



Independent Publishing 101

Instructor: Alix Reynolds

Kurio Studio Photography & Book Design

Contact Info:

Tel: 204-791-5734

Email: info@kuriostudio.com

Web: <http://www.kuriostudio.com>



Who this course is for:

Reasons & purposes for indie publishing

- Personal projects
- Community-based organizational projects/
Non-profit
- Fundraising
- Business/For profit
- Book projects with an intent to distribute

Goals of this workshop:

- To provide an overview of the independent publishing industry, so you can save both time and money by understanding the realities of self-publishing and the processes involved in self-publishing;
- To help you decide whether self-publishing is right for you; what parts of the self-publishing process are essential given the nature of your book project, and to better understand what parts of the process are realistic to undertake yourself, and what parts you may want to outsource to others.
- To help you create a more professional quality book, while increasing the level of control and involvement you have over your book project
- Helping you to avoid some of the pitfalls and hazards inherent in the self-publishing process

Workshop Overview:

- What is Independent Publishing?
 - Traditional vs. Vanity vs. Independent
 - Publishing routes and options.
 - Pros & Cons of Indie Publishing
 - Is Indie Publishing right for you?
 - Overview of the Indie Publishing process
 - The Bureaucracy of Books: copyright, ISBN, CIP, EAN barcodes
 - Establishing your own indie publishing house
 - Choosing a printer
 - Editing & Manuscript Preparation
 - Sourcing Artwork & Imagery
 - Book Design: Interior & Cover
- [in all of the above we will discuss the average costs to be considered and the various options available to you depending on the budget for your project.]
- E-books
 - Planning , Marketing, Distribution



What is Independent Publishing?

Very broadly and basically defined:

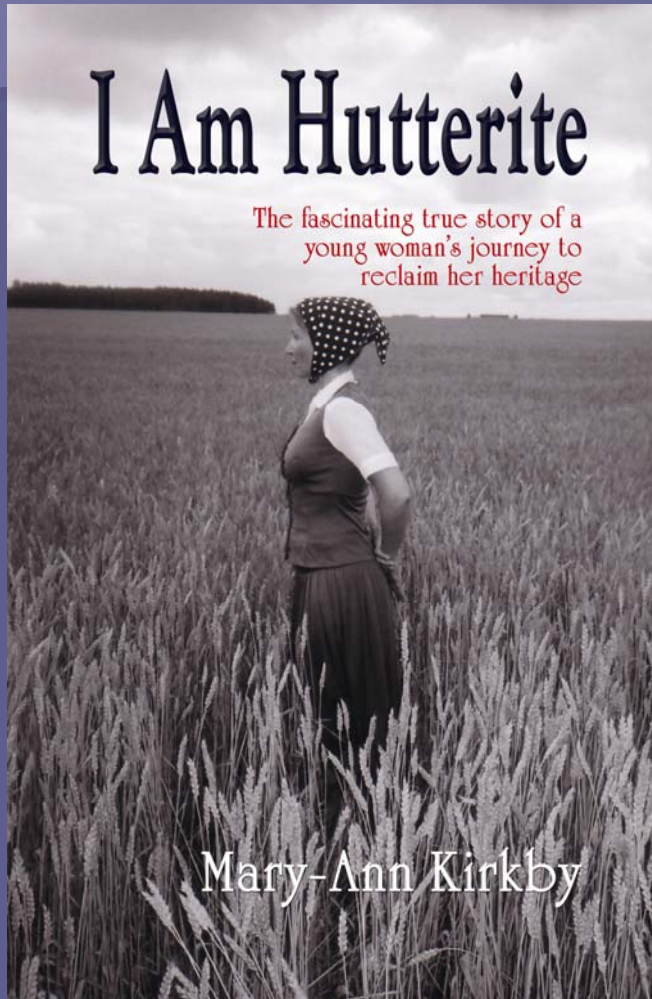
- A book created with the intent of distribution whether for profit or non-profit;
- A book published with out the transferring of rights to a publisher;
- A book whose marketing and distribution is not handled by a traditional publishing house;
- A book whose author controls the process of preparing the book for print.

Examples of Self-Published Works



I am Hutterite

by Mary-Ann Kirkby



Mary-Ann Kirkby spent seven years shopping her book around to various publishers.

When no response from the larger publishing houses, she turned to medium sized publishing houses however, they wanted TV and movie rights which she wasn't interested in giving up.

