

Perception of Authors in e-Publishing

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Citation

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Abstract

Electronic and printed publication, have their own strengths value. Both formats are required for greater information dispersal. In this digital economy era, Internet becomes popular as a medium to market and share information. Hence, this paper describes the model for publishing and marketing Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) ePublication. A publishing model, which consists of eleven stages, was followed to ensure quality publication. This project was confined to educational environment and a virtual centre called Electronic Information Centre (eInfoC) was developed to collaborate with an independent electronic publisher (eloka.com). The objective of this paper is to report authors' perception on models developed and several issues about satisfaction. At lastly, the findings show that the e-Publishing model that was suggested in this project was well accepted by 80% of the authors. All these results seem to indicate that eBooks do have a positive future in higher educational environment.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major tasks carried by academicians is to write and publish the works. As one of the higher education institutions, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) also publishes books, research reports, journals, modules and other material for academic purposes. The existing practice is to publish in printed and bound forms for several years. The existing academic publications in UUM are in printed and bound forms, which pose some disadvantages (Norshuhada et al., 2003a). In addition, the publications have not been widely promoted or marketed and as a result their accessibility has been very limited.

Electronic Information Centre (eInfoC) has been proposed to overcome the limitations in publishing UUM's owned publications. eInfoC is a virtual centre that collaborates with eloka.com, the first Malaysian electronic publisher. Besides publishing the electronic content, eInfoC is also selling and marketing them. The electronic contents that are published and marketed are electronic books (eBooks), electronic journals (eJournals), electronic research reports (eResearch-reports), and electronic lecture modules (eLecture-modules). The processes of publishing and marketing the materials electronically are helped by eloka.com which acts as a ePublisher. Furthermore, to gathered more knowledge, information must be online and can be reach anytime. The advantages of electronic publishing was describe by Powell and Loebbecke (1999), (Norshuhada et al., 2003,b,c) and Collins, J (2005). Bonime and Pohlman (1998); Ralins

(1991) and Roa (2004) also discusses the benefit of eBooks.

In this paper the existing traditional publication process are being discussed. Next, the current of e-Publishing process is described and followed by proposed of e-Publishing process. This brings us to explain about the author perception on models developed and issues emerged. For this purpose, a number of hypotheses were formulated:

1. H1: The proposed e-Publishing model well accepted by more than 60% of the authors;
2. H2: More than 60% of the authors are interested to publish electronically;
3. H3: More than 60% of the authors are likely to sell their work in electronic format;
4. H4: More than 60% of the authors are more satisfied with e-Publishing than traditional publishing.

The final part of this paper discusses our findings and then concludes what we have accomplished so far.

TRADITIONAL PUBLICATION MODEL

In the traditional publishing model, the publishing schedule is directly linked to the schedule controlling the editorial process. There is a single schedule to manage the title from commissioning to final publishing. From a production perspective the work is handled in large units, complete

chapters or even the whole book would be sent for keying and editors would wade through great piles of manuscript before moving on to the next title.

This method of working has evolved over many years. It works very well until the publisher has to find a way to create a Compact Disc-Read Only Memory (CD-Rom) or an on-line service as well as a paper version. In order to propose a collaborative e-Publishing model, the process flow for both traditional and current e-Publishing model were investigated.

THE PROCESS FLOW IN TRADITIONAL MODEL

There are three main phase in the process flow of traditional model: editorial; pre-press and post-press.

EDITORIAL

There are five important persons in this phase: author, publisher, reviewer, editor and proof reader. In this phase, author will submit the proposal to the chosen publisher. The publisher and author will discuss further about review, specification and cost. When the author and the publisher agree with one another than the proposal is approved. After that the proposal will become a manuscript. The publisher will pass the manuscript to the reviewer. The reviewers have to review the manuscript based on their expertise. After reviewing the manuscript, the reviewers will pass the manuscripts for copy editing process. There are three step involved in the copy editing process. The first step is editing and this depends on the quality of the manuscript. The second step is proof reading and the last step is marking. All the three steps will be repeated if the proof reader, editor, reviewer and author do not satisfied with the manuscript. When satisfaction is reached then the manuscript will go for the final proof level. The output for this phase is proof edited copy. At the same time, International Standard Book Numbering (ISBN), International Standard Serial Number (ISDN) and Catalog in Publication (CIP) for the manuscript will be created.

