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Digital publishing and its influences on literacy

1. Introduction

The digitalisation and development of technical devices have had a profound impact on our everyday life and behaviour. Today, being permanently online is considered normal and new technical devices are developed continuously to facilitate and improve our quality of life. The book is one of the media affected by this change. People increasingly prefer the use of digital devices to read formerly mostly printed media like news (The Guardian, 2013). This change has had, and still has, a wide-ranging effect on traditional publishers, their business and their products. The publishing world is facing probably the most profound transition since the invention of the printing press (Carreiro, 2010).

Digitalisation’s effect on publishers is not the only concern caused by the increase of screen reading, resulting from the growing use of digital devices (e-marketer, 2013). Reading on these devices differs widely from the reading of a printed book. Multimodality and interaction are the most advantageous features of a digital text, making it differ enormously from a linear printed text. Due to this, critics see reading on-screen as threatening, due to the effect, that skimming and scrolling practices have on our ability to deep read long texts (Carr 2008). Some go even further and say that culture, education and literacy will wither along with the printed book (NEA 2004). Critics like these certainly fomented concerns about how digital books will
influence children's ability to read, making children's books an especially interesting example of how digital multimodality influences literacy and reading.

In this thesis I will show that the digitalisation of books does not necessarily have negative influences on the publishing sector or on children's literary development. Drawing on several different fields, namely education, communication, media and cultural studies as well as publishing. I will show that due to the novelty of the topic it is too early to draw conclusions about the value of each media form for the development of literacy. It is equally premature to argue that the printed book or the publishing industry will be extinguished in the near future. Based on the analysis of two enhanced children books, Alice for the iPad by Atomic Anteloupe and The Fantastic Flying books of Mr. Morris Lessmore by Moonbot Studios I am aiming to show that multimodality can, despite concerns, be used to produce meaningful and educational reading experiences.

The development of the internet and ever smaller and more mobile devices which connect us to it has changed our way of life and behaviour immensely. The huge quantities of information provided by the internet can be accessed permanently and content can easily be downloaded at every time of the day. The lecture of the daily printed newspaper changed to reading its online version on the tablet. Certainly this shift to digital devices instead of printed media has serious effects on the publishing industry. The rising popularity of digital texts like e-books does not just force publishers to the alteration of their product but of their whole business plan (Kobo 2013, Carreiro 2010). Production, distribution, pricing and marketing are changing through digital books. Even if this means negative developments like rising competition, by, for example big online retailers like Amazon, it also incorporates advantages for the publishing industry. Still, numerous critics fear that the digital revolution signifies the death of the printed book (Striphas, 2009). Cultural theorist
Ted Striphas on the other hand refutes this, arguing that the book still has an important status in today’s society and that print continues to be the most valued medium of knowledge transmission.

The digitalisation does not only affect the book itself and the publishing business, but also our reading habits. Numbers show that reading online and on digital devices increased during the last years, while the use of print media decreased (The Guardian, emarketer.com, 2013). This shift has been vastly critiqued and considered as dangerous to our culture and education (NEA, 2004). The author Nicholas Carr argues in his book The Shallows that reading online makes us stupid, due to the internet’s influence on our way of reading. Endless information provided by the Internet search engines enable the discovery of the requested results in seconds. However, due to the amount of text offered by the World Wide Web, it is impossible to read all in depth: skimming of paragraphs for the most important facts is a more appropriate technique. Carr states that this shift in reading behaviour is affecting and transforming our brain, making us incapable of focusing on long texts. “Deep reading, as Maryanne Wolf argues, is indistinguishable from deep thinking” (qtd. in Carr 2008): in other words, the loss of deep reading skills implies the loss of profound thinking. Our ability of concentrating on text is negatively influenced by the combination of different modes which we are permanently confronted with online (Carr 2008).

The exact term for this phenomenon is multimodality, which is according to Günther Kress, the combination of different modes to create meaning, for example text, sound and images (Kress, 2010). A mode is hereby a term used to describe a “set of socially and culturally shaped resources for making meaning” (MODE, n.pag.). Different modes carry different values in our society, so is writing for example still the most related to the transmission of information. The new digital books give us the
opportunity to use multimodality and more than just written text to create meaning. Concerns about multimodality and on screen reading are especially applied when it comes to the literary development of children. There is a fear among experts and parents that this combination of different media forms in one text could be more distracting, hence have a negative effect on their literacy (Kobo 2013). This concern is also mentioned by Carr:

It injects the medium’s content with hyperlinks, blinking ads, and other digital gewgaws, and it surrounds the content with the content of all the other media it has absorbed. A new e-mail message, for instance, may announce its arrival as we’re glancing over the latest headlines at a newspaper’s site. The result is to scatter our attention and diffuse our concentration (n.pag.).

