TOOLKIT for Beyond the Tangled Web: Envisioning a Comprehensive Technology Strategy for Your Literary Organization
-Veronica Liu

"Publishing is going through a revolution. There's opportunity and danger. The danger lies in ignoring or resisting the transformation in media. . . . To us, literature is what is important, not the medium. If eBooks, Kindles, or iPhone apps help literature survive, then we're all for them."
—*Electric Literature*, About page

"At the same time, if you believe that the internet is a revolution, then you must take seriously the consequences of that revolution *as it is*. . . . At this point the best thing the web and the book could do for one another would be to admit their essential difference. This would allow the web to develop as it wishes, with a clear conscience, and for literature to do what it's always done in periods of crisis: keep its eyes and ears open; take notes; and bide its time."
—*n+1*, Issue 9

And so, whether you are one to embrace revolution or shuffle your feet during this period of crisis in publishing, the least we can do is provide you with some notes. Here, the terms, topics, and organizations that came up in panels or Q&As during last fall's Facing Pages convening are compiled for reference. This is by no means a comprehensive list of all the topics or tools available to literary organizations considering technology as it relates to their presenting/publishing programs, and the items below aren't meant to be unequivocal endorsements of the "it" thing to do. These are just possible tools, albeit for a house that is still being built.

C O N T E N T & D I S T R I B U T I O N

Presenting Audio on the Web
Audible (audible.com)
iTunes (apple.com/itunes/content-providers)

Audible came up on the day of the convening as one publisher's main audiobook endeavor beyond physical CDs. Audible produces and sells audiobooks as downloads. As the producer, Audible takes care of casting actors, recording, etc. Purchased by Amazon in 2008, the company has a monopoly on the downloadable audiobook market.

Other venues to make audio available for purchase—or also for free, on sites that aren't your own but where browsers may find them—are to sell mp3s on **iTunes** or on **Amazon**.

If you aren't planning audio, you can embed on a streaming audio player on your website, such as . . .

Presenting Video on the Web
Babelgum (babelgum.com)
Hulu (hulu.com)
Vimeo (vimeo.com)
YouTube (youtube.com)

Babelgum was brought up on the day of the convening, though it's hard to discuss without mention of **YouTube**, **Vimeo**, or a host of other video-hosting sites. All of these are sites to which you can publish videos that people can watch for free, though the companies promote themselves with subtle differences: YouTube celebrates the individual uploader, Vimeo describes itself as a social-networking site centered on video, and Babelgum emphasizes that it's for "professional content owners," i.e. not open to those who make fuzzy home videos of sneezing cats.

Out of these three, Babelgum content is not as open as, say, YouTube, where anyone who knows how can upload content, but it aspires to stream better quality files, which can be longer than the ten minutes YouTube allows. Publishers can arrange to make money (but don't have to) by getting a cut of any ad revenue that they can agree to have stream before or after a Bablegum video.

Mention of **Hulu** also came up at the convening, as an example of how more and more people are taking in their entertainment and information through the internet, that it's not just newspaper reading and radio listening that have migrated but also TV watching. Hulu is a website that streams commercial-supported TV shows and movies mostly from major networks and high-profile studios.

Presenting and Archiving Paper-Based Content on the Web
Issuu (issuu.com)
Scribd (scribd.com)

Issuu was discussed at the convening by Publishing Genius Press, though **Scribd** is also listed here as another, similar option. On both Issuu and Scribd, you can upload documents (PDFs of books or magazines, Word docs, etc.) so that others can read them as web documents. These documents can be embedded on your website, rated, commented on, shared to social networks, and downloaded. On Issuu, uploaded print material is made to look like a "realistic" printed publication with animated page flips, whereas on Scribd you scroll down the page as you would in the original offline document; both services let you add hyperlinks to the documents. Both sites push the community aspect of being able to share these documents with a web audience who can check out your publication for free, though they also offer options for readers to pay. Publishers can use both sites for free, though there's also a "Pro" option you can pay for on Issuu. Scrib recently partnered with services like Blurb, MagCloud, and Mimeo to accommodate print-on-demand paperbacks, magazines, and documents.

