

E-Book Formats Explained

What Are E-book File Formats?

A file format is essentially a standardized way to encode information so that it can be understood across devices and programs.

File formats are designed to carry one specific type of information, such as an image (jpg), audio (mp3), video (mp4) or e-books.

There are a few different ways of encoding e-books, but by far the most common e-book formats are EPUB, MOBI.

EPUB is the most widely accepted and functional e-book format. MOBI and AZW3 are Amazon's proprietary formats used for Kindle devices.

EPUB (.epub) format

An EPUB, or electronic publication, is the most widely supported eBook format and can be read on a variety of devices, including computers, smartphones, tablets, and most eReaders (except Kindles). All EPUB file formats are DRM protected and have strong copy protection. EPUB files are reflowable, but also support fixed layouts.

Reflowable EPUB files are designed in a way that allows the text and images reflow to fit all screen sizes. They have a flat, linear design, which means images float along with the text (no overlap or text wrap), so this format is best used for text-heavy eBooks. Reflowable EPUBs are the most common eBook format and have the widest distribution because it's the format that is most familiar to users.

Fixed layout EPUBs, on the other hand, have sophisticated designs. Whatever effects, images, and layout you have in the program, will be kept in its fixed layout. It also supports javascript, which allows for

interactivity and animations. Read aloud, a feature where the words on the screen light up or change colour while a voiceover reads the story, which makes them great for children's books.

One downfall of fixed layout EPUBs, though, is that they are limited in distribution compared to reflowable EPUBs. They aren't sold in the Kindle store, so they're usually found in the iBookstore, which has a smaller audience than Kindle.

MOBI (.mobi) format

A MOBI file, otherwise known as a Mobipocket eBook file, was used as the first file format by Amazon when it launched Kindle. In 2011, support for the MOBI file was discontinued and has since been replaced by the AZW file format. Although MOBI files are no longer supported, Amazon's Kindle devices use MOBI file structure, but they now have a different DRM protection and use the AZW file extension. Because of this, MOBI files are still widely popular for devices with low bandwidth, except Nooks and Sony readers. Outside of Kindle, though, you won't find them too often.

AZW (.azw) and AZW3 (.azw3) formats

AZW files, also known as Kindle files, were developed by Amazon for its Kindle eReaders, replacing MOBI files. AZW files use the MOBI format, but contains DRM protection that only allows them to be read on Kindles or devices with Kindle apps. Additively, they are only accessible from the Amazon online bookstore. These files can store complex content like bookmarks, annotations, and highlights.

Older Kindle eReaders use the AZW format, but after the release of the Kindle Fire, Amazon created AZW3 files, also known as the Kindle Format 8 (KF8). AZW3 is the next-generation version of the Kindle eBook file, adding support for [HTML](#) and [CSS](#) to the existing Kindle format, making it more advanced to support additional styles, fonts, and layouts.

Other E-Book formats you may see:

TXT (.txt)

A plain text file is the simplest file format that uses the file extension .txt. These files are used strictly for text, images and graphs are not supported. Because of their simplicity, these files are usually for storing information with no formatting beyond basic fonts and font styles

PDF (.pdf)

A PDF, also known as a portable document format, isn't technically a true eBook because it's not reflowable, (A reflowable document is a type of electronic document that can adapt its presentation to the output device.) but it's the format most people are familiar with. Created by Adobe, PDFs are known for their ease of use and ability to maintain high-end designs and formats. Because they hold their format and aren't reflowable, they can be difficult to read on a small screen and have limited interactivity.

PDFs are similar to the fixed layout EPUB file format, but, unlike the EPUB, they only have basic copy protection, which means they can be easily downloaded and shared for free. Despite this, they are still one of the most commonly used eBook formats, especially by marketers.

PDFs can't be sold in the iBookstore or Kindle store, but they can be read on just about any device.

