

# Notes on Publishing

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This is a collection of notes I have accumulated about the publishing industry and how to go about publishing a novel, poetry pamphlet or other piece of writing. It does not cover magazine publishing, submission to websites, competitions or probably quite a lot of other possibilities. Mostly, it focuses on the ways an author can get a novel published and into the reader's hands. The information has come from many sources – e.g. attending various talks as part of the Hampshire Writer's Society monthly meetings, material from Jericho Writers presentations, publisher's websites and other internet sources. Perhaps the primary benefit of these notes is that a lot of information is collected in one place. On the other hand, I'm sure I've missed stuff out – and the material included here will undoubtedly get out of date over the coming years.

## Introduction

A publisher is responsible for the process of converting an author's manuscript into a final form, and then distributing it to bookstores, libraries and other channels. Today, a publisher can be involved in the production and content for a variety of media, including books, websites, magazines, eBooks, e-magazines, audiobooks, computer games, music etc.

The publication process can involve many steps (though not all publishers provide all these services):

- Editing of the manuscript, either a high level (structural), or for factual accuracy, correct grammar, writing style and so on (line editing and copy editing).
- Design and selection of cover art
- Design and selection of type of binding material and styles
- Additional pages such as copyright, author bio,
- Allocate ISBNs as needed
- Provide copies of the book to the copyright libraries
- Coordination with a printer for the physical printing process or a digital production team
- Storage of a supply of books
- Negotiation of rights for foreign translation, film and audio rights, and Ebook adaptations
- Publishers will have expertise in their specific marketplaces, emerging trends, competitive offerings
- Distribution of the final book to distribution channels or bookshops
- Marketing such as
  - Advertising in trade journals and trade book fairs
  - Book tours by the author

Larger publishers rarely accept submissions directly from authors. Instead, they work with an agent who represents the author. The agent's job is to ensure that anything that they submit is both suitable for the markets that the publisher covers and is of sufficient quality to merit publication. It is hard to be accurate but there is probably of the order of 200,000 fictional manuscripts written each year in the UK. Agents will receive many tens of submissions a week and hence have to sift one or two thousand a year.

Working out how many new titles are published each year is hard – there is no definitive source. And how the digital channels have influenced this is also unclear. But the numbers are big!

Fifty years ago, publishing meant producing hardback or paperback books physically. Today, there are a number of digital alternatives, including eBooks and Audiobooks. This means it is very much easier for authors to self-publish their work.

Print books from traditional publishers are by their nature rather immutable. It's not easy to change the cover, or modify the price, nor are they sold directly from the publisher to the

consumer (they go via distribution to bookstores or Amazon etc). The whole process is not fleet of foot.

Digital books are much more flexible. If sales are slow because of the cover that can be changed quickly. No old stock needs to be pulped. You can change the blurb too. You can modify the price, radically if you wish – easily and instantly. You can include hyperlinks to your author's website. And eBooks are sold primarily via Amazon and Apple. These are just a conduit – in effect, the author is selling directly to the reader.

There are (estimated to be) well over 12,000,000 eBooks on Amazon. There are probably over 50,000,000 books of all varieties and formats on Amazon. That of course is many years of publications. But it is definitely a big number.

The publishing world is bifurcating into two different divisions. One division contains traditional publishing still exists, and traditional publishers sell roughly 70% in print form, 20% as eBooks and 10% as Audiobooks. eBooks play a bigger role in adult genre fiction but a smaller role in children's books and non-fiction.

The other division contains independent authors. They publish about 95% of their work in digital form (audio and eBook). But these digital sales are much less visible.

So today the author needs to decide if they are going to go the traditional route (which means that the publisher does a great deal for them) or the self-publishing route, where the author is responsible for the process of producing, distributing and marketing the book. The emergence of print-on-demand systems and the widespread adoption of digital technology means that many authors have become self-publishers.

## Traditional Publishers

The big 5 traditional publishers are Penguin/Random House, Hachette Book Group, Harper Collins, Simon and Schuster, and Macmillan. They are large, multi-national conglomerates, driven primarily by business objectives, dealing in vast quantities of books.

The top 30 trade publishers by 2009 sales were:

Company	Sales 2009	Notes
Hachette Livre (UK)	£287.9m	Headline; Hodder & Stoughton, Sceptre, Quercus; Little, Brown, Abacus, Sphere, Piatkus, Orbit, Virago; Orion, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Gollancz, Phoenix, Everyman; John Murray; Octopus, Cassell, Hamlyn, Mitchell Beazley, Philips; Orion Children's Books, Hodder Children's Books, Orchard Books, Franklin Watts, Wayland, Hodder Education, Chambers Harrap
Random House (UK)	£239.4m	Random House: Random House, Century, Hutchinson, William Heinemann, Arrow; Chatto & Windus, Jonathan Cape, Harvill Secker, Vintage, Pimlico, Bodley Head; Transworld, Doubleday, Bantam Press, Black Swan, Bantam, Corgi; Ebury Press, BBC Books; Virgin Books, Black Lace, Nexus, Cheek; Andersen Press
Penguin Books	£170.5m	Penguin: Penguin, Hamish Hamilton, Allen Lane, Michael Joseph, Viking, Rough Guides, Dorling Kindersley, Puffin, Ladybird, Warne
HarperCollins	£132.3m	4th Estate, Avon, Voyager, Collins, HarperPress, Blue Door, Harper North
Faber Alliance	£57.4m	Faber & Faber, Atlantic Books, Canongate, Granta Books, Icon Books, Portobello Books, Profile Books (including Serpent's Tail), Short Books. A number of financially independent smaller publishers that have formed an alliance to share promotion and administration, led by Faber.
Pan Macmillan	£57.3m	Pan Books, Picador, Macmillan New Writing, Macmillan, Boxtree, Sidgwick and Jackson, Tor (UK), Kingfisher
Pearson Education	£42.2m	Educational publishing and services subsidiary of the international corporation Pearson.

Company	Sales 2009	Notes
Oxford University Press	£37.6m	The Oxford University Press publishes academic journals, dictionaries, English language resources, bibliographies, music, classics, literature, and history, as well as Bibles and atlases.
Bloomsbury	£35.6m	British worldwide publishing house of fiction and non-fiction.
Simon & Schuster	£27.2m	As of 2017, Simon & Schuster was the third largest publisher in the United States, publishing 2,000 titles annually under 35 different imprints.
Egmont	£27m	Danish publisher.
John Wiley & Sons	£27m	An American multinational publishing company that focuses on academic publishing and instructional materials.
Elsevier	£23m (2008)	Dutch academic publishing company specializing in scientific, technical, and medical content.
Source: Wikipedia, List of largest book publishers of the United Kingdom, <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_book_publishers_of_the_United_Kingdom">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_book_publishers_of_the_United_Kingdom</a> .		

Major or traditional publishers such as those above generally only take submissions via an agent, will pay an advance, will work with the writer on its content to improve the content by offering structural and line editing and proofreading, will typeset and print the finished product and distribute to the major bookshops as well as make it available to independent bookshops and market it via digital channels. Typically, they might do a print run of 5000 to 15000 and will have a sale or return arrangement with major bookshops, supermarkets etc. While they do little marketing unless you are a major author, they will support book signings and trade shows. They may expect you to use some of your advance money to pay a press agent, do a small book tour, etc. They will manage the financial records and legal and may negotiate other rights (films, foreign markets, mass-market releases) on your behalf. After a few years, they are likely to cease sales and pulp or sell off the remaining books to discount booksellers (this generates no income for the author). An advance might be of the order of £5k. Royalties are small, paid in arrears, e.g. quarterly from the previous quarter, but might increase if the book breaks even. Often, they don't.

## Independent Publishers

Independent publishers are those publishers who are not part of a large corporation or conglomerate. These companies will offer most if not all, of the services provided by the

large five – such as editing, design, marketing and distribution. Many do not offer advances but do pay more generous royalties than larger publishers. They may or may not require a literary agent to submit on your behalf. They do not charge a fee to publish your work. They are likely to be highly selective and may well be focusing on a particular market segment (poetry, social comment, fantasy romance, LGBT, feminist etc). They are likely to have turnovers that are much less than 50 M\$ per year and may publish only a few new titles every year.

There are many more independent publishers than you can shake a bunch of sticks at. The best way to find them is to look for well-reviewed books in the areas that you are interested in. The internet contains many summaries such as:

- Poetry: The National Poetry Library: *Poetry Publishers*:  
<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/venues/national-poetry-library/write-publish/publishers/>
- Bloomsbury Publishing. *Writers' & Artists' Yearbook 2025*: The best advice on how to write and get published: Book publishers UK and Ireland (p. 116). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.
- An A-Z of Independent Publishers in the UK and Ireland, Jill's Book Café:  
<https://jillsbookcafe.blog/independent-publishers/>

Some well-known independent publishers are:

**BloodAxe Books:** Their web site says “Bloodaxe Books has revolutionised poetry publishing in Britain over four decades. Internationally renowned for quality in literature and excellence in book design, our authors and books have won virtually every major literary award given to poetry, from the T.S. Eliot Prize, Costa Book of the Year and Pulitzer to the Nobel Prize in Literature. And books like the *Staying Alive* anthology series have broken new ground by opening up contemporary poetry to many thousands of new readers”.

