dLogos

After-Action Report: The Future of Books Belongs to Readers

dLogos

April 15, 2025

1 Welcome

On April 15, 2025, dLogos hosted a vibrant discussion on the future of publishing in the Web 3 era, sparked by a petition created on March 26, 2025, titled "The Future of Books Belongs to Readers" (https://app.dlogos.xyz/petitions/55b9ab32-83d8-48cb-b4a3-70002518b629). Facilitated by Vivek and Amelie Lasker, this session brought together thought leaders and enthusiasts to explore how decentralized technologies empower true reader ownership and censorship-resistant libraries. The petition, supported by 12 community members, set the stage for a dialogue on redefining digital media ownership, aligning with dLogos' mission to catalyze impactful conversations.

2 Event Details

- **Title**: The Future of Books Belongs to Readers

- **Date**: April 15, 2025

- **Facilitators**: Vivek Singh, Amelie Lasker

- **Participants**: Joe Konrath, Carol Blanco, Gary Lasker, Ankit, Brian, Christina (via chat), Angela Gilhotra

3 Key Recap

- Web 3 enables true ownership of digital books via NFTs, unlike corporate platforms like Amazon, which license content.

- Alexandria Labs leverages blockchain for decentralized publishing, offering DRM-free epubs and encrypted options.

- Joe Konrath's *Dark Thriller Collection,* a 1.7-million-word NFT, includes 555 unique covers and exclusive content.

- Accessibility is prioritized with email sign-ins, credit-card payments, and low-gas networks like Base.

- Books on Alexandria are cultural artifacts, fostering community through sharing and fan engagement.

- The session emphasized onboarding non-crypto users, making Web 3 publishing intuitive.

- Fan art and fiction are embraced, with authors controlling monetization to protect IP rights.

4   Distinctive Moments

1. **Socratic Moment**

   "How do we onboard? Somebody who doesn't know how to set up their own wallet?" — Joe Konrath

   This question reframed the conversation from technology to empathy: Konrath insisted that Web 3 projects succeed only when they translate cryptographic complexity into seamless, human-centered design. The room responded with concrete suggestions—from auto-generated non-custodial wallets to e-mail recovery flows—illustrating how curiosity can surface practical innovation.

2. **Hot Take**

   "Don't fear piracy. Don't fear theft. Fear obscurity." — Joe Konrath

   Konrath argued that the real risk for authors is irrelevance, not infringement. By prioritizing exposure, writers cultivate network effects that Web 3 provenance tools can later monetize. His provocation flipped a protectionist instinct into a growth mindset, echoing Kevin Kelly's "1,000 True Fans" theory.

3. **Visionary Moment**

   "Books are the greatest form of long-form entertainment." — Joe Konrath

   Here, Konrath elevated books above streaming and gaming, asserting that immersive reading pairs perfectly with verifiable digital scarcity. The statement energized the group to position NFTs not as gimmicks but as vessels for literature's intrinsic depth.

4. **Open-Minded Moment**

   "I love fan art. I love fan fiction." — Joe Konrath

By welcoming derivative creativity, Konrath modeled a post-copyright ethos: let the community remix, then reward the best contributions. Participants linked this to programmable royalties, showing how smart contracts can channel value to both originators and fans.

5. **Innovative Moment**

   "You can know exactly who owns the Conrath Thriller Collective books." — Amelie Lasker

   Lasker highlighted on-chain transparency as a foundation for direct, reader-centric marketing—from airdropping bonus chapters to gating exclusive Q&A sessions. The insight reframed ownership data as a relationship graph.

6. **Pragmatic Moment**

   "You need to be so good that the world could not ignore you." — Joe Konrath

   Closing on craft, Konrath reminded creators that no tool substitutes for quality. The remark grounded the session, balancing tech enthusiasm with the timeless discipline of writing exceptional prose.

5 Key Speakers and Beliefs

5.1 Joe Konrath

- **Belief**: True ownership is critical in digital publishing.

  "You finally can own books, and they're better than physical copies."

  Konrath chose this belief after seeing readers lose access to purchased ebooks when platforms change terms. NFTs promise permanence, aligning with his advocacy for author-reader autonomy.

- **Belief**: Piracy is less harmful than obscurity.

  "Fear obscurity, fear nobody knowing who you are."

  Having built his audience through free giveaways, Konrath knows visibility drives sales. This belief stems from empirical data that sampling boosts conversions.

- **Belief**: Fan creativity should be encouraged.

  "Anybody who wants to use my characters, let them."

  Konrath witnessed fan fiction revitalize dormant IPs; enabling it cultivates community loyalty that paid editions monetize later.

- **Belief**: Persistence leads to publishing success.

"A writer who never gives up [is] published."

After 500+ rejection letters early in his career, Konrath's breakthrough validated grit over gatekeepers, shaping this conviction.

5.2   Amelie Lasker

- **Belief**: Web 3 redefines intellectual-property models.

  "It allows us to think about compensating people in new ways."

  Lasker's background in film taught her the limits of traditional royalties; smart contracts automate fair splits, motivating this belief.

- **Belief**: Accessibility drives Web 3 adoption.

  "We have credit card payment which anyone can use."

  User-testing at Alexandria showed drop-off when crypto tooling appears; she champions familiar UX patterns to broaden reach.

- **Belief**: Books are evolving into community artifacts.

  "Books become cultural artifacts."

  Lasker sees NFTs as social objects that accrue stories and annotations over time, mirroring marginalia in physical books.

- **Belief**: Direct author-reader connections are powerful.

  "We can know exactly who owns the books."

  CRM data in Web 2 is opaque; on-chain ownership lists enable bespoke rewards, motivating this principle.

5.3   Vivek

- **Belief**: Web 3 balances provenance and proliferation.

  "Provenance and proliferation are where we are in the times."

  Vivek synthesized panel insights, noting that blockchain tracks origins while open licensing spreads ideas—a duality driving innovation.

- **Belief**: Dialogues seed technological innovation.

  "Seed a bunch of different dialogues about technology."

  As a convener, Vivek values cross-disciplinary conversation as the catalyst for experiments like this session's wallet-onboarding prototype.

6   Recommendations

- **Books**:
  - *The Judas Goat* by Robert B. Parker

- **People**:
  - Robert B. Parker

  - Anna Maria Caballero

- **Concepts/Theories**:
  - Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)

  - Decentralized encryption (LIP protocol)

  - Blockchain provenance

7   Unanswered Questions

- How can Alexandria further simplify wallet interoperability for non-custodial wallets created via email sign-in?

- What specific strategies can onboard older readers unfamiliar with cryptocurrency to Web 3 publishing?

- How will fan-art policies evolve to balance author control and community creativity in Web 3?

- What new genres will Alexandria explore to expand its NFT book offerings?

8   dLogos Call-to-Action

Join dLogos and our mission to catalyze valuable conversations.

Visit `https://dlogos.xyz` to:

- **Sign & share** petitions that bring decision-makers, experts, and creators to the same table.

- **Nominate** guests and **vote** on the next high-impact dialogue topics.

- Watch real-time signature counts and what people are saying.

dLogos stewards the ancient art of dialogos in modern, digital times. We are the coordination layer for conversations that matter—where fans, thinkers, and causes unite to shape culture.