Making & Marketing E-Books

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson
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US $12.00
Additional copies may be obtained at
http://www.wilsonweb.com/ebooks/make_ebooks.htm

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Introduction

One publishing phenomenon of the Internet revolution is the electronic book, the e-book. Bypassing commercial publishers and vanity publishers, e-books can make knowledge accessible quickly and inexpensively. As online businesses learn to offer information to their customers -- both for free and for pay -- they can provide an important service.

This brief e-book doesn't tell you how to write a book -- there are many resources to help you there. But it tells you how to take your words and put them into an e-book format. Then how to market and distribute -- even sell -- your e-book online.

This book has been adapted from a series of articles that appeared in early 2003 in *Web Marketing Today* and *Web Marketing Today Premium* -- revised and updated for the beginning of 2004. I hope this e-book will inspire you to take the knowledge you possess and make it available through e-books.

God bless you,
Dr. Ralph F. Wilson
Editor, *Web Marketing Today*

About Dr. Wilson

Dr. Ralph F. Wilson is widely recognized as one of the top international authorities in the area of Internet marketing. *Business Week* called his popular WilsonWeb.com website: "bar none the best e-commerce resource out there." *Business 2.0* profiled him as one of the savvy dot-com survivors. The *New York Times* named Dr. Wilson "among the best-known publishers and consultants who preach the responsible use of e-mail for marketing."

He is the founding editor of *Web Marketing Today® Free Weekly*, the grandfather of the Internet marketing e-zines, published continuously since 1995. His *Web Marketing Today Premier Edition* is considered one of the top sources in the industry for in-depth content.

He is a winner of the Tenagra Award for Internet Marketing Excellence and the author of hundreds of articles and numerous books, including *Planning Your Internet Marketing Strategy* (John Wiley & Sons, 2002), *The E-Mail Marketing Handbook* (2003), and *The Shopping Cart Report* (2004, Revised Edition).

He holds three earned academic degrees and lives with his wife in Loomis, CA.

Chapter 1. 7 Ways You Can Use E-Books to Build Your Business

E-books can be dynamite marketing tools as well as unique digitally delivered products that you can sell to earn money. But the success of your e-book depends on how well you're able to market it. First, let's consider the e-book phenomenon.

What's So Great about E-Books?

There's a lot to be said for e-books:

1. **Flexibility**. Available for multiple platforms so you can carry a library of e-books with you on a laptop or PDA.

2. **Functionality**. Depending upon the platform and particular document, you can search, annotate, resize, highlight text, increase font size, create bookmarks, use navigational links, and print. Microsoft Reader now offers a text-to-speech add-on. Interactive games and activities, plus sound and video, are options.

3. **Convenience**. You can search online for exactly what you want, purchase, download, and be reading in a few minutes.

4. **Pricing**. Mass-market e-books are usually priced lower than the printed version, especially when counting shipping costs.

5. **Space**. You save shelf space with many e-books on a computer and whole encyclopedia sets on one or two CDs. Libraries conserve space and consume less time and money

in the weeding, repair, and replacement of inventory.

6. **Availability**. Low-demand books needn't go out of print since warehouse storage is no longer a requirement. Out-of-print volumes can be converted to e-books quickly and cost-efficiently.

7. **Self-publishing**. It's cost-effective for writers to publish their own e-books, increasing the quantity and variety of technical and narrow-niche information available.

8. **Conservation**. E-books save trees and avoid pollution caused by inks and dyes. You can probably argue somehow that they help save the whales, too -- always a biggie. :-)

Why People Still Prefer Print Books

But to tell the truth I'd rather have a print book if I had the choice -- to fill my already stuffed-to-overflowing bookshelves and to gather dust. Many people don't prefer e-books because:

1. E-books don't stack neatly on the toilet tank and are awkward to read lying down.

2. E-books are harder to read at 72 dpi screen resolution. Many people must print them out for reading ease, nullifying many of an e-book's inherent advantages.

I don't expect e-books to replace print books in our lifetime. But in spite of their disadvantages, e-books are in demand. In 2000, Andersen Consulting predicted 10% of all book sales by 2005 would be in e-book format. Though that number may be high, e-books are growing in popularity and many e-marketers attest to the demand.

Ways to Use E-Books in Your Business

Let's consider how you can utilize your own e-book. Let me count the ways:

1. **Bolster your reputation as an expert**. If you can say with Rodney Dangerfield, "I don't get no respect!" then why don't you write an e-book? A poorly executed e-book will cause you to lose respect, but an excellent e-book will develop your reputation as an expert among both colleagues and customers. While it usually still takes a "real" print book by a known publisher to be considered a "real" author (Life isn't fair!), e-book authors do gain recognition, especially in niche markets.

2. **Earn income**. You hear stories of fabulous sums earned by e-books about how to market or how to make money. And they're probably true. Your experience, however, is likely to be much more modest. Yes, you can earn decent money from selling e-books. I do (www.wilsonweb.com/ebooks/). E-books take time and effort to write -- and time is money. But once they've been written and published in an electronic format, the cost to distribute is negligible. Of course, there's marketing overhead in both cost and time, so it's not pure profit -- no matter what anyone says. But e-books do make outstanding products with a substantial profit margin. Later in this article we'll be discussing how to market an e-book.

3. **Provide a valuable bonus.** E-books make great free gifts to offer when you want people to take a particular action. For example, I give away three free e-books when people confirm their subscription to my e-zine *Web Marketing Today Free Weekly* (http://www.wilsonweb.com/wmt/). When I began to do this, the subscription rate went up dramatically. Surveys get a huge boost when you offer a valuable bonus for those who

complete it -- though it is possible to skew the results if your reward selects for a certain kind of respondent. When selling other products, valuable e-books provide an ideal free bonus since they can be delivered electronically at no cost. I'm currently offering huge e-book bonuses to those who subscribe to my *Web Marketing Today Premium Edition* newsletter (free e-book value $146, www.wilsonweb.com/wct/) and my Internet Marketing Best Practices Briefing ($188 in free, outstanding e-books, www.wilsonweb.com/seminar/).

4. **Viral marketing tool**. E-books given away free can serve as effective viral marketing tools designed to earn revenue through affiliate links within the book, speaking engagements, or sales of other products on your site. Yanik Silver wrote Autoresponder Magic (2000, Surefire Marketing, $17, http://autorespondermagic.com/). Though Silver sells resale rights, you can also give away his e-book free of charge to customers who will give it to others who will give it to others. This creates a viral marketing expansion for the author, who makes his money by means of various affiliate programs sprinkled liberally throughout the book.

5. **Repackage and highlight information**. I've learned that site visitors can be impatient. They might disdain reading the back issues of your newsletter, but they'll sit up and take notice when you repackage the very same content as an e-book or report which you can sell, give away, or both.

