

Handout

How to Publish Your Book and eBook on Amazon

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Get a knock-out cover, format your eBook/print book, and position it to sell on Amazon with categories and keywords. Keep all control and profits, and become a happy self-publisher.

OUTLINE

Types of Publishing

Today's Talk is About Self-Publishing

Editing

Formatting

Book Covers

ISBNs

List Your Book on KDP

Author Central Account

Optimize Your Categories and Keywords

Wider Book/EBook Distribution

Conclusion

TYPES OF PUBLISHING

Congratulations with finishing your manuscript! That is awesome. Now it's time to reach others with your words by publishing.

Before you jump into publishing, it's important to know HOW you want to publish. There are three distinct types of publishing:

- Traditional — Your literary agent finds an editor from a traditional publishing house like Tyndale, Multnomah, or Simon and Schuster to purchase your manuscript. The agent earns a well-deserved commission.

The traditional publishing house publishes your book under their company and pays you royalties. This has a long lag time (about 2 years). \$

- Hybrid/Subsidy — You pay a company to prepare and publish your book/ebook. They do all the work for you and pay you a set amount for each sale — “royalties.” This has a medium lag time (about 3-12 months). \$\$\$\$\$
- Self — You take control of all aspects of your book/ebook and publish it yourself. You keep all profits and control all aspects of making changes, pricing, and marketing. This has a short lag time (days to a few months). \$ - \$\$\$

You can find a free short article on my website that explains the differences in publishing types at <https://amydeardon.blog/free-downloads/>

TODAY'S TALK IS ABOUT SELF-PUBLISHING

Today I'm going to tell you how you can professionally self-publish your book/ebook for little or no money. Personally I love self-publishing. I love the freedom to create, design, and market my book/ebook however I want without having to ask permission from anyone.

When you self-publish:

- You keep all rights, control, and profits for your book, forever.
- You can prepare your book and ebook for under \$500 — usually under \$100 or even FREE.
- You can format your book and ebook with ease since there are good free easy-to-use formatting apps that only need a Word document.
- You can find or create a professional cover image for free or low-cost and use free formatting tools and fonts to finalize it.
- You can list your book and ebook for sale on Amazon for free, and update the text, cover, and price any time you want to.
- You can buy print books for your own stash at lowest printer's prices — for example, a 250 page black and white book will cost you about \$4.

- You can use free marketing tools on amazon to help your book and ebook get noticed.
- You can always hire contractors to help you with any or all of these tasks. www.fiverr.com is a great go-to for inexpensive help for different jobs. There are other contractors you can find also.

Self-publishing is an awesome way to go!

EDITING

The downside with self-publishing is that since you are the gatekeeper you have to make sure your book/ebook is up to professional standards.

Never never never never never publish a first draft of your manuscript. In my experience, especially if you're new to publishing then it often takes as long to edit your manuscript as it does to write.

There are three general types of editing:

- Self-editing.
- Writing and Critique groups.
- Professional editing.

For best results, try to do at least two of these types of editing.

Self-Editing

You have to be tough with yourself. As the saying goes, Kill your darlings.

Here are some things you can watch for with self-editing:

- Repetition – words, phrases, or ideas. Say it once, clearly, then get out.
- Using passive voice.
- Static descriptions. Use nouns and verbs, not adjectives and adverbs.
- Words that are not adding to your ideas. Challenge yourself to cut at least one word from every sentence in your manuscript.
- Jargon or million-dollar words. You want to communicate, not show off.

- Hidden ideas and unclear connections. The reader can't read your mind so be clear. Spell out points or if you don't want to make a statement on the nose use vivid images to show not tell.
- Not having a point. Why are you telling the reader this? What is the point you want to make in each paragraph? Don't just blather on.

A classic self-editing book that will make your words sing is *Self-Editing for Fiction Writers, Second Edition: How to Edit Yourself Into Print* by Renni Browne and Dave King.

Critique Groups

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

— Proverbs 27:6

To make sure that your message is getting through, it's important to hear what others think of your writing before you publish it.

Critique groups are a wonderful place to get feedback in a safe place.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- When offered feedback simply say "Thank you." Even if you don't agree you won't change the reader's mind by arguing, so don't.
- Be open, not defensive. Consider if the reader could possibly be right.
- Remember that it's easier to pick up that something is not working than it is to diagnose what the problem is. Recognize that "fixes" offered by the reader may not be correct, but the fact that there is a problem probably is.
- Be careful when offering your own critiques. Your words can penetrate deeply. Be gentle and kind.

If you are looking for a critique group, you may want to consider Marlene's GPCWC weekly Zoom group!

Meetings alternate between Thursday mornings at 10 and Thursday evenings at 8.

