

The Future of Zines

Chloe Parks

Graphic Communication Department

College of Liberal Arts

California Polytechnic State University

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to discover if the creation of handmade zines will continue in the future despite the barrage of digital options for those who desire to self-publish. A case study was conducted by interviewing participants from the zine-making community, who shared their thoughts and insights on the medium. The participants responded to questions about the value of zines to society, their personal zine collections, their digital publishing spaces, and where they thought zines were headed. The results of this study found that zines have historically been proliferated for various reasons, and through this have manifested distinct value through the decades. Those who makes zines today continue to create such value, which suggests that the medium will continue in the future.

Chapter One

Purpose of the Study

A zine is a noncommercial, handmade miniature magazine or comic book, usually dealing with subculture specific issues such as feminism, politics, art, music, or personal interests. Zines are icons of the do-it-yourself movement, and embody a cultural desire to express oneself, and communicate with others who share similar interests. During their peak in popularity in the 1990's, zines enjoyed a reputation as an important tool for communication within subcultures such as punk rock, feminism, political groups, comic book enthusiasts, and various fan bases. In a pre-internet world, zines were an extremely powerful means to connect like-minded people and express ideas that varied from the mainstream.

As the years passed and the power of the internet grew, the relevance and attention paid to zines waned. Books moved to e-readers, magazines to websites, and zines to blogs. But can blogs and e-zines communicate the original intent of the self-publishing movement? Zines are made by hand, often with limited resources and commonly low-run, while blogs can be words typed into website templates and instantly published to the entire globe. Can zines be translated into a digital form without losing their efficacy, or will zines continue to be hand made and hand-distributed?

For those who make zines, their hand-made quality is a cornerstone of their existence. If zines were to make the move to a completely digital platform, the physicality of their existence would be lost. Zines are more than just the ideas within, but also each distinct decision that is made about how to present the content, what materials to use, and how many to duplicate. If the content becomes digital, is it the same zine?

Significance of the Study

These questions directly relate to the issues the traditional publishing world is facing today. As digital communication becomes easier, cheaper, and more efficient, printed works must adapt to stay relevant. For books and magazines, this has meant a move towards pixels, rather than print. Though many still prefer the look and feel of physical books, digital's efficiency is undeniable--same content, different carrier. Yet, zines differ from long-run books and magazines in many ways. Zines are self-published (i.e. hand made) and communicate separately from the mainstream culture of traditionally-published works. In some ways it would seem that this would make them more apt to translate to blogs--anyone can make a blog, and "self-publish" in their own right. Yet, the physicality of the zine may not transfer successfully online.

Discussions concerning the relevance of print in an expanding digital realm are characteristic of the current period in time. Perhaps in the future, digital will be fully embraced and print will be nothing more than nostalgia, but for now the worth of print versus digital is an important issue that affects the graphic communication industry.

Interest in the Study

The interest in zines stems from an interest in subculture expression and self-publishing. The idea of people crafting printed works with their hands is extremely fascinating, an individual endeavour fueled by a thirst for self-expression and the desire to be understood. The power of self-publishing, and the popularity of this ideal in our current age, is extremely interesting. People connected through art, music, and ideas is a concept that translates well to the advent of the internet, and discovering whether or not certain aspects of the do-it-yourself printed culture will continue to adapt and change as more publications move online is indicative of larger trends.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Print Moves Digital

Over the past several decades, the shift from print to digital has created difficult circumstances for traditional print industries. The ubiquity of the Internet has changed the landscape irreversibly, and many who have not conceded to digital, have lost businesses because of it. Newsweek Magazine, which was founded in 1933, folded their print department in October of 2012—citing “declining advertising revenue and subscribers” as their main struggle (Bercovici, 2012). Newsweek Magazine’s fate is an allegory of the grapple between print and digital, and serves as a warning to many traditionally printed industries: to either adapt or be left behind.

Zines

A zine is a noncommercial, handmade miniature magazine or comic book, usually dealing with subculture specific issues such as feminism, politics, art, music, or personal interests. These small self-published works can “[range] from anywhere from Xeroxed handwritten rants and cut-and-paste collages to professional design and offset printing,” and “possess some of the most intelligent, political, and outrageous writing today” (Green & Taormino, 1997, p. xi).

As Mark Todd and Esther Pearl Watson detail in their book, *Whatcha Mean, What’s A Zine?*, zines are: “cheaply made printed forms of expression on any subject. They are like mini-magazines or homemade comic books about favorite bands, funny stories, subcultures, personal collections, comix anthologies, diary entries, pathetic report

cards, chain restaurants, and anything else” (2006, p. 12). The content of zines is non-specific to its definition, and are created purely as a form of expression for the writer or editor. They are decidedly noncommercial, often resulting in a profit loss for whomever the creator may be, and exist “to provide an outlet for unfettered expression and a connection to a larger underground world of publishers doing the same” (Duncombe, 1997, p. 14). Zines often represent a strong aversion to the societal “mainstream,” and serve as a way to connect like-minded people. In *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*, Stephen Duncombe characterizes the importance of zines to those in the margins of society: “In an era marked by the rapid centralization of corporate media, zines are independent and localized, coming out of cities, suburbs and small towns across the US, assembled on kitchen tables. They celebrate the every person in a world of celebrity. Losers in a society that rewards the best and brightest” (1997, p. 7). He describes further than zines carry “within them honesty, kindness, anger, [and] beautiful inarticulate articulateness” (1997, p. 7) that is unmatched by commercial, mainstream publications.