6. **White paper sales pitch for a high-ticket item**. Many Fortune 500-priced products and services are sold through classy-looking "white papers." Most companies also get your name and e-mail address when you register to download their classy sales pitches.

7. **Educate your customers**. Your e-book can be a great tool to educate your customers about a particular subject. I wrote my short e-book ["How to Develop a Landing Page that Closes the Sale"](www.wilsonweb.com/ebooks/landing.htm) (www.wilsonweb.com/ebooks/landing.htm) because I observed that some of my advertisers weren't getting the full benefit of ads in my newsletters because the landing pages on some of their sites were so awful. I give my advertisers a free copy to help them succeed since I know they'll advertise with me again if they can close sales effectively.

Chapter 2. How to Decide Which Format Is Best for Your E-Book

E-book authors have lots of choices to make when it comes to putting their content into a package that is ready to sell. There is much to say on these subjects, but I've tried to condense the learning curve a bit to make this easier to digest and understand.

E-Book Formats and Their Usefulness

The first question, strangely enough, is not What e-book format you should use? But, Who is your market? E-books have moved from a fringe publishing approach to the big time. Several major online bookseller now offers e-books, but the formats these books come in are telling.

Acrobat eBook Reader and Microsoft Reader are both trying to reach the mainstream book reading public. See a comparison between the two at Amazon USA. http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/browse/-/560748/ Amazon calls PDF files that aren't in Adobe eBook format "e-Documents" (http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/browse/-/577910/) rather than e-books. Rather than popular-level books, they tend to be business reports (often rather expensive) and niche topics under the following headings: business, computers & Internet, investment reports, market research, science & technology, and travel.

Barnes & Noble (www.bn.com) no longer sells or provides support for e-books. HarperCollins PerfectBound (http://www.harpercollins/hc/perfectbound/) supports MS Reader, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Palm Reader and Gemstar (a now defunct PDA-style hardware e-book reader). Bookbooters

(www.bookbooters.com) still supports all readers but e-books are most abundant in PDF, Adobe eBook, MS Reader, and Palm Reader. Mobipocket is still available at select e-bookstores though it is no longer widely used. See an excellent hardware/e-book software comparison table at

http://www.bookbooters.com/aboutebooks.asp.

I took a look at Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader (http://www.adobe.com/products/ebookreader/) and was impressed. It is designed to allow purchases of commercial e-books and easy reading with optimized typeface clarity. Adobe recommends a 6"x9" page size for Adobe eBooks, though the reader is able to display standard PDF documents designed for 8-1/2" x 11" pages.

PDAs or mobile devices use several formats. Palm Reader is popular. Pocket PC uses Microsoft Reader. PDF format documents can be read on PDAs on Symbian OS, Palm OS, and Pocket PC.

If you're writing for the mass market, you'll be looking at Acrobat eBook Reader and Microsoft Reader and perhaps Palm Reader. But if you're writing business reports and niche e-books, then your choice is PDF and perhaps compiled HTML.

Pros and Cons of HTML Compiled as .exe File

One approach that has been widely used by e-marketers is to prepare materials in HTML format, and then use a compiler that compresses all the files into a self-extracting .exe file that requires a password to open.

The advantages are that it is easily distributed, easy to make, and compilers are cheap or free. Activ Ebook Compiler for example, one of the best, sells for $29.95 (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/activ.htm).

The disadvantages of the compiled HTML approach, however, are several. HTML can't be controlled as well as you'd like, since it is very dependent upon the user's web browser and the way the user has configured it. The user may not have the fonts you've used. Style sheets must be written for a lowest possible denominator web browser, and some HTML features may not show up correctly on older browsers.

Moreover, .exe files are widely suspected of carrying viruses. As a result, many people -- myself included -- are hesitant to open an .exe file on their computers unless they are very sure of the source. Finally, .exe files can only be opened by Windows users, leaving out Mac, Linux, PDAs, etc.

Pros and Cons of PDF

So far as my market is concerned, the best distribution format for e-books seems to be Adobe Portable Document Format or PDF in 8-1/2"x11" page format so it can be easily printed out if desired. PDF truly is platform independent. Adobe distributes free Acrobat Reader software for Windows, Mac, Palm OS, Pocket PC, various flavors of Unix, and OS/2 (www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html). PDF can be designed using precise desktop publishing tools to look -- and be seen by the user -- in exactly the way you want it. Fonts may be imbedded so they can be seen whether the user has them installed on his computer or not. And PDF e-books can be protected against alteration as well as password protected against opening by unauthorized individuals.

On the downside, not all recipients have installed the Acrobat Reader plug-in and newbies especially can become frustrated in the process. Newbies sometimes don't understand how to save the e-book correctly. Longer pages sometimes require vertical scrolling to see everything on the page. Overall,

however, the positives outweigh the negatives at this point in time.

Adobe Acrobat vs. PDF Knock-offs

If you decide to format your e-book in PDF, you'll need a program to convert your text and graphics into PDF.

[Adobe Acrobat 6.0](www.adobe.com/acrofamily/) (www.adobe.com/acrofamily/) is the most recent Acrobat program. Acrobat comes with Acrobat Distiller that takes your MS Word or other text and converts it, with any hyperlinks and graphics, into a top-notch PDF document.

[FinePrint Software pdfFactory](www.fineprint.com/products/pdffactory) (www.fineprint.com/products/pdffactory) is a less expensive but very fine substitute for producing PDF e-books. It comes in Standard ($49.95) and Pro ($99.95) Editions, but you'll probably need the Pro version if you want clickable URLs and bookmarks in your e-book -- and you'll need those for the table of contents. pdfFactory lacks some of the bells and whistles of Acrobat, but may be entirely adequate for your task.

See Preston Gralla, "No need for Acrobat-ics: 3 new ways to create PDF files," *ZDNet AnchorDesk*, 10/19/01 for similar tools. www.zdnet.com/anchordesk/stories/story/0,10738,2818436,00.html

Password Protections -- Pros and Cons

I question whether it's wise to password-protect e-books at all. Have you ever experienced the frustration of buying an e-book, taking a look, and then coming back to read it later in detail, only to find that you've misplaced the password?

