Using Calibre to Read E-Books and Convert E-Pub Files for the Kindle

Most people who use a Kindle simply download the books they want from the Amazon web site. But what can you do if you want to read something else on your Kindle? The Kindle recognises Kindle (.azw), Text (.txt) and Mobi (.mobi) files and can also view (but not read out) PDFs. It cannot currently handle E-Pub files, so if the book or resource you are looking for is only available in E-Pub format, you need to convert it, using a program such as Calibre.

Calibre

Calibre is a free E-Book management program that you can download from http://calibre-E-Book.com. You can use Calibre to search for and download E-Books from the internet to build up and manage your own collection on a computer. Calibre can convert files in one format into another to suit any external E-Book reader you may be using, e.g. a Kindle. It is available for Windows (XP, Vista and 7), Mac OS X and Linux, and can be run from a memory stick.

Setting up your Kindle Account

Note that you are advised to set up your Kindle Account to receive email attachments before you install Calibre on your computer.

Finding your Kindle Email address

Calibre will ask for your Kindle email – the chances are that you won't know it! To find it, go to http://www.amazon.co.uk (or to your local Amazon site, depending on which country you are in) and click on **Your Account** (top right of the Amazon window). You may have to sign in, unless Amazon 'remembers' you. Once you have signed in and clicked on My Account, you should have a screen that looks like this:

www.callscotland.org.uk

Click on **Manage your Kindle** (under Digital Management), then **Personal Document Settings** (under Your Kindle Account) and you will see your Kindle email address under Personal Document Settings and Send-to-Kindle Email Settings. Make a note of this email address.
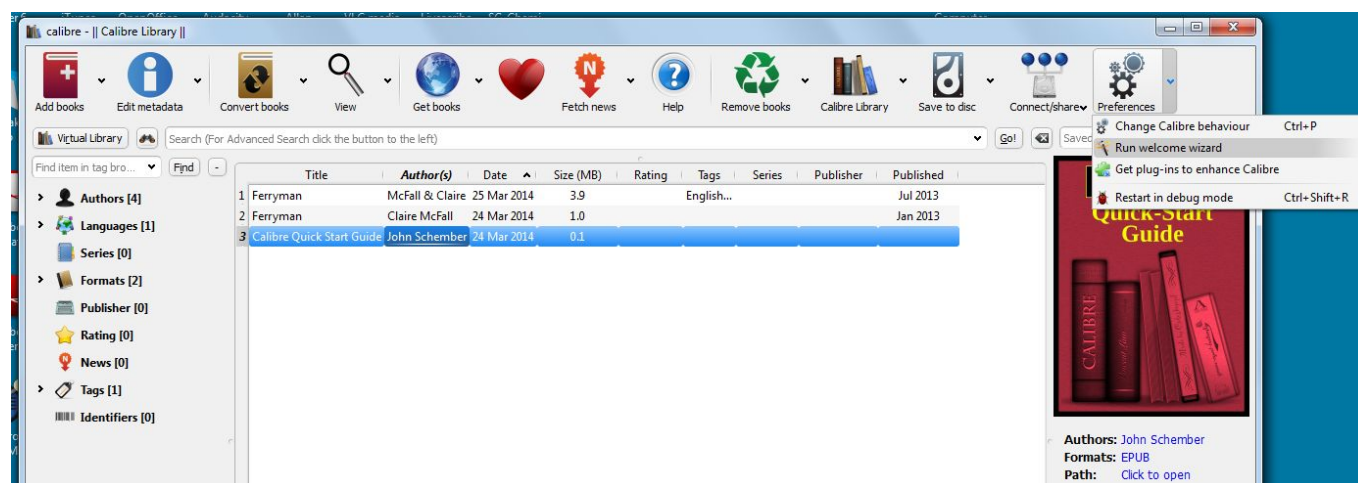
Adding your email address to the Kindle Approved List

