

# Publishing Principles and Practice ACP 2079, Semester 2, 2014

## Lecture 6 – Ebook Preparation & Formatting

with Dr Euan Mitchell

Wednesday 27 August, 2014

24 Slides

### Overall Goal for Option (Chapter) 5



- The overall goal for Option 5 is to format the **internal pages** of a book so they will convert accurately into an ebook in the **reflowable Kindle** and/or **EPUB** formats.
- **PDF** files have **fixed page** layouts, which has reduced their popularity as ebooks.

## Overview of Preparing Ebooks

### Edited Text

Ideally, the edited text will be saved in Microsoft Word, but free software can also be used as long as it can export in the .doc format.

Note: published writers wanting to digitise an existing print edition should first compile their finished text into a Microsoft Word file. This can be done by either scanning all the pages of a print edition or copying across the text from a PDF of the pages. But trying to directly convert PDF files of the print edition into an ebook will likely result in a mess, because a PDF is designed in a fixed page layout with page numbers, footers and/or headers that are not needed in the ebook.

### Formatted Text

The existing formatting of the edited Word file is altered so the text and graphics will convert accurately into ebooks.

+

### Front Cover File

This is the file of the front cover, created in Option 4, preferably in the JPEG format.

### Finished Ebook

The text (including images in JPEG or other formats) and the cover file are converted into a single file, typically in the EPUB and/or Kindle (MOBI) formats, but other formats are possible.

- Books that are **predominantly text** in a Word file can be converted into an ebook relatively easily.
- Four commonly used aggregators/retailers that offer a Word-to-ebook conversion service are **Kindle, Smashwords, Lulu and Kobo**.

## Building Your Confidence with Ebooks: Part 1

- Buying a **dedicated electronic reading device** – as opposed to reading ebooks on a laptop or desktop computer – is probably the biggest single step you can take towards building your confidence with ebooks.
- You could buy a Kindle, Kobo, Sony or generic e-reader, but reading can also be enjoyable on the (heavier) multi-function **iPad** or a **tablet** computer that uses the Android operating system made by Google.
- Some people don't mind reading ebooks on the small screens of **smartphones**, such as the iPhone, but lengthy sessions can be hard on the eyes.
- The latest '**phablet**' computers may suit people who want a device sized between a smartphone and a tablet.



## Building Your Confidence with Ebooks: Part 2

- Making your own first ebook is easier than it might seem.
- A confidence-building exercise can be done in 10 to 30 minutes, assuming you already have:
  - A **Microsoft Word file** of at least a few hundred words
  - A picture or photo (preferably in **JPEG** format) for a temporary front cover, and
  - Reasonably fast internet access.
- In your **seminar today**, we will undertake this exercise, using the free downloadable software called **Calibre**.



## Metadata and Tags

- **Metadata** for an ebook should at least include the following specifications: Title, name of author/s, name of publisher, date of publication, ISBN, description of contents, name of illustrator (if applicable), shout-lines or favourable quotes, the language it is written in, the file name, edition and/or series number.
- **'Tag'** can mean a 'key word' to help readers identify the category (genre) and content of your book, e.g. a book on Hawaiian Surfing Destinations might use tags such as Pipeline, Sunset Beach, Waimea Bay and Makaha.
- **'Tag'** can also relate to the formatting of a document, e.g. a Heading 1 style has a tag or set of tags specifying its font, size and alignment.



## Decision Tree 5A: Who Will Make the Ebook Edition?

### Alternative 5A i) The publisher

- Publishers grounded in the print book trade are now generally ensuring an ebook edition of the book is released around the same time as the print edition.
- With older titles, a publisher may want to hold onto the digital rights indefinitely without obligation to utilise them even if the print edition is no longer available.
- At other times, the print edition may still be in circulation but the publisher is not planning to release an ebook edition.
- Some publishers have allowed the author **non-exclusive digital rights**, so the author can make their own digital edition.

