Self-publishing

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March 26 – Finding a publisher or printer – What Print On Demand (POD) publishers will and won’t do for you – Manuscript preparation – Editing – Book formatting

April 2 – Continuation of preparing your book for publication – Mistakes to avoid – Proofing and ordering – Shipping – E-book publishing

April 9 – Marketing and distribution
Potential Reasons to Self-Publish

1. More control over finished product.
2. Shorter production cycle
3. Larger potential percentage of the profit
4. Full ownership of rights
5. Lower initial printing costs (Not lower per book cost)
6. Can publish works large publishers won’t publish because of limited sales potential.
7. Can publish for your own reasons not linked to profit
8. Can make frequent revisions and updates to material

Potential reasons not to self-publish
(or at least be aware of before you sign that contract)

1. It is not for the faint of heart (unless you have simple needs or deep pockets).
2. You may not have as much control over the final product as you think.
3. Many POD publishers make more money from selling services than publishing books.
4. Support may only be available through e-mails or on-line forums (may be no in-person or phone support).
5. You haven’t built up a fan base before publishing.
6. Very few self-published books are profitable.
7. You don’t like speaking in public.
8. You are not interested in marketing.
9. You don’t know what to write when signing copies of your book.
10. You write cowboy poetry.
Questions to ask **before** you decide to publish your book

I. Why do you want to publish a book? Your reasons for publishing may affect your publishing decisions.

A. Do you want to see your name in print?
   1. 2013 survey by *Digital Book World* and *Writers Digest* – Median income for self-published writers was under $5000
   2. 2015 *Authors Guild* survey showed steady decline of author’s income
      a) Full-time authors – 30% decrease from 2009 to 2015 – from average of $25,000 to $17,500 per year
      b) Part-time authors – 38% decrease from 2009 to 2015 – from average of $7,250 to 4,500 per year
C. As a keepsake? Is your book a memento of a camp, or a companion to a workshop, etc.
D. To share your wisdom, or fill a void in existing knowledge base? Are you an expert in a field?
E. Career enhancement? Will having a published book increase your perceived authority, or give you increased visibility among your peers?
F. To tell a good story?

II. Who is the intended audience? Your audience may dictate the number of copies to print, what type of publication to produce, and the sales price for the book. For instance, if your potential audience is:

A. Family and friends? Are you writing a family or church history, or telling the history of the ancestral home?
   1. Number of copies needed may be small.
   2. May only need a booklet printed at local print shop.
B. Specialized audiences such as local geography teachers, stamp collectors, etc.?
   1. Number of copies needed may be small.
   2. Your relationship to the subject and the audience may guarantee sales.
   3. Specialized audiences may be willing to pay more than the general public for a book.
C. Regional audiences for subjects such as local or regional history, mushroom identification, etc.
   1. May be hard to judge market.
   2. Many possibilities for local marketing.
D. How-to market?
   1. A large market.
   2. Reaching potential buyers might be difficult.
E. Niche fiction – for instance books for people interested in Goth zombie veterinarians?
   1. A tiny market.
   2. If you are a well-known member of the niche community sales may be guaranteed.
F. General fiction with a wide appeal?
   1. A huge market.
   2. Marketing and distribution would be challenges.
III. What is the best way to reach the intended audience? A printed book may not be the best way to reach your audience, at least, not as a first step.

A. Blog? Blogs are websites where you publish short posts on a periodic basis.
   1. Sites such as WordPress and Blogger host blogs and have tools necessary to get you started.
      a. Easy way to start writing.
      b. Allows you to build up inventory of written material.
      c. Assuming your blog is good, builds up your authority and builds a fan base.

B. Static website? This would be a site where the material does not change, or is not updated on a regular basis.
   1. It might provide same information as a blog, but as a completed, comprehensive unit.
   2. Your blog could morph into a static website.

C. E-book?
   1. Can be fairly easy and inexpensive to format a manuscript and convert it to e-book.
   2. No printing costs.
   3. Easy to distribute.

D. Printed book? This is the traditional route to authorship.
   1. Necessary if you want to be part of bookstore sales channel.
   2. Necessary if you are planning to sell the book yourself through local channels.

E. A combination of the above?
   1. You may want to start with a blog until you establish your authority and audience, and then move to a printed book.
   2. You may want to publish a printed book and e-book at the same time.

