XinXii Style Guide: Optimal Formatting for E-Books! The Ultimate Guide for Authors

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XinXii Style Guide:
Optimal Formatting for E-Books!
XinXii Style Guide
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the XinXii Style Guide – Your Getting Started Guide for optimal formatting!
On XinXii, the central contact point for authors and Europe's Nr. 1, authors can upload, publish and deliver their eBooks to leading eBook shops – only with one account.

General Informationen:  
Publishing on XinXii:  
Comission on XinXii:  

Our team is available to support you daily, email us at support@xinxii.com!

About XinXii

XinXii is Europe's leading indie eBook self-publishing and distribution platform. Users can upload their books of all sorts and lengths on http://www.xinxii.com/en and sell them on their XinXii Author Page – no expenses and contractual obligations involved. As an eBook aggregator XinXii distributes additionally to leading eBook shops worldwide such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Weltbild, iBookstore and Kobo – including the conversion to ePub and mobi format.

** The XinXii Power is free of charge for all fiction eBooks, for all other genres the XinXii Power is available after a one-time payment of 9.99 EUR /12.99 US$/8.99 GBP.

There are some points you should take into consideration before uploading your source file. We are going to provide you with more information about formatting your document in such a way that we can convert and validate your eBook in the best way. The XinXii Style Guide is the best preparation for a successful publishing with XinXii.

Have fun getting informed and enjoy formatting and uploading your eBook!
WHAT IS AN eBook?

In order to avoid misunderstandings regarding the use of the term „eBook“ we would like to clarify the general definition.

An eBook is not an exact electronic reproduction of a printed book. The eBook will always differ optically from the fixed formatting of the PDF file which has been prepared for printing.

The eBooks that are available in digital bookstores are created through a special file in the format „ePub“. In contrast to the PDF file, which can be read only on a PC/Notebook, this file offers a higher reading comfort.

XinXii generates a professional ePub file from your Word file (= source file), which can be displayed and read on all reading devices. Additionally, for the distribution to the Amazon's Kindle shop, we create a file in mobi format - it is used by the Kindle devices and the Kindle app for PC/Notebook.

The basic differences between an eBook and a printed book (or a PDF file) are the following:

- An eBook is built in a different way in comparison to a printed book:
  There is neither a front and back page nor a blurb.
- An eBook has no page numbers but „positions“ which are displayed by the eReader.
- An eBook has no fixed font style, font size or similar static formatting.
- Each eReader interprets an eBook in a different way and users can customize the font size, line spacing etc. according to their needs.

You will comprehend the content of this style guide in a better way after learning more about the above differences.
It is clear, according to the above image, that many E-Ink Readers (left) display the text differently - in contrast to the PDF file (right) the colors are not displayed. The columns are shorter, the lines are not fixed and the layout depends on the preference of the reader. Headers and footers are not displayed. The graphic is smaller and adjusts according to the page width.
PART 1

THE FORMATTING
It is important that we receive a well-formatted source file in order to generate a high-quality eBook. We clarify what we mean by “well-formatted source file” in 8 steps.

**STEP 1: THE SOURCE FILE**

You can submit the following file formats:

```
.doc | .docx | .odt | .rtf | .txt | .pdf | .epub | .mobi
```

PDF files usually create problems in the process of conversion, in some cases they lead to unsolvable errors (some letters or characters are converted in a wrong way or simply disappear).

When saving your word file do not choose options such as „write-protected“ because you would seal the document. The file should be editable, so we can convert it. It is understandable that many authors do not provide the customers with an editable text- on our page you can hide it. We use the format only for conversion purposes and not to make corrections on the text itself.

You can upload ePub and mobi files directly. In this case, we recommend you to upload the source file too. Should there be any complications with the validation of the eBook file, we convert your source file.

We **cannot (or only partially) work with** the following files:

```
Indesign | Pages | iBooksAuthor | html
```

---

**INDESIGN FILES**

A text created with Indesign can be easily exported to a RTF file.


---

**PAGES FILES**

The program Pages enables a conversion to a DOC file.
iBooksAuthor offers an export to PDF and TXT format.

