

eBooks: From Adobe® InDesign® to the Kindle Store

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Kindle and PDF

While this paper describes how to convert an EPUB file for compatibility with Amazon devices, the Kindle DX does include native support for PDF files. For the Kindle 1 and 2, however, users must convert their PDF files in order to view them. This conversion can be accomplished either by using Amazon's fee-based online conversion service or following steps 2–4 of this paper to convert the PDF file to the MOBI format, replacing all references to EPUB with PDF. Since PDF is designed for static page layout—and not for reflow—results will be better if you convert from an EPUB file.

As eReader devices like Amazon's Kindle increase in popularity, Adobe InDesign users are asking how to prepare their eBook documents for reading on the Kindle and selling on the Amazon.com Kindle Store. This paper describes how best to accomplish this task. Generally, InDesign users must first export an InDesign document into an EPUB file. Then they must convert it using open source software into the MOBI format to view on a Kindle reading device or to sell on the Amazon.com Kindle Store.

A multiplicity of formats

Although many eBook file formats exist, two are most prevalent: the EPUB format, created by the International Digital Publishing Forum (to which Adobe belongs), and the AZW format, created by Amazon. Because the Kindle doesn't recognize EPUB files, users of a variety of content creation tools that create EPUB files—including InDesign—must convert these files to a format the Kindle can read. And since tools to convert to the native AZW format aren't generally available, users must convert EPUB files to an alternative format, MOBI, to view on the Kindle or to sell on the Kindle Store.

This white paper provides a step-by-step guide to display your EPUB book on the Kindle:

1. Export InDesign document to EPUB.
2. Convert EPUB to alternative MOBI format.
3. Preview on a Kindle device (optional).
4. Upload to Amazon.com.

Requirements

To accomplish this conversion, you need the following:

- **Adobe InDesign CS3 or CS4 software**—While you can export to EPUB with InDesign CS3, InDesign CS4 includes enhanced EPUB export features—like local formatting preservation and floating anchored objects—that simplify the conversion process.
- **Adobe Digital Editions software**—Digital Editions is a free, lightweight eBook reading application for PC and Mac. You can use it to read and organize your eBook collection, as well as preview the EPUB files you export from InDesign.
- **Calibre** – A free, open-source eBook conversion tool, Calibre runs on Windows®, Mac OS, and Linux®. Because the Kindle doesn't include native support for the EPUB format, this paper describes the use of Calibre to convert EPUB to the MOBI format (which is supported natively in the Kindle).

To preview your converted documents you need a Kindle and its USB cord. If you don't own a

Kindle, you can preview your converted documents online through Amazon's Digital Text Platform (<http://dtp.amazon.com>) Also, if you want to upload your eBooks to sell on Amazon.com, you'll need an Amazon.com account.

Step 1: Export InDesign document to EPUB

One of the features in InDesign CS4 is the ability to export an InDesign document directly to the EPUB format. As mentioned previously, this open document format is interoperable among a variety of handheld eReader devices (like the Sony Reader), desktop reading applications for the PC or Mac (like Adobe Digital Editions), and smartphone reading applications that display eBooks on your mobile phone (like Stanza or Shortcovers).

To get started, create your document and add your text and images. While this paper doesn't review how to set up an InDesign document, the training resources at Adobe.com can point you in the right direction should you need more information. See www.adobe.com/support/training/products/indesign.html

Once you have your document set up, review the following tips to ensure your file is exported properly to the EPUB format. Remember that these tips are general guidelines for exporting production-quality EPUB files and are not necessarily specific to the MOBI conversion workflow discussed later.

Layout

InDesign will export all your text frames as one single flow of text and in the order the frames are threaded together. You'll need to verify that you have threaded the frames in the correct order. Remember also that the export feature doesn't preserve individual object positioning on the page; it exports all the elements into one continuous flow of text. To achieve perfect object positioning, you'll most likely have to manually style the EPUB file after export (see link below for more information on manual styling).

Styling

If your InDesign document contains local formatting (a manually bolded word without a Character Style applied to it, for example), make sure you select the Local Formatting option under Base for CSS Styles in the Digital Editions Export Options dialog. Local formatting export is supported in the latest version of InDesign CS4 (v. 6.0.3). If you're using InDesign CS3, only Character Styles, Paragraph Styles, and Object Styles are preserved during the export.

Chapters

If you're working with a long document with an expected final file size over 300KB that you intend to display on a device, you'll want to separate each chapter into a separate InDesign document. To export all the chapters into the same EPUB document, create an InDesign book (File > New > Book). From there, add the individual chapters using the Book panel (automatically appears when working with a book), and then select Export Book for Digital Editions from the Book panel commands.

Font embedding

In general, all fonts used in the document will be embedded in the resulting EPUB file. Note that although EPUB supports font embedding, the MOBI format as displayed on the Kindle does not. Consequently, you'll see the standard Kindle font in your final document when displayed on a Kindle device. In EPUB, OpenType fonts are supported during the export, as are most TrueType fonts—but you should always test to ensure you see the results you expect.

Images

If the Formatted option is selected in the Images panel of the export dialog box, the exported images will be reformatted to the size to which you have scaled them in your InDesign document. This scaling reduces the file size of the final EPUB file. You will also want to anchor your images to the relative area to which they belong in the text, or else they may all end up at the beginning or the end of the document. Again, to achieve perfect image positioning, you may need to manually style the EPUB file after export (see link below). For more information on working with image captions, see the sidebar entitled Image captions.

