



**Digital Book Publishing:  
How Disruptive Technology  
Serves the Niche of  
Self-Publishing**

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# Digital Book Publishing: How Disruptive Technology Serves the Niche of Self-Publishing

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## Introduction

With new digital publishing options, the door is now open for authors to publish a book without the help and expense of a traditional publishing house. The disruptive technology of digital publishing has changed many aspects of book publishing: (1) how a book is published and by whom; (2) how many books are printed and warehoused; (3) how books are marketed; (4) how books are distributed; and (5) the costs of book publishing.

This research is to inform the author of best practices in self-publishing, marketing published books through social media, and electronic dissemination of books. E-publishing models for the independent author were examined. An overview of the self-publishing process was reviewed, and consumer opinions of e-books were gathered and are reported.

## Background

An e-book is a book published in an electronic format that can be downloaded over the Internet. An e-book can be published in various file formats and read on various e-reader devices like the Amazon Kindle, Apple iPad, Apple iPhone, Barnes & Noble Nook, Android tablets, and a home computer (Computer Hope, 2017). Digital books are most often less expensive than a printed book to purchase and the cost difference has influenced consumer behavior. Amazon's 2016 e-book sales grew four percent overall compared to 2015, and

traditional publishers have been rapidly losing market share to self-published authors, according to an Author Earnings report (2017). The consumer has a choice, and may embrace reading an e-book rather than a printed book (and vice versa) based on personal preferences, usage and age regardless of the type of book (academic, trade, journal, illustrative, encyclopedia, etc.) or the genre of the book (fiction, non-fiction, history, poetry, religion, etc.) (Myrberg & Wiberg, 2015).

In addition to the generally lower price, other unique aspects of an e-book include immediate access, portability and ubiquitous availability. These aspects of e-books can out-weigh the benefits of the printed book. Because e-books are immediately available through an online distribution platform, this immediacy of access has been considered disruptive to the traditional print book distribution model (Sadokierski, 2013). There are innovative options for self-publishing of Print-on-Demand (POD) books as well. POD is a computer-based digital printing process in which a book can be printed on an as-needed basis in any quantity and at any time (Technopedia.com, n.d.).

Some books, like the 300+ year-old *Encyclopædia Britannica*, are only available in digital form. The last print edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* was published in 2010 and the publisher since has been thriving as a global digital media company (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2016). The information in the *Encyclopedia* is current and updated regularly with hyperlinked content, allowing

for an interactive user experience with searchable links. Eliminating the printed version saved on hard costs, particularly the cost of paper, which typically represents about one-third the manufacturing cost of a printed book (Ross, 2016). Additional hard costs saved include ink, printing equipment overhead, warehousing and shipping (Beaty, 2017).

## A Shift in the Business Model

The book publishing industry is experiencing a shift in the current way of doing business. The traditional printed book is no longer the only product or delivery choice for today's mobile, tech savvy audience. As a result, publishers are responding by investing in digital technologies to provide more options to deliver a wide variety of choice in e-book pricing and delivery options, such as digital subscriptions, e-lending plans, e-book rentals and Print-on-Demand (POD) opportunities (Association of American Publishers, 2015).

The latest evolution of the industry's business and distribution model is in direct response to disruptive technology – the industry has adopted digital technology to stay relevant. This digital conversion has been interpreted as being a disruption to the industry yet it equally has been considered a benefit by creating new revenue streams that are more universally applicable, replacing obsolete business models. Rather than publishers monetizing only content, they are also focusing on monetizing their audience, behaviors, data and brand revenue drivers (Idio, 2017).

Digital access for the independent author to self-publish is partly a result of the traditional book publishing industry's reinvention of itself, where it moved away from a traditional supply-chain model to a model that is more efficient with real-time response to meet uncertain demand (Ross, 2016). A traditional supply-chain model is a network between a company and its suppliers, manufacturers, retailers, and distributors to produce and distribute a specific product to the end customer. The traditional supply-chain and revenue models that have been built over decades have been disrupted by the new supply chain for e-books (Wilson, 2014).

