Getting Started

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Mobi and EPUB ebooks, and PDF for printed book, formatted by Nepo Press (http://nepotism.net/)

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Introduction

The Nepo Press formatting service is web based. This means all you need to create eBooks is a computer with an internet connection and a web browser (and a word processor or text editor to edit your manuscript).

Start with this *Getting Started* guide. Once you are successfully turning your manuscript into an eBook, read the *Quick Reference Guide* for additional tags you can use to improve the appearance of your eBook. Eventually, if you want a pBook (printed book) in addition to an eBook, see *How to Create a Camera-ready PDF*. All three of these guides are available at http://nepotism.net/formatting/documentation.html.

When you log into your book account, you will first reach your Author Page which lists all of your books. If you have just set up your first book account, the list will have just the one book. Click on that book to go to your Book Page.

Your Book Page lists your book details (title, author, etc.) and the files related to your book, both the files you upload and the eBook and report files we create from your files.

It also has also has a *Browse* button and an *Upload* button (so you can upload your manuscript, cover image, author photo, etc.)

It also has three formatting buttons that say *Mobi*, *EPUB*, and *PDF*. Click on the *Mobi* or *EPUB* button to turn your manuscript into an eBook.

We will use my book *Stormy Night* as an example for the purposes of this guide. The title is "Stormy Night". The nickname for the book is "stormy". The author is "Frank Sergeant". The file name for the manuscript is "stormy.txt". The book also has a cover image and an author photo, but we will ignore those for now.

It's easy to get started. Here is an overview. The following chapters will flesh out the material a bit further.

- Log into your book account. This takes you to your Author Page.

- Click on the book you want to work on ("stormy" in this example).

- Upload your new or updated manuscript (named "stormy.txt").

- Press the *Mobi* button. This leads to the Mobi File page with some information to entertain you while you wait for the Mobi file to be created. Except for the worst errors, a Mobi file will still be created. Give it a few seconds then click on the *Return to Book Page* button.

- Click on the report file (named `mobireport.txt`) to see if there were any error or warning messages. If you don't see `mobireport.txt` in your list of files, the processing hasn't finished yet. Give it a few more seconds then press the *Refresh file list* button.

- Your eBook is now ready as both a Mobi file and an HTML file. The fastest way to see the results is to click on the HTML file and look at it right in your browser. In this example, it will be named `stormy.html`.

- Download the Mobi file (named `stormy.mobi`) to put it on your Kindle, email to friends, or view on your PC or smart phone in a Kindle App, etc.

- Proofread your book, edit your manuscript, upload the new version, and repeat until your book is ready to publish.

Simplest Manuscript Possible

Here is a bare-bones example of a manuscript.

```
*  My Summer Vacation

I went to the beach and drank
a lot of beer.

I was sunburned the next day, so I
went to a local bar to drink beer.
After drinking all day, I passed out.
I must have gotten *way* too
much sun the previous day.

Eventually I returned home although
much of my vacation was a blur.
I don't know why.

The End
```

It illustrates the three key points:

- Chapter titles are marked with an asterisk in the first column (at the left margin). Your manuscript *must* have at least one chapter.

- Paragraphs are separated by one or more blank lines.

- A pair of asterisks indicate italics.

The above example "works" but will need fleshing out. This looks too simple, but it is best to start simply and actually create a Mobi (and HTML) file successfully. This gets your confidence up and shows you how easy it is.

Once this much is working, extend your manuscript chapter by chapter, and with additional markup, until your eBook is just the way you want it.

Text File

The manuscript file must be a text file and it must be named as shown in the book details of your Book Page. For example, "stormy.txt".

If you write your manuscript in a word processor, that's all right. All you need to do is save it temporarily as a plain text file.

If your word processor gives you a choice, save it as a "UTF-8" text file.

The key to this formatting system is that all your markup is explicit and visible, not hidden. So, turn off all the automatic formatting that your word processor might be trying to do. Turn off headers and footers. Turn off page numbering. Turn off smart quotes, links, table of contents, etc. You won't need any of that. The formatting program takes care of it for you.

If you are using a text editor instead of a word processor, that's even better because your manuscript will be in plain text to begin with and you won't need to do the extra "save-as" step.

Easy Next Steps

What's missing from the example shown in the Simplest Manuscript Possible chapter?

You probably want a title page, copyright page, maybe dedication or acknowledgments pages, an "About the Author" page (possibly with a photo)—all these extra pages are simply *chapters* as far as the formatting program is concerned—and a table of contents and a book cover image. You will also want to mark the words and phrases that should be set in italics.

The next several chapters show how to do all this.

Italics

Let's add more italics as the next step. Go through your manuscript and put asterisks arround each word or phase that should be in italics. If you have any words underlined, mark them with italics also. In your word processor, you can tell which words are italicized because they show up in italics on the screen. You don't have to *remove* the word processor's italics, just add the asterisks.

The only caution is that you must not leave a space immediately after the beginning asterisk or before the ending asterisk.

Good:

```
*this* is in italics, and *so is this*.
```

Bad:

```
* this* is in italics, and * so is this *.
```

Remember, asterisks serve two purposes:

- An asterisk in the left column *followed by a space* indicates a chapter heading.

- A pair of asterisks, butted tight against a word or phrase, indicate italics.

