

Questions

Does the Samsung Galaxy Tab handle fixed format EPUBs?

Are Fixed Layout titles viewable on an iPhone? First presenter said no, but Eric seems to suggest the answer is 'yes'.

Is Fixed Layout only available for the iPad and iPhone, but is it tied to a specific eReader on those devices, e.g. iBooks, Kobo or Stanza?

Are the standard iBook features available in this case?

Is there any interest from the Android community in using this standard on their tablets?

For Cliff, any thoughts on the lack of Flash?

What about Read Aloud in Fixed Layout?

What about embedding audio and video into Fixed Layout EPUBs?

EPUB is supposed to be an open source code. Why do online publishers manipulate the code differently (without necessarily releasing their code requirements to authors) for their own readers?

Answers

My understanding is that Fixed Layout EPUB conversion is specific to the Apple iPad. Apple drafted the conversion guidelines titled *iBookstore Asset Guide 4.5*.

If I mentioned that Fixed Layout files were not viewable on the iPhone, I had a mental misfire. I may have said Andrews McMeel represents cartoonists who would prefer to have their work shown only on the iPad. A few of our cartoonists feel the iPhone screen size is too small to view their work properly, and they are right.

Only iBooks.

It depends on which one you're asking about: search, yes; copy, yes; dictionary lookup, yes; font resize/change, no; bookmark, yes; quick scroll, somewhat different.

The problem is that it isn't part of a standard, but rather a proprietary extension on top of a standard.

Andrews McMeel has definite plans to offer enhanced Fixed Layout eBooks. Aptara has successfully integrated video—I believe .mov or .m4p formats—into Fixed Layout EPUBs. Our challenge is coming up the audio/video content. As a legacy print publisher, we need to plan for these enhancements when a book manuscript is acquired. We're just beginning to do so.

I haven't seen it yet.

Yes, that is possible.

Most likely to gain some level of a competitive advantage or to work around a weakness in a particular device or application.

6.23.11 | Unanswered Questions from the Live Event | Respondents: Cliff Koehler, AMP and Eric Freese, Aptara

Questions

How close can you get to Fixed Layout using standard EPUB?

Answers

Standard EPUB is all about reflow, which fixed format completely ignores, so the closest way would be to embed PDFs within the EPUB files to create the illusion of fixed format.

When will EPUB 3 become available on eBook readers, including iBooks on the iPad?

No dates have been announced that I am aware of.

Is Fixed Layout part of EPUB 3?

EPUB 3 did not specifically disallow Fixed Layout, but Fixed Layout is also not part of the EPUB 3 spec.

Is font matching essential between printed book and Fixed Layout eBooks? If so, how does font licensing work?

It really depends on the publisher and the material. Sometimes close is good enough, others it must be exactly the same. Font licensing is much like content licensing where you determine how and when a font can be used and distributed.

How do you tackle font size in Fixed Layout eBooks?

Font size is set to replicate the print as closely as possible. The user can pinch the screen to zoom in and out to make the page larger or smaller.

Where do I find a default list of fonts available to the iBooks process?

The choices in the app are probably the best list. Of course, any open source font should be able to work. The list can be found in iBooks by selecting the "Change Font" button in the reader.

If we are not able to find the exact font, will this not disturb the flow of the text? How are you handling this situation? In this case, the point size may not match the original print version. Will this be ok with the Fixed Layout conversion?

It might cause the text to flow differently, but not in such a way as to be detrimental to the reading experience.

Is it really true that you cannot embed the Adobe Fonts? If so, why?

It depends on licensing.

Adobe has an entire OTF library. Do you mean that you can't use Adobe Postscript fonts?

Yes, OpenType is supported.

Does EPUB support embedded TT and OT fonts?

WOFF and OpenType are the supported fonts in EPUB 3.

Questions

You can use any OT or TT fonts in Fixed Layout EPUBs. So did you change the body font in the cookbook and gift books shown because the original body font was perhaps a PS font? I don't see any other reason to change the fonts.

What format is the original content developed in (software, file types, etc.)?

How is this format different from flip books and e-magazines with page turns, etc.?

Are these layouts similar in design to the layouts that comic book publishers, such as Marvel and DC Comics, use for their digital applications?

To Mr Koehler: What is the backlash from other retailers when a book is released only as Fixed Layout (only for Apple)?

Can soft returns be used to keep line breaks the same within the text? It drives me crazy when my line breaks change; I break for sense as well as for the look of the typography.

What format will transfer better to Apple: QuarkXpress or InDesign 5?

Are folios, running headers/footers, also supported in Fixed Layout?

Answers

In cases where the font is not available, we often convert them to images, like in the Twinkie Chan example with the headings.

