
Through historical research and observations, the intention of this project is to explore the nature of the role of the book cover in today’s market. Further research into the industry will help librarians to make informed predictions about the future of book cover design with the rise of e-readers, which greatly diminish a reader’s ability to make selections based on the cover alone. As the technology of reading changes, designers will have to adapt, changing their cover art to gain more attention when covers are only displayed as small, even black and white, icons. By examining this dynamic industry, insights will be gained for designers, readers, and librarians, who are increasingly making collection development decisions for e-books. Books have historically had aesthetic value in their physical form, but as this form changes, perception of what a book is also changes, particularly for books that may exist only in electronic forms.

Headings:

Books -- Format

Book industry

Book jackets

Book selection

Electronic books

Libraries -- Marketing
THE CONSEQUENCES OF E-BOOKS AND E-READERS ON THE COVER DESIGN INDUSTRY AND THE USE OF BOOK COVERS AS AN EFFECTIVE MARKETING TOOL: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF BOOK COVERS IN AN E-BOOK WORLD

Introduction/Background

In recent years, e-books have appeared in the market, part of a trend towards new technologies and expanding digital media. E-readers and tablets, such as the Kindle, Nook, and iPad, have revolutionized reading by providing books in a variety of different formats. Retailers extol the benefits of their devices, which deliver thousands of books, magazines, and articles to a single device that is lightweight and easy to use. Electronic reading device ownership has steadily grown with the current number of Americans owning either a tablet or an E-reader at 19% (Bercovici, 2012). Although the use and production of these products is increasing, e-books have yet to dominate the market. Predictions of the future differ, with much speculation about whether e-books ever will take over the market, or if they will, how long that will take. However, e-books have been gradually making a place for themselves at retailers and libraries.
The speculation over the future of book formats has raised a number of questions for the industry. Publishers have already been making drastic changes in their business models and how they market their products. Designers of book and jacket covers for print publications will also have to make changes over time as well. This sub-industry has always had to keep up with current artistic trends, creating designs that continue to be visually appealing to consumers. As the saying goes, judging a book by its cover is one of many ways customers and library patrons choose their reading material, so designers and publishers collaborate to make sure that their books attract readers. However, with e-books, the rules have to have changed. Marketing consultant Damien Horner (2011) states “e-reading is not just killing printed books, it is also killing book covers, and this is going to have huge implications for the industry…the death of the book cover means that publishers will lose their most powerful marketing tool.” When a consumer purchases a
book online or directly from their device, the role of the book’s cover is much less understood.

Motoko Rich’s article (2010) in the *New York Times* outlines some of the ways the role of the cover has changed. Reading a paperback on a plane or bus typically includes free marketing for the author; others can notice the cover and become curious about the content. However, with an e-reader, the book of another may be unidentifiable. When shopping at a bookstore, customers are drawn to books by attractive, interesting covers; when shopping online, covers appear as tiny, obscure rectangles. Those who participate in the creation of a successful jacket cover are starting to take steps to take better advantage of new formats.

Apart from industry changes, e-books have created new ways of thinking about the book as an object. Many ardent readers have a love for the book itself, in its physical sense. They may recall with nostalgia the smell of old books, or the anticipation of turning to the next page. Aesthetically, there is a pleasure that comes to some in seeing a well-stocked library, or even a bookcase in an individual’s home, filled with one’s favorite books, each with accompanying memories and stories.

Scholarly literature traces the evolution of the book, from clay tablets, to vellum tomes, to the modern mass media paperback. With the emergence of computers, the Internet, and subsequent technologies, humanity’s methods for exchanging information and knowledge are indelibly changed. People have begun to spend more time interacting with personal technology, reading and learning from digital screens rather than paper. E-books raise questions about the future of the book as object, as many publishers are shifting focus to electronic publishing to remain viable in the market. Increasing
numbers of books are born-digital, self-published online, or more conveniently available through an e-reader than through a physical retail store or library. Many libraries have begun to shrink in physical size as more of their collections are stored in small computer consoles and servers rather than on rows of shelving. Presently, print sales in fiction and non-fiction remain dominant, but the shift in formats has forced the market to adapt nonetheless.

