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## Research on Book Sharing Models under Internet Thinking: Postprint

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**Date:** 2023-08-26T00:00:00+00:00

### Abstract

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### Full Text

### Preamble

**Vol. 62, No. 3, February 2018**

### Research on Book Sharing Models Under Internet Thinking

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] In the Internet era, book sharing in China has encountered development bottlenecks. Employing new thinking and creating new models will become a new approach for the development of book sharing. [Method/Process] Based on a review and comparison of three book sharing models, this paper proposes guiding principles for the development of book sharing, addresses several problems in existing models, and introduces a new

model for book sharing under a provincial library consortium based on Internet thinking. **[Result/Conclusion]** The FULink book drifting model is grounded in practice, leverages organizational advantages, and demonstrates strong operability, offering guidance for book sharing in libraries, bookstores, and various reading service organizations.

**Keywords:** book sharing; Internet thinking; sharing spirit; reading promotion; FULink

**Classification Number:** G250

**DOI:** 10.13266/j.issn.0252-3116.2018.03.004

Shared books refer to the sharing of existing book stocks with users to achieve recycling. Their characteristic is that the user scope is indefinite, including users within library consortia (such as joint borrowing within a regional library alliance), users within a certain geographic area (such as Hefei's "shared bookstore"), users in unspecified regions (such as "123 Library"), and multilingual users worldwide (such as book drifting websites). Book sharing breaks the constraints of traditional libraries, serving not only users of a single library but enabling books to circulate and spread more quickly and widely. Sharing methods include drifting, transfer borrowing, and lending, with the goal of ensuring every book finds its reader and every reader finds their book, while simultaneously forming communication circles with books as the medium. Since the beginning of the 21st century, book sharing has entered its 1.0 era, which was merely the most primitive period of book drifting, where drifters could obtain drifting books through simple website operations. As Internet technology rapidly developed and spread in China, book sharing merged into the wave of the Internet economy, entering the 2.0 era. With the rise of the sharing economy, book sharing officially opened the curtain on its 3.0 era. During this period, a large number of emerging sharing models appeared, such as "Book Crossing," "123 Library," and Hefei Sanxiaokou's "Shared Bookstore," showing initial results but still facing development bottlenecks. How can book sharing be done well? How can new development ideas be formed? This paper will analyze three book sharing models in the Internet environment, compare their characteristics, and define a new model by referencing Internet thinking, the sharing economy concept, and social network features.

## 1. Three Book Sharing Models in the Internet Environment

### 1.1 The "Book Crossing" Model

Inspired by the camera drifting on the PhotoTag website, R. Hornbaker proposed the idea of tracking books. With the help of his wife and co-founders, he established "BookCrossing" on April 21, 2001, using "the book that runs" as its logo. The team headquarters is located in Sandpoint, Idaho. As of July 21, 2017, the website had over 1,774,049 registered members and 12,061,510 registered drifting books across 132 countries [1]. The website's purpose is to connect people through books, promoting deep reading while facilitating spiri-

tual communication and exchange.

After nearly 16 years of development, BookCrossing has formed a relatively mature “book drifting website” model. Users can register on the website to become “drifters,” registering a BookCrossing ID (BCID) for each book they want to “release.” Each BCID is unique to every book, and once registered on the website, the book can be tracked and permanently recorded [2]. Simultaneously, drifters can download free labels or order special labels on the website, or choose to create custom labels to paste on books for circulation. When drifters obtain a book, they can look it up on the website using its BCID, write acquisition logs, reading reflections, etc. Additionally, drifters who want to “request a drift” can choose mailing or other methods to transfer the book, and drifters can post their reading reflections on drifting books to promote mutual communication and exchange [3], as shown in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper].

As seen in Figure 1, the book drifting model uses the book drifting website as a carrier to establish connections between people through book tracking and transfer, using books to narrow the distance between individuals.