The History of Zines

For as long as those with dissenting opinions have had access to printing presses, versions of zines have existed. Duncombe positions zines as “the most recent entry in a long line of media for the misbegotten, a tradition stretching back to Thomas Paine and other radical pamphleteers, up through the underground press of the 1960s, and on towards the Internet” (Duncombe, 1997, p. 15). In *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* published in 1947, the authors illustrate an uncanny similarity between self-published works of the early 20th century and modern-day zines: “A little magazine is a magazine designed to print artistic work which for reasons of commercial expediency is not acceptable to the money-minded periodicals or presses. Acceptance or refusal by commercial publishers at times has little to do with the quality of the work” (Hoffman,

1947, p. 2). The creators of such published works are “stimulated by some form of discontent—whether with the constraints of his world or the negligence of publishers, at any rate with something he considers unjust, boring, or ridiculous. He views the world of publishing and popularizers with disdain, and sometimes despair” (1947, pp. 2-3). Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*

for a global connection through interests was built, and a means to communicate with like-minded humans was born.

As zines moved through the decades, their status as beacons of discontent grew. What began as publications to connect similar fanbases, evolved to represent the voices from the fringes of society. The “punk rock and Do-It-Yourself aesthetic” had a huge impact on zines in the 1970s, and zines’ handmade quality lent itself naturally to the movement (Rowe, 1997, p. xi). Duncombe illustrates the connection of the “negative identity” of punk rock music with the creation of zines: “As staunch contrarians, zinesters construct who they are and what they do in opposition to the rest of society. Their identity is a negative one. The negative identity is in many ways a legacy of punk rock” (1997, 41). Those who made punk zines were devoted to the “pure rebellion, pure negation” it represented. Zines served the voices of punk subculture as expressions of their frustration with the mainstream world. The titles of punk zines highlight their discontent, with names such as “*The I Hate People Gazette* and *Oh Cool Scene Zine: I Hate Everybody*, [and] *I Hate Poetry (but it’s all I can write)*” (Duncombe, 1997, p. 41). Yet, it is important to not generalize zines as completely negative entities, as Duncombe further discusses: “It’s important to remember a few things. Zines offer a space for people to try out new personalities, ideas, and politics...Through this sharing, the argument with the outside world can begin to be replaced by a conversation among comrades” (1997, p. 43). Zines have built a foundation for readers and writers alike to “formulate their ideals of an authentic life,” whether that life is negative or positive (Duncombe, 1997, p. 43).

Though the punk movement stood to represent opposition to the oppressive mainstream, the movement was not all-inclusive—and thus built its own angry antagonists: feminists. Women who considered themselves part of the punk movement were often not considered equal by their male counterparts. The punk subculture continued to breed misogynistic tendencies and attitudes towards women, even those women who valued and were devoted to the punk aesthetic and ethic. Sarah Dyer, a woman who made punk zines

with a male co-producer, describes “a familiar feminist story. She was part of a punk community that positioned itself as outside of and superior to the mainstream world, a community that claimed to challenge the power dynamics and oppression that characterized dominant societal practices (Piepmeier, 2009, p. 25). Yet despite her involvement in the movement, Dyer “discovered that the social justice movement with which she identified did not offer her full human recognition” (Piepmeier, 2009, p. 25). The building frustration of women in the punk culture and the burgeoning need for a resurgence of an updated feminism led to feminism’s third wave in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and to the introduction of the Riot Grrrl movement.

In her book, *Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism*, Alison Piepmeier delineates the origins of third wave feminism, and zines’ impact in the movement. Piepmeier describes the social and political atmosphere of the early 1990s as one that was primed and ready for a new phase of feminism: the backlash against feminists in the 1980s and a discontent with the second wave’s neglect of women who were not white and heterosexual built a need for a new kind of feminism to reform in its place. The third-wave focused on creating a “more inclusive” feminism, and “is often used to describe a kind of companionable, man-friendly, pro-sex, pro-femininity-if-you-want-it feminism that reflects the successes of the second wave’s struggle for equal footing” (Fudge, 2005). Yet this wave of feminism (like the ones that came before), was no stranger to controversy: “From its first utterance, the notion of a third wave has generated controversy and concern that both the media and young women were (and are), in their own ways, flattening the powerful complexities and nuances of second-wave feminism into a man-hating, anti-lipstick stereotype, and setting up a generational antagonism” (Fudge, 2005). Such stereotypes were gleaned from the third-wave’s unabashedly angry and loud Riot Grrrl movement which began in Olympia, Washington in the mid 1990’s. Riot Grrrl “allowed women to be sexually free and simultaneously open about harassment and sexual assault, [and] encouraged them in pursuits traditionally thought of as male, like dancing in the mosh pit

or thrashing on guitar, without having to give up their spirited girly-ness” (Ryzik, 2011). The Riot Grrrl movement “rewrote the word ‘girl’ to incorporate an angry growl,” to illustrate the anger, frustration, and power that those in the movement assumed.

Zines were invaluable to the Riot Grrrl movement, in the same way that small self-powered publications have always been important to feminist movements. Even before desktop computers and Xerox copiers, feminists have been using printed technologies to spread their messages, from handmade scrapbooks to mimeographs. Informal publishing has always been a fundamental facet of feminist tradition, and the grrrl zine explosion was no exception (Piepmeier, 2009, p. 44). Piepmeier defines grrrl zines as “sites where girls and women construct identities, communities, and explanatory narratives from the materials that comprise their cultural moment: discourses, media representations, ideologies, stereotypes, and even physical detritus” (2009, p. 2), and such publications not only helped spread the ideals of feminism’s third wave, but also led to the proliferation of zines in the 1990s.

Though the functions of specific zines have changed over the decades, one aspect remains intact in each that is created: a desire to express oneself. Their historical importance is categorized by their ability to encompass the energy and hopes of social movements, while simultaneously being vessels of a singular person’s experience and expression.

