

# 5 STEPS TO Self PUBLISHING

All the essential information you need to  
go from manuscript to marketplace



BY STEVEN SPATZ

President, BookBaby

*Featuring Excerpts from the BookBaby Blog*

[www.bookbaby.com](http://www.bookbaby.com)

**Phone Support:**

877-961-6878

Pre-sales & Sales: (9am to 6pm ET)

Post-sales & Production: (9am to 5pm ET)

eBook & POD Distribution: (9 m to 5pm ET)

**Email Support:**

Pre-sales & Sales: [info@bookbaby.com](mailto:info@bookbaby.com) (9am to 5pm ET)

Post-sales & Production: [support@bookbaby.com](mailto:support@bookbaby.com) (9am to 5pm ET)

eBook & POD Distribution: [distribution@bookbaby.com](mailto:distribution@bookbaby.com) (9am to 5pm ET)

Printing Specifications

Trim: US-Letter

Paper Stock: 60lb Opaque

Cover: Perfect bound soft cover

Printed by BookBaby

This guide, *5 Steps To Self Publishing*, contains all of the essential information an author needs to publish their manuscript. Not too much! Not too little! To produce this right-sized book I've worn two hats – both writer and editor. The material presented on these pages is a combination of my own original writing and content, augmented by multiple posts that originally appeared in the BookBaby Blog ([www.bookbaby.com/blog](http://www.bookbaby.com/blog)) from 2014 through 2017. We have worked with some of the most knowledgeable and reputable experts in the publishing industry and I want to publicly thank them for their contributions to help authors from across the globe achieve their publishing dreams.

All testimonials are from *actual* clients. Check out our Trustpilot page:

<https://www.bookbaby.com/reviews>



HOW TO SELF PUBLISH A BOOK SERIES

# 5 STEPS TO Self

# PUBLISHING

All the essential information you need to go from manuscript to marketplace

# SELF-PUBLISHING SIMPLIFIED

## How to use this guide

BookBaby has helped thousands of authors self-publish—books of every genre; in dozens of languages; and in every trim size and binding style. We've worked through every possible issue faced, and brainstormed before every decision taken for every kind of book.

*To keep things simple, every section starts off with a color section like this one. Here we've summarized all of the decisions and choices needed at each step of the way. The rest of the pages are filled with essential information to help you make your decisions.*

Here's what our experience has taught us:  
**You need to take five steps**



“There’s never been a better time to self-publish than right now.”

It’s a statement I often repeat when speaking at writing conferences around the USA. The good news is that this message is being received loud and clear by thousands of aspiring writers around the world, just like you. They’ve completed the journey of taking their manuscript directly to the marketplace. From romance novels to religious books, from children’s titles to non-fiction, every author can succeed with a self-published book.

## Why self-publish?

There are lots of compelling reasons, but I only need four:

- 1. You can and will make more money. A lot more.** Self-published eBooks can earn between 60% and 70% in royalties. Your printed books can earn you up to 50% in royalties when you sell direct-to-reader through BookBaby. Now, compare this with the 12% to 20% royalties earned by traditionally published writers. You may ask, “Are self-published authors actually making money?” Yes. In fact according to recent reports from [authorearnings.com](http://authorearnings.com), as a group, they are making MORE than traditionally published writers.
- 2. Self-publishing is fast. Weeks, not months or years.** Your edited manuscript will be available on major online retailers like Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and the rest within a few weeks. Meanwhile, it can take 18–24 months for your finished manuscript to reach the marketplace at the end of the traditional publishing process. And that doesn’t even count the time-consuming task of finding both the agent and publisher who are willing to take you on as a new author. That alone could take months or even years!
- 3. You retain all control of your book.** No contracts or signing away your publishing rights. Self-published authors are the CEOs, making the call on every aspect of your book, from edits to cover design, book reviews to promotion. And finally, one reason that may be obvious and yet still very important:

- 4. You’re guaranteed to be published.** Self-publishing is a sure thing. You WILL be published if you go this route. For many that’s a dream in and of itself. For others it’s a start to a literary career. In today’s low-risk traditional publishing environment, it’s the longest of long shots for an unpublished, unknown new author to get that dream publishing deal.

And if you are holding out in hopes of finding an agent and a traditional publishing deal, let me give you one more reason why you should self-publish.

- 5. The very best way to be discovered by a traditional publisher ... is to succeed at self-publishing.** Authors can make their best first impression on agents and publishers with quality books, strong work ethic, and promotional skills. I’ve seen hundreds of examples of self-published authors from either BookBaby or elsewhere being signed by huge international publishing houses.

This guide holds the key for you to self-publish your book. We’ve made the process simple and easy for every author to complete this journey.

We wish you, on your self-publishing journey, Godspeed!



Steven Spatz  
*President, BookBaby*





## **IN THIS SECTION:**

**Professional editing  
is a must for your book**

---

**What kind of  
editing does your  
book need?**

---

**A cautionary tale  
of the consequences  
of not editing**



---

# **FINISH YOUR BOOK**

## Editing is a must

The last words in your book might be “The End,” but your book isn’t finished until it’s been edited.

It’s an accepted fact: Getting your book edited is a must if your goal is to succeed in the publishing marketplace.

Your book is worth the investment of a professional editor and here’s why:

- **Editing = higher sales.**
- **BookBaby’s recent self-publishing survey interviewed 850 authors who earned over \$1000 on their latest book. Over 74% of them had their books edited by a professional.**

## PROFESSIONAL EDITING IS A MUST FOR YOUR BOOK

### Five reasons why a professional editor will improve your book - guaranteed

#### 1. Editing can turn a good book into a great book

Editing is like housework, it goes unnoticed unless it's not done. Professional editing is an indispensable, not just a desirable part of a novel's journey to publication. Editing can transform your writing, get readers talking, reach the ears of professional publishers, and catch the eye of movie producers. An editor will make sure that the reader remembers the dazzling plot and characterization, and not the problems with grammar.

#### 2. Editors give honest, objective feedback

Lots of authors ask friends and beta readers to take a look at their novel. Most people are flattered by the request and are happy to help. While any feedback is welcome and can help improve the manuscript, friends tend to give a lot of positive encouragement. They can gloss over some of the novel's shortcomings to avoid causing offense. However, professional editors are experienced at giving criticism. They are systematic and thorough, covering not only familiar issues of grammar and punctuation, but also matters of style, pacing, dialogue, plot twists, and fact checking (to name but a few). Above all, the feedback they give is honest and objective. It takes teamwork to craft a polished and captivating novel that could become tomorrow's bestseller. In short, authors need professional editors.



“Editing is not an optional step in the publishing process. Every book should be edited prior to being published, if you want your reader to perceive you as a serious and professional author.”

—Christina Ramirez, BookBaby Publishing Specialist

### 3. Editors work together with authors

It's the editor's job to be honest with the author when suggesting improvements (such as rewriting, restructuring, or cutting sections) while respecting the author's message, meaning, tone, and style. Both the author and the editor have a shared interest in producing a work that gets—and keeps—the reader's attention. What's more, if an author so wishes, an editor with experience and knowledge of the book-selling market can also suggest ways to take the novel in a direction that might better attract the eye of a publisher or an agent.

### 4. An editor is a sounding board

Authors often pour their deepest feelings, and even secrets, into their novels. And, for that reason, they are often cautious about who reads their early drafts. In such cases, authors can benefit from the impartial opinion of an editor. An editor takes a bird's eye view of a novel, identifies the elements that work and those that don't and suggests the necessary changes. While editors often get to know authors well throughout the editing process, especially in the case of full, substantive editing, they are not concerned with your private life. They won't be flattered or annoyed if they appear or not in the final version (although a credit is always nice).

### 5. Editing is a professional skill

It can be tempting to ask a friend to edit your book. Someone who is not an editor but who is good with language and is prepared to do the job for little or no cost.

The issue here is that you often get what you pay for. Editing is a profession like any other. It is their job to help the author produce a work that will keep the reader engaged and cause that magical, lasting effect the author has set out to achieve.

#### **Top notch!!!**

*"I am a commercially published author, with books published by Scribner, Harcourt, Harper, etc., and I have had many experiences with good and great editors, art directors, and the like. Comparing my experiences with them with BookBaby, I have to give BookBaby everything from gold medals to gold stars. Other than total professionalism, the staff is friendly, knowledgeable, and excellent at finding innovative solutions to tough problems. As all of my commercially published books were out of print, I have had BookBaby convert them to a digital format. With my most recent book - a collection of short stories - I even asked them to design the book cover, and they did a great job. This is a wonderful company staffed by fantastic people, and I could not recommend it more highly. Particularly to published authors looking for new ways to market their out-of-print books."*

*—Edye, BookBaby Author*

## WHAT KIND OF EDITING DOES YOUR BOOK NEED?

### From proofing to developmental - the four main types of editing

#### 1. Proofreading

This is a very light, final look at a previously edited book. Proofreading is intended to pick up the final typos and spelling mistakes and to correct inconsistencies, like ensuring the word “proofreading” is always spelled as one word and not “proof-reading” or “proof reading.” In almost every case, the book has already gone through other more comprehensive editing, and proofreading is a simple final check before publishing.

#### 2. Copy Editing

Copy, in the publishing world, refers to the text. So, copy editing could just as easily be called text editing. It’s a word-by-word edit that addresses grammar, usage, and consistency issues. Copy editors will check for typos and spelling errors, along with correction of grammatical, linguistic, and syntactical errors. They will also pay particular attention to punctuation such as commas, semicolons, and quotation marks.

#### 3. Line Editing

Line editing is a more intensive structural edit that focuses on the finer aspects of language—the flow of ideas, transition elements, tone, and style. Line editors expand their efforts to correction of awkward constructions and suggestions to make sentences crisper and tighter by fixing redundancy and verbosity without a full rewrite. Editors will look at the manuscript using a holistic methodology with a review of key aspects of the manuscript—the narrative, vocabulary, structure, characterization, style, and development.

#### 4. Developmental editing

Not every book requires a developmental edit. This editing should come early in the publication process, while the author is still in the drafting stage. Also called substantial editing, structural editing, or full editing, it often includes a detailed critique of the essential elements of the story (in the case of a novel), which include setting, timeline, characterization, plot, story structure, pacing, presentation, and marketability.

#### *Very professional edit.*

*“The editing made my book much more readable. I was impressed with the suggestions, and changes that were made to my manuscript.”*

*—Dean, BookBaby Author*

## A CAUTIONARY TALE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT EDITING

### If you don't pay for book editing, it's going to cost you

God only knows why Dr. Tony Lewis, the president of Christian Bible Institute and Seminary in Spring, Texas, didn't get professional editing for his book. "Something was telling me I should have paid to have it edited," he says. It proved to be an expensive—and potentially embarrassing—mistake for the self-published author. But today, it's a lesson that the Texas theologian now wants to share far and wide with prospective BookBaby authors.

"It's imperative that you have your book edited. I want to save people the headache and expense of what happened to me," says Lewis. "It's a process that just can't be rushed. Authors need to take their time and do it right."

Dr. Lewis chose BookBaby to publish his latest book, *The Message and the Messenger*, and he remembers conversations with BookBaby publishing specialists about editing. Dr. Lewis says, "They recommended that I have someone else proof and edit the book...but I didn't want to spend any more, or invest the time. I just thought to myself, 'Nah, I'm not going to do it.'"

And that's when all the problems started. "So we get the books printed and I do a press release that goes out in March. After the second day, my sister called me. She said: 'Have you looked at your book?' I asked, 'What do you mean?' She said, 'There's quite a few errors in it.' She took screenshots of the pages and texted me. And I saw what she was seeing. I was in shock."

And what about all those beautiful books Lewis had printed? "I had to just throw them away. They were worthless," says Lewis. "All that money down the drain. Thank goodness only my sister saw the books with all those errors or it would have been even worse."

