

## 电子书如何失去了实体书的灵魂

- ▶ 为什么作者说自己是阅读技术中的卢德派？
- ▶ 与实体书相比，电子书的呈现样态为什么是转瞬即逝的？
- ▶ 电子书有哪些缺点和优点？
- ▶ 为什么文中说电子书缺乏 bookiness？
- ▶ 在图书历史上，人类如何从莎草纸过渡到羊皮纸，再到现在各式各样的印纸？
- ▶ 电子书为什么最适合作为类型小说的载体？
- ▶ 你知道作为物的实体书，在图书装帧和设计上有多少玄妙之处？
- ▶ “wrap one's spleen” 这个短语是什么意思？

## Ebooks Are an Abomination

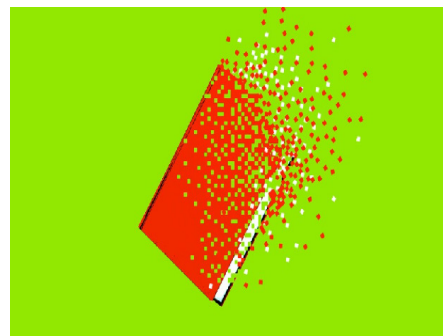
*If you hate them, it's not your fault.*

By Ian Bogost, *The Atlantic*, Published by Sept. 15, 2021

Perhaps you've noticed that ebooks are awful. I hate them, but I don't know why I hate them. Maybe it's **snobbery**. Perhaps, despite my long career in technology and media, I'm a secret **Luddite**. Maybe I can't stand the idea of looking at books as computers after a long day of looking at computers as computers. I don't know, except for knowing that ebooks are awful.

If you hate ebooks like I do, that **loathing** might attach to their **dim** screens, their **wonky typography**, their weird **pagination**, their unnerving **ephemerality**, or the prison house of a **proprietary** ecosystem. If you love ebooks, it might be because they are portable, and **legible** enough, and capable of delivering streams of words, fiction and nonfiction, into your eyes and brain with relative ease. Perhaps you like being able to carry a never-ending stack of books with you wherever you go, without having to actually **lug** them around. Whether you love or hate ebooks is probably a function of what books mean to you, and why.

When discussed in the present tense, ebooks means Amazon Kindle



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听课笔记

ebooks. Competitors are out there, including **tablets** such as the iPad and the various software that can display books in electronic format. The first commercial e-ink reader was made in 2004 by Sony, not Amazon, although you've probably never heard of it. Adobe's PDF format, first released in the early '90s, made it easy to create and share print-formatted documents, viewable on any platform with a PDF reader.

But you can't have books without bookiness. That's the word Glenn Fleishman, a technology writer and longtime bookmaker, uses to describe the situation. "It's the essence that makes someone feel like they're using a book," he told me. Fleishman and I took a swing at defining bookiness anyway. A book, we decided, is probably composed of bound pages, rather than loose ones. Those pages are probably made from paper, or leaves akin to paper. These pages are likely numerous, and the collection of pages is coherent, forming a totality. The order of that totality matters, but also the form of bound pages allows a reader random access to any page, via flipping and fanning. An open book has the **topology** of a valley, creating a space that you can go inside and be surrounded by, literally and figuratively. Some books are very large, but the ordinary sort is portable and probably handheld.

A particular reader's receptivity to ebooks, then, depends on the degree to which these objects conform to, or at least fail to **flout**, one's idea of bookiness. But if you look back at the list of features that underlie that idea, ebooks embrace surprisingly few of them. An ebook doesn't have pages, for one. The Kindle-type book does have text, and that text might still be organized into sections and chapters and the like. But the basic unit of text in an ebook does not correspond with a page, because the text can be made to reflow at different sizes and in various **fonts**, as the user prefers.

I hate ebooks because I don't read much genre fiction, but I read a lot of scholarly and trade nonfiction. I also buy a lot of books on art, architecture, and design, whose subjects work best—or feel most bookish—when they are large-format, open-spread, and richly

**illustrated.** As a somewhat **haughty** book person, I also can't quite wrap my **spleen** around every book looking and feeling the same, like they do on an ebook reader. For me, bookiness partly entails the uniqueness of each volume—its cover, shape, typography, and layout.

If you like ebooks, great. Enjoy your dim, gray screen in peace. If you hate them, don't worry about it. Who says everything must involve a computer? Maybe it's better, even, to protect the print-book market by building a firewall against ebooks' expansion beyond their rule over genre fiction. Just give up and read normal books, like humankind has done for 2,000 years.

