

Publishing Your Book

There are many options, a variety of print-on-demand services and a wide range of prices when it comes to self-publishing. You need to decide how much control you want of your project, how much of the work you are willing to do yourself, and how much money you are willing to spend. This will determine whether you will have a printing company print your book, whether you will market the book yourself, or if you want to have a print-on-demand company print and market your book for you or if you want to query traditional publishers in hopes of having them pick up the whole ball of wax.

Printing Options

If you choose to self-publish, you have the option of using a regular printing company or a print-on-demand (POD) company.

If you decide to self-publish through a regular printer, you will need to have an absolutely perfect copy of your book including the cover in the exact format you want it printed. They will not make changes, look for typos, work on layout, or help you market your book. You can do the formatting and editing yourself or you may choose to outsource it. The printing company will print the quantity of books you want and you will warehouse and distribute them on your own.

A POD company offers printing and additional a la carte services for a fee. These services include formatting, editing and marketing your book. There is no need for warehousing since the POD will print the books as you need them (one book at a time if necessary) and distribute them to the individual customer or bookstore. Many of them will obtain the ISBN for you and send out PR material to help promote your book nationwide to the media and bookstores.

Traditional Publishing requires the least amount of work AFTER your book is accepted. Getting the book accepted is a totally different story. You will need to research to find the names and addresses of publishers you think would likely publish a book in your genre. You'll need to research the market and sell your book idea to the publisher through a query letter. Query letters may be as many as 100 pages (including a few sample chapters of your book) and must be eloquently written using a format that shows your research and tells why it is in the publisher's best interest to accept your book. This proposal or query letter is sent to a number of publishers, and then you will wait for a response until one of them accepts your proposal. This can take a lot of time and may be frustrating when you do not hear anything from the publisher for months. Once accepted, you retain rights to a percentage of the royalties from the sales of your product, but you may lose control of your work if the publisher wants to make major changes in your manuscript, so be prepared for that

possibility. This Web site has a lot of links for self-publishers:
<http://www.bookmarket.com/tipsconfirm.html>

Copyright and ISBN

It is a good idea to register and copyright your book in the Library of Congress before sending it to market. The instructions and forms are available online via the office of copyright website at <http://www.copyright.gov/>

Either the publisher or author will apply for the ISBN. If you choose to publish and market your book without a print-on-demand company, you can do this online at <http://www.isbn.org/standards/home/isbn/us/application.asp>. The ISBN costs about \$225.00 (per 10 ISBN) for normal service plus a Publisher Registration Fee of \$19.95. You'll have to purchase a quantity of 10 ISBNs because that is as few as Bowker will sell a publisher (you, me) at one time. You can use the other nine ISBNs on additional titles you may write and publish later on. Decide on a price for your book before you apply for the barcode if you want it to be encoded in the barcode. If you know the number of pages and type of cover and binding you want, your printer can give you a ballpark price. You'll need to purchase the digital barcode separately (about \$10-25) from a link a barcode company. Here is a listing of bar code services online. <http://www.isbn.org/standards/home/isbn/us/barcode.asp>. You can choose to have the barcodes emailed to you or sent on disc by regular mail. The average person (like you and me) cannot open the barcodes because we do not have the program required to do so. Trying to open it in another program could permanently damage it. Most printing companies have the program and the ability to open the code and insert it onto the book for you. The barcode will have the price encoded so that when it scans at a checkout, it will automatically ring the retail price. Most print-on-demand companies obtain the ISBN and barcode as part of the price and services they offer.