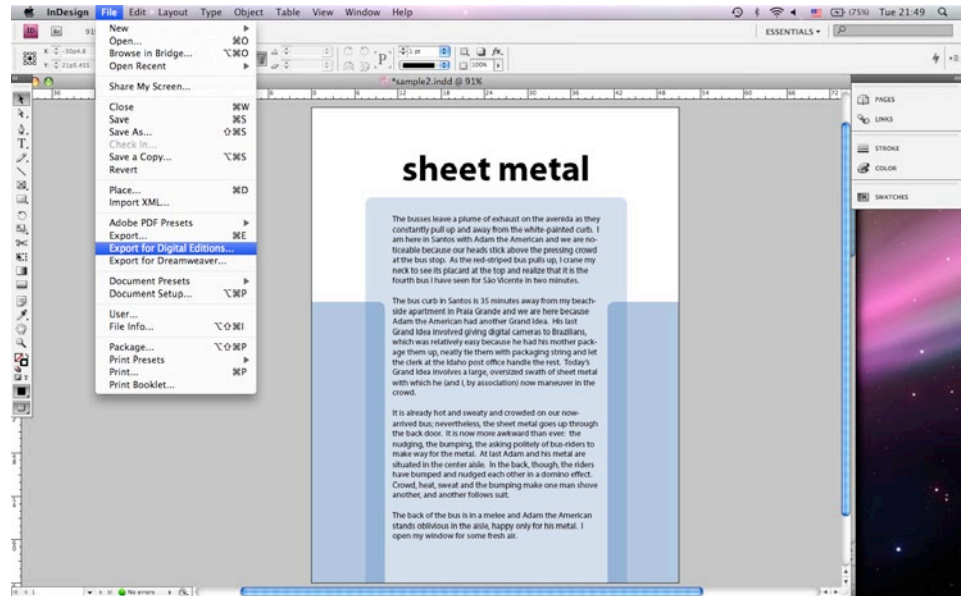
Image captions

For image captions to export correctly to EPUB, you'll need to paste them as a group inline with the text and then create an anchored object. Follow these tips to complete this process:

1. Select the frames containing the image and the caption text and then choose Object > Group.
2. Transfer the group to the clipboard using Edit > Cut.
3. With the Text Selection tool, select the location in the text flow to which you want the group to anchor.
4. Paste the object inline in the text frame using Edit > Paste.
5. Using the Selection tool, select the inline group.
6. Choose Object > Anchored Object to create and specify the offset and behavior of the anchored group.

For other tips on how to set up your document for correct export to the EPUB format, as well as how to perform post-export manual editing, see “Producing ePub Documents from InDesign” at <http://blogs.adobe.com/digitaleditions/indesign-epub.html>

After your document is correctly formatted, export it to the EPUB format by choosing File > Export to Digital Editions.



Then select a location to save the EPUB file.

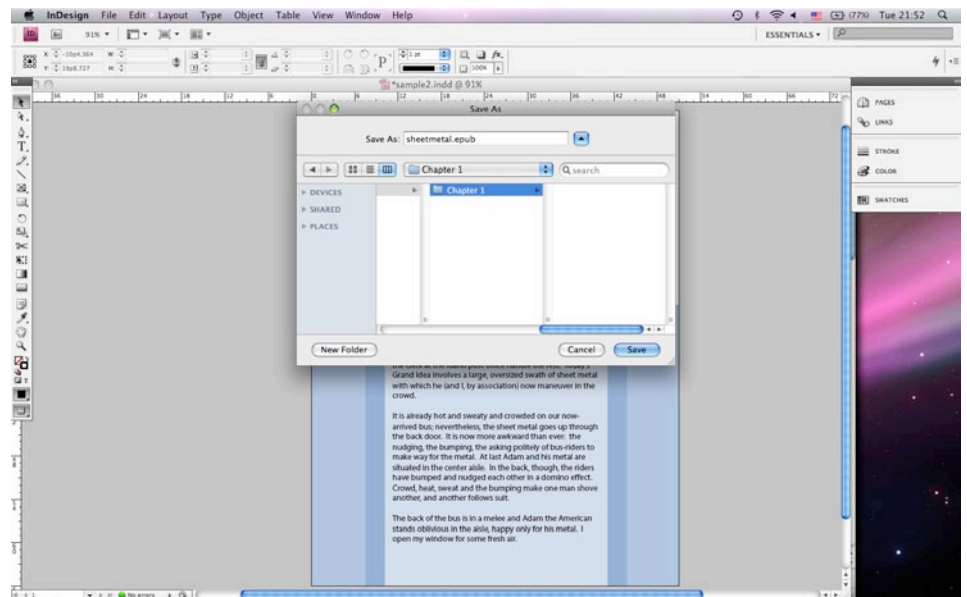
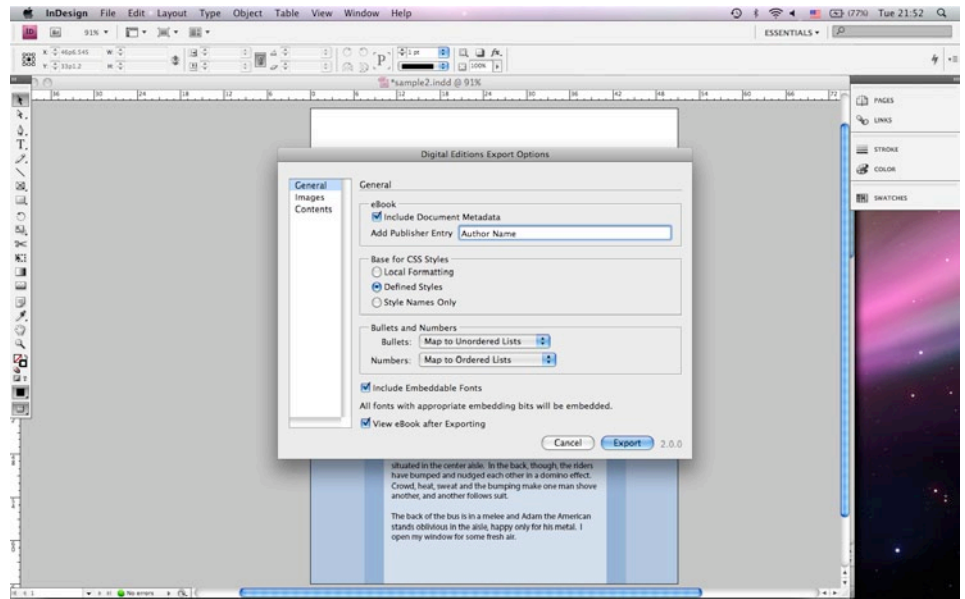


Image formats

If you're having trouble deciding whether to output your images into GIF or JPEG format, you can read more about the differences between the two formats at www.adobe.com/devnet/contribute/articles/convert_images.html

In the Digital Editions Export Options dialog box, select the EPUB options that fit your needs best. You have the option to add publisher metadata, define the styling source, select image output type (GIF or JPEG), and adjust the table of contents, among others.