E-book publishers seem paranoid that someone will steal their intellectual property and e-mail it to a friend. And they will -- occasionally. This is my take on the matter. Few people who

spend $25 or more on an e-book are likely to e-mail a copy to friends. And most of the people who collect such illicit freebies never read them -- nor would they have likely bought the e-book if they couldn't get a free copy. I argue that you lose very few potential sales by leaving password protection off your e-book. It's not an issue to lose sleep over -- this from a writer who has had hundreds of articles pirated onto websites by ignorant or unscrupulous webmasters. People who steal from others are seldom successful in business and are unlikely customers.
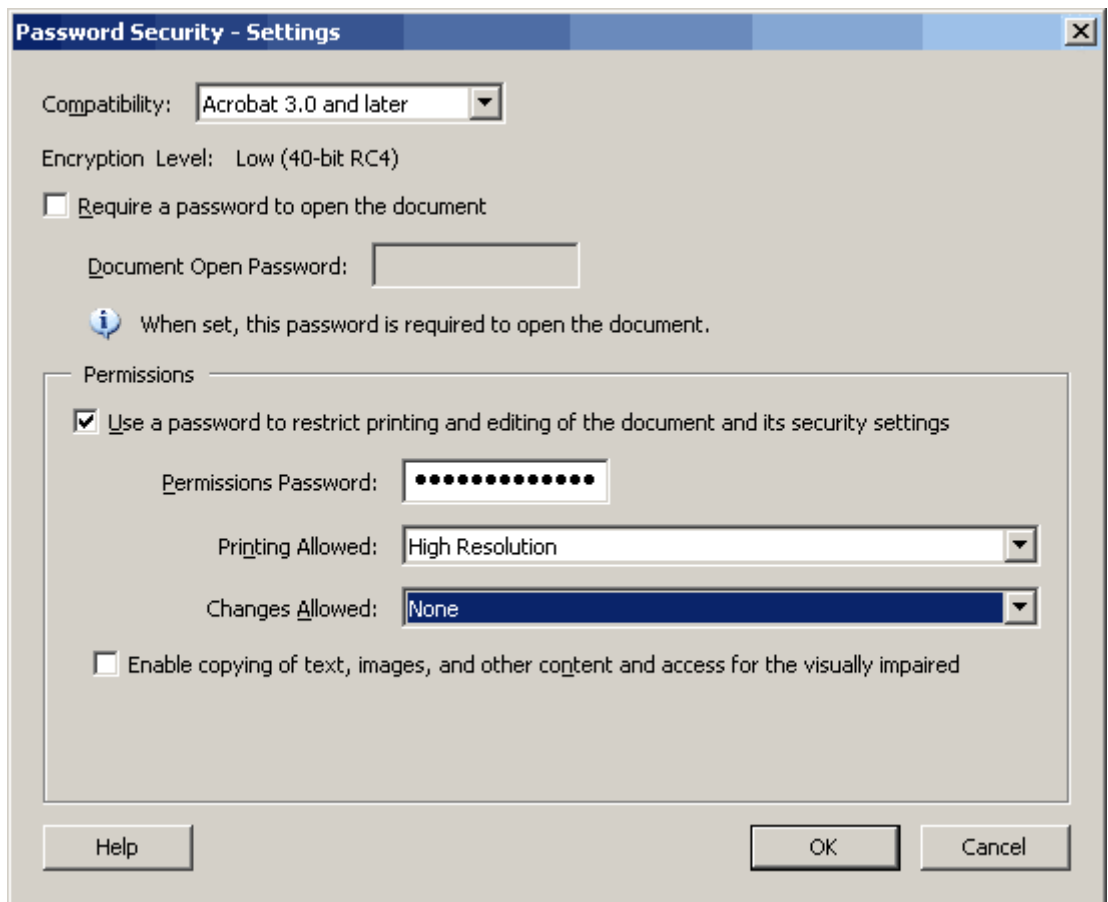
Having said this, let me explain the copy protection available using PDF Acrobat. In version 6.0, once you have prepared your e-book in PDF format, choose Document > Security >

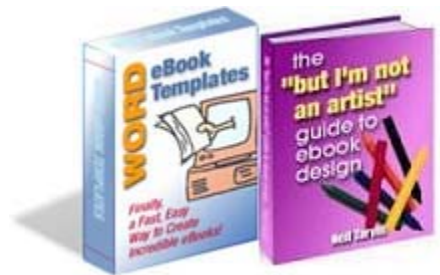Restrict Opening and Editing. There you can select the level of security required to read the document.

I recommend setting security so that e-book readers can't change the content of your document, but recommend allowing printing and annotating.

Adobe's password scheme isn't foolproof. There's a free program circulating that will allow someone to subvert the system. But for most users it will allow you some protection against your work being changed.

E-Book Templates for a Professional Look-and-Feel

If your customer opens your e-book and is impressed -- Wow! -- with the way it looks, you're not likely to get many "copies" returned. A professional look is vital if you expect to be taken seriously.

However, many authors just don't know how to prepare a book for printing or e-book formatting. This is a desktop publishing skill. You'll find some help in Neil Tarvin's *Word E-Book Templates* and *The "But I'm Not an Artist" Guide to E-book Design* (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/tarvin1.htm). He designs e-books professionally and has developed Word templates that simplify the process of producing a professional-looking e-book -- in living color. Our next chapter, "Ken Evoy and Neil Tarvin on E-Book PDF Page Formatting," includes excellent tips on formatting an e-book page for readability and presentation.

E-Book Covers

The finishing touch for your e-book is a cover. Silly, isn't it, since bits and bytes don't need covers. But they help your potential customers think of your work in terms of a virtual book, and that's important to help sales.

Amazon uses two-dimensional book covers supplied by the book publisher to sell print books. But many e-books these days are pictured with three-dimensional books, slightly at an angle to the reader, and complete with a shadow caused by the virtual density. There are many very fine e-book cover artists. I'll mention one that comes highly recommended by someone I trust:

KillerCovers Example

KillerCovers (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/killercovers.htm), Vaughn Davidson. Excellent covers from artist experienced with marketing and advertising. $117. Takes credit cards.
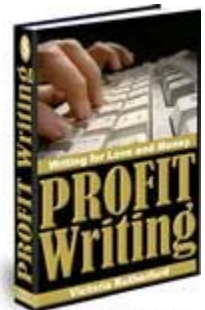
Chapter 3. Ken Evoy and Neil Tarvin on E-Book PDF Page Formatting

Just what font size and page format is best for an e-book? I posed this question to two e-book experts:

I can see why Adobe eBook Reader suggests pages 6 x 9 inches, though I acknowledge Neil's criticism of this, since it wastes so much blank paper when printed out.

However, there seems to be a built-in conflict for reading 8-1/2 x 11" format e-books on computer screens that have a horizontal orientation. Problem -- it's difficult to read the type unless you have a fair magnification. But in this case you have to vertically scroll to the bottom of the page to read the whole page.

In your expert opinion, what type size is adequately large so people can read the entire page without scrolling? Or is that a concern for you?

**Ken Evoy, author of Make Your Site Sell!
and developer of Site Build It!**
(http://sales.sitesell.com) **writes:**

I think the answer is determined by the age-old question, "What's your customer going to do with it?"

A 6 x 9 format never entered my mind "way back when" when I first thought about format for Make Your Site Sell! I agree with

Neil -- too many people like to print and that's a lot of wasted margin! On the other hand, if it's meant to be used purely online, heavily dependent on PDF functionality for online purposes, 6 x 9 could be fine.

However, our books are used as online references, with tons of interlinking, both within volumes and out to the Net. AND we also recommend printing 2-up on both sides (using a utility like [FinePrint](http://www.fineprint.com) http://www.fineprint.com), since it's also a good idea to just flat-out read the book -- and monitors are just not good to read entire books upon.