IV. If you choose to publish your book via a printed copy, what is the best way to get it printed?

A. Local printer, or copy center, or home publishing.
   1. For small jobs such as booklets you may be able to print the booklet off at home with a computer printer, or using a copy machine, and then bind it yourself by stapling or other simple methods. There are artisans in town that do hand binding.
   2. Your local print shop may be able to handle a small print job. Local print shops may or may not have offset presses, or letterpress equipment, but they probably will have digital printers of some sort.
   3. Advantages of using a local print shop or copy center:
      a. Ability to work with a real person.
      b. Your money supports the local economy.
      c. Quick turn-around time.
   4. Disadvantages of using a local print shop or copy center:
      a. High production costs.
      b. Choice of bindings limited. Local printers probably do not have machines to provide perfect binding or do hardbound books.
      c. You may have to settle for lower image quality.
B. Off-set lithography - traditional publishing house. Offset lithography is a printing method in which an image on a metal plate is transferred (offset) to a rubber blanket and then transferred to paper. Multi-color printing requires a separate plate and rubber blanket for each color. The paper never comes into contact with the metal plate, prolonging the life of the printing plate.

1. Advantages of Offset:
   a. Consistently high image quality.
   b. Offset presses can usually handle large sizes of paper.
   c. Better handling of color images (better and larger selection of ink).
   d. High speed printing.
   e. Per unit costs decreases as number of units printed increases.
   f. Uniformity across large print runs.

2. Disadvantages of Offset:
   a. Multiple mechanical steps necessary.
   b. Takes longer to set up and maintain equipment.
   c. Takes longer for actual printing.
   d. Longer down-time between jobs.
   e. Because of above factors short print runs are discouraged.
   f. You end up with large number of books that need to be stored.

C. Digital Printing – Print-on-demand (POD). Digital printing is based on the use of computers, and the use of digital presses that operate similarly to home computer printers. Many of the mechanical steps required for offset printing are eliminated. Presses can usually do one-pass printing, applying all colors of ink at the same time, greatly reducing printing time.

1. Advantages of digital:
   a. Small press runs are no problem.
   b. Less time needed for set-up and maintenance.
   c. High speed printing.
   d. Quicker turn-around time between jobs.
   e. Changes to document can be easily made.
   f. Smaller print runs mean less money spent on book storage.

2. Disadvantages of digital:
   a. Image quality, while it can be very good, is usually not as good as off-set or letterpress.
   b. Not as many ink choices – perhaps less color fidelity.
   c. Per unit cost higher than offset (but smaller print runs reduce per job cost).
   d. Cannot handle large paper sizes.
   e. Can be small variations in image placement between print runs.
   f. Printing costs per unit usually remain the same even for large print runs.
D. Letterpress printing. Letterpress is one of oldest types of printing. It is a type of relief printing, uses raised images which are inked and pressed into paper. The images leave an impression in the paper, and image can be left un-inked for an embossed image. Letterpress was used extensively in publishing up until the development of offset printing in the 1960s. In modern usage it is commonly used for invitations, business cards, stationary, etc., but larger letterpress specialists can print books.

1. Advantages of letterpress:
   a. Handcrafted look and feel.
   b. Crisp lettering.
   c. Excellent image quality.

2. Disadvantages of letterpress
   a. Labor intensive.
   b. Time consuming.
   c. Expensive.
   d. Because of these factors it is usually reserved for high quality limited edition books.

V. Do you have realistic expectations of how long it takes to publish a book? Many POD publishers emphasize how quick book publishing is. While the time it takes a publisher to set up a file and print a book may be short, the pre-press work of getting a book to the “Camera Ready” stage can be lengthy.

A. Have you considered the time it will take to edit and revise your manuscript? Having another person view your work with fresh eyes is essential. If you haven’t budgeted the time and possibly money to do this you then are not ready to publish.

B. If your book will include illustrations, do you already have the illustrations?
   1. If you do, how long will it take to optimize the illustrations for print?
   2. If not, how long will it take to find/buy or produce the illustrations and optimize them for print.

C. How long will it take to design the book interior and covers? Good design does not guarantee sales, but bad design will definitely turn prospective buyers off. Book buyers do indeed judge a book by its cover.

D. How long will the formatting take?
   1. It will take a relatively short time to format a book without illustrations, perhaps less than a week.
   2. Illustration-rich books will take considerably longer to format. My books, which have an illustration on almost every page, take about six months for illustration production and optimization, and publication formatting (work done myself).

E. How long will the proofing take?
   1. Most POD publishers have on-line proofing tools and/or provide PDFs of the finished document to view. On-line proofing or viewing a PDF file can take little time, but proofing on a computer screen has limitations.
   2. Most POD publishers will provide printed copies of your book as it will come off the presses. You really need a printed proof copy to peruse over a period of time and mark up, especially to check for proper image placement.
      a. The publisher will charge you printing and shipping costs. Pay up! This is an essential step, but it can take several weeks to proof and correct this way.
E. Have you planned for the unexpected. Develop a realistic schedule that includes time for unexpected delays.
   1. I scheduled my first book to come out right before the Christmas shopping season began. Then, during the Holiday shipping rush, five boxes of books that were shipped via USPS Priority got misplaced somewhere between California and Alaska. I had to put in a rush order for more books to be delivered via UPS.

