

Do-It-Yourself eBook Design : Recipe for Disaster!

By James Corless

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Do-it-yourself? I love it! In this era of 'experts' and 'specialists' it's fun to get your hands dirty and have a go. And get that glow of satisfaction from getting something done.

I've repaired my own cars, renovated my own homes, even done my own first aid when I sliced myself with a craft knife. It was fun to do (except for the blood) and it saved some money, too.

As a dyed-in-the-wool 'D-I-Yer', I also love ebooks. They're something that anyone can do. All you need is an idea, a computer, Internet access and a candle that burns at both ends.

But I've learned from experience that when it comes to the risky stuff, it pays to call in the experts.

So now I get a mechanic to fix the brakes, I call in the electrician to repair the wiring and I go to the doctor for serious medical attention. Some things are too important to try and do yourself.

Same thing with ebooks. If you want to make money selling an ebook, there's only so much you can do yourself before you start putting your profits at risk.

One of the common reasons ebooks flop is because inexperienced authors try to do their own design and produce a product that looks second-rate.

The major cause of bad design is the word-processor, bloated with 'design features' that make it really easy to mess up. So the Internet is swamped with cheap-looking ebooks and unhappy authors wondering what they did wrong.

The simple fact is this: A good-looking book will sell better than a cheap-looking book.

Mainstream publishers have known it for years. They don't ask authors to design their own book covers! They spend big money with top designers because they know that professional design is a sound investment. It sells books!

Good design is vital for success. It's no longer a matter for debate - Stanford University has proved the point. In a recent eye-opening study, researchers there confirmed that the 'look' of a product is far more influential than you'd think.

The 'design look' (their term) is twice as powerful as any other factor in establishing credibility. And credibility is the thing you need most when asking someone to buy your product.

When it comes to your ebook, don't sabotage your success by trying to save money. When you need special help, go to the specialist.

Of course, if you really must DIY then there'll be no stopping you. But don't make the same mistake as some authors, who think that because they've got the software they've also got the skills.

For your own sake, do a short course, buy a book, or check out some online tutorials. There's a ton of really good advice on the Internet just for the searching.

'Do-it-yourself' is great - in its place! Fix the car, decorate the home, get your hands dirty and have some fun, but when it comes to the success of your ebook, don't shoot yourself in the foot. Hire a professional designer - it's an investment in your business. Good design SELLS!

James Corless designs ebooks - anything to do with ebooks: covers, contents, ezine covers, CD covers, banners, sales buttons and web site graphics. [">mailto:james@ebook-designer.com](mailto:james@ebook-designer.com)

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