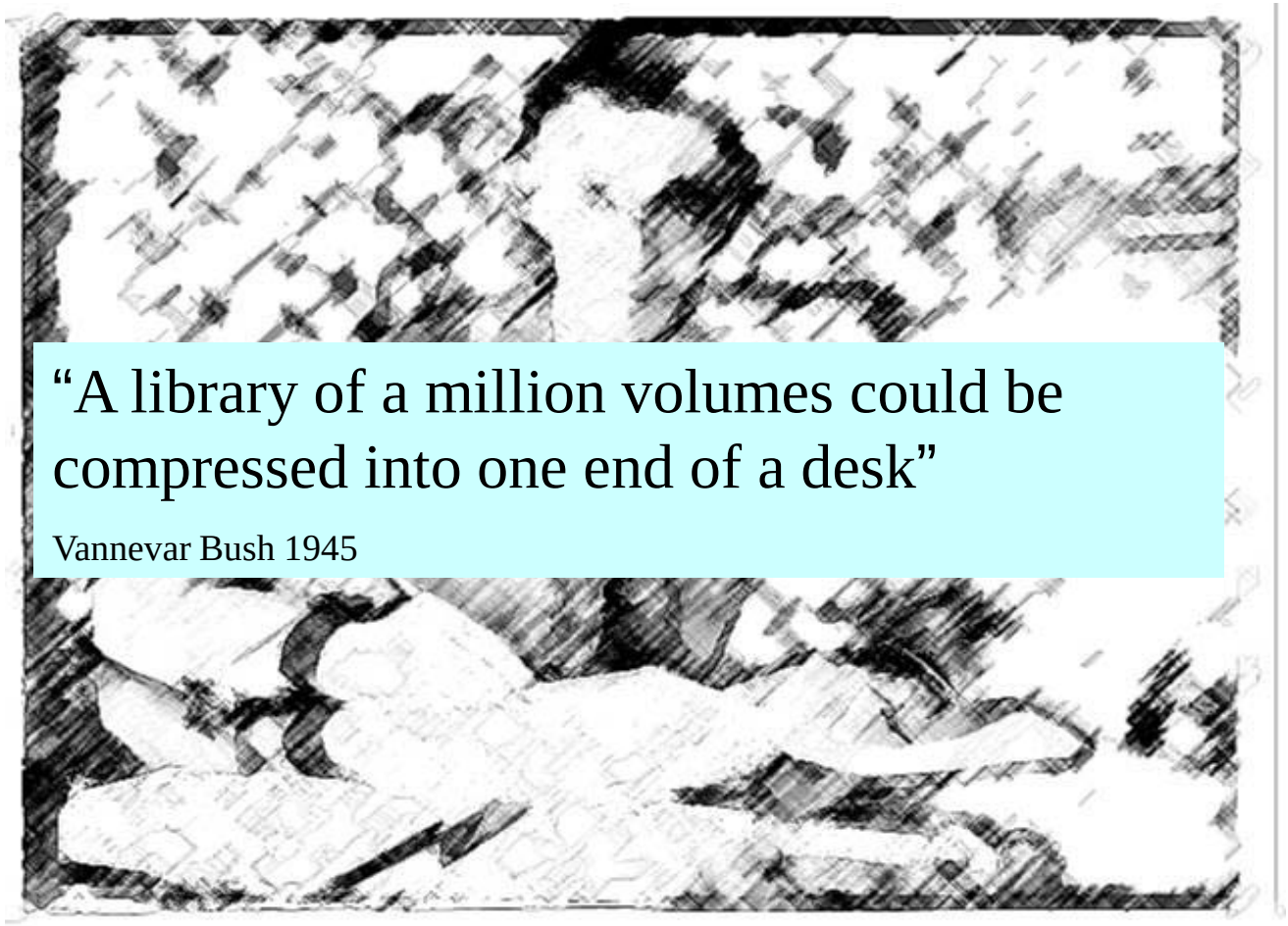
Books locked, loaned or open?

