

# eBooks 101

The Digital Content Strategy for Reaching Customers Anywhere, Anytime, on Any Device



**Ann Rockley and Charles Cooper**

*Foreword by Dev Ganesan, Aptara*

# Foreword

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eBooks aren't just for books anymore.

Our authors, Ann Rockley and Charles Cooper, correctly present them as the ultra-convenient, flexible, mobile delivery formats that they are. eBooks provide rich and interactive user experiences, not just to customers of Barnes & Noble and of Amazon, but to *your* customers, prospects, employees, partners, and shareholders.

It doesn't matter if you sell books, tractors, cosmetics, medical devices, smart phones, or pharmaceuticals, or if you work in a university, consulting firm, or healthcare company. If you produce or distribute large volumes of content, you're a publisher. And as a publisher, your challenge is to provide your customers with the content they need when and where they need it, in the language they prefer, on the device of their choosing.

The problem when you're publishing an eBook is that there is no prescribed formula for success. Most traditional publishers are not good role models because they still employ production processes rooted in outdated (and often manual) print publishing practices that were never intended to tackle today's electronic challenges.

In order to profit - literally - from new digital markets, you must rethink the way you create, manage, publish, and deliver content. You must re-engineer your processes to create a more flexible and sustainable future. You must re-imagine a production process that frees your content to be easily transformed into whatever new formats and devices that your customers desire. And it all starts with recognizing the inefficiencies of tackling each new publishing challenge from scratch. For instance, instead of considering eBook creation as an add-on at the end of the print publishing lifecycle, you must adopt a content-centered publishing approach.

If you're considering a foray into eBook or app production, "eBooks 101: The Digital Content Strategy for Reaching Customers Anywhere, Anytime, on Any Device" is the best place to start your journey. Think of it as your go-to reference guide. It contains the secret sauce of eBook production, advice on avoiding pitfalls, device-specific and standard-specific information, design guidance, XML publishing tips, and a best-of-breed approach for creating, managing, and delivering eBooks and apps - in the most efficient way possible.

Rockley and Cooper call their approach the "Unified Content Strategy" - a repeatable, systematic process that supports the holy grail of publishing - separating content from its formatting, and making it possible to deliver content easily to any device, on any platform, in any format (print, web, mobile) - whenever and wherever your readers desire.

The authors have been helping organizations around the globe do just that, by developing repeatable, systematic, and strategic approaches to creating, managing, and delivering digital information. Their experiences over the past twenty years have made them some of the most highly sought after content management and digital enterprise publishing consultants in the world. They've distilled years of wisdom into this easy-to-read quick reference guide, the first eBook on eBook production

strategies, and a necessary one.

At Aptara, we help organizations leverage next-generation publishing approaches to ensure that they can meet the rapidly changing needs of digital consumers. Our customers are creating large volumes of content faster, more efficiently, and less expensively than ever before. And it's being published - often in parallel - to print, online, and mobile devices of all types, in formats that provide robust reader experiences.

Freeing your content from print-based workflows and developing device-independent content creation processes is not only possible, it's a highly achievable and profit-maximizing necessity. The bottom line: whatever type of content you publish, if you want to successfully compete in the digital age, you must design a process that enables profiting from its digital distribution.

"eBooks 101: The Digital Content Strategy for Reaching Customers Anywhere, Anytime, on Any Device" is not just a book about how to create eBooks. It's a quick and ready reference that will help you get your publishing processes in order so you can create engaging, interactive eBooks and apps that will dazzle your customers. And it's a handy instruction manual on how to do it right - the first time.

Ready? Set? It's time to ease into digital... the right way.

[image of signature]

Dev Ganesan

President and Chief Executive Officer

Aptara, Inc.

# Chapter 1: What is an eBook?

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To end confusion over eBooks, we break them down into three types: Basic eBooks, Enhanced eBooks and eBook apps. And we discuss where eBooks come from, and where they're going to.

There are several kinds of eBooks:

- **Basic eBook:** includes text, images, table of contents, but no additional functionality
- **Enhanced eBook:** includes audio, video, and certain interactive features like Javascript
- **eBook app:** software that looks and acts like a printed book, but provides an interactive experience

## Basic eBooks

An eBook is an electronic book. It may be a digitized form of a printed book or be electronic only. In general, it's an electronic representation of a printed book. eBooks, as opposed to Enhanced eBooks or eBook apps, typically consist of text and graphics. They can be displayed on eReaders, tablets, personal computers, and mobile phones.

eBooks aren't all that new. An excellent source for examples of Basic eBooks is the text files provided by Project Gutenberg started by Michael Hart in 1971. Project Gutenberg is dedicated to making "information, books and other materials available to the general public in forms a vast majority of the computers, programs and people can easily read, use, quote, and search."

In order to do this, it was decided that the best way would be to distribute these documents using the lowest common denominator for computer representation at the time, which was ASCII text. This means that there was no formatting, not even for italic, bold or underlining.

