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Digital Books and Flying Cars

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Digital Books and Flying Cars

DPLA / Michigan / 2012

According to a short preface, the text had been taken from a folio edition, undated.

concept of
an “organizational field”
(defined)

often complex groups or
sets of actors involved.

Oddly, the preface was unsigned.

stable industry > stable network
(and vice versa)

for both organizations
and people

She checked the copyright page

Disruption of key fundamentals –
book production and distribution –

even creates conflicts emerging
from redefinition of old assets:
a backward lens.

and found that the original hardcover had been a textbook,

good example:
digital rights for backlist titles

rights to the latent rents
were never arbitrated

Plays of Ford, Webster, Toumeur and Wharfinger,

confusing enough issue to be a
major component of GBS proposal
(*"Author-Publisher Procedures"*) ...
attempting to draw a "bright line"

published by The Lectern Press, Berkeley, California, back in 1957.

as old content is re-commoditized, and
new content emerges through different
channels,

conflict emerges among existing niches
authors | agents | publishers | retailers

She poured herself half a tumbler of Jack Daniels

Outcome:

Rosetta, Wylie v. Random House

HarperCollins v. Open Road

(the Paranoids having left them a fresh bottle the evening before)

digital transform permits fundamental
shift in corporate control of publishing.

and called the L. A. library.

Imagine home 3-d printable
aerocar templates on torrents,
competing with existing cars.

They checked, but didn't have the hardcover.

Fundamental turmoil yields frenetic efforts to build a new market stasis-

Locate primary “axis of competition”:

product | pricing | services

They could look it up on inter-library loan for her.

deep technology shifts ...

usually remove the ability
to focus on a single axis.

"Wait," she said, having just got an idea,

firms able to exploit new opportunities in
organizational networks gain supremacy.

e.g. the Amazon Kindle

"the publisher's up in Berkeley. Maybe I'll try them directly."

org fields that have become disrupted
are naturally subject to the formation
of newly emergent breakthroughs.

(a la the Amazon Kindle)

She found the Lectern Press in a small office building on Shattuck Avenue.

org network components –
e.g. services and standards –

wind up being hijacked,
suborned by new firms

They didn't have Plays of Ford, Webster, Tourneur and Wharfinger on the premises,

EPUB -> EPUB₃ in order to compete vs. Apple/ Android apps, only to see EPUB₃ adopted as a foundation for proprietary enhancements.

but did take her check for \$12.50,

Boutique book formats:

tech platforms want optimal hardware fit,
book designers want to maximize artistry.

Cf. Msft and browser standards

gave her the address of their warehouse in Oakland

loss of control of format standards that would otherwise buttress competition.

No MP3 for books.

and a receipt to show the people there.

publishers attempt to re-assert control of market pricing and distribution channels as they steadily lose control over new product production.

agency pricing ...

By the time she'd collected the book, it was afternoon.

Apple and Amazon represent something new: comprehensive, proprietary consumer-facing content distribution platforms.

She skimmed through to find the line that had brought her all the way up here.

“Agency pricing” cannot disrupt this.

Nothing publishers can do to re-direct
the new dynamics of publishing.

And in the leaf-fractured sunlight, froze.

Any effort to leverage previous
network mechanics only serves to
create unintended consequences

No hallowed skein of stars can ward, I trow,

Obvious example – Libraries.

due to potential loss of revenue
publishers are very reluctant to
provide ebooks to libraries.

ran the couplet,

exercising one remaining factor:
disallowing distribution of books
but ...

Who once has crossed the lusts of Angela.

this permits Amazon to innovate
in library lending practices through
Prime subscriptions.

"No," she protested aloud. "

Basically, the problem for libraries is exactly the problem for publishers –

technologically induced displacement of prior relationships in the network.

“Hold Hands”, wickenden, Flickr



'Who's once been set his tryst with Trystero.'

in organizational fields like publishing
that have had a long period of stability
implicit rules formed to govern action

The penciled note in the paperback had mentioned a variant.

whenever (inevitably) conflict arises,
the bluffs are not called, and warfare
is usually avoided.

(consider *e.g.* Wylie v. Random House –
agent and publisher worked it out)

But the paperback was supposed to be a straight reprint of the book she now held.

one can see this in technology:

patents are *usually* cross licensed -
not worth divisive outright wars if
players hold equivalent hands.

Puzzled, she saw that this edition also had a footnote:

widespread lawsuits typically signal
a breakdown in normative practices
within an organizational field

(this would *never* happen to a research university ...)

According only to the Quarto edition (1687).

as in today's mobile phone tech wars,
one day AG and AAP are best friends,
the next they are suing each other

The earlier Folio has a lead inserted where the closing line should have been.

author / agent / publisher / retailer

the central publishing industry
possessed a self-referential set
of linear interactions of actors

Then where, Oedipa wondered,

digital transformation replaces roles with functions which can be located anywhere.

e.g.: no typists or typing pools now – everyone enters text into machines.

does the paperback I bought at Zapf's get off with its "Trystero" line?

as industry, publishing is lucky
it has laid claim to an obvious
higher-goal:

disseminating information

Was there yet another edition,

this reference point acts to
reduce friction, mitigating
damage from rent seeking
(or it did)

besides the Quarto, Folio, and "Whitechapel" fragment?

but networks break when powerful
new entrants encounter a previously
stable field disrupted by technology.

The editor's preface, signed this time,

It is this “asteroid from outer space” characteristic that makes publishing raw and exposed for the first time in decades

by one Emory Bortz, professor of English at Cal, mentioned none.