"If just one author is persuaded to edit his book because of my situation, then I'll be happy," said Lewis. You can't just let anyone edit your book. Your friends can't do it. Your family can't do it. If you want to put something you're proud of into the marketplace, you have to have a proofing and editing expert do the job. Whatever the cost!

The bottom line, says Lewis, is that editing is an absolute must: *"If you don't pay for it, it's going to cost you in the long run."*



# 2

## **IN THIS SECTION:**

**Why is the cover design so important?**

---

**Tips for creating a eye-catching cover**

---

**Book formatting and why your book may need it**

---

**Preparing your manuscript to be converted to an eBook**

# PREPARE YOUR BOOK FOR PUBLISHING

You can create a beautiful book,  
inside and out

Now that you've finished with your content, you need to make sure your book looks as good as it reads.

- Will your cover design stand out in the crowded marketplace?
- How about inside the cover? Book formatting can add a professional touch.
- What do you need to prepare your digital file for production?

These are the kinds of finishing details that transform a good book into a great bestseller!

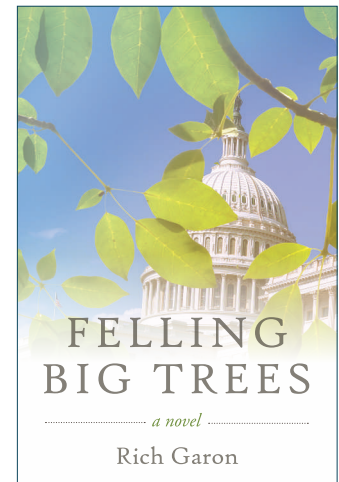
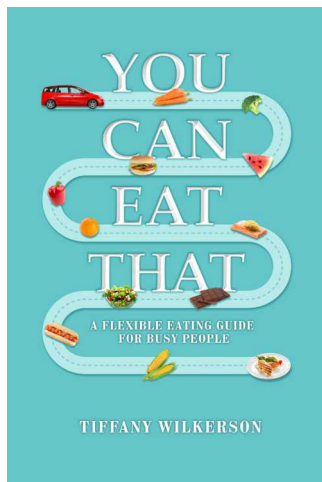
## WHY IS THE COVER DESIGN SO IMPORTANT?

### The cover is a make-or-break sales tool for your book

The average online book buyer will spend less than a second scanning a single cover image during the average browsing session. How will your book stand up to this near instant “yes” or “no” buying decision?

Book covers aren’t just important to authors in hopes of gaining sales. They’re important to readers, too! According to Deloitte’s research paper, Technology, Media & Telecommunications Predictions 2015, “A key value of printed books appears to be their cover. Covers have been shown to not only drive sales but also send a message to those around you about what you are reading and what kind of person you are. As has been noted, ‘the act of reading a book in public conveys important information to other readers.’”

A great cover design can also speak to fans of a genre and tell a little (or a lot) about the style of writing and the genre your book fits into. Here’s a gallery of some of the standout book covers designed by the professionals in the BookBaby Design Studio.

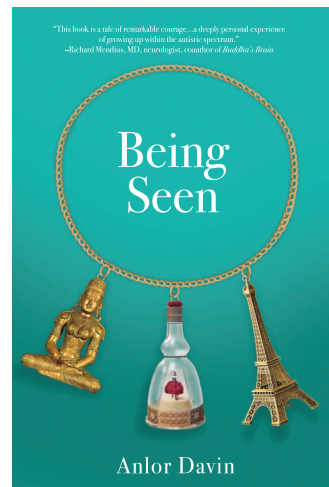
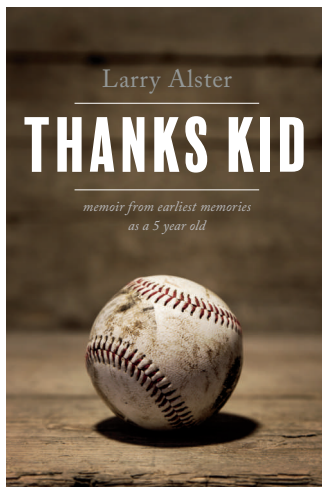
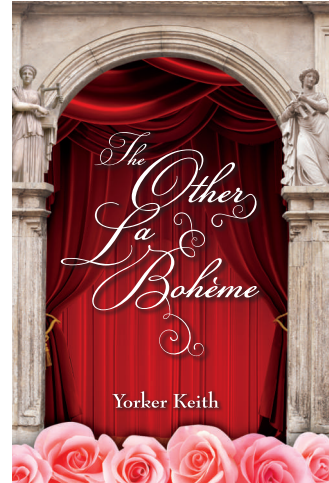
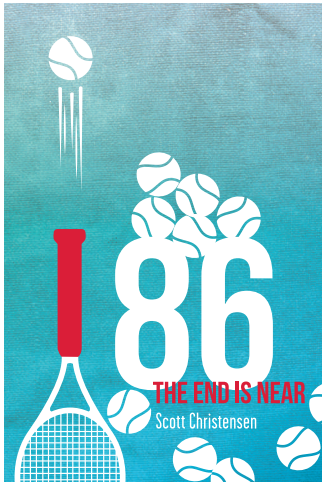
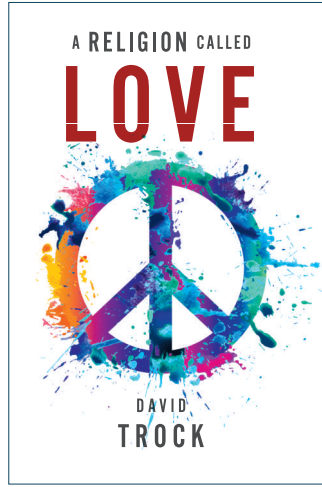
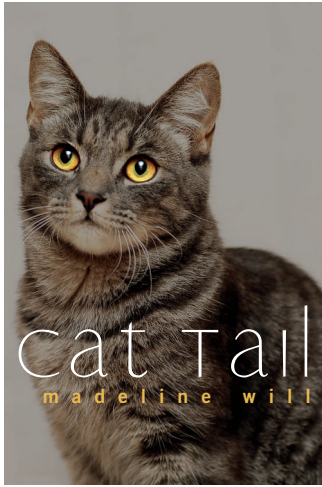


#### ***Awesome job!***

*“BookBaby did an awesome job helping me get the book ready to print. We are very pleased with the cover design and the finished product. We will use them again for our next book.”*

*—Linda, BookBaby Author*





## TIPS FOR CREATING A MEMORABLE COVER

### Selling your book starts with an eye-catching design

Many authors believe that your cover is your very best sales tool. We humans are a visual species, stimulated by compelling graphics and imagery. The virtual online bookshelves are crowded, making it all the more important to stand out when it comes to your cover. And that goes for both eBooks [www.bookbaby.com/ebooks](http://www.bookbaby.com/ebooks) and Printed Books [www.bookbaby.com/book-printing](http://www.bookbaby.com/book-printing) available via *Print On Demand* (POD). If you captivate readers from the outset—with the outside of your book—they’ll be drawn to find out what’s inside.

#### Here are the three tips suggested by the BookBaby Design Studio for creating an eye-catching cover that sells:

1. **Be unique.** It’s important to stand out. If you are choosing images yourself, make sure they are distinctive in their appeal. Take a look around Amazon and check out all of the other covers in your genre and make sure yours is different. Keep to one theme and don’t over-clutter. Think about what the driving message of the book is and use this as the focus of the design.
2. **Be bold, use color.** Color increases readers’ attention span by 82% and makes an impression that is 39% more memorable. Strong, contrasting colors are likely to have the most impact and be the most readable.
3. **Think about your thumbnail.** Online retailers will usually display your book cover as an 80 × 115 pixel thumbnail, so it’s important to make sure your cover design is clear and readable at different resolutions. View your cover image at varying image sizes and make sure it looks good when it’s small.



“Keep it simple. It is often more effective to use one striking concept that represents your book rather than piecing together multiple themes.”

— Jaine Kopala, BookBaby Designer

## HOW A SELF-PUBLISHED AUTHOR GOT EXTRAORDINARY BOOK COVER DESIGN

### The key to your stand-out cover is in your local bookshop.

Lauren Lynne knew exactly what she wanted for the book cover design of her *Secret Watchers* action–adventure book series. “I did my homework. I spent a huge amount of time looking at other book covers,” says the Oregon-based author of four young adult books: *Vision*, *Whispers*, *Insights*, and *Perceptions*, depicting the ordinary-turned-extraordinary life of eighth-grader Owen Ryer.

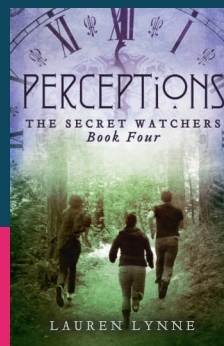
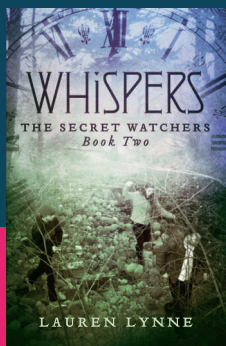
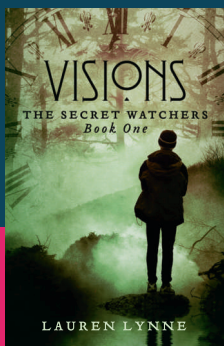
“I’m really into books and literature and so I spent a lot of time looking at other people’s book covers before doing my own,” she says. “I’m one of those crazy people whose passion is young adult literature. It’s my guilty pleasure.”

Today’s savvy self-published authors know that having an eye-catching book cover design is one of the most important elements for a

successful eBook and printed book sales run. Lynne is one of the many authors who has used BookBaby’s Cover Design services. BookBaby has created book covers for all four of Lynne’s books, and she reports that working with the BookBaby team was a true collaboration.

Lynne counsels other authors to use her approach for creating the perfect cover. “Before you start, do your research first, that’s the key,” she says. “Look at covers at your local booksellers like I did.”

From there, communication is vital. “Give as much information as you can to the cover artist,” says Lynne. “Tell them all about the story, the theme, and the mood. Tell them what’s important about the story. And don’t be afraid to send images to the artist to pinpoint exactly what you want.”



## BOOK FORMATTING AND WHY YOUR BOOK MAY NEED IT

### It's the little design touches that make a book...a book!

What makes a book a book? It starts with words. Lots of them. Tens of thousands usually. Or pictures. Or both.

Next you have to have a cover and a back cover if it's a printed book. But beyond that, well, it gets a little hazy. Should we create a Table of Contents *or* a Title page *or* The Foreword?

For a book designer like BookBaby's Becky Rodriguez-Smith, what goes into a book is dozens of different things, large and small, that comprise the finished product. "What we do is turn a double-spaced manuscript, given to us in a Word document, into a real book," says Becky. "And when I say 'real book,' I mean we make it look professional, it can be compared to any other on the shelf of a book store. You can look at it, open it, feel it, and it looks like it was done by a major publishing company."

That professional look is usually accomplished by a service called *book formatting*. But what exactly is book formatting? Let's ask the expert.

"Actually it's hard to explain sometimes to clients what they really get from it, especially brand-new authors," says Becky. "But once they see the finished product and see the difference in appearance, it's very easy to understand. It might not seem like much is happening, like applying a different style to chapter heads, designing copyright pages, and maybe running headers and footers. But it's all those design details that really make a book a book!"

Becky and the other BookBaby designers format the books and then send the author a PDF proof of his or her book for review. This gives the author a chance to make corrections and provide comments to improve the final product. "We're not formatting in Word or using any kind of template," explains Becky. "We use design software developed specifically to produce beautiful-looking books."

"The designers here at BookBaby have been around for awhile. This is what we do, and we want authors to trust us to create a beautiful book. We're not going to put something out there that doesn't make them look great!"

"We've learned over the years and through experience what is going to grab the attention of readers and keep it."

