphone.html

[40] "Fixed-Layout eBooks," *eBookArchitects.com,* accessed on August 6, 2012, http://ebookarchitects.com/conversions/fixedlayout.php

form factors (e.g., cell phones and tablets vs. laptop screens and widescreen monitors)."[41]

APPS

Apps have become exceedingly popular in the world of smartphones and tablets. An app is a software application that a user can download to a smartphone, tablet, computer, and/or ereader (though choices are very limited for ereaders). Apps have a variety of uses. For example, users can download productivity apps, like personal calendars and calculators. They can also download game apps, news apps, and health and fitness apps.

As with EPUB 3 and fixed-layout ebooks, an app gives the publisher complete control over content display. Publishers can control the layout, font choice, and the settings users can change (font size, margins, etc.). Publishers and independent programmers have found this to be a popular option. For example, a quick search for "poetry" in the Android app store shows more than 2,900 poetry apps available for download.[42] The apps range from emerging authors' poems to collections of Shakespeare's sonnets to apps that generate a love poem at the click of a button.

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[41] Kaplansky. "Keeping up with Fixed Layout Support".
[42] *Google Play*, accessed on July 31, 2012, https://play.google.com/store/search?q=poetry&c=apps

An example of a good poetry app is "Poetry from Poetry Foundation." The Poetry

Foundation, an independent literary organization that publishes *Poetry* magazine, offers

this free app, available on iTunes for the iPhone and iPad, and at Google's app store for

their Android operating systems. At the time of this report, the Android app has been

downloaded more than ten thousand times. Apple's iTunes store does not offer

information on the number of times the app has been downloaded, but it is the first result

when the word "poetry" is entered in the search field.

According to the "more info" section of their app, "the application was created to

introduce new audiences to the world of poetry." The "Poetry from Poetry Foundation"

app allows users to "browse, discover, and share poems from favorite poets old and

new."[43] The poetry in this app comes from their magazine, the public domain, and other

sources from which mobile permissions have been obtained. Users can search for

poems by a poet's name, a poem's title, or memorable lines. The app also lets users

save poems, and share them with friends via Facebook, Twitter, or email. They have

also added a fun feature: Shaking the iPad or other device will cause the application to

"spin," which selects and displays a random poem for the user to read.

---

[43] "Poetry from Poetry Foundation Description," *Google Play,* accessed on August 6, 2012,
    https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.thepoetryfoundation.AppSuite.POETRY&feature=sea
    rch_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwyLDEsIm9yZy50aGVwb2V0cnlmb3VuZGF0aW9uLkFwcFN1aXRlLlBPR
    VRSWSJd

Key Considerations

While EPUB 3, fixed-layout ebooks, and apps offer publishers more control over the layout of their content, they are not perfect solutions. Cost, ebook page dimensions, complexity of these formats, and sales potential are all questions a publisher will need to consider in choosing to use any of these formats.

Cost

Fixed-layout ebooks and apps give a publisher pixel-perfect control over the formatting of an ebook, but they can be costly to produce. As Peter Cocking, D&M's art director, noted in an email, "A fixed-layout (ebook) treatment on a wider screen – like an iPad – could be appropriate and potentially even beautiful, but the cost of production, and the tiny market, would make it a fruitless exercise."[44]

Professional ebook designer Liz Castro is leery of fixed-layout ebooks as well. As she notes on her blog post "Fixed Layout Epubs for iPad and iPhone": "I'm not completely convinced by the idea of fixed layout books. I find them complicated to lay out and not much more useful than a PDF for reading the content. They lack EPUB's most important feature: the ability to reflow when the size and font of the text are changed."[45] The

[44] Peter Cocking, email to author, March 19, 2012.
[45] Liza Castro, "Fixed Layout Epubs for iPad and iPhone," *PigsGourdsandWikis.com.*

coding required for this format is complicated. Fixed-layout ebooks have to be built from the ground up. According to Joshua Tallent, founder and CEO of eBooks Architects, this "means we have to completely re-arrange the text and images as they were arranged in the original files."[46]