- Apple
- Amazon
- Google
- Facebook

She spent nearly an hour more,

Not concerned with historical relationships,
seeking profit in disruption, and with a *wildly*
different understanding of their competition.

searching through all the footnotes,

Out-of-field (technology) disruption entails radical change in the org. field's participants and ultimately products.

finding nothing.

Transmedia and interactive ebooks are examples of technology-enabled arts that the old industry couldn't accommodate.

"In the text that I go along with personally," said Bortz,

Absorbing external disrupting agents into prior business relationships is not feasible; those networks are long gone.

"that other couplet has the last line suppressed."

Attempts to re-gain control by
exercising the levers of the past
generates unanticipated outcomes.

The book in the Vatican is only an obscene parody.

The locus of relationships
for corporate control has
fundamentally shifted.

The ending 'Who has once crossed the lusts of Angelo'

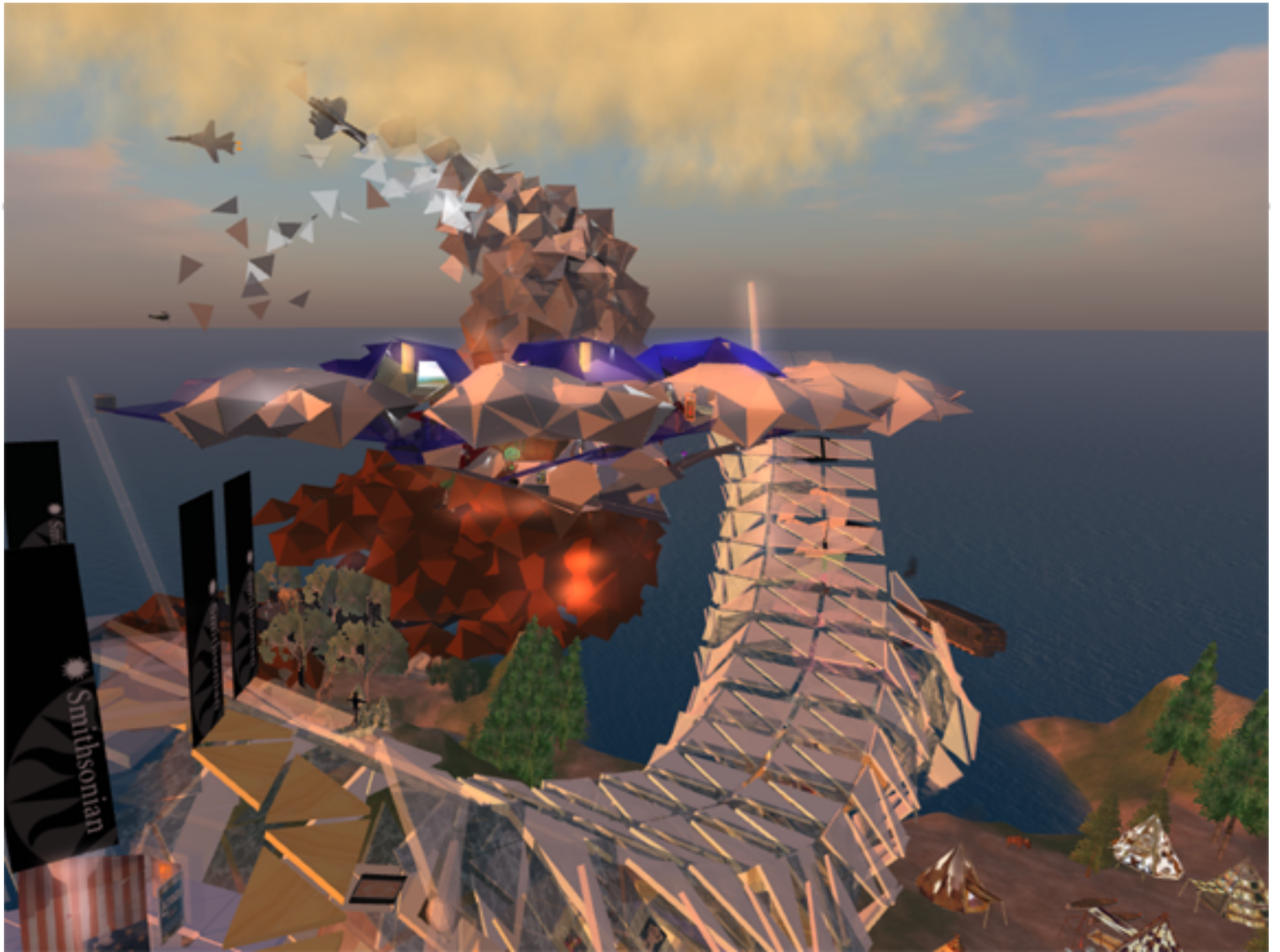
The distinction for entrant firms is that they are monetizing traffic, ultimately to drive the purchase of other goods.

was put in by the printer of the 1687 Quarto.

We cannot reclaim a stability that existed in a network among firms that no longer exists.

The 'Whitechapel' version is corrupt."

Instead of responding to publishers, think about how to generate community profit from the disruption in existing networks.



Thanks.

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The Crying of Lot49
- Thomas Pynchon, 1963

He that we last as Thurn and Taxis knew

Now recks no lord but the stiletto's Thorn,

And Tacit lies the Gold once-knotted horn.

No hallowed skein of stars can ward, I trow,

Who's once been set his tryst with Trystero.