So we went 8.5" x 11", 12 pt, non-serif, lots of white space and graphics since it's so painful to read onscreen. Here's how we elect to SHOW our PDF books...

File > DocInfo > Open

Initial View

- Page Only, Open to Page 1
- Magnification 100%
- Page Layout Single Page

Window Options

- = Resize Window to Initial Page
- = Center Window on Screen (and *not* the Open in Full Screen Mode)

User Interface Options

- None
- Do not hide any menus, task or scroll bars

The result is a nice clean, centered presentation.

As you can see, vertical scrolling is not a concern -- users don't mind vertical scrolling (don't make them scroll horizontally, though!). I suppose you might get tired of it if you're going to read 100 pages online, but really -- do your eyes, neck, and back a favor and print that out and read it offline! :-)

We've sold over 100,000 copies and hundreds of thousands of [free copies of our PDF Masters Courses](http://sales.sitesell.com/freetrial/) (http://sales.sitesell.com/freetrial/), etc. People love the clean, easy read, and actually ask for our "formula" (basically, what I note above) for how we present such a clean, clear format. So we're pretty comfortable, after 5 years, with this approach.
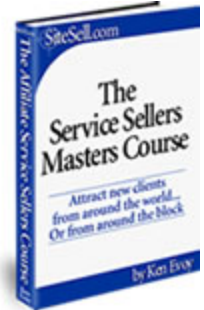
All the best,
Ken

Neil G. Tarvin, professional e-book designer and author of _Word E-Book Templates_ and _The "But I'm Not an Artist" Guide to E-book Design_ (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/tarvin1.htm).
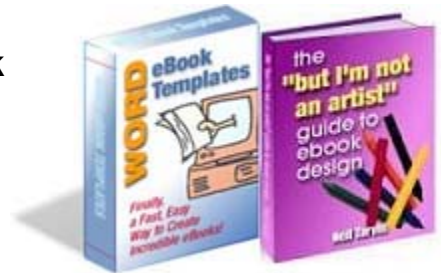
I agree virtually 100% with Ken on this one. There are just a couple of points I do a bit differently.

Default line spacing, when imported from Word, is too tight. Line spacing needs to be at least 2 to 3 points larger than the point size of the type. In general, I use 12- or 13-point type, but type size itself should be gauged to the target reader. For example, though we are mostly concerned with net-related

subjects, there are a whole lot of e-books being done for other markets with different requirements. In general, an e-book targeted for those over 50 or under 12 should be in a slightly larger type size, and it's best to avoid serif typefaces. Line spacing should also be adjusted, and lines should not be fully justified, but set ragged right (flush left) to make it easier to follow the copy.

For screen reading, I almost exclusively use a page size of 8.5 x 11. My settings are virtually the same as Ken uses, with the exception that I usually set the page to "single page - continuous" - mainly because I'm one of those readers who tends to keep scrolling, and those page jumps always make me miss something, or I have to scroll back.

For very short e-books, I often use a 7 (or 7.5) x 9 format - this is because I will frequently use a presentation mode (very much like PowerPoint, but it's PDF) for short e-books to make them more dynamic and give them more impact. In this mode, 6 is just too narrow and 7 - 7.5 gives a better balance on the screen.

Cutting to the chase, it simply means that you have to take a number of factors into consideration - screen vs. print, the target market, interactivity between various volumes, etc.

Good design should be almost invisible to the reader - they'll just know it "fits." (And, believe me - they certainly know when it *doesn't!" <smile>)

Neil

Chapter 4. How to Price Your E-Book

Selling information fits the Internet well, since up-to-date information can be transmitted electronically and quickly. Moreover, people are willing to pay for information, especially hard-to-obtain data or business reports that can be crucial to guide a business towards profitability. Advantages of your own e-book are:

- Full and exclusive control over the product.
- Writing and formatting the e-book are the only product costs.
- No printing, manufacturing, or shipping costs are incurred.
- You can command a good price if information is of a highly technical or exclusive nature.

But there are drawbacks as well. Since self-published e-books are easy to produce, it is more difficult to remain the exclusive information source about a topic. Some topics, such as Internet marketing, how to make money, etc. are flooded with literally thousands e-books all competing for the same group of readers.

How should you price your e-book? Here are the main factors:

Value Analysis

What is the value to the reader? How-to information on a hobby, for example, won't command the kind of price that critical business information will, since it isn't perceived by the customer as crucial. Businesses don't judge value so much on actual price, as on what the information will do to help the business. Thus critical business marketing data or technical how-to information that help a business compete and move forward may be priced at $150 to $1500 or higher. This will be a

similar price to printed reports for the same kind of materials, if they are available.

Market Analysis

Your pricing will be related to prices of similar materials sold to the same market. While major corporations may pay $600 for a key business report, small businesses will balk. If you're writing for Fortune 500 companies you'll be pricing much differently than if you are writing for SOHO (Small Office, Home Office) entrepreneurs. If most e-books in your field are selling for $15 and you price yours at $45, you'd better have something more to offer. The more exclusive or hard-to-obtain the information, however, the higher the price. Customers also judge value on the basis of price. If material is high priced, it is judged to be more valuable than if it is bargain priced -- even though the contents of the high priced Internet marketing course may be inferior to the low-priced product. For example, Ken Evoy's Make Your Site Sell! 2002 (http://sales.sitesell.com/myss) sells at USD $29.95 -- much lower than materials by high-hype marketers. Yet the content is excellent, voluminous, and as good or better than packages costing 10 times as much.

Fame and Reputation

eBookMall suggests pricing mainstream fiction and non-fiction at $2.99 to $9.99, but well-known authors can command a much higher price, for example $14.95 for Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code* (Doubleday, 03/03) that has a hardback price of $24.95. However, the price is likely to drop dramatically when the mass-market paperback appears at $6 to $9. Stephen King's *From a Buick 8* (Scribner, 9/02), prices the hardback at $28, the mass-market paperback at $7.99, and e-books at $6.99 before discounts. In business topics, too, a well-known

author can command higher prices than unknowns for similar kinds of materials.

Cost Analysis

For print books, for example, the traditional price formula to break even is eight times costs divided by the number of books in the first print run. E-books have costs of production, editing, design, and promotion, but no printing and distribution costs, so the minimum price can be much less than for print books. Cost analysis is seldom an important factor in pricing e-books, since their value is more closely related to the sale price of similar material in print books than to their actual costs.

These are the main pricing factors that I have in mind for my own e-books (www.wilsonweb.com/ebooks/):

Budget of my readers

My e-books range from $12 to $34.95. Some of the e-commerce information I sell is just not obtainable elsewhere at *any* price. I've priced it low because I really want to make it accessible to the people I write for -- small to medium business owners, marketing staff, and SOHO entrepreneurs who can't really afford the $197, $297, $397, $497 price tags of my competitors. I'm writing web marketing and e-commerce materials to help the small guys grow great online businesses, not to make a killing. I care about my readers and their budgets.