The onset of digital technology has disrupted the chain strategy and processes universally used in the book industry. Internal processes and managerial focus have had to shift in response to the new industry structure

and consumer behavior. In the evolving digital publishing process, the publisher and the wholesaler/bookstore have less of a centralized role than has been the case in the past. Both the publisher and the author can deliver the e-book directly to the e-bookseller, bypassing the agent and traditional bookstore. The power has shifted to the author, who can now do more independent of the publisher (Wilson, 2014).

According to Smashwords (2017), profit margins for the publisher (as well as the author) in relation to the costs to produce a book, are adjusting partly in favor of the book publisher and partly in favor of the author, due to shifts of responsibility. The book publisher is cutting costs for marketing print books to refocus on sales efforts, yet those savings are transferred to cover the cost of digital support, storage and multi-platform tools for digital books. At the same time, the self-published author might be enjoying a higher profit from one's book sales because of no longer working with a traditional publisher, but the investment of time and managing marketing strategies might cut into that margin (Coker, 2009).

Many well-established authors are changing course in response to disruptive technology and the availability of a digital platform. For example, J.K. Rowling has bypassed both publishers and retailers by taking full control of the e-book and audiobook rights for the Harry Potter franchise, validated by the digital platform and e-commerce website for the e-book series, "*Pottermore Presents*" (Alter, 2016).

The largest growth in digital book sales between 2012 and 2015 was by Amazon, which accounts for 74% of e-book sales in the United States. The largest growth of self-publishing and self-publishing services, tracked over a period of at least five-years between 2010 to 2015, shows Smashwords enjoyed a nearly 725% increase for both print and e-book self-publishing (Bowker, 2016).

Amazon's CreateSpace, which is dominating the e-book arena, enjoyed a nearly 1,087% increase for self-published print books during this same period (Ha, 2016). Harris, one of the authors of this paper, has successfully published three books using CreateSpace. The reason CreateSpace was not selected as the publishing venue for this particular project was because of the costs involved; the goal was to find an e-book publisher to print a book at no cost to the author.

In response to digital disruption affecting the book publishing industry, publishers are moving away from being a full-service publishing, marketing and distributor outlet. Publishers still provide creative support, sales networks and marketing services, but whether the books move in those channels depends primarily on the author. Bowker (2016) affirms this hybrid trend in self-publishing.

## Methodology

With permission from the estate of University of Arizona Professor Leslie W. Jones, his unpublished novel, *In Another Life* (copyright 2011) was used for demonstrating the methodology of the self-publishing process.

The e-book publishing process involved converting an unpublished manuscript into a compatible digital format. The project consisted of utilizing three phases: (1) book selection process, (2) the e-book format and design process, and (3) the publishing process of the e-book.

The following steps took place in the book selection phase: (1) the author and book was selected for publication, (2) self-publishing platforms were researched and compared, and (3) a self-publishing platform model was selected. The design and formatting phase consisted of (1) designing the book cover, (2) preparing the manuscript for formatting, and (3) formatting and converting the book to a compatible digital format. The publishing the e-book phase consisted of: (1) selecting a publisher/distributor, (2) uploading the formatted book, and (3) reviewing the process for resubmission of e-book updates.

Testing consumer access and user behavior of e-books was an integral part of the research. A sample of 25 undergraduate students from Arizona State University were surveyed for consumer behavior. One of the main purposes of the study was to examine how students prefer to read books. The survey questions included both qualitative and quantitative questions using a Likert Scale.

## The Test Publication

The unpublished novel, *In Another Life*, was used for demonstrating the self-publishing process (<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/714456>). The primary objective for the case study was to get the book digitally published. Sales and profit were not a factoring element since the author's family requested that the book be offered for free. Jones' novel falls into two of these technology categories: print-on-demand and e-book.

## Selecting a Publisher

In today's market, as technology permeates the book publishing industry, the researchers found many options of publisher and distributor for the independent author to select. Nine publishers and distributors and their best practices for self-publishing, distribution and marketing were identified: Amazon.com; Apple.com; BookBaby.com; CreateSpace.com; Google.com; KDP.Amazon.com; Lulu.com; NookPress.com; and Smashwords.com. Based on the literature review and research, these nine publishers were compared in terms of pricing models, royalties, distribution, publishing, marketing and formatting requirements. Each offered unique services, different option fees or upfront fees, distribution, marketing, formatting requirements or conversions, exclusivity or nonexclusivity, pricing structure and royalty returns.

