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Formatting your book with the Vellum app

Transcript • Module 1, Vellum controls overview

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[00:00:00] To look at an overview of the interface inside Vellum itself, we have to start from the beginning, and you have to install Vellum to your system if you haven't already.

[00:00:18] So from Vellum dot pub, you can find your system requirements and click the download button, and then you can either go to, it's usually a small arrow that will say "Show Downloads," or come to your Finder and go to the Downloads folder. When you double click the installer file, it will extract that and now you can double click that to install it to your system. This won't finish the process for me because I already have Vellum installed, but that's the basics for that.

[00:00:49] Vellum has a completely free trial. There's no time limit, and the only limitation in all of the software is that, instead of a "Generate" option, a new item will show "purchase." Instead, you can test everything and preview all the options, but not generate files.

[00:01:09] If you choose to visit skinner books dot com slash vellum before you purchase, then I get paid a small finder's fee at no extra cost to you, which helps keep me making content for you, and if you do that, thank you so much.

[00:01:29] When you open Vellum, it's immediately obvious that you have three main columns for this interface. The column along the left side is called the Navigator, and this is where all of your chapters will show up. I'll also refer to the items in the Navigator as "Elements" because there are different types of structures other than just a body chapter. I won't overwhelm you with that at this moment, but for right now, the left pane is the Navigator, and all the items in it are Chapters or Elements.

[00:02:04] The center pane is called the Text Editor. If you're working in Vellum, and this text feels a little small, this is actually adjustable. If you come up to the Menu Bar and choose Vellum > Settings - in older operating systems, this is going to be Preferences instead of Settings - but then you come under the Text Editor block. This will give you the option to choose from six different fonts and six different sizes, so however it's comfortable for you to see what you're working on. Again, that's under Vellum > Settings or Vellum > Preferences. I'll go back to my defaults, Georgia at 18, but it's nice for you to have that control.

[00:02:53] Then the pane on the right side is called the Preview pane because you can see a live preview of a number of different E-readers and apps. So here we have the Kindle Fire, and you can also see what it'll look like on a Kindle Paper White. And I like to always check the iPad and the iPhone as those are the largest and smallest screens that we work with for ebooks.

[00:03:17] So it's nice to see how an image is going to display for those, but we don't want to micromanage that too much simply because the end reader can change all kinds of things. They can make their own font huge. And so can we in the preview. And they have a number of text color options that they can choose from, depending on their device or their app settings. So again, the little phone icon is Change Device and it will let you switch views, and the "Aa" button when it's under an ebook will let you change the font sizes and types in the preview.

[00:03:53] If we go to print, I think it's helpful to know that even though this is a live preview, this may look a little different from an exported file because this is just a quick placement. If you come up to, again, the Change Device Settings button, the little "Aa" button, now we have different options here for Draft or for Proof.

[00:04:18] Draft is just going to have the text on here in general, and Proof is going to have the actual margin settings applied. It also has a shaded inner edge, which is really faint, but it helps you tell which side of the book this will be on if you're opening this finished PDF.

[00:04:37] So if you ever want to make adjustments based on what this preview looks like, make sure when you're in print that you're not in Draft mode and

that you're actually viewing it in Proof. You may not need this right now, but if you want to bookmark this for later, you can come back and see what I mean.

[00:05:01] The next thing to show you is how to get back and forth between this screen where you open, and to go into the Styles, which is where you can go into your high - level book formatting, your decorative choices for the entire document. If your buttons don't look the same as these, just hover your mouse over them. If you click Show Styles, that does take you into the high - level formatting.

[00:05:29] At the time I'm recording this, there are 26 overall styles, but these don't [all] show up when you first go in, so you can either sort by some of the main categories, or you can come down to All Styles.