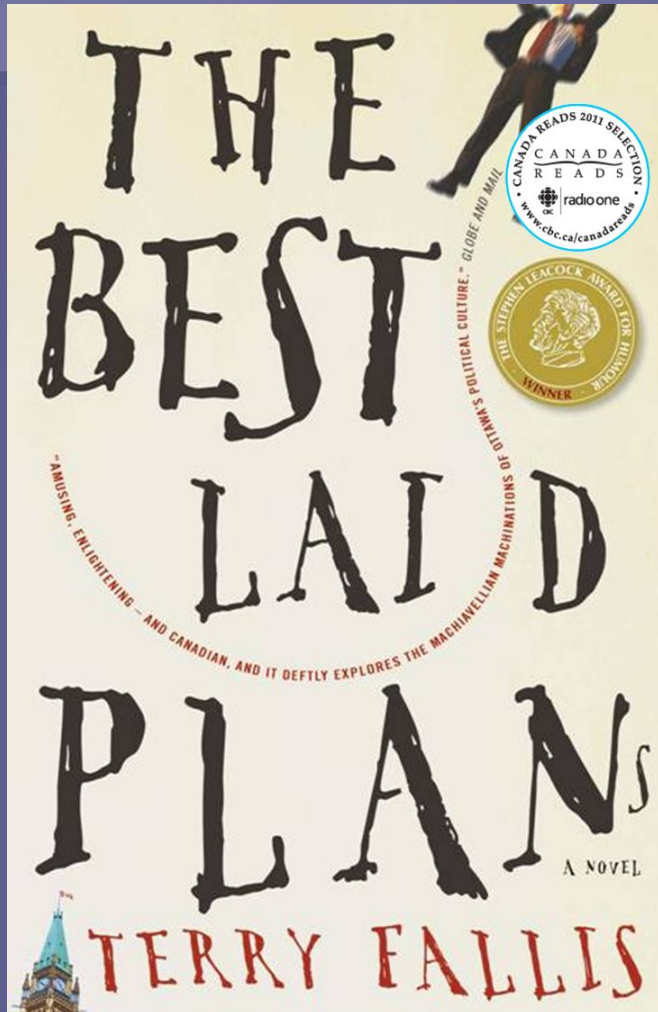
She knew she had not only a good book on her hands, but also a unique book. She also had a ready made market of over 40,000 Hutterites on over 400 colonies in Canada and the US.

With advice and encouragement from Paul McNally, owner of McNally Robinson Booksellers, Kirkby took out a loan for \$30,000, established Polka Dot Press and printed 5,000 copies of her book.

The book was launched at McNally's and became a chain-wide bestseller. Chapters came calling, and did Costco. Kirkby sold 75,000 copies of her book and eventually signed a distribution deal with Key Porter, a Canadian publishing company, as well as with US publisher Thomas Nelson.

The Best Laid Plans

by Terry Fallis



Due to lack of publisher interest, Fallis originally released excerpts from his debut novel in podcast format, later turning to the print-on-demand company iUniverse to self-publish a paper edition.

The podcast was subsequently picked up for broadcast on Radioropa, Europe's largest satellite radio network.

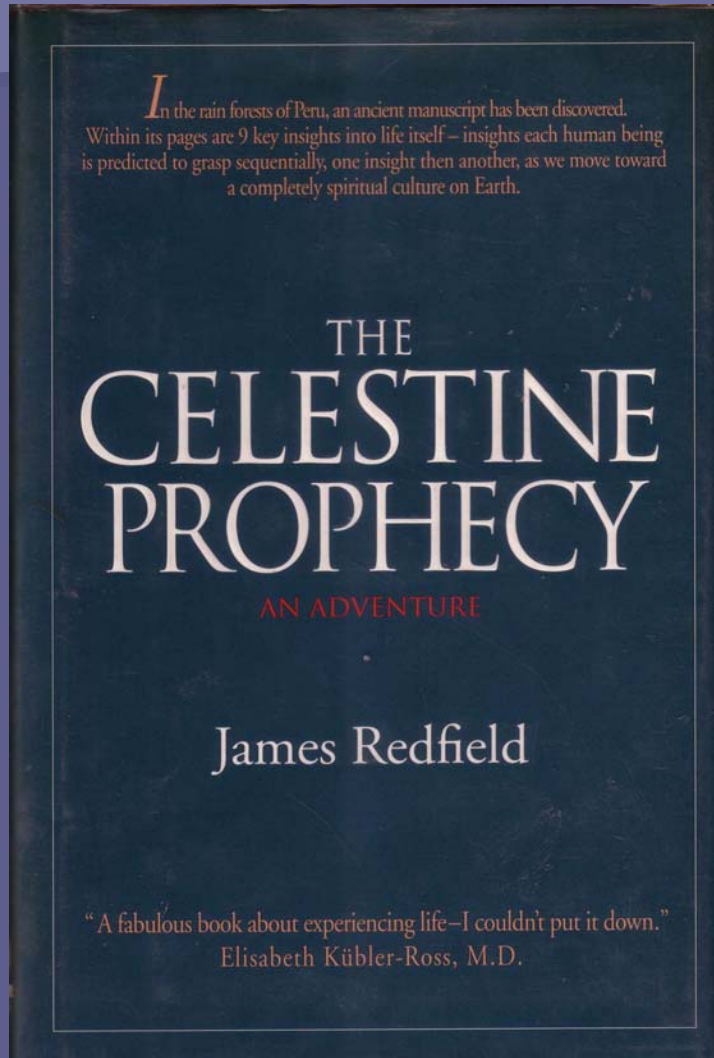
In 2008, *The Best Laid Plans* became the first self-published book to be awarded the Stephen Leacock Medal.