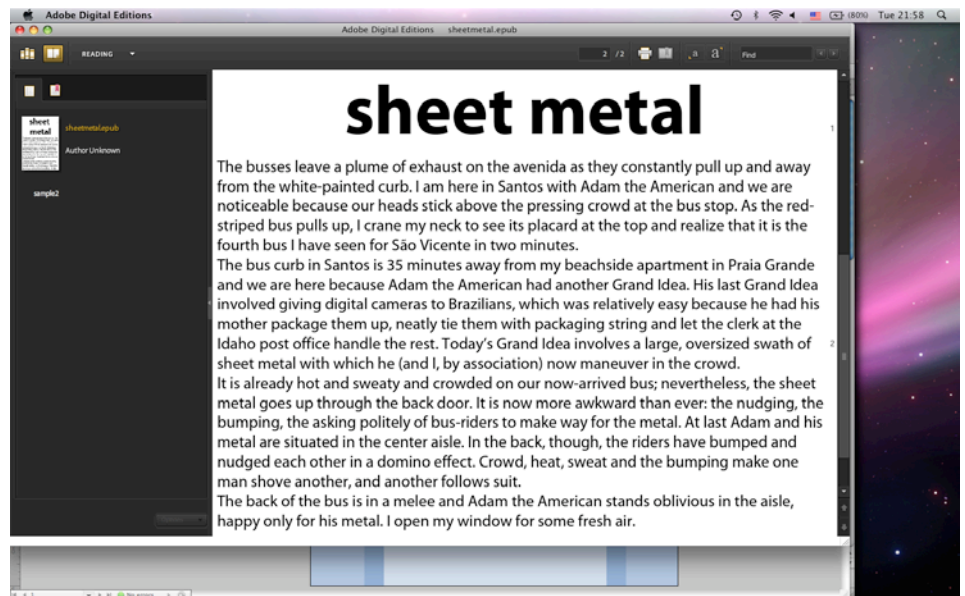
Previewing EPUB in Digital Editions

Adobe Digital Editions is a free, lightweight eBook reading application for PC and Mac. In the workflow outlined in this paper, it is used to preview EPUB files for accuracy before converting them to the MOBI format. In addition, Digital Editions allows you to:

- Read and easily navigate your EPUB/PDF eBook files
- Organize your digital books and view title metadata
- Insert annotations and bookmarks
- Play multimedia SWF files embedded in eBooks
- Transfer eBooks to supported devices

To download Digital Editions, go to www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/#download

If you've selected the View eBook after Exporting option on the previous screen, you'll be able to immediately see the results of your export, provided you have installed the free Adobe Digital Editions eBook reader. To download Adobe Digital Editions, go to www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions/#download

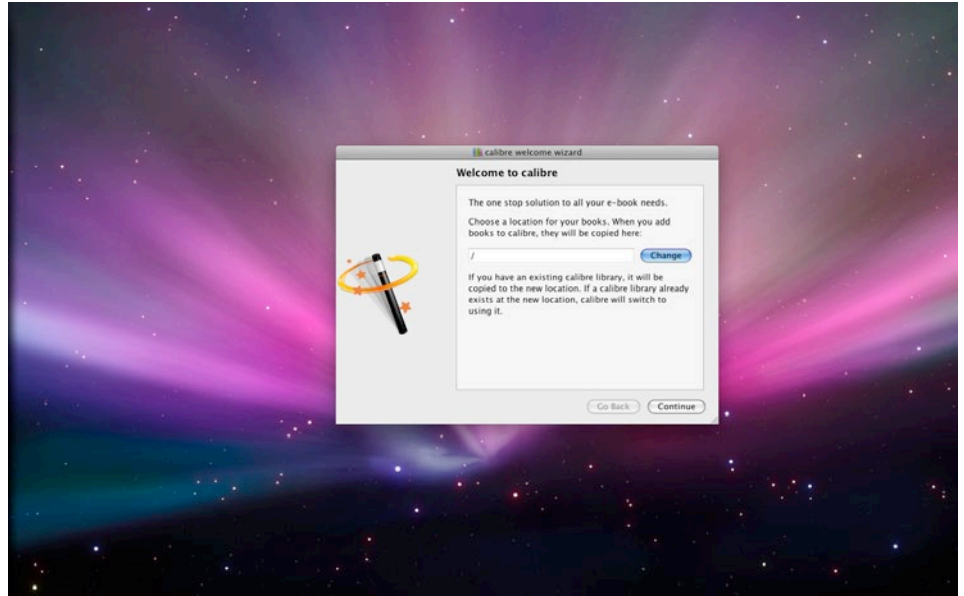


Step 2: Convert EPUB to MOBI

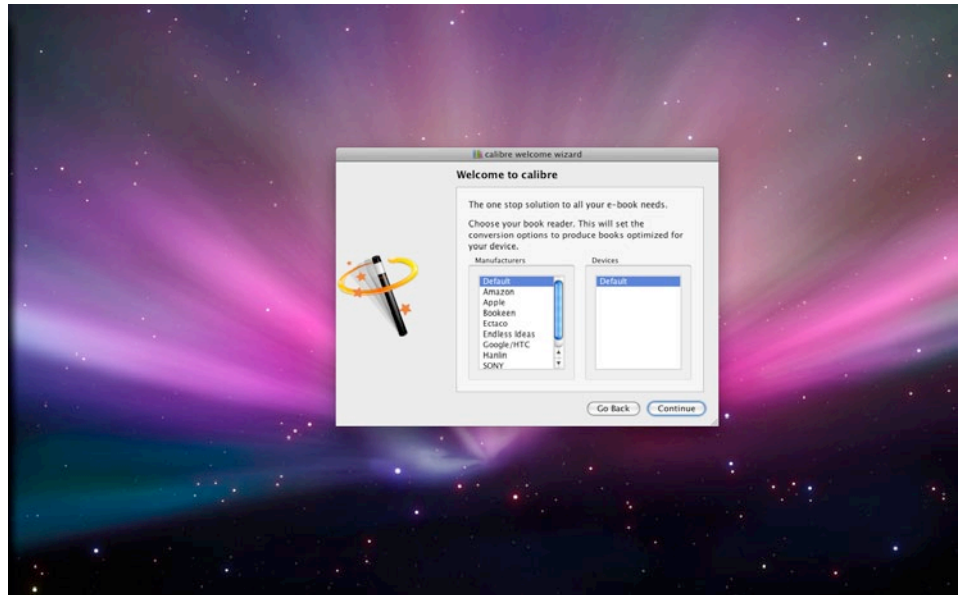
With an EPUB file in hand, the next task is to convert it to the MOBI format. One of the simplest ways to accomplish this is with the free, open-source Calibre conversion program. It runs on Windows, Mac, or Linux and is available for download at <http://calibre.kovidgoyal.net/download>.

