A GUIDE TO

SELF-PUBLISHING

written by Ann Wilson

Welcome *to the wonderful world of publishing.*

Your book is written, or you are in the process of writing and the time has come to commence your journey to becoming a published author.

At the outset the writing seemed like the difficult part but often the production process and marketing is where the challenge begins. It is said that 'You don't know, what you don't know' and this is certainly the case with publishing and the terminology used.

There are three paths to becoming a published author. Publishing with a Traditional Publisher, using a Vanity Publisher or self-publishing as an Indie author, each with it's own challenges.

This guide will provide you with an insight into the terminology used in publishing circles. No matter which option you choose you still need to understand all the same book fundamentals.

Whether you are publishing a nonfiction book to complement your business or interest, a work of fiction, family history, cookbook or any other genre, this guide will help you understand the publishing journey.

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Publishing types

Self - publishing

Not using a traditional publisher is a quickly developing phenomenon and opens up the market to new authors.

Self-publishing allows authors to manage the production of their work in print or as an ebook. There are many stages in the self-publishing journey and these include editing, design, production, promotion, selling and distribution.

Not so many years ago self-publishing was frowned upon and seen as unprofessional; however, that view is rapidly changing. Yes, there are self-published books that are unprofessional and look and feel amateurish, but there are ways to achieve the look and quality of a traditionally published book as an independent (Indie) author.

The good and the bad news with self-publishing is that you have complete control, and with that comes a lot of responsibility. There is a wealth of author services, freelance editors and designers available to assist you, and often the trick is to pinpoint your strengths and weaknesses and know what services you will find valuable.

Whatever stage you are at in the writing/publishing process, establishing your author platform is paramount. Covered on page 24. You are at an advantage if this is being taken into consideration even before pen hits the paper.

This guide will help you understand the terms used within the industry and be a reference point as to which areas need your focus.

Traditional publishing

This is the dream for many authors – signing a contract with a major publisher such as HarperCollins, Pan Macmillan, Penguin Random House, University Presses … the list goes on. If this is your goal, obtaining the elusive deal can be easier said than done. If you're pitching to the larger publishers, you will need to pitch to an agent first, and if the agent takes on your manuscript they will pitch it to the publishers on your behalf.

Whether you are pitching to an agent or directly to the publisher, rejections and waiting for responses are part of the process.

Always research the submission guidelines set out by each individual agent and publisher. They all have different requirements and receive hundreds of submissions. If you do not follow these precise requirements, your manuscript may not even be looked at.

The credibility and validation of having a book deal with a major publisher brings plenty of prestige. The one great advantage of a traditional publisher is their distribution to physical bookstores, airports and other retail outlets.

You will also have access to a team of professionals, including editors, cover designers, layout designers and a production and marketing team, who will work on bringing your manuscript to life.

However, these benefits need to be weighed up against the cons. It can take a long time to go from finishing your manuscript, to signing a contract, to having a published book.

Using a traditional publisher means you lose a degree of control – you can have input into the cover, blurb, timing and price but ultimately this will be the publisher's decision.

You may dream of that large advance and royalty cheque but in reality it is unlikely, especially if you are an emerging author. If you do receive an advance it may take years before you receive any royalties.

Traditional publishers will promote your book to the bookstores and their distributors for a limited time, but, as the author you need to be prepared to market your book to your readers.

Vanity publishing

A clear distinction should be drawn between Vanity Publishing and self-publishing, where the author finances the publishing of their own book.

A Vanity Press may assert rights to published work and continued fees/ royalties on ongoing book sales.

Publishing is a highly competitive industry, and unfortunately where there is great want, there are people who will take advantage of that financial want.

Vanity publishing will often be expensive and often doesn't deliver on promises made. It is often hard to detect whether any effort has been made to promote and sell your book which can be a real problem. They exist on the fees paid to them by authors and have little to no interest in the quality of the book or in helping an author market and distribute their work.

It is genuinely difficult to market an unknown author but they will often 'con' unsuspecting authors into believing they will be made famous. By the time they realise this is not the case a contract has been signed and money has been handed over.

Using NSW Fair Trading's 'things to watch out for' as a starting point, the ASA (Australian Society of Authors) has put together a list of warning signs that should alert you to the presence of a vanity publisher.

- They may require you to pay for 'submission guidelines.'
- They may require you to use – and pay for – their manuscript assessment service before submitting your manuscript.
- They insist that they will only publish work that has 'merit'.
- They praise your work (this one can be hard to ignore).
- They charge inflated prices to publish and 'market' your book.
- They require you to sign a 'non-disclosure agreement' (which means you can't get advice about the contract).
- They offer you a 50% share of net profits (and 50% of nothing is still nothing).
- When the book is not published on schedule, they will give you a string of excuses for the delay.
- They are unlikely to get your book reviewed in any literary journal or major newspaper.
- They will not get your book into bookshops, and online sales will prove elusive.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you are dealing with a vanity publisher contact the ASA or your local Writers Centre.

www.nsw.org.au

www.asauthors.org

www.qwc.asn.au

Editing

Few people can edit their own work effectively. Authors can have difficulty in foreseeing the message readers interpret from their work. Often what makes sense to you, the author, because of jargon, prior knowledge etc. does not make sense to the reader. And no matter how confident you are with your spelling, punctuation and grammar, an edit is extremely beneficial if you want your work to be polished and professional for all to read and enjoy.