## 1.2 The “123 Library” Model

“123 Library” was invested and established by Hangzhou Hantu Network Technology Co., Ltd. in 2011, with a registered capital of 10 million yuan. As a leader in book sharing economy, it is affiliated with the China Digital Library of the National Library’s second-phase project. After five years of scientific research accumulation and series of innovations, it has created the world’s lowest-cost book circulation model to solve the difficult problem of national book recycling in China. “123 Library” focuses on real books, dedicating itself to book sharing and recycling to achieve green sharing of book resources and reduce resource waste.

Hangzhou Hantu Network Technology Co., Ltd. has a research and decision-making group of 23 doctors from Ukraine, the United States, and China, and its independently developed “Dandelion Business Model” received intellectual property protection on September 2, 2011. Users register as members on the “123 Library” website by providing their mobile phone number to obtain a verification code. Sellers can publish book sale information through three methods: using book numbers and other book information, “selling books with pictures,” or “bulk book selling” after completing their delivery address and email information. Sellers choose to sell books to “123 Library” at 10%, 20%, or 30% of the price to participate in subsequent dividends. Through the first rental by the buyer, the seller can receive cash back within 30% of the price, and the renter can sublet for profit while the seller receives dividends [4], as shown in Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper].

The Dandelion Business Model, also known as the “dividend transaction” model, allows book sellers to receive dividends through selling books and book buyers to receive rebates through renting books, creating a cycle that reduces readers’

reading costs while improving book utilization efficiency [5].

### 1.3 The “Shared Bookstore” Model

On July 16, 2017, Sanxiaokou Bookstore under Anhui Xinhua Distribution Group officially debuted as the world’s first shared bookstore, representing the “sharing economy” boom entering the book industry. Sanxiaokou Bookstore has eight floors covering an area of 4,800 square meters, with books divided into literature and art categories. As of July 18, it had shared over 5,600 books, providing quality services to readers while promoting full utilization and efficient circulation of books in the store, carrying out deep-level reading exchanges and reading promotion, and implementing the innovative initiative of “turning the bookstore into one’s own study” [6].

Sanxiaokou Bookstore launched the “shared bookstore” operation model. Readers download the “Smart Study” APP, bind their mobile phone number to obtain a verification code, and pay a 99 yuan deposit online to borrow books by scanning the barcode on the back of books in the store. Each time, they can borrow two books with a total price below 150 yuan, with a free period of 10 days. The deposit can be refunded at any time after returning the books on schedule. If the reading period is exceeded, a fee of 1 yuan per day is charged, capped at the book’s price. Additionally, the “shared bookstore” stipulates a “reading scholarship.” Users can not only receive rewards for returning books on time but also get 8% of their deposit returned as a reading scholarship after reading 12 books within three months, with a reward of 1 yuan for each book read. Moreover, users can have their own study room on the “Smart Study” APP to manage their book collections, exchange ideas through writing book reviews and sharing book photos, promote book reading while making friends through books [7], as shown in Figure 3 [Figure 3: see original paper].

As seen in Figure 3, readers using the “Smart Study” APP to complete book borrowing simultaneously broaden their purchasing channels, breaking through the traditional model of “going to bookstore - purchasing books” and adding a recommendation and purchase channel of “reading reviews - borrowing books - placing orders on APP - purchasing at bookstore,” creating more connections between readers and bookstores.

## 2. Analysis of Advantages, Disadvantages, and Comparison

### 2.1 The “Book Crossing” Model

The “Book Crossing” model has three advantages: First, wide book sources. Book resources are the starting point of book drifting activities, and extensive book sources can lay a solid foundation for subsequent activities. The website’s users are not limited by country or region, as “Book Crossing” aims to initiate a “global sociological experiment” drifting activity, with drifters from around the world. Second, diverse book categories. Books in book drifting are not limited

to certain categories; novels, biographies, finance, politics, etc., can be freely chosen by drifters, who only need to search for requested books by location or title. Third, more convenient book acquisition. Drifters can learn about book information at any time according to the website, and after selecting the books they want to read, they only need to send a drift request and wait for the needed books to be delivered.