VI. Do you have realistic expectations of how much it will cost publish a book?
A. Book publishing can be relatively inexpensive if you do much of the pre-press work yourself. Otherwise, it might cost you thousands of dollars. Many POD publishers will provide services such as editing and book design—for a price.
   1. Some POD publishers make more profit from selling services that by printing books. A few publishers require you to buy a package of services to publish through them, with the least expensive package of services costing about $1000.00. If you need additional services, the cost can easily escalate to $5000.00 plus.
   2. Some POD publishers market their services a la carte, with you paying only for the services you need. In my opinion, most of the services provided by POD publishers are over-priced.
   3. Some POD publishers allow you to do all the work yourself (or purchase the necessary services elsewhere, probably at a lower cost). All you do is provide them with a “camera ready” PDF file for the book.
   4. If you have the necessary formatting and image manipulation software, and the time and willingness to learn the necessary skills, you might be able to prepare a book for publication for about $600.00. This would not include the cost for printing and shipping books to you. At a minimum, the pre-press costs would probably include:
      b. Minimal copy editing - $250.00
      c. Book cover design - $100.00 to $200.00
      d. A proof copy of the book shipped to you - $30.00 to $50.00 (Most of that cost would be for expedited shipping)
      e. Office supplies: ink and paper -100.00
B. Will you produce a color or a black and white book?
   1. Your cover will be in color (even if its black & white). Most POD publishers assume you want a color cover and do not give you a choice.
   2. Black & white interiors are the least expensive to print. Color interiors (even if it is just one illustration) can triple or quadruple the cost to print the book.
      a. At CreateSpace, a 6” x 9” book with black and white interior would cost $2.43 per copy. The same book with a color interior would cost $10.03 per copy.
VII. If you want to publish via e-book, do you have a realistic view of the steps involved in producing an e-book, how long it will take, and how much it will cost? Some e-book publishers emphasize how quick e-book publishing is, and how inexpensive it is. Unfortunately, “It ain’t necessarily so.” The same basic question talked about in sections V and VI relating to printed books need to be considered.

A. How long will it take to prepare your manuscript for conversion?
B. Have you had the manuscript expertly edited? How long will that take? Will you need revisions?
C. If you have illustrations, have they been optimized, properly sized, and properly placed within the document?
D. Have you produced a killer cover for the e-book—one that will stand out as a thumbnail image?

VIII. Is right now the time to publish? Many publishing consultants recommend that one to two years before publishing a book you should be establishing your reputation as an author and building up a fan base of people interested in your work. Do you need to establish your credibility as an author before going ahead with your book project?

IX. Are you aware that as a self-published author, you are an “authorpreneur”? Not only will you write and publish a book, but you will also be responsible for distribution and marketing. Are you willing to take on the role (timewise and financially) of publicist, marketing developer, and distributor, or are you willing to pay someone else to do those jobs?
Publishing Rights

Publishing rights refers to the permissions granted to a publisher to reproduce a work. You can sell the rights to reproduce a work while still retaining the copyright.

Two basic types of work arrangements in traditional publishing:

**Work for Hire** – This generally denotes an employee/employer relationship, or work done as an independent contractor. You do the work, but you do not get the copyright. This is the situation where a publisher or other agency might contract with the author to write part of book, pays the author a flat fee, and gains copyright to the work. The author retains no rights and receives no further compensation. Whoever owns the copyright is free to alter or use the material in any way. In general it applies to works that are part of a large work. Ghostwriting an entire book is not considered work-for-hire unless the writer is actually an employee of an employer.

**Royalty Publishing** – You do the work and you get the copyright. You can sell your copyright and lose all rights to your work. Assuming you retain the copyright, you can grant permission to a publisher to reproduce a work for a percentage of the profit. In traditional publishing the publisher pays for publishing and marketing a book, takes most of the risks, and takes most of the profits. They also want to have control over most of the rights. Everything is negotiable. Some of the rights that can be negotiated and granted to a publisher include:

1. Country or region where a work can be published.
2. Language a work can be published in.
3. Duration of time a publisher can publish work.
4. Medium in which a work can be produced (hardcover, paperback, digital, audio, etc.)
5. Rights such as television and movie, book club, etc.
6. Serialization rights
Copyright

1. **What does copyright protect?** Copyright, a form of intellectual property law, protects original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, such as poetry, novels, movies, songs, computer software, and architecture. Copyright does not protect facts, ideas, systems, or methods of operation, although it may protect the way these things are expressed.