Pricing of my paid newsletter

Instead of pricing e-books relative to my competition, I price them relative to my premium e-commerce e-zine, *Web Marketing Today Premium* (www.wilsonweb.com/wct/), which sells for $49.95 annually. I want people to see a price of $17.95 or $29.95 or $34.95 -- then realize that for just a bit more they can

get a full year of *Web Marketing Today Premium Edition* plus five or six free e-books valued together at $145. I over-deliver value because I know that if I can up-sell from a sales total of $34.95 to $49.95 I haven't lost any real sales, but have gained $15 while my customer will be delighted with the value received. It's a win-win formula using an up-sell pricing strategy.

So what should you charge for your e-book? The answer is a clear and precise: "It depends." :-)

[For more on competitive analysis and pricing theory, see my print book *Planning Your Internet Marketing Strategy* (Wiley, 2002, ISBN 0471441090), chapters 9, 10, 11 and 20. http://wilsonweb.com/go/to.cgi?l=pyims]
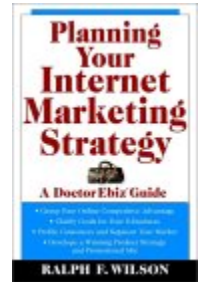
Chapter 5. E-Commerce Programs to Sell E-Books and other Digital Downloads

In the last couple of years, many well-known shopping carts were upgraded to include the ability to sell digital products. Some host the digital products on their site, others allow download from a webpage on the merchant's site. The better systems have URLs that are disabled after a certain number of days or download attempts, preventing people from sharing download URLs with their friends. Some systems set up password-protected directories on the merchant's site that can be accessed with a username and password generated by the shopping cart.

There is no way to make a comprehensive list of shopping cart programs that allow digital download -- there are too many and quality varies. But here are some that advertise this capability on their websites and have some popularity with merchants. (Note: Information like this becomes obsolete rapidly, so check the vendor's website for up-to-date information and prices.)

1ShoppingCart (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/cart.htm). Hosted ASP system (Application Service Provider—a hosted program that typically charges a monthly fee). Pro version handles digital downloads, autoresponders, newsletters, ad tracking, affiliate program, etc. Also sold under labels such as 1AutomationWiz, Professional Cart Solutions, etc. Uses many payment gateways such as Authorize.net, LinkPoint, Paymentech, Planet Payment, PayPal (without IPN), World Pay, and VeriSign PayFlow Pro. $69/mo. or $599/yr.

Actinic (www.actinic.us). Ver. 6.0 includes digital download plus tangible products. Close tie-in with database on PC and QuickBooks.

Americart (www.cartserver.com/americart). Hosted ASP cart. See their electronic delivery demo example for digital downloads. Very flexible to sell all sorts of products. Supports payment gateways LinkPoint, Authorize.net, VeriSign PayFlow Pro, PayPal (without IPN). $249/year.

Cart32 (www.cart32.com). Can be configured to give download URL on either thank you page or confirmation e-mail. Can sell many kinds of products. Installs on Windows servers. Interfaces with QuickBooks. Payment gateways supported include Authorize.net, LinkPoint, Quick Commerce, VeriSign Payflow Pro, PayPal (without IPN), and others. $299.95

ClickBank (www.clickbank.com). See detailed information in the appendix.

Dansie (www.dansie.net). Perl cart for Unix or Windows. Allows you to sell passwords to password-protected directories. Payment gateways include 2Checkout, Authorize.net, LinkPoint, NetBanx, PayPal, VeriSign PayFlow Link, World Pay, etc. $150, $50 optional installation.

DigiBuy (www.digibuy.com). Owned by DigitalRiver. Hosted ASP allows sale of digital softgoods without a merchant account. $29.99 set-up fee plus 13.9% of each sale ($3 minimum). No monthly charge.

Kagi (www2.kagi.com). Hosted ASP for sales of software and digital goods. No set-up fees or merchant account required. Revenue share varies with price of product. Under $25 fee is 5% of transaction total plus $1.25. $25 to $100, 10%. Over $100 percentage drops to 7.5% as low as 5.8%.

LeGarde StoreFront 6.0 (www.storefront.net). AE and XE products offer download delivery. Lots of flexibility to sell all kinds of products. Supports payment gateways WorldPay, LinkPoint, Authorize.net, PayPal, etc. $979 - $1379.

Miva Merchant (www.miva.com). Installed on your server with flexibility to sell many kinds of products. Built-in affiliate program, support for many payment gateways. Digital downloads through third party plug-ins.

PDG Shopping Cart (www.pdgsoft.com). Installs on Unix servers. Cart system supports softgood downloads, affiliate program, flexible system to sell many products. Payment gateways include Authorize.net, LinkPoint, WorldPay, VeriSign PayFlow Pro. $399.

ShopSite Pro (www.shopsite.com). Installs on Unix and Windows servers. Pro version has strong support for digital downloads, plus flexibility to sell many products. Payment gateways include Authorize.net, VeriSign PayFlow Pro, PayPal, and others. $1,295.

Yahoo Merchant Solutions
(http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/bzinfo/prod/com/). Allows delivery of softgoods. URL in e-mail confirmation message allows immediate download. Flexibility to sell many kinds of products. Requires merchant account, except does allow payment by Yahoo! PayDirect. Built-in payment gateway and basic affiliate program.

PayPal (www.paypal.com). See detailed information in the next chapter.

Many other shopping carts allow you to sell digital products as well. But the sales vehicle isn't the real key -- it's marketing your e-book so it is seen and desired by your target audience.

Chapter 6. How to Develop a Marketing Plan to Sell Your E-Book

This isn't the place to provide full instructions on how to market an e-book, but rather the place to suggest directions you should explore. Details about each of these strategies can be found in articles in or linked to by my website.

E-book marketplaces

Selling e-books is not easy so you ought to explore multiple approaches to getting traffic. Consider placing your e-books at various marketplaces where potential buyers might visit and search. I'll cover this in chapter 7. I survey some of the leading marketplaces to give you ideas of where you might place your e-books to increase your net income. This is not a comprehensive list, but suggestive.

Search engine positioning

Of course, you'll want to construct your webpages with search engines in mind. But you'll also want to go after keywords and keyphrases that will put you at the top of each of the major search engines in your region of the world.