You now have to add the email address you will be using to send files from Calibre to Kindle to the approved list for your Kindle Account. Scroll down under Personal Document Settings until you get to Approved Personal Document E-Mail List and click on Add a New Approved E-Mail Addresss. Type in the address and click on **Add Address**. Note that you can approve more than one email address.
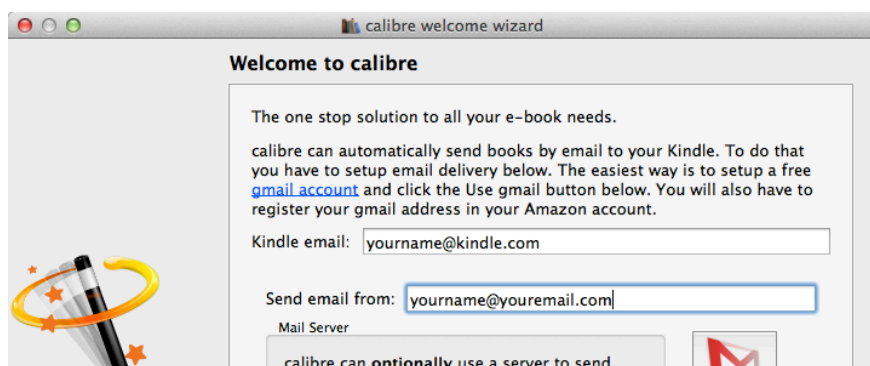
Installing Calibre

Now that you have set up your Kindle account, you can proceed to download and install Calibre. Go to http://calibre-E-Book.com/download and select the version you require.

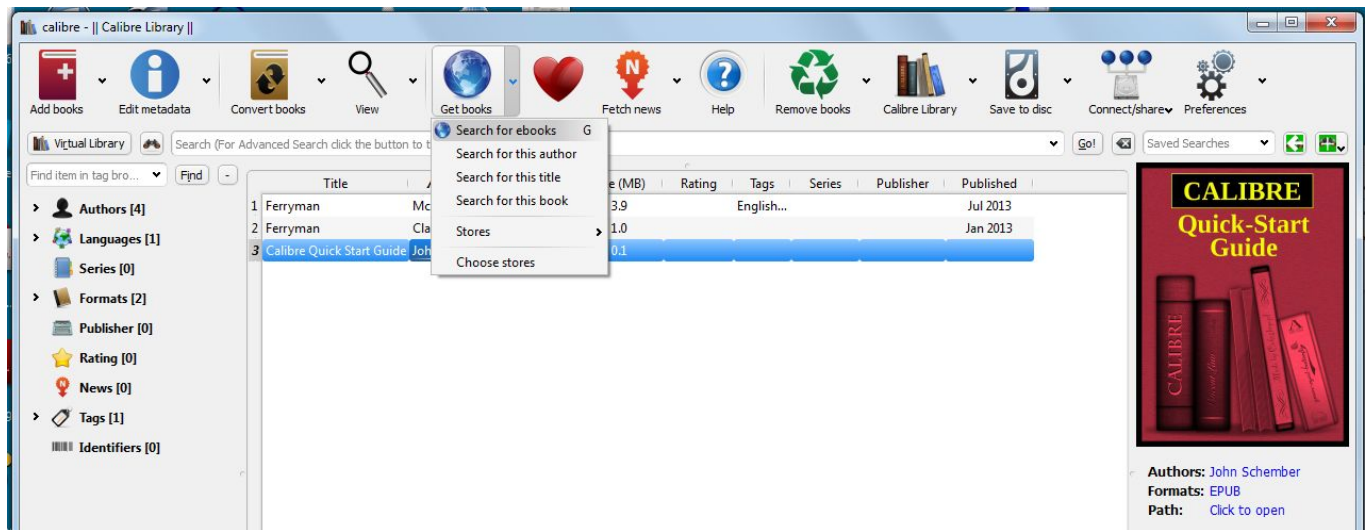When you install and run the program, it should look like this.

