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Using the Right Images and Photos for Your Ebook Cover

By Leva Duell

"A picture is worth a thousand words." That saying may be ages old but its message is just as vital

today as when it was first uttered. Simply put, a single image can often communicate what might take you one thousand words (more or less) to say or write.

You have already spent the time putting together an ebook or software package that you want to market on the Internet. You have chosen the right words for your title and any other text you might use on the book cover.

Now you have to carefully design your cover to best represent your book or software. You have to find the right graphic(s) that will support the title and enhance the perceived value of your ebook.

There are two common forms of graphics: clip art and stock photos. Take some time exploring sites providing stock photos and clip art. It can be a lot of fun.

First of all, what is clip art? There are many differing opinions out there. Some call it "ready-made art" because sometimes clip art can include photos, pictures, or complete illustrations. But, for the sake of this article, we are defining clip art to mean: All ready-made pieces of digital art, such as illustrations, borders and line drawings that are used as graphic elements in a document. They can be either raster images (jpeg, tiff, bmp, gif) or vector images (eps, wmf, ai). They can be black and white, or color.

Regardless of what you call it, clip art should be used sparingly in quality ebook covers or software boxes. The fact is, clip art can range in quality from rough drawings to refined images. But, clip art is never mistaken for high quality paintings or photos. It is not intended to be the only or the primary image in a larger work (like an ebook cover).

Perhaps the best rule of thumb is: If you are not sure if you should use a piece of clip art in your document (ebook cover, box cover), don't use it. If you are not careful, the wrong choice of clip art can imply a lack of quality.

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The above statements notwithstanding, clip art can, if used properly, be an effective element in a quality ebook cover.

Where do you find graphics? Without a doubt, there are many sites where you can get images and photos you can use. There are literally hundreds of Web sites where you can find clip art of all types and quality. Just search online for "free clip art", "free images", or "free graphics." Some may require that you sign up for a free membership.

Just be sure that you are allowed to use any clip art you find, and that it is of high quality. It is very important that you carefully read the "Terms of Use" before using any image. Some sites may only allow use of their images for personal use. Others allow commercial use. Still other sites let each contributor of the images determine what kinds of usage will be allowed. When paying a fee for an image, the fee usually grants you permission to use the image freely in any way that you wish.

When using an image for your ebook cover, make sure it is okay to use in a commercial situation, and

check to see if you have to pay for that use, or if there are other requirements like giving the author/photographer credit for the image. You can also purchase large collections of clip art on CD sets in computer stores or on the Internet.

Good luck in your search for the right images. Finding the right picture will make your efforts worthwhile. It will increase sales of your ebook or software. If you find yourself a little lost trying to find the right images and design of your cover, then perhaps you should consider hiring an experienced graphic designer to produce the cover for you.

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How to Choose Stock Photography for Your Ebook Covers

By Leva Duell

Choosing the right images for your ebook is important to convey the message you want. Stock photography is an effective tool for your ebook covers.

Here are some tips to help you find and choose stock photos.

1. Photography agencies have many selections. Stock photography is more cost effective than custom photography and will work for most ebook covers.
2. Be flexible. Don't expect to find the exact image you want. For example, if you provide information about home schooling, you may want to find an image of a women with a child. The images you'll find

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may not be the size, color, or position you're looking for and the child may not be the right age for your topic. Determine what message you want to convey. Then search for an image that conveys that message. If you don't find the right image, you may want to take your own pictures with a digital camera or hire a photographer.

3. Use a free comp image to try out the image. Most stock agencies offer a free comp image for position only so that you can try it and see if it's going to work for your purpose.

4. Buy the size and resolution you need. Don't pay more than you need to. So don't pay for 300 dpi resolution when you only need 72 dpi resolution for an ebook cover image.

5. If you don't find what you need, contact the web site. They may have images that are not featured on the site.

6. Know how to search. Try different keywords. If you are looking for a women in the woods, try keywords like "women woods, women trees, women forest."

7. Consider combining two or more images. Sometimes you have to put two or more images on top of each other to create the image you want. You can use a graphic program to do this. In the example above, you may find a great image of a forest without a women. You may want to put a picture of a women on top of the forest image.

8. Check the "Terms of Use." Some sites only allow you to use their images for personal use, while others allow commercial use (which is what you will want for your ebook that you are selling). Other sites let each contributor of the images determine what kinds of usage will be allowed. If you're using the image for an extended period of time, you may have to pay every year.

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