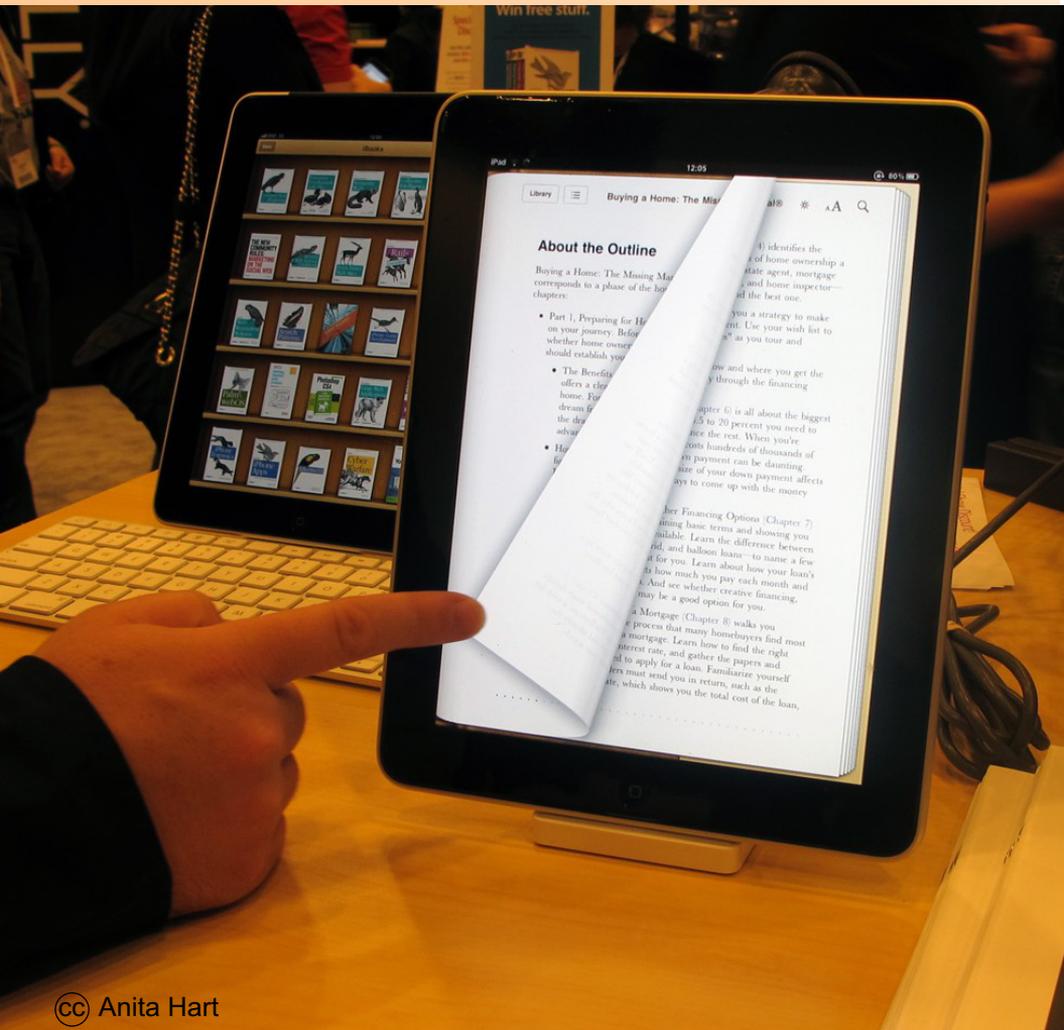


# Producing e-books

From Finished Manuscript to Virtual Bookshelf



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# Introduction

Whew! The manuscript is done, written, edited and polished. The file is ready to send to the printer to turn into tangible books. Now it's time to turn that manuscript into an e-book.

Once upon a time, books came in just two flavors: hardcover and softcover (paperback). The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has expanded the options available to readers, which in turn offers more ways for authors to put their writing in front of readers. According to the American Association of Publishers' [StatShot Annual for 2014](#) (which reflects only the 1,200 largest publishers), book publishing is a \$28 billion industry.

