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One Book, Ten Thousand Authors

UK author aims for world's biggest literary collaboration

Author and Edinburgh resident Chris Baker has announced the launch of a new literary project, "I want a word", which aims to produce a single book using contributions from ten thousand different people. Through the website www.iwantaword.com Baker, 26, is giving prospective contributors the chance to submit any word of their choice to the project, which, if successful, stands to become the world's biggest multi-author book.

Contributors will pay £1 for the right to choose a word for inclusion in the book, and when all ten thousand words have been sold, Baker will add a few more of his own to create a single, coherent story incorporating all of the contributions. When the book is completed, it will be given away on the website www.iwantaword.com as a free pdf ebook, as well as being made available in conventional, printed form.

"It's going to be a massive challenge," says Baker, "but it's one I'm really looking forward to."

Baker, who recently completed a PhD in chemistry at Oxford University, first came up with the idea after finding it difficult to get his work noticed through more conventional methods.

"The publishing industry is just so competitive nowadays," he tells us, "that it's almost impossible to get your work published. It seemed like this would be a good way to raise my profile a bit and get a few more people interested in my work."

Since its inception, however, the idea has grown beyond being merely a device by which Baker can publicise his writing. As he says, "the more I thought about it, the more excited I became. A book consisting of contributions from ten thousand people: that has the potential to be something really special, something genuinely unique."

www.iwantaword.com is online now and words are already selling. The first word sold, "beaver", was bought by Kate Fraser of Edinburgh.

"It's certainly a very interesting idea," says Kate, "I hope he uses my word in a good way!"

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