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Introduction

Many people want to become a published author, but they lack the patience or persistence to do so. It's a daunting process to find an agent and a publisher. Even if you're lucky enough to get picked up by a traditional publisher, it can take a year or more before your book is even published, and even longer to receive your first royalty check.

For this reason, many give up on their dreams entirely. They throw in the towel and think they will never have a chance to make it in the tough world of publishing.

If you feel that way, think again! Self-publishing could be exactly what you need to get your book published and making money right away! With self-publishing, you won't have to wait several months to hear back from publishers. You won't have to endure countless rejection letters. And you certainly won't have to wait a year or more for your book to be published. You could have your first book published and earning money in just a few days!

So let's get started.

Self-Publishing a Book

So what's involved in getting a book ready to publish?

First, you have to write the book, obviously. But you need to make sure your book fits within a specific niche or genre. Otherwise, it will be very difficult to market the book. If it is non-fiction, be sure it is a topic that is in demand. If it is fiction, you'll want to ensure it fits in with a genre or sub-genre.

Next, you need to edit the book. One of the biggest mistakes people make is to write the book and publish it without going through the editing process.

The editing process is extremely important, because people are often very disturbed by major errors in books. It makes them think you don't care about the book's content, and they worry about the quality of the information or story. Errors in fiction can be distracting, and can break the tension you're trying to build in the story.

Don't count on your word processor to catch mistakes with spellcheck and grammar checking. They don't catch all mistakes, and sometimes you will

have errors that wouldn't show up in a spellchecker, because the words aren't technically misspelled.

For example, if you mean to type "though", and you add an extra "t", the word becomes "thought". Clearly, these words do not mean the same thing, but a spellchecker wouldn't catch the error, because "thought" is still a word.

Some people get "beta readers" to help edit their book. You allow some trusted individuals to run through your book before it is published in order to catch as many mistakes as possible.

One way to edit a book is to read it backwards sentence by sentence. This will help you catch more mistakes, because you won't be distracted by the story itself.

If possible hire a professional editor to revise your work, but make sure you hire someone who does proofreading. Some editors only look for content and flow, and can't actually help catch grammatical mistakes!

Once the book is edited and ready to go, you need to create a book cover. This may need to be created to a very specific size if you will be printing the book, or it can be nearly any square or rectangular size if you will be creating a digital version only.

Your book cover is critical. They say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but the fact is, many people do. Would you buy a book that had a terrible cover? You would probably think it was put together just as sloppily as the cover. That's never a good thing.

If you can't design a professional cover yourself, you can hire someone to do it for you. Book covers start at around \$50 and go up to about \$300. If you're serious about making a success of your book, you really need a quality cover.

Make sure to use legal, royalty-free images if you design your own cover. You don't want to steal random images from Google Images or somewhere similar, because you could get into trouble for infringing on someone's copyright.

Buy images for your cover from a reputable stock photo agency like:

<http://www.istockphoto.com>

<http://www.dreamstime.com>

<http://www.bigstockphoto.com>

Paperback Publishing

In the past, self-publishing a paperback book required a huge upfront outlay of cash, because you had to pay to have the books printed in large quantities.

Thanks to the print-on-demand (POD) industry, you can now have a paperback ready to sell for little or no upfront outlay! In fact, it will cost you very little, even if you have to hire someone to design your book cover.

Sites like Lulu.com and CreateSpace.com make it so easy to publish your book that almost anyone can do it without any prior experience. CreateSpace.com provides easy to use templates that make it easy to create a cover for your book, and put a book together in almost any size.

It can be tricky to format a book for sites like CreateSpace.com. They have very specific requirements for the formatting, and if you don't follow their suggestions, they'll deny your book and you'll have to try again.

For this reason, many people hire professionals to format their books. CreateSpaces offers formatting services for a fee, or you can hire someone from a place like eLance.com.

If you want your book to appear in bookstores, libraries, and other locations, you'll want to get CreateSpace's Expanded Distribution package. You will have to pay \$39 for this, but your book will be available for bookstores and other retailers to buy. That doesn't mean they will buy them, but they will be able to.

Some people feel it's worth it, and others do not. If your book becomes popular and proves it can sell well, it is definitely worth the cost. Not only will you have the potential to get picked up by retail locations and libraries, but you'll get a hefty discount off the purchase of your own books.

So you'll be able to buy your own books and distribute them through your own channels.

You can upgrade to the EDC (Expanded Distribution Channel) at any time, so you don't have to do this as soon as you release your book. You can easily upgrade once you have the funds available, or once your book has proven to be a hit.

Digital Books

Many people prefer to publish digital e-Books instead of paperback books. Some say it's easier to format an e-Book than a paperback, and it can be faster to get a book published.

There are several platforms for selling digital books. Kindle is the most popular. You can upload your book to Kindle at:

<http://kdp.amazon.com>

If you want your book to appear at BN.com (Barnes & Noble) and other websites, you have two options. You can publish directly to Barnes & Noble's website with PubIt. Or you can publish to Barnes & Noble and many other sites with Smashwords.

<http://pubit.barnesandnoble.com>

<http://www.Smashwords.com>

PubIt will only allow you sell on the Barnes & Noble website, but you'll get a higher commission than through Smashwords. Smashwords will let you

publish on Barnes & Noble, as well as the Apple iBookstore, Sony Reader Store, Kobo, and the Diesel eBook Store.

Many writers prefer to publish to Barnes & Noble with PubIt for the higher royalties, and use Smashwords to publish only to the other networks, while others prefer to keep everything in one location. It's up to you which you would rather do.

You may want to get some formatting help if you publish to Smashwords or PubIt, because they require specific formats. Some people have trouble converting their books into these formats. Kindle uses HTML, so most people can handle formatting their books for it, but other stores require different formats.

Fortunately, these sites have step-by-step instructions that tell you exactly what you need to do to format your book for their devices. Some people find them complex or difficult, but if you are patient, it's really not hard. Just follow the instructions and you'll have your book ready for a variety of devices in no time.

Smashwords even has a free guide available:

<http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/52>

Promotion

Don't forget the single most important element of self-publishing – marketing. Most people put their books up and expect people to find them, but that won't get you sales. People aren't going to find your book among millions if you don't do some promotion.

Here are some things you can do to promote your books:

1. Join and post in reader forums, such as Amazon's discussions.
2. Set up a blog to promote your book.
3. Create a "book trailer" and submit it to YouTube and other sites.
4. Use Facebook and Twitter to spread the word.
5. Hold book giveaways to draw attention to your book.

These are just a few ideas to get you started. Get out there and start promoting your book. This is the most important part of the process, so spend the time to do it right.