> *Independent Ink recommends that you employ the services of an experienced editor to read your manuscript and, at the very least, provide a manuscript assessment. This will allow you to see how your manuscript is working, as well as highlight what improvements can be made to it. The editing experience can then continue, depending on what type of editing your work requires.*

Types of Editing

Manuscript Assessment (Substantive/Structural Edit)

A manuscript assessment is the first editorial check you should have, particularly if you are writing a fiction novel.

An editor carrying out an assessment will read through your completed manuscript and focus on the overall structure, content and style of your manuscript. They will look specifically at your narrative; voice; plot; pace; characterisations; dialogue; readership; title; length and presentation.

The editor will provide a thorough review of the above aspects, as well as provide examples and suggestions for improvements. They will be able to demonstrate how grammar, spelling and punctuation may need to be corrected; however, they will not correct all of these errors in this edit.

A manuscript assessment will give you professional advice on the big overall aspects of your work.

Copyedit

A copyedit ensures that nothing disturbs the interaction between author and reader. Points that are checked during this edit include:

- narrative; voice; plot; pace; characterisations; dialogue; readership; title; length and presentation
- grammar, spelling and punctuation
- consistent style
- factual accuracy
- correct illustrations suitably placed and captioned
- completeness
- coordination of copyright applications and acknowledgments, legal concerns etc.
- checking of title page, imprint page, references, indexes, chapters etc.

This edit is the most thorough of all edits, and is therefore the most expensive.

Proofreading

Once a manuscript has been copyedited, and given back to you to check before finalising, it is best to have an editor/proofreader do a final proofread. This proofread can also take place once the book has been typeset, which is mentioned below.

No matter when you prefer to have this proofreading done, it is paramount to have an editor read through the final manuscript before going to print or converting to an ebook. This is the final stage that allows an editor to check for any last minute mistakes.

Once you are happy with your manuscript, it is time to hand it over to the people who will produce your printed book and/or ebook.

Production

The following terms are used during the production process of your book. These will give you an indication of the things you will need to decide on prior to your manuscript being typeset.

Typesetting

Typesetting is the process of arranging the type (text) for printing. In the case of ebooks, it is when the type is easily laid out. This sounds like an easy task but there are many aspects of this process to be taken into consideration. Without an understanding of typographical issues, a designer/author runs the risk of producing a work that is unprofessional. This can hinder the book sales and distribution opportunities or, in the case of a work promotion, you or your business will appear amateurish.

The aim of good typography is to make reading the text an effortless process and ensure that there is no conflict with design, which ultimately aims to produce a visually beautiful book.

> *At Independent Ink, years of experience have allowed us to develop a keen eye for what is both visually appealing and effortless to read.*

Manuscript (ms)

Text delivered by an author. Usually a word file supplied either on disc or electronically, but may be typewritten or even hand written.

Type Size

There is nothing worse than having a type size that is too small. It makes reading difficult and unpleasant. As a guide we recommend being able to read the text from around arms length. This will ensure normal reading is effortless.

Line Length

The length of line (i.e. the number of characters per line) and type size is important due to how we recognise words and read. The longer the line, the more effort is required to stay on track. Independent Ink recommends having a line length of between 50 and 70 characters.

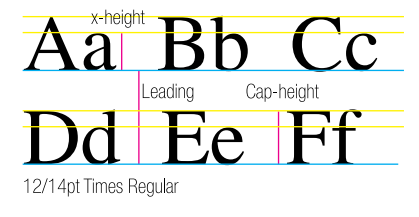
Font Selection

Brilliant typography should be something that is not noticed, therefore we always recommend using a simple, easy-to-read font. And it is best to choose a font that is available in various weights and styles including bold, italics and bold italics.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	Adobe Garamond Pro Regular
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	Bembo Regular
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	Sabon Roman
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	Minion Pro Regular
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	Mrs Eaves Roman
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	Helvetica Neue Roman
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	Trade Gothic Light
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	Franklin Gothic Book
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	Neutra Text Book
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff	ITC Stone Sans Medium

Font

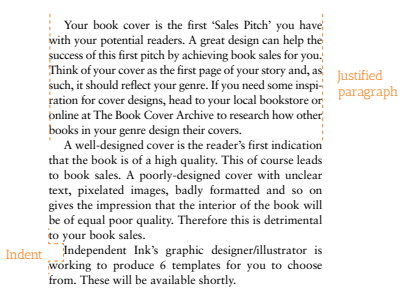
A font means 'a complete set of type carrying a given size of a given typeface', which comprises upper and lower case characters, numerals, punctuation marks and a range of special characters. The terms: bold; italics; bold italics etc. are referred to as 'font styles'. When talking about font you will be asked about type size. For example: 10/12pt (ten on twelve point) refers to the type size and the distance from the baseline of one line to the baseline of the next. A printer's measure for a point is equal to approximately 0.3mm. The 10pt refers to the body height of the type, measuring from the highest ascender to the foot of the lowest descender, plus a small overhang of the body to allow for a space between each line of characters. The 12pt indicates an extra 2pt space between the lines. This 2pt space is also referred to as the 'leading'. This is a term dating back to when books were handset in metal type. If the typesetter thought the text looked better with extra space between the lines, strips of lead were then inserted, hence the name 'leading'.