PRE-PRESS

This phase can be divides into sub-phase: layout; design and in-position. In the layout phase, text, illustration and photo are laid out by the author. On the publisher's approval the layout will be sends to the editor and passed back to the author. The design of the book will be based on estimation (specification) made earlier by author and publisher in the first phase. A designer will follow all the specifications that have been approved by the author. When the designer

completes the layout, it will go for the next phase called in-position. Layout proof is performed and on approval by the author and publisher it will go for the next step called prepare dummy. Next step is plate making.

POST-PRESS

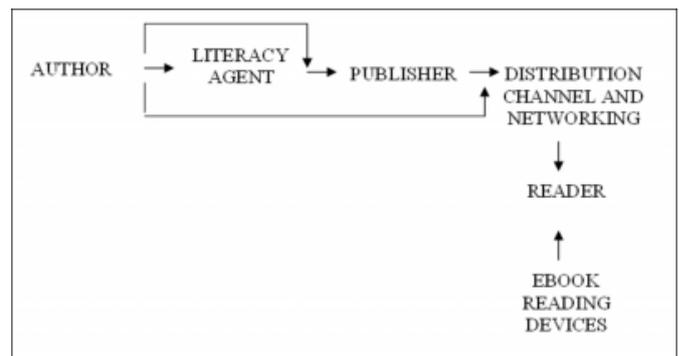
In the plate making, the author must choose either one, offset technology or digital technology. If the author chooses offset technology, then the plate will go for the next step called galley proof. Otherwise, no plate making is required. In galley proof, the plate will be tested plate by plate (test sheet). Finally, it will go for the final step called training cutting branding, quality control (rejected) and distribution.

CURRENT E-PUBLISHING MODEL

Rao (2003) suggests a model as depicted in Figure 1. The flow begins when author creates an original work (manuscript) in various formats. Then the manuscript will go to the next level called literacy agent. In literacy agent the manuscript will be reviewed by the agent. Next the manuscript will be submitted to an eBook publisher. However, the author can also transmit the manuscript through the publisher without passing it first to literacy agent. In this case, the manuscript considered reviewed and no more error. The publisher converts the work to an eBook format. After that the publisher will employs Digital Right Management (DRM) encryption to lock the file

Figure 1

Figure 1: eBook Publishing Model by Rao

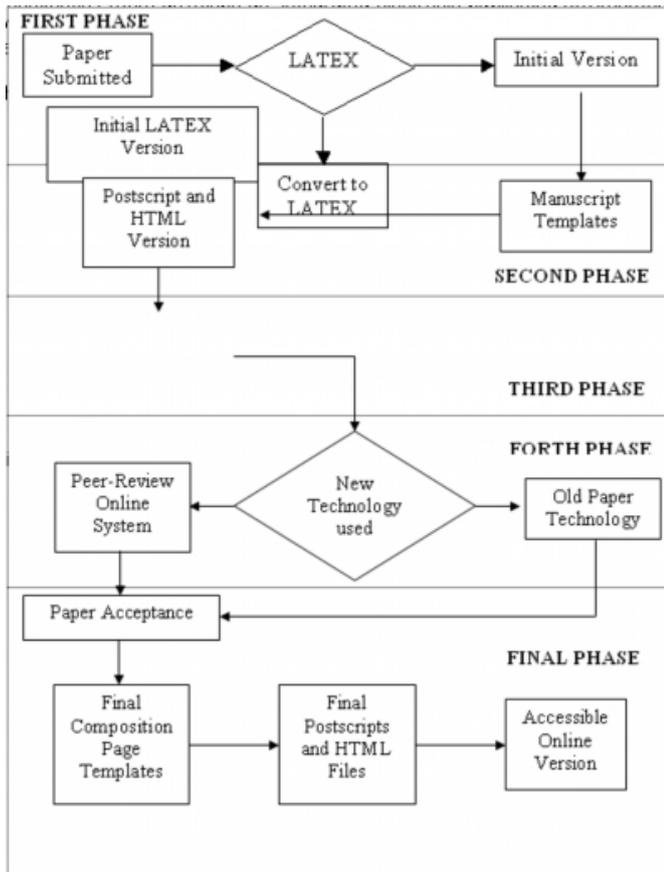


and generate a unique encryption key. The distributors manage encryption key and lock file to protect the work, and transfer the book to an eBook retailer, who sell the secure eBook online and offer eBook buyers an easy way to purchase keys to decrypt and read the book. eBook buyer who visits an eBook retailer web site can purchase the book and read it using an e-book reading devices after unlocking the file with a DRM key.