Although total trade book sales fell somewhat in the [first quarter of 2015](#) (most notably in children/young adult and religious presses), the 2014 book market for those 1200+ publishers looked like this:

	Sales revenues	Sales – units	Growth from 2013
Total trade books	\$15.43B	2.42B	4.2%
Hardback	\$5.99B	568M	
Paperback	\$4.84B	942M	9.5%
e-Books	\$3.37B	510M	3.8%
Audio books	\$305M	48M	26.8%

Clearly, e-books contribute significantly to the major publishers' revenues – about 22% of total revenues. But that's not the whole story. Because the production and distribution costs are much less – nearly negligible – e-books are an important profit

center. That factor is even more essential to traditional publishers who are being squeezed by growing printing costs and hardball pricing strategies by mass market retailers.

Taking a clue from the “big boys” of New York, independent publishers and authors have a low-cost method to increase their profit from their books by producing e-books in addition. As the majors have proven, e-books can be profitable in their own right but they can also drive sales of tangible books. (But that’s marketing strategy, which will be ignored in this book.)

StatShot 2014 reported that online retail continues to be the way Americans buy most books. About 832 books (from those 1,200 publishers) were sold online last year, compared to 577 in brick-and-mortar stores. While walk-in store book sales have been declining for years -- even with elephants like Wal-Mart and Costco as major players – online bookselling is great news for independent publishers.

Like e-books and print-on-demand technology, e-commerce is a relatively low cost avenue. That translates into greater profitability. Many experts have said that the technological advances of the last decade or two have “democratized” publishing unlike anything since Gutenberg’s printing press. The economic barriers to publishing have crumbled, and along with them many of the business models that have dominated publishing for the last 200 years.

Simply, publishing is now available to anyone with something to say.

By the way, this book will refer to Microsoft Word because it is the most widely known word processing program. It is not the only word processor, and not necessarily the best. The best

software is what is most comfortable and transparent to the writer – the program shouldn't get in the way of writing.

In addition to Microsoft Word, other noteworthy word processors include:

[Word Perfect](#) (has an [E-book Publisher](#) add-on)

[Libre Office](#) (formerly [Open Office](#))

[WPS Office](#) (a.k.a. Kingsoft Office)

[SSuite Office](#)

[AbiWord](#)

[Jarte](#)

[Angel Writer](#)

As if this list doesn't offer enough choices, Writer's Digest sells [specialty writing software](#) and TechRadar.com has a list [of 10 free programs](#) for writing fiction.

# Preparing your print manuscript for e-book publishing

Most authors write with a physical book in mind, knowing that the publisher will format the text for the book's layout. E-books demand a different mindset and some extra steps to make the manuscript ready for e-book production.

Word processing software (as opposed to plain text editors like Notepad) handle formatting tasks with hidden tags embedded into the document. After countless rounds of editing, these marks can become a hodge-podge, unseen on the screen or paper. Print publishers will scrub the manuscript through their own software when they do the page layout, so these tags don't matter to them, either.

For an e-book, they can create havoc. The first step in producing an e-book is to clean up those hidden formatting marks.

A writer can see the formatting marks in Microsoft Word by going to the Paragraph group in the Home tab and clicking on the paragraph mark (¶). However, that may not reveal all of the hidden marks. To [change the settings](#), click on the File Tab (round Office button in word 2013), then Word Options, then Display, then Show All Formatting Marks.

You may be surprised at how much is going on behind the scenes. If you have written a novel or some other kind of book that is essentially all text (without graphics or references), a good

first step is to save your finished manuscript as a text file. Go to File, then Save As and in the Save As Type box, select “Plain text (\*.txt).” This step will strip out all of the formatting commands, giving you a clean slate to format your narrative for an e-book.

Next, open your plain text version in your trusty word processor and do some technical clean-up. (It wouldn’t hurt to do these chores before shipping your manuscript off to the print editor, either.)

If you aren’t already a master of Find & Replace, you will be in a few minutes. Pressing Ctrl-F brings up the Find function, but Word also offers a shortcut for Find & Replace, Ctrl-H.

Use Find to check your quotation marks. Make sure all open quotes are paired with close quotes, and that you’ve used double quotes instead of single quotes (unless, of course, you’ve got quotes within quotes).

Next, use Find & Replace to check for:

**Spaces between sentences.** Double spaces were taught in typing classes until the advent of the word processor, but the style has changed to single spaces now. Check whether some double spaces have crept into your writing.