**E-book share of total consumer book sales in the U.S. in 2009 and forecast until 2015**

As books and content change from physical to digital, bibliophiles have embraced the kinds of books that cannot be replicated in a digital format. Some authors and artists have reverted back to a style of publishing that emphasizes the aesthetic appeal of print books. Classics, now in the public domain and free to download, are reprinted as leather bound novelties, even with gold embossing on the covers (Appendix, Fig 1). These are sold not only for their content, but also for their value as an object. Artists’ books have
long explored the idea of what can be called a book, with non-linear narratives and unusual mediums. Authors of artists’ books create works that utilize a variety of papermaking and printing techniques that cannot be fully appreciated on a computer screen. Will such collector’s editions and artists’ books become more popular as best sellers continue to expand more into the Cloud than on the shelf?

While it is impossible to predict exactly how the industry will be impacted by e-books into the future, scholars and those in the field have made many projections. Much of the dialogue has been taking place online and within blogs, rather than in the scholarly literature. Journals have been examining the past and present influence of e-books, but have been hesitant to forecast the future, and rarely mention the changing role of book covers. Authors who do discuss the future tend to point out that changes will be necessary, without providing extensive explanation of what solutions may be possible. These articles also tend to be quite brief, calling for further consideration.

**IMPORTANCE AND POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The primary research questions to be considered here are:

- What purposes have book covers served, now and in the past, and in both print and digital formats? Do (and should) publishers and librarians consider them to be an influence on their consumers’ or patrons’ decision-making?

- Is the cover design industry adapting to the e-book environment? If so, how?
What steps are being taken to keep book covers relevant and maintain their use as a key marketing tool?

The purpose of this study is to examine the industry, how it is changing, and how it will need to adapt in the future. Not only booksellers, but also librarians will be impacted by the rise of e-books and the related technologies. For librarians, the fields of collection development, readers’ advisory, library marketing, and even preservation and facilities management may change as patrons’ desires evolve. It is thus beneficial to gain a better understanding of where the industry is headed in the future. Book covers have long been a tool to promote books and authors, on displays, faced out on shelves, and for patron browsing. New methods will need to be adopted to promote e-books in a similar way. Libraries will also need to consider whether they will continue to value the book as object, maintaining physical collections into the future.

METHODS

The methods of this study will emphasize historical research, “more subject focused than question focused,” and direct observation (Morgan & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 156). Historical research and a study of secondary and primary sources will provide a foundation for the research, as any predictions for the future require a thorough understanding of the past. This research will focus on what changes the industry has already undergone, starting with the rise of book aesthetics to the rise of mass media, as well as the current state of the industry.

Once this foundation has been built, the study will incorporate direct observation, to gain an understanding of the market today. Book displays at both public libraries and
a large retail location will be examined to look at how covers are used to gain attention. Specifically, the hypothesis is that face-out books and displays will be made up of more dynamic, eye-catching, or recognizable covers than of those books with dull or older jackets. As these may be subjective criteria, the use of bright colors, the font size, and the use of well-known imagery will also be considered as well.

**Search Strategies**

When searching for materials on the broader topic of book cover design, the subject must be examined from several different fields. From the field of library science, book covers can be seen as tools for readers’ advisory and collection development. From a business perspective, they are considered marketing tools for authors and publishers. Businesses are also concerned with the developing technology of e-readers and digital content. Book covers are especially relevant from an anthropological point of view, as historical artifacts to be studied through content analysis.

The majority of the scholarly literature was located through the *Library Literature & Information Science* database. Other databases searched include *Academic Search Premier*, *Business Source Premier*, and *LexisNexis Academic* through the UNC library’s website. Search terms included “book cover,” “book jacket,” “dust jacket,” “cover design,” “e-books,” “e-readers,” “marketing,” and others used in combinations with Boolean operators, such as “book cover not binding.” Reference lists of the articles were also consulted for further sources. Simple Google searches were also used to identify relevant blogs, websites, and other popular materials. Such sites, while not considered scholarly or academic, do host many important and up-to-date conversations on relevant topics.
Web Resources and Blogs

As the younger, tech-savvy generations become more involved in the marketplace, conversations about the future are increasingly taking place online, on blogs and websites. While not academic in nature, these sites often provide insights from those involved in the industry and familiar with relevant current events. One of the most comprehensive sites is the Book Cover Archive (Pieratt & Jacobsen, 2011). The site includes popular covers, portfolios of designers, links to other industry sites, a blog for industry news, as well as links for their Twitter accounts and the site’s RSS feed.

