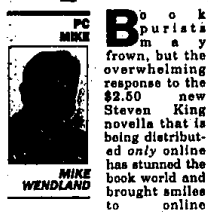


# E-publications are growing quickly in popularity



**PC MIKE**  
Mike Wendland

entrepreneurs.

In the first 24 hours the "Riding the Bullet" e-book went online, more than 400,000 orders were processed, way more than typical book sales.

"We see a time in the not too distant future when virtually every book in print will be available in both physical and electronic formats," says Barnes and Noble online sales exec Steve Riggio.

A lot of the orders are coming from people with Palm and Win-

dows CE handheld devices. While it does take some getting used to using scroll buttons to read a book on a tiny handheld computer screen, it soon becomes as familiar as paper.

For example, I no longer subscribe to a paper copy of a daily newspaper. I read everything from the Wall Street Journal and New York Times to my local paper on my Palm, thanks to a free program called AvantGo (www.avantgo.com).

If you think that's something, wait until Web-equipped wireless phones become as standard in the U.S. as they are in Europe. Chuck Westbrook, senior producer with CNN Interactive (www.cnn.com) told me the other day that in Europe, 40 million people read CNN content on wireless phones.

Just last week here in the Detroit region, AirTouch Cellular rolled out its Mobile Web wireless phone, which offers news, sports, weather and business Web-site surfing from the

same handheld device you use to place wireless phone calls. There's also e-mail, paging and a Web-based calendar accessible through the phone. Other services, like online shopping and surely the downloading and reading of books and magazines, also are possible.

It looks like "e-publications" are here to stay.

**PC Mike gets a Palm IIIc**

Speaking of Palm, I traded my Palm Vx in this week for the new Palm IIIc color unit. I know, I know. I said a few weeks ago that I didn't think I'd get one of the color models. But then I was browsing through my local computer store and saw it. The display is absolutely breathtaking. It is crystal clear and really bright. I was seduced by a pretty face, what can I tell you?

The new color model is a little larger than my Palm Vx, but it's still way smaller than those klutzy and complicated-color Windows CE competitors. The

Palm IIIc sports a new hot-synch update that speeds up the time it takes to synch data and, with 8 megs of memory, there's room for everything I need. I've now had every model of the Palm from the day it was introduced.

With this new color model, I am again struck by the simplicity and efficiency of the Palm. It is not a "be-all, do-all" gizmo that tries to jam in all sorts of useless features like voice dictation and MP3 playback. It is practical and aimed clearly at the no-nonsense business user who wants to manage a calendar, to-do list, address book and memo pad.

There are tens of thousands of programs available that work on all models and the little machines synch perfectly with Outlook on my desktop computer.

I haven't had this new unit long enough to give you a reliable read on how the color screen will affect battery life, but from

all the reports I've read on the Net, that does not seem to be a problem.

**Voice e-mail**

I received a talking e-mail from PCMike.com regular Mike Biasin alerting me to a new free program called Talksender (www.talksender.com). It's a pretty cool download that takes less than a minute to grab and then use. Just click the mouse to record and hit send to zap it off. Your recipients need nothing extra to listen to your messages. They hear it right away when they open your message.

**Free PC's not a good deal**

Before you jump on the free PC bandwagon, be aware there have been a lot of complaints about some companies that bill your credit card and then don't deliver PC's for weeks or months. And if things go wrong with these freebie PC's, customer support is usually impossible to find. Right now, I would-

n't recommend any of these so-called freebie systems, especially if it is to be your only computer. Most have only limited expansion capabilities. Same goes with the free DSL service being offered these days. The catch with this is you have to give your name to acads of advertisers, who will bombard you with come-ons and sales pitches.

**PC MIKE** on WWJ, NewsRadio 950

Starting Monday, listen to my Net News Daily feature on the Internet, at 6:30 PM on WWJ-Radio, NewsRadio 950. And don't forget my regular WXYT "PC Talk" call-in computer show every Saturday and Sunday from 4-6 p.m. on TalkRadio 1270, WXYT.

"73" until next week.

Mike Wendland covers the Internet for NBC-TV NewsChannel stations across the country. He is the author of a series of Internet books. You can reach him through his Web site at <http://www.pcmike.com>

## BUSINESS CALENDAR

Items from the Observerland area for the Business Calendar can be sent to: Observer Newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, MI 48150 attention: Business Calendar.