Layout

Traditional books have always been produced with justified text. This means that all words in all lines are spaced out so that the first word aligns with the left margin and the last word with the right margin.

The first line of each paragraph is also indented. The pattern of opening indents and short lines at the end of paragraphs helps enable the reader to visualise the logical shape of the text by emphasising paragraph breaks.



Alternative page layouts are flush left/ragged right and flush right/ragged left. These can be useful for specific purposes such as poetry and prose, and to distinguish letters or emails within the text. Flush left can avoid large spaces between words and excessive hyphenation. However, it can tend to look amateurish and old-fashioned if used over a large extent of text. It can also be difficult to read and keep track of paragraphs.

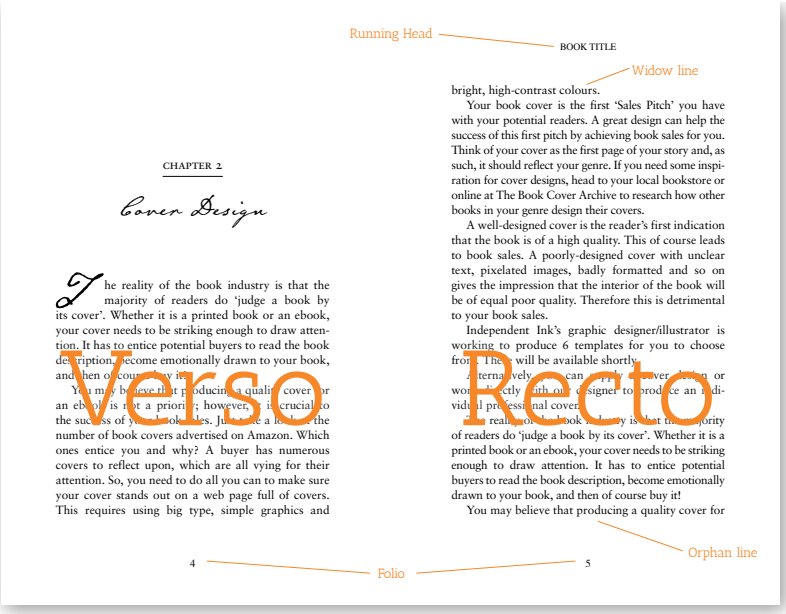
Pagination

Another item to think about is the pagination and page extent. In the case of a printed book this will be influenced by the number of pages required by the printer. Printers work in sections and this will be in multiplies of 4, 12 or 16 pages. If you are printing the book yourself you will need to confirm this with your printer.

When counting your page extent, be mindful that you may also need to include:

- Title Page
- Imprint Page
- Dedication
- Contents
- Acknowledgements
- About the Author

A blank page can be inserted where necessary to reach the required number of pages.



Folios

Publishers and printers refer to page numbers as the folios. The folios can be centred or outside margin at the top or bottom of the page. There is no correct placement of folios – it is a personal preference.

Orphans/Widows

A widow is the last line of a paragraph that appears at the top of a page, and an orphan is the first line of a paragraph that appears at the bottom of a page. Sometimes it is vice versa, depending who you talk to. It is visually more appealing to avoid having orphans and widows if possible. Sometimes this is unavoidable unless the text is edited.

An orphan is also when the last word of a paragraph is on a line by itself, especially at the base of a page.

Recto and Verso

The terms 'recto' and 'verso' are shortened from Latin and refer to the text written on the front and back of a page.

In an open book the left-hand page (even number page) is called the verso and the right-hand page (odd number page) is a recto page.

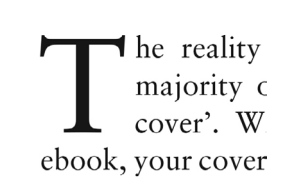
The general style in book publishing is to place the first page, and sometimes each chapter and section, on a recto page.

Running Heads

A running head is a heading printed at the top of each page of a book. It is personal choice whether to include running heads and if so what they will be. A standard format is often the author name on the verso page and the book title on the recto. When chapters have a title this can be used as a running head on the recto page with the book title on the verso.

Drop Caps

A drop cap is the first letter of a chapter that is created in either a larger font size or using a different font. The use of a drop cap is a personal choice and is only used for visual appeal.