Following his award win, Fallis signed with McClelland and Stewart, who republished *The Best Laid Plans* in September 2008.

The book went on to be the first originally self-published book to win CBC's Canada Reads.

The Celestine Prophecy

by James Redfield



When Redfield self-published his first novel in 1992, the immediate interest from booksellers and readers made *The Celestine Prophecy* one of the most successful self-published books of all time.

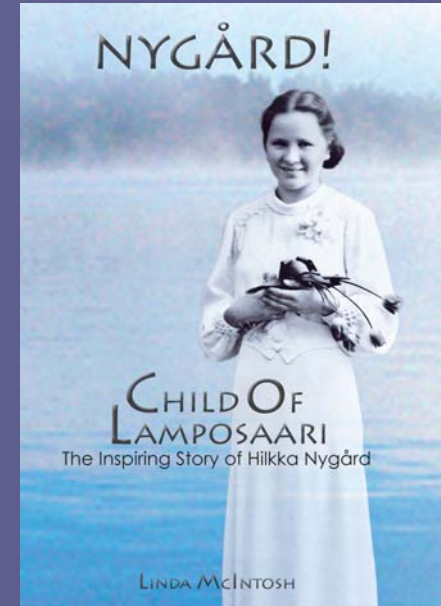
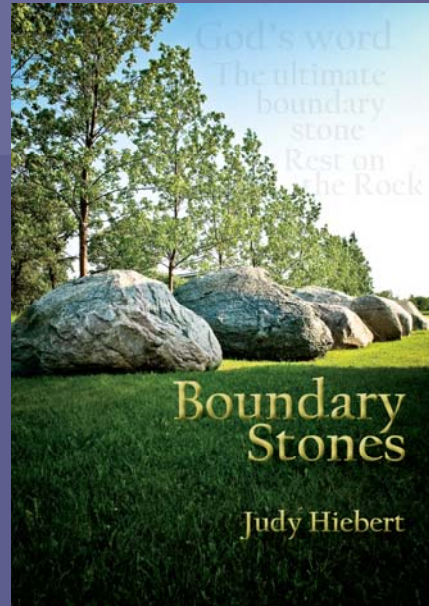
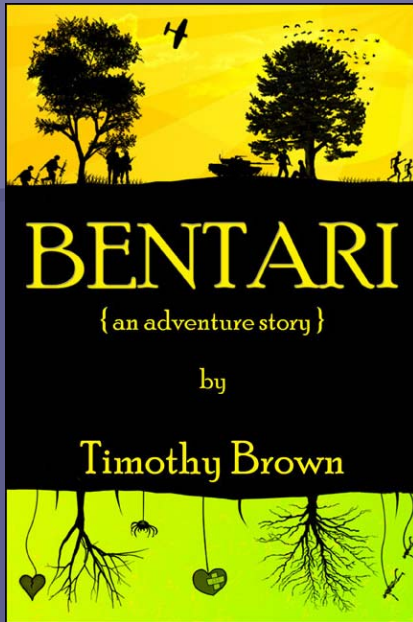
Warner Books bought the rights and published the hard cover edition in March 1994.

The book quickly climbed to the #1 position on the New York Times Best Seller List and, according to *Publishing Trends*, *The Celestine Prophecy* was the #1 international bestseller of 1996 making James Redfield the best-selling hard cover author in the world.