"We have a great team of experienced book designers. This is what we do, and we want authors to trust us to create a beautiful book."

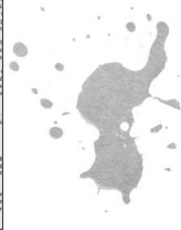
—Becky Rodriguez-Smith, BookBaby Design Services Manager



"Mendelsohn's"
"Missy, please don't do that. All the other girls are probably already here. Don't embarrass me like that," Lily begged. She really didn't want her mama to find out that Missy's parents weren't even home and that the house was likely filled with boys by now.

"This way, Christ, no one sees the front door. Mrs. Weldon has these really old, antique rugs in the living room that she doesn't want anyone to walk on, so everybody goes either the side door or the back door. The side door leads to a cozy library that's attached to a porch that wraps all the way around both sides of the house. Large oak and pecan trees run along the driveway and are scattered around the front of the house, while beautiful, blooming magnolia trees line the right side of the house and a row of mimosa trees line the left. I was walking toward the front door, when I heard Lily call me.

CHAPTER 3
The Party



before

It was 7 o'clock when Aunt Martha pulled into Missy's driveway. "I think I'll run in and say hello to Mrs. Weldon. I want to thank her for having you girls over," said Aunt Martha.

"Oh, Mama, please don't do that. All the other girls are probably already here. Don't embarrass me like that," Lily begged. She really didn't want her mama to find out that Missy's parents weren't even home and that the house was likely filled with boys by now.

Aunt Martha stopped the car, and looked at Lily for a few seconds. "All right, I won't embarrass you." She had that "you hurt my feelings" tone that mama's get when they want to make you feel guilty. It was lost on Lily.

She jumped out of the car in two seconds flat, dragging me behind her. "Thanks, Mama."

"Bye, girls, have a good time. I'll be back about 10 o'clock to get you." "Mama," Lily whined, "no one leaves that early. Let us stay at least until 11."

"Ten-thirty, and I don't want to hear another word about it, Lily, and don't make me come in to get you. You'll think embarrassed."

26

after

THE BLOODY SHOE AFFAIR
"Yes, Ma'am." Aunt Martha drove off. "Well, at least I got thirty extra minutes," she grinned. "Let's go inside, 'time's a wastin'." Lily looked beautiful in her white cotton sundress with spaghetti straps that showed off her bronze, summer tan. Her dress had a lace, form-fitting bodice that gave just a hint of cleavage.

Missy lives in an old, white antebellum style plantation house with four big columns on the front and a porch that wrapped all the way around both sides of the house. Large oak and pecan trees run along the driveway and are scattered around the front of the house, while beautiful, blooming magnolia trees line the right side of the house and a row of mimosa trees line the left. I was walking toward the front door, when I heard Lily call me.

"This way, Christ, no one sees the front door. Mrs. Weldon has these really old, antique rugs in the living room that she doesn't want anyone to walk on, so everybody uses either the side-doors or the back-door. The side-door leads to a cozy library that's attached to a really neat sunroom. That's where we usually hang out when we aren't up in Missy's room. It's away from all of the main rooms of the house, so we don't bother her parents when they're home. Of course, we don't have to worry about that tonight."

As we walked up the steps of the porch, I could smell the faint aroma of the magnolia trees drifting in the warm evening air. The door opened into a darkened room that Lily had indicated was the library. It took my eyes a few seconds to adjust. There, sprawled on dark burgundy leather couches, lovesats and armchairs were girls who looked to be in their late teens, sitting in guys' laps, making-out. No one in the room took any notice of us as Lily led me past the make-out party. She opened a door that led to a long hall, letting rays of light pierce the darkness of the library before she closed the door behind her. It was obvious that the party had started way before we got here.

"Lily," I whispered in her ear, "you said this wasn't going to be a date party!"

27

2. TONY'S VANISHING ACT
Eric Martin was a self-absorbed wisecrack and a dick. Always had been, always will be. He was the type of kid in school who would infuriate you, only to redeem himself with some offhand comment that was so completely inappropriate it was funny, or by taking the fall for an offense he didn't commit. A penance, I suppose.

Eric Martin was a self-absorbed wisecrack and a dick. Always had been, always will be. He was the type of kid in school who would infuriate you, only to redeem himself with some offhand comment that was so completely inappropriate it was funny, or by taking the fall for an offense he didn't commit. A penance, I suppose.



before

TONY'S VANISHING ACT

Eric Martin was a self-absorbed wisecrack and a dick. Always had been, always will be. He was the type of kid in school who would infuriate you, only to redeem himself with some offhand comment that was so completely inappropriate it was funny, or by taking the fall for an offense he didn't commit. A penance, I suppose.

Case in point: once Eric and I had flown a paper airplane back and forth in writing class. On it I'd written some vulgar comments about our teacher, the bifocal Mr. Lewis. Eric caught the plane just as Mr. Lewis turned around. His bald head bobbed as he stalked over to Eric's desk, ripped the paper from his hands, and started to read. His face ripened with embarrassment, stemming from his redneck neck all the way to his cue ball scalp. He demanded to know the author, and before I could cop to the crime, Eric got cocky. He leaned back in his chair, put his hands behind his head, and in a voice that didn't falter in the least said, "I did. Just practicing my creative writing skills." He gave off his classic Martin grin before the teacher promptly issued a detention. After the lesson proceeded, Eric held up a piece of paper behind Mr. Lewis' back that said: Detention = Nap time. He winked, and I gave him a mock salute in lieu of thanks.

27

after

COLORS OF IMMORTALITY
It was those moments that overshadowed his obnoxiousness. But he was still a dick. He was also my second cousin. And family or not, that brawny meathead had crossed a line. Big time. Fuming over his two-faced, selfish actions, my knuckles flexed white as I gripped the steering wheel. It wasn't just the note, or Eric taking my place, that enraged me; it was that it didn't come as a surprise. Unexpected—yes; surprised—no. I figured Tony would've stopped him. Eric was a force to be reckoned with, but Tony was my best friend, and he knew what that date meant to me.

Hell, Eric knew, too, but that hadn't mattered. And now Eric was meeting my girl, and all because Tony never grew a set. It was enough to tick a guy off. On the drive home, I attempted to level my anger by counting the dashed lines between solid stripes, and since I lived on the outskirts of Hicksville—aka Trestle, Oregon—I had plenty of time to practice. I'd been playing this cool-down game a lot lately. I was starting to get good at it.

At least the scenery was pleasant. Trestle, a poky, rural town wedged between two mountain ranges, was framed by farm fields and healthy rivers. To the west sat the Coastal Mountains, and to the east, the Cascades. On clear days, the scenery was incredible with breathtaking views from nearly every angle. But it's Oregon. And clear days are a rarity, especially nine months out of the year. Rain—a nasty, four-letter word for those living in warmer, friendlier climates—was simply a part of life here. Because of it, everything was green and beautiful.

I suppose it was nature's method of checks and balances. Pretty, but wet. By the time I pulled up to the house I shared with my grandmother, I'd managed to calm down. A little.

Gram's place, located on a dead-end country road, was set back on a small rise. The property consisted of twentyish acres, all of which had

13

## PREPARING YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO BE CONVERTED TO AN EBOOK

### 10 necessary steps to create great-looking eBook files

With eBook distribution available to everyone, the barriers for the distribution of books have been leveled. But self-published authors are tasked with some new challenges when they enter the marketplace.

Creating eBooks means you must execute a file conversion: taking your Word or other text file type and converting it to the programs used by eReaders such as Kindle and Nook. Without going into a lot of technical details, these file types are called .mobi (for Amazon Kindle readers and apps) and ePub (for every other reader type).

Whether you attempt to convert the file yourself, or you hire a company like BookBaby to do this work, there are ten very important things you can do to ensure a successful—and good-looking—file conversion.

1. Proof your files for proper spelling, grammar, and syntax. Take the time to proofread your book one more time. Once your book has been converted to the ePub format, it's difficult to fix a typo!
2. Don't use tabs or the space bar to format paragraphs and individual lines. While it may look the way you want it to in a Word or text file, tabs and spaces wreak havoc when converted to the eBook format. Use the "Format/Paragraph" menu or alignment buttons in the toolbar of your text-editing program if you want indents.
3. If you choose to include the publisher's name and address, date of publication, copyright information, ISBN number, or collaborative credits in your digital book, do so within the first two pages of the document.
4. Use standard fonts such as Times New Roman or Courier New. Not all fonts are supported by the eBook format and eReaders.

***BookBaby was very helpful and cooperative with this non-tech-savvy author***

*"The BookBaby staff was very patient and helpful in helping me navigate the digital world of self-publishing. They were always supportive, insightful, and patient."*

*—W. Thomas Leonard, BookBaby Author*

5. Don't use extremely small or large font sizes. We recommend 12 point size font for body text and 14 to 18 point size font for chapter titles.
6. Resize large images to 300 pixels high if you would like them to display in-line with text. Do all image resizing outside of the document with image-editing software, then reinsert them in your document (that is, don't resize your images in Word or a text editor). All images must be in .png, .jpg, or .tif format, of 72 dpi, and in the RGB color mode.
7. Do not wrap text around images. All images (except full-page images) should be set in-line with text.
8. Extract content that is displayed in tables or sidebars and list it as ordinary text. Tables, inserts, and sidebars will not display properly in the ePub format. Tables and graphs can always be included as images.
9. Special symbols may not convert properly to ePub unless they are characters in a standard font set. It's best to choose a font like Times New Roman for all text and symbols.
10. Do not include any elements that refer to page numbers other than your formatted Table of Contents. Pages in your document will not coincide with the "pages" on any given eReader.

Remember – How you format your finished document goes a long way to determine how smoothly the conversion process will go.



## **IN THIS SECTION:**

**eBook? Printed book? Both?**

---

**Customize your  
printed book**

---

**People powered publishing**

---

**Six key questions and  
answers about eBooks**

---

**Fixed versus standard layout—  
what's best for your eBook?**



# PICK YOUR PRODUCTS

## What do your readers want?

Now that your book is finally ready for production, it's time to go shopping!

At this point you'll need to consider your potential readers. How do they want to enjoy your book? Studies show that most authors are allowing their readers to choose how they want to consume.

What do successful self-published authors choose?

BookBaby's most recent Self-publishing Survey revealed:

- **91% chose printed books**
- **84% chose eBooks**
- **...And, most importantly, over 78% of them chose both printed books and eBooks.**

## EBOOK? PRINTED BOOK? BOTH?

### It's not an either/or situation to find your maximum reading audience

By now, most self-published authors understand the benefits of selling eBooks:

- Low cost of entry into the marketplace—affordable distribution that gives you worldwide reach and no manufacturing costs per unit (beyond the initial design, formatting, and conversion)
- Unlimited and eternal shelf-space with nearly instant delivery to your fans
- Highly portable and customizable reading experience with readability across devices (tablet, smartphone, eReader, desktop, etc.)

Yet there remain quite a few “holdouts” that refuse to offer their books in the digital format. The usual argument is that a book—especially *their* book—is worth more than \$2.99, or \$4.99, or \$9.99, or whatever the trending eBook price may be. In their stubbornness, they're sticking to printed books, which warrant (at least in their minds) a higher price tag.

Unfortunately, these authors are confusing price with value. Truth be told, books are only *worth* what readers are willing to pay for them. For established authors that can be a pretty good sum. But for most undiscovered authors that's usually not the case.

That's why eBooks are the perfect medium for self-published authors. When you publish an eBook, the attached production costs are minimal. That way you can keep the price low and make up in volume what you lose in revenue per unit sold. This is a proven method for building a readership, and print-only self-publishers are missing out on this opportunity.

#### The future of books: why printed books still matter

There's a strong case for publishing a printed version of your book, too. Sure, eReaders and tablet devices are everywhere these days, but according to a recent study, only 4% of active readers purchase digital books exclusively. That means 96% of readers still purchase printed books. Even among a younger demographic (age 30 and below), 50% of readers purchase printed books *only*.