The disadvantages of the “Book Crossing” model are: First, low social awareness. Book reading is a relatively private activity with limited public character. Currently, social relationships formed through books are also limited to familiar people. Therefore, many people know little about book drifting activities, and participating drifters are also in small circles, which cannot effectively play the role of book drifting [8]. Second, lack of book classification. Currently, “Book Crossing” has 12,061,510 registered drifting books but no classification statistics for these books, which reduces book drifting probability to some extent and affects the development of drifting activities [9]. Third, language limitations. “Book Crossing” has over 1,774,049 registered members across 132 countries. The top 10 countries by drifter proportion are the United States (29%), Germany (16%), United Kingdom (13%), Netherlands (11%), Finland (10%), Canada (8%), Australia (5%), France (4%), Portugal (3%), and Spain (1%) [1]. This shows that BookCrossing drifting activities are mostly distributed in European and American countries, with fewer in Chinese-speaking and Asian regions, indicating that book drifting activities are greatly limited by language, which also affects the development of “Book Crossing” in China.

## 2.2 The “123 Library” Model

The “123 Library” model has three advantages: First, green reading. “123 Library” advocates “recycling one book, saving one tree,” creating new value for idle old books through circular reading. Second, value sharing. “123 Library” adopts a “dividend transaction” model, enabling books to be continuously recycled between users and demanders. Users receive dividends, further stimulating the reuse of idle books. Third, regional division. The website sets up nine regions including Central China, North China, and South China, grouping nearby areas together, which greatly facilitates readers’ selection of books at close range and reduces logistics costs and saves time.

The disadvantages of the “123 Library” model are: First, loose organization and management. Most users are scattered families and netizens in society who cannot be managed and controlled accordingly. The book circulation process entirely depends on users’ personal preferences and interests, making timely and appropriate adjustments impossible. Second, overly single book categories. The “123 Library” website only offers books and e-books; it should expand to include journals, e-journals, newspapers, conference materials, etc., to enrich the circulation system and meet users’ reading choices. Third, high user costs. Although users can obtain corresponding benefits through “dividend transactions” on the “123 Library” website, costs such as mailing and time must be

borne by demanders themselves, which greatly reduces user enthusiasm and is not conducive to book reading promotion.

### 2.3 The “Shared Bookstore” Model

The advantage of the “shared bookstore” model is reducing reading costs and providing more comprehensive, personalized services. First, reducing reading costs. Most children’s books and bestsellers have certain time limitations, and many books have no collection value after being read, only to be shelved by readers, causing book waste. The “shared bookstore” model precisely solves this problem. Readers shift from buying books to borrowing them from bookstores, lowering the reading threshold while increasing reading frequency, thus obtaining more convenience and benefits. Second, personalized reading services. Through the Smart Study APP, book sales do not mean the end of service. Each reader’s reading process, interests, and habits are completely recorded. Through backend data analysis, this can bring better reading experiences to readers and guide the better development of offline bookstores. Simultaneously, bookstore sales staff become reading consultants for each reader, providing more professional reading guidance, and all books in the bookstore will be fully utilized and efficiently circulated, promoting nationwide reading with minimal cost and maximizing reading quality. Third, more comprehensive reading services. The borrowing model of “shared bookstore” has distinct characteristics: bookstore books are updated quickly, and readers are widely distributed. The application of the “Smart Study” APP also promotes bookstore publicity. These characteristics are not possessed by traditional libraries. The innovation of “shared bookstore” makes book reading more convenient and promotes nationwide reading promotion.