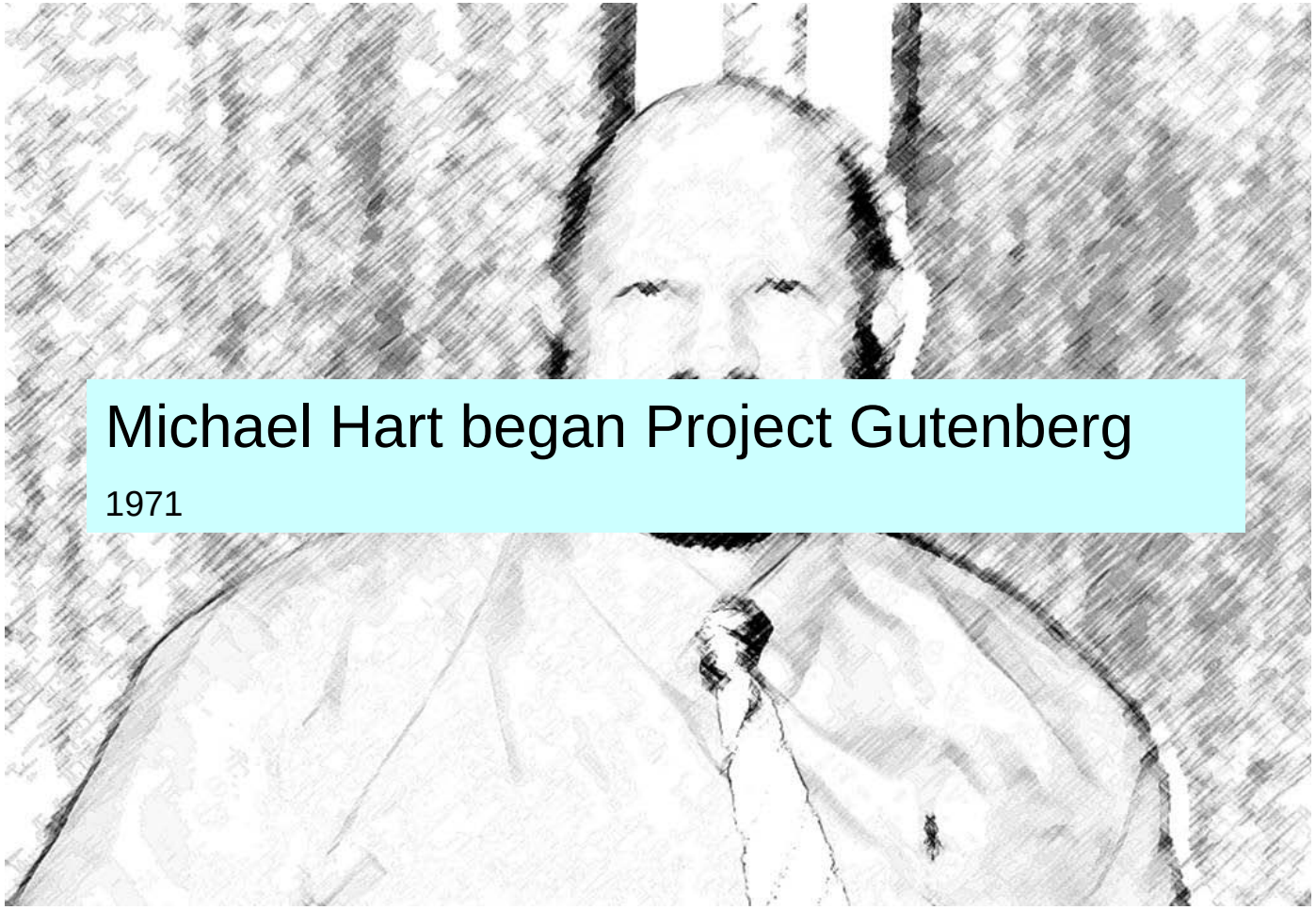
Digital Publishing Forum

3 December 2009



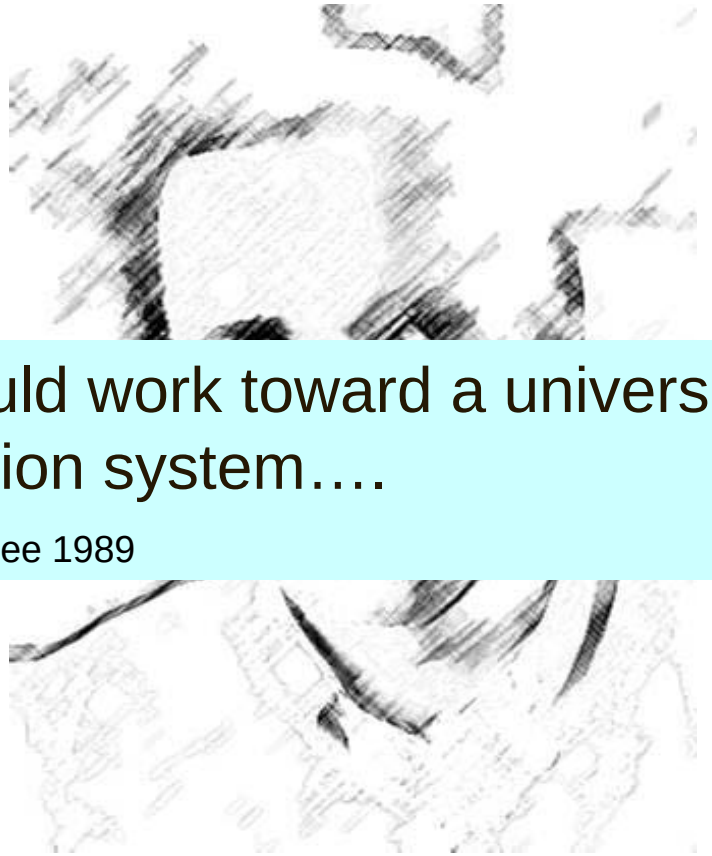
“A library of a million volumes could be compressed into one end of a desk”

