Adobe® eBook Platform:
Authoring and delivering eBooks across devices

Consumer preferences and publisher requirements

The increasing popularity of eBooks demonstrates that they are not a passing phenomenon. With this rise in adoption comes a solidifying of consumer expectations: consumers want more from eBook experiences than they've been offered in the past. As the market takes hold, it's becoming clear that eBook readers want:

- An open environment where readers can download books from a variety of sources
- Interoperability among devices
- Ability to share books with friends

Consumers are frustrated by "walled garden" approaches that limit their reading to a specific device and prevent sharing books with others. Amazon Kindle users, for example, cannot download EPUB files from their public libraries to their devices. And those who want to access Apple's iBookstore can do so only via their Apple devices, not PCs or Android devices. In fact, according to the Book Industry Study Group (BISG) report, "Consumer Attitudes Towards E-Book Reading – Part 2":

> The inability to read e-books on different devices remained the biggest problem e-book acquirers identified about e-readers.

Publishers have their own requirements as they meet the increase in consumer demand for eBooks. Top among these is a cost-efficient workflow in which publishers can create books in print and digital formats. Publishers also need to integrate their eBook production with existing systems. Additionally, publishers are

concerned about security, and they want their distribution channels to protect their eBooks from piracy.

This white paper investigates how the Adobe eBook Platform provides the interoperability that consumers want as well as fulfills publisher requirements for eBook production and distribution.

The Adobe eBook Platform

The Adobe eBook Platform consists of four key tools: Adobe InDesign® CC software, Adobe Content Server 6 software, the Adobe Reader® Mobile 11 Software Development Kit (SDK), and Adobe Digital Editions software. Together, these tools enable:

- Publishers to create and distribute eBook files

- Retailers and libraries to securely distribute these files to consumers

- Device manufacturers to enable e-readers and smartphones to access eBook files

- Consumers to download and read eBooks

Adobe's solutions support PDF, the standard for final-form eBooks, as well as the EPUB and EPUB3 formats. Developed by the International Digital Publishing Forum, EPUB has become the lingua franca for reflowable eBooks across the industry. Having a common standard allows publishers, wholesalers, retailers, libraries, and consumers to create, distribute, sell, loan, and access eBooks without converting or reformatting files. By adhering to the EPUB standard, the book industry ensures that eBooks get from publisher to consumer with minimal disruption. Because of its importance as a standard, Adobe is helping to drive EPUB adoption with more than 150 industry partners, including Barnes & Noble, Kobo, OverDrive, and Sony.

Adobe Content Server 6

Adobe Content Server allows publishers, retailers, distributors, and libraries to host and manage eBook distribution. This server software encrypts PDF and EPUB eBook files and allows publishers and retailers to manage the rights on the eBook files they distribute. At the outset, Content Server allows publishers to monetize their content. It also enables them to innovate on their business model without being locked into a specific distributor's terms. This reduces the "walled garden" scenario and helps publishers avoid disintermediation by dominant technology players.

Over 150 companies use Content Server to protect PDF and EPUB eBooks, resulting in over 1,000 points of purchase where users can download eBooks, including many public libraries.

Adobe Reader Mobile 11 SDK

The Reader Mobile 11 SDK allows e-reader device manufacturers and eBook application developers to support EPUB and PDF files protected by Content Server in their products. It enables tethered and over-the-air downloads so that consumers can order eBooks directly through their devices or "side-load" them by copying files from their desktops to their mobile devices. Developers who use the Reader Mobile 11 SDK have access to source code as well as complete documentation for the SDK and APIs. In total, over 50 dedicated e-readers and eBook applications use this SDK, including the Barnes & Noble nook, the Sony® Reader, and the Kobo eReader.

Adobe InDesign

Adobe InDesign CC, the layout and design tool for publishers—enables production staff to export EPUB and EPUB3 files from their print layouts. Using InDesign CC, publishers can export eBooks to the Apple iPad, the Sony Reader, the Barnes & Noble nook, and smartphones, as well as personal computers using Microsoft® Windows® or Mac OS.

InDesign allows publishers to include interactivity, animation, sound, and video directly in the native InDesign file, bringing eBooks to life when they are read on a personal computer using Adobe Digital Editions.

Adobe Digital Editions

Adobe Digital Editions is a free, lightweight desktop reading application for PC and Mac that allows eBook consumers to easily download and organize their eBooks easily. Consumers can read their eBooks online and offline, transfer copy-protected eBooks from their personal computers to other devices, organize eBooks into a custom library, and annotate pages. Adobe Digital Editions also lets consumers read eBooks they've borrowed from their public libraries or purchased from a retail outlet.

