



Ebook questions – info

What are eBooks?

The Oxford Dictionary of English defines the eBook as “an electronic version of a printed book,”

Many eBooks are electronic versions of printed books but increasingly authors and content creators are creating eBooks with no print analogues. Most current eBooks exist as packages that can be read on computing devices using a browser-based application, stand-alone software or on a dedicated e-reader device. Some eBooks are enhanced to include indexes, dictionaries, maps, video, and geo locational or interactive elements such as simulations as an integral part of the book. Most eBook reading platforms permit bookmarking and annotations. At this time, the majority of trade digital books do not have these features.

What are the different eBook formats?

There are three main ebook formats, they are:-

- **Epub.** This is the most widely supported format, it is overseen by the [International Digital Publishing Forum](#) (IDPF) and looks set to become the standard. Epub books can be read on almost all (non Amazon) dedicated readers, desktop and tablet computers as well as smartphones running Android, iOS and Windows operating systems. Epub books do not usually have pages in the conventional sense, instead the text ‘flows’ allowing the reader to change the text size at will. Epubs can contain ‘enhancements’ such as web links, interactive elements, audio and video clips.

The new epub 3 format has many improvements to allow better styling support, fixed page layouts, complex layouts, custom typography, multi language support and improved rendering of mathematical equations, but is not yet widely supported in dedicated reading systems.

- **Kindle (mobi, prc, KF8, azw).** Amazon's proprietary format, very similar to epub in its capabilities but only readable on Amazon devices and software. Amazon provide [software](#) to allow Kindle books to be read on Apple, Windows and Android operating systems. This is the only eBook format available from Amazon.
- **Adobe Acrobat (PDF).** The only universally readable format, its major shortcoming is that pages have an unchangeable, fixed, layout and the text cannot be resized without resizing the whole page.

Can I convert one eBook format into another that I can read?

You can convert almost any format into any other format. You can do this on the Web at <http://convert.com> and you can download the "Calibre" software free from <http://calibre-eBook.com>. If the book is protected by DRM, you may not be able to convert it. A search engine will let you find sites that claim to have software that will strip DRM from eBooks and allow you to convert them. Their claims may or may not be true. If they are true, using the software may or may not be legal.

What advantages do eBooks offer over traditional print books?

- eBook readers are compact; a single -book reader can hold thousands of eBooks.
- eBook readers are compact, lightweight and portable.
- With today's technology you can read eBooks anywhere, on the bus, train, aeroplane, and while queuing.
- Using the most common lending technologies, library users do not incur overdue fines because eBooks "time out" on a patron's reader at the end of the loan period.
- eBooks are delivered almost instantaneously. You can purchase, download and start reading them within minutes, without leaving your chair. You don't have to go to a book shop or library to obtain them or wait for days, weeks and sometimes more for them to arrive in the mail.
- It is possible to purchase an eBook 24 hours a day, every day of the year, wherever you are.
- Worldwide availability – Anyone with an internet connection, anywhere in the world can buy your book.
- No trees are required to manufacture paper for the pages of eBooks.
- eBooks can contain links, for easy access to more information, related websites and the author's other works.
- eBooks are searchable. You can quickly and easily search for any information or content in an eBook.
- eBook readers and browsers are more effective in meeting the accessibility needs of users with visual impairment. Many have built-in screen readers, screen enlargement options and text-to-speech

functionality.

- eBooks do not require printing, shipping and physical processing like traditional print books so more of the sale price can go to the author.
- eBooks are easy to update or correct – new editions are not tied to print runs and can be issued almost instantaneously.
- eBooks do not require storage space unlike traditional print.
- Once published, eBooks are permanently available and never go ‘out of stock’.
- There is a definite “cool factor” associated with eBooks.

What are the disadvantages of eBooks?

- People like books, the feel, the look, even the smell.
- The batteries never go flat in a printed book.
- Printed books are more robust – you can drop them, get them wet, leave them in a hot place and even prop up wobbly tables with them and they will still be readable.
- The hardware is relatively expensive.
- Many current eBook retailers and distributors use proprietary digital rights management (DRM) software to control access to the eBook.
- A standardised file format for eBooks is still evolving, although EPUB dominates and EPUB3 is likely to see widespread adoption.
- eBook use statistics usually cannot be tracked within the library ILS system.
- Licensing terms of use for eBooks may restrict user rights under the copyright law, such as library lending and fair use.
- There are significant reader privacy concerns.
- Some retailers lock their customers into a particular format, I.E. Amazon.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of eBooks for people with disabilities?

Advantages might include text-to-speech capabilities and font enlargement.

Disadvantages might be DRM employed by publisher to prevent text-to-speech functionality. On the newer dedicated e-readers, on ipads, on smart phones and on laptops, it is easier to turn a page than it is with a hard copy book. You often have multiple ways on the same reader to turn a page: a screen tap, a key press, a mouse click, or a ‘flick’ of the finger.

Is there an industry standard for eBooks?