Limitations of Existing Studies

Literature on the subject of book covers abounds, but is mostly comprised of content analyses and opinion pieces. Perhaps due to the subjective nature of book cover appeal, there are far fewer empirical studies of their influence than one would expect. Many do include interviews with industry professionals, but only a limited range, at most two or three individuals are interviewed. To construct a more thorough picture of the predictions being made about the future of the industry, professionals from all involved fields should be included.

HISTORY AND RELATED ARTICLES

Thomson (2010) provides an enlightening history of the evolution of the book as an art object, particularly in the late 19th century and into the beginning of the 20th. Previously, books primary value lay in their content, but with the rise of a visual culture and new binding practices, books became more of a fashion object, reflecting a buyer’s personality and often their socio-economic status. Approaching the more modern era,
however, the book cover “became another commodity, seen primarily as a form of advertisement” (p. 243). This article, in particular, informs this research by raising the question that if book covers become less relevant in a digital marketplace, would physical books once again become valuable art objects? Or would the concept of books return once again to being primarily focused on content?

Ellen Mazur Thomson’s article in the *Journal of Design History*, “Aesthetic issues in book cover design, 1880-1910,” details an important period of time for the industry. This historical background provides a context for current changes. Thomson points out that “new technologies of manufacture played a key role in driving this interest in the aesthetics of mass produced objects, including book bindings” (Thomson, 2010). She describes the book’s rise as an art object, as the outer appearance of a book gained importance in the consumers’ eyes. Although the industry has obviously changed a great deal since the turn of the century, many of the aesthetic issues remain important. In fact, the binding and design of print books may change in the future as well, with print editions of books becoming more collectible, thus calling for more artistic designs to increase the value of the object, not just the content.

*Logos: Journal of the World Publishing Community* has published a number of related articles of interest. In 2003, the journal printed Jack Matthews’s article, “And another thing…Dust jackets and the art of memory,” which provides more helpful context in the history of book covers. He discusses another important function of the book cover: the way in which the image of the book remains part of our remembered experience of reading it. He disputes the idea that a book’s cover is unimportant, the argument that “a great book, as non-collectors like to argue, transcends its avatars in
paper, cloth and leather,” and writes that “the dust jacket is a vivid and specific reflection of the book, merging with that edition of it as physical object…it stands for the book to subsequent readers; it becomes part of the book’s life, much as an accident or unanticipated journey becomes a part of our lives.” It can be noted that this concept is dependent on a book’s value as an object, as well as a vehicle for content. His perspective is optimistic about the future, claiming, “if we have just come to the end of the golden age of dust jacket art and are entering an age of photo montage and computer art…well, perhaps it, too, will generate – and be possessed of – its own idiom, its own genius” (Matthews, 2003).

The article (Matthews, 2003) addresses the modern role of the book cover in a visually driven society. Book covers have become increasingly important to popular authors. Matthews quotes Pat Conroy, speaking about his dust jacket designer, Wendell Minor, “I build the church…he makes the stained-glass windows” (p. 156). With the rise of computers, television, and the Internet, however, Matthews laments that book art and quality book covers may be fading out. He points out the rise of computer art and simple photomontages. The author believes that the future of dust jackets is a compelling topic and suggests publishers and authors continue to observe “changing proprieties” (p.158).

*Logos* published Angus Phillips’s article “Cover story: Cover design in the marketing of fiction,” in 2007. Phillips is also the director of the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies, focusing on the current marketing capability of the book cover. The study provides essential background for understanding the present influence of book covers, an understanding of which is critical to being able to make adaptations for the future. Phillips considers how retailers take advantage of covers: how they are
used to build “author brands,” depend on market segmentation, and even how a cover can
determine how much of a book a retailer will stock (Phillips, 2007). He also points out
the heavy influence of trends, claiming that “many people do not buy books to read but to
demonstrate their personal taste, cultivation and trendiness.” This same principle would
apply to having the latest, sleekest e-reader or tablet, but then lacking the tool through
which to display one’s reading selection. This knowledge helps provide a clear image of
the book cover’s role in the present, and provides clues as to how it will have to change
to remain important in the future.

**Modern Cover Design**

As for the actual design process, Michael Scharf and Jennifer M. Brown’s article,
*Cover story: The evolution of a dust jacket* (2005) is a good example of the process a
mass market cover can go through before printing. Knopf art director, Carole Devine
Carson, and designers Peter Mendelsund and Abby Weintraub, went through dozens of
potential designs for the book *Cast of Shadows*, considering what buyer’s would like,
what would appeal to different segments of the population, and which designs best
represented the work. The final result was a compromise between the designers, the
publisher, the author, and his agent. This article also represents how important an author
can perceive a cover to be; one of the designers claims “Michael Crichton wasn’t Michael
Crichton until Chip [Kidd] down the hall made him Michael Crichton” (p. 31).