Search engine positioning has two parts -- tweaking webpages and getting incoming links. The first part of the equation is to build webpages that are focused on a particular keyword or keyphrase and easy for the search engine spiders to index. In your e-book website you'll probably want to have a separate webpage for each keyword or keyphrase that you're trying to

target. You can get excellent technical information from Mike Grenham's Search Engine Marketing, Second Edition (updated through November 2002, www.wilsonweb.com/afd/se_report.htm). The software tool I use is WebPosition Gold 2.0 (http://www.wilsonweb.com/afd/webposition.htm). Its Page Critic feature gives you constantly updated information on how to tune your webpages to match what seem to be the search engines' standards. There's nothing I know of that is as good. You can get a free trial, if you like (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/webposition.htm). Be aware, however, that search engine positioning done right is time-consuming. You may want to outsource this to a firm that does this day in and day out.

The second part of the equation is to get lots of people to link to your website, especially large directories and industry information hubs, since these kinds of links count a lot with Google in increasing your page rank. Avoid "link farms" that are collections of unrelated links. If you appear in one of these it could even hurt your ranking on Google. Rather seek to have your link appear with other links to sites in your field or industry. Here are several linking strategies you can explore:

1. **Ask for reciprocal links** from sites complementary to your own, especially the sites with higher page ranking with Google. Offer to give them a link also.
2. **Get listings in major directories** such as Yahoo! Directory and The Open Directory Project.
3. **Write an article and share it**, allowing others to use it on their site or in their newsletters so long as it contains a link to your site, preferably hyperlinking the keywords that you're trying to feature. For example, I'd rather have a link to Web Marketing and E-Commerce Information rather than to Wilson Internet Services, since the words hyperlinked are a clue to the search engines about what

is important on my site and will cause them to rank my higher for these keywords.

4. **Offer an Award Logo** to complementary sites, with a link back to your site.
5. **Set up an affiliate program** -- just make sure that the affiliate links point to your site rather than to a third-party ASP site, if link popularity is one of your main goals.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising

Overture (http://www.content.overture.com/d/) and Google AdWords (https://adwords.google.com/select/main) drive a lot of small business ad traffic these days, on all the major search engines as well as content sites. PPC ads appear as sponsored ads at the top of searches for the keywords you select. You pay 10¢ to several dollars a click-through, depending upon the popularity and competition for the keyword or keyphrase you select. When that keyword is searched on with the major search engines, you can pay to have your ad appear near the top.

Google places its sponsored ads in boxes to the right of the search results. Other search engines will show the top four bidded ads for that keyword as featured or sponsored links. If you can afford one of these top four positions, you can get a large amount of traffic quickly.

The big question, of course, is whether PPC advertising is cost-effective for your e-book. This depends entirely upon the sales price of your e-book and conversion rate at your website: that is, the percentage of site visitors that end up making a purchase. You'll need to work hard on your landing page -- the page that the PPC ad points to on your site. You'll find the important principles laid out in my 24-page e-book Developing a Landing Page that Closes the Sale.
http://www.wilsonweb.com/ebooks/landing.htm

Spend some money with PPC to drive enough traffic so you can make successive improvements in your landing page and then test them. Once your conversion rate seems fairly stable, then you need to calculate the average cost per sale -- a factor of your average PPC ad costs and your conversion rate. You may find that PPC ads make you money if your average cost per sale is 20% to 40% of your sales price. If you're spending more than that, you'll probably have to find another approach -- or raise your price. :-)

A short list of top resources I've found on PPC advertising include PayPerClickAnalyst.com (http://www.payperclickanalyst.com) and Andrew Goodman's excellent e-book Google AdWords: 21 Pay-Per-Click Campaign Secrets Your Competition Doesn't Know, newly revised. http://www.wilsonweb.com/afd/pagezero.htm

E-zine advertising

Try advertising in e-mail newsletters targeted to potential readers. If you know enough to write an e-book, you probably have become aware of the leading e-mail newsletters in your field. These are likely to reach the best prospects to purchase your e-book. Call or e-mail the editor to inquire about placing a small ad. Two factors work in your favor: (1) Editors tend to be unsophisticated when it comes to selling advertising, so prices may be modest. (2) Internet advertising prices have been depressed for the last two years, so it's an advertiser's market. Make an offer and see if the editor will bite. You can see how I sell ads in the Web marketing and e-commerce fields on my website. http://www.wilsonweb.com/ads/

Affiliate programs and CPA Advertising

To supplement other forms of advertising, consider developing an affiliate program through which to sell your e-book. Since you have no printing and distribution costs, you can afford a fairly attractive commission, which is paid only when a sale is made through one of your affiliates' links. I pay a 20% commission (www.wilsonweb.com/affiliate) on my e-books and *Web Marketing Today Premium* newsletter, but e-book authors often offer 30% to 40% commission on sales. Don't look at a large commission as losing money. The chances are very good that you would never have sold that e-book *at all* without the help of your affiliate. View paying affiliate commissions as rewarding your partners for helping you sell. And when they receive your check, they'll be motivated to sell more.

Affiliate programs aren't that expensive to set up these days. Several shopping carts that cater to digital sales include built-in affiliate programs. I'll list several in the next chapter, but here are two very good ones.

I use Ultimate Affiliate Package (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/groundbreak.htm), by Steve Miles, $199 as my affiliate management system. Unless you're a techie, you'll need help installing it to work with your shopping cart program, but that is true of nearly every affiliate system.

MyAffiliateProgram (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/myaffiliateprogram.htm) is a hosted service that charges a monthly fee, but they do an excellent job -- though probably a bit too expensive for a single product unless your e-book is doing well. However, MyAffiliateProgram can also double as a fine ad tracking system.

Perhaps the most common affiliate program -- and most accessible to e-book authors who already have a website -- is ClickBank (www.clickbank.com), which is also an e-commerce platform that requires neither a merchant account nor a payment gateway. ClickBank charges a one-time $49.95 activation fee and then a $1 transaction fee and 7.5% of the sales price, with no monthly fees. They claim 100,000 affiliates -- and I don't doubt it. But you'll need to recruit site visitors to join your affiliate program. ClickBank won't get you many affiliates without your own efforts. That's true, of course, with any affiliate program you use. You'll need some important third-party add-on programs if you decide to be a ClickBank merchant.

Marketing e-books isn't easy -- no matter what anyone claims with "too-good-to-be-true" marketing hype. However, many authors have found e-books to be excellent products with sales that help supplement other income. And many find them valuable as marketing tools, pure and simple, whether or not they ever earn a dime from selling one. Happy marketing!

Chapter 7. Internet Marketplaces Where You Can Sell Your E-Book

Selling e-books is not easy, so you ought to explore multiple approaches to getting traffic. Consider placing your e-books at various marketplaces where potential buyers might visit and search. Some of these require you to be an already recognized author. Some have listing fees. But be careful of what are effectively self-publishing or vanity publishing prices of several hundred to several thousand dollars.

The marketplaces that work for you will vary due to the topics of your e-books. But explore the possibilities with the following.