Jstor (short for Journal Storage) and **Project MUSE** are online systems for archiving academic journals, providing full-text searches of digitized back issues of several hundred well-known journals. Each database covers different journals, though the ability to see the texts is limited to those with institutional access (libraries, schools, etc.). Project MUSE provides both PDF and HTML files, and includes the most recent issues. JSTOR, used by *Bomb* magazine,

provides PDFs only, and has a "moving wall" policy to protect publishers, such that online issues of more than 90 percent of its titles do not become available until at least three years have passed since publication of the print issue.

Syndication
Blogs
Podcasts
RSS
Twitter

Podcast is a series of digital media files (either audio or video) that are released episodically and often downloaded through web syndication. The mode of delivery differentiates podcasting from other means of accessing media files over the Internet, such as direct download, or streamed webcasting. A list of all the audio or video files currently associated with a given series is maintained centrally on the distributor's server as a web feed, and the listener or viewer employs special client application software known as a podcatcher that can access this web feed, check it for updates, and download any new files in the series. This process can be automated so that new files are downloaded automatically. Files are stored locally on the user's computer or other device ready for offline use, giving simple and convenient access to episodic content.

      RSS (most commonly expanded as "Really Simple Syndication") is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works—such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video—in a standardized format. An RSS document (which is called a "feed", "web feed", or "channel") includes full or summarized text, plus metadata such as publishing dates and authorship. Web feeds benefit publishers by letting them syndicate content automatically. They benefit readers who want to subscribe to timely updates from favored websites or to aggregate feeds from many sites into one place. RSS feeds can be read using software called an "RSS reader", "feed reader", or "aggregator", which can be web-based, desktop-based, or mobile-device-based. A standardized XML file format allows the information to be published once and viewed by many different programs. The user subscribes to a feed by entering into the reader the feed's URI or by clicking an RSS icon in a web browser that initiates the subscription process. The RSS reader checks the user's subscribed feeds regularly for new work, downloads any updates that it finds, and provides a user interface to monitor and read the feeds.

Electronic Book Readers
iPad
Kindle
Nook
Sony Reader
Google Editions

Offering ebooks is becoming increasingly common, with both very small and larger presses. BlazeVOX, for example, offers downloads from their web site. This is what Geoffery Gatza had to say about their experience:

"Each of our titles have around 6 to 7 thousand unique downloads on each of our titles. This is astounding when most of our POD books sell rather infrequently on Amazon.com or through

SPD. It seems that people do want full-length collections of contemporary writers but are reluctant to purchase a book. This is wonderful for us, as it costs next to nothing to make an ebook. We use the same method to produce an ebook as we do to make a POD book, only we do not have to use the materials to make the thing so it is an area we plan to focus in on in the future."

M A R K E T I N G

Email Marketing
Constant Contact (constantcontact.com)
Mail Chimp (mailchimp.com)
VerticalResponse (verticalresponse.com)

Constant Contact, **Mail Chimp**, and **VerticalResponse** are different software companies that allow you to send email newsletters and surveys in a professional-looking format. Some organizations, such as the Academy of American Poets, have custom newsletter systems, since they were on the web relatively early. The drawback to custom systems, though, are that updates are sometimes quicker to take hold in third-party systems.
These companies offer different services and rates depending on how large your email list and database are. Smaller organizations may do better with a particular company that offers rates for small distribution as opposed to organizations that reach thousands of members.

Social Networking –
Facebook (facebook.com)
Meetup (meetup.com)
MySpace (myspace.com)
Twitter (twitter.com)

We all know about most of these social networking options, all of the organizations at the convening use one or more of them to help promote their events or presses.

I N T H E O F F I C E

File Transfering
File Transfer Protocol (FTP)
     -Cyberduck (cyberduck.ch)
     -Fetch (fetchsoftworks.com/fetch) (Mac only)
     -Filezilla (filezilla-project.org)
SendSpace (sendspace.com)
YouSendIt (yousendit.com)

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) is a way of transferring large files over the internet, files that are too big to send over email. You need to have FTP client software installed on your computer (**Fetch** is common on Macs; **Cyberduck** and **Filezilla** are decent free alternatives), through which you connect and transfer the file to a server, where a colleague can later access the file.

