THE FORM OF THE BOOK IN HYBRID PUBLISHING PRACTICES

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Background: London Essays, hybrid publication, 2014

LONDON ESSAYS

Technology

Issue 2, 2015

EDITOR’S INTRODUCTION

Ben Rogers

This, the second edition of London Essays, focuses on technology. Again and again over its long history London has been transformed by technological innovation. But the essays in this collection all look to the future. There is every reason to think that new technologies will continue to transform London in the decades ahead.

FOREWORD

Ian Hawksworth
Collecting and Curating Digital Posters

This handbook explores new conceptual approaches and practical tools for collecting digital posters and graphics. It represents the findings of a V&A project initiated by the Posters Subject Specialist Network, and funded by Arts Council England, investigating ways to address current barriers to collecting material that is created, distributed and encountered in digital formats.

Introduction

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For over one hundred years there has been a rich culture of poster-collecting in the UK, resulting in a broad range of poster collections in museums, archives and libraries. Some of these are historical in their focus. Others maintain a contemporary remit which, today, inevitably means engaging with the digital.
Background: Inland Editions, indie publishing, 2014-17
Contemporary publishing landscape
Contemporary publishing landscape
The increasing democratisation of the means of book production and distribution has lead to the influx of independent publishers who are developing new hybrid programmes and alternative operation models.
This talk will focus on different strategies for developing:

- Content and editorial approach
- Design and art direction
- Production and distribution
- The social life of the book
Just in Time, or a Short History of Production. 2010; Image credits: Xavier Antin
Traditional publishing model
Traditional publishing model

CONCEPTION

- book contract
- acquisitions editor

EDITORIAL WORK

- editorial work
- development editor

MANUSCRIPT WORK

- manuscript work
- author(s)

PRODUCTION

DISTRIBUTION
Traditional publishing model
Traditional publishing model

**CONCEPTION**
- book contract
- editorial work
- manuscript work
- author(s)
- acquisitions editor
- development editor

**PRODUCTION**
- design department
- production typesetting
- proof-reading
- design work
- sign off
- author(s)
- design / production
- editor(s)

**DISTRIBUTION**
- print files to press
- inventory books to warehouse
- marketing
- distribution books to shops
- distribution department
- marketing department
- distribution department
- distribution department
- marketing department
- distribution department
Alternative publishing model

CONCEPTION  PRODUCTION  DISTRIBUTION
Alternative publishing model

CONCEPTION

publisher(s)

author(s)

editors(s)

designer(s)

PRODUCTION

DISTRIBUTION
Alternative publishing model

CONCEPTION

publisher(s)

author(s)

editors(s)

designer(s)

PRODUCTION

copy editor(s)

manuscript

design layout

digital product

press files

printer(s)

DISTRIBUTION
Alternative publishing model

**CONCEPTION**
- publisher(s)
- author(s)
- editors(s)
- designer(s)

**PRODUCTION**
- copy editor(s)
- manuscript
- design layout
- press files
- printer(s)
- digital product

**DISTRIBUTION**
- engaging audiences
- promoting the work
- social media
- online distribution
- book launch
- talks / events
- book fairs
- independent booksellers
Publisher case studies

- Content and editorial approach
- Design and art direction
- Production and distribution
Content and editorial approach
Content and editorial approach

Cross-disciplinary narratives: creating spaces for collaborations (literature, art, design)
Content and editorial approach

Non-linear narratives: curating the pages of a book as an exhibition space
Content and editorial approach

Catalogue narratives: extending the exhibition space onto the pages of a book

Content and editorial approach

Historical narratives: archival images and new texts

‘Please Come to the Show’, Occasional Papers, London; Image credits: Occasional Papers
Content and editorial approach

Reframing digital archives in hybrid publications

Steve, Harvey and Matt,

As discussed with Nancy, we would like the content at the links below removed and archived as soon as possible. (printed book)
We appreciate your assistance in this time-sensitive matter.zip (download)

https://github.com/soulellis/epa
dat://epa.hashbase.io

archive.work
“With more and more media readily available through this unruly archive, the task becomes one of packaging, producing, reframing, and distributing; a mode of production analogous not to the creation of material goods, but to the production of social contexts, using existing material.”