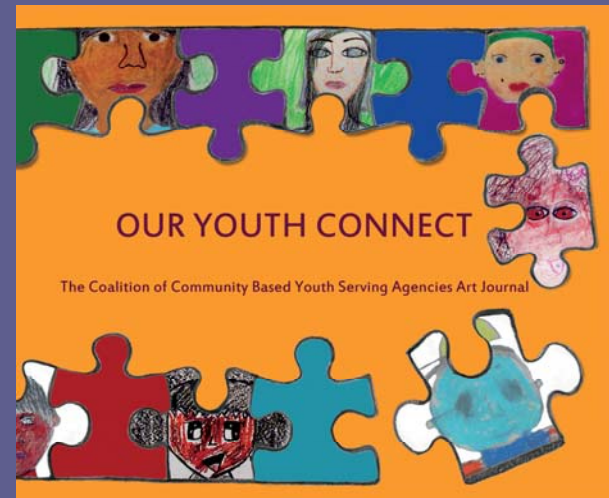
The novel spent over 3 years on the New York Times Best Seller List. As of May 2005,

The *Celestine Prophecy* had sold over 20 million copies worldwide and had been translated into 34 languages.

Examples of Kurio Projects



Nicole & Tom
September 12, 2009



Indie Publishing: A Long History

Margaret Atwood

William Blake

Lord Byron

Pat Conroy

e.e. cummings

W.E.B. DuBois,

Alexander Dumas

T.S. Eliot,

Benjamin Franklin

Thomas Hardy

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Alexander Pope

Beatrix Potter

Ezra Pound

Marcel Proust

Robert Service

George Bernard Shaw

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Upton Sinclair

Gertrude Stein

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Henry David Thoreau

Ernest Hemingway

Stephen King

Rudyard Kipling

Louis L'Amour

D.H. Lawrence

Anais Nin

Mark Twain

Walt Whitman

Virginia Woolf

Edgar Allen Poe

Leo Tolstoi

Why Indie Publishing?

A world full of stories...

- Many authors are increasingly finding it difficult to find publishers and agents willing to represent them.
- With the advent of digital printing technologies, the increasing accessibility and cost-effectiveness of independent publishing, a revolution of sorts is taking place within the publishing industry similar to what has already taken the music industry by storm.
- Many authors are seeking to retain the rights to their work; to maintain control over the publication of their work, and are interested in pursuing avenues which allow them to see more of the profits and returns on the sale of their work.
- The relative low-cost of self-publication offers individuals, groups and organizations the opportunity to share their stories in a way that has traditionally been inaccessible. More and more people are pursuing indie publishing as a personal project or hobby, or as an effective means to fundraise.

Indie Publishing for Serious Authors

Several thousand manuscripts are submitted to publishing houses each week, however only a very small percentage are selected for publication.

In the past, a single editor or agent could acquire a book, but today a whole board is usually required to sign off on a project.

Often, limited promotional backing is available for first time authors effectively restricting a book's potential.

Indie Publishing for Serious Authors

The traditional book-publishing business has fallen on hard times, with layoffs and news that established publishers such as Houghton Mifflin have literally put the freeze on acquisitions.

The mainstream publishing industry seems to be turning increasingly to celebrities, prolific writers and books that have a proven track record or a ready-made market.

Why Indie Publishing?

Independent publishing isn't for everyone, but today it is fast becoming an accessible, cost-effective, and respected way to publish a book.

Why Indie Publishing?

Self-publishing has become one of the fastest growing segments of the publishing industry.

Because of computer and desktop software, anyone can publish a book for a fraction of what it once cost.

Digital technology is quickly changing the way books are produced, published and distributed. On-line publishing has become an attractive alternative to conventional publishing, and has made it easier for writers to become published authors.

Self-publishing is an excellent way to:

- Test the market for a book
- Establish a market for a book
- Build the market to such an extent that an author can sell the reprint rights to a much larger book publisher.
- Increasingly, many larger book publishers are looking to the shelves and the Internet for self-published books that could fit their publishing program.

To write a book is an art, to publish it is a business.

- This is often overlooked until you are stuck with a garage-full of unsold books.
- The fact remains that out of 10 books published; 3 earn a profit, 4 break even, and the remainder lose money.
- With those odds it is only sensible to approach this venture wisely.



Traditional Book Publishing

A commercial or trade publisher purchases the right to publish a manuscript (usually together with other rights, known as subsidiary rights).

Most pay an advance on royalties to the author.

Commercial publishers are highly selective, publishing only a tiny percentage of manuscripts submitted.

They handle every aspect of editing, publication, distribution, and marketing. There are typically no costs to the author.