Some areas that were considered before selecting an e-publishing service were: control and file ownership; exclusive or nonexclusive service; retailer-driven; add-ons and hidden charges; and compatible file formats. It was found in the literature that a publisher may offer many of these services to the author. Most often, the publisher and distributor are one and the same, which for a self-publisher may be more helpful. The distinction is in the options that each publisher provides. Some options are free, others are not. For example, a multiple-channel distributor likely requires the self-publisher to pay fees to make changes after the initial upload (Friedman, 2012).

Another factor for a new author to consider is the upfront costs and royalties policy. The royalties policy encompasses how much money goes to the author and under what terms. Talking to Jones' estate representative (M. Zones, personal communication, March 3, 2016), the primary desire was to ultimately publish his novel; the estate was not considering sales, analytics or royalty returns so these components were not factored into the researcher's selection.

Two e-publishers were isolated in this study: Smashwords and Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing. Based on the simple publishing and distribution structure needed for Jones' novel, Smashwords best met the objectives to publish Jones' novel at no cost.

## Formatting for Publishing

Smashwords is an e-book distributor and a self-serve publishing service that converts files into multiple

e-book formats for reading on various e-book reading devices. Smashwords offers a universal standard for how to format an e-book and converts the e-book to different retailers, e-reader devices, and distribution partners. This is different from Amazon, whose formatting guidelines are specific to the Kindle device (Matthews, 2015). Understanding the file preparation required to format an e-book was key in selecting Smashwords for the publisher and distributor for Jones' book.

Smashwords requires a single-step process in formatting an e-book using a word processing program. Using Microsoft Word is more universally compatible with other publishing conversion processes. Smashwords Style Guide (Coker, 2008) reveals that any version of Microsoft Word may be used, including older versions like Word 2000, Word 2003 and Word 2007. Free alternatives to Microsoft Word include Open Office (popular with many Smashwords authors), Apple Pages (also popular), or Libre Office software.

Smashwords converts the e-book to different retailers, e-reader devices, and distribution partners. It is responsive on multiple e-book formats for reading on various e-book reading devices. Any updates or changes can be made just once from their dashboard and propagate the update to all their retailers. The e-book is responsive on different platforms by converting and formatting the Word doc file using special software. The conversion

is free. There are no upfront fees offering less financial investment (Coker, 2009).

The convenient updating feature in Smashwords frees the author from having to create unique editions with each update, or from converting files for specific distributors' platforms. Additionally, Smashwords generates reflowable e-books allowing the text of the e-book to be scalable and readable on any device and screen size (Coker, 2008).

The open-source e-pub file format is generally used for sharing e-books between different e-readers. Smashwords requires an e-pub file (Coker, 2008; Matthews, 2015), whereas Amazon's Kindle requires a proprietary .mobi file (Mobipocket Mobile Format).

The .mobi file is an e-book file format that is used by Amazon Kindle devices and is suited for smaller screens. It is converted from other file formats, like e-pub, HTML, and Word (doc/docx). To read an e-pub on a Kindle the e-pub file would first need to be converted into a .mobi format (Nicol, 2016). Amazon's Kindle devices use the .mobi structure, but files that are protected with a Digital Right Management scheme use the .azw file extension (Fisher, 2017a). A .mobi file was designed specifically for mobile devices with low bandwidth (Fisher, 2017b).

## Design for Publishing

Since e-books are read on different types of screens, Smashwords recommends avoiding the use of colored fonts. The fonts work best at 12-point for body copy and 14-point for the book title on the cover page, and for headings. The file upload limit for the entire interior e-book is 10 megabytes (MB). Since high-resolution images, or print quality images, are lost on many e-reader screens, Smashwords encourages e-books that are predominately text. If images are used in the Word document, it works best if the images are formatted as .png, as opposed to .jpeg (Coker, 2008).

