

ENTER A FUTURE

With the release of its first digital anthology, *Enter a Future: Fantastic Tales from Asimov's Science Fiction*, this magazine has plunged head-first into the frothy waves of electronic publishing.

Digital editions of the magazine have been available for purchase since our January 2002 issue. Sales began small and grew slowly until the introduction of the Kindle, Amazon's electronic reader. The four Dell fiction magazines—*Asimov's*, *Analog*, *Alfred Hitchcock*, and *Ellery Queen*—were the eleventh through fifteenth magazines offered for sale from the Kindle Magazine Store. Readers could purchase individual issues or subscribe to the magazine for a monthly fee. It was exhilarating to watch *Asimov's* frenzied climb up through the ranks of best sellers. At one point, we were even in first place, ahead of *The New Yorker* and *Time Magazine* for a couple of hours.

Naturally, being a specialty magazine, our hold on the top didn't last forever. Amazon now sells subscriptions to seventy-six magazines, and we've stabilized at around the fifteenth place, but sales have continued to grow. Digital editions of *Asimov's* now account for about 25 percent of all our sales. We're available in more places, too. We can now be read on the Sony e-reader, Barnes & Noble's Nook, and Fictionwise, and we are continually reaching out to additional e-retailers.

Once it became clear that interest in digital subscriptions was not abating, I was asked to pull together stories for a digital anthology. There was one caveat, however. Providing the authors were interested, I could use any story I wanted as long as the material had appeared in *Asimov's* after our conversion to desktop publishing late in 1996. In theory, that sounded fine. We've published close to a

thousand stories in the past thirteen years. Unfortunately, that giant pool of tales didn't include the one story I had my heart set on—Robert Silverberg's Hugo-Award-winning "Enter a Soldier. Later: Enter Another," which first appeared in our June 1989 issue.

This story had already gotten away from me once, when I couldn't find space for it in *Asimov's Science Fiction's Thirtieth Anniversary Anthology*. I had promised myself I'd run the tale the next time I put together a set of stories from *Asimov's*. I told Bob about this theoretical digital anthology over the course of the 2009 Nebulas Awards weekend in Los Angeles. He was intrigued by the book and let me know that the novelette had been created with the software available at the time. If I could clean it up, the story would be mine (well, it would be mine as long as I paid for it, too). Bob had used that software for quite some time and, fortunately, back in the nineties I'd created a macro for updating his reflections column. Although initially the formatting looked daunting, it took only eighteen minutes to clean it up and create a pristine manuscript. Bob was also kind enough to let me use the story's title as inspiration for the title of the new book.

Once I knew Bob was behind the book, it was easy to pull the rest of the collection together. Just as a typical issue of *Asimov's* is a mix of familiar faces and brand-new authors, I wanted *Enter a Future* to be a collection of established professionals and promising newcomers. I was concerned about what the authors might think of a book that existed only in digital format, but everyone I approached agreed to let their story appear in it.

Since an electronic anthology doesn't face the same constraints that a print

book does, I didn't have to make decisions based on the length of each tale. As a result, the anthology also consists of Hugo-Award-winning novellas by Connie Willis (the delightful "Inside Job") and Robert Reed (the stark tale of "A Billion Eves") as well as the deeply moving *Asimov's* Readers'-Award-winning novella by Kristine Kathryn Rusch's about "Recovering Apollo 8." Shorter pieces include Allen M. Steele's brilliant Hugo- and Nebula-Award finalist detailing the torturous "Days Between"; Nancy Kress's taut thriller "Safeguard"; long-time *Asimov's* favorite Mary Rosenblum's quietly told tale of a "Breeze from the Stars"; the story that helped land Gord Sellar on the 2009 John Campbell Award ballot for best new author, "Lester Young and the Jupiter's Moons' Blues"; new author Sara Genge's desperate short story about "Shoes to Run"; and Daryl Gregory, now no longer a new author, but fresh to *Asimov's* when his novelette was first published, with his own Readers'-Award-winning "Second Person, Present Tense."

Enter a Future is available exclusively on the Kindle. If sales are strong, and early indications imply that they are, we will almost certainly put more digital anthologies together. Our print magazine remains our primary focus, but we're very happy to see that digital editions are contributing to an increase in readership. We're fortunate that so many talented authors send us their terrific stories. Our stories deserve a broad audience, so to reach as many readers as possible, we will continue to explore the opportunities that exist on the digital frontier.

For an upcoming editorial on the electronic reading experience, I'd like to hear from readers who subscribe via the Nook, Kindle, or any other e-reader. I'm also interested in opinions from people who have downloaded individual issues. Responses to this query should be emailed to asimovsst@dellmagazines.com. Comments may be edited and shortened for publication. Let me know if I can use your name and be sure to put "Digital Subscriptions" in the subject line. ○