

# Print And Etext Convergence: Creator To Consumer In A Digital Age

Learning element 3.2

**Pluralism v Elitism:**

*Why do we still have 'bestsellers'?*



*Bill Cope, Tom Davis and Mary Kalantzis*



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[www.C-2-CCourse.com](http://www.C-2-CCourse.com)

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## Framework map

### Print And Etext Convergence

	<i>Empirical And Experiential</i>	<i>Conceptual And Critical</i>	<i>Applied And Transferred</i>
<p><b>Theme 1: Print</b></p>	<p><b>1.1</b></p> <p><b>History And Structure Of The Print Industry</b></p> <p><i>How is the current industry a reflection of the past?</i></p>	<p><b>1.2</b></p> <p><b>Markets, Language And Identity</b></p> <p><i>How does print link business, politics &amp; culture?</i></p>	<p><b>1.3</b></p> <p><b>SWOT Analysis</b></p> <p><i>How healthy are traditional print &amp; publishing businesses?</i></p>
<p><b>Theme 2: EText</b></p>	<p><b>2.1</b></p> <p><b>The Development Of EText</b></p> <p><i>How has etext grown? Who has pushed it?</i></p>	<p><b>2.2</b></p> <p><b>Artefacts v Availability</b></p> <p><i>Why isn't the book dead already?</i></p>	<p><b>2.3</b></p> <p><b>Market Analysis</b></p> <p><i>How can etext be sold?</i></p>
<p><b>Theme 3: Convergence</b></p>	<p><b>3.1</b></p> <p><b>Print In The Digital Age</b></p> <p><i>To what extent has digitisation altered supply chains?</i></p>	<p><b>3.2</b></p> <p><b>Pluralism v Elitism</b></p> <p><i>Why do we still have 'bestsellers'?</i></p>	<p><b>3.3</b></p> <p><b>The Future Of Convergence</b></p> <p><i>What is a viable way forward for digital print &amp; publishing?</i></p>

## Aims

### Knowledge scope

**Pluralism v Elitism** encourages you to investigate arguments around literary elitism and marketing and their impact on the book industry. The focus here is on the social and economic dynamics that may influence the way technological advances in the digitisation of print are picked up by the broad community. For example, does the fact creators may have greater opportunity to publish their work with the convergence of print and EText technologies mean they will also have access to markets? Or are markets constructed by literary and economic elites? And, ultimately, do they determine which books are considered “good”? Alternatively, are other possibilities raised by the convergence between print and EText?

### Knowledge and capability aims

By the completion of this Learning Element you will have the capacity to:

- ⊗ effectively engage in debate over the social construction of markets, and the implications for digital publishing;
- ⊗ bring the empirical knowledge you have gained in relation to the digital supply chain to bear on questions of elites and creator access to markets;
- ⊗ better work within and between disciplines and argumentative frameworks; and
- ⊗ better structure an academic argument as you work your way to a considered position on the substantive issues raised in this element.

### Important terminology

The ‘Learning Framework’ is the overall educational endeavour of ‘*Print And Etext Convergence*’. This is comprised of three ‘themes’, presented in the left-hand column of the Framework map. Each theme is divided into three learning ‘processes’, presented in the top row of the Framework map. Altogether this constitutes nine ‘elements’. The Learning Framework is also referred to as the ‘course’.

## **Learning processes**

The primary learning process in this element is to discuss with fellow students the questions set out below. In your discussion you are to make reference to the readings listed underneath the questions. You should also seek out other material, starting from the list of weblinks provided.

You will notice that the information included with each reference indicates the perspective of the reading, whether it tends to be:

Business,  
Cultural studies or  
Technology oriented.

In your discussions and learning activities you should take account of the different perspectives represented by the readings and acknowledge those in your responses. You may wish to address this theme from a particular perspective, such as technological changes taking place in the industry.

