

# *The Smart Way to Self-Publish*

*from*  
Stories To Tell

SELF-PUBLISHING FOR  
INDEPENDENT AUTHORS

[www.StoriesToTellBooks.com](http://www.StoriesToTellBooks.com)

# *The Smart Way to Self-Publish*

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## *Understanding the rights to your published work*

### **AS AN INDEPENDENT AUTHOR, YOU OWN, IN YOUR OWN NAME:**

- \* ISBN (*International Standard Book Number*)
- \* Copyright
- \* *Publisher name/imprint (use your name, or invent an imprint)*

### **OTHER OPTIONAL IDENTIFIERS FOR LIBRARY SALES:**

- \* LCCN (*Library of Congress Control Number*)
- \* PCN (*Preassigned Control Number*)
- \* P-CIP (*Publishers Cataloging-in-Publication*)

# I. *Different Approaches to Publishing*

## *Here's a secret...*

There is no one “right way” to self-publish. Instead, there are many choices to make along the way; in the book’s content, its design, publishing, and marketing. We support independent authors by having an unbiased, multi-path approach. We can advise you, based on *your* book, on the most likely path to success.

## *Three main paths to publishing*

### **1. TRADITIONAL PUBLISHERS**

These publishers carefully screen books to select the most profitable candidates. Authors submit to an agent, who submits to an acquisitions editor, who determines to negotiate the sale of the book from the author. Terms of the sale vary widely, including the amount of the advance and the percentage of royalties paid to the author.

### **2. “SUBSIDY” OR “VANITY” SELF-PUBLISHING COMPANIES**

These publishers offer some of the features of a traditional publisher. Similarly, they contract exclusively with the author to sell and distribute each title, but an important difference is they do not pay an advance to the author, while the author pays them to publish.

- The author pays all production costs for editing, design, publishing, and marketing
- The publishing company claims a percentage of each book sold
- The remaining percentage of royalties to be paid to the author varies widely

### **3. INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING SERVICES**

These service providers (including us!) also edit, design, publish, and market books. However, we do not contract for the exclusive rights to the book, and therefore are not the “publishers.” Instead, the author is his own publisher, and he or she owns the book without sharing any profits.

- The author pays all production costs for editing, design, publishing, and marketing
- For a one-time fee, we set up the book for sales and distribution in the author’s name
- The author earns the entire profit from each book sold

# Different Approaches to Publishing

Do you have a BLOCKBUSTER BESTSELLER, plenty of time, and determination? We encourage you to pursue an agent and seek a traditional publishing deal. Why? That's the only way to get someone else to pay for a huge marketing campaign. (If you don't succeed, you can come back to us and self-publish later.)



## Which path do we recommend?

Authors can benefit most from either traditional publishing (path 1) or independent self-publishing (path 3). Both give authors real opportunities for success. Why? The book is more likely to be well edited and designed. Authors can control important decisions about costs and profits in both cases.

Many self-publishing companies (path 2) fail to deliver on services and on profits, and authors face legal challenges when they try to get out of their contracts.

Self-publishing giant Author Solutions has purchased and consolidated many companies of this model, such as Xlibris, iUniverse, WordClay, and Trafford.

Learn more by searching online with “Author Solutions complaints” to hear real stories from other authors.

# Different Approaches to Publishing

## Why “Indie” is better self-publishing

### Independent Self-Publishing

#### **PRESERVE YOUR BOOK RIGHTS**

The key service: we register the ISBN and copyright in your name, making YOU the publisher. (Our non-commercial authors are welcome to save money by using our free ISBN, as this issue doesn't affect them.)

#### **KEEP CREATIVE CONTROL**

Collaborate with your editor and designer. We'll suggest ways to improve your book, but it is always your choice. If you wish, we will incorporate your images into the interior and cover design.

#### **CHOOSE YOUR SERVICES**

We encourage authors to keep their costs down, and to “DIY” when they can. Our prices are offered as both packages and individual services so you can get just the help you need.

#### **FAIR BOOK BUYING**

Book printing is fairly inexpensive, without a middleman! We shop around to find the best deal for each author. The author pays the printer directly, at cost. This can be a huge savings.

### Subsidy or “Vanity” Self-Publishing

#### **SIGN AWAY YOUR RIGHTS**

An ISBN in any name but yours gives that publisher control over your book - your profit, the price, the distribution, and they may discontinue it. You are not allowed to take the book elsewhere.

