

# Choosing an e-Book Compiler



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## What is an e-Book compiler?

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

There are many different compilers from which to choose, but first, you need to know exactly what an e-book Compiler does.

Here is the simple explanation:

An e-book compiler is a software program that converts either text pages or HTML-coded text into a single executable file; an e-book. In essence, it is as if you took a snapshot of your book so it was in a format usable on the Internet.

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

## How do you choose an e-Book Compiler?

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

Choosing an e-book Compiler depends on a number of factors:

1. How did you create your pages? Was your text prepared in a word processor like Microsoft Word or WordPerfect? Did you save your basic files in document formats like .doc or .wpd? 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 e-book.
2. Consider how easy the compiler 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 make certain it actually does what it claims to do.

3. **Security features.** If you plan to sell your e-book, check out the security features of the compiler software carefully. Security features should include:

- ✚ Preventing of the reader from modifying text.

- ✚ Allowing 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 e-book. That means you need to know exactly how you plan to use your e-book and what functions you require.

## Taking a closer look.

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 e-book 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 e-book. 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 e-book HTML compiler is, open an e-book on it. While it is open, check the temporary directory of your computer. This can usually be accessed by entering C:\Windows\temp. If you see a bunch of files when your e-book is open or running, it means that your computer is decompressing the secure data from your e-book before showing the e-book 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 e-book to their evil heart's desire. Remember, one of the main purposes of buying and using an HTML compiler is to protect your intellectual property.

Next, let's discuss passwords. When trying to choose an e-book Compiler, check out the type of passwords the compiler supports. Almost all compilers offer some kind of password protection that insures that the user (reader) 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 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 e-book the compiler supports. The best compilers can create e-books up to 2 GB in size without decompressing the HTML pages or images to your hard drive. Usually, e-books 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 e-book. This would mean that anyone who purchases your e-book will have to wait for all the data to decompress before they can access the e-book right after downloading it. So look for compilers that only decompress temporarily files that are NOT HTML to the local hard drive. 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 e-book, to place a shortcut on their desktop, and to add the e-book, 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 can 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 e-book 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 the e-book compiler you wish to live with for quite a while.