HTML files are accepted as far as they meet the formatting standards of this style guide. If it is a professionally built HTML file then you should upload it only on XinXii.

Important: The source file should not be bigger than 40 MB. Please do not use special characters such as @ $ § &% when naming your file, also no umlauts or spaces since that can lead to problems during the upload. Here is an example: „Life@Work“ instead of „Life@Work“

This is how you can remove the redundant formatting

1. Open your file in Word.
2. Copy the text to Windows Notepad or a similar text editor.
3. Open a new word document.
4. Copy the text from the Notepad file to the new Word document.

Thus all redundant formatting is removed and you can continue editing the file while considering the following formatting tips.
STEP 2: FORMATTING

The PDF file represents a static format - the formatting is done “once and for all”. That's why PDF files are used as a template for printed books.

The ePub is a dynamic format which excludes rigid formatting since the text displayed on the eReader is not static. The readers can customize the file format on the eReader and set it in a way that increases their reading comfort.

When creating your source file take into consideration the following points:

- Special font styles are not accepted by all reading devices.
- The font style is determined by the settings of the reader.
- Colors are not displayed and converted to grayscale by most eReaders.
- Footnotes are displayed as endnotes and are linked at the end of the eBook.
- Multi-column text areas (charts) are not displayed properly due to the limited display area and should be avoided or inserted as an image.
- Lists and enumerations should be formatted according to our guidelines. (see „Charts and Lists“).

Our recommendations:

- Create your text in a standardized font style (for example Arial or Times New Roman).
- If you use a special font style for chapter headings, then you should insert it as a graphic (JPG format).
- do not use color for text formatting.
STEP 3: FORMATTING STANDARD TEXT

Clever formatting: the paragraph symbol
Before we continue with more tips: Have you activated the „paragraph symbol“? It shows all paragraphs and breaks.

Do not forget: Clean your text!
We have already explained how to remove redundant formatting with the Notepad editor. (see Step 1 „The source file”). If you have not done that yet, now is the time to catch up! After you have cleaned your text with the above mentioned method you should double check the standard formatting - bold and italics. Underlined text should be avoided since it is used to mark a linking to a web address in digital media.

Text boxes
Pay attention not to use text boxes. Instead submit your content in a continuous text.

Erstes Kapitel

Verhaftung – Gespräch mit Frau Grubach – Dann Fräulein Bürstner

Die Köchin der Frau Grubach, seiner Zimmervermieterin, die ihm jeden Tag gegen acht Uhr früh das Frühstück brachte, kam diesmal nicht. Das war noch niemals geschehen. K. wartete noch ein Weilechen, sah von einem Kordtisch aus die alte Frau, die ihm gegenüber wohnte, und die ihm mit einer an ihn gerichteten, gleichzeitig befremdender und für ihn ungewohnter Art der Wohnung noch niemals herumgetraut, ein anliegendes schwarzes Falten, Taschen, Schuhen, | daß man sich darunter klar werden konnte, dann aber verbrauchte, Lehren, dass das eine Redmund mußte Josef K., vermutlich, ein Mann, der er in Glück und doch fest gebaut, er sich, mit verschiedenen Ursachen der Verwirrung und infolgedessen, ohne praktisch erscheinen. »Wer sind Sie?« fragte K. und saß gleich halb aufrecht im Bett. Der Mann aber ging über die Frage hinweg, als müsse man seine Erscheinung hinnehmen, und sagte bloß seinerseits: »Sie haben gehört?« »Anna soll mir das Frühstück bringen« sagte K. und versuchte, zunächst stillzulegen, durch Aufmerksamkeit und Überlegung festzustellen, wer der Mann eigentlich war.

Text boxes can considerably alter the final result when converted to ePub format since they are often positioned above the continuous text after conversion. That’s why it is highly recommendable to avoid them!
How to remove a text box:
In order to find out whether your text contains text boxes choose the option „page layout“ by clicking on View from the drop down Word menu bar. If the text contains text boxes they appear with shaded lines when you click on them. They are easily recognizable and are removed without any problems.

We recommend looking for text boxes in footers and headers and removing them as well.

