



How to Prepare an eBook

eBook is short for electronic book, also called a digital book. An ebook is the digital version (at least in theory) of a printed book that can be read on a computer or a special eBook reader.

The major advantage of eBooks to authors is that books can be produced without paying for printing, shipping or inventory. The major advantage for readers is that they can be purchased and read immediately.

One of the big issues in eBook production is that there is no standard format, although we are getting closer. Just as music has been on records, cassette tapes, CDs and now is available in MP3 download, so eBooks are evolving.

The difference between most eBook readers and computer screens is the use of something called eInk technology. The screens of ebook readers are usable in direct sunlight (unlike computer screens) because of a higher-contrast technology.

eBook Readers

Similarly, eBook readers do not yet have a standard format. A disadvantage of current eBook readers is that they cannot show graphics, so books that are dependent on graphics are not easy to read as ebooks on ebook readers. The most popular ebook readers right now are the Amazon Kindle, the Sony Reader, the Barnes and Noble Nook and the Cybook Opus. Apple recently entered the ebook market with the iPad.

Creating eBooks

To create an ebook you must have a designed book ready for print. It is just as important to have an ebook professionally designed as well.

To create a PDF of a book and cover to read on the computer is easy - just like creating a PDF of any document. To create a PDF ebook, add a PDF of the front cover to the beginning of a PDF version of the book, making sure to change the ISBN on the copyright page. It is a good idea to ask the book designer to create this for you.

To create an ebook version that can be used on a reader is a little more complex and to make matters worse, each of the readers has its own proprietary conversion language that works only on that reader, making conversion difficult and somewhat costly.

Another problem is that for the most part, readers are in black and white (although that is changing with the iPad) and cannot convert special type or graphics.

Some book designers are capable of doing some or all of the conversions to book readers, so it might be a good idea to do the conversion at the same time as the book is being typeset. Most of the major publishers release ebook versions at the same time as print versions, but it is up to the author as to whether to do this or not.

Sources for Conversion

If you use Lightning Source for a printed book, it may also be a partial solution for creating an ebook for some formats. Most of the time if the book is printed through Lightning Source, ebook title conversion and distribution is free. But Lightning Source doesn't have conversion to some of the major ebook readers, such as Kindle.

A great source for creating a Kindle version (or other ebook versions) is a new cost-effective provider is about to enter the scene, www.PublishGreen.com. The cost for a Kindle conversion is \$299US and other ebook formats are extra.

eBook Numbers and Listings

An ebook of the author's printed book must have its own ISBN. An ebook does not have library cataloging information because you can't shelve an ebook in a library.

An ebook does not have library cataloging information because you can't shelve an ebook in a library, so there is no need for cataloging information.

An ebook also does not require a Bar Code since it doesn't physically need to incorporate the ISBN and price in a scannable form.

Retail Pricing

Another issue with eBooks is pricing them for retail sale. Should they be priced the same as printed books, given that the value of the information is the same? Or should they be priced less because there are fewer costs associated with producing them? It seems clear that there will be lower prices for eBooks, and right now they are being set between \$2.99 and \$9.99.

eBook Distribution

Amazon now carries more than 350,000 books plus many magazines and newspapers for Kindle and users can download almost anything in less than 60 seconds, anywhere in the world with wireless capability. Here are Kindle's current capabilities:

- Get books delivered wirelessly in less than 60 seconds
- 6-inch electronic ink display provides users a "read like real paper" experience
- 2GB of internal memory stores up to 1,500 digital books
- Read For Weeks On A Single Charge – supports over 2 weeks with wireless turned off or up to 4 days on a single charge with wireless on
- Read-To-Me – Kindle can read most newspapers, magazines and books out loud thanks to the Text-To-Speech feature
- Automatically syncs with Kindle and Kindle compatible devices
- Wirelessly send and receive documents in a number of formats including Word and PDF

Barnes & Noble announced the launch of the Barnes & Noble eBookstore (www.bn.com/ebooks) which started with 700,000 eBooks that can be read on a wide variety

of platforms priced at \$9.99US. The total includes 500,000 public domain titles from Google that can be downloaded for free.

Other places where ebooks are sold (and where Lightning Source provides distribution include:

- Powells.com
- Ebookmall.com
- Diesel-ebooks.com
- Fictionwise.com
- Booksonboard.com

eBook Publishing

Amazon has also provided a way for authors to publish their books electronically as the primary media. Amazon announced that in June 2010, it would pay author/publishers 70% of eBook revenue, if eBooks:

1. Sell between \$2.99 and \$9.99
2. Are priced at least 20% lower than a comparable physical copy of the book.
3. Support the text-to-speech Kindle feature.

Future of eBooks

As of today, more eBooks are being sold than hard cover books.

Eventually most books will be sold primarily as eBooks and print books will be "special ordered".