A consistent theme throughout the literature is the importance of how a book
cover reflects the book’s content. Darcy Lohmiller, a middle school librarian, points out
how book covers are important for library collection development (2008). With only
limited time to select books, she often makes judgments based on book covers, making
assumptions about a book’s plot based on its cover, but these images are often misleading. As a school librarian, Lohmiller also observes that a good cover design often indicates a work’s longevity; many classic works have better designs, while cheaper works with less invested in them may be less attractive. “Long after I have thrown out the novelization of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, I will be checking these books out to readers who know timeless, quality stories when they see them” (p. 15). It will be compelling to see in the future if this remains observable.

Future predictions may be difficult because of the number of people and professions that play a role in designing a book’s cover. Rich points out that from a book’s conception and approval for publication, the cover design alone passes through so many hands. There is a creative director or designer, the editor, author and agent, the publisher, and the sales people, and also the bookseller (Rich, 2010). Thus, as e-books gain momentum, it is not simply one group that must adapt, but all of those involved in the process. Each player should be knowledgeable of consumer desires and be considerate of how the cover will eventually impact sales not only of print, but of other formats as well.

Research into what exactly consumers find appealing in a cover, what makes them pick up a book to begin with, is critical. Of course other marketing factors are influential, from suggestions by friends to movie renditions, but often, a book’s cover may be the first contact someone makes with a work. To remain a powerful marketing tool, cover designs must change to still be viable in a digital market.

As sales of e-books continue to increase, access to e-books are also being demanded in library settings. Many public, research, and even school libraries have
begun to offer loans of e-books and e-readers to their patrons. Besides the obvious marketing tactics of retailers, libraries too must constantly market their services and their holdings to encourage circulation. Rather than being able to create a physical display with copies of a book to attract readers’ attention or having face-out displays of popular books in the stacks or on end-caps, libraries will have to change their strategies to promote their new digital assets. However, libraries themselves have little influence over cover design; rather, the publishers, authors, and all of those involved in the design process, must make the necessary changes, and then make new strategies available to both retailers and libraries. These changes may range from designing covers that are still appealing on a black and white screen, to changing the size and proportion of text and images on a cover to compensate for a smaller size and lower resolution, to getting rid of the text all together and creating icons that can be used to represent a book online and in social media (Page, 2011). It may be that cover design for e-books will not adapt at all, but rather be replaced with a different tool all together.

STUDIES

A shortcoming of existing studies on this topic is that the majority of articles that do exist focus entirely on either children’s or young adult literature rather than adult readership. These works, marketed towards children and teens, seem to rely heavily on visual stimuli to appeal to young readers. Donna Miller’s article in *Voice of Youth Advocates* (2000) demonstrates that, according to her students, cover designs are a factor in how they choose books to read, but not a critical one; they also consider recommendations from friends and the summaries on the inside flaps and back of a book.
These results also seem to show the effects of social pressure on young adults; they want to read what is popular and what their friends may be reading. Such pressures may be much less influential on adult readers.

Edward T. Sullivan (1998) took a different approach as a member of YALSA’s Best Books for Young Adults Committee. He began with the assumption that covers play a critical role in teen readers’ choices, and decided to examine how the committee’s choices would fare when judged by their intended audience solely on their covers. Sullivan even admitted that he doubted young adults would care about a book’s selection by the committee, but would rather just select something they thought they would enjoy. The students surveyed did have strong feelings toward some of the covers that they deemed very appealing or not at all appealing.

The difference results in these two studies on teens demonstrate how challenging it can be to get consistent data from the group. Study results depend on the researchers’ perspective and the angle through which they perform their research. By slightly changing the survey questions, the two studies came to different conclusions about the importance of book covers to this audience.

Dawn Towery’s SILS master’s paper (2003) is one of a few studies that did focus on adult literature. Towery performed in-depth interviews with 15 SILS students judging the covers of 22 books from a variety of genres and time periods. The interviews revealed the influence that many aspects of a book cover can have on a potential reader. The students judged the covers based on their creativity and artistry, their perception of the genres, typefaces used, recognition of an author, and even on the authors’ genders. This study is unique in its consideration of all of these different aspects. Should these
same survey strategies be applied towards a much larger, more diverse study population, the data would be incredibly valuable in understanding exactly how covers communicate to consumers.

