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Choosing an eBook Compiler

By Samir Jhaveri

You've written and revised your ebook, hired an artist who has produced outstanding graphics, and now you're ready to actually put together your ebook. What you need to make an ebook is software called an ebook Compiler.

There are many different compilers to choose from, but first, you need to know exactly what an ebook Compiler does. Here is the simple explanation:

An ebook compiler is a software program that converts either text pages or HTML text into a single executable file or an ebook.

If you or someone you hired has created a file with graphics in HTML, you will need an HTML ebook Compiler. This type of compiler requires a working knowledge of the HTML tag language. You can also use software to do this for you, such as Microsoft FrontPage or Macromedia Dreamweaver.

There are a large number of ebook Compilers available on the market, all with glowing sales copy and tekkie language. It can get very confusing and overwhelming very fast without some simple guidelines to help you figure out which compiler is right for you.

Choosing an ebook Compiler depends on a number of factors:

1. How did you create your pages? Did you use HTML or PDF format? There are many more compilers available for HTML, but you can find some very good compilers that will convert your PDF files into an ebook.

2. Consider how easy the program is to use and the thoroughness of the software's instruction manual. It is absolutely necessary that the compiler you buy have an instructional manual, documentation, or online "wizards." If it doesn't, your chances of figuring out how to correctly use the program are compromised, and the time required doing so is going to be significant. Many manufacturers of compilers offer a free trial version so you can play around with it and see if it suits your needs. Download the trial version and ascertain that it actually does what it claims to do.

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3. Security features. If you plan to sell your ebook, check out the security features of the compiler software carefully. Security features should include: prevention of the reader from modifying text, access only to the pages you assign or by entering a password, different ways of generating passwords such as secure passwords, user-friendly, and open passwords.

4. Supported scripting. Find out what scripts the software supports. Scripting allows you to create special effects, customize menus, and create and modify other user interactivity. Choose a compiler that permits you to include graphics, search windows, hyperlinks, forms, surveys, etc.

5. Pricing. This is a factor that is not always easy to gauge. The highest priced compilers are not automatically your best choice. Choose your compiler based on the necessary requirements for your Ebook. That means you need to know exactly how you plan to use your Ebook and what functions you require.

Let's look at some of these factors in more detail. First of all, make sure you have the correct browser to run the compiler. The majority of HTML compilers use Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape. Check out the version that the compiler supports. Compilers that require a browser will not run on a computer that does not have the required browser installed. However, there are ebook HTML compilers that don't require you to have any browser installed on your computer. These compilers run on any Windows system.

If you choose a compiler that requires a browser, check to ascertain that the browser is installed correctly and that it is properly configured to the specifications of the compiler. Check to see if certain functions are turned off or on, and make any adjustments according to the compiler instructions.

Security is an essential element of any compiler, regardless of whether you plan to sell or give away your ebook. One of the main reasons for using a compiler is to prevent the reader from modifying the contents. A secure compiler allows access only to the pages you want the user to access unless they enter a correct password.

To find out how secure an ebook HTML compiler is, open an ebook on it. While it is open, check the temporary directory of your computer. This can usually be accessed by typing in C:\Windows\temp. If you see a bunch of files when your ebook is open or running, it means that your computer is decompressing the secure data from your ebook before showing the ebook to the viewer. This method is not secure! It means that anyone with the knowledge of how to access these temporary files can steal the secure data and then they can fiddle with your ebook to their evil heart's desire. Remember, one of the main purposes of buying and using an HTML compiler is to protect your property.

Next, let's discuss passwords. When trying to choose an ebook Compiler, check out the type of passwords that the compiler supports. Almost all compilers offer some kind of password protection that insures that the user can only access the contents they have purchased from you. However, the best compilers offer varied ways to generate different types of passwords. Choose a compiler that gives you the options of secure, user-friendly, and open password generation.

Another important factor when it comes to passwords is how the compiler generates them. A compiler

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that has internal password protection generation built into the software is more secure than compilers that link to live Internet password control systems.

Find out if the compiler generates passwords online. If it has this option, it allows you to choose any payment processing system you want or to do the payment processing yourself.