The advantage of a Basic eBook like those provided by Project Gutenberg is that it can be read on just about any device; large or small, color or black and white, it's all the same. Another advantage of Project Gutenberg eBooks is that they can be searched by keyword (digitized versions, not scanned versions), giving you greater access to the content.

Today's eBooks provide a much more readable format including bold, italics, font sizes, and pretty much anything you can do on a web page.

## Enhanced eBooks

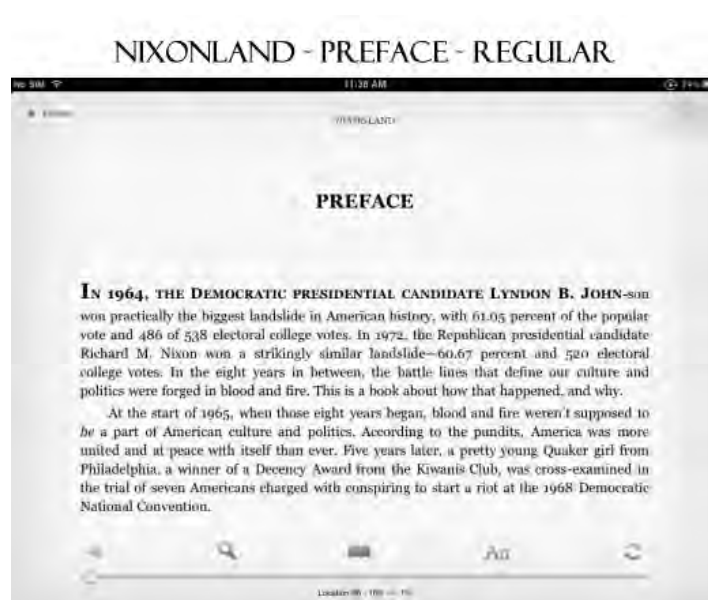
An Enhanced eBook is an eBook that has been “enhanced” with audio, video, 3D or links to external information or social media.

Enhanced eBooks are where eBooks start to distance themselves from their printed counterparts. An enhanced eBook typically contains audio, video and may include Javascript for interactivity.

Some enhancements won't work on all devices. Some will work on one device in a class but not on others in the same class, so unless you know what device your audience is using, and what the abilities of that device are, adding enhancements might not be effective.

If you're not planning on only publishing your eBook to an E Ink-based eReader, your opportunities for enhancement are broader.

For example, consider two different versions of *Nixonland* by Rick Perlstein, published both as a Basic eBook (see “Nixonland - Preface - Regular”) on the Kindle and as an Enhanced eBook through the Apple iBookstore.



The standard eBook contains text and images and provides the types of information that are included in a printed book. In *Nixonland* the author refers to specific events: speeches, letters, and interviews. A simple Enhanced eBook can provide links to outside sources and references. If you're enhancing an eBook for an eReading platform such as the Kindle or NOOK, that's about as far as you can take it.

However, on the iPad or similar device, displaying information can go much farther. The enhancement of this book on the iPad actually contains embedded media, and in this case, movies of the actual interview (see “Nixonland - Preface - Enhanced”). Not only can you read about the interview, you can actually watch it. The “>” icon in the center of the image indicates that it's a movie, not a photograph. Clicking on the icon starts the movie.

# NIXONLAND - PREFACE - ENHANCED



If you're aiming at a broad audience, you'll need to make trade-offs and design decisions about what type of Enhanced eBook you want to produce.

## eBook app

An eBook application (eBook app) is a method of delivering an interactive media-rich experience to the reader.

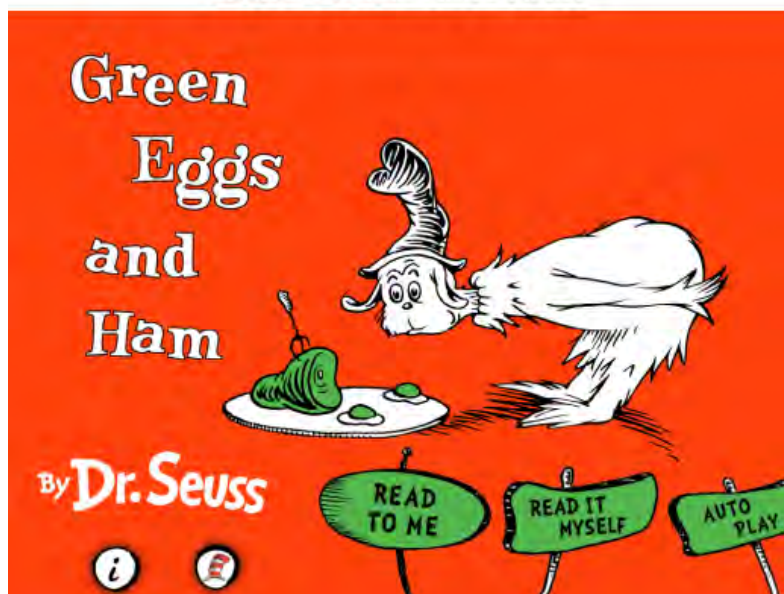
A book as a fully fledged application (app) is the next step in enhancing books.