**Dashes.** Word by default takes two hyphens surrounded by single spaces and translates them into “em dashes.” An em dash is a long dash (the width of an M). An en (short) dash looks like a hyphen. A double space before or after your hyphen pair may leave you with two hyphens instead of the professional looking em dash.

**Indents before paragraphs.** Remove any tabs or spaces you used to indent paragraphs. You’ll set those indents with styles in a minute.

## Formatting with styles

Most e-book formats are adaptations of HTML, the language of websites (more on that shortly). HTML uses “styles” to format blocks of text, so to make the manuscript ready to become an e-book, the manuscript needs to be formatted with styles.

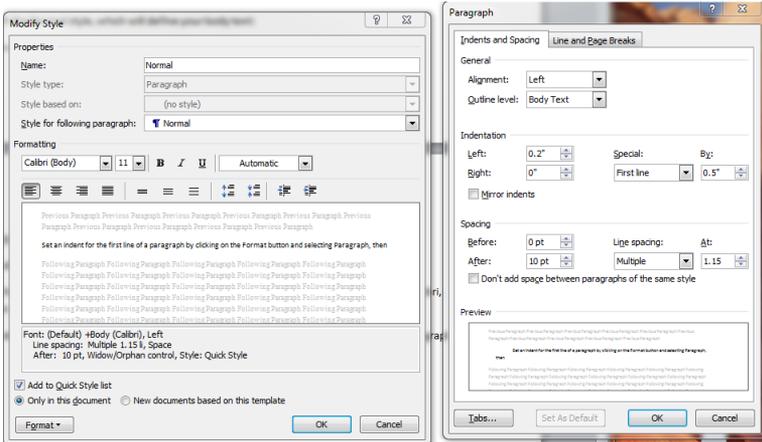
Fortunately, Word and other powerful word processors also use styles. You may not have realized it, but anytime you write something in Word, you are applying styles to your text. The default is the “Normal” style, highlighted on the Home tab ribbon.

For a typical book, only two or three styles are needed. It’s simply a matter of customizing the defaults to what you want.

Start with the Normal style, which will define your body text:

1. Place the cursor in a paragraph, so the Normal style is highlighted (boxed) on the ribbon.
2. Right-click on the Normal style box to display a popup menu.
3. Click Modify.
4. Change the font, size, spacing and other aspects to your desired look. (Word’s default is 11pt Calibri, 115% line spacing, 10pt space after paragraphs.)
5. Set an indent for the first line of a paragraph by clicking on the Format button and selecting Paragraph. In the Indentation section, change Special to First Line. Default is first line indent of a half inch, but for the smaller size of books, you may want to reduce this to 0.25 inch.
6. Click OK to finish the paragraph format changes, and then OK again to save the Modify Style changes.

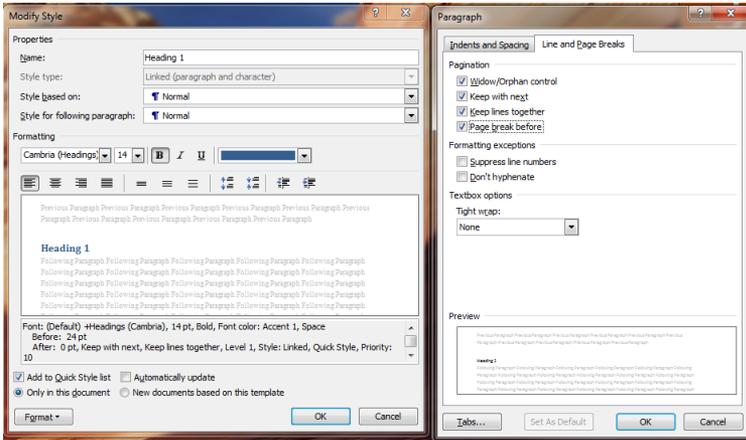
7. Right-click the Normal style box again, and click on Select All to highlight the entire manuscript. Left-click on the Normal style to apply it to the full document.



With the Normal style set, now do the Modify Style process again to change the Heading 1 style. This is the one to use for chapter titles, and breaks can be set so each chapter will start on a new page.

