

Getting our bound book out first, fast, and often as ebooks

In a blog here on November 15 I explained what a publisher, like us, expects from the author as his/her book is sent to press, and of course before. The book I discussed just saw light in paperback and digital (PDF) formats: Patrick Anderson's [The Kid in Purple Pants: Structured Approaches to Educating Underprivileged Students](#).

You might be interested in what we normally do quickly (a few days) after the main bound book is in print and is beginning its usual (here niche) marketing venture.

We make the book widely available in digital (ebook) format.

(1) As mentioned in the opening paragraph, even before the paperback returns from the printer we are selling that book's modified ebook partner, except that the format we sell contains a similar layout and is in PDF format.

That means that there is very little change in the book itself: it keeps its page numbers, a full Table of Contents and Index, and the artwork (almost none in this book) is locked in place. That's because the PDF format is read on computers and can be printed out if the buyer wishes. The book costs \$19.95 in paperback and \$16 in all ebook versions. The bound and ebooks each have their own ISBN. And only the front cover is used in the ebook.

(2) First we then sent the same PDF version to [Lightning Source](#) to get it included in their free ebook listing. That takes a few minutes, and results in very few sales.

(3) Then we took the final paperback manuscript and stripped

it down and modified it so it could be used on the popular ebook readers. We sent it first to [Kindle](#) (they sell the most), following the submission instructions.

Because the pad or tablet readers don't have set page sizes (the text rolls from page to page and it can be reduced and magnified, changing the word count on each page) we must eliminate page numbers in the Table of Contents, in the text, and in the Index. We keep the text sizes between 11 and 14 points, use Times New Roman, strip out the Word format instructions (using only Normal), redo out artwork to fit into their very limited style and size, and use flush left only. [How to Get Your Book Published Free in Minutes and Marketed Worldwide in Days](#) gives the details, as does Mark Coker's fee style book at the opening website page, left side, at [Smashwords](#).

To submit this modified digital file to Kindle we must fill in the needed listing information: title, author, price, description, author's bio, categories, keywords, language, and selling spread and rights. Then we uploaded the book file and the book cover, and waited to see if the cover was accepted and the text looks correct in the preview reader.

In fact our cover art was smaller than the Kindle minimum so we contacted the cover artist to pump it up to 1400 by 2400 pixels, which worked fine.

As usual, I had to tinker with the book's interior text. Some things don't convert well from Word to mobi. Mostly, type size differed, chapter headings didn't center, and it needed some paragraph separations. I had to adjust and read it three times before it was ready to go.

I gave them permission to use it, not to lend it, and not to put it in the KDP Select program. In a few hours it was available for Anderson fans and others to buy and enjoy!

(4) I then went through almost the same steps with [Nook](#),

except here they convert the text copy into epub. That means I must read the reset book at their site again, in final form, and make modest corrections, and reread it, and tinker some more until it's finally ready for public purchase. Nook is the easiest of the "open" publishers to use, and for us the least purchased. Bitter joy.

(5) The trickiest is [Smashwords](#). The submission form is similar, it has quirky sections (like inserting the correct copyright wording), and it takes a while to get the interior text converted into eight computer languages. Of those all you must read is the epub version. I just send them the final Nook ebook version and it is almost ready to use at Smashwords. Fiddle with it until it's ready to go. Alas, that's usually not the end. It may be OK now but in a day or two you will likely be informed that it needs correction. What that means is that Smashwords will sell your ebook as is but to get it inserted in the premium catalog for selling acceptance by iPad and Sony more is needed—probably a better or bigger cover.

We didn't send this as an ebook to Scribd (maybe later) or Lulu, nor as a paperback to Lulu, Blurb, or CreateSpace (since we are already selling the core book as a paperback), but they too are open publishers that would sell our new book too.

We get these versions out and marketing (very modestly) very early in the book's selling life so we can direct potential buyers to their availability in our marketing campaign. To retain a visual similarity, all copies of this book (paper or digital) have the same front cover and all ebooks use the same bound or ebook ISBNs.

I hope this helps.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett