

## E - PUBLISHING

**I**nformation is the main product of the 21st century, mature economies. Communication, and new technological methods of disseminating information, promptly and efficiently is the topic of this paper.

A while back you had to find an agent and a traditional publisher if you had an idea and wanted to share it with the world. This was a closed and protected market of so called experts and insiders. Nowadays, this process had become more democratic and open; anyone can do it.

Anyone can start a blog or write a book. This has opened up possibilities to all but also created clutter and information overload. The possibility to write something great is there. Not everybody is going to achieve that but with quality and uniqueness, information knows no boundaries and limits. It just comes alive.

This newfound freedom and openness had caused a paradigm shift in the book publishing industry. With the advent of on-demand publishing and the incredible growth of Amazon.com, traditional bookstores are experiencing a decline.

I remember in the nineties the superstore concept was developed and quickly Barnes and Noble and Borders

had jumped on the bandwagon and started opening them en masse in Manhattan and other urban centers. Now they are closing them or refraining from opening new ones. Since I'm no stranger to the industry I could never understand the economics of a superstore, knowing the profit margins on the book and the marketing cost and operating cost of a book mega store. I have observed the people hanging out there, most of them only browsing books, reading the magazines, seldom buying anything but coffee.

Most of the regulars are students or retired people who will not spend enough to sustain these places.

## THE OLD VERSUS THE NEW WAY

**T**raditionally, the book business was always a gamble and environmental waste. The bookstore wanted to alleviate this by demanding unlimited returns on most merchandise, mainly on books and the publisher wanted the choice shelves or display spots for their favorite, newly published material. This resulted in the dynamics of vying for the best “real estate” in the store and if a book not sold, quick - return to the publisher, who in turn dumped these unsalable books to the secondary merchant (for pennies on the dollar) who, would try unloading them, usually unsuccessfully. Tons of books, traditionally printed end up in the “book graveyard”, also known as paper recycling plant.

This is why most newly published books start with a short run, meaning, the publisher would print 2000 copies or less and see the demand before committing more money to the project. With the numerical explosion of the published works, books in print had grown exponentially resulting in financial losses for many borderline projects. A traditional publisher has several failed projects and to pull through the year and remain in the black he needs one or two best sellers. Even if the best seller would materialize, the financial gain seldom gets transferred to the author, the intellectual rights holder, the main stream publisher keeps most of it to offset his risky business model. There is a new and better way of doing things.

This paper aims to show you how. Our goal is to eliminate your risk, enhance your exposure at a minimal cost and offer you the chance to be discovered using a proven self- publishing process that first uses elec-

tronic books and if demand warrants it, on-demand publishing. There is a distinct possibility that electronic books will accelerate encroaching into the market space of paperbacks while hardcover books will stage a modest comeback. Amazon had announced that, due to the success of the Kindle, paperback sales suffered but there was a slight increase of hardcover book sales. I guess durability and product longevity is also coming back.

It must be said; that in order to achieve success and financial independence, good, polished writing and unique and timely subject material is a must. It is my suggestion that after “finishing” a book, you put it aside and let it mature for a few weeks, after which you should read it again for smoothing out spots and areas of needed polishing. It is extremely important to fight the need for urgency the desire for completion.

If your goal is to write and get readers, please read on. The electronic book market with the advent of the Amazon Kindle and the Apple iPad is revolutionized the business of book selling. New authors can write and publish their works electronically and if it is any good, judged by the marketplace, they can either self-publish it as a printed book or try to sell it to a mainstream publisher. As most publishers are on shaky fiscal ground, “being published” usually is more of an ego gratification than a financial success. The advances are just not what they used to be. Most authors take anything at the first time, in hopes that “being published” will increase their chances with their second book.

## VIRAL MARKETING

**L**ets talk about the formats of e-book. The original electronic book was made for the computer and usually it was in executable format for the personal computer market. The usability of this computer application varied from vendor to vendor. Many people started private label programs where they wrote a sales pitch in a form of a short e-book and let others buy and use their content. The application allowed the author and web page or e-mail address to be custom changed. This was an attempt to make fast money on the Internet. With the proliferation of computer viruses people have stopped opening these viral e-book in fear that they will literally catch a computer virus.