**Virago Press:** Their web site says “Since we began in 1973, our mission has been to champion women’s voices and bring them to the widest possible readership around the world. From fiction and politics to history and classic children’s stories, our writers continue to win acclaim, break new ground and enrich the lives of readers. More recently, as part of our commitment to an ever more inclusive feminism, we also publish and welcome submissions from writers of underrepresented genders”.

**Granta:** The Granta Web site says: “Granta magazine and Granta Books share a remit to discover and publish the best in new literary fiction, memoir, reportage and poetry from around the world. The magazine was founded in 1889 by students at Cambridge University as The Granta, a periodical of student politics, badinage and literary enterprise, named after the river, that runs through the town. In this original incarnation it published the work of writers like A.A. Milne, Michael Frayn, Stevie Smith, Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath. In 1979, Bill Buford and Pete de Bolla transformed Granta from a student publication to the literary quarterly it remains today. Each themed issue of Granta turns the attention of the world’s best writers on to one aspect of the way we live now”.

**CanonGate:** Their web site says: “Since 1973 we’ve worked to unearth and amplify the most vital, exciting voices we can find, wherever they come from, and we’ve published all kinds of books – thoughtful, upsetting, gripping, beatific, vulgar, chaste, unrepentant, life-changing... Along the way there have been landmarks of fiction – including Alasdair Gray’s masterpiece *Lanark*, and Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi*, the best-ever-selling Booker winner – and non-fiction too – from Barack Obama’s memoir *Dreams From My Father* to Samin Nosrat’s new cookery classic *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat*. We’ve campaigned for causes we believe in and fought court cases to get our authors heard. And twice we’ve won Publisher of the Year. We’re fiercely independent, and we’re as committed to unorthodox and innovative publishing as ever”.

**Bloomsbury:** The Bloomsbury mission statement includes: “Our mission is to be a creative, entrepreneurial, independent publisher of books, audiobooks and digital content of excellence and originality and to bring these works to a worldwide audience. Our purpose is to inform, educate, entertain and inspire readers of all ages and backgrounds. We champion a life-long love of reading and learning and seek to help build a reading culture with all the benefits which that brings society”.

**Faber and Faber:** A large independent publisher. The say on their web site: “Faber is one of the world’s great independent publishing houses. Since we were founded in 1929, poetry has been at the heart of our publishing, with T. S. Eliot as our first Poetry Editor.

In every generation, Faber has sought to find the very best writers and we are proud to publish the foremost voices in fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, film and children’s books, from writers including Sylvia Plath, Samuel Beckett, Ted Hughes, William Golding, Kae Tempest, Seamus Heaney, P. D. James, Natalie Diaz, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Alan Bennett, Edna O’Brien, Simon Armitage, Emma Carroll and Sally Rooney. Thirteen Nobel Laureates and six Booker Prize-winners have been published by Faber, with awards most recently for Kazuo Ishiguro and Anna Burns. At Faber, we share a belief in the unique power of the published word to transform, to inspire and to challenge. This informs all our in-house activities and extends to our outreach and our partnerships within independent publishing”.

There are many more.

## Can you make a living from traditional publishing?

The UK publishing industry is the 5th biggest in the world at approx. 6 billion dollars/pounds a year (2022). There are 100,000 books traditionally published each year, and maybe 1 million self-published. While the number of books published is growing, the number of readers is not growing correspondingly – so the market is flat. The audio market and readership (listenership) are both growing. This suggests it should not be too hard to earn a living in this environment, given the volume of books published. It turns out that is not really the case.

Getting substantial commercial success requires a long-term effort. Ellie Griffiths, a well regarded crime author, has produced a sequence of successful books but only made the top 10 best-seller list after 10 years.

For a middle list commercial (ie genre) fiction author, who is established and who has already sold well with previous novels, the traditionally published 2-year sales forecast might be:



Sales	Unit price	Sales revenue	Author commission	Income to author (£)
130 hardbacks	20	2600	16%	416
170 trade returned			0 ?	0
2000 paperbacks	10	20000	10-13%	2000
5000 eBooks	8	40000	25%	10000
1000 Audiobooks	10	21000	10-25%	1800
Total		83600		14216

The author might get a £5k advance but this would come out of the £14,216 total income. And they would have to pay 15% of that to their agent.

The above table shows that the income is mostly driven by the digital channels, eBooks and Audiobooks. This is because they have cheaper production costs, so less money has to go to the publisher/printer/retailer. But doubling the number of eBooks sold only brings in another £10k.

According to the Guardian:

*“The average annual income for a UK writer is £12,000, well below the minimum wage for a full-time job, a recent European commission report found. The Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society says professional authors have experienced a 29% drop in income in real terms since 2005, with the top 5% earning 42% of the money made by UK writers. And the bottom 50% struggle to generate even 7% of the total income”. (Guardian, 2017)*

This is out of a marketplace of 173,000 titles in 2015.

Looking at different profit/loss plans it becomes clear that the author needs to sell tens of thousands of eBooks or paperbacks to make a substantial income.

First, 400 hardcopy books, sold at £25, with an author advance of £1000. This results in a loss for the publisher of £600.

Item	Number	Unit Cost	Item Cost	P/L
Book sales at store	400	25	10000	
Printing cost	400	8	-3200	
Shipping		-100	-100	
Production (editing/typesetting/artwork)			-1200	
Legal, accounting, other overheads			-100	
				5400

Store commission rate	50%		
Retail store total commission		5000	
			400
Net publisher profit before author payments			
Author advance		1000	
Final Publisher Profit			-600

Second, 1000 paperback books, sold at £10, with an author advance of £1000, gives a worse result - a loss for the publisher of £1400.

Item	Number	Unit Cost	Item Cost	P/L
Book sales at store	1000	10	10000	
Printing cost	1000	4	-4000	
Shipping		-100	-100	
Production (editing/typesetting/artwork)			-1200	
Legal, accounting, other overheads			-100	
				4600
Store commission rate	50%			
Retail store total commission			5000	
				-400
Net publisher profit before author payments				
Author advance			1000	
Final Publisher Profit				-1400

It seems that the only people likely to be even mildly happy with these P/L predictions will be the bookshops.

Consider a more successful author – assume 100 hardcopy sales, 10,000 paperback sales, 20,000 eBook sales. Assume 20% returns on the hardcopy and paperback and 20% author commission on eBooks. This results in 25k£ earnings for the author (before any agent commission), and 30£k for the publisher. Both the hardcopy and paperback sales are loss-making but the eBook (sold at £5) saves the day.

Item	Number	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Subtotal	P/L
Hardback sales at store	100	25	2500		
Printing cost	20%		-500		
Printing cost	100	10	-1000		

Shipping / Distribution			-100	
Production (editing/typesetting/artwork)			-1000	
Legal, accounting, other overheads			-100	
				-200
Store commission rate	50%			
Retail store total commission			-1250	
Net publisher profit before author payments				-1450
Paperback sales at store	5000	9	45000	
Returns	20%		-9000	
Printing cost	5000	4	-20000	
Shipping / Distribution			-400	
Production (editing/typesetting/artwork)			-1000	
Legal, accounting, other overheads			-100	
				14500
Store commission rate	50%			
Retail store total commission			-22500	
Net publisher profit before author payments				-8000
eBook Sales	20000	5	100000	
Printing cost	0	0	0	
Shipping / Distribution			0	
Production (editing/typesetting/artwork)			-1000	
Legal, accounting, other overheads			-100	
				98900
eStore commission rate	30%			
eStore total commission			-30000	
Net publisher profit before author payments				68900
Net publisher profit before author payments				59450
Author advance			-5000	
Net publisher profit after author advance				54450
Author commission on hardback sales		10%	250	

Author commission on paperback sales	10%	-4500		
Author commission on eBook sales	20%	-20000		
			-29750	
Final publisher profit				24500
Author earnings		29750		

## Academic Publishers

This category of publisher distributes academic research and scientific and scholarly journals. Much of this work is peer-reviewed before it qualifies for publication. University Presses also fall partially into this category. Well-known academic publishers include:

- Springer
- Palgrave Macmillan
- Routledge
- Elsevier
- Nova Science Publishers
- Edward Elgar
- Information Age Publishing
- IGI Global

as well as those in the category of University Presses.

## University Presses

A University press is focused on publishing scholarly, educational, intellectual material or literary works of creative merit. They may focus on a small audience of specialists or a regional community of interest. While they are still commercial organisations, their prime objective is not merely profit. They often do not require an agent. They will provide full publishing services, including cover design, editing services, printing, distribution and marketing. Do they provide advances? Not sure.

