

# Practical Publishing Handbook



Colin John Holcombe

Ocaso Press 2010



# Practical Publishing with Special Reference to Poetry

Colin John Holcombe

Ocaso Press 2021



# Practical Publishing

by Colin John Holcombe

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# 1. WHAT YOU FACE

Perhaps those rejection slips are trying to tell you something, or you're thinking of giving PoD or electronic books a go. How much can you expect to earn through traditional and electronic publishing, and how can you most effectively market your work? To these and a host of similar questions, this carefully researched handbook will give you the answers.

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Publishing isn't easy money. Before sending off your masterpiece, or even thinking about your next article, you might bear in mind:

- publishing is a strange if not mad world that combines superb professionalism with laughable incompetence.
- **over half** of books bought aren't read.
- the odd best-seller aside, **no one** today makes serious money at publishing, either authors or publishers.
- because many publishers are **struggling to survive**, the last thing they want is another manuscript from an unproved author.
- if they're sensible, authors write to communicate a love for their subject, and (just possibly) some status.
- anyone can publish a book today at modest expense, but even recouping the outlay needs effort and much inside knowledge.
- electronic publishing and the internet are important developments, but bring their own needs: just creating an e-book and setting up a marketing website will not work.

Some talent is needed, but equally important is an understanding of the publishing business, persistence and a grasp of the opportunities.

## 1.2. PUBLISHING: AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Most writers earn far more from reviewing, teaching, adjudicating competitions, giving talks, running workshops, and/or appearing on radio

than from royalties on their publications. {1} Twenty odd years ago, some 70,000 new books were published each year in Britain, of which 6,000 were novels. Twenty percent of these had some claim to literary respectability. {2} There were big-earners, multimillionaires even, but only 300 full-time novelists made over £8,000 p.a., with another 300 supplementing income from journalism, and another 900 supplementing income from some other literary activity. Figures from other countries were equally depressing (e.g. 1250, 750 and 1750 respectively for the States), {3} and these will not have improved recently. Rebecca Brandywyne spoke for many when she remarked: 'the hard reality is that the vast majority of authors cannot earn even a comfortable—much less a luxurious—living from their writing careers, and, unless they have access to other sources of funding (such as a working spouse, investments and dividends, or an inheritance), are frequently compelled to take other jobs as their primary means of financial support.' She provided a worked example. Consider a mass-market paperback book of 25,000 copies printed, an average return rate of 50%, an average \$6.50 cover price, and an average 6% royalty rate. Royalties would amount to \$4,875, less agent fees of \$731.25, leaving the author a before-tax profit of \$4,143.75. {4}

Poetry has never paid. Nor has poetry translation, even of well-known classics. Translators earn good money in business, but not in translating literary works, which are labours of love bringing little fame or money.

How long it takes to write a decent novel depends on the genre, the quality, and what you call writing. Kerouac's *On the Road* was dashed off in three weeks, but Joyce's *Ulysses* took sixteen years {5}. The actual typing may only require a few months, but the ideas generally take years to gestate, and that first draft will need extensive rewriting and sometimes a whole new storyline. Many novels never come good, and have to be abandoned—providing valuable experience but not, as Bernard Shaw remarked, worth quite what we've had to pay for it. Most novelists report a year or two of actual writing. Best-selling novelists can afford a more leisurely pace, turning out a blockbuster every three or four years. Some novels are written in weeks, either under inspiration or by relentless application, but that rate can't be maintained for long. The respected UK Society of Authors found half their members earned less than the minimum wage {6}, and successful authors urge newcomers to look before leaping into full-time writing. {7}{8}

Any large UK publisher will receive 2000 unsolicited novel manuscripts in a year, and publish 20. The average serious first novel receives half a dozen reviews and perhaps sells 1000 copies over two years. With royalties around 10% at best, writers must learn to mechanically turn out a commercial product or starve. Seventy-five per cent of serious writers in the States earn no money at all from their work, ever. {3}

Don't believe this? Use [titlez](#) or [rankforest](#) to check sales on [Amazon](#), or just glance at the sales ranking. A respectable ranking of 10,000 indicates sales of 100 books per month, perhaps earning their proud authors \$1 a sale. {9} Read an insider's view of the publishing trade by [Michael Allen](#), or look at matters from an [enterprising publisher's](#) point of view. Consider the work that internationally known poets put on their sites (we're not naming names), and ask not why it's so indifferent but how they ever got round to writing the pieces in the first place, given the unending schedule of talks, signings, representation on various societies, weekly column, and contributions to late-night shows where they must say something kindly about the books of colleagues they haven't read and don't intend to.

Literature does not bring fame. Its standard-bearers were the English departments in schools and universities, but these have been taken over by critical theory, which often lacks humanity and the honesty of clear exposition. {10} Work in the small presses is very mixed, and few have a circulation above the low hundreds. Even the habit of close attention soon wears off: some 58% of US high school students and 42% of college students never open a book after finishing their education. {11}

Print on Demand companies estimate that one million manuscripts are looking for a publisher in the States alone, of which only one per cent will be successful.

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4. Brandywyne, Rebecca, [Advances and Royalties: How Authors are Paid](#).
5. Mya Bell's [Web Log](#). July 2004.
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7. Sendbuehler, Fran. [First Novel Policy and The Bestseller](#). Feb. 1996.

8. Weinberg, Robert. *Writing Full Time—A User's Guide* 2003.
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10. Chapter 3 of Bernard Bergonzi's *Exploding English: Criticism, Theory, Culture* (1990), Chapter 2 of Alvin Kernan's *The Death of Literature* (1990), and Chapters 1 and 9 of George Watson's *The Literary Critics* (1986).
11. Poynter, Dan. *Statistics* 2004.

### 1.3. THE PUBLISHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Dan Poynter {1} quotes a publisher's survey of 1988, where the average fiction book took 475 hours to write, publisher's average annual sales were \$420,000, and staff worked 50 hours a week. Putting that together, we find the average small publisher produced 4.7 books/year, for an average revenue per book of \$89,400. Even if royalties were 10% and there were no book returns, and rewriting was only done once—all rather unlikely—the author would have written at 295 words an hour to turn out two books yearly and earn royalties of \$18,000 a year.

Such examples come from popular or mass-market fiction, which accounts for 53.3% of book sales. Literary fiction, together with poetry and art books, accounts for only 3.3% of book sales. {2} Given that the average first novel, favourably reviewed in leading newspapers, will sell a few thousand copies over its total shelf life, {3} it is obvious why publishers don't rush to fill their lists with new names, and concentrate on that small percentage of writers who pay their salaries. {4}

Much more dismal are the earnings from poetry publishing. A few specialist publishers (e.g. Anvil, Carcanet, Bloodaxe) do turn in respectable figures, but in general poetry is not handled at all (the great majority, e.g. Corgi, HarperCollins, Hodder and Stoughton), is subsidized by sales elsewhere (e.g. Faber and Faber, Peter Owen, OUP) or supported by regional grants (e.g. Peterloo). {5}

But what about academia, where talent is rewarded and protected? Here is a breakdown of sales by Cambridge University Press in 1998: {6}

Number of titles offered: 13,500.

Annual Revenues: \$60 million.

Titles selling less than 100 copies/year: 8,000.

Titles selling less than 10 copies/year: 2,000.

Average number of copies sold/title: 32.

Number of new titles: 1,500

Number of titles discontinued: 1,300

When you're considering writing up that specialist interest, you might therefore remember these figures, do some research on Amazon, and recall that academic books are often subsidized anyway—a subject of anguished debate in academic sites and blogs. {7}{8}{9}{10}

You might also consider the PoD model, which is indeed what the Cambridge University Press has done. Slow-moving titles have been converted into digital form, and the CUP figures for 2006 were: {6}

Total number of titles offered: 29,000.

Annual Revenues: \$75 million.

PoD titles: 7,000.

In short, the efficiencies introduced by taking the PoD route have allowed CUP to expand their listings.

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5. Gordon Wells's *The Book Writer's Handbook* (1995).
6. CUP Increases Revenues by Using PoD *VISTA Publishing Perspectives*.
7. University Presses, Libraries, Monographs and Ultimate yellow brick roads? *Colin Steele*. 2007.
8. Library Statistics & Measures. *Joe Ryan*.
9. Association of American University Presses: *Quick Facts*.
10. Imaginary Journal of Poetic Economics. *Heather Morrison's blog*.

Two matters concern publishers: the reputation of their publishing house, and whether they can at least cover expenses.

Suppose you approach a publisher with your collection of poems and stories based on your home town and its characters. Of course you'll include a media kit and stress that you're well known on the local poetry-reading, radio and book-signing circuit, more than capable of making the publication sell. Here's what the publisher does:

1. Checks the credentials: that you are indeed who you say you are, your previous books exist and have been successful. A few telephone calls will establish these.

2. Estimates likely sales figures. He learns that your home town has a population of 50,000, and its local newspaper enjoys a circulation of 15,000 (calls to friends, local library, Bowkers). Experience has told him that only a few per cent of newspaper readers will buy poetry, say 500. Allowing 10% loss in spoilage and review copies, he has 450 copies to sell. Figures in US\$:

publishing costs @ \$3.50/copy	-	(\$1750)
ancillaries (distribution, warehousing)	-	(\$350)
gross sales @ \$6.95/copy	\$3127	-
bookstore commissions @ 40%	-	(\$1112)
marketing expenses	-	(\$500)
totals	\$3127	(\$3712)
net profit	-	(\$585)

Hardly enticing. A loss, even though no royalty is paid, and he hasn't costed his own time. Supposing every copy is sold, eventually.

3. But perhaps he's a would-be poet himself, or feels that your prestige will enhance the firm's standing in the community, or the price can be increased to \$8.95. He asks for the MS, reading it carefully and getting opinions from the local writers circle and a retired English professor. Everyone likes the work. The publisher therefore invites you in for a meeting and is sufficiently impressed by your confidence to offer a co-publishing contract. A **print-run** of 500 copies, no royalties, and you put up \$1000 of the publishing costs. Yes, you. He has \$2100 at risk; you can bear the other \$1000.

Serious poetry is never a best-seller, but novels can be. In this second example you have managed to interest a large publishing house in your manuscript. Everything looks promising. You're personable and articulate, ideal for a TV chat show or late-night arts programme. You have a good thirty years of writing in you. What you produce now is phenomenally good. The publishing house does its sums. These are the 'back of the envelope' figures, all in units of 1000. The book retails for \$12.95, royalties are 8%, and bookstore commissions average 40%:

no. sold	receipts	costs	profit	no. sold	receipts	costs
-	-	printing & distribution	royalties	-	-	printing & distribution
1	13	6	1	1	13	6
2	26	8	2	2	26	8
10	129	21	10	10	129	21
100	1,295	135	104	100	1,295	135
1,000	12,950	1,250	1,036	1,000	12,950	1,250

Everything depends on the book proving a best-seller. This is how the publishing house calculates the odds: figures again in thousands:

no. sold	% odds	profit	what you're worth to them (odds x profit)
1	30	(2)	-0.6
2	50	3	1.5
10	17	41	7.0
100	2.9	526	15.25
1,000	0.1	5,459	5.46
total	100		28.88

The figures are notional, but suggest the publishing house has a 98% chance of making less than \$7,500. That's barely worth the effort, but they're banking on the future, your second or tenth novel.

You have a 80% chance of earning no more than \$2,000 in royalties. For many months or years of effort, that does not amount to a working wage. But of course you sign the contract: self-publishing is time consuming, and you'll not get better terms elsewhere.

Both author and publisher are clearly chasing a dream, but that is the nature of fiction publishing, and explains why publishers (and agents) need textbooks, self-help, cookery and gardening titles to survive.



## 1.4. FUTURE OF PUBLISHING

Publishing is changing. As mainstream publishing concentrates on profitable lines—celebrity memoirs, textbooks, self-help, cooking, gardening, travel—works of a specialist nature (which includes academic works, translations, poetry and literary novels) have increasingly to fend for themselves. Profit margins are too slim for agents, publishing houses, distributors and booksellers to make more than a token effort here.

With return on capital around 5%, even the larger publishing houses are struggling to survive. Much information is available on the internet, and that information will only grow in range and quality. Books are the product of a long historical process, and today lie at the end of a vast chain of specialist skills and services. The work has to be researched and written, proofed, typeset, a cover designed, printed, reviewed, warehoused, distributed and sold through booksellers throughout the country or abroad. Costs pile up, and what's left over for authors can be very modest—10% of retail price at best. Contracts are becoming more onerous to writers even as their share of the proceeds decreases. Books are tailored to particular markets, and are therefore restricted to safe themes and obvious treatments. Manuscripts must be delivered on time, year in and year out, and writers make themselves available for tours, chat-shows, book-signings and the like. Problems with copyright and libel are becoming exclusively the author's responsibility, as agreements allow the publisher to sidestep these issues.

In this internet-connected age, these specialist skills and services are not only unnecessary, but are becoming a barrier between writer and reader. Costs restrict what is publishable. Editing doesn't improve the reading because that editing tends to be perfunctory, little more than proofing for obvious typos or grammar slips. The cover, so necessary for bookshop sales, is forgotten once the purchaser sits down to read. Reviewers are middlemen, who do their honest best with the deluge of books crossing their desk every week, but don't have the time to read in depth, or often the background knowledge to assess fairly. Some books are a source of pride to the publishing house, and an enduring pleasure to readers, but the too many would be better slimmed to a fraction of their bulk, or perhaps not written at all.

Only the smallest percentage of manuscripts will make money for a publisher, and he's naturally skilled at spotting that odd exception. Or he should be. In fact, some 70% of books published do not pay back their advances or make money for the publisher. The internet, e-books, podcasts and blogs have given authors a royal road to their readers, though the clamour is still for traditional publishing, with the work coming out under a prestigious name, and glowing reviews to follow. No one wants to shatter illusions, but reviews (to put the matter charitably) are **unreliable**, and the prestige of the publisher speaks only money. Before pestering a publisher, you'll need to research the market and prove to his and your satisfaction that a proper demand exists for your manuscript. Equally, before traditional or self-publishing, you may want to make your work available in electronic form, carefully watching the response, and then building on its indications. How you do that is one of the themes of this handbook.

Vanity publishers and some PoD companies consult only the bottom line, but even reputable publishers are not patrons of literature, and place responsibilities to staff and shareholders well before the needs and wishes of their authors, particularly of new and untested ones.

## 1.5. USING THE HANDBOOK

As the name suggests, this is a handbook: a handy reference work that covers the whole field of publishing and self-publishing. You'll find it:

- thorough. We cover the whole field, compactly in 60,000 words and 1400 resources.
- realistic. We don't pretend that publishing is easy, or success lies in some magic formula. We give you comprehensive notes, analyses, lists and resource listings so you can make properly informed decisions.
- honest. We tell it as it is, with internet surveys that summarize current thinking. We also list all those other books and sites on publishing, where you can judge for yourself, and make further notes as necessary.
- frank. Not all writing will make money: we show you the realities of the publishing world.

- plainly written. The text is simple and condensed, but the references will take you to sites where the topic is explained at greater length and/or from another standpoint.
- helpful at all levels. We write with the beginning publisher in mind, but also cover aspects that the advanced publisher will need, some of which are not covered elsewhere, either in books or on the internet.
- independent. All 1400 resources have been hand-picked on their merits: i.e. not for commissions or advertising sales.
- free. Some links are out of date, but what was once a \$14.95 handbook is now offered free.

If you really want to get that book or article published, then this reference work may well make all the difference. You have a map to the entire world of publishing, traditional and contemporary, and can choose the route best suited to your time, talents and pocket.

We've designed the handbook for comfortable onscreen viewing with a PC or laptop, but you can also print it in neat paper form: section 6.2.2 will tell you more.

## 2. MAKING WORK PUBLISHABLE

Yes, we know your work is first rate, but do they—the editors, agents and publishers you're submitting to? Often the problem is one of shaping and approach, of getting through the invisible filters imposed to keep submissions to a manageable level. You may not be submitting to the right outlets in the right form. Like everyone else, publishers follow the herd, and look more favourably on what is already selling well. Becoming a professional writer means turning out material that other people want to read: researching the market in short.

### 2.1. MARKET RESEARCH

#### 2.1.1. Books: General

Book publishing statistics hardly makes for good bedtime reading, but you do need to undertake some market research if you plan to earn your living in the book trade. Who's doing what and with what success? What are the hot properties at present, the authors and themes whose time has come. In this you'll simply be doing what the traditional publisher does, which is to:

- assess the chances of success, i.e. see the particular venture against the general trend in book publishing statistics, and
- devise a writing plan that divides the enterprise into stages with realistic time-spans, costs and revenues.

