Book Glutton
http://www.bookglutton.com/
(c. January 2008 -)
Created by Travis Alber and Aaron Miller

Book Glutton bridges e-reading with, uh, e-book-clubbing – and that's a compliment. The free catalog/ forum not only allows users (accounts are free) to peruse and read over 1,500 digital titles (not including user-uploads) but also lets them discuss and append marginal notes – *as they read*. Users can read solo, join or create discussion groups, and even isolate sections of their text for discussion focus. For example, say Betsy and Omar are reading "Macbeth" for their 11th grade Brit. Lit. course, but Betsy's on Act III and Omar's only just finished Act II; he can select everything he's read up to but exclude the remaining text, and the site will only permit comments that fit those terms. Likewise, Betsy can talk with others who're ahead in their reading, and/or join the official Glutton "Macbeth" forum, to discuss the book with those outside the class. Users can also view comments on particular paragraphs, chapters, even *words*, via linked wiki-esque blurbs.

The site has a user-friendly interface, an appealing, simple format, pdf-like text excerpts, and a well-stocked catalog that's increasing daily. Uploading texts is easy, and users set their sharing terms (not the site). While Book Glutton is not specifically "an educational resource," it's akin to an online library (perhaps *the* touchstone of educational resources) – and you don't even have to whisper! The site is currently lacking in supported resource links, though it is in the process of partnering with other organizations – including publishers and libraries – to expand its purview. It's also creating a "user-submissions" component, similar to www.fanfiction.net, where users will be able to share their own writing. It's not necessarily a good in-class tool – except maybe during whole-class "read-alouds" – but appears an excellent secondary resource where students can generate discussion ideas *as they read*, planting the seeds for the subsequent in-class discussion. This could minimize downtime in the classroom, as students would already have begun debate and (hopefully) come to class eager to continue in-person. Paired with a personal blog, NING group, or collaborative Web 2.0 word processor (i.e., Google Docs), Book Glutton offers a viable extension of literature circle *outside* the classroom, where, after all, most reading occurs.

The site has drawbacks, of course. Teachers have no effective way of overseeing all discussions except via student feedback (though both can participate in an officially-created BG group, or through a NING), and there isn't a convenient (clean) means of printing the online transcription – the result is a garbled format that doesn't translate well on paper. And, again, the catalog is still relatively small. However, as the site develops and expands its reaches and tools, its "shelves" will grow in size and scope, too.

Book Glutton was created primarily by two people: Travis Alber, an interactive media/design professional, and Aaron Miller, a writer and web developer. Both have extensive professional experience in both web development, online publishing and licensing, and, perhaps most importantly, writing. The site is an ad-supported dot com, but it's decidedly "not for profit" – at least thus far.