To join, just email Marlene directly at mbagnull@writehisanswer.com and ask her for the link to the meetings.

Professional Editing

In my experience many writers want to get professional editing before they're ready. Professional editing is EXPENSIVE so make sure this is a good step.

Professional editors are artists, not scientists — in other words, each has a different style. You want to make sure your style matches with theirs.

Be clear what type of editing you want — structural, content, or line editing.

Professional editing will not fix deeper problems with your ms. If you're having trouble with your manuscript, you may want to look for a developmental editor, story coach, or ghost writer.

To find an editor, first ask fellow writers for recommendations. Look around this conference because there are lots of editors here, in all price ranges. You can also find editors at the Editorial Freelancers Association www.the-efa.org.

FORMATTING

Formatting a book or ebook is meticulous. Fortunately you don't have to format by hand unless you want to.

Kindle Create

Kindle Create is a free app put out by Amazon that will take your Word document and format it into a print book and an ebook.

Kindle Create gives you choices in fonts and layouts so you can personalize your book/ebook and make it look beautiful.

For your ebook, Kindle Create formats in epub as well as AZW3 so that your ebook can be available on other platforms besides just Amazon if you wish.

You can download a PC or Mac version at <https://tinyurl.com/bdzccesx>

Atticus

Dave Chesson of the fabulous www.kindlepreneur.com website has also created a formatting tool for print book and ebook.

Atticus has more formatting options than Kindle Create.

Atticus also has a writing component to help you create your book.

Atticus costs \$147. It can be downloaded at <https://www.atticus.io/>

Format By Hand

I run a business helping authors to self-publish (NOT subsidy publish). For me, I prefer to format by hand because it gives me the best control of the appearance of the book and ebook.

If you're interested in hand-formatting, I have two books available on Amazon that use a step-by-step approach:

Self-Publish for \$100 or Less — this book shows you how to use Word to format your print book, and how to use Calibre (a free app) to format your ebook.

Special Effects for Your EBook — this book provides HTML coding that you can cut and paste to create spectacular ebook appearance of tables, boxes, black-on-white writing, etc.

BOOK COVERS

Characteristics of a Professional Book Cover:

- Pulled Together.
- Stay on Trope — your topic should be obvious even without title.
- Cover is a little different than other covers.
- With a white cover be aware it's easy to melt into the white background when you're listing it on a website. You can mitigate this by drawing a border around the listing cover jpeg (not the actual cover file for your book)..
- Thumbnail is in focus.
- Title is easy to read.

The simplest book cover is just text with a colored background. More complex covers use one or more images with text.

Use only royalty-free images or else purchase them on photo sites. A great place for free images is www.pixabay.com. You can also use open-source AI image generators like Dall-E <https://openai.com/index/dall-e-3/>

Use only royalty-free fonts or else purchase them. You can find great free fonts at www.dafont.com. Get fonts that are 100% free rather than free for personal use.

There are four basic ways to get a book cover:

- Pre-made Book Covers
- Hire Someone
- Do It Yourself DIY
- Use Amazon's Create-A-Cover

Pre-Made Book Covers

These covers are already designed and waiting for someone (you!) to purchase them.

The artist takes the image off the market then inserts your name and title to give you a unique cover.

These run between about \$50-\$200.

You can do a google search for "Pre-Made Book Covers."

Hire Someone

www.fiverr.com – (about \$20-\$100). For best results you'll need to provide one or more images.

www.99designs.com – (about \$300 + extras). This is the premiere site for spectacular designs and my personal favorite.

Do It Yourself DIY

If you're good with graphics you may want to design your own cover. Canva www.canva.com is a great free site to help you create something beautiful.

Amazon's Create-A-Cover

Amazon offers free cover design options on KDP (print and ebook), with royalty-free images and cover color/layout ideas.

ISBNs

ISBN = International Standard Book Number

The ISBN is like a book's Social Security Number: a unique identifier that is necessary to put your print book up for sale.

An ISBN is not needed for an ebook if you just list it on Amazon. However you can certainly use an ISBN if you wish. You WILL need an ISBN for a print book.

If you want both your print book and e-book to have an ISBN, you need two—one for each format type.

ISBNs trace back to the person/publisher who bought them. This means that if you purchase an ISBN from a third party (a hybrid/subsidy company or other publisher), the ISBN will trace to the company, not you.

The only place to buy ISBNs in the USA so that they belong to you-the-publisher is Bowker (www.myidentifiers.com).

ISBNs are not cheap. At this time 1 ISBN is \$125, 10 ISBNs are \$295, and 100 ISBNs are \$575.

Amazon's KDP aims to be the go-to place for self-publishing print books and e-books. They have teamed up with Bowker to sell official ISBNs for market rates.

