



## “Making the Internet More Free and Accessible For Authors and Readers”

A Step towards Decentralization of the Internet

# 1

## Introduction

There are no disputes about the fact that the internet has changed the very essence of how work is done in various fields; writing and reading are no exceptions to this.

The replacement of traditional brick and mortar bookstores with online markets and books with eBooks has not only revolutionized the publishing industry, but has also greatly affected the readers and writers.

However, like all the other areas, some problems surfaced during the initial phase of the internet takeover as well. For example, the disappearance of bookstores led to an increased competition to get bookshelf space and also made it hard for new authors to be discovered by the readers.



While these problems were solved as various applications and platforms emerged and people became proficient in internet usage, a new problem surfaced. This was the '**centralization of the internet**'. An example of this centralization is the fact that a majority of the communication that takes place on the internet is controlled by a handful of corporations that are known as '**internet giants**' and the governments. This

means all your activity can easily be traced and hence, your privacy is compromised.

This is against the original purpose of the internet and the World Wide Web, which was to develop a neutral network that could be used for the betterment of humanity and would allow every user to equally participate in it. While this original vision was lost after a short time during what is called the first 'dotcom' bubble, in an attempt to collect, hold and monetize the information, efforts have been going on lately, to regain the long lost vision. These are known as efforts to build a '**Decentralized Internet**'.



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### What Does a De-centralized Internet Envision?



The de-centralized internet envisions giving the power back to the internet users. It aims to create a world where the internet is not controlled by organizations, where internet users will not have to compromise on their privacy to gain access to information, to be able to search, to communicate, to use social networks, to make money and to receive various services, such as publishing. Instead, they will be provided by modern technologies.

The decentralization model is based on the idea that the responsibility for operation of services is shared.

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## Ethereum Platforms – The Future of Internet

Although Ethereum technology is still in its nascent phase, it is considered the future of the internet because it is based upon the very principles of internet decentralization.

### What is Ethereum?

As mentioned earlier, Ethereum is a decentralized platform that functions just the way it is programmed. As explained by the developers themselves, this means that the applications are run without interference of third parties, censorship, downtime or fraud.

To program the applications, customized blockchains, digital public and distributed ledgers that record every transaction made using a crypto-currency, are created.

The inspiration for developing Ethereum was taken from the Bitcoin Blockchain. But, Vitalik Buterin, creator of Ethereum, took the concept to a whole new level by expanding and generalizing it so that it can be used to run apps, websites, and even organizations without relying upon computer servers.

Also, the emergence of Ethereum made the development of blockchain applications quite easy. It no more requires one to have immense knowledge about or to be an expert in mathematics, coding, cryptography and other associated areas.



**Authorship is one such decentralized platform that aims to redefine the world of books by connecting authors, translators, publishers and readers on a single platform.**

Before we go into the details of Authorship and how is it going to change the world, it is better to have an idea about the current situation of book publishing industry and the problems faced by the authors.

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## Common Issues Faced By Authors

Writing a book and getting it published is not as simple as it may appear to many people. In addition to dealing with the writer's block, lack of productivity, occasional emotional breakdowns and compromised lifestyle during the book writing process, the writer has a lot more to deal with even after he/she has completed writing a book.

These include:

### Getting the Book Published



Ever since the emergence of publishing technology, publishers have been serving the intermediary role between the authors and readers. It is a bridge that helps authors making their thoughts and ideas readable by making them reach the targeted audience.

But, like many other fields and industries, publishing industry is also challenged by the digital revolution and it has profoundly affected the growth and development of publishing industry, over time.

Publishing, at its core, is about dissemination of thoughts and ideas and this is why it had been considered as the reflection of a basic democratic ideal i.e. free flow of thought, for a long period of time. But, the idea was challenged and publishing industry was thought to lose its very essence as profit earning became the key concern of publishers.

This posed many challenges to the authors as the criteria for getting their work published changed. Publishing houses formulated their own policies, based on the idea of making as much money as possible, about the kind of work or the authors they would publish.

Rather than publishers competing for the production and distribution of an author's work purely on the basis of quality, authors were forced to concede with publishers' demands, including the high costs of publishing.

As a result, the gap between the publisher's business interests and the author's objectives continued to widen

However, over time, this negatively affected the business of books and led to the emergence of the risk of publishing without the need of publishers.

Digital revolution brought drastic changes in the book industry, changing the readers' habits is only one of them. It also resulted in the disappearance of large numbers of bookstores throughout the world. Publishing industry received a major setback as the traditional books started being replaced by their paperless versions.

At present, the book publishing industry is facing multiple new challenges, mainly due to the rapid growth of digital technology. The processes and methods of production and distribution have been redefined, unlimited access to all types of content can easily be obtained and the formats and media have been dematerialized, to name a few. With the declining traditional role of a publisher, the industry is in a crisis that is highly likely to worsen if not addressed.

