Hints and tips

This chapter provides some hints and tips as a reminder of the things that you will need to consider as you work on your book:

- Use outlining and styles!

- Use an 8½" x 11" portrait format.

- Save frequently.

- Design the cover to the proper trim size. Remember that the cover of a perfect-bound book will be trimmed. Therefore the final size of the front cover will be smaller than 8½" x 11". Check with your print shop to see how much will be trimmed off of the top, bottom, and right-hand side of the book.

- Use the JPEG format for grayscale and color images. Use TIFF for line art.

- When saving an image in the JPEG format, choose high quality setting.

- Choose an appropriate spatial resolution for all images.

- Remember to autocorrect and sharpen all grayscale images.

- Confirm that the table of contents and index references are accurate. Important: Hide non-printing characters before updating the table of contents or index.

- Request a proof and examine it closely.

- Even-numbered pages should fall on the left-hand side of a two-page spread. Odd-numbered pages should fall on the right. New chapters generally start on right-hand (i.e., odd pages).

- Don't spend more than five cents per black & white image for printing. A price of four cents per image (or less) is even better.

- Think ahead – How will you transfer the final book from your computer to the print shop? Will they have the fonts they need?

- Know your limits – You could do everything, but there are things that you will probably want to leave to professionals (for example, the printing and binding). Other tasks depend on your own skills. Can you take a recognizable portrait photograph of someone you interview for your book? Can you scan and adjust that image so it will look good in print? Can you create original color artwork for the cover? Can you integrate that artwork into a cover design? Can you prepare a print-ready color file for the cover? Do you have the visual sense to select fonts for the text and cover? Can you apply styles to your text and also proof any formatting errors? Can you work with a printer to be sure that the book comes out the way you want it to? Chances are you could try to do most of these things. However, in some cases you'll find it is worth it to pay someone with professional skills to do parts of it for you.

Afterword

You have an unprecedented opportunity to produce a small quantity of attractive soft-cover books, without having to work through a publisher. I did it, and with the right effort, so can you.

If you have any questions or comments about this book, I'd love to hear from you. My e-mail address is:

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