

of people

is changing? No, of course not. The people that think that only a doorstop of a book can provide depth and that a summary of short messages and interactions on Twitter has no substance, have done nothing more than take a cursory view of things. Adding everything together—blogs, Twitter, mail, Facebook etcetera—I read more than ever, but increasingly less with those parties that used to have exclusive rights to reading matter.

Erwin Blom is founder of The Crowds, a company specialized in social media.

05

Encoded Experiences James Bridle

294 words | 1:10 mins

Books are changing, and the nature of reading, what we take away from it, is changing too. Books used to be physically malleable things that we marked, physically, with our experiences: dog-earing them, underlining them, highlighting, and copying out. But the books will not be physical for very much longer.

The great misunderstanding of digitization is to believe that it is only the content and the appearance that matters. That, to reproduce the experience of the book, we needed to make a screen that looked like a page, that turned like a page, that contained words. And the reason that we've had difficulty for so long with the notion of eBooks is that that is not all that books are.

Books are journeys, and encoded experiences. The writer has spent months, perhaps years, producing this work out of themselves. That devastating last line of James Joyce's Ulysses: *Trieste–Zurich–Paris 1914–1921.* And the book is the medium of transmission of that

experience, so that the reader, too, can experience it, and go on their own journey.

The books are subliming, they are going up into the air, and what will remain of them is our experiences. That experience is encoded in marginalia, in memory, and in data, and it will be shared because we are all connected now, and because sharing is a form of communal prosthetic memory.

When Walter Benjamin wrote that *what shrinks in an age where the work of art can be reproduced by technological means is its aura*, he was assuming that the aura diffused, that it was lost to the other reproductions. But digital technologies do not just disseminate, they recombine, and in this reunification of our reading experiences is the future of the book.

James Bridle is publisher, writer and editor.

06

Watching, Formerly Reading Max Bruinsma

832 words | 3:19 mins

I don't read, someone I know well told me. She meant that she doesn't read the way *readers* read. People who can spend hours on end with a book in a chair or on the sofa, occasionally turning over a paper page and appearing to have completely forgotten that there exists a world outside the sentences they are reading. No, she's not one of those readers. But, I say, you actually read the whole day through! You scan articles and books, browse through websites and online fora, open and answer emails, gloss over newspaper headlines. Yes, but that's not reading, she says. What it is, then, I don't know, but I do know that on an average day she processes more text than many a *reader*. I am from a somewhat older generation; I know how it feels