Treating Books As Software

Brad Neuberg's [Transforming eBook Production by Treating Books as Software](#) as a possible suggestion of how to handle books as software with all the advantages that it entails.

I like the idea but I don't think it goes far enough. I can't tell when the article was written but there have been changes in the software world that make it easier to use some software over others.

Before we look at the technology let's see what the minimal required assets to build an epub ebook.

- XML files
- HTML

To these basic assets we can add more:

- CSS
- Javascript
- Additional Fonts beyond those offered in reading devices
- Audio
- Video

These bundles can be very complicated. For example, a large book may have more than 50 chapters of text and images. Now add interactivity, and educational content. If you're not careful you will need a small army to produce every eBook.

So how do we build these different types of files? how do we store them? How do we allow for collaborative development?

Tooling

If we want to treat book production we should consider the appropriate tooling for it. Some of the tools we need may include:

- Source control systems
- Issue databases
- Build systems
- Testing

What type of application?

In recent years we've seen the concept of progressive web applications become prevalent on web development and, at some point, I wrote about a combination of PWA and [subcompact publishing](#) (a concept and philosophy first proposed by [Craig Mod](#)) that I called *subcompact publishing*.

However, as interesting as subcompact publishing is, we should look at building our content as a regular web site and then add PWA features on top of it.

Build your content

Build a manifest

Build a service worker

(Optional) Package your content

- [Stab a Book, the Book Won't Die](#) *[Referenced Works 2019: Walks, Books, Habits, Publishing Tools](#)
- [Fast Software, the Best Software](#)
- [Tools and Creative Permission](#)
- [How I Got My Attention Back](#)
- [As We May Read](#)
- [Let's Talk About Margins](#)