Hyphenation

The choice to use hyphenation is a personal one. The use of hyphenation ensures that lines do not appear gappy or tight. This is referred to as a discretionary hyphen or soft hyphen. All hyphenation should be checked to ensure that no bad word breaks appear or that there is no hyphenation at the end of a page. It is visually unappealing to have too many hyphens on a page, we aim for no more than 5 per page.

En Dash

A dash – that indicates a closed range of values such as dates, times, numbers or acts as a hyphen connecting adjectives or prefixes to open compounds.

Dinkus

A dinkus is a symbol used to indicate a minor break in the text. It can be an asterisk, 3 consecutive asterisks or any relevant small symbol.

Margins

The margin refers to the space at the top, bottom and either side of the text on the page. It is the empty space between the trim (where the paper is cut) and the text on the page. Sometimes the headers and footers are in the margins.

Gutters

A gutter is the inside margin or blank space between two facing pages. This extra space allows for the binding of the book. The amount of space or gutter size varies depending on the book binding method chosen.

Trim Size

The book size is referred to as the 'trim size'. This is the size where the book is trimmed at the final stages of production. The trim size you choose will depend on the style of your book and there are no hard and fast rules.

Prelims

The first pages of a book, including half title, half title verso, title page, imprint page, contents page, about the author and dedication etc. This is also called the front matter.

Title page

The title page is often the third page and is always on a recto. The author's name, the title of the book, the series title and subtitle (if any) and the publisher's imprint logo all appear.

Title page

Imprint page

Imprint page

The imprint page or copyright page is usually backing the title page on the verso (often the fourth page) on which the copyright notice, publisher, ISBN and other details about the publication are printed.

Colour Resolution

Colour resolution is the amount of information in dots that make up an image. In publishing, colour resolution refers to any colour images in the book. These can be photos, colour drawings, graphs, tables etc. To achieve a high-quality image when your book is printed, images should be supplied at 300ppi (pixels per inch) at the minimum. 600ppi is required for line drawings. This can also be referred to as dpi (dots per inch).

Illustrations/Captions

A caption is the relevant information about a photo or illustration. The placement of the caption can be either below or to the side of the image. This will depend on the page layout.

Bibliography/Reference

A bibliography is a list of all materials/resources used in the research of your book. These are listed alphabetically at the end of the book in a separate bibliography section. Generally these are listed as the author name (surname followed by initial); year of publication; title of works (in italics); publisher; place of publication. An example:

Wilson, A, 2015, *Independent Ink Terminology*, Post Pre-press, Carina.

References are resources from written works referred to directly in your book. References are usually listed alphabetically at the end of the book in a separate reference section. The listing is the same as for a bibliography.

Page proofs

First pages

On completion of the typesetting a set of first page proofs are supplied either as a printed copy, PDF or both. These are used to proofread and mark up any correction/changes that are to be taken in.

Corrections

Corrections, additions or deletions are taken into the typeset file from the page proofs. These can either be hand written or marked up in the PDF. If the manuscript has been edited prior to typesetting these should be minimal.

Final pages

These are the final page proofs to be approved before a final PDF is supplied to the printer.

Cover design

As a self-publisher the good and the bad news is you have total control of your cover design. In one quick glance, it needs to tell the story of your book, in essence it is the window into the soul of your book.

You may believe that producing a quality cover for an ebook is not a priority but take a look at Amazon and see how many book covers there are and which ones you are drawn to.

The main goal of a book cover is to generate excitement and interest in your book. The cover is one of your best tools in your marketing arsenal but can also be something that goes horribly wrong.

Designing A Concept

Deciding on the message you want to send to potential readers will give you direction when putting together a design brief. Even if you are designing the cover yourself it is helpful to mindmap a design brief as this will help give you clarity on the message you are trying to portray.

Ask yourself what is my target audience looking for? What is the book's purpose? Inspiration, how to get from here to there, success and achievement?

Narrowing this concept down will help you come up with ideas and visual metaphors that in turn will help determine the imagery, choice of colours, typography and layout. These design concepts will assist in portraying the message of the book.

Genre Is Important

The book cover should reflect the genre of the book. A great book cover 'talks' to the readers through the imagery, typography and colours. The reader gets a sense of what they will get from reading your book.

A good cover for a nonfiction book should communicate the tone of the book. A Fiction cover should communicate a sense of what the book will deliver. For example a cover depicting a romantic couple that is actually a horror thriller does not clearly talk to the reader about your chosen genre.

Getting It Wrong

When thinking about your cover design it is good practice to look at bad design examples. Pinterest is a great place to start.

Over wrought and over-thought typography is a frequent offender and stock imagery can ruin a books visual credibility.

A poorly designed cover is a signal that your book is self-published, people will look at your cover and make an instant decision based on it.

Printing

Paper

Choice of paper, also referred to as 'stock', can be a technical issue and takes into account many preferences including, style, weight, bulk, colour and opacity. The following guidelines are here to help when talking to printers.

Art Papers These are made with clay as a filler, which gives the paper a smooth finish that makes them particularly good for printing photographs.