### Alternative 5A ii) The aggregator

- A new and important type of intermediary, called an aggregator, has sprung up in recent years to help publishers and writers turn their books into ebook editions as well as manage their distribution and sales accounts.
- Although some traditional publishers have built ebook creation into their own workflows, other publishers may hire aggregators to do the formatting and conversion of ebooks. Individual writers can also hire an aggregator.
- **BookBaby.com** claims to be the world's largest ebook formatting and distribution service for indie writers. But we looked at that during another lecture. Two Australian aggregators are DoctorZed and Port Campbell Press.
- <http://www.doctorzed.com/>  
<http://www.portcampbellpress.com.au/>

### **Alternative 5A iii) Add-on packages to print-on-demand services**

- There are also ebook services offered as add-on **packages** by **print-on-demand services**. For instance: **Lulu**, **CreateSpace** and **Lightning Source** offer print-on-demand options for publishers and self-publishers, and also offer add-on packages for ebook formatting and distribution services.
- The prices are often a few hundred dollars, depending on the options selected.
- Lulu's ebook packages distribute to Apple and Barnes & Noble. CreateSpace is part of Amazon, so Kindle is their e-retailer.
- Other companies will allow writers to select a broader range of e-retailers. In addition, these companies offer help with ISBNs, covers and other aspects of packaging the ebook.

### **Alternative 5A iv) The writer**

- The writer can format and convert an ebook, but a significant investment of time is required to learn the procedures.
- **Kindle** and **Smashwords** allow writers to **directly publish** to their online retail stores.
- **Google's eBookstore** is building its 'Partners' program to enable direct publishing but is not yet as straightforward as Kindle or Smashwords.
- **Apple's iBookstore** will allow writers to self-publish via the company's '**iTunes Connect**' program, but there are numerous and hurdles. Apple offers a 'Free Books Account' with Apple, which enables writers to give away their work for free, or a 'Paid Books Account' for ebooks that cost money.

### Alternative 5A v) Fully paid packages

- Some writers prefer to delegate everything to do with ebooks – and also with print-on-demand books – to a third party.
- They have neither the time nor inclination to be involved beyond the writing process itself.
- Companies such as Balboa Press, Xlibris, and Bookpal offer a range of packages that can run to thousands of dollars.
- You can google their package and price lists.
- **Such companies may also offer expensive marketing extras (\$14,599 in one case). The effectiveness of these extras is contentious.** There is plenty of online debate over the value of their services.

## Decision Tree 5B:

### Which Type of File Should be Used to Make an Ebook?

#### Alternative 5B i) PDF (Portable Document Format)

- If you try to directly convert a **PDF** into an **EPUB** or Kindle ebook, you will likely end up with a **mess**.
- This is because **PDF is a fixed format** that will probably contain headers, footers and page numbers that are not needed for the reflowable formats of EPUB and Kindle.
- The cheapest solution for many writers begins by copying and pasting the main text from the PDF and saving it into a Word file. The Word file is then converted into EPUB and/or Kindle formats.
- A writer could instead send their PDF to an aggregator so they can convert it to EPUB and/or Kindle.



## Alternative 5B ii) A Document in Microsoft Word or (Apple's) Pages

- The **.doc format** is the most **widely** accepted by online aggregators/retailers, so it makes sense to use this format even though it's possible to use others.
- Apple's Pages, OpenOffice and LibreOffice can be used to create **.doc** files.
- The option to export EPUB files directly from Pages, without careful re-formatting, will likely result in a mess.
- For the most reliable results use Microsoft Word – a suggestion echoed by the **Smashwords Style Guide**.
- <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/52>

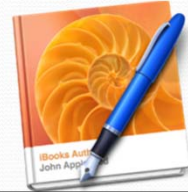


## Alternative 5B iii) InDesign or QuarkXpress

- Recent versions of **professional** publishing programs such as **InDesign** or **QuarkXpress** can directly export ebooks in the Kindle and/or EPUB formats.
- This sounds like a neat solution to creating an ebook, but I suggest this is more of an option for those working with a professional designer.
- Even if you are familiar with laying out books in both InDesign and QuarkXpress, as I am, you will probably find it easier to create ebooks by working with **.doc** files.

## Alternative 5B iv) Ebook-creation apps

- Some writers create ebooks by using specially designed apps, e.g. **iBooks Author**, Book Creator or eBookMagic.
- <http://www.apple.com/au/ibooks-author/>
- The page **templates** currently offered by these types of apps may suit some picture book writers and illustrators, but other writers may want more flexibility in the way the text is styled.
- The legal **fine print** in the app agreement may also compel the final ebook to be sold exclusively through Apple's iBookstore, which means missing out on sales via the world's biggest ebook retailer, Kindle.



## Decision Tree 5C:

Which Levels of Formatting Does My Word File Need?