At this point it is important to say, that children books have to some extent always been multimodal, at least through the connection of text with images and sometimes even sound. For this reason the new possibilities offered by digital books are especially interesting for the children book sector. They permit the creation of multimodal and interactive books for tablets which can, for example, combine sounds, videos, images, animation and text and so produce a completely new reading experience for children. Although digital books represent a promising and fascinating technology, parents still prefer to use printed books for their children, even if they are digital readers themselves. Despite the concerns of parents and critics, the numbers of digital children books produced and sold are, according to statistics, rising immensely in countries all over the world (Kobo 2013, Panorámica de la edición española de libros 2012). Everything points to a continuing digitisation of children books and it is the task of publishers and parents to find an adequate way of dealing with the new media and of supporting children in its use.

New research already shows that children are more able to assimilate multimodal
and digital texts than critics predict. They state that children today “live in media-saturated homes and communities” and that it is therefore “impossible to exclude children from digital media” (Hisrich, Blanchard, 2009). Children of all ages permanently see their parents, older siblings and everybody else in their environment using digital devices and media. Recent numbers demonstrate that children already decided on the tablet as their favourite reading device "The tablet is the technology 60% of e-reading kids use most, up for 48% last January" (Bacon, n.pag). This shows that it is actually at the time to accept the fact that children can impossibly be excluded from digital media and start to use and see the possibilities it offers for the creation of valuable education material.

Additionally, a recent study by Rachel Levy, an education professor at the Sheffield University, shows that children are very comfortable with the use of digital media and have no trouble using it. In her research she found that multimodality is not distracting, but actually supports the children’s understanding of written text. This lead her to the statement that reading today is not simply about the decoding of printed text anymore; it goes far beyond that. Reading today is about understanding and dealing with multimodality, comprehending the interplay of different modes and making meaning out of it.

The diversity and number of fields concerned and engaged with the digitalisation of books lead to vastly differing opinions and results about the impact of digitalization. On the one hand, this, along with the novelty of the topic, makes it impossible to draw any clear conclusions. On the other hand, exactly these contradictions and ambiguities turn out to support my initial claim that neither the print nor the digital version of a book can be considered better or worse and that neither of them will soon be erased in our culture.
2. Digitalisation's influence on the world of print

In this part of the thesis I will analyse how the growing integration of technical devices in our lives change behaviour towards them and the internet. Further I will show how this influences the print media and market.

Digitalisation has altered the relationship of people towards media and their use of technical and digital devices. The term digitalisation can be defined in various ways, for this purpose Businessdictionary.com's description as “Integration of digital technologies into everyday life by the digitization of everything that can be digitized.” is the most appropriate one. The mentioned integration of technology is a development which cannot be denied when reflecting on the last years. In the previous decades, several analogue media and technologies have been replaced by digital versions or improvements. Devices like GPS systems, smartphones and tablets became an essential part of society and most people’s life and time spent with them increased significantly over the last years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Time Spent per Day with Nonvoice Mobile Activities by US Adults, by Device, 2010-2013</th>
<th>Hrs:mins and % of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smartphone</strong></td>
<td>0:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— % of total</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tablet</strong></td>
<td>0:01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— % of total</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feature phone</strong></td>
<td>0:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— % of total</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>0:26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ages 18+, time spent with each device includes all time spent with that device, regardless of multitasking; for example, 1 hour of multitasking on a smartphone while on a tablet is counted as 1 hour for smartphone and 1 hour for tablet.

