

Moving On. . .

Gutenberg started it in 1455 by printing 180 copies of the Latin Vulgate Bible. Thus began the habit of reading books. His Bibles were over a thousand pages and they began a revolution that profoundly changed society and reshuffled the power of kingdoms and religious beliefs.

Since then his basic printing process has evolved steadily. Workers go into the woods and cut millions of trees, chipped into bits, mashed into pulp, rolled into huge rolls of paper on machines which cost over a billion dollars and are the size of two football fields which must run 24/7, and smell bad. The rolls are trucked to presses costing a million or more each, which pour out little collections of stitched or glued-together pages on which computers write addresses, followed by bundling in packs for the correct postal facility and finally delivered to your mailbox.

The owner of the *Wall Street Journal* predicts this will all be gone in a decade.

Nobody, probably including you, will like the change from a printed magazine to one that arrives at your computer monitor after your e-mail tells you it is ready. We did not realize that the computer would make physical addresses redundant. Web addresses are now becoming the method for finding stuff and each other.

At Audio Amateur we have always moved with the technology and have hauled a distressing lot of expensive equipment to the recycle center. The time has

come when we must change again. Our small size as a niche specialist publisher makes us more vulnerable than most in this field. We already prepare our pages for the big lithographic press in a digital format sent electronically overnight to the printer. We OK our printer's proofs over the same route two days later.

Now, with some inexpensive software, we can process those same pages, enhance them in some impressive ways, place them on a big, very secure server which we can rent inexpensively, and send you an e-mail telling you the address of the server where your magazine's content for the month is located. You will have supplied to us a username and passwords which will unlock your copy.

We will continue to produce *audioXpress* in both printed and digital formats. For how long will depend on your choices. If many of you make the change, we can probably lower the subscription price. As this happens the price of a subscription to the printed version must rise.

Our costs have steadily risen for everything we use to publish and deliver your copy of *audioXpress*. We are also in the middle of the worst economic decline in 80 years. Advertising budgets of our most faithful clients are down. We have taken every step we can to economize and to become more efficient. So these are powerful incentives to move in a new direction to put the publication on a firmer, economically sound foundation.

It is particularly critical that

overseas subscribers change to the digital version, since postal rates are rising more rapidly than ever, and delivery is slow and often unreliable. The digital *audioXpress* will be published ahead of the printed version. You will find a survey on our website (<http://www.audioXpress.com>) which asks about your preferences. Our website will also contain a form for changing your subscription to digital delivery which will require only a minute to fill out. You will need your magazine's mailing label to complete the form.

I believe you will find a digital version of *audioXpress* more fun and more useful than its printed form. Digital magazines are interactive and ours will have all sorts of links to enhancements which are available with a click of your mouse. We hope to add audio and video clips to articles, and links to the sources of parts for a building project, and the bibliography can be "live" rather than difficult to find. Advertising will also be more active with direct links to those who offer you the products which make this avocation possible. When we can again do reviews of recordings, it may be possible to include short samples.

Please give some serious thought to this proposed format change. Gutenberg probably could not have imagined how much his work would revolutionize the world. The reading habits he instituted are woven deeply into our brains. But we must ride this tide for our efforts to survive. Your help is vital. —ETD