How Zines Are Made

Zines are typically small, saddle-stitched works created from folded 8 1/2” by 11” sheets. Their materials can vary greatly, some of which can contain one of a kind scrapbooked additions. At their simplest (and most commonly), zines are made by folding sheets of paper, numbering the pages to account for imposition, and creating the content on these “master pages” that are to be photocopied to create the full run (Todd & Watson, 2006, p. 46). Binding is most often created with staples, but can be as complex as sewn

bindings or square bindings to lend the zine a perfect bound feel. Content is created within the pages written by hand, created on a computer, or built using a cut-and-paste technique from found collaged materials—or any combination of said techniques.

The content possibilities of zines are limitless. Though there is great freedom in zine creation, several types of content are more commonly seen, such as: rants, fiction, poetry, journaling, reviews, articles, interviews, and comics (Todd & Watson, 2006, p. 33).

Once a zine is created, photocopied, and bound, getting it into circulation remains the final hurdle. In *Whatcha Mean, What's a Zine?* authors Mark Todd and Esther Pearl Watson suggest initially to “find out who’s in charge and start mailing out those zines. Send them to distros, zines and websites that do reviews” (2006, p.90). It is also important that contact information is included to continue to build the correspondence of those who make zines. Todd and Watson further suggest that “by including things like an e-mail, website, or snail-mail address, you can let readers contact you for future issues, send trades, or simply write you a note” (2006, p. 92).

Today, zines are still created, traded, and collected, and those who consider themselves members of the zine culture often gather to promote their passion for self-publishing. One example of such a gathering is the Los Angeles ZineFest, which is:

“organized by a collective of zine-enthusiasts dedicated to promoting zine culture as a means to connect the pre-existing communities in L.A.—artistic or otherwise. We aim to create opportunities for people to share self-published works and host events that encourage ideas to spill out onto paper in pictures and words. We believe that by embracing the urge to create and sharing ideas there can be a more robust and formidable local zine community that extends beyond bookstores and bedrooms. L.A. Zine Fest is an opportunity for So-Cal zinesters to come together en masse and meet and exchange ideas with those from all over the country” (lazinefest.com).

Such conventions are a physical manifestation of the correspondence that zines

have built over the decades, and allow like-minded people to connect in the real world.

Conclusion

Zines have a rich history in various subcultures, movements, and fanbases. They are of great importance to those who create, trade, and collect them, and exist as expressions of creative and independent thought. Though they have evolved over decades, their purpose remains as alternatives to the mainstream media. Whether or not they will continue to evolve as the printed world adapts to a digital landscape is a question this study aims to answer.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to discover where zines are headed as more printed products shift to fit our growing digital world. Zines have existed in various forms for over a century, and are an important facet of underground culture and a tool of communication for burgeoning movements. This study aimed to ascertain whether or not blogs will suffice as a digital substitution for zines, and if those who consider themselves part of the zine community will accept or reject the digital form.

The objective of this study was to determine if the creation of an online blog is a comparable experience to creating a handmade zine. This study will examine if those who currently consider themselves part of the handmade zine community do not consider blogs to be a form of zine culture, or if those who digitally self-publish see greater value in their digital choice.

In order to obtain this research, case studies were performed by interviewing various zine-making participants (See Appendix A). Several people were interviewed, some who have created zines for decades, some who have just begun making handmade zines, and some who create both zines and digital outlets for their self-publishing (See Appendix B).

Each set of responses was analyzed in relation to the interviewees connection to zine culture. Opinions were extracted about the value of handmade goods versus digital versions, and determined similarities and differences in responses through an analysis of like responses, differing opinions, and made notes of any novel disclosures.

Chapter Four

Results

Through surveying zine-makers, results were found that indicate certain trends in the attitudes and insights for the future of the medium. The participants' responses advocated distinct values of zine-making, processes inherent to the craft, and opinions about where zines are headed in our exceedingly digital world.

The Value of Zines

Zines have been valuable components of many underground political and social movements through the decades, but today they often create value in a different way: by offering an alternative medium to digital options. Kim Schwenk, a feminist zine-maker who has been creating zines since 1987, still defines the value of zines as markedly political: "Zines are documents and snapshots of society without the censored voice of the state." Yet, a majority of the participants (who have been begun creating zines within the last decade) stressed the idea that today zines serve as a more lasting reflection of a personal artistic endeavour, which can be lost when quickly viewed on a computer screen. Endless Canvas, an anonymous publisher and curator of graffiti zines, explained how zines "slow down and curate information" for their audience: "At this point in society, with the endless stream of low quality 'Instagram information' bombarding us ...[Zines] say this information is important and worth preserving." In the case of graffiti artists, the anonymity that is possible with zine-making is unbeatable for their publications because "many graffiti zines are still a valid way for graffiti writers to communicate with each other off the grid. It's a secure way for artist to share photos without their IP addresses

being traced by the authorities” (Endless Canvas). The idea that zines are a valuable alternative to digital publishing was echoed by Bianca Barragan, an English Instructor, who pointed out how zines build real-world connections that differ from online options: “In a day and age where the communication we have is constant but superficial, I think there is a real need for media in which people can engage each other for a long time, have a conversation, across countries or oceans.”

Beyond zines serving only as valuable alternatives to digital publishing, a noteworthy augmentation to the described value of zines from the surveyed participants were descriptions of zine’s value to self-worth. Jamie Mayne, a student and Zine Director at Rock Paper Scissors Collective who has been making zines for four years, described how zines can elevate both the creator and reader’s sense of self: “[Zines] provide tangible proof of passion and intent. They invite the reader to sit with the stories or images of another person who otherwise might not ever be heard. They can really open a persons eyes to an entirely different way of life and because they are so simple to make; I think they inspire others to make their own voices heard as well.” Zines express the creator’s intention through purposeful decisions--and this alone is enough to inspire in others a desire to express oneself deliberately. Barragan also commented on the value of zine’s to her sense of self: “My first zine changed how I thought about myself and what I was capable of. It’s basically the most empowering thing that happened to me, ever.” Clearly, those who produce zines find inherent value in their production, whether that be an exploration of self, a political message, or a community-building tool for like-minded people. Zines have value, but how does this value translate in our increasingly digital world?