Remember, paragraphs (and nearly everything) else should be separated by one or more blank lines. Extra blank lines are ignored. Be sure to leave a blank line before and after chapter titles and any other markup that starts at the left margin.

Table of Contents and Further Notes

The table of contents will be created for you automatically if you use a `<contents>` tag. Just put the tag where you want the table of contents to appear. Start the tag at the left margin. Leave a blank line above and below it. A common place to put it is right after the copyright page. Here is a simplified example.

```
* Stormy Night

* Copyright Page

copyright (c) 2015 Frank Sergeant

all rights reserved

<contents>

* Introduction

blah, blah, blah

* Chapter One

...
```

The above will work but there are several problems.

First

The title page should say "Stormy Night", and it will, but it will also be listed in the table of contents. This not usually what you want. The trick is to give it both a title for use in the body of the book and a separate title for use in the table of contents, and make that second title completely empty, like this:

```
*  "Stormy Night" ""
```

Note, since there are two items (two pieces of information, two titles), we indicate each one by putting it within quote marks.

Second

The copyright page will have the title "Copyright Page" and it will be listed in the table of contents. Usually, you don't want either of these things to happen. To solve this, simply give it a completely empty heading.
Not perfect:

```
*  Copyright Page
```

Perfect:

```
*
```

Third

- The copyright page will use (c) where you really want the symbol ©.

- The word "copyright" (i.e., the first word in the copyright "chapter") will start with a drop cap.

- Maybe you would prefer the body of the copyright page to be centered rather than aligned at the left margin.

Here's how we do it:

- Use the `<copy>` tag instead of `(c)`.

- Add an extra, empty, level three heading (three asterisks at the left margin).

- Use the `<align>` tag twice: Once to turn on centering and again to turn it off.

Here is the entire, improved copyright page.

```
*

* * *

<align> center

copyright <copy> 2015 Frank Sergeant

all rights reserved

<align> default
```

Images

Y̲ou definitely want a cover image. If you want to make it yourself, you might like to read *Quick and Dirty eBook Covers* (http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00CRRG03K).

If you want a temporary cover image to play with, you can download the cover image for *Stormy Night* from http://nepotism.net/downloads/stormy.jpg. Save it to your computer then upload it to your book account. The cover image should be a `.jpg` file. A good size for this internal cover image is 600x800 (600 pixels wide and 800 pixels high) or larger (eReader pixel resolution is increasing—maybe 1200x1600 would be better). You can name it anything you want (but it must end in `.jpg` and there must not be any spaces in the file name). Your `<cover>` tag in your manuscript must match the file name of the cover image.

For example, put the following tag somewhere near the beginning of your manuscript (with a blank line before and after it, of course):

```
<cover> stormy.jpg
```

Amazon will want a larger cover to use on your book description page at Amazon. However, don't upload this larger cover to your Nepo Press book page. Instead, upload the larger cover directly to Amazon when you publish. Use the smaller cover (such as 600x800) when making your Mobi file. This makes for a smaller eBook and can help reduce the delivery charge when Amazon sells your book at the 70% royalty rate.

In other words, there are typically two cover images. One is used by Amazon on your book description page and the other

is actually inside your Mobi file (and can be seen on a Kindle or Kindle App).

You may want an author photo on your author page at the end of the book or you may want an occasional image or figure inside the book. For any image except the cover, use the `<image>` tag. Here's an example author page with a photo:

```
* About the Author


<image> frank.jpg

Frank started out at a
young age ...
```

Additional Examples

For a more complete template for a novel, there are several examples to look at. The fake mystery novel *Sam Speedo (Bathing Suit Detective)* is a good place to start. See the *Sam Speedo* section at http://nepotism.net/formatting for links to two versions of the manuscript:

- one version is simple to view but has no explanatory comments: http://nepotism.net/samspeedo/sam-short.txt

- the other version is cluttered with explanatory comments: http://nepotism.net/samspeedo/samspeedo.txt

The resulting eBooks can also be viewed or downloaded so you can compare the result with how the result was achieved:

- http://nepotism.net/samspeedo/samspeedo.mobi

- http://nepotism.net/samspeedo/samspeedo.epub

- http://nepotism.net/samspeedo/samspeedo.pdf

Feel free to download samspeedo.txt or sam-short.txt, rename it to your manuscript name (such as stormy.txt), upload it to your book directory, and format it. Then, gradually replace and extend it with the content of your actual book. In other words, it makes a great getting-started template for your own use.

Other, more extensive examples are available in the fake mystery novels *Stormy Night* and *Windy Day*. They are available for free on some sites (Nepo Press, Apple, Smashwords, Kobo) and for about a dollar elsewhere (Amazon, B&N). Each of these fake novels includes its entire manuscript in an appendix, so you can see how different effects were achieved.

Go Forth and Publish

You should now be ready to start formatting and eventually publish your eBook or printed Book. If these guides

- *Getting Started*

- *Quick Reference Guide*

- *How to Create a Camera-ready PDF*

plus the sample novels (*Sam Speedo*, *Stormy Night*, *Windy Day*) don't answer all your questions, please see the FAQ available at http://nepotism.net/formatting/documentation.html. If your question still hasn't been answered, feel free to email me (frank@nepotism.net) with full details and I'll try to extend the FAQ so that it *does*.

Happy Publishing

The End