

The Official Self-Publishing Checklist

By

www.book-editing.com

BOOK EDITING ASSOCIATES



Turning Writers into Authors Since 1998



If you've never self-published a book, the start-to-finish process may seem overwhelming. Becoming an independent author means you're in charge of design, pricing, distribution, marketing, and promotions.

The professional book editors, proofreaders, and self-publishing coaches affiliated with Book Editing Associates put together this checklist to help you navigate the steps involved in self-publishing your book.

BEFORE YOU HIT "PUBLISH"

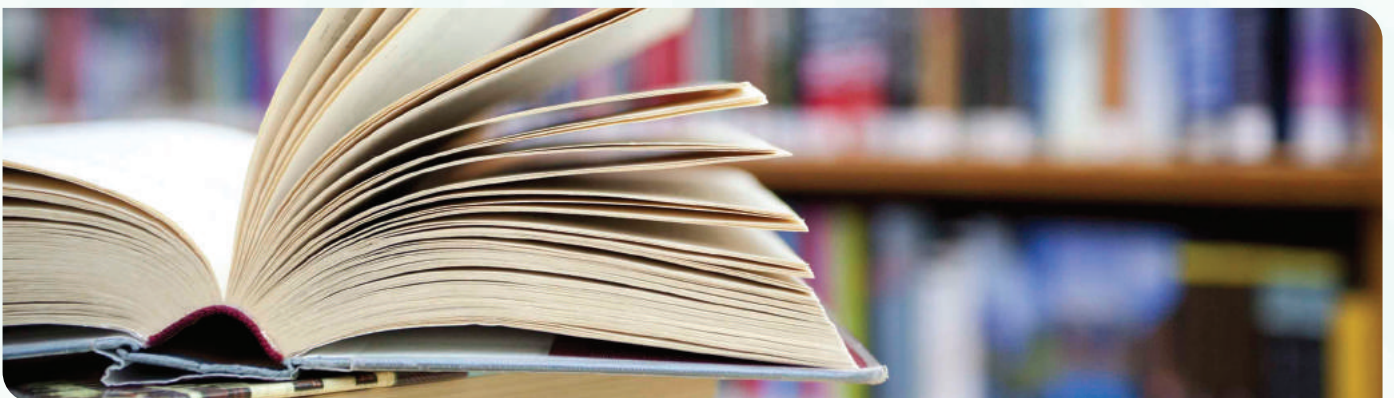
- 1. Research** your target audience. This will influence your cover design, editing, marketing, and promotions.
- 2. Decide** if you want to publish digitally, print, or both.
- 3. Select** your digital and print distributors. Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) isn't the only game in town. Check out IngramSpark, Lulu, Draft2Digital, Barnes and Noble Press, Scribd, SelfPublishing.com, and Smashwords.
- 4. Read** the contracts carefully or use the services of a literary attorney to make sure you understand the fine print before deciding on a publisher and distributor.
- 5. Plan and budget.** Be realistic about your talents and limitations. Editing, proofreading, and cover design will be your biggest expenses. These expenses will be followed by smaller expenses, some one-time, but others can be regular outputs depending on your marketing plan.
- 6. Editing and proofreading** are essential. Although there are many aspects of self-publishing you can do on your own, developmental editing (big picture), copyediting/line editing (how you use words), and proofreading (typos/mistakes) should only be done by publishing professionals. Do not shop for the lowest price. If your book is 50,000 words, and you get quotes of \$350 and \$2,500, you're not comparing apples-to-apples. (See Beware the Lowball: Why Different Editing Services Charge Different Rates).
- 7. Title.** Get creative. Avoid overused words and titles that sound too familiar (e.g., Shades of Blue/Gray). Come up with as many titles as you can think of. Keep a pen and pad handy. Brainstorm with your editor.

PREPARING THE MANUSCRIPT

- 8. Create the front matter** (e.g., title page, copyright page, table of contents, dedication, acknowledgments).
- 9. Barcode.** You or your cover designer will need a barcode for the back cover.
- 10. Pseudonym.** Decide if you'll use your real name or a pseudonym. Look into the pros/cons of registering your publishing entity as a business.
- 11. Bank account.** Set up a separate bank account for publishing-related income and expenses.
- 12. Keywords and categories.** Research your options. You want your book to be discovered alongside traditionally published titles. You'll select your BISAC code (Book Industry Standards and Communications), which determines where the book will be "shelved," whether virtually on a sell site like Amazon or in a brick-and-mortar store.