The Importance of the Do-It-Yourself Ethic

The participants in the study had varied opinions about the relative importance of the DIY ethic in zine-making. Schwenk considered DIY as the “cornerstone of zine-making. Without self-sustainability, you might as well bargain with capital interests.” Her

opinion highlights the idea that there is a distinct freedom of expression that comes from completely detaching oneself from corporate sponsorship or necessity. A zine-maker who feels compelled to produce or contribute to a zine is by nature utilizing the DIY ethic by self-publishing, or as Mayne phrases it: “DIY is more about not asking permission than it is about doing something all by yourself.” This concept was seconded by Endless Canvas’s opinion: “[Zines] can only exist with a DIY ethic. If you don’t do it yourself, it won’t happen. No one is going to make it for you.”

Each participant in the study detailed their process for creating zines, and the issue of self-manufactured zines was touched upon. Some zine-makers create content and send their digital files to cheaper locations (China, per se) to alleviate some of the financial burden of self-publishing. Though most of the participants in the study detailed their processes as specifically hand-made, most had no issue with the idea of outsourcing zine manufacturing. Barragan detailed that though some people send off their content to be manufactured elsewhere, she would never, though she sees no issue with this notion. In some way, the zine-maker has worked to either produce or raise money to have the zine printed elsewhere--both respectable options to Barragan. Scott Longo, a Comic creator and publisher, explained that he viewed the DIY ethic in zine-making as being built from necessity: “the DIY aspect is a necessity in small-scale printing because it costs too much to print [larger volumes].”

The importance of the DIY ethic to zine-making is especially critical when considering online venues for e-zines. If one considers a blog to be the digital equivalent of a zine, where does the DIY ethic play in? Would using website template or themes be considered inauthentic, as opposed to the purposefully designed and manufactured physicality of zines? Almost all of the participants in the study championed the DIY effort as a crucial part of the zine-making process. So if the digital carrier of user-made content is not created by the author/artist/zinester themselves--is it even comparable?

Digital Self-Publishing

It is interesting to note that every participant in the study had a URL to offer as a digital presentation of their work (zines, art, portfolio, etc.). A majority also mentioned social networking and blogging sites as filters through which they share their work. Only one participant, Zach Shipko, a software engineer, posts on a “self-hosted blog/portfolio hybrid. Because [he is] skeptical of posting all of my personal work on for profit a website run by someone else with motives unknown to me.”

When asked if the participants considered online self-publishing of e-zines as comparable to printed zines, the responses varied. Schwenk considers the two to be comparable, in that they “allow for an expansion of access. E-zines tend to be more informational and lack visual qualities.” Schwenk clearly sees value in the opportunity for digital sharing when it relates to allowing as many people as possible to have access to information that the creator wishes to share. This concept is a strong argument that digital zines have great value, as the origin of zines was to spread information to people who may not otherwise have access (i.e. said information is blocked by traditional publishing industries). Endless Canvas only considers e-zines as comparable when the creator has scanned a PDF of the physical zine. He states that “other than that, it’s the same content, but because it is presented differently [online] it has a different impact on people...It’s a quick glance then onto the next meme.” So while your work may reach more people in a digital medium, the permanence or any lasting effect the creator wished to impart may be lost completely.

Mayne made an important distinction between her online self-publishing and physical zine-making when she mentioned that her sites are “more for professional advancement...[while her] zines are for a different audience. I don’t expect or seek monetary return for my zines, but I hope to make a living off of my art.” The separation between online self-marketing and zine-making for zine-making’s-sake is an interesting indication of what each medium can be used for.

Mayne furthered her description by describing how one might collect zines in an entirely different approach than collecting websites: “I treasure my zine collection in a way that I will never treasure my bookmarked blogs. The visible hand is something I look for in every aspect of life and it’s something that is lost almost completely with digital media.” Echoing this sentiment was Barragan, who had the strongest opinion about zines versus digital options: “Blogs are in no way a zine. Not even comparable. A blog, even the most personal, still feels far away to me.”

The Future of Zines

The participants’ opinions on where zines are heading in the future are indicative of larger trends within the realm of zine-making. Endless Canvas and Longo both asserted that as far as zines representing an outlet for expression and communication, digital options are superior. Shipko echoed this sentiment by stating that “if you want people to read or see what you made, then digital is just as good (if not better [than zines]).” Yet, they agreed that zines will continue more as “art-objects and small crafty books. The older function of communication and distribution has been completely eclipsed by the internet, but there is something undeniably intimate about reading from a physical object that I don’t think e-zines or web spaces will be able to replicate” (Longo). Endless Canvas believed that there will be less zines in the future, due to the rising costs and inconveniences of traditional zine-making processes, such as rising Xerox copying costs. He asserted that there will be “more blogs and less zines” within the next decade, but that this fact “will only make those fewer zines even cooler.”

Schwenk, Mayne, and Barragan agreed that zines will continue to exist, but not merely as craft projects or art pieces--but as important tools of communication. Schwenk stated that “as long as society has a voice, print zines will continue to be produced and collected...[Digital] formats are volatile and easily corruptible.” Mayne contended that a rise in zine popularity could be anticipated as “the public becomes more disenchant-

with the highly censored mainstream media and the digitizing of everything around us.” Mayne’s opinion was the strongest voice suggesting that zines would rise in popularity, while every other participant saw the digital wave as something that certainly threatens zines as they have existed historically. There are movements trending around the world for a return to simpler, more hand-made manufacturing as a rejection of global corporation and censorship, and zine-making certainly aids in that rejection, yet a majority of the participants saw value in both printed and digital formats, depending on the content type and target audience. Though each participant established their own scale of the value that zines hold to the individual and to society, every respondent asserted that zines would still exist in the next 10 to 25 years. As Barragan noted, the power of zines to connect people is inherent to their creation and representative of their strength to survive. In her words: “It’s not like people are going to stop being lonely, or stop really needing to know that other people, even just one other person, feels the same way they do about something. As long as people need to have rewarding relationships or want to learn about the experiences and lives of others, zines will survive.”