The more complicated the process of creating a fixed-layout ebook, the more labour-intensive it is, and the more it costs. eBook Architects offers conversions for many different types of ebooks, including fixed-layout ebooks.[47] Their rates for creating fixed-layout ebooks vary by platform. The minimum rate for each platform, including for Amazon and Apple, is $250. Creating a fixed-layout ebook for Apple costs $15 per page. Titles for Amazon cost $5 per page. For fixed-layout ebooks for use on Barnes & Noble's products, the company has a flat rate of $250 for titles less than 100 pages; anything longer requires a quote from eBook Architects. According to their online quote system, converting *The Return*, which is 240 pages long, to a fixed-layout ebook for Apple and Amazon would cost $3,120.[48] As a point of comparison, to convert a novel with fewer

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[46] "Fixed-Layout eBooks," *ebookArchitects.com,* accessed on August 12, 2012, http://ebookarchitects.com/conversions/fixedlayout.php.

[47] Their rates can be found here: http://ebookarchitects.com/conversions/services.php

[48] Calculation made, August 19, 2012, here: http://ebookarchitects.com/conversions/fixedlayout.php

than 400 pages, "as long as the book does not have any formatting complexities,"[49]

costs $200.[50]

Creating apps can be equally expensive. According to app developer Brad Waller,

"apps cost as much as you have budgeted."[51] Depending on the developer's profile and

the complexity of the app, the cost can range from $500 to $100,000 (the higher price

being the cost of developing some high-end game apps). As well, different pricing

structures are available, from one-time to monthly fees – if created through app

agencies. If, as with the Poetry Foundation, the app will be used as a central repository

for the publisher's poetry, the cost might be justified as a good investment. However, if a

publisher plans to release one poetry title, as was the case for *The Return*, creating an

app to present the content may not be a wise investment.

EPUB 3 uses the new HTML 5 and CSS 3 web standards. As Jeremy Greenfield noted

in "How Publishers Should Prepare for EPUB 3," on DigitalBookWorld.com, "EPUB 3 is

built on HTML 5. A relatively new coding language, HTML 5 isn't yet a common skill for

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[49] "eBook Design Services," *ebookArchitects.com,* accessed on August 12, 2012,
   http://ebookarchitects.com/conversions/services.php

[50] Ibid.

[51] Dianna Dilworth, "How Much Does it Cost to Make an iPhone App?" *MediaBistro.com,* accessed on
   August 6, 2012, http://www.mediabistro.com/appnewser/how-much-does-it-cost-to-make-an-iphone-
   app_b24694

developers. And where there's scarcity, there's cost." [52] Any titles that rely on interactivity, like cookbooks and children's books, will need HTML 5 as the core building block, and therefore expensive programmers. For poetry books, if they are simply text on a screen with little to no interactivity, such as audio or video, the coding will mostly remain the same. But if publishers want to create ebooks that are more complicated, they will have to invest in tech-savvy help, which often comes with higher costs.

Page Dimensions/ Multiple Formats

Creating specific page dimensions for an ebook, whether EPUB 3, fixed-layout ebook, or app, limits the distribution potential for a title. If the ebook is designed for the iPad, readability on other devices is compromised – unless, of course, a publisher makes multiple ebook files for a title, which can be costly, as shown by the quote from eBook Architects (above). Until a universal fixed-layout ebook format is created, publishers will have to produce the ebook in multiple file formats if they would like to create fixed-layout ebooks.[53]

As Jean Kaplansky notes in "Keeping up with Fixed Layout Support: What, Where, and Huh?," "the four major eBook retail vendors have not settled on a common, and entirely

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[52] Jeremy Greenfield, "How Publishers Should Prepare for EPUB 3,"January 2012, accessed on August 19, 2012, http://www.digitalbookworld.com/2012/how-publishers-should-prepare-for-epub-3/

[53] EPUB 3 attempts to solve this issue with the option to set the text in the file to "fixed" or "reflowable".

open fixed-layout format. This is keeping publishers and their eBook production partners on their toes in order to support multiple fixed layout formats, based on targeted device reading platforms and apps, and depending on the fixed layout typographic specifications of the eBook."[54]

The low number of ereading devices that support EPUB 3 is the major setback for this new standard. At the time of this report, not all ereading devices and applications have been updated to support EPUB 3. Currently, the AZARDI reader, IDPF's Readium, and iBooks supports most elements of the standard.[55] Other vendors will catch up in time. But for the moment, creating a title in EPUB 3 does limit the number of reading devices on which the title can be read.

