

The Internet Bookmobile

The Internet Archive Bookmobile visits schools and libraries and other events so people can print and bind free books. We download with a mobile Internet satellite terminal any of thousands of free books. We then print the electronic book with a color duplex laser printer in booklet mode, cut the paper, perfect bind the book with a soft cover, and trim the book with a safety paper cutter. The idea is to promote the concept of the public domain and the Internet, and demonstrate that the Internet can be a global public library through the new technology of print-on-demand. We especially aim to help children and new readers print and take away their own books.

This bookmobile, based in Derry, N.H., and Robinhood, ME., is the sixth set up by the Internet Archive and Anywhere Books of San Francisco. The Internet Archive (at archive.org) archives the entire Internet plus thousands of movies, music, and books, for free. The founder of the Archive, Brewster Kahle, put the equipment together into the original Internet Bookmobile in San Francisco. He later installed bookmobiles at the Library of Alexandria, Egypt, and two in India. Anywhere Books (at anywherebooks.org) was spun off as a non-profit corporation and with the help of a World Bank grant set up a bookmobile in Uganda, and is planning more. Hewlett Packard donated laser printers, while the rest of the equipment was purchased at retail. The Bookmobile has been featured on TechTV and National Public Radio.

The Bookmobile can print and give away books for free because the works are in the public domain or with the permission of the copyright owner, and because of some financial support from the Internet Archive and Anywhere Books. We do not sell franchises but we can give technical assistance if you plan to set up a print-on-demand station. Labor is donated. Tax-deductible donations are accepted. It costs a couple of dollars to print and bind each free book.

To find one of the more than 25,000 books that can be downloaded free from the Internet, go to <http://www.archive.org> or the Online Books Page at digital.library.upenn.edu/books/. The Bookmobile has formatted some texts so they print attractively.

By special arrangement we can print your custom book, as for example a school class compiling a writing project. Since our purpose is to promote free culture and the public domain, we ask that you label the book with a Creative Commons non-commercial license (see creativecommons.org) if you own the copyright. The Bookmobile also has a flatbed scanner and software so we can copy, print, and bind out-of-copyright works not already available online.

A truck camper, with Bookmobile graphics, is on a pickup truck that occupies one and a half parking spaces. We prefer that it operate within 100 feet of a power outlet, but we have a generator if needed. At the site we set up two tables with the paper cutter and binder so users can bind the books they take away. If it is raining we can bring some tools inside. We can visit up to ten sites a month. Since it takes a half hour to print a 200-page book, we need to print most of the books ahead of each visit. We will print at least ten and up to about 30 books each time.

This summer we hope to receive invitations from libraries in New Hampshire and Maine, and from schools next fall. When cold weather arrives we will head south and out West. To extend an invitation, please email Eric Eldred (ericeldred@usa.net) or call (603) 434-7746.

Currently we are publishing "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" by Beatrix Potter, and a new compilation of writings on New Hampshire by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

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