

Q&A: Your Ebook Engine

1. What is Ebook Engine?

Ebook Engine enables you to sell electronic books with your existing e-commerce infrastructure.

2. So how exactly does this work?

- i. You supply standards-compliant ebook materials (book files and metadata) to us,
- ii. Adapt your online catalogue / bookstore to display and sell ebooks to your visitors,
- iii. When a user buys an ebook from your site, you display access links ('Download' and 'Read Online' links) for the book in their account page on your site,
- iv. The access links include encrypted information that provides us with what we need, in order to give your customer access to their ebook.

3. Why would I want to use Ebook Engine rather than just using my existing retail partners?

You should continue to work with your existing retail partners, but it makes sense to also provide ebook fulfilment from your own site. You can direct your customers to another retail site, like ebooks.com for fulfilment, and that makes good sense if you don't have the resources to dedicate to managing ebook sales from your own site. But keep in mind that each time you send a customer off your own site you reduce the chances that they will buy the book from you, or from the other vendor. When they arrive at the new site there are many other books from other publishers also available there and the chances that they will find another book that interests them, or simply lose interest, are increased with each additional site they have to visit. There is attrition when customers moves from one site to another and if you want to retain your customer, and encourage them to buy your books, keep them on your site and keep it simple.

Another reason – profit margins on direct sales. Selling your own ebooks allows you to drive customers to your own site and retain more of that margin for yourself. While your relationships with retailers are important, why give away that extra margin for sales that you have directly generated yourself if you don't have to?

4. How much could I make from selling ebooks on my site?

That is up to you. You choose the prices, and you do the marketing. You drive your customers to your website and develop a closer relationship with your customers.

5. Can I rent my books?

You can rent your books. In the instructions that we provide to your developers / web team we show them how to provide expiring access to a book. Then it is up to you to represent this as a rental on your site to your customers.

6. Can customers pre-order for NYP titles?

You can enable your customers to pre-order NYP titles, but you'll need to be 100% confident that the book file you supply meets our file and metadata requirements and that you allow a few days for processing the file in advance of the promised delivery date, otherwise you will risk disappointing your customers.

7. How much development work is this for us?

This will vary depending on what you already have in place on your retail site and what your hopes and dreams are with respect to how you'd like to see this updated. If you have no shopping cart as yet then it could be a sizeable job. However there are a number of plug and play solutions that we can show you to that could make this a faster process. If you already have a retail site with shopping cart functionality then it will be a much smaller task that involves adding the ebooks to your catalogue and determining whether to display them as entirely new records, or alongside the print book version on the same product page and how to display the download links after the purchase has taken place.

8. How long will it take to get it up and running?

From our perspective the turn around time is very fast. Your developers will need to spend some time testing to ensure that the fulfillment code is correctly set up at your end. Once your development team has passed the integration tests you could be ready for live requests within 16 business hours.

9. Are there instructions that I can hand over to my web person / development team?

We have created simple "API documentation" that you can pass on to your web person / development team. This can be downloaded from within your Ebook Services admin portal, or you can contact your Ebook Services representative to request a copy.

10. Can I put my tech people in touch with yours?

Absolutely. What we recommend is that you pass on the Ebook Engine Developer Stuff document to your developers / web team as soon as possible. Once they have reviewed it we set up an introductory call between our tech team and yours.

11. Besides the setup development time / cost, how will it affect my company's existing processes

This depends on what your current processes are. If you are already supplying ebook files and metadata to eBooks.com, EBL (or other aggregators), and already have an ecommerce solution on your website then once the initial development and setup has taken place you should barely notice any changes to your existing processes. Without these existing processes in place you will have to make allowances for additional workload, but the benefits of implementing these processes are vast and extend far beyond just Ebook Engine.

12. Who takes the money? Who hosts the shopping cart and processes the transaction with Ebook Engine?

You do. With Ebook Engine you manage every aspect of the search, discovery, purchase, authentication and bookshelf display process. What we do is supply access to the book to your specifications (i.e. for the length of time you specify, in the format(s) you specify, with the print and copy allowance you specify, etc).

13. Can customers order print and ebooks in the same shopping cart?

Your customer can order print and ebook in the same shopping cart. You will need to work with your development team and a designer to determine exactly what this would look like. We have a demo that walks you through some of the ways that you could represent this on your website, but you will need to create these pages at your end. Please contact your Ebook Services representative to request a copy.

14. Who stores the customer details?

You will need to collect and store your customer details. When you send us the authentication information to let us know that a valid request for access has come through we will store that information and use it for billing. It is important to note that we will only record the information for books that a customer accesses, not for all books purchased. If you sell a book to a customer, but they never access it, we will have no record of that in our system.

15. Do customers need a second login?

They don't need a second login.

16. So after they buy the book how does my customer find their ebook to start reading it?

This is up to you, but there are a few ways that you can do this

- a) you can send them an email when they purchase the book that includes a link to download the book. When the user clicks on this link it will pass information to our servers that allows us to detect that this is a legitimate request and from there the user will start downloading the book (or reading it online);
- b) if you already have an account area for your customers on your site with a record of their purchases, then in addition to sending them an email confirming their purchase you could include the link to download the book from within their account, perhaps next to the purchase record for that title;
- c) you can create a bookshelf on your site for each customer within their account, where they can go at any time to access their ebooks.

