



Darin Brockman, c.e.o.

The Firsty Group offers a comprehensive set of digital services to publishers and authors through its five divisions:

- FirstyWork (ePub conversion and app development, build and distribution)
- FirstyFish (e-book and app store)
- FirstyReader (eReader comparison)
- FirstyNews (ePublishing news site)
- BCL NuMedia (website development)

Book publishers around the world have reached the digital zone. And there they have met, among others, app development specialists with whom they must now work closely and with enthusiasm, imagination and bags of creativity if they are to remain major players in today's publishing revolution

Think app, think partnership

The rise and rise of e-books—as they begin to outsell print books, as they take off among the young across the world, as they become the preferred way of reading books on holiday, on aeroplanes and on desks, as they lend themselves to an ever-increasing range of electronic reading devices—has turned the trickle of publishers entering the digital zone into a flood. Whether in ePub format or as apps, e-books are no longer “the future”, they are “the present”.

Some publishers have chosen to follow only the ePub route, simply

Stephen Fry saw the light early, as he often does, and created an app for his latest bestseller. It enables readers to explore the book from many angles, to interact with it, to dip in and out of it and follow particular themes or subjects, and then resume reading the main text. Fry shows that he understands the new digital audience—typically, the under 35s who have grown up hopping about on small screens, choosing what they want, knowing what they want—and how to integrate this new audience with the established book audience so as to give readers today, all of them, the choice as to how they want to read a book.

Apps offer extraordinary potential for innovation, for bringing words and pictures to life, and for inspiring and amazing readers, whatever their age. Critically, it is how publishers seize this opportunity that matters now. They need to bring to this new ePublishing world all their age-old skills of spotting market gaps, finding authors, creating content, occupying niches, retaining audiences, developing quality titles and promoting them energetically. But now they also need to work hand in hand with app developers and to verse themselves well enough in this technology to learn what it can do—and to keep on learning, with the help of their selected app development partner. And they need to commission authors who can be nurtured to deliver not just words and pictures, but also ideas on how these words and pictures can be presented in app format. Successful e-book apps will be those that have been created through the combined expertise, creativity and enthusiasm of publishers, authors and app developers.

HELPING PUBLISHERS TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE DIGITAL PUBLISHING REVOLUTION—IT'S WHAT WE DO AND WHAT WE LOVE DOING

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converting their books—frontlist, backlist or both—into files that flow into reading devices. That's fine, so far as it goes. It makes these books available in a format familiar to readers and easy for publishers to handle, requiring little creative input. But it doesn't really add value to a book. It doesn't exploit the vast potential of what digital publishing has to offer. It doesn't constitute a revolution in book publishing or book reading.

Apps do. Apps open the door to the new concept of the non-linear book.



Company Name The Firsty Group
Address: 4, The Courtyard,
Newbury RG14 1AX, Berkshire, UK
Telephone: 01635 581185
Email: info@firstywork.com
Website: www.firstywork.com