The source files for most of our conversions are Adobe InDesign files (no HTML tagging) and embedded or linked hi-res TIF or JPEG images. We also provide the conversion house with a single-page PDF file of the entire book for visual reference.

The page turn functionality is usually driven by the device software. The file type simply supports the native functionality. The iPad and B&N NOOK have page turns. Amazon's Kindle shows one page at a time.

Our cartoonists are constrained by the comic page space requirements of newspapers. We simply repackage Daily and Sunday comics into a book. My guess is Marvel and DC may have more page layout freedom since the comics are delivered in this format originally.

Huge backlash! If your business strategy is to offer your eBooks to multiple resellers, it is political suicide to pick and choose which titles are offered to certain eBook retailers. The reseller who misses out will not be happy. Consequently, it is smart business practice to offer the entire list to all of your retailing partners, even if the conversion looks awful due to the limitations of their device.

There is no soft break tag in HTML 5.

I'm not sure that either does a direct export to Apple's Fixed Layout.

They could be, but they would need to be laid out individually on each page. Remember fixed format pages are separate entities and must be laid out individually with no carry over.

Questions

What is the main benefit to using Fixed Layout EPUB over a PDF file? PDF is still searchable, and re-sizable. It almost seems like we are reinventing the wheel here.

Why would I not do a PDF with the same size as the viewport instead of doing an XHTML page with CSS?

PDF files are said to have a Fixed Layout. Has Apple registered the name "Fixed Layout"? Or is it used as a category of eBook formats?

Your cartoon Fixed Layout EPUB looks just like a "regular" EPUB. What about it is specific to Fixed Layout?

You've got to be kidding me! Line by line?

How to put multiple hotspots in a page?

iBooks is a wrapper to WebKit (Safari), so is engineering a custom solution possible?

Using this tool, how difficult are updates to eBooks that have many graphics/illustrations? My organization tends to want to make major updates to our publications quite frequently, so I wonder how something like this would help our production process.

Are there any adjustments to the height of the page in these Fixed Layout books? Or is this square layout the only option?

Answers

Great question. The eBook market is driven by the device makers who are all fighting for market share. If you want Apple to sell your illustrated books on the iPad, then you need to supply their store with Fixed Layout EPUBs—they won't accept PDFs. You can embed PDF within an EPUB, but you cannot select a straight PDF book in the iBookstore.

That is another option, but you can't sell PDFs in the iBookstore. But you can embed PDF within an EPUB.

I think it is just used to describe a class of books.

If set up properly, a cartoon book converted as a regular EPUB would work well on an iPad. The Fixed Layout conversion locks the image coordinates to a page, whereas a regular EPUB conversion would rely on forced page breaks. A regular EPUB, at the core, is a reflowable file. A Fixed Layout conversion consists of single pages. It is "safer" to specify Fixed Layout for an image-based book.

Assume you mean the same line breaks line by line. It's possible by carefully selecting a True Type font with character sizing that closely matches your Adobe font in the print edition. We didn't say it was easy.

No hotspots yet.

Doubtful.

You would need to re-release the eBook file.

You can set whatever page dimension you want.

Questions

How much additional time and effort is involved in creating a Fixed Layout after the initial printed book is designed? Are you thinking ahead and trying to design for both platforms from the onset?

As a producer of complex conversion eBooks, I've found that Fixed Layout books have a drastically faster production process. What reasoning do you have for higher conversion costs? Fixed layouts take days, instead of weeks. I'm very curious!

In Fixed Layout format, how do you assure that the picture lies next to the text if the text is flowing?

Is there a way to do live text on a curved path or would that have to be rendered as an image?

So can we include images larger than 738/985 for better zooming?

I create PDFs in Word. Will they address that? Isn't this just a matter of grouping text boxes so that they stay together?

So do you make each page as an HTML page, then go back later and wrap it as an EPUB file?

Do you always create styles by page, or is this just for the examples?

Just to confirm, is this typesetting completely in parallel? Is having to set from scratch for the digital completely separate from the work done for print?

Answers

Design can be the same for both, but the process is usually completely different.

Are you using XHTML/CSS for the fixed formats? We have not seen any cases where Fixed Layout is produced faster than straight EPUB.

The text does not flow in Fixed Layout.

Current CSS support does not allow that. Perhaps in EPUB 3.

Yes, just remember the 2M file size limit.

No, it is laying out the text on the page image.

Basically, yes.

CSS styles can be shared throughout the book. The ones shown were for demonstration.

At this time, yes—until there are tools that can export to the Fixed Layout format.

6.23.11 | Unanswered Questions from the Live Event | Respondents: Cliff Koehler, AMP and Eric Freese, Aptara

Questions

Do you recommend Fixed Layout format for books beyond the page size of 8½x11" since there is a limitation to the maximum size of the zooming in this type?