A Word about ISBN Numbers

The ISBN (International Standard Book Number) system is managed by [agencies in each country or area](www.isbn-international.org/agencies.html) (www.isbn-international.org/agencies.html). The [US National ISBN Agency](#) is run by R.R. Bowker (www.isbn.org/standards/home/isbn/us/secureapp.asp). US publishers pay a $75 charge to obtain an ISBN Publisher Prefix. After that, a block of 10 ISBNs cost $225, 100 for $800, etc. ISBNs aren't essential for self-published e-books. However, if you wish to distribute your e-book through larger online bookstores, an ISBN will be needed since they use an ISBN as a SKU or product number.

Amazon.com

Amazon.com carries both e-books (in Adobe eBook, MS Reader formats) and e-documents (mostly in PDF format). To give you an idea of what is selling, here are top ranking e-documents as of February 4, 2004:

books (and donating the proceeds to charity) under Do You Zoom, Inc. (http://www.zoometry.com/zoom/) after success with an e-book first edition of his *Ideavirus*. I talked to Seth about his experience with selling e-books on Amazon. The bottom line: don't expect to make a living on selling your e-book on Amazon. Yes, it'll help, but it could be substantially improved as a place to sell e-books.

You might look into having your e-books listed at Amazon under the Amazon Advantage program (www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/partners/direct/faq/advantage-faq-books-about.html). An ISBN number is required; self-publishers get 45% of the list price of books sold each month.

The Woes of E-Book Publishing

Take a look at E-Book vs. Print by Linda Pendleton. She forewarns authors of the discipline and effort required to self-promote an e-book. http://www.todancewithangels.com/ebookvsprintpage.html

E-Book Promotion for a Fee

"The Pros and Cons of Amazon.com," We-Publish.com. http://www.we-publish.com/amazon.htm Explains how to get higher ranking within your category at Amazon.com by paying for premium placement, listing the book at zShops, etc. Primarily focused on print books. A vanity press.

CyberRead (http://www.cyberread.com). For a fee will aggregate (resell) authors' and publishers' eBooks into Amazon.com's eBook Bookstore, BN.com's eBook Bookstore, Mobipocket's eBook Bookstore, Powells.com, eLibrion.com, Booksamillion.com, eBookhome.com, etc. Converts e-books into various formats, secures ISBN numbers, etc.

"The E-Book as Print-Edition Ad," by M.J. Rose, *Wired News*, 4/1/01. Discusses incessant promotion of print books, even through ads in e-books.
http://www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,42751,00.html

Your E-Book in Print

This may sound strange, but you may want to publish your e-book in print form also. Why? If your book is popular, you'll have requests for a print version from those who don't like to read books on their computer monitors.

CafePress.com

(www.cafepress.com/cp/info/sell/) allows authors to use their e-commerce functions to sell e-books and print books alike. They carry no inventory. If someone wants a print book, CafePress will produce the book on demand from your originals, plus handle the credit card transaction and shipping anyplace in the world. For this service they charge by the number of pages and the binding you choose. For example, for a "perfect bound" book (paperback), they charge 3¢ a page and $7 for the binding. A 100-page book would then cost you $10 to produce. Saddle stitched binding (center stapled like a magazine) costs 4.5¢ a page plus $4 for the binding. A 50-page saddle-stitched book would cost you $6.25. What you charge for it above that would be your profit. You might want to have one price for an e-book and another for the print version to cover your costs.

Selected Bookstores that Carry E-Books

Powells.com (www.powells.com). Portland bookstore carries e-books in three formats: Adobe eBook, MS Reader, and Palm Reader. Might be contacted about carrying an author's e-book, but does not carry PDF format books.

Bookbooters.com (www.bookbooters.com). Based in rural New England, Bookbooters offers over 2000 e-books in the widest variety of formats.

iUniverse.com (www.iuniverse.com). Picked as Editors' Choice of PC Magazine comparison of six print on demand (POD) companies (May 27, 2003 issue). Professional but pricey e-book publishing.

There are many other e-bookstores, but few have the prominence of Powells and Amazon. However, it doesn't hurt to see if they'll carry your e-book.

eBay as an E-Book Marketplace

Don't overlook eBay (www.ebay.com) as a place to list your e-books. eBay specializes in unique, hard-to-find collectible and hobby items, but there's a little bit of everything out there. Yes, they have listing fees and final value fees, but they've also accumulated a huge number of members who regularly search eBay for things that interest them.

eBay is no longer an auction-only site. You can set up an eBay store and sell goods at a fixed price if you like.
http://pages.ebay.com/storefronts/seller-landing.html

What information sells on eBay? A wide variety. Here are a few I found that are suggestive of the wide range of possibilities. The great majority of what I found could be described as "incredible marketing offers," "awesome," "ultimate," "wealth-building." [Note: The word "incredible" means, literally, "unbelievable," which describes some of these claims.] But there are many other topics. Some are sold as CDs but could just as easily be sold as downloadable e-books:

- Air Defenses in Nazi Germany CD, 595 p. eBook

- Royal Child ...Historical Romance Ebook
- What No One Else Will Tell About eBay, eBook.
- Alternator Secrets
- Clock designs PDF
- EZ tree house plans PDF
- US Navy Seal Physical Fitness Manual, 300 pages PDF
- Beginner's Guides to Hacking Software Ebook
- Atlantic Salmon Fly Tying eBook
- 1999 eBook: History of Aircraft Ejections CD
- Celtic Warfare in Ireland CD, 110 pg. eBook:
- Bodybuilding and Muscle Building Ebook
- Think and Grow Rich eBook -- Napoleon Hill
- Wholesale & Drop Shipping Source 2002 eBook
- Assembly Language Basics
- The Secrets of Credit Repair

There are lots of places you can promote your e-book. If you're discouraged with one, try another. If a publisher takes on a book, you would think that it would bear all the promotion costs and hassle. Wrong. Unless you're Stephen King or Stephen R. Covey, the publisher really expects you to promote the book yourself after one quick appearance in its quarterly book catalog.

So if you're going to have to market the book yourself, why not write an e-book you can publish yourself at low cost? Then promote it to the hilt, sell a goodly quantity, and you won't have to share the profits with a publisher.

No, e-books aren't likely to replace print books any time soon. But in many fields, audiences are now ready to buy and use e-books, especially in fields where it's hard to get good information. Here's a great opportunity. Hey, my friend, go for it!

Appendix 1. Tools for E-Book Authors who Sell via ClickBank and PayPal

ClickBank and PayPal are popular with e-book authors. Neither requires a merchant account and both offer low e-commerce start-up costs. But each can create problems for merchants selling digital download products.

ClickBank Tools

ClickBank (www.clickbank.com) specializes in selling digital goods and provides a full-blown affiliate program. Customers can pay by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, Eurocard, Bravo, Visa Debit, MasterCard Debit, and Novus, plus online checks from the USA and Canada. Cost per sale is a $1 transaction fee plus 7.5% of the sales total. There is a one-time activation fee of $49.95 with no monthly fees.

However, ClickBank merchants have some problems that can be solved by a host of third party programs. Here are a couple.

