

A process for

creating ebooks

Create your own ebook

This guide was put together by Five Simple Steps, an independent publisher of web design books that closed in 2014, as a way of giving back to the web community.

The process described in this documentation reflects the way the team at Five Simple Steps worked, so it's best suited to people working on Macs, and references tools they used.

Bear in mind that you'll need access to a variety of devices (at least an iPad and Kindle) to test and view your ebook.

You'll find all the project files you need to get started within the .ZIP file. All the information that you need to change in the template files appears in uppercase.

Before you get started

There are a few things you'll need before you get stuck into creating your ebook.

Manuscript

You will need an edited and finalised manuscript, complete with URLs for all your references. Having a finalised manuscript ensures you have fewer errors throughout the process.

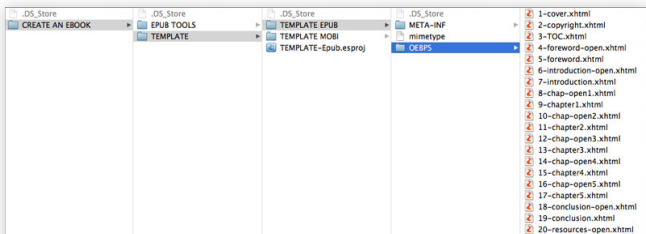
Images

All images (including the cover) will need to be created and optimised for the web. Images should be no wider than 800px and need to be saved for web as a .jpg file. It's important to reduce the file size of the images as much as possible whilst retaining quality.

A good naming convention to follow for images is to set them in chapter and numerical order, as shown below.

'img - chapter number - image number .jpg' → 'img-1-1.jpg'

Once all your images are ready, move the image files into the OEBPS project folder.



Espresso



This guide explains the process of working in [Espresso](#) and refers to it throughout, but you can use any text editor.

ePub Zip 1.0.3



To create the final .epub file, [ePub Zip](#) is a handy script that will save you time.

Calibre



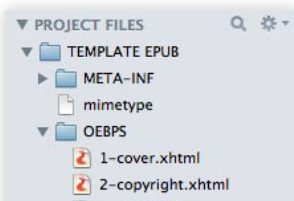
You can use [Calibre](#) to convert your ePub file to a mobi version for Kindles and other devices.

Devices

It's essential you view and test your ebook on a range of devices. Ideally an iPad, a Kindle or an Android tablet are best to test on in order to ensure compatability for the ePub and mobi formats.

Got all of those? Then let's get started

1. Double click the **TEMPLATE-Epub.esproj** file in the main TEMPLATE folder to open the project in Espresso.
2. Expand the TEMPLATE EPUB folder > expand the OEBPS folder.



Key book information

1. Change the book title on each page

Work through each file within the project in order, and change the title of the book to one of your choice.

2. Enter details in copyright.xhtml

Edit all information as needed and ensure all referential links are added to the `href`.

3. Enter metadata details at top of content.opf

Edit all information as needed. Don't forget to change the `opf:file-as="SURNAME, FIRST NAME"`.

4. Add ISBN to toc.ncx

Add the ISBN number within the `<head>` area of the **toc.ncx** file - `content="urn:isbn:ISBN NUMBER (no hyphens)"/>`.

For more information on ISBN numbers, take a look here at [Nielsen Book](#).

Book structure

1. Add or delete pages in the project (if needed)

Within the project files in the left hand side of Espresso, add or delete files to add or remove pages from the book. Be sure to re-number the files as you go.

2. Reflect changes in...

You will need to reflect the file structure changes within the following files:

toc.xhtml

Each of the chapter link locations must match the project file names.

content.opf

All `manifest item` link locations must match the project file names, and the `id` number will need to be updated in numerical order. You will also need to update the `spine itemref` to match the number of `manifest items`.

toc.ncx

Each `navPoint` will need the `id`, `playOrder` and `src` amending to match the project file names/numerical order.

Initial content

1. Add chapter titles to chapter-open#.xhtml pages

Within each **chapter-open** file, add the relevant chapter titles.

2. Add chapter titles to toc.xhtml and toc.ncx files

You will need to reflect the chapter title changes within the following files:

toc.xhtml

Each of the chapter titles will need to be changed.

toc.ncx

Each **text** item within each **navPoint** will need the chapter title changed.