Text alignment
We recommend that you write your entire text using the margin “justification”. Mark the whole text and choose „Justified“. Specific passages, for example, citations could be right-justified. The relevant text positions would be marked and aligned.
STEP 4: FONT STYLES AND SPECIAL CHARACTERS

We advise you not to use several font styles but **one standard font style** in a **consistent size for the entire text**. We recommend the font styles Arial or Times New Roman, size 12pt.

Since the readers customize the font style and the size by themselves while reading, you should avoid **special font styles**. Yet if you want to use a special font style for some specific words, we recommend that you insert it in the form of a graphic.

Since most eReaders (based on eInk) cannot display colors you should avoid using **colored text** or **background color**. Always remember that your eBook is not in a static form and your settings would not be displayed properly by every reading device. The advantage of the eBooks is that the readers can customize the settings according to their needs.

Symbols are not accepted in the case of enumerations. Special characters, initials or glyphs such as „“ should be inserted as a graphic image (the standard enumerations are „•“ and „*“).

**PRACTICE TIP**

1. A suitable font for fiction publications is a serif one (such as Times New Roman), we recommend a non-serif font for books of non-fiction (such as Arial).
2. If you want to highlight certain words, you can use capital letters, for example: He went to the BERGHAIN discotheque.

**In order to create an uniformed text in style and size, mark the whole text (Ctrl+ A) and choose the desired format style and size using the „Start“ tab**

**Tip for OpenOffice-Users:**
The formatting area can be found directly on the bottom menu line.
Paragraphs

Paragraphs are always formatted with the first line indent or defined through spacing from the previous paragraph.

The best way to format paragraphs is by clicking with the right mouse button, after marking the text and choosing “Paragraph”, and choose the spacing by yourself (please adjust the line spacing to single or 1,5, never choose double, exactly or at least).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spacing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before: 0 pt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After: 10 pt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do not generate paragraphs
- through a break („Shift“ + „Enter“),
- durch tabs and spaces,
… since those are not displayed as paragraphs in ePub format and thus the structure of the text would be lost.

If you use images or special characters for paragraph separation, they should be centered:

Tip for OpenOffice-Users:
In its current version (OpenOffice 4.0.1) there is a convenient menu list on the right side where you can define paragraphs, spacing and indent.
Page break

Page breaks, e.g. before a new chapter, should not be generated through blank lines but using the combination „STRG“ + „Enter“ or through the menu function „page break“ in the Word navigation menu:

Thus you can be sure that the range of pages would not be shifted in the process of conversion.

Tip for OpenOffice Users:
Click on the tab „Insert“ and choose „Manual Break“, the window „Insert break“ is opened. Then choose the break and insert it with „OK“.
The Chapter Heading

The best way to structure a long text is through meaningfully grouped content units. A chapter should contain several subchapters, structured through paragraphs in order to support the flow of reading.

The chapter heading should be separated from the continuous text. It can be centered, in another font size, underlined and/or highlighted in bold. Pay attention that all chapter headings are formatted consistently. This helps us to create the table of contents in a correct way.

It is **not** needed to insert a table of contents with linked headings in your source file. We automatically link the chapter headings to the table of contents during the conversion process.
**STEP 6: HYPERLINKS AND FOOT-/ENDNOTES**

If you want to add links, choose „Hyperlink“ and „insert“ the internet address.

![Hyperlink interface](image)

We have to remove **links to competitors**, such as Smashwords, Amazon and Apple, since many online shops forbid the reference to other marketplaces. Still you can include your blog / webpage as well as your social media pages, so the reader can contact you and learn more about your publications.

Bear in mind: Not every reading device has access to Internet which means that not every reader can follow the links.

![Tip for Open Office Users](image)

**Tip for Open Office Users:**

Mark the text that you want to link, choose „Hyperlink“ and then insert the Internet address.
Endnotes

In the process of conversion footnotes are transformed to endnotes because there is no fixed page and thus no page footer. The footnotes are gathered at the end of the book and are linked with the main text. The reader can automatically switch from the text to the endnote and retrieve the information.

You would like to publish a text that contains explanatory notes? We recommend that you include them as endnotes in order to see how your book would be arranged after the conversion.