Nechilenko (1999) develops an integrated electronic publishing environment with features such as technology and tools includes online submissions, peer-review process, update and revise papers, back and forward referring, teX to Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) conversion. In his publishing model, five phases are involved: Figure 2 summarizes the model.

Figure 2

Figure 2: Integrated E-Publishing Environment by Nechilenko



FIRST PHASE

Author prepares initial version of articles (manuscript) in American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) text or Lamport Tex (LATEX) format. Paper in ASCII format will be converted to LATEX. Author must submit all the text and graphic in hard copy and corresponding graphic files. Author may also submit extra files contains movie, sound, animated graphics and etc.

SECOND PHASE

In this phase, the technical staff will verifies a completeness of all submitted materials and produces initial LATEX version of the articles under manuscript templates developed for different contents.

THIRD PHASE

In the third phase, postscript and HTML versions of the initial articles are produced from the LATEX version corresponding links are included in HTML version for existing multimedia and other extension.

FORTH PHASE

The postscript and HTML version are both considered for peer-reviewed. Depending on reviewer's preferences they can use either old paper technology (writing their review and sending to editor) or used Peer-Review Online System which supports writing online review and provides reviewers and managers with a set of other options.

FINAL PHASE

Paper accepted after the peer-review is updated and corrected following the author's updates made in accordance with reviewers and editor recommendations. For the final composition page templates are used instead of manuscript templates. Final postscript and HTML files are produced and the articles published.

Currently, eloka.com follows the following publication process:

1. e-content submission for review;
2. review and signing of agreement;
3. e-book conversion;
4. e-book listing at eloka.com;

The above e-Publishing process should be modified to suit UUM requirements. One obvious requirement is to emphasize on the "editorial job specifications", and this is elaborated in the next section. For academic publication to be accepted as a quality product, editors who are normally the experts in the concerned subject areas should be involved.

PROPOSED E-PUBLISHING PROCESS

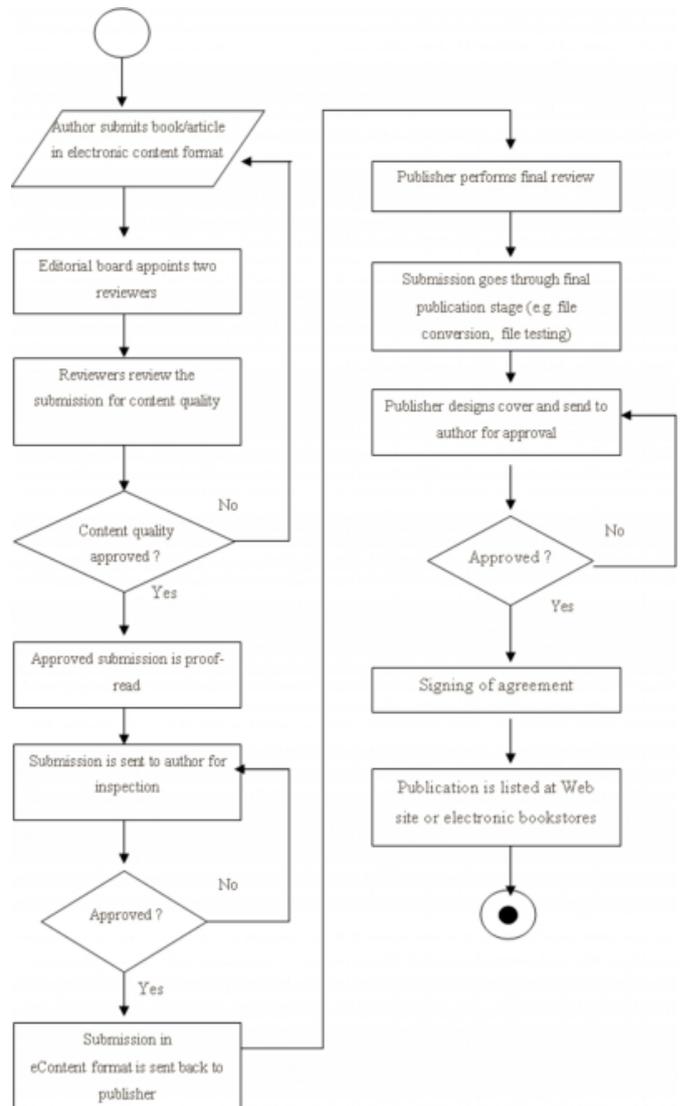
Instead of adopting the eloka's process, we propose a process model that consists of the following phases (see Figure 3):