17. Do customers have to leave our site at any point?

No. The customer remains on your site throughout the whole process.

18. How will this be branded?

The branding is in your hands. All we do is provide the fulfilment, so from the customer's perspective we are invisible.

19. How secure is Ebook Engine?

Like all services provided by Ebook Services, Ebook Engine is secure and runs using 128 bit encryption for all communications and data transfers. Ebook files are stored on dedicated servers in our US-based, tier one data centre. All book files are stored on non-public servers and access is controlled via 2-factor authentication methods (2-factor = "Something I know + something I have.")

20. What files formats and devices are supported?

Ebook Engine supports PDF and ePub files. These files can be read on a number of different devices including Windows Desktop and Mac OS, iOS (iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch), Android OS, Kobo Reader. We can also convert your PDF and ePub files to Eb20 Online Reader format at no extra cost. This will make your titles available on most tablets, laptops and desktops with a web browser. If you wish to make your titles available on other devices, including the Kindle, the only way to do this at present is with social DRM, which is available for your Ebook Engine. Our social DRM consists of watermarking the file with the user's name and email address on random pages throughout the text. The file can be copied and passed on, and there are no limits on printing and copying, but it will include the name of the user who originally downloaded it.

21. If I don't have ecommerce on my site, will you do it for me through eBooks.com, with my brand on it?

We can provide you with a catalogue of links to your books on ebooks.com and you can transfer your customers direct to the book product pages on our site. But the page will not carry your brand and the customer will become our customer for that transaction. At this stage a co-branded solution where eBooks.com hosts the shopping cart is not available.

22. Can you set this up on my website for me?

We can provide you with guidance and tips and our development team is happy to talk to your development team / web people, but the work to create any additional pages and the authentication process on your site will need to be carried out by your own team.

Q&A: Administering Ebook Engine

1. Are Ebook Engine ebooks available for expiring and perpetual access?

Yes. In the "API documentation" we explain how your developers need to structure the links to allow for perpetual access or to allow for expiring access.

2. Who controls the DRM for the Ebook Engine books?

You determine what the print, copy, read aloud, sharing permissions are on your books, we wrap the DRM around them when your customer clicks to download or read online.

3. How do I upload new titles and metadata to my Ebook Engine account?

When you sign terms with Ebooks Corporation we provide you with login details to our Publisher Interface for managing your inventory and an FTP account for uploading your ebook files and metadata. We will also provide you with a metadata template for metadata submission and a handbook to help you navigate the Publisher Interface. We also accept ONIX if you would prefer to supply your metadata that way.

4. Who manages customer support?

You manage customer support, but your Ebook Engine representative is always on hand to answer questions as they arise. We are also happy to provide you with the FAQs and customer support replies used by our own customer support team at eBooks.com to help you with common troubleshooting and FAQs.

5. What is the delay between uploading a file and metadata and the book becoming available for sale on my site?

Provided that you have delivered your files and metadata according to our required specifications your title should be live on the system within 5 working days. For titles that need to be processed urgently please upload the file and metadata to your FTP account and contact us to ask that we fast track it.

6. Can I get a report of my sales?

You can get a report of the orders that have been fulfilled (i.e. when a customer has actually clicked to download or to read a book online), but not of the sales. Because you are handling the transaction and we only kick in when a customer actually downloads or opens a book, it isn't possible for us to provide you with sales reports. You will need to keep a record of these at your end. On the upside, we only bill you for the books that are read, not for the sales that are made. Any difference between the two, you keep.

7. I usually work with my distributor - they do all my sales reporting - how can I get these sales included?

You will need to keep a record of your own sales and supply these reports to your distributor directly. We are only able to keep a record of the books that have been accessed, not the books that have been sold. So this reporting function by necessity will have to come from you.

8. I don't want to sell some of my books as ebooks from my site. Can I choose which books to sell?

You can. It is up to you which books you do and don't sell from your site. When you supply us with files and with metadata you can specify which channels each book is available for. If there are titles that you don't want to make available as ebooks on your site then you can flag them in your metadata. We provide you with a catalogue of the titles that are flagged as available for Ebook Engine in your metadata.

9. How should I price my ebooks?

We recommend pricing your ebooks on a par with your print books, but pricing is absolutely at your discretion.

10. Can I sell my ebooks in different currencies?

If you wish, supply us with USD, GBP, EUR, AUD and CAD prices in your metadata and we can supply this information to you in your catalogues. Then it is up to you which price(s) to display on your website.

11. What if I don't have e- rights in a certain territory? How do I stop the book from showing up?

When you supply us with files and with metadata you can specify which channels each book is available for. If there are titles that you don't want to make available as ebooks on your site then you can flag them in your metadata. We provide you with a catalogue of the titles that are flagged as available for Ebook Engine in your metadata.