Traditional: A free ride?

Traditional book publishers, until recently, assumed all of the expenses incurred in the publishing process. Authors didn't pay toward any publishing or marketing cost. In exchange, they got their books published for "free."

A typical first-time author:

- Gives away the rights to the book for some period of time (five to seven years);
 - Receives a royalty (typically 5-8 percent of the retail price).
 - In some cases, authors may receive advances against royalties.
- A typical advance for a new, unknown author might be \$2,000-\$5,000.



Traditional: Getting noticed

The first step in getting a traditional publisher is to write a query letter that gets an agent or publisher to notice you.

A query letter explains who you are, what your book is about, who the intended audience is, and how you intend to market the book so that this audience will know that your book exists.

Sending query letters to agents and publishers often amounts to tossing these letters into a black hole in the middle of a remote galaxy.



Traditional: Fewer options

As the traditional publishing industry continues to contract, with the larger publishing houses taking over the small, and many independent houses closing, authors and agents have fewer and fewer places they can go to pitch a new book.



Traditional: Marketing

Presumably, authors lucky enough to get a contract from a traditional publisher choose that route because the publisher brings years of design, marketing, PR contacts, and other important relationships to the table.

But how many of those relationships will be leveraged for the release of a book by a little-known author?

Increasingly, if authors don't spend the marketing money required to help launch their book, the book will likely fade away in the publisher's warehouse and eventually become back-listed (the publishing world's purgatory).



Traditional: Who benefits?

When authors spend their own money to market their book, they are effectively spending money to make their publisher the lion's share of profit for each book sold.

Marketing is the most expensive part of the publishing process, so while not having to pay for up-front production expenses is attractive, that alone may not be a good enough reason to sign with a traditional publisher.

The author will likely give away a lot (rights, control, subsidiary rights, most of the earnings) and end up paying for the marketing expenses.



Traditional:

If you're going to spend money either way, you might as well control the process and the result. In the self-publishing model, the author is paying all of the upfront expenses, and in return retains rights, control, and full profits.

The trade off is that with self-publishing, the author assumes not only all the costs and the risks, but also must invest a considerable amount of time and energy promoting and distributing their book.

For authors who prefer to spend their time writing, independent publishing may not be the ideal route.

Vanity Publishing

A vanity or subsidy publisher charges a fee to produce a book, yet still presents itself as a publisher.

There's a wide variety of models for vanity/subsidy publishing, from companies that simply produce a print run that's shipped to the author, to companies that provide a menu of design, editing, distribution, and marketing services in addition to book production.

Vanity/subsidy publishers may or may not be selective, and may or may not make a claim on authors' rights.

Marketing and distribution, if provided, are usually limited; as a result, most of the burden of promoting and selling falls on the author.

Costs involved for vanity/subsidy publishing are typically quite high.

You are vanity publishing...

If you are talked into purchasing ten thousand copies of your book even though you have no real marketing plan or dollars to spend.

If you are planning to publish a book just to tell people that you've published a book.

If you go into debt to publish a book because you "just know it will sell."

If you don't plan on spending any significant time or money to properly edit and design your book.

If you don't plan to spend any time or money to market your book but instead are waiting for sales to magically come pouring in once the book is released.

Vanity Publishing

Basically, the “vanity” part comes in if you believe that your book is so amazing that you can put out whatever you want and readers will flock to buy it, even though you’ve done little to promote it.

In this way, vanity publishing has more to do with the intent behind publishing, then how you go about producing your book.

Vanity Publishing

For projects where the number of books required is small, and marketing and profit aren't a concern (for instance, memoirs or genealogies or recipe compilations, intended for family and friends or to be given as gifts) an honest, straightforward vanity or subsidy publisher can be a reasonable—if often costly—alternative.

Vanity Publishing vs. Indie Publishing

With indie publishing, the author is publishing a book in a strategic, well-thought-out, and well-informed way.

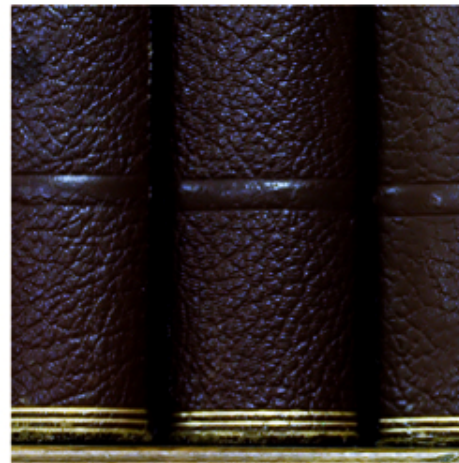
Strategic means that the author spends considerable time and investment having their book edited, and the book cover and interior well designed in order to produce as professional and quality a book as possible.