### Alternative 5C i) Formatting the body text

- Go to the **Styles** section of Word's Home tab. Right-click on **Normal**. (Mac users with a single mouse can hold down Control and click.) Then select Modify.
- Change the font to Times New Roman or Georgia in size 11 or 12 points. **The reader of an ebook will be able to change fonts and sizes.** For now you just want to use a common font in a common size – fancy or unusual fonts may cause problems.
- Decide if you prefer left or justified alignment.
- Highlight all the body text, then click on Normal Style.



### Alternative 5C i) Formatting the body text, continued

- Kindle, Smashwords, Lulu and other aggregators ask you to **demarkate paragraphs** by using either:
  - **first-line indentation** of paragraphs, or
  - **adding spacing after paragraphs** of 6–12 points, **but not both.**
- Choose Modify so the Styles dialogue box appears again. Go to the bottom left and click Format, then select Paragraph...
- For first line indentation, go to 'Special', then select First Line , then set the indentation to about 0.5 to 0.8 cm.
- For spacing after each paragraph go to 'Spacing', then in the After field enter a value from 6–12 points.

### Alternative 5C ii) Formatting the headings and subheadings

- Use **Styles**, modify the Heading 1 settings, and apply to every chapter or section heading. You do this by simply varying the procedure explained for modifying Normal.

### Alternative 5C iii) Inserting the images correctly

- No images should be **copied** and pasted into the Word file. For the most accurate results, you should click on the **Insert** tab and select **Picture**.
- A dialogue box will open and allow you to select your chosen image to insert wherever your cursor happens to be placed in the document.

## Alternative 5C iv) Creating a table of contents

- A table of contents is **not always necessary**.
- Kindle will accept the table of contents generated by Word via the References tab, then selecting the appropriate Table of Contents.
- Unfortunately, Smashwords will not accept the Word-generated table of contents and requires a **hyperlinked** version that is more fiddly to set up. This procedure is detailed in the Smashwords Style Guide.
- By contrast, Lulu's free EPUB creator has its own way of constructing a table of contents. It relies on the Heading styles being correctly set up and does not allow hyperlinking in the way Smashwords prefers.

## Preliminary Pages & Endmatter

- The pages before the main text begins are known as **preliminary pages** (called 'prelims' in the industry), also known as frontmatter. You can include all sorts of preliminary pages such as a dedication, author information, preface, foreword, introduction, but the two most important ones are a title page and an imprint (copyright) page.
- **Endmatter** can include an appendix, glossary, advertisements, social media links, hyperlinks to your website (see next page) and polite suggestions to email the author some feedback. Of course an index with page numbers is redundant in a reflowable ebook.

## Decision Tree 5D:

### Who Converts the File and Checks its Accuracy?

#### **Alternative 5D i) Conversion and previewing by direct publication**

- Once a writer thinks the file of their pages has been sufficiently prepared, it needs to be converted to Kindle and/or EPUB formats to see how accurately the content is displayed.
- Check the ebook for any unexpected changes in Kindle's Simple and/or Enhanced Previewer. Bits of the formatting in the file/s may be tweaked then uploaded again
- Smashwords has extra conditions for distribution. The free Smashwords Style Guide has the details. If you have formatted accurately, it takes about a week for their approval.

#### **Alternative 5D ii) Conversion and validation by aggregators**

- If you are working with an aggregator such as BookBaby or Port Campbell Press, they will take care of **previewing** the ebook to ensure it meets quality requirements.
- After all, this is largely what you are paying for.
- The requirements for EPUB files are usually stricter than for Kindle files.



## Alternative 5D iii) Conversion and validation with online tools

- The 'meat grinder' converters used by Smashwords, Lulu and Kobo are better than Calibre at turning Word files into 'valid' EPUB files.
- A valid EPUB file can pass the quality control test available directly from the International Digital Publishing Forum's EPUB validator at: <http://validator.idpf.org>
- This is the world's central service for validating EPUB files, but you will find there are plenty of other websites offering to do the same.



## Homework – Week 6

- Read **Option 5: Preparing Ebooks** in *Your Book Publishing Options*, pp 145-180
- Take special note of the FAQs on:
  - Should I start with a small ebook?
  - Is there a central place I can compare aggregators and retailers?
- If you haven't already, read the excerpt from *The Design Manual* (week 3 on the Unit Guide), which will help your Offset Design Critique due next week, in hard copy and as an EPUB ebook.



END