

PAGES OF POSSIBILITIES

Formatting your book with the Vellum app

Transcript • Module 1 • What does Vellum do?

Updated 04-09-2024

[00:00:00] If you're someone who is completely new to Vellum, you might be wondering, what does the Vellum book formatting app actually do? Great question.

[00:00:11] When you import a word or docx file into Vellum, then you have control inside the software to set your designs, and then you can export print book interiors and ebook text. The text interiors are suitable for either paperbacks or hardcovers, and the ebooks will work on any major distribution platform.

[00:00:34] Once you're happy with how your book looks, you can take your cover file, which is created in a different program, or which you can hire someone else to do for you, and you can publish those together on any of the available print on demand and self-publishing platforms.

[00:00:50] So what kinds of projects can Vellum do? This is a big question because we have a lot of different kinds of people who work inside Vellum. So things that are absolutely a great fit inside Vellum are going to be books that are focused on the text. So any novel, any inspirational or self-help book that doesn't have a lot of complex text, things like this, and smaller images that can be added between the paragraphs, just wherever they'll work within the text.

[00:01:20] Any tables or charts that are small or fairly simple that can be converted to an image and that also can just fall wherever in the text they fit, these are also fine. And you can do larger images as long as they're fairly relaxed on where they can be placed as well. As far as numbered lists and subheadings, these are perfectly fine in Vellum as long as there's only a single level of each one.

[00:01:45] Things that are doable, but they're a little more challenging in Vellum:

[00:01:49] If you have a lot of images, it's going to take a lot of work with the live preview to get them to work. My book on how to format with Vellum has 108 screenshots in it, and it's, it's something that has been doable, but it does take a lot of work, like I said, in the preview to see how they're going to actually fall on the page.

[00:02:09] If you have larger images that you have to have placed precisely within the chapters, that's also going to be a bit more challenging.

[00:02:17] Full page artwork is something Vellum is perfectly capable of doing, but especially images that have to go to the page edges, "full bleed" artwork, to the edge of the page, must be placed in between chapters in Vellum right now.

[00:02:32] You can do custom chapter typography for your chapter numbers, your chapter titles, you just have to use workarounds, creating them outside of Vellum and then inserting them as images, and we'll go through that in a later lesson.

[00:02:45] Items that aren't suitable or that you'd have to really adapt the project are things like fully custom typography, not just your chapter titles, but you have things in the body text that have very specific requirements. Something that is a fully custom program would be a better fit, like Adobe InDesign or Affinity Publisher or something like that.

[00:03:07] If you have an art or a photo focused book and you want an artsy sort of layout where a number of the pages go all the way to the edges of the paper or where you want to be able to adjust the layout, again, that's not a great fit inside Vellum.

[00:03:24] If you have columns, Vellum does not handle those at the time I'm recording this, and large tables that have a lot of information in them are problematic no matter what program you're using. But because Vellum is limited to the margins for tables that need to fit within the text, a lot of times there's a better option than Vellum.

[00:03:44] If you have multiple levels of subheadings in the text, and especially if you require the contents to be able to display multiple levels of subheadings, you're going to need a different program than Vellum. Vellum will do a single

level of the subheadings and it could display those in the contents, and there are manual workarounds for being able to do a second level of subheading with bolded text or things like that, but again, the project would need some adaptation for this to work well.

[00:04:13] For your vertical lists, if you have lists with bullets that have sub items nested farther over, if you have numbers that again, have sub lists within them, or the alpha numeric combination type vertical lists, those aren't possible in Vellum right now.

[00:04:32] If you'd like to talk with other people who have used Vellum before and you want to find out if your project would be suitable, then come find us on Facebook because we have a lot of these discussions as far as what's possible, what Vellum is capable of, what other programs might be a better fit. But I especially love talking about Vellum because it's really amazing for everyday users.

[00:04:54] You can join us at [facebook.com slash groups slash Jody's book nook](https://www.facebook.com/groups/jodybooknook). That's J-O-D-Y-S book nook, no punctuation. I hope to see you there.