## 词汇

**abomination** /əˌbɒməˈneɪʃən/ n. 令人憎恨的事物，可恶的东西

- a thing that causes disgust and hatred, or is considered extremely offensive
- e.g. Slavery was an abomination. 奴隶制令人深恶痛绝。

**snobbery** /ˈsnɒbəri/ n. 势利态度（或行为），自以为优越的态度（或行为）

- (*disapproving*) the attitudes and behaviour of people who are snobs
- e.g. intellectual snobbery 智力上的自我优越感

**Luddite** /ˈlʌdɪt/ n. 反对新技术（或新工作方法）的人

- a person who is opposed to new technology or working methods
- e.g. The majority have a built-in Luddite mentality; they are resistant to change. 绝大部分人天生都有反对技术进步的心理，他们是抗拒变革的。

**loathing** /ˈləʊðɪŋ/ n. 强烈的厌恶，憎恨

- a very strong feeling of hatred
- e.g. She looked at her attacker with fear and loathing. 她盯着袭击她的歹徒，既害怕又憎恨。
- **loathe** /ləʊð/ v. 厌恶，憎恨
- to hate someone or something very much
- e.g. He loathes their politics. 他讨厌他们那一套政治。

**dim** /dɪm/ adj. 阴暗的，昏暗的

- fairly dark or not giving much light, so that you cannot see well
- e.g. in the dim light of the early dawn 在微弱的晨曦里

**wonky** /ˈwɒŋki/ adj. 不稳的，摇晃的，歪斜的

- unsteady or not straight or level
- e.g. a wonky chair 摇摇晃晃的椅子

**typography** /taɪˈpɒɡrəfi/ n. 印刷术，排印，版面设计

- the art or work of preparing books, etc. for printing, especially of designing how text will appear when it is printed

**pagination** /ˌpædʒəˈneɪʃən/ n. (书、杂志等的) 页码编定，页码标注

- the process of giving a number to each page of a book, magazine, etc.

**ephemeral** /ɪˈfemərəl/ adj. 短暂的，只流行一时的

- existing or popular for only a short time
- e.g. Fashion is by nature ephemeral. 从本质上说，时尚不过是一时的潮流。
- **ephemerality** /ɪˌfeməˈrælɪti/ n. 朝生暮死，短命的事物，无常的事物

**proprietary** /prəˈpraɪətəri/ adj. 专卖的，专营的，专利的；所有的，所有权的

- (of goods) made and sold by a particular company and protected by a registered trademark
- e.g. proprietary brands 专利品牌
- relating to an owner or to the fact of owning sth.
- e.g. The company has a proprietary right to the property. 公司拥有这笔财产的所有权。

**legible** /ˈledʒəbl/ adj. 清晰可读的，清楚的

- clear enough to read
- e.g. legible handwriting 清楚易读的笔迹

**lug** /lʌɡ/ v. 吃力地搬运，用力拖，使劲拉

- to carry or drag sth. heavy with a lot of effort
- e.g. I had to lug my bags up to the fourth floor. 我只得费劲地把我的几个包拖上四楼。

**tablet** /ˈtæblət/ n. 平板电脑

- a small computer that is easy to carry, with a large touch screen and sometimes without a physical keyboard

**topology** /təˈpɒlədʒi/ n. 拓扑结构，构相

- the way the parts of sth. are arranged and related
- e.g. The Canadian banking topology is relatively flat, with a few large banks controlling the entire market. 加拿大银行业结构相对简单，由几家大银行控制着整个市场。

**flout** /flaʊt/ v. 公然无视，违抗（法律、规定等）

- to deliberately disobey a law, rule, etc., without trying to hide what you are doing
- e.g. Some companies flout the rules and employ children as young as seven. 有些公司无视规定，雇用年仅七岁的儿童。

**font** /fɒnt/ n. 字体，字型

- the particular size and style of a set of letters that are used in printing, etc.

**illustrate** /ˈɪləstreɪt/ v. 加插图于，给（书等）做图表

- to use pictures, photographs, diagrams, etc. in a book, etc.
- e.g. an illustrated textbook 有插图的课本

**haughty** /ˈhɔːti/ adj. 倨傲不逊的，傲慢的，目中无人的

- behaving in a proud unfriendly way
- e.g. a haughty laugh 傲慢的大笑

**spleen** /spliːn/ n. (尤指不合情理的) 怒气，愤怒

- anger, especially unreasonable or unfair anger
- e.g. Obviously you're annoyed, but that doesn't give you the right to vent your spleen on me. 很显然你心里不痛快，但你也不该把怒气发泄在我身上呀。