The list of UK University Presses include:

- Aberdeen University Press
- Cambridge University Press
- Edinburgh University Press
- University of Exeter Press
- Imperial College Press
- Liverpool University Press
- James MacLehose and Sons
- Manchester University Press
- Nottingham University Press

- Oxford University Press
- University of Hertfordshire Press
- University of London Press
- University of Westminster Press
- University of Wales Press

## Non-traditional publishing routes

The advent of digital technology, eBooks, audiobooks and online shopping has meant that the traditional publisher, printing press and physical bookshop are no longer the only way of reaching readers. Today, there are other possibilities:

**Online Retailers** – they provide an online digital bookshop. The large ones have their own brand of eBook publishing platform. The author and the retailer share the royalties on the book.

Examples: Amazon KDP, iBooks Author, Barnes and Nobles Press, Kobo Writing Life.

**Aggregators** – will distribute your book to multiple retailers, for a charge. They take a share of the royalties.

Examples: KDP Print, PublishDrive, Smashwords, Draft2Digital.

**Full-service companies** – these offer the whole package of publishing services, including editing, formatting, blurb, interior and cover design, distribution and marketing.

Examples are: Bookbaby, Outskirts Press, Matador (aka Troubador), White Magic Studios

## Vanity Presses

Vanity publishing describes any publisher or press that does not aim to generate worthwhile revenue from book sales but profits from charging authors extortionate rates for the publishing services provided. Rather than using the author's money to produce high-quality books and promote them, vanity publishers spend the minimum on the publishing process and take most of the money for themselves. A vanity press gives the appearance of a full-service publisher, but does not deliver the quality of a true full-service publisher.

The key warning indications of a Vanity publisher are that the publisher will take an up-front fee from the author and that they will uncritically accept the author's manuscript. (To be blunt, they will uncaringly publish poor quality work as their business model does not depend on reader sales). They are likely to do little professional editing of the manuscript, only add simple cover art, and will do the minimum to format and print the book. It is unlikely they will use good typesetting practices or cover art design skills (since these are expensive), and it is likely they will use a standard print-on-demand production process. The author has little or no control over the publication process or how the book is formatted or looks. They will print a certain number of books and deliver them to you. You may or may not get an ISBN. Apart from placing the book on their website and providing a means to buy it from the website, they generally won't market the book (even if they say they will). It is up to the author to market it on social media etc, or to take it to their local bookshops. Their contract with the author may also take the author's rights away from them in the worst case. The contract is also likely to take a proportion of any future sales. The up-front fee is typically a few thousand pounds or more.

There are also key warning indicators in the contract between the Vanity Press and the author, such as:

- The contract requires the authors to give the copyright to Vanity Press indefinitely. This prevents an author from publishing the same work elsewhere. Or the author might be forced to give up the adaptation rights or foreign rights to the book with little or no royalties in return.
- A clause requiring the author to purchase copies of their book to meet a minimum sales threshold.
- The royalties offered to the author are unfair, giving the publisher a huge cut in any sales revenue generated by the work.

Remember, if you join the Society of Authors, you can use the Society's contract review service to validate the integrity and quality of any contract with a publisher or an agent.

Examples are Abbott Press, Book Vine Press, Archway Publishing

For more info see: <https://blog.kotobee.com/vanity-publishers/>

## Partnership or Hybrid Publishers

These publishers provide a wide range of services, including the design and production of a book through to marketing and distribution. Their business model again requires payment by the author for the services provided and does not offer an advance. There is a close mapping between the services provided and the fee paid, unlike Vanity Publishers. They also, however, have a direct interest in maintaining a good reputation for quality publications, as they need to maintain such a reputation to generate new business. Their services are expensive – but that is because they are realistically priced. See below (e.g. Matador) for some examples.

## Retailers

### Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP)

Most eBook sales (85%) occur on Amazon. KDP is the system by which authors upload eBook ready manuscripts. Amazon also provides the KDP Select program which allows author to promote their books using special deals. (During the period of the special deal, Amazon will own the book's exclusive rights – so the book cannot be published elsewhere).

In addition, Amazon provides KDP print, a print-on-demand service, so that hardback and paperback versions of the book can be sold through Amazon (here Amazon is acting as an aggregator) and to other bookstores and retailers if use Amazon's Expanded Distribution channel.

### Apple Books (iBooks Author/Pages)

Perhaps a second-best service to KDP it is also a free-to-upload self-publishing route. You must be a Mac user to publish in Apple books and take advantage of the 70% royalties. This route can accept a manuscript written in MacOS Pages. It can also accept EPUB format. It integrates well with Vellum (a free-to-download software that has purchasable packages for exporting an eBook). Hardcopy paperbacks can be published via Vellum Press.

## Kobo Writing Life

Canadian Rakuten Kobo's self-publishing division '[Writing Life](#)' – accounts for 25% of Canadian eBook sales. Simple, step-by-step process, with built-in sales analysis tools, and a good royalty rate.

For most new authors, it is better to use KDP and then address the smaller retail channels via an aggregator.

## Barnes & Noble Press

This is the 'narrowest' publishing channel discussed here. Free to upload, 70% royalties. USA specific.

## Aggregators

### Draft2Digital

Draft2Digital will format a book into an eBook format and then place it on a range of online retailers.

D2D charge no fees for formatting or updating the eBook. They take 10% of the retail price of the eBook for each sale. If you set the price to zero (and the retailer allows that) then they take no fee.

D2D will publish the author's eBook to any or all of the following retailers Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble, Kobo (including Kobo Plus), Smashwords Store, Tolino, OverDrive, cloudLibrary, Everand, Baker & Taylor, Hoopla, Vivlio, BorrowBox, Odilo, Palace Marketplace and Gardners. The author chooses which retailers the eBook goes to (and can change this over time).

D2D will format the eBook from an initial Word, RTF or Word readable file. This does not include PDF files. D2D will create a title page, copyright page, table of contents etc. D2D just need the manuscript to show chapter headings, section headings and so on. Draft2Digital does not directly offer cover art creation, manuscript editing, or other author services, so the author must provide the cover page art.



Draft2Digital accepts EPUB files for eBooks but not print. They won't make any changes to the EPUB formatting and will distribute it unchanged to the digital stores selected by the author.

The sale price for the book is selected by the author. Amazon has some restrictions: An eBook submitted to Amazon has a minimum price of \$0.99. The file size of the eBook also adds further limitations. Books priced at \$0.99 must be less than 3MB, those priced between \$1.00 and \$1.99 must be 10MB or less, and books that are 10MB or greater must be priced at \$2.99 or more.

If the author does not provide an ISBN, D2D will automatically assign one. This ISBN will denote Draft2Digital as the “vendor or record” on the recording agency website. This does not give D2D any rights to the author’s work nor will it show publicly. The digital stores will continue to show the publisher’s name chosen by the author (or the author’s name if no publisher name was chosen). If you use a D2D provided ISBN you cannot use this ISBN for direct sales at other retailers- so you could not use the D2D free ISBN to set up direct sales for a Kindle version of your book – (this is a rule imposed by the agency that supplies ISBN to D2D).

D2D also provide a print-on-demand service called D2D Print. Using this service, an author can publish a hardcopy version of their book that will be listed as in-stock through online booksellers. There is no inventory stock held though by D2D or the booksellers as the book will be printed and shipped directly to the customer only when the online bookseller receives an order. (This also means there is no need to worry about returns of unsold books from the retailer). D2D Print can be used with Amazon, and all distribution channels served by Ingram, including Barnes and Noble and most independent bookstores in the USA. The author will receive approximately 45% of the sales price of the book, less printing costs. Printing costs can be estimated here: <https://www.draft2digital.com/podcalc>.

If you want to get your books placed on shelves in actual bookshops or libraries then the only way to do this is to contact the individual bookshops or libraries.

Print books cannot be offered for free as there is a cost for the materials to produce a physical book.

If the author chooses to sell their print book using Amazon KDP Print Expanded Distribution or Ingram Spark, then there is no benefit in using D2D Print as well.

250,000 authors and publishers around the world who have already partnered with Draft2Digital to publish and distribute over 900,000 ebooks, print books, and audiobooks. D2D Print example.

Let’s say you have an 80k word 6x9 inch paperback, that you wish to print-on-demand and distribute via D2D.

328 pages at £0.0105	£3.45	This is the cost of printing the book pages alone
Base cost per book	£1.24	
Unit POD cost	£4.69	

D2D will also charge for getting the book into the online catalogues of the booksellers. They take 55% of the selling price of the book. So if the book sells for £9.99 they take  $0.55 * 9.99 = £6.44$ , leaving 45% for the author, i.e.  $0.45 * 9.99 = £4.50$ . This is a problem as it does not cover the POD print cost, and the author loses  $4.50 - 4.69 = £0.19$  per book.

If the author wishes to make £1.00 profit per book, then the selling price of the book needs to be:

$$S = (4.69 + 1) / 0.45 = £12.64$$

This may still be a problem, as this seems costly for an 80k paperback. Will people buy it at that price?

