

Creating and Formatting e-Books

Lesson 10

Distribution Methods

As I alluded to previously, there are different ways to get an e-book out to market. Let's take a look at some of the options.

Directly through Amazon, iBooks, Barnes & Nobles

Many authors have successfully worked directly with the various e-book retailers. For writers who choose to distribute their book directly through the popular e-book sites, the first step is to read all the terms and conditions completely. If something is unclear, seek advice. (Because I'm not a lawyer, I won't be offering any.)

As we've seen, Amazon Kindle, Barnes & Noble Nook, and Kobo are rather straightforward to upload the product. Just follow the instructions at the websites. Apple's iBooks is a bit more complicated than other distributors, but not impossible. Apple has more requirements, but it is still certainly doable. If Apple iBook is the only distribution outlet, the book will be available on only Apple products. There is no iBook reader for PC or Android devices.

Third-Party Distributors (Aggregators)

Third-party distributors or aggregators provide all types of services from formatting the manuscript to distribution through all the major e-book companies. Companies like Smashwords only offer services for e-books. Each company has its own fee structure, which may be an upfront cost or a percentage of sales. Here is an article and chart of the various aggregators for e-books from Gary Larson, "Ebook Aggregators Comparison Chart." (This information is from 2013. Some of it may have changed slightly, but it still gives a reference for comparison.)

<http://www.publishyourownebooks.com/ebook-aggregators-comparison-chart/>.

Some print-on-demand publishers offer packages that include e-books. Lulu (<https://www.lulu.com/>), Blurb (<http://www.blurb.com/>), BookBaby (<https://www.bookbaby.com/>), and IngramSpark (<http://www.ingramspark.com/>). These companies' primary business is print-on-demand books. E-books have often been an add-on as e-book reading became popular. Like aggregators, the pricing structure varies.

These are worthwhile looking at. A lot can be learned about the process and each has free downloadable guides, which have useful information.

A Website

The easiest way to sell an e-book from a website is with a PDF file. It's possible to sell an e-book not just as a PDF, but also for Kindle (MOBI) and iBook (EPUB). Two things to consider: 1) products may not have the same DRM (digital rights

management) as those sold through Amazon and Apple. 2) Buyers will have to upload the product to their device manually.

DIY or Download Service

The DIY method, often reserved for PDF files, can be easily done by those using a WordPress or Blogger site. Plug-ins are available to automated the system. A PayPal account is often needed to accept payments. It is possible to add EPUB and MOBI files if they have been created during the formatting process.

Many companies provide download services. Two popular ones are ClickBank (<http://www.clickbank.com/>) and PayLoadz (www.payloadz.com/). Both companies charge a fee for the service. A link is added to the website for the products. Both companies also offer affiliate programs to add other products to a website store, which may compliment the writer's own product. With these services, all the payments and distribution are handled by the company.

Another option to sell on a website is to offer links to the book at Amazon, B&N, or another online source.

In Person

A question often asked when talking about e-books concerns selling e-books at the back of the room or in an exhibit area. It is possible to make an e-product available in person.

One option is to have the e-book available on a CD-ROM. CDs are easy for most people to burn with their personal computer, if only making a few. The CD and cover images are just as important for a CD as they are for a print book. [Kunaki.com](http://www.kunaki.com) is a no nonsense service for printing the disc and covers for a CD or DVD. It does require some hands-on work by the user. The prices are more than reasonable.

Smashwords and internet shopping cart services, such as ejunkie (<http://www.ejunkie.com/>) or WooCommerece (a WordPress plug-in), allow the user to create a code for the download. The code can be printed on a bookmark or postcard, which is given to the buyer. Or the code can also be converted to a printed QR code, which is not so easily shared.

It's easier than I thought to get a plastic card like the gifts cards sold in stores.* These cards may have a code and instructions under a scratch off area on the back. Not only can these be used as "gift" cards at the back-of-the room table, they can also be used to sell an e-book in bookstores. For more information, read Dean Wesley Smith's blog on *Electronic Sales to Bookstores* <http://www.deanwesleymith.com/?p=4154>

Diana Horner offers questions she asks her clients in "[How to Choose Self-Publishing Options for Ebooks.](#)"

Assignment:

Take a look at Clickbank and Payloadz. Compare and contrast their services.

What factors might be considered when making the decision of how to distribute an e-book?

Which strategy are you considering? One distribution channel or multiple channels? Why? (I add that question to think through both possibilities.)

If you are developing an e-product, what method of distribution are you leaning toward?

After reading Diana Horner's article, can you think of other questions that you may want to ask?

*Plastic Gift Card Resources

(Note: I've not used either of these companies. I add them as resource for information only.)

Duracard

<https://www.duracard.com/products/plastic-gift-cards>

Plastic Printers

<https://www.plasticprinters.com/custom-gift-cards>