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### InstaBook Adds Sites, Publishers in Canada

Of the handful of companies developing machines for in-store production of single copies of books, InstaBook has the distinction of being the only one to actually have a machine running in a bookstore (Book Express, in Cambridge, Ontario, Canada). Now, the company has announced plans for two more Canadian installations, both in the Toronto area (one in a bookstore and one in a public library).

Concurrently, InstaBook Canada announced that eight publishers have committed to putting titles into the central online repository serving the system. (Until now, InstaBook has been limited to a library of public-domain titles, plus book manuscripts that local authors have submitted for printing.) The participating publishers include ECW Press, Dundurn Group, Scholastic Canada, Penguin Books, McClelland & Stewart, Raincoast Books, HarperCollins Canada, and Key Porter books. These companies will be providing InstaBook with electronic versions of some of their titles over the next few months. None of them are in the repository yet.

Dave DiMarcantonio, president of InstaBook Canada, tells us that the installation at Book Express (now more than 14 months old) has been sufficiently promising to justify this broader rollout. It has provided a lot of useful information about how the machine is used. The monthly volume of books printed has ranged from 20 to 300, and a majority have been books from local authors who have brought in electronic manuscripts for printing. These have included family histories, manuals and novels. DiMarcantonio is pleased with the results, given that InstaBook has yet to do any marketing and that no books from commercial publishers have been available during the period.

Our take. Successful in-store production of single books has been an elusive goal for many years. The technology is tricky, but it isn't the biggest hurdle. Bringing publishers onboard and working out the royalty and document-security issues have been much bigger obstacles. The progress in Canada indicates that the situation may finally be improving. Bookstores may be encouraged to get involved by the experience of Book Express, which has found that printing books from local authors represents a new line of business made possible by the InstaBook machine.



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