Before you get started, it is a good idea to run the Calibre Welcome Wizard (under Preferences). This asks you to:

1. Choose your language and a location for your books.
2. Choose your E-Book device by manufacturer and device.
3. In the case of a Kindle, you will then be asked to give your Kindle email and the email address that you have approved for use with your Kindle Account, as shown below. You can send an email to your Kindle account to make sure it is working. Note that you won't actually receive the email on your Kindle until it is switched on and connected to the internet by a wifi connection.
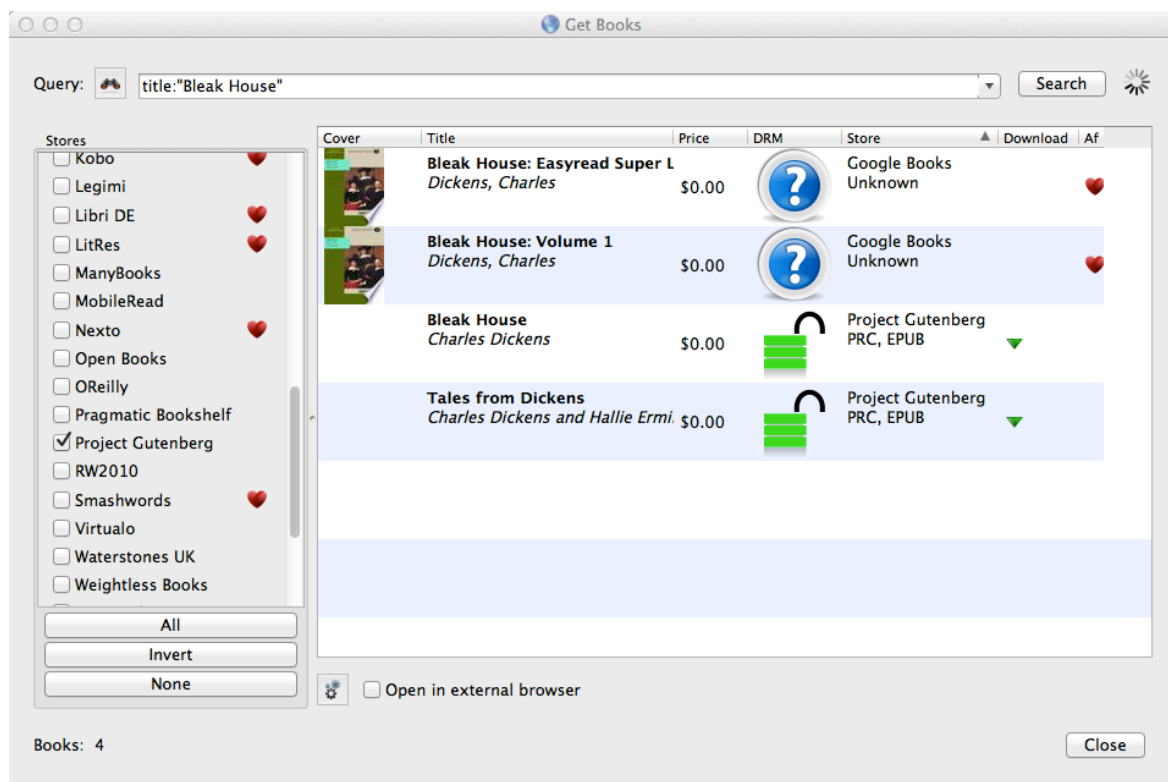
Finding a Book with Calibre

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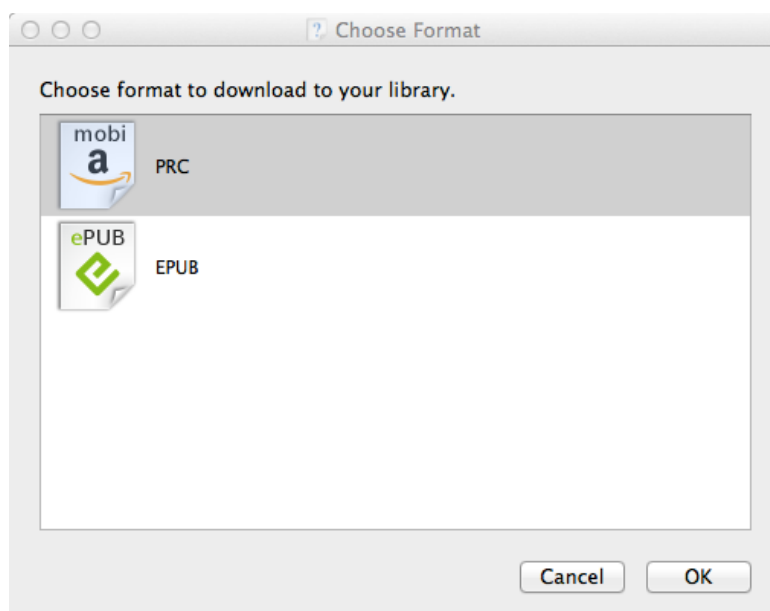