Gloss Art The production process produces a porcelain finish that gives spectacular results with colour printing; however, the amount of reflected light can make reading difficult. Gloss Arts paper is essentially wonderful for coffee table books.

Matt Art Is a good compromise between the above two papers.

One-sided Art Has a gloss finish on one side only, and is good for book jackets.

Coated These are newsprints that are spray-coated with a clear enamel giving a gloss finish. Mainly used for cheap magazines, but they are sometimes used for books where there is a need for bright colour at a low cost.

Book printings This is the term used for a large variety of papers that normal books are printed on. See below for more details.

Newsprints Used for newspapers and cheap paperback books.

Specification

Paper (stock) is specified by type and weight. For example: 100 gsm Bookprint Matt – gsm stands for 'grams per square metre'.

Bookprint Choice

Colour The main choices are ultra-whites, whites and creams. Compared to a white, ultra-white can have a bluish hue. Ultra-whites are best used for colour work and can be hard on the eye when reading text.

Finish The terms wood and weave are about smoothness. Wood is a random fluff, and a good paper can be referred to as wood-free. Weave is a deliberate texture and this is what gives a lot of papers their character.

Bulk Means thickness. The bulk will depend on the weight and style. The weight that gives this bulk varies. Generally 65 gsm is used for newsprint, 80 gsm for books and 100 gsm for art/colour books.

Paper Sizes

In today's book market paperbacks are referred to as A, B and C Formats. As a guide:

- A Format is 181 x 111 mm
- B Format is 198 x 128 mm
- C Format is 234 x 153 mm

The exact size will depend on the printer and the machine used to trim the finished book.

Spine

The bound edge of the book.

Binding

The action of folding a printed sheet then sewing, stapling or gluing these into a book. Printers use different names but paperbacks are usually perfect bound or perfect bind.

Bleed

Off page area printed to allow for minor inaccuracies in trimming. Generally anything intended to print right up to the edge of the page is extended, and bleeds about 5 mm beyond the intended edge of the trimmed page.

Print on Demand (POD)

Involves producing printed books using digital technology rather than traditional offset printing processes. Digital printing makes it simple and affordable to produce books in small print runs or even one or two at a time, rather than printing several hundred or thousands at one time. This greatly reduces the initial costs involved in book production.

Ebook formats EPUB, EPDF and Mobi

Consider your options before converting your book to an ebook for use on tablets, smartphones and e-reader devices.

EPUB

EPUB is the most widely used ebook format. It displays on most smartphones/tablets (with the exception of Amazon Kindle e-reader). EPUB comes in 2 styles: reflowable EPUB and fixed-layout EPUB.

Reflowable EPUB means the text will flow dynamically to fill the length of your device, wrap to the edges of the screen, and also allows user control to increase/decrease font size for readability. It also features searchable text and supports colour images/text. This type of EPUB is used mainly for novels and non-fiction books which are text heavy.

Fixed-layout EPUBs appear exactly as the printed version. On most devices, Fixed-layout EPUBs will open up as double-page spreads, just like reading a book. Text, images and other page elements are in fixed positions on the page – there is no option for users to increase/decrease font size to enhance readability. This type of EPUB is used mainly for cookbooks, picture books and other books with many in-text images.

EPUBs are sold on the Apple iBooks Store, Nook, Barnes & Noble, Lulu, Smashwords, Kobo, PubIt, Bookforge, Book Baby and more. EPUBs are not supported for sale on Amazon Ebook store.

EPDF

This file that you are reading is an EPDF.

EPDF is an ebook format converted from a PDF, with Table of Contents support on ebook-reading software. Appearance-wise, it will look exactly as the printed version, like a Fixed-layout EPUB. However, unlike a Fixed-layout EPUB, EPDFs do not display as double-page spreads – but one page at a time. It doesn't allow increasing/decreasing the size of fonts.

EPDFs are suitable for reading on any smartphone or tablet, but not Amazon Kindle.

EPDFs are not supported for sale on Apple iBooks Store, or Amazon Ebook store.

Why use an EPDF?

The main advantage of an EPDF over other Ebook formats is its ability to preserve the original layout of any document – text, illustrations, photos, maps – a 'what you see is what you get' format.

EPDFs' compatibility with all computers, smartphone and tablet devices also gives readers more flexibility on how they view your ebook.

Mobi

Mobi is an ebook format for exclusive use on the Amazon Kindle and sale on the Amazon Ebook store. It is not supported by Apple iPhones, iPads and Android devices. This format is very limited and bare-bones in its appearance. Most versions of the Kindle do not support colour display.

ISBN

An international standard book number (ISBN) is a unique book identification number. In Australia they are issued by Thorpe-Bowker (www.thorpe.com.au). Prices start at $42 for a single ISBN plus a one-off registration fee for new publishers. You can either purchase this yourself or we can purchase this on your behalf. We recommend allocating three for each title and a barcode. Choose paperback, hardcover and an e-book version. This looks more professional when printed on the inside cover even if a hardcover is not produced.

Copy Rights/Permissions

Australia is a signatory to the Berne Convention and as such copyrights do not have to be registered. Copyright comes into existence when a literary work is written down.