Vannevar Bush 1945



Michael Hart began Project Gutenberg

1971



We should work toward a universal linked information system….

Tim Berners Lee 1989

Larry Page and Sergey Brin start doing some digital library research

1996

And we still don’t know what a digital book is

And we still don’t know what a digital book is

There are competing paradigms

amazon.com

Google

The Amazon Model

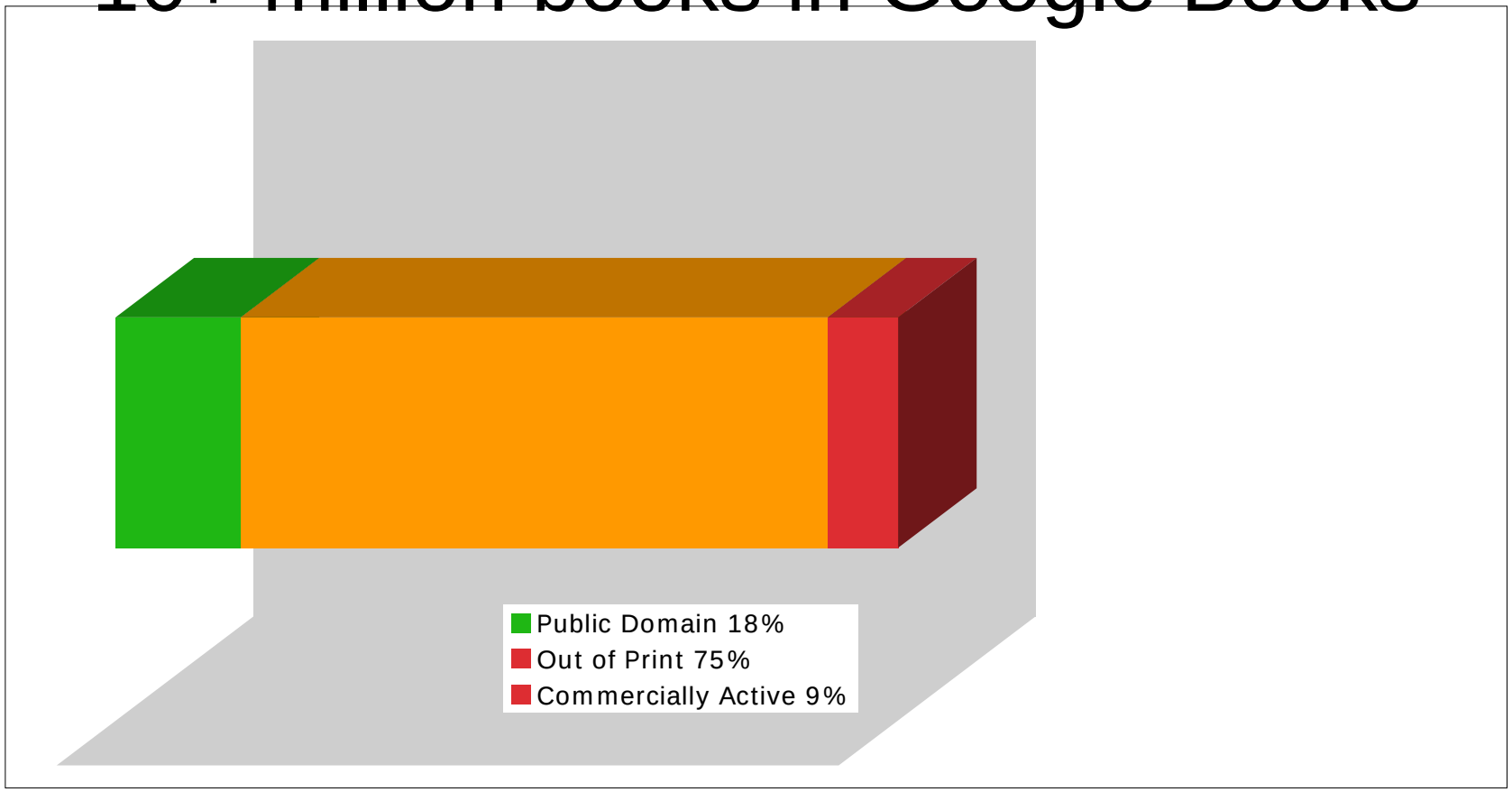
- Digital books are eBooks
- They are ASCII files
- Dedicated reading platform?
- Illustrations?
- Colour?
- Design?