KDP also offers free ISBNs. Remember though that if you take this free ISBN your publisher will be KDP, not your own company. This may not be a bad thing if you are content to sell your book just on Amazon.

Barcodes

When you buy ISBNs from Bowker, they offer bar codes for an additional price. However you don't need to buy the bar code so save your money!

You can create bar codes using free tools on the net. Do a web search for “create book bar code.”

My favorite site is:

www.creativindiecovers.com/free-online-isbn-barcode-generator/#submit

You can put in “90000” rather than a price if you want flexibility, or leave the price barcode off completely.

LIST YOUR BOOK ON KDP

KDP is the publishing arm of Amazon. You’ll need to set up your KDP account to publish your book.

Sign into www.kdp.amazon.com with your amazon email and password. Your KDP account is now linked with your amazon account. This is important since KDP will ship author copies of your book to you (or other addresses you specify) using your amazon account.

You will need to fill in financial information including your bank account and your SSN or EIN. This is so amazon can pay you for books/ebooks sold and issue you electronic 1099s every year.

You will need to fit your print book cover on a free template that you can get at https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/cover-templates. If you need help with this you can hire someone at www.fiverr.com for a few dollars.

Your ebook cover has slightly taller dimensions than the print book. Their ideal size is 2820 x 4500 pixels. Again, if you need help with this hire someone on www.fiverr.com.

For your ebook, enable DRM (Digital Rights Management). This will give some protection from theft.

AUTHOR CENTRAL ACCOUNT

Once you are published on Amazon you definitely want to create an Author Central Account <https://author.amazon.com/>

The Author Central Account allows you to list your bio and other information you might want to include like your photo, your other books, your blog, your vlog, and your website.

Your Author Central Account is listed with your book and if someone is browsing, they can easily click on it to learn more about you, the author.

OPTIMIZE YOUR CATEGORIES AND KEYWORDS

Categories

The BISAC (Book Industry Standards and Communications) is the standard system used by libraries and bookstores to categorize books. There are about 600 BISAC codes.

Amazon uses its own system to categorize books. They have over 11,000 categories.

You want to use Amazon's system rather than the BISAC to categorize your book and ebook.

When listing your book and ebook on KDP, Amazon allows you three categories. In general you want to select the easier categories and the most niched-down categories that will allow you to rise to #1 in that group.

Please don't try to game the system by choosing irrelevant small categories. This annoys readers. Amazon may also notice this and strip you of that category.

Keywords

Keywords are the words or phrases used by online searchers to find something.

Remember that Amazon is a search engine, just like Google. Potential buyers use keywords to find books like yours.

You want to identify keywords that are likely to be used AND that you can rank in.

KDSpy

Rather than researching categories and keywords by hand, you can use the KDSpy app to do the research for you in a few seconds. It works on PC, Mac, and Chromebook. One-time cost is \$69 at www.kdspy.com

Publisher Rocket

Publisher Rocket is another app that can research categories and keywords. It also works on PC, Mac, and Chromebook. One-time cost is \$97 at www.publisherrocket.com

Nerdy Girl for Categories

If you want to find the categories of competing books to yours, just find the ISBN-10 (10 digit ISBN) or ASIN (Amazon Standard Identification Number) that are listed in the product info section of the book on Amazon.

Input the number into Nerdy Book Girl app at www.nerdybookgirl.com/book-category-hunter

Amazon Autofill for Keywords

When you're typing something into the "search" box, Amazon has an "autofill" function to guess what you're going to say.

To find keywords, you can start typing a few letters of your keyword to see what appears.

You can also use the letter trick in which you type in keyword "A", keyword "B", and so forth to see what appears in the autofill box.

WIDER BOOK/EBOOK DISTRIBUTION

I usually advise my clients to start with publishing on Amazon until they can get a foothold in sales, usually about 6-12 months. However, eventually many self-publishers want to have their book available in other places.

For wider distribution, I recommend looking into Ingram Spark for print books <https://www.ingramspark.com/> and Draft 2 Digital for ebooks <https://draft2digital.com>

CONCLUSION

I hope after this lecture that you are convinced that you can, indeed, publish your book and ebook yourself!

Take things one at a time and you'll be fine.

If you're overwhelmed you can always hire contractors to help you out. One of my favorite places for piecemeal jobs is at www.fiverr.com

If you have questions please feel free to contact me at amydeardon@gmail.com

I also have a business, EBook Listing Services, that does all the work of preparing and listing your book/ebook and gives you advice for marketing and managing your book. EBook Listing Services is an individual contractor rather than a Subsidy/Hybrid Company. This means that YOU are the publisher and retain all rights, profits, and control. YOU own the ISBN, not us. We just do the heavy lifting then show you how to manage everything.

HAPPY CONFERENCE!