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Don't Judge An Ebook By Its Cover

By Stephen Brennan

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For a change, my article headline doesn't have some sarcastic undertone or alternative meaning! I haven't utilised some delicious pun to demonstrate a point, this time. This article is actually about what you might look for to determine a worthwhile ebook from the tons of absolute crud that abound online.

In the first place, of course, the headline says it plain and simple. Don't judge an ebook by its cover...literally. There is some really wonderful 'cover creation' software that can be got for very little. It's good news for the ebook publisher but it also means that the most useless and least valuable piece of rubbish can look like a million dollars in the promo'.

Generally speaking, when it comes to ebooks on the Internet, most people, especially those who would be exposed to this article, are going to be presented more often than not with non-fiction, that is, guides, tutorials and instructional about marketing and home business or 'how to...' type titles.

There are many such titles available and some are quite worthwhile and of value, especially to people just beginning on their 'online business adventure'. I am referring to these sorts of ebooks, rather than novels, which are a completely different animal and are purchased for entirely different reasons.

The ebook 'litmus test' is two-fold as far as I am concerned. If an author or publisher is truly confident that an ebook is worth what they ask, they will feature two important things:

The first is a 'glimpse' of some sort, whether it is a sample of the ebook for download, or a few screenshots of pages, so that prospective buyers can see, prior to buying, the type of information being imparted, the look and style of the ebook and features with which it is sold. This can be a bit of a dilemma for some, as there is often the question of how much to 'give away', but anyone serious about their ebook and what it offers, will find a medium. Even when it's not much, it's something – that is, they're happy for you to see something BEFORE you buy.

The second is a 'money back' guarantee. The Internet has given us instant access to information in many forms, including the ebook. This instant access has made it necessary for people to pay 'up front'

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for information that bears a charge. The mechanisms for this access, the likes of [b]Clickbank[/b], have such transactions down to a fine art. They also have a built-in safety net in the form of their '90 day money back guarantee'.

If you buy an ebook (or software) through Clickbank and simply change your mind, your credit card WILL be credited without question. Some authors and publishers sell directly, rather than use the services of such a facility. Some offer a similar guarantee however, some people have discovered to their chagrin, that a guarantee from just anyone is not much good.

This would suggest that purchasing directly from the author or publisher is a risky business, but I'm not going to go that far. I will go so far as to say that I would only be confident if a click on the 'Buy Me' button led to a Clickbank (or similar) secure purchase facility with an 'enforceable' guarantee of

satisfaction.

As I've said, there are all kinds of ebooks about all kinds of topics. Some are nothing more than a promotional catalogue for a given product or website. Others are simply a means to get others to sign up for the myriad of lists and/or facilities, which are available. Some affiliates attempt to extend their downlines by supplying free ebooks with links to their many programs. Needless to say, these types of ebooks shouldn't be charged for at all.

Apart from actually reviewing an ebook, there is no way to ascertain whether the actual content is of value or worth what is being asked. In fact, as we all have different needs and different expectations, opinions would vary somewhat anyway. But of course, the 'money back' guarantee would seem to negate this particular concern – if you're not satisfied, get your money back.

There is one final consideration, which I think is important in determining the value and quality of an ebook and also the seriousness of the author (or publisher). The way in which the ebook is presented and the program used to enable it to be viewed by those who access it. A number of 'ebook compilers' are nothing more than 'offline browsers'. They are simply a series of web pages linked together and packaged as an ebook. Some can't even be viewed without a browser like Internet Explorer®.

My feeling is that an author who 'loves' his/her book (and every author should consider their creation as a child) should only be satisfied with presenting it in the best possible way. '3D Page Turning' technology has been available for a few years but has come into it's own in the last twelve months. The programs needed to publish in this format are more expensive than your 'offline browsers' but the finished product is in every respect a 'virtual book'.

You open the book at the cover and you turn pages (and see them turning) as in a real book. The pages and the text look every bit like a real book. In every sense (other than reality itself) you get a 'virtual' or 'e' book'. It is just my opinion and it doesn't have any 'real' bearing on the quality of the content but to me, it represents an attempt to give the reader the look and feel of a real book-reading experience.

These things, to me, represent the difference between a worthwhile ebook and a means to an end,

which unfortunately, some are.

Stephen Brennan runs the 'Home Based Business and Affiliate Center' – <http://www.online-plus.biz>, is publisher of 'Home Based Biz' newsletter and is the author of 'The Affiliate Guide Book' – The Definitive guide to becoming a successful Internet Affiliate (at little or no cost) – available at <http://www.ebooks.online-plus.biz>

You Do Judge a Book or Ebook by Its Cover

By Leva Duell

Do you buy ugly books? Probably not. Book covers sell books. Ask any bookstore manager. Ask any successful Web site that sells books.

"Don't judge a book by its cover." We've all heard this saying before but the truth is, we all do it anyway.

First impressions greatly influence how we judge people. Impressions are no less important when it comes to the items we buy. For example, imagine that you are looking through a magazine. You come to a page that has two nearly identical ads side by side. Both ads are selling books on the same subject. However, in one ad the book is shown with a plain cover with text only and no illustrations. In the other ad, the book has a colorful, illustrated cover, along with the text. Now, which ad is likely to catch your interest?

Sure, the title and other text will go a long way to inform of the book's contents. But, unconsciously you are going to be attracted to the illustrated cover. Your impression will be that this book has greater value. Simply put, you decide that "what you see is what you get" and that is usually enough to sway you to buy that particular book.

Let's say you visit two different Web sites, both selling an ebook about starting a home-based business.

On one site, the book cover is a flat rectangle representing the basic shape of the front of a book. Furthermore, while it has some color and illustrations, these images have nothing to do with the subject of the book, plus the photo is a little blurry.

The second site shows a three-dimensional ebook image. It "looks" like a real book. The picture conveys a mom working on a computer with a child on her lap, representing a home-based computer business. Added to that, the photo and the colors on the cover image all work well together.

Now, which ebook are you likely to be drawn to? Which one gives you a sense that it has greater value? Clearly, the one represented by the well-designed, 3D cover with a relevant image will influence you in a more positive way, and will more likely induce you to purchase that book.

Every successful marketer learned back in Marketing 101 that the packaging will most often determine

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how well an item will sell. Successful Internet marketers of ebooks and software already know this. These ebook and software sellers understand the importance of the cover design (book or box). They use quality 3D images to represent their products and increase their perceived value.

Let's put it this way: You may have produced the world's most important book on your subject, but who is going to know if nobody reads it?

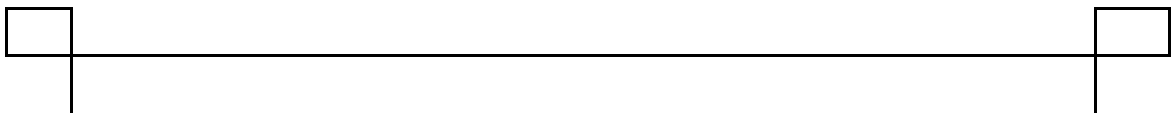
A quality ebook image is vital to your ebook sales! If you are selling a book on the Internet (heck, even if you are giving it away), your marketing success is going to depend on how potential buyers perceive its value.

Put a little more crudely, dress your ebook in rags, showing a flat cover with no illustrations or inappropriate images, and no one will want it. Display your ebook in the equivalent of a tuxedo, a 3D cover with well-thought-out images, colors and title text, and you will instantly boost your ebook sales!

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