Cracking the Nonfiction Code

@kobo @mtamblyn #TOCCON
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EVP Content, Sales & Merchandising
@kobo
In print...

Fiction

Non-fiction
In print, with kids books...

Fiction

Non-fiction
In digital...

Fiction

Non-fiction
Why?
Devices
Customers
Price
Narwhals
Competition from other sources
Gift economy of the book
Gift economy of the ereader
25 minutes
Data
Data vs. Fun
Data vs. Fun
(or at least Conscious)
“I hold the rights for the world’s largest collection of narwhal field guides and am going to decide what to price them at the end of your talk.”
“I have spent the last two days learning everything there is to know about epub3. Entertain me or I will hang myself with a lanyard.”
Difficult balance
Hard data.
price
share
With interludes of Semi-substantiated speculation
W, Empress of Content & Pricing Data
About Kobo
2.5 million titles
7 million customers

Kobo eReader Touch
Kobo Vox
iPad, iPhone, Android, Blackberry
eBooks to almost 200 countries
and some countries that only questionably exist
Acquiring content in 25 countries
Merchandising in 9 countries

(US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Germany, France, Spain, Netherlands)
Merchandising in 9 countries

(US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Germany, France, Spain, Netherlands)
What is the fiction/non-fiction split?
## Digital vs. Print Share of Purchase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>Nonfiction</th>
<th>Juvenile</th>
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</table>
What is moving easily to digital:
Original stories ➔ Fiction

Opinion, analysis and expertise vs. data and information.
➔ Biography, History, Business

“Proprietary knowledge”
➔ Diets and health guides, self-help, instruction
Why are some categories significantly underindexed?

How many of them are richly illustrated with complex formats?
→ Constrained by supply in digital, still not a lot of titles available vs. print

How many are given as gifts?
→ Constrained by behaviour)
The categories at the bottom of the list: those in competition with free ad-supported web resources (cookbooks, travel, etc.) → if you have a web-connected device to read on, you’ll use it...
There are definitely opportunities for children’s books
Gift shifting from
“book”
to
“device to read books”
Could we do a better job of on a device for kids?
Sure.
Are there non-fiction devices?
Yes.
Not about screen size.
or OS.
“Where the boys are...”
% of Library in Non-fiction

- Kobo EReader 2.0
- iPhone
- Desktop Client - Windows
- Kobo Website
- Kobo Vox
- Android App - downloadable
- Kobo Touch
- Desktop Client - OSX
- iPad
- Samsung Galaxy Tab
- Blackberry Playbook
- HTC Android Smartphone
- Desktop Client - Linux
Non-fiction Pricing
US Non-fiction pricing vs. unit sales

BACKLIST  FRONTLIST
(digital non-fiction is a backlist business)
Food & Cooking
Is there a significant self-publishing market?
not yet.
7% of all unit sales self-pub
non-fiction
1%
self-pub
Price Decay in Non-fiction
Business & Non-fiction

% of Total Quantity Sold

Average Price

Linear (Average Price)
Health & Fitness

% of Total Quantity Sold

Average Price

Linear (Average Price)