

A Look Into Various Publication Systems

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Kapitel 1

Pressbooks

Pressbooks¹ modifies WordPress² via the plugin mechanism to become a book production suite. Unfortunately, it's licensed under the GNU General Public License 2³ because the WordPress code and plugin directory requires it, while that license is insufficient for code that runs on servers⁴. It too has dependencies to proprietary software, namely PrinceXML for generating PDF files and Amazon KindleGen for generating MOBI files, where the MOBI format is also a proprietary format.

Its founder Hugh McGuire⁵ gave several talks about it: at the Books in Browsers conference 2011⁶ he suspected that Amazon would adopt the EPUB standard more or less (4:16⁷), which doesn't seem likely because the whole point of the MOBI format is to create a vendor lock-in⁸ as Amazon can change the format at any time and update the firmware in the devices remotely or by force (he recognizes the effects of such silos in his talk at the Books in Browsers conference 2014⁹), where at the same time Amazon takes EPUB files as input for their platform and uses HTML5 technology within MOBI. From 9:05¹⁰ he describes a major issue of traditional publishers, which is maintaining separate workflows for separate end formats, effectively increasing production costs for no good reason other than technical ignorance. At 17:04¹¹ he answered a question about how traditional publishers should go about switching to XML-first workflows as they already have their old workflows in place and don't want to spend money again for arriving at something that's quite similar to their old workflow regarding the results. In the previous print-only world, things like manual DTP made sense because there wasn't really another use to the result other than printing. With print, web and e-books one would save the need to develop two separate, additional workflows, and one can think of even more such like the use in databases et cetera. If the source files are output format

¹<https://github.com/pressbooks/pressbooks>

²<https://wordpress.org/>

³<https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html>

⁴<https://www.gnu.org/licenses/why-affero-gpl.html>

⁵<http://hughmcguire.net/>

⁶<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdWTz10Wb9s>

⁷<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdWTz10Wb9s\&t=4m16s>

⁸https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vendor_lock-in

⁹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsPRTnGADKY>

¹⁰<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdWTz10Wb9s\&t=9m05s>

¹¹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdWTz10Wb9s\&t=17m04s>

agnostic (would be the case with semantic XML/XHTML), it's comparatively easy and cheap to generate whatever new output format or use case comes along in the future.

At the Books in Browsers conference 2012¹² from 4:48¹³ he compares offline webbooks with online webbooks, misleadingly calling the first “e-books”, but in fact e-books are webbooks, both terms are interchangeable and they only differ regarding the current state of connectivity. Any e-book can be uploaded to become a webbook, and any webbook (website) can be packaged to an e-book for offline reading or to transfer it to a different location on the web. If copy & paste isn't possible on a device or in some software, that's only because it isn't built into it. There's no reason why it shouldn't. He also announced in this talk that the Pressbooks software will get released under a free license (16:29¹⁴).

At the Books in Browsers conference 2013¹⁵ he spoke about technical details of the automatic generation of print layouts, in particular about CSS for print layout definition.

¹²<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1Dxutb0vxo>

¹³<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1Dxutb0vxo\&t=4m48>

¹⁴<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1Dxutb0vxo\&t=16m29>

¹⁵<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyVTQ-N16N4\&t=28m36>

Kapitel 2

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Version 3, 19 November 2007

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¹<http://fsf.org/>

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