The disadvantages of the “shared bookstore” model are: First, returning books to the store increases reading costs. While the “shared bookstore” model has made certain innovations in deposit methods and storage methods, it still retains the traditional book rental business model. Readers who want to borrow books still need to visit the bookstore in person, which undoubtedly becomes a weakness of “shared bookstore.” E-books have become the reading choice of more and more modern people precisely because they require no transportation costs or storage space, unlike paper books. Second, short free reading time with high overdue fees. The store rules stipulate that each time readers can borrow two books with a total price below 150 yuan, with a free period of 10 days. The deposit can be refunded at any time after returning books on schedule. If the reading period is exceeded, a fee of 1 yuan per day is charged, capped at the book’s price. For most office workers and students, spare time is not abundant. On the one hand, 10 days is completely insufficient for concentrated reading of a book; on the other hand, such a short time cannot meet readers’ deep reading needs, while light-reading users generally choose convenient e-books. Third, in the initial stage, there is little profit. Although the “shared bookstore” model is being carried out vigorously and has certain innovation and pioneering na-

ture, its essence is still a bookstore. The profit source of “shared bookstore” mainly comes from overdue borrowing income and traditional book sales business income. In the white-hot period of the sharing economy, “sharing” has become a well-known concept. However, the heat of the sharing economy is only temporary; persistent operation is the way to survive.

#### 2.4 Comparative Analysis of the Three Models

The author respectively compares and analyzes the above three book sharing models from aspects such as sharing carrier, sharing form, management method, and book source, as shown in Table 1 .

**Table 1. Comparison and Differences of the Three Sharing Models**

Aspect	Book Crossing	123 Library	Shared Bookstore
Sharing Carrier	Website	Website	APP
Sharing Form	Person - Website - Person	Book - Website - Book	Bookstore - Person
Acquisition Method	Mailing or Self-pickup	Mailing or Self-pickup	In-store Borrowing
Management Method	Team + Volunteers	Scattered Netizens	Unified Management
Book Categories	No Classification	Books + E-books	Books + Journals
Book Source	User Donations	User Sales	Bookstore Provision
Information Release	Website Release + Real Life	Website Release	APP Release
Reader Constraint	None	Deposit	Deposit

As seen in Table 1, the shared bookstore uses an APP as its sharing carrier, while Book Crossing and 123 Library use websites, which are relatively simpler and more convenient. In terms of sharing form, Book Crossing tends to use websites to attract people, “123 Library” focuses more on connections between books, while shared bookstores aim to attract people to physical stores. In terms of book acquisition methods and management methods, the three have obvious differences, which are also key factors distinguishing them. Additionally, Book Crossing has no constraints on readers, while “123 Library” and “shared bookstore” both have certain constraints on readers. Moreover, compared with the other two models, “Book Crossing” does not set book classifications. In terms of book sources and categories, “shared bookstore” provides its own books and adds journal options for readers, with the advantage of ensuring book quality

and enhancing readers' reading motivation. The significance of the Internet lies in breaking time and space barriers. From this perspective, none of the three currently solve the mailing cost problem in the sharing process, which also limits book reading promotion to a certain extent. Therefore, it can be seen that although book sharing has made some new developments driven by the Internet, with each having its own merits, there are still many problems to be solved.

### 3. Innovative Model

#### 3.1 Guiding Principles

Through the above analysis, to further develop book sharing, a series of existing problems must be solved, including weak organization and management, low social awareness, high user costs (such as communication, transportation, and time costs), lack of book classification, inadequate statistics, and single types of shared books, while learning from each other's strengths to lay a foundation for book reading promotion. Solving these problems must keep pace with the times, integrate new ideas, and identify new directions.

**3.1.1 Internet Thinking** With the development of modern information technology, the emergence of global information networks has been greatly promoted. Internet thinking is a data-driven operational thinking model. Compared with traditional thinking models, Internet thinking is more convenient. Internet information transmission and acquisition are faster than traditional methods, making book sharing content richer. Additionally, Internet thinking pays more attention to individual participation and expression, achieving development and innovation in the sharing process through personalized performance and creation. We live in the Internet era, which has brought us many conveniences, especially free services. Appropriate preferential services can be provided during book transfer to attract readers. Internet thinking emphasizes data analysis, and using data to guide book sharing will greatly enhance users' reading experiences. Focusing on user experience, the foundation of any business model is users, so in improving book sharing, we should distinguish users' attention levels and improve key focus objects.