3. Add images to item list in content.opf

Add an **item** within the **content.opf** file for each image, following the example provided with the **id** of **image#**. The **id** of the **items** will need to be renamed in numerical order.

```
<item id="image1" href="img-1-1.jpg" media-type="image/jpeg"></item>
```

Page content

1. Add page content

Copy and paste content from the manuscript and wrap in the appropriate HTML tags. Ensure the code structure (as provided in the template) is followed.

2. Link up images

All images within the content need to be linked to the correct project image files within the OEBPS folder.

Actions

1. Convert all page content to named entities

Certain characters will need to be converted to named entities in order to display correctly and be semantically valid. In Espresso, select all of the page content, go to Actions in the menu, then HTML, and select Convert to named entities.

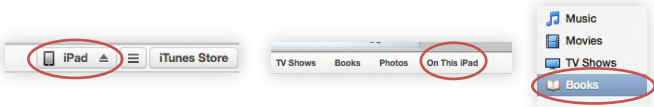
A reference of named entities can be found here: <http://www.freeformatter.com/html-entities.html>

2. Check content for anomalies

Check for any remaining double spaces, tabs, straight single and double quote marks, hyphens, ampersands, any code examples with `<` or `>`, and convert as needed.

Compress, validate and finalise the ePub

- In Finder, drag the BOOKNAME EPUB folder onto EPUB Zip 1.0.3. This will compress the EPUB folder into an .epub file in the main TEMPLATE folder.
- Open your browser and go to <http://validator.idpf.org>.
- Choose the BOOKNAME EPUB.epub file that you have just created and click Validate.
- Fix any errors that are listed and repeat the steps above. If you don't have any errors, move to the next step.
- Connect your iPad to your Mac and open up iTunes. Click **iPad > On this iPad > Books**. Now drag the BOOKNAME EPUB.epub file into iTunes.



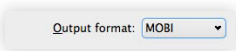
- Check for any content and visual inconsistencies and errors on the iPad. Also make a note of the page count.
- Make any changes within the project files in Espresso, and be sure to add the page count in the **metadata** of **content.opf**.
- Repeat the steps above until you have an error free and valid ePub.

Create the mobi version

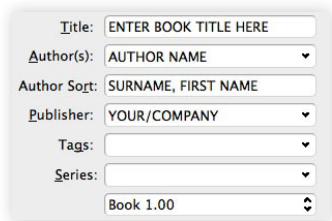
- Duplicate the **META-INF**, **mimetype** and **OEBPS** files into the BOOKNAME MOBI folder.
- Replace the **styles.css** file in the **OEBPS** with the **styles.css** file from the ePub tools folder.
- In Finder, drag the BOOKNAME MOBI folder onto EPUB Zip 1.0.3 in the ePub tools folder.
- Open Calibre and drag the BOOKNAME MOBI.epub file into the main window.
- Select that file and click Convert books.



- Select MOBI from the Output Format dropdown menu.

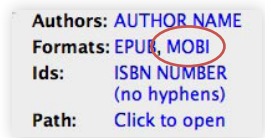


- Check the details in the book information fields are correct.



A screenshot of the book information fields in Calibre. The fields are: Title (ENTER BOOK TITLE HERE), Author(s) (AUTHOR NAME), Author Sort (SURNAME, FIRST NAME), Publisher (YOUR/COMPANY), Tags, Series, and Book 1.00. Each field has a dropdown arrow on the right.

- If the information is correct, click OK.
- When the mobi version has been converted, you will see MOBI appear in the Format area on the right hand side of Calibre (under the book cover image).



A screenshot of the book information fields in Calibre showing the conversion results. The fields are: Authors (AUTHOR NAME), Formats (EPUB, MOBI), Ids (ISBN NUMBER (no hyphens)), and Path (Click to open). The MOBI format is circled in red.

- Click the Click to open link next to Path.
- Drag the BOOKNAME MOBI.mobi file into your main book folder.
- Delete the BOOKNAME MOBI.epub file you created earlier.
- Add the BOOKNAME MOBI.mobi to your Kindle or Android tablet.

And that's it! You've successfully created your ebook.