## PublishDrive

Their website says they have published 100K+ books, with 30M+ global readers, with the possibility of 39K+ bookstores for printed books and 240K+ digital libraries. Good international distribution. They state that the advantages of their services include:

- Widest worldwide distribution network (including Amazon)
- One-click distribution to all stores
- Built-in analytics and sales reports
- Royalty management
- Marketing and promotional tools
- Easy management of a large inventory of books
- Bulk import
- Distribution to hard-to-reach markets like China, India, etc.
- Global reach with print-on-demand books
- Print-on-demand converter
- Print-on-demand template generator

PublishDrive uses a non-commission business model. They charge a flat rate per month that depends on the number of different books on distribution (not the total sales). eBook, printed and audio books count separately. Some typical charges are (2024):

1 book of 1 type, sent to 35 distribution channels	free
1 book title of 3 types, sent to 55 channels	\$9.79/month
6 book titles of 3 types, sent to 55 channels	\$29.39/month

PublishDrive provides tools for converting a manuscript (eg Word file) to EPUB and into a print format. They also provide a dashboard for tracking royalties.

PublishDrive examples. Using the online calculator (<https://calculator.publishdrive.com/>) for an author who has 3 different eBook titles, selling 3000 copies a year (so a total of 9000 sales) at \$8 per eBook, the PublishDrive calculator suggests the following comparison to other aggregators:

Aggregator	Revenue on 1 year's sales	Store commission on sales (30%)	Aggregator commission or flat fee per year	Author earnings
PublishDrive	\$24000	\$7200	\$168	\$16632
Draft2Digital	\$24000	\$7200	\$2400 (10% of sales)	\$14400
Ingram	\$24000	\$7200	\$7200 (30% of sales)	\$9600

30% store commission seems a little low, so here is the table rewritten with 55%:

Aggregator	Revenue on 1 year's sales	Store commission on sales (55%)	Aggregator commission or flat fee per year	Author earnings
PublishDrive	\$24000	\$13200	\$168	\$10630
Draft2Digital	\$24000	\$13200	\$2400 (10% of sales)	\$8400
Ingram	\$24000	\$13200	\$7200 (30% of sales)	\$3600

## Ingram Spark:

As Ingram Spark does not sell directly, they are an aggregator. They can create eBooks or print copies from a manuscript and place them with online retailers or within bookstores. They will handle print returns, and discounting, and have distribution channels to a large number of bookstores so that people can easily order your titles from their local bookstore. (That does not mean it is physically on bookshelves, but it does mean people can order it if they know about it).

IngramSpark: <https://www.ingramspark.com/>

## Lulu

The Lulu website says: “While we offer ISBNs for books published through Lulu (which means your book can be ordered through bookstores), print-on-demand economics cannot provide the large discounts bookstores require to stock books”.

Lulu: <https://www.lulu.com/>

Lulu Book Creation Guide: <https://assets.lulu.com/media/guides/en/lulu-book-creation-guide.pdf>

## Bookvault

Bookvault say: “Bookvault is able to offer the full range of book services, from publishing your book with us to, printing and distribution direct to consumer or selling with mainstream

retailers. Bookvault offers very flexible printing options and finishes, and champions automation with a range of apps and plugins that can take orders directly from your own site”.

BookVault: <https://bookvault.app/>

## Full-Service companies

### BookBaby

Bookbaby provides a range of self-publishing packages. They charge 50% royalties for selling directly on BookBaby’s bookshop – but will also facilitate publication on Amazon KDP, Barnes and Noble and others.

<https://www.bookbaby.com/self-publishing/#learn-more>

### Outskirts Press

The Outskirts Press website says:

We combine the advantages of traditional book publishing with the advantages of independent self-publishing all while giving you the support and assistance of a dedicated group of publishing professionals to take care of all the details of preparing your book for publication. You’re a writer after all—not a publisher. Do what you do best, and we’ll take care of the rest for you.

But, if you want to be a publisher, we can help you with that too. Our [Private Label Imprint](#) service allows you to own your own ISBN and publish under your own publishing company name (aka, your imprint) while still taking advantage of our worldwide distribution network.

And, never fear, you’ll always maintain 100% of your publishing rights and 100% of your net profits when you publish with Outskirts Press.

	Traditional Publishing	Independent Self-Publishing	Publishing with Outskirts Press
You keep 100% of your rights		✓	✓
You control the content of your book		✓	✓
Wholesale distribution via Ingram	✓		✓
Wholesale orders are fulfilled for you	✓		✓
Automatic listing on Amazon	✓		✓
Automatic listing on Barnes & Noble	✓		✓
You set the retail price		✓	✓
You keep 100% of the net profits		✓	✓
Marketing Support	✓		✓

<https://outskirtspress.com/>

### Matador

Matador (part of Troubadour) offers self-publishing authors a wide range of services, from the design and production of a book to marketing and distribution.

Example costs are (Matador, 2024)

1. *Basic*: An entry-level publishing option that gets your book ready for publication and available via Print on Demand to buy. Cover design, Typesetting (page design and layout), ISBN registration, Print On Demand set-up, British Library legal deposit. £850.
2. *Boost*: A step up that gives you copies printed in advance and availability through bookshops. This includes the items in (1) plus Bibliographic data setup, Print 200 copies total, Retail set-up and distribution. £2095.
3. *Bookshop*: For authors wanting their book to get exposure through traditional bookshops and digital retail. This includes the items in (1) and (2) plus On-screen copyedit, print 500 copies total, trade marketing and sales representation, eBook conversion (ePub and Kindle), worldwide eBook distribution, on-screen copyedit. £3595.

Printing costs:

Printing 100 copies – £400  
 Printing 500 copies – £1320  
 Printing 1000 copies - £1860.

You can find some excellent [podcasts here](#) about Matador and the authors who have published with them, including one author who has gone on to success with HarperCollins UK.

Alternatively, you can assess the quality of the products by looking at the online versions of their book catalogue: <https://troubador.co.uk/bookshop>

See: <https://troubador.co.uk/book-publishing>

## White Magic Studios

White Magic Studios is the UK counterpart of Matador.

<https://www.whitemagicstudios.co.uk/self-publishing>

## Book Reality

<https://bookreality.com/>

The Book reality website says:

“We offer a range of packages from paperback formatting, through E-Book preparation, cover art design, all the way up to full editing and preparation services

for multi-format editions. We also offer training and mentorship through the process if you would prefer to do it all yourself. Regardless of which service you choose, all copyright remains with you.”

and

“So, just to be clear... publishing through Amazon’s Kindle Direct Publishing\*, Draft2Digital\* and Ingram Spark\* (and the myriad of other service providers out there) is entirely accessible to all. However, if you are unsure of the steps, or if you need help with formatting, cover art or any other services, then The Book Reality Experience is your assistant in getting your book onto these worldwide distribution platforms.

From that point, your book will be available to a global audience and any sales will be paid at standard royalty rates (which can be up to 70% on E-books). Our services are purely designed to get you there.

We offer two models. A full payment up-front service, at the end of which you run your own accounts, book orders and systems. Or, occasionally, we offer a reduced fee up-front and a share of ongoing sales profits. We do that in the event you want us to run your accounts and book orders and ongoing systems. That way, you don’t have any more out of pocket expenses and we both share the profits from any sales (60/40 in your favour). However, even that model will have a time limit set, usually two or three years, although you can extend it if you wish. If we offer you a choice of either model, you can **CHOOSE** which you want. We do **NOT** insist on a profit share. In fact, we do not insist you do anything, other than a professional edit and a professional cover design. That we do insist on as we will be putting our credibility behind your book”

## Izzard Ink

Their web site says: “Our journey began with a simple yet powerful idea—to empower authors by connecting them with the essential tools, unwavering support, and industry experts needed to thrive. Since then, we’ve grown into a flourishing business, having sold over 1,400,000 books and counting.”.

Sample costs (from the Izzard Ink website: <https://izzardink.com/>):

Manuscript assessment: An exploration and uncovering of your manuscript’s potential. Our team of editors evaluates your work, providing specific, detailed feedback and actionable suggestions.

This process is not just about finding areas that need improvement; it’s about working on your manuscript’s potential and setting it on the path to publishing **success**.

An assessment typically covers the following aspects of your writing:

- **Overall structure:** The editor will look for any inconsistencies or gaps in the plot and will make suggestions for improving the pacing and suspense.

- **Plot:** The editor will identify any plot holes or inconsistencies, making suggestions for strengthening the conflict and resolution.
- **Characters:** The development and likability of your characters will be assessed. The editor will look for any flat or underdeveloped characters, and they will make suggestions for deepening their motivations and personalities.
- **Readability:** Suggestions for improving the overall flow and readability.

Cost: \$595. (7-10 hours)

Example: <https://izzardink.com/manuscript-assessment/>

### Editing services:

Editing a 50,000-word manuscript is an investment that varies, typically ranging from \$1,500 to \$4,500 or more. The cost depends on the specific editing services required, such as copy editing, developmental editing, or proofreading.

At Izzard Ink Publishing, our tailored solutions for a 50,000-word manuscript span from \$3,500 to \$9,500+, accommodating your needs for line/copy, developmental editing, or proofreading. Our consultants guide you through the process, ensuring a precise fit for your requirements, all while upholding quality standards and ensuring effective project management.

