



from print publishing to the Internet. I'll let you be the judge as to whether or not our design is successful. But please do not refer to it as a zine, or even a Web zine, at least in my presence. I get a little touchy on that subject at times. Zines were those little pamphlets stapled together and published by high school drop outs in Seattle before the Internet took off. The first magazines on the Web were called Web zines. They were characterized by funny, frivolous content and non-traditional design. That's not the image we have in mind for *The Southerner*.

Notice that one disadvantage to our cover look is that you have to click down a page to see the whole thing. But to me, it's like looking at the newsstand and seeing what's above the fold. The main advantage is that you can print the cover on 8 1/2 x 11 paper on any printer. For the first four issues, this was the entrance page. We recently decided for the purposes of speed to make the first page you come to in each issue the contents page. It's a trade off between presenting a visual image of a publication and allowing readers to get right to the contents without having to wait for a large image to load.

With high speed Internet access right around the corner, this phone line speed problem we all experience now will be gone. Once people everywhere get the Internet through cable TV lines, or DSL fiber optic phone lines, that's when the traditional print publishing industry should be prepared for a *real* revolution in the way people obtain and consume information.

E-Books

I started out talking about the mega sales of Steven King's e-book, [Riding the Bullet](#). You could have purchased this book at [Amazon.com](#), [Barns & Nobles](#), or any other major book store with a Web site and credit card sales capability. That by itself is no threat to the book publishing empire, as long as all the big companies get in on the money. Remember, the price of an online book is so much cheaper for the consumer, in part because the cost to the producer to print, distribute and market is also far less expensive. It's just another segment of the market for them, and there is no Internet tax yet to pay either. What really worries the book industry are the new [Virtual Publishing](#) houses like [iUniverse](#), [1stBooks](#) and [Fatbrain](#).

Salon also produced a big package on the issue under the headline: [Brave new e-books](#). The lead? "We've seen the future of publishing, and the wrong people are freaking out." According to Salon, the real threat, in fact, may be to glossy magazines, book distributors and vanity presses. Fatbrain.com had originally attempted to obtain the rights to *Riding the Bullet*, only to be slapped down by Simon & Schuster. Judy Kirkpatrick, executive vice president and manager of Fatbrain.com's new publishing division, MightyWords.com, said they met with the president Simon & Schuster and received an ultimatum NOT to approach authors signed with the publishing house directly, or that would be perceived as competition. So MightyWords was shut out of offering the King book. Obviously there's some testosterone left in the publishing industry.