The author has a realistic approach to the process and plans to invest many hours of his/her own time towards the project.

The author has a marketing plan and some kind of marketing budget (regardless of size), and intends to work hard to make sales.

Those who sit around all day admiring themselves for having published a book are the vanity publishing crowd. Those who spend quality time marketing their book, and understand that sales opportunities down the road may be hatched by marketing ideas today, are what the spirit of self-publishing is all about.

Self-Publishing Independently



Self-Publishing Independently




True self-publishing, like vanity publishing, requires the author to bear the entire cost of publication, and also leaves marketing and promotion to the author.

Rather than paying for a pre-set package of services, the author puts these services together in a customized way that best serves the needs of the book project.

Because every aspect of the process can either be put out to bid or D.I.Y in nature, self-publishing can be much more cost effective than vanity publishing; it can also result in a higher-quality product.

All rights, and all profits, remain with the author.

Self-Publishing Independently

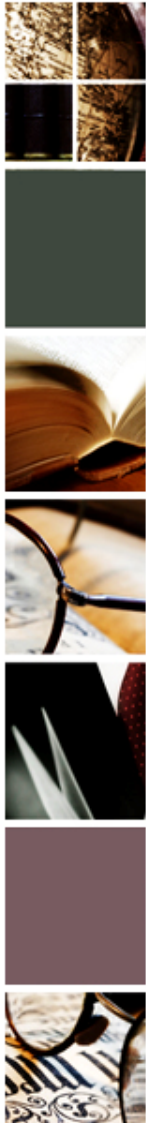


The author either has the skill set to carry out their own book production and publishing, such as book formatting, or employs professionals to complete the process for them.

The author largely creates his or her own self-publishing experience, rather than purchasing a company's services.

Independent publishing requires that authors have in-depth industry knowledge, cultivated management skills, and complete commitment to their entire publishing process.

Self-Publishing Independently



True self-publishing—where the author handles every aspect of publication—is a more reputable alternative to vanity/subsidy publishing. You have far greater control over the process (which can result in a superior product), and retain full ownership of your rights.

Authors can establish their own indie publishing house, function as their own distributors, offering standard discounts and returns to bookstores, which may make stores more willing to stock a self-published book.

Literary agents and commercial publishers may be interested in self-published books that sell a large number of copies relatively quickly—typically in the area of 5,000 copies or more.

Self-Publishing Independently

Self-publishing is not for the faint of heart.

You must be prepared to shoulder the entire burden of publishing, distributing, and promoting your book, a process that will eat up not just time but money, and requires a huge amount of energy, creativity, and determination to carry off successfully.

Self-Publishing Independently

Self-publishing works best for particular kinds of projects, including:

Niche nonfiction (and even niche fiction) where the author has direct access to his/her target audience;

Books whose authors are able to exploit “back-of-the-room” situations (for instance, a restaurateur who can sell his self-published cookbook in his restaurant, or a speaker who can make her books available at her lectures.)

For general nonfiction, and for nearly all fiction, self-publishing can be much more challenging.

Your odds of success with a self-published book are much steeper than with a commercially published book.

There are a variety of routes one can take when deciding to self-publish:



The D.I.Y. Option

This represents the most challenging option available to self-publishers that involves them becoming their own publisher, personally taking on many of the tasks involved in the publication process.

Depending on the nature of the book project, some authors may choose to handle many of the tasks involved in publication on their own, bringing in independent contractors on an “as needed” basis.

Some of the tasks involved in this process include: overall project management and administration; identifying a suitable and cost-effective print service, book editing, book cover design and interior layout, marketing, promotions and distribution.

The D.I.Y. Option

Pros

- Author retains the most control
- Most cost-effective approach
- A good option for projects with a limited budget
- Results in the highest returns
- Most suitable for small, local book projects, fundraisers, and projects which are more personal in nature, niche books, and books with a ready made marketing platform

Cons

- Most time involved
- Massive learning curve
- Involves a high level of technical skill, business and project management skills, and a sound understanding of the publishing industry
- May be difficult to produce a professional quality book
- Promotion & distribution tend to be the greatest challenges

The D.I.Y. Option

with a Self-Publisher Support Service

Authors who publish with the help of a self-publishing company are also self-publishing. This is because the author is financing the majority of the publishing process and tapping into a self-publisher support service in much the same way they would hire any other independent contractor

There are many different self-publishing companies available to authors who want to self-publish, and a great deal of variety in the level of services offered.