Izzard Ink provide the following comparison chart:

### Book Publishing Services Pricing

ASPECT	Izzard Ink Publishing (Collaborative Publishing)	Leading Hybrid Publisher	Leading Do It Yourself Publisher	Marketplace Publisher	Leading Traditional Publisher	Leading Vanity Publisher
Pricing Structure	\$15,000 to \$40,000+	\$38,000 to \$135,000+	Free. No Editing Provided Outside Spell Check	\$100 to \$70,000+	Authors Get an Advance	\$8,000 to \$20,000+ (No Publicist)
Genre Specialization	All Genres	Non-Fiction	All Genres	All Genres	All Genres	All Genres
Comprehensive Publishing Management	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	Depends on Which Tier
Author Copyright Ownership	100%	100%	100%	100%	100% of the Text, Design is Publishers	100%
Team Selection Flexibility	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
Alignment with Author's Vision and Strategy	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Customized Marketing Solutions	✓	✓	✗	✓	Yes, with Author Paying for It	✗
Publicist and PR Firm Collaboration	✓	✗	✗	✓	Yes, with Author Paying for It	✗
End-to-End Distribution Service	✓	✗	Yes, Amazon Only	✗	Yes, 7%-15% of MSRP Goes to the Author	✓
Focus on Exceptional Content	✓	✓	✗	Yes and No, Depends on the Author	✓	✗
Time Frame	3-9+ Months	6-12+ Months	72 Hours (No Editing)	1 Week to 12+ Months	12-24+ Months	2-4+ Months (No Editing)

Not sure this makes sense to me. How can you spend £38 to \$135k on a Hybrid publisher?

## Print On Demand companies

Generally, the Print on Demand companies have the following characteristics:

- The author retains the copyright to the work. The POD printer is the distributor.
- The POD printer may be able to assign their own ISBN to the book, and they will register this with various bibliographical services. But this ISBN can't be registered with the United States Library of Congress or any other country-specific copyright office.
- The author can obtain their own official ISBN and use that. If they do, they must provide the printer with the bibliographic information (title, author, format, publisher, etc.) required to associate the ISBN with the author's book, and include the ISBN within the manuscript, e.g. by listing the same information on the book's copyright page that was used to register the ISBN.
- The POD printer will not create a copyright page automatically, it is up to the author to insert a copyright in the work and record themselves as the copyright holder (e.g. Copyright © Year by YOUR NAME) and publisher of their work (Published by <PUBLISHER NAME>).

Most print-on-demand companies are also hybrid publishers or aggregators. That is to say they not only allow readers to buy the book directly, but they also place the book in various digital or physical distribution channels. Examples of print-on-demand publishers are Amazon KDP and Lulu.

## Amazon KDP

When you publish a book on KDP the author is effectively the publisher. KDP is merely the print channel. To make the book orderable by bookstores you need to enrol the book in the KDP Expanded Distribution scheme. But in any case, books ordered via KDP are not returnable. Most book retailers will not order a book that is non-returnable.

Amazon KDP: [https://kdp.amazon.com/en\\_US/](https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/)



## Self-Publishing

A self-published author takes on the responsibilities normally undertaken by a publisher. This does not mean the author has to carry out the tasks themselves that a publisher would normally perform. So, the author does not have to personally design the covers, proofread the final drafts, etc., but they ensure that all these steps get done and to a professional standard if the author desires to produce a professional product. While this may seem daunting, there are many authors, some of them highly commercially successful, who have taken this route. The self-published author cannot work alone, they need to assemble and direct a team of professionals just like any other publisher, unless in the unlikely event they have all of these skills. The self-published author must consider the following aspects of the process:

- Editing
- Design (cover and interior)
- Production and distribution
- Marketing
- Promotion
- Rights licensing

The primary advantage of self-publication is the high level of royalties possible (e.g. 70% on the cover price of eBooks sold on Amazon), fast payment, and clear sales reporting (e.g. daily on KDP). This compares well with the 5% of the cover price expected by trade-published authors (though they may well get a significant advance).

While the recent enormous growth of self-publishing has been driven by the emergence of E-books, print-on-demand digital printing and internet retailing, self-publishing has existed in previous forms for many years. Beatrix Potter self-published *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* because no publisher was willing to put the book out in the small format (to fit in a child's hand) that Potter was insisting upon. Virginia Woolf ran her own small independent publisher, Hogarth Press, to allow her to take full control over her publications, doing the typesetting herself and using her artist sister's designs for her covers, a hugely laborious process. Charles Dicken's self-published *A Christmas Carol*.

Traditional publishing has historically used lithographic printing. This produces high-quality output and can handle a wide variety of paper stock, and cover materials. Each print run uses physical plates as the print master. Individual plates must be physically changed for different pages, which means print runs need to be large, to manage costs, typically thousands of copies. Colour adds further expensive changes. So, the minimum print run, for a viable price per book, can be thousands of copies. This is an up-front cost, that the publisher has to pay before making any sales. The publisher also has to pay for storage of the books before distribution and sales. The publisher takes a risk because there is no guarantee that all books printed will be sold. On the other hand, printing on a very large scale, the unit cost per book using lithographic printing can be much less than with digital printing.

With the advent of digital printing, there are no physical master plates (the print technology is similar to a laser printer). Moreover, in a single print run, you can print many different books (provided they all have the same page trim size, and you can keep track of which page goes where in which book) as changing the master copy is simply a matter of changing a digital file. The whole process of printing, cutting up and binding can be fully

automated. It is therefore viable to print just one copy or a small run. Equally, large print runs can also be accommodated. This has led to print on demand (POD) when the book is only printed after it has been ordered, and as soon as it is printed it is despatched directly to the supplier (no bookstore or warehouse needed). At Ingram Spark, the average print run is 1.6 copies per book. However, because POD prints so many books in a single run, there are restrictions – you cannot have a mix of colour and monochrome in the same run. Fancy stuff like embossed covers and specialist inks are also harder to incorporate (or just too plain expensive).

### Questions to consider if you are thinking of self-publishing

- What do you need to do to make your manuscript fit to self-publish. You, the author, will self-edit it, but then you will need to find professional structural, copy and line editing, plus proofreading skills.
- You need to create some metadata for the book: title, subtitle, series data, categories (e.g. genre), keywords, ISBN, author bio, pricing strategy
- You may need to find an illustrator that you can work with – and decide how to share the IP and revenues (e.g. if you are writing a children’s picture book) – this will require writing a proper contract.
- A blurb
- The stuff needed to practically print books and create eBooks, e.g. cover designs, interior files, - everything a book designer does.
- A distribution strategy for the book – how to upload the finished print and ebook files to distribution platforms (i.e. print on demand sites) that serve online retail sites, physical stores and libraries. For eBooks, you need to decide if you are going to be exclusive to Kindle, or also available on other platforms.
- What is your author brand? You need to create an author website and be present on social media. Your author website needs to support a mailing list and forms to order your book(s).
- You need a strategy to grow your audience over time – this may involve offering freebies (e.g. short stories/extracts) on your website and running a blog (you need to consider how good a return on investment of your time this is).
- A strategy to attract reviews – and how to deal with the results. Amazon and Goodreads.
- A strategy to use Amazon’s Author Central and social media as part of your marketing activities. This includes a newsletter, promotional offers on your book(s), how to use any or all of Amazon, BookBub, Facebook to accumulate reader loyalty and to extend sales.
- A strategy/plan for book tours, author events, talks etc
- You will need to keep accounts (you will be a sole trader) and budget expenses, monitor sales and record income.
- A licensing strategy for the rights to your book(s) in different formats and languages.
- Library lending rights.
- That funny society that pays from library borrowing

### Self-publishing costings

- Formatting and setting up your book: KDP and Draft2Digital – nothing, Ingram Spark £36.

- A pack of ten official ISBNs - £164. (KDP will provide Amazon ISBNs, but these will not be recognised by libraries, official distribution channels etc.
- British Library's Legal Deposit - £10.
- To this, you may need to add editing services, cover design services, proofreading, marketing, distribution channels

While KDP does not charge upfront for their POD service, they do take a percentage from each printed book. This leaves the author revenue at 60% of the royalties, and this leaves the author 30% or so after print costs. The author might expect 70% for eBooks. A traditional publisher might give 10% royalties, but only after they have recovered the cost of the author advance.

So, the absolute minimum cost would be to publish on KDP with fixed costs of less than £100. If you only sold via Amazon, with a paperback price of £5 and eBook price of £4, then, for 100 printed book sales and 400 eBooks you would earn:

$$100 * 5 * 30\% = 150 \text{ pounds}$$

$$400 * 4 * 70\% = 1120 \text{ pounds}$$

and your net profit would be about 1000 pounds. If you sell your eBook for £1 though, then the profits vanish quickly.

To sell more, you are likely to need to spend on professional editing services, cover designs, and to create an author brand and so on. Costs are in the range:

- Developmental editing: hundreds to a few thousand £
- Copy editing: £500-£2000 or £2-£5 per page
- Cover design: £20-1000
- Marketing and Promotion ?
- Author brand (author web site, blog, mailing list, social media) £100 - £1000 – made up of web hosting (£100) and web site design fees (?), mailing list subscription (£100 upwards)
- Paid advertising: e.g. Facebook ads £500?
- Amazon keyword listing and adverts ?
- Speaker events ?
- Webinars ?
- Accountant ?

