

A magazine for people who love to read and to write.

Shelfless.org

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How To Convert Your Kindle eBooks To ePub (How To Remove DRM From Kindle Books)

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November 1, 2012 Categories: [Feature](#)



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Of course, Amazon doesn't want you to turn your Kindle books into eBooks. They want you to be locked into their ecosystem. Buy their device, read their books. This is all well and good, and makes reasonable business sense for them for the most part. But what if you chose to buy a Nook reader, and subsequently discover there's a Kindle book you really want to read? Amazon would say you should buy a Kindle reader, or use one of their apps. It seems rather silly that you cannot read the book on your nice dedicated Nook though, doesn't it?

Fortunately, there is an answer. Kindle books can be very easily converted into ePub – and any other – format. There is a little bit of setting up involved to get there, because Amazon protect their downloads in order to prevent you from doing just this, but once the setup is done you'll be able to convert any Kindle book in seconds.

Disclaimer: *Removing the DRM from Kindle ebooks, changing their format, and reading them on anything other than a Kindle device or official Kindle app is strictly against Amazon's terms and conditions. It may result in your Amazon account being closed permanently.*

Having said that, there are some provisions in law (in both the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, and its European counterpart the EU Copyright Directive, to allow for the creation of backups of digital content for personal use. I'm not suggesting these provisions make it legal to remove DRM from Kindle books, and the law is a constantly moving target on this issue. Unless you are a lawyer, or have taken legal advice, it's better to assume that removing DRM is illegal. And regardless of the law, it's certainly against Amazon's terms, which you implicitly agree to when you download any Kindle book.

My personal view is that there is nothing *ethically* wrong with altering the format of a book you have paid for. The way I see it, removing DRM from a Kindle book and turning into an ePub to read on another device is exactly the same as purchasing a print copy, pulling out all of the pages, punching holes in them and putting them into a ring binder because that's how you prefer to read. In each instance, the author, publisher, and retailer all got paid their dues. Others will disagree with me, and the law almost certainly does.

With that out the way, how do we actually go about turning a Kindle book into an ePub? The first thing you will need is Calibre, a free program for managing ebooks. There are versions for Macs, Windows PCs, and Linux. You can download it [here](#).

Follow the instructions provided to install the Calibre software. It's not difficult, but the user interface leaves a lot to be desired. Fear not though, we only need to use the program in passing (although it has many features and if you've not used it before, you may want to brave the poor UI and delve in to it further – there's a lot you can do if you can stand it!)

Next up, you need to download some plugins for Calibre. These work like extension to a web browser – they give the software extra abilities. In this case, we want plugins that can strip the DRM from our Kindle books. You

Recommended Read:



[Noah's Ark: Survivors](#)

By: Harry Dayle

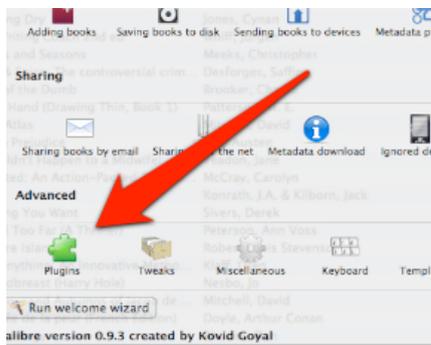
Genre: Apocalyptic

Formats: Ebook

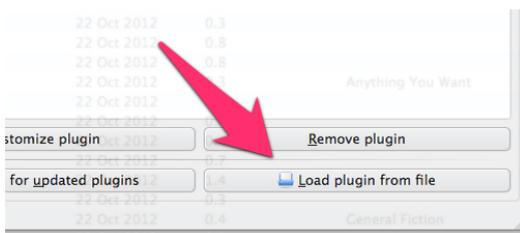
[Click here for details...](#)

can find the necessary download here (it's a few paragraphs down the page). It doesn't matter if you are using the Windows, Mac, or Linux version of Calibre, the plugin download is the same for all three.

There are several plugins, and they're all bundled together in a ZIP file. Unzip it using whatever method you normally use (if in doubt, double-clicking the file should work it in most cases). Now open up Calibre if you haven't already done so. We need to get to the the Preferences window – click on the Preferences icon if you're using the Windows version, on a Mac you can just use the menu or usual keyboard shortcut (CMD+.),).