Source: eMarketer, July 2013

164477 www.eMarketer.com
Perma nent access to the Internet with its endless information and offerings is affecting the way in which we use other, “traditional” media forms, like print or TV. As statistics have recently shown, 2013 adults over 18 years in the U.S spend 2 hours more online than in 2010. We can also see that, along with the increase of time spent online, the amount of time spent on reading print media decreased about 18%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Time Spent per Day with Major Media by US Adults, 2010-2013</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>3:11</td>
<td>3:49</td>
<td>4:33</td>
<td>5:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—Online*</td>
<td>2:22</td>
<td>2:33</td>
<td>2:27</td>
<td>2:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—Mobile (main voice)</td>
<td>0:24</td>
<td>0:48</td>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>2:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—Other</td>
<td>0:26</td>
<td>0:28</td>
<td>0:31</td>
<td>0:36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>4:24</td>
<td>4:34</td>
<td>4:38</td>
<td>4:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>1:36</td>
<td>1:34</td>
<td>1:32</td>
<td>1:26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print**</td>
<td>0:50</td>
<td>0:44</td>
<td>0:38</td>
<td>0:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—Newspapers</td>
<td>0:29</td>
<td>0:29</td>
<td>0:22</td>
<td>0:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—Magazines</td>
<td>0:20</td>
<td>0:19</td>
<td>0:16</td>
<td>0:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0:45</td>
<td>0:37</td>
<td>0:28</td>
<td>0:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10:06</td>
<td>11:18</td>
<td>11:49</td>
<td>12:05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ages 18+; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of multitasking; for example, 1 hour of multitasking online while watching TV is counted as 1 hour for TV and 1 hour for online; *includes all internet activities on desktop and laptop computers; **offline reading only.

Source: eMarketer, July 2013.

But does less time spent with print necessarily mean less time spent on reading? If we look at, for example, newspapers, we can see that reading in fact does not decrease with the use of digital media. Rather, people use digital devices and the internet for the lecture of news. Statistics about how people access their daily news demonstrate that in 2013 55% of all adults in the U.K. read or downloaded their news from websites, in comparison to only 20% in 2007 (The Guardian, 2013). These numbers prove the fact that people did not actually stop reading, but that there is rather a trend towards reading online and on digital devices.

We are now living in an age of “transformation of our social and cultural attitudes toward, and uses of, this familiar technology (print)”, or what Jay David Bolter calls the “late age of print” (Writing space p.3). There is a clear shift from print to digital. Digitised texts and books already existed for several years before the general public
became aware of them. Popular interest slowly increased in 2000 when bestselling author Stephen King decided to publish his novel *Riding the Bullet* exclusively as e-book. In the first 24 hours the book was downloaded over 400.00 times. However, the actual breakthrough of e-books came in 2007 when Amazon and Sony launched their first e-readers, which finally made reading in digital format easier and more comfortable (Maxim, 2012). Since then e-books sales grew immensely from year to year, the leading countries being the U.S.

In 2011 Amazon firstly sold more e-books than print books for the first time (Maxim, 2012).

The above mentioned numbers clearly show a development towards the digital. Reading of print media is stagnating, while e-books and reading online are rapidly gaining more popularity. Put differently, they point to a not too far away take-over of the traditional print medium by the digital. However, this is just one side of the coin. Later in this thesis I will show why the predicted death of the printed book is a rather hastily conclusion.

3. Digitalisation's influence on publishing

The trend of reading digitally has already had an immense influence on the publishing world. Traditional print publishers are suddenly forced to develop a successful digital strategy and react to this change in society as well as to keep pace
with modern technologies and developments. With new devices like tablets and e-readers, books can be downloaded directly onto the device. This direct access strengthens and shortens the supply chain; fewer intermediaries are needed. These improvements along with others such as the lower production costs due to the saving of resources lead to a reduced price for e-books. Additionally distribution failures like the recurring “Out of Print” or leftover stock won’t be an issue in digital publishing anymore (Carreiro 2010). On the other hand it is exactly this ease of access and decrease of production costs which lead to a higher competition within the e-book market and a consequent decline in e-book prices, making it tough for some publishers and intermediaries to stay in business. Another significant problem arising with the online distribution of e-books is the growing piracy. Publishers try to take action by insisting on stronger Digital Rights Management which consequently slows down the growth of e-books (Carreiro 2010). Certainly the digitisation of books has a grave impact on publishing and this “pending publishing revolution will likely forever change the way we generate access, send and receive information” (Carreiro, 2010).

Not surprisingly, digitalisation has advantages as well as disadvantages for the publishing business. While production and distribution costs and failures are decreasing, growing competition and piracy are two major issues that publishers and retailers have to struggle with. Being up to date with technological developments and having a well-conceived business plan that is balancing digital and print is also essential for a successful publisher.

4. The E-book

What differentiates the e-book from the printed book? Electronic books or short e-books are defined as “[...] electronic version of a printed book which can be read on a computer or a specifically designed handheld device” (“E-book”). E-books can have
different formats like epub, mobi or pdf, depending on where and how they are published. Texts in these formats are usually mere digital copies of printed books, in black and white and without any additional features except for some platforms or devices that allow the variation of text size or font. The main advantages of e-readers and e-books are the facilitation of access to books and the solution to transportation and storage issues, due to their possibility to store a huge number of books in only one small and light device.