Australian law requires that legal deposit copies of a published work be lodged with the National Australian Library and with the State Library within the State the work was published. This requirement is for printed work only. Digital forms can be lodged but it is not a legal requirement.

Copyright gives the author control over all use of their material, whether in print on paper or in digital form. In most cases, copyright is owned by the author. The major exception to this is when work is compiled by an employee as part of their work, in which case the employer owns the copyright.

If a work is co-authored it is covered by a single copyright jointly owned by those authors. With multi-level works the copyright has different rules – as is the case with works planned by an editor but with various contributing authors. The editor owns the copyright in the collection as a whole and each contributing author retains copyright in their individual chapter. In this case it is recommended to have a signed agreement between parties.

The duration of an author copyright is 70 years from their death. In the case of posthumously published works, it is 70 years from the date of publication. Copyright can be given away, subdivided, bequeathed, sold, licensed or leased.

Copyright clearance must be obtained for all substantial quotations of work that is in copyright. The most common way to obtain permission is to apply to the original publisher.

Promotion

The art of marketing your book

The good and bad news about being a published author is that it is up to you to promote and market your book. This is the case whether you are using a traditional publisher or self-publishing.

While this will not be of concern to some authors, especially if they have already built an author platform, for others it will be a challenge and very much out of their comfort zone.

Plan for marketing / Author Platform

Marketing is your way of communicating with your target audience the benefits your book will deliver.

Developing your marketing plan and audience platform will not happen overnight, so it's best to start thinking about how you are going to do this well in advance. Ideally, you will commence this process 12 months before publishing and, if possible, start marketing before you have even written your book.

It is essential that you have a marketing plan for your book. This plan should include research on who will buy your book, also known as your 'target market', and research into what influences your target market.

Start planning with the end in mind, who do you see buying your book, what are your goals in terms of book sales, do you want to be a sought after speaker and so forth.

Developing this plan will help you concentrate on the key areas and focus your energy where it's needed. For example, there is no point concentrating your marketing efforts to a Facebook audience of young adults if your book is about retirement.

Marketing your book when it launches

Book reviews

Reviews can be very helpful in positioning your book online. Send free books to reviewers who work in your genre. Contact Amazon's best reviewers but ensure that you send your work to people that have reviewed books in your genre. Remember though, not everyone will like your book and not everyone will give a good review, and that's okay.

Press release

Getting coverage in the press can be difficult. Even the local papers are swamped by thousands of emails every week. If you have a non-fiction book, think about a hook that ties it to what's hot in the news right now, and have a catchy headline.

Traditional media

Being on television, radio or in print does not necessarily guarantee book sales; however, consider how many books you have gone out and bought after you listened to an author speak. The trick to gaining media attention is to target media outlets that align with your theme and topic, and really personalise the message in terms of what their audience will get out of hearing from you.

Book launch

The book launch is a traditional way to promote your book, but the way we buy books has changed and it is important to have a longer-term view of promotion. Often sales can be better after a few months when your marketing gains traction. But who doesn't love the idea of a party to celebrate your newly published book!

Paid advertising

Self-published authors can access paid advertising on Facebook with a clickable 'buy link' that takes people directly to a page to buy their book. Amazon also offers paid promotional packages that can help promote your book.

Metadata

Metadata is data about data, and in the ebook world metadata is data that describes your book. Understanding and making good use of metadata makes your book more discoverable and accessible to readers.

Your book title is metadata. As is your book description, price, genre, virtually any piece of information that describes and identifies your book is metadata. The possibilities for metadata are virtually unlimited and we will see new types of metadata in the years ahead.

The following are the most common examples of metadata.

Book Title

Your book title is one of the most important pieces of metadata. A good book title grabs the reader and reinforces the message portrayed by the cover image. This includes your subtitle, which should inform the reader the exact subject of your book.

Author Name

Your author name is your brand and for most authors it is their real name.

Avoid cutesy spelling as this can make it difficult for readers to find you. Anything that makes it more difficult to find you makes your book less visible.

Avoid initials. If your pen name is A.M. Wilson and someone goes to a retailer, either online or a physical bookstore, and searches for AM Wilson (No full stops or spaces) or any combination, the result may come up empty.

Book Description/Blurb

This is a short promotional description that appears on the back cover or inside of a book. This is one of the most important pieces of writing you will do for your book.

For ebooks the book description is equivalent to the jacket copy of a printed book. A good book description is tailored to your target audience and tells the reader something about your writing talent or lack thereof.

Do not upload your book with a description that has spelling errors, missing punctuation or grammatical errors. Nothing screams ‘Don’t read this book!’ faster than typos.

An optional book description will be clear, compelling and clever.

- In a few seconds, readers need to get the gist of your book.
- It needs to compel people to read it which can be achieved by explaining how your book adds value to their life.
- Use the common keywords for your genre. This will aid discoverability when people search.

Category

Another important piece of metadata to consider is the book categories that you list under. Think of a category as the online equivalent of the sections and shelves in a traditional bookstore.