**3.1.2 Sharing Spirit** The rise of the sharing economy model has brought a sharing boom. The sharing spirit means everyone shares and everything is free—a mutually beneficial idea. However, the core of sharing is not only common enjoyment based on certain interest exchanges but also high-efficiency, low-cost organization based on strengthening usage rights and weakening ownership rights, as well as co-creation in the Internet era. According to the “2016 China Sharing Economy Development Report” released by the China E-commerce Research Center, China's sharing economy market size reached 3,945 billion yuan in 2016, with a growth rate of 76.4%. Meanwhile, the State Information Center's Sharing Economy Research Center predicts that China's sharing economy will maintain an average annual growth rate of about 40% in the coming years, with transaction scale accounting for more than 10% of GDP by 2020. The “sharing

economy” brings many new experiences to consumers while also achieving value-added of original materials. Book reading will also enhance new value under the guidance of the sharing spirit.

**3.1.3 Social Demand Orientation** If book sharing wants to attract user participation, it must focus on social demand and use it as a starting point to update sharing models, enrich sharing methods, effectively solve the contradiction between book sharing and current social needs, and create practical book reading services. Social demand can directly reflect the development direction of book services, avoiding sharing models lagging behind changes in reading demand. Sharing methods and models cannot blindly pursue expansion and innovation. The goal of enriching book sharing models should start from analyzing social needs and be continuously adjusted with deeper understanding to enhance the persistent adaptability of sharing models, thereby achieving book reading promotion.

**3.1.4 Social Network Application** Social networks are social structures formed by individuals or organizations, representing various social relationships that connect people or organizations together [10]. Applying social networks to book sharing, with the help of books, connects people or organizations with the same hobbies, values, ideals, and concepts to create free, equal, open, and communicative book exchange circles. For books, connecting reading is better than owning books, focusing on immediate, local, and present information exchange, fully exerting book functions and increasing reading efficiency. Based on this, the deep-level book review exchanges in book clubs from “Book Crossing” are integrated to stimulate readers’ interest in reading certain books, gather like-minded people, and enhance reading motivation.

In summary, the development of book sharing models should be oriented by social demand, grasp the pulse of book reading services, use Internet thinking to provide good positioning and stable structure for book sharing models, be guided by the sharing spirit, and establish social networks to provide quality services and user experiences for reading promotion. Based on this starting point and basis, this paper proposes the FULink book drifting model under the provincial library consortium.

## **3.2 A New Book Sharing Model Based on Internet Thinking Under FULink**

To promote book reading and the development of the shared book market, relying on the Fujian Provincial University Digital Library (FULink), this paper proposes the FULink book drifting model, aiming to provide users with more convenient book exchange services to adapt to the development needs of book sharing. The FULink book drifting model learns from the three aforementioned pioneering experiences in book sharing, draws on collective wisdom while avoiding weaknesses, strives to solve problems in the sharing process, and provides new ideas for book sharing.

The book source for FULink book drifting comes from the collections and donated books of FULink member libraries. Users register via the “FULink Book Drifting” APP, become drifters after authentication by each member library’s management system, search for and select books they want to read according to book numbers or categories, obtain books by scanning codes or requesting drifts, and after successful reading, register the release to circulate books in the same way. As shown in Figure 4 [Figure 4: see original paper].

### 3.3 Connotation of the FULink Book Drifting Model

Different from other book sharing models, the FULink book drifting model has its unique connotation system, which will be specifically explained below from the perspectives of book sources, users, reading exchanges, and data usage.

**3.3.1 Book Sources** The “FULink Book Drifting” APP uses real-name registration. Book sources come from the rich collections of the FULink platform, with book quality uniformly controlled by the platform, solving the problem in “Book Crossing” where book languages and themes are unscreened and unsuitable for university library consortia. Meanwhile, different from the “shared bookstore” model where all rules point to profit, FULink book sharing tends more toward alumni inheritance and social public welfare, providing readers with lower-cost, higher-quality book resources.