Even ebook apps do not always easily adjust to screens with different dimensions. The Poetry Foundation's app been tweaked for each device. In the Android app the default viewing mode is portrait, with no option to view it in landscape. The iPad version allows the user to view in landscape and portrait mode. While viewing each poem, the user has the option to increase and decrease the font size. The Poetry Foundation has inserted a note into the app that recommends the best way to view the content:

[54] Kaplansky. "Keeping up with Fixed Layout Support".
[55] Matthew Diener, "iBooks: The Latest EPUB 3.0 Reader," *EPUBsecrets.com,* May 2012, accessed August 19, 2012, http://epubsecrets.com/ibooks-the-latest-epub-3-0-reader.php

> "We've done our best to maintain the integrity of line breaks, but poems with long lines might look better on the website or on the iPad version of this app…"[56]

Other poetry apps in the Android marketplace, such as "Poet's Corner" and "Love Poems," do not allow the user to change settings such as font size, screen orientation, or background colour, which ensures that the content is displayed exactly as intended.

Potential Sales

Possibly the most important consideration, when deciding on alternative poetry ebook options, is sales potential. Fixed-layout ebooks are not big sellers. D&M has made a few fixed-layout ebooks and found that some of them did not recoup the costs of making them. An example given by Peter Cocking in an interview was the fixed-layout ebook created for *A Thrilling Ride: The Vancouver Canucks' Fortieth Anniversary Season,* published by Greystone Books, an imprint of D&M publishers. The print edition was a large commemorative book, 9 x 11 inches, with colour photographs throughout. At the time of this report, the print edition had sold more than 12,000 copies, but only eighty copies of the fixed-layout ebook had been sold.[57]

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[56] "More Info" *Poetry from Foundation Android App*, Accessed August 6, 2012.
[57] Peter Cocking, interview by author, July 17, 2012.

For ebook apps, a factor that will affect potential sales is discoverability. As D&M

Publisher's Chief Operating Officer, Jesse Finkelstein, explained in a conversation, "the

problem with selling individual books as apps is also one of discovery. How will people

find a book app in an app store?"[58] Finkelstein raises an important point. Placing an

individual book into an app environment will require a specialized marketing campaign,

and other ways of differentiating it from thousands of non-book apps.

PDF Files

Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF) is the easiest, most popular, and cheapest

option for displaying poetry in a digital container. In a piece posted on IBM"s Developer

Works website, titled "Build a Digital Book with EPUB," Liza Daly, software engineer and

co-founder of Threepress Consulting Inc., compares the benefits of PDF files and

EPUBs. As Daly discusses in her piece, the PDF file format offers publishers many

benefits. PDF is still the most widely used electronic document format. PDF files give

pixel-perfect control over the content's layout. Many programs generate PDFs, including

Microsoft Office's Word and Adobe InDesign. Fonts can be embedded in the file. As

well, Adobe Reader, the main program for reading PDF files, is on most computers, and

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[58] Jesse Finkelstein, email correspondence with author, October 1, 2012.

can be downloaded to many devices, including smartphones, tablets and ereaders.[59] As well, no extra costs are required to create them. The publisher does not need to hire an employee to create a PDF, or pay to convert it out-of-house, as with many EPUBs. (This method also has the hidden cost of the administration time required to track the titles when they are being converted.)