### **Learning activity: Online/Tutorial Issues**

Engage in Online/Tutorial discussion in response to the following questions:

- 1) Who defines what is a “good” book? How might this influence consumers?**
- 2) What does the “Western Literary Canon” mean and which books might you expect to see on its list?**
- 3) Does the convergence of print and EText allow for new players – writers and publishers – to enter the book trade? Or will the established players continue to dominate?**
- 4) Does an expansion in the number of literature creators, as envisaged under the C-2-C concept, equate with a diminishment in average quality of output? Is it sometimes a good thing for a society to have a clear standard for measuring literary (and cultural) value?**

### **Recommended reading:**

Focus on the first three sources before moving on to the others.

## Sources

When viewing this online you can click on a learning source title to go to the reading. Each reading in the list is provided with a label titled ‘**Perspective**’. Use this as a guide in determining its relevance to the three categories: Business, Culture or Technology.

<b>Title:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Publishing: The Current State of Play</a>
<b>Author:</b>	Mercieca, Paul
<b>Year:</b>	2001
<b>Book Title:</b>	C-2-C: Creator to Consumer in a Digital Age
<b>Editor:</b>	Cope, Bill; Mason, Dean
<b>City:</b>	Altona
<b>Publisher:</b>	Common Ground Publishing
<b>Pages:</b>	77-99
<b>Perspective:</b>	Technology, Culture
<b>Keywords:</b>	Digital Supply Chains, Marketing, Distribution Of Text, Technological Change, Opportunities For Authors
<b>Abstract:</b>	This chapter offers an overview of the dynamic between digital print technology and readers—and, more generally, society.

<b>Title:</b>	<a href="#">The Western Canon</a>
<b>Author:</b>	Schenk, Leslie
<b>Year:</b>	1996
<b>Journal:</b>	World Literature Today
<b>Volume:</b>	70
<b>Issue:</b>	2
<b>Pages:</b>	325-329
<b>Perspective:</b>	Culture
<b>Keywords:</b>	Elites, Markets, Literary Criticism, Creators & Consumers
<b>Abstract:</b>	Review of Harold Bloom's <a href="#">The Western Canon</a> . Argues that, while Bloom has done a good job in identifying the key figures in Western literature, and in arguing why it is they are key, he has failed to properly address the question of the legitimacy in the "Western Canon" assuming the mantle of the "Global Canon". The tendency of Western literary elites to presume non-Western literature has little global impact is one which Schenk believes to be false and in need of redress.

<b>Title:</b>	<a href="#">Reading Bloom (Or: Lessons Concerning the 'Reformation' of the Western Literary Canon)</a>
<b>Author:</b>	Baumlin, James S.
<b>Year:</b>	2000
<b>Journal:</b>	College Literature
<b>Volume:</b>	27
<b>Issue:</b>	3
<b>Pages:</b>	22-46
<b>Perspective:</b>	Culture
<b>Keywords:</b>	Elites, Literature, Western Canon, Cross-Cultural Analysis, Postcolonialism
<b>Abstract:</b>	This article critiques Harold Bloom's attempts to revive and promote the notion of the Western Literary Canon. The author's central argument concerns the extent to which Bloom fails to recognise the level of interaction between non-Western and Western societies and literature.

<b>Title:</b>	<a href="#">Technology to the Fore</a>
<b>Author:</b>	Lichtenberg, James
<b>Year:</b>	2002
<b>Journal:</b>	Publishers Weekly
<b>Volume:</b>	May 6, 2002
<b>Pages:</b>	25-29
<b>Perspective:</b>	Technology, Business
<b>Keywords:</b>	Technological Change, Internet, Supply Chains, Industry Change
<b>Abstract:</b>	"The mere arrival on the scene of a new technology ... does not guarantee immediate response. Innovation is a complex, meandering process. The full flowering of any innovation can take several decades until conditions are right. In the case of publishing, had the corporate structure of publishing not changed so radically over the past quarter-century, the issue of operational efficiency would be much less urgent. However, publishing today is the product of several decades of mergers and acquisitions. The increasing scale of a publishing company creates a huge difference as to its functioning..."

