

Self Publishing – The basic steps

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Here are the basic steps in publishing your book through Scribbulations.

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1. Finish your book

Have your work critiqued

Writing is a lonely business, they say. But at the same time, you can be too close to your own work to see obvious errors. There is probably a writing group near you or, at least, enough demand for you to start one. Don't try to publish before you've shown your work to others.

Do any necessary rewrites

Sometimes you can get by with minor adjustments here and there. Other times, what's wrong with your work will require a re-write. Based on the critiques, and how you weigh them against your own instincts, you have to decide how much is enough.

Run a spellcheck

Whichever word-processor you use, run the spell checker. It won't catch everything and sometimes it is actually wrong. But run it anyway.

Formulate some ideas on layout, not the details

You know if you need a traditional chapter layout, easy-to-read font and so on. You might have clear ideas on breaking the conventions and producing an innovative eye-popping product. Remember that the conventions have evolved over centuries. They have utility and the weight of your readers' expectations behind them. Control your ambitions and concentrate on the words for now.

The best way to write your manuscript is double-spaced 12-point courier, with underlines where you want italics and nothing else. Special layout and formatting ideas should be written up separately.

2. Copy-edit

There are clearly understood psychological reasons for not editing your own work. The human brain does a lot of processing of information

between the image hitting your eyes and the concept appearing in your conscious mind.

Ever seen this?

Paris
in the
the spring

Look carefully. Most people read this as "Paris in the spring." That's not what it says.

When, as an author, you read your manuscript you read what you expect to be there, not necessarily what you've actually written. There's no shame in this, it's a fact of nature.

That's why you need a copy editor (sometimes referred to as a line editor). Preferably one who doesn't already know you and/or like you, and who has not read your work before. They will read your words with a fresh eye. If they have experience in editing they will also have a set of techniques that will minimize the common mistakes. These include, but are not limited to:

- word substitution – "from" instead of "form"
- errors in grammar – "between you and I"
- incorrect word usage – "I am unanimous in that"
- incorrect punctuation – "I must correct it's problems"
- paragraphs that need to be broken up
- sentences that need to be broken up

Don't pay for a full edit and then do a major rewrite; it's a waste of money and of the editor's time. If the editor tells you your book is in real trouble and is urging a rewrite, go back to your critiquers and say "Why didn't you tell me?"

Scribbulations offers editing services, but if you want to use your own, that's fine. It is however not an optional step.

3. Cover

It says "pick me up and buy me!" Or not.

Cover design

Like editing, this is best sub-contracted out. Have your ideas ready.

Cover text

If the cover design makes a potential reader pick the book up, the back cover text has to make the sale. This is your sales pitch; work on it and rework it, then memorize it.

Scribbulations offers cover creation services, but if you want to use your own, that's fine too.

4. Design and Layout

Your designer will take you through the design process. Here you decide on matters such as:

- Headers - and what they might say
- Footers - and what's in them
- Ornamentation - perhaps indicating the end of a poem or list
- Chapter headings - style and position on the page
- Front matter - contents, foreword, acknowledgments, glowing endorsements from famous authors...
- Is there anything your book requires that involves special formatting, backgrounds, printing to the edge of the page and so on.

Don't spend your time doing the detailed layout at home. Your layout expert will guide you through this. They have the correct software to achieve what you need.

Illustrations

Do you have photographs? Where will they be placed? Do you need captions?

Text

Here you decide on, at least:

- font(s)
- font size
- placement of the various text features
- leading and kerning
- the number of pages

You should ask for sample pages to check that the layout is being done according to those instructions you wrote separately from your manuscript.

Scribbulations will provide the design and layout services for your book.

5. Galley

Once the book is laid out, you get the chance to review it, usually unbound.

Proofread

Now is the time to proofread. Again, someone unfamiliar with the text should do this.

Scribbulations offers proofreading services, but if you want to use your own, that's fine. It is however not an optional step.

6. Digital Files

The Print on Demand process uses digital printers. All books and their covers are loaded into the printing machines electronically.

These digital files are required to be produced by professional page-layout programs. Those produced by ordinary word-processing programs will usually not be of sufficient quality.

Scribbulations will handle all aspects of the digital file creation for your book.

7. Printing

The first step of the printing process is the set-up on the digital printing machines. If a problem is encountered at this stage the files will be rejected and will need to be corrected and resubmitted.

The next step is the production of a proof copy. This has to be checked for printing errors, and is the final chance to catch any other problems that have not been found in the editing or proofreading stages.

Once the proof copy is accepted, the book is available for order.

Scribbulations will check the proof copy before passing it on to the author for final approval.

8. Ordering

Print on demand books can be ordered in any quantity, including one at a time.

Scribbulations will handle the ordering for your book.