#### **LOSE CREATIVE CONTROL**

Self-publishing “factories” produce poorly designed “template” books. They use common stock art to make cheap cover designs. Many complaints are about sub-par editing.

#### **MISLEADING PACKAGES**

Comparison shopping for self-publishing is tricky. Consumers are drawn in by low starter prices that do not match their real needs, and/or pay for bundled services they do not use.

#### **INFLATED PRINTING COST**

Many companies charge the author a steeply marked up price on their own books, disguised as a “discount.” Authors lose two ways: the added expense, and then a smaller profit margin on each sale.

## 2. *Your Steps as the Author*

### *Ask yourself these questions as you write your book*

*Who is my audience? How many readers do I expect to be interested?*

- a book meant for a small number of family and friends
- a book you intend to make available for sale, but it's of interest to a limited audience
- a book you've planned primarily as a commercial venture

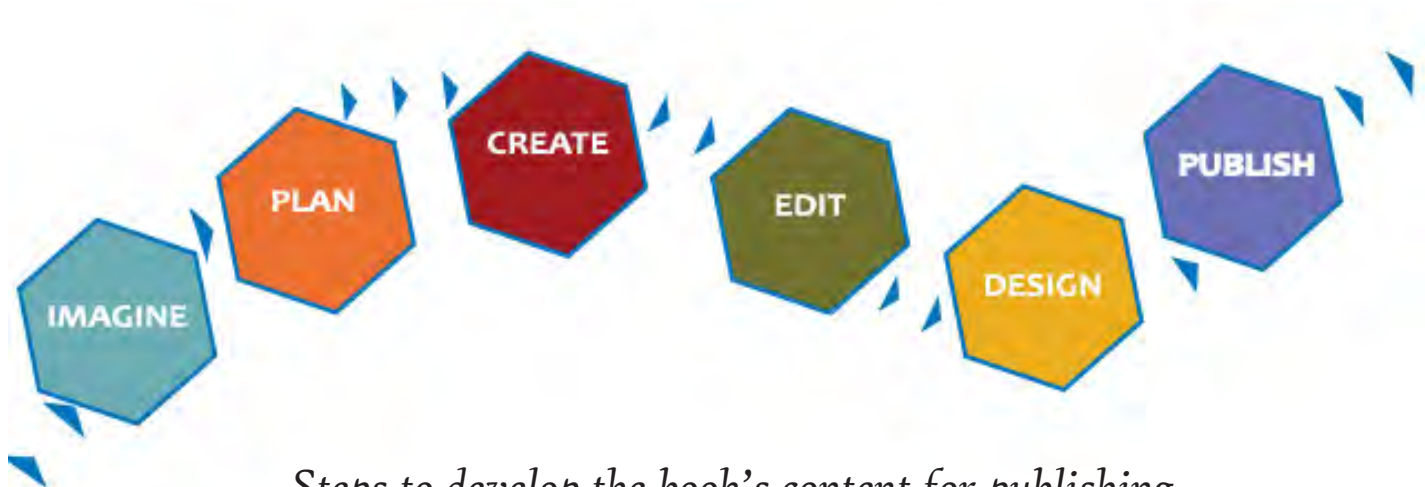
The answer should focus your writing, and will affect editing, design, and publishing choices.

*What are my book's features?*

Including photos, illustrations, tables, endnotes, an appendix, a bibliography, an index, or other special features will enhance a book. They also drive up the costs of editing and design. If you have "thrown in the kitchen sink," take a careful inventory and cut what you (and your reader) don't need.

*What are similar books like?*

By investigating comparable books, you can understand your genre better. You can fill the gap with a new take on your subject, and avoid common errors by noticing the length and style of the most successful titles.