If you click on 'Get Books' you will see that Calibre can access around 50 online commercial and public domain book sources. You can choose to search all, or a selection, of these libraries. If you are looking for a 'popular' book, it is a good idea to restrict your search to just a few sites, e.g. Amazon Kindle, Google Books, Project Gutenburg and Waterstones, otherwise you may be overwhelmed with options. You should get a list of possible sources for the E-Book. If there is a green triangle beside it, you can download it directly by double-clicking on the title.
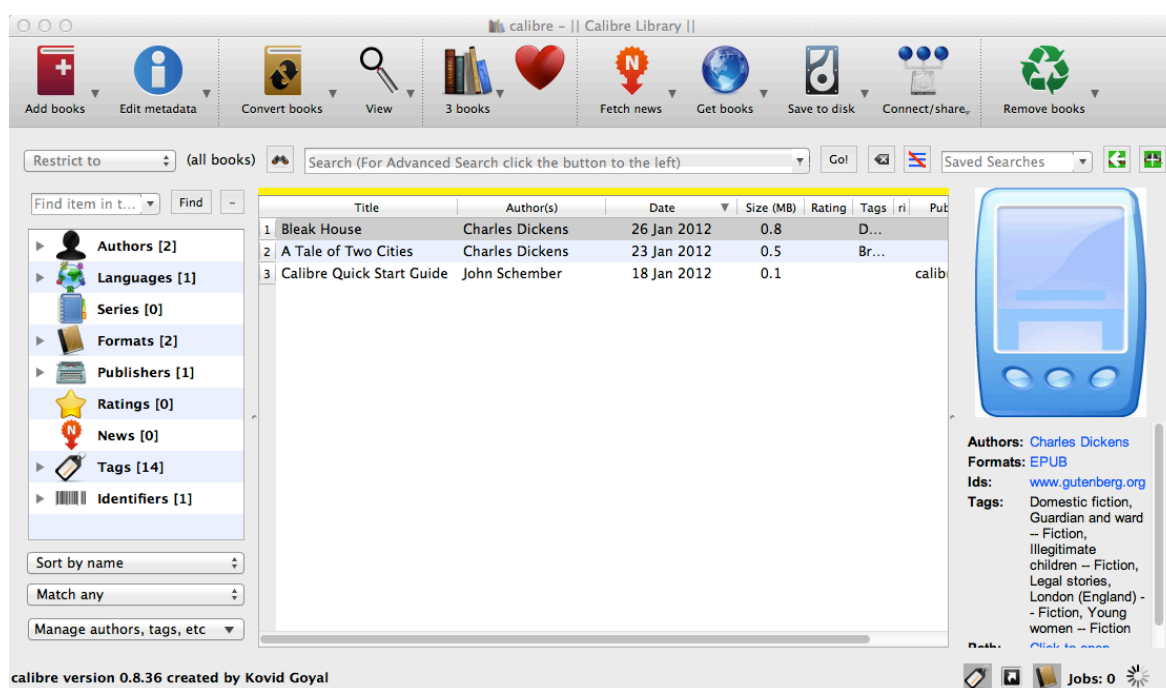

In this example, Bleak House is available from Project Gutenberg in E-Pub and PRC Formats. The PRC format is compatible with the Mobi format used by the Kindle, so you could just

