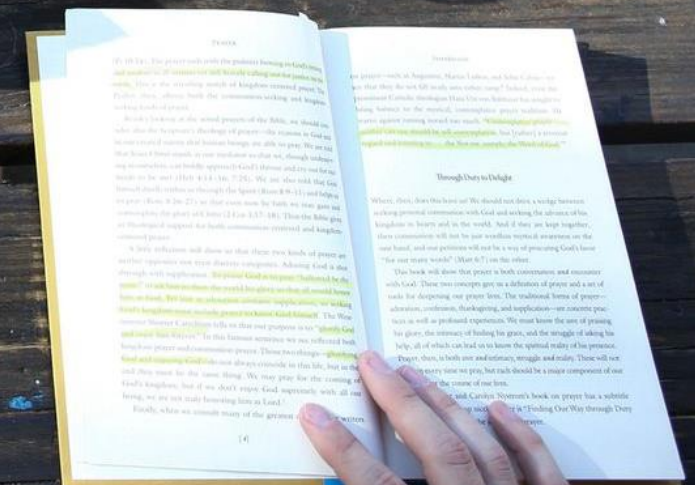# Community Espress-ion:

the Espresso Book Machine, public libraries, and the development of creative communities

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Public Libraries & Community

The public library is being positioned **not just as a place to borrow or read books** or even to access digital materials, **but as a key resource** and facility which can act as **a venue for community events** and as **an access point** connecting individuals with one another, **connecting people with their local communities**, and **connecting communities with wider society**.

(Goulding, 2009, pp. 47-48)

Public libraries are:

keystone institutions for civic development, creative development and connection within the broader community (Scott, 2011).

shifting from content provision to content creation (Nicholson, 2019).

actively encouraging participation, making & creating, learning, new outreach and partnerships (Nicolson, 2019).

Makerspaces in the public library

are:

a fold-out of maker culture, a DIY- and grassroots-focused movement that first appeared on the public scene in the early 2000s.

encourage:

experimentation and innovation, empowering the 'maker' to take control over their own creativity (Nicholson, 2019; Peppler & Bender, 2013).

increase:

library use by teens (Nicholson, 2019; Koh & Abbas, 2015) and intergenerational socialisation and collaboration (Peppler & Bender, 2013).

may:

intuitively extend to publishing and the printing of books (Nicholson, 2019; Koerber, 2012)

Public library publishing in practice

Examples of public library publishing programs date back to the 1970s (Kniffel, 1989).

These programs emphasize: **increasing participation** with library resources by **creating resources** that are particular to **the interests of the local community** (Kniffel, 1989).

The librarian's guide to micropublishing: Helping patrons and communities use free and low-cost publishing tools to tell their stories by Walt Crawford (2012)

Library Publishing Toolkit by Allison Brown (2013)
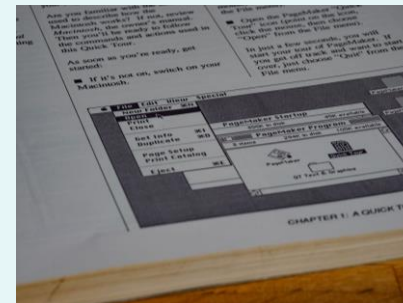
'When "regular folks" can cost-effectively print a single book, everything about publishing changes' (Koerber, 2012).

The Espresso Book Machine

Mid-Continent Public Library

The Story Center and Woodneath Press

Mid-Continent Public Library (MCPL)
The Story Center

'The Story Center, established in 2013, **celebrates and develops writers, performers, and filmmakers** through **access to free resources**, workshops, and **a community of storytellers**. The Story Center offers a **Storytelling Certificate Program** in partnership with Metropolitan Community College, The Story Center Speaker Series in partnership with Rainy Day Books, a local author fair every November, and the award-winning Woodneath Press, which allows authors to see their work in print.' ([The Story Center – About, n.d.)](#)

Free workshops and a certificate program are offered in:

- Written Storytelling

- Oral Storytelling

Participants are provided workshops in 'Creation', 'Development' and 'Business' and complete a capstone project (2,000 original written words or 5-7 minutes of an original oral story).

Mid-Continent Public Library (MCPL)

Woodneath Press

Woodneath Press is the publishing imprint of Mid-Continent Public Library's Story Center. ([MCPL — Library-as-Publisher: A Unique Model, n.d.](#))

Publication with Woodneath Press provides authors:

- inclusion in the Library's collection
- book group opportunities throughout the Library's 32 branches
- book launch at Woodneath Library Center
- programmatic opportunities with the Library system and partner organizations
- access to SquareOne Small Business professionals and expertise
- national and international distribution via our partner organizations
- opportunity to work with a graphic designer to develop the book cover
- quarterly royalty payments

The Woodneath Press uses MCPL's Espresso Book Machine for printing.