2. **How is a copyright different from a patent or a trademark?** Copyright protects original works of authorship, while a patent protects inventions or discoveries. Ideas and discoveries are not protected by the copyright law, although the way in which they are expressed may be. A trademark protects words, phrases, symbols, or designs identifying the source of the goods or services of one party and distinguishing them from those of others.

3. **When is my work protected?** Your work is under copyright protection the moment it is created and fixed in a tangible form that it is perceptible either directly or with the aid of a machine or device.

4. **Do I have to register with your office to be protected?** No. In general, registration is voluntary. Copyright exists from the moment the work is created. You will have to register, however, if you wish to bring a lawsuit for infringement of a U.S. work.

5. **Why should I register my work if copyright protection is automatic?** Registration is recommended for a number of reasons. Many choose to register their works because they wish to have the facts of their copyright on the public record and have a certificate of registration. Registered works may be eligible for statutory damages and attorney's fees in successful litigation. Finally, if registration occurs within five years of publication, it is considered *prima facie* evidence in a court of law.

6. **How long does a copyright last?** The term of copyright for a particular work depends on several factors, including whether it has been published, and, if so, the date of first publication. As a general rule, for works created after January 1, 1978, copyright protection lasts for the life of the author plus an additional 70 years. For an anonymous work, a pseudonymous work, or a work made for hire, the copyright endures for a term of 95 years from the year of its first publication or a term of 120 years from the year of its creation, whichever expires first.
Questions and Answers about ISBN

1. **What is an ISBN?** ISBN stands for International Standard Book Number. It is a 13-digit number that’s used as a unique identifier for books. ISBN is used internationally.

2. **Why do we need ISBNS?** We need them to identify each book that is published, and each edition of the same book (including different formats of the same book). ISBN also identifies the publisher of the book. It is the standard ID number used to identify books by booksellers, libraries, book wholesalers and distributors.

3. **Should I get an ISBN?** If you plan to sell your book in bookstores, to libraries, or through online retailers like Amazon.com, you will need an ISBN.

4. **Does a book have to be published to have an ISBN?** ISBNs are issued to publishers, who then assign them to individual books. This can be done at any time, even before the book is written.

5. **Is the ISBN the bar code I see on the back of books?** The bar code is a representation of the ISBN in a form that can be identified by scanners. The bar code might also have other information embedded in it, like the price of the book and the currency in which it is priced.

6. **Okay, do I need to have a bar code too?** Only if you plan to sell your book in bookstores. If you only plan to sell online, or privately like at speaking engagements, you don’t need a bar code. Many publishers put them on their books anyway.

7. **How do I get an ISBN?** Bowker is the only company authorized to administer the ISBN program in the United States. Go to myidentifiers.com, or selfpublishedauthors.com (both are Bowker sites) and click on “ISBN Identifiers” and you’ll be taken to a page where you can buy 1, 10, 100 or 1000 ISBNs.

8. **If I get an ISBN, does that mean my book is copyrighted?** No, ISBN is administered by a private company for the use of the international book trade. Copyright is administered by the Library of Congress and is an extension of intellectual property law.

9. **If I have an ISBN, does that mean my book will be in Books in Print?** Once you have an ISBN you can go to the Bowker sites mentioned above to fill out the forms necessary for your book to be listed in Books in Print.


11. **How many ISBNS should I buy?** The least economical choice is to buy 1 ISBN. If you ever publish another edition of your book, or another book entirely, you will need more than one ISBN. I suggest you buy the 10 pack.

12. **What do ISBNS cost?** A single ISBN today costs $125, while 10 ISBNs cost $250, 100 cost $575 and 1000 cost $1000. Note that the price per ISBN drops from $125 to $25 to $5.75 to $1.


14. **Where do I put the ISBN?** You’ll print it on the copyright page, and it’s included in the Cataloging-in-Publication data block, if you use one. Otherwise, just print it on the copyright page and, of course, on the back cover as part of the bar code.