Apps are platform-specific, and because of this you can be fairly confident in the capabilities of the device used to read your content. If you are developing an eBook app for the Apple iPad, you'll know that it has a color screen, audio playback capabilities, and a particular touch interface. You'll also know what limitations it has (Adobe Flash is not supported, though other video formats are) so you can design with both the abilities and limitations in mind.

Some of the best known eBook apps on the iPad include *The Elements* by Theodore Gray, and *Green Eggs and Ham* by (of course) Dr. Seuss. These books were turned into apps for totally different reasons.

*Green Eggs and Ham* has charmed generations of children (and adults) as a paper book based on its intelligent word play and delightful illustrations. It really didn't need improvement, but by turning it into an app, the publishers (Oceanhouse Media) have enhanced the experience (see "Green Eggs and Ham"). The words and images are still there of course, but the app can "read" the eBook out loud, and as this occurs, the spoken word can be highlighted to indicate what word is being spoken. The app can read the story without highlighting, or as you are reading. And you can touch the images to find out what the thing is (for example, Sam, Ham, or Fox) that you just pointed to. It also provides a teaching/learning experience for parents and children to help children master vocabulary and simple grammar. It takes nothing away from the reading experience, but does inject a bit more fun into an already enjoyable story.

### GREEN EGGS AND HAM



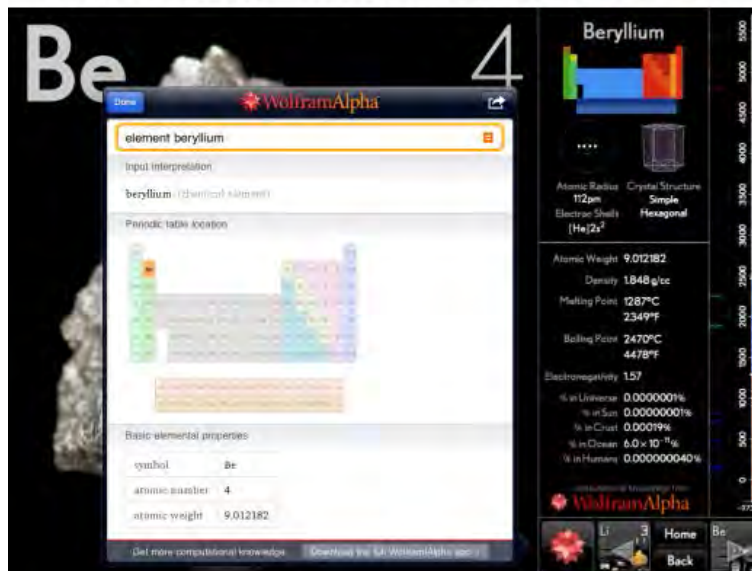
*The Elements* is a different beast altogether (see “The Elements”). Based on the award-winning, beautiful and informative 2009 book of the same name, the app is a solid re-imagining of what a book can be when viewed on a powerful tablet computer. It mixes amazing photography and irreverent and informative text with the interactive and web-linked capabilities of the iPad. In the printed book, each element is displayed on its own two-page spread, with a full-color photo of an example of the element on the left page. In the app, the photo of the element isn’t just a flat, unmoving image, it actually spins showing all sides of the sample - and you can control the rate and direction of the spin with your finger. It gives you a feeling of depth and presence that a static image can't. You can also touch an icon and be taken to the web to get more information about the element. You can jump quickly from element to element in the periodic table with the touch of your finger.



Also, Theodore Gray is co-founder of Wolfram Research whose computational search engine, Wolfram | Alpha, drives the data gathering and display functions in the app (see “The Elements - WA Computation Engine”). Wolfram Research sells Mathematica which is used to create the graphical representations of data in the app. So in addition to creating a wonderful book and application, they've managed to develop a desirable advertisement for their products!



## THE ELEMENTS - WA COMPUTATION ENGINE



The screenshot displays the WolframAlpha mobile interface for the element Beryllium (Be). The interface is split into two main sections. The left section shows a search bar with the query "element beryllium", a search result "beryllium (chemical element)", a periodic table with Beryllium highlighted, and a "Basic elemental properties" section. The right section provides detailed properties for Beryllium, including its atomic radius, crystal structure, electron shells, atomic weight, density, melting and boiling points, and electronegativity. A vertical temperature scale is visible on the far right.

Basic elemental properties	
symbol	Be
atomic number	4
atomic weight	9.012182

Beryllium Properties	
Atomic Radius	112pm
Crystal Structure	Simple Hexagonal
Electron Shells	[He]2s <sup>2</sup>
Atomic Weight	9.012182
Density	1848 g/cc
Melting Point	1287°C 2349°F
Boiling Point	2470°C 4478°F
Electronegativity	1.57
% in Universe	0.0000001%
% in Sun	0.00000001%
% in Crust	0.00019%
% in Oceans	6.0 × 10 <sup>-14</sup> %
% in Humans	0.000000040%

The iPad is not the only device that supports eBook apps. Smartphones and other tablet computers, especially those running the Android operating system, also offer a similar, rich experience for users.