What is more, there are many ereading software programs that use PDFs as input formats and present the files in visually appealing ways. Issuu, Blio, and Ampersand are three examples. In "Diverging Digital Roads: Poetry and eBooks," in *Publisher's Weekly*, Craig Morgan Teicher describes Ampersand: "To create Ampersand ebooks, Bookmobile [the company that created Ampersand] takes the PDFs publishers prepare for the printer, wraps them in DRM,[60] and makes them available for sale."[61] Ampersand was not available for download at the time of this report, but was soon to be available for the iPad. The software is similar to Adobe Reader. It displays PDF files on a screen,

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[59] Liza Daly, "Build a Digital Book with EPUB," *IBM.com,* accessed on August 6, 2012,
    http://www.ibm.com/developerworks/xml/tutorials/x-epubtut/index.html
[60] DRM=Digital Rights Management.
[61] Craig Morgan Teicher, "Diverging Digital Roads: Poetry and eBooks," *PublishersWeekly.com,* accessed
    on August 6, 2012, http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/digital/content-and-e-
    books/article/46615-diverging-digital-roads-poetry-and-e-books.html?page=2

allows the user to zoom in on the document to better see the text, but adds page turns to make it feel similar to a print book.[62]

Many publishers, including the Associate Publisher at Graywolf Press, Katie Dublinski, are greatly excited about Ampersand. "It seems like the best solution so far," Dublinski says. "I love that it preserves all the things that we worked really hard to make. It preserves the page, which is important to most of our poets."[63] Sachiko Murakami, poet and poetry editor at Insomniac Press, is also a proponent of digitizing poetry in this way: "I wish I weren't so resistant to the digital presentation of poetry, but I am." She explains in an email: "Whatever holds the words stillest on the page is best. I wish that didn't mean PDF (and perhaps the flash-based flipbook type prettification of PDF), but it usually does."[64]

For D&M Publishers, current sales are what make PDF files an appealing ebook format. As both Peter Cocking and Lara Smith noted in telephone interviews, D&M has sold more PDF files than fixed-layout ebooks. As a result, when they have the digital rights to release a PDF, they do so. In these cases they release a "universal PDF," which means the PDF file has an active, clickable table of contents, the bookmarks go to every

[62] "Ampersand." Promotional video. March 2011. Accessed August 19, 2012,
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtQGjCBfuOA&feature=plcp
[63] Craig Morgan Teicher, "Diverging Digital Roads: Poetry and eBooks," *PublishersWeekly.com.*
[64] Sachiko Murakami, email to author, March 24, 2012.

chapter start, and the text has been optical-character recognized, so that it can be searched. The company distributes these to all of their vendors that support a PDF file option.[65]

Key Considerations

Though PDF files are easy to produce, and reliably mimic the page, they are not an ideal digital format in all respects. A major drawback of PDF files, says Liza Daly, is that publishers are locked into proprietary formats. As Daly says in her tutorial, although PDF libraries are available for most programming languages, "many are commercial or are embedded in applications and not easily controlled by external processes. Few PDF files are tagged so that converting them to a web-friendly format is simple or reliable."[66] If a publisher wants to create a PDF file outside of Word or InDesign, it is "not a trivial standard to learn; therefore, it is not a simple matter to throw together your own PDF-generating code."[67]

PDF files have one major drawback from the consumer's perspective as well: they do not offer a consistent experience across all reading platforms. PDFs are a snapshot of content. This means that the size of the original document, whether it is a poster or a

[65] Lara Smith, interview by author, July 18, 2012.
[66] Liza Daly, "Build a Digital Book with EPUB," *IBM.com.*
[67] Ibid.

postcard, affects how it displays on different devices. While PDF files can be read on virtually any device, ideally, they are read on devices with larger screens, such as an iPad or computer monitor. On smaller screens, the user has to zoom in to read a section of the page, then slide the document left and right in order to read the complete content.

Since the launch of Adobe Reader 8, it is possible to reflow the text in a PDF file in order to fit the width of a device's reading pane, making it easier to read on a mobile device.[68] However, not all objects in the PDF document reflow, including: "forms, comments, digital signature fields, and page artifacts, such as page numbers, headers, and footers. Pages that contain both readable text and forms or digital signature fields do not reflow."[69] As well, when the document is set to reflow, the content aligns on the left side of the screen and much of the structure is lost, making it difficult to see where a paragraph starts and ends.