Sure, eReaders and tablets are everywhere these days, but 96% of readers still purchase printed books.

Why do most readers still prefer physical books to digital? According to a recent poll by Colour & Thing, it comes down to factors such as:

- Readers enjoy the tactile experience. The heft of the book, the weight and smell of the paper, and the dog-eared pages; it's tough to recreate all these in 1's and 0's.
- Printed books are best for collecting. Most readers love to flaunt their personal library on bookshelves.
- Learning is often easier with print. Many folks find it easier to study with a bunch of books open on their table, rather than from multiple browser windows or electronic devices.

When you publish a printed book with a great design and a striking cover, you can reach the majority of readers who are more likely to buy physical books. Your books can be placed in libraries, easily sold at readings and signing events, and are so convenient to have on-hand in case you meet someone who seems interested in your writing!

### So will it be eBooks or printed books?

The answer is simple: Both.

When you publish both eBooks *and* printed books, you set yourself up to capture the widest possible audience. When you publish both, you have a product for everyone and a price-point for everyone.

A free sample chapter or low-priced eBook may act as a “gateway drug” to your entire body of work, but once they're hooked, your readers should be able to purchase your writing in *their* preferred format. Make sure you're *meeting* your readers' needs. That's how you get paid, after all.

#### ***BookBaby exceeds all expectations***

*“BookBaby's conversion process is, quite simply, the best in the business - and I've tried them all. The customer service and support is also wonderfully thorough, friendly, and clear - they've handled all issues and questions to my complete satisfaction. There are no surprises with BookBaby, no hidden costs, no upselling pressures - just professional and complete service at an amazingly affordable price. I've been very, very pleased with the entire experience, and look forward to using them with my next book.”*

*—JT Price, BookBaby Author*

## CUSTOMIZE YOUR PRINTED BOOK

### Create your custom book by answering these three important questions

Your choices can please your print-loving readers

Self-published authors are asking an important question: Is anyone still reading books?

The answer is an emphatic yes! And leading the way is an age group you may not expect: The millennials. It's a fallacy that they're too distracted by video games, surfing the net, and other online activities and do not read books.

In fact, a recent study by the Pew Research Center finds that US readers under 30 are more likely to have read a book—print or electronic—in the past week than Americans over 30 years.

And when they do read books, millennials are overwhelmingly choosing print over electronic. According to another Pew Research Center study, 73% of 18- to 29-year-olds who read a book in the previous year read a print book versus 37% who read an eBook.

### When choosing your printed book formats, you have three important decisions to make:

1. Should I print my book in Black and White or Color printing? We'll assume your cover will be full color so this choice is about the interior of your book. For most books this is a pretty obvious choice. Novels and fiction books are mostly B&W texts, while art and photography books demand full color. Of course some books are a mix of both black text with color photos inserted throughout. You'll need to work with your printer to discuss your choice.
2. Should I print a Hard or Soft Cover book? This is mostly a personal – and economical – choice. A hardcover is a book bound with thick protective cover, with usually a paper or leather dust jacket over the main cover. The aim of hardcover is protection and durability. Hardcover books last far longer than the corresponding paperbacks. They do not get damaged easily thus making them perfect for reference guides, great literary works, etc.

Paperback books are prepared for non-commercial works and those which don't get much exposure. The cover here is made of thinner paper or

#### *Great for all authors!*

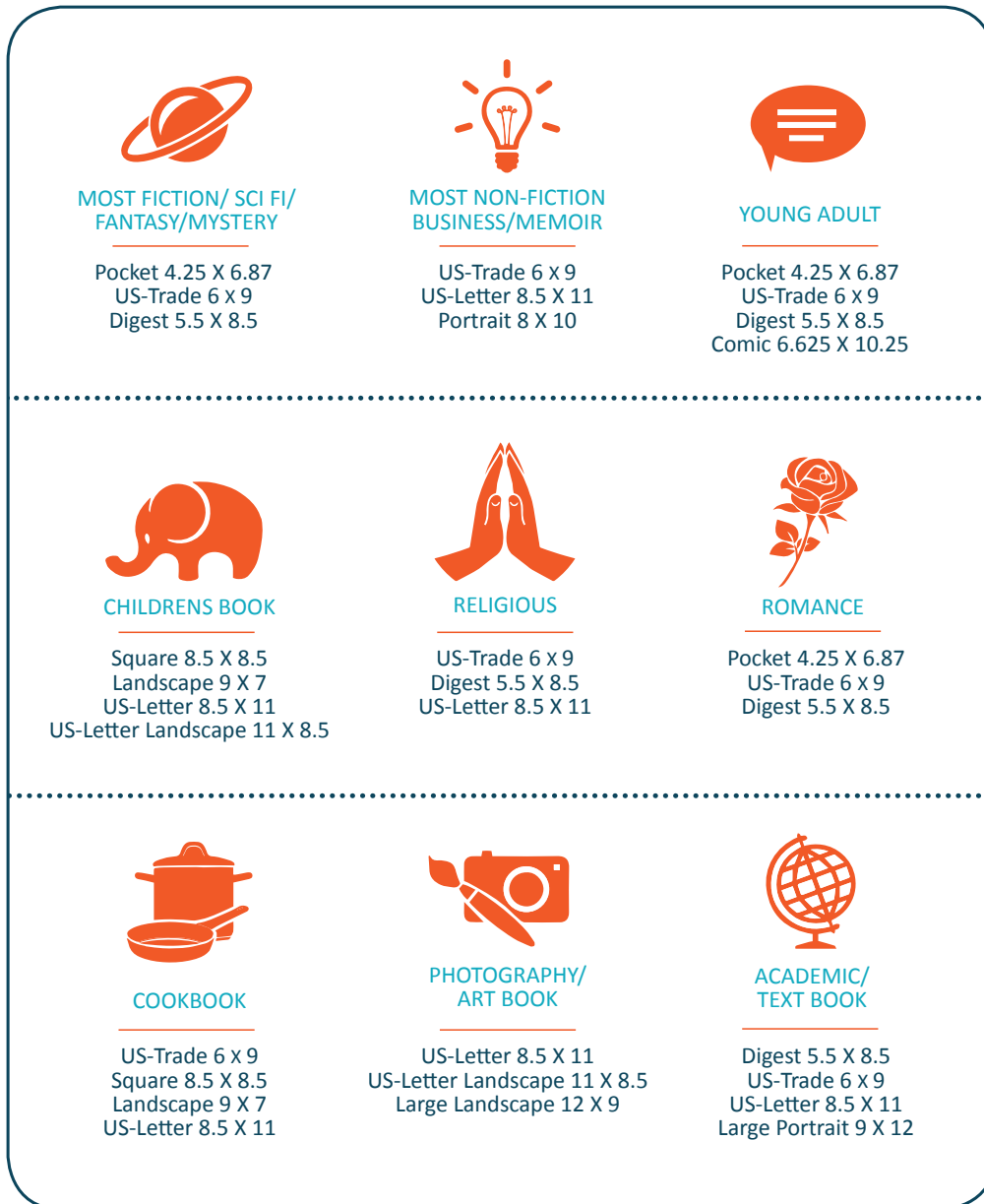
*"Thank you BookBaby. BookBaby helped turn my apprehensive rough draft into a confident and polished book."*

*—David Sheets, BookBaby Author*

cardboard, with glue to stick to the leaves. Its cost of production is lower than hardcovers. Most new writers will start off with a paperback.

3. What Trim Size should I choose for my book? This is an important decision for independent authors. While there are very few “rules” about book sizes, but there are a number of conventions that are good to know about. Your readers will “expect” a certain type of book to be within some standard conventional sizes. (All sizes quoted are width x height.)

**Here’s a chart that matches popular book genres with the most common printed book trim sizes:**



# WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH 100 BOOKS?

## THEY'LL BE GONE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!

### YOU **1ST BOOK**

The first book off the press goes to YOU.

The look, the weight of it, even that new-ink smell – you have to have that one special copy for yourself. Keep it on the shelf, like a trophy.

### AGENTS **5 BOOKS**

Want to take a stab at traditional publishing? You'll need to send some out to agents who prefer printed books over eBooks.

### BOOK SIGNINGS **30 BOOKS**

Reserves 10 books for 3 book signings. Depending on how hard you work to promote your title, this number could easily be 2X, 5X or more.

### ONLINE FOLLOWING **8 BOOKS**

Use printed copies as giveaways to your Twitter, Facebook, and other social media followers. Encourage people to sign up to your email list.

### HOLIDAY GIFTS **5 BOOKS**

Wrap a few books as holiday gifts to your Uncle, Aunt and cousins. Your family size will vary.

### COMMUNITY **10 BOOKS**

Give back to the community. Your book will be welcomed in local libraries, hospital waiting rooms, Veteran's hospitals, YMCAs, Senior Centers, homeless shelters, etc.

### YOUR EX **1 BOOK**

This one goes to that "Ex" who never thought you'd amount to anything.

Turns out you get the last word(s)!

### YOUR BOSS **1 BOOK**

Save one for your boss. Maybe surprise him/her around your annual review and raise time?

### SERENDIPITY **5 BOOKS**

Keep a supply in your car. You never know when you'll want to hand one out to someone new in your life.

### BOOK CROSSING **1 BOOK**

Send one here: [www.bookcrossing.com](http://www.bookcrossing.com).

### SPOUSE/PARENTS **3 BOOKS**

Give one to your spouse who seldom, never, or often complained about how much time you were devoting to your book.

And save two for your parents who, although are very proud of you, were likely having the same thoughts.

### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS **2 BOOKS**

Want to register your book with the Library of Congress? You'll need two copies sent to Washington D.C.

### TEACHERS **2 BOOKS**

Mail one to your favorite English or Writing teacher who inspired and encouraged you all those years. Another can go to that hated instructor who thought your writing to be the equivalent of fingernails on the blackboard.

### RELEASE PARTY **15 BOOKS**

Throw a party – a Book Release Party. Your close friends and family are going to want signed copies.

### PAY-IT-FORWARD **1 BOOK**

Leave a book on the table of your favorite coffee shop, with a note explaining how this copy is meant to be read and shared.

### LOCAL MEDIA **5 BOOKS**

Get the attention of the local media – radio, TV and newspaper. Encourage them to devote space and time to the work of a local author.

### BOOK REVIEWERS **3 BOOKS**

Ditto for local book reviewers. Some are fine with digital eBook files, but sending a book with a beautiful cover adds some cache to your review request.

### OPRAH **1 BOOK**

Send a copy to Oprah because, well, you never know.

So adding it all up, that makes 99.

**So pull out one more for yourself and put it on your desk or bedside table, someplace where you can look at it every day, open it up, leaf through it and say:**

# I DID IT!

## PEOPLE POWERED PUBLISHING

### Learn why self-publishing is a people business

There’s a phrase BookBaby often uses on our web site and in our emails, “people-powered publishing.”

Kind of a catchy phrase, but it’s more than that. It’s how BookBaby does business, and our customers have noticed. Check out rating sites like [Trustpilot](#), and you’ll see scores of reviews that talk about our advice-laden customer service.

It’s not just a point of pride. We think it’s a necessity. In this digital age where anything and everything can happen online, we believe the very best publishing happens when people partner with other people. Or, in our case, when authors partner with other authors.

When you call BookBaby for advice, it’s very likely you’ll find you’re not just talking to a publishing expert, you’re talking to an actual self-published author who has been there, done that. Take, for instance, Laura Wilson, who started working with BookBaby in late 2015. Well, that’s not really accurate. She joined the BookBaby staff in 2015, but she had been part of BookBaby for longer than that—as an author.

“I had just finished writing my first book in late 2012,” says Wilson, who goes by the pen name of Alex Kost. “I searched ‘self-publishing’ and BookBaby.com popped up. Immediately, I knew it was a Web site and company I could work with. I clicked around, found the pricing, educated myself, and learned how affordable it was.”