### TUES, MARCH 21

**HI-TECH TUESDAY**  
The Ann Arbor IT Zone will sponsor "Research Grants as a Funding Alternative" at 5 p.m. at 350 E. Liberty, downtown Ann Arbor. Mark H. Cleveley, director of the Small Business Association of Michigan's Entrepreneurial Development Center, and Dr. James MacBain, director of research relations at the University of Michigan's College of Engineering, will be the featured speakers. Cost is free to members, \$25 for non-members and \$5 for students. Registration: online at [www.annarboritzone.org](http://www.annarboritzone.org) or call (734) 623-8286.

**NAT'L ASSOC. OF CAREER WOMEN**  
The West Suburban Chapter of the National Association of Career Women will meet at 11:45 a.m. at Ernesto's Restaurant, 41661 Plymouth Road, Plymouth. Etiquette consultant Patricia Warner will discuss "Minding Your P's and Q's in the Workplace." Cost: \$18 for members and \$22 for non-members. To make reservations, call Tracey Huff (248) 347-3355.

### WED, MARCH 22

**BUSINESS NETWORK INT'L**  
Laurel Park Chapter meets 7-8:30 a.m. at Archie's Restaurant, 30471 Plymouth Road, Livonia. Call the BNI regional office at (810) 323-3800.

### FRI, MARCH 24

**BUSINESS NETWORK INT'L**  
Livonia Chapter meets 7-8:30 a.m. at Senate Koney Island on Plymouth Road near Stark. Call the BNI regional office at (810) 323-3800.

### THUR, MARCH 30

**RETIRED EXECUTIVES**  
Marketing Plan Workshop from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Executive Office Building of Oakland County, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac. Topics include diagnosing marketing problems, market targeting, and advertising and publicity. Cost: \$40. To register, contact SCORE at (313) 228-7947 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays.

### WED, APRIL 5

**WOMEN'S CONFERENCE**  
The Michigan Business and Professional Association will sponsor the 4th annual Women's Leadership Conference and Distinguished Service Awards Luncheon Wednesday, April 6 at Burton Manor in Livonia. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. Conference is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Two workshops are planned: "How to Build a Successful Personal Strategic Plan" followed by "Is Your Business Checklist in Order?" The total cost is \$50; cost for luncheon only is \$25. For information about attending, co-sponsoring or advertising, contact MBPA at (810) 979-6322.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 14

Conference is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Two workshops are planned: "How to Build a Successful Personal Strategic Plan" followed by "Is Your Business Checklist in Order?" The total cost is \$50; cost for luncheon only is \$25. For information about attending, co-sponsoring or advertising, contact MBPA at (810) 979-6322.

#### BUSINESS IN CHINA

Oakland University's Professional Development and Education Outreach, School of Education and Human Services (SEHS) will present "Opening Doors in the 21st Century. Creating Business Opportunities in China after WTO." The seminar will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, April 14 in Oakland University's Meadow Brook Ballroom. Co-sponsors include: The Detroit Regional Chamber, Pontiac Export Assistance Center -

U.S. Department of Commerce, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and Leonard Woodcock Legacy. The seminar is an introductory course for individuals and organizations interested in developing or expanding markets in China. Jerome D. Hill, J.D., Ph.D. and Ledong Li will share their expertise on expanding interests and overcoming the challenges of doing business in China. Cost is \$295 and includes a Chinese luncheon and handout material.

The registration deadline is Wednesday, April 5. Enrollment is limited. Contact the Professional Development office at (248) 370-3033 for a brochure or to register for the seminar. Fax registration with VISA or MasterCard payment is accepted at (248) 370-3137.

#### FRI, MAY 12

**Fiesta Hispana Ball**  
The Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce hosts its 11th

Anniversary Fiesta Hispana Ball at the Ritz Carlton in Dearborn. The VIP reception begins at 6:30 p.m. followed by dinner and dancing at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Bo Andersson, executive in charge of worldwide purchasing for General Motors Corp., is event chairman. The ball provides an opportunity to network with business representatives and meet corporate sponsors. For tickets, contact MHCC at (248) 208-9916.

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