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[68] "Reflow a PDF," *Adobe.com*, Accessed on August 6, 2012, http://help.adobe.com/en_US/acrobat/standard/using/WS58a04a822e3e50102bd615109794195ff-7d19.w.html

[69] Ibid.

Conclusion

Formatting fixed-layout content in a fluid environment like ebooks can be challenging, in terms of reflowable text, production costs, and the skill sets required to create titles with complicated formatting. Copper Canyon Press, a non-profit US press dedicated to poetry, received a $100,000 grant from the Allen Foundation "specifically to work on the problem of how to digitize poetry."[70]

The grant will help move this area of research forward, but ebooks are not the problem. As Liza Daly notes in "What Can We do With Books?," many of the limitations of ebooks and reflowable text have nothing to do with the intrinsic qualities of a digital book. Instead, "they are a reflection of the difficult transition between an old, established medium (print books) and a new, to-date undeveloped one (ebooks). We compare the physical to the digital and quickly spot the differences as digital's shortcoming."[71]

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[70] Teicher, Craig Morgan, "Dividing Digital Roads: Poetry and eBooks." *PublishersWeekly.com*. Accessed on August 6, 2012, http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/digital/content-and-e-books/article/46615-diverging-digital-roads-poetry-and-e-books.html?page=1

[71] Liza Daly, "What Can You Do with a Digital Book?" *PressBooks.com,* accessed on August 6, 2012, http://book.pressbooks.com/chapter/what-we-can-do-with-books-liza-daly

Dethe Elza, a programmer currently working for the Mozilla Foundation, has a similar perspective. He says that the problems of EPUBs, and ebooks in general, are not problems. "Problems can have solutions. These are quandaries," he says. "These are just things we have to deal with. We can't solve the problem that we're going to have these different format sizes (ereading devices). That's just a constraint, or lack of constraint, we're going to have to live with." [72] Publishers and ebook designers have to learn to work with, as Elza phrases it, "the predictability of unpredictability."[73]

Reading on Small Screens

When viewing content on bigger screens, like the iPad or a computer monitor, line breaks and other formatting matters are not usually a problem, as the screen is wide enough to accommodate most digitized print content. However, obstacles arise once that content has been placed in a container with smaller dimensions. For example, if a title is optimized for the iPad, then viewing it on a screen of any other size will compromise readability. As Jean Kaplansky notes, "there's a time and a place for the fixed layout typography treatment. For instance, fixed layout typography is not appropriate on all reading devices. Specifically, devices with smaller screens are simply

[72] Dethe and Daniela Elza, interview by author, April 11, 2012.
[73] Ibid.

too small for readers to comprehend the full context and value of fixed layout typography."[74]

This is where reflowable text helps – it allows content to be readable across multiple containers by adjusting it to fit the viewing pane. Unfortunately, it does not work for poetry. Perhaps publishers should not try to place poetry in such a small, confined container. Or perhaps poetry and reflowable text can live together. Joshua Tallent of eBook Architects phrases it this way: "There's a value to reflowable text in ebooks, and there's a value in the form of poetry. The challenge going forward will be how to balance those two values."[75]

In general, it is in a publisher's best interest to have content on multiple platforms, which includes smartphones. With EPUB, publishers can create a single file that can be easily read on multiple devices. Fixed-layout ebooks, EPUB 3 (in specific cases), and apps are created for specific devices. Even PDF files are not ideal for all ereading devices – they are easiest to read on devices with large screens. The challenge is to make it comfortable to read fixed-layout content on small screens.

[74] Kaplansky. "Keeping up with Fixed Layout Support".
[75] Joshua Tallent, interview by author, March 15, 2012.

Issuu, a digital publishing platform which uses PDF files, has attempted to resolve this problem by producing their own mobile app, currently available for Android devices, which allows users to easily read content on smartphones. The user can click on an article in a PDF file; then, in a pop-up screen, the article's text is presented in a reflowable format. The reader can increase and decrease the font size without having to zoom in on the document.[76]

This option does make content in PDF files easier to read, but Issuu's app raises one question. If content is displayed in this way, divorced from the original document so the user can read it on smaller screens, why have a PDF file at all? It feels like a regular epub file, except the user only gets to read the content on half the screen (the bottom half of the screen shows the PDF). In this way, a PDF becomes an expensive-to-lay-out background image.