Yet the technology already developed further and digital formats of books are taking on a next level, and can, for example, include color, a significantly different form of layout, sound or interaction. Due to their recent development the name of these “books” is not exactly defined yet, in literature and the publishing market they are called enhanced books, enhanced e-books, e- or digital book. In this essay I will use the term “enhanced book”, which is currently the most popular in the publishing sector. An enhanced book can be for example an epub3 file that can include images as well as sound, videos and animation. This innovation is of great importance, especially in the children and school book sector, having in mind that children books have always been multimodal and this technology offers a way to create a completely new and exciting reading experience for children.

In spite of the advantages this new technologies imply for readers and publishers critics face it as negative and fear the digital revolution to soon cause the death of the printed book (Stríphas, 2009). However, there are numerous signs that speak against this negative prediction for the fate of the printed book. The e-book sales in the U.S firstly flattened or even declined throughout 2013, a sign that the digital book revolution may have reached its state of being (Bosman, 2013). Additionally, research shows that people, also young adults, still prefer print books over their digital versions. Surprisingly, 62% of 16-24 years prefer a printed book, due to their
monetary value and to an emotional binding to paper books (Bury, 2013). So it seems that the printed book except numerous negative predictions of the death of the book “is not going away any time soon” (Carreiro, 2010). Even if the influences of digital media might seem threatening to the book as a media, “books [will] remain key artefacts through which vocal actors articulate and struggle over specific interests, values, practices and worldviews” (Striphas, 2009). The printed book still takes an important place in our society it still holds the status of the main artefact of education and knowledge transmission.

Even if the book itself as medium changes and transforms it will not be forgotten or vanish completely. As Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin argue, every remediation of a medium depends on its predecessor, which means that the old medium can never be completely erased; the new medium depends on the old one and permanently reminds us of it (Remediation, 1999). Remediation is an important factor in the production of e-books and enhanced books. Even if they are digital they are still called book, and mostly layout and use, like turning a page, are inspired by books. Due to these factors digital books still “carry” their predecessor inside them and permanently remind us of the older medium. Considering only this already speaks against an entire extinction and “death” of the printed book.

The e-book and its various formats and features offer particular possibilities for the production of texts and their use, just as the printed book does. This and the before mentioned growing sales and production numbers enhanced the fear of the printed book being taken over by its digital version. However, the fact that e-books at least at present are a clear remediation of the print book as well as recently stagnating e-book sales and the still existing preference of printed books to digital ones speak clearly against this pessimist prediction.
5. Literacy debate

Throughout history whenever a new writing technology has emerged it has have almost always been seen, at first, as endangering our intellectual property and education.

The intellectual history of reading and writing technologies consists, as it were, of a recursive series of laments about the apparent incapacity of these technologies to represent or manifest fully—the word, presence, personality, meaning, intention, and beyond. It is, moreover, a history so densely laden with contradictions and role reversals that a time when something besides loss and alienation ruled the day seems almost unimaginable. (Striphas, 26)

The new trend of reading on digital devices is no exception. Digital text is often seen as intellectually or experientially impoverished (Striphas, 2009). Critics fear that through the decrease in reading of print media literacy and along with it our education will impair significantly throughout the next years. A study of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in 2004 called Reading at Risk shows a decline in literary reading, along with a decline in total book reading from 1982 to 2002. The biggest difference in the numbers of literary reading is found among the group of young adults. “The rate of decline for the youngest adults (18-24) is 55 percent greater than that of the total adult population (-28 percent vs. -18 percent)” (NEA, 2004). The NEA argues that this is a sign of an “imminent cultural crisis”, meaning that literary culture and skills will continue to worsen and that “reading as a leisure activity will disappear in half a century”. According to it, reading being at risk means culture being at risk, in other words, if literary reading will continue to decrease our cultural legacy will disappear with it.

The NEA is not the only critic of new reading technologies. Author Nicholas Carr fears that multimodality, which is almost omnipresent online, is more distracting than
helpful to the comprehension of the read text. Efficiency and immediacy are the most important attributes in the use of the internet and this shift in technological affordances reshapes our way of reading. In Carr’s opinion the skimming practice learned by reading online does not only change but actually replace our ability to deep-read and concentrate on longer texts. Additionally he argues that deep reading is irretrievably linked with deep thinking, which, put in a different way, means that reading online makes us stupid (Carr, 2008).