1. Author submits book/article in eContent format to eInfoC;
2. Editorial board appoints two reviewers;
3. Reviewers who are experts in the relevant areas,

- review the submission for content quality;
- 4. Approved submission is proof-read;
- 5. Submission is sent to author for inspection;
- 6. On approval, submission in eContent format is sent to eloka.com;
- 7. eloka.com performs final review;
- 8. Submission goes through final design process such as conversion to several formats (e.g.: Adobe Acrobat's Portable Document Format (PDF), Microsoft Reader's Literature (LIT), MOBIPOCKET, etc) and Executable (.EXE) file testing;
- 9. eloka.com designs cover and send it to the author for approval;
- 10. Signing of agreement;
- 11. Publication is listed at eloka.com and eInfoC.

Figure 3

Figure 3: Proposed e-Publishing Process



AUTHORS PERCEPTION IN E-PUBLISHING

Authors usually have three e-Publishing choices: commercial, subsidy, and self-publishing (Henke, 2001). Commercially published eBooks are sold primarily through the publisher's Web site and eBookstore. Authors pay no publication fee, and receive royalties. However, their manuscripts will go through "editorial process". Subsidy publications utilise publisher's expertise to produce and distribute books for a fee, and authors receive royalties. Unlike commercial published books, manuscripts for subsidy books are usually accepted regardless of their quality, and publishers do not provide editorial services or proof-reading, and the responsibility for promoting a book rests primarily with the authors (Henke, 2001; Allen, 2000). In self-publishing, authors are responsible for the entire process of publishing their books, from development to

marketing.

For the purpose of this research, the above conventional definitions will be adapted to mean:

1. Commercial and Subsidy (higher quality publications): Manuscripts will go through editorial process, publishers will perform conversion to electronic contents(eContents), authors pay no publication fees, authors will receive royalties and publishers do the marketing process;
2. Self-publishing (lower quality publications): Manuscripts will not go through editorial process, publishers will perform conversion to eContents, authors pay no publication fees, authors will receive royalties and publishers do the marketing process.

In this case, eInfoC was categories under self-publishing. Marketing of all publications (through adopting the identified marketing strategies) shall be handled by eloka.com.

ANALYSIS OF MODEL FROM AUTHOR PERCEPTION

Back to previous, another objective of this survey is to get authors perception in e-publishing. Data was collected by questionnaire with convenience sampling start on 11 September 2004 until 26 December 2004 from authors who have experiences in publishing eContent. eContent or digital content is defined by those involved in creating, providing and distributing information as the digitised content, which is viewed on screen and not on paper (Norshuhada et al, 2003c).

A number of techniques were used to get respondents and these include:

1. Participating at the following forums and groups
 - a. e-book committee
 - b. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ebook-community/>
 - c. eloka.com forum
 - d. Writer_Forum@yahoo.com
 - e. ebookfriend.com

3. Sending electronic mail to individuals. Electronic mail addresses were collected by browsing in Internet and phone calls were made.
4. Advertisement in Web site such as at e-infoc.uum.edu.my (figure 4) and <http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB223Z9R9CGFM>
5. Posting mail.

Figure 4

Figure 4: e-infoc.uum.edu.my



FINDINGS

At the end of the study, 30 authors responded and Table 1 shows their demographic analysis.

The findings show that about 83% of the authors are likely to sell information in electronic format and about 71% are interested in e-Publications such as eBooks and eLecture-modules. Also, the e-publishing model that was suggested in this project was well accepted by 80% of the authors. Those who did not agree provided their comments as depicted in Figure 5. Furthermore, out of 30 authors, 22 had experience in publishing both eContent and printed book. From these 22 authors, only about 13% said that e-Publishing method gives him/her more satisfaction.