Calibre Setup

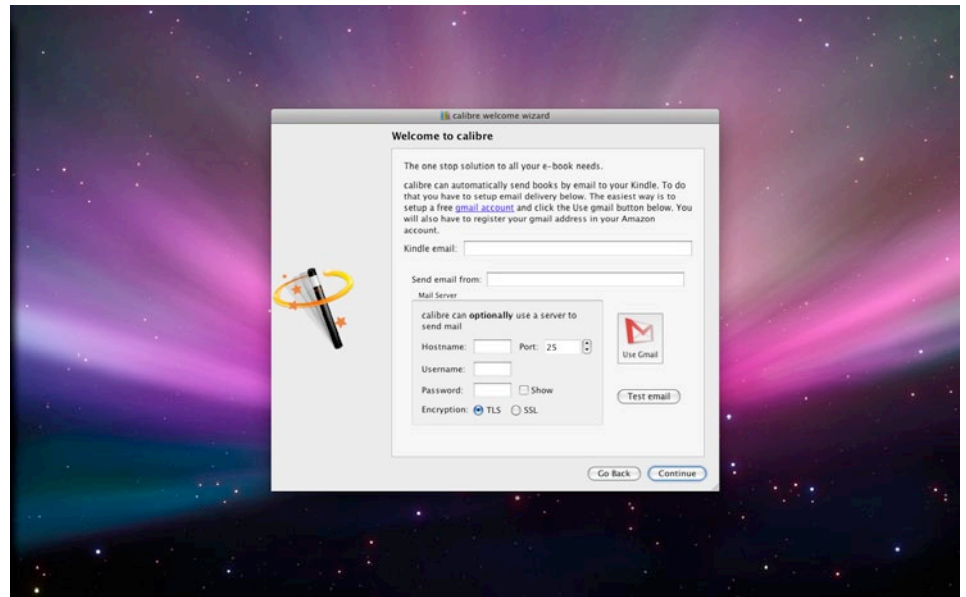
To get started with Calibre, download and install it. After installation, one of the first prompts asks where you want to store the books that you'll be converting. Select a location on your hard drive and click Continue.



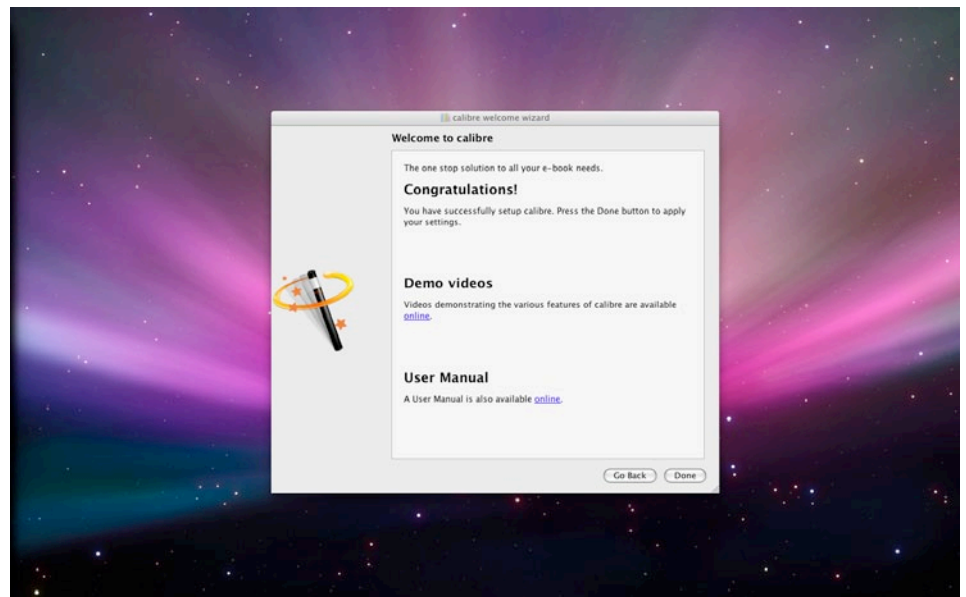
Next, in order to optimize the output of converted files, Calibre asks what type of eReader device you have. Since this example assumes you'll be mainly reading on a Kindle, go ahead and select Amazon under Manufacturers and your Kindle version under Devices. If you plan to convert books to a variety of formats, however, you might consider leaving the setting to Default.



Should you plan to use the Amazon fee-based wireless delivery service, fill in the e-mail addresses requested on the following screen.



You should then see a screen indicating that you have successfully set up Calibre.