1. Place the cursor in a chapter title line and then left-click on Heading 1 on the ribbon.
2. Right-click on the Heading 1 style box to display a popup menu.
3. Click Modify.
4. Change the font, size, spacing and other aspects to your desired look. (Word's default is 14pt Cambria, 24pt space before heading.)
5. Click on the Format button and selecting Paragraph.
6. Click on the Line and Page Breaks tab.
7. Place a check mark by "Page break before." In addition to setting the look of the chapter heading, this option will automatically move every chapter to a new page.

- Click OK to leave the paragraph format popup, and then OK again to save the Modify Style changes.



You may also want to set Heading 2 or Subtitle to your desired font if you will have subtitles within chapters.

Now that Heading 1 is set and applied to your manuscript, jump back to the top of the file and create a table of contents:

- With the cursor before the beginning of the text, click on the References tab on Word’s ribbon.
- Click on the Table of Contents icon at the left side of the ribbon.
- Click on “Insert Table of Contents” near the bottom of the menu, not on one of the predefined automatic formats.
- In the popup box, uncheck “Show page numbers” and make sure “Use hyperlinks instead of page numbers” is checked.
- Click OK to save and generate the table of contents.

Word’s automatic table of contents formats all include page numbers. Because e-book pages will change (“reflow”) to fit the reader’s screen size, page numbers won’t be accurate. Instead,

links to the chapters will let e-book readers jump to where they want to read.

## Create the cover

Word has some graphic functions that might tempt you to prepare your cover as part of your manuscript file. Don't do it! Graphic designs are much better handled through a graphic editor program, plus you will want the cover graphic separate for Calibre, Smashwords and Amazon KDP as well as for publicity.

A standard softcover size is 6x9 inches. In graphics speak, that's an aspect ratio of 1.5 – the height is 1.5 times the width. Amazon KDP uses a slightly different aspect ratio, 1.6, based on a 5x8" page size. The aspect ratio may not seem important if the manuscript is intended to be an e-book, but is if you want to sell the book through an online retailer such as Amazon or if you later decide to print some copies through [CreateSpace](#), [Blurb](#), [Lulu](#) or another book printer.

If you choose to go to your neighborhood quick print shop and produce a book with 5.5x8.5" pages, that's an aspect ratio of 1.55. Don't fret that you need multiple layouts for your cover. A 1.5 aspect ratio cover design fitted into Amazon's 1.6 space would have an extra quarter inch of space top and bottom. Simply keep this in mind as you are laying out your cover.

Assuming this book is a complete do-it-yourself project and you aren't hiring a cover designer, you'll need a graphic editing program. Pricy [Adobe Photoshop](#) may be the one that first rolls off many authors' tongues, but it's not the only player. Among other choices:

- [Corel Paintshop Pro](#) – powerful, commercial graphics editor.

- [GIMP](#) – Leading open source (free) competitor to Photoshop. Powerful, but steep learning curve.
- [Paint.NET](#) – also free and powerful. Needs Microsoft's .NET software installed to run.
- [PhotoScape](#) – free and easy to use
- [Zoner Photo Studio](#) – also free and easy to use
- [Google Picassa](#) – remarkable versatile despite being oriented to posting pictures online

The first step in any graphic editor is to set up the “canvas” (page) size. Amazon’s Kindle Direct Publishing stipulates that [cover image dimensions](#) must be at least 625x1000 pixels, with a recommended size of 2,500 pixels on the long side (that would be 1563x2500 pixels for the 1.6 aspect ratio).

A pixel in simplest terms is a dot – a dot on the monitor screen or a dot in a printed halftone image. E-book readers range from fairly low resolution of 600x800 pixels on early e-book readers to 1080x1920 high-definition (HD) resolution on the latest Kindle Fire HD and some tablets. Meanwhile, a print-on-demand (POD) press typically will print at 300 dots per inch, so a 5x8” cover would translate to 1500x2400 pixels for its artwork.

For a canvas size, set 1500x2400 (or 1600x2400 if you want to work with a 1.5 aspect ratio). If you are sure your design will never go to print, you could use 750x1200 pixels. With “bitmap” (dot-by-dot) images, reducing their size doesn’t hurt quality while they will get jagged when enlarged.

A cover should be simple and uncluttered but include 3 elements:

1. Title of book
2. Name of author
3. Image (either photo or illustration)

A nonfiction book also routinely has a subtitle.

Start with the image, which will serve as the background, and then place type in layers over the image.

