Book Design Made Simple

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Regardless of design background, anyone who wants to design and produce a professional-looking book should find everything they need in Book Design Made Simple.

Fiona Raven & Glenna Collett's second edition of *Book Design Made Simple* is a step-by-step, comprehensive guide to designing one's own book.

Self-publishing spawned a whole cadre of authors anxious to turn manuscripts into completed books. While online sources often offer templates to create books with adequate design elements, there is nothing that duplicates the quality of designing a book that is free of system-imposed constraints. That is the approach taken by Raven and Collett, two experienced and accomplished book designers. In this book, they walk inexperienced book designers—whom they recognize are likely to be self-published authors—through every step of book design, from a blank page to a print-ready book.

The starting point here is Adobe InDesign—not an inexpensive program, but one that is available for lease. The book is completely keyed to that program, so if the novice book designer chooses to use another program, much of the text and all of the screen grabs will have little relevance. The use of Microsoft Word to create a manuscript is also presumed.

The book is an excellent show-and-tell manual for InDesign, clearly explaining its various components and offering tips and techniques for making the best, most efficient use of the program. It also imparts a wealth of knowledge about the design process itself.

The authors take nothing for granted in terms of an individual's level of design knowledge, interweaving the basics of good book design into their tutorials. A handy visual map of the specific pages in the front matter and back matter sections of a book is provided early on. In discussing the design of chapter openings, nine different possible designs are offered, with complete specifications and instructions for how to implement them. Helpful information is included that goes beyond design as well, such as how to obtain an ISBN and a bar code, and how to set a book's retail price.

Not surprisingly, *Book Design Made Simple* is itself beautifully designed. Within each of nine parts are numerous short chapters, each prominently numbered. Virtually every spread in the book has both explanatory text and illustrations with callouts. Frequent sidebars annotate the text.

The writing style is instructional yet informal; text is kept to a minimum when a graphic of a page or page element is more explanatory. Many examples are used throughout the book to point designers in the right direction.

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BARRY SILVERSTEIN (May 3, 2017)