



Introduction to Electronic Publishing

Electronic publishing allows authors and publishers to create and distribute ideas and information via computer rather than on paper. Unlike traditional paper-based materials, however, electronic publications (e-pubs) are not limited to text and pictures. E-pubs can also include animation, video, music, narration, visual effects and interactive elements. And because they are not limited by what can be printed on paper, e-pubs can be used to present, and even gather, information in new and exciting ways.

E-pubs created with NeoBook may be simple presentations, requiring very little input from the reader, or they can interact with readers in intelligent ways. Publications can perform calculations, gather information, determine correct answers, communicate with other software, and much more. In fact, many NeoBook publications have more in common with computer programs than printed documents.

Aside from the exciting creative possibilities offered by electronic publishing, there are some real economic advantages in creating electronic works as well. For instance, you can afford to publish only what you need - helpful if short-run printing costs are prohibitive. Also, e-pubs can be created and changed much more quickly than printed materials. Shipping and inventory costs can also be reduced or eliminated. Low cost and free distribution methods available to e-pub authors include: email attachments, web sites, Internet FTP, CD-Rs and diskettes.

NeoBook makes it easy to create high-quality e-pubs. If you can produce printed materials on your computer, you can produce effective electronic versions of your work.

Publication Ideas

NeoBook can be used to author many different types of publications, including:

- * electronic books (e-books)
- * electronic magazines (e-zines)
- * training and testing materials (CBT)
- * multimedia classroom projects
- * sales brochures
- * catalogs
- * greeting cards
- * multimedia resumes
- * kiosk displays
- * slide shows
- * utilities
- * games
- * and more!

In adapting material to an e-pub, try to take advantage of the strengths of this form of publishing. Here are some suggestions that will make your publications shine:

- * Use button controls or hypertext links to allow readers to navigate through your publication.
- * Place navigational buttons in the same location on each page.
- * Use color and illustrations freely. (Unlike traditional print media, there's no extra charge for color!)
- * Break your publication into smaller pieces. Remember, you don't have to worry about the cost of paper, typesetting and printing.
- * Spice up your pages with animation, sound and video.
- * Try to break up large blocks of text into smaller pieces. Large blocks of text can be difficult to read on a computer screen. Also, many people will simply skip over long blocks of text.
- * Use NeoBook's text entry, variables, file reading/writing and other advanced capabilities to make calculations, keep track of user responses, etc. You might not use these complex functions in your first e-pub, but these powerful features are surprisingly easy to implement.

NeoBook includes many sample publications that can be used as a starting point for gathering ideas as well as illustrating how to implement many of the program's features. Feel free to adapt these to create your own publications.

Distributing Your Work

Once completed, NeoBook publications can be compiled into stand-alone 32-bit Windows applications (exe), screen savers (scr) or Internet Explorer® plug-ins. Your readers will not need to have NeoBook in order to read your compiled e-pubs, and you can distribute them to as many people as you like, royalty-free. E-pubs are often distributed via web sites, email attachments, diskette and CDs.

Online Distribution

The Internet has become the most popular and cost-effective distribution method available to electronic publishers. For many authors, this eliminates the need to distribute disks or CDs altogether. Potential online locations for your e-pubs might include an Internet web site, a company-wide or school-wide intranet (internal network), or major online services such as MSN, AOL, zdnet.com and cnet.com to name a few.

While some online services allow uploads to their libraries for a wide variety of publications, others are more particular about what they will accept. Major online services can give your product world-wide exposure, and often it's simply a matter of uploading your file to the service.

If online distribution sounds like a good idea, pay a visit to several services that you think would be a good fit with your publication. Read their submission requirements, and, if necessary, contact them directly. Don't be discouraged if some services refuse your publication - there are plenty of alternatives. Many people prefer to set up their own web site to showcase and distribute their publications.

Retail Distribution

Retail shops may be interested in distributing certain types of publications, especially if the publication relates to products or services that they sell. For example, a fabric outlet may be interested in selling a publication that demonstrates sewing techniques which may encourage customers to buy more fabric. You may choose to start by building a relationship with a particular retailer, or collaborate with a major publisher who might be interested in marketing your work. As always in retail settings, attractive packaging will increase interest in your product. Retail tends to be the most expensive of all the distribution methods.

Contract Work

There are many potential opportunities for creating customized NeoBook publications. Because NeoBook projects take less time and money than traditional programming, you can address smaller niche markets that might otherwise be unable to afford to write their own software. Businesses and individuals may be interested in electronic

newsletters, catalogs, kiosk displays, etc. The key to marketing your work is to focus on what the customer or end-user might need.

Low Cost Advertising

There are many ways to spread the word about your work. Indeed, NeoBook publications can be created to advertise themselves or advertise other publications. Many authors send out “teasers,” or limited versions of publications, aimed at getting people interested in purchasing or subscribing to the full product. Others make brochures (electronic or otherwise) that describe their publications. Consider linking your trial publication with a secure web site where customers can order the full product.

Protecting Your Work

Your work can be protected under various laws and international treaties. It is important that you familiarize yourself with the legal requirements regarding copyrights, trademarks, etc. There are many guides to copyright law, and your public library is a good place to find these materials.

One of the most important things you can do to protect yourself is to make absolutely certain that you do not infringe on copyrights owned by others. Be sure the music, images, text and other materials in your publication are either your own original work, are in the public domain, or that you have the copyright holder’s permission to use them.