Anyone can make a detailed and handsomely presented plan—publishers and financiers see them every day—but such things are worthless unless supported by accurate figures. Getting the facts requires knowing your way round the publishing world, where the following may help:

#### Market Research: Reading

**American Library Association.** Several useful publications.

**Choice Magazine.** Scholarly reviews and articles.

**Library Journal.** Includes reviews in various categories.

**School Library Journal.** Schools are big purchasers of books.

**Editor and Publisher.** Several authoritative yearbooks.

**Bookpage.** Reviews of American books.

**Boston Review.** Political and literary forum.

**American Book Review.** Single issues \$4: subscription \$24/year.

**Atlantic Online.** Digital edition of long-established magazine.

**The Horn Book.** Children and young adult's literature.

**New Criterion.** Conservative view of the humanities.

**London Review of Books.** Some articles free, otherwise \$42/year.

**New York Times Reviews.** Free if you register.

**Guardian Book Reviews.** Reviews from UK's left-wing newspaper.

**Times Literary Supplement.** Leading review: \$135/year.

**Contemporary Poetry Review.** Current articles free, archives \$6/month.

**Book Web.** Trade news and personalities.

**Book Publishing News.** Articles and news snippets.

**Bookwire.** Comprehensive portal of the book industry.

**Gale Group.** Maintains over 600 databases.

**Canadian Authors Association.** Useful articles and links.

**Writer's Digest.** Packed with advice and information.

**Poets and Writers Online.** Extensive articles and resources.

**League of Canadian Poets.** Events, publications and resources.

**Book Industry Statistics.** Useful facts and figures.

**General Publishing Resources.** Long listing: mixed bag.

## 2.1.2. Novel Reading Lists

Unless you're a failed novelist turned commercial, the usual advice is to write what you enjoy reading. It's difficult to slum, or pretend you live on heights you've never scaled, and the effort will probably show, readers being canny creatures. That doesn't mean you shouldn't widen your reading matter, however, and anyone attending a novel-writing course will probably be given homework like the following: 'this week's assignment is chapter ten of so-and-so: explain how the tension is built up, and why the denouement is so unexpected but satisfying.' Those not attending a writing course can be more leisurely, but here are some reading lists that may prove useful. You can find more through internet searches specifying genres or periods.

**All Time 100 Novels.** Time's selection: mixed quality, with reviews.

**The Most Influential Novels and Books.** Several listings, with religious affiliations.

**The Big Read.** BBC's listing: popular, with emphasis on the latest read.

**English Authors and Books.** SwissEd's list, mostly contemporary, many for school class reading.

**College Bound Reading List.** As the name suggests: rather worthy, but divided into several categories.

**Business Week.** Mostly business studies, but some surprises.

**Libraries and You.** American Library Association's yearly booklists.

**The Classics.** In case your education's been neglected.

**My Reading List.** Science fiction: a personal selection.

**Teen Reads.** Includes reviews and samples.

**Mac McCool.** Illustrated children's books and comics.

**Great Books Lists.** A list of lists, wide-ranging.

**Modern Novels: the 99 Best.** Anthony Burgess's 1984 list.

**Books on the Canon Wars.** Consider before drawing up your lifetime reading plan.

**British Women's Novels: A Reading List, 1775–1818.** Covers a short period, but fascinating, with the compiler's comments.

### 2.1.3. Magazines

Far more print magazines will take your work than you might suppose, provided the article or poem enhances the publication and adds to readers' enjoyment. Your first step is to research the print magazine market carefully, starting with well-known guides, the first of which may be in your local library or community centre. For poetry in particular:

The Writers Handbook edited by Barry Turner. Pan. 800 pp. Publishers, professional organizations and advice.

**Poet's Market.** 1507 Dana Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45207 \$24. US markets.

**Dustbook's Directory of Poetry Publishers.** Over 2000 outlets listed. \$25.95.

**Writer's Notes.** Markets and information for Canadian writers.

**Writers Net.** Internet directory of writers, editors, publishers and literary agents.

**The Poetry Machine.** Excellent directory of poetry magazines in USA, Canada and beyond. Focuses on small presses and is not always up to date.

**The Poetry Resource.** Extensive, including poetry publishers.

**Poetry Publishers Who Accept E-mail Submissions.** More than the usual small presses.

**Poetry Society of America.** Extensive list of poetry book publishers, and more.

**Poetry Kit.** Good listing for the UK, USA and elsewhere.

**Lollipop.** Listing of UK small presses, news and publishing advice.

**About.** Some 40 small presses listed, not specifically poetry.

Yes, a lot of work, and it will help to be systematic. Make an extended table in which each possible outlet is assessed for style, poem length, theme, quality and payment (if any). There should be dozens, perhaps hundreds.

But you haven't finished yet. All serious writers know these magazines. To steal a march on the competition, you'll need to go through the more general directories:

**Books in Print.** Bowker's listing of US publishers.

**Gebbie's.** All U.S. print and broadcast media, including newspapers, trade and consumer magazines.

**Gale Directory.** Educational publishing for libraries, schools and businesses.

**Parrot Media Network.** Extensive listings of US media sources.

**SRDS.** Thorough coverage of US media outlets.

**MediaPost.** Excellent information source: 35,000 listed in media people finder, and 3,000 articles.

**Media Finder.** Database of print media in Canada and the USA.

**Media UK.** UK media community with extensive independent directory.

**Magazine Directory.** Several hundred listed.

**Yahoo.** Magazines listed under 50 odd headings.

**Open Directory.** Hundreds of directories listed: worldwide.

And then turn your attention to specialist outlets. Many of your poems or articles are on flowers and pets? Think of gardening magazines and those catering for cat and dog lovers. Your work is set in a specific place or time? Consider regional and house magazines, or possibly a history or local history journal. Your library can help, and prolonged internet searches even more. You'll be surprised how varied people's interests are, and the range of publications set up to cater for them.

Of course you'll have to read the publications to pick up the nuances of the markets they serve, but again your local library can obtain copies of outlets likely to feature on your shortlist, and websites at least provide a glimpse.

If you're a poet then it's magazines that publish poetry you should be reading. If you're a feature article writer, then you'll be tracking what's appearing in the magazines to which you submit. Topicality is essential, and it's all too easy, turning out your own work and running events in the local community, to forget the larger picture. You need to know who's just published a set of good poems in magazines that publish poetry, who has

won an important literary prize, who and what the literary journals are talking about. All this is vital to:

- ensure your submissions to magazines reflect these changes
- shift your own writing styles to catch the new interests
- talk knowledgeably at writers' events
- interest publishers with up-to-date projections
- hobnob with editors at fairs and publishing conventions
- review sensibly

Your natural curiosity should lead you to such sources, but if you don't make a special point of searching you may only hear at second-hand, or not at all. Spend a few hours occasionally with these websites.

Poetry institutions:

[Poetry Society of America](#). Excellent listings of US poetry events and magazines.

[Poetry Forecasts](#) On-line version of Poetry Society of America's publication.

[State Poetry Societies](#). Links to US State poetry societies with websites.

[UK Poetry Society](#). Events, publications and resources.

[Poetry Library](#). Full-text digital library of English poetry magazines.

[Poetry Foundation](#). Extensive listing poets old and new.

Book news:

[Book Web](#). Trade news and personalities

[Book Publishing News](#). Articles and news snippets.

[Bookwire](#). Comprehensive on-line portal of the book industry.

[Bookspot](#). Extensive sets of links.

Literary criticism, reviews and gossip:

[About Poetry](#) Poetry channel and literary gossip.

[Moby Lives](#). Good set of articles in Archives.

[Ozlit News](#). Australian scene: needs updating.

[Poets & Writers Online](#). Extensive articles and resources.

[Cosmoetica](#). Idiosyncratic view of US poetry scene.

[Bookpage](#). Reviews of American books.

[American Book Review](#). Single issues \$4: subscription \$24/year.

[League of Canadian Poets](#). Events, publications and resources.



[New York Times Reviews](#). Free if you register.

[Guardian Book Reviews](#). Reviews from UK's left-wing newspaper.

[Times Literary Supplement](#). Leading review: \$135/year.

If you've forgotten your literary theory/criticism, or are simply baffled:

[General Resources for Literary Criticism](#). Select list.

[Schools of Literary Criticism](#). Short listing: traditional.

[General Literary Theory and Criticism Guides](#). Listings for course.

[Romanticism and Contemporary Poetry and Poetics](#). Detailed papers, more on 19th century figures but useful.

[John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism](#). On-line version of well-known guide. \$80/year.

[A Guide to the Theory of Literary Genres](#). Covers a wide field.

[Contemporary Philosophy, Critical Theory and Postmodern Thought](#). Good accounts of some 40 key figures.

[Contemporary Post-colonial and Post-imperial Literature in English](#). Post-colonial histories, theory, authors and bibliographies.

[Introduction to Modern Literary Theory](#). Introduction to types, bibliographies and internet listings.

[Marjorie Perloff](#). Penetrating essays on contemporary poetry.

[IPL On-line Literary Criticism](#). Links to vast number of critical and biographical websites.

[Perspectives in American Literature](#). Full research and reference guide.

[English Literature on the Web](#). Good listings but not for contemporary work.

[Outline of American Literature](#). Good overviews.

[Literary History](#). Includes leading British and American poets.

[Literary Resources on the Net](#). Jack Lynch's extensive listings.

[Classic Poetry](#). Listing of poem analyses.

[The Constant Critic](#). Tri-weekly poetry reviews.

[Literature Webliography](#). LSU Libraries' useful listings.

[Literary Encyclopedia](#). Author profiles.

## 2.1.4. Poetry Ezines

### General

Many poetry ezines have excellent articles, bulletin boards and workshops where poems and writing matters are discussed and encouraged. Most accept submission by e-mail, which is an enormous boon for poets submitting from overseas: no more SAEs and International Reply Coupons. In general, publishing your poetry through these channels is no different

from submission to the conventional magazine, and your efforts will be more favourable received if the guidelines are followed. A few words of praise won't go amiss, if perceptive and sincere: 'I admire the range of work you publish, and especially liked so-and-so's poem in the last issue, which seemed to me . . .' Editors are human, and like to feel their efforts are appreciated.

Broadly speaking, ezines come in four flavours: long-established small presses with internet representation, reputable literary ezines, the 'ezine poetry' started on a whim and not seeing the year out, and popular poetry ezines.

You can find the first group through the magazine resources.

For the second there is no complete listing, though some of the following may still be live. You can find more through internet directories and search engines.

**Every Lit. Magazine.** Just a listing, but one of the largest anywhere.

**Contributors List.** Ezines recommended by web del sol-featured poets. Useful listing of personal favourites.

**Poetry Pages.** Add your site to individual poet's websites.

**Haiku Link.** Listings for haiku and other poetry sites.

**Links to Poets.** List poet's sites and joint ventures.

**Hypertexts.** Good listing of New Formalist poets: publishing credits will suggest possibilities.

**Poetry Kit.** Good listing of UK ezines and individual poet's sites.

**Lollipop.** Listing of UK small presses, news and publishing advice.

**GreatWorks.** Good listing of websites containing innovative writing.

**Find Poetry.** Good listing of poetry ezines.

**Write Words.** Over 300 UK poetry magazines and ezines listed.

**Shearsman.** Contemporary poetry sites, UK and USA.

**Jacket.** Over 100 contemporary poetry and resources sites.

**LitRefs.** Extensive listing of poets, magazines, publishers and more.

**Pinko.** Alternative British poetry: poets and references.

**Poetry and Other Links.** Peter Howard's excellent listing.

**A Little Poetry.** Reciprocal links.

**The Ezine Directory.** Varied: not limited to poetry.

**Inkpot.** Extensive listings under some 50 headings.

**Ezine Search.** Long known to ezine fans.

**ListChannel.** Some 200 listings: varied.

**Literature Buzz.** Full listings, over 500 ezines alone.

**WebSource.** Short but useful list of ezine directories.

**Zinos.** Ezines organized by a rating system.

**Arms of the Angels.** Links and Rings: now an extensive list.

**Poetry Publishers Who Accept E-mail Submissions.** Both ezines and magazines.

## Popular Poetry Ezines

The third group are too many to list, continually appearing and disappearing.

The fourth group, popular poetry sites are well-patronized, and offer many amateurs their only chance of seeing work 'in print'. Quality varies, but is occasionally very acceptable. It would be snobbish to ignore such outlets, but do remember they are not well thought of by the literary establishment. Never mention them among your successes if submitting to serious poetry outlets. Poetry.com, in particular, is seen as a vanity press.

**Kill Devil.** Large site, presented in hearty nautical fashion.

**Net Poets.** Poetry of love and the passions.

**Love Poetry.** Love poetry: old favourites and new submissions.

**Shadow Poetry.** Good range of genres and services.

**Cowboy Poetry.** Family oriented celebration of cowboy folklore.

**Poetry.Com.** Popular site, but close to vanity publishing.

**Starlight Cafe.** Fully featured site.

Chapbook services are often reasonably priced, but be wary of 'handsomely produced' anthologies and international poetry conferences.

## Bulletin Boards

If you'd like feedback on your work, consider sending to one or more of these poetry bulletin boards.

poetry today forum the critical poet

everypoet poetry forum

poetry taverna

salty dreams poetry forums

the poetic link

short story poetry group

taverna's koans

abc tales

eratosphere

poets on-line  
poem.org  
echoes poetry forum  
wood carvers  
poet's place  
poetry submission  
lyrical missive  
passions in poetry  
words on fire  
unknown poets  
in a dove's nest  
plagiarist  
artist corner  
tir nan og  
sijo forum  
wild poetry forum  
paradise poet's society  
moontown cafe  
author me  
enter the muse  
poetry pages  
friendly musings  
all in a pen  
reverie  
ewrite life  
aha poetry  
poet's peak  
blueline forum  
inverse  
pagan poet  
rhyme zone forum  
last words  
pif magazine

### 2.1.5. Writing Groups

Many publishing opportunities come through literary associations and networking. Your local poetry or writing group probably issues a yearly anthology, and you may find yourself on its steering committee. In fact you

should take a full part in its activities, including the less pleasant tasks of keeping the books and chasing up subscriptions. Poems read in local groups may not be critiqued in great depth, but the comments are usually genuine and helpful. The feedback can help you fix problems that editors simply don't have the time to point out. Look for groups at your local library or community centre, or consult the following:

**Poetry Society of America.** Poetry conferences, colonies and festivals: also publishers, MFA programs and journals.

**Poetry Kit.** Good round-up of the UK scene.

**Preditors & Editors: Workshops.** Extensive listing of literary workshops.

**Gotham Writers Workshop** New York workshops: \$395 for 10 weeks.

**Albany Poetry Workshop.** Free workshop with a live forum.

**Writers Bureau.** Poetry writing courses: details posted to you.

**Worldwide Learn.** On-line writing courses and tutorials.

**Street Writes.** Seattle workshop and poetry group.

**Writers Online.** Part of the Writers Digest network: advanced poetry writer's workshop is \$179.

**Writers Village.** Extensive range of poetry courses. Membership is \$5.99/month or \$59/year.

**Shaw Guides.** Guide to over 1300 forthcoming conferences and workshops worldwide.

**Virtual Communities.** Good list of writing workshops and communities.

**Arvon Foundation.** Four day residential courses in UK countryside: grants available.

**Local Writer's Workshop.** Community of writers who meet to discuss ideas and work in progress.

**Virtual Poetry Workshop.** On-line poetry workshop for student writers.

**Zeugma.** Workshop for serious poets to submit and critique work.

**Cave Canem.** Ten-week workshops for emerging African-American writers.

**Scholastic.** Poetry workshops aimed at younger writers.

**Teaching the Art of Poetry.** Workshops aimed at middle school to university students.

**Rhyme & Reason.** Free course in 6 modules, each linked to a poem.

## 2.1.6. Literary Blogs

An enjoyable way of keeping up with 'who's doing what' is through literary blogs, with their literary gossip, reviews, less-than-reverent sniping. Some good listings:

**Complete Review.** Some 300 listed: authors, academics and publishing companies.

**Top Ten.** Guardian UK newspaper's listing.

**Literary Blogs.** Web del Sol's listing.

**Forbes.** A short list: Forbes also has a newsletter.

## 2.2. AUTHOR AIDES

Author software, or book-writing software, comes in two categories, and is widely used in the trade.