*Steps to develop the book's content for publishing*



# Your Steps as the Author

## Ask yourself these questions as you complete your book

*What are my goals for distribution?*

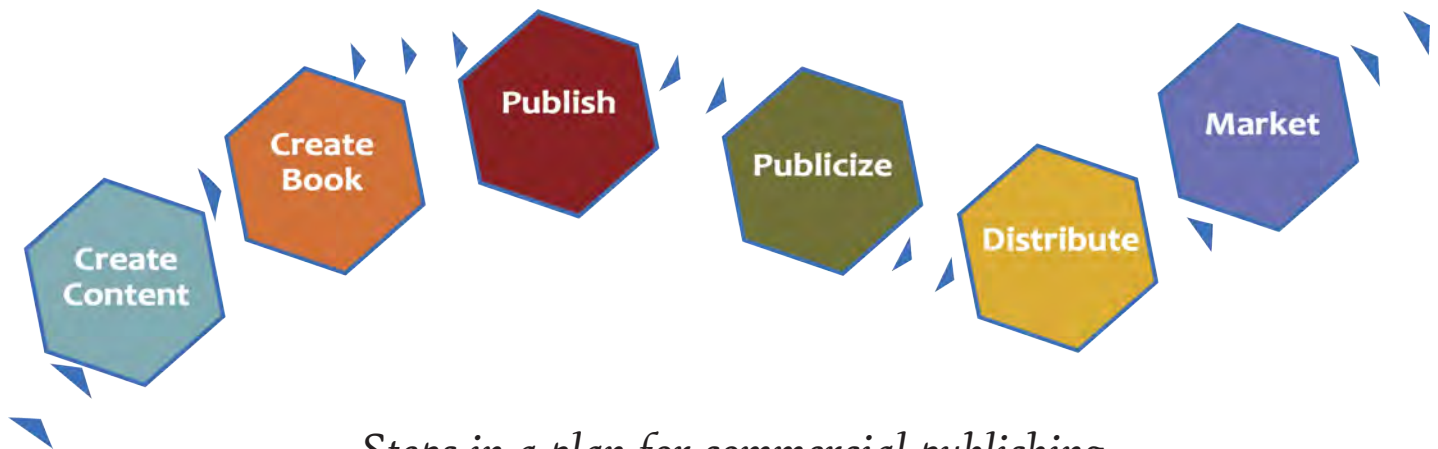
Publishing is, essentially, about putting the book into the reader's hands. You need to anticipate who your buyers are, where they are, and the most cost-effective way to deliver your book.

*How will I tell the world about my book?*

There are many ways, particularly with social media, to publicize your book. We often create an Advance Review Copy (ARC) so that reviewers will help to spread the word. Generally, it is best to begin publicizing the book well before it is published, so that readers are eagerly waiting to buy.

*How much marketing do I need?*

Publishing alone just isn't enough for a commercial author to be noticed. A careful combination of publicity and marketing are essential. Your marketing plan may include a website, ads, placement in catalogs, and other strategies that require a budget and your time. Most authors would prefer to write, but to make a profit, they must also engage with the business of marketing. We provide complete author marketing services—for the book launch and ongoing support.



*Steps in a plan for commercial publishing*

# Your Steps as the Author

## Publishing time management

Many authors rush to release their book. They feel “behind schedule” since the book (inevitably) took longer than expected to write! What they do not anticipate is that there are more steps still ahead, and that careful thought to these steps will be worth the wait.

### EDITING

Ask your editor for a time estimate. It will take a few days to several weeks, depending on the type of editing and the book’s complexity . TIP: Never rush a good editor. You really do want them to read through your book again and again. Our editor will return the book to you with revisions,suggestions, and corrections, and these improvements are always worth the time.



### DESIGN

Book design is an art, and you have the opportunity to shape that art. We often communicate ten times or more about the cover design, sending revisions back and forth, to arrive at a look that is perfect. Books with illustrated interiors are even more of a creative collaboration. Design can take from 2 weeks to 2 months, depending on the complexity of the interior layout, so expect to enjoy this special part of bringing your words to life.

### PROOF BEFORE PUBLISHING

Publishing means checking the book over again and again. A team approach is best. We will send you PDFs to check over carefully. The final, perfect version goes to the printer. Then the printer will produce a single “proof” copy and mail it to you to check over the paper, ink, and binding. Only then is your book made public. Turnaround for this process? Allow 2-3 weeks.

### MARKETING: PUBLICITY , REVIEWS AND ARCS

It’s optional, but many publicity opportunities are better pursued before publishing. For example, a contest win before publishing can “make” a book’s success. Good reviews are also invaluable. To pre-launch a book with an Advance Review (ARC) campaign, we fashion an ARC cover, and then print and send books (and eBooks) to reviewers. Remember, reviewers need time to read and write about your book. Allow up to 3 months for this cycle.