All of which raises a further question: Can there be, and should there be, a single approach to a publisher's digital content?

[76] "Publishing Gone Mobile," *Issuu.com*, accessed on August 19, 2012, http://issuu.com/mobile

Reconsidering Content

Ebooks are their own medium, with their own opportunities and limitations. In the same way that a publisher cannot expect a movie adaptation to be perfectly faithful to the print book, they cannot expect the ebook to fully replicate print, especially when placing fixed-layout content in a digital realm.

According to Craig Mod, in his essay "Designing Books in the Digital Age," publishers must identify content as occupying one of two categories: formless content, and definite content. Formless content can be removed from its layout and retain its intrinsic meaning. [77] Definite content "embraces the container as a canvas."[78] As Mod points out, definite content, such as poetry, "may be reflowable, but depending on how it is reflowed, inherent meaning and quality of the text may shift."[79]

Mod advises that formless content can go completely digital; whereas definite content should be divided between print and the iPad format. He argues that the "Kindle and the iPhone are successful at displaying text, but that's about it."[80] The iPad, however, has a

[77] Craig Mod, "Designing Books in the Digital Age," *Book: A Futurist's Manifesto*, 2012, accessed on April 14, 2012, http://book.pressbooks.com/chapter/book-design-in-the-digital-age-craig-mod#fig1
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

screen size that will accommodate two-page spreads, which is what print readers are accustomed to, making possible a digital adaptation of definite content.

Mod urges content creators to change their approach to creating/formatting content in these new mediums. He also urges publishers to think critically: "I don't think this is a solution we should blindly embrace. Definite Content in printed books is laid out specifically for that canvas, that page size. While the iPad may be similar in physical scope to those books, duplicating layouts would be a disservice to the new canvas and modes of interaction introduced by the iPad."[81] He goes on to say that content created for the iPad should utilize the benefits of the technology and not simply replicate print. There is no need to replicate page turns, or limit a page's borders to a two-page spread. On an iPad, the content's canvas should go beyond the screen's borders, in what Mod describes as the "infinite content plane."[82]

Changing Perspective

A key factor to moving digital content forward will be a change in people's perspectives. Poets will need to put aside the ingrained belief of what poetry is, and what it should look like. Dr. Ray Hsu, editor at *Ricepaper* magazine and instructor at The Writer's Studio,

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[81] Ibid.

[82] You can see an example in his piece: http://book.pressbooks.com/chapter/book-design-in-the-digital-age-craig-mod

urges poets to move from a print-first frame of mind, but understands that an internal struggle may slow down the transition.

Hsu feels that many poets are trying to preserve two things: their identities and the historical idea of poetry. Most poets' aversion to placing their content in a digital realm, he says, comes from the desire to preserve their own identities. Traditionally, poets control how their work is presented. The units of information – the lines – are carefully crafted and controlled. Reflowable text takes this power away as poets lose control of where a line will break. If their poetry is placed in a container that may remove their intent, what is the role of a poet?

According to Hsu, poets are also trying to preserve the idea of poetry. For him, the historical idea of poetry has been built up so densely that poets think poetry is only one thing, which includes, for example, the belief that line breaks must be conceived and displayed in a certain way.[83] This adherence to a traditional notion of how a poem should look is fuelling poets' aversion to presenting their work in a fluid medium, because it won't look the way it has looked for centuries.