In the first category are electronic equivalent to books or courses on writing. You are taken through the stages of devising characters, their motivations, the conflicts that generate plot, and the basic techniques of suspense and scene construction—in the novel, short story, poem, play or film script. In the second are story development programs, electronic card indexes where you keep notes on the characters, track them from scene to scene, and decide how the issues can be resolved. Taking them in turn:

### :Electronic Instruction

#### Advantages:

- compact, and can reside in your computer for immediate reference.
- commonly include exercises to consolidate what's been taught.

#### Disadvantages:

- more expensive than conventional books.
- exercises are not 'marked' by outside parties.
- doesn't make you the friends and contacts of live courses.

#### Examples

**10 Best Novel Writing Software.** Useful comparisons.

**Writer's Software Companion:** old program, but detailed and thorough: \$49.

**Fiction Master:** Covers most aspects of craft. \$179.

### :Story Development Programs

#### Advantages

- convenient: everything has its predesigned place.

- you're continually reminded of what needs to be covered.
- plotting is easier with a plan constantly in view.
- reduces unnecessary writing and later reshaping.
- consistency: helps you remember your heroine's eyes are green, etc.
- commonly include timelines controlling character appearances.
- practically essential for meetings if you're writing a radio or TV series.
- when done, you simply have to 'join the dots' to complete the work.

### Disadvantages

- tend to generate an enormous quantity of notes.
- final draft often needs to be recast in the crucible of imagination.

### Examples

You'll find good listings on [Writers Store](#) and [Writers Publish](#).

[Plot Monkey](#): basic plot generator: \$10.

[Storycraft Pro](#): Popular, fully featured program: \$69–79.

[Chrysanth NETime Author](#): For popular fiction and television serials: free trial: \$70.

[Power Structure](#): Stimulates your creativity: \$135.

[StoryBase](#). Develops plots from 5,600 story-moves: \$89.

### :Books

A short selection of the many practical books on writing:

[Stein on Writing](#) by Sol Stein: character conflict creates plot.

[The Art of Fiction](#) by John Gardner: general considerations for beginners.

[Plot \(Elements of Fiction Writing\)](#) by Ansen Dibell: nuts and bolts of plot.

[The Art of Fiction: Illustrated from Classic and Modern Texts](#) by David Lodge: brief introductions.

[The Screenwriter's Bible](#) by David Trottier: featured on Writer's Digest.

[Language in Popular Fiction](#) by Walter Nash: academic but useful study.

### :Local Writing Courses

Most towns and cities have a writer's circle where you get together with like-minded enthusiasts. Ask friends, at your public library or community centre, or do a specific internet search.

## 2.3. STYLE AND GRAMMAR

Good writing is more than style and grammar, and the engaging literary personality is a gift honed by long practice. Even on the mundane level of correct usage, English is a minefield, and a cogent way of putting something can be hard to find.

Whatever you write is probably going to be altered—by a proof-reader, the editor, a thoughtful colleague or the need to keep within style and space considerations. But you can do yourself a favour by getting as much right as possible in the first submission because:

- proof-reading is a skilled trade that charges high fees based on the time spent sorting out your muddles.
- editors want something needing the minimum of alteration.
- unless you continually check you will never see the need to improve.

There is no magic formula, just self-evaluation and hard work. First-time authors are thrilled to have their novel accepted, but most also come to hate their early productions, finding them gauche, derivative, pretentious or worse. You'll not want to read the following in their entirety, but you should check whenever uncertain about a passage or particular usage, and set aside an hour or two each week to systematically cover the field.

### :Sites

**Library Spot.** Brief but useful listing of sites.

**Dictionary.com.** Correct usage for American readers.

**Refdesk.** Dictionary and language resources.

**Writers Write Online Journal.** Much useful information for authors and booklovers generally.

**Writers Free Reference.** Sites useful to writers.

**Writing Tools.** Extensive listing, including those for technical writing.

**Toolkits for Poets.** Anthologies, bookstores, advice, and thesauri.

**Technical Writing.** MIT articles on the technical aspects of writing.



## :Books

Reader's Digest: **The Right Word at the Right Time: A Guide to the English Language and How to Use It**: straightforward and sensible.

Henry Fowler: **A Dictionary of Modern English Usage**: a classic: a little dated and more for British English, but still useful.

University of Chicago Press Staff: **The Chicago Manual of Style**: excellent: covers bookmaking, style and production, and printing.

Thomas S. Kane. **The New Oxford Guide to Writing**: popular and well-recommended guide to finer points.

Patricia T. O'Connor: **Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English**: funny and informative.

Harry Blamires: **Correcting Your English**: not engaging, but does highlight many contemporary mistakes.

## :Style: Approaches

Style is a complex matter, but here are a few approaches:

style is the man: **Style** by F. L. Lucas: an old book that remains one of the best.

fiction: **Language in Popular Fiction** by Walter Nash: also considers serious fiction.

general: **Seeing Through Language** by Ronald Carter and Walter Nash: practical student's introduction to most areas.

literary criticism: **The Functions of Style** by David Birch and Michael O'Toole: essays at an advanced level.

sociology: **Language and Power** by Norman Fairclough: how language mediates structures of social and political power.

linguistics: **A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose** by Geoffrey N. Leech and Mick Short: a good starting point.

analysis: **Investigating English Style** by David Crystal and Derek Davy: a classic textbook analysing examples.

terminology: **A Dictionary of Stylistics** by Katie Wales: clear explanations of the key terms.

## 2.4. NOTES FOR NOVELISTS

Writing takes a lifetime to learn, but here are the basics.

### 2.4.1. Openings

Prospective buyers of nonfiction can glance at the cover, and turn to the review snippets on the back cover, which will be sensible and reliable. Then they'll note the contents, start on a chapter heading or two to see what depth the work goes into, and look at the references to check how thoroughly the research has been done. Finally, if sensible, they'll open the book at random and ensure the style appeals, that you can impart what they need to know in a clear, friendly and engrossing manner.

Fiction is another matter. The cover needs to look professional, though readers have long ago discounted such glowing phrases as 'a hard-hitting follow-up to the award-winning', 'unputdownable', 'knows how to tell a good story brilliantly', and the like. Unless you're already a favourite author, they'll flip through to the opening paragraph, perhaps read the first page, in rare cases read the first three pages, but that's about it. You have a few minutes only to make your sale.

Nonfiction readers look for information. Fiction readers look for emotion. An obvious point, but sometimes overlooked by beginners. Readers want a world created that is far more real, engrossing and significant than the one they live in. Created: evoked, conjured up, built by sustained craft and inspiration into something they can happily inhabit and return to for subsequent rereading. Created does not therefore mean reported on. Nor are novels a means of self-expression, real or imagined.

Nineteenth-century novels moved slowly. Whole pages were devoted to setting the scene, and to carefully describing the characters as one by one they stepped on to the stage. Except perhaps in literary novels, or the superior historical romance, no one has such patience today. Films are the preferred model, and by looking carefully at what appears every night on your TV screen you'll begin to understand how it's done. Many start at some exciting point in the story. A spectacular bank heist. A drugs swap in a seedy nightclub. The schoolchild reluctantly going up the stairs to her stepfather's flat. The body being weighted and dropped into the canal. The

farewell party at the corporate headquarters. The oily water reflecting the derelict unloading facilities. And so on. All are telling the viewer something that needs to be known: the genre, the period, the setting, the preferred audience. Equally, all are setting up expectations that will be developed and realized as the story unfolds. There are standard novel openings taught in writing schools, and a host of books on the subject, but the easiest and most enjoyable way of starting your novel is often to imagine it filmed. In this way you can sketch in quickly what the opening scene must depict, and avoid that dreaded stumbling block: the opening sentence. Forget about it. Just write, condense, and then remove the dross. Most writing is rewriting, and the most effective tool remains the blue pencil.

Novels take a long time to read. If you're in a hurry to find opening sentences then you may do worse than consult short stories, which are more to the point, and where every word must count. We know immediately what to expect with: *The revolver felt heavy, but the trigger was well oiled. . . Whatever else could be said of him, Hubert Dreaver was a responsible man. . . When I think of Aunt Jayne's house, across the foothills of memory, and go up the unpainted steps. . . Bernstein was my best friend. . . Open Day is not a favourite on any Head Teacher's calendar, and . .*

## Resources

**Unfolding a Story from a First Sentence.** Bill Johnson. Some examples on A Story is a Promise blog.

**Realist Novel.** Notes by Dennis Walder on Jane Austen's techniques.

**First Sentences.** An Ontarian in Newfoundland blog.

**Great first lines in crime fiction.** Detectives Beyond Borders blog.

**100 best first lines from novels.** Pantograph.com listing.

**Getting Hooked: Fiction's Opening Sentences 1950S-1990s.** Sharon Rendell-Smock. 89-page paperback. Also [here](#).

**ABC: Opening Sentences of Famous Novels.** Leon Mazella. 96-page paperback

**Bulwer-Lytton.** Worst possible openings: good fun contest.

**Funny Deliberately Terrible Bad First Paragraphs of Novels.** Innocent English. More on how not to write it.

**Working from Opening Sentences.** A few exercises.

## 2.4.2. Novel Writing: Plot or Character-Driven?

Should your novel be plot-driven, or operate through the motivations of its characters? Your novel will end up being both, of course, with a plot to keep readers turning the pages, and the characters that are believable. More than believable: your novel must have characters your readers identify with, share their excitement and hopes, feel that their goals are worthy, and that failure is too awful to think about. You'll need to intermesh plot and character so completely that one automatically conjures up the other.

Here lies the failure of many literary novels. Brilliantly written, but falling over on the first test: sympathetic characters. If we don't care about the suspicions of the neurotic invalid on the ground floor of the decaying tenement, or feel the return of the missing Modigliani will be a triumph at the local art gallery, or a thousand and one such contrivances, then the novel fails. On the world stage, none of these things matters, but they must to the characters, and we must be drawn into their lives sufficiently that they do to us.

Nonetheless, if good novels are strong on both aspects, there are still important differences in writing them. Commercial novels, those giving their authors a living wage, are more likely to be initially constructed as plot-driven, because such novels are more quickly written, particularly with software now available. The main storyline is devised, characters found to act the parts, and then the setbacks and advances with sub-plots are woven in. When everything has been thought through, right down to what each scene must achieve, then the sentences can go to work, essentially joining up the dots. Both planning and writing are time-consuming, but months don't need to be set aside for the characters to mature and interact with each other, when all too often they will refuse to cooperate, creating only dead-ends or yawning gaps. Character-driven writing is more usual in literary novels, but the typical sales of a few thousand copies annually will not keep the wolf from the door, even when supplemented by reviewing and late-night appearances.

Many genres are hybrids. If the author has struck gold with his detective hero, then another mystery in the series is quickly plotted without sacrificing what's been achieved. Heroes may indeed grow as the series develops, and software can again help to introduce actions and character details at the suitable moment, or to remind the reader of what's passed

some chapters back. No doubt too much detail prevents the reader imagining properly, but some matters do need to be brought out. The senseless murder, the bank robbery on an empty vault, the hero who throws it all away without reason are not only baffling but unsatisfactory. Life is fragmentary and confusing, but novels are generally expected to make good or explore some of those deficiencies.

To classify novels as essentially plot- or character-driven is also to overlook their larger dimensions. Novels have explored issues of conscience (Dostoevsky), social reform (Dickens), class barriers (Austen) and racial issues (Baldwin). Novels have explored the human heart in love (Turgenev) consumed by ambition (Balzac) by jealousy (Proust) or by class interest (Lampedusa). Some novels have no real plot (Bunin) and some have no real characters (Kafka). Many carry the innermost hopes and feelings of their creators, which is why authors are advised to write the novels they enjoy reading. Intellectual slumming is quickly detected, and literary novels cannot be created with the crude (though effective) devices of the successful thriller.

## Resources

**Theme & Premise: Or How to Plot a Character Driven Book in 3 Easy Steps.** Robyn Hart's approach: theme, premise, character arc.

**Character-Driven or Action-Driven?** Martha Alderson article. Practical advice on both approaches.

**Absolute Write.** Thread on merits of plot versus character-driven novels.

**Write Words.** Another literary thread, here on character-driven plots.

**Bostonia.** Article on Vyvyane Loh's novel: themes and ideas can also be important.

**Blockbuster Plots.** Martha Alderson's services, but also good articles.

**Writers Digest.** Articles, courses and book on all aspects of writing.

**Novel Journey.** Literary blog with good listings.

**Writers Store.** Wide range of books and software.

### 2.4.3. Novel Writing: Point of View

Point of view is the character whose eyes are observing what is happening. Partly this is convention (what readers expect) and partly commonsense (you can't portray what your point of view can't observe). You have a choice of first, second or third person, and the pros and cons of each are easily grasped:

## Third Person Narrative

Narrative in the third person is told as though someone were recounting it, facing an audience. In the twentieth century, this point of view is often limited to what one person could theoretically see, though that view may include outward aspects of personality the characters are not aware of. In previous centuries, the 'third person omniscient' perspective was more popular, and here the storyteller held all the cards, including what the characters thought, felt or planned to do. An intermediate point of view is the 'third person objective', which allows the novelist to present all the characters, wherever they may be, but not to know their inner thoughts: the 'fly on the wall' approach. Other variations are possible: readers may be given access to the inner motivations of some characters but not to others, leaving those unknown quantities as intriguing or threatening aspects of the landscape.

The third person narrative is the most flexible point of view but generally places some distance between reader and character. Even if inner motivations are given readers, it is difficult to identify fully with a long cast of characters, however engagingly drawn.

## Second Person Narrative

The second person, where the reader is addressed as 'you' throughout, is difficult to manage, though experimental fiction sometimes takes the reader by the hand, like a Virgil guiding Dante through a strange and forbidding world. The present tense is more often used, and that separation between reader and narrator can operate as the tension in good dialogue.

## First Person Narrative

The first person point of view sacrifices omniscience for a greater intimacy with one character: the readers see the world through his or her eyes, feel as that person feels, and share his or her motivations and dreams. That character is commonly the protagonist, but may be a close friend or wise elder. The author speaks through the narrator, which brings intensity but also the danger of losing what novels need in plot, dialogue, balance and overall shape. Occasionally, the narrator may directly address the reader, but this breaks the tacit understanding, and gives a distance or unreality to

events: it is rarely done in modern fiction. In autobiographical fiction, the narrator is clearly the author, and may or may not be reliable.

### Further Points

Controlling the point of view is essential for the intensity of a story, but the matter can be subtler than the above suggests. The third person is much used for action novels and commercial fiction, as the narrator can go anywhere, tightening the sub-plots, and adding to the suspense as characters come up against obstacles the reader is expecting. The difficulty is keeping the reader engaged with the characters, not as devices of plot but as breathing people whose aims readers sympathize with. What they experience, even simple observations, has to be real and important to them, and not third person observations from a neutral perspective.

It is possible to mix first-person points of view, but this is rarely successful within a scene, and even changes between chapters must have some point if readers are not to become confused. Naturally, since the narrator has clearly survived, the first person point of view is rarely used for thrillers, and there are also problems with the narrator's ego. If he comes over as too introspective he may seem weak, and so forfeit the reader's interest. If, on the other hand, he continually kicks his way through life, or presents his views too strongly, he may come over as a braggart, and be equally a turn off. It's usually better for readers to build their own sense of character from the varied response of others in the novel, having the narrator's self-perspective recast by what others say to or of him. More depth is created this way, though the narrator is not then entirely reliable.

### Resources

**Things to Keep in Mind When Studying a Novel.** One of many aspects in this handy summary.

**Some Questions to Ask in Analyzing Novels.** Useful checklist.

**What Point of View?** Brief Absolute Write article.

**Point of view (literature).** Detailed Wikipedia article.

**List of novels by point of view.** Short Wikipedia list, but instructive.

**The Development of Point of View.** Brief, but useful examples.

**Critic's Notebook: The Limits of a Novel's Point of View.** NYT article: influence of cinema and modernism.

**Point of View: how to drive a story from inside a character's head.** One of many novel-writing aspects covered on this site.

**Cohesion in the Novels of Alex La Guma: A Dialogic Analysis.** Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia and linguistic dialogism.

#### 2.4.4. Dialogue

After plot, nothing gives novelists so much trouble as dialogue. It never seems perfect, and editing—tightening, shaping, recasting—only creates more possibilities. Are there general principles, and when do you stop tinkering?

