From Design to "Publish"
Steps to Design and Self-publish Your Book

A Brief Overview

The definition for self-publishing is *"to publish a book or piece of one's work independently and at one's own expense"*. The more popular term is "Indie Publishing" which comes from combining the words "Publish" with "Independently".

Thanks to Print-on-Demand (POD) technology, the economy of scale is no longer a factor in book printing—authors can have books printed for virtually no upfront cost. Through indie publishing, authors are in control of producing and selling their books directly to readers without a traditional or hybrid publisher taking a chunk of the profits and controlling the production schedule and design of the book, or the method of sales. Authors become "authorpreneurs" who manage all aspects of their publishing enterprise like a small business, in contrast to the old model of being at the mercy of gatekeepers— the agents and traditional publishing houses.

While authors are in charge of the design and marketing of their book and they usually hire people to do tasks that require skilled expertise such as design and editing. Many authors develop their own skills in social media marketing, engaging their niche readers through blogs, videos and interviews, and direct, and online marketing to sell their books. What follows are the steps you'll take to independently publish your book:

Preparation

Authors often work in a vacuum and the editing and remarks they receive are likely from friends and family. Your finished manuscript should also be read and edited by a professional editor who will provide an editorial evaluation regarding what is needed to make it market-ready.

You'll also want to do some marketing research: Who are your readers; what formats will appeal to these readers; and in what ways will you get the word out to them? What are the current outstanding books in your niche? Create a budget and plan of action for marketing when your book is published or available through presale. If you plan to write more than one book, it's recommended that you create your own publishing imprint and obtain an ISBN (see page 2-3).

When this preparation is done, your finished, edited manuscript is ready for layout

Book layout and cover design

After looking over a book designer's online portfolio, get started with a free introductory meeting to talk about your book, schedule, budget, expectations, and your marketing plan or ideas. If the designer is a good fit, request a proposal detailing services and fees.

Your book designer will want to know:

- ✔ Do you have any artwork or images that can or should be used?
- ✔ What is the genre or closest genre? (For example: fiction/romance, non-fiction/ business, etc.)
- ✔ What is the word count for the book?

✔   Will there be an index?

✔   Are there any color or branding requirements?

✔   If the title or subtitle has not been finalized, will you consider optimizing it for Google and Amazon's search engines?

✔   Do you have or wish to explore a publishing name and logo?

✔   Do you have an ISBN?

✔   Is the book part of a series?

✔   Do you have a book description and endorsements?

✔   Do you have an author bio and photo?

✔   Do you also plan to publish in eBook and audio formats?

✔   What are other notable books in your genre?

The book design process

You can expect to choose from several custom cover and interior layout designs before you decide on a final cover and interior layout and you'll review the book in several stages along the way. Before your book is published you'll review and approve final designs. At the end of the project, ask for the editable files and linked artwork for both cover and layout.

Printing & publishing through KDP (similar process for IngramSpark.com)

The book is ready for printing after the book layout and cover have passed the final proofreading. There are a number of printing options but the most common is KDP—an Amazon company, or Ingram Spark, a printing subsidiary of Lightning Source. The account setup and printing/publishing process is similar though it is free and more streamlined through KDP. Either you or your designer will upload your files for printing:

1.   Set up an account at kdp.amazon.com/en_US or IngramSpark.com

2.   Gather the metadata for your book that include a book description of up to 4000 characters; 2-7 keywords or short keyword phrases; the cataloging /browsing categories for your book (for example fiction/political thriller); the list price, book size and page count; whether it is part of a series; your publishing imprint, and the ISBN number.

3.   Upload PDFs of the book layout and full cover, and check them through the online previewer before approving the book for printing proof copies.

4.   Order printed proof copies at the wholesale author copy price. Books will arrive in 7-10 days, proofread, then approve the printed book for publishing.

5.   Your book will appear on its own sales page on the Amazon website in 1-3 days

6.   After your book is published, create a free author page at authorcentral.amazon.com

Registering your ISBN with your own publishing imprint

The ISBN helps customers identify and order the exact book in the format they wish to purchase. Libraries, bookstores, online retailers, distributors, and wholesalers depend on this unique identifier to track purchases and sales, and it is necessary to register an ISBN for your book if you intend to sell to those outlets under your own publishing name. On the other hand, an ISBN is not required for eBooks. Retailers such as Amazon,

Barnes & Noble, Kobo, and Apple will provide one, though you can assign your own. Purchase either a single ISBN number for $125, or a block of ten ISBNs for $295—there is no time limit in which to use the numbers. ISBNs are registered through the Bowker/My Identifiers website: http://myidentifiers.com. Here you'll create an account with your name and contact info, selecting "publisher" as organization type, and enter your publishing name. You can register under your author name, but this may cause your book to be excluded from some catalogs and will flag your book as self-published. When you have an ISBN, you can register your book with the Library of Congress—necessary for books to be accepted by libraries and academic institutions.

To apply for a number from the Library of Congress (LCCN)

1. Go to the EPCN homepage: loc.gov/publish/pcn

2. Click on "Open an Account", Then *Application to Participate* at the bottom of the last paragraph.

3. Submit a registration request for a publisher account. When approved, you'll be sent login information, and then you'll be able to register your book for a Library of Congress number that will be sent to you by email within a few days. This number is placed on the copyright page, above the ISBN.

What is a self-publishing imprint?

A publishing imprint is the name of your publishing company—the name displayed to the public wherever you sell your book and in distribution channels. It is also listed on your book's copyright page, and it's the name that your ISBN will be registered through. Self-publishers can use their author name but it is preferable to create a distinction between the author name and the publisher for public relations and brand-building reasons. The imprint can be an invented name, the name of one's existing business, or some variation.

To make sure that no one else is using the publishing name you choose, check for the full name through online searches: Google, Amazon books, the county records database of fictitious names, and Literary Marketplace.

Remember to search for the complete name including "press" or "publishing" if they are part of your publishing name. If you will be publishing more than one book, this is well worth the effort. Once chosen, a self-publishing imprint name is essentially forever. It becomes the brand for your books and helps readers identify your work.

The question that follows is, "Do I need to set up a formal business entity under this name"? The short answer is that there is no requirement but depending on your circumstances, it might make sense. One consideration is whether you want to accept payment in the name of your imprint. In many parts of the country, a bank will want to see proof that you are authorized to be "doing business as" (DBA) this name and you will need to formally register the fictitious name. Check with your city, county or state for local regulations.

When the publishing name is settled, you may want to create a logo or symbol for your imprint. If you do, keep it simple and easy to see in a tiny size and in one color.

I hope this brief overview will help you navigate the process of self-publishing. If you have questions or would like to meet with me to talk about your book, contact me at 541-488-6869, or by email at booksavvystudio@gmail.com.

Wishing you success in your publishing adventure,

Chris