Carr goes even further as he argues that the new media and technologies we use for reading and learning to read, play an important role in shaping our brain. This especially affects children, who are in the process of learning how to read. Children’s literacy development is probably one of the biggest concerns about reading on digital devices. It is one of the main reasons why parents are still skeptical about the use of e-books when reading with their children (Kobo, 2013). The opinion that a printed book is better in terms of helping children learn how to read, seems to be at the root of the resistance to e-books. However, it is important to see that this is only a matter of opinion, not borne out in research. There has been no substantive study proving that in terms of development or educational value reading to children with e-books is better or worse than print (Kobo, 2013).

A study by Dr. Rachael Levy, a professor in Early Years Education at the University of Sheffield, even showed that children may feel more comfortable when reading on screen than when reading printed books. The multimodality of digital works helps them to understand the written text. Children who are not very confident in reading may feel under pressure when they are supposed to read and understand a written text without the aid of other media like images or icons. Hence, the multimodality provided by enhanced e-books can even been seen as a support for the literacy process of children, especially the ones that have problems in their literacy
development (Levy, 2009).

The ability of children to handle and cope with digital devices today is often underestimated. 70% of 4-6 years old have used a computer at least once in their life (Hisrich, Blanchard, 2009). Excluding children from digital media in today's society is close to impossible. Children see their parents and siblings constantly using digital devices and media. They observe and unconsciously learn how to tap and swipe on a touchscreen and the meaning of different icons displayed on the screen. Young children today can deal better with new forms of media and adapt faster to their use than may be expected. While it may be difficult and unusual to read on screen for older generations, for children who are growing up with digital media it is easier and more familiar.

Supporting as well as opposing sources tend to take biased stances based on preconceived ideas about print and digital, as well as biased opinions about the benefits and disadvantages of the two media forms. Additionally there do not yet exist sufficient studies of the topic of literacy which naturally requires long-term studies over many years to properly address the impact of any medium on a child’s intellectual development

6. The digital children book

6.1 Multimodality in the digital children book

The concept of multimodality is a key concern in this thesis. It is central to the understanding of children books and prevalent in the analyses of digital texts. Multimodality is an inter-disciplinary term; Günther Kress has defined multimodality as the combination of different modalities to create meaning. He is connecting multimodality to the field of social semiotics, which aims to explain “how people communicate by a variety of means in particular social settings” (MODE, 2012). In
the case of multimodality it refers to which modes were chosen and which purpose they bear, in short it analyses how communicators create texts and how this text is interpreted by the user. Practices of representation, as well as communication always consist of various modes which shape meaning. Children books have so far always been multimodal, particularly through the combination of images and written texts, some even interactive, for example pop-up books or books with fold-out images. With the digital book however, multimodality takes on a far more important role in transmitting the meaning of text. In the digital form written text can be combined with sound, a voice which reads out the story, music or animated images. Additionally the fact that most digital reading devices are equipped with a touch screen gives users of enhanced books the possibility to physically interact with the text in a way that has not been possible before. This interplay of different media forms can help to support written text, create a different reading experience and engage readers deeper with it.

This development alters what Bearne calls "the ecology of literacy" (Bearne 2009). The definition of reading as we know it changes with the emergence of new media forms. The linguistics as theory of language is shifting to a more semiotic approach, considering not just one but various elements as meaningful (Bearne, 2009). Reading multimodal texts is not just about decoding text on a printed page, but involves a more complex skill set to understand and make meaning of the interrelation of different forms of media (Levy 2009). Ted Strifhas suggests "that reading is an intricate, multifarious activity, one that varies significantly across time and space". At this point in media history reading and publishing multimodal digital texts requires a new set of strategies, which are entirely unique and cannot be compared to anything that existed before.

Multimodality is not new, however with the new technologies it gains new importance in the publishing world. But multimodality does not just change the book
itself but also reading behavior and expands what we, so far, understood under terms like “reading” and “literacy”.

6.2 Case studies

The before mentioned necessity of developing new strategies in publishing multimodal digital texts led to the production of works that differ widely from anything known and evoke wide media attention. Established magazines and newspapers like the *New York Times* or *Wired* dedicated several articles to the topic of enhanced children book apps. Ranking lists of the top apps can be found on numerous blogs and websites, reviewed and rated by professionals and parents.

One of the Apps that gained a lot of media attention and accolades from parents and online reviewers is the in 2012 released app *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore*. This interactive storybook from Moonbot studios is based on the Oscar winning short film *Morris Lessmore* and is so far only available for Apple devices.

