

Hewlett-Packard, Amazon To Sell Paperback Versions Of E-Books

Associated Press Posted: 10/21/2009 10:44:10 AM PDT SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Some of the technology industry's best-known companies are betting there's pent-up demand for on-demand books.

Hewlett-Packard, the world's top seller of personal computers and printers, is teaming up with online retailer Amazon.com to join Internet search leader Google as the latest entrants in the quirky new market of re-creating digital books as paperbacks.

The concept represents a different type of book recycling, as digital copies created from print get a second life as paperbacks.

The HP program offers to publish paperback versions of about 500,000 digital books scanned from the University of Michigan's library. The paperback copies can be ordered through Amazon.com and a few other retailers.

New HP Service Undigitizes Books

John Murrell

Posted by [John Murrell](#) on October 21st, 2009 at 5:23 am HP believes this whole print-to-digital book conversion push is very much a two-way street — sometimes, for some things, you really want a hard copy. And for a company with roots in printing and ambitions in services, the next play was a natural: How about we offer custom book printing services? And so we see making its formal debut from HP Labs an initiative that [puts powerful publishing abilities into the hands of the masses](#). *Copied below.*

HP Lets You Print Old Books Or Wikia Pages As Your Own Custom Publications

October 21, 2009 [Dean Takahashi](#) The democratization of book and magazine publishing is well underway. Every person can pretty much operate their own virtual press, thanks to innovations in web-based self-publishing.

[Hewlett-Packard](#) and [Wikia](#) are delving further into this with [Mag Cloud](#), a service that goes live today. With the service, users can take the free web pages of Wikia — which has more than 3 million pages of user-generated articles online — and print them out as a magazine. Gil Penchina, chief executive of Wikia, said he tried out the service by printing a 75-page magazine based on Wikia articles about Star Wars film character Luke Skywalker. The cost to print your own magazine is just 20 cents a page.

HP is also formally launching [BookPrep](#), a service that lets you print a book for which the copyright has already expired. Google and the University of Michigan have an agreement that lets Google put 500,000 books owned by the university up for sale in virtual form on the web. HP goes one step further, allowing anyone to print on demand any one of those books for a fairly low price: a 250-page book might cost around \$15.

Both services take advantage of HP's prowess in digital printing, where in the case of books it can take poorly scanned book images and clean them up so they can be viewed easily. With the magazines, HP finds printers around the globe that are nearest to the user ordering a magazine. It then prints the magazine locally so that it can minimize shipping costs, said Andrew Bolwell, director of new business initiatives at HP.

The business also fits with HP's belief that everything will become a service, thanks to web-based cloud computing technologies. In this case, the data to be printed can be stored in the cloud and users can access it and print it out as they desire.

Bolwell said HP has been toying with these ideas for a decade. [HP Labs came up with the BookPrep idea and showed it off on a research day in March, 2008](#). Many of the books that it can print are taken from books that are more than 80 years old.

You would think that nobody would want those books. But in a deal with Applewood books, HP has been testing BookPrep, and it's found that there is demand for just about any kind of book, from Civil War histories to recipes from the 1800s. There are, for instance, something like 1,500 books available about railroads that are available for printing on demand through the service.

The Wikia idea stemmed from a talk that Wikipedia and Wikia founder Jimmy Wales gave at HP. Penchina said the talk led to discussions that led to the collaboration. Penchina said he is very interested in the types of magazines that could be printed. He notes, for instance, that Wikia has about 75,000 user-contributed pages on World of Warcraft. There are also about 40,000 pages of recipes. With HP Mag Cloud, anyone could self-publish the Wikia content in a magazine, up to 100 pages.

On a higher scale, magazine publishers could also use the HP magazine print-on-demand technology. Time's Life magazine division used the HP technology to print custom copies of its 40th anniversary issue of Woodstock, which had a bunch of classic photos from the 1960s rock event. Atlantic Monthly also assembled a new magazine based on articles about "brave thinkers" that it had profiled over the years. By using print-on-demand, the magazine publishers don't have to worry about the risk of printing a lot of magazines that might not be popular.

Wikia, founded in 2004, became profitable earlier this year, thanks to the user-generated content that draws 25 million unique visitors a month.

HP predicts there is an explosion of content that will become available for print-on-demand services. Amazon has more than a million books for sale. But Prakash Reddy, system architect of BookPrep, told me in 2008 that there are 6.5 million books out of copyright, about 32 million more in a kind of legal limbo, and a total of 90 million that are completely out of print.

The service is called [BookPrep](#), and it enables any publisher "to [digitize any existing book and turn it into a virtual asset](#) that can be sold over the Internet and printed on demand — either as is, or personalized by the consumer. ... BookPrep automatically aligns and flattens scanned texts of current and out-of-print-books, cleans and brightens the fold and corners of the pages for consistent coloration, and outputs a professional and print-ready PDF eMaster. ... BookPrep makes it possible to give consumers access to every book ever published as a high quality replica of the original that they can even personalize." The appeal here is in the long tail, all the fodder for those with passionate niche interests residing in the estimated 90 million books that are out of print, millions of them out of copyright. The latest addition to the books available for on-demand printing is a collection of 500,000 rare or out-of-print titles from the University of Michigan Library. And while the cost of a custom run was once prohibitive, new technology will let HP price a 250-page book around \$15.

Meanwhile, another HP personalized publishing effort, [MagCloud](#), announced today it has partnered with [Wikia](#), the community-of-interests site started by Wikipedia's Jimmy Wales, to allow anyone to assemble

material from Wikia’s deep reservoir of niche resources and put together a full-color magazine that can be distributed digitally or as a glossy print product. “With millions of freely available and relevant articles written by dedicated communities, Wikia broadly covers thousands of topics, from Marvel comic book characters to ABC Television’s popular drama ‘Lost,’” [said Wales](#). “We believe that Wikia’s communities will use the MagCloud printing service to reach broader audiences, and inspire people to engage in a new wave of magazine publishing 2.0.”