



Podcast transcript

## **Content marketing: White Papers versus E-Books**

*INTRO: I'm talking with Marcia Jedd, owner of Marcia Jedd & Associates, a marketing communications consultancy in Minneapolis. Today, we're on the topic of white papers and e-books and the differences between the two.*

***(Interviewer JP): Marcia, we've all heard the term white paper. What is a white paper?***

(MJ): One definition I like is a report or guide that helps readers to understand an issue, solve a problem or make a decision. White papers are often associated with thought leadership. These pieces are more formal than other forms of marketing communications and tend to present a business case around a problem. Length can run over 2,000 words and feature an executive summary and conclusion. Longer papers may include a table of contents.

White papers are all about the information and concepts presented in basic text without a lot of bells and whistles.

***(JP): So what's an e-book then? Aren't they very similar to white papers?***

(MJ): Yes and to clarify, here we're not referencing full-length e-books, such as those on your Kindle or tablet but shorter pieces. E-books in this case may run about 1,500 words or more and like a white paper, are used as thought leadership pieces.

E-books are splashier, feature more graphics, great photos and may be interactive with links to additional online content. Because they're meant to be read online, e-books are typically designed in landscape format for easier reading versus the portrait layout of a white paper.

E-books "chunk up" the info by parsing copy out in subheads and highlight points and such to encourage scanning. Stylewise, e-books may be written in an edgier tone, more "in your face" than a white paper. Structure can be more like an extended blog or article.

***(JP): What are some variances mapped to marketing these pieces?***

(MJ): Both white papers and e-books educate the reader but by their nature, e-books tend to be more sales-like and emotional in content.

Both types of pieces help increase lead generation. While white papers traditionally require registration as gated content, e-books typically don't require sign up to receive so they're easy to market on social media.

A smart way to market a release of a white paper is at a conference, event or presentation, or even rolled out in conjunction with a webinar or email campaign.

***(JP): With all the free content out there today, are these pieces effective?***

(MJ): Yes, I would say even more so (than other types of content) with a well-written paper on a compelling topic. It's interesting to note that in the last two years, the Edelman Trust Barometer (<http://trust.edelman.com/trust-download/infographic-trust-in-media/>), an annual study of global opinion leaders, found that both credentialed experts and company technical experts are now the top two most trusted sources of information, even over CEOs.

I would encourage companies developing a white paper or e-book to tap their internal and external experts as key contributors to these advanced thought leadership pieces.

***(JP): We just heard from Marcia Jedd from Marcia Jedd & Associates on the topic of white papers and e-books.***

*What's in your content strategy?* For assistance with your marketing communications, contact Marcia Jedd of Marcia & Associates LLC. She helps organizations worldwide improve their reach, reputation and revenues with insightful marcom that includes copywriting, PR and marketing research services. For more information, please visit [www.marciajedd.com](http://www.marciajedd.com) or call 612.805.1425.

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