ClickBank Gateway Script (www.widexl.com/scripts/clickbank/), from Widexel.com Internet Solutions. Perl script includes .htaccess password protection. After payment, the script validates the transaction and generates the member name and password. You do not have to leave your product in a public-accessible directory. It is placed in a password-protected area, so only paid customers have access. $17.95.

ClickBank Toolkit (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/cb_toolkit.htm). Various scripts solve problems for ClickBank merchants. Generates

affiliate URLs for different products on different websites, using only one ClickBank account. Encrypts affiliate URLs so commissions can't be easily diverted by tech-savvy customers. Protects thank you page from those who haven't paid. Automatically creates links for affiliates. $67.

Sales Guard CB from Software Programs, Inc. (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/salesguard_cb.htm). Creates self-expiring dynamic thank you pages, sends username and password to customer. E-mail message can be used to offer up-sell products. $47.97.

PayPal Tools

PayPal (www.paypal.com) provides an international payment system (currently in five currencies) and a crude hosted cart system. Cart order buttons include the URL of a thank you page where digital products can be downloaded. No set-up fee, merchant account, or payment gateway required. Cost is 2.9% of sales total, or 2.2% over a threshold. PayPal has recently introduced a rather sophisticated Instant Payment Notification (IPN) system that programmers can use to release paid-for products for customer download. If you use PayPal as is, be aware that order buttons should be encrypted to prevent unscrupulous shoppers from going to the thank you page directly and downloading your softgoods without paying.

You can find more about PayPal e-commerce and IPN in the "PayPal in E-Commerce Applications" issue, *Web Marketing Today Premium*, Issue 65, December 15, 2002. http://www.wilsonweb.com/wct6/issue65.htm

Here are some third-party PayPal tools.

PayLoadz (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/payloadz.htm). Provides ASP hosted digital download delivery service. Merchants use PayPal payment with Instant Payment Notification. Once payment is

complete, products are delivered instantly. Affiliate program. Accounts from $15/mo. (up to $1000 transactions) to $75/mo. (up to $5,000).

PayPal Encryptor, Stealth Promotions (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/paypal_encryptor.htm). "Encrypts" in hexadecimal code the elements of your PayPal order button URL, so unscrupulous customers can't just find your thank you page URL and skip payment. $37.95.

PayPal Download Protector - Using IPN from WebmasterInABox (www.wilsonweb.com/afd/paypal_ipn.htm). Hides the thank you page URL from customers. After payment via PayPal is verified by Instant Payment Notification (IPN), customer is redirected to a page to download the softgoods. Written in PHP. $34.95 or included with many other scripts $99.

Appendix 2. Resources for E-Book Authors and Marketers

Basics

eBook Formats Compared, ePublishing Marketing Associates. Gives pros and cons of 13 e-book formats: Adobe Acrobat (PDF), Adobe eBook (PDF). Embiid, Gemstar eBook, hiebook, HTML, Instant eBook (et. al.), Microsoft Reader, Microsoft Word, Mobipocket, Palm Doc, Palm Reader, and Plain Text. http://www.epmassoc.com/compare.php?sp=1

Adobe eBook

Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader 2.2 (free download for Windows and Mac). http://www.adobe.com/products/ebookreader/main.html

How to Create Adobe PDF eBooks. 66-page PDF document that explains how best to format an e-book for reading on a variety of formats. Explains how to use Adobe Acrobat and Distiller to produce the desired format. Sections on converting to Adobe PDF format from FrameMaker, PageMaker, MS Word, QuarkXPress, and PostScript formats. http://www.adobe.com/epaper/tips/acr5ebook/pdfs/eBook.pdf

Adobe PDF

Create Adobe PDF files online now. ASP service allows you to convert a variety of documents (including MS Word) into Adobe PDF files. You can create up to 5 documents in a free trial. Unlimited use available for $9.99 per month ($99.99/year) for users in the US and Canada. https://createpdf.adobe.com

PDF Link Changer. Changes all links within an e-book to a customer's affiliate links, if desired. $19. http://www.reprint-rights-marketing.com/pdfchanger/

Planet PDF Tools List. Hundreds of tools to format, convert, extract, and create PDF files. http://www.planetpdf.com/tools

Palm Reader

Make Your Own Books. Free software to create Palm Reader (.pbd) files that can be read on Palm OS handheld devices. Explains Palm Markup Language. http://www.palmdigitalmedia.com/dropbook

Microsoft Reader

Overdrive ReaderWorks. Suite of eBook authoring and conversion tools for creating Microsoft® Reader eBooks with ClearType. ReaderWorks Standard is free. ReaderWorks Publisher is $119. http://www.overdrive.com/readerworks/

E-Book Author Resource Sites

Ken Silver Online Ebook Marketing and Publishing Forum. Helpful forum with credible people participating. http://www.network54.com/Hide/Forum/11488

Planet eBook - eBooks Community. http://www.digitalworm.com/

Mind Like Water Ebooks Directory. Free e-book directory listings for authors, plus PPC or monthly ads to get top position. http://www.mindlikewater.com

KnowBetter.com Ebook Bookstores. Site by Kelly Ford provides forums that discuss the e-book business, various formats and software, e-book news, and e-book announcements. Some info on the Rocket format. http://www.knowbetter.com

[e-book.com.au](http://www.e-book.com.au/main.html). Bruce's Australian E-Book Newsletter. News items of interest on e-book publishing. http://www.e-book.com.au/main.html

[eBooks and ePublishing section](http://search.about.com/fullsearch.htm?terms=ebooks) of Publishing in About.com. A comprehensive collection of links, articles and information about electronic publishing and digital books. http://search.about.com/fullsearch.htm?terms=ebooks
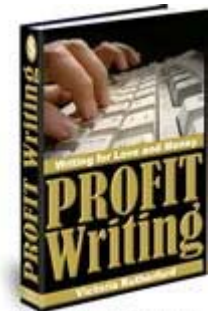
Books on E-booking

[Poor Richard's Creating Electronic eBooks: How Authors, Publishers, and Corporations Can Get Into Digital Print](http://amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B00005S8S0/ref=nosim/wilsoninternetse), by Christopher Van Buren, Matt Wagner, Jeff Cogswell (Top Floor Publishing; 2001) ISBN: B00005S8S0. 336 pages. Adobe eBook Reader format only. http://amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B00005S8S0/ref=nosim/wilsoninternetse
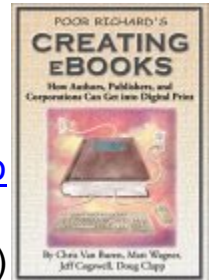
E-Book Covers

[KillerCovers](http://www.wilsonweb.com/afd/killercovers.htm), Vaughn Davidson. Excellent covers from artist experienced with marketing and advertising. Recommended by people I trust. $117. Credit card.
http://www.wilsonweb.com/afd/killercovers.htm

KillerCovers Example