To maximise your exposure to potential readers cross-categorise by picking 2 different categories and subcategories. For example: 'Self Help' and 'Business & Money'.

Keywords

Keywords refers to the words people type into a search engine to locate something. Ideally keywords are words that potential readers will use for conducting searches.

For example if someone is planning to start their own online business they might search for 'How to start an online business.'

Optimising the title or subtitle with relevant keywords, for example: '101 Tips to Starting an Online Business', aids the search engine in ensuring your book is visible.

Titles and subtitles can be optimised to aid visibility but only do this if it produces a powerful title. Don't overdo it.

Auto-Generated Metadata

This is automatically produced data and can include your ebook sample, your sales rank within each online reseller.

Cover Image

The cover image is also considered a form of metadata as it helps describe your book. For more information on cover design see page 14.

Building your audience over the longer term

Website

Register your domain name and url, either under your name if you are building a public profile, or for the title of your book. Depending on your budget, you can set up a free website with Wordpress.com or other similar platforms.

List building and email marketing

Use forms on your website to collect people's email addresses to keep them updated about your book and other promotional content. Some authors also include a sign-up at the back of their book. This gives you a way to inform your readers of future books and you can send out regular newsletters and links to your blogs.

Blogging

Blogging is a great way to build attention and engage with your audience over time. A blog is a series of informative and interesting posts, which relate to your main topics and your book in some way. It can be as diverse as your imagination, combining photographs, videos, art, music and text. Typically a blog would be incorporated into your website, but if you don't have one you can set up a blog independently through a range of sites, including Wordpress.com. You could also look to guest blog on other blogs that have a similar focus and audience to you.

Social media

Using a variety of social media channels is a wonderful way to engage with your audience. Depending on your genre you can connect with people on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and many other channels. Just be sure to pick your channel based on your research into your target audience so you can tap into the right networks. One of the biggest mistakes people can make on social media is making it all about themselves. Try to be useful, inspiring or entertaining and only occasionally promote yourself. Think the 80/20 rule. 80% helpful informative information and 20% promotion.

Podcasting

Appearing on your own podcast or as a guest of a regular podcaster is a fantastic way to build your profile. Podcasting is experiencing a massive resurgence at the moment and there are a wide variety of podcasts you could join.

Speaking

Speaking at a conference or networking event is a wonderful way to increase your profile and engage with an audience. Start by finding events in your local area and then branch out from there once you have established some credibility.

Networking

Networking with like-minded people is a great way to let people know about your upcoming book and build excitement around your book or launch. Social networking is all about connecting with people, so remember to avoid the hard sell. Focus on building relationships with people, because behind every profile is a person. Over time these people could become great fans of your work, and advocates too.

There are many different ways you can market yourself as an author and promote your book. We've touched on just a few here, but there are many more. Time in the market building your author platform and hard work will make all the difference over time. For most authors, marketing is a big step out of their comfort zone but can be well worth the effort.

Book Distribution

There are four main digital and print distribution channels. They are online ebook resellers (digital), direct sales (digital), author-services companies (digital and print), and print-on-demand (print).

The fifth distribution channel that is fast gaining traction is Audio.

The self-publishing ecosystem is confusing and fragmented. Apple, Amazon, Google, and other self-publishing vendors try to optimise products and processes often leaving authors scratching their heads not knowing which direction to take.

Global Distribution

This is the process of making a publication available for purchase in many countries worldwide.

Ebook Resellers

Amazon (Kindle Direct Publishing), Apple (iBookstore), Barnes & Noble (Nook), Google (Google Play), and Kobo are the major online ebook resellers. For the vast majority of self-published authors, these represent the easiest and most lucrative way to sell ebooks.

Digital Direct Sales

You can sell your ebooks via Gumroad, E-Junkie, Clickbank and a host of other companies. Your files are placed on the service and a link is added to your website. People can click on the link, pay for the file and download it. The authors pay a transaction and a hosting fee.

You can also sell your book directly from your own website or social media.

Author Services Companies

Companies like CreateSpace, Lulu, Blurb, and the imprints of Author Solutions act as intermediaries between authors and online brick-and-mortar resellers. These companies provide services such as copyediting, conversion, layout, cover design, printing, and then send your book to resellers.

The pros include:

- Fewer reseller programs to join, learn, maintain and track.
- One-stop shopping

The Cons include:

- Reduced revenue. You can buy these services on a package but you also usually pay a percentage of your royalty off the top.
- If your vendor experiences financial issues, you may never collect your royalty.
- Poor quality. To quote Guy Kawasaki: 'Author-services companies often use independent contractors and offshore labour to provide editing services. These people may not be native speakers of your language, and true fluency is necessary for good editing. You won't have much choice in selecting them.
- Extensive Fine Print.

You can also use CreateSpace as a reseller only as it handles all of the print orders from Amazon.com and the international Amazon sites.