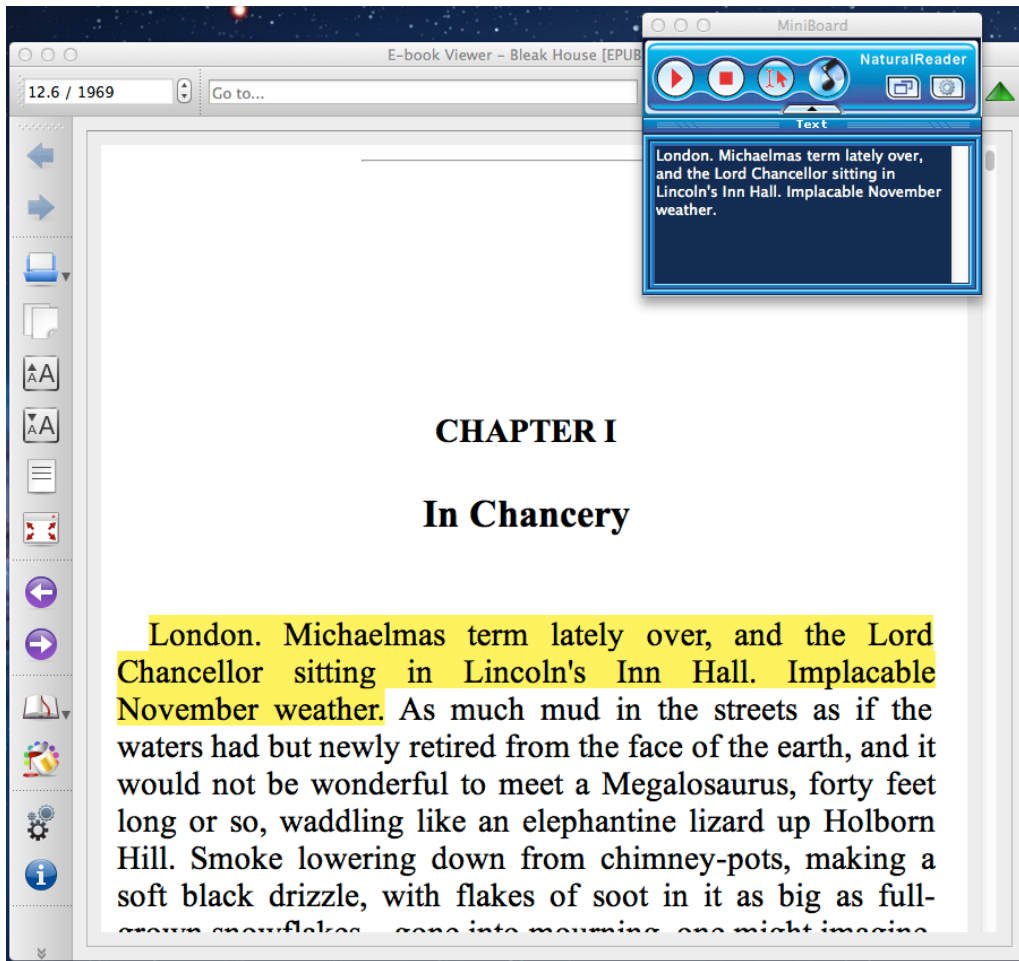download this. If the only available file was in E-Pub format, you would have to download it and convert it.