Be respectful about copyrighted images and don't use without permission and probably payment. Stock image suppliers make it easy to find a photo or illustration that fits your theme and purchase a license for a modest price.

Authors on really tight budgets should look for images with [Creative Commons](#) licenses. In between "all rights reserved" copyrights and "free for everybody" public domain, Creative Commons is a set of six alternative licenses where the creator retains ownership but permits use of the work without payment. Generally, a Creative Commons (CC) license requires the creator's name be displayed ("attribution"). Many top and aspiring photographers and illustrators place CC licenses on some images to draw attention to their stock images and possible assignments – sort of a portfolio of good but not best work.

Numerous websites provide Creative Commons licensed images. The most extensive collection is on [Flicker](#), where approximately 350 million photos are available under Creative Commons. The Creative Commons organization also has a [search function](#) to fix CC licensed images throughout the Internet. [Bing's image search](#) allows users to specify "Free to share and use commercially" as a search filter.

Amazon accepts both JPEG (JPG) and TIFF image formats. JPEG loses detail each time it is saved, so during editing save your images as TIFF, PNG or BMP where all the detail is preserved. JPEG has the advantage of being smaller files than lossless formats, so save only the final version for publication as a JPEG

(in addition to a copy in lossless format, in case you need to edit again later).

## Choosing e-book formats



Finally the manuscript is ready to put into e-book format. But which one?

Literally dozens of e-book formats have been developed over the last few decades. However, there are only three to pay attention to, and two more worth mentioning.

### PDF (Portable Document Format)

Adobe developed PDF as a proprietary format for printing documents so they would look the same regardless of the computer, software and printer used to create and print them. It is ideal for books with extensive graphics and complicated layouts, because the book will look just like how the publisher designed it. Because the layout is fixed, however, it reduces proportionately on small devices so that it can be hard to read on a smartphone.

Adobe released the PDF format as open source in 2008, so now more than 3,000 products work with PDF. Adobe has since developed a supplemental Digital Rights Management (DRM) system which provides copy protection to PDF documents. DRM

is essential for enlisting commercial content producers to back PDF. They know they can restrict viewing and printing of PDF documents so they don't lose money to bootleg copying. DRM-enabled PDF files require [Acrobat Digital Editions](#) or similar software rather than the basic Acrobat Reader.

PDF books can be created directly from Word through the Save As function, making PDF the easiest e-book format to prepare.

## MOBI and AZW

MOBI and EPUB differ significantly from PDF in that both are based on HTML, the language of the web, and CSS (Cascading Stylesheets, an extension of HTML). The HTML foundation allows these two formats to be “reflowable” – change layout to fit the reader's screen. Because portable e-book readers and smartphones have smaller screens than desktop computer monitors, this so-called responsive nature makes MOBI and EPUB equally readable on any device.

Since buying the French company in 2005 that developed the Mobipocket e-book format, Amazon has built proprietary formats AZW and the current [Kindle Format 8](#) (KF8, or AZW3, developed for the Kindle Fire) based on MOBI. MOBI files can be read by all Kindle readers so they are the format for publishers who want to provide books to Kindle owners.

AZW files are produced and sold only by Amazon, but Amazon's [KindleGen](#) software can convert HTML and EPUB files into a single Kindle file supporting both MOBI and KF8. Amazon requires that any books converted with KindleGen be sold only through the Kindle store (although free e-books may be distributed through other outlets such as your website).

As an older standard, MOBI generally supports HTML4 while KF8 uses the newer [HTML5 capabilities](#), including some video and audio. MOBI files can be either encrypted (DRM protected) or unprotected.

Amazon has come under fire because there is a lack of e-book reader privacy with the Kindle. Kindles report to Amazon the reader's identity, what the user is reading, what page the user is on, how long the user has spent on each page, which passages the user may have highlighted and whether the user has finished the book. Readers and publishers concerned with privacy have turned to the EPUB format as an alternative.

### EPUB

Kindle readers do not handle EPUB books, but most other readers (Nook, Sony, etc.) use EPUB as their primary format. Unlike Amazon's proprietary MOBI/AZW/KF8 format, EPUB is a free and open-source standard backed by the [International Digital Publishing Forum](#). As open source, EPUB has no restrictions on its production or distribution.

Like MOBI, EPUB is reflowable, is based on HTML and CSS, handles some video and audio content, and supports digital rights management.