Laura is just one of a group of BookBaby staffers/authors. Pick up the phone and call BookBaby and it’s likely you’ll be talking to an already published author or book designer. There’s nothing like gaining the viewpoints of someone who has walked in your shoes, as the saying goes. Now Laura is able to share her real-time experiences one-on-one with authors around the globe.

“Having self-published myself really helps,” says Laura. “I have an appreciation for the amount of time everything takes. I’ve been through it all and I can talk to authors about the different steps in the book production process. I get people on the phone asking about things like copyright protection. I can say to them, ‘Yep, I know exactly what you’re talking about because I’ve done it.’ I’ve already dealt with almost everything they need to do, so I’m able to explain it in a way that makes sense to other authors.”

So maybe we should change our line to: Author-powered self-publishing. It may not roll off the tongue quite so nicely, but it’s one of the reasons why so many would-be authors are coming to BookBaby to publish their first book.

“I’ve been through it all and I can talk to authors about the different steps in the book production process.”

—Laura Wilson, BookBaby Prepress Operator



## SIX THINGS EVERY AUTHOR SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EBOOKS

### eBooks 101

#### 1. What is an eBook?

Electronic books—or eBooks—are digital versions of a manuscript. An eBook can consist of text, images, or both. eBooks have been around since 2007, when Amazon introduced the Kindle, followed by the Barnes & Noble Nook and the iPad from Apple.

#### 2. How do people buy and read eBooks?

eBooks are downloaded directly to all kinds of reading devices. They can be read on almost any modern computing device including dedicated eReaders like the Kindle or Nook, PCs, smartphones, and tablets like the iPad.

Readers can buy eBooks from thousands of online retailers around the globe, including Amazon, iBooks, and Barnes & Noble. Authors can also sell eBooks directly to readers from their own websites or from BookBaby’s free BookShop pages.

#### 3. How do I turn my book into an eBook?

You need to have your manuscript in one of the popular digital file formats, such as Word or a PDF. These source documents will then be converted into two special eBook files. The .mobi format is used in the Amazon Kindle device, whereas ePub is used in all other eBook reading devices, apps, and programs.

Some authors can convert their files themselves using third-party software applications. **Be forewarned: eBook conversion is a complicated process, and producing an error-free file can be difficult.**



“No two eBook devices are the same in terms of how they render the font for your eBook. It’s best to keep your formatting simplistic, knowing the reader will have the option to change the font in which your eBook is displayed.”

— Gino Vasquez, BookBaby Conversion Specialist



Many authors opt to hire a company like BookBaby for professional eBook file conversion. BookBaby inspects the Word or PDF documents to ensure that it conforms to eBook file specifications and then converts it into both .mobi and ePub files for all eReader types. BookBaby sends a format proof of the eBook files that authors can load and preview the eBook on their own device.

#### 4. What kind of books can be eBooks?

Just about any kind of book can be made into an eBook. Most text-based books work very well as eBooks because they have a simple layout.

#### 5. How long will it take to create an eBook?

There is no single answer to this question, it all depends on your book files and the time spent reviewing your eBook proof. Here's the process:

- When you send your Word or PDF book file to BookBaby, we'll inspect all of the contents to ensure everything is right.
- Next, we will convert your file into both .mobi and ePub formats, and send you a digital proof. Your first proof will arrive in about 6–8 business days.
- Then the ball is in your court! You'll need to review your proof and contact BookBaby with any changes. This can take five minutes...five days...or five weeks. Most eBook conversions take two rounds of proofs. How long does the "average" conversion take? You can generally expect this part of the eBook creation process to last between 12 and 15 business days.

#### 6. What do I need to do to get started on my eBook?

First, you should have your book professionally edited. That goes for any kind of book, printed book or eBook. There's just no substitute for another set of eyes combing your manuscript to eliminate typos and grammar issues.

When you send us your edited book file in Word or PDF format, we recommend you keep everything very simple. Because there are so many kinds of eBook readers and devices, a simple book file is best for consistency. Avoid any kind of special fonts or type treatments. Remember: It's the content of your book that's most important—not a fancy typeface.

## Why eBooks look different than print

Digital books, or eBooks as we call them, are still very new to most authors. Authors have lots of questions about this form of book, starting with:

### “Why doesn’t my eBook look like the printed version and/or the source document I provided you?”

All of the content of your printed book will be in your eBook, but it won’t look exactly the same. Why? It’s all about control:

Self-published authors are in complete control of their printed book. The author chooses a certain trim size, font size, formatting, and design that remain consistent. The book itself is static and doesn’t change—unless the author wants to create a second edition with changes. With a printed book, the author has the luxury of specifying the exact reading experience that will remain consistent from book number one to book number 1,001. Each page stays exactly the same—*forever!*

This isn’t the case for the eBook. For this medium, it’s everyone—and everything—*but* the author who makes all the choices. An eBook page can and will change depending on several factors including:

- Reading device. A book read on an iPhone will look much different than the same book viewed on a Kindle or iPad simply because of the different screen sizes.
- Software or browser. If you’re reading the book on proprietary software like Adobe Digital Editions or different browsers, the layout can and will change.
- Distribution partner. Some partners, including Amazon, can add formatting rules and guidelines of their own to digital files.
- The reader. His or her experience can be customized with font and point size choices.

For some books—various children’s books and recipe books, for instance—an exact page design may be critical to the reader’s experience. For this, we recommend converting your eBook as a fixed layout.

#### **First-rate service**

*“Everyone I spoke with was courteous, professional and helpful. Phone calls are answered right away, as are customer requests. Fast turnaround time and impeccable results. Love my beautiful new eBook!”*

*—Jean, BookBaby Author*

## eBook layout formats explained by the BookBaby conversion team

Here's how the BookBaby eBook conversion team explains it:

### Dynamic layout

The majority of the eBooks that BookBaby distributes are mostly text without photographs or images. These books have what are called “dynamic” (sometimes also called “standard”) layouts. A dynamic eBook is engineered with flowable text so you can read it on any eReader. Readers can adjust the font size and style to fit their reading preferences. That means there is no set design with a standard eBook, because the number of characters and words displayed will vary based on user settings and the screen size of a particular device.

For these books, it's not really necessary that readers have exactly the same viewing experience. With dynamic converted eBooks, every reader will have a slightly different experience. Not better or worse. Just different.

#### **You should have a dynamic eBook conversion if:**

- Your book is almost entirely text (besides the cover art).
- Any images you have are embedded between paragraphs.
- You are concerned about maximum exposure for your book.

### Fixed layout

There are some types of books that require a precise and consistent layout and pagination. Books that rely heavily on design elements or large illustrations and photos are candidates for what is called “fixed-layout” eBooks.

What kinds of books are suited for this kind of file conversion? Cookbooks, children's books, coffee table books, and certain kinds of text books.

#### **You should consider fixed eBook layout if:**

- It's important to maintain a design that has text going over images.
- A specific background color is important.
- You want to wrap text around images.

Many of these types of books must preserve the qualities of the printed page. A “fixed-layout” conversion will literally “fix” the images to a digital page. The book content—text and images—will not “flow” across the page if you change your settings, although most devices will allow the reader to zoom in and out.

## DYNAMIC OR FIXED LAYOUT: WHAT DOES YOUR EBOOK NEED?



# 4

## **IN THIS SECTION:**

**Global eBook Distribution**

---

**Print On Demand (POD)  
Distribution**

---

**Direct-to-Reader Sales**

---

**The time is right  
to publish**

# CHOOSE YOUR BOOK DISTRIBUTION OPTIONS

Find your readers around the globe

Software tycoon Bill Gates was credited for saying “Content is King”. That was true in 1996 at the dawn of the Internet, but now there’s a new rival for the crown.

Today it’s “distribution” that holds the key to your self-publishing success. Like the tree that crashes down in the empty forest, even the best of books will only be successful if you can sell it to the widest possible audience.

Self-published authors need a distribution plan that puts them in front of the maximum number of potential readers.

## GLOBAL EBOOK DISTRIBUTION

### How you avoid the #1 mistake by self-published authors

A lot of self-published authors are making a very costly mistake when it comes to eBook and printed book distribution. That's because they *only* sell their books through Amazon. In other words, they're putting all their eggs in one basket.

Mind you it's a very *big* basket. Amazon is the biggest and most important online bookstore, with approximately 67% of the eBook and printed book market share in the US. You must have your book in all the Amazon stores around the world.

But there are many other baskets...err...stores where millions of eBooks and printed books are sold in the US each year including iBooks, Google Play, Barnes & Noble, and dozens more. What the most successful self-published authors are learning in 2017: Even bigger online sales opportunities lie outside of the US. They do call it the World Wide Web after all.

Industry stats collected from around the globe show a much more diverse and changing marketplace. For example, while Amazon is the dominant player in the UK, they're just one of the many stores in the European Union including Tolino, Adlibris, and BOL. Amazon owns only about 40% of the German eBook sector, while down under, Amazon has only 34% of the Australian and New Zealand digital book market.

The trend continues around the globe. In Canada, Amazon has less than 40% of the market, with strong competition from retailers such as Indigo and Kobo. Kobo, which also owns Overdrive, a distributor specializing in libraries, has 26 million users and a library of 4.7 million eBooks and magazines in 190 countries.

Need another reason to consider the global marketplace? Think of it another way: There are huge English-speaking reader bases throughout the planet. Yes, the USA is number one on the list but here's the rest:

India	125,000,000	Germany	46,000,000
Pakistan	94,000,000	Canada	28,000,000
The Philippines	89,000,000	France	23,000,000
Nigeria	79,000,000	Australia	18,000,000
UK	59,000,000	China	15,000,000

\*Another 250,000,000 are learning English in state schools.

**BOTTOM LINE: While Amazon dominates market share in the US and UK with 65% of the market, Self-published authors need to distribute beyond the jungle (Amazon) onto the world marketplace to get their books in front of 100% of their potential readers!**

## Where should you then distribute your book?

### eBooks

Here's where your book should be sold:

**Amazon** – Amazon is the largest online retailer in the world and the Kindle is by far the most popular eReader on the market. Your eBook should be available for sale and able to be enjoyed on the Kindle and many other readers through the Kindle reader app.

**iBooks** – Apple's iBooks is the premier eBook destination for iPad, iPhone, and iPod owners in over fifty countries around the globe. When listed on iBooks, your readers can purchase your eBook through the iBooks app, available for free through iTunes.

**Barnes & Noble** – Still one of the biggest eBook retailers in the US. Your eBook needs to be available on their Web site [www.BN.com](http://www.BN.com) and easily purchased by millions of NOOK owners around the world.

**Google Play** – Google is a rising star in eBook sales. Give your eBook a greater reach with the world's most renowned search engine and also sell your book on Google Play, Google's very own digital distribution service.

**Kobo** – Kobo owns about 20% of the worldwide eBook market, behind only Amazon, and is the leading eBook retailer in many countries, including Canada and Japan.

### Printed Books

These are the best online stores and distributors for your *Print On Demand* books:

**Amazon** – A must for any kind of book sales. Your hardcover or softcover book can be for sale on Amazon, the largest online retailer in the world, alongside literary classics and bestselling authors.

**Barnes & Noble** – Barnes & Noble is the largest retail bookseller in the USA, with over 650 bookstores throughout the country, plus 700 college bookstores.

**Books A Million** – Books A Million is the second largest book retailer in the nation and also sells on the Internet at [www.booksamillion.com](http://www.booksamillion.com). The company presently operates over 250 stores in 31 states and the District of Columbia.

**Powells** – Based in Portland, Oregon, Powell's Books is the largest independently used and new bookstore in the world.

**Ingram** – As the world's largest distributor of books, Ingram can get your book into practically any store, making your book available for sale in over 39,000 online retailers.