Adapted from “ISBN for Self Publishers,” on thebookdesigner.com website
Traditional Publishing – Self-Publishing – Hybrid Publishing – Vanity Publishing

1. Traditional Publishing
   a. Publisher buys the rights from author to publish a book. Publisher assumes all the responsibilities, costs and risks for publishing, distributing and marketing a book, and takes most of the profit.
      i. Publisher registers copyright for the book in author’s name, and obtains ISBN
      ii. Publisher usually has exclusive rights to publish book for specified period of time.
      iii. Book is published under the publisher’s imprint.
      iv. Publisher is in control of all aspects of publishing
      v. Publisher is responsible for warehousing books
      vi. Author get small percentage of the profit, sometimes receives an advance
   b. Minority of the titles published make a profit. Profits from the best-sellers support the publication of other books.

2. Self-publishing.
   a. Author assumes all the responsibilities, costs and risks for publishing, distributing and marketing a book and takes most of the profit (if there is any)
      i. Author makes all decisions regarding pre-press, production, distribution and marketing
      ii. Author can register own copyright, and obtain ISBN, or allow others to do that for author.
      1. Some publishers or service providers may overcharge you for services that you can do yourself inexpensively or for free.
      iii. Author’s contract with publisher is usually non-exclusive and can be terminated at will
      iv. Publisher may have distribution program, but marketing is essentially left up to author.
      v. Publishing is usually print-on-demand. If author has books printed, then author is responsible for warehousing books.
      vi. Author gets a higher percentage of the profits.

3. Hybrid publishing – relatively new publishing model combining elements of traditional and self-publishing. Publisher brings skills and expertise in printing distribution and marketing—Author chips in to pay for pre-press expenses. Implication is that author and publisher split expenses equally
   a. Author and publisher share in the responsibilities, costs and risks for publishing, distributing and marketing a book.
   b. Usually author pays a set fee for pre-press work on the book, publisher pays for production, distributing and marketing
   c. Author collects a larger share of profit than with traditional publishing, but not as much as might be possible with self-publishing.
   d. Like traditional publishing companies, hybrids usually have their own imprint and require exclusive right to publish.
   e. Like traditional publishing companies, they have a vetting process, and not all manuscripts are accepted for publication
   f. Like traditional publishing companies, they should have established and proven distribution and marketing programs
   g. Criteria for reputable hybrid publishers
      i. In January of this year, the Independent Book Publishers Association passed an initiative that states “that hybrid publishers behave just like traditional publishers in all respects, except when it comes to business model. Hybrid publishers use an author-subsidized business model, as opposed to financing all costs themselves, and in exchange return a higher-than-industry-standard
share of sales proceeds to the author... Although hybrid publishing companies are author-subsidized, they are different from other author-subsidized models in that hybrid publishers adhere to professional publishing standards. Regardless of who pays for editorial, design, and production fees, it is always the publisher that bears responsibility for producing, distributing, and ultimately selling professional-quality books.

ii. IBPA has adopted the following list of nine criteria defining what it means to be a professional hybrid publisher.
   1. Define a mission and vision for its publishing program.
   2. Vet submissions.
   3. Publish under its own imprint(s) and ISBNs.
   4. Publish to industry standards
   5. Ensure editorial, design, and production quality.
   6. Pursue and manage a range of publishing rights.
   7. Provide distribution services.
   8. Demonstrate respectable sales.
   9. Pay authors a higher-than-standard royalty.

h. Vanity publishers –
   i. Before days of POD publishing, vanity (subsidy) publishers would produce books using a business model where the author paid for the entire publishing process and was required to purchase substantial numbers of copies. Authors usually ended up with cases of unsold books. The main goal of these publishers was to separate as much money from naïve authors as possible.
   ii. These types of publishers still exist today, masquerading as legitimate self-publishing or hybrid publishing companies. With these companies the author assumes all the costs and risks for publishing, distributing and marketing a book and the publisher takes most or all of the profit.
   iii. Self-publishing is very much a caveat emptor situation. Authors much use due diligence in finding and working with a publisher
      1. Make sure the publisher is a legitimate company with a proven track record.
         a. Do internet search for company’s name plus “complaints” or “rip-off.”
         b. Check sites such as Alliance of Independent Authors, Writer Beware, Predators and Editors, and The Independent Publishing Magazine. which maintain lists of publishers and services (good and bad) as well as other information useful to authors
         c. Use with caution internet sites that list “top” or “best” POD publishers. Some of these only list companies that pay to be listed. This also applies to sites that purport to find the publisher best-suited to your needs. Often these sites are maintained by publishing companies.
         d. Reviews and ratings that are more than a few years old should be used with caution. The self-publishing industry changes rapidly. Companies that were well-rated years ago may have been acquired by a rival and their reputation downgraded.
         e. Make sure publishers have a bone fide distribution system
         f. Read contacts carefully. Many POD publishers have sample contracts available on-line. Watch out for “weasel” words or vague statements that publishers can use to their advantage.