BOOK PUBLISHING PROSPECTUS

This form is intended to give us a clear idea of your proposed book and its intended readership. We ask that you please complete it as fully as possible. When you submit the form, please also attach your detailed **Table of Contents with abstracts**, **sample chapter(s)** **or the completed manuscript, and** **your** **current CV**.

When preparing your proposal, please provide complete information about your project – the argument, scope, audience, market competition, etc. – within this document and in the sample material you provide.

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**Author/Editor Name: David Levin**

**Affiliation**: College of Management Academic Studies

**Proposed Book Title and Subtitle**: Holding on to the Past: The Unexpected Survival of Paper and Plastic Media

Please attach your CV, including your mailing address and email address, your current position and a list of recent publications and/or conference papers.

1. **Book Description**

Please provide a clear, concise description of the project, including its aims, central argument, methodology, and outstanding features. ***Please note boxes will expand when filled.***

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| **Book Description**  It seems like everyone has books on their shelves, and diplomas are often proudly displayed on walls. These things feel both ordinary and strange. Meanwhile, turntables are back in fashion, and Polaroid cameras are once again available in stores. Has time stood still? Surely people have heard of eBooks, digital music services, or smartphones with sophisticated cameras?  In fact, people often prefer technologies like paper, vinyl, and plastic for reasons beyond personal taste. Their choices are driven by a range of motives, which many articles and books have explored. However, there are some key issues with this research that this book aims to address.  Media like paper or plastic provide a tactile experience that lets us connect with each message in a deeper way. We must be close to an object, focus on it, and engage our senses when we touch it. The experience of physically interacting with a paper book or vinyl record is entirely different from seeing an image on a smartphone screen. Paper and plastic make objects feel *stable*, *unique*, and *distinct*. This book offers a fresh, interdisciplinary perspective on how these three elements contribute to our emotional connection to physical photographs and the authority we associate with paper documents.  Over the past twenty years, many books and articles have explored the survival of paper and plastic products in the digital age. This book collects and reorganizes hundreds of these writings, using examples from everyday life and the media. It focuses on specific areas, such as education, using an interdisciplinary approach that transcends traditional boundaries between different fields. I argue that the ability to distinguish between two objects makes traditional religious texts, children’s paperback books, and school textbooks more appealing than their digital alternatives.  Another goal is to position my thesis within the ongoing debate in media studies about whether technology influences society or vice versa. This book takes a different approach from the classic works of Marshal McLuhan or Neil Postman or studies that view preferences for paper and plastic as expressions of nostalgia or mixed feelings about the digital world. I argue that this middle ground helps explain why many people still collect records while few insist on owning a black-and-white TV set. Both objects may reflect shared nostalgia, but each has its own unique advantages. This book takes a different view from the many works that focus on touch in digital content. I emphasize that interacting with screens and devices cannot replace the physical experience of touching an actual object – for instance, sending a colorful GIF of a flower is not the same as delivering a fresh bouquet. |

1. **Proposed Content**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Chapter | Title | Word Count |
| Chapter 1 | Introduction: On touch and society | 11,000 |
| Chapter 2 | Authority and authenticity: Paper and its products into the 21st century | 12,610 |
| Chapter 3 | Survival in spite of everything: Newspapers and books. | 17,400 |
| Chapter 4 | Digital natives with books and binders | 11,700 |
| Chapter 5 | On the shelf: Photographs and records | 14,820 |
| Chapter 6 | Touching the screen: In the name of efficiency | 10,140 |
| Chapter 7 | Summary: What we touched on here | 5,200 |

Please insert here or attach a **Table of Contents with chapter abstracts** identifying the project’s planned content and main argument(s). If this is an edited collection, please also include brief biographies of the contributors.



**Book Chapters**

**CHAPTER 1 Introduction: On Touch and Society**

The opening chapter centers on touch and introduces the key recurring concepts of stability, differentiation, and uniqueness, as well as the theory of technological affordances that underpins the book. This theory provides a framework for analyzing the meaning of technology by combining its core properties with individual, social, and cultural interpretations. I review the essential features of touch-based interaction, emphasizing the need for physical closeness and mutual reciprocity between the individual and the object being touched. Three conclusions emerge: the stability of the material conveying the message, how it differs from others, and the transient nature of the interaction. I then explore the meaning of touch, from its rational applications in medicine and scientific research to its emotional significance, particularly in the experience of ownership. I explore philosophical perspectives on touch throughout history, from its ancient associations with mystical power to modern interpretations. Finally, I connect touch to two worldviews: the pursuit of efficiency and the rise of the post-digital idea.