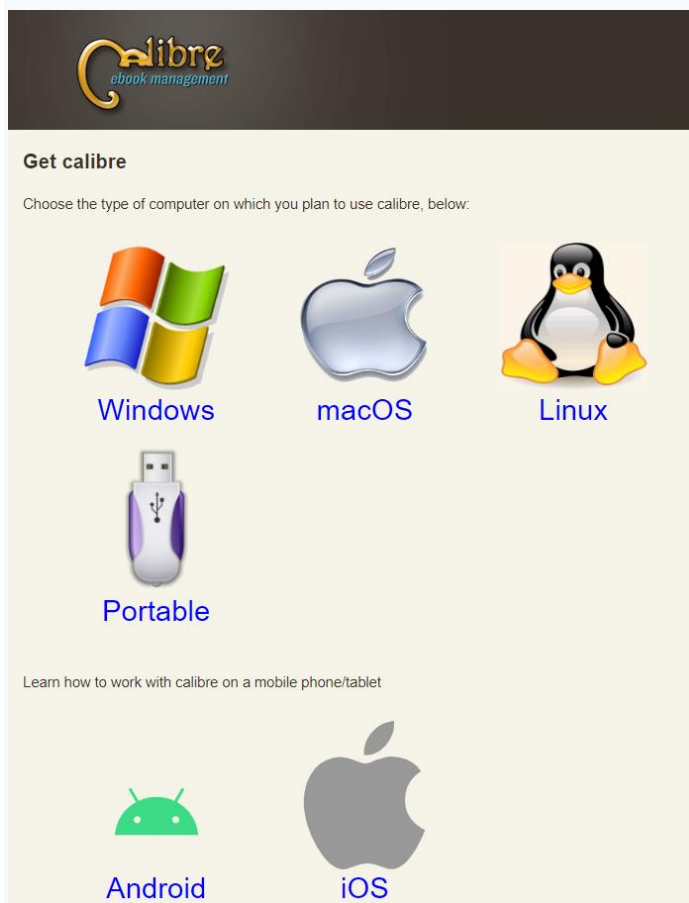
How to Convert EPUB & MOBI

Converting books between the EPUB and MOBI formats is incredibly easy. A simple Google search will show that there are dozens of free converter websites.

The best way to convert MOBI or EPUB files as well as manage your e-books in general is with Calibre. The software is free, and lets you convert all sorts of document and e-book files.

1. Download & Install Calibre

Go to the [Calibre website](#) – Select your Operating System:





Download for Windows

calibre works on Windows 10 and higher.



[Download calibre 64bit](#)
Version: 6.1.0 [What's new](#)

[Alternate download location #1](#)
[Alternate download location #2](#)

While you wait for the download to complete, please consider contributing to support the development of calibre.

SUPPORT CALIBRE



Previous releases of calibre are available [here](#).

Note

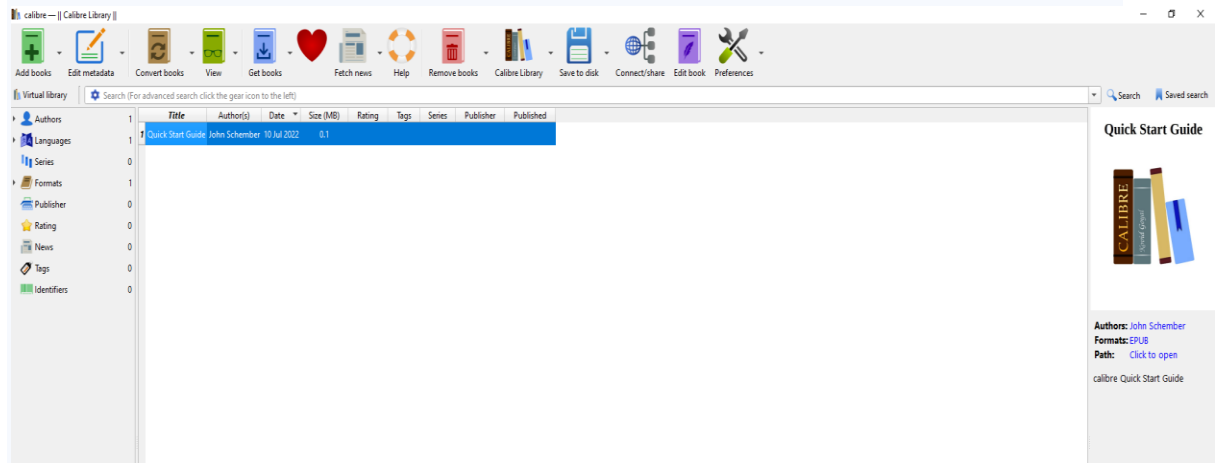
- If you are using Windows 8, please use calibre 5.44, which works with all Windows 8 machines, [from here](#). Simply un-install calibre and install 5.44, doing so will not affect your books/settings.
- If you are using Windows 7 or Vista, please use calibre 3.48, which works with all Windows 7/Vista machines, [from here](#). Simply un-install calibre and install 3.48, doing so will not affect your books/settings.

© KOVID GOYAL | FEED OF NEW RELEASES | DESIGN BY CENTRESOURCE INTERACTIVE AGENCY

Click Download Calibre 64bit

2. Add Your Book to Calibre

Once Calibre is open, click on the button in the top-left corner that says “**add books.**” Select “**add books from a single folder**” and find the file you want to convert in the file selection window that opens.



3. Select the Book & Convert

Now that you can see the book in your library, select it and click on the button at the top of the window that says “**convert books.**”

4. Choose Conversion Settings

This will open up the **conversion settings**, where you can adjust the metadata (such as the title, author, publisher and series), change the cover image and set the output format. There are a lot of advanced options located in the menu on the left, but for now all you need to do is set the **output format in the top-right corner** to what you want it to be and **click “OK” in the bottom-right corner.**