

Empowering Creators and Consumers: The untapped potential of digital ownership

Using the Cardano blockchain to establish a next-generation approach to intellectual property protection

Challenge

A lack of ownership in traditional digital publishing

For decades, the digital publishing industry has operated under a fundamental misconception of ownership. When a consumer buys an e-book or audiobook from a major platform like Apple or Amazon, they don't acquire the intellectual property (IP) or even a transferable digital asset. Instead, they purchase a revocable license to access the content. While convenient for distribution, this licensing model creates multiple systemic problems that **undermine the principles of IP, fair compensation, and long-term control**.

It's a system where centralized entities dictate terms, retain ultimate control over digital libraries, and leave both creators and consumers with limited rights. This inherent flaw became an obsession for Book.io co-founders Joshua Stone and Ben Illian, who recognized the urgent need to transition from a licensing model to one of **true, verifiable digital ownership** to unlock the full potential of IP in the digital age.

The challenge

- Granted revocable access
- Undermined true ownership
- Dictated platform terms
- Limited creator rights
- Controlled digital libraries

The solution

- Enable verifiable ownership
- Generate perpetual royalties
- Limit censorship risk
- Establish secondary markets
- Protect intellectual property



Industry

- Digital Publishing
- Intellectual Property

Size

- Global Digital Publishing Market:
 - USD 97.36 Billion (2024)
 - USD 248 Billion (2034)
 - CAGR 9.8%¹
- Global eBook Market:
 - \$25.28 Billion (2024)
 - \$40.99 Billion (2033)
 - CAGR 6.1%²
- Global Audiobook Market:
 - \$8.70 Billion (2024)
 - \$35.47 Billion (2030)
 - CAGR 26.2%³

"At Book.io, we're unlocking real ownership in the digital world—and with it, new marketing and revenue opportunities for authors, publishers, and readers to thrive like never before."

Ben Illian
Co-Founder, Book.io

Solution

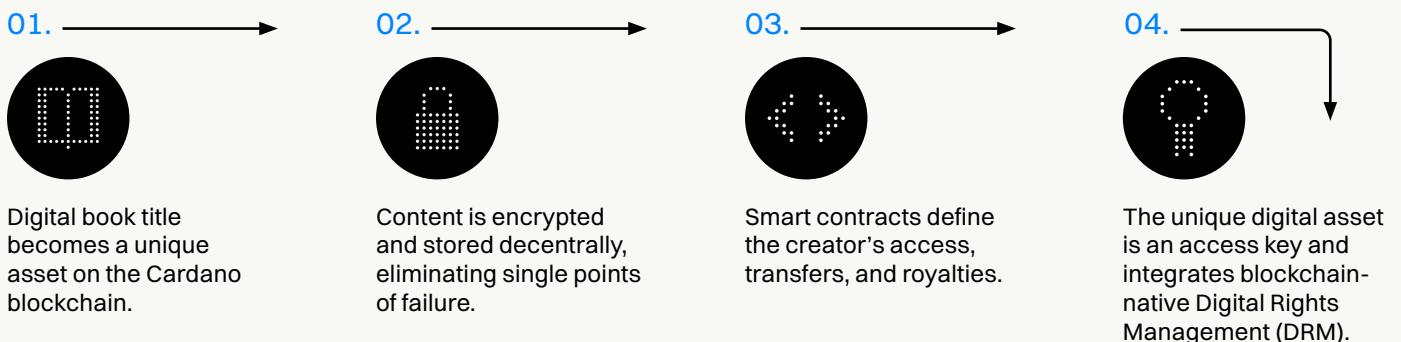
Authentic ownership and enhanced intellectual property protection



After launching in July 2022, Stone and Illian, alongside CTO RJ Regenold, embarked on a mission to create digital books that were **unburnable, unchangeable, and unbannable**. To achieve this ambitious goal, Book.io introduced **Decentralized Encrypted Assets (DEAs)** on the Cardano blockchain. This groundbreaking approach transformed digital books into verifiable, ownable, and transferable assets capable of generating perpetual royalties. By leveraging blockchain technology, Book.io directly addressed and overcame the inherent limitations of traditional digital publishing’s licensing model, paving the way for a new era of digital ownership.

The Cardano Foundation, in collaboration with Book.io, is actively demonstrating the transformative potential of blockchain-powered ownership for digital assets and intellectual property. Beyond unveiling the [2025 Cardano Ecosystem Guide](#) at the World Economic Forum (WEF) — an event that saw **1,000 redemption cards distributed for on-chain copies of the guide** — the Foundation further showcased this innovation with the launch of [ICan Aiken](#). This marked its first on-chain book in partnership with Book.io, **distributing 2,000 copies as part of a content pilot for Cardano Academy**. These initiatives clearly illustrate how decentralized technologies are redefining the future of digital content ownership.

Solution Walkthrough



Results

Redefining intellectual property with blockchain



Granted ownership

Readers are granted verifiable digital ownership, allowing free resale, gifting, and permanent access to content.



Boosted royalties

Authors and publishers receive automated, perpetual royalties from all sales, enhancing transparency and IP control.



Secured content

Digital content is secured, becoming impervious to censorship or removal by central entities, ensuring availability.



Enabled markets

Complete digital ownership enables dynamic and fair secondary markets, creating new value for all.



Protected intellectual property

Creator works are protected through an advanced, transparent, and secure blockchain framework.



CARDANO

Advantages



Proven Resilience

Demonstrated security and reliability support continuous operation



Scalable network

Future-proof infrastructure supports platform growth without sacrificing performance



Secure data

Robust architecture protects sensitive data, minimizing the risk of breaches or fraud



Deterministic model

Advanced smart contracts that support auditable logic for Decentralized Encrypted Assets (DEAs)

Sources

¹ Market.US, Global Digital Publishing Market Size, Share, Statistics Analysis Report

² Business Research Insights, E Book Market Size, Share, Growth, and Industry Analysis

³ Grandview Research, Audiobooks Market Size & Trend

Contact us



Cardano Foundation



The Cardano Foundation is an independent, Swiss-based not-for-profit advancing Cardano as a public digital infrastructure across a wide range of industries.

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