**Baker & Taylor** – Baker & Taylor distributes books to more than 36,000 libraries, institutions, and retailers in more than 120 countries.

*Less is more* is a cute phrase for minimalists. But when it comes to book distribution, "More is more!" is the gold for self-published authors.

## PRINT ON DEMAND (POD) DISTRIBUTION

### POD is a game changer for self-published authors who seek the widest distribution possible

The self-publishing revolution has been powered by two technological advances:

- One was eBooks, the digital format first popularized by Amazon's Kindle and now used by a large and growing percentage of the reading population.
- The other is Print On Demand, or POD for short. It's exactly what it sounds like—having a printed book printed and shipped directly to a reader. Digital technology allows self-published authors to sell printed books in online bookstores worldwide without a huge upfront printing cost or inventory burden. As technology has grown, it has eliminated the need for large, offset print runs, thus allowing millions of new authors to see their work in print at a fraction of the cost.

While eBooks was a true innovation and lowered the barrier to entry into the publishing marketplace, it's Print On Demand that's the true game changer for self-published authors. Most readers still prefer printed books for their reading consumption. Print On Demand has the potential of getting a million more books in the hands of readers. For the first time since Gutenberg, every writer has the opportunity to turn his or her work into a premium book without spending an exorbitant amount of time or money.

#### What you'll need in order to have your print books put into POD distribution:

1. Your book files need to be prepared in a print-ready format. This is usually a formatted PDF, not as a Word document or an eBook. (Although ePub files can be converted to print.) To make sure your book files are prepared to your specifications, it's always best to have some copies printed. We recommend printing at least 25 copies so that the printing machines can be optimized and fine tuned for producing your books on demand in the future. You're going to need these physical copies anyway for use at signings, local bookstore sales, library and marketing giveaways.
2. You'll need to specify distribution with a capable Print On Demand distributor. BookBaby offers an extensive Print On Demand program for self-published authors, and there are others who offer similar programs.

#### *Great Way to Publish Books!*

*"I found that BookBaby is a great way to publish my books and place them with book sellers around the world. They provided guidance on how to prepare my manuscript, created an ePub file, and then placed it with multiple sellers. I am very happy with BookBaby, which I have used for two books."*

*-Beau, BookBaby Author*



# HOW PRINT ON DEMAND WORKS

The cost effective way to print and ship your book directly to readers.



## MADE TO ORDER

Your book files are prepared and formatted for printed book production.

## ON THE BIG STAGE

Your book is listed on the world's biggest websites like Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Powells, Books a Million and many more.

*(IMPORTANT NOTE: Amazon alone isn't enough; your book should be listed in as many retail sites as possible to allow readers to discover your book.) You can also list your book on Direct-to-Reader Web pages such as BookShop.*



## IN SEARCH OF YOU

The reader discovers and orders your book.

*(Or more commonly as research shows, they buy from a link sent out from an author's email, tweet, post or advertisement.)*



## ORDER UP

The retailer's site sends a message to the Print On Demand distributor and orders one book. The printer receives the order, prints, and binds, and packages the one book.



## READER'S MAILBOX

The book is shipped to the retailer's warehouse. (Or they may stock a supply of your books if sales warrant it.) The retailer ships the book to the reader.



## PROFIT

The retailer pays the Print On Demand distributor a percentage of the selling price. The Print On Demand distributor passes along net sales revenue to the author. Cha-ching!

*Make the maximum royalties when you sell direct to reader through your own eCommerce page like BookShop*

### What are the advantages of Print On Demand?

The benefits to Print On Demand are numerous—and critical to the literary career of self-published authors around the world.

- No costly inventory needed – Before POD , huge offset printing presses had to print an extraordinarily large number of copies in order to make printing cost-effective. That puts a heavy financial burden on indie writers who don't have the support of a traditional publishing company to cover the costs.
- Leaving the shipping to the pros – Indie authors who choose POD don't have to cope with issues of storage and fulfillment to the online retailers' warehouses. Retailers have limited space, both for display and storage, so they do not want excess inventory unless it's a bestseller.
- Direct shipment to the readers – Books can be shipped directly to the buyer, eliminating the tremendous costs associated with the traditional publishing model. Print On Demand allows authors to publish from the comfort of their own homes and sell their books online—without nearly as much financial investment as required a few decades ago.



“Retail shops purchase titles from wholesale distributors, which include Ingram and Baker & Taylor. With POD distribution, your titles are automatically added to these wholesale catalogs.”

— Sam Sedam, BookBaby Distribution Coordinator

With its ability to cut costs, eliminate storage issues, and provide easy online availability, Print On Demand technology has opened up the publishing world to a whole new population of passionate writers ready to share their stories!

## How to pick your Print On Demand program

Not all Print On Demand programs are equal. When choosing a Print On Demand distributor, you should do your homework, including these questions::

- Do they offer a wide range of retail stores in their distribution network?
- Do they offer Print On Demand sales for your book's trim size?
- Do they offer Print On Demand for hardcover books?
- What are the royalties for Print On Demand book sales?

This is an important issue for all self-published authors. In most Print On Demand programs, royalties for Print On Demand books purchased through sites like Amazon are somewhat low, usually between 5% and 12% of the selling price. Many self-published authors justify the lower payouts against the convenience of having printed books available to their readers and minimal upfront investment.

BookBaby offers a more lucrative option with its Print On Demand program. In addition to offering Print On Demand distribution through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and dozens more stores, BookBaby authors can direct readers to buy books on their own BookShop pages and earn much higher royalties. BookShop pays authors a 50% royalty on all printed books, including a large assortment of trim sizes and both softcover and hardcover books. It's the biggest percentage payout in the self-publishing industry by far!

### ***So glad I went through BookBaby!***

*"I cannot believe how simple BookBaby made it for me to publish my first novel! The website is very user-friendly, the design team created a beautiful cover for me, the customer service team was so nice and answered my questions promptly, and my book was actually published and available online AHEAD of schedule! My book is available on not only several major stores in the United States, but it is also available in several countries overseas. I could've never done this all on my own. I would recommend BookBaby to anyone!"*

*—Jennifer, BookBaby Author*

## Everything you need to know about ISBNs

Consider the ISBN: Seldom are thirteen little digits so misunderstood. Of all the self-publishing topics there are, the ISBN ranks among the most asked questions with the BookBaby publishing specialists. Let's answer a few of those questions:

### What is an ISBN?

ISBN stands for International Standard Book Number. An ISBN is a numerical identifier that is used around the globe by bookstores, publishers, and just about everyone in the publishing industry. ISBNs have either ten or thirteen digits (all ISBNs assigned after January 1, 2007, have thirteen digits).

### Am I required to have an ISBN to sell my book?

Yes. If you plan on selling your book in bookstores, to libraries, or through most online retailers (with the single and notable exception of [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)), you will need an ISBN.

### Does Amazon use ISBNs?

Yes, and no. Amazon ignores the ISBN you assign to your Kindle eBook and instead assigns its own identifier, called an ASIN (Amazon Standard Identification Number). This ASIN is what you and the public use to identify your Kindle eBook on Amazon when linking to the book. However, if your book does have an ISBN, *that number can be used as a search term* on the Amazon Web site.

### I'm preparing a printed book and an eBook. Do I need two ISBNs, or can I use the same one?

You will need an ISBN for each format, one for your eBook and another for your printed book.

### Do I need a separate ISBN for my hardcover and softcover version of the same book?

Yes, you need a separate ISBN for each version to identify each volume for anyone who may want to find it in directories, catalogs, and databases.

### Who can purchase an ISBN?

A self-published author is considered as a publisher, so you purchase a number like anyone else.

### How do I get an ISBN?

When you publish your book through BookBaby, you can purchase an ISBN for eBook and printed versions of your book. If you prefer to purchase this directly from Bowker—the company responsible for ISBNs in the USA—you can go to [myidentifiers.com](http://myidentifiers.com).

### How much does an ISBN cost?

BookBaby sells ISBNs for \$29 each. If you go direct to Bowker, a single ISBN costs \$125, while 10 ISBNs cost \$250.

*Note: there is no difference in the ISBN purchased from BookBaby vs. one bought from Bowker. BookBaby purchases blocks of ISBNs from Bowker to provide to our authors.*

### I live outside of the USA. Can I purchase an ISBN?

If you do not reside in the USA, you may purchase an ISBN through BookBaby. There are over 160 ISBN agencies worldwide, and each ISBN agency is appointed as the exclusive agent responsible for assigning ISBNs to publishers residing in their country or geographic territory. Bowker is the only source authorized to assign ISBNs to publishers supplying an address in the USA.

### I have my own ISBN number. Can I use that?

Yes, as long as your ISBN has not previously been used for a print or digital book. ISBNs that have been assigned to books should be reported to Bowker as the database of record. Book titles can be registered at [www.bowkerlink.com](http://www.bowkerlink.com).

#### **Amazing!**

*“Beyond my expectations! Customer service was the best I have received; knowledgeable, nice, didn’t make me feel bad when I made mistakes, they were wonderful. They did my first book in eBook format, and in paperback and the results were awesome! They did all the hard work for me, and I am so thankful. My book actually ended up on Bestsellers list! Thank you BookBaby!”*

*—Aaron, BookBaby Author*

## DIRECT-TO-READER SALES

### Make more, get paid faster when you sell direct to your readers

Authors are following the lead of indie musicians selling directly to fans.

Where is self-publishing going? All you need to do is take a look at the indie music scene. Authors are following the same script that musicians wrote in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

#### The parallels to the independent music scene are almost identical:

- First, technological innovations opened the door – with CDs and MP3s for musicians, and eBooks and Print On Demand distribution for authors.
- Next came the crashing impact on the traditional gatekeepers' control on the marketplace. Their stranglehold on tastemaking dissolved—from the big music labels like Sony, EMI, Capital, etc. matching the decline of traditional publishers.
- Finally, the access to the marketplace was opened wide, with musicians and authors adding a tsunami of content to Amazon, iTunes/iBooks, and hundreds more. Music fans—and readers—continue to be the beneficiaries of this new creative era.

Now authors can follow musicians in the next chapter of creative success—selling direct to their readers. Authors have the ability to earn more—a lot more!—and engage their fans into building long-lasting relationships without the middleman.

While there are many ways for authors to sell their books directly to their eager readers, BookBaby has made it very easy for its authors. Every author using BookBaby for its retail distribution also receives a free eCommerce page called BookShop™.

#### BookShop offers three important advantages to independent authors:

1. **You get paid more** – a lot more. BookBaby authors earn 85% in royalties on eBooks sold through their own BookShop. That compares with rates of 30% to 70% selling through Amazon. For Print On Demand titles, BookShop sales earn authors a guaranteed 50% in royalties, much more than the 8% to 15% earned on Amazon.
2. **You get paid fast** – Amazon and other retailers hold onto your royalties for 90 to 120 days. When you sell at BookShop, BookBaby credits your account typically 7 to 10 days after your reader buys your eBook or POD title.

#### *Met expectations perfectly!*

*"I used BookBaby to publish my eBook and everything was perfect. I wanted my document turned into an eBook to distribute and they did it exactly as described on the website. The process was easy and my book was up for sale in a very short time. I also like that they have a site for me to use to send people to in order to purchase my book and pay with PayPal. This entire process has been very pleasant. No complaints whatsoever."*

*—Jason, BookBaby Author*

- 3. Your printed book never goes out of stock** – The biggest challenge with most POD programs is that Amazon, B&N and other retailers must have your book on hand in their gigantic warehouse system in order to show the book “in stock” on their websites. That’s never a problem with BookShop – your printed title is available 24/7/365 because your readers are buying DIRECT from the printer!