Double-click on the title, then click on OK to download it. The downloaded file will now be added to your personal library.
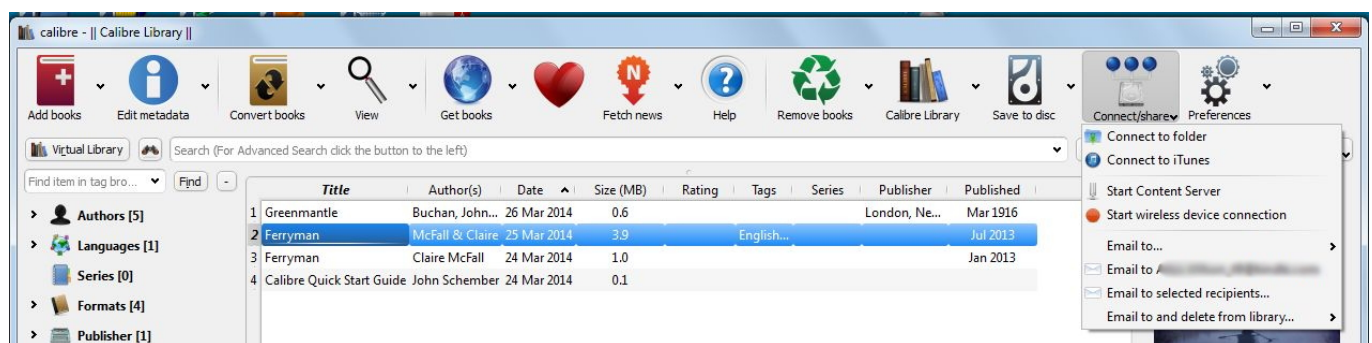

Reading a Book Using Calibre

Double-click on a book in your library, or click once on the book you want to select it and then click on the **View** icon to open the book in the Calibre reader.

Depending on the level of protection of the original text, the Calibre reader allows you to change font, enlarge text, move easily from page to page and set bookmarks. There are keyboard shortcuts for people who prefer not to use a mouse. Unfortunately, it loses your place in the document if you enlarge the text, so it is a good idea to do this before you start reading. Another drawback is the lack of a built-in text to speech facility, but as long as you can select the text with your mouse it works well with a text to speech program, such as Ivona MiniReader or the free version of NaturalReader.

Converting a Book for use on a Kindle

If you only have an E-Pub or PDF version of a book you have to convert it to MOBI or AZW3 format in order to read it on a Kindle. Calibre can do much of this for you. Simply select the book you want to convert for your Kindle, and click on Connect / Share. Email it to your Kindle account and within a few seconds, provided that your Kindle has a wifi connection, it will appear on your device as a Kindle book that you can open and use.

Transferring your Book to your Kindle by USB

If you don't have a wifi connection and are impatient to load a book onto your Kindle, you can also connect by using a USB cable. Connect your Kindle to a USB connection on your computer. The Kindle will appear as an additional disk drive on the computer. Open the Kindle drive and you will see a folder called 'Documents'. Open this folder to see the documents that you already have on your Kindle. Now go back into Calibre, select the title that you wish to transfer and click on the small triangle beside the Save to Disk icon. You
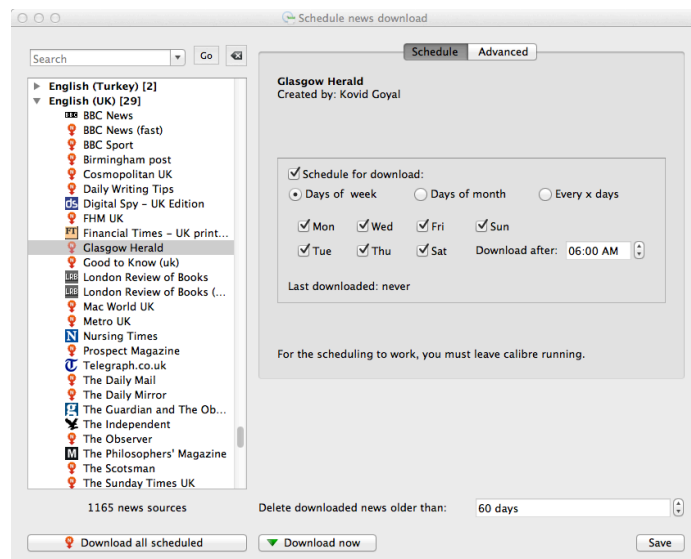
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You can schedule a 'download' time for each title, depending on how regularly it is published. Note that you must have Calibre running to download your publication. Publications are downloaded automatically and can be read using the Calibre reader.

Your titles will be automatically transferred to your Kindle the next time that you have a wi-fi connection.