**CHAPTER 2: Authority and authenticity: Paper in the 21st century**

This chapter is focused on the second main element of the book: paper.The first part presents paper as a communication medium that engages the human sensory system, primarily sight, and touch, while outlining its evolution into a commonplace object. I then highlight four contemporary contexts where paper is still preferred over digital alternatives, including for formal uses like signed documents and informal ones such as handwritten love letters.

**CHAPTER 3: Survival in spite of everything: Newspapers and books**

This chapter explores printed books and newspapers, both of which have a rich history spanning thousands of years and have been influenced by the digital world. I present data showing that experiences of intimacy and ownership make printed books a significant and often preferred choice for many people, despite their higher cost compared to digital alternatives. While print media has declined considerably, it maintains relevance thanks to the sensory experience it offers and the assurance it provides that the text remains unchanged – qualities that many value in the post-truth era. A section in this chapter focuses on a unique category of books: sacred texts. It highlights the dilemma clergy face in the 21st century, as some seek to broaden their audience through digital media, while others are concerned about the uncontrolled distribution of altered texts and the potential erosion of the sacred status of these holy texts.

**CHAPTER 4: Digital natives with books and binders**

This chapter explores the role of paper-based media as learning aids. Despite dire predictions about the decline of print books and notebooks, research shows that those raised on a “digital diet” display significant deficiencies in basic knowledge. Reading from screens can be distracting due to a lack of differentiation compared with reading printed books, which are easier to navigate and help with information location and retention. Despite the advantages of typing, many still use pen and paper, particularly for language learning and lesson summaries, as it proves more effective.

**CHAPTER 5 On the shelf: Photographs and records.**

This chapter explores two forms of material media: printed photographs and vinyl records, tracing their history as fixtures of 19th and 20th-century living rooms. Their enduring popularity surprises many. There has been considerable research and public discussion about the resurgence of vinyl records, which even appeal to younger audiences who tend to consume music through streaming services like Spotify. These young listeners are willing to visit shops and navigate the complexities of turntables to own tangible copies of their favorite albums. Additionally, I discuss the thriving market for instant film cameras, like Polaroid, and printed digital photo albums. These objects allow people to capture unique experiences, maintain intimacy with their subjects, and highlight what is meaningful to them amid the overwhelming options of smartphone photography and cloud storage apps.

**CHAPTER 6 Touching the screen: In the name of efficiency**

This chapter examines the similarities and differences in touch interaction on screen-based versus non-screen-based media. The rapid rise of smartphones highlights the genuine human desire for tactile interaction with technology. In contrast, interaction with paper objects offers a fundamentally different experience. Each message on paper is experienced uniquely, while smartphones represent an extreme expression of the idea of efficiency aimed at optimizing human interaction with the environment, often at the expense of distinguishing between different objects. The final section of the book explores efforts to transcend the limitations of the screen and create what seems like an oxymoron: virtual touch in both virtual and augmented reality. These innovations enable users to explore the properties of individual surfaces through touch.

**CHAPTER 7 Summary: What we touched on here**

While the previous chapters reviewed the technological and social literature on touch-based media interactions in the 21st century, the concluding chapter takes a more theoretical approach. It uses the key concepts of stability and differentiation to explain the continued relevance of physical media such as paper and vinyl, especially in times of crisis. The main argument is that the digital world is a marker, if not a cause, of instability: reliance on physical media thus helps people feel more secure and allows them to distinguish their property, reflect on the past, and maintain hope for the future. This suggests that people cannot always view reality as a linear progression; even those who desire progress may seek to slow the pace of change.

Please also attach your **sample material**. Please provide at least one chapter, or a writing sample on the topic, that you feel is the best representation of your work and that demonstrates your argument and analysis. For edited collections, please supply at least two samples.

**See attached file**

1. **Market and Audience Considerations**

What kind of readership do you envision for your book, and why would they be interested? Please comment on the main audience (students, scholars, practitioners, etc.) and the relevant field(s) of study.