The app tells the story of Morris Lessmore, a book lover, who one day gets blown away by a storm and strands in a house full of lovely, living books. As the story goes on Morris takes care of the books, feeds them and repairs them until he, already an old man, finishes writing his own biography and decides that it is time to leave. As described on the producers website, “The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore is a poignant, humorous allegory about the curative powers of story.” (morrislessmore.com).

The navigation through the app is made to look and feel book-like, including pages that have to be turned with a swipe on the screen, as one would turn the leaf of a page. Almost every page is built of a text frame in the bottom and an animated image or video above it. Through touching indicated, through arrows or slight blinking, parts
Additionally every page contains sound effects and music, as well as an option to have the text read out loud. All of these features, as well as the written text, which is available in different languages, can be turned off separately at any moment during the experience of the app.

Small games, spread throughout the book, are supporting certain parts of the storyline and provide the app with more interactivity and a possibility for the user to engage.
The Fantastic Flying books of Mr. Morris Lessmore is an example of an enhanced children book which take reading and learning seriously. It successfully combines text and images with sound, music and interaction. While music and sound are extensions which are not necessary for the understanding of the story, they certainly contribute to the specific mood and ambience that makes this app so special. The sound, however is an important for the interactive part of the app, without it certain additional activities do not work. So does one for example not hear Lessmore’s knocking on the door of the destroyed house and misses to tap the door in order to release him. Enough time for the interactive parts is created through the manual turning of the pages. This leaves time for children and parents to explore each page, to find the additional features and enjoy them for as long as they want to. It also applies when the text is being read aloud. The narrator talks slowly, easily understandable and makes breaks between certain sentences to give the user the possibility of concentrating on the other media displayed, or re-read the text.

The interactive parts in this app are with a few exceptions supportive of the text, so is it for example possible to hear certain sounds after activating which are verbally described in the text. In this case multimodality cannot be considered as a distraction, as Carr argues, but as an improvement and enhancement of the reading experience. Furthermore the story of Lessmore honors and promotes the book as medium and reading as cultural practice. The books described in the story take on an antropomorphic role and the relationship between them and humans and their role of in the life of humans is highly romanticized.

Another enhanced book for children, Alice, published by Atomic Anteloupe is a clear remediation of a traditional print book in a new digital form. The overall style is very book-like, imitating the yellowed pages of an old printed work; also the illustrations are in a rather old-fashioned style. Reading Lewis M. Carroll’s Alice in
Wonderland converts in a completely new reading experience, combining successfully the old with the new. In opposite to Lessmore, Alice is based on text, containing far less images and neither sound nor music. The interactions are quite one sided, consisting mostly in depicted objects which were mentioned in the text, and can be flipped through finger movements or through tilting of the tablet. They are a simple extension to the text, not necessary for understanding or support. Still, due to their simplicity they do not distract from the lecture and the understanding of the story.

These two apps are despite their differences both very suitable examples to show that publishers are on the way to use multimodality for educational purposes and to support literary development. A comparison of them further shows the development in enhanced book development throughout the last years; from the very simple multimodality of Alice to the complex, but still perfectly working concept of The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore. Finding the appropriate combination of text and other media is the key to the production of valuable enhanced books. Additionally both promote the printed book as medium and hold it in high honor, transmitting these values to their users.

Available in the App store are also free enhanced children books, for example of
Tab Table which released various famous children stories, like *Alice in Wonderland* or the *Wizard of Oz* in digital format. Like *Lessmore*, these apps include text, sound, a read out option and interaction, as well as various games. However, there are some important differences concerning the quality of the apps. While all the interactional parts and animations in *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* are related and supportive to the story, in the apps of Tab Table they mostly do not specifically make sense, to say nothing of being educative. So, if for example one of the carpenter tools around Pinocchio is touched, it jumps or flips and produces noise, though nothing that has anything to do with the actual purpose of these artifacts. The Tab Table apps also include games which are separately accessible and not embedded in the story like in *Lessmore*. These games exist merely for entertainment, not as extension or aid to the comprehension of the story.

The educational and literary value of enhanced children book is strongly dependent of the relation of different media forms. An overload and competition of interaction and different media can be distracting. Hence, these new features should be used carefully and thought out. Simply using animation, sound, and similar without any supportive value for the story and careful collaboration between them might serve for the entertainment of children, but not their educational and literary development. In the creation of enhanced books less can sometimes be more (Kobo, 2013). The two above mentioned examples show ways of how to create enhanced books, which do not distract or confuse through an overload of modes. *Alice*, for example, focuses mainly on text, only scarcely using images and movable objects throughout the app to support the story visually and entertain the reader. *Lessmore* on the other hand uses a wider range of different modes, successfully combined, so that every additional mode is supportive and not distractive of the written text and storyline. Apps like the *Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* or *Alice* are proof that
enhanced children books can be as educational as they are entertaining.