– Seth Price, ‘Dispersion,’ 2002
Content and editorial approach

Reframing digital archives in hybrid publications

Printed Web

"Library of the Printed Web", Paul Soulellis, New York; Image credits: Paul Soulellis
“As libraries become increasingly digitized through projects like Google Books, what gets lost? What do we lose – and what can we gain – in the transition from physical objects to digital forms? How does the dematerialization of books effect our understanding of them? Can digital books be made physical again?”

– Benjamin Shaykin, ‘Special Collection’, 2009
Reframing digital archives in hybrid publications

‘Special Collection’, Benjamin Shaykin; Image credits: Benjamin Shaykin
Design and art direction
“The projects’ content serves the design first and foremost. We don’t have any strong ideas about the design until we’ve had those initial meetings; there’s an openness to what we do.”

– Wayne Daly, Bedford Press
Design and art direction

Design as integral part of the narrative experience: ‘Creating great looking stories’

Design and art direction

Developing a new visual language to reinforce the narrative structure
Design and art direction

Developing a new visual language to reinforce the narrative structure

‘All Possible Futures’, Bedford Press, London; Image credits: Bedford Press
Design and art direction

Developing a visual language which expands the context of the narrative

‘Heart of Darkness’, Four Corners Books, London; Image credits: Four Corners Books
Production and distribution
“... 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.”

– Silvio Lorusso, ‘Print on Demand – The Radical Potential of Networked Standardisation,’ 2015
Production and distribution

- Print-on-demand: Producing the books on location and minimising distribution and shipping costs
Production and distribution

Digital archives: ‘An archive that publishes and a publisher that archives’– a digital platform, bi-annually collected in a publication, printed on demand
“The status of a PDF file available on a private website changes considerably once the very same file has been ‘published’ on the website of ‘publisher.’ ... thus providing an ‘infrathin platform for the staging of submitted works.’

But in a literary system largely devoid of monetary expectations, this staging has a social rather than a commercial function. It not only makes public, but also publicises; it offers recognisability, multiplication, and an advance of trust for the author.”

Production and distribution

- Troll Thread / Gauss PDF, Tumblr blogs
The form of the book in hybrid & independent publishing practices is not only related to the process of making a book, but to the ways in which the book engages the public and the ways in which the public interacts with the book.
The social life of the book

**CONCEPTION**
- publisher(s)
- author(s)
- editors(s)
- designer(s)

**PRODUCTION**
- copy editor(s)
- manuscript
- design layout
- press files
- printer(s)

**DIGESTION**
- promoting the work
- engaging audiences
- social media
- book launch
- online distribution
- book fairs
- talks / events
- independent booksellers

**BOOK**
The social life of the book

Post-production: the life of the independently published and distributed book

Image credits: Publication Studio

PS London  
PS Rotterdam  
PS Portland
The social life of the book

Post-production: the life of the independently published and distributed book

Image credits: Inland Editions, except (top left) Good Press & (bottom middle) Babel Bok.
The social life of the book

The [art] book-space beyond the page: creating adjacent, parallel, or extended curatorial spaces

The social life of the book

Partnerships with like-minded institutions
The social life of the book

Crowd-sourcing campaigns

The social life of the book

Platform saturation and the return of email – books as newsletters (subscription model)

Hate Inc.
How, And Why, The Press Makes Us Hate One Another.
A serial book, delivered by email, by Matt Taibbi.

Let me read it first
Links / References

Inland Editions, https://twitter.com/InlandEditions
K. Verlag, https://k-verlag.org/
Occasional Papers, https://occasionalpapers.org/
Paul Soulellis, https://soulellis.com/
‘Library of the Printed Web’, https://printedweb.org/
Four Corners Books, https://www.fourcornersbooks.co.uk/
Publication Studio, https://www.publicationstudio.biz/
Troll Thread, http://trollthread.tumblr.com/
Matt Taibbi newsletter, https://taibbi.substack.com/
‘Electric Eel’ newsletter, https://mcdbooks.us18.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=a51fdf73467e2176b71972da6&id=2497c5a088
‘Print on Demand – The Radical Potential of Networked Standardisation’, http://p-dpa.net/networked-standardisation/
‘Heart of Darkness’, caa reviews, http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/3196#.XGmiXM_7TMU
Thank you! Questions?