

## **Definitions of Publishing**

Publishing is the activity of making information, literature, music, software and other content available to the public for sale or for free.

The industry of publishing, including the production and distribution of books, magazines, web sites, newspapers, etc.

Traditionally, the term refers to the distribution of printed works, such as books, newspapers, and magazines. With the advent of digital information systems, the scope has expanded to include electronic publishing such as e-books, academic journals, micropublishing, websites, blogs, video game publishing, and the like.

## **Publishing**

Publishing is the process of production and dissemination of literature, music, or information — the activity of making information available to the general public. In some cases, authors may be their own publishers, meaning: originators and developers of content also provide media to deliver and display the content for the same. Also, the word publisher can refer to the individual who leads a publishing company or imprint or to a person who owns a magazine. Traditionally, the term refers to the distribution of printed works such as books and newspapers. With the advent of digital information systems and the Internet, the scope of publishing has expanded to include electronic resources, such as the electronic versions of books and periodicals, as well as micropublishing, websites, blogs, video game publishers and the like. Publishing includes the stages of the development, acquisition, copy-editing, graphic design, production – printing, and marketing and distribution of newspapers, magazines, books, literary works, musical works, software and other works dealing with information, including the electronic media. Publication is also important as a legal concept

## **History**

Publishing became possible with the invention of writing, and became more practical upon the introduction of printing. Prior to printing, distributed works were copied manually, by scribes. Due to printing, publishing progressed hand-in-hand with the development of books.

The Chinese inventor Bi Sheng made movable type of earthenware circa 1045, but there are no known surviving examples of his work. Around 1450, in what is commonly regarded as an independent invention, Johannes Gutenberg invented movable type in Europe, along with innovations in casting the type based on a matrix and hand mold. This invention gradually made books less expensive to produce and more widely available.

Early printed books, single sheets and images which were created before 1501 in Europe are known as incunables or *incunabula*. "A man born in 1453, the year of the fall of Constantinople, could look back from his fiftieth year on a lifetime in which about eight million books had been printed, more perhaps than all the scribes of Europe had produced since Constantine founded his city in A.D. 330."<sup>[6]</sup>

Eventually, printing enabled other forms of publishing besides books. The history of modern newspaper publishing started in Germany in 1609, with publishing of magazines following in 1663.

Missionaries brought printing presses to sub-Saharan Africa in the mid-18th century.<sup>[7]</sup>

Historically, publishing has been handled by publishers, although some authors self-published.<sup>[8]</sup> The establishment of the World Wide Web in 1989 soon propelled the website into a dominant medium of publishing. Wikis and Blogs soon developed, followed by online books, online newspapers, and online magazines.

Since its start, the World Wide Web has been facilitating the technological convergence of commercial and self-published content, as well as the convergence of publishing and producing into online production through the development of multimedia content.

The process of publishing

Book and magazine publishers spend a lot of their time buying or commissioning copy; newspaper publishers, by contrast, usually hire their staff to produce copy, although they may also employ freelance journalists called stringers. At a small press, it is possible to survive by relying entirely on commissioned material. But as activity increases, the need for works may outstrip the publisher's established circle of writers

For works written independently of the publisher, writers often first submit a query letter or proposal directly to a literary agent or to a publisher. Submissions sent directly to a publisher are

referred to as unsolicited submissions, and the majority come from previously unpublished author. If the publisher accept unsolicited manuscripts, then the manuscripts is placed in the slush pile, which publisher's readers sift through to identify manuscripts of sufficient quality or revenue potential to be referred to acquisitions' editors for review. The acquisitions editors send their choices to the editorial staff. The time and number of people involved in the process are dependent on the size of the publishing company, with larger companies having more degrees of assessment between unsolicited submission and publication. Unsolicited submissions have a very low rate of acceptance, with some sources estimating that publishers ultimately choose about three out of every ten thousand unsolicited manuscripts they receive.

Many book publishers around the world maintain a strict "no unsolicited submissions" policy and will only accept submissions via a literary agent. This policy shifts the burden of assessing and developing writers out of the publisher and onto the literary agents. At these publishers, unsolicited manuscripts are thrown out, or sometimes returned, if the author has provided pre-paid postage.

Established authors may be represented by a literary agent to market their work to publishers and negotiate contracts. Literary agents take a percentage of author earnings (varying between 10 and 15 percent) to pay for their services. Some writers follow a non- standard route to publication. For example, this may include bloggers who have attracted large readerships producing a book based on their websites, books based on internet memes, instant "celebrities" such as Joe the Plumber, retiring sports figures and in general anyone a publisher feels could produce a marketable book. Such a books often employ the services of a ghostwriter.

For a submission to reach publication, it must be championed by an editor or publisher who must to convince other staff of the need to publish a particular title. An editor who discovers or champions a book that subsequently becomes a best-seller may find their reputation enhanced as a result of their success.

## **Types of Publishing**

When it comes to publishing your book, you have several options, depending on your budget, timeline, and the marketability of your book.

Before deciding on a publishing option, it is important to understand the different types of publishers, as well as your ability to reach an audience with your book and sell copies.

