

How to Write an Ebook

Gail Buckley

www.PLRContentSource.com

The first ebook you write will be the hardest one to write. It will take longer to think of topics for your chapters, it will take you longer to write each section and chapter, and it will take longer to edit and proofread. You will have more difficulty getting each section to 'line up' and flow together with each other. Take my word for this, the second one will be exponentially easier than the first one; that is another great reason to write something short, perhaps 40-60 pages, and offer it at a low price point. You will have your first one out of the way! Then you can start on something bigger and it will feel a whole lot easier!

Understanding the Ebook Market

It is important to understand how different the ebook market is from the offline, printed version market. People who buy ebooks online are looking for information alone. Now, someone offline may be looking for information too, but they are also looking for something that looks pretty, that they can put it on their shelf; they are also the touch-and-feel types – they have to be able to see it before they buy it. Remember the first time you downloaded your first ebook? You probably weren't sure what you were going to get – now you are much more comfortable, you know you are buying information, and frankly, you probably don't care what it looks like, you just want it to give you information that works.

Now, reading an ebook is different than reading an offline book. The reason for this is that if you read your pdfs online, as I do, rather than printing them out, it is not as easy to flip from page to page, or highlight, or underline important things like you can a physical book. Therefore, it is important that you write the ebook in small, well-named sections. Each time you change a topic, a new section needs to be created, and it needs to show up in the table of contents in the beginning of the ebook, so people can easily go to the section they want.

Formatting Your Ebook

Assuming that you are using a relatively new version of Microsoft Word, the first thing you want to do is to go into the formatting tab at the top, or in the toolbar across the top, and notice that you should have at least 3 different heading fonts that you can use. These are probably preprogrammed for you, but if you click on the heading font you want, and then click on the features that you want, the heading font for this document will change to that heading. So heading 1 might be Arial Bold 20, heading 2 might be Arial Bold 16, and heading 3 might be Arial Bold 12. You might use Times New Roman or Arial to type the actual ebook.

As you go through the ebook and create the Title, Chapters, and Sections, be sure and use an appropriate and consistent header for each of them, so that when you go to create a table of contents when you have finished the ebook, Word will do it for you. For example, you could use heading 1 for your title, table of contents, and chapter headings. You could use heading 2 for all the sections in each chapter. You could use heading 3 for any sub-sections you might need. The key here is that you are consistent, so that you will get a consistent table of contents.

Outlining Your Ebook

I am going to assume that you are going to create a 10 chapter ebook. Now, if you are choosing to write something short (as I recommend you do, something in the neighborhood of 40-60 pages), then you will put about 5-6 sections in each chapter. If your book is longer, you could add a few chapters or you can go to about 10 sections or more per chapter (that will get clearer in a few moments).

Obviously the first step is deciding what you are going to write about. Remember, when you are writing online, the most important thing is that you are writing to give information. People online want to learn how to do something, how to make something better, how to solve a problem. So think of a problem in your niche which you can solve.

For the purpose of this lesson, I am going to create a sample niche – painting your house.

So, if my niche is painting your house, what are some ideas for problems I can solve?

How about these:

- How to paint your house
- How to paint the outside of your house
- Easy way to paint your house

Now, if this is the problem I am going to solve, then every chapter, every section in this ebook should support that problem and the solving of it. If anything I write about, for example, painting furniture, does not support my primary topic, it should be left out of my ebook.

The next step is to come up with 10 supporting ideas or steps to solving the problem you have chosen.

Here is a sample set of chapters in a painting your house manual:

Step one: Fundamentals of painting your house

Step two: Choosing the right paint for your house

Step three: Choosing the right paint brushes and other tools for each section of your house

Step 4: Preparing your house for painting (moving furniture, removing old paint, etc.)

Step 5: How to paint the large areas

Step 6: How to paint trim, etc.

Step 7: How to fix mistakes (overlapped paint colors, paint on windows, etc.)

Step 8) How to make your painting job last longer

Step 9) Other tips and techniques for painting your house

Since I am not a painter, I must have missed something – there are only 9 steps in this hypothetical house painting book.

Now, assuming I am going to write a short book (40-60 pages), I can target 5 pages per step and I will have about 45 pages. Some chapters will be a little longer, so that will probably put me at about 55 pages, and once I add the title, etc., I will be easily at 60 pages, which is a bargain at \$10 – a good deal at \$47 online, especially since when I write this I am going to focus only on the information needed to learn this subject – I do not believe in adding filler to your ebooks just to make them longer.

The next step, of course, is to write the section topics. To do this, take each one of your chapter topics and come up with at least 5 steps that will make that topic clear to your reader.

As an example, I will create the section topics for Step 4: Preparing your house for painting:

- 1) Moving furniture
- 2) Preparing the ground
- 3) Preparing the surfaces to paint
- 4) Taping off windows, etc.
- 5) Getting organized

Go through this process with each of the 10 chapter topics you have.

Notice that I have not mentioned beginning to write any of the sections or chapters yet – and this is because you do not want to start doing this until you have every topic about which you will write, chosen and in a list, just like the ones I have created here.

Writing the Chapters and Sections

At this point, you may have noticed that in this particular example, if you have 10 chapters and 5 sections each, you will have a total of 50 sections all together. You may have also noticed that if you write each of these sections, you will have completed each of the chapters when you have done so.