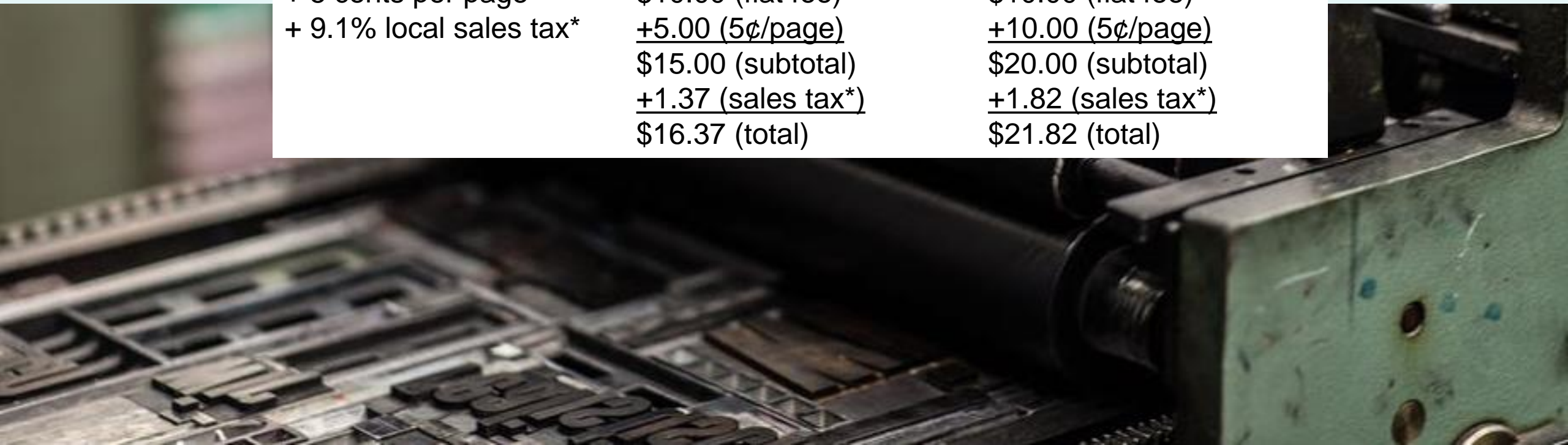The Espresso Book Machine is also available to library patrons looking to self-publish.

How much does it cost?

(MCPL – Espresso Book Machine, n.d.)

| $10 a book
+ 5 cents per page
+ 9.1% local sales tax* | **100-page book**
$10.00 (flat fee)
+5.00 (5¢/page)
$15.00 (subtotal)
+1.37 (sales tax*)
$16.37 (total) | **200-page book**
$10.00 (flat fee)
+10.00 (5¢/page)
$20.00 (subtotal)
+1.82 (sales tax*)
$21.82 (total) |

Other models of note…

a short list of public library publishing initiatives, past and present

Current

Sacramento Public Library

- [I Street Press](#), 2012–present
- 501 authors and 672 titles
- Tiered cost model with a la carte options
- Press not distinguished from self-publication

Toronto Public Library

- [Asquith Press Book Printing Service](#), 2014–present
- Single cost model
- Book printing guide for authors; templates
- [Pinterest page](#) featuring patron books

Historic

Temecula Public Library

- Flash! Books, 2010–2014
- Over 80 authors in its first year
- Free consultation, fee-based assistance with formatting and editing

Brooklyn Public Library

- 2012–2013
- Offered a single cost model
- Published young adult creative writing anthologies

For a full listing of current EBM installations, visit the On Demand Books website: https://ondemandbooks.com/ebm_locations_list.php

# The future: what's next for public library publishing?

Universalisation of author incubator programs in public libraries

See: LaRue, J. (2013). Wanna Write a Good One? Library as Publisher. *American Libraries*, (pp. 18-21). Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/26197701

Alternative cost models

See: Conrad, K.M. (2017). Public Libraries as Publishers: Critical Opportunity. *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, *20*(1). DOI: 10.3998/3336451.0020.106
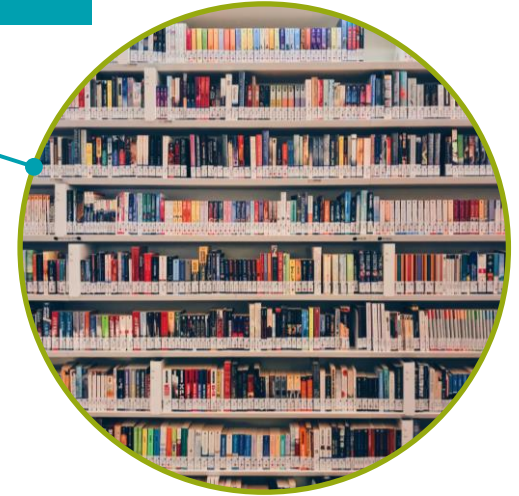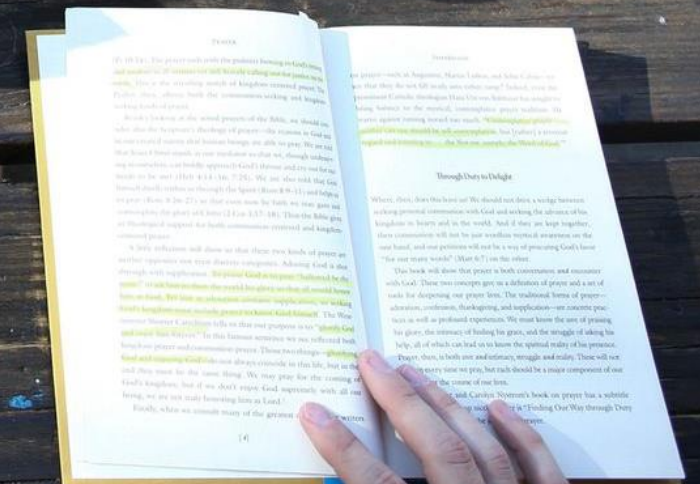
Cataloguing and collection development

See: Bruno, T. (2015). Self-Publishing and Libraries: The Slush Pile Is the Platform. In Holley R. (Ed.), *Self-Publishing and Collection Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Libraries* (pp. 125-138). West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press. DOI:10.2307/j.ctt1wf4dpf.14

Questions?

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