



Tactical publishing: using senses, software and archives in the twenty-first century

While the book doesn't offer an explicit definition of *tactical publishing*, it becomes clear that the term refers to a humanistic approach that emphasizes experimentation with digital technologies to assist and capitalize on reading and writing activities, focusing on the intrinsic value of reading and writing, rather than commercial gain (p. 1). This core concept informs the diverse topics explored in subsequent chapters, and it also distinguishes this work from traditional approaches to publishing, both print and digital, which often prioritize strategic goals. The author's perspective resonates deeply with my experience as a librarian and former member of the Pirate Party. Furthermore, the book delves into many areas that have intersected with my research throughout my career, both directly and through surprising connections.

Our current project of multisensory representation in digital museum environments directly aligns with the book's discussion of the historical evolution of sensory experience across various reading media. Previously, our team investigated the distinct communication channels employed by physical and digital books. The first chapter of this book gratifyingly confirmed our prior research outcomes while revealing even more nuanced aspects influencing the reading experience.

While the first chapter illuminated for me familiar concepts with fresh insights, the second chapter, which explored writing with and by machines, brought a true joy of discovery. Despite utilizing various writing aids and encountering machine-generated texts, I had never considered the process from this perspective. The author provided a fascinating perspective on the history and nature of nonhuman writing, as the author terms it, along with the abundance of technologies created for this purpose and the variety of texts they produce. The emerging possibilities in the modern world of writing seem endless, but they also necessitate clear and rigorous explanations of the creative writing and text production processes involved.

The following two chapters delve into the world of publishing itself. Chapter 3 highlights the issue of manipulative publishing, while Chapter 4 explores the current state of constant, instantaneous publishing by everyone. The author provides a fascinating historical perspective on the evolution of banned content and misinformation in print media, alongside the rise of manipulative techniques in the digital age. The theme of trust is central to the entire discussion, whether the author is examining the production of criticism, the creative use of technological advancements, or the blatant manipulation of public opinion. All these elements are interwoven, prompting the author to seek solutions not only from scholarly works, but also from the writings of authors like Lem, Bradbury, Orwell, and others. Chapter 4 explores the tension between the seemingly endless capacity for writing and text production and the limited ability to consume and process information.

Chapter 5, *Libraries as cultural guerrillas*, is a truly good reason to rhapsodize. While I certainly had a rather professional understanding of libraries, this chapter offered a whole new perspective. The concept of *liminal librarianship*, for example, perfectly captured a phenomenon I'd experienced but couldn't name before. The book also offered bold and accurate definitions, like this one: 'Technically it (the library) is an orchestrated distribution and archival system and a local social network of the commons' (p. 169).

What surprised me most was the book's portrayal of libraries. It went beyond simply praising them as valuable resources in both physical and digital forms. The author presented a refreshingly creative perspective on the diverse roles libraries play. From the various types and formats to their broader expressions and functions, the book highlighted how libraries are crucial to human experience and cultural development. Interestingly, the role of libraries as a platform for publishing was also given significant weight.

This chapter also explores the various faces 'librarians' wear can be summarized by the term 'custodian'. This custodian role raises the critical issue of access, not just as an institutional or intergovernmental challenge, but interestingly, as a primarily personal one (p. 177). The book argues that this transforms each of us into a potential dissident, devoted to safeguarding and ensuring access to literature. Ordinary people from artists and educators to community members and software designers, are all contributing to a vast network of distributed libraries, both permanent and temporary. While the author distinguishes between a custodian and a professional librarian based on curation responsibilities, both are ultimately united as guardians of knowledge. This emphasis on individual contribution resonates with the idea that everyone can become a publisher. With this shift, the possibility of becoming a custodian in this global, distributed library feels quite logical.

The final chapter introduces several new 'ecologies' - interconnected systems - that are shaping the landscape of 21st century publishing. The author argues that forging connections between these ecologies and their participants (dwellers) is crucial for creating a thriving network that fosters a vibrant (or alternative) space for publishing (p. 223).

This insightful book comes from the mind of Alessandro Ludovico, a dedicated researcher and imaginative professional at the Winchester School of Arts (University of Southampton). Ludovico doesn't just write, he curates the reading experience. Beyond the photographs, he weaves in a rich tapestry of real-life examples and a fascinating list of 100 publishing experiments in Appendix A.

Many academic departments of art, publishing, digital design, library and information science, culture, literature - in general any liberal arts - will benefit from having this book in their libraries. I would recommend to have it in a personal library of any literary minded person.

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