One study in a library setting (Massey, 2005) looked at circulation statistics for a public library over a year and a half. This particular library had recently decided to leave dust jackets on books rather than remove them, to save time. Over the course of the study, circulation of books with jackets increased 54%, while books without jackets increased circulation only 15%. This seems to speak to the importance of visuals when shelf browsing. Several Publishers Weekly studies (Rawlinson, 2000) also show that booksellers, 75% in one study, consider cover design to be very important in marketing a book. Yet, their study also found that only 23% of consumers agreed that covers were significant in helping them choose books to purchase.

These disparities in perceptions of booksellers, book-buyers, and library patrons help to show that there may be a need for a much larger study of the adult reader population. However, it may be noted that even such a study could undervalue the subconscious effect covers have on consumers and readers, of which they themselves can be unaware. It could potentially be valuable to perform a series of interviews with the professionals that serve these populations. The industry can only suffer if publishers do not understand or agree on why readers choose their books, and benefit from increased communication throughout the publishing, design, and marketing processes. Also, by better understanding the views of those who do deem covers important in their selections, cover designers can better target their work to increase appeal.
Within the book publishing industry, the process of designing book covers and dust jackets is multi-faceted and is affected by a number of parties. It is important to examine these influences from a marketing perspective. Studying the effect book covers have on adult readers in how they choose which books to read will help increase our understanding of how to best market these books, and to better predict future trends correlating with the rise of digital publications. The hypothesis is that e-readers will have an impact on how book covers are designed, but only time will be able to provide evidence of significant changes. However, by studying cover design and reader motivations, more informed recommendations can be made to publishers and industry players on how to best proceed and evolve to maintain book covers as a strong marketing tool.

MODERN MARKETING
Retail Marketing

When studying the future roles of covers in book sales, it is beneficial to study how publishers use covers now, and how the rise of e-books is affecting the market. One of the major roles of book covers is in branding an author; Phillips (2007) discusses the practice of creating a consistent design template for a popular author, so that new titles are easily identifiable to readers. For example, Janet Evanovich’s novels are characterized by bright neon colors and the use of text rather than images (Appendix, Fig. 5). There is also a predominant trend for such authors that their names be printed above and much larger than the title of the work. In this way, covers communicate more about an author’s reputation than about the content of the specific book. Phillips also examines
how covers demonstrate the segmentation of the book market; for example, the Harry Potter books were published with covers for the young adult audience and different covers aimed at an adult audience. Over time, publishers also re-print books with updated covers to keep up with popular trends and to make older books appealing to younger generations. Consumers can easily recognize newer editions of books, recovered with images from television or movie adaptations; for example, Charlaine Harris’s books have been reprinted with pictures from the HBO series True Blood (Appendix, Fig. 2).

The recent rise in popularity of e-books and new e-reader technologies has introduced new challenges for the market. Schiller (2011) examines how multi-format publishing has changed the way publishers have to think about advertising and distribution, using new tools such as blogs and social media sites. The ‘News’ section of Publishers Weekly (Deahl, 2011) also suggests that e-book sales have complicated the creation of best seller lists and rankings, though Dunneback (2011) points out that most of the major periodicals have recently began publishing e-book sales along with, but often separate from, print sales. Deahl points out that many of the terms used by publishers and booksellers, including “copies in print,” and “first printing” are becoming outdated, claiming there is a need for new terminology. If a new lexicon is created to discuss book sales in the future will a cover or jacket be called something else to include digital formats?

As for e-reader technology, work by Nancy K. Herther (2011), a Sociology/Anthropology librarian, shows that 68% of consumers desire larger screens and only 51% ask for color screens. Horner (2011) points out that when a consumer
browses Amazon on a Kindle, book covers appear as only 2 cm x 3 cm, low resolution images. It was only in the past year that Kindles were released with color screens, but cover browsing on such e-readers is still difficult and not well understood.