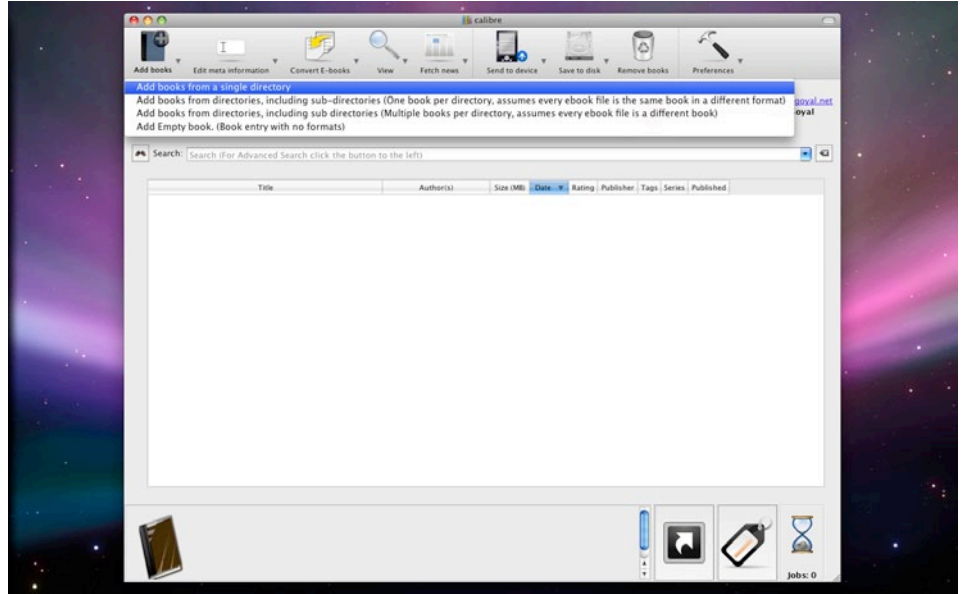


Converting EPUB to MOBI in Calibre

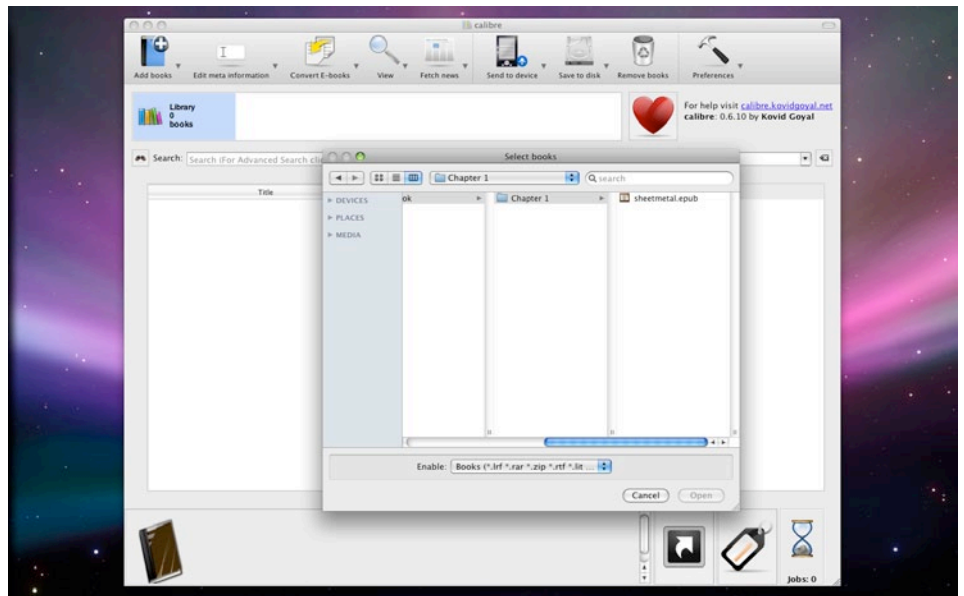
Converting an EPUB book to the MOBI format in Calibre is a two step process: Add the EPUB file to the Calibre library, and then initiate conversion of the EPUB file.

Adding EPUB files to the library

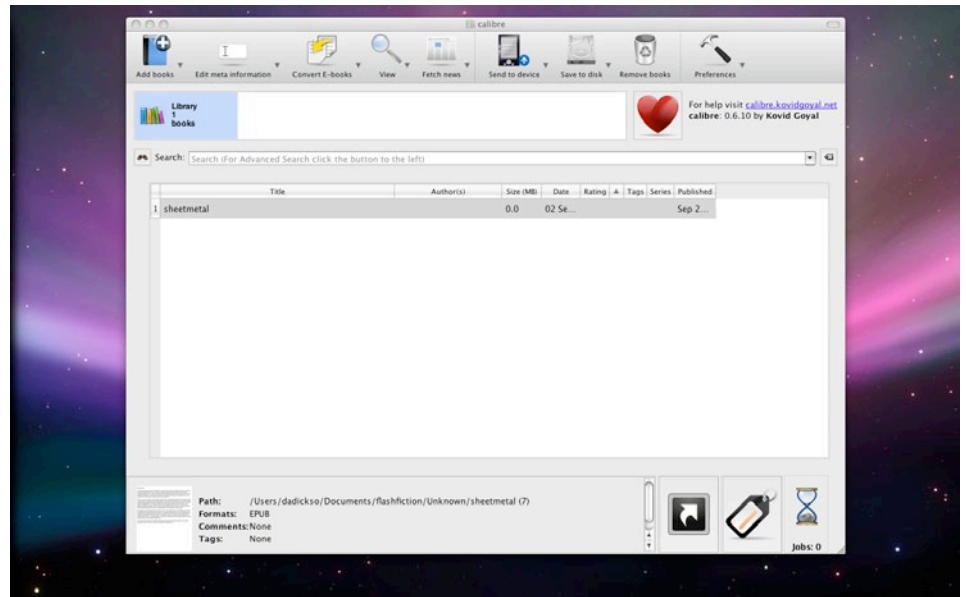
To add a single EPUB file to the library, click the “Add books” icon in the upper left corner of the program. If you have multiple books to upload to the library at once, click the triangle immediately to the right of the icon, and select from the available bulk upload options.



Next, select the EPUB file on your hard drive that you wish to upload to the library.



You will be able to see the EPUB book in the list of available titles when the uploading process is complete.