You can also use **SendSpace** and **YouSendIt** to send files too big for email, in a more temporary manner than with an FTP client. These services offer temporary online file hosting—up to 100MB is free to send on YouSendIt, and up to 300 MB is free to send on SendSpace, though both companies offer more storage or downloading options for a fee.

Content Management Systems
GiantChair (giantchair.com)
Submission Manager (clmp.org/about/sub_mgr_form.html)

Content Management Systems (CMS) are . . . MySQL, a database method that most websites use; examples WordPress, Drupal.

A hosted CMS means that another company is managing much of the "back end"—installing the ecommerce elements of your site, implementing new marketing tools as the need arises, monitoring the servers. An example of a hosted CMS is a company called **GiantChair**, whose main clients are indie publishers.

Created by the journal *One Story*, **Submission Manager** is an online system for accepting and managing written submissions for a magazine or press. Available for other journals to license through the Council of Literary Magazines and Press, you can accept submissions through your website; track submissions automatically; assign submissions to editors and readers; accept or reject submissions individually or en mass; and create standard and personalized email rejections.

Donor Management Systems
Giftworks (missionresearch.com)
Raiser's Edge (blackbaud.com/products/fundraising/raisersedge.aspx)

Both **Giftworks** and **Raiser's Edge** were brought up at the convening as examples of donor-database software in use by organizations in the room. This kind of software is used to track donors and pledgers, manage funds, and send out mailings. Giftworks allows organizations to accept online donations that can then easily post to Quicken. Raiser's Edge has all kinds of add-ons like MatchFinder, which helps with identifying matching gift program candidates within your database.

Other inexpensive or free donor-database software:
BasicFunder (jellyware.net)
Ebase (ebase.org) *free*
eTapestry (etapestry.com)
Metrix (metrix.fcny.org) *free*

Metrics

Google Analytics (GA) is a free service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about the visitors to a website. Its main highlight is that the product is aimed at marketers as opposed to webmasters and technologists from which the industry of web analytics originally grew. It is the most widely used website statistics service, currently in use at around 57% of the 10,000 most popular websites. GA can track visitors from all referrers, including search engines, display advertising, pay-per-click networks, email marketing and digital collateral such as links within PDF documents.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology is an analytical artificial intelligence system that considers sequences of characters rather than whole words or phrases. Based on the analysis of sequential lines and curves, OCR makes 'best guesses' at characters using database look-up tables to closely associate or match the strings of characters that form words. OCR systems require calibration to read a specific font; early versions needed to be programmed with images of each character, and worked on one font at a time. "Intelligent" systems with a high degree of recognition accuracy for most fonts are now common. Some systems are capable of reproducing formatted output that closely approximates the original scanned page including images, columns and other non-textual components.

I N T E R E S T I N G   P R O J E C T S

Sophie / Future of the Book / Golden Notebook Project

Electric Literature's mission is to use new media and innovative distribution to return the short story to a place of prominence in popular culture. It is a quarterly anthology of five short stories, delivered in every viable medium. From the website: "To publish the paperback version of Electric Literature, we use print-on-demand; the eBook, Kindle, iPhone, and audio versions are digital. This eliminates our up-front printing bill. Rather than paying $5,000 to one printer, we pay $1,000 to five writers, ensuring that our writers are paid fairly. Our anthology is available anywhere in the world, overruns aren't pulped, and our back issues are perpetually in print. We hope that this model can set a precedent: more access for readers, and fairness for writers."

Take the Handle (www.takethehandle.com) – an on-line quarterly that includes essays, photos, videos and news.

Triple Canopy (www.canopycanopycanopy.com)- Triple Canopy works collectively with writers, artists, researchers and other collaborators on projects that deal critically with culture and politics, and the ways people engage them, both online and in the world at large. These investigations are realized in an online magazine as well as in public programs and print publications encompassing various fields and locales.

Bomb's image archive (www.bombsite.com)- the archive seems to go on forever.