The cover design is the most important marketing tool to attract readers and appeal to their interest in the title, particularly if the author is unknown. A great cover makes a promise to the reader. It is generally recommended that the cover be designed professionally, yet it is not an impossible task for the layman since design templates and resources are readily available. Legibility and appearance of the cover image is important

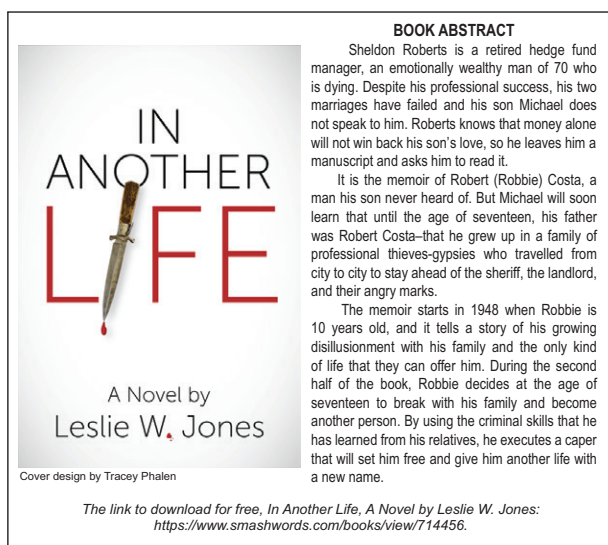


Figure 1: E-book cover art should limit itself to the title, the author name and one graphic

considering how small the cover image appears on searchable sites of e-retailers. A compelling, well-designed cover may be used to attract readers, but it is also used to promote the book in digital marketing and social media (Taylor, M., 2017).

Additionally, the e-book is searchable by the e-book embedded metadata rather than solely by the cover image. Metadata are essentially keywords.

Unlike print, e-book cover art should limit itself to the title, the author name and one graphic that instantly communicates something about the tone or genre of the book (see Figure 1). Additionally, the e-book is searchable by embedded metadata rather than solely by the cover image. Metadata are essentially keywords. (Friedlander, 2012).

## Publication Distribution

Each publisher has a unique distribution model, including Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, Barnes & Noble NOOK, Smashwords, and Apple iBookstore. Electronic distribution and marketing service packages are available from these publishers at a price depending on the goals of the author and the pricing structure selected for the e-book.

Traditional book publishers invest in the author and provide publishing and marketing services including a marketing plan, market analysis, and demographic studies to determine the best distribution model (Peterson, 2016). As a self-publisher in the digital market, one can control the costs and market reach by assuming the responsibility of publishing, marketing and distribution. This work will shift to the self-publishing author, along with the profit.

Smashwords and Amazon KDP require that the book adhere to specific formatting guidelines for distribution. Smashwords converts a manuscript for universal compatibility among other digital retailers. This reduces the upfront work necessary for future distribution among multiple retailers and distributors. If Jones' estate should change its position to extend the e-book's reach, the document would not need formatting revisions.

Smashwords distributes to Kobo, iBookstore, and NOOK, but not to Amazon. Authors are awarded royalties of 60% of list price from other retailers and 85% from direct Smashwords sales. There is also no upfront fee for the author (Smashwords.com, 2017).

E-books purchased from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Apple, or Google, are protected with a Digital Rights Management (DRM) scheme. DRM technology is proprietary software which limits whether or not digital media copies can be made, what time periods media can be accessed, or the number or type of devices that can be used to access the digital media. It is a strategic copyright protection for the publisher and author (Layton, J., 2017). This means the book is available for reading only on devices that support each store's DRM system. Amazon-purchased e-books can only be read on Kindle devices or in Amazon's Kindle apps (Guy, 2017). Smashwords does not have DRM so can be read on any device (Matthews, 2015).

A unique ISBN was required using Smashwords as the publisher/distributor in Smashwords' Premium Catalog. The researcher obtained the free ISBN from Smashwords and resubmitted the e-book for review. When it was approved, the researcher was notified. Once the e-book was accepted into the Premium Catalog, the book was automatically distributed to major online retailers, including Apple iBook Stores (in 51 countries), Barnes & Noble (US and UK), Kobo, Blio and Inktera and other notable retailers in Smashwords' national and international distribution network (Smashwords, 2016).

