Discovering books in the digital age

Or: how to sell books when nobody knows about them and nobody cares

Michael Bhaskar 30.11.2010
Everyone thinks everything has suddenly changed

BUT IT HASN’T TOTALLY
This is a poster with the text:

VERY GRADUAL
CHANGE
WE CAN BELIEVE IN
Not this
But with some of these along the way...
Rather than look at everything I am going to look at three things, snappily entitled:

1.) Internal Platform Dynamics
2.) Many to many microblogging
3.) The possibility of paracontent
Platforms =

- Kindle
- iPad
The cycle

• A book becomes popular
• It gets in the charts
• Because it is in the charts it is promoted
• It sells more because it is being promoted
• It remains in the charts because it sells more
• Ad infinitum
### Bestsellers in Kindle eBooks

**Top 100 Paid**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (Millennium Trilogy)</td>
<td>Stieg Larsson (Author)</td>
<td>£2.68</td>
<td>Available for download now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets’ Nest (Millennium Trilogy)</td>
<td>Stieg Larsson (Author), Reg Keeland (Translator)</td>
<td>£2.68</td>
<td>Available for download now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Girl Who Played with Fire (Millennium Trilogy)</td>
<td>Stieg Larsson (Author)</td>
<td>£2.68</td>
<td>Available for download now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Confession</td>
<td>John Grisham (Author)</td>
<td>£6.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top 100 Free**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</td>
<td>Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Author)</td>
<td>★★★★★ (28) Available for download now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Fallen Idols</td>
<td>Neil White (Author)</td>
<td>★★★★ (21) Available for download now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Pride and Prejudice</td>
<td>Jane Austen (Author)</td>
<td>★★★★★ (129) Available for download now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Dracula</td>
<td>Bram Stoker (Author)</td>
<td>★★★★ (38) Available for download now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THIS IS ABOUT USER BEHAVIOUR AND HOW WE ENGAGE WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

But it’s also a trend that applies across publishing and bricks and mortar retailing – the long tail isn’t a myth, but it’s no saviour
This is me – @ajaxlogos
“SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY” IS OVER
Web 2.0 is so 2006

• Social networks have moved on
• Twitter is the best way for companies to communicate
• Flexible, non-invasive, concise, neutral, multi-purpose, useful
These people

- Publishing houses/imprints
- Publishers and staff
- Authors
- Characters

Talk to these people

- Other publishers and industry people
- Journalists and bloggers
- Readers
- Interesting people in other industries
Justin
@shitmydadsays
I'm 29. I live with my 74-year-old dad. He is awesome. I just write down shit that he says
http://www.shitmydadsays.com/blog

shitmydadsays Justin
"No. I want the salad... Live a little? I’m ordering lunch. I don’t have a choice between salad or fucking skydiving."
11 Nov

Captain Random House
@GoodRandomHouse Wherever Books Need
Defending
World’s Largest Freakin’ Book Publisher, Defender of the written word, Slayer of Evil Andrew Wylie (and anti-trust practices)
http://www.randomhouse.com

GoodRandomHouse Captain Random House
We at @goodrandomhouse are thankful for all the authors whose blood we continue to feast upon. I mean publish.
21 Nov
PARACONTENT

“Spreadable media”
“Spreadable media is media which travels across media platforms at least in part because the people take it in their own hands and share it with their social networks.”

Henry Jenkins
Marketing becomes content
Content becomes marketing
Enhanced ebooks: where publishing meets marketing?
• Paracontent is when marketing is separate from the book – yet fundamental to it
• In marketing theory this is related to the idea of the augmented product (which sees packaging and services around a product as integral to it)
• Content marketing has been taken to the next level
• The boundaries of the book itself have become porous – this is creatively interesting but also a commercial tool
So, to recap...

3 ways to discover books in a digital age:
1. PLAY THE PLATFORMS, WORK THE SYSTEM AND GET YOUR BOOKS IN POLE POSITION
2. GET ON TWITTER; IN FACT, GET ALL OVER TWITTER
3. DON’T WORRY ABOUT THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CONTENT AND MARKETING – MAKE INTERESTING STUFF
AS FOR THE REST, YOU’LL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE

(Thanks for listening)
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