E-book Formatting Checklist

To create an e-book requires converting your manuscript into an HTML format. And to make the process as painless as possible, there are certain Do's and Don'ts you should be aware of when preparing your manuscript.

NOTICE: In the following, I refer to Microsoft Word, but you can use any word processing program you prefer, such as Open Office.

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Preparation is Key

FIRST: You are <u>not</u> concerned about the appearance of the book at this point. You are only preparing the page with the proper styles so it can be easily converted to HTML. I will modify the look and design when I import your manuscript.

Need to DO:

FIRST: Before you do any of the following, **make a backup copy of your manuscript**.

SECOND: Turn on the 'pilcrow' or ¶ in the top menu. This will display all the hidden characters such as paragraphs and spaces. The spaces are indicated with miniscule dots, so you may have to enlarge the page view to determine how many there are at the beginning of a sentence.

What is addressed:

- Chapter Headings
- Subheadings
- Manual Line Breaks or Soft Breaks
- Indents
- Spaces

Need to Know:

> ^p = paragraph
> ^t = tab
> ^l = soft return

(1) CHAPTER HEADINGS

Make <u>**all**</u> your Chapter headings using the HEADING 1 style.

WHY: Chapter headings are used to determine where to make chapter breaks for the book. Without them, your formatter may not know where to make the breaks and your book will not look correct.

Do not rely on your formatter comparing the e-book to your original manuscript in Word to determine page breaks. Some fiction books are over 100 chapters, so going "back and forth" just isn't cost-effective or accurate.

Chapter headings also are included in the table of contents (TOC). Without proper headings, a section may not be listed properly in the final TOC. Even if you do not what the chapter listed in the final table of contents, make the headings a HEADING 1 tag anyway. And then inform your formatter what chapters to omit from the final TOC coding.

(2) SubHEADINGS

If you want subheads, then be consistent. These are the HEADING 2, HEADING 3, HEADING 4 tags. Again do not worry about the font or color of the word layout when using the styles. This will be modified in the HTML process.

(3) MANUAL LINE BREAKS or SOFT RETURNS

Never, *ever*, create manual paragraph returns using the Shift + Return. While you may want to keep certain lines together in your "design" remember YOU aren't designing the book. These manual or soft paragraph returns so not translate to the e-book well. In fact, they are ignored and your entire manuscript may convert as one long paragraph.

To replace soft returns with actual hard return paragraphs (In Microsoft Word):

1. Open the Find and Replace feature
2. Find: ^l (that's a ^ followed by a lowercase 'L'
3. Replace: ^p
4. Replace All
5. Save your document.

(4) INDENTS

DO NOT USE TABS OR SPACES. If you want your paragraph to indent, then use the proper method: **Format > Paragraph > First Line Indent** (the location of the first line indent in your software may be different. Please refer to your manual.)

If you used tabs or spaces here's how you can easily remove them using the Find and Replace.

First, we'll set the *proper indents* then we'll remove the improper ones.

1. Highlight **all** the text in your manuscript.
2. Set the **First Line indent**. *(2em is the standard.)*
3. **Save**.

To remove tabs:

1. Open the **Find and Replace** feature
2. Find ^t (for tab)
3. Replace ^p
4. **Replace All**
5. **Save your document**

To remove spaces:

1. **Highlight** the "space" at the beginning of a paragraph. Remember you have a *proper first line indent*, so that will not highlight. You are only concerned with the little space "dots". *(Turn on your pilcrow ¶ to see the hidden characters.)*
2. When you have the spaces highlighted, **copy** them using Control+C or Command+C.
3. Open the **Find and Replace** feature
4. In the Find field **Paste** the 'spaces'. You won't see anything in the box, but your cursor will be indented slightly from the left margin. *(Paste: Control+V or Command+V)*
5. Leave the Replace *blank*
6. **Replace All**
7. **Save your file.**

(5) SPACES.

Sometimes you may have extra spaces at the end of a paragraph or you missed a space at the beginning of one. You can remove those easily using the Find and Replace.

1. Open the **Find and Replace** feature
2. **Find** (space)^p
3. **Replace** ^p (no space before or after the paragraph mark)
4. **Replace All**
5. **Save**

Repeat this step several times until the result is 0.

To find space at the beginning of a paragraph (in case you missed any in the previous step):

1. Open the **Find and Replace** feature
2. **Find** ^p(space)
3. **Replace** ^p (no space before or after the paragraph mark)
4. **Replace All**
5. **Save**

Repeat this step several times until the result is 0.

Your file is now ready for a "cleaner" conversion to HTML.