

ePub WordPress plugin released today

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The Beyond the PDF workshop took place a little over a week ago. One take-home message for me was that ePub is a very interesting document format for scholarly publishing and has several advantages over PDF. The workshop had a wonderful spirit to do something, and in this spirit I wrote a WordPress plugin that automatically creates ePub files from blog posts. The plugin was released today, and can be installed directly from your WordPress installation. A sample ePub can be downloaded from this blog post, using the link at the bottom.

The workshop example paper from PLoS Comp Biol, as seen on the iPad.

This is version 1.0 of the plugin, and there are still a number of small bugs, mainly because ePub is a complex format. A big problem is page breaks, and widows and orphans can currently only be avoided by workarounds. You can also see in the screenshot that the shortcode wasn't parsed for the ePub.

But these are minor issues that can be solved in the coming weeks. More interesting for version 1.1 is the inclusion of attachments (other than images) in the ePub. I have to do some more thinking on how to do this, especially how to handle all the possible mime types.

I like reading science blogs in ePub format, using either Adobe Digital Editions on the Mac or iBooks on iPad and iPhone. This works particularly well for longer posts, e.g. those lovely posts from my science writer colleagues here on PLoS Blogs. If you have access to WordPress, then this plugin is one of the easiest ways to produce content in ePub format.