

THE KEY BOOK PUBLISHING PATHS: VERSION 2

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TRADITIONAL	SELF-PUBLISHING	COMMUNITY
 <p>KEY CHARACTERISTICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You pay nothing to publish. Highly selective process; few authors accepted. Almost always demands exclusivity; you won't be able to use or publish the work anywhere else while under contract. Publishing process may take years, except for digital presses. <p>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publisher shoulders risk. Physical bookstore distribution more likely. Best chance of mainstream media coverage and reviews. With experienced publishers, years of expertise in book editing, production, marketing and publicity work for you. 	<p>FULLY ASSISTED</p>  <p>KEY CHARACTERISTICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You pay for a publishing services package; the cost may be hundreds or thousands of dollars depending on the package. Author receives better royalties than a traditional pub contract, but often makes less than DIY options below. No gatekeepers or selection process. Everyone can play. Your book may be available for order through bookstores, but it is rarely ever physically distributed or stocked. Unless you're paying for a print run, these services use print-on-demand technology (books are printed when ordered). The service company may try to sell you additional services that carry high prices, but may provide little value. Example: AuthorSolutions dominates this market in the U.S. (brands include AuthorHouse, Xlibris, iUniverse, many more) <p>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You get a published book for the minimum amount of hassle, if you can afford package fees. Ideal for an author who has no desire to handle the business side. 	 <p>KEY CHARACTERISTICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You write, publish, and distribute your work in a public or semi-public forum, directly for readers. Publication is self-directed and continues on an at-will and almost always nonexclusive basis. Emphasis is on feedback and growth, usually not sales. <p>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows you to develop an audience for your work early on, even while you're learning how to write. Popular writers at community sites may go on to traditional book deals.
<p>TRADITIONAL VARIATIONS</p>	<p>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You get a published book for the minimum amount of hassle, if you can afford package fees. Ideal for an author who has no desire to handle the business side. 	<p>COMMUNITY VARIATIONS</p>
<p>BIG FIVE: NEW YORK STYLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author receives an advance. After the advance is earned out, then royalties are paid; most books do not earn out their advance. Life-of-copyright contracts are most common, and the author keeps very few rights while the contract is in effect. You almost always need (and want) an agent. 	<p>DO IT YOURSELF</p>	<p>SERIALIZATION / IN PROGRESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readers consume content in chunks or installments; writers receive feedback that may allow them to revise. Establishes a fan base, or a direct connection between the author and her readers. Serialization is often used as a marketing tool for completed works. Examples: Wattpad, LeanPub
<p>SMALL PRESSES & UNIVERSITY PRESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many independent and small presses, such as Graywolf, Tin House, and Algonquin, work similarly to the Big Five, but may offer more personalized attention and niche marketing. Given how easy it is in the digital age for anyone to start a press, make sure your small publisher is doing something meaningful to earn its share of revenue, especially a newly born one. With university presses, you often give up far more rights to your work than with any other publisher; your work may also be subject to peer review and/or university board approval. 	 <p><i>The following types of services can be mixed & matched by entrepreneurial authors to best serve their readers. They primarily work on a nonexclusive, at-will basis, and typically offer more earnings potential than fully assisted models. No gatekeepers.</i></p>	<p>FAN FICTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very similar to serialization, only the work is based on other authors' books and characters. For this reason, it can be difficult to monetize fan fiction since it may constitute copyright infringement. Examples: Fanfiction.net, Archive Of Our Own
<p>PARTNERSHIPS: THE INNOVATIVE SIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually offers no advance, but better royalties (50-50 split is common). Partners may include imprints at major houses, literary agencies, author-led efforts, organizations/institutions, etc. Not all partners are created equal; some may offer little more than digital distribution and administration, while good partners have invaluable market experience and knowledge. Examples: Berrett-Koehler, Rogue Reader, Cool Gus 	<p>EBOOK-ONLY PUBLISHING SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Instant" publishing capability—start selling your e-books very quickly, sometimes within a day or so. Author responsible for all work—hiring freelance editorial or design help, producing final e-book files, marketing, etc. Many services charge nothing upfront and earn money when your book sells. For those that charge upfront fees, they commonly take a low (or no) percentage of sales. Major self-pub successes (e.g., Hugh Howey) often use this method, with distribution through Amazon KDP. Some services provide free or paid e-book file conversion, marketing tools, and other add-ons you can purchase. Examples: Amazon KDP, Smashwords, Apple iBookstore, BookBaby, Kobo Writing Life, Nook Press. 	<p>BLOGS AND WEBSITES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both new and established authors alike use their blog or website to post works in progress, offer excerpts for critique, or distribute free (and paid) versions of their books. Examples: LiveJournal, Wordpress, etc.
<p>DIGITAL-FOCUSED OR DIGITAL-ONLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide range of players here, from Big Five imprints that publish e-books, to digital-focused presses that may issue print-on-demand or small print runs (Ellora's Cave), to savvy start-ups (Byliner), to Amazon Publishing. Diversity of players and changing landscape means contracts vary widely. However, an ideal contract for a digital-only release is often a fixed-term contract (rights revert to the author after a specified number of years), due to ongoing changes in the industry. Advances may be nominal, with royalty split often in the 50-50 range. Hire an agent to review the contract before signing. 	<p>PRINT-ON-DEMAND (POD) SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> POD technology makes it affordable for most self-publishing authors to sell and distribute print books. The major do-it-yourself POD services offer a la carte packages and assistance if needed, but package purchase is not required. Some services also handle e-book sales/distribution. Examples: CreateSpace, Lulu, Lightning Source, Blurb. 	<p>CROWDFUNDING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When authors use a site such as Kickstarter, Pubslush, or Unbound to fund their project, essentially asking readers and other supporters to buy the book before it is published, as well as donate additional funds. Authors may employ any type of publishing methods to produce and distribute the funded book; some crowdfunding sites also distribute/sell.