**3.3.2 Users** In terms of users, the FULink book drifting process can be centralized or distributed. Books can be shared among readers or return to library collections at any time, breaking the centralized rather than distributed book sharing form of “shared bookstore.” The reader credit in FULink book drifting is controllable. Face-to-face code scanning for book collection is used. University town populations are dense and don’t require mailing costs. Long distances can be handled by staff regularly delivering books to doors, and within the province, logistics cooperation platforms are responsible for mailing. A membership system is implemented. First-time members can read one book for free, and afterward, contribution values are allocated based on the number of books shared by individuals or completion of book delivery and other work, enjoying corresponding benefits appropriately to adjust readers’ book borrowing costs.

**3.3.3 Reading Exchange Circles** Partitioning is done according to user preferences or single book attention levels. Using the APP as a platform, books and book reviews can be shared within or across schools, forming reading exchange circles one by one, thus helping readers accurately find suitable books and gathering members willing to share books. This solves the problem in “123 Library” where there is only economic interest consideration and insufficient attention to social interpersonal relationships. Simultaneously, developing interest-based social network relationships improves user stickiness, cultivates and discovers high-quality users, and places fans and followers in a benign interactive environment [12]. Moreover, in the sharing process, it is not limited to books but importantly expands to e-books, exam materials, journals, newspapers, etc. Users

can obtain corresponding book reading volumes for free based on the amount of books they share, enabling book sharing to develop and promote.

**3.3.4 Data Acquisition and Analysis** Through the “FULink Book Drifting” APP backend, personalized, professional, and precise analysis and recommendations can be conducted, and the entire process can be evaluated and measured. Simultaneously, every book in the circulation system has its own information record. Users can select books of interest according to attention levels or evaluations, and the book drifting location can be recorded at any time for readers to select “nearby books” on the APP for convenient reading. Additionally, if damage or unreadable conditions occur, “book repair reporting” can be clicked promptly to complete book recycling and updating work.

In summary, the application of Internet thinking in FULink book drifting is divided into three aspects: First, user supremacy. Emphasizing user service and user experience, understanding readers’ needs and goals, thus timely solving readers’ requirements during the sharing process while discovering problems in the sharing process, deepening understanding of FULink book drifting itself. Second, social network application. The combination of social networks and shared books, on the basis of promoting the development of expanding and maintaining social relationships, improves readers’ enthusiasm for reading and collecting books, thus benefiting book reading promotion. Third, data-driven. Through data collection and analysis, not only can the shared book process be monitored and improved, but shared content and information can also be organized and summarized, laying the foundation for providing readers with further knowledge content services and promoting more personalized and intelligent services from the “FULink Book Drifting” APP.

As a model operated by university library consortia for university users, the FULink book drifting model has more trustworthy personnel and simpler relationships compared with other models. Moreover, since university libraries are mostly relatively concentrated geographically or have frequent interactions among students, logistics and time costs in the book sharing process can be saved. However, this model still has problems such as small collections of popular books and imperfect penalty measures. The logic followed in exploring innovative models is always: discovering needs - finding solutions - forming products and services - establishing models. Therefore, the most fundamental aspect of a successful model is to solve user needs and satisfy user experience. The FULink book drifting model is based on the concepts of “environmental protection, sharing, and freedom,” aiming to promote nationwide book reading and change people’s reading methods, hoping to bring new development to book sharing.

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## Author Contributions

Zhao Yan: Wrote and revised the paper;  
Dai Xiaoxiang: Participated in research and proposed revision suggestions;  
Zhan Qingdong: Drafted the article outline and reviewed main viewpoints.

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**Keywords:** book sharing; Internet thinking; sharing spirit; reading promotion; FULink

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

*Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.*