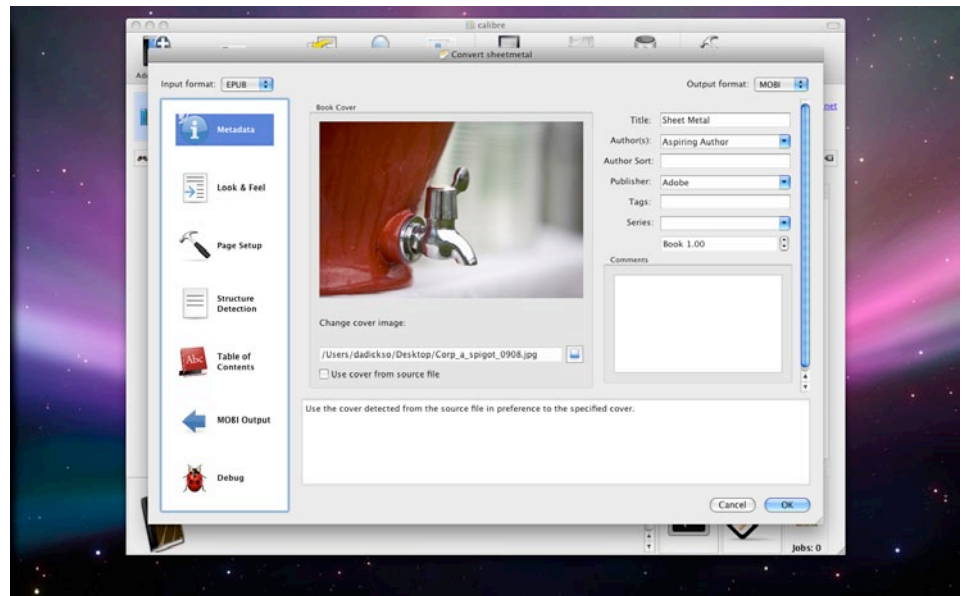


Initiating the conversion

After you have your EPUB file in the Calibre library, you must convert it to the MOBI format. To do this, select the EPUB file from the list of available titles and then click the Convert E-books icon on the top menu bar.

After you've clicked this icon, the conversion dialog screen appears. Make sure that the output format field in the upper right corner reads MOBI.

The panels on the left side allow you to adjust the conversion options. In the Metadata panel, you can edit the book's title, author, publisher, and cover image. The Look & Feel panel provides fine-tuned adjustments on line spacing, font height, and non-roman characters. If you didn't select the Kindle as the output profile during the setup process, you can do so in the Page Setup panel. The other panel options provide features for advanced users. When you are satisfied with the selections you have chosen, initiate the conversion by clicking OK.



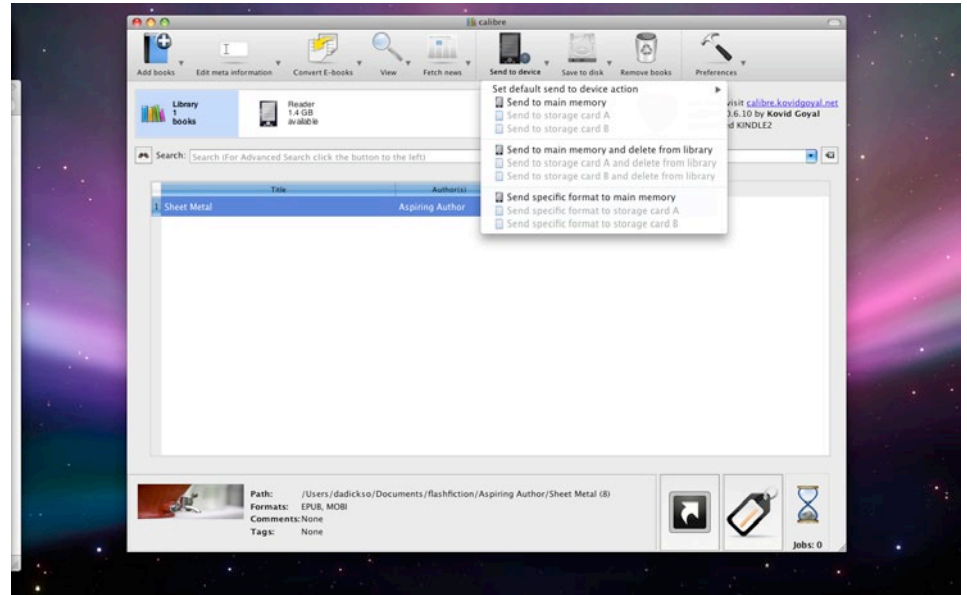
eBooks and content protection

eBooks sold in online bookstores generally have content protection applied to them, using a solution such as Adobe Content Server 4 software. Content protection allows the bookseller to specify sharing and printing rights. As a result, the Calibre program cannot convert EPUB files with this content protection. The program will, however, convert unprotected books, like self-authored publications or books in the public domain.

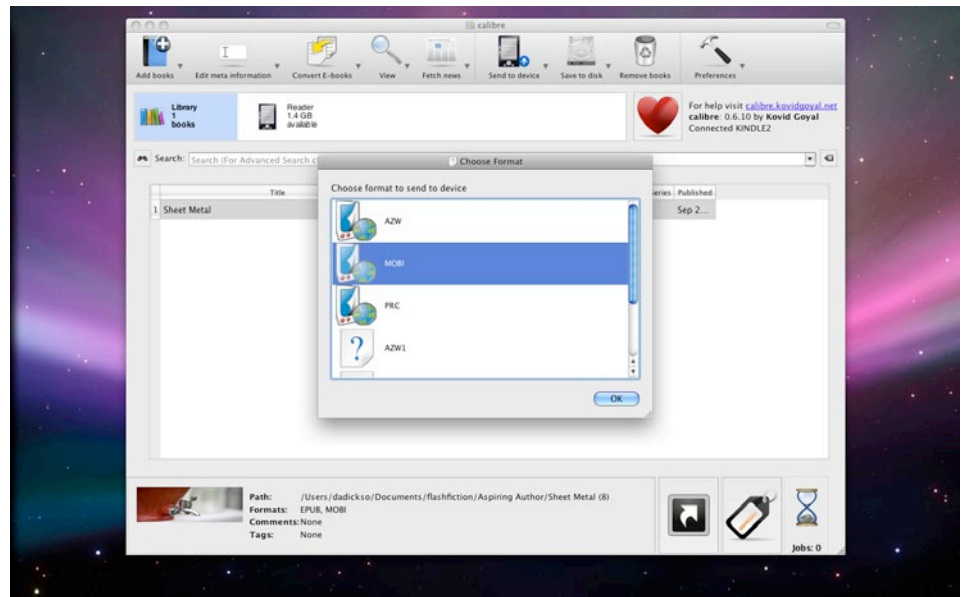
You will know the conversion process is complete when the hourglass stops spinning in the lower right-hand corner and a message displays on your screen. After converting a file, Calibre stores the completed file in the library folder you selected during the first step of the setup process. Use a file browser to navigate to this folder, and verify the newly converted MOBI file is located in a folder named after the author.

