

Publishers - left behind by the digital revolution?

By [Wesley Lynch](#), issued by [Realm Digital](#)

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The book, magazine and newspaper industries - already changed forever by digitisation - is set to further accelerate its march to digital formats with instant [Digital.co.za/solution/digital-publishing/ pdf-to-mobile app](#) conversion.

Digital publishing's last obstacle?

Don't wait for the digital wave - it has already come. Admittedly it hasn't made a clean sweep of publishing: some nostalgia persists for printed works, standards aren't settled and digital channels continue to converge.

Still, leading publishers, book retailers and hardware manufacturers have all embraced digital formats to serve future markets, with mobile showing the most current success.

One of the only remaining obstacles for publishers is in overcoming their lack of skills and knowledge needed to convert their catalogues into new mobile formats.

To understand how they can still get on board, it's instructive to track how digitisation has thus far played out in this industry.

Gutenberg is dead: long live the Web, e-readers and tablets

For many years, the biggest costs of publishing have been printing, and the associated costs of storage and distribution. Thanks to these, only large publishers have had the volumes to serve niche markets profitably.

In the nineties, Web publishing provided relief with new low-cost online publishing channels. A decade later, interest in digital flared up anew, when mobile digital formats came into their own right - first with Amazon's Kindle and then with tablet PCs, led by Apple's iPad.

Since then the market for mobile digital formats has taken off, with the [Digital.co.za/service/ipad-applications/ iPad](#) showing the most promise and the [Digital.co.za/service/blackberry-applications/ BlackBerry](#) and [Digital.co.za/service/android-applications/ Android](#) standards following in its footsteps.

Closed book

But [Digital.co.za/solution/digital-publishing/ digital publishing](#) remains a closed book to many print players today, as it presents a steep learning curve for those that don't have the skills to convert their content into e-formats.

Whether developing on EPUB, the dominant e-book format supported by most readers, the iPad or its competitor tablets, publishers have had to undergo lengthy and costly bespoke development to convert their catalogues into downloadable apps. While the bigger publishers have been able to absorb this, the high cost has been prohibitive to smaller publishers.

Easy e

This conundrum has now been solved, thanks to Adobe and Apple.

The tipping point came when [Digital.co.za/solution/adobe-digital-publishing/](https://digital.co.za/solution/adobe-digital-publishing/) Adobe's Digital Publishing Suite hit South Africa earlier this year, allowing Adobe's reseller channel to easily convert print-ready Adobe InDesign files into tablet format, for easy distribution (and monetisation) via the Apple Store.

Using these tools, [Digital.co.za/product/mobile-platform/mobile](https://digital.co.za/product/mobile-platform/mobile) developers with experience in the publishing industry offer turnkey conversion to tablet platforms without any further development required. Indeed, print-ready publishing files can be 'app-lified' as a self-service option - something that would not be possible on the EPUB format used by most e-readers.

See the light...

Publishers have seen the light. They know the future is digital and they want to convert their catalogues to mobile formats - only, many don't know how or where to begin.

If, like them, you find yourself between the devil and the deep blue sea, it is time to look for a developer with experience in developing mobile content for the publishing industry.

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**Realm Digital is the sole African partner of Adobe's Digital Publishing Suite®, which offers publishing firms global reach via iPad, Blackberry and Android tablets without costly, lengthy bespoke development.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[[[http://www.twitter.com/wesleylynch](https://www.twitter.com/wesleylynch) Wesley Lynch]] is Founder and CEO of [[<http://www.realmdigital.co.za/> RealmDigital]].

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