

Book Design

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To most people, there seems to be nothing to producing a book. According to them, you just get a simple word processing program like MS word, start typing away, and once you are done, just apply some simple and pre determined formatting and viola! Your book is ready for print and publication. Nothing could be further from the truth. For book design is not just an exacting science that has to take many factors into consideration. Doing book design is somewhat the same when you design your own t-shirt. It is an art that makes the book itself much better than it was written to be. Book design is not a new or novel art. In fact, it has been around in some form or the other ever since the beginning, when the first books were published. In the beginning, book design concentrated on making the books accessible to the general public, most of who were grossly unlettered or had little more than a rudimentary knowledge of the language. But as standards of education improved and more and more people began to buy and read books, the art or science of book design began concentrating on a more important aspect – that of designing books to sell. In fact, going by the use of book design nowadays, it would be no small matter to say that this is the only sphere for which the art flourishes. Take a walk through any major bookstore and you will find that there are many cover versions of the same books available. Especially with the more popular books and authors, this is almost a norm. There will be a hard cover version followed by a paperback edition. There might also be versions with different book jackets to cater to the cultural sensibilities of various key markets. And finally, if a book makes it to the translated versions, the possibilities for book design are endless. So there you have it. Book design is not just about layout and formatting as most people assume it to be. In fact, the book design professional is a consummate professional who specializes in taking the book and attractively ‘packaging’ it in order to make it sell better. And in the process, if the book design can make the book itself more accessible to a wider audience, so much the better. After all, this was one of the key tenets of good book design in the olden days. And catering to federal government laws like ensure access for all, especially in the arena of learning, is much more than a convenience. It is almost a mandate!