SPECIAL CASES AND HYBRIDS

- **Agent-assisted self-publishing.** When the agent takes care of administrative and business duties related to self-publishing—giving you an "assisted" experience—then takes 15% of your sales, in addition to charging various editorial, production, and design fees.
- **Agent-assisted e-book distribution.** The agent signs you with an e-book distributor that works specifically with agents and publishers. The two biggest firms are Argo Navis and INscribe Digital. Be aware this puts two middlemen into the equation: the distributor who gets a cut, and your agent who typically gets 15%.

- **Digital-only publishers:** This is a confusing area because of the range of firms and services are out there (many brand-new), which may operate on traditional, partnership, assisted, and DIY models. Be careful when agreeing to exclusivity. Ideally, there should be a specific term to the contract. How or when does the agreement terminate? Be very protective of your rights if you're shouldering most of the risk and effort.
- **"Hybrid" authors:** There is much confusion over this term, but it typically refers to an author who both traditionally publishes and self-publishes. CJ Lyons is an example of such an author. A hybrid author may or may not work with an agent.

POPULAR TOOLS & SERVICES FOR PRODUCING E-BOOK FILES

- Scrivener: word processing software (paid)
- Calibre: free e-book conversion tool
- Sigil: free EPUB formatting/creation tool
- PressBooks: free e-book formatting tool, Wordpress-based, distribution possible
- LeanPub: free tool for turning a blog into an e-book, or publishing an in-progress book
- Apple Pages: can export EPUB files
- Apple iBooks Author: for building enhanced e-books for iOS devices
- Book Creator: iPad app for creating illustrated e-books for iOS devices
- AerBook Maker and Tablo.io: good for multimedia-work and tablet delivery

VALUABLE RESOURCES + ASSISTANCE

- The Independent Publishing Magazine by Mick Rooney offers comprehensive reviews and rankings of self-publishing service providers: independentpublishingmagazine.com
- Agent Rachele Gardner keeps a list of recommended editors at her website (look under "Resources for Writers"): www.rachellegardner.com
- BiblioCrunch is useful for finding professional editorial help: bibliocrunch.com
- WriterCube is a vetted book marketing database: writercube.com
- For a link round-up on the basics of e-book publishing: <http://janefriedman.com/2013/04/21/how-to-publish-an-ebook/>
- For a primer on how to get traditionally published: <http://janefriedman.com/2012/01/28/start-here-how-to-get-your-book-published/>