Some self-publishing companies offer publishing services to authors who are unable or would rather not deal with the details of the publishing process. In this instance the author pays the self-publishing company to handle one or more aspects of the publishing process for them.

Examples of services commonly provided include ISBN assignment, book cover design, interior layout, editing, distribution and marketing. Some self-publishers are designed only to get the book printed, while others mimic traditional publishing houses providing a full set of publishing and marketing services.

Cooperative Publishing

Although not as well known as other avenues to getting into print, the cooperative publishing model has a lot to recommend it for the right book. Although many publishers who produce books cooperatively don't advertise that fact, it is advantageous for the right book and the right publisher.

In this model, a publisher who is already issuing books in your market, and who knows how to sell to that market, may offer you a contract different from the normal publishing contract. They will be interested in books that complement their existing line, and will have pretty high standards in both content and writing style for the kinds of books they will consider.

You will be asked to pay a publication fee, to cover some of the publisher's upfront expenses and, when the books are printed, you will be asked to pay the printer's invoice. In exchange for this investment—and these fees and printing costs can typically run to \$5,000 or more—the publisher will take over all the functions that a traditional publisher provides.

Cooperative Publishing

In addition, rather than receive a royalty, you become the equity partner with the publisher in the profits generated by your book. So instead of 8% or 10% of the retail price, you will earn, for example, 50% of the profit. This arrangement removes the financial risk for the publisher, since all costs are substantially covered by the author, and it gives you the cachet and the editorial, production, and marketing capacities of the publishing house.

As an author you will still be responsible for helping to market your book but, with your equity participation, this is much more like a business venture for you and can justify your spending more time and expense to sell your book.

If you are a non-fiction author in a specific niche, and you can identify smaller publishers who aggressively service your field, you may find a great fit with one of those publishers, allowing you to concentrate on writing and selling your book, leaving everything else up to your publishing partner.

POD/Subsidized Publishing



Buyer Beware!

POD/Subsidized Publishers



In this publishing model, you pay to have your book published.

Although you might pay a fee to a Cooperative Publisher or a Publication Support Service, these avenues see you maintaining a level of control or becoming partners in the success of your book.

With POD/Subsidized publishing, you pay for a service only, since the company you will deal with has no need to actually sell any books. Their profits are derived only from authors, and this is why they have traditionally been known as “vanity” publishers.

These companies follow two basic models; either you will pay a fee for the design, typesetting and production of your book, or you will pay a high price for any copies of the book you purchase. With both of these models, subsidized publishers typically make use of POD or “Print-On-Demand” digital print technology.

POD/Subsidized Publishers



In addition, you will be offered numerous “packages” of services including manuscript editing, marketing, premium interior or cover design, press release mailings, listings in industry directories, illustration, and so on. Each extra service will accrue an additional fee, and these fees can quickly add up to thousands of dollars.

When your book is printed, you will receive somewhere between 1 and 25 copies of the book, although the publisher may claim to print more that they are “holding” against future demand.

Most of the website-centered publishing services companies that offer these services also claim to distribute your book with the aim of furnishing copies to eventual buyers through “print on demand” technology. However, this distribution usually amounts to a listing in a database and nothing more (unless, of course, you purchase an additional “package”).

POD/Subsidized Publishers



Since these companies derive all their profit from authors, there are no barriers to “acceptance.” The actual work of these companies is much easier to understand if you think of them more as manufacturers than publishers, and yourself more as a customer than as an author.

Books produced through this option may be well written, or they may be trash. It makes no difference to the “publisher” since they are actually just manufacturing products, not publishing per se.

If you would like to print up copies of a cookbook for gifts or fund-raising, or print a book solely for distribution within your company and you have the staff to do it well, this can be a viable option. As with all manufacturing, ignore the hype and compare on price for at the end of the day it’s buyer beware.

POD/Subsidized Publishers



Tips on Evaluating POD/Subsidized Publishers

Examples



DIY:

Involves identifying a printer, editor, book designer, publicist, etc., effectively putting together a book production team. Writing, editing, graphic design, and independent publisher association websites are great resources

Self-Publishing Supports:

Kurio Studio

Self-Publishing Supports w/ Printing:

Artbook Bindery: <http://www.artbookbindery.com/index.htm>

Print & Distribution:

Blurb: <http://www.blurb.com/my/dashboard>

MagCloud: <http://www.magcloud.com/>

Lightning Source: <http://www1.lightningsource.com/>

Royalty Based POD:

Infinity: <http://www.infinitypublishing.com/>

Trafford: <http://www.trafford.com/TraffordAdvantage/default.aspx>

Friesens Press: <http://friesenpress.com/>

All-in-One

Createspace: <https://www.createspace.com/>

Lulu: <http://www.lulu.com/>

Independent Publishing



The Pros & Cons

Is it right for you?



