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Ramin Setoodeh

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Steven Levy

Could the publishing industry get Napsterized? That was my first thought when I saw the marketing materials for the Atiz BookSnap, the first consumer device that enables you to "release the content" of your books by transforming the printed words on the page into digital files that can be read on computers and handheld e-readers. "It's not a scanner," proclaims a banner on the Atiz Web site. "It's a book ripper." Though ripping (which means transferring content from an external medium to your computer) does not necessary imply an act of piracy, I couldn't help but wonder whether this was a sign of impending apocalypse on Publishers' Row, a scenario that could end up with people file-sharing John Grisham's latest they way they do now with the newest Vampire Weekend tunes.

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