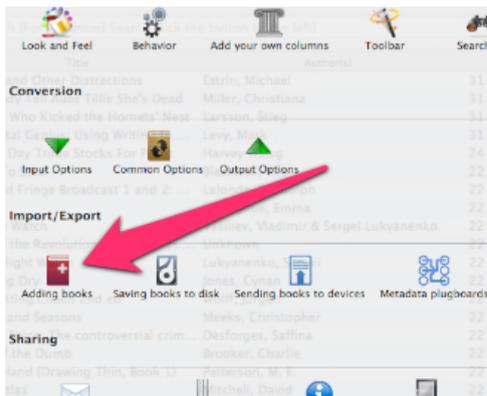


The preferences window is particularly badly designed, but don't despair, we won't be here for long. Find the icon called *Plugins* (it looks like a piece of jigsaw puzzle) and click on it. This will open yet another new window. At the bottom of this are six buttons, click the one labelled *Load plugin from file*.

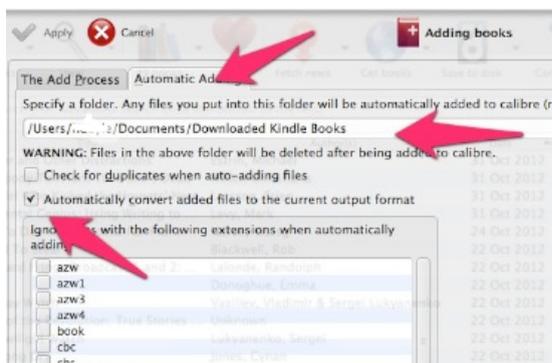


You can now use the file chooser to locate the plugin files you downloaded and unzipped. You'll need to repeat this step a few times to load all the plugins from the ZIP file, one at a time. When your done, close Calibre and reopen it, this will ensure the plugins are active and ready for duty.

Next up, we need to tell Calibre to convert our Kindle books, which means letting it know where to find them and what to do with them. Again, this step only needs be done once. First we must make a folder somewhere for Calibre to watch. Any ebook you put into this folder will get imported into the Calibre library, and converted to ePub (and the original will be deleted from the folder). Go ahead and create a folder somewhere convenient to you on your computer. Now open up the Preferences pane again (the icon at the top, or use the menu). Under *Import / Export*, click the *Adding books* icon.



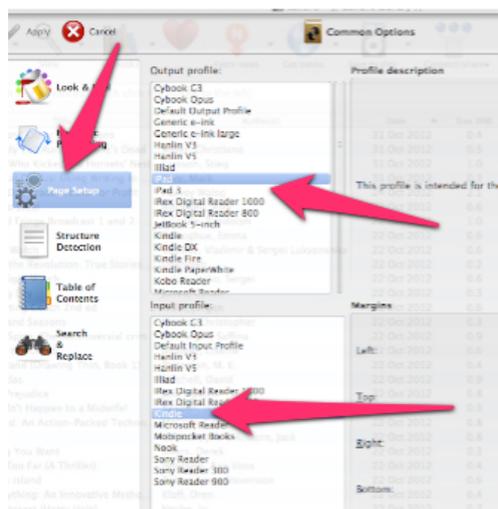
On the window that pops up, click the *Automatic Adding* tab. At the top of this section is a box into which you can enter the name of the folder you created earlier. Click the little button at the end of the box and you'll be able to use the file selector to choose the folder.



A little further down you'll see a checkbox that's marked *Automatically convert added files to the current output format*, you'll need to make sure it's checked. Click *Apply* to save the settings.



Finally we must tell Calibre what we want to do with the ebooks it finds. On the main Preferences screen, click *Common Options*, then in the window that pops up, choose *Page Setup*. You'll see two lists, one marked *Output Profile*, the other marked *Input Profile* (confusingly, the *Output* list is at the top). In the *Input Profile*, select *Kindle*, as you'll be importing Kindle books. For the *Output Profile* you can select whichever ereader you plan on using, whether it be a Nook, Kobo reader, Sony reader, or another device. If you plan on using iBooks on an iPad or iPhone, simply select iPad and Calibre will do the rest. Click *Apply* to save the settings, and you're all done with the hard part!



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With the books downloaded, it's now simply a case of copying the book files into the folder you created earlier. On a Mac, you'll find them in `~USERNAME/Library/Application Support/Kindle/My Kindle Content`. On Windows PCs, you should find the book files in `My Documents/My Kindle Content`. In both cases there are multiple files per book; the ones we are interested in are those with the `.azw` file extension. Simply copy the `.azw` files into the folder you created and let Calibre do the rest. If you watch the Calibre window you'll see it import the books, then work its way through converting them.

Once a book is in Calibre you can click its title and on the right of the screen you'll see all the details about that book, including the formats it exists in. If you don't see ePub listed, it's because Calibre hasn't finished converting that book yet.

You'll find your newly created ePub files in the Calibre library folder, which on a Mac is in `~USERNAME/Calibre Library` (unless you choose otherwise in the Calibre settings). The eBooks are DRM free and you can move them around and install them on your ereader in the usual way.

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