Figure 5

Table 1: Demography analysis

Items	Percent
1. Sex	
Male	63.3 %
Female	36.7 %
2. Age	
Below 20	0
20 – 30	33.3 %
30 – 40	23.3 %
40 – 50	30 %
upper 50	13.3 %
3. Occupation	
Lecturer	56.7 %
Teacher	3.3 %
Editor/publisher	6.7 %
Others	33.3 %
4. Country	
Malaysia	70 %
Australia	6.7 %
US	20 %
UK	3.3

Figure 6

Figure 5: Comments about e-Publishing model

i. Who does the indexing? And why should the publisher design the cover?

ii. Your 'signing of the agreement' should be moved to the start of the process. Beyond that, it looks very logical me.

iii. I think you have "Signing of Agreement" block is at the wrong process. Without a contract, you might be able to get an editorial staff to preview your work, but little or nothing else would happen.

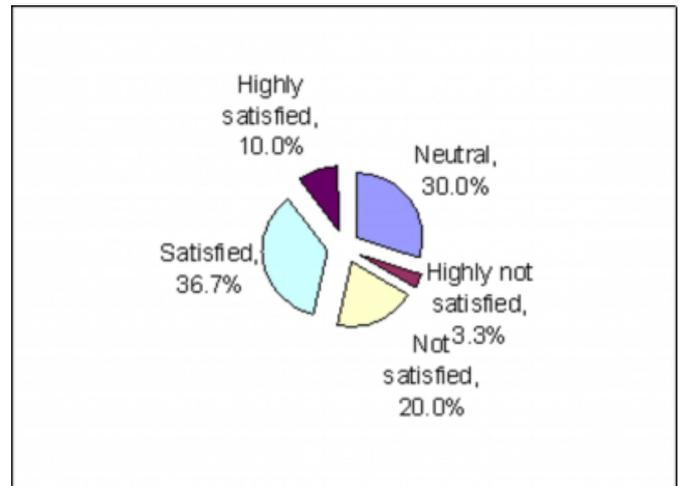
iv. Usually only a query (synopsis and sample chapters) is submitted at first. If the editor likes the sample. S/he will ask for the entire manuscript. At the point, the project will be accepted or rejected. If accepted, an agreement will be signed then.

v. Seems like a long drawn out schedule, but if it works, yes.

Authors were also asked about their satisfaction with copyright protection of their manuscripts. It was found that about 23% were indeed not satisfied and a further 30% had mix opinion (see Figure 6).

Figure 7

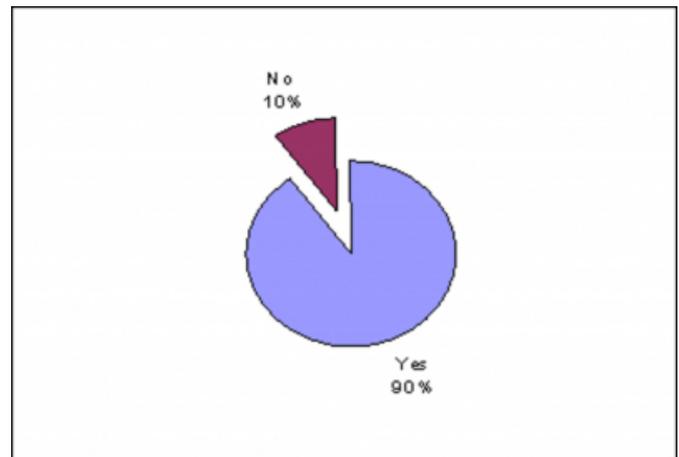
Figure 6: Copyright protection satisfaction



The hypothesis that eBooks can be acquired faster than printed book was proven, whereby 90% of the authors were certain with the statement (see Figure 6).

Figure 8

Figure 7: Electronic book can be acquired faster than printed book



In addition to the above findings, the authors jotted down a number of comments.

1. Electronic publishing is now accepted by most academicians. Students in medicine use most of their learning material in electronic format (according to focus group interview in Texas). Submissions of article for online publications are increasing. Online readership in increasing. Our online journals have currently between 4000 and 7500 unique readers every day. Open access journals are very popular. Business models on how to pay for the online content are still evolving.