Questions to ask:

1. What is my motivation and purpose for publishing my book?

Writing a book is a lot of work. Publishing one is even more work. Is your purpose clear and well enough conceived to sustain you through the experience? If profit is a motive, this venture must be treated as a business. Typically, from start to finish, a writer will spend 10% of their time writing the book, 15% publishing it and 75% marketing and promoting the finished book. Keep your purpose clear!

2. Is my book written for a specific market niche or group of people?

It is more expensive to promote a book to a wide general audience. Marketing costs are less when the target audience is specific, definable and accessible.

Is it right for you?



Questions to ask:

3. Do I have a way to sell books direct?

Selling books direct (at retail price to your target audience) is the most profitable way to recover your initial self-publishing investment. The standard heavy discounts to wholesalers and bookstores can be costly for slow-moving books. In fact, without a solid marketing plan, selling books to bookstores can be the least profitable way to distribute your book. Think of alternative ways to distribute your book: organizations, associations, corporations, conventions, fund raisers, back-of-the-room sales after lectures or workshops, to list a few.

4. Am I willing to go out and promote my book?

A general rule for authors . . . a book stops selling when the author does. No matter who publishes your book, the author is responsible for creating the demand. Books will not sell well sitting on a bookstore's shelf, unless interest is created in your book. Writing a book is about 10% of the effort, publishing is about 15% of the effort and marketing is 75% of the effort!

Is it right for you?



Questions to ask:

5. How many books can you expect to sell?

Beyond friends and family, who will be interested in your book? Knowing your market and how to reach those people are important questions to answer before investing in self-publishing. If profit is your motive, the initial cost of producing and printing (fewer than 500 copies) may be higher than a realistic retail price. Of course, the more you print, the less they cost. However, that decision must be weighed against the possibility of many unsold books sitting in your garage.

6. Are your expectations realistic?

If you don't have realistic expectations about your likely income and the time that marketing your book will take you may fall very short of your expectations. Of course you want to get your work published and get some recognition for doing so, but is your book going to achieve this? The question you must answer is: Can you and will you sell enough copies?

If you decide to self-publish



Know your options—all of them.

Be sure you have a good understanding not just of self-publishing, but of commercial publishing (a.k.a. “traditional” publishing). Many writers base their decision to self-publish on misconceptions about commercial publishing—such as the myth that major publishers aren’t interested in first-time authors. Unless you understand the whole range of options available to you, you can’t truly make an informed decision.

Go into it with your eyes open.

Really open. Consider all the issues and challenges identified above, and factor them into your plans.

Take stock of your goals.

Be sure that self-publishing is a good match for them.

If you decide to self-publish



Have a plan.

Know what you want to accomplish by self-publishing. Draw up a list of what you'd like to receive from whatever service you decide to use. Decide what you're able to spend—and don't fail to include self-promotion in your budget. Decide how much time you can devote to your project, both before and after publication. Being clear on these things ahead of time will make it easier for you to evaluate what kind of self-publishing you want to do, and which service (if any) to choose.

Do your research.

Be sure to check out the reputation of any self-publishing service you're thinking of using, whether POD or electronic—not all are reliable (there are resources below to help with this). If possible, contact other authors who've used the service to find out about their experiences. Be careful of brand-new startups—you're probably best off if you stick with larger, longer-established services, even if they're a bit more expensive.

If you decide to self-publish



Keep your expectations realistic.

Know the possible limitations, as well as the potential advantages, of self-publishing, and understand what it is and is not likely to accomplish for you. Writer Beware gets many complaints from authors who believe they've been scammed by self-publishing companies, when in reality it's their expectations that were faulty—whether because they didn't read their contracts carefully enough, or erroneously assumed that self-publishing was a ticket to commercial-style success.

Ignore the hype.

There's a tremendous amount of hype around electronic self-publishing right now, and a lot of discussion of high-selling Kindle self-publishers and the established authors who are bypassing their trade publishers to self-publish online. Not all of this information is accurate, complete, or representative, however, and it needs to be carefully assessed and placed in context.

Questions?