## How can I learn more about self-publishing?

Harry Bingham of Jericho Writers has some useful stuff to say on this:

- [How print books are sold](#) by publishers
- [How you can maximise your chances of success](#) when working with a trad publisher
- [How to sell via Amazon](#)
- [How to use Facebook](#)

- [How to build your mailing list](#)

Scanning the internet for costings will also find many articles:

<https://www.publishing.com/blog/amazon-self-publishing-cost>

as well as material on self-publishing vs traditional publishing:

<https://www.mrsmumtypenny.co.uk/are-you-self-publishing-a-book-avoid-self-publishing-companies/>

## The Art of Typesetting

Typesetting, or book page composition, is concerned with making the text on the page easy to read, look good and stylistic consistent. Achieving professional results requires skilled knowledge even with the use of sophisticated tools. Products such as Microsoft Word and OpenOffice may appear to produce pleasing text layouts but are rarely able to achieve professional quality results. Professional level products such as Adobe InDesign, and FrameMaker allow designers very fine control at the expense of complexity. In Word, the default options will produce or can be quickly modified to produce an adequate result. But there is no substitute for the time and money of a professional tool to get professional results.

Typesetting also must consider that there are often numerous targets for a manuscript, e.g. hardback, paperback formats, large type, eBooks, websites and many different styles dependent on the target audience, e.g. academic books, cheap holiday paperbacks, cookbooks etc. All require different typesetting considerations.

## Some typesetting definitions and considerations

A **font** is a particular size, weight and style of a **typeface**. A typeface is a style of lettering, e.g. **Arial**, Times New Roman, or **Helvetica**. Font **size** is the height of a font's characters, which can be measured in points (pt) or pixels (px). There are approximately 72 pts per inch. The **weight** of a particular font is the thickness of the character outlines relative to their height, and can be classed as thin, ultra-light, light, medium, semi-bold, bold, heavy, extra-black. The **style** of a font is concerned, amongst other things, with the slant of the lettering, e.g. normal or italic. Fonts are an extremely complex subject, particularly now that the original metal type mechanism used for traditional paper has been extended onto many other devices such as computer screens, TV screens, cinema screens, eBooks and so on. Serif fonts are generally used for the main body of a text, while San-Serif fonts are used for titles, chapter headings and so on. A **Serif** font is a typeface that has small lines or extensions, called serifs, at the ends of its longer strokes. Serifs are decorative features that create small horizontal and vertical planes within a word. Serif fonts are often used in books, magazines, and newspapers because they are considered easier to read in long-form use cases. They can also command attention, and traditional newspapers often use bold serif fonts as headings.

Some examples of serif font styles include Garamond, Times New Roman, Bodoni and **Rockwell**. A **San-Serif** font is one with less stroke width variation than serif typefaces. They are often used to convey simplicity and modernity or minimalism. Examples are **Ariel** and **Helvetica**. Fonts also come in fixed spacing and variable spacing variations.

The **book block** is a defined area on the page, in which the text appears, and which helps ensure that facing pages usually end on the same line (with the possible exception of the last page of the chapter).

The **margins** are the white space around the entire book block. Good sized margins allow the reader's eye to move comfortably from one line to the next.

The **alignment** of the text defines how the text lines up across the page. Alignment is adjusted by varying the line spacing to make sure that alignment across the page occurs properly, even in the presence of headings, subheadings, illustrations and lists.

**Line spacing** ensures that lines of text are neither too far apart nor too close to each other. Poor line spacing will interrupt the rhythm of the reader.

**Paragraph spacing** can be used to indicate a scene change or a new section. Generally, a new paragraph should be indicated indenting its first line, rather than a space above the paragraph. The first paragraph in a section or chapter should not be indented, as it will have a space or title above it, which already indicates it is a new paragraph.

**Widowed or orphaned** lines are a small number of lines at the start or end of the paragraph that should not appear at the bottom or top of a page respectively. When a small part of a paragraph is disassociated from the rest of the paragraph by a page break, this will have the effect of making the reader pause unnecessarily.

**Orphaned headings** are similar to widowed/orphaned lines. If a subhead appears at the bottom of a page, it should be accompanied by at least two lines of the following text.

**Word stacks** occur when the same word appears a number of times in the same position on consecutive lines. This draws unnecessary attention to that particular word – the problem can be resolved by rewording the text or adjusting the word spacing within the lines.

**Kerning** is the way two adjacent letters are spaced relative to one another. This can be done metrically (the kerning is determined by information built into the font), optically (the kerning is done based on the individual letter shapes – this works well with fonts like Times New Roman, or if two different typefaces of font sizes are used on the same line) and manual kerning, where the spacing is adjusted manually.

**Tracking** is the spacing of letters across a complete word. This is typically done to slightly stretch or shrink a group of words to better fit within a line. Tracking is applied after kerning.

**Trim size** is the size of the page of the book, including all margins and white space. Common trim sizes are: 4.25 x 6.87 inches (mass market paperbacks), 5 x 8 to 6 x 9 inches (for most fiction and general non-fiction books), 6 x 9 (hardback), 6 x 9 to 8.5 x 11 inches for textbooks (since they may contain diagrams and illustrations). The larger the trim size,

the more words per page, and the shorter the book. If using print-on-demand, choosing a common trim size may reduce the cost of printing.

Other things to consider are hyphenation, true quotation marks, justification, use of proper dashes (em and en dashes) etc. The list is more or less endless. See Wheildon (2016).

If a book is simply intended for distribution to a small number of readers, perhaps friends and family, then the cost savings involved in using a layout tool such as Word may well be worth it. On the other hand, if the book is intended for a wide market, where it is competing with existing best sellers in that genre, where it may have a long life time in libraries or a number of reprints, or appearing in a professional magazine, where it represents the market brand and professionalism of the author, then the quality of typesetting in the book will be reflected directly on the public perception of the author themselves and will undoubtedly affect sales.

## Layout concerns when formatting a book

**Total Document Size** - The total dimensions of the file with bleed area included.

**Spine Area** – This is the area of the cover which is visible when the book is viewed end on (ie as on a bookshelf). The width of the spine will depend on the number of pages in the book and will also depend on the type of binding. Coil Bound and Saddle stitch bindings do not require a spine.

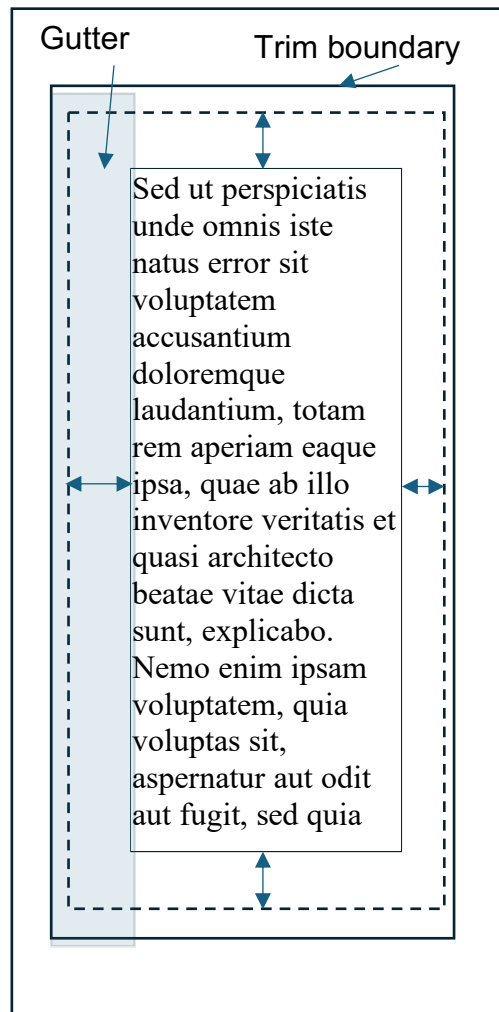
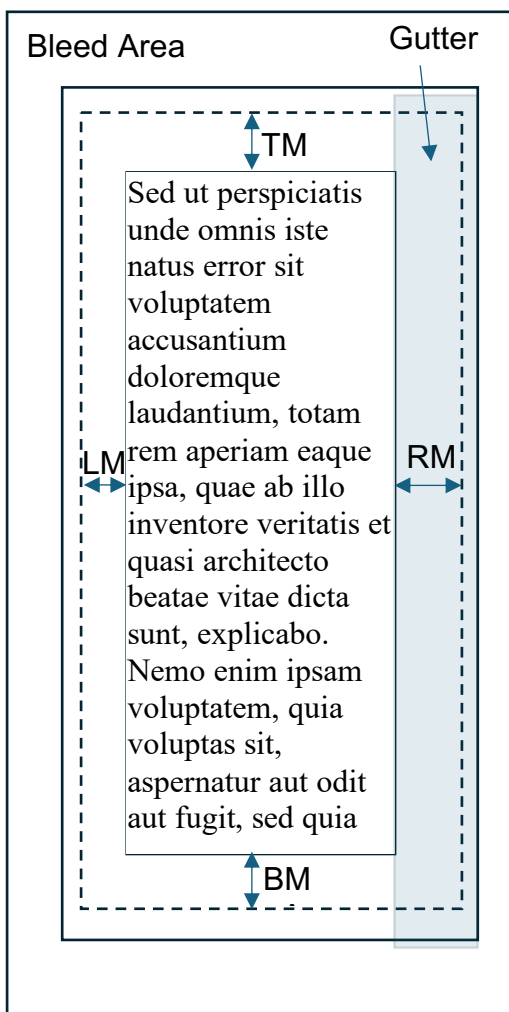
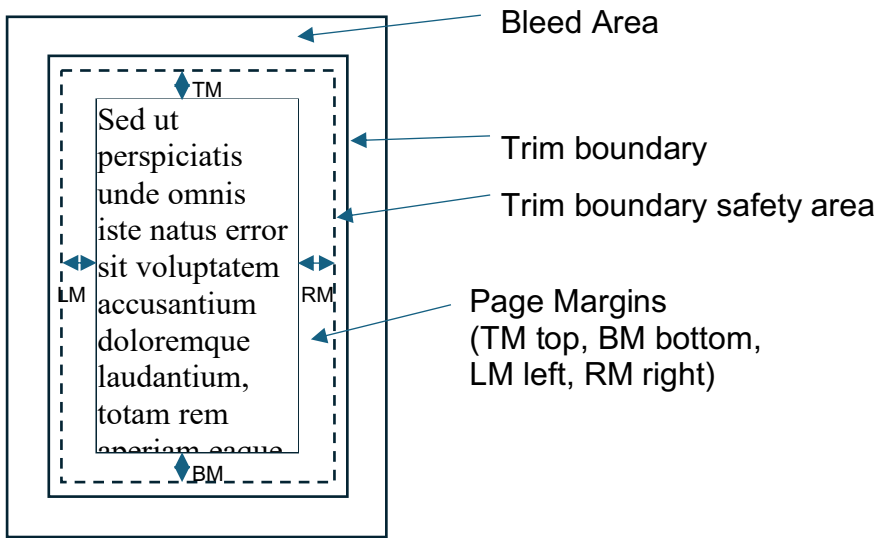
**Safety Margin** – an area within the trim size reserved to allow for variations in the trim process. This should not contain any important content, otherwise it might be lost during the trim process.

