The Espresso Book Machine at Michigan State University Libraries

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Espresso Book Machine at Michigan State University Libraries?

The Espresso Book Machine (or EBM) doesn't make coffee – the EBM is a completely self-contained book publishing machine. The EBM can print anything from your family cook book to a novel you've written or have selected from our catalogue. The machine will print, bind, and trim a book within minutes – it will do this for virtually any book.

Where is the EBM located?

The EBM is located in the Copy Center in the Main Library. The Copy Center is on the second floor of the west wing.

How does it operate? What is the basic process?

The EBM first prints your pages on a high speed copier. Then, pages (called the book block) enter the Espresso Book Machine and are prepared for binding. While the book block is printing, a full color cover is printed from an inkjet printer and is automatically fed into the EBM. The book is then formed by gluing the book block to the cover page – this forms the spine and the cover is clamped against the spine and pages to create a perfect-bound book. Then, in one motion, the newly joined book block and cover page are trimmed to your exact specifications. The book then travels to the pick-up slot for retrieval.

Who is able to use the EBM? Do I have to be a student or MSU staff/faculty?

Anyone is able to use the EBM. However, the machine will be for use by Library staff for a short trial period. We hope to have it publicly available in the coming months.

Can I see the EBM in action?

Yes! The machine runs during normal Copy Center hours and is fully accessible to see up close.

Can I receive help with formatting my book block and/or cover?

Yes! There is a dedicated staff position for the EBM that will be available during posted hours to help you with any EBM needs.

How long will it take to print my book?

The actual book will print in less than ten minutes, but it is unsure what the turnaround time will be from ordering to pick-up. If you require help with document set up, please allow for extra time in addition to the ten minute average.
Are there templates available for formatting the book block and cover?

Yes, on the EBM at MSU webpage there are templates for both – they cover a range of common and standard book sizes. They still require some manual formatting based on your book length/spine size. If you would like help with this, just call the Copy Center and ask for the EBM staff.

Are there pre-made covers I can choose from if I don’t want to design my own?

Yes! The EBM staff is developing a few covers you can choose from when printing your book. They are full color and have a few option for fonts and colors. Just make sure you let the staff know that you will be selecting a pre-made option.

Where can I learn more technical information about the machine?

You can either speak with the EBM staff or look on the manufacturer’s website. On Demand Books developed the EBM and Xerox manufactures the high-speed copy machine used to print the book block. The inkjet printer is made by Epson and prints your cover on 11x17 glossy coverstock.