### iBooks

Thanks to websites, readers have gotten used to interacting with their content, choosing which content to read and in the order they choose, and then having the content respond to their choices. E-books have been weak in the interactive area because they have followed the printed book model. Leave it to Apple to come out with an alternative.

The iBooks format is noteworthy because of its capabilities and its backing from Apple. Nevertheless, it is a niche product which can be produced only by Apple's [iBooks Author](#) program running on a Mac computer, and viewable only on an iPad or Mac. iBooks can be sold only through Apple's [iBooks store](#).

The forward-looking nature of iBooks gives publishers a view of where e-books may go in the future. Apple has promoted the iBooks format to the textbook field, where the interactive features allow a end-of-chapter quiz to be answered and graded in the book. iBooks have strong multimedia capabilities. And iBooks offer a unique solution to the fixed PDF or reflowable EPUB/MOBI choice. When an iPad is held horizontally (landscape), the iBooks layout is fixed like a PDF. Turn it vertically (portrait orientation) and the book becomes reflowable.

## **FB2 (FictionBook)**

The open-source, Russian-developed FictionBook format has been around since 2004 but is growing slowly in popularity. It does not support digital rights management of any kind, limiting its adoption by commercial publishers.

FictionBook is optimized for narrative literature and does not handle embedded images well. It is based on XML, a language similar to HTML but more stringent. While a number of European brands of e-book readers accept FB2 files, Kindle, Nook and Sony readers do not recognize FictionBook so its use is limited in the U.S. For tablets and computers, several FB2 reader programs are available, including [FBReader](#), [Anant Reader](#) and [Cool Reader](#).

For many novels, EPUB and MOBI may be all you need. Add PDF if you anticipate a significant number of readers will view the book on a computer.

# Converting with Calibre

Amazon's [Kindle Direct Publishing](#) and [Smashwords](#) will take Word DOC or DOCX files and make e-books from them, as will [CreateSpace](#) for printed books (although CreateSpace prefers PDF's since pages can shift in DOC files). That's nice, but if you want to produce e-books to sell on your own website you'll need to do one more step.

If you have Word Perfect, you can prepare EPUB and MOBI files directly within the word processor. For everybody else, the solution is to download a free program called [calibre](#) (sometimes pronounced "kay-lee-brah" to emphasize its free nature, and always spelled without capitalization).

Calibre is really the Swiss Army Knife of e-book tools. In addition to converting among various e-book file formats, it also is a library management system, managing a reader's collection of e-books. Plus, calibre is an e-book viewer for a variety of formats, an e-book editor and a tool to sync e-book devices, and a few other interesting capabilities. For those who prefer not to clutter their computers with more programs, calibre also has a portable version that can run from a flash drive without installing.

Because EPUB and MOBI formats both are based on HTML, earlier versions of calibre required that you save the Word file to HTML. That's easy ... use the Save As command and choose the file type as Web Page, Filtered (htm, html). The filtered version strips out Word's peculiar hidden code to generate a moderately clean HTML file.

The latest versions of calibre accept DOC and DOCX files (as well as RTF, Rich Text Format, a simpler format) for direct input. If you have specific elements that you want to control in the file, you would be better off using HTML but most publishers will discover that calibre handles a DOCX file just fine.

Here's where the Heading 1 style you modified for the chapter titles really come into play. Not only will calibre follow the instructions to start each chapter on a separate page, but it will also automatically compile those chapter titles into a table of contents.

The calibre interface can be a bit daunting at first because there are so many options. Don't worry, calibre's defaults mean you don't really have to set anything before producing your book. Also, some of the calibre website's tutorials lag behind the current version of the software, so the steps are:

1. On calibre's main screen, which lists books in your library, start by clicking the Add Books button at upper left.
2. In the browse window, navigate to the folder where your manuscript is
3. Click on your DOCX file and then on the Open button to add it to your library.
4. Back at the main screen, select your manuscript in the library list and then click on the Convert Books icon on the menu bar.
5. Browse for your cover image (calibre will apply a basic cover if you don't select something).
6. Check and correct the title, author and tags in the boxes to the right.
7. Select the output format in the box at the top right. (EPUB is the default.)