## **Distribution**

There was a time when independent booksellers were taken over by the bookstore chains because of the lower distribution costs associated with the latter. That did not turn out to be everlasting though. The emergence of online retailers, along with the digital revolution, soon tempered the growth of those booksellers.



With e-books and e-readers came digital distribution.

However, it has been found out that despite the large numbers of e-books and e-readers, there is still a huge demand for traditional books. But, they are not readily available anymore, in many parts of the world. Poor distribution is one of the barriers in selling of traditional books.

While major retailers have been playing a role in books distribution process, they usually stock only the best authors and the best sellers to make sure they are being sold quickly. This has created huge problems for the authors, particularly for the new ones as they lack channels to make their books accessible.

## Being Discovered By Readers (In Case Of New Writers)

Discoverability has become a huge concern for new writers ever since the disappearance of local retailers. Since they used to stock a large variety of books and not focused on best sellers only, they were the major channel through which readers found out about the new authors and books.



Local retailers also played a great role in promoting local authors. The employees in the bookstores used to introduce and even suggest readers the books they did not know about.

As the shelf space shrank with the disappearance of local retailers, the discovery of new authors and books became a challenge not only for the publishers, but for authors and readers as well.

To many people's dismay, the problem was not resolved even after the digital revolution took over the book industry. Discoverability is still as relevant an issue as it was prior to the advent of the information technology. Easy accessibility of the internet has resulted in information overload and increased competition. To gain the attention of online readers and being discovered among hundreds of thousands of writers and books require a different set of marketing strategies.

It is the need for discovery that has given birth to a whole new field i.e. Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

While publishers have been experimenting with various techniques to resolve the discoverability issue, they have yet to come up with a fool proof strategy.

## Getting Customers or the Fear of Selling

Throughout the publishing and distribution process, one of the fears that linger in the author's mind is the 'fear of selling'.

This fear of selling is associated with many other fears; what if the book does not get noticed in the plethora of available books out there? What if the author's work fails to impress the audience and



cannot lead readers to purchase the book? What if his/ her book cannot generate enough revenue?

Although the fears are kind of natural, particularly in case of new authors, dealing with them is nerve-wracking.

## Dealing With the Ever Increasing Competition

New authors are continuously making their way into the book industry and they have always had. But, the competition was never as intense as it is today. This is mainly due to the high dominance of information technology. By interconnecting the world, it has increased the reach of authors; those who were once only known by the local people are now read and appreciated all over the world.

At the same time, it has also widened and intensified the competition. Authors that only had to compete and do well in the local markets now have to make their way through large numbers of works of authors from different parts of the world.



To deal with this ever increasing competition and to gain the readers' attention is another great problem for the modern day authors.

## Low Earning

While traditional book publishing has its perks, one of the greatest problems it poses to the authors is the very low amount of money they earn from book sales. The publishers keep a large share of the revenue that is being generated from sales and the author merely receives about 6 to 10 % of the net amount.



## Unsold Books Means Even Lesser Earning

The way traditional book publishing industry deals with the unsold books creates a huge problem for authors. In the conventional industry, all the parties from the publishing to the selling of a book i.e. the publisher, distributor, retailer, and wholesaler, have the right to return all the unsold books to the

author, even months later. In return, they get a full refund that is being deducted from the author's share of revenue.

## The Long Process from Publication to the Launch

Another problem for authors is to deal with the long time the traditional book publishing industry takes from reading the manuscript of a book to accepting it for publishing, from publication to distribution and then finally releasing the book for sale.

The whole process usually takes somewhere around 18 to 24 months; this can be really frustrating for many authors.



## Summation

All the problems and challenges authors face, mainly in the traditional book publishing industry, make book publishing a highly tiresome and less fruitful (at least materially) task.

The drawbacks of the industry have made people to question its relevance and even existence in future.

*Are we truly near the end of the traditional book publishing?*

Not entirely perhaps, but it is expected that the emergence of new technologies, platforms and channels is surely going to change the book publishing industry.

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## Authorship – Readers and Writers Paradise

Being an author does not solely mean working days and nights in solitude to put your ideas on paper, it never worked that way. But, in the rapidly changing scenario after the digital revolution, authors have started taking up more roles than ever. They have started taking charge of their work, have become more active by participating in conferences, workshops, trainings, readers and





writer's groups, and have also started to ensure their online presence.

However, the problems with regard to conventional book publishing are still unresolved largely. Despite the challenges and drawbacks and seeing the old structures and procedures falling apart, large numbers of authors are forced to rely on the industry mainly because they do not have any alternative available.

Although the advent and increasing popularity of paperless or e-books have made some people question the future of publishing industry, we are still to come up with a better and apposite alternative.

