

My Friends Say I Should Be Published . . . But What Do I Do Next?

It depends on what you mean by “publish.”

For anyone interested in having his or her works published, it is important to understand the different options available. In its truest form, publishing encompasses all phases of book production, printing, marketing and distribution. The most common pathways are: Commercial Publishing, Subsidy Publishing, and Self-Publishing. Recently another option has become available, On-Demand Publishing. Each of these options has its own advantages and disadvantages in what it offers authors, and who pays for them.

Commercial (Venture) Publishing

Commercial publishing—which is also called venture publishing—provides the author the opportunity to submit a manuscript for approval by a publishing house, such as McGraw-Hill. The publishing house will venture (risk) the success of the accepted manuscript and will pay the author for it. The publishing house will fund the design, production, printing and marketing of the book and will reserve ownership and all rights to the book. The contract with the author usually will include a percentage of the royalty fees, sometimes paid in advance against future royalties.

Subsidy (Vanity) Publishing

According to the *British Advertising Standards Authority Advice Note, Vanity* (July 1997), a vanity publisher is: “any company which charges a client to publish a book; or offers to include short stories, poems or other literary or artistic material in an anthology and then invites those included in it to buy a copy of that anthology.” Vanity publishing is also referred to as subsidy publishing which means the author sells his or her subsidiary rights which allows someone else to repackaging his or her work into another format, at a fee paid by the author. Subsidy publishing will often provide an author exposure he or she would otherwise not receive. Distribution and rights vary, the author should examine any contracts carefully.

publish

\Pub"lish\, v. t. [imp. & p. p. [Published](#) ; p. pr. & vb. n. [Publishing](#) .] [F. publier, L. publicare, publicatum. See [Public](#) , and [-ish](#) .]

1. To make public; to make known to mankind, or to people in general; to divulge, as a private transaction; to promulgate or proclaim, as a law or an edict.
2. To make known by posting, or by reading in a church; as, to publish banns of marriage.
3. To send forth, as a book, newspaper, musical piece, or other printed work, either for sale or for general distribution; to print, and issue from the press.
4. To utter, or put into circulation; as, to publish counterfeit paper. [U.S.]

Self-Publishing

According to *The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing* (Ross, 1994), self-publishing is “the act of privately producing and marketing your own work.” According to Tom and Marilyn Ross the following are among the rewards of self-publishing: (1) it offers the potential for larger profits; (2) it provides entrepreneurs an opportunity to work independently; (3) it provides tax shelters; (4) it provides the opportunity to work part-time while maintaining full-time employment; (5) it allows the author absolute control over the production of his or her work; and (6) it allows the author to control the timeframe for the publishing and marketing of his work.

The author performs all the functions of a publisher: to do his own marketing, to fund the project and the printing, and to be responsible for all editorial aspects of composing the publication. In return, the author retains all rights to the work, owns the books and the camera-ready artwork, and works directly with the designer to produce the book the way he wants it.

On-Demand Publishing

On-demand publishing is a relatively new form of publishing and may be a good fit for an author who strongly desires to be published but does not have enough capital to fund completely the publishing of his or her own work.

There are several excellent Internet sites to explore about on-demand publishing. Generally they offer the following services:

- (1) options for setup of print-on-demand service, applications and contracts;
- (2) internet marketing and promotion and order fulfillment; and
- (3) title maintenance archiving services.

On-demand publishing benefits an author by reducing front-end printing and warehousing costs while marketing the book through web and book catalog listings. Royalties are paid to the author upon the sale of each book, after deducting the cost of printing the order.

Authors receive a small number of books when they purchase the service and have limited control over design decisions. Authors retain all rights to the material, however they do not own the materials from which the book is printed.

A variation of printing-on-demand (POD) is “print as needed.” Using a local printing service who can print and bind small print runs (50 or 100 books), the author can order books as needed for distribution. The book would be stored electronically at the printer ready for output. The author would need to make arrangements for shipping and marketing, but this is a ideal resource for an author who wishes to have publications on hand to sell alongside professional speaking engagements.

Publications Unlimited will obtain prices for these alternative printing methods as part of our self-publishing evaluation and proposal.

For anyone interested in having his or her works published, it is important to understand the different options available. The pathways to being published are: Commercial Publishing, Subsidy Publishing, and Self-Publishing. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages in what they offer authors, which are summarized here.

Commercial Publisher

- Author submits a proposal or a manuscript
- Agent or publisher selects the work
- Publisher and author agree on contract
- Advance paid to author from future royalties
- Publisher funds editorial and design
- Publisher funds printing
- Publisher owns and files all copyright and ISBN registration
- Publisher files Library of Congress CIP
- Publisher markets book but author is required to cooperate in the marketing effort. Author may have to pay for some travel associated with a "book tour."
- Publisher pays author royalties based on sales
- Publisher takes on all risks of publishing the book.