**Bleed Area** – So that the book will have clean edges the pages of the book are slightly oversized as they go through the printing process. They are then trimmed to exact size. The area that is removed is the ‘bleed’. This is typically a 0.125 in / 3.175 mm area

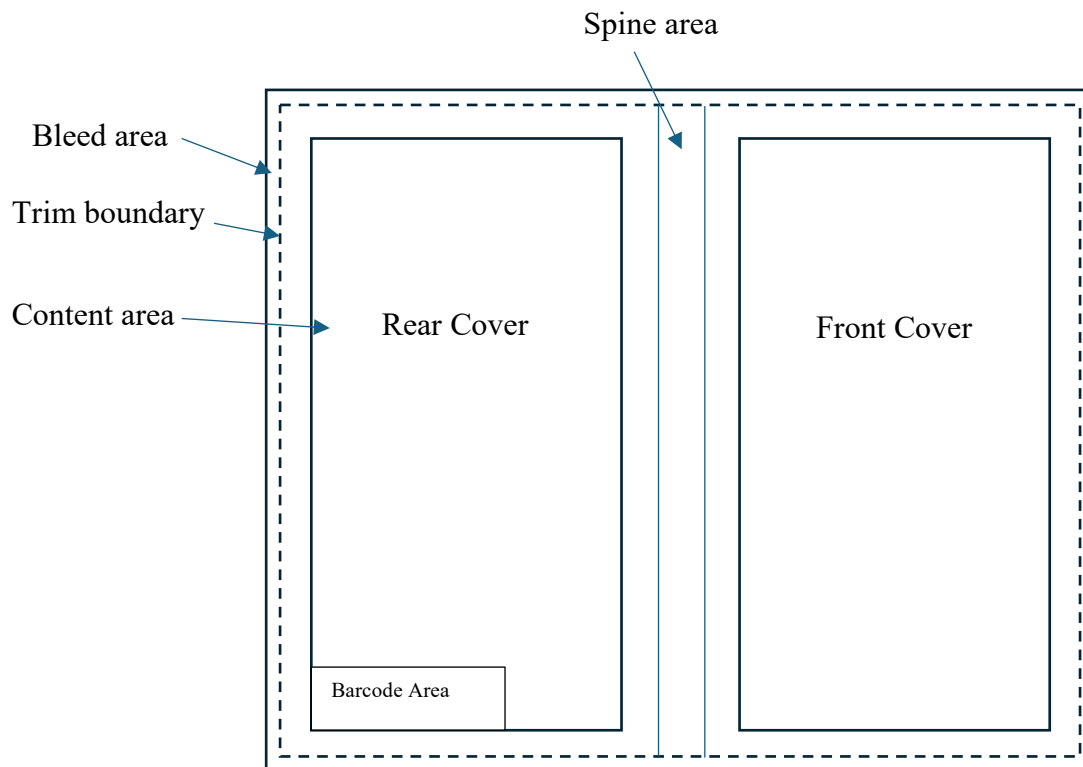
**Barcode Area** – an optional space reserved for your ISBN barcode on the cover

**Gutter Area** – this is the central area inside the book where the pages meet at the spine. The page margins in the gutter generally need to be larger than the margins on the rest of the page, to make the book easier to read.

The width of the spine needed depends on the page count of the book. Typically, POD printers require hard-cover books to have a minimum of 24 pages and paper books must have a minimum of 32 interior pages. The spine width then increases linearly according to page count. So, for a book of say 24 pages the spine width might be 6mm. For 250 pages it might be 22mm. And for 500 pages, 37mm. The guidance provided by the POD printer will give exact figures.



The cover layout will look like:



There is always some slight variance in dimensions in the book production process. This means that the exact position of any text placed on the spine is also subject to a little variation. For that reason, when designing the cover:

1. Do not fill the entire width of the spine with text or graphics. Leave 4 mm between the spine text and the edge of the spine on both sides of the text. Failing to do this may mean that the spine text strays onto the front or back cover of the book.
2. Do not include any spine text if the book is less than 80 pages.
3. Ensure any spine text does not extend into the trim area at the top or bottom of the spine area (and indeed leave a little unused margin for trimming error to be safe)
4. Use the same colour/graphic for the spine as the rest of the cover.
5. If your spine will be a different colour from the rest of the cover, design the cover to include the spine colour or graphic wrapping around the front and back covers.

Other considerations for the cover layout are:

1. Ensure that any background colours or images extend into the Bleed area. This is because these colours or images must extend to the very edge of the final cover pages – otherwise strips of white may appear around the edge of the cover.
2. Step 1 implies that the content of the periphery of images on the cover should not be important to the final look of the book – as this periphery will be lost when the book is trimmed.



## Producing an eBook

eBooks can be viewed on specialist devices like Amazon Kindle or Kobo, or via suitable software applications on laptops, notebooks and phones. eBooks come in various formats:

EPUB eBooks are eligible for Global Distribution, making your eBook available to buyers on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, iBookstore, Kobo and others. These have digital rights copyright protection. They can also be viewed by such software applications as Apple iBook, Adobe Digital Editions and Calibre.

PDF eBooks are simple files, unprotected, and viewable on PDF viewers (as found in many web browsers). They can be made available for sale and download on Lulu's Bookstore and elsewhere.

EPUB and PDF files can be created by conventional word processing systems such as Word, Vellum, Calibre etc.

An EPUB eBook must conform to a number of requirements to be distributable by services such as Lulu's Global Distribution (which makes them available to buyers on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, iBookstore, Kobo, and many other retailers. EPUBs must contain a title page, table of contents and a copyright page. The doc file used to create the EPUB eBook must use inline formatting for bolding, italicizing, or underlining words in a paragraph; and style-based formatting for each paragraph. Heading Styles are used automatically create page/section breaks and to generate the EPUB Table of Contents (TOC).

Since eBook devices will use their own fonts when displaying an EPUB then the font usage should be restricted to simple choices such as Arial or Times New Roman. Special characters should be avoided if possible.

EBooks will reflow the text of the book according to the device screen size and the size of the font selected on that device by the reader. This means that page numbers, page breaks, headers or footers should not be used in the document originating the eBook. In addition, the page size and margin choice in this document will not affect how the eBook appears on different devices.

Images can be used but should be sized to 500x500 and at less than 150 dpi.

Hyperlinks can be used, both for internal and for web links.

Cover art may also be used, though again this should be kept simple.