Digital Editions supports the Sony Reader, the Barnes & Noble nook, and over 50 other devices. In addition to supporting EPUB and EPUB3, Digital Editions supports PDF, which means that consumers can use it to access personal documents.
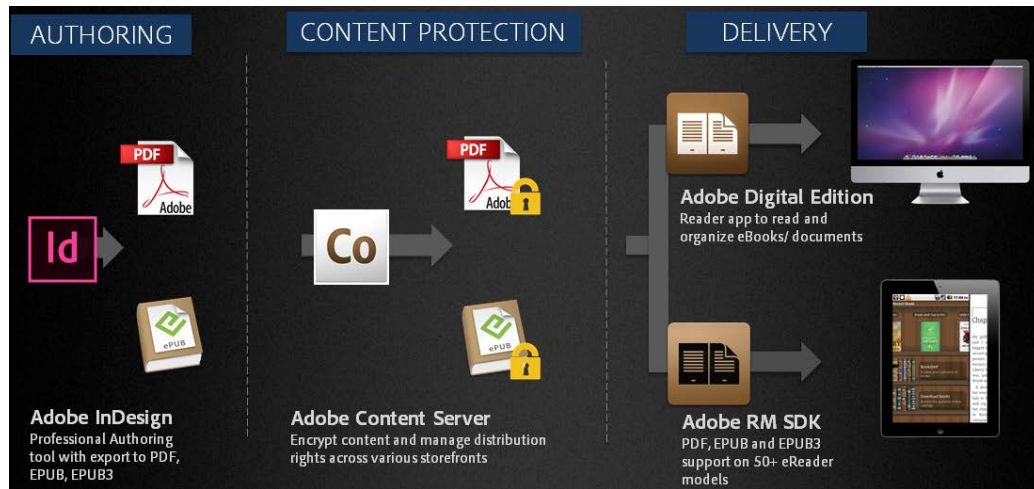
How the Adobe eBook Platform helps meet consumer demands

Open environment

As quickly as consumers are adopting eBooks, they are also experiencing frustration with walled-garden systems. While EPUB is an open standard, many publishers require retailers to encode their eBook files with digital rights management (DRM), making it impossible for users of a specific retailer's device—like the Apple iPad (using iBookstore) or Amazon Kindle—to purchase eBooks from another retailer with a different DRM. This keeps device owners locked into one specific retailer for all their purchases, even if that retailer stops carrying certain titles. The fact that some devices do not allow purchasing or downloading from a variety of retailers or libraries remains, according to the BISG study cited earlier, the top consumer complaint.

With the Adobe eBook Platform, consumers can purchase and download books from a wide variety of retailers: Barnes & Noble, Sony, Kobo and more. Additionally, consumers can download books from public libraries, most of which are powered by Adobe Content Server. The libraries encode an expiration date in their eBooks' DRM. Upon expiration they are returned to the library and no longer exist on the consumer's device.

Device interoperability

The sheer number of devices that can be used to read eBooks has exploded in recent years. In addition to dedicated e-readers, consumers are using smartphones, tablets, and laptops for their immersive reading experiences.

As mentioned, a frequent consumer demand is the ability to read eBooks on a number of devices. For example, consumers might want an e-ink display for reading outdoors and a small backlit display for reading indoors at night, or be able to access their eBooks on their desktops to copy content into a document or an email. Or they might want to view recipes from a digital cookbook on a smartphone and read a children's story from a tablet while in the kitchen. With the Adobe eBook Platform, consumers can do all this. With one common file format and DRM, they can access their eBooks from a variety of devices anywhere, anytime.

How the Adobe eBook Platform helps publishers

Publishers have their own concerns about eBook production and distribution. Producing multiple formats can be expensive, requiring publishers to invest in additional software, train designers, and create separate distribution mechanisms. Leveraging existing creative software, such as Adobe Creative Suite, and associated designer skill sets is a more economical approach.

With the proliferation of devices, publishers want a cost-efficient workflow that leverages existing editorial tools. Instead of outputting multiple file types to reach multiple devices, publishers are looking to streamline the authoring workflow by outputting to a standard file format like PDF or EPUB that is compatible with a wide variety of devices. With InDesign CC, publishers are able to export EPUB, EPUB3 and PDF files from their print

files, which helps reduce content production costs.

Adobe has contributed to the development of other open source tools, including EpubCheck, which validates EPUB files against specifications, and EpubPreflight. EpubPreflight inspects an EPUB file and determines if it is empty or if its images are over the recommended file size limit, which can be helpful to publishers that are converting many eBooks at once and need to preflight them en masse.

However, the InDesign EPUB export feature makes authoring EPUB files easier than ever, and it remains the toolset of choice among publishers who are heavily invested in eBook production.

Summary

The Adobe eBook Platform offers both publishers and consumers a complete solution from authoring to reading. Publishers can leverage their existing use of InDesign to create EPUB, EPUB3 and PDF files and protect and   distribute those files with Content Server. Users with devices enabled by the Reader Mobile SDK (over 50 different dedicated e-reader devices and eBook applications) or desktops with Digital Editions can download and read eBooks easily. Already in thousands of retail locations and libraries all over the world, Adobe's solution satisfies the needs of publishers, distributors, and consumers alike.

For more information
Platform details: *www.adobe.com/solutions/ebook*