Subsidy Publishing

- Author submits a proposal or a manuscript
- Work selected by publisher's acquisition editors
- Publisher and author and negotiate a "rights" contract that transfers the publication rights from the author to the publisher.
- Author pays publisher for editorial and design work
- Author funds printing
- Publisher owns and files all copyright and ISBN registration
- Publisher files Library of Congress CIP
- Author markets book, publisher lists book in booklists and makes some promotional efforts
- Author may be asked to "buy back" copies of the book which do not sell
- Author takes on most risks of publishing the book without ownership of the book. Author may need to buy back rights to the work.

Self-Publishing

- Author provides manuscript to be published
- Author decides to act as own publisher
- Author selects, contracts with, and pays for book design and production services.
- Author provides own editing or contracts with professional editor
- Author selects and pays for printing
- Author owns and files copyright and ISBN registration
- Author files Library of Congress CIP
- Author markets book and makes arrangements for order fulfillment
- Author may wish to maintain web site for book promotion and sales
- Author receives all profits from the sale of the books
- Author takes on all risks of publishing the book, retaining all rights and ownership of books and potential for profit.

Additional Resources

The writer's section at the local public library and local writer's networks are additional resources available to authors. Online are many articles that can be accessed by a simple search engine. Publishing and writing course are also available from local community colleges.

Commercial Publishing

- *The Writer's Market* is updated yearly and is an invaluable resource to an author desiring commercial publishing. It provides a list of publishers, addresses, and where and how to submit manuscripts.
- *The Writer's Handbook*, also updated yearly, contains over 3,300 book markets and includes articles from successful authors "to help you write better."

Self-Publishing

- *The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing: Everything You Need to Know to Write, Publish, Promote and Sell Your Own Book*, Tom and Marilyn Ross, Writer's Digest Books, Cincinnati, OH
- *The Self-Publishing Manual: How to Write, Print and Sell Your Own Book* (Self Publishing Manual, 13th ed), Dan Poynter

Subsidy Publishing

- Vantage Press, Inc., Subsidy Book Publishers, 516 W. 34th Street, New York, NY 10001 (212) 736-1767 or FAX (212) 736-2273. www.vantagepress.com

On-Demand Web-Based Publishing

- AuthorHouse at <http://www.authorhouse.com>
- iUniverse at <http://www.iuniverse.com>
- Xlibris at <http://www.xlibris.com>
- Lulu at <http://www.lulu.com>

Custom Publishing Services

- PUBLICATIONS UNLTD · Design & Publication Services, Raleigh NC / 919-832-9311

To Register Your Work

- The Library of Congress website at www.locweb.loc.gov will provide you information and forms on how to obtain the copyright for your publication, and much more.
- The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is a 10-digit number that uniquely identifies books and book-like products published internationally. ISBNs are assigned in the United States by the U.S. ISBN Agency. R.R. Bowker is the independent agent in the U.S. for this system. <http://www.isbn.org>

The Book Industry Community

R.R. Bowker provides many links for the publishing community, in addition to ISBN registration. <http://www.isbn.org/standards/home/index.asp>

Clarifying Your Publishing Needs

This form will allow you to define your project and your needs, and will help us to determine the best fit. You may also use the sheet to help you determine which process serves you best.

- ☐ What type of book do you wish to publish? (i.e. adult fiction, children, how-to manual, etc.)

- ☐ How many pages do you project the book will be? _____
- ☐ What size are the pages? 5.5 x 8.5 _____ 8.5 x 11 _____ 6 x 9 _____ other _____
- ☐ Does your publication need to be in color or black and white? ☐ color ☐ black ink
- ☐ Will your publication be primarily text? ☐ yes ☐ no
- ☐ What other type of graphics to be included: ☐ photographs ☐ graphics ☐ tables ☐ illustrations
- ☐ How many? _____
- ☐ Are you wanting a soft-cover or hard-cover for your book? ☐ soft-cover ☐ hard-cover
- ☐ What is the range of your readership? How many books will you need printed? _____

To help determine the best form for your publication, please rank the following:

Range of Importance: 1 = very important; 2 = important; 3 = neutral; 4 = unimportant; 5 = do not care

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want someone to pay me for my manuscript? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to fund and own the publishing process myself? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want control over the design and production of my manuscript? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want control over the printing and marketing of my book? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want control over the editing of my manuscript? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How important is it for you to make a profit from your book? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How important is it for you to have your book accessible to other readers? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How important is it to have the books on hand for promotional opportunities? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How important is it to you to be recognized as an author? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |