

Books

A Living History

Martyn Lyons

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Price: £19.95

The book is one of the most useful, versatile and enduring technologies in history. For the last two and a half millennia, humanity has used the book in its manuscript or printed form to record, administer to worship or educate.

There have been many revolutions in the history of the book starting with the invention of the codex, and today mass market paperbacks ensure that the book is ubiquitous. But the information revolution may irrevocably undermine the status of the book, making it completely obsolete.

This is a good moment, therefore, to take stock and in *Books: A Living History*, Martin Lyons considers the book's history, evolution and influence around the world. He charts its development from the cuneiform tablets of ancient Sumer through the development of movable type and the emergence of the modern information revolution.

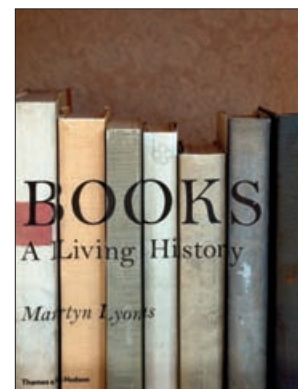
Today we are on the brink of the biggest change since the codex, as the Internet offers boundless scope for production and dissemination of knowledge. Prophets of gloom abound, but there were similar fears with the invention of printing five hundred years ago, and the living history of books shows that many contemporary Internet issues are echoes of the panic and naivety generated when printing first appeared.

Books: A Living History is a timely topic that's currently the subject of lively media debate. It is a visual feast featuring 250 colour images ranging from Maya codices and masterpieces of early printing from Gutenberg and Aldus to atlases from the great age of exploration and the world's first digi-novel *Level 26*.

This handsomely produced volume celebrating the enduring power and magic of books will be appreciated by traditional book lovers as well as an inspiration for those excited by the new electronic technologies

Author

Martin Lyons is Professor in the School of History and Philosophy at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He has published widely on the history of books and reading, including *Readers and Society in Nineteenth-Century France: Workers, Women, Peasants* and *Ordinary Writings, Personal Narratives: Writing Practices in 19th- and Early 20th-Century Europe*.



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