### There are even more benefits of selling direct to reader:

- Selling direct enables the author a way to learn more about their customers and create a rich and meaningful relationship. You can share your story to help readers know you better and encourage them to be ready to support your writing efforts.
- Controlling your own sales channel allows authors to build a strong database that can be enhanced through strategic email messaging.
- Going direct makes for a more intimate relationship with customers, many of whom are now actively looking to buy directly from artists, wanting to support creativity on the personal level rather than through a global conglomerate. In many ways, it’s more in line with similar movements in a farmer’s markets, with artisans and craftspeople establishing a localized economy.

### How do you get readers to buy direct instead of from Amazon?

The answer is within your control. One of the hidden truths of self-publishing has to do with browsing and book discovery on the huge retail sites. In a nutshell, it just doesn’t happen for indie authors. While it’s important to have printed books available on Amazon for legitimacy, it’s very unlikely that readers will discover self-published authors this way. The Amazon algorithms for genre or book searches don’t favor unknown indie authors. Searches are often done for more famous authors. That puts you at a big disadvantage.

But worry not: The good news is that self-published authors are getting discovered in an entirely different way. In talking with dozens of self-published authors and by monitoring sales results, we estimate that vast majority of sales are because of authors driving interested readers directly to a designated retail Web site to make a purchase. Some self-published authors witnessed as much as 90% of sales on BookShop.

What this means is that authors already control where their books are sold by sending them buying links through emails, texts, tweets, Facebook posts and links posted on their author blog or Web site. Their faithful readers follow the instructions regarding where to buy.

Once you have your own direct-to-reader Web page set up, send readers there instead of Amazon, iBooks, or Barnes & Noble. You’ll earn more revenue and your readers will enjoy a better experience by dealing directly with their new favorite author!

# 10 WAYS TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR OWN ECOMMERCE BOOK SALES PAGE

## Selling direct to your readers will maximize your profits and readership

Just like a realtor trying to attract house buyers, you need to improve the “curb appeal” of your direct-to-reader selling pages. Your efforts will be far easier than remodeling a bathroom or applying new paint.

In fact, setting up—or remodeling—a sales page can take just a few hours of work. It’s an investment in time that will surely pay off. There are many simple yet important ways to boost your potential book sales.

### 10 ways to boost your book sales on your own sales page:

- 1. Link to your sales page.** Every time you mention your eBook or Print On Demand title online (in your email newsletter, on your web site or blog, via social media, etc.), make sure you include your website address in every communication.
- 2. Tell your readers that you’ll make more money.** Tell them why it’s important to buy your books on your own pages. Don’t worry. Readers don’t mind learning this. In fact, when you share such details, readers will be even more engaged with your work. If people love your writing, they’ll want to help support you by purchasing your book from whatever outlet benefits you the most.
- 3. Same low prices!** To support the above point, it’s also worth mentioning to your fans that they’ll pay the same price whether they buy your book from a store like Amazon or from your own page, so they might as well buy from the outlet that most benefits you.
- 4. Give your readers format options.** If possible, you should offer your eBook in as many formats as you can. That includes print, eBook files (.mobi for Kindle, ePub for all other readers), or in a simple PDF file.
- 5. Link to other retail sites.** If someone already has an account with Amazon, they may prefer to just buy your book from there instead of going through a brand-new check-out process. If that’s the case, you don’t want your page to be a dead end.
- 6. Make sure your book cover is a sales magnet.** Your site should feature an oversized image of your book cover. Of course, if your book cover is going to be big, it better be great. Otherwise your visitors will assume that the writing matches the poor quality of the cover design.
- 7. Write a catchy book overview and description.** Here’s your chance to grab a reader’s attention. But you only have a few sentences at most to win them over. Invest the time on it so that your readers’ experience is interesting and compelling from the very first word! Feel free to pepper your book description with some positive quotes from reviews if you have any yet.
- 8. Use your Author Biography to intrigue your readers.** Time to tell the world about you. What is it about your own life experiences that will make your book worth reading?
- 9. Use accurate metadata to aid search.** What’s metadata? We’ll explore that in the next few pages. Basically it’s the basic information about your book that’s used in searches like on Google. Your metadata will include things like genre, subgenre, ISBN, publication date, language, and page count. Make sure this data is accurate, and you may just boost your traffic from people searching on Google.
- 10. Encourage your readers to use the social sharing function.** Most selling pages will include simple social media icons for sharing. That makes it easy to show the page address on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and many more. Be sure to ask your fans to help you spread the word.



## Don't wait to get your book published

### What's the best time to publish your book?

The answer is, now!

Here's a little-known fact for aspiring self-published authors: The holiday season is not the prime selling time for new, self-published authors.

Think about it: Established authors target holiday sales periods because it's a safe, easy gift choice for a lot of folks. The same can't be said for most self-published authors. These relatively unknown authors' books need to stand out and attract the interest of potential readers. This kind of discovery and browsing usually doesn't take place in the hectic holiday time frame. As a result, they're often disappointed with holiday sales efforts.

So when is "prime time" for new authors to release their book? Just about any other time than the holidays. Starting with the beginning of the year. People are going to have more time to spend reading during the cold winter months, and it's a fact that book sales soar during January and February. Thousands of new eReaders and gift cards given during the holidays need content. There's no reason why it can't be your book!

Many authors think the entire first half of the year is a perfect time to launch and promote self-published books because of another major book-buying season that happens during that time. In fact, did you know what's the biggest selling season for books? Fair warning: It's probably not what you're thinking.

Most people will say: Christmas. Sure, the holiday season is important for every retailer, including book merchants. But they would be wrong.

The summertime reading season is the top selling season for books—over \$3.4 billion in sales over the long hot summer according to industry sources. That compares with about \$2.9 billion spent for holiday gift giving.

**But in reality, there's really never a bad time to release a book.** One idea may be for you to follow the patterns set by the book publishing trade. Traditional publishing houses have a rough "calendar" by genre of their release dates:

**January–April:** Romance, Self-help, Business books, Cooking, Design

**May–August:** Adventure, Fantasy, Travel

**September–November:** Academic, Horror, Paranormal

**December–January:** Children, Cookery, Illustrated, Quiz, and Novelty books

The bottom line: Don't worry so much about "when" you publish. In fact, the worst thing self-published authors can do is not publish their book because of some perceived timing advantage. It is often said that self-publishing is a marathon and not a sprint, and authors shouldn't worry so much about the placement of the starting line. Just publish it!

## THE TIME IS RIGHT TO PUBLISH



## **IN THIS SECTION:**

**Book Reviews –  
The ultimate WOM promotion**

---

**Metadata – How readers  
find your books online**

---

**Email – Still the most powerful  
marketing tool in your kit**

---

**Social media –  
The key to your online  
author platform**

# PLANNING YOUR PROMOTION AND MARKETING

## Spread the word about your new book

In this final section we'll cover the basics of book marketing and promotion.

Just because it's the 5th out of 5 steps doesn't mean marketing should come last in the process.

BookBaby's Self-publishing Survey reports that 85% of successful published authors believe that marketing should start well before you've published—or even before you have finished your book.

Focus is the key to successful book promotion. This is an area where many authors can and possibly will get confused. There are thousands of blogs, Web sites, and ads chock full of “can't miss” ideas to sell your books.

Don't believe them.

The truth is that there's no one-size-fits-all solution to generating sales for your book. You'll need to experiment with what works best for your book.

## BOOK REVIEWS – THE ULTIMATE WOM PROMOTION

### More reviews = more sales for authors

Book reviews should be the cornerstone of your book marketing plan. Most authors agree that reviews – good or bad – are critical to promoting your book. And here’s why:

- **Readers use them.** In a recent Kindle Board survey, over 85% of all Amazon Kindle readers report they rely heavily on book reviews before making an online order.
- **It’s the ultimate WOM (Word of Mouth).** Friends don’t let friends read bad books. Everyone wants to know about the next best book and *no one* wants to waste their time with a terrible one.
- **Reviews count heavily in the booksellers’ algorithm.** More reviews and sales page views can equal higher ranking, better inventory position, and exposure to more book buyers. They also affect the “If you liked this, then you may like that” book recommendation features on many sites. This is particularly helpful for a debut novel or authors with a smaller following.

Bottom line: More reviews equal more sales for authors and more informed readers. In addition, authors gain exposure to other book review sites, blogging communities, and book clubs.

### How to get reviews

The good news: There have never been more book reviewers available to the self-published authors. But before you go hunting for reviewers, make sure you’ve got the essentials you’ll need to attract and engage with reviews. At the minimum you should have:

- **Your book (obviously!).** Some reviewers prefer digital copies so you should have both eBook file types (.ePub, .mobi), print copies, and even a PDF version. All must have images of your book cover. (Note - Even if you have Print On Demand distribution, you should fulfill the requests from your own supply of books for the personal touch.)
- **Mailing supplies for printed copies.** Don’t skimp here—it needs to look and feel professional.
- **Press release** about the launch of your book.

- **A cover letter** – short and sweet, but should be a brief, introduction to you and your book.
- **Author biography.** This is a good place to show your qualifications, particularly if you're a nonfiction author.

### How to find and work with reviewers

There are literally thousands of book reviewers and bloggers online, and most of them review books even though they aren't paid. (We don't recommend paid reviews as these are very expensive and not viewed positively in many reader communities.)

A quick search online can provide you with plenty of links, directories, and lists. We recommend sites like Midwest Book Review, Indie Reader, and Self-publishing review as a starting point.

Just as important as the “who” is the “how” of working with reviewers. Here are some ideas of how to engage and work with these very important people in your literary career:

- **Choose carefully.** If you pick the wrong reviewer—one who doesn't review your genre as an example—it's a tremendous waste of time. It's critical to find out what kind of books the reviewer likes to review, and only select appropriate reviewers.
- **Meet the requirements.** Some want you to just send the printed book. Some review eBooks, many do not. Conforming to their requirements saves both of you time.
- **Send the book on a timely basis.** You've got their attention—don't waste even a moment to get your book out to them. Don't let them lose interest in your book.
- **Follow-up—gently.** Stalking or harassing won't help your cause. The reviewer is very likely doing this in his or her spare time. If you haven't heard anything after a few weeks, it's very appropriate to follow-up to see if they still intend to write the review.
- **Thank the reviewer.** It's common courtesy, but it also shows you appreciate the time and effort someone else took to help bring your book to the attention of more people. It's also something they'll remember when it's time to review your next book!

## METADATA — HOW READERS FIND YOUR BOOKS ONLINE

### Metadata is critical to your book's marketing and sales efforts

Most new authors have never heard of the term. It's one of the least understood components to publishing an eBook, but it turns out that metadata is critical to your marketing and sales efforts.

#### Metadata is all the information related to a specific book, including:

- Author biography
- The genre and subgenre of your book
- Short and long book descriptions
- Keywords that will aid readers searching

In short, metadata helps people find your book, connecting books to readers on a digital level. Customers at online stores type in what they want to read—and books with matching metadata appear in their search results. A customer who types “London murder mystery” wants to read a crime thriller that happens in the capital of the UK. If your novel takes place in London, and people get murdered—even if it's also a WWII suspense novel—the words “London murder mystery” may be great choices for metadata.

Different online retailers ask self-published authors to provide metadata in slightly different amounts, in slightly different formats, and in different orders. But they ask for the information either in online forms or in formatted spreadsheets, so all you have to do is fill in the blanks. Here's a quick list of things to think about when coming up with your metadata lists.

**Be accurate and precise:** Include the full title and subtitle of your book in your keywords. List your name as the author, and any other major contributors (illustrators, photographers, etc.) You want to include words that describe the form of your book, such as “novel” or “essays” or “collection.”

**Specific genre:** Be as specific as you can be—the more precise, the better. If you write “science fiction” your book will be competing with a lot of other books. The top spots in the query results list go to the highest-selling books. So if you're not already a best-selling self-published novelist, competing in a smaller arena gives your book a better chance at appearing on the customer's first page of results. To do this, modify the subject with a few

focused words, from “science fiction” to “futuristic aviation science fiction romance” or “alien abduction science fiction thriller” or whatever describes your novel. Your book will have a better chance of standing out—and you’ll attract the people who are seeking your specific niche.