8. Click the OK button to convert your manuscript. The time will depend on the length of your manuscript and the speed of your computer, but should be from a few seconds to a few minutes.
9. Once the conversion is complete and the library screen is displayed again, you will see below the cover image that the format will say DOCX, EPUB. Click on EPUB to view your finished e-book.
10. Click on Convert Books to repeat the process for MOBI or other formats you want to produce.

# Putting it out to the world

Now that you have e-books, the next step is to make them available to readers. There are several options, and you'll probably want to pursue as many as time allows to build the broadest possible market for your book.

## Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing

As the leading retailer, Amazon is the outlet that leaps to mind first for many authors. Amazon makes it easy to put your book onto the virtual bookshelf with three programs it offers: [Kindle Direct Publishing](#) (KDP) for Kindle e-books, [CreateSpace](#) for print books, and [ACX](#) for audiobooks.

Focusing on e-books, KDP has several advantages:

- It's free to publish your book and place it in the [Kindle Store](#).
- Books benefit from Amazon's global distribution and name recognition.
- Royalties are 70% for e-books priced \$2.99 to \$9.99 sold to North America, Europe, India, Brazil and Japan.
- Royalties are 35% for books sold elsewhere worldwide and for e-books priced 99¢ to \$2.98 and \$10 to \$200. (See Amazon's [Pricing Page](#), [List Price Requirements](#) and [Sales and Royalties FAQ](#) for full details.)
- Amazon provides extensive reports and [promotional tools](#).

There are some downsides with KDP as well:

- Amazon's inventory is so huge that your book will get lost without serious promotion

- KDP distributes only KF8 formats for Kindle readers, so you don't reach the EPUB readers market.
- To take advantage of Amazon promotions and free giveaways, you must join the [KDP Select](#) program and exclusively distribute the digital book through KDP for at least 90 days. You are precluded from making your e-book available on your website or blog or in another digital format (EPUB, PDF).

## Smashwords

Amazon isn't the only e-book venue in town, and some authors find other avenues offer them greater flexibility.

[Smashwords](#) is the largest independent e-book distributor.

Among its plusses:

- Distributes both EPUB and MOBI formats.
- Distributes to most top e-book sellers: Barnes & Noble, OverDrive, Kobo, Scribd, iBooks, Baker & Taylor Blio and more.
- Distribution to libraries through OverDrive and Baker & Taylor.
- 85% royalty from Smashwords.com sales and 60% from other e-book retailers.
- Create coupons for discounts and free downloads
- Daily sales reports
- Upload either a Word DOC formatted according to the [Smashwords Style Guide](#), or an EPUB file through [Smashwords Direct](#). One upload will generate the both formats Smashwords will distribute.
- Free ISBN option

Downsides:

- If you choose to have a free ISBN, Smashwords will be listed as the publisher in Bowker's [Books In Print](#) catalog.
- Copyright page must say Smashwords Edition or Published at Smashwords or Published by XYZ Press at Smashwords.
- Lower royalties (60%) for sales through other e-tailers, where most readers buy their books.
- No distribution to Amazon – you must do that yourself.

### Your own book webpage

Let's just assume that by the time your book is ready to go, you already have an established online presence – website, blog, social media, maybe even a podcast and some YouTube videos. Use those to build awareness of your book, but don't expect them to sell it. For that, you need a book webpage.

A book webpage is a single page devoted to your book, with ordering information and links to your other outlets (Amazon, Smashwords, etc.). Actually, the book webpage might actually be several pages online, if you have supporting or bonus material you want to provide to readers.

A book webpage can be a page in your website, but it should have an easy to find address (such as [forrestdavis.com/e-book](http://forrestdavis.com/e-book)). If you want to pursue serious online promotion and search engine optimization, you may want to invest a few dollars for a domain name for your book.

Your book's webpage should include:

- The book's title (and subtitle, if it has one)
- Author's name
- Cover photo (yes, even for an e-book, so it looks like a "real" book)

- Short description (could be the back cover blurb)
- Table of contents
- How to purchase

While you certainly want to promote the online sellers carrying your e-book, you will keep more of the sale if you sell the book yourself on the webpage. A number of online payment processing services are available; the most common one is Paypal. Paypal charges 2.9% of the sale price plus a transaction fee of 30¢, so for a \$2.99 e-book, the Paypal fee would be \$0.39. (Arizona also collects sales tax on digital media sold by Arizonans, which would add \$0.17 to the price, and more paperwork for the publisher.)