


Reading Books in the Digital Age subsequent to Amazon, Google and the long tail

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Journal article, Peer reviewed



Åpne

 Reading Books in the Digital Age subsequent to Amazon, Google and the long.pdf (188.0Kb)

Permanent lenke

<http://hdl.handle.net/11250/184283>

Utgivelsesdato

2007

Metadata

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Samlinger

Vitenskapelige publikasjoner (SV-IMKS) [82]

Originalversjon

Reading Books in the Digital Age subsequent to Amazon, Google and the long tail by Terje Hillesund In First Monday, volume 12, number 9 (September 2007)

Sammendrag

Presenting a wide range of literature, this article explores the state of art in book research, paying particular attention to John B. Thompson's interpretation of digital transformations within the book industry, as depicted in *Books in the Digital Age* (2005). Claiming that Thompson's analyses are one-sided, the article applies alternative perspectives and a model of a text cycle, contending that the diminishing role of paper in text production and text distribution makes the dominant position of printed books particularly vulnerable to advances in digital reading technologies.

Utgiver

University of Illinois at Chicago Library

Tidsskrift

First Monday

Chris Anderson's new book *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More* has quickly risen to claim a well-deserved slot on the New York Times' non-fiction bestseller list. Those articles (see the first and the second) made a splash among both tech enthusiasts and e-commerce professionals as Anderson managed to crystallize key developments driving the growth of online retail pioneers such as Amazon and Netflix. We at Seeking Alpha have considered the concept important enough to devote a category of articles to the topic since early 2005. What's it all about? Richard Akerman summarizes the business implications of the Long Tail principle in one sentence *The Long Tail*. Forget squeezing millions from a few megahits at the top of the charts. The future of entertainment is in the millions of niche markets at the shallow end of the bitstream. With no shelf space to pay for and, in the case of purely digital services like iTunes, no manufacturing costs and hardly any distribution fees, a miss sold is just another sale, with the same margins as a hit. A hit and a miss are on equal economic footing, both just entries in a database called up on demand, both equally worthy of being carried. Consider the implication: If the Amazon statistics are any guide, the market for books that are not even sold in the average bookstore is larger than the market for those that are (see *Anatomy of the Long Tail*). Advertisement. Advertisement.