PREPARING TO SELF-PUBLISH

- 13. Author's platform.** Set up your author's platform before you publish but after you have the creative elements (images/colors/fonts) in place. Get your website and blog ready. A Facebook page is not a substitute for a website.
- 14. Choose your domain name.** You will grow your website as time goes on. It will be an important way for your readers to connect with you, and for you to build your brand as an author. So we suggest that your domain name be your name. If your name is not available you can add "author" or "books" to the domain name. And if at all possible get the .com version.
- 15. Set up your social media.** Just as fiction and nonfiction are different, different platforms may work better for you and your book. Popular platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram (often used for poetry), Goodreads, YouTube (often used for nonfiction and expert tutorials), Tumblr, Pinterest (largely female demographic), Anchor (an audio platform), etc. Some authors also create or participate in podcasts. Start engaging with your readers and followers. Direct your social media to your website.
- 16. For consistency and recognition,** use your professionally designed book cover as the main image for all of your social media pages. Use the same images, fonts, and colors consistently.
- 17. Book promotion.** Start posting promotional content to your blog and social media pages. Think of posting quotes from your book, and photos and images of people and places (real or imaginary) that appear in your book.



- 18. Create a mailing list.** Set up a link on your website for people to sign up for your newsletter. Use MailChimp for email bursts that invite potential readers to subscribe. Think surveys, giveaways, contests.
- 19. Pre-orders.** Use your social media/blog to promote pre-orders of your book. This can give your book a ranking boost on the day it's released.
- 20. Reviewers.** Create a digital preview of chapters 1-3 and contact potential reviewers.
- 21. Proofreading.** Have your proofreader review your website content and blogs before you publish updates.
- 22. ISBN.** Obtain your ISBN from Bowker or the publisher you select.
- 23. Copyright.** Register your copyright (optional). You own the copyright to your material whether or not you register.
- 24. Indexing.** For print nonfiction, send the final file to an indexer.
- 25. Proofreading.** Do you see a pattern? Have your proofreader review the digital and print galleys. In short, have your proofreader proof everything.
- 26. Pricing.** Research prices of similar books in your category. Calculate your sales price and sales percentages (aka royalties) for print and digital formats.

HIT "PUBLISH" AND THEN ...

- 27. Create hashtags.** Identify appropriate hashtags you can repeatedly use to convey your message in social media. A helpful link on how to use them:
<https://thepreviewapp.com/how-to-use-instagram-hashtags-17-golden-rules/>
Follow related hashtags and use them (don't abuse them) to reach potential readers. Google "hashtags for writers" and the current year. New hashtags are always being created, often in response to popular topics of the day/week/year.
- 28. Schedule your social media posts.** Decide if you want to use a social media utility such as Hootsuite, MeetEdgar, or TweetDeck to schedule your social media posts. Reference your other social media pages in your social media posts. Generate content at least once per week.
- 29. Images** work well on certain platforms, e.g., Instagram:
<https://www.thecreativepenn.com/2017/01/07/instagram/>
For simplicity, you can post the same image across all platforms so you only need to find one image at a time. Your cover designer or a graphic artist can create customized images for your marketing and promotions.
- 30. Photos.** Black-and-white photos may be preferred for nonfiction and memoir. Use a more polished color photo for LinkedIn, and a variety of high-resolution photos for your website. You'll need a way to compress the photos so your pages load quickly. If that sounds like geek-speak, hire a geek to resize your images and photos.
- 31. Submit to awards and contests.** Submit to general writing and genre-specific book awards and contests. Make a list of general/genre reviewers to send the book to, for both before publication and after.

- 32. Post-publishing promotions.** Plan your promotions, such as book signings and writers' conferences. Offer price reductions. Kindle Direct Publishing lets you run promotions on Amazon, but also check out BookBub and Goodreads.
- 33. Join writers' groups** on Facebook and other social media sites. You can trade "likes," but it doesn't necessarily mean a boost in sales, and you may be liking pages of writers who don't write well (putting it kindly).
- 34. Advertising and marketing.** Investigate the options for your topic/genre/demographics. Try ads on Facebook, Instagram, Goodreads, and Amazon. Pay attention to your daily budget, especially if your credit card is attached to your ad campaigns. Track your expenses and returns. Be prepared to tweak daily or weekly.
- 35. Consider a launch party.** Use your blog and social media to offer content snippets, promotions, giveaways, and contests. Host brief chats during the launch with other authors in your genre.
- 36. Comment** on the blogs of other authors and invite them to comment on yours. Keep in mind that, just as there is social etiquette in the world, there is etiquette in the world of social media. You want to connect to others to sell your book, but you also want to respond to others. While it's your social media, remember that it's not all about you.
- 37. Get it in print.** Order copies of your print book for local PR. Contact your library about upcoming publishing panels.

TRACKING AND TWEAKING

- 38. Track your sales** on Kindle or BookCore.

About Book Editing Associates

Formed in 1998 to protect writers from online scams, Book Editing Associates continues to be a one-stop shop for writers looking for vetted and tested book editors, proofreaders, ghostwriters, publishing, and self-publishing consultants.

www.book-editing.com