7. Conclusion

It is undeniable that the growing popularity and development of digital books and on-screen reading has had immense impact on publishing as a business sector. Publishers suddenly find themselves forced to react to the changes caused by digitalisation. The resulting fear of “the death of the book” fueled by numbers of rising use of digital media instead of print, is as I have argued, a biased and premature conclusion. It results in research that shows that people, even younger generations, still prefer the printed book over the digital, probably due to the former’s emotional and monetary value. Additionally, e-book sales in 2013 stagnated, which could be seen as a sign of a possible balance reached between digital and print books. Putting a special focus on the impact of digitalisation on children books I further encountered a different set of concerns. On-screen reading and especially the new technology of enhanced books are closely linked with the theories of multimodality. Children books have always been mostly multimodal, combining images and text, but new digital media like enhanced books allow the combination of more than just these two modes. This development suggests a great possibility to create a new and still educational reading experience and to get them interested into reading. However, critics see screen reading in general as less valuable to literary development than reading of print. They state that the combination of different modes is rather distracting than supportive to a text, making it impossible to deeply read and engage with a text. Due to this critique’s blindness to different genres, for example the children book, where pictures account for an essential part, it can actually be designated as a fear of images. This led to a rising fear of the effects on the literary development of children and in general on culture and education. Similar to the
prediction of the extinction of the printed book by the digital this conclusion is biased, not taking into account recent researches showing that children use digital media more intuitively, learning through observation of their environment. Additionally studies show that children are highly capable of making meaning of multimodal texts, even seeing other modes as supportive for the understanding of written text, instead of distracting. A new form of literacy is developing, one that does not just focus on the decoding of written text, but also on other forms of meaning making. As my case studies show, *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* and *Alice*, as well as the apps of Tab Table, multimodality is a tool which can, if used appropriately, create meaningful and valuable works. These two examples demonstrate that it is realizable to create enhanced books that do not distract or confuse through an overload of different modes.

Due to the novelty and continuous shifts concerning the questions of digitalization and final conclusions are impossible to be drawn. However, the consideration and analysis of sources from a range of fields and research point to a future co-existence of print and digital books. In terms of children books and children’s literary development, the changing ecology of reading should be seen as a development prompted by changes in culture rather than as a danger to culture. Digital media offer great possibilities for the creation of valuable, educational as well as engaging children’s books and it is time to start using them to benefit from this recent development.
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Digital catalogue for TakaTuka

My Bachelor project consists in the creation of a digital catalogue for the Spanish children’s book publisher TakaTuka.

1. From the start…Why a digital catalogue?

The idea for this project occurred to me while working on a similar project for the course Digital Text Production. I was wondering why—if they produce e-books—publishers do not produce their catalogues in digital forms. Through further research I found out that most large publishing companies are already working on projects like this, but that printed catalogues are still the most common way for them to approach their retailers. Looking for a publisher that would be willing to realize this project with me, I finally found TakaTuka, a Spanish publisher for children’s books. TakaTuka is a relatively young publisher and due to their still on-going establishment in the market and limited staff, digital media and catalogues were nothing they considered doing yet.

2. The company

TakaTuka is part of the small publisher Virus, which was created in 1991; both are situated in Barcelona, Spain. The publishing program contains picture books, novels and non-fictional books for children and youths. The editorial concentrates on “stories that allow girls and boys to better understand their environment and to approach the adult world with curiosity, providing them with elements of analysis and criticism, and
encouraging them to feel as protagonists of their own lives and future” and produces as beautiful as sophisticated books for children and teenagers.

3. Choice of platform

The Internet offers various platforms and programs which allow the creation and publication of magazines or in this case catalogues. After some time of research and testing different platforms, I decided to introduce two to TakaTuka, Mag+ and Joomag. Due to monetary reasons the publisher decided to use Joomag, which though it offers less possibility than Mag+, convinced through a more flexible and fitting price plan. Joomag has various ones which include different features; it can be used for free, allowing the use of sound, links, galleries, etc. as well the publication on the platform. Other price plans, allow for example for the use of the catalogue on tablets and smartphones or a subscribe option. The price plan can be updated at every time and consists of monthly subscriptions. Joomag offers an online editor, which allows the user to create a magazine from scratch or use templates or his own PDF as basis.

