

Only if the 'e' stands for 'ersatz'. Honestly, I'm more interested in the cases in which electronic devices represent a deficient surrogate of traditional ways to create and distribute content.

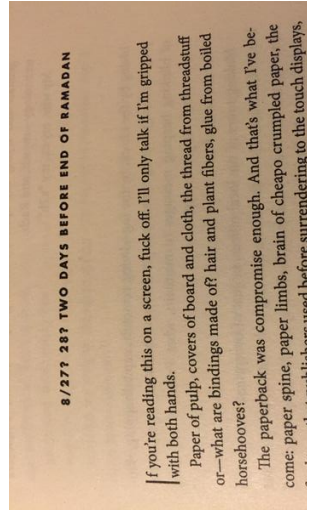


Let's consider this ebooks-only Texas library. Basically, the library of the future looks like an Apple Store. This kind of library is probably cheaper than the ones with physical books but it is a surrogate in several ways: no guarantee of privacy, an interaction with books that is regulated by the specific software provided by one company, and so on.

I remember Geert Lovink saying that the physical library will soon be a luxury. Unfortunately I think he's right.

Related: [Bibliotechal \(http://p-dpa.net/work/bibliotechal/\)](http://p-dpa.net/work/bibliotechal/), 2013-present.

### In the age of digital computers, is there still materiality?



final type that publishers use... that had thin four-times-deinked recycled crap, 100% acidfree postconsumer waste. I have very few books with me here—Hitler's Secretary: A Firsthand Account.

Digital technology is not immaterial, at least no less material than, for instance, printed matter. And as can you see in the incipit of Joshua Cohen's *Book of Numbers*, the materiality of electronic devices can even be addressed in negative terms.



My favorite account of the computer's materiality comes from [N. Katherine Hayles \(http://www.cws.illinois.edu/IPRHIDigitalLiteracies/Hayles.pdf\)](http://www.cws.illinois.edu/IPRHIDigitalLiteracies/Hayles.pdf) (2004). In her words, "digital computers have an Oreo cookie-like structure with an

analogue bottom, a frothy digital middle, and an analogue top." So there's no digital without analogue.





As Johanna Drucker

(<http://digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/7/1/000143/000143.html>) points out,

materiality is a performative features of artifacts: “what something *is* has to be understood in terms of what it *\*does\**”. This type of performativity can be fruitfully exploited by artists and designers alike.

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Related: C.O.P.Y. (<http://p-dpa.net/work/c-o-p-y/>), Martin Wecke, 2013.

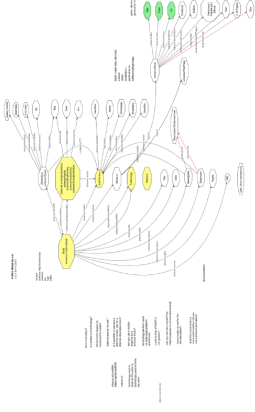
### Why there’s so many **Print on Demand books on P—DPA?**



Because POD books represent a genuine hybrid of digital and analog processes: under the guise of the ‘traditional’ book form, there is a complex ecosystem made of file formats, metadata, retail platforms, multiple connections to online stores and, sometimes, even YouTube book trailers, authors’ blogs, etc. Sent through the regular postal system, the physical book is the tip of the iceberg of an infrastructure that takes advantage of digital printing, desktop publishing, PDF format, and Web 2.0. Therefore, POD is not a new technology in itself, but a fruitful combination of existing ones.

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### How do you categorize the works?



Categorization is a powerful way to create context around cultural artifacts. That said, I must admit that the categorization system I adopt on P—DPA is pretty naïve and by no means scientific. Above you see my failed attempt to design a rational comprehensive scheme. After that, I tried to simplify and now

I have three main categories:

- media — the carriers of the work, with the exception of performances: from animated GIFs to mugs;
- technologies — the technologies that are needed to create, use, and replicate the work: from programming languages like JavaScript to mini-computers as the Raspberry Pi. This part is particularly flawed since it is difficult to identify what is *not* a technology, e.g. the book or the alphabet itself;
- platforms — these are what matters the most nowadays. Many of the works included in P—DPA address the operations of proprietary platforms. So it is crucial to take trace of them and to explain their relationship to the works.

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Related: Books Scapes (<http://p-dpa.net/work/books-scapes/>), Julien Levesque, 2012.