

# Epub Tools: In-Depth Review

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# Introduction

— [ Scott Prentice, President of Leximation, Inc.

— [ Specializing in FrameMaker plugin development as well as structured FrameMaker conversions, consulting, and development. FrameMaker user/developer since 1991.

— [ Developed DITA-FMx, a FrameMaker plugin for efficient DITA authoring and publishing.

— [ Consulting for custom Help systems, creative/functional web applications, and EPUB solutions.

# What is EPUB?

- [ EPUB is an ebook file format that can be read on almost every device and platform
- [ Requires a “reader” application or dedicated reader device
- [ A collection of XHTML, XML, CSS, and media files wrapped up in a “zip” archive
- [ Defines the content and formatting of the ebook

# EPUB 2 or EPUB 3?

- [ EPUB 3 is current spec, but full support still weak
- [ EPUB 3 adds interactivity, multimedia, more (via HTML 5)
- [ To take full advantage of EPUB 3 you'll have to hand code, no tools provide interactive features (yet)
- [ If you do include EPUB 3 features, it will limit the readers
- [ Use simple EPUB 3 or EPUB 2

# EPUB publishing tools

— [ Adobe TCS (RoboHelp, FrameMaker) - EPUB 3

— [ ComponentOne Doc-To-Help - EPUB 3

— [ EC Software Help & Manual - EPUB 2

— [ MadCap Flare - EPUB 3

— [ Webworks ePublisher - EPUB 2

# EPUB publishing tools

— [ DITA Open Toolkit + DITA for Publishers plugin - EPUB 2

— [ Docbook - EPUB 2 and 3, various options

— [ FrameMaker + ElmSoft EPubFm2 (FM 6-10) - EPUB 2

— [ Author-it + ePUB Publishing Extension - EPUB 2

— [ Word plugins? (YMMV)

— [ PDF to EPUB converters

# Publishing tool issues

— [ Internal EPUB file structure - simpler makes it easy to make manual modifications

— [ Use of “fake” lists vs. real HTML lists

— [ Use of @style attributes on elements vs. CSS classes

— [ Limited metadata

— [ Control of “chapter” breaks

— [ “EPUB 3” tools really don’t offer more than EPUB 2

# What about Kindle?

- [ Kindlegen (from Amazon) converts EPUB to MOBI/KF8
- [ May require modifications to EPUB for decent Kindle output
- [ Simple EPUB coding produces the best Kindle output
- [ KF8 supports some of the EPUB 3 features
- [ Always test after conversion!

# EPUB tools and utilities

- [ EPUB editor

- Oxygen XML editor - EPUB 2 and EPUB 3

- BlueGriffon EPUB Edition - EPUB 2 and EPUB 3

- Sigil - EPUB 2 but works on EPUB 3 files, mostly

- [ Calibre - multi-purpose tool

- [ epubcheck - validator

- [ kindlegen - converts EPUB to MOBI/KF8

# DEMO!

- [ Show output from 3 tools: Doc-To-Help, Flare, RoboHelp
- [ Show output from DITA-OT + DITA for Publishers plugin
- [ Open each EPUB in Oxygen XML Editor
- [ Show working with EPUB in Sigil and BlueGriffon
- [ Show desktop readers

# Resources

— [ EPUB 3 specification - [idpf.org/epub/30](http://idpf.org/epub/30)

— [ EPUB 3 Fixed Layout Format specification - [idpf.org/epub/fxl](http://idpf.org/epub/fxl)

— [ CSS 3 Module Info - [www.css3.info/modules](http://www.css3.info/modules)

— [ Liz Castro - [www.pigsgourdsandwikis.com](http://www.pigsgourdsandwikis.com)

— [ Ebook Ninjas Podcasts - [ebookninjas.com](http://ebookninjas.com)

— [ Resources - [www.epubtest.com/resources.php](http://www.epubtest.com/resources.php)

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