Chapter Five

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to discover whether or not printed zines will survive in the exceedingly digital global landscape. In order to survey the value of zines to our society, a case study was performed by interviewing participants who shared their insights and passions on the subject. Through an analysis of the value of the zine to both the individual and society, the importance of the do-it-yourself ethic, and a comparison to online digital self-publishing, the future of zines was structured by the input of the study's respondents.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the research is that zines have an inherent value that cannot (currently) be recreated in full through a digital medium. 100% of respondents agreed that zines would exist in 10 to 25 years--though their answers varied as to how prolific the medium will remain, or what subject matter might pertain to zines most. In the New York Times article "Yes, Zines Still Exist, and They're Not Antiques," author Chris Berube comments on zine making today: "zine making is alive and well, as evidenced by the zine fairs that have popped up across the country in the last few years. At the Chicago Zine Fest in February, three floors of the Ludington Building at Columbia College were packed with rows of exhibitors' tables." Clearly, those who share a passion for zines are proactively creating and congregating in order to encourage and ensure the continuation of these little magazines. Berube also contends that there is a human quality in zines that cannot be compared to digital formats: "Perhaps the most important reason for zine makers to continue their hobby — even after blogging, Facebook and Twitter became the dominant modes of public personal expression — is that zines are rich with

personality. An author might be more likely to reveal herself in the creation of a zine than through the selection of preset templates on a WordPress blog.” This sentiment was echoed in similar ways through the participants of this study who stressed the importance of human connection.

Zines have been created for over a century to meet various ends--whether that be political dissent, human communication, or self-expression. Their functions are varied but their value is fundamental: zines are an alternative outlet to traditional publishing methods, and those who choose to create or collect them understand their significance and distinct characteristics. The responses gathered from the case study surrounding the future of printed zines suggest that their creation will continue. Zines have the capacity to share insights and intent that may not be shared through other media, including digital options, and because of this, printed zines won't be vanishing any time soon.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my case study portion of my senior project surrounding the future of printed zines. Please answer and return your responses through email to cparks@calpoly.edu by Saturday, April 27th. Thoughtful responses in full sentences are appreciated.

1. Name:
2. Occupation:
3. URL of online self-publishing space (if applicable):
4. How would you define a zine?
5. How long have you been making zines?
6. On what subject(s) do your zines focus on?
7. How do you physically make your zine (process)? What technology/tools do you need to create your zine? (Microsoft Word, Photoshop, Copier, staples, hand-sewn binding, etc).
8. How important is the do-it-yourself ethic to zine-making?
9. What function do you think zines serve/What is their value to society?
10. Do you collect zines? If so, on what subjects?
11. Do you also self-publish on the web (personal site, portfolio, blog, Tumblr, Flickr, etc.)? If so, through which outlets and why?
12. Do you consider online self-publishing of e-zines comparable to printed zines? Why or why not?
13. Do you think zines will continue to exist in printed versions in 10 years? 25 years?
14. Any additional comments:

Appendix B

Participant Responses

Participant Response 1

1. Kim Schwenk aka Kim Riot
2. Librarian
3. gzagg.org
4. A zine is one of the last vestiges of independent media.
5. Since 1987
6. Stateless society, anarchism, politics and art, reclaiming ecology from industry
7. I prefer cut-n-paste, hand manipulation, typewriters. I do use copiers to enlarge and copy images, but I have collected scrap for years and generally use refuse scrap and other found objects. I then copy the original and staple or sew the binding.
8. DIY is the cornerstone of zine-making. Without self-sustainability, you might as well bargain with capital interests.
9. Zines are documents and snapshots of society without the censored voice of the state. Their value is embedded in the information or the aesthetic they contain.
10. Mostly herbalist, environmental, or how-to zines on wilderness survival.
11. My collective, Grrrlzines-a-go-go posts zines on the web, but otherwise, I prefer print based zines.
12. They are comparable, in that, they allow for expansion of access. E-zines tend to be more informational and lack visual qualities.

13. Yes, as long as society has a voice, print zines will continue to be produced and collected. Digital formats have less of a lifespan as print media. Their formats are volatile and easily corruptible. Besides, who really reads and collects things online? We collect objects for longevity because we attach memories to them. Digital formats are temporary placeholders for current attention. We must continue print culture to reconcile our past.

Participant Response 2

1. Endless Canvas
2. Publisher / Curator
3. <http://www.EndlessCanvas.com>
4. Zine was originally an abbreviation for magazine. It has since been used to define any small scale independent publication. The term zine most commonly refers to a half sized, saddle stitched, booklet printed on a Xerox machine, or something reminiscent of that traditional aesthetic.
5. I've been making zines for about 12 years. EndlessCanvas.com was launched in 2008 as a collaboration between a few zine makers / photographers. We printing our first hard copy of Endless Canvas in Early 2009.
6. Our zines focus on graffiti and street art.
7. Digital photography, Photoshop, InDesign, Xerox, and Screen Printing. Our next issue of Endless Canvas will be offset printed to bleed, photo quality paper, and perfect bound. Our other publications are still Xerox with screen printed covers.
8. It can only exist with a DIY ethic. If you don't do it yourself it wont happen. No one is going to make it for you.
9. At this point in society, with the endless stream of low quality Instagram information bombarding us, zines actually slow down and curate information. They

say this information is important and worth preserving. Many graffiti zines are still a valid way for graffiti writers to communicate with each other off the grid. It's a secure way for artist to share photos without their IP addresses being traced by the authorities.

