An eBook "How to"

By Terry Rawkins

It's now the first month of 2021 and I have found an article that I wrote on 26 Dec 2011. I guess eBooks was my Christmas project then. I did not have a Kindle device then but used both a PC and Android tablet Apps. Anyway this document, based on the 2011 version, is now up to date.

Wikipedia says that an eBook is:- "An electronic book (variously, e-book, ebook, digital book) is a book-length publication in digital form, consisting of text, images, or both, and produced on, published through, and readable on computers or other electronic devices. Sometimes the equivalent of a conventional printed book, e-books can also be born digital.

The Oxford Dictionary of English defines the e-book as "an electronic version of a printed book," but e-books can and do exist without any printed equivalent. e-books are usually read on dedicated e-book readers. Personal computers and some mobile phones can also be used to read e-books. "

I come to eBooks with a need to read and write eBooks on my 3 Windoze 10 machines, a ChromeBook, Android tablets and phones and my new kindle.

Maybe in the future I will write eBooks that will help others and in particular those in the visually impared community I will then need to make eBooks in both mobi and ePub formats.

Which eBook format will my Kindle read?

MOBI, AZW, AZW3, DOCX, PDF, TXT and HTML all these formats have their quirks.

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  https://www.sumatrapdfreader.org/free-pdf-reader.html

The Chrome extension "EPUB Reader" Reads epub files directly in the browser.

For ChromeBooks and Android Phones and Tablets.

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The Android App "Ai Reader" lets you open and load one book at the time and provides easy access to customization tools. Readers have the option of changing the font style, size or color, as well as margins and spacing. Screen rotation is also supported.

The Actions tab includes a Dictionary option, Autoscroll and Text-to-Speech.
AIReader supports a large number of reading formats including text, epub, html, doc, mobi and prc.

Also on Android is the Dolphin "Easy Reader" for ePubs. This App is primarily for the visually impared community and has Text-to-Speech.

https://yourdolphin.com/en-gb/products/individuals/families/easyreader

Table

Format	Windows 10 PC	Android & ChromeBook
All or most	Calibre	?
AZW (no DRM)	Kindle App or Sumatra	Kindle App
Mobi	Kindle App or Sumatra	Kindle App or Ai Reader
ePub	Sumatra or Chrome extension	Ai Reader or Easy Reader
Prc	Calibre	Ai Reader
ePub Text-to-Speech	Easy Reader £40	Easy Reader £0

eBook Authoring Software

What is required here is a process, the end product of which will be either, a mobi file emailed to my Kindle or a mobi / ePub file saved to a disk on the local machine. There are many software systems that convert one format to another but few that start with a blank page.

The most versatile tool is Calibre which seems to be able to Read, Display and Write to all eBook formats but it can't originate a suitable initial file. Calibre is only available on Windows.

File types such as HTML, PDF and DOCX are the only formats that I can write to. Therefore Calibre is going to be used somewhere in the process.

Of course Amazon has software such as Kindle Create and Kindle Previewer but both make heavy weather of the task compared to Calibre and still require a docx file to start. Both are needed if you need to send a AZW file to Amazon.

MS Word / Google Docs are the systems with the least hasle, whereas HTML has the most potential for a document with both words and pictures.

The tool required for HTML is a simple text editor like Notepad, TextPad, Caret or Notepad ++. For PDF one can write in MS Word and SaveAs PDF.

Workflow

First decide what you want :-

Horses for Courses
- Quick and simple text :- docx to Calibre to Mobi to Kindle
- Large text and pictures :- docx to PDF to Kindle
- Mixed text, and pictures as a presentation :- HTML & JPGs to zip to Calibre to Mobi to Kindle

Then write the text using either a simple text editor or MS Word. See appendix for HTML code. Check the grammar, spelling and layout now as none of the next steps will do this.

Lastly use Calibre to convert your .docx file or the Zipped html & jpgs to mobi.

The Calibre user interface is simple, the workflow follows the screen layout.

1. Add Book
2. Edit Metadata
3. Convert
4. View
5. Save to disk
6. Email to Kindle

One tip that I use is to make a shortcut on the desktop to the Calibre Library folder "C:\Users\....\ Calibre Library" Then there is no need to use the Save to disk feature as you can open via the shortcut, copy the file and paste it to your own books folder.

If you wish to view the eBook on Calibre OK but to save space I delete the Book using the Calibre Remove Books feature. I just use Calibre as a conversion tool. Be careful here as deleting a book will remove the book's folder.

Some useful websites

http://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=2245146011

http://www.feedbooks.com/

http://www.free-ebooks.net/

http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/

http://www.kobobooks.com/free_ebooks

http://www.manybooks.net/

http://www.the-ebook-reader.com/free-ebooks.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebook

http://www.moondownload.com/ $5.00

http://calibre-ebook.com

Appendix

Basic HTML

Here is the basic layout of a HTML file. Use only a simple text editor like notepad to write this and save with a .html extension. The formatting of a HTML file is made using Tags most but not all tags start with <text> and finish with </text>

The structure is fairly easy to understand, I hope.

Start with <html> finish with </html>

Set the head with general information

Set the body, it's in here that you write text that will be seen

Turn on then off text alignment, eg. center

Simple formatting is achieved with the paragraph tag <p> but each <p> must be closed with a </p>

Shut down the body and html tags at the end

Copy all the text below then paste it into a text editor. Save it as ebook.html and you have started on your way.

```
------------ cut -----------
<html>
<head>
<title>A Basic HTML Page </title>
</head>
<body>
<center>
<h2>Initial Heading</h2>
</center>
<div style="margin-left: 10%; margin-right: 10%;">
You put whatever text you like in here but please remember that all spaces and carriage returns are
treated as just one character.
<p>
You have to use the Paragraph Tag  to format your text.
</p>
<p>
Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in
liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.
</p>
Add a picture here
<br>
<img src="picture.jpg">
<br>
<p>
Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and
so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to
dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that
nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.
</p>
<p>
But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The
brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add
or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what
they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who
fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task
remaining before us that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which
they gave the last full measure of devotion that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have
died in vain that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the
people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.
</p>
</div>
</body>
</html>
------------ cut -----------
```

<center>
The End

5 January 2021
</center>