Using Leslie W. Jones' novel, *In Another Life*, the results were documented within the first 12 hours of uploading and publishing the e-book 17 downloads were recorded. The book was resubmitted as a new version and the process of what happens with an updated file was observed. This resubmission process for an updated file went smoothly and the new e-book version was available within the hour.

Within a two-week period (with no additional marketing or social media promotion) the book had 39 downloads. Smashwords' Dashboard also provided Search Engine Optimization (SEO) results indicating how the e-book was found. The e-book was retrieved in different ways: from the Smashwords site, from a link, from the title of the book, and from the author's name. The searches included Google web search, Yahoo! web search, Microsoft Bing, and Google blog search.

## Publication Marketing

With self-publishing, the responsibilities of marketing and distribution shift from the traditional agent/publisher

to the author. A benefit of this shift is seen financially whereas the author enjoys a potentially larger profit margin. Yet the costs for the author shift as well, particularly in the additional cost of time that is dedicated to marketing the book.

A self-publisher must determine how viable it is to assume all or part of producing, publishing, marketing and promoting a book. Learning how to capitalize on digital marketing by using social media platforms and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) may be needed to help promote and sell a self-published book (Peterson, 2016).

Smashwords and Amazon KDP marketing models were compared. The main difference between the two publishers is that Amazon KDP requires exclusivity with a 90-day embargo on sales through other distributors, and the manuscript must be converted into Amazon's .mobi file format to be supported by and viewed on Amazon's Kindle device (kdp.amazon.com, 2017). The exposure on Amazon benefits the new author, but well-established authors who require a wider distribution may not favor the embargo. By comparison Smashwords, the largest seller to major retailers, provides distribution to many of the retailers, except to Amazon, and saves the author from having to reformat and upload the book to each retailer separately. Smashwords does require that the author identify them as the publisher, to which some self-publishing authors may object (McCartney, 2014).

For the self-publishing author, a strategic marketing plan for social media platforms should include posts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, among others (Hess, 2015). Additionally recommended is to create a social teaser, pin a tweet, create a social banner, leverage influencers, and post in online communities.

## Comparing Financial Investment

With retail bookstores closing or downsizing, and the consumer going online to purchase books, less inventory must be warehoused. A book today has less than a one percent chance of being stocked in a bookstore (Pier-santi, 2016). A shift in the traditional supply and demand business model has moved towards print-on-demand and e-books, reducing the publisher's costs associated with print and warehouse inventory.

Determining an efficient way to publish a book with the least financial investment in self-publishing contributed to selecting Smashwords, rather than Amazon

KDP, as the publisher and distributor of choice for this research. Smashwords is a free service offering immediate distribution, as well as having the option to publish internationally.

## Observations on Consumer Behavior

Understanding end-user or consumer engagement, behavior and demographics was explored. According to an article in the Western States Printing Alliance (WSPA), citing a report by the Pew Research Center, many readers prefer print. In fact, 73% of U.S. adults read a printed book in the past 12 months compared to 28% who read an e-book during the same period. The report states that most readers do not see e-books as a replacement for printed books, but rather as a complement (WSPA, 2017).

To better understand these trends, the researchers sampled 25 undergraduate students for a survey questionnaire. This demographic is assumed to be more familiar with digital media and social media communications. The 25 participants' ranged in age from 18 to 49, 68% were in the 18 to 21 age range. The gender of the students was evenly balanced with 44% female and 56% male. Forty-six percent of the students were university juniors.

These students were selected for the survey mainly because studies suggest that this age group is more familiar with using multiple digital platforms, particularly with online learning platforms like textbooks. It is assumed these students are familiar with digital navigational options and are comfortable using the variety of tools available. E-books may be changing reading habits for those under 40. Fifty-six percent own an e-reader or a tablet (Minzesheimer, 2013).