Creating endnotes:

Choose to the place where you want to insert an endnote. Choose the tab „Reference“ and then „Insert endnote“. Now you can find your endnote at the end of the content. You can find more information about endnotes in your Word manual.

Tip for OpenOffice Users:

Go to the tab „Insert“ and choose „Foot/Endnote“. Then another window is opened, you can create the Endnote under „Type“.
Images should always be inserted and embedded as JPG, so they do not interfere with the flow of the text – overlapping it or appearing at unwanted places.

**Embedding images:**

Right click on the picture, then you will see in the menu list the red area „Image tools“. Choose the desired anchoring from „Wrap Text“— we recommend „Top and Bottom“. Thus you fix the image in a proper way.

**Tip for OpenOffice Users:**

Here you can anchor the images directly, simply right click the image and choose the option „As Character“ which can be found under „Anchor“. In the current Open Office Version (4.0.1.) you can find a practical list on the right side.
Image size

Large images should always be scaled down, so the file does not exceed our maximal file size of 40 MB (for example Gimp, IrfanView, Paint, Photoshop). The smaller the image the smaller the file. A few eReaders have a display format which allows for large images to be displayed properly. The loading of the image in the case of bigger image files takes a long time and alters the reading experience. That's why the image should not be larger than 400 px (pixels) and not have a high resolution (of course it should not be too pixelated!).

Praxistipp

Images are usually shown in grayscale on most of the eReaders. Take into consideration the screen size which sets certain limits.
STEP 8: INSERTING TABLES AND LISTS

Tables

Complex tables might not be displayed properly on most of the eReaders due to the limited display width. Due to that tables with more than two columns would not be converted and should be inserted as an image file.

Lists and Enumerations

We recommend that you do not format lists and enumerations manually but use automatic enumeration since the numbering is inaccurate in conversion.

Choose the tab „Start“ from the menu and then choose the desired enumeration mode. We recommend that you choose the disc • or another desired enumeration variant. Other symbols would not be converted properly. Create the next bullet point with „Enter“.

Please avoid paragraphs breaks within the bullet points and the listings should not be nested within each other.
Tips for OpenOffice Users:

You can choose the automatic enumerations directly in the lower menu bar.
Forms and Checklists

Forms, checklists, patterns etc., which suggest that one should fill in/tick off a point in the text, are not accepted. Such elements might lead to deferral in some partner shops and are redundant for the ePUB format since the text would not be printed.

*Here are two examples:*

Filling in:

Name: ………………………

Date: _________________

Ticking off:

- XX
- YY
- ZZ
PART 2

EBook Components
The Title Page

Your eBook should have a meaningful and interesting title, include the author's names (pseudonym) and the name of the publisher if applicable. In case of contributors (translator, illustrator or editor) those should be mentioned on the title page as well.

Author’s names and book title should be overall congruent – on the title page, as well as on the imprint, cover and during the upload process in our system.

**Formatting the title page:**
We recommend that your main title is set bigger than the subtitle. You can choose by yourself how to arrange the author’s name and the title. The most important part is that the same title and author's name are mentioned. The title should never be positioned vertically on the title page since it might not be recognized in the process of conversion.

*Example – title pages of fiction and non-fiction books*

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**XinXii-Style-Guide**
So formatieren Sie Ihre Originaldatei korrekt.

**Der Proceß**
Franz Kafka
The Book Cover

You should pay attention to the following:

> The book cover should not contain blurbs or an envelope with a front and back side.
> The book cover should be uploaded in high resolution and quality with a width of at least 1400 px.
> The book cover should display the author’s name/pseudonym in a visible way as well as the book title (and the name of the publishing company, if applicable). The author’s name on the cover should be identical with the one in the imprint.
> Do not scan photos for the book cover, choose a graphic image and upload it as a JPG file.
> We cannot accept a 3D cover for distribution to our partner shops.
> Pay attention that you possess the respective rights to the used graphics and the owner is mentioned in the imprint. Alternatively, you can add this information in the end of your eBook by integrating an image index.

PRAXISTIPP

When creating your cover, have a look at already existing book covers in the same genre. You can find numerous tips in our „XinXii-Buchmarketing-Guide“.
Attention: Please take into consideration that most of the shops have strict rules and can reject offensive or inappropriate images.