First: dialogue is part of your novel, an increasingly important part in mainstream work, but still only part. If the plot doesn't hold up, or the characters are unbelievable, then no dialogue brilliance will save the work. Listen to the scripts of good films: many are surprisingly flat and cliché-ridden, giving no hint of personality to their characters, but the stars breathe life into the hackneyed words. Or get an actor friend to read a page of your work, or anything else: you'll be surprised what a trained voice can do. Be a little wary, therefore, of the 'reading aloud test': that your dialogue isn't convincing may lie more with your acting skills than the dialogue as such. Nonetheless, a dialogue should serve one or more of the following. It:

- discloses the speaker's personality, background and motivations.
- carries the plot, often creating a climax and/or decisive twists in the story.
- heightens tension or conflict between the speakers.
- continually and subtly changes the relationship between the speakers.
- reminds the reader of what may have been forgotten.
- foreshadows events or personality aspects.
- establishes mood or tone.
- stimulates the reader's curiosity.
- breaks up long stretches of text.

Dialogue is not a transcript of actual speech, as you can tell by listening to the radio: you'll know within a few seconds whether it's a recording or a



play. Dialogue is a carefully crafted and distilled version of actual speech, employing conventions that vary with genre and the author's intentions. In contrast, actual speech is more spasmodic and untidy: full of run-ons, repetitions and throwaway phrases (*actually, perhaps, right, like, I mean . .* most of which can be removed unless acting as speech markers.) Real speech is also rather static: back and forth go remark and response. Dialogue needs to be indirect. In place of the boring:

He: *Have a good weekend?*

She: *Yes thanks, and you?*

He: *Got the garden sorted, at long last.*

She: *Expect it needed doing.*

It will go more as:

He: *Have a good weekend?*

She: *David got around to fixing the shed. Fell off and injured himself.*

He: *Seriously?*

She: *No. We'll have to think of something else.*

Characters don't generally address one another with their names, even in group discussion, and you'll have to find other ways of indicating who is speaking. Commonly this is done with *he said / I said* speech tags, but a richer approach is through speech markers. Consider:

Vocabulary specific to the character: *I always think, I mean it's kinda gross, And Bob's your uncle again*, and the like.

Speech that's noticeably tight: *Sort it! Got that? Tuesday without fail. . .*

Speech that's unusually loose: *I wonder if I could ask you, Which means all things considered if you follow my thread of course that. . .*

Words specific to a profession: *Lesions to the right temporal lobe, interpersonal relationship skills.*

Sarcasm: *You can read, can't you? Running the company, are we now?*

Run-on sentences: *So there I was . . . and you'd have thought . . . but no, not for his highness . . . and that's always the way with these . . . isn't it? I mean . . .*

Grammar: *If I was you, Because he nice man, So me I think big.*

Omit words: *So I think myself, When I was boy.*

Indicate class or ethnicity: *May I know your name? Now my dear boy. Get lost.*

Characteristic throwaway phrases: *Look here old sport, Know what I mean? Like we're old friends, aren't we?*

Vocabulary inappropriate to the background or context: *I mean like albeit that you're a big-shot, Are you the perpetrator of this particular foul-up?*

Dialect (just the odd word): *Just a wee bairn, So I says to the old sugar and strife.*

None of this should be overdone, or make difficulties for the reader who generally reads by sight, not by enunciating each word of the page. Feelings drive novels, and dialogue is no exception. Only use words that seem natural to character and situation, therefore, but cut even these when emotion goes off the boil.

## Resources

**Dialogue.** One of several useful summaries on this *Learn the Elements of a Novel* site.

**Wheels of Motion.** Introduction by Gloria Kempton.

**Basics: Dialogue.** Basics by Terry W. Erwin II.

**Writing Dialogue.** Elizabeth Rose: taking it further.

**Dialogue Tips for Documentation.** Dialogue in nonfiction.

**Top 10 Tips for Writing Dialogue.** Sensible notes on the About Fiction Writing Site.

**Writing Effective Dialogue.** Punctuation: note on Writers Digest site.

**Writing Believable Dialogue.** BBC's Get Writing course.

**On Using Dialogue.** Good list of references on The Writing Life blog.

**The Dialogue Shop.** Online workshop with Christine DeSmet

## 2.4.5. Credible Characters

Of course your novel needs credible characters, people more real than those you meet every day in the office or supermarket but still acting as anyone would in their situation. People who also represent characters your readers would like to be, so they can warm to and identify with them. You have these resources:

### 1. Descriptions

Characters used to be introduced with lengthy descriptions:

*'Visitors to O'Connell's Ice-cream Parlor in the early summer of 1964 would have noticed the appearance, every morning at eleven, of an elegant young woman with tightly curled blonde hair and eyes so large, candid and blue that regulars would say, 'here comes summer on the prairies again.' She was dressed in . . . and the small waist was even more tightly pinched by . . . Everything was immaculate, even to the stockings, which were silk, as the better class of customer was aware—and O'Connell's did have the better class of customer in those days.'*

And so on. Still useful for short stories, but something of a burden on the reader who has to remember these details. Who is noticing all this, and is it relevant? No doubt police officers and portrait artists do make mental notes of passing strangers, but most of us take in only what we need to get through our busy lives. You may do better to build your character slowly, giving your reader just what is necessary scene by scene to explain the narrative.

*'She wasn't pretty, but there was something about the manner, he thought: pleasing, a little girlish even, though she was in her thirties, he concluded, dismissing the thought. He brought out his cell-phone, and was making his third call of the morning, when he noticed she was looking at him again. Too old to be wearing that short dress, he said to himself, as though he had some claim on her life. . . '*

Two last points: professional novelists often keep a 'casting book', where they jot down descriptions of characters dreamt up or met in real life. Into this large book they dip when the need appears for a character in their work. Detailed descriptions are also restricting, and many excellent

novelists keep them simple and vague for that reason. Readers like to create them in their imagination.

## 2. Dialogue

We covered dialogue above, but important here is what others say to and of the character you're building. If they call him 'spineless' or 'calculating' or 'a decent sort' that those descriptions will be one aspect of his character. Those aspects may not be accurate—the characters are acting as unreliable narrators, or seeing matters too much through their own perspective—but character need not be presented all at once, but grow slowly in the reader's consciousness as the plot evolves.

## 3. Reactions of other characters to them.

Nothing works in advertising like the personal recommendation from someone we trust, and the same technique is open to the novelist. It may be direct as in popular fiction:

*Haines rubbed his chin. 'Well, the only guy who's going to measure up to that is Rayner,' he said slowly.*

*'Red Rayner?' said Gonzalez. 'The guy the CIA ran out of Guatemala?'*

*'Ran him out of Peru and Mexico, and every other trouble spot in Latin America. But he's still there, and the CIA still use him, because he's the only operative the guerrillas respect. . .'*

Or more oblique, as in literary fiction:

*Devlin was the malevolent figure I'd met on my first day at the plant, who disappeared for weeks on end, only to re-emerge with an affable modesty when credits were being handed out . . .*

### 2.4.6. Plot

We learn more (and believe more) from watching people in action than listening to what they tell us about themselves. The novel is no different. Villains behave badly. Good guys do creditable things. If that good guy is also your viewpoint, you can enrich his character with thoughts, interior monologue and flashback. The reader knows the mainsprings of action, and what fears and difficulties had to be overcome. If the good guy is not the

viewpoint, then other characters can comment on the action, tell each other how it contrasts with expectations, and so on.

Heroes make things happen, but they're not miracle workers. If yours rescues the woman from the frozen lake, make sure you've shown your reader that he's a skating ace, and fearless, well before that scene. Explanations inserted at the climax to a story look contrived, and are unforgivable when the word processor allows easy changes in the script. Likewise coincidences. The boy needs to meet his girl several times, and in ways that seem natural, before the romance blossoms. The reader has suspected their involvement, but delaying the moment gives you time to flesh out their characters more, and build suspense.

## Resources

Once alerted, you can watch the techniques being used in your favourite films and novels, but the following takes the matter a little further:

**Be Your Own Casting Director: Introduction.** One of several useful posts on this *Write Time Write Place* blog.

### 2.4.7. Employing Flashbacks

Flashbacks take your reader into a scene that happened before the present. Because that interrupts the narrative, and endangers the illusion of scenes passing before the reader's gaze, flashbacks need to be used carefully and sparingly.

In general, a flashback should:

- add materially to the present scene: provide motivation, richness of character, suspense.
- introduce an immediate scene and not off-stage narrative.
- move immediately from the present to the flashback.
- start with an arresting sentence.

A problem arises immediately with 'had'. Since most stories are written in the past tense, the logical tense for flashbacks would be the pluperfect. That destroys the continuity and immediacy of the scene, however, and it's better to quickly signal a flashback and then continue in the simple past tense. Instead of:

*I was always in trouble at school. Even on rare good days I had had the distinct impression the girls were laughing at me . . .*

Try:

*I was always in trouble at school. Even on good days I knew the girls were laughing at me . . .*

You can introduce a flashback with dialogue:

*'Truth is, Sue, I wasn't exactly a hotshot at school.'*

An understatement. *How many times was I standing in the corner . . . ?*

Or go direct into dialogue from a flashback.

*I was not good at school.*

*'Roberts you are the most singularly dull and obtuse boy in this class. Stand up. . .'*

Flashbacks can create suspense:

*'Go on, little man.'*

*I thought of the doctor's advice.*

To close a flashback you can simply leave a blank line and pick up the previous scene. Or you can refer to the flashback in some way:

*Then I moved to Baltimore, and everything changed.*

*I was still thinking of those humiliations when I saw Delmot's puzzled look come off my face.*

## Resources

**Playing With Structure.** Short BBC 'Get Writing' module.

**Flashbacks.** The Writing Life blog: some dos and don'ts.

**Lesson Four: Plot.** Basic but mentioning alternatives and the flashforward.

**Booky Noise III: I'm having a flashback!** Cabbages and Kings blog, with some hilarious examples.

**3 Tips for Writing Successful Flashbacks.** Writer's Digest article exploring the device in more depth.

## 2.4.8. Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives and adverbs are best used sparingly, and for these reasons:

1. They make your prose seem insubstantial and overqualified:

*Wearily, her face wearing a sad look of puzzled dejection, she sat down and opened her bag.*

is better conveyed as:

*She sat down wearily and opened her bag.*

2. Their power falls off with the number employed.

*With a sad gesture of tiredness, her uncombed hair flopping untidily over her face, she sat down to read the address book I gave her.*

is more forceful as:

*Pushing the hair from her face, she stared at the address book given her.*

If, however, you want something more subtle, which helps build the character, then use unexpected combinations:

*With a practised air of tiredness, she sat down to read the address book I gave her.*

3. They hold up the action. In place of:

*With a sad gesture of tiredness, her uncombed hair flopping untidily over her face, she sat down to read the address book I'd given her.*

cut to:

*She glanced at the address book, and flipped it shut. 'I'd always be knowing Dave had others.'*

4. More time-wasting are qualifiers: *rather, very, perhaps, a bit, somewhat*. Point your reader to the specifics if there's uncertainty.

5. They draw unnecessary attention to the he/she of dialogue. The 'angrily' is not needed in:

*'That's enough from you,' she said angrily.*

but the 'softly' is saying something else here:

*'That's enough from you,' she said softly.*

If you're heroically doing without dialogue qualifiers altogether, then add an action:

*'That's enough from you,' she said, slipping an arm round his waist.*

Nonetheless, as point 2 suggests, adjectives can be used to set atmosphere and tone. There is a world of difference between these descriptions of the crooked lawyer warning off the hero:

*'I would not advise that,' he said indifferently.*

*'I would not advise that,' he said with a snap of menace in the voice.*

If the contrast is between the well-heeled world of crime, and the impoverished protagonist, then:

*'I would not advise that,' he said pleasantly, the smile showing expensively-kept teeth.*

And all the rules can be broken if we know what we're about. Here for tone:

*'I would not advise that,' he said. The smile opened to show two faultlessly maintained rows of white teeth, gleaming as though flossed regularly between appointments. I wondered if I should change my dentist.*

Everything depends on the effect aimed for, which in turn supposes that we realize how the words will be read, i.e. we know the rules before we ignore them.

#### 2.4.9. Polishing your Novel

You'll not be able to correct everything in your novel at one go, and will probably need to take polishing in stages, working from the broadest to the most detailed, i.e. in something like this order:

1. characters added or deleted
2. changes in plot and sub-plot.



3. characters given more substance and depth of personality.
4. scene changes and improvements.
5. replacement of off-stage narrative by live scenes.
6. tightening of dialogue.
7. general style improvements.
8. grammar checks.
9. spelling checks.

For items 1. to 5. you'll need distance, the ability to read the manuscript cold as would the first-time buyer of your work. Put the manuscript aside for some weeks or months, therefore, and then reread it quickly, noting immediately where the pace slackens, the characters go dead and the plot isn't clear. Generally you'll have only the one chance to see the manuscript with fresh eyes, and it's essential that you're honest with yourself, and sufficiently organized to note the failings as they appear. A second or certainly a third reading will put you inside the work again, seeing what you intended rather than what will strike a detached and sceptical reader.

A novel's dialogue is helped by supporting matter, but it must still be individual and convincing. You may have to work repeatedly on your drafts until real voices appear in your characters, cutting lines, changing phrases, adding identifying turns of phrase as necessary.

At step 7 the viewpoint changes, from creative to critical. Though interwoven in all writing, these two aspects call on different gifts. Many skilled proof-readers, indispensable to publishers, couldn't create a character to save their lives. Conversely, some household names have never learned the rudiments of English grammar, and their work is a nightmare, requiring extensive recasting by sympathetic ghostwriters. Most writers fall somewhere in-between, but few are without their pet phrases, overworked constructions and doubtful grammar. A decent proof-reader will pick these up, but if you're proofing yourself then you must first know what to look out for. Spend time with guides to style and grammar. Better still, check out the [stylewriter program](#). It's not cheap, and recommends an impossibly plain style of writing. You don't have to blindly follow its

recommendations, however, and a dialogue shorn of common turns of phrase and the occasional cliché would not sound natural, but you'll at least know what a conscientious proof-reader would flag, at a fraction of the cost.

Run the manuscript through a spell-checker, setting this to American, British, Canadian, Australian or whatever English. Especially run the spell-checker at the conclusion of the proofing: it's amazing what slips are made in correcting a draft.

Finally listen to the manuscript being read by audio software as the text appears on your VDU screen. Spell-checkers will not detect words missed out or sentences that could be clearer. Moreover, though the voice will not be entirely natural, you will be hearing your manuscript as new readers will. Problems for you will certainly be problems for them.

#### References: Audio Software

**TextAloud.** Offers 32 voices in 21 languages: from \$35.

**ReadPlease.** Basic version free, customisable version from \$50.

**NaturalReaders.** Basic version free, professional pack from \$39.50.

**BrowseAloud.** Free: reads HTML pages.

**Adobe Reader.** Later versions of free reader have audio.

**A Partial List of Available Text Reading Software.** Some 25 programs listed.

**Text and Screen Readers.** Short listing from the State University of New York.

#### :Grammar

**Professor Gibson's Wonderful World of Editing** Good listing of common errors

**Mechanics of the Introspection Fiction-Writing Mode.** One of several useful posts.

## 2.5. CITATION

Whether you write for the web, or publish in traditional books and magazines, you'll be using other people's ideas, phrases and information. That's unavoidable: you can't personally have done all the spadework that lies behind your words. Unless the material is for a general and/or popular audience, you should quote sources whenever you:

- use quotes
- paraphrase

- use an idea that lacks general currency
- make specific reference to another's work
- develop someone else's ideas further

Academic publications have strict rules to avoid plagiarism, but citation also helps to:

- give credit where credit is due
- make your own contributions more obvious
- show the research you have done
- provide support for your ideas

Citation should include information about: the author, the title of the work, the name and location of the company that published your copy of the source, the date your copy was published, the page numbers of the material you are borrowing, the date you accessed the material (in the case of websites). How this information is presented depends on the publication: use other articles as a template if there's not a 'guide to authors' in the publication concerned. Unfortunately, publishers also have their own house rules, and there are marked differences between countries and languages. If you write for many outlets, it may pay you to a. use citation software and b. buy a proper handbook: detailed citation can be complicated. Make a habit of recording citations properly at the time, of course, and at least use the APA or MLA systems failing all else.