***"Authorship"* aims to fill this very gap. Although still an idea that needs to be pursued and put into practice, Authorship has the potential to transform the book industry.**

### **What Is Authorship?**

*"Authorship"* is a website platform that is going to be developed on the basis of the idea of decentralization of the internet and for this purpose the platform will make use of 'Ethereum'.

With the aim of providing a platform to authors, readers, publishers and even translators where they cannot only interact, but can also offer and avail services, Authorship is going to redefine the book industry.



It will allow authors to take charge of their work and the publishing process, get their works shared with large numbers of readers across the world and also make money on monthly basis.

### **A Look into the Functioning Of the Decentralized Platform**

As mentioned earlier, Authorship is going to be developed using the Ethereum platform; one of the most fascinating and exciting experiments of the internet that is to fulfill the wide held dream of decentralizing the internet.

Authorship aims to simplify the book publishing process by giving all the authorities to the author. When an author publishes a book at the platform, he/she enjoys all the rights and does not have to comply with the complex policies of publishers, worry about the distribution or share the major chunk of royalties with the publishing company.

Also, it aims to offer guaranteed monthly payments to the first 100,000 authors that will register at the website platform.

The platform will run using virtual currency called “ATS tokens” (*Authorship tokens*). A total of 100 million tokens will be issued. 20% of the tokens will be reserved for the first 100,000 authors whereas the remaining 80% will be distributed among the investors. The reserved 20% will be distributed among the authors on monthly basis, after a predetermined schedule.



In addition to this, it will allow authors to publish their books for free and still earn the tokens. This will be made possible by publishing advertisements in the authorship’s reading apps. To get their products and/or services publicized, advertisers will be required to buy tokens. These tokens will then be added to the collection reserved for authors.

In addition to helping authors getting their works published and being sold across the world, authorship will be a platform for readers, publishers and translators as well.

Using the real money, readers will buy the ATS tokens which they can use to purchase both e-books and printed books.

When it comes to getting the hard copies of books published, authorship will revolutionize the publishing industry by reversing the typical scenario where the authors have no option, but to compromise on money, as the publisher takes the most profit, to get their books published.

Rather than making authors look for a publishing company, the platform will make publishers compete among themselves to get the rights for publishing a book.

Whenever a reader will order a printed book on authorship, all the interested publishers on the platform will forward their quotes for printing the book and delivering it to the reader. This will give birth to a competitive environment where not only the publishers will be forced to come up with more realistic

offers (low process), but the authors will also have the option to choose the best from a variety of publishers.



Authorship will also bring amazing opportunities for all the language experts out there. A lot of authors want their books to be translated into one or more languages so that more and more people, all over the world, can read them. However, many cannot make it happen because they have access to only a limited number of translators who usually charge high amounts of money for the work.

At authorship, the authors will be connected to large numbers of translators all over the world, which will ensure competitive prices. The royalty from the sale of every translated book will be shared by the author and the translator.

To sum up, it can easily be said that with the aim of resolving one of the biggest challenges authors face i.e. to get their books printed and distributed, to create numerous career opportunities for translators, and to connect readers with at least 100,000 authors from all over the world, authorship is going to drastically transform the book industry.

Also, with its promising features, it can easily be called as the readers and writers' paradise.

## How Will It Revolutionize The Book Industry? Publishing



In the conventional book publishing industry, publishers are at the most advantageous position. Since only the publisher has the infrastructure and resources to get the book published and reach the readers, authors are forced to comply with their demands, high prices and unjust policies to make their work reach large numbers of readers.

In the world of authorship, the unjust benefits that publishers have been enjoying since a very long time will be ended. By giving the control and charge of their work in authors' own hands, the platform will force the publishing companies to come up with fair policies and rates to get work and earn money.

## Distribution, Discovery and Sales

While every book seller is ready to stock up the books of established and popular authors, those that are not considered 'big names' of the industry face huge troubles when it comes to distribution.

As mentioned earlier, with the great decrease in the numbers of traditional brick and mortar local retailers, and the ever increasing competition, the discoverability has become a huge problem for new authors. This directly affects the sales of their books.

In the new authorship era, the problem will be taken care of by ensuring that equal opportunities are provided to all the authors on the platform irrespective of the status they enjoy.

## Conclusion

A digital world that functions without the interference of third parties, censorship, downtime or fraud is a dream we all have had for long time.



*"Authorship"* is a step towards making this very dream a reality. Although a lot more needs to be done for complete decentralization of the internet, the successful development of the website platform will prove the skeptics wrong who believe that this cannot be achieved in the real world.

Furthermore, the authorship will redefine the book industry. By bringing authors, readers, translators and publishers on the same platform, it will mark the beginning of a new era where the issues, challenges, and drawbacks of the traditional book industry will no more be present to make writing and reading books difficult.

Authorship promises a more book friendly future for readers and authors all over the world. Also, it will create many work opportunities for the publishers and translators as well. The website platform is one thing that we all should look forward to and play our part into making it a reality.