## 今日习题

## 1. 根据英文释义写出文中出现的对应单词

\_\_\_\_\_ : a thing that causes disgust and hatred, or is considered extremely offensive

\_\_\_\_\_ : to deliberately disobey a law, rule, etc., without trying to hide what you are doing

## 2. 一词多义

Which of the following underlined words is closest in meaning to the one in the sentence "If you hate ebooks like I do, that loathing might attach to their dim screens, their wonky typography, their weird pagination, their unnerving ephemerality, or the prison house of a proprietary ecosystem."? \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Her future career prospects look dim.
- B. The lights in the theatre dimmed as the curtain rose.
- C. This light is too dim to read by.
- D. The dim outline of a building loomed up out of the mist.

## 3. 翻译：根据给定中文回译英文

如果你喜欢电子书，可能是因为它们携带方便，足够清晰，并且能够以相对轻松地方式将虚构类和非虚构类作品中一行行的字传送到你的眼睛和大脑。

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## 习题答案

1. abomination; flout  
2. C  
3. If you love ebooks, it might be because they are portable, and legible enough, and capable of delivering streams of words, fiction and nonfiction, into your eyes and brain with relative ease.

电子书 (electronic book) 是一种可以在电脑或其他电子设备的显示器上阅读的数字化图书, 一般由三个要素构成: 一是文本内容, 并通过特殊的格式转化使其可在网络中传输和阅读; 二是阅读器, 比如电脑、各种手持阅读器等; 三是阅读软件, 比如微软的 Microsoft Reader、超星的 SSReader 等。2010 年代初, 美国电子书的销售总量已经开始超过纸质书。据调查, 2019 年, 美国阅读电子书的成年人占比 25%, 相较于 2016 年 (28%) 略有下降。

电子书的理念提出可以追溯至 1930 年鲍勃·布朗 (Bob Brown) 在看完第一部“有声电影”后, 提出了一种可以让用户在屏幕上阅读书籍的设备。他将其命名为 *The Readies*, 认为阅读也应该创造一种新的媒介, 便于随身携带。1971 年, 迈克尔·哈特 (Michael Hart) 首次将美国《独立宣言》改编成电子文档, 同时将一些他认为对人类有一定意义且无版权的书籍输入电脑, 放置在网站 (<https://www.gutenberg.org/>) 上供人们免费阅读和下载, 这项计划被命名为“谷登堡工程” (Project Gutenberg)。“谷登堡工程”第一次使纸质图书规模化地转换为电子图书。然而, 彼时互联网并未普及。直到 1974 年, 文顿·瑟夫 (Vinton Cerf) 和鲍勃·卡恩 (Bob Kahn) 创建了 TCP/IP, 互联网开始兴起。电子书的发展离不开网络及其他软硬件设施的支持。

1980 年, 美国国防部着手开发一种用于技术维护的便携式电子传输设备, 即 PEAM 项目, 并于 1981 年完成, 为电子阅读器的开发奠定基础。1992 年, 索尼推出了一款电子书阅读器 Data Discman, 可以阅读存储在 CD 上的电子书。早期以软盘和光盘的形式传播的电子书通常是面向专业领域的少数读者。1993 年, 保罗·巴伊姆 (Paul Baim) 发布了一款名为“电子书” (EBook) 的免费软件 HyperCard。1998 年, 出现了专用的电子书阅读设备, 如 Rocket Ebook 和 SoftBook 等。著名的兰登书屋 (Random House)、西蒙与舒斯特 (Simon & Schuster) 等出版商也相继介入电子图书市场。

2000 年 4 月, 美国畅销小说作家斯蒂芬·金 (Stephen King) 的新作《骑弹飞行》 (*Riding the Bullet*) 首次以电子版的形式发表, 在 24 小时内就被下载了 40 万次。作者获得的收益远高于传统纸质图书。《骑弹飞行》的畅销不仅引起了出版商、网上书店的极大关注, 也促进相关技术的发展。微软、Adobe 等大公司, 开始介入电子书的产品开发。微软公司前技术副总裁迪克·布拉斯 (Dick Brass) 认为未来 15 年内, 将有一半的书以电子图书形式销售。2007 年 11 月, 全球最大网络书城亚马逊 (Amazon) 推出电子书阅读器 Kindle, 并开放了电子书商店, 超过 9 万部正版图书上架。2010 年, 苹果也加入了电子书大潮, 在发布 iPad 的同时, 开放了 iBooks 商店。Google eBookstore 也不断扩大电子书市场, 已拥有超过 300 万种电子书。

参考资料: 维基百科; *A Short History of eBooks*