

# ENG426: Digital Publishing

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Digital Publishing introduces the theories, principles, and technologies of producing electronic books. We will learn processes of digital production—with a specific focus on basic HTML & CSS, which allow us to build ePubs—and we will work with a range of authoring tools. We will also examine the opportunities and challenges of producing digital texts via topics such as metadata, design, copyright, access, and distribution. The course will culminate in a major publishing project: You and a team of colleagues will convert a book of fiction (published by Miami University Press) to a digital, ePub format. There are no prerequisite digital literacies or skills required for this course; however, an open mind and a willingness to explore new tools and technologies are a must.

## Course Objectives

In the process of successfully completing this course, you will:

- Analyze and identify elements of digital book publishing processes and products;
- Apply rhetoric and design principles to the production of digital books;
- Produce and edit digital books using industry-standard tools as well as web- and markup-based languages;
- Prepare digital books for long-term preservation (based on metadata, web, and accessibility standards);
- Use version-control software and workflows to collaborate with authors and other editors;
- Solve problems relating to audience access and the range of digital platforms and devices;
- Work with clients to negotiate project goals, deadlines, and deliverables; and
- Reflect on how producing digital books complements and expands your understanding of writing as a practice.

## ENG 426 - Midterm Assignment

For the midterm you will create and submit two artifacts: an epub file from a Project Gutenberg text and a production memo that documents your process.

### Epub Creation

Your task is to take a text file from Project Gutenberg and convert it to an epub file. Specifically, you will:

- Mark up the text as valid, semantic (X)HTML;
- attach a style sheet and perform basic visual styling of the text & book;
- embed a font (according to the terms of the font's license) and also provide fallbacks;
- include both an inline and embedded cover image;

- include two table of contents: one embedded (via the nav document) and one inline;
- include Dublin Core metadata; and
- include all relevant copyright, license, front matter, and afterword material.

## Production Memo

The production memo should be written for the client (in this case, me) and should include an overview of the decisions you made (including markup choices, CSS styling, and font selection) as well as the results of your QA testing. It should include two components: 1) a narrative overview of your process and choices made, and 2) a table that shows the results of your QA testing.

Particularly, you should include specific details about the devices you tested this epub on and any limitations. For example: Does your embedded font not work on certain platforms? Is there one platform with an unavoidable, unfortunate page break? At a minimum, I would suggest you test your book on an iOS device, an Android device, iBooks for Mac, a Windows-based reader such as Radium, and a Kindle App of some sort. (Note: For Kindle testing, you will need to use Calibre's "convert" function to create a .mobi file.)

## Deadline

The deadline for this project is Friday, 10/30 at 11:59pm. You will have a small bit of in-class time available for testing or troubleshooting, but you should plan to do most of this work outside of class. If you choose to work in a group, be sure that you have compatible schedules or work habits.

## Evaluation

Your projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Quality of the final epub artifact: How does it look? How does it function? Does it represent the best industry practices as detailed in our readings? Does it offer the reader a good, usable experience?
- Validity & preciseness of markup (HTML) & style (CSS): Is there a sound & well-considered underlying architecture? Is the book built with a valid manifest, spine, and navigation system?
- Professionalism of production memo & thoroughness of QA testing: Does the memo show a production team that has thoughtfully and thoroughly considered their work and tested it? Does the memo help the client to understand the conversion process, the decisions made, and the book's potential limitations?