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| * Due to its interdisciplinary nature, this work may appeal to English-speaking academic audiences in North America, Europe, and beyond, particularly those with an interest in: contemporary culture; the influence of technology—especially communications technology—on culture; psychology, and human behavior; learning psychology; science and technology studies (STS); the sociology of material culture; leisure studies; the sociologies of home photography, journalism, and reading; institutional sociology; and organizational behavior. * The book will be suitable for academic libraries, particularly in North America, the United Kingdom, Europe, Australasia, etc. * The book will be of interest to students and lecturers on courses covering contemporary culture and technology, the sociology of technology, cognitive psychology, and social behavior. * The research for this book is based on a large corpus of journalistic articles covering topics such as contemporary culture, technology, communications technologies, music, photography, and the impact of technology on society. As a result, journalists and their audiences will likely find this book of interest. |

If your work is intended for teaching, please list below any courses for which your book may be suitable (including your own). Be sure to include the course names, names of the institutions and typical student numbers.

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| Not applicable. |

Please list any secondary markets that may exist for the project (e.g. academic associations, professional bodies).

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| **Intellectual/ informed lay readers:**  Because of its multidisciplinary perspective, this book might be of interest to informed members of the general English-speaking public interested in topics such as language acquisition, marketing in the digital age, hobbies, technology, and questions concerning contemporary culture  My book extends beyond an academic audience to engage lay readers who may feel uneasy about the impact of social media and smartphone technology on their own lives and on those of children and adolescents. It offers hope by arguing that reality has not changed as dramatically as many believe and that a substantial part of the familiar world still remains. By using accessible language and incorporating numerous case studies, the book bridges the gap between academia and general interest, appealing to a broad audience curious about how these technologies impact society and human behavior. Given the ongoing popularity of “retro” technologies such as vinyl and instant cameras, it will resonate particularly with informed readers with a personal interest in these items.  The book will also be of interest to large, non-academic libraries that include academic books of interest to a wider, informed audience. |

1. **Competition**

Please list 3-5 major competitors for your book and explain how your project is distinctive.

**1. Parisi, David. *Archaeologies of Touch: Interfacing with Haptics from Electricity to Computing*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2018.Top of FormBottom of Form**

Parisi’s book traces the contemporary history of touch-based digital technology, such as virtual reality and smartwatches, arguing that we are entering a new era where touch, previously overlooked in the age of radio and television, which prioritized sight and sound, has been reinvented. This brings touch into the digital age, emphasizing the increased efficiency of information transmission. The book has two main limitations: it focuses solely on digital contexts, overlooking the differences between digital feedback and the tactile sensations of paper or plastic, and it emphasizes efficiency while neglecting the symbolic meaning of touch-based media.

Parisi’s book is significant to my proposed work for two reasons. First, he uniquely views touch as a means of communication like words and images. Second, it skillfully links contemporary media to historical processes that began a century ago. I incorporate both insights into my book.

Parisi’s book is part of a series of works that explore touch in the digital environment. I chose this work because he is one of the most prominent authors on this topic in the past decade, and he also references other relevant studies in his book.

Like Parisi’s book, my proposed work emphasizes how paper and plastic media convey messages through touch and explores their historical connotations, such as ownership and institutional authority. However, my book expands beyond the digital translation of tactile experiences by also examining symbolic interactions with paper and plastic media.

**Baron, Naomi S. *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021Top of FormBottom of Form**

Baron’s book explores how reading from screens versus printed pages affects learning, noting that the rise of tablets and smartphones has increased the problem of choice. While digital books improve global content accessibility, they also lead to shallower reading and more distractions. Baron discusses the cultural adoption of digital books, claiming they foster a more social experience, which has driven their popularity in the United States and the United Kingdom but less so in France and Japan.

Baron exclusively examines the relationship between paper and digital products in education, overlooking leisure contexts and the implications of paper for ownership and reading rituals. The book lacks a historical and cultural perspective, failing to place textbooks within the broader significance of paper and plastic media in the 21st century. In contrast, the proposed book addresses concerns about digital distractions among educators and religious leaders, despite their differing contexts.

Baron’s book makes two important contributions: it identifies the material parameters of stability and differentiation in textbooks and provides a comprehensive overview of the textbook field, which are valuable for the relevant chapter in the proposed book. While the debate over paper versus digital products is central to education, much of the substantial research on this topic comprises isolated articles or narrow studies. I highlight Baron’s book for its unique theoretical framework that synthesizes existing knowledge and clarifies the advantages and disadvantages of educational acquisition compared to the proposed book.