Next, look into the size of ebook the compiler supports. The best compilers can create ebooks up to 2 GB in size without decompressing the HTML pages or images to your hard disk. Usually, ebooks that are 2 GB in size can easily support 6 GB of compressed data. The catch here is that only text files will generally be compressible.

You do not want a compiler that decompresses this amount of data when the user attempts to open your ebook. This would mean that anyone who purchases your ebook will have to wait for all the data

to decompress before they can access your ebook right after downloading it. So look for compilers that only decompress temporarily files that are NOT HTML to the local harddisk. Non-HTML files include Flash, Word, and Acrobat files. This type of compiler is more secure and certainly faster.

Make sure the compiler you choose is compatible with your system software. Check out what version of Windows it requires, and make sure you have that version before buying your compiler.

Support issues are extremely important. Choose a compiler that includes an installation program. This program allows your user to choose a number of different places on their computer to install the ebook, to place a shortcut on their desktop, and to add the ebook, if they choose, to the Start Programs menu.

You also want excellent and accessible vendor support. Make sure you can access quick technical support! At three o'clock in the morning, this factor will be VERY important. Also, check to see the terms of free technical support offered. Unlimited technical support is obviously the best option.

Check to see if the company that puts out the compiler software offers a service level agreement. This agreement is to assure you of their quality response to your questions or problems.

A good thing to consider is how long the compiler has been on the market. Usually, the version number will give you an idea. The longer the program is on the market, the higher the version number, the more bugs have been worked out.

When choosing an ebook compiler, do not be swayed by incredible promises and dazzling sales copy. Do your homework first, and then consider all the above issues and factors before choosing an ebook compiler.

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Samir Jhaveri is the Head Marketing Director of

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Rating Internet Ebook Creator Software Programs

By Amin Sadak

The purchased software is user-friendly with easy-to-follow help files that not only guide you through the steps of compiling your Ebook, but also explains what an Ebook compiler does. The software provides detailed instructions on how to create source files from Microsoft Word 2000 and 1997, PowerPoint 2000 and 1997, and HTML documents. It contains less detailed instructions for creating source files from other programs.

This compiler allows for password protection of your entire Ebook or for selected pages. Additionally, you can set a time limit on your Ebook. When the runs out, the customer no longer has access unless they pay for it. In other words, it allows you to create a demo version of your Ebook for marketing purposes.

You can set a single password or multiple passwords. Using multiple passwords assigns each user their own specific password. Online help files guide you through setting up your passwords. You can also create a Sales and Thank-you page for selling a password protected Ebook. This is a good choice for the novice, particularly since it includes basic features for password protection and distribution.

* Activ Ebook Compiler

This is an easy to use compiler that provides excellent features. This software can support HTML, JPEG, GIF, and all active plug-ins. Features includes password protection, branding, internet linking, icon customization, assigning unique serial numbers, splash screen, file compression, and start-up messages. It also provides free lifetime upgrades. Additionally, it includes a preprocessor, re-brander, active script, and detailed instructions for using HTML, Power Point, and Microsoft Word files.

There are several other excellent Ebook compilers on the market that are worth looking into.

Ebook Generator features splash screens, password protection, branding, icon customization, and compression control. Additionally, it includes virus prevention that alerts the user to any modifications made to your Ebook and offers usage statistics so you can track your Ebook's use. With all these advanced features, this is an excellent compiler for the beginner because it is exceptionally easy to run.

Ebook Creator is another excellent compiler, supporting HTML, JPEG, GIF, and PNG graphics, and Javascript, VB script, and Java applets. It also supports all Internet Explorer plug-ins. Standard features include unique serial numbers, direct linking to a form or a page on your website, disabled right clicking, and search functions. The software allows for expiration after a set number of days or

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usages, which allows you to create demo versions. You can create up to 1000 different passwords; every time the Ebook is downloaded, a unique password is required to access protected pages. The software provides user-friendly menus and buttons that allow the beginner to the advanced user to easily create their Ebook.

Obviously, there are some excellent compilers out there. So figure out EVERYTHING you need in terms of features, and then compare prices and options. Do take advantage of demo versions if they are offered before purchasing.

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