## 3. Selling Books & eBooks

### *What are my choices for distribution?*

#### **BOOK PRINTING**

The simplest distribution is to have books printed and shipped to you, for you to share or sell. If you're ordering fewer than 500 books, the press will be digital, so you can print just as many or few as you want. Many printers have a minimum of 25, and you'll get a better price, while there is a higher cost per book if you order less than 25. Genuine commercial book printers offer a far better deal than online photo book sites, which often have limits on page counts and have very high prices.

#### **PRINT ON DEMAND FROM ONLINE BOOKSTORES**

Print On Demand (POD) makes your book available to the public from online bookstores such as amazon.com. Your book listing appears in search engines, which is a powerful way for readers to find your book. POD bookstores process the buyer's payment, print the order, and ship the book, and then pay the profit (less print costs and their share, 40% of your cover price) into your bank account. It's the easiest deal for authors, if not the most profitable.

#### **OFFSET PRINTING**

For large scale publishing, we order offset printed books. Economies of scale (1,000 books or more) will mean you purchase the books at much less cost than digital printing. However, you'll likely need warehousing and fulfillment services to put the books into buyers' hands, and these costs, together, all must be paid in advance of book sales.

#### **DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION**

The publishing solution to printing and shipping costs is the eBook, a digital file that is downloaded from online stores. The initial editing and design costs of an eBook are nearly the same as a print book. Yet eBooks are easier to distribute, and without the cost of printing, the profit margin can be greater. An eBooks-only strategy is limited, as only some readers consume them, so both eBook and print are used together to reach a wide audience.

#### **DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIPS**

Book distributors release catalogs regularly to advertise titles to professional book buyers from bookstores and libraries. If your book is about a niche topic, you can locate a niche catalog with titles just like yours, and arrange to be listed. Many of our authors publish with Ingram Spark for their book to be listed in the Baker & Taylor catalog.

## What can I do to profit from book sales?

### BUYERS, BUYERS, BUYERS

What is the most important rule of selling books? Understand who your buyer is. Not every reader wants your *kind of book*, and sadly, not everyone interested in your topic *buys books*.

- Drill down to a specific description of your sub-genre. Not just mystery, but historical mystery set in Japan. Not just self-help, but help for older people with balance disorders.
- Look at comparable books. Read their reviews, and learn what their readers want.
- Target and locate your buyers, wherever they buy books. Market to them on their terms.

### WRITE A MARKETING PLAN—REALLY!

Selling books is just like selling any other product. Your success depends on having a plan to market your book. We provide marketing services in all four areas:

1. **Foundation:** A business identity, with basics such as business cards, marketing copy, and an “elevator speech.”
2. **Platform:** Your tools to communicate to the world, including social media and a website.
3. **Buzz Builder:** Strategies to get others, particularly influential reviewers, to spread the word.
4. **Publicity Plus:** Go beyond your press release, connect with the media, and consider using strategic paid advertising.

### USE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGICALLY

Book marketing doesn't have to be expensive! Build and leverage your network through free social media tools. Successful authors use a system to manage their social accounts and minimize the time they spend on social marketing. We can train you how to do this yourself, or we can do it for you.

### CUSTOM MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Every marketing plan needs a unique “hook” that makes the book stand out from the crowd. We craft clever, one of a kind campaigns that work for your book's genre, audience, and special qualities. These campaigns will build buzz, draw the attention of the media, and build a loyal readership.

# Selling Books & eBooks

## Large-scale publishing, or smaller?

### **LARGE-SCALE COMMERCIAL PUBLISHING**

If you're going after the masses and you've written a mass-market book, your strategy for self-publishing should match your goals. Attempt to "slot" your book to fit your genre. We will make sure your cover design "pops." Your marketing efforts should have a clear budget and begin well before publishing. We can devise multiple campaigns to spread the word widely.



### **NICHE PUBLISHING**

If you're targeting a smaller, select group of buyers who are interested in your specialized topic, (especially for nonfiction books) then matching your book to its buyer is easier. Your cover should be carefully designed with their point of view in mind. Your marketing can be more limited, relying more on free social media, as long as it is very focused on your audience.