Answers

It really depends on the content on the pages and whether it can be used within the abilities to zoom.

How well, if at all, do these XHTML documents render in a browser?

The XHTML itself should render in a browser just fine, assuming it supports all the things being done in the CSS.

How do you calculate the pixel values for the text lines?

There are sites on the web that provide conversion factors for pixels and point sizes.

Can we put Javascript, Carousel and JQuery plugins in Fixed Layout?

Not that I'm aware of.

Will HTML5 & CSS3 have a great impact on developing these eBooks?

I think they will provide ways to simplify the process some, but also provide greater functionality through CSS3.

Is it possible to embed a PDF into an XHTML document?

Yes.

Because all of the pages have to be individual XHTML documents, do the documents have to be hand coded, or can InDesign be used to export useable single XHTML pages?

I don't believe InDesign can export Fixed Layout yet.

Do you have to use a Mac and Apple software to produce the EPUB file for Apple's Fixed Layout?

No.

Do you have any transforms already available for converting IDML or XML exported from InDesign to XHTML for Fixed Layout formatted iBooks?

We have some tools to automate part of the process, but it is still very manual intensive.

What about magazines from InDesign: If I export for Dreamweaver and attach it to a CSS, then how should it be converted to be read on an iPad?

I'm not sure. There is a Working Group called NextPUB that is working on magazine layout within EPUB.

6.23.11 | Unanswered Questions from the Live Event | Respondents: Cliff Koehler, AMP and Eric Freese, Aptara

Questions

Do Fixed Layout eBooks increase the size of the page on iPads as compared to a PDF?

Answers

I don't think so.

Is there a simple way to convert a pre-designed PDF to this new Apple Fixed Layout?

Not that I'm aware of.

What are you converting the illustrated eBooks with?

A variety of tools and manual processes.

How much time does it take for Aptara to do one spread for this type of conversion?

It depends on the complexity of the content. We could do a sample for you to give you a more accurate estimate.

Why did Cliff choose to "sacrifice searching text" in the cartoon even though text was captured as an image? Could he not have searched hidden text as was done with the cook books? Did I miss something with capabilities of Fixed Layout?

Here is a very honest answer: No one told us this was possible. Having search capabilities in all of our books is desirable as long as the cost to add the feature does not outweigh the benefit to the end user.

Does Andrews McMeel use ALT text for hand lettering in EPUB?

No. Adding ALT text to an EPUB conversion would increase source file preparation time and conversion cost. Since we believe the majority of end users would not enable this feature when viewing comic strip eBooks, we do not plan on offering ALT text in the near term. We may revisit this decision in the future, especially on front-list titles where creating an alternate text manuscript could be part of the normal development process.

Is the alternative text for title images or heading images searchable? If not, is there a way to get around it?

Not generally. This is due to a belief that only visible text should be searchable—a belief I personally disagree with.

For EPUB is there any way to encode the text as hidden and tied to the image, like ALT text, or a form of meta text to enable search while still maintaining the author's text visually?

No.

6.23.11 | Unanswered Questions from the Live Event | Respondents: Cliff Koehler, AMP and Eric Freese, Aptara

Questions

Can image text be searchable if it is captioned?

Answers

No. Only text that is visible is indexed and searchable. If the graphic text is repeated within the a caption, then it becomes searchable, but I have never seen this done for user experience reasons.

Does Fixed Layout support charts and tables that contain text?

It can, but it is very complex.

Is there any evidence that academic publishers are rolling out tests of this?

I am not aware of any.

I am really interested in the "how" part of this and would like a reference to useful resources online or available in hard copy.

Apple hasn't really provided anything that I am aware of. You might need to do some web searching.

What is the general price per page for producing a spread, like those used as examples, as a Fixed Layout page?

Our sales people could provide that for you.

I am converting books in Fixed Layout EPUB. Text is not justified and ragged at the right site. I am using position: absolute style properties to place the text on each page. Is this with the design of this layout or is there options to get the text justified as in the print version?

I would need to see the style sheet to get a better idea of all the factors in play in this case.

The views, opinions, positions or strategies expressed by the individuals herein and those providing comments or questions are theirs alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, positions or strategies of Aptara, Inc. or its affiliates and any employee thereof (collectively, "Aptara"). Aptara hereby disclaims any warranty, express or implied, including warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose, or any legal liability for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information contained herein. Any reference to a specific commercial product, process, or service does not constitute or imply an endorsement by Aptara of the product, process, or service, or its producer or provider. Reproduction, copying, or redistribution for commercial purposes of any materials contained herein is strictly prohibited without the express written permission of Aptara.



3110 Fairview Park Drive, Suite 900
Falls Church, VA 22042

+1-703-352-0001

aptaracorp.com