10. I don't go out of my way to collect zines but they tend to accumulate around me. I'm most attracted to aesthetically pleasing hand printed art zines. Political pamphlets are also very important to communicate contemporary issues and movements. Most activists can't afford to publish full on books.

11. We self publish on www.EndlessCanvas.com ... we're also working a short documentary series that is published online. We try to keep up with the social networking sites, Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram... Flickr is dying off but we post once in a while. It's really important for anyone promoting any project really.

12. It's comparable if you are posting a PDF of your zine that is laid out exactly like your zine. Other than that it's the same content but because it is presented differently it has a different impact on people. Online is so instant that your fans will never look back on it. It's a quick glance then onto the next meme. Zines sit around on your coffee table and you look through it every time you're procrastinating.

13. Zines will continue to exist for the sheer novelty and history they hold in the punk scene. I don't see as many punk zines anymore though. It seems to have been more adopted by the craft making community. Graffiti zines have been making a come back because they're riding on the back of the sticker trading craze. There will definitely be less zines in the future. Copies are going up in price, copy scams don't work anymore, surveillance cameras on employees, new Xerox machines recycle the toner so that you don't get nice dark prints, independent book stores are becoming rare. There will be more blogs and less zines, but that will only make those fewer zines even cooler.

14. Take time to make your zine aesthetic and people will be a hundred times more likely to read the content.

Participant Response 3

1. Jamie Mayne
2. Student and Zine Director at Rock Paper Scissors Collective
3. rpscollective.org
4. Self-published mini magazine, often hand made and historically used as a voice for marginalized people and communities.
5. 4 years
6. Travel, personal narrative, art, queer, humor
7. Sewing, cut and paste collage, photocopied textiles, hand drawing sometimes staples, usually a single page folded and cut to make an 8 page zine. I am a weaver and often photocopy sections of my weaving to give out when I'm displaying the weavings in order to merge my fine art practice with my zine practice and to offer a piece of my art that is more attainable for the majority of people.
8. The concept of DIY was part of the initial strength of the movement and it's resurgence with Riot Grrrl, when girls could do their music scene themselves without permission from the boys who typically ran the show. Part of the empowerment one can find in zines comes from the ability to figure it out with very little resources and create a finished product without outside help. That said I also think multi-contributor zines are a great form and a way to feature diverse perspectives into one publication. Our collective's 'slogan' is DIY but Do It Together and I think that goes for zines as well. DIY is more about not asking for permission than it is about doing something all by yourself.
9. They provide tangible proof of passion and intent. They invite the reader to sit with the stories or images of another person who otherwise might not ever be

heard. They can really open a persons eyes to an entirely different way of life and because they are so simple to make I think they inspire others to make their own voices heard as well.

10. Yes, mostly art zines, DIY and herbalist zines, and queer and feminist zines. Some funny zines too.

11. Yes, I have an artist website and a blog. These are more for professional advancement. My zines are for an different audience. I don't expect or seek monetary return for my zines but I hope to make a living off of my art.

12. No, a large part of the allure of zines for me is having something tangible when we spend so much time consuming information online. I treasure my zine collection in a way that I will never treasure my bookmarked blogs. The visible hand is something I look for in every aspect of life and it's something that is lost almost completely with digital media.

13. Yes, I expect they will become even more popular as the public becomes more disenchanted with the highly censored mainstream media and the digitizing of everything around us.

14. Good luck on your project, I'd love to hear more of what comes of it! Come by and say hi sometime, we are always looking for passionate zinesters to help catalog the library, make suggestions or just hang out!

Participant Response 4

1. Bianca Barragan
2. ESL Instructor
3. youcantrustme.Tumblr.com
4. I think a zine is an independent, selfpublished publication made by a person or people for the sake of sharing ideas or art.
5. I've been making zines since 2009, but I contributed to friend's zines before making my own.

6. My zines are probably what could be called creative nonfiction and personal essays. They are always about me in some way the people I meet on the subway, the things that happen in my life.
7. My zines were all made using Microsoft Word. I typed them up on landscape oriented pages with two columns, and I then printed the pages out and cut them in half. Then I taped them back together so they could be printed and copied double sided, booklet style. I usually staple my zines, but the first two print runs of my second zine were with a needle and thread. This is all in the past tense because recently I edited and did layout for a compilation zine, and in the process I learned how to use InDesign. I think in the future, I will use that to make my zines because it is amazing and it makes everything faster and easier.
8. For me, DIY is very important to the act of zine-making because I actually enjoy the assembly process. I like typing the stuff up, printing it out, monkeying with the details. As far as other people's zines go, I don't really have an opinion. Some people send their zines away as PDFs and have them printed in China, and I think that's just fine. But I would never do that. I think that zine-making and DIY are totally intertwined. Even people who don't physically make their own zines have busted their butts to raise money to print them somewhere else. Zines are gateway to other things because first you use a copier and make your zine and then you meet someone who silk screened their cover and you think, "Oh, that would look nice. Wonder if I can learn that," and then you're like, "Well I could screen a tshirt," and then next thing you know, you're making your own bread or something. To have that object that I can hold that zine makes me feel like I have proof that I can do something, no matter how long it takes or how humbly it begins. My first zine changed how I thought about myself and what I was capable of. It's basically the most empowering thing that happened to me, ever.
9. I think that first and foremost, zines help people connect to one another in

ways that are deep and meaningful.

There are zines about everything it's so easy to find someone who is passionate about something you're passionate about! In a day and age where the communication we have is constant but superficial, I think there is a real need for media in which people can engage each other for a long time, have a conversation, across countries or oceans. Zines also help to preserve history of movements that don't get attention from mainstream media. Zines are made by everyday people and document versions and perspectives on subcultures or currents in thought that might otherwise be lost.

10. I didn't set out to collect zines, and thus, the collection doesn't really have a theme. What happened was, I kept hanging out with zine people and going to zine events and trading my work with others and then one day, I realized that all my trades and purchases had claimed two shelves of my bookshelf. The zines I have are all over the map--comics, perzines, interviews with sex workers, graphic narratives, poetry.