See:

EBook publishing made easier than ever: <https://blog.lulu.com/EPUB-ebook-update/>  
PDF eBook creation guide: <https://help.lulu.com/en/support/solutions/articles/64000255509-pdf-ebook-creation-guide>  
EBook creation FAQ: <https://help.lulu.com/en/support/solutions/articles/64000255507-ebook-creation-faq>

Publishing an EBook for Global Distribution:

<https://help.lulu.com/en/support/solutions/articles/64000255592-publishing-an-ebook-for-global-distribution>

## Personal Publishing Tools

Name	Comments
<b>Word processing and PDF production</b>	
Microsoft Word	Word processor
Open Office	Word Processor
<b>Content management</b>	
Scrivener	File management and integration system. A word-processing program and outliner designed for writers, that provides a management system for documents, notes and metadata. Scrivener offers templates for screenplays, fiction, and non-fiction manuscripts. Provides the capability to organize notes, concepts, research, and whole documents for easy access and reference (documents including rich text, images, PDF, audio, video, and web pages). Content may be t exported to a standard word processor for final formatting or to screenwriting software, desktop publishing software, or TeX.
<b>Formatting, typesetting and layout</b>	
Adobe Framemaker	Versatile, highly capable but complex authoring tool suitable for technical documentation and large-scale publishing projects. Many advanced formatting and typesetting capabilities, making it suitable for complex and structured content.
Vellum	Typesetting and layout tool – contains automated features. Likely to produce a much better result than word.
Adobe Indesign	Professional level tool widely used for typesetting and layout, with features for designing page layouts, setting typography, and managing images and graphics.
QuarkXPress	Professional level tool providing powerful design and layout capabilities
Affinity Publisher	Advanced typographic tools, and seamless integration with other creative software from the Affinity suite. It offers a cost-effective alternative to established industry tools.
Latex	A well-established typesetting system commonly used for technical and scientific

	publications, as well as academic books and journals. Excellent support for mathematical equations, complex referencing systems, and automated formatting – often used by academic or scholarly publications
Scribus	Open-source desktop publishing software so maybe a cost-effective solution.
Script writing and formatting tools	
Final Draft	Supports many formats – industry standard tool
Plagiarism checker	
Turnitin	
Online grammar, spelling checker and writing assistants	
Grammarly	

## The editing process

If you are publishing with a traditional publisher, they will provide editing services, both to help you refine the manuscript, and also to ensure the manuscript meets their house style. Working with a good editor at the structural level can make a big difference to the quality of the book and many traditionally published authors have a long-term working relationship with their development editors.

On the other hand, if you are self-publishing, you either have to find and employ editors or do the work yourself. The chances are though, that you won't have the best possible editing skills – this is a specialist job. The Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading keep a registry of editors: <https://www.ciep.uk/>. Jericho Writers (and many others) offer editing services.

A **development** or **structural** editor is concerned with the concept, plot, character arcs, themes and context of the book. The development editor looks at the Big Picture and asks questions such as does the story make sense, are the characters believable, does the content match the proposed genre, will the reader's expectations be fulfilled given the genre of the work. What is the core concept of the story – is this well realised? Will the reader care about the characters and what happens to them?

Does a development editor do a manuscript assessment? No, not quite. A manuscript assessment says what works, and what doesn't and suggests how to fix the bits that did not work. This can be transformational for the work. But it is not a page-by-page examination of the big picture things (i.e. character, plot, tone etc) to think about. A development edit is both about the very big picture but also about the page-by-page picture. For a development edit, you should expect to get back a marked-up copy of your manuscript with a page-by-page set of comments on the structure of the book etc. No one completely agrees on any of these terms exactly so it's best to check carefully that any editor you hire is going to do what you expect and want.

A **line editor** or **copy editor** concerns themselves with ensuring that each line is well written. They don't worry about the big picture – they take that as a given. They are concerned with ensuring that writing is effective. It will identify and correct unclear or weak phrasing,

factual errors, errors in time sequences or dates and times, awkward repetitions, unexpected changes of tone, and deviations from any preferred house style. Line editing will also cover clumsy sentences, repetitious phrases or sentences, lack of fluency, inconsistent use of dialect or accent and so on. Proofreading would also be included as part of this process.

A **proofreader** looks for a specific set of typographical errors, missing spaces, punctuation errors or spelling errors. Traditionally this was done after typesetting (which could itself introduce errors, but today's automation generally does not introduce such errors into the final book). A proofreader's job is thus not to enhance the writing, simply to ensure that it is correctly realised in the final copy.

Typical costs for these services are (based on Jericho Writer's tariff, 2024). These are for an 80,000 word manuscript.

Manuscript assessment:	£800	4 week turnaround.
Development assessment:	£1600	6 week turnaround

Jericho Writers definitions of editing types			
	Proof read	Copy edit	Line edit
Typos	yes	yes	yes
Spellings	yes	yes	yes
Suitable for US or UK English	yes	yes	yes
Punctuation	yes	yes	yes
Grammar	some	yes	yes
Fact-checking		yes	yes
Consistency		yes	yes
Repetitions		yes	yes
Clarity		some	yes
Style & flow			yes
Cutting			yes
Rewriting			some
80,000 words (4 week turnaround)	700	900	1200

As another example, Louise Harnby is a professional editor and offers line/copy editing services including the following:

- Chapter sequencing
- Character-trait consistency
- Cliché and awkward metaphor
- Dialogue expression: particularly authenticity of phrasing and word choice in relation to character voice, mood and intention
- Effectiveness of sentence-level narration, including an assessment of word choice, repetition and overwriting, especially in action and suspense scenes
- Effectiveness of suspense and thrill points
- Layout guidance

- Letter, word, line and paragraph spacing
- Problematic representation, stereotyping and othering
- Sentence pace, rhythm and flow, and whether it reflects the setting and mood of a scene
- Speech tagging and punctuation
- Spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, hyphenation and capitalization
- Standard document formatting using Word's styles palette: indentation, paragraph style, section breaks
- Told versus shown prose
- Use of tenses
- Verb use, especially to create tension and suspense

Her rates are on her website – but for full manuscripts, the rate varies depending on assessing the initial quality of the manuscript. A 10,000-word edit is offered at £450. See:

<https://www.louiseharnbyproofreader.com>.

## Author Commissions

Channel	Author commission	Commission basis	Territories	Comments
Ebook stores				
Amazon Print	35-70%	Sales price	Europe, Americas, Australia, Japan	
Apple	70%	Sales price	Europe, Americas, Australia, Japan	
Barnes and Noble	65%	Sales price	USA	
Google Play	52-70%	Digital list price/sales price	Worldwide	
Kobo	70%	Sales price	Worldwide, number one in Canada	
Print on Demand				
Amazon	50%			
Ingram	50%			
Barnes and Noble	50%			
Audio bookstores				
various	60-70%			

## Interesting Statistics

The Writers and Artist's website (<https://www.writersandartists.co.uk/resources/listings>) includes:

- 362 literary agencies
- 500+ detailed profiles of literary agents
- 1345 book and audio publishers
- 792 magazines and newspapers
- 300 awards, prizes and festivals
- 360 societies and associations
- 130 self-publishing providers
- 85 creative writing courses

## Relevant Societies

The Society of Authors: [Society of Authors](#).

The Authors Licensing and Collecting Society: [ALCS](#)

Public Lending Rights: [PLR](#)

The Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading: <https://www.ciep.uk/>.

## ISBNs

An ISBN is a unique numerical book identifier, provided by affiliates of the International ISBN Agency. Each edition or variation (but not reprinting) of a publication is given a different ISBN. Thus, a paperback, hardback and eBook will have different ISBNs. The method of assigning ISBNs is nation specific. A fee must be paid to allocate an ISBN or a block of ISBNs to a publication.

Some organisations, (e.g. Amazon KDP) will provide their own free internal 'ISBN'. These will not be recognised by other organisations, i.e. they cannot be used with other publishers or other publishing services, nor will it allow you to sell the book via other retailers or place a copy in a copyright library, or indeed a normal library.

When an ISBN is registered against a particular book, a set of metadata is mapped to the ISBN and stored by the ISBN provider. This metadata includes:

Book Title  
Author Name  
ISBN  
Publisher  
Publication Date

If the book is being self-published, then the Author will in effect be the publisher.

Note: retailers will record other metadata for a book, against the ISBN, in their own catalogues. E.g. Genres, keywords, descriptions, and even the cover images. This is to allow them to organize, categorize and market the publication on different platforms. But this type of metadata is not stored in the records the ISBN creates in its own database).

If you have the ISBN for a book, you can then find details of that particular book by using an ISBN database lookup service such as

<https://isbndb.com/blog/isbn-number/>

but these services often charge a fee. Just Googling the ISBN number is usually enough to identify the book edition, publisher etc.

An ISBN often appears as a barcode on the back cover of a book. It will also certainly appear on a page within the book.

The cost of an ISBN depends on the quantity purchased and where it is purchased from. In the UK typical costs are:

Nielsen UK ISBN Store

- Single ISBN           £93
- Block of 10 ISBNs   £174
- Block of 100 ISBNs   £387



### Independent Publishing Network

- Single ISBN £40 with barcode image, £30 without
- 2 ISBNs £76. (£38 each)
- 3 ISBNs £105 (£35 each)
- 4 or more £30 each

### Book Editing Services UK

- Single ISBN £89
- Block of 10 ISBNs £164
- Block of 100 ISBNs £369

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