This is how you integrate a cover in your document:

Click on „Insert“ and then choose „Graphic“ or in the case of Open Office, please click on „Picture“ and then simply choose the file. The inserted image could be adjusted only according to the page size. Please take into consideration our tips for embedding images in Step 7.
THE IMPRINT

As a self-publisher you are fully responsible for the content of your book, that's why it is needed that you add an imprint, so you can protect your copyrights. In Germany it is mandatory to add an imprint not only for printed editions but also for digital books.

The imprint should contain the following data:

- Author’s name / pseudonym
  (In the case of a pseudonym your real name should not appear in the imprint.)
- Title
- Number of edition
- Email address (alternatively postal address)
- ISBN

You can have a look at our example:

IMPRINT

Book title
by Name Last Name

© Year Name of the author/copyrights holder.
All Rights reserved.

Author: Name Last Name
Contact (Address and/or email address)

If applicable:
Book cover, Illustration: Name Last Name or Institution
Editorial office, Proofreading: Name Last Name or Institution
other contributors: Name Last Name or Institution


This eBook, together with all its parts, is protected by copyright and should not be copied, sold or transmitted without the expressed consent of the author.
ISBN

In order to reach more customers, we are distributing your eBook to our numerous partner shops free of charge: http://www.xinxii.com/gd_cms.php/en?page=distribution_en

An ISBN („International Standard Book Number“) is necessary for the distribution and is used for the individual categorization of the book. You can find more information here:


You can obtain an ISBN directly on XinXii: Choose our package XinXii Power and you will receive, together with the conversion of your source file, an ISBN as well as a distribution of your eBook to the online shops chosen by you. The package is free of charge for books of fiction.

You can also use our services if you already possess an ISBN. Choose the package XinXii Plus, and we will take over the standard conversion and the distribution to our partner shops using your ISBN.

If your book is available in print, you need a new ISBN for the digital one; it can be identical for the formats ePub and mobi. You need a new ISBN in the cases of a new edition, an edited one or if you extend the content.

Here you can find more information about our publishing packages and order an ISBN: http://www.xinxii.com/publish.php.
OVERVIEW

Summary of the Most Important Tips for the Formatting of Your Source File
For the conversion your file should

- not be uploaded in a landscape format and as a vertical text
- not be bigger than 40 MB
- not contain scanned text
- not contain headers and footers
- not contain a colorful background
- not contain a 3-D-Cover
- not contain special characters
- should not be formatted using numerous font styles
- not present the same content twice
- be proofread and with a complete content
- contain an imprint with a complete copyright information (with content and images of third parties)
- not be formatted for printing - no calendars, forms, games, contracts, etc.
- contain images in JPG format in good quality
- not contain audio or video data

When you can answer with „Yes“ to all points, then your file is prepared optimally for the conversion and we can distribute your eBook.

If you have missed some points, we would like to ask you to double check them.

The XinXii team wishes you all the best and lots of success with us!
Here is an example for an endnote. By clicking on the i you will follow the referral.
LINKS: TUTORIALS FOR WORKING WITH WORD AND OPEN OFFICE

Word Online Manuals:

Training courses for download:


Video Tutorials:

Formatting texts in Word: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQWYGcZ7USQ

Formatting the front page in Word: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKWKswH29kM

Open Office Online Manuals:

http://www.openoffice.org

http://www.tutorialsforopenoffice.org

Video Tutorials:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_G27IebhLbY
CONTACT

You have further questions or suggestions?
Please contact us under guides@xinxi.com!
We will be glad to support you.

Visit our blog to find out what's new at XinXii and learn more about other authors through our interviews.

Have a discussion with the XinXii team and the community in our forum:
THE AUTHOR

KATJA NAUCK

Katja Nauck is a marketing assistant at XinXii, she has been managing the German social media channels since 2012. Together with the many years of experience in publishing, the specialist in German studies gathered valuable experience in the sphere of book/online marketing through occupation in publishing houses, online editorial offices and working on blogs.

She is passionate about literature, art, blogging and travelling.

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