The first serious attempt to use electronic books for serious literary pursuit came with Adobe's Portable Document Format or PDF. Since PDF is the format digital printers use this is also the most widely used format in the Internet today. PDF is excellent for designing nice colored documents with charts and images where the layout is important.

On the negative side, PDF is a rigid, inflexible format, according to some it is pretty bad for reading novels. The reader can not easily change the font size or style to match their preferences.

## EPUB

**E**PUB is an open industry ebook format. This is the format that Apple, Barnes&Noble, Sony, Kobo, Diesel e-book, and others use. If your book is available in EPUB, it can be read on the most popular e-book readers and e-book reading software applications (Like Stanza on the iPhone or Aldiko on Android devices), and

will gain the widest readership outside of Amazon. Barnes&Noble also started to sell the Nook, the electronic reading device that is supposed to compete with the Amazon's Kindle.

## MOBIPOCKET (KINDLE)

**M**obipocket also known as MOBI, facilitates your books to be read on the Amazon Kindle, since Amazon is far the biggest online book seller, and ebooks are for online market; this format is extremely important. Mobipocket is also supported on many handheld devices and e-reading applications, there is even a free PC application that lets you buy books on the Kindle to be read it on your laptop.

These two major formats (and there are more) locked in a deadly conflict, vying for supremacy of the electronic publishing market; this maybe reminding some of you the “wars” of eight track tape versus the cassette or the battle of DVD-RAM versus the DVD+RW. Do not be overly concerned with this. As a writer or content provider, you just make sure your book is well crafted and available for both the Kindle and the Nook.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MICROSOFT WORD (MS WORD)

**I**f you are using Open Office or other word processing software such as Adobe's InDesign you would need to save the manuscript in doc format and reopen it with MS Word. If, for some reason you do not have one I strongly recommend, as an author, invest in a copy. Both e-book distribution venues accept MS Word manuscript and original e-book

format either MOBI or EPUB respectively.

In addition Amazon accepts;

Zipped HTML (.zip) Word (.doc)

Adobe PDF (.pdf) ePub (.epub) Plain Text (.txt)

MobiPocket (.mobi and .prc)

Barnes&Noble accepts

ePub (.epub)

Microsoft Word (.doc and .docx) HTML

Rich Text Format (RTF) Plain Text (.txt)

Despite all these choices, the best way to ensure your book will look good electronically is to use MS Word or in Open Office.

## FORMATTING FOR THE KINDLE

The easiest way of preparing Kindle books—and one of the most highly recommended by Amazon—is to start with a MS Word (Open Office) document, convert it to HTML, then have Amazon convert it to Kindle format. If you are writing a text book only which is ideally suited for ebook readers, Word's HTML is almost well suited to Kindle conversion with little or no change.

While you will notice that Word's export feature generates a lot of excess code, usually the excess is ignored by the Kindle converter. The question often comes up whether you need to facilitate DRM (Digital Rights Management) available on both platform.

What is DRM?

Digital Rights Management encrypts your e-book so it cannot be decompiled or read on another device. In other words, it protects it like a

lock. Nook and B&N applications can read it, so if a customer purchased a DRM e-book and they're logged into their device or application on their computer, they can read the (their) e-book.

There is a lot of information available online about Kindle formatting but much of it is either outdated or plain wrong. The best sources on the kindle formatting are Aaron Shepard's article

<http://www.newselfpublishing.com/WordKindle.html>

Mark Coker had started a electronic publishing service called "smashwords" - his business converts your electronic book to all the main formats and will distribute it, IF, it satisfies his quality requirements. Unfortunately, his books are not picked up by Amazon but, for formatting guidelines it would not hurt to read his guide and see if your book actually qualifies his premium catalog. <http://www.smashwords.com/>

I'm hoping that this little essay is helpful to authors and self-published professionals.

Andras Nagy