

The Future of the Book in the Digital Age

EDITED BY
BILL COPE
AND
ANGUS PHILLIPS



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The book is still thriving in the digital age, but the physical entity that contains information, inspiration, and ideas is being transformed by the technology that was supposed to replace it. A scholar studying the history of technology looks at two alternative futures: one with books and one without. It was widely believed in the 1990s that the end of the book was near. But if books (and print in general) are dying or dead, why do book sales continue to remain brisk? E-books and other digital products have hardly made a dent in the book market. The paperless office--the supposed harbinger of ... The New Digital Age is a guide to the future written by two experts who possess a profound understanding of humanity's altered prospects in a wireless world. There are insights on every page and surprising conclusions (and questions) in every chapter. For experts and casual readers alike, Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen have produced an indispensable book. "This is the most important and fascinating book yet written about how the digital age will affect our world. With vivid examples and brilliant analysis, it shows how the Internet and other communications technologies will empower individuals and transform the way nations and businesses operate. But it's dead because the way we touch digital books is different than the way we touch physical books. And once you acknowledge that, useful corollaries emerge "And so we don't want the cover to disappear." What follows is a neat dissection of the problems surrounding cover design in the modern age, and a look at the possible future of what can be done with a new, exciting medium for expression. If you're interested, you should read the essay yourself, as any attempt to recreate it here can't do it justice.