

Indie Publishing Lecture #3

Create Your Book

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One advantage to self-publishing is you can create as many books as you want. For example, short kindle books do amazingly well, and you can quickly write related works for an eager audience. Since the marketplace is exploding you need to consider different formats — paper, ebook, audible — to increase sales.

To create books you must smash writer's block. Once the book is finished, you can finalize each format (paper, ebook, audible) and get it ready to go. If all this sounds intimidating, it soon won't — this lecture has your back.

SHORT BOOKS

In addition to traditional-length books, here is a review of additional projects you may want to consider:

Low-Content

Specialized low-content books are quick and fun. You can search online to compile information and/or find contributors at www.mturk.com.

Use royalty-free images (www.pixabay.com) and fonts (www.dafont.com) to dress up items:

- Calendars
- Planners
- Workbooks

- Checklists
- Prayers or Meditations
- Jokes
- Tips
- Quotes
- Word-a-Day
- Anecdotes
- Puzzles
- Etc.

KDP Vella

KDP has set up a new platform where you can publish serial fiction.

A helpful article by Jason Hamilton is:

- **<https://kindlepreneur.com/kindle-vella>**.

Check out Amazon guidelines at:

- **https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G6F5YEPRLMKR3PV7**.

Kindle Shorts

Those who watch trends say that people want shorter, simpler books. KDP has obliged with a new category called Kindle Shorts.

These books can be quick to write and price comparably to longer works. You can probably write a short book of 5000 words in a week or two.

- 15 minutes: 1-11 Kindle pages (approx. 250-2750 words)
- 30 minutes: 12-21 Kindle pages (2751-5250 words)
- 45 minutes: 22-32 Kindle pages (5251 -8000 Words)

- One hour: 33-43 Kindle pages (8001-10,750 words)
- 90 minutes: 44-64 Kindle pages (10751-16,000 words)
- Two hours or more: 65-100 kindle pages (16001-25,000 words)

CREATE BOOK

Strategy

The name of the game is “Series” — to write related books so you don’t have to look for new readers each time you publish.

See *Handout #2: Niche Your Book on Amazon* to learn how to find good book topics.

For fiction try to create characters and/or a story world that can be serialized. For example: sisters in a family; or a coffee shop in a small town. Some categories that sell well are romance, paranormal, science fiction, historical, and YA.

For nonfiction try to find a problem that has a straightforward solution and can be serialized. For example: how to clean (kitchen/garage/bathroom); or how to invest (retiring folks/kids/working adults).

Some categories that sell well are money, self-help, pets, diet & fitness, computers, and spiritual.

Writer's Block

Creating a book is comprised of three separate activities:

- Plan
- Write
- Edit

Writer's block occurs when you try to do more than one of these things at the same time.

Note: Even just a little bit of planning goes a long way to head off writer's block. If you are a seat-of-the-pants writer, challenge yourself to try this system for just one book or Kindle Short. If you like it, great. If not, you don't need to do this ever again.

Plan

Describe your ideal reader in a sentence or two. Look online for photos of someone who could be this person.

Fiction

List short answers to the following:

- Short phrase to describe each of your 2-3 main characters (hero, love interest, villain).
- What change of circumstance starts your story? (inciting incident).
- What does your hero need to do by the end of the story? (story goal).
- What event will happen at the end that CLEARLY SHOWS the story goal is reached, or not? (you don't HAVE to know this up front but think about it).

- What horrible things will happen if your hero fails? (stakes).
- Why does your villain want to stop your hero?
- What secret is one of your characters hiding?
- How will your hero become a better person because of story events? (story arc).

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If you want to go into more depth, it might be helpful to use an outline tool like:

- Dan Wells' 7 point system for short stories and novels:
<https://gwuwi.com/2016/05/04/writing-method-7-point-system-by-dan-wells-printable-summaries>
- Randy Ingermanson's Snowflake:
<https://www.advancedfictionwriting.com/articles/snowflake-method>
- Blake Snyder's Save the Cat! system:
book: Jessica Brody, *Save the Cat! Writes a Novel*

Nonfiction

UNDERSTAND YOUR READER:

List short answers to the following:

- What problem is your reader suffering from?
- Why is your reader's problem unpleasant or even frightening?

- What does a solution look like? How will your reader be happy if he/she can solve the problem?
- What may be holding your reader back from solving the problem? (Some ideas: lack of knowledge, fear, inertia, time, ambivalence).
- How will the information in your book help to solve the problem?

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SELECT WHAT YOU WANT TO COVER:

- Study common questions people have about your topic on AskReddit or Quora.
- On Amazon scan the comments of similar books. Notice what readers liked and what they wish had been skipped or covered in more depth.
- Use Amazon's "Look Inside" feature to snag a few TOC's (table of contents). Use these as a model.

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CONSTRUCT YOUR OUTLINE:

- Keep breaking down your topic into small questions.
- Only include information that will help your reader solve the problem. Avoid long excursions about things that are irrelevant.
- Try to include a few "wow" factors — new ideas or a new way of looking at things that the other books don't have.
- Consider using a MindMapping tool to outline your book. I love Freemind at <http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Download#Download>. And

if you use a Chrome Book (like I do now) you might like this nifty app
MindMap Tab at

**[https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/mindmap-tab/mkgjficalhpl
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Write

Using this technique you will be able to write AT LEAST 1000 WORDS/HOUR.
Really.

- Remember that planning and editing are different tasks from writing. Writer's block occurs when you combine tasks. Don't put together your thoughts or change your sentences as you write.
- The secret: allow yourself to write garbage! When you haven't figured something out jot down a quick note to yourself (or put XX in the text) then get back to writing. Aim for 1000 words/hour. Yes you can.
- Dictation will double your speed. Free apps:
 - CHROMEBOOK: Google Docs voice typing.
 - WINDOWS: Windows 10 Speech Recognition.
 - MAC: Apple Dictation.

Edit

- There is good information for self-editing online. Text to speech (TTS) is a great help to notice tortured writing. Keep cutting the bad and filling in with good stuff.
- When you're ready let other readers take a peek. Don't argue with their opinion because you won't change it — just listen, take notes, and make changes if you need to.

- IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE YOUR BOOK PROFESSIONALLY EDITED especially for longer works. Professional editing is expensive so make sure you have done everything to sparkle your manuscript before you hire an editor. If you don't know anyone who can recommend an editor, you might find one at <https://www.the-efa.org>. Or you may be able to find more information at this conference! For example just two months ago I met a lovely lady at the GPCWC who runs an editing service — here's a shout-out to Victoria Dorshorn. vdorshorn@gmail.com.

FINISHING

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