Now, each section is going to be about one page long – maybe shorter, maybe longer, depending on the depth of the topic. That is about the length of an article. So you can almost think of this ebook writing project as a set of 50 articles. Perhaps since beginning this coaching program, you have written 50 articles, and now you know how easy that can be. Perhaps you have only written 20 – but at least you can gauge how long it might take you to write the equivalent of 50 articles.

Incidentally, I recommend that you take about every fifth article you write, and submit it as an article to the article directories. In your bio, you can include something like this: This has been an excerpt from my upcoming book “How to Paint Your House”. To receive notification and a discount coupon when I release it next month, [click here](#).”

Do not try to write all the articles (sections) in one sitting. You do not even need to write them in the order you have put them in for your ebook. Just write the ones that are easiest for you first, the ones that require the least amount of research, first. Then when things get tough and you have to do some of the more difficult topics, you will already have the ebook half done, or more, and you will be less tempted to quit on yourself. By the way, this is the exact process I have used to write over 6 complete ebooks in the last 7 months. I have simply written them one section at a time, and have just about always written from an outline, just like the one I show you how to create here.

Conclusion

Your work for the next few days, of course, is to write your chapter and section headings, and begin writing the individual sections. I will plan to give you precise instructions for formatting your ebook, adding headers and footers, transforming it into a pdf, and other finishing touches in the next core lesson.

Formatting Text

If you have not done it already, put all of your chapter headings in to a heading style. If you are using Microsoft Word, you should have a pull down menu in your toolbar that gives you formatting choices.

You can use 'heading 1' for chapter titles, 'heading 2' for section titles, and 'heading 3' for sub-section titles.

The reason you are going to format your headings this way is so that your table of contents can be made automatically by Word.

Create Table of Contents

To do this in Microsoft Word, click into your text where you want your table of contents to appear, click on 'insert', then 'reference', then 'indexes and tables', then on 'table of contents'. Once you get in there, you should be able to click 'okay' and you will have a table of contents. As you make changes to your text, you will want to update your table of contents.

To do this, right click on the area that is created as your table of contents, and you will be given some choices of how to refresh that area...generally I choose the one that allows me to refresh the entire table of contents, that way I make sure I include any new headings I might have added since I last updated the table of contents.

Create Headers and Footers

To create headers and footers, click 'view' then 'header and footer' and you will get a box near the top of your page. I like to type the name of my book on the left, and then the page number on the right. To put the page number in, the box that comes up when you are in 'header and footer' will give you an option to put in a page number (it is the button that has the # sign on it). Once I have typed in what I want in that box, I underline it – so that it looks more professional.

On the bottom of the page, you will see the footer. For this I like to put the copyright symbol. To get to that, go to 'insert' then 'symbol', then click on the ©, then click 'insert' then click 'close'. I like to put both my company name and my name next to the © symbol. To the far right, I put the url to my web site.

Inserting Hyperlinks

To insert live links to other web pages, click on the 'insert hyperlink' icon in your Word toolbar. There will be two boxes – one for the web address – be sure and use the entire url, including the http:// - and one for the text of the hyper link.

To make the link open in a new window when someone clicks on it (so that the ebook remains open) click on 'target window', then click on the pull down menu, then click on 'new window'. Beneath the pull down box, there is a box to check to 'make this the default for all hyperlinks' – check that, and all your hyperlinks will open in a new window. I like to do this so that if someone clicks on one of my links, the pdf stays open.

Create the Title Page

On this page, I simply put the title to my ebook, my subtitle to my ebook, and my name. Remember, my copyright information is already in the footer, as is my company name.

Additional Pages

I like to include a limit of liability in my ebooks. If you are in a health-related niche, then a limit of liability is also a must-have.

I also have an 'about the author' page, and I usually end the ebook with a personal note from me.

Create a PDF

I like to make my book into a pdf, so that I can put security features on it so that it cannot be copied from. The adobe software can run you several hundred dollars, and there are a number of copy cat pdf makers out there that run anywhere from free to several hundred dollars. When I first got started online, I looked at about 10 free pdf makers, and each one had drawbacks. For example, they wouldn't make your links live, or they would put advertising on your pages.

What I do now is subscribe to Adobe's monthly service...it is \$10 per month and gives me unlimited pdf conversions. They will give you a free trial of 5 conversions, but I have heard recently that it will no longer allow you to have live links or create headers with the trial version. I simply think that your best choices are to either buy the software or use the \$10 service from adobe. Here is the link to the monthly service from adobe: [Adobe](#)

Conclusion

This lesson has been one of the most technical lessons I have given you. If you go through these steps and find that I have missed something, or if the process in Adobe changes, please let me know so I can update this lesson. Of course, if you cannot figure out how to do something, please send me an email, and I will try to make it easy – sometimes with different versions of Microsoft Word, the process is slightly different, so I will try to help you figure it out for your version.

Keep in mind, if you have never created an ebook before, the processes I have laid out in this lesson may take you 5 or 10 hours to do the first time. However, the second time you do them, they should all take no more than an hour. One thing I do is when I am starting a new ebook or even a lesson like this, I start with the last one I have written, and go in and change the title, and critical information, but by using a former edition of something I have already done, I do not have to reformat the headings, or the header and footer, etc. – and certainly all of this takes time.