**Winters, Paul E. *Vinyl Records and Analog Culture in the Digital Age: Pressing Matters.* Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.**

Winter’s book is an ethnographic study examining the resurgence of vinyl records. Once nearly obsolete, vinyl has regained significance in public consciousness, coinciding with the rise of the digital music era. The book explores how the appreciation for vinyl records developed as part of a counterculture in clubs and online. Over time, as the music industry recognized this trend, vinyl evolved into a mass-consumer product and became profitable.

While Winter’s book presents an in-depth analysis of the resurgence of vinyl, its findings are not easily generalizable to other instances of paper and plastic media use in the 21st century. His analysis aligns with the revival of Polaroid cameras but does not extend to the ongoing use of banknotes or printed textbooks. Additionally, vinyl had all but vanished two decades before its re-emergence in the digital age, while the proposed book includes media types, such as sacred text and printed documents, that have never disappeared.

Winter’s book shares a key theoretical principle with the proposed book: the balance between a product’s materiality and its sociocultural significance. He highlights the materiality of vinyl records as central to their appeal, discussing the production and reception systems that increase their desirability. The proposed book applies this same approach to other paper and plastic products.

Many academic works discuss the integration of paper and plastic in leisure, often citing vinyl records as symbols of the zeitgeist. I focus on Winter’s book for its emphasis on material aspects, setting it apart from texts centered on production or post-digital themes. This distinction underscores the uniqueness of the proposed book compared to more theoretical literature.

**Pressman, Jessica. *Bookishness: Loving Books in a Digital Age*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020.**

Pressman’s book explores contemporary book culture, seeing books as designed objects, expressions of identity, and marketing tools. She makes visual graphics and references to books in diverse contexts, like pillows featuring book covers. She links the growing interest in books to the current zeitgeist, suggesting that this engagement helps people cope with the dominance of digital culture, and documenting how books are cultural totems that symbolize identity. In contrast to the proposed book, her perspective lacks a theoretical foundation for discussing books’ practical correspondence with most paper and plastic products. However, her insights into the cultural aura surrounding certain paper and plastic products in leisure culture are relevant to understanding the essential properties of the media explored in the proposed book.

Pressman’s book stands out for its accessible approach compared to other works on the “postdigital” phenomenon. Unlike many scholarly articles and books on critical theories regarding digital media, which are too theoretical for general readers, Pressman uses case studies to make complex ideas accessible to a wider audience. I highlight her book because I take a similar approach in my proposed work.

1. **Apparatus and Status of the Book**

How long do you expect the project to be overall (in words)?

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| About 80,000 words |

Are you planning to include any **illustrations**? Please indicate the type and approximate number:

Black/white Color

Tables [ 0 ] [ 0 ]

Figures (graphs/charts/diagrams) [ 0 ] [ 0 ]

Images (photos/film stills/paintings) [ 0 ] [ 0 ]

Plate section [ 0 ] [ 0 ]

Other [ 0 ] [ 0 ]

At what date do you realistically expect to have the full manuscript ready for submission? Please comment on what portion of the material is complete and what is outstanding.

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| The proposed book was published in Hebrew in 2023 and is based on materials collected up until 2022. I hold the rights to publish it in any other language. Since the field is very dynamic, I would like to update the content for 2024-2025 and will use professional translation and editing services. While I prepare the requested documents for you, I will also work on these updates. I anticipate that once I sign a contract, I will need approximately six months to finalize and deliver the book. |

Do you have a particular **Peter Lang series** in mind for your book? If so, why?

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| I chose Peter Lang after reviewing your media and communication series and reading several book summaries. I believe your publishing house aligns with my writing style and targets an audience that includes both academics and the educated public. |

Is the book based on a **doctoral dissertation**? If so, please confirm that this proposal is for a fully revised manuscript. Additionally, please indicate if your thesis is available electronically anywhere (e.g. an institutional repository).

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| I can use small grants from my workplace, the College of Management Academic Studies, and potentially from the ISF. |

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Do you plan to provide **supplementary material** (instructor manual, discussion questions, solutions, answers, workbook, or other material) to accompany the book? If yes, please provide details.

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