Smashwords is an ebook distributor working on a 15 percent commission. It does not offer design and editing services. Smashwords focuses on ebook resellers such as Apple, Barnes & Noble, Kobo and Sony — but not Amazon. Readers can also buy directly from its website.

Print on Demand (POD)

As a self-published author you can now use POD technology to get your book directly onto the biggest online bookstores globally. You no longer need to hold stock and there are no hassles with storage or postage.

You can use an author-services company as a print-on-demand supplier or a direct printer such as Lightning Source. There are now smaller companies offering local POD and it is a good idea to get a few quotes.

Audio Books

Audio is booming and is an area that is expanding the opportunities for Indie Authors.

Humans have been listening to stories for millennia. Look at how Indigenous Australians have kept their history and culture alive through telling the stories of Dreamtime.

People can multi-task while listening to an audio book, which allows them to read on the go.

Before signing any contracts check to see who holds the right to audio.

Foreign Rights

The right to publish a book in a foreign country. Foreign rights are usually sold by an author's publisher to other publishers in different countries.

As a self-publisher you can publish in your native language worldwide and maintain foreign rights, but selling rights to a foreign publisher often involves the foreign publisher translating the book into the local language.

Royalties

This is the payment made to you, the author, from the distributor, or in the case of traditional or vanity publishing from the publisher. The rates vary depending on where you choose to distribute your book.

For the best royalty rates go direct to the individual retailer. Each site has detailed help and you don't need any programming skills to use them.

Distribution through Amazon

Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) is the Amazon self-publishing service for ebooks. At this point in time Amazon owns the market and depending on how you will sell your books most of your sales will come through Amazon.

When setting up your account it is important to understand the royalty rates and fine print.

You can buy a wide selection of Kindle devices from Amazon as well as Kindle applications for Mac's, Windows, BlackBerry, Android, and iOS devices.

By using Amazon as one of your primary distribution channels, you are ensuring your book takes full advantage of Amazon's marketing infrastructure:

- Amazon is the largest product search engine in the world, especially in the book market.
- Amazon's review system is a reliable indicator of product quality (even if a consumer decides to buy your book through another channel).

- Amazon's built-in marketing algorithms provide free advertising. Once your book exceeds a certain number of sales, Amazon starts referring your book to others who have never heard of you.

Author Central

An important step in creating a visible profile on Amazon is located in the Author Central section of your account. Creating this will set you apart from the vast amount of authors selling their books on Amazon.

After you create your amazon account at kdp.amazon.com and your book is uploaded you will be able to create your Author Central account.

For the best results, add a picture, bio and all other available options. Ensure that you link to your book including the book description.

Global Territories

When selling through Amazon you can reach multiple territories. These are accessed through your account. Click on your bookcover and edit it if necessary. Save and go to the second page. This is the Rights & Pricing page. It is here that you assign rights to sell your book in different countries.

These need to be considered when choosing KDP Royality deals.

It is important to regularly check your account as territories can be updated and expanded.

Distribution through Apple

Apple's platform for selling ebooks, is iBookstore and is currently the second biggest player. There are two types of ebooks in the iBookstore: First, the traditional ebook, second, Multi-touch ebooks that only work on iPads. Multi-touch ebooks allow you to implement rich media and interactive elements far beyond the traditional ebook.

The iBookstore requires that you set up an account as an iTunes Content Provider which is managed through a service called iTunesConnect.

Distribution through Barnes & Noble

Nook is the name of the Barnes & Noble tablets and eReader applications. Nook offers an application for Mac's, Windows, iOS, Android, and online reading.

To get started you use a service called Nook Press.

Nook Press allows authors to upload a Word document, however, to achieve the most accurate conversion of your manuscript to a book on Nook readers you are advised to upload an epub file.

Distribution through Google Play

Google Play is Google's content business that sells music, books, magazines, video, games and applications.

Distribution through Kobo

Kobo sells tablets and ebooks and gives away reading applications for computers and tablets. There is a program for authors called Kobo Writing Life and a program for publishers called Kobo Publisher Operations.

Publishing overview

In a perfect world you would write your book in Word, upload it to one or more online resellers and one print-on-demand printer and a perfectly converted book would appear.

However, life and publishing is not that simple.

Anytime anything converts a file something *wonky* can happen to your formatting. Headers get misaligned, numbered lists restart at odd places, formatting changes and so forth. The challenge is knowing how to fix it.

Understanding and writing about how Amazon and online resellers, royalty payments, categories and algorithms work is a book in its own right.

I hope that this guide has given you an insight in the publishing industry and what follows is a list of recommended reading and books used as research.

Coker, Mark: *The Secrets to Ebook Publishing Success*

Hudson, Nicholas: *Modern Australian Usage: A Practical Guide for Writers & Editors*

Kawasaki, Guy; Welsh, Shawn: *APE: Author, Publisher, Entrepreneur*

Penn Jonna: *The Creative Penn*

New Oxford Dictionery for Writers and Editors

Nothing compares to the thrill of becoming a published author but the journey can be overwhelming to navigate. I hope this guide has given you an understanding of some of the terminology used in the publishing process.

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