First, let's look at the three primary methods for publishing your book.

### **Traditional Publishing**

When you walk into a bookstore, you're surrounded by traditionally published books. A majority of the books on the best seller lists and 99% of the books you've ever heard of or read are traditionally published. You probably recognize names like HarperCollins, Penguin Random House, and Simon & Schuster—these are all traditional publishers.

Traditional publishers pay an author an advance to buy the rights to publish, sell, and distribute their book. Most traditional publishers will not accept any direct submissions or contact from authors. An industry insider or literary agent is required in order to engage with the publisher and secure a book deal.

### **Advantages of Traditional Publishing**

1. Traditional publishers pay an advance rather than requiring the author to pay the publisher.
2. It's more prestigious than hybrid or self-publishing.
3. Traditional publishers have the ability to sell to bookstores and other retailers.
4. You increase your chances of hitting bestseller lists.
5. You'll receive support and direction from top industry talent.
6. Being traditionally published opens more opportunities for endorsements from and collaborations with notable authors.
7. Some imprints will provide marketing and publicity for authors—especially with larger deals.
8. You will most likely sell many more books than you would with any other publishing option.

## **Disadvantages of Traditional Publishing**

1. You'll have less creative control—e.g. the publisher will ultimately decide on the book cover, book title, etc. However, the horror stories of publishers taking control of a book and going against the author's wishes are rare and way overblown. Almost always, all editorial decisions are submitted to the author for approval.
2. The typical timeline from deal to publication date is 12–18 months.
3. Low royalties (typically starting at 8% of the retail price, and topping out around 20%, and substantially more for ebooks, though this can vary widely and some smaller houses even offer profit-sharing deals).
4. It is very difficult to attract a reputable traditional publisher, especially without a platform.
5. Most authors are disappointed in the marketing and publicity efforts delivered by a publisher.

## **Self-Publishing**

Self-publishing, as the name indicates, is basically *do-it-yourself* publishing. You'll need to find and pay for an editor, a proofreader, a typesetter, a formatter, an indexer, an illustrator, and a cover designer, then submit the book yourself through Amazon, Kindle Direct Publishing or a similar book publishing facilitator.

When you self-publish, it's your responsibility to get your book in front of readers. Any publicity or media attention will require “knocking on doors” and peddling the book yourself.

If you take physical inventory, there's the added complications of order fulfillment and storage.

Depending on which publisher and distributor you use, it's likely that your book will be available on Amazon and the Barnes & Noble website. Almost always, though, bookstores and other brick-and-mortar retailers *will not* buy the book or put it on their shelves.

We'll just put it out there upfront: we do *not* recommend self-publishing. Simply put, for the time and money you'll put into self-publishing your book, you're better off hiring a small hybrid publisher (see below) to facilitate the publishing process for you.

## **Advantages of Self-Publishing**

1. You'll earn a higher percentage of profit from each book sold.
2. You'll have 100% creative control.

## **Disadvantages of Self-Publishing**

1. Costs for various services will likely outweigh similar costs for a professional hybrid publisher.
2. Self-publishing is a major time investment for the author.
3. Your book has almost no chance of becoming a bestseller.
4. The chance of your book being in bookstores is slim to none.
5. Frankly, you'll probably mess things up and cost yourself time, money, reputation, and peace of mind.

## **Hybrid Publishing**

Hybrid publishing is similar to self-publishing, as you typically retain all the rights to your materials and have creative control; however, instead of paying several different contractors to produce and publish your book, you pay a single entity to handle all aspects of the publishing process. Proofreading, typesetting, book cover design, etc., are typically all handled by the hybrid publisher.

A good hybrid publisher also knows what they're doing and will typically do a much better job of every aspect of the process than you or freelancers will. There is no need for you to micromanage the process.

Also, many of the top hybrids will go through a traditional sales cycle and can get your book into bookstores and other retail outlets. Most include some sort of marketing plan, and most help get your book reviewed and listed.

Hybrid publishing is a great option for most authors as even the least expensive "low-end" options are typically cheaper and of better quality than if you were to self-publish.

## **Advantages of Hybrid Publishing**

1. Hybrid publishing offers better royalties than traditional publishing. (Note: this varies widely, depending on how many additional services the hybrid publisher offers)
2. The author retains rights to the creative assets.
3. Hybrids can often publish within a short time frame. The time between signing the deal and the pub date can be as little as 2 months.
4. You're hiring a professional team that knows the book industry.
5. It's more prestigious than self-publishing, especially if you are working with a higher-end hybrid publisher.
6. High-end hybrids can get your book into physical retailers and sometimes even target bestseller lists.
7. Some hybrids include in-house marketing, website development, and other promotional services.

## **Disadvantages of Hybrid Publishing**

1. Cost: a low-end yet reputable hybrid costs as low as \$4,500, but a high-end hybrid that can sell to retailers will typically be at least \$25,000, with \$50,000+ being common, and some costing \$100,000+ if you opt for a heavy marketing and sales strategy. In general, you get what you pay for.
2. Hybrids are less prestigious than traditional publishers.
3. Your book is less likely to get picked up by retailers than it will be if you go with a traditional publisher.