One of the largest ways in which book covers have been undermined by e-books is in the lack of covers in public spaces. Kirschner (2011) and Rich (2010) lament that before the existence of e-readers, which Kirschner calls “anonymous digital slates,” you could examine what people around you were reading. Attractive covers stand out on buses, airplanes, and on the subway. Judgments could be made based on the type of person reading a book, combined with the attributes of the cover, and the book was instantly advertised to a larger public audience. Also, although an e-reader can hold thousands of books and provide quick, easy access to your reading materials, there is often a disconnect between the reader and the book. Kirschner points out,

When I'm not actually in the act of reading, the author and title are far less of a presence than they used to be. When I open (activate? illuminate?) my e-reader, I am presented with the last page I read. Convenient, yes, but devoid of context. No cover means no strong visual cue to reinforce just who and what I am reading. All gone in a digital flash. (para. 3)

Book covers still have a significant presence in large retail settings, such as the retailer Barnes and Noble. While the Nook kiosks typically occupy a place of honor in the front of stores, the majority of Barnes and Noble’s sales and retail spaces are occupied by print materials. For example, in the Durham, NC store, large prints of iconic covers are used as art, hanging on the walls over the different displays (Appendix, Fig 6). The importance of cover art is evident when looking over the sales floor. Catchy, often dramatic book covers draw readers towards the shelves. The experience of discovery that is possible in a physical store is lost online. When the process is reduced to clicking a
mouse to browse a large set of titles, readers may not feel the anticipation and excitement of finding a new book. Also, a physical location allows for the reader to be exposed to subjects that they may not have been online, while walk through the store to their intended section. Cover art is even more critical during this exercise in capturing a reader’s attention; a cover face out on a shelf can catch the eye of a passerby, while online, a cover can be scrolled past in a blur, in a fraction of a second. Occasionally these two realms intersect and retailers attempt to sell a book by attracting the reader to the print copy (via flashy cover art), but then letting them know the book is also available in digital format (Appendix, Fig. 3).

**Library Marketing**

A number of products and services have arisen to help libraries take full advantage of new digital content and book formats. They have also had to navigate problematic copyright issues with e-books, such as HarperCollins’ mandate that its e-books could only be checked out 26 times before a library would have to purchase another copy. Still, as of last year, about 66% of public libraries had e-books available for their patrons (Osnos, 2011). To provide these services, many libraries have turned to OverDrive, a company specializing in digital distribution, and providing content to about 18,000 libraries. The company even builds them the necessary websites, which facilitate “browsing, checking out, and downloading” (overdrive.com).

Many libraries advertise their available e-books on their websites, on signs inside their buildings, and in newsletters, but the New York Public Library’s website is arguably one of the most attractive websites for users. The interface is reminiscent of a retail site, with large icons of new book covers on the main e-book page, though once the user
moves on into browsable categories and searches the icons become smaller and less distinguishable. They do take advantage of the increased content already digitized for them, and make book previews and excerpts available (Appendix, Fig. 4, ebooks.nypl.org).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The nature of the book cover design industry is changing rapidly and future of the entire publishing industry is in question. Digital publishing is becoming more popular as the public demands mobile technology and accessible content. Further study into consumer preferences and how a book cover communicates to them can only add to a foundation from which the industry can move forward and create new marketing tools to keep up with consumer demands. Changes will definitely have to be made, though it is still hard to determine in which direction the medium will go. Some will mourn the loss of mass consumption of great original cover art, and the marketing advantage gained by it. Others are more optimistic; Horner, for one, predicts “an ‘explosion of new creating thinking ahead’ as designers learned to play to the different strengths of the different mediums they would be working in, from lavish hardback editions created as works of art, to icons that function in social media” (as cited in Page, 2011).

The technology for viewing and reading e-books advances, with developments in e-ink, tablet design, and new applications. Screens are becoming clearer, larger, and more frequently LCD. Consumers’ personal preferences will continue to drive design options and sales. Although these enhancements may make an on-screen book cover easier to view, they do not increase browsability for selling or make one’s cover visible to
others for a more subtle marketing advantage. And as e-readers strive to make reading more convenient, turning on to the last page read, and starting newly purchased books at the first page of text, books may be bought and read without the cover being glanced at more than once. In the future, cover design may morph into a subfield of graphic design, focused more on making memorable icons or typefaces, with more artistic endeavors reserved for collectible print editions, artists’ books, or cheap mass-market paperbacks. At least such pursuits could save cover art from becoming a lost art so soon.
APPENDIX

Figure 1. Collectible editions of classic novels with decorative covers.

Figure 2. Charlaine Harris’s Sookie Stackhouse series with both the original and television adaptation covers.
Figure 3. Advertising Harry Potter books in print and digital formats.
Figure 4. New York Public Library’s e-book homepage.
Figure 5. The bold neon graphics of Janet Evanovich’s novels.

Figure 6. Well-known book cover art used as wall art in a Barnes & Noble.
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