

# APOGEE

## PEAK OF FLIGHT

### NEWSLETTER

## Rocketry E-Books?

By Tim Van Milligan

Francis Graham writes:

- > I have a question for you: has anyone done good business
- > research on how easily people will give up their tree-
- > originated books for the kind of e-books you sell?

My response is that there are two opinions.

#### On the negative side:

First: you can't take your computer into the throne room to do reading. Some of the most important buying decisions are made there; because distractions are very limited.

Second: even though computers are abundant; not every single rocketeer has one yet. So the market for e-books is limited to only those people that have a computer, or are willing to go through the effort to borrow someone else's.

But on the other hand, there is a lot of advantages to e-books. I'm talking about Adobe PDF documents. There are people that are publishing books with the extension .exe -- which means that us Macintosh users can't read them. So if you're considering writing an e-book, get yourself Adobe Acrobat -- it is worth every penny.

And many Window's users are leery of free software with the extension .exe because they don't know if it contains a computer virus. People are more willing to trust files with the .pdf extension.

#### The advantages to a rocketry e-book:

First, printing costs are nil. For us small companies, printing costs are significant. If the item has a slow sell-through rate, you can end up with thousands of printed books sitting around. I've got over 1000 of my *"Model Rocket Design and Construction"* book in boxes sitting in my shop. That's several thousand dollars that's tied up and can't be used to produce other rocketry products.

Second, you can add color photographs or movies easily; and without additional expense. In printing, color photos eas-

ily triples the cost of the book. So using a pdf e-book saves even more money.

Third, people that want to; can print out the book on their own printer. So they will have a hard-copy to save and to read while on the throne. The quality of the printing is much better than a photocopy too. A good laser print out is the next best thing to a offset printed book.

Fourth: distribution costs are zilch too. It is possible that you don't have to charge shipping. Customers like that; particularly those from other countries where Air Mail rates are pretty astronomical.

Fifth: People get the book instantly when they place an order for it -- if you have a web site where they place the order. Customer satisfaction is a big part of multiple sales.

Sixth - With Adobe Acrobat, the user can do a "Find." That is, if they are searching for a specific word, you can just type it in to the search box. It is better than an index page in the back of a printed book.

Seventh: you can embed links in the pdf document to web pages, and to other pdf documents.

Eight: if you post pdf documents on the internet, search engines will now index them. This is important if you want to get teachers and students to find your book.

Nine: You aren't limited to a set number of pages -- which you are if you are printing the book. With a printed book, you have a press budget. If you run out of money, you have to cut back on the number of pages.

Ten: for people with bad eyesight, you can easily zoom in on the text when you use a computer. This can be less strain on your eyes.

Eleven: With e-books, you can also embed QuickTime movies in with the text. I've done this with my e-book *"Building Skill Level 1 model Rocket kits."* I think it works incredibly well; because showing live video techniques of building a rocket is even better than a color photograph. In fact, I like it so much, I'm going to do this for the instructions on the big



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Saturn V kit.

All in all, I think the advantages are worth it.

I'm considering converting all my old printed books and technical publications over to pdf files. But I'd like to first hear back from customers. Do you like e-books?

### About the Author:

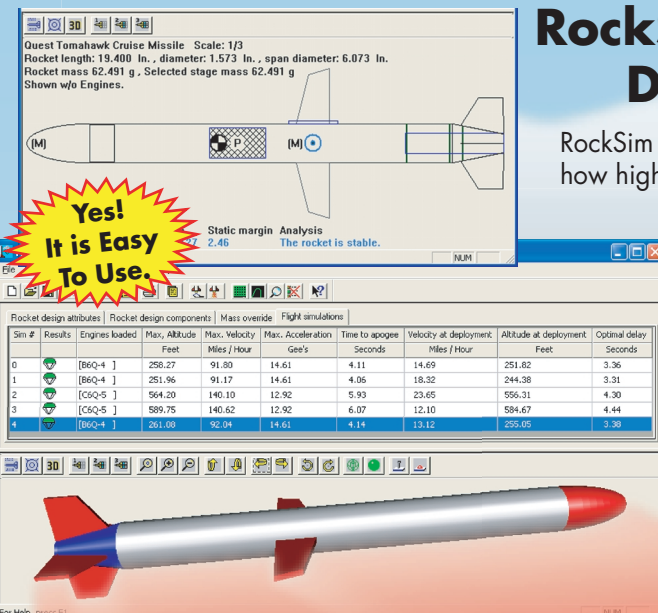
Tim Van Milligan is the owner of Apogee Components (<http://www.apogeerockets.com>) and the curator of the rock-

etry education web site: <http://www.apogeerockets.com/education>. He is also the author of the books: "Model Rocket Design and Construction," "69 Simple Science Fair Projects with Model Rockets: Aeronautics" and publisher of the FREE e-zine newsletter about model rockets. You can subscribe to the e-zine at the Apogee Components web site, or sending an email to: [ezine@apogeerockets.com](mailto:ezine@apogeerockets.com) with "SUBSCRIBE" as the subject line of the message.

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