You'll find much material on the internet, but these may help:

## Resources

**What is Citation?** Key points from the iParadigms site: basis of this post.

**APA Citation Guide.** Ohio State University guide: examples.

**MLA Citation System.** Summary from MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.

**Comparison of reference management software.** Detailed guide: many programs are free.

**New Hart's Rules: The Handbook of Style for Writers and Editors** by R. M. Ritter (OUP, 2005).

**A Handbook for Scholars** by Mary-Claire van Leunen (OUP, 1992) Thorough and entertaining.

## 2.6. PROOFING THE MANUSCRIPT

No one should undertake the proofing of their manuscript lightly. Or perhaps at all. Proofing is a time-consuming and highly skilled craft, which naturally makes it an expensive element in the publishing process. You can skim through galleys while listening to your favourite TV soap, but the idleness will show.

Proofing ranges from catching typos, through correcting grammar, shaping for clarity and emphasis, rearranging and rewriting of the whole manuscript, to complete ghost-writing from notes and interviews. Fees rise accordingly. The best favour you can do yourself is to get as much right as possible from the start. The reasons are obvious.

Firstly, proof-reading is expensive, and an editor or publisher may simply be unwilling or unable to foot the bill.

Secondly, corrections spoil your script. Each sentence has its word-choice, rhythm and characteristic phrasing, and these sentences build the paragraph and then the article or book. These aspects represent your literary personality, why people read you, beyond the simple need for information. If proofing seriously changes those aspects then your personality is at risk. You will have to accept the corrections, and then rewrite, which is time-consuming and opens the door to more errors. Look, for example, at the examples in *The Reader Over Your Shoulder* (Random House, 1979). Alan Hodge and Robert Graves were experienced authors, but the charm of the originals disappeared in the rewrites.

Thirdly, editors do not relish undertaking major surgery on submissions. They don't have the time to do so, don't want to deal with the author's howl of anguish, and don't see why they must pay the same as for pieces that are. 1. on target and properly researched, 2. in the style suitable to the magazine, 3. slanted at the readership, and 4. of the length stipulated.

Fourthly, you'll never learn to write better until you see your efforts from a professional standpoint.

The non-fiction article is probably the easiest to proof, but do decide, before putting pen to paper, on the conventions you'll use for spelling, punctuation and phrasing. British or American English? They are quite different. Be consistent with abbreviations, references, use of *ize/ise*. Get yourself a

guide (e.g. **Style: Toward Clarity and Grace**: or **New Hart's Rules**) and stick to the recommendations. The publisher may well have their own house style, but resetting can be done in minutes if the original is correct and consistent.

If you decide to do your own proofing, then beware. You may read what you expect to find rather than what's actually on the page. It's also surprising how much silliness can get through. Your minor character Dan in chapter 3 becomes Dean in chapter 23. Your heroine's mother, whose death your opening chapter so poignantly described in the foggy winter of 1980, has been dead a year when you provide a flashback in 1979. The careful reader will find many slips in published novels, even by well-known names in second editions. You need all your wits about you in fiction.

You may also be blithely unaware of your errors. The doubtful grammar, the clichés and overworked constructions that cause an editor to despair and take an early lunch may be just what you're most proud of. If they're too bad you'll have your work returned, or find what's published is nothing like your submission. Learn from the feedback. Not all editors are up to the mark—some are truly dreadful, missing the obvious and insisting on changes that have no grounds in correct English usage—but you must either accept with a good grace or submit elsewhere.

The advantages of doing your own proofing are equally real. In tightening the dialogue you may at last discover the 'voices' that have escaped you up till now. You may realize that some paragraphs are too long, some descriptions are overwritten, and that some sections lose momentum or don't bring out the conflict enough. The superficial proofing common today will miss these faults, or may even hide them, as you'll be too busy (or irritated) following the corrections on your MS to notice the bigger picture.

You should have your work proofed by an eagle-eyed, nit-picking third-party who works from what's on the page. If you're self-publishing and can't afford professional proofing, then consider:

#### 1. A guide to editing/proofreading:

**Developing and Proofreading Skills** by Sue C. Camp: clear and simple approach.

**Self Editing for Fiction Writers** by Rennie Browne and Dave King: excellent: editing as it should be.

**Handbook for Proofreading** by Laura Killen Anderson: includes step-by-step instructions and exercises.

**Style: Toward Clarity and Grace**: Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing by Joseph M. Williams

**New Hart's Rules: The Handbook of Style for Writers and Editors** by R. M. Ritter: covers UK and US usage.

## 2. Software to pick up vagueness, cliché and verbosity:

**StyleWriter**: you'll hate what it throws up, but it's good medicine.

## 3. Audio software that reads your text out aloud, allowing you to hear the work cold, as a stranger would: see software listed **above**.

## 3. GETTING SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED

### 3.1. PUBLISHING ARTICLES

Popular writing is a trade with many skills to impart, particularly of writing to a deadline with a particular audience in mind. Rather different is serious writing today, which holds little appeal for the 'common reader' and is not known outside the trendier magazines and university departments. Even less commercial is writing that falls between the two stools. Few outlets of any quality now exist for traditional poetry, for example, and even experimental fiction is more discussed than bought and read.

Authors therefore need to take decisions early in their careers. Serious poetry and experimental fiction subsist through an elaborate network of critics, theorists and editors, on grants and subsidies, and on reviewing in the intellectual press. Literary theory plays a large role in bringing work to notice, even though that theory often rests on dubious ground. Solidarity is essential, and anyone who enjoys membership of the modernist or postmodernist club is expected to abide by the rules—to subscribe to the right periodicals, not to question the achievements of the founding fathers, to show proper deference to the literary establishment, and to remain unswervingly optimistic about contemporary work. If this is your aim or position, then the following section does not apply. You'll never write a best-seller, but nor will you starve: serious writers look after each other. Much time will be given up to reviewing, giving talks, running workshops and serving on panels and grants committees, but you will gradually take the place of those you supported and be entitled to the same privileges. Your work will be seen within a context of ideas and opinions, and praised to the extent it supports and furthers the same.

If this model is not for you, either because you came to writing by other routes, or because you find the literary world too restrictive and self-serving, you will have to find another public for your efforts, which isn't easy. Popular fiction is written to certain formulas, and a reputation in one department won't necessarily help in another. Readers are creatures of habit, and novelists often write under several names to avoid confusing their loyal public. Publishing houses specialize, and an agent cannot be

expected to remain abreast of events in all fields of writing. Remember these obvious points when reviewing prospects:

1. Readers need to identify in some way with your creations. Through the characters and situations you conjure up—and this applies just as much to poetry—they expect to see themselves in greater understanding and emotional depth. Your novel can describe the trials and tribulations of the second Ming Emperor, for example, but that character has to be built with the elements of our common humanity, so we imagine ourselves in that predicament and with those opportunities.
2. Many best-sellers are topical. The world changes slowly but certain themes flare up in the public imagination. For a decade or so there are novels on cold war spying, marital break-up, third world poverty, clashes of family and career, ethnic unrest, world terrorism—the themes are continually being developed until something new comes along. As in films, the first are often the best, and sensible writers keep their ears open, pushing the boundaries a little further without alienating their core public.
3. Genres shouldn't be mixed too much. Thrillers are not literary novels, and the hero must be credible within certain conventions: you'll portray a fallible human being but not the shy introvert indulging in ritual self-analysis while the action stalls.
4. Even within genres—the poetry collection, the contemporary love story—there are demarcations affecting the appeal of your work. You may not recognize the indicators, but publishers certainly will, and may turn your work down on 'inexplicable' grounds. Many writers specialize for this one reason: a growing awareness of their public.

Even with poetry, a general publisher will ask: can the poems be understood readily? Do they deal with a broadly shared human experience? Do they fit into a well-defined market? Is their subject matter topical, or at least contemporary? Are the poems of manageable length? Do the poems hang together with a common theme and/or style? Does a distinctive personality emerge?



## References

**Peak Writing.** Articles on all aspects of writing.

**In so many words, it's just the perfect life.** Susan Elkin. General article, with sobering statistics.

**Asking for Help.** One of many articles on journalism: Poynter Online.

**10 Steps to a Fab Job as a Romance Writer.** Lori Soard.

**The Writer's Friend: Behind the Scenes With Editors.** Joseph Gregg, Nancy McAlary and Guy Lancaster. Sensible advice for the article writer.

## 3.2. PUBLISHING POETRY

Many schools of poetry exist today, each with their different aspirations and career paths. The broadest grouping is into professionals and amateurs, but even professional poets disagree about what is or should be good poetry, and make strenuous efforts to belong to the right movement. You can only understand such coterie politics by jumping into the swim of events—writing, editing, reviewing—but you will need eventually to declare for one or other of the current movements, and modify your output accordingly. Your pattern of acceptances will be a guide, but also helpful will be extensive reading, particularly the critical work of the 'enemy camp'.

### :Types of Poetry: Professional

Many dream of the time when they can get down to writing, without the need to put food on the table and create a name for themselves in their day-to-day jobs and local community. Why not become a professional, a career poet, turning out collections regularly from prestigious presses, and taking a recognized part in conferences, courses and workshops?

Some hundreds of poets do that, becoming writers in residence at universities, or accredited workshop conveners at writing colleges or community centres. Poetry was, is, and always will be an essential part of their lives, whatever the cost, however financially or socially unrewarding. They spend their last penny on poetry collections, and can remember precisely when they encountered an author later important to them.

Note the unquenchable interest, contacts and background. Professional poets make careers for themselves in one or more of the following ways:

- Take a Master of Fine Arts degree, and become a writer in residence at some recognized university or college of further education.

- Follow a university English course by a Ph.D., but spend much of their time writing and associating with poets, promoting their work and being promoted in turn.
- Become officers of poetry institutions, again hobnobbing with poets and becoming part of the publicity machine.
- Teach in an English faculty, many of which run a magazine publishing certain types of poetry and their important names.
- Work in a publishing house, particularly those few that bring out poetry collections or literary novels.
- Join the poetry performing circuit, building up a loyal public and issuing collections of their popular numbers.

Of course there are dangers. One is the need to publish collections at regular intervals, regardless of quality, simply to prove credentials. Another is the ease with which literary activities can substitute for the real thing, which is writing. Everything is easier than writing poetry, or poetry that's any good, and perhaps only the most stubborn (and sometimes difficult) characters survive the temptation.

But there's more involved than well-deserved approbation. Literature is a community, one where you can make friends and learn to craft your work more appealingly. If bulletin boards and local writing circles can't help, then consider one of a workshops [listed above](#).

#### :Types of Poetry: Amateurs

But perhaps you're not a career poet at all, but an amateur in the best sense of the word, who has produced a substantial body of work. How do you get your precious lifeblood published?

- You've earned the money to self-publish at no cost spared. You find a reputable publisher, talk to local bookstores and place your work on [Amazon Books](#).
- You don't have the \$1,000 + needed to 'publish and be damned'. Your options:
- Join a local poetry group and publish in their occasional anthology.

- Submit to the many ezines springing up on the internet, and disappearing as fast again.
- Submit to one of the long-established small poetry or literary magazines.
- Self-publish an anthology of your work: traditional or print-on-demand.
- Run your own magazine or literary **website**.

### 3.3. DEALING WITH EDITORS

Editors are people. Many are among the most helpful and charming you'd ever hope to meet. Others, putting matters mildly, are self-opinionated, ill-bred and/or plain daft. All who publish regularly have their own lists.

How do you turn the last group into people you enjoy associating with? Probably you can't, since they've been pushed to the brink of madness years ago, but you can save yourself a doctor's prescription and the time wasted in drafting incendiary ripostes, by being soberly effective and professional. Conversely, you can turn a friendly editor into an enemy by:

1. Paying no attention to the publication's guidelines: not taking the trouble to read a few issues, and/or slant work accordingly in content, style, and word length.
2. Pestering with phone calls, emails, letters, manuscript revisions and explanations well before the stated evaluation period is up.
3. Submitting work at the wrong time: magazines generally like to put their Christmas edition to bed by July, for example.
4. Changing everything when only small changes have been requested, not making changes clear, not making the changes at all or on time.
5. Not addressing the editor by name in proposals, or briefly acknowledging courtesies, help or advice given.

Editors in the non-commercial field—experimental fiction, academic articles, poetry—face a spasmodic and smiling amateurism that places the burden of work squarely on their shoulders: rescheduling for delays, correcting,

rewriting, holding the space while ever more bewildering changes and 'improvements' come in.

As a writer, you're selling something into a hopelessly oversubscribed market, where everyone's too busy to give advice, or read beyond a few sentences if the proposal isn't coming good. That also applies to on-line publications. Strange to say, an editor does not want to put in half an hour's work on your behalf if you haven't bothered to spend five minutes clicking through his site. Usually he won't. Life is short, and the occasional kindness can descend into a well-meaning but infuriatingly myopic correspondence, one that leaves both parties feeling confused and aggrieved.

To be received favourably, make your accompanying letters friendly and to the point, something that denotes professionalism: that an intelligent and well-read author has chosen this particular outlet and is applying to its editor.

The submitted work has also to be suitable. Many literary magazines want poetry, but they want poetry of a type that fits their preconceptions of what contemporary poetry is and should be doing. What those preconceptions are can be gauged by reading what is published, and by such policy statements as appear in the magazine or in directories of publishing outlets for poets. Sending a carefully crafted sonnet to an avant-garde magazine is a nonsense, and editors continually complain that two thirds of their time is wasted in reading material of the wrong style or content, wrong length, no covering letter addressed to them by name, no publishing history, and no SAE for response. Guidelines are given for a reason, and have to be read.

Indeed the whole magazine should be read before submission. Literary magazines are usually labours of love, perilously short of funds and subsisting on grants, competition receipts and the personal generosity of friends. It helps to first send for a trial copy, to read it carefully, and at least take out a year's subscription if the submission is accepted. Editors feel their efforts are rewarded if each issue contains a few pieces that are really good, and what they ask in publishing your efforts is the financial means to continue providing a platform for new work.

Or the best ones do. Some unfortunately dream of publishing only nationally famous writers, and assess each submission by name rather than

by work. Unless well-known on the literary circuit—and editors are very knowledgeable here—your poetry goes into a slush pile, to be picked over if space unexpectedly appears when selections have been made from submissions by big names and personal friends. Some magazines accept almost everything, and follow up their flattering words of 'exceptional talent' with offers of overpriced anthologies or conferences of 'selected poets'. Some magazines are the in-house journals of university English departments, and their young editors do not always have the reading and experience to tell the good from the merely fashionable.

You can develop a standard format for such letters, or buy sample cover letters, but remember to adapt for each case.

The well-known magazines are notoriously choosy, accepting only 5% or less of submissions. You can greatly shorten the odds by:

- keeping scrupulously to the submission guidelines.
- reading the publication carefully and sending exactly what is wanted.
- presenting yourself as an old hand.

Unless instructed otherwise:

1. Type/laserprint each piece on quality white paper, double-spaced. In the top left-hand corner put your name and address. In the top right-hand corner put the rights for sale: usually first serial rights. Start each piece on a new page, and number the pages sequentially, each with name, address and rights for sale. Run off fresh copies for each submission.
2. Include a one-page covering letter, personally addressed to the editor by name. Phone to get that name if necessary. The covering letter should offer the piece(s) for consideration (list them), say (subtly) why they are being sent, and briefly mention previous successes.
3. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or self-addressed envelope and IRC if submitting from abroad).

You can kill your chances by:

- Adding that your course-teacher or Aunt Mildred thinks your poems are absolutely fantastic.
- Including silly credits: vanity presses, senior citizen competitions, and the like.
- Insisting that these are just what the magazine needs (that's the editor's job).
- Overdoing the compliments: *I think this is only magazine.* .
- Including notice of copyright, which suggests only trouble.
- Submitting in longhand.
- Specifying payment (arranged later).
- Including drawings or artwork (they're rarely useful).
- Specifying a deadline for reply.
- Submitting on coloured/non-standard size paper or with fancy fonts.
- Pleading, or promising a subscription if accepted.
- Threatening a personal visit/violence/suicide if not accepted.
- Sending a follow-up letter a week later: *I need to know because.* . .

Remember the book trade can be slow, especially in impoverished areas like poetry. Keep copies of everything sent. Allow a few months before sending the polite follow-ups, again as business letters. Be systematic in submissions, making them one of the regular chores of writing.

### 3.4. SUBMISSION CONTRACTS

Poetry and some literary magazines leave copyright with authors, for them to assign when an anthology of work is published. Copyright in other cases generally goes to the magazine or newspaper, about which you can find more by examining the publication or its 'advice to authors' section. Copyright is an important matter for the professional writer, however, and is therefore covered in some detail below.