Step 3: Preview on a Kindle (optional)

To transfer your book to a Kindle device, first ensure that the Kindle is connected to your computer via the USB cable. Then select the title from the available title list within the Calibre library. Click on the triangle next to the “Send to device” icon in the upper menu bar and then select “Send specific format to main memory”.



A dialog box appears asking which format you would like to send to the connected Kindle device. Since you just converted your EPUB file to the MOBI format, select MOBI.

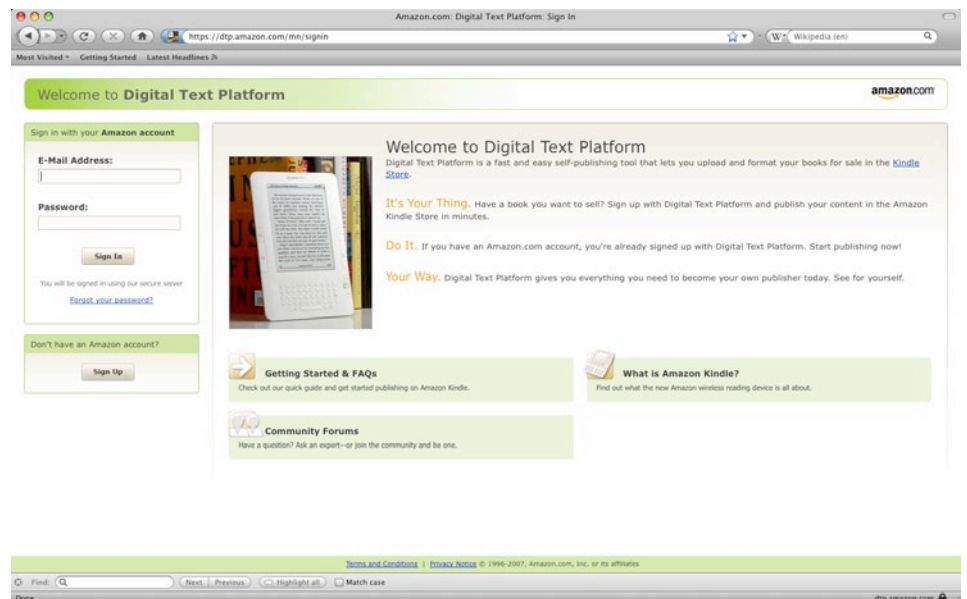


After the hourglass stops spinning and you receive a completion message, you should be able to view your content on your Kindle device.

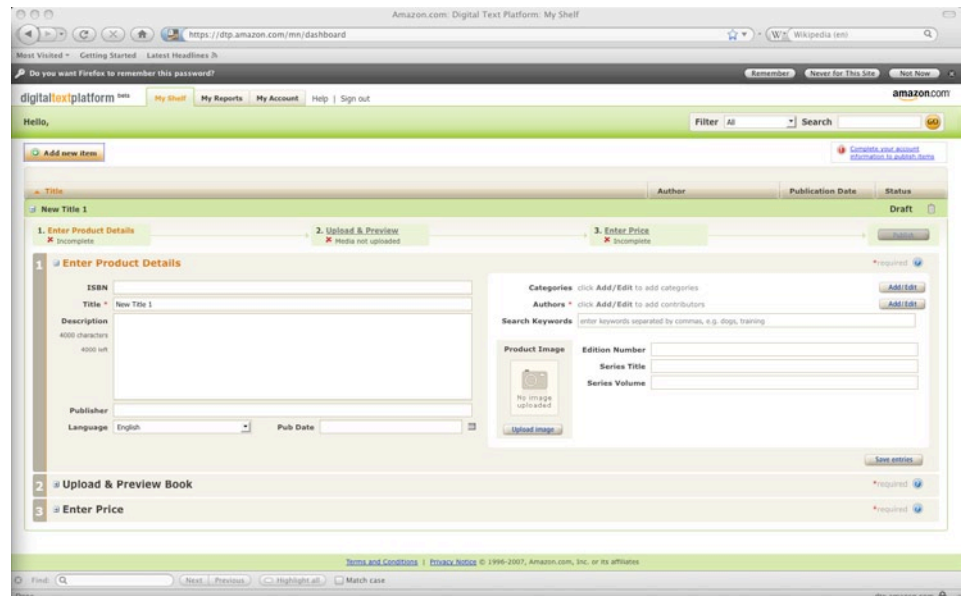
Alternatively, you may choose to transfer your converted MOBI files manually to your Kindle. To do this, open the folder you selected as the Calibre library during the first step of the Calibre setup process. Then connect your Kindle and navigate to its contents using a file browser. To transfer your file, simply copy it from your hard drive to the Documents folder on your Kindle.