The qualitative questions were on reading habits and access to books. Taking it a step further, discovering which social media platforms were used most often suggested those platforms that might be best for promoting e-books in general, and Professor Jones' book specifically. The quantitative data extracted from the questionnaire helped affirm the target demographic market for e-book distribution and promotion.

The survey presented some expected results and some unexpected results. The researchers expected the respondents to be rather competent at using social media and technology. However only half of the group, 50%,



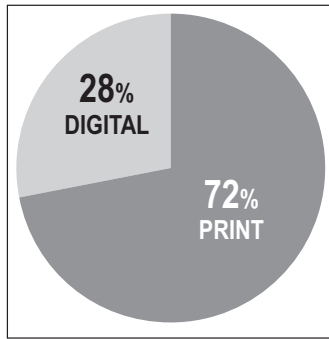


Figure 2: Preferred method of reading a book.

considered themselves to be well-versed in social media.

It was found that 72% of respondents from the survey preferred using print rather than e-books (Figure 2). This finding concurs with a study reported in the Los Angeles Times stating that 92% of college

students would rather read from a print book instead of an e-reader (Schaub, 2016). Our data showed that only 28% preferred reading an e-book. Of the 28% who preferred reading an e-book, only 42% (less than half) owned an Amazon Kindle. However, 38% of the group that self reported enjoying reading print books owned a Kindle.

The article “How to Make Reading Relevant to Today’s Consumer” by Eric Shoup (2016) stated that the consumer reads five or more books at the same time, intermittently. According to our survey, 88% of respondents indicated they read less than two e-books at the same time.

## Conclusions

As self-publishing gains greater interest among authors, the traditional publisher is not out of the book publishing game, yet. Both the author and publisher are learning to work together to provide services for getting a book published. A traditional book publisher is a good choice to reach and find readers, to provide an online presence, to promote through social media, and to market and distribute the book. Yet, not every author has this option. Perhaps the book is not that marketable.

A self-publisher can do the same thing as a traditional publisher, but the author must invest time, and money to produce, market, and distribute the book, as well as create and upload the electronic files for multiple devices and multiple distributors. Regardless, a book’s success is not guaranteed by how it is published or marketed. Yet, understanding the process for a self-publisher to get started could help.

As technology evolves, it is certain the book publishing industry will continue to evolve with it, providing a great user experience across devices as innovations are

developed. New publishing distribution platforms allow content to be distributed outside the walls of brick-and-mortar stores and sheets of paper and into the digital screens of e-readers.

“Content drives design,” a statement found in *Graphic Communications Today* by Ryan and Conover (2004), was the mantra of its day in the mid-1980s when newspaper design and journalism melded together. Equally today, content drives design in the book self-publishing sector. An independent author has access to digital technologies and tools to design and self-publish a manuscript without the guidance of a traditional book publisher. Yet, for the book to be successful fundamentally depends on its content, and if it gets read.

As a self-publisher, the author must clearly define one’s goals to determine if self-publishing is the best solution. They assume the added responsibilities of promoting, marketing, designing, distribution and analytics, yet on the other hand, they potentially enjoy the rewards of bigger royalty margins on sales and control of intellectual property.

Self-publishing is a rapidly evolving industry with many competitors that are constantly introducing digital innovations. Publishers are continually upgrading their facilities, infrastructure, and pricing which means the self-publisher needs to stay aware of changing industry trends (Carnoy, 2012).

Book publishing has changed and is responding to digital disruption by transforming the traditional publishing model into one that includes digital self-publishing. Consumer behavior may be partly driving this change in response to digital mobility and access.

The findings of this research were in alignment with the Pew Research Center that many people prefer reading print and that most readers do not see e-books as a replacement for printed books, but rather as a complement (WSPA, 2017).

E-books offer an exclusive user experience – not worse than the printed book, just different – with each format offering unique value to the end-user. From the perspective of an independent author, disruptive technology has provided the vehicle in which to publish a book. From the perspective of the traditional book publisher, digital publishing requires a new business model and a shift in publishing responsibilities. What may be disruptive for some, may be an opportunity for others.