**Express emotions and tone:** List the adjectives that describe the emotions that your readers will feel when they read the books. Will they feel humor or empathy? Will they conjure up romantic feelings or become edgy? For this keyword, think about your reader’s state of mind as they read, not the way your characters feel in the book.

**Include key topics:** This is where you can list specific and important details of your book, especially fiction and novels. Does a main character in your book have a disease? If so, “Allergies” or “Bipolar Syndrome” are potential keywords. Does your novel take place in the “wilderness” or in a “mountain cabin”? Consider all of the key elements of your story—location, time period, political climate, etc. Someone may be looking for those very qualities in a novel.

**Describe your audience:** Describe the ages and reading levels of your ideal readers. This is especially important in books for young readers. If your novel has mature content, or if it’s got a strong religious message, make sure to specify this. Those audiences often self-select via keywords.

After you publish your book, don’t be afraid to modify your metadata any time you please. As you write your list of metadata keywords, think like your readers. One helpful exercise is to ask people who’ve read your book to tell you what they’d type into a search engine to find it. The words they choose may not be words you’ve thought of.

***Still pleased second time around!***

*“I used BookBaby two years ago for my first novel. I liked the response time in having my manuscript converted into an eBook as well as staff availability to respond to my many questions. BookBaby has just published my second eBook. Distribution was immediate and worldwide. I am already (in less than 30 days) getting ratings and reviews from across the globe (US, UK, Australia).*

*Will not hesitate to use them for my next soon-to-be-published novel.”*

*—B. Buena, BookBaby Author*

# SELF- PUBLISHING JUST CAN'T BE RUSHED

## Patience + Persistence = Publishing Success

Many of the mistakes a self-published author will make involve some aspect of time. Either they rush into the marketplace or they give up too quickly or both.

Publishing experts like to use the phrase “Publishing is a marathon and not a sprint.” Here’s another one: “Good books don’t have an expiration date.” Authors need to realize that overnight sensations are outliers. Patience and persistence are essential parts of a great book marketing plan for self-published authors.

For today’s self-published authors, there are no shortage of book marketing opportunities—getting reviews, going on “blog tours,” sending press releases, posting on all the social media platforms, so and so forth. And don’t forget spending time on Goodreads.

For most authors, it can be completely overwhelming to do it all. So don’t. That’s the advice successful authors would give. Focus on one channel at a time. This month you can work on your Twitter campaign, follow the right people, add new followers. Then next month, you can devote to Goodreads, and so on. If you buy into the concept of book publishing being a marathon, these short-term marketing targets are like the shorter legs of that long race.

## How one of BookBaby’s best-selling books took nearly 4 years to reach bestseller status

A great recent example of how persistence can pay off is the amazing story of *The Rabbit Who Wants To Fall Asleep*, the self-published book that suddenly shot up the New York Times Bestseller list in late August 2015.

Written by Swedish psychologist Carl-Johan Forssén Ehrlin, the book attracted the attention of all the major traditional publishers, resulting in a reported seven-figure contract for future titles.

And now for the rest of the story: Ehrlin originally published the book in 2013—with BookBaby—as an eBook. He posted very modest sales from the launch all the way through 2014. This lack of early success didn’t slow his enthusiasm for the book as he had it converted into five languages and gave away over 45,000 eBooks! Ehrlin called in to the BookBaby customer service team quite often for advice and encouragement. He completely believed in his project and never stopped promoting it.

Later, Ehrlin created a printed book version and added Print On Demand distribution, with modest sales through 2015. Suddenly during midsummer 2015, his sales started to climb. What happened?

All of those free eBooks had created tremendous word-of-mouth marketing. A reporter with the Guardian Newspaper received the freebie and tried it out on her own kids. It worked so well that she wrote about her experiences. The story was picked up by newspapers worldwide of his unique parenting techniques.

Sales went through the roof! BookBaby was sending Ehrlin six-digit checks every month.

The moral to this story: After three-plus years of hard work and efforts, this “overnight sensation” was really anything but. Ehrlin used his marketing time wisely and he’s now reaping the rewards.

In the words of French dramatist Jean Racine: “There are no secrets that time does not reveal.” The key to your best book promotional effort could be revealed tomorrow, next week, or maybe next month. Be patient and give your book every chance it deserves to succeed.



## Build and utilize your email list to maximize sales

With so many different book promotion opportunities available to self-published authors, it's very easy to spread yourself too thin in trying any and everything to help you sell your book.

To help you stay on track and keep a focus, remember this almost universal book marketing truth:

*Your #1 marketing goal as an independent author should be to build and use your email list.*

Why is email and your list so important? In sum: your list is where the money is for starters. After they've been marketing for awhile, authors often regret they didn't focus on this area much sooner.

While it's not exactly "cutting-edge" technology, email remains the most effective way to build trusting relationships with readers, turning avid fans into advocates.

### Here are the main reasons why email should be the backbone of your marketing efforts:

- You have direct and immediate access to readers, allowing you to reach out on a personal, one-on-one basis. Email gives you another opportunity to extend your brand style, voice, and personality.
- Unlike social media, where only a small percentage of your followers will see your message, email reaches everyone.
- You have full ownership and control over your email list and the content you share.
- Email is a cost-effective, efficient, and timely way to relay relevant promotional and informational content to subscribers.

Subscribers have opted to engage with you on a deeper level. These people are more inclined to support your work, share your message, and buy your books over a long period. People who sign up to your list are part of your target market and have given you permission to communicate with them further. You are not spamming random people. These readers want to hear from you.

You can boost your book's visibility and potentially launch it into bestseller status or onto lists for hot new releases. Imagine telling several thousand eager readers that your latest book is available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or Kobo.

The bottom line: an email list is a phenomenal asset. Without one, you'll have a harder time gaining the traction you need to develop a financially satisfying writing career. As your community grows, your income grows.

## EMAIL – STILL THE MOST POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL IN YOUR KIT

### How do you build your list?

Readers need a really good reason to part with their precious contact information, which is where opt-in incentives (a.k.a. lead magnets) play a vital role in list building. These incentives are enticingly great offers that provide prospects with something of value in exchange for an email address.

What makes a good giveaway? Everyone already knows what's in it for you, so focus on what's in it for your prospects. What will make them commit to you?

### If you're unsure of what you have to offer, here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Guides, checklists, or white papers
- Short stories or novellas
- Chapters of a book or bonus content
- Bundled book offers
- Promotion codes or discount and free shipping coupons
- Case studies
- Entry into a contest or giveaway
- A newsletter
- A free consultation

### Make sure you have an email signup form on your website

While it's possible you can grow your email list through real-world promotion (bringing a signup form to your readings, signings, lectures, panel discussions, etc.), the most common opportunity you'll have to capture someone's email is probably when they're visiting your website.

Be sure to add an email signup form to your website (which should be displayed on every single page—because you never know which piece of Web content is going to attract the readers).

If you're serious about establishing a career as an author, take control and start doing the single most important thing a writer can do in today's competitive market. Email marketing: it's how you turn your promotional activities into book revenue.

## From Twitter to LinkedIn, authors must know the importance of social media sites

The phrase “author platform” is today’s popular catchphrase in the book world. What is an author platform? Simply put, it’s how you currently—or plan to—reach an audience of book-buying people.

It could be from an existing business, or your current blog or website that reaches potential readers.

For most authors starting out on the self-publishing journey, it’s mostly made up of the many and varied social media sites that you already use and enjoy. These sites can offer great promotional opportunities for new authors.

In BookBaby Self-Publishing Survey, over 94% of successful authors said that social media was an important part of their book marketing plan.

*Bear in mind, growing an author platform online takes planning, time, and effort, but it’s not at all difficult. With a little know-how, you can build your own online community.*

### 1. Use social media to build excitement

Before your book even launches, take advantage of the power of social media to generate excitement for its release. Start with teasers, quick posts about how excited you are, pictures of the book cover, and short blurbs explaining what your book is about, or who you hope it will speak to.

Offer special incentives for pre-order, and hype any free accompanying materials you’ve created, such as book club discussion guides, or complementary resources. Hold giveaways before your book is officially available and start sharing any early reviews you’ve received. The more excitement people see on your social media pages, the more they’ll get excited about your book themselves.

### 2. Partner with influencers on social media

You may be wondering how to get new people to visit your social media pages in the first place. One answer: Team up with people who already have established followings on social media, and whose audiences would be interested in a book like yours.

That may mean emailing a mommy blogger to ask her if she’d mind reviewing your book in exchange for a free copy, or messaging an Instagrammer to see if they’d be

## SOCIAL MEDIA: THE KEY TO YOUR ONLINE AUTHOR PLATFORM

willing to hold a giveaway of your book. Maybe someone will want to interview you for their podcast, or maybe they'll let you write a guest blog post for their site. Once you've made connections with a few of these influencers, they'll start sharing your book with their audiences—which will bring those people to your social media pages.

### 3. Take advantage of video on social media

One of the very best ways to connect with people via social media is through video. Whether it's a pre-recorded video where you're speaking about your book or a Facebook Live video where you're sharing personal stories, videos are extremely effective marketing tools. You can even go interactive, holding live video Q&A sessions where you answer questions posed on social media. Your followers will love to feel that they have a more personal connection with you, and that feeling leads to more enthusiasm and interaction on your social media pages.

### 4. Host community-building events on social media

Speaking of building connections with your audience, the key to growing your author platform and then keeping it going strong is to build a real community around your book on social media. Your aim shouldn't just be to promote your book to your audience for a certain amount of time and then stop, but instead, to gather a group of like-minded people you can interact with, give advice to, answer questions for, and truly become friends with, for the long haul.

Hosting Facebook parties and Twitter chats is a great way to get your community involved and interacting with you and each other. Starting discussions by asking questions is another effective method of interacting, but even just setting aside one day a week to respond to your followers' posts on your pages will go a long way in making them feel they have a meaningful relationship with you, and that they truly belong to a real community of friends.

Once you've built that loyal, enthusiastic following online, don't be surprised if they start clamoring for another book! You may just find that you have a ready-made audience chomping at the bit to buy your book and make you the successful author you've always dreamed of becoming.

# NOW YOU'RE READY TO PUBLISH!

We've covered the five important steps on the road to self-publishing.

## Step 1

Finishing your book with a professional editing job

## Step 2

Preparing your manuscript to be published with cover design, formatting, and file conversion

## Step 3

Picking your publishing products, including eBooks and printed books

## Step 4

Choosing your book distribution options featuring Print On Demand and direct-to-reader sales

## Step 5

Planning your book promotion with the four essential elements of marketing

Now that you've read this guide you're armed with all the essential information so that you can take your book from manuscript to the marketplace.

But self-publishing doesn't mean you have to go it alone! The friendly and knowledgeable publishing experts at BookBaby are ready to assist you with every publishing issue. Let's get your book project started today!

“Give us a call today at **877-961-6878** or send an email to **info@bookbaby.com**. We look forward to being a part of your publishing team.”

— John Morad, BookBaby Publishing Production Specialist



## BookBaby's Self-Publishing Checklist

There's a lot of ground to cover before your book reaches its readers. Keep track of where you are and what's left to do in your self-publishing journey with this step-by-step checklist.

### Step 1 – Finish your book

- Professional Editing

### Step 2 – Prepare your manuscript

- Printed book cover design
- eBook cover design
- Book formatting
- eBook conversion

### Step 3 – Pick your publishing products

- Printed book production, including color, binding options, and trim size
- eBook Production, including dynamic vs. fixed layout

### Step 4 – Choose your distribution options

- eBook distribution
- Print On Demand distribution
- Direct-to-Reader distribution

### Step 5 – Plan your book promotion

- Metadata
- Book reviews
- Social media
- Email list build and marketing