11. I self-publish irregularly on my Tumblr. It's nowhere near as polished as the stuff I print, but for a brief time, I had a series of hypertext nonfiction that had sort of a journalistic-essay-meets-humorous-essay vibe, or at least that's what I'd hoped for, but I got busy and stopped, and then when I had time again, I didn't want to start doing them again because I couldn't think of a satisfactory way to translate all the links that made the online version fun into a print version without making it prohibitively expensive to print. I got a Tumblr because I had a Livejournal and loved it, but now only Russians use Livejournal and I don't speak Russian so who am I going to meet? I liked the themes and visual focus of Tumblr, it seemed like it would be a good looking, un-intimidating blog to write on. The only reason I wanted a Tumblr was because I told myself that I was going to post stuff up there and have my zines for sale and my resume, and eventually

I'd buy a domain and have a site for my writing and then I would get a job writing. It didn't work out that way, but now the Tumblr is mostly to, as I mentioned, irregularly post writing and regularly repost LA Zine Fest stuff.

12. I don't consider ezines as comparable, but it might just be because I don't participate in that community and have no idea what it's really like, or if it's anything like the physical zine community. I also don't think it's as fun, and I don't feel as connected to the people who made it. I think ezines are a great resource for teachers who might not have access to a lot of print zines but want to share the medium with their students, or to preserve a printed zine, but I am not as interested in digital zines as I am in the printed ones. I'm not quite clear what's meant by online selfpublishing (blogging and the like, or using websites like Blurb to print books or booklets of your work?), but blogs are in no way like a zine. Not even comparable. A blog, even the most personal, still feels far away to me. People who use online services to print their zines I probably would still consider zinesters, and their zines would be just like any other zine to me, but I would just feel like they're missing out on so many fun things and learning experiences.

13. Heck yes! Zines have survived radio and TV and cable television. People will want physical artifacts as our world becomes increasingly digital. It's not like people are going to stop being lonely, or stop really needing to know that other people--even just one other person--feels the same way they do about something. As long as people need to have rewarding relationships or want to learn about the experiences and lives of others, zines will survive.

14. I love that you are doing this as your senior project! So many people have contacted LA Zine Fest about studies and projects they're doing about zines. It's so inspiring to know that people continue to study and be interested in zine culture--just as exciting as the fact that people are still making them! Good luck :)

Participant Response 5

1. Scott Longo
2. I quit my job about a month ago. I used to work as an Administrative Assistant at a local utility. In my spare time I publish and make comics but I don't think of it as my occupation necessarily.
3. sontinacomics.us
4. I guess when I think of a zine I think of a fanzine. Like, a precursor to a blog in some way? I feel like the Wikipedia definition is pretty dead-on: "A zine (an abbreviation of fanzine, or magazine) is most commonly a small circulation self-published work of original and/or appropriated texts and images usually reproduced via photocopier."
5. I'm not sure if I even really make zines? But I've been making and printing comics since 2008. I tend to use the term mini-comics when talking about stand-alone, small, self-published comics.
6. I've mostly been printing short, self-contained comics stories that are semi-autobiographical or comics fiction. I think the only real zine I've ever tried to make was a collection of short life stories similar to John Porcellino's King-Cat.
7. For the first couple mini-comics I just took the original pages straight to a copier, then for assembling the book, I'd use a long-arm stapler or in some cases hand-sewn binding. But now I pretty much use a scanner or iPhone camera to capture the image, Photoshop, InDesign, a zip-drive to make and transfer the images.. and I guess for the smaller stuff I would still take these files to a copy shop to print and do the folding and binding at home. And a utility knife, paper cutter, and a bone folder really help with cutting and folding everything down to size.
8. Uh, I think more than anything I enjoy the direct translation of ideas. Just knowing that a certain image or set of thoughts is coming to you relatively uncensored.. understanding that there's fundamentally a real person behind the finished

product is always nice. I don't have a huge attachment to the intensely crafty side of zine-making.. like, I don't think it's essential to the definition but it's nice when something is well done. I feel like, for the majority, the DIY aspect is a necessity to small-scale printing because it costs too much to print most things any other way and people get into and enjoy what they've got.

9. Honestly, I think blogs have replaced the need and function of a lot of zines. Zines used to be a way of getting in touch and involved with a community. Expressing thoughts. Now it's so easy to do that with the internet, I think zines have come to serve more of an art-object function. I feel like when you print something in that small a run it's more of a way to aestheticize content or to very intimately communicate to a small group of people. Austin Kleon posted something recently about how.. like, if you want to ensure something is kept private, make sure you write it down or print it and keep it off the internet.

10. I keep and actively seek out mini-comics. I think the only real zines I collect are John Porcellino's King-Cat and Jason Martin's Laterborn, both of which are autobio comics.

11. I have a Tumblr, Flickr, a comics journal blog, and an additional Tumblr for Sonatina related news and art. I think, like most people who are involved with creating stuff, I try to take advantage of all the ways to reach people in our ultra-connected world. Of all things, Tumblr seems the most related to zine-culture. A quick and easy way to keep up with a community of people and share images. Flickr is more like an archive or portfolio site in some way.

12. Um, it seems pretty comparable and maybe more realistic for most people? It seems like there is a new school of young cartoonists out there making short, popular e-zines who have had some success selling them for a few bucks. I guess the main thing is just getting the content out there. I thought it was interesting that in the Wikipedia definition they go on to say that the cost and time spent making

these publications is rarely equal to the amount gained in distribution. Like, that was an essential part of it, haha. So, to me, distributing them online seems to make a lot of sense. Again, I think the purpose of zines are mainly just to communicate thoughts with people in some kind of ordered manner.. so eliminating any of the processes that can limit production seems to be useful for most people. It's also probably much easier to reach more people with an e-zine.

