

The Manchester Journal

Print-on-demand grabs would-be authors

By Brandon Canevari, August 29, 2008

MANCHESTER — Approximately six months after being introduced to the general public, the Northshire Bookstore's print-on-demand machine is increasing in popularity.

"We have more satisfied customers and word has now spread. It's just getting busier and busier," said General Manager of the Northshire Bookstore Christopher Morrow.

The majority of the 30 titles that have been printed since the machine has been up-and-running have been self-published books by individual authors, Morrow said.

One of those authors is community member Rabbi Michael Cohen who is currently in the process of printing 30 copies of his first work of fiction "Einstein's Rabbi: A Tale of Science and the Soul."

While Cohen said having the book printed by a major publishing house would have been ideal, there are advantages to self-publishing the work.

The creation of the book's cover was one aspect of the process that Cohen preferred. He said that if he were to publish the book through a large publishing house — unless he were a big name author — he would have no input on the cover's design. That was not the case in the self-publishing process as Cohen said he was completely involved in designing the cover.

Making corrections to the manuscript was also much easier, according to Cohen.

"We printed what we thought was going to be the last version last week and Lucy (Gardner Carson, the print-on-demand coordinator) caught two stylistic pieces in terms of printing and they were throughout the entire book. They were able to go back and correct those," he said in an interview last Tuesday. "It would have been much more difficult to make these last minute changes and make the corrections this late in the process [if the book were being printed through a major publishing house]."

Cohen said because of the affiliation the Shires Press has with the Northshire Bookstore — which because it's an independent bookstore and is "not beholden to the forces that are at work in the publishing world both in terms of selling books and printing books" — it gives people like him and other unknown authors the chance to be published. Also, Cohen said the use of the print-on-demand machine gives authors more control and more flexibility than they would have if they were to publish their work through a traditional publishing house.

Though the machine has been used most prevalently for self-publications, it has been used for other applications such as printing other titles as well. Morrow said types of titles have been very diverse ranging from a genealogy book that existed in the public domain to "Tom Sawyer" in French.

The machine has not only been an asset to customers and community members, but to the store as well.

"I'd say it's been a strong asset to the book store. We've gotten a lot of good press both locally and statewide," said Morrow. "It's furthered our reputation in the book world about being pioneers and it's had a lot of ripple effects. in terms of our customers, its [resulted in] dozens of happy people and we're looking forward to satisfying many more in the coming years."

The charge for printing a book is seven-cents per page plus a \$75 set-up fee, according to Morrow. While the bookstore is tracking how much additional revenue the machine is bringing into the store, Morrow said it is still too early to provide accurate numbers.

The bookstore acquired the machine in February from On Demand Books in New York, N.Y. making them only the fifth location in the world and the only commercial location to have one. Morrow said as time passes "the uses for the machine are just going to explode."