[83] Ray Hsu, interview by author, March 12, 2012

Collaboration

The next step will be to create new content specifically for this medium, ebooks. In order to do so, Hsu says the key will be collaboration, which is about more than creating. Each artist needs to push his or her personal artistic boundaries. "I think the most exciting collaboration is one where I have to suspend my identity as a poet… and we end up producing something that looks neither like poetry and neither like art."[84] [85]

The work of Daniela and Dethe Elza is a good example of bringing code and poetry together. Daniela is a published poet, with a master's degree in linguistics and a PhD in Education.[86] Dethe is a programmer with a degree in computer science (minor in linguistics). They met in a class on syntax, and have been married for about seventeen years. Their history of collaborating began when Daniela asked Dethe to look over a poem before she submitted it to a contest. Dethe surprised Daniela by removing extraneous words and tightening the poem up.[87] Since then, they have created many poems together.

[84] Ray Hsu, interview by author, March 12, 2012.

[85] Hsu's collaboration with Levente Kovacs and Alana Thorburn-Watt in *Dandelion Magazine,* titled "I Put a Virus on This Disk," is a good example of this type of collaboration. A video for it can be found here: http://vimeo.com/40423535

[86] "Elza, Daniela," *ABCBookworld.com,* accessed on August 6, 2012, http://www.abcbookworld.com/view_author.php?id=9792

[87] Daniela and Dethe Elza, "Guest Blog: Dethe and Daniela Elza," *LoftyAmbitions.wordpress.com,* accessed on August 6, 2012, http://loftyambitions.wordpress.com/2011/03/07/guest-blog-dethe-and-daniela-elza/

Their closest union of poetry and code resulted in a collaborative poem, titled

""blood_alley://interstital_syn.tax," which was published in *Qarrtsiluni*, an online literary

magazine.[88] The poem fuses the language of poetry and the language of programming.

Dethe wrote the first version of the poem in 2009, at a time when he was thinking about

how to put computers and technology into poetry. As he states in the "process notes" at

the end of the poem, "poetry has had a big influence on how I write code, but the

influence hadn't gone the other way very much. The sparking of these ideas helped to

bring the two together."[89] Daniela helped him refine the poetic aspects. He openly

admits that the result isn't actual code, but it does have the feeling of a markup language

– which is recognizable to programmers, and accessible to readers of poetry. A

recording of Dethe and Daniela reading this poem is also posted to the *Qarrtsiluni*

webpage.

From there, Dethe and Daniela have worked with poetry in ebooks. Dethe created an

app for a collection of Daniela's poems, called "Words for Crow." Due to the complexity

of the poetry and the target device, which was the iPhone, Dethe made image files of the

poems, saying that this was the easiest approach, since Daniela's poetry can be quite

complex. She like to play with her poetry, spread the words out and play with not only

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[88] The poem can be viewed here: http://qarrtsiluni.com/2009/02/26/blood_alleyinterstital_syntax/

[89] Daniela and Dethe Elza, "blood_alley://interstital_syn.tax," *qarrtsiluni.com,* accessed on August 6, 2012,
    http://qarrtsiluni.com/2009/02/26/blood_alleyinterstital_syntax/

how the words align but also with what the words are. Creating an app for this type of poetry seems quite natural. When viewing the content, the user can see that the poetry can be quick and chaotic, seemingly scattered across the page, and coding in the spacing between the words would have been very time-consuming. And, because Dethe is a programmer it was easy for him to take the image files of these poems and wrap them in an app.

Dethe does not restrict himself to image files when producing digital poetry. On another occasion, he wrote JavaScript code for the poem "In Earth Dreams," in which he played with images and different levels of opacity, superimposing words on one another, and adding a voice recording of the poem over top of everything.[90] This poem is not in an ebook; it is hosted on a website. In it they meld text with images, voice, and movement. Their intent was to play with the medium in which the poetry is presented, in the same way that a typewriter poet might use the typewriter as part of the creation process.

Collaboration has allowed Daniela and Dethe to capitalize on their different skill sets. The finished artifacts are different from what either imagined, but neither could have created it alone. The app for "Words for Crow" is available for sale on the iTunes store

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[90] The poem can be found here: http://movingpoems.com/2011/01/in-earth-dreams-by-daniela-elza/

for 99 cents. There is no indication of sales numbers, but the important thing is that they are putting out new digital content.