### 3.5. GETTING ORGANIZED

To publish with increasing regularity calls for an organized and persistent approach. All freelancers work to schedules, and would quit the business if the odd rejection slip interrupted the creative flow. Here's what to do:

1. make a longish list of outlets, the best prospects at the top.
2. group your article/poems into batches, each specific to a particular outlet or group of outlets.
3. work through the list, sending your batches off to several outlets at a time. Pay no attention to the usual demands for single submissions to literary magazines. Many are hopelessly amateur, will keep you waiting for months, lose your MS, or not reply at all.
4. send a polite reminder if stated response time is very much exceeded.
5. keep a record (see below) of submissions, acceptances and any remarks.
6. always keep several batches in circulation, sending the batch off to a new outlet the very day you get a rejection slip from the previous magazine.
7. rearrange batches and their contents as necessary.
8. don't abandon a piece until you've exhausted all possibilities.
9. learn from the pattern of response times, rejections, acceptances and comments. Read magazines/ezines more carefully as a result, but accept that some editors will never take your work.

Your submission record will look something like this:

Batch Name	Submitted To	Date	Response	Date	Comments	Suggestions
'red iron'	Thumbscrew	2/1/05	all rejected	25/4/05	none	submit 'northern blues'
'northern blues'	Thumbscrew	25/4/05	all rejected	7/10/05	liked 'moontown'	submit 'Carlisle castle' batch
'red iron'	London	25/4/05	'old	19/6/05	more like	reorganize

	Poetry		foundry' accepted		this	batch
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Detachment is the key. Get your writings published regularly by turning anticipation into a routine. An acceptance? Good: make a note in the record. A rejection? No matter: send the batch to the next on the list. Submitting work takes time and patience, an immense quantity of both, but the strategy at least is within your control.



## 4. GETTING YOUR WORK PUBLISHED

### 4.1. FINDING A LITERARY AGENT

Literary agents specialize, and though one listed as 'fiction literary agent' looks a good bet for your novel, you need to check credentials and preferences. Some names appearing under the name will handle fiction of all sorts, some only popular fiction, etc. Literary agents find a good home for your work, charging a commission, commonly around 15% of your royalties. They open the door to the larger publishing houses, and bring these advantages:

- have personal contacts with publishers and editorial staff.
- stay abreast of corporate policies and publishing ideas.
- know who's looking for what and when.
- negotiate advances and publishing contracts to your advantage.
- secure subsidiary and overseas publishing rights.
- find you new areas of writing.
- suggest how you could develop your talent.

#### 4.1.1. The Proposal

Well before you get a literary agent—and even if you don't get one at all—you will need what is called a 'proposal'. This is a lengthy document that tells the publisher why it makes commercial sense to bring out your book.

Equally important, it spells out exactly how and why you will be successful should you opt to self-publish your work.

The proposal typically consists of:

- Overview: 2-page general summary.
- Market: 3-page description of the potential readership.

- Competition: Similar books already published: how yours compares.
- Authors: 1-page bio. of your skills and successes.
- Chapter by Chapter Summary: Up to 20-page sample if fiction, otherwise brief outlines.
- Delivery: 3-sentence clincher.

2. Next you identify twenty possible agents from the resources below, and send each a query letter. Enclose SAE. The letter has this structure:

- Teaser: attention-grabbing sentence.
- Expand the Idea: 3–4 sentences outlining the substance of the book.
- Bio: 3–4 sentences on why you're best to write it.
- Closer: why you like this agent.

3. Agents respond by telephone if interested and by email/letter if not. Do some research on agents who respond favourably, and send them your proposal. If possible, choose the most successful.

4. Sign the Contract. The agent sends a contract, which is generally a simple 2-page document. It's wise to check that representation isn't for more than a year, and that you'll not be charged for the service (postage and telephone are usually acceptable, but not the agent's time). The agent looks for a publisher and negotiates your advance. You've made it: all that remains is to write or complete the book.

#### 4.1.2. Poetry

The above holds for non-fiction, and fiction to some extent. It does not hold for poetry. Unless you're a literary celebrity in some other walk of life, you'll be lucky to find an agent. Agents live off commissions, and poetry books rarely make money.

Novelists, however—though it's still tough—should consult one or more of the following:

**Literary Agents.** Writers Beware article on what to check.

**Mockingbird.** Articles on agents, and listings.

**Bloomsbury.com.** US and UK agents plus advice.

**Writers Net.** Excellent database of agents, plus articles.

**Fiction Addict.** Extensive agent listings, but no details.

**Unpublished Indian Author's Page.** Many useful references.

**Association of Author's Agents.** Check credentials of UK agents here.

**Preditors and Editors.** Just about everything on agent and publisher search strategies.

**Fiction Writers Resource Guide.** Excellent listings.

**Writers' and Artists' Yearbook 2006.** Information on-line and free.

**First Writer.** Searchable database of 600 agents. \$3.99. Also publishers.

**Publishing Game.** Various publications and services, including on-line proposal writer.

**Literary, Foreign, and Subsidiary Rights Agents.** HTML list of 375 agents. \$30.

**2007 Guide to Literary Agents.** Now in its 16th year. \$16.50

**Jeff Herman's Guide To Book Publishers, Editors and Literary Agents 2006.** Who they are! What they want! How to win them over! \$19.77.

**Write the Perfect Book Proposal.** 10 That Sold and Why, 2nd Edition. \$10.85

**The Insider's Guide to Getting an Agent.** Practitioner's view of the business.

**How to Write a Book Proposal.** More for non-fiction writers, but useful. \$10.87.

### 4.1.3. Doing Without an Agent

Many publishing houses will not consider direct submissions, and use literary agents as a filtering mechanism—understandably when submissions can run to dozens every day. Unfortunately, it's often as difficult to get an agent as it is to find a publisher directly. Many fiction writers try first for an agent, then turn to submitting direct to publishers, and end up self-publishing. Some obvious suggestions:

- find an agent when you have a publisher's offer.
- interest a publisher with a compelling proposal.
- target agents carefully.
- network for an introduction.
- persist.

## 4.2. FINDING A PUBLISHER

### 4.2.1. Introduction

A suitable publishing company will be found by your agent, if you have one.

If you don't have an agent, then the task of finding a publishing company is yours. Suggestions:

- Find books of a similar genre in libraries and bookshops, and note the publishers.
- Do the same with books on-line at Amazon and elsewhere.
- Ask around at writing circles and conferences.
- Visit [Publishers Lunch](#) to see who's doing what. Basic version is free, but \$20/month subscription gives access to archives.
- Subscribe to [Publisher's Weekly](#): \$225/year for US citizens and \$367 overseas, though your local library may have copies, or can borrow them for you.

### 4.2.2. Book Publishing Companies

Work through the following:

[Preditors and Editors](#). Information on publishers, agents and much else.

[Fiction Writers Resource Guide](#). Excellent listings.

[Writers' and Artists' Yearbook 2006](#). Information on-line and free.

[First Writer](#). Searchable database of publishers. \$3.99/month.

[Publishing Game](#). Several publications and services of interest.

[Publishers Homepages](#). Bowker's listing of US publishers.

[Book Market](#). Over 400 listed: most work through agents.

[Gale Directory](#). Educational publishing for libraries, schools and businesses.

[Parrot Media Network](#). Extensive listings of US media sources.

[SRDS](#). Thorough coverage of USA media outlets.

[Media Finder](#). Database of print media in Canada and the USA.

[Media UK](#). UK media community with extensive independent directory.

[Book Information](#). Information on UK book world.

**Open Directory.** Hundreds of directories listed: worldwide.

**Bella Online.** Danielle Hollister's publishing links.

### 4.2.3. Book Publishing Companies: Poetry

You will need a reputation to stand much chance, but research the following poetry book publishing companies if you want to try your luck anyway:

**The Poetry Resource.** Includes extensive list of poetry publishers.

**Publishers Homepages.** Bowker's listing of US publishers.

**Poetry Society of America.** Extensive list of poetry book publishers and much more.

**Dustbook's Directory of Poetry Publishers.** Over 2000 outlets listed. \$25.95.

**First Writer.** Searchable database of publishers. \$3.99/month.

**Poetry Kit.** Good listing for the UK, USA and elsewhere.

**Lollipop.** Listing of UK small presses, news and publishing advice.

**Small Press Publishers.** About.com's listing.

**2006 Poet's Market.** Over 1,800 outlets, with submission guidelines, interviews and advice. \$24.99 .

Many poets will have to **self-publish** in some form.

### 4.2.4. Contacting a Publisher

Business letters take many forms, but a specialized one is the inquiry letter to an agent or publisher. Here you've just the one chance to make your pitch. Dozens, probably hundreds of inquiries pour through the post every week, and yours obviously has to be special. It will:

- be properly typed/laser-printed on good quality, standard-size paper, and include SAE.
- address the recipient by name (phone first if necessary).
- be friendly, persuasive and well-organized: the recipient will know immediately what's being proposed.

First impressions count, and an indifferent letter doesn't auger well. Both agent and publisher are generally looking for reasons not to take matters further, just to survive the continual deluge of submissions and proposals.

Response can be disappointing. It's quite usual to get back a standard rejection slip, your letter with a handwritten 'sorry', a scruffy bit of paper

typed on a 1940s Olivetti, or nothing at all. A third will probably not bother to reply with your SAE. An agent tends to phone if she's interested, and use e-mail or slow mail if not. Maddening, but that's the publishing trade.

But if all goes well, the agent or publisher will ask to see more. Now is the time to send:

1. Your **media kit**.
2. The **proposal**.
3. First 30 pages/5,000 words—whatever is requested. Make sure the MS is properly presented:
  - plain white paper of standard size.
  - typed or printed-printed with standard typeface (serifs are preferred, and certainly not cursive fonts).
  - double-spaced on one side of paper only, with generous (3 cm+) margins.
  - numbered sequentially, across chapters.
  - left-hand justified only.
  - paragraphs indented a few spaces.
  - new chapters start a third way down page.
  - your name and MS title on each page.
  - consistent spelling and punctuation (ize or ise, and so forth).
  - capitals for character's names in plays, stage directions in italics, dialogue in single-spacing.
  - use card folders, not slippery plastic ones.
  - pay full postage and give instructions (re MS: please do not return/stamps enclosed for return).

Many editors/agents will make up their minds once they've found time to read the MS. Others have to send it around, or obtain approval. Give them

a couple of months before the polite follow-up letter. If no joy then go elsewhere and/or ask for the MS back. Don't expect reasons for rejection: everyone's too busy to give advice.

If your work is accepted, then there is a Contract to sign, questions of copyright to sort out, and the proofing. Do not make extensive changes to the MS once accepted, or the publisher may charge you (a lot). Publishers may insist on their own changes, but as far as possible get everything right first time.

#### Resources:

[Bloomsbury.com](#). US and UK agents plus advice.

[Writers Net](#). Excellent database of agents, plus articles.

[Unpublished Indian Author's Page](#). Many useful references.

[Preditors and Editors](#). Much useful information.

[Writers' and Artists' Yearbook 2006](#). Information on-line and free.

[Publishing Game](#). Various publications and services, including on-line proposal writer.

[Jeff Herman's Guide To Book Publishers, Editors and Literary Agents 2006](#) . Who they are! What they want! How to win them over! \$19.77

[Write the Perfect Book Proposal](#). 10 That Sold and Why, 2nd Edition. \$10.85

[The Insider's Guide to Getting an Agent](#). Practitioner's view of the business.

[How to Write a Book Proposal](#). More for non-fiction writers, but useful. \$10.87

#### 4.2.5. Co-Publishing Arrangements

Co-publishing arrangements are those where you share expenses. But aren't publishers supposed to pay you royalties for handing over the copyright, perhaps not very handsome amounts, but some recognition of the talent and hard work that's gone into the manuscript?

Yes and no. If you're writing popular fiction, or some steady earner like travel or cookery books, then assuredly so. Your work should sell in tens or hundreds of thousands of copies, earning a good profit for the publisher and a respectable income for author and agent. But co-publishing is more common with literary novels, experimental fiction and poetry, where publishers can find themselves facing a loss, however optimistically they do their sums. Yes, it might just make a modest profit, but almost certainly will not. Poetry not on teaching syllabuses is particularly difficult to sell, and the average first

novel, well-reviewed in leading periodicals, sells a few thousand copies, eventually.

Matters are not much better in the academic presses, and a specialist work, say, on the Hebrew literature of Muslim Spain, needs support, often in the form of grants, or subsidies from better-selling lines, but sometimes from the author's own pocket. These are the hard facts of the publishing trade, which professionals understand.

Publishers offer co-publishing arrangements for two reasons:

1. to help defray costs, and
2. to show commitment.

You're going to do much of the marketing anyway, but only if you have your own funds tied up in the project will you go that extra mile, give yet another talk to an over-sixties club or travel to some off-the-map settlement for an ill-attended reading, neither of which is likely to produce more than three sales apiece. The enthusiasm of the contract signing soon wanes, and the publisher understands the marketing maxim: a good rep is a hungry rep.

#### 4.2.6. Agent Fees

Respectable agents, say the authorities, do not charge a reading fee: that's part of the job. They carefully log their telephone and stationery expenses for reimbursement, but otherwise live off their 15% commission, toiling ceaselessly on your behalf.

So they may if their 20-odd clients earn \$50,000 annually in royalties. But the average 'serious' writer earns only a fraction of that, supporting himself largely with a day-job or fill-in occupation. Fifteen per cent of \$1000/year is not a large sum, even multiplied by 100 clients. For that reason alone, agents cannot take on poets, and tend to limit numbers of 'promising' new novelists, hoping for distant fame and glory rather than instant cash.

All this is obvious when seen through the eyes of others in the publishing trade. You may mortgage your future to a dream, but publishers and agents have more pressing needs. Co-publishing arrangements need to be scrutinized as any other book publishing contract, but do offer a sensible way of balancing expenses and rewards in risky areas. Negotiate if you're



unhappy with the concept. Perhaps the publisher will let you keep the copyright, or allow it to revert to you after a short period. If you meet him halfway, you may be on to a mutually helpful relationship that will serve you well in the years ahead.

## 4.3. BOOK CONTRACTS

### 4.3.1. Introduction

Book publishing contracts are crucial to an author's future livelihood, and yet are often signed after a cursory glance. 'Must be all right, since everyone else has signed the thing.' That is not always the case, and a good agent or author's association may be able to get you better than usual rates. At least understand what you're agreeing to, and be wary of terms binding on future productions.

Publishing contracts are fairly standard and cover such matters as:

- details of the book: format, print-run.
- obtaining ISBN and listings in national catalogues.
- period the contract holds (years or copies sold).
- what happens after the contract expires.
- supply of galley proofs to author.
- copyright issues: who is responsible for checking (often author).
- royalties to author depending on seller (author, publisher through bookstores, book clubs, subsidiaries).
- when and how royalties are paid.
- terms applying to author for copies (no. of free copies, discounts thereafter).
- advances (commonly 1/3 at contract signing, 1/3 on submission of galley proofs and 1/3 on return of proofs).
- how MS is submitted to publisher.
- cost of unauthorized author changes to galleys (\$/hour).
- responsibility for libel, copyright infringement (commonly author, who indemnifies publisher).

- any guarantees regarding copies printed or sold (generally none).
- what the publisher will do towards marketing.
- what the author will do towards marketing.

### Subsidiary Rights

The publisher may wish to use your manuscript in ways other than producing hardcover or paperback print book editions. Print-related subsidiary rights include:

- book club and paperback reprint editions.
- publication of selections or abridgments in anthologies and textbooks.
- first and second serial rights (i.e., publication in newspapers or magazines either before or after publication of the hardcover book).
- international publication.

Non-print-related subsidiary rights include:

- motion pictures.
- television.
- stage, audio.
- animation.
- electronic rights.
- merchandising.

Subsidiary rights may be licensed to a third-party, where you will get a share of the licensing fees. The matter is complicated, and you may want to reserve subsidiary rights until you get an agent, or have some experience of working with the publisher.

### 4.3.2. Current Trends

Being brought out by a large publishing house bestows prestige, but not necessarily financial independence or peace of mind. Though technology

has made publishing less risky and less costly, the benefits are not being passed on to authors, who find themselves faced increasingly with one-sided agreements.