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# Visual Communications Journal Submissions Guidelines

## Manuscript Form and Style

- » Prepare manuscripts according to the APA style, including the reference list.
- » List your name and address on the first page only. Article text should begin on the second page.
- » Provide a short biography for yourself that can be used if the article is accepted for publication.
- » All articles must be submitted in electronic form on a CD-ROM or as an email attachment.
- » Submit a Microsoft Word document, maximum of 10 pages (excluding figures, tables, illustrations, and photos). Do not submit documents created in page-layout programs.
- » Word documents must have been proofread and be correct.
- » Call out the approximate location of all tables and figures in the text. Use the default style "Normal" on these callouts. The call-outs will be removed by the designer.
- » Use the default Word styles only. Our designer has set up the page layout program styles to correspond to those style names.
  - Heading 1
  - Heading 2
  - Heading 3
  - Normal

## Graphics

- » Be sure that submitted tables and other artwork are absolutely necessary for the article.
- » Write a caption for each graphic, include captions in a list at the end of your Word document.
- » Electronic artwork is preferred and should be in PDF or TIFF format.
- » Send all artwork files and hard copies of these files with your submission.

## Tables

- » Set up tables in separate documents, one document for each table.
- » Do not attempt to make it "pretty." Use the default Word style "Normal" for all table text. Do not use any other formatting.
- » Do not use hard returns inside the table ("enter" or "return").
- » Get the correct information into the correct cell and leave the formatting to the designer.
- » Tables will be formatted by the designer to fit in one column (3.1667" wide) or across two columns (6.5" wide).

## Artwork

- » Scan photographs at 300 ppi resolution.
- » Scan line drawings at 800 ppi resolution.
- » Screen captures should be as large as possible.
- » Graphics should be sized to fit in either one column or across two columns.
  - One column is 3.1667" wide, two columns are 6.5" wide.
  - Graphics may be larger than these dimensions, but must not be smaller.

## Manuscript Guidelines

### Eligibility for Publication

- » Members of the Graphic Communications Education Association, or students of GCEA members, may publish in the *Visual Communications Journal*.

### Audience

- » Write articles for educators, students, graduates, industry representatives, and others interested in graphic arts, graphic communications, graphic design, commercial art, communications technology, visual communications, printing, photography, desktop publishing, or media arts. Present implications for the audience in the article.

### Types of Articles

- » The *Visual Communications Journal* accepts four levels of articles for publication:
- » 1. Edited articles are accepted or rejected by the editor. The editor makes changes to the article as necessary to improve readability and/or grammar. These articles are not submitted to a panel of jurors. The decision of the editor is final.
- » 2. Juried articles are submitted to the editor and are distributed to jurors for acceptance/rejection. Juried articles are typically reviews of the literature, state-of-the-art technical articles, and other nonempirical papers. Jurors make comments to the author, and the author makes required changes. The decision of the jurors is final.
- » 3. Refereed articles are submitted to the editor and are distributed to jurors for acceptance/rejection. Refereed articles are original empirical research. Jurors make comments to the author and the author makes required changes. The decision of the jurors is final.
- » 4. Student articles are submitted by GCEA members and are accepted/rejected by the editor. These articles are not submitted to a panel of jurors. The editor's decision is final. Please be aware that poorly written student papers will be rejected or returned for editing.

## Submittal of Manuscripts

- » All manuscripts must be received by the editor no later than December 15th to be considered for the spring Journal or by June 15th to be considered for the fall Journal. Include digital copies of all text and figures. Prepare text and artwork according to the instructions given in these guidelines. Be sure to include your name, mailing address, e-mail address, and daytime phone number with your materials. E-mail all materials to the editor (address shown below).

### Acceptance and Publication

- » If your article is accepted for publication, you will be notified by e-mail. The *Visual Communications Journal* is published and distributed twice a year, in the spring and in the fall. Printed copies are mailed to GCEA members. A PDF version of the *Journal* is published online at [www.GCEAonline.org](http://www.GCEAonline.org).

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- » Articles submitted to the *Journal* cannot be submitted to other publications while under review. Articles published in other copyrighted publications may not be submitted to the *Journal*, and articles published by the *Journal* may not be published in other publications without written permission of the *Journal*.
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- » See the previous page for style guidelines