4. The catalogue

Due to my own skills I decided to do the design part of the project in Adobe InDesign and later on upload the PDF to Joomag to include various features instead of using Joomag to design from scratch or a template. My contact person in TakaTuka provided me with all necessary material to be able to create the catalogue. In terms of lay-out and design, the only requirement was the highlighting of new titles; otherwise they did not express special requirements or wishes.

I decided to separate the catalogue in three parts, each for one genre TakaTuka is publishing, called álbumes (picture-books), novelas (novels) and no ficción (non-
fiction). Each section starts with a double paged title page, followed by this year’s new releases and ending with older works, which are presented in a three column lay-out.

The title page, as well as the title pages of each genre, are in a modern, sleek design, including the TakaTuka logo and its typical colors, red, white and black. The actual title page additionally includes the slogan “la isla de los libros” and an image of TakaTuka’s “logo dog”. I used the red column and the same style in all title pages to create a sense of consistency.

The novelties are presented on two pages, which provide enough space for images as well as text. My plan was to keep the design simple but playful to represent the colorful spirit of children books. The title can be on either the right or the left of the double page, giving the catalogue a slightly more innovative and dynamic look. Important facts for users of the catalogue are highlighted through the
use of boxes and different colors, to make them directly and easily viewable.

In the following pages I represented the older works, using a three column lay out. Every column includes an image of the book cover followed by the title and author in color. I used color to set it apart from the following description, which is in black and a smaller font size. The end of each column consists of the important characteristics of the book, like size, price, etc. Also this part is set apart through the use of color. I also wanted to keep this part sleek, but not too serious, which is the reason for decorating it with certain images from the book which makes the pages a bit livelier. In the section “novelas” I resigned to the use of these playful images to not distract from the fact that these works are directed to an older audience. The general font I have used is a freely available font called “Walkway” which has a modern and interesting design, however due to some issues with the legibility of the smaller parts I finally changed the font to “Century Gothic” that has similar characteristics but is easier to read. I decided to include a last page with contact details of the publisher and its employees, which is common in this kind of catalogues. Additionally this offers the possibility to directly link e-mail addresses and make it following easier accessible and time saving for the user.
During the production process of the PDF I was in constant contact with TakaTuka to keep up with their opinions and wishes, as well as their suggestions for change.

5. Joomag

Once the PDF is done and approved I will upload it to Joomag, creating a new Issue and modify it in the platform’s editor. I am planning to transform author’s names, and book titles into links, which lead directly to the corresponding page of TakaTuka’s website. There users of the catalogue can find additional information, as well as a directly order books. Furthermore I would like to include photo-galleries on the novelty pages, changing with the image of the little book title, to provide users more information on how the book looks like inside.
6. Conclusion

My intention was to create a modern, but playful lay-out to express TakaTuka’s character. Furthermore I wanted to point out the advantages of using digital catalogues instead of printed ones, like ease of distribution and production cost, which are especially important for a smaller company like TakaTuka. The realization of the project was quite time intensive, but it was a new and interesting experience to work with an actual company; especially to accept changes and wishes which I did not like or would not have done. Eventually while creating this project I learned a lot about lay-out, the use of InDesign and Joomag and about how it is to work with an external company.
The digitalization that has transformed the publishing industry during the last years has not just had profound effects on the book, but also on marketing and distribution practices. Now, publishers have the possibility to produce marketing items like catalogues digitally and distribute them over the internet. This implies various advantages: it saves enormous printing and distribution cost as well as time, and further digitalization offers functional features like near limitless space, the inclusion of links, sounds, videos, etc into the digital texts. Additionally, platforms like Mag+, Joomag, Issuu and many more allow for the creation and publication of a catalogue without requiring any coding, which facilitates and speeds up the production process for the publisher. Some of these platforms even offer their service for free which makes the production of a digital catalogue or magazine viable for every publisher, independent of factors like marketing budget and web-designer.

My project consists in the production of such a digital catalogue for the Spanish children book publisher TakaTuka, which is still a fairly new and small publisher without any experience in digital media. Due to skepticism about if a digital catalogue actually has advantages for them, the company decided to use Joomag, which offers free publication and the possibility to later upgrading.

This project aims to show one specific case of developments and advantages the digitalisation has for the publishing business. Digital catalogues are a thing every publisher should consider including in their marketing strategy; they are faster, cheaper, offer additional features and are on top of this good for the environment.