13. I think so. Like I said above, I believe zines will exist more as art-objects and small crafty books. The older function of easy communication and distribution has been completely eclipsed by the internet but there is something undeniably intimate about reading from a physical object that I don't think e-zine or web spaces will be able to replicate. It's like when television arrived.. it didn't replace movies as a medium it just shifted both of their purposes.

14. If you haven't already, try to contact John Porcellino, Jason Martin, Jack Hayden at Snakebomb Comix, and Leah Wishnia at Happiness Comix. They'll probably have some interesting things to say about this. I guess I think of zine culture as a specifically 90s thing and a pre-90s thing. I mean, current zine culture exists but it seems to be very different and, like I've been saying, just serves a different purpose.

Participant Response 6

1. Zach Shipko
2. Software Engineer
3. zachshipko.com
4. An amateur-looking magazine/booklet, often smaller and less frequently released than a magazine.
5. 10 years
6. No single, central focus. They usually include photos and found images/text

7. It totally depends, but I've often used tape, paper, photocopier, rubber cement, or just a computer (and when I do that I use the program GIMP)
8. It can be part of it if that's what you want but anyone can make a zine...even if they want to spend tons of money on it and have someone else make it for them... if they choose the 'zine aesthetic' then it's a zine.
9. No
10. They are like mini diaries that you are willing to share with people. I don't think they are really all that valuable to society. A zine is just a fun little booklet that you can share with people.
11. I post on a self-hosted blog/portfolio hybrid. Because I am skeptical of posting all of my personal work on for profit a website run by someone else with motives unknown to me.
12. Yeah, it depends on what you're trying to do though. If you want people to read/see what you made then digital is just as good (if not better). But if you're interested in the art of bookmaking then an e-zine probably won't cut it. I am not so concerned with the art of bookmaking.

Participant Response 7

1. Sara McGrath
2. Soon to be former college student/bookseller at Green Apple Books in SF
3. [Twitter.com/spillaryclinton](https://twitter.com/spillaryclinton), [Worldfamousrapstar.Tumblr.com](https://www.tumblr.com/worldfamousrapstar)
4. A zine can be any amount of pieces of paper stapled together and photocopied and distributed to friends and strange and whoever else. Zines are in their purest form when they do not cost anything. Zines are often traded with other zines. I think they should always be free.
5. I made my first one when I was 18 during a minor breakdown my freshman year of college. It was really personal and I think I made it all in one day. I did

acid the day before and walked around campus with my roommates. I had a series of revelations and felt like I would die if I didn't write down a bunch of stuff, make a ton of copies, staple them together and give them to my friends. Since then I've made a lot of zines on different topics. This first one was called "This is a Hand" and there was a drawing of a hand on the front.

6. Mostly I write fiction and poetry but I prefer to call it "prose" because of the negative associations people have with both of these terms. My writing mostly center around people who are trying to find intimacy and connection but are unable, for various reasons. I guess that's the most general way to put it. Putting my writing out myself is a way to mediate this need for human connection that my characters/writing represents.

7. I am super basic about the way I make my zines. I cut and paste, literally, with scissors, tape, and glue. I make copies at the Office Max. I don't always pay for the copies I make. It's easy to do. I sometimes use colored paper. I wish I could sew or bind my own books but when I'm making a zine I'm usually in a frenzy of trying to get it out into the world as fast as I can and I have never been very patient or had much of a steady hand.

8. The absolute most important. Though I'm kind of primitive and slipshod in my process of putting together the actual zine, I am very careful and meticulous about what content goes into it. It is a way of owning every aspect of your creative project and having complete control. I don't understand when people make zines and charge upwards of ten dollars for a few photos of their friends that they commissioned someone else to compile on glossy paper. No offense to people I know that have done that, but having it all in my hands is meditative for me.

9. I think it's a crucial way to get voices heard that wouldn't be normally. Literally anyone can make a zine, and should! I think it takes back a lot of the power of production that seems lost in our "fast fashion" society where nothing is

really custom or personal. A zine can tell you a lot about a person and gives them a platform to say something they feel is important.

10. I have a huge collection by accident, none of which I revisit that often, unfortunately. Mostly they've been given to me or traded for my own. I think if I were to look through most of them they'd be poetry and short fiction. I probably have a few photo zines lying around too.

11. Sort of. I tweet a lot, which is partly for the affirmation that comes from getting faves and retweets, but also to take notes or bookmark ideas I have for future projects. Those poems also came from my Blogspot, which I used to use a lot but don't anymore. The fact that you can go back and edit blog posts make them feel more like placeholders or reminders to go back and edit things through. It's more of a notebook than a final frontier of publishing. I also use Tumblr but mostly for stupid pictures.

12. I really like e-books but I don't always read them. I guess I like the idea of e-books, the accessibility. I think whoever wants to put their writing or art out in whatever form is great. To me, collating paper and folding and cutting and gluing and taping is a process I would miss if I made them on a computer. Also I'm terrible with InDesign and all that stuff. It's easier to get frustrated and rip paper up than get frustrated at a computer screen, I think. Because like, what are you supposed to do then? I'm very into tactile, tangible, physical objects. Printed zines show you more of the person's blood sweat and tears, so to speak. Every typo is a story.

13. I don't see why not. As a kid I'd make my own picture books and staple them together. It just seemed natural and I didn't understand the difference in quality/legitimacy between what I made and the books we got in the library (yeah I always had a huge ego). People should feel empowered to make stuff they want to read/see. I work at a bookstore and almost every day some customer comes in and talks

about the “future of the book” and is so grateful and emotional, like almost to the point of tears, that we’re still around. I don’t really understand why we wouldn’t be. Convenience, I guess. But no, I don’t think books/zines/handmade whatever/ paper goods will ever be obsolete. I mean, what else would people do? Everything would be super boring.