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Adobe to Shut Down Digital Media Store

May 11, 2005

By Robyn Weisman

Without any fanfare, the Adobe Digital Media Store, which was set up to showcase the versatility of the PDF format, will cease operations on June 3, 2005. According to its **Web page**, users no longer are able to purchase digital content, although they may download already purchased content and redeem gift certificates before the June closing date.

Tom Prehn, senior business development manager at Adobe Systems Inc. and the creator of its Digital Media Store, said that the store, which was launched Oct. 31, 2003, sold a wide range of content, from best-selling novels and popular magazines to scientific papers. According to Prehn, the store became unnecessary as vendors such as Amazon.com and eBooks.com increasingly offered a broad range of e-docs for purchase.

"E-books is a narrow term, with over 1 million e-docs now readily available. And they're becoming more popular worldwide in different languages and [countries], rather than just in North America," Prehn said.

According to Prehn, about 55 percent of PDF e-content sales are in reference and nonfiction. PDF provides consumers with the information they need right away, which may be why reference e-books and e-docs are more popular than so-called "entertainment" PDFs.

PDFs don't have to be an Internet blight. [Click here](#) to read Don Fluckinger's column.

Without commenting directly on the closure of Adobe's Digital Media Store, Joe Wilcox, a senior analyst at Jupiter Research, noted that problems exist with the PDF e-format.

"Our surveys show that 46 percent of online consumers are not interested in reading any form of content in a digital format," Wilcox said.

Wilcox said that adoption of e-books overall perhaps has lagged behind other forms of digital media because the pricing of most of these books is not that different from physical books.

"There aren't the same production costs involved, [yet] there is usually little or no difference in price between e-books and their physical counterparts. And the physical book format is highly portable. You can lend to someone else, while e-books are constrained by the devices they can be read on. It's hard to share content [through e-docs] as it is with physical books and magazines," Wilcox said.

For his part, Wilcox said he is baffled that e-books didn't pursue a lower-cost strategy to increase their adoption. Digital music downloads have already set a precedent by offering a lower price point in comparison to CDs. The average digital album costs around \$10, about \$3 to \$4 less than a CD—which makes sense, given that a CD offers consumers extras such as better audio fidelity, album art and sometimes video.

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