

Introduction to electronic books and ePub3

Maximum Number of Participants: 12

Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2014 – All Day – 09:00 to 12:00 + 13:00 to 16:00

Facilitator(s):

C. M. Sperberg-McQueen, Black Mesa Technologies

Overview:

This tutorial offers an introduction to current standards for electronic books, focusing on EPub 3.0 (a standard issued by the International Digital Publishing Federation) with side glances at other specifications. The competition to EPub 3.0 includes proprietary ebook formats and page-image formats like PDF and DejaVu; the supporting specifications for EPub 3.0 include XHTML, HTML 5, CSS, SVG, and Zip.

Many of the challenges of ebook production will be familiar to anyone with experience in book or journal production: mathematics, tables, graphics, and figures are no easier to handle (but, happily, also not much harder) in electronic books than they are in print publications or on the Web. Others will be familiar from web-site production: incompatibilities among ebook readers resemble the incompatibilities among Web browsers in the mid- to late 1990s, and the relation of hardware or software behavior to the prescriptions of the specification remains (to put it gently) complex. Earlier versions of the EPub standard put strict limits on the use of interactive elements; this lowered the threshold for ebook production, but also the ceiling of what was possible in a standards-compliant ebook. So the tutorial will devote special attention to clarifying what is (and is not) made possible by the broader rules of EPub 3.0.

For further information: <http://blackmesatech.com/2014/07/epub3/>

Audience:

The target audience consists of digital humanists interested in understanding the current generation of open specifications for electronic books and how to exploit them to solve design problems in ebook production.

There are no formal prerequisites. Participants with some familiarity with XML, HTML, HTML 5, and CSS will be in a better position to follow the details of examples. Students who wish to participate in the (optional) hands-on exercises should bring a laptop computer. Links to download sites for suitable software will be provided on-site; software used in the exercises will also be available on a USB thumb.