There is a standard format adopted by the International Digital Publishing Forum. It is EPUB. In practice, differing DRM systems prevent device interoperability, and the quality of digital books differs across publishers. However, there are a growing number of validation suites for EPUB, which supports their standardization. A new version of EPUB, EPUB3, has been released for final comment before publication as a standard. See

<http://idpf.org/epub/30/spec/epub30-overview.html>.

Can you use bookmarks?

In most cases, yes.

Is the cover image available?

Almost always.

Which eBook reader is best?

It all depends on what the reader is seeking and is willing to pay. EBook readers vary in weight, screen size, resolution and digital rights management controls. Readers are reading eBooks on a variety of other electronic devices (phones, computers, and other handheld devices). The types of books a reader likes will also have bearing on the device they choose. Novels and nonfiction that are primarily text are well suited to black & white eInk e-readers; while full-color or graphics-intensive books, such as children's and lifestyle books, are best presented on multi-function tablet devices and computers.

What format should I get?

That will depend on the devices you use. EPUB is an open standard supported and endorsed by the overwhelming majority of publishers, distributors, and trade associations, including the American Association of Publishers. Users of Amazon's Kindle can only use mobi/prc/KF8/azw and PDF formats

What impact does a vendor's platform have on eBooks?

The procedures for downloading vary, which can make it more difficult for libraries to offer and support an eBook service to the public. A library user may be unable to access and download eBooks that are offered only in a propriety format that requires the use of a particular e-reader.

Most eReading systems are integrated with the manufacturer's eBook shop, which allow the user to purchase and download directly from their reading system.

Can all eBooks be loaded onto a device, or does it depend on the vendor and the device?

It depends on the vendor and the device. An EPUB book with no DRM can be loaded and read on any of several devices. An AZW book from Amazon can be read only on a Kindle or device loaded with [Kindle software](#).

Why can't I open my new eBook on my device/computer?

There are over two dozen eBook formats and probably at least that many DRM schemes. eBooks are available from many sources. There are multiple computer operating systems (Windows, iOS, the Linux family, etc). If you want to open a Word document without having to fight with your HP PC, get Microsoft Word. If you have a Mac, use products that Apple supports. If you have a specific e-reader brand, and you get books only from that e-readers' vendor (e.g. Nook and Barnes & Noble), it will work easily. If you try to read an eBook with an unknown format and DRM on the first e-reader that comes by, you are likely to run into problems. Getting comfortable in this is not rocket science, but it goes beyond what an FAQ can offer.

Are there vendors for Spanish language or other language eBooks?

Yes, you can find a selection of offerings on the web. Currently, Barnes & Noble's Nook has the largest collection of Spanish language books on the market.

What privacy issues are there related to eBooks?

New reader privacy issues emerge with digital book services. Reading history can be collected and analyzed and wind up in the hands of governments or third parties without the reader's knowledge or consent. This information may be used for targeted advertising. Libraries have strict reader privacy policies supported by privacy law. The government is currently considering the need for an updated privacy law in respect of the new digital environment.

What is DRM?

DRM is Digital Rights Management. It is a way of securing an eBook (or music or other digital file) so that only someone with the correct key can open it and use it.

How does DRM work?

There are many different forms of DRM, just as there are many types of physical locks. One simple form uses time and date and takes advantage of the fact that computers have built in clock calendars. The e-reading software on the PC checks the current date and time whenever the eBook is opened. When the current date and time are later than the eBook's due date (which the e-reading software knows), it refuses to open the book. Some DRM systems rely on the credit card of the purchaser. Some use a complex encryption of the text and build the decryption key into their proprietary e-reader.

How many libraries provide eBooks?

In 2011 two-thirds of U.S. public libraries offered eBooks, up from 38 percent only two years before. According to Library Journal, 60 percent of libraries that do not currently offer eBooks expect to within two years. (Source: LJ/SLJ Virtual Summit: eBooks at the Tipping Point, October 2010.)

Britain is one of the world's best-served nations when it comes to digital lending, as most UK libraries have signed up to provide books through the DRM-managed OverDrive system.

Why do libraries offer eBooks?

Public libraries have established relationships with their communities that begin when parents bring their very young children to the library to read books, and these relationships continue through adulthood. Many readers have purchased dedicated reading devices or multipurpose computer tablets and expect the public library to offer eBook downloads as an extension of print library lending. As people age and eyesight diminishes, eBooks offer users the ability to enhance the reading experience by adjusting font size and screen background. Visually impaired users have an opportunity to gain access to millions of works previously unavailable to them. Library users want books in regular print, large print, audiobook and eBook formats. Libraries want to offer the user the right book, in the right format at the right time. eBooks are now part of that service.

How do libraries acquire eBook services?

Some libraries provide the service as individual libraries, while others participate in a consortium, which leases the books. Most libraries use a vendor that hosts a site to manage the eBooks and the portal that library patrons use to borrow the eBook. There are also several sites online that offer free eBooks directly from authors, publishers or genre based interest groups.

Do libraries loan eBook readers?

