

Marathi e-books on a roll

Prasad Kulkarni | TNN

Pune: People who fret that internet and computers have done away with the good old reading habit have reasons to rejoice. While the printed word may have faded for some, e-books in Marathi are fast becoming a rage among people of all ages.

Mandar Joglekar, founder of BookGanga.com, said, "The experience is similar to that of reading a regular book, which is why e-books that are easily available on the net are becoming a craze. Also, since the publishers are directly making these books available to readers on the net, there are hardly any issues of copy rights." He said that recently they had launched a series of books on Swatantryaveer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and in two months, a whopping 15,000 e-books were downloaded.

Joglekar, a US-based IT professional, who has developed an application of Marathi e-books for I-pad, observed that youngsters especially prefer e-books.

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Marathi e-books are available on the net. Even special Diwali issues of various publications popularly known as Diwali Anka have a huge demand. In a month, around 5,000 Marathi e-books are being downloaded, he added. "Many sites contain free downloads and even paid e-books. Biographies, religious books, books on history and motivational books are among the more popular choices. Even literature for kids in the format of e-books is becoming a fad."

"So whether it is a youngster on the move or someone who is based in a place where Marathi books are not easily available, anyone can go to one of the sites and download a book of their choice," he added.

According to book publishers, the overall popularity of Marathi books is regaining its lost status.

"This could be a reason why e-books are also becoming popular. Also, there is a large scope for promotion of e-books."

Rajiv Barve, a publisher of books in Pune, said, "At present, the trend to read e-books is more with people settled abroad and it will completely pick up in the country only five to six years down the line. Barve said that since the last four to five years, there has been a rise in the number of Marathi books being published in the state, which has nearly 450 publishers.

"A group of publishers have decided to start a campaign to convert leading books into e-books, so that we can bring all popular publications into e-books' format," writer-publisher Rajendra Gurjar said.

According to Gurjar, "There is a lot of transparency in transactions of e-books, which are available at cheaper rates. Also, the space required for storage is less. Therefore, many publishers are opting to upload e-books and also sell it in the hard copy format, making it a win-win situation for them."