Google

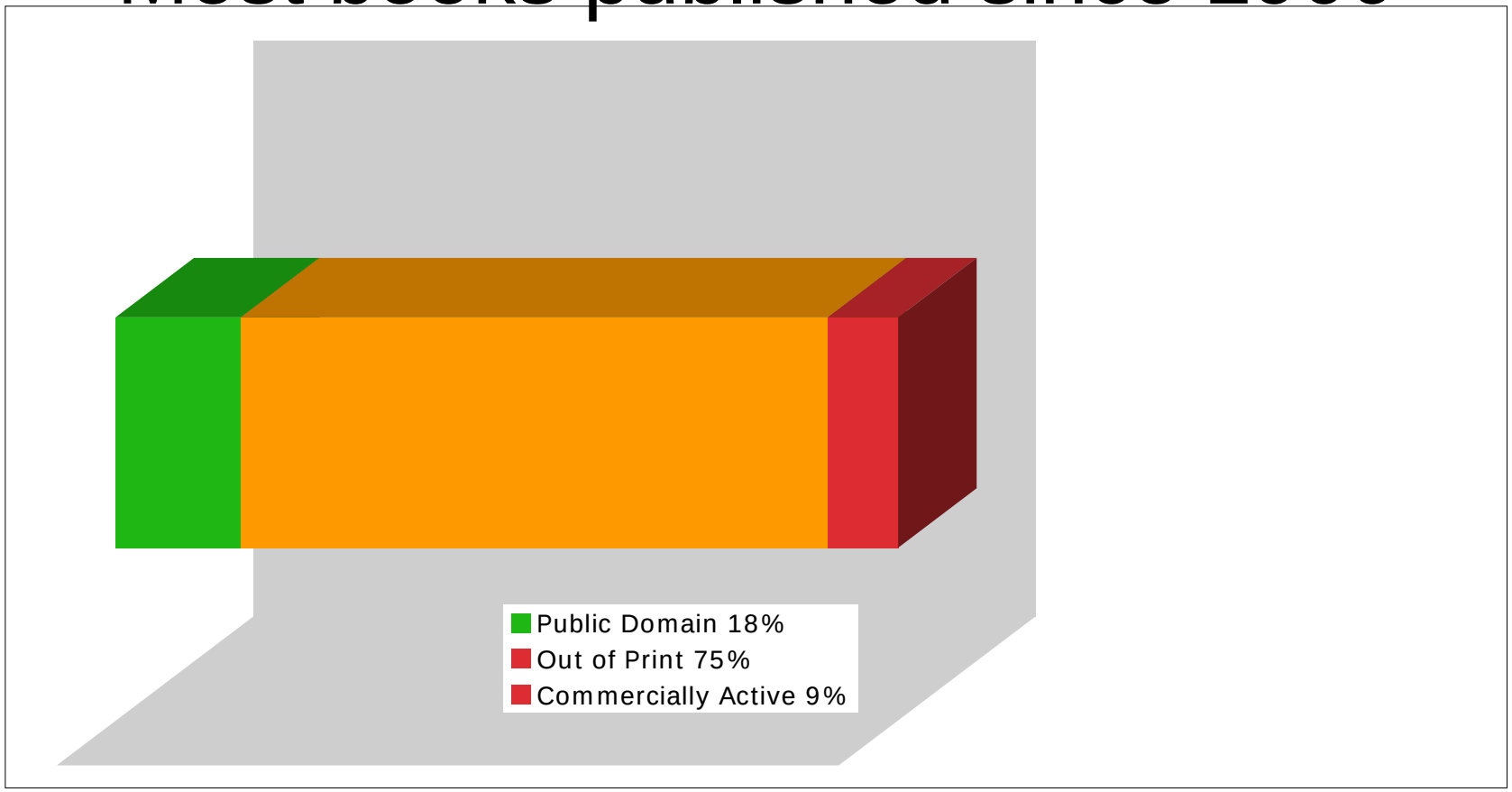
Digital Books are Digital Editions

- Digitize the book as a complete object
- Even the bindings
- Database the lot
- Digital books can be universally available as a service
- Digital books are accessed not ‘owned’
- Loaned