Some libraries do, but this lending model might not be sustainable in the long term, and the legal issues remain unclear. Readers can be broken or stolen and their replacement adds financial burden to libraries. As reader technology evolves, libraries have to purchase new readers supporting new features and formats. Traditionally, public libraries have focused more on providing the content rather than the appliance; readers are likely to fall in price, making it less necessary for the library to provide readers.

How are libraries responding to patrons' questions regarding eBook readers?

Libraries are working hard with the public to help them understand the new technology and how to use it. Staff help the public make sense of the complicated eBook and eBook reader market place by offering instructional classes and tip sheets that provide information on how to make various eBook formats work on the patron's particular reader. Libraries also provide public access computers with Internet connections that facilitate access to digital books.

What would libraries offering eBooks like to see happen in the future?

- Interoperability of eBook readers and platforms so that all library eBooks could be downloaded to any device.
- The option to purchase rather than to lease eBooks, in much the same way libraries purchase print books, audiovisual, and other materials.
- Full integration of eBooks into library catalogs so that the vendor's site is transparent to the user.
- Integration of eBook usage data into the ILS circulation module so that there can be a single place to generate circulation statistics for both print and digital material.
- Integrated acquisitions workflow so that eBooks can be selected and made available to patrons through the established materials ordering process.
- Vendor collection development programs for digital materials that mirror programs now used for physical materials acquisitions, such as new title notifications plans and standing order programs.
- Reasonable pricing models comparable to those given on traditional print books.

Where do libraries acquire eBooks?

Specialised Trade eBook sales channels.

How long will they be allowed to be on a library's shelf without re-buying?

This varies by vendor and publisher. In some cases there is a cap on the number of circulations. In others there is no limit. The supply chain is still in the process of establishing viable models.

What is the difference between sales channels for libraries?

Some allow library patrons to select and download eBooks. The customer can transfer downloaded books to his personal e-reader. The downloaded books expire (or, if you prefer, return themselves to the library) when due. Some others focus on the educational market, offering books in bundles like "easy fiction." There is a license associated with the purchase similar to licenses for online journal databases. When you stop paying your annual subscription fee, you lose access to the books.

I am interested to know about length of time library eBooks can be downloaded and do they just disappear after so many days?

If a library uses Adobe Content Server and Adobe Digital Editions the loan period is up to the library. The patron can even choose from among multiple loan periods. When the loan period is up, the eBook "expires" on the patron's PC or e-reader and can no longer be read.

How many licenses are required if you have to people reading the same book at the same time? This has always stumped me Once a library has purchased a license, must the library purchase more than one to allow

access by its users?

This varies by vendor, library and licensing model. The default model treats an eBook like a hard copy book. If you want 6 people to be able to read it at once, you buy six copies. EBSCO has stated that they will offer plans that allow the library to pay more per “book,” but be able to loan that “book” to multiple users at once.

Why isn't this book available as an eBook?

The publishing industry is slow to take up new technologies and is concerned about piracy and so, in some cases, publishers are reluctant to publish works in electronic format.

Does the library own the eBooks they lend?

With Overdrive and probably most other vendors, the library does not own the book. It may have a perpetual lease, but it cannot resell the book, give it away, or lend it via ILL. It cannot even lend it to its own patrons without going through the vendor's site. There are exceptions. For example, Douglas County Libraries in the USA are working with the Colorado Independent Publishers Association and will own eBooks they purchase for lending to their community. The Internet Archive has a “Publishers Program” where they are seeking to purchase titles that are then made available through lending.

What publishers will not sell eBooks to libraries? (It would be helpful if the answer included the subsidiaries as well as the main publisher name)

MacMillan and Simon & Shuster. Some of their subsidiaries, however, do sell eBooks to libraries.

What publisher will only sell eBooks to libraries for a limited number of checkouts? It would be helpful if this included subsidiaries as well

Only HarperCollins at this time. Some subsidiaries of HarperCollins do not limit checkouts.

How could an eBook help my small business become better known?

EBooks can be the perfect calling card for potential customers. Offering an eBook free on your website in exchange for a prospect's email, providing a link to a free downloadable eBook via your newsletter, or even having a link to your eBook in your email signature line provides a much greater opportunity to show your client your knowledge, expertise and point of view.

What's the basic process for writing a small business eBook?

Step 1. Choose a topic: Brainstorm ideas that use your expertise, knowledge base or specific information and/or research. Consider smaller

slices of bigger topics for eBooks. Books that can fit into the “how to” topic area are some of the most popular.

Step 2. Create Your eBook Outline: Decide what five to ten basic topics you are going to address in your eBook, and then outline the three main points you are going to make under each of those topics.

Step 3. Begin Writing Your eBook: Oddly enough, the easiest part of eBook publishing is getting the finished product up and running for distribution. Many can be uploaded with just a click of a few buttons. But where most entrepreneurs face a challenge is in finding the time, or having the writing chops, to craft the eBook in the first place. We get weekly calls from small business owners asking us to ghostwrite their eBooks because, although they have great content and ideas, they don't have the writing skills.

Even if that's the case, it's no excuse, since M-Y Books' sole purpose is to ghostwrite, edit, design and publish your eBook.