<b>Title:</b>	"Good Democracy": The Role of Public Service Broadcasting
<b>Author:</b>	Jacka, Elizabeth
<b>Year:</b>	2001
<b>Publisher:</b>	Paper presented at the Rethinking Public Media in a Transnational Era Conference. New York University. January 11-14 2000
<b>Perspective:</b>	Culture
<b>Keywords:</b>	Elitism In Media, Notion Of Standards, Pluralism And Democracy, Globalisation, Public Broadcasting And Media
<b>Abstract:</b>	This paper attacks the notion that there is always a deep division between "cultural elitism" and democracy by considering the examples raised by public broadcasters - especially the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

<b>Web sources:</b>
Publishers Marketing Association <a href="http://www.pma-online.org/index.cfm">www.pma-online.org/index.cfm</a>
The PMA newsletter <a href="http://www.pma-online.org/news.cfm">www.pma-online.org/news.cfm</a>
Articles on Epublishing and marketing from Wired magazine <a href="http://www.wired.com/news/culture">http://www.wired.com/news/culture</a>

## **Assessment Task A option**

You may wish to draw on the issues raised in this element, **Pluralism v Elitism**, for your Assessment Task A (worth 25% of your overall grade).

To complete Assessment Task A you must write a proposal (of approximately, but not exceeding, 1,500 words) for the larger work that will constitute Assessment Task B. In choosing the format of this proposal refer to the range of assessment formats provided in the framework level description of this course. If applicable, you can draw on experience from your own workplace to provide examples of how these issues impact on the business, communication and/or technology sectors.

The aim of Task A is to:

- (i) help you begin to format the structure of Task B; and
- (ii) help you begin to build the content for Task B.

You also need to consider how you will later integrate the final work you produce for Task A into Task B.

**Note: You are required to do only one Assessment Task A throughout the course.**

Choosing issues from **Pluralism v Elitism** as the springboard for your Assessment Task A does not necessarily lock you into pursuing them for Task B. For example, on completion of this task, you may decide to pursue a different theme for Task B.

Even if you choose not to base your Assessment Task on the issues raised in this element, the knowledge and capabilities you have gained here can be fed into the topic you eventually use as the basis for your Assessment Task A.

**Note: Assessment Task A must be submitted by the end of week four.**

## Learning pathways

### Transition from Learning Element 3.2

On completion of the learning process of this element (with or without completing the Assessment Task A option), you must decide which element to undertake next.

Possible transitions from this element are presented below, however it is recommended that you work out your own pathway in consultation with your teacher.

### Pathway options

By the completion of this element, **Pluralism v Elitism**, you should have improved critical capabilities and an in-depth knowledge of the issues in this theme as analysed from the perspectives of Technology, Business and Culture.

You may now wish to apply this theoretical knowledge by undertaking the **Applied And Transferred** element of this Theme, **The Future of Convergence**. Alternatively, you may wish to engage with a new theme by undertaking any **Empirical And Experiential** learning elements you have yet to complete.

### Example pathways

	<i>Empirical And Experiential</i>	<i>Conceptual And Critical</i>	<i>Applied And Transferred</i>
<i>Theme 1: Print</i>	1.1 History And Structure Of The Print Industry	1.2 Markets, Language And Identity	1.3 SWOT Analysis
<i>Theme 2: EText</i>	2.1 The Development of EText	2.2 Artefacts v Availability	2.3 Market Analysis
<i>Theme 3: Convergence</i>	3.1 Print In The Digital Age	3.2 <b>Pluralism V Elitism</b>	3.3 <b>The Future Of Convergence</b>

## About this Learning Element

**Pluralism v Elitism** investigates literary elitism and marketing and their impact on the book industry. The focus here is on the social and economic dynamics that may influence the way technological advances in the digitisation of print are picked up by the broad community. For example, does the fact creators may have greater opportunity to publish their work with the convergence of print and EText technologies mean they will also have access to markets? Or are markets constructed by literary and economic elites? And, ultimately, do they determine which books are considered “good”? Alternatively, are other possibilities raised by the convergence between print and EText?

### Keywords

Book Criticism  
Book Marketing  
Consumers  
Creators  
Digitisation  
Distributors  
EBooks  
EText  
Internet Publishing  
Literary Elites  
Pluralism  
Publishers  
Reading  
Software  
Text Availability  
The Western Canon