Many book contracts now:

- do not ensure publication: you consign your earning ability to another, and your book does not appear, even the modest advance being clawed back if the book is sold on to another publisher.
- stipulate that your next MS must be offered, completed, to the same publisher, who need not consider it immediately, can turn it down subsequently, and even change his mind if another publisher takes an interest.
- allow royalties (commonly only 8%) to be cut by half if the publisher sells through a big distributor.
- ditto if the publisher sells the rights to an affiliate.
- dispense with royalties if the publisher decides to make the book into a give-away e-book for publicity purposes.
- require the author bear the costs of any libel suits, whoever is at fault, which the publisher can settle without consulting the author.
- allow the option to be consigned to third parties, who need not defend the action.
- remove last vestiges of author control.

All this must make authors into hard-nosed businessmen or paupers. Books of mass appeal must be turned out regularly, and/or additional means of support found, usually reviewing and literary journalism. Many good authors cannot now make a living, and have turned to self-publishing, textbooks and teaching.

More information on publisher's contracts, author's rights and current trends in author-publisher relationships can be found below.

## Resources

[National Writers Union](#). Provide a Guide to book contracts.

[Author's Guild](#). Advice on the book (and other) contracts.

[What Writers Should Know About All-Rights](#). ASJA article.

[Rights: What They Mean and Why They're Important](#). Writing World article.

[Electronic Publishing and the Potential Loss of First Serial Rights](#). One of many excellent articles on this lawyer's site.

[Publishing Tools](#). Includes example of author contract.

[Society of Academic Authors](#). Their boilerplate contract.

[Contract Issues: Books Published Online](#). NWU article.

[Writers Forum](#). Many points of interest discussed.

[Never Release Your Rights To Anyone](#). One of many WritersNet articles.

[The "Standard" Book Contract: An Antitrust Lawsuit Waiting To Happen](#). Author difficulties.

[Publishing without Borders: Strategies for Successful International Publishing](#). International rights issues: \$25.

[How To Be Your Own Literary Agent : An Insider's Guide to Getting Your Book Published](#) . Continually revised since 1983 printing. \$10.80.

[Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting Published](#). Third edition of this popular series: covers the basics well. \$12.30.

## 4.4. ELECTRONIC PUBLISHERS

Being published by an electronic publisher is much the same as by a traditional one. You still have to convince the publisher that your book will make money, even though risks are reduced as the electronic book is cheaper to produce. Royalties are more generous, of course, and a popular website promoting your e-book takes the place of bookstore signings and readings.

Electronic books are basically computer files, created to be read on a computer or hand-held device. Technology is making great strides, but the traditional paper book remains the more popular.

Self-publishing companies have recently grown more cautious in what they will publish, having seen many of their fraternity disappear when the enthusiasm gave way to hard business sense. Only a few electronic publishers now accept poetry, where you'd probably do better to buy the **software** and create your own e-books.

More information can be found on these sites:

[Electronic Book, e-Book, eBook, eJournals, and Electronic Journal Watch](#). Articles and a good listing.

[NetLink E-Publishing & Print-On-Demand Sites](#). Includes general sites on electronic publishing.

**Electronic Publishing.** About/Jeeves's extensive listing.

**EPIC.** Professional organization for e-book and print authors.

**netLibrary.** Large e-content provider: listings for books and services.

**Online Books Page.** Lists 25,000 free books on-line.

**Electron Press.** Publishes books in Adobe Acrobat or PDA-readable format.

**eBookAd.** E-book information, news and supplies.

**Ebook Palace.** Resources for publishing and marketing e-books.

**Internet Authors Network.** Services and user group to promote e-books.

**Journal of Electronic Publishing.** More scholarly articles on e-publishing.

**Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography.** Extensive and well-maintained.

**Internet Publishing.** Personal site, with an excellent listing of electronic publishers.

**EPS.** Good source of statistics for the on-line publishing industry.

**E-Reads.** Offers e-book versions of previously published books.

**WBJB.** On-line radio show devoted to self-publishing: links to articles and newsletter.

A few of the many e-publishers still in business: quality varies:

**Hard Shell Word Factory.**

**New Concepts Publishing.**

**Awe-Struck E-Books.**

**C & M Online Media** (Boson Books).

**Fictionwise, Inc.**

**Writer's Exchange E-Publishing.**

**Atlantic Bridge Publishing.**

**Wings ePress, Inc.**

## 4.5. PRINT ON DEMAND

### 4.5.1. Introduction

On-demand-publishing, also known as print-on-demand, PoD, or publish-on-demand, allows details of your book to be stored electronically for later printing on a one-off basis. This route is much less hassle than doing your own publishing, and has these advantages:

- Costs start somewhere around \$150, compared with the \$1000+ for conventional printing.
- Turnaround is a few weeks rather than the customary 18 months.

- You can send the company the text by e-mail, ftp or on a floppy through the post, and the PoD company does the rest.
- Your book can feature on Amazon and other on-line bookshops.
- On-demand-publishing can produce books of a specialist nature that would otherwise never see the light of day.

Equally important are the disadvantages:

- You may be giving up your copyright, for a smaller return in product quality and guarantees.
- Some of the cheaper versions look poor: garish covers and fuzzy pages.
- No quality controls exist, unless you specify and pay for them. Editing, proofing, typesetting, illustration, warehousing, marketing and reviewing can all be skimped, which impacts on sales figures.
- Many formats tend to be standardized, which may not suit all publications.
- Publishing rights stay with the PoD publisher, rather than with the author, at least for a period.
- Bookshops may refuse to stock these products because they are not generally returnable on a sale-or-return basis, and discounts offered are less attractive.
- The books themselves are more expensive than their conventional counterpart, sometimes 50% more.
- Sales are often disappointing. Publishers Weekly found that of 17,000 titles produced by iUniverse, only 83 had sold more than 500 copies.
- PoD does not lead necessarily to recognition. A 2004 NYT article reported that only 20 of the 10,000 titles published by Xlibris had been picked up by commercial publishers.

### 4.5.2. PoD Companies

PoD companies are middlemen, who handle many of the traditional publisher's functions for a share of the earnings. The best known are [iUniverse](#), [Xlibris](#), [Authorhouse](#) and [Trafford](#), but many companies provide the same service more cheaply. Shop around, and look at terms and prices carefully, especially any exclusivity clauses, book pricing restrictions and royalties payable.

#### Resources

[Print on Demand](#). Advantages and disadvantages of this approach.

[Go Publish Yourself](#). Advocating self-publishing over PoD.

[Union Cautions Writers About On-demand Publishing](#). Points to watch for.

[An Incomplete Guide to Print-on-Demand Publishers](#). Extensive and useful comparison/listing.

[Electronic Book, e-Book, eBook, eJournals, and Electronic Journal Watch](#). Articles and a good listing.

[Book Publishers Compared](#). Several e-books/services. \$16.95 e-book analyses and compares 48 PoD companies.

[The Fine Print of Self-Publishing: The Contracts & Services of 48 Major Self-Publishing Companies--Analyzed, Ranked & Exposed](#). Mark Levine: \$11.50.

[NetLink E-Publishing and Print-On-Demand Sites](#). Articles and listings of electronic publishers.

[Internet Publishing](#). Personal view, with much insider information.

[Summertime Publishing](#). Basics, including costs and today's permutations.

[Dehanna Bailey](#). PoD author's homesite, with excellent PoD company database.

[Book Printers](#). Aeonix's 'List of Printers': technical but essential reading for PoD and other printing jobs.

[Pocket Guide to Digital Printing](#). Introduction to the technical aspects.

[Print-on-Demand and E-book Producers](#). Excellent listing.

Some of the better print-on-demand companies:

[Virtual Bookworm](#). Royalties are 50%: from \$360.

[Lulu](#). Basic service from \$150: royalties 80%.

[Pagefree Press](#). Authors can set their own prices: \$300.

[Wingspan Press](#). Royalties 100%: from \$400.

[Aventine Press](#). Good royalties. \$349 plus add-ons.

[Click Lit](#). UK Guardian article on possible in-store POD.

### 4.5.3. Colour with Publish on Demand

Colour PoD printing technology exists, and more companies are offering the facility. Before ordering something from your favourite cover illustrator,



however, you need to understand the limitations of Lightning Source technology still used by most PoD companies.

Colour printing is a skilled craft which requires—besides experience and design flair—close control of all steps in the process. These must be set properly: 1. the colour monitor, 2. the background lighting conditions of the designer's studio, 3. the colour management system by which the document is converted into a pdf file, and 4. the printing machine that will be employed. Steps 3 and 4 are especially technical, and a lot can clearly go wrong, though the attractive colour magazine that regularly accompanies your Sunday paper demonstrates just what a superb job is done by the trade these days. Naturally, if your cover is being designed by professionals, all aspects will be looked after, and you can simply await the sample copy to arrive on your desk.

In fact, most PoD companies offer a set of cover templates and/or have a list of recommended cover designers, who understand that Lightning Source is not standard CMYK offset printing, but 1. uses a low resolution of 300 pixels per inch, and 2. converts the submitted file to a screened image. That means that curves and diagonals can have jagged edges, and many typefaces may look fuzzy. What's to be done? Order a book from the PoD company to check. If you use your own illustrator, get him or her to contact the PoD company, and design accordingly. A cover for offset printing may not serve for PoD, just as trade paperbacks will use more sophisticated cover designs than are feasible with mass-market paperbacks.

If you're designing your own covers, these suggestions may help:

- Calibrate your monitor: probably to around 6500 K. Consult the documentation that came with the monitor and/or the references below.
- Work in some area of subdued and constant lighting source.
- Master the colour separation aspects of whatever programs you are using: Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign or Xpress.
- Check by creating colour profiles.
- Use simple designs and more basic typefaces.

- Be especially careful of bar codes, which sometimes come out less sharp than they should be. Consider having them added professionally, or designing the back cover in simple black and white. You can also buy adhesive bar codes.
- Talk to the PoD company about the Colour Management System settings they require. For simple black and white printing you can convert your MS Word file with something like Cute PDF and submit to the PoD company with a fair chance of everything being fine. Colour is another matter: check.
- Technology is improving rapidly. Consider waiting a couple of years for better presses to become available and/or **more widely used**.
- Rough out the cover yourself, but hand over to a professional illustrator for the final product.

## Resources

**Calibrate Your Monitor.** Short About article, with reference listings.

**Monitor calibration and gamma.** More detailed article by Norman Koren.

**Monitor Calibration Wizard.** Free software to facilitate the process.

**Print On Demand.** General article on PoD quality.

**Kirtas.** Now part of Amazon's Booksurge PoD services.

**HP Indigo Printer.** New generation digital colour printer.

**Xerox iGen3 110 Digital Production Press.** Another high-quality digital press.

**Punch Graphix.** Details of digital printing machines they supply.

**BooksandPublishing.** Specifications for your own cover design (also see their detailed MS Word file submissions).

**The London Press.** Examples of professionally designed PoD covers.

**Fultus Publishing.** Examples of cover templates.

**Booksurge.** Offer complete design packages: \$499–4200.

**POD Label Presses.** PrintOnDemand.com article.

### 4.5.4. Print-On-Demand Quality

How do you make sure of quality in PoD?

1. Many PoD companies use graphics and type by Lightning Source, Inc., so any differences that arise will concern layout and choice of typeface. Your choices:

- use the template(s) supplied by the PoD company.
- submit simple layout in pdf format, if the PoD company permits.
- do proper typesetting yourself: best, but not always allowed by PoD companies.

2. Other digital printing equipment does exist, however, and is superior to Lightning Source. Your local printer may even use it.

3. A third factor is the paper quality. Some PoD companies specify the paper weight, but from others you may get narrow spines and thin paper. Order a book from each of your shortlisted PoD companies to be sure.

Also get a decent book on print-on-demand publishing if you're seriously considering the approach. There are many things to watch out for (rights, pricing, cover design, distribution, returns, bar codes, ISBN) and the outlay will soon pay for itself. You can also check quality if published by a PoD company.

Some suggestions (including 'print buying'):

**Print-on-Demand Book Publishing.** Based on author's own experience and includes actual costs. \$14.95.

**The Clearly Confusing World of Self-Publishing and POD.** Balanced account of pros and cons. \$13.95.

**Print on Demand: A Graphics Handbook.** A PoD book that appears not to have taken its own advice. See review for the dangers. \$9.95

**Put It On Paper!** A newcomer's guide to the printing industry. \$24.95.

**The Fine Print.** Detailed comparison of PoDs. \$20.

**Forms, Folds, and Sizes: All the Details Graphic Designers Need to Know but Can Never Find.** Bridges the DTP to printer gap. \$18.90

#### 4.5.5. Royalties

Royalties need special attention. Suppose your book retails for \$12.95, and the PoD company pays royalties at 75%. If royalties are based on the gross cover price, you'll get a handsome  $0.75 \times \$12.95$  for each book sold, i.e. \$9.71/copy. In all probability, however, the royalties will be based on the **net revenues**. From \$12.95 are first taken publishing costs, say \$4.50 per copy, leaving \$8.45. Then, if the book is sold on Amazon, the bookstore commission amounts to 55% of the retail price, i.e. \$7.12. Take that away

from \$8.45 and you're left with \$1.33. Royalties at 75% of the net revenues are therefore  $0.75 \times \$1.33$  or \$1.00/copy, a fairly typical figure.

## 4.6. VANITY PUBLISHING

You'll want to avoid this route because it:

- is too expensive.
- often results in a poor quality product.
- damns your publication in the trade: booksellers won't stock it.

Publishing calls on a wide range of skills, not always apparent to outsiders. Ensure the book production company you've chosen is not a vanity publisher by:

- Asking about the publisher's reputation at writer's circles and publishing conventions. Leaf through writer's handbooks. Do a detailed internet search.
- Having the project costed by other publishers: it should be broadly comparable.
- Buying one of their publications.
- Being wary of these tell-tale signs:
  - glib phrases (your exceptional talent, stunning collection).
  - offers to subscribe to overpriced anthologies and conventions.
  - unwanted information on ISBN numbers, bar codes, Copyright Office, British Museum, Library of Congress and much else.
  - review cuttings of other books published.
  - special 'subsidy' or 'co-partnership' or 'joint-venture' publishing services.
  - complicated royalty schemes.
  - warnings to be realistic in recognition and profit.
  - no mention of who owns the ISBN or digital rights (probably them, i.e. you can't move later to someone else).

These sites will tell you more:

**Vanity Publishing.** Poetry Kit article.

**Vanity Press.** Wikipedia's helpful entry.

**Co-Publishing.** Difference between co-publishing and vanity publishing.

**Poet Beware.** A realistic view.

**Publishers Association.** General advice and listing of writer's books.

**Literary Scams.** AuthorsLawyer.Com's article and listing.

**National Writers Union.** Check the 'writer alert' section.

**Prededitors.** Some general rules for spotting a scam publisher.

**Publishing Basics.** List of articles on vanity publishing.

## 4.7. COPYRIGHT AND LIBEL

Contracts being what they are these days, copyright and libel affect the author as much as the self-publisher.

### 4.7.1. Copyright

Copyright seems to cause more confusion than anything else in publishing, though the main points are not disputed:

- copyright exists to protect intellectual property.
- copyright is what you sell to publishers (and why you must check the contract: the material is theirs to use or not thereafter).
- ideas cannot be copyright-protected, but their expression can (and is).
- copyright is automatically yours the moment you create the work.
- though not legally necessary, it may be wise to register copyright.
- copyright applies even if the original is greatly modified.
- boosting publicity and sales is no defence against copyright theft.
- compensation is based on the court's view of the financial damage inflicted plus fees arising.

Clearly it's common sense to avoid trouble in the first place by getting written authorization to use copyright material from the person entitled to give it. Also to have some documentation for your own work: application forms from **US Copyright Office**: fee is \$30 per item.

Copyright law varies from country to country, and benefits **lawyers and middlemen** far more than authors. Institutions purchasing material with public funds can use their copyrights (denying publication or charging excessive fees) to prevent that material being used for its intended public good. The exclusion cause 'fair usage' is often unclear in practice, giving victory in disputed cases to the company with the deeper pockets. All the same, unless you're a legal crusader, you'll stay within its narrower provisions.

### Fair Usage

So that material can be used in reviews and for educational purposes, the laws of copyright are ameliorated in what is called 'fair usage', which very broadly applies in the following circumstances. Copyright is relaxed when original material:

- is used for reviews or non-commercial purposes.
- does not damage the interests of the copyright holder.
- is properly attributed.
- is a small part of the original source—generally no more than a paragraph in a book, or 40%/10 lines of a poem.

