

Christian Publishers Turn Attention to E-Books

Publishers need to “e-publish or perish,” according to international book partners James Elwell and Ellen Banks Elwell.

The Tyndale House Publishers couple—he director of international publishing, she international publishing assistant—believes that for readers, “this is the best time in history” with so many choices of media type.

But “for publishers, it’s a time of big headaches and wonderful opportunities. We’re trying to figure out multiple formats, digital rights, contract e-rights and internal corporate complexity.”

While books will not go away, publishers need to recognize that reading is like cooking, in that most U.S. households have a conventional oven and a microwave, but use each for different purposes.

“Reading is like that,” the Elwells say in an Industry Forum guest column in the May issue of *Christian Retailing*. “When curling up on the sofa, we might choose to read a book. While riding public transportation, we might prefer using an e-reader or smart phone. Readers have choices.”

The e-publishing challenge is one of nine major trends in Christian publishing that the Elwells identified after surveying colleagues in the industry, various periodicals, popular business books and publishing surveys.

They also noted the growth of the overseas market. “English is spreading, companies from around the world are entering into partnerships, the China market is emerging, low-cost books and Bibles are being produced for developing countries, and

publishers in other countries are cultivating more indigenous authors,” they says.

“One of the biggest challenges in international publishing these days is distribution. We’re wise to listen and learn from our customers and employees in regards to new international opportunities.”

Do you prefer paperbacks, hardbacks or e-books? And why?