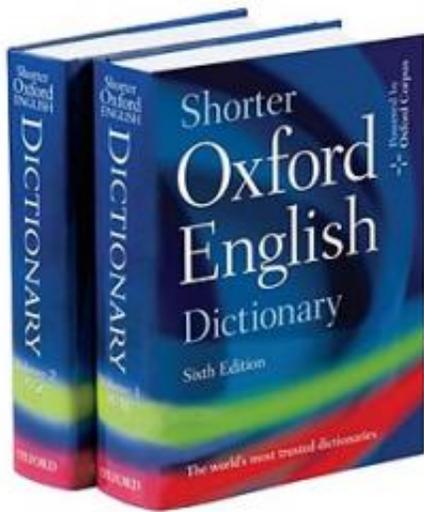


Oxford English Dictionary may never be printed again

August 31 2010



The next edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, the word reference bible of the English language, may never appear in print and instead be accessible only online, its publisher said Tuesday.

A team of 80 lexicographers are preparing the third edition of the OED, but with more than a decade of work ahead of them and digital books fast gaining popularity, the publishers are hedging their bets on what format it will take.

"The first edition of the multi-volume Oxford English Dictionary was fully published in 1928, and the second edition in 1989," a spokeswoman for Oxford University Press said Tuesday.

"No decision has yet been made on the format of the third edition.

"It is likely to be more than a decade before the full edition is published, and a decision on format will be taken at that point."

Revised and new entries are published online every three months on OED Online, with the next version due to be published in December.

Sales of [digital books](#) are fast catching up with print copies -- online retail giant Amazon announced last month that sales of electronic books for the Kindle e-reader had overtaken hardcover book sales for the first time.

However, Oxford University Press said it was confident that "large numbers of people continue to purchase dictionaries in printed form and we have no plans to stop publishing print dictionaries".

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Citation: Oxford English Dictionary may never be printed again (2010, August 31) retrieved 19 September 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-08-oxford-english-dictionary.html>

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