Adjusted Production Processes for eBooks

It can be tough to justify a digital focus on content and production processes when digital sales account for only a small percentage of a publisher's overall revenue. Eventually, though, publishers will need to make the transition to a digital-friendly production process that incorporates ebooks more efficiently.

D&M Publishers

D&M Publishers are already moving in this direction. Since the exploratory work on *The Return*, D&M converts all of their titles to EPUB in-house – no titles are sent to a conversion house. Lara Smith and Peter Cocking have created a process, that allows them to convert simple, no-frills titles in as little as three to four hours.

Once a typeset manuscript is finalized, and the only remaining changes will affect the design of the manuscript and not the content, the InDesign file is sent to Smith. She then converts the title to an EPUB file. Because she receives the InDesign file at an earlier stage, she gets extra production time to work on the EPUB file. What is more, the time she saves on the administration of sending titles off-site to be converted and then proofreading them, allows her to consider the content of each title and the formatting options, and to make design decisions.

For example, Smith needed that extra production time when she created the EPUB for a design-heavy title, *America But Better*, a book based on the satirical viral campaign for the American Presidency, by Brian Calvert and Chris Cannon. When creating the ebook, Smith found that many of the formats in the print edition would be difficult to replicate in an ebook. This was not a poetry book, but many of the formatting choices were guided by adapting fixed-layout content to a reflowable environment. With the help of Cocking, the print designer, and feedback from the authors, she found ways to incorporate footnotes and sidebars more intuitively into the ebook.

Emerge 2012

The Writer's Studio is also updating its production process to incorporate a digital-first workflow. Because *emerge* is a small, student-produced publication, created annually, it is easy to change workflows. For *emerge 2012*, all the students' submissions will be uploaded to a Wordpress.com blog.[91]

Placing the content on a blog does not change the formatting questions encountered in *emerge 2011*, but that is not the objective. TWS wants its students to think about how their writing will look both on the page and on the screen. The questions of formatting poetry in ebooks that face us now can be grappled with by allowing writers to see their

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[91] The Blog for *emerge 2012* can be found here: http://emerge2012.wordpress.com/

content in a digital container as early as possible in the production process. After all the substantive, stylistic and copy editing have been completed, the content is finalized on a blog, where students can view their submissions. This content is used by the print designer to create the print version, and is also used by the ebook designer to create the ebook. At the time of writing this report, all the submissions have been placed on the blog, with the print title soon to be created by the print designer.

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When it comes to digital poetry, there may never be a single approach or single solution that will satisfy everyone. Poetry is a very subjective, personal genre. As a result, someone will always be displeased when poetry is placed in a different medium from the one in which it was originally created. Jan Baetens and Jan Van Looy, in their essay "E-Poetry between Image and Performance: A Cultural Analysis," said it succinctly: "Take for instance 'oral' poetry reproduced in print, of which people will think as nothing more than a 'pale copy' of the spoken 'original.' Or take public readings of poems that are actually made for close readers having the possibility of multiple re-readings; again one will think of these public readings as nothing more than a shadow of actual poem etc."[92]

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[92] Jan Baetens and Jan Van Looy, "E-Poetry between Image and Performance: A Cultural Analysis", *E-Media Studies*, no 1, 2008. Accessed on June 30, 2012, http://journals.dartmouth.edu/cgi-bin/WebObjects/Journals.woa/xmlpage/4/article/288

In this sense, digitizing poetry that was written for the page will inevitably cause "page purists" to cry foul.

As seen from these two case studies, formatting poetry in ebooks is not as simple as placing the page on a screen. There are many challenges in formatting poetry in EPUBs, and in any ebook format with reflowable text at its core. While there are other options for creating ebooks that allow for fixed-layout pages, they can be very expensive to produce, and projected sales may not justify the cost. Finally, PDF files may be cheap and easy to produce, but they are not perfect.

Poets and publishers will need to think about their digital content in new ways. An ebook should not be considered a digital version of a print title, but as its own edition or format, with its own benefits and limitations. Progress and triumphs will not come overnight, as seen in the case studies from D&M and TWS, but the industry is moving forward, even if only at a poetic pace.

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