Copyright and fair usage are shadowy areas, immensely complicated in detail, as you'll quickly see from these sites:

**A History of Copyright and Why it Matters.** NWU article: includes registration advice.

**Crash Course in Copyright.** University of Texas online course.

**Copyright and Fair Use.** Stanford University links: extensive

**Copyright Internet Resources.** Library of Congress listings.

**Ivan Hoffman.** Legal matters for small publishers.

**US Copyright Office.** Forms and information: fee is \$30 per item.

**eTime Stamp.** Service authenticating electronic documents. \$10 for 25 stamps.

### 4.7.2. Libel

Far more threatening to the writer is libel, particularly in England, in whose courts so many cases end up. Libel is a written form of defamation defined as a 'false or unjustified injury to someone's good reputation.' That injury

may be unintentional, and libel is a lurking danger to everyone who puts pen to paper. No newspaper office is without a resident expert or their horror stories. All statements have to be double-checked, not only that the person quoted did in fact say that, but what they said was true and can be readily so demonstrated. Any doubt, and the article remains in the publisher's drawer. Disclaimers are not enough, and you are most unwise to portray a villain who could in any way, however unwittingly, be linked to an innocent living person. Your fictitious Hector Sepulveda of Deepshade Mansions is apt to spring to life with a writ if you haven't exhaustively ruled out the possibility.

Avoid giving the publisher a further reason to turn down your manuscript by consulting these sites. Many more articles can be found on the internet, and do not make happy reading.

[Libel Law in the United States](#). Basics: USInfo site article.

[How to avoid libel and defamation](#). Sensible advice.

[Burleson Consulting](#). Libel and the internet.

[On-line distribution extends the reach of British libel law](#). Bookseller article.

[Freedom of the press](#). Usual helpful Wikipedia article.

[Publishing Law Newsletter](#). Various articles.

[On-line Publishing Risks Create Need for Libel Insurance](#). Case for libel insurance.

[Protection Racket](#). What libel insurance can cost and not cover.

## 4.8. GHOST WRITERS

If you have a best-selling story, but lack the time, skills or interest to write it properly, then hiring a ghost writer may be the answer. Ghost writers advertise widely on the internet and in writers' magazines, and many are employed by or affiliated with specific ghost-writing agencies, some of which specialize.

Fees depend on what's entailed, and may be surprisingly low, given the time and skills required. Most good writing is some form of rewriting, and ghost writers can help you immediately shape the story into a commercial and compelling narrative, saving time and frustration later. Ghost writing, in fact, ranges from putting a final polish on a manuscript, through extensive rewriting, to complete authorship situations where the ostensible author simply recounts anecdotes or suggests areas to be covered. Research is often necessary, and this may take months and involve

extensive travel, sometimes to foreign countries where the story is set, or participants are now living.

Ghost writers are paid a flat fee, take a share of the royalties, or receive some combination of the two. Fees are typically around \$30 a page for rewriting an existing manuscript and \$50 per page for fresh efforts. Fees for a professional to write a full-length book are typically \$10,000 to \$25,000, but those with a good track record of producing best-selling books for high-profile celebrities can charge hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Ghost writing is more prevalent than generally realized. Figures in the public eye, or in senior management positions in public services or large corporations, are often obliged to employ 'correspondence officers' or secretaries, who may even add their manager's signature when answering run-of-the-mill enquiries. Politicians employ speech-writers continually, sometimes teams of them, with drafts being scrutinized by various levels of management and public relations.

Several well-known names among fiction and crime writing are in fact one or more ghost writers, and this is particularly the case where the supposed author is now infirm, too busy to cope, or in fact deceased.

Ghost writing is prevalent in the music industry, in blogs and websites, and in student fraud, where standard essays are given an individual appearance for a fee. White papers by large companies, though ostensibly written by resident experts, often have to be shaped or largely written by ghost writers, and something similar happens in computer and technical books, where authors are not renown for exemplary exposition.

### Ghost Writers: Background

You'll only get firm figures for time and costs when the proposal has been carefully mapped out, but these sources will tell you something of the business, and what to expect:

**Ghost Writers.** Wikipedia article detailing the business and its variations.

**I'm a Celebrity, Get Me a Ghost Writer.** BBC news article.

**Grumpy Old Bookman.** Writer's blog, giving the low-down on the practice.

**Ghost Writers.** Who writes for whom.

**How Our Laws Are Made.** Ghost writing in political legislation.

**Medical Editors Issue Guidance on Ghost Writing.** BMJ article.



## Ghost Writers: Resources

Fees and experience vary enormously, but here are a few of the better-known agencies:

**The Penn Group:** Well-known agency offering several services, with guides to fees on site.

**Ghost Writers Central.** Books, scripts, contracts. Fees on site.

**Write For You.** Individual service through network, plus typical contract.

**Rent A Ghostwriter.** Rather promotional site.

**Elance.** Writing and translation projects posted on site.

**Just Articles:** Species of ghost-writing: articles for webmasters to post on their site.

**Angela Booth.** Experienced Australian copy- and ghost-writer.

**The Phantom Writers.** Services and helpful series of article.

**Andrew Crofts.** Explains the business and offers services.

**Idea Marketers.** Ghost writer listings.

## 5. SELF-PUBLISHING

### 5.1. PLANNING

Self-publishing gives you what the traditional publisher provides—with full control over the publishing steps, and the bill to follow.

If you can't find a publisher for your work, and don't want to use a PoD company, then you'll have to bring out the book yourself.

The first thing to check is the market. How many people are likely to be interested in your book, and how could you convince them to buy?

So: who actually wants to buy a new collection of poems, or yet another first novel? You can make some rough guesses by:

1. Talking to booksellers or publishers about sales figures.
2. Placing an advert on [eBay](#) or in a specialist magazine. Or by using [pay-by-click](#) promotion on a website specially created to sell your work. You don't have to deliver a yet-to-be-written book, but you can note the interest. No inquires, no interest.
3. Reading the [trade news](#).
4. Looking at the [sales rank](#) of similar books on Amazon.
5. Researching (for ebooks) what's already available on [eBookMall](#), [CyberRead](#) and [Book Locker](#).
6. Looking at hot topics of interest in [Google Groups](#).
7. Through Internet searches:
  - with free tools like the [Google Keyword Tool](#), which estimates search volume, trends, and advertising competition.
  - or the [Google Traffic Estimator Tool](#), which roughly estimates the price required to rank #1 on AdWords 85% of the time and the traffic you could expect to get from Google AdWords for a given bid.

- use commercial keyword tools: search the internet with 'keyword software / services'. A wide range exists, though many are for large online companies, with prices to match.

Having now guess-estimated likely sales, and an acceptable price for the book, you now have a notional sum to accommodate all the other items that have to be paid for, i.e:

- Proof-reading and editing.
- Design of book cover.
- Typesetting
- Printing costs.
- Delivery and warehousing charges.
- Book distribution charges.
- Costs of press releases, trade adverts, publishing launches, travel to bookshops and talk centres.
- Discounts applying when selling through Amazon or other online stores.
- Book returns (often up to 50%).

Next comes your time. You'll probably have a day job: how many of your evenings and weekends can you reasonably devote to the project, and when would it be sensible to hand over to professionals with skills you can't match or acquire?

Publishing is no different from any other business, and projects fail for the same reasons: under-funding, over-optimistic hopes, insufficiently researched markets, poor implementation and/or financial control. But many companies that are now household names began with a plan that was presented not dozens but hundreds of times to sceptical businessmen and funding institutions. Persistence does pay off, and what was difficult at first becomes second nature.

## 5.2. PREPRESS SERVICES

Self-publishing is a well-recognized way of avoiding the limitations of conventional publishing. You take all the steps yourself to publish a book, subcontracting to someone else where you lack the necessary time or skills. Costs are the critical factor, which is why you must look at the economics carefully. Many are specialist areas, but hundreds of reputable companies exist to handle any or all of the following:

- key in text and/or scan material.
- proof the text.
- lay out the text attractively on the page.
- ensure the book structure conforms to industry standards.
- design a cover.
- add ISBN and price code.
- obtain reviews so blurbs can be added.
- print the book.
- arrange warehousing and delivery.
- organize publicity.
- attend to orders, either from bookstores or individual customers.

You can find these companies on the internet by searching with these terms:

- book production company/services
- book/print company/services
- prepress company/services

Internet searches will also turn up publish-on-demand companies, so that you'll have to check what's being offered.

## 5.3. BOOK FORMATS

### 5.3.1. Introduction

You'll need to be familiar with book formats, which means more than book sizes.

The trade paperback, for example, the 6" by 9" paperback that many PoD companies offer, is not simply a larger version of the 4.2 x 6.9 inches mass-market paperback, but a different animal altogether. If you look carefully you'll notice the paper is better quality, the font-size is larger and the lines (leading) are more widely separated. The trade paperback is designed to last: think textbooks, non-fiction, reference works (but not dictionaries). As its name suggests, the mass-market paperback is for more ephemeral items: novels, today's best-selling biography or exposé of political corruption. The paper is thinner and the cover design is basic, often spot-colour printed. In favour of such productions, it must be said that these paperbacks are more user-friendly: they can be slipped into a pocket or handbag for reading on the commuter train.

Categories are not watertight. In our own library, we found Robert Bowie's collection of Bunin translations (*Night of Denial: Stories and Novellas*, Northwestern University Press) has the mass-market paperback format, but the cover also features a reproduction of Mikail Nesterov's *Taking the Veil*, the paper was slightly better quality, and the leading more generous at 14.4 point. Conversely, John Mace's *Persian Grammar for Reference and Revision*, though appearing under the RoutledgeCurzon imprint as a trade paperback, with a handsome cover, had plainly been typeset by the author himself, and not too well. At £21 retail, Routledge should have reset it, but probably for cost reasons have not done so.

Each book is slightly different, depending on publisher, market and editorial whims. But the important need, if you're publishing yourself, is to become familiar with what's out there so your book looks right. Examine your own library carefully. Spend time in public libraries and bookshops. Note the cover, stitching, layout, typeface, margins and leading. Also the prices. Mass-market paperbacks are much cheaper than trade paperbacks, which is why many PoD companies don't offer the smaller format: the PoD

printing process can't turn out books at the dollar apiece necessary to price effectively.

All this takes time, but you will have a far better chance of producing a saleable item if you pitch your product within the usual trade boundaries of format, quality and price. Of course, your editor and typesetter should know this anyway, but you may be called upon to approve their suggestions, or may indeed be doing the work yourself. Publishing may be a mad world, but it's also fascinating to professionals, being their livelihood.

**Wikipedia** has a good introductory article, and you can find much more through the search engines. Better than articles is the experience of handling and examining books, which should be garnered before you consult PoD and publisher's sites to see what services are available.

### 5.3.2. Page Layout

Even sophisticated DTP software commonly asks you to select the page size, set the margins and then choose the number of text columns. In fact, you'd often do better by thinking things out first, starting with the line length, with what printers call the measure.

Several guidelines operate:

- the optimal measure is between 1.5 and 2.0 times the length of lowercase alphabet.
- taking each word as 5.5 characters, the optimal measure is 9 or 10 words.
- the acceptable measure is from 27 to 70 characters, with 40 being optimal.
- the optimal measure in picas is between 2.0 and 2.5 times the type size in points. There are approximately 6 picas to the inch, so optimal lengths of 12 point text will range from 4 to 5 inches. The absolute outer limit is 3 times the type size in points, and anything under 1.5 times the type size makes typesetting difficult.

Next comes leading, or line spacing. In most instances, you'll not want anything less than the type size for the space between lines, i.e. for 10

point type size you'll need at least 10 point spacing, or 10/10 as it's usually expressed. In practice, something more generous is advisable, say 10/12 or 10/13.

Finally, with measure and leading roughed out, you can turn to calculating the page margins. It works like this. A paperback book commonly has 40 lines to the page. If leading is 12 point, then the text block will be 40 x 12 points in height, i.e. 480 points. As there are 72 points to the inch, that text block will occupy 480/72 or 6.67 inches. You can of course set margins in inches, or in cm, but it's often easier to stick to points throughout. A (US) standard page of 6 by 9 inches will be 432 by 648 points. Subtracting 480 from 648 gives 168 points. If top and bottom margins are equal in height, then each will be 168/2 or 84 points. Pages set this way will look professional, with text and page bottoms aligning. The same approach will give you the left and right margin dimensions.

Headings will throw things off, but the trick here is to use multiples of the leading. Supposing you don't set the chapter heading a third down the page, but at the top as in any other page, then setting the leading as 24 point or 36 point for the heading text will cause facing pages to align and text to end neatly at the page bottom. If the heading is midpage, between blocks of text, then you can set the leading as 12 point above and 12 below. Simple as that.

In fact, it's not quite that simple, as you'll probably not want to set margins equal, and the typeface also plays an important part, discussed shortly. Meanwhile, here are a few sites to visit:

[Page Design 101](#). The basics, but an excellent starting point.

[Typesetting in Microsoft Word](#) by Jack Lyon.

[Page Layout Worksheet](#) by Dan Emery.

[Typographic Ruler](#). Print out on transparent paper.

## 5.4. TYPESETTING

### 5.4.1. Fonts

First some definitions. Font is a physical entity, the program in your computer or the description of a typeface. Typeface is a collection of characters designed to work together as a coordinated outfit. In looking at

a page you can say 'What typeface is that?' or 'What font was used to set that?', but you can't say 'What font is that?' Or you shouldn't: amateurs use the two interchangeably, but typographers get cross at the mix-up.

Typesetting is an art that calls on aesthetic judgement and long experience. Well-designed pages 'look right': they read easily and the typeface doesn't call attention to itself. There are no cast-iron rules, therefore, but there is good practice, and beginners are advised to study examples and conform to trade expectations. Good practice usually stipulates something like the following:

1. Use serif typefaces for text: Palatino, Garamond, Baskerville, Century Schoolbook, Georgia, Times New Roman and similar.
2. Use a non-serif or display typeface for headings: Arial, Verdana, and a host of others.
3. Don't use more than two typefaces for a page.
4. Typeface is measured in points, with 72 points to the inch. Size varies with typeface, but 10 point is the usual downward limit, with 11 to 13 preferred for readability. Larger typefaces are needed for longer lines of text.
5. Ensure you have the fonts in the italic or bold styles if you use them on your page. Your VDU will obligingly display them, but it does so by fabricating their appearance: they will not print out when your manuscript goes to press. Check.
6. Be wary of delicate typefaces when creating PoD or pdf documents: they tend to 'burn out'. Check before going too far.
7. Fonts today come in three types: Type 1 fonts are postscript fonts, popularised by Adobe. TrueType fonts are close to Type 1 fonts in look and quality, but were initially created by Apple, and are not compatible with Type 1, i.e. not interchangeable. OpenType fonts are a hybrid, able to accommodate both TrueType and Type 1 data. Type 1 fonts naturally work best with Adobe software, and the other two are found in many Apple and Microsoft products. You can use Type 1 fonts in MS Word, but not all Word to pdf document conversion programs will embed them—meaning trouble at the printers.



8. You don't buy fonts, but a licence to use them under certain terms and conditions. That doesn't always include embedding them in files sent to the printers, and some DTP software will in fact prevent the embedding of such fonts. Stick to everyone's favourites.

If you're creating e-books, you may want to use fonts that read easily onscreen, i.e. Georgia and Verdana: not too beautiful but clear, and surviving pdf 'burn out'. When all these requirements are borne in mind, you may find the bewildering choice in your font folder boils down to a half-dozen.

Beyond these brief notes lies a minefield of conflicting opinions and typesetting preferences. Keep it simple is the best advice—for speed in typesetting and corrections, safety at the printers and general appearance. Here are a few well-recommended books and sites:

[The Complete Manual of Typography](#). James Felici. 2002. 384 pp. \$29. Thorough and beautifully set out, but more for general reading than quick reference.

[Typography Workbook: A Real-World Guide to Using Type in Graphic Design](#) Timothy Samara. 240pp. 2004. \$38.

[Typesetting](#). Extensive Wikipedia set of articles.

[Typography 101](#). Covers basics, with brief listing.

[Mark Boulton](#). Professional's site with much good sense.

[Typography](#). A detailed site.

[Editorial Freelancers Association](#). Resources for editors and publishers.

[Design and Publishing](#). On-line magazine with articles and critiques.

[All Graphic Design](#). Article and examples.

[The Elements of Typographic Style](#). A long-established favourite. \$19.77.

[Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students](#). Ellen Lupton. 176pp. 2004.

[Will Harris](#). Sells fonts and \$45 book on using fonts effectively.

[Selecting and Combining Typefaces](#). Brief, free e-book.

[Typography for Writers