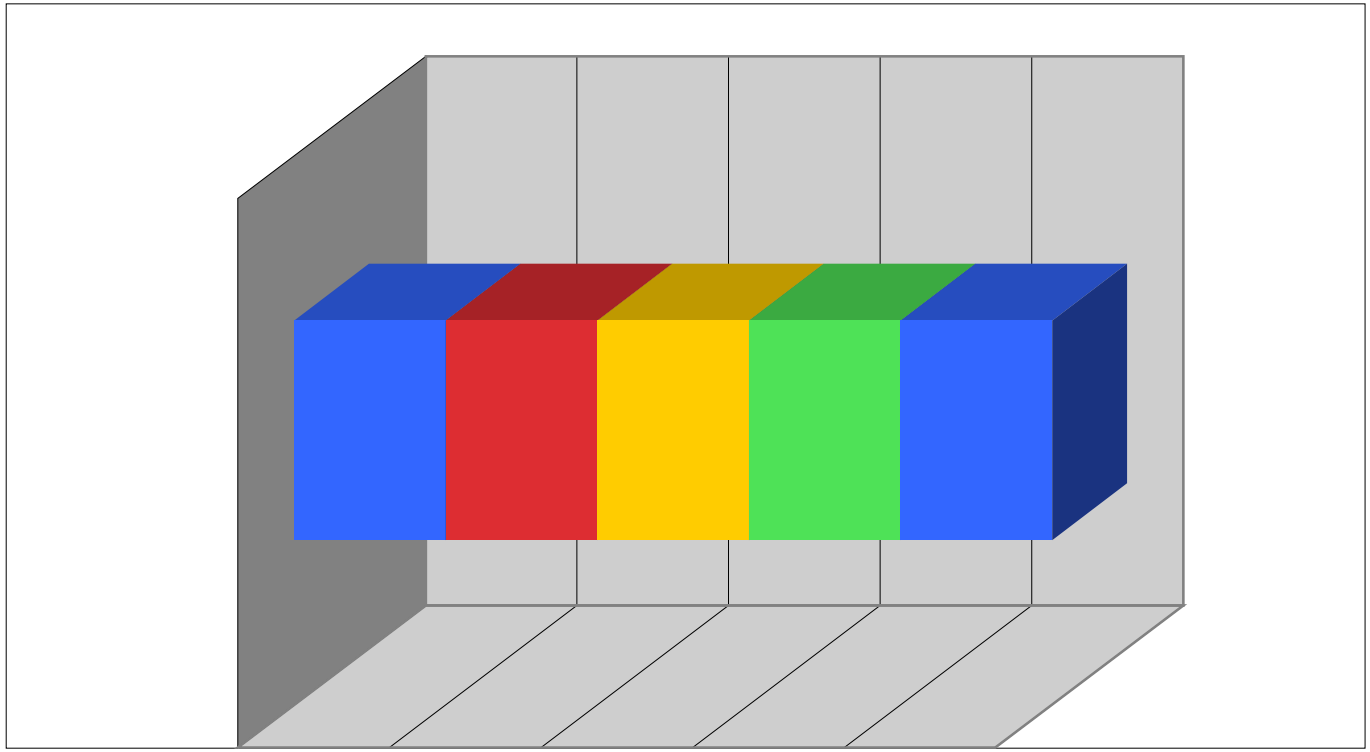
10+ million books in Google Books



Most books published since 1900



Will the next 10 million books be Googlized?



Probably

- But that is not the end of story
- May only be the end of the beginning

The Google project is surprisingly retro

- A library of all the books that have been published
- Or a bookshop for all the books that will be published
- But will the next 10 million, mostly digital books, sit on the shelves in orderly rank with the last 10 million books published?

A library of the books that will be published

- But we don’t yet know what digital books can do.
- This library would be easier to plan if digital books were in all/most crucial respects like printed books

Does Apple have a view on digital books?

?

Apple appears to be more open to digital book innovation

Apple appears to be more open to digital book innovation

But you never can tell with Apple

Digital Books are Applications

- Digital books will respond to touch
- …..to orientation
- …..to location
- To the intention and circumstances of their reader/user and to

- …..other network resources

Digital Books are Applications

- Digital books are themselves computational resources and their future is open

Temerity in citing Apple as a standard-bearer for openness

What would it mean for digital books to be more open?

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