



Sunday February 26, 2006
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News	<h1 style="color: red;">Life</h1> <h2 style="color: blue;">Publishing by the book</h2> <p>On-demand publishers print manuscripts as the orders come in so they don't have too much stock on hand Tuesday August 13, 2002 VALERIE HILL RECORD STAFF</p> <p>As a would-be novelist, Michael David Lannan's head was swimming with plot lines, characters and settings, drama and comedy. And as a Kitchener family lawyer, he used much of his down time in court to work on his first book, typing madly on his Palm Pilot, barely able to contain the flow of words.</p> <p>But writing was the easy part. Publishing his book, <i>The Empty Net</i>, was a different and difficult matter -- one he decided to circumvent by using a relatively new method called on-demand publishing.</p> <p>"Most Canadian publishers don't want new Canadian writers," said Lannan.</p> <p>"It can take up to one year just for them to review it (manuscript). I didn't want to wait."</p> <p>He could have hired an editor to check his prose, a graphic artist to design the book and a printing firm to print hundreds of copies.</p> <p>Instead, Lannan searched the Internet and found Trafford, an on-demand publisher in Victoria.</p> <p>Trafford, founded by Bruce Batchelor, a University of Waterloo alumnus, offers an alternative: a choice of three packages ranging in price from \$700 to \$1,500.</p> <p>At the low end, Trafford looks after the administrative and legal chores related to launching a book; at the high end, the package includes nine copies of the book, a Web page and inclusion in the electronic bookstores of Trafford, Chapters and Barnes & Noble.</p>
Business	
Classified	
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Entertainment	
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Learning	
Events/Calendar	
Opinion	
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Anne Laird of Book Express uses the InstaBook, which allows a customer to print, bind and cover a copy of a book that may be out of print. It can also be used by those who want to self-publish.

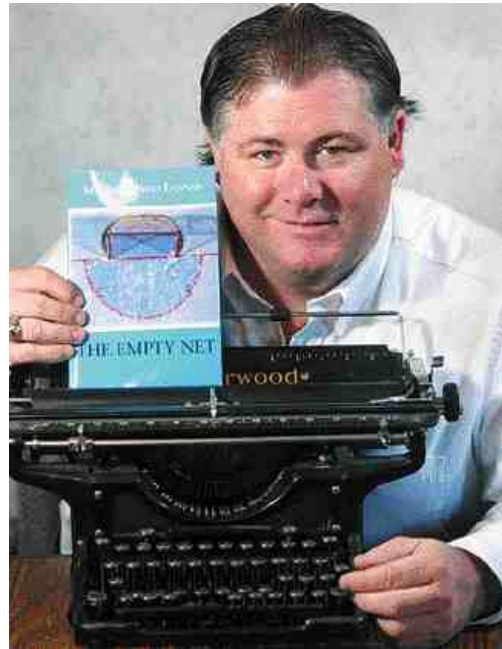
What makes the system unique is that books are printed only when orders come in from the Web site, meaning authors don't dish out a lot of cash to print hundreds of books that might not sell.

Batchelor was a self-published author and he developed the on-demand concept to relieve the financial burden of self-publishing.

"Everyone told us we were crazy," recalls Batchelor. "They didn't think it was feasible."

He proved them wrong. Since 1995, Trafford has published 1,200 titles with 100 new ones now being added each month from authors around the world.

Authors set their own retail price, but normally price their book at least two and a half times the printing cost of \$8.88 for a 200-page book, which would bring the retail price to about \$23. In that case, Trafford gets \$8.88; the author gets about \$14 per copy.



Michael David Lannan, a Kitchener lawyer, holds a copy of his first novel, *The Empty Net*.

"In most situations, this is more than the six per cent of retail price that an author would receive from a conventional publisher," Batchelor said.

The innovative system provides authors with a wide market through electronic bookstores.

"The book is in print forever unless the author withdraws from our service," Batchelor said. "There is no renewal fee."

On-demand publishing has been popular with writers, but Batchelor says traditional publishing houses are less than enthusiastic, partly because it lets anyone churn out a book regardless of quality.

"The purists in the book industry like to think their opinion counts," he said. "(But) the publishing end has never been on the vanguard of new ideas."

BOOKS IN AN INSTANT

Meanwhile, in a Cambridge bookstore, Anne Laird is pushing the boundaries with a pilot on-demand publishing concept called InstaBook.

InstaBook consists of a hard drive, printer and small conveyor belt, neatly packaged in a small kiosk near the cash register. Laird can download any one of hundreds of books from InstaBook's Web site, printing out a small, softcover bound edition in less than five minutes, right there in the store. The cost ranges from \$12 to \$20 per book.

Most of the 2,000 books available are classics, but some are new releases from small publishing houses and self-published authors who couldn't afford to provide the bookstore with a stock of books.

For shoppers, previously hard-to-find books are readily available if they're on the list.

"Twenty to 30 per cent of requests per week are for books that are out of print," Laird said. "If all the bookstores had this system, publishers wouldn't have to pay to have all their titles in stock."

So far, Book Express is one of only two retail outlets in the world with an InstaBook system. The other is Coach House Books in Toronto.

"This is a custom publishing service," said Dave Di Marcantonio, president of the Hamilton-based InstaBook. "The technology is deceptively simple."

Di Marcantonio is negotiating to add more titles to the system but he admits the idea is being resisted by publishers.

"There are a lot of rights issues," he said. "It does make some publishers nervous, but we see InstaBook as an additional sales mechanism."

The technology exists to turn out books with glossy covers and full colour, but some costs are prohibitive and not all store staff are trained to use the system to capacity. What customers get is a 20.5-cm-by-13.5-cm book with a heavy-gauge paper cover.

Customers wanting to print their own books must have their manuscript on disc, using a page layout program. It can include black and white graphics, photographs, special fonts or even large print.

In Victoria, Batchelor sees on-demand publishing as the way of the future.

"It's turned self-publishing into an efficient, affordable and very convenient method," he said.

"There is no reason now a writer has to say, 'I have to wait for the gatekeepers (publishing houses).'

"When you open up a new technology to creative people, they're going to use it in creative ways."

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PUBLISHER INFO

Trafford On-Demand can be reached at 1-888-232-4444, by e-mail at joti@trafford.com or on the Web site at <http://www.trafford.com/>

Lannan's book follows the early years of a young hockey player who dreams of playing in the NHL. His book is also available at K-W Bookstore on King Street West in Kitchener.

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