Step 4: Distribute your converted EPUB file on Amazon.com

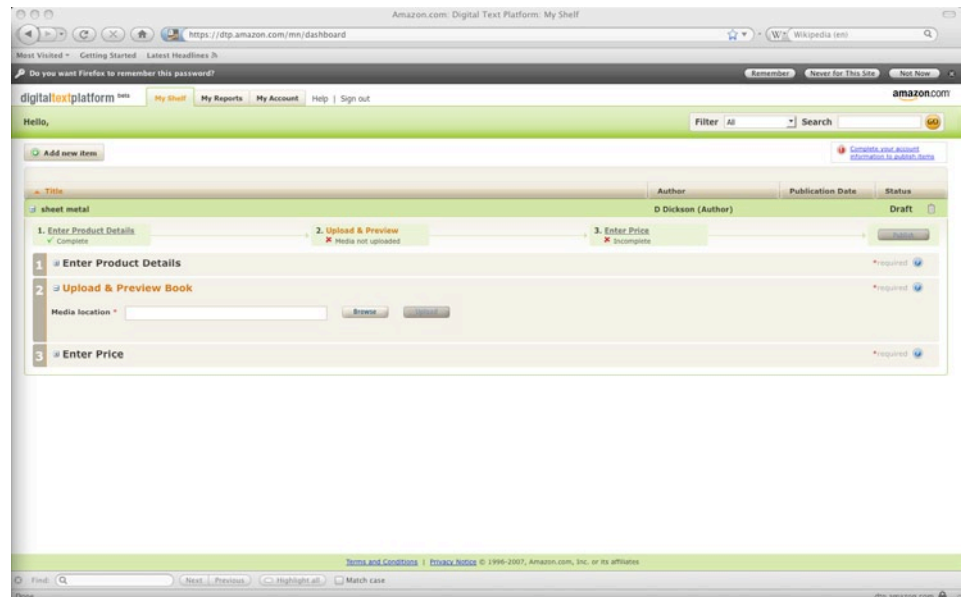
Some authors may wish to distribute their converted EPUB documents using Amazon.com's self-publishing tool, the Digital Text Platform. To do this, you'll need to log in with your existing Amazon account (or create a new one) at <http://dtp.amazon.com>.



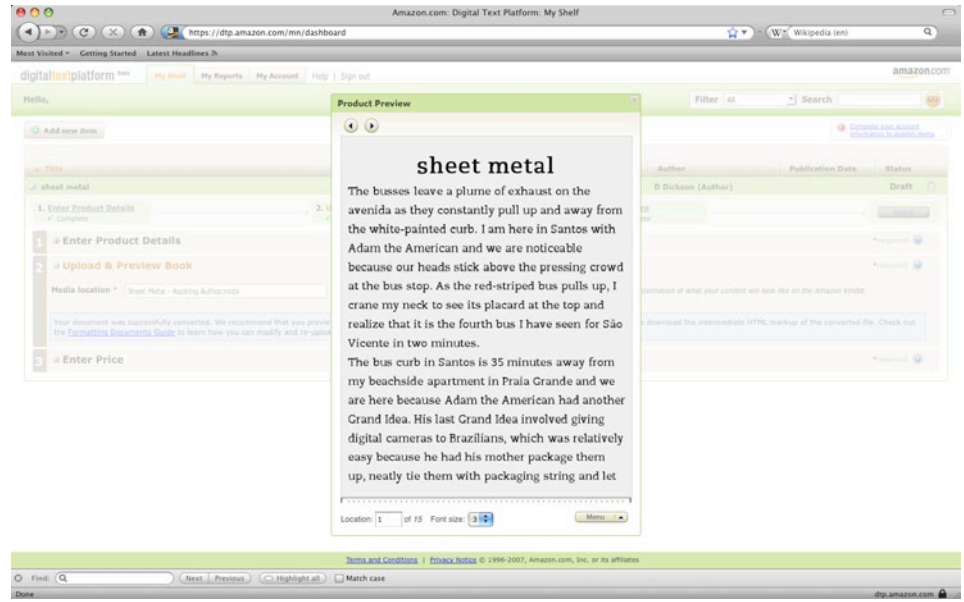
After you have logged in, click the “Add new item” button at the upper left corner of the screen. Then enter a few required details about your book, including title and the author’s name. You also have the option to submit a product image and contribute a short description of your work. After you’ve finished with this screen, remember to click “Save entries.”



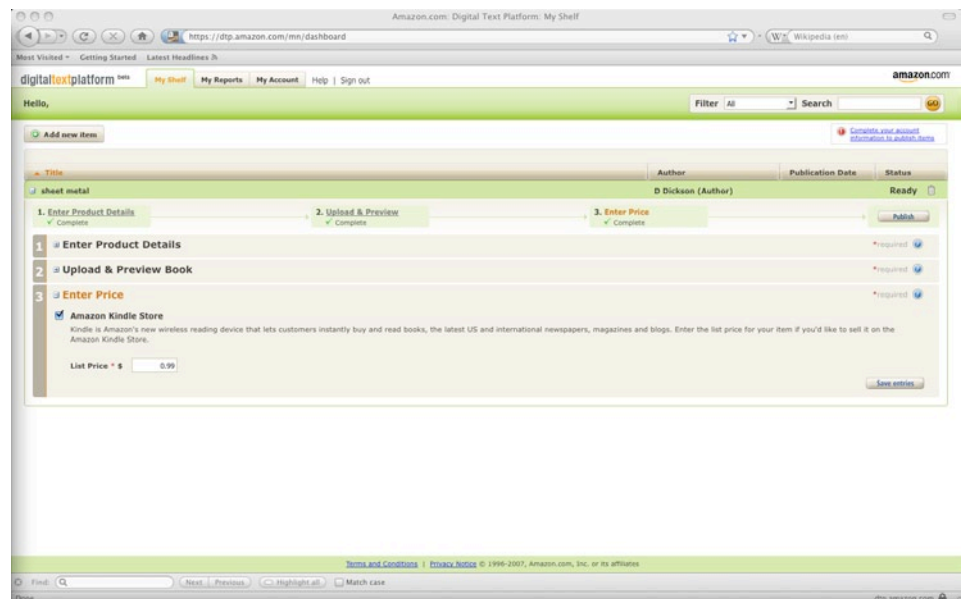
Next, Amazon will prompt you to upload your book. Browse to the location of your converted MOBI file on your hard drive (in your Calibre library location, under a folder with the author’s name) and then click “Upload”.



After you've uploaded the file successfully, preview it to ensure that it will display as you expect. Click the Preview button to display how your file will appear on the Kindle.



After you are finished previewing, choose Menu > Close in the preview dialog box to return to the previous page. Then click Enter Price. In this text field, enter the price for which you wish to sell your eBook in the Kindle Store. Note that your price must be greater than US\$0.99 and less than US\$200. When you are finished, click “Save entries”.



Finally, when you are ready to distribute your eBook in the Kindle Store, click Publish at the upper right side of the screen. Amazon may ask you on a subsequent screen for more information on where to deposit your earnings.

Congratulations! You've successfully converted your eBook created in InDesign to a format that can be read on a Kindle and sold in the Amazon.com Kindle Store.



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