### **PRIVATE PUBLISHING**



If you're publishing with no intention to sell books for profit, that's private publishing. You may not even need an ISBN. You may simply want printed books to share as gifts. Some authors ask us to produce two versions of their book: a limited number of luxury hardcovers for family and close friends, and also a paperback version, which can also be gifted, or can be sold on amazon.com. This method will save you the cost and effort of printing and shipping books, and distant friends can easily get an affordable copy. You don't have to market your book; instead you send all your friends a link to your amazon page.



## 4. Getting Started!

### *How and when to send your book*

#### **DO YOU NEED A MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION?**

Has a professional editor read your draft? Many authors begin by asking us to read their book. This is an inexpensive way to get feedback as you develop your draft. We recommend completing the draft before sending it for an evaluation. (If you're stuck, send it anyway, and we'll help to get you on track and finished.) On the other hand, if your book has been well edited and corrected, and you're confident it's ready to be published, we can skip the editing and begin working on its design.

#### **MICROSOFT WORD OR PAGES FOR MAC**

There's no need to do any fancy formatting to send us your draft. Whatever program you used, save the document with the title and/or your last name. It is better to save a Word .doc or Mac .pages; we prefer these easy-to-open files to .PDF format, which must be converted for use.

#### **EMAIL ATTACHMENT OR DROPBOX**

Most book drafts can be sent as an email attachment. Larger, longer books that have embedded images may be too large to send via email. In that case, we will send you an email from Dropbox with a folder for your book project. There are no costs or size limits. Simply copy and paste your book files into your Dropbox folder to share them with us.

### **FAQ**

#### ***What books do we accept?***

*We publish both fiction and non-fiction, with unlimited page counts and unlimited images. We do not edit science or highly technical writing, but we can design, publish, and market these types of books.*

# Getting Started!

## How to plan for photos and illustrations

### ARE YOU WORKING ON AN ILLUSTRATED BOOK WITH PHOTOS OR IMAGES?

Good news! You don't have to work so hard. If you've attempted to place images in a Word document, you know how difficult and unwieldy it can become, especially as the file size increases. Word processing programs were made for *words*, and they are a poor substitute for book design software. Instead, *plan* where the images will be. It's a more flexible method, and it will result in a better design later, once you've truly finished with the text editing.

### AN IMAGE PLANNING CHART

1. Number your images
2. Note the number in your book's text where you want the image
3. Decide the size
4. Write the caption, if any

### ABOUT SCANNING

Scan your photos at a *minimum* of 300 PPI (pixels per inch.) If that sounds too technical for you, then have us do your scanning. Correct scanning methods are crucial to the book's printing quality!

Image #	Size S, M, L	Caption (optional)
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

## How to Estimate Your Costs

The first question most people ask is, “How much will this cost?” That depends on your book’s length, whether it contains illustrations or photos, and other factors. Every book project is unique, and the author has options, according to his/her goals for the book .

Our prices are like an à la carte menu. You can choose exactly what you want and need, without paying for hidden extras or packages that inflate costs.

### **METHOD #1: DOWNLOAD OUR COMPLETE SERVICES AND FEES LIST**

If you want to view, print out, and/or download complete list of our services and fees, go to [www.storiestotellbooks.com/the-fine-print/](http://www.storiestotellbooks.com/the-fine-print/) and click “Download Services List.” You can find also find “The Fine Print” on the footer of every page on our website.

While you’re there, you can also download our contract to view our author-friendly terms.

### **METHOD #2: USE THE PRICE CALCULATOR TOOL**

Use our new price calculation tool. This step-by-step method allows you to place services directly into a shopping cart and to make your initial deposit. This works well for authors who are experienced with publishing, know exactly what they need, and who are eager to get started.

What if you change your project? That’s OK; we’ll always adjust a project’s invoice, if needed.

We only process a deposit to get started. We’ll review your services with you to confirm they’re right for you, before you sign a contract.

### **METHOD #3: GET A CUSTOM ESTIMATE**

Many authors have questions specific to their project. They may not know which services to choose. We can help. Call or email to discuss your project. We will ask about your book project and your goals for publishing. If the project is at all complex, we may ask you to share your project files. Then we will create an itemized estimate based on your needs. If you’re working with a tight budget, let us know—there are ways to save.

You’ll receive your custom estimate promptly, and a contract to sign if you are ready to go forward. What if you change your project? That’s OK; we’ll always adjust as needed. We’re all on the same team, to make a wonderful book succeed.