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Future of the Book

The regime of the book lasted 1500 years; however, the proliferation of enhanced and electronic books is forcing practitioners to look closely at the type of writing authors produce.  Traditionally, static documents were produced that could stand alone, but today there are opportunities for texts to include embedded multimedia and hyperlinks.  This new form of textual book production begs the question of who controls the meaning of such a work – the writer or reader?  It also questions if ekphrasis (the description of a visual scene with words) will survive and how alphabetic writing might disappear.  Ultimately, how will representations of traditional books continue to be challenged? What forms will fall into disuse, and what new forms may take their place? Will collaborative writing and the tracking and storing of easily-updated versions end the codex as a “content container”? How might universities prepare student writers for this new world of self-expression?