

What are the specs for my cover image?

Make an independent file that will eventually be linked to your Indesign document as its cover. (*I've used Photoshop to create my book jacket covers.*)

Image Format:

The cover image needs to be RGB mode, saved as a JPG (most common format I've seen), GIF or PNG.

Resolution:

I've seen different resolutions for cover images. From what I've read, it appears that it's the pixel dimension and not the resolution that matters.

72ppi seems to work well for all file sizes. Each device will scale your image according to its own screen size.

Pixel size of your file:

I've seen different pixel dimensions for the cover image.

Previously the magic size covers were designed to was 600px wide by 860px tall. These dimensions would automatically generate an independent page (in which the cover image would exist) for an ePub on most eReaders. For example, iBooks would always fill an entire page with an image this size—whether it's horizontal or vertical.

Now that image quality is increasing on many devices (retina display on the iPad 3 for instance—has a resolution of 2048 x 1536), the minimum size requirements for the cover image is increasing to allow the cover images to display well. Please see the following site for more information about pixel dimensions for your cover image:

<http://blog.smashwords.com/2012/06/new-ebook-cover-image-requirements.html>

What are the requirements for my cover image, and how do I create one? *Information taken from Smashwords an independent publisher of indie books.*

Book covers are image files (files that end with .jpeg, .jpg or .png), not as PDFs for Word documents, and must include the book title and the author name. The cover should show the front of your book only, not the back cover you use for print. It must be two-dimensional, not 3D or pseudo-3D. Cover images must not contain web addresses on the front cover (some retailers will reject them for this reason) or promises of products not included in the book (such as, “Comes with a free CD!”).

Cover sizes have been known to vary but a recommended minimum width for the new standard is 1,400 pixels. The previous minimum for Apple was 600 pixels. The new size requirement is for higher quality reproductions of images (retina display) on the iPad.

A recommended size is approximately 1,600 pixels wide by 2,400 pixels tall (the proportions of most paperback books in the USA, which have height 1.5 times greater than their width). There’s room for personal preference. Aim to make the height approximately 30-60% greater than the width and the book should look good.

When retail partners receive your cover, it will often be converted to multiple smaller sizes, so don’t make your title text or author name too small, otherwise it’ll be unreadable when it’s shrunk down to thumbnail size.

Covers that have mostly text and sharp lines are best saved in PNG format. Covers that contain photographs are often too large when saved in PNG and these will need to be saved in JPEG (JPG) format (make sure that you use a high-quality setting so that the text doesn’t come out fuzzy).