2. I like seeing my work in print but it gets broader distribution in electronic form. So it's not a matter of selecting one over the other. I enjoy helping publishers convert to electronic formats. Books lag journals in many respects. Electronic finding aids that allow the searcher to make a decision about selecting a book are not yet developed. The market is evolving. I write, publish and consult in scholarly publishing. Both formats have value.
3. I enjoy eBooks. I enjoy creating eBooks. Good luck to you in the future.
4. I couldn't answer #15 because both are satisfying. Although i personally prefer to read electronically, I recognize there is a larger market for printed books. So I get satisfaction from publishing both.
5. Preferred both methods as what Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka (DBP) use now. (Printed book + eBook).
6. E-documents has gain promising momentum over the last few years from many publishers. It's mainly due to cost and time of printing and delivery. Although e-documents are touted to be portable, the mediums (e.g. mobile devices to carry them are still not fully developed and easily handled. Archiving and retrieving e-documents also poses some challenges as they can easily be lost. Methods to secure e-documents and maintain their authenticities also require improvement if they are to be as robust as current paper media. I still have mixed feelings as to where e-documents will lead us. Should we abandon the paper media altogether as shift to e-media, only time and technology will tell.
7. Kos beli e-buku murah tapi untuk buat cetakan perlu cetak sendiri. Gambarajah perlu berwarna, jadi perlu dicetak menggunakan cetakan berwarna. Kos meningkat. Beli buku bercetak berwarna.
8. E-buku adalah penemuan baru dalam dunia perbukuan. Pandangan saya ia perlu dipromosikan dengan lebih kerap. Dengan kadar penggunaan internet yang agak rendah, perlu ada inisiatif yang teliti bagi memastikan kejayaan dalam aspek ini. Satu lagi aspek yang perlu di atasi ialah masalah kelewatan pihak penerbit. Pengalaman saya dalam aspek ini amat mengecewakan.
9. Penerbitan dalam bentuk elektronik membantu/memberi kemudahan dari segi capaian yang lebih cepat. Walaubagaimana pun dalam keadaan tertentu, bahan bercetak amat diperlukan. Contohnya apabila infrastruktur seperti komputer dan sambungan ke internet tiada/kurang memuaskan.
10. Penerbitan elektronik dan maya mempunyai masa depan yang cerah. 20 tahun lagi, dunia akan melihat gagasan penerbitan tersebut. Ini tidak bermakna penerbitan cetak tidak diperlu lagi. Namun, telah diganti dengan cd interaktif yang tidak perlu di semak dan sisip muka surat sebagaimana buku dan helaian kertas. pembacaan linear sudah dipinggirkan sedikit demi sedikit masakina. masa depan tidak perlu lagi ada perpustakaan yang mempunyai ruang yang besar.
11. Tiada promosi, pendedahan yang secukupnya kepada penggunaan e-penerbitan kepada pengguna. Hanya tertumpu kepada pengguna yang secara langsung sahaja.

Looking back at the discussions above, the three hypotheses, with exception of the last one (i.e. H_3) were failed to be rejected at 95% confidence level (all three P values > 0.05). The main reasons for the hypothesis rejection of H_3 ($P < 0.05$) were unsatisfactory level of copyright protection, poor Internet connectivity infrastructure, and inadequate eBook promotion activities and strategies.

In general, the hypotheses testing have confirmed that the majority of the buyers have interesting buying and using eContents, believe they have faster accessibility with eContents, and are indeed satisfied with content in electronic format and the eContent purchasing technique. In addition, authors too are interested to publish electronically and are likely to sell their work in electronic formats. Also, the proposed e-Publishing model was well accepted by the majority of the authors.

CONCLUSION

Findings indicate that most authors (80%) are more satisfied when their works are published as printed copies. This findings is similar to Anderson et al. (2000). The reasons could be contributed to a number of factors such as:

1. Unsatisfactory level of copyright protection

2. Poor Internet connectivity infrastructure
3. Inadequate eBooks promotion activities and strategies.

Although this is the case, most authors prefer their publications to be in both electronic and printed formats. They strongly believe that both formats complement each other and it should not be a matter of selecting one over the other. Both formats have value. In addition, majority of the authors (about 83%) are likely to sell their work in electronic format.

Lastly, we believe that e-Publishing can help to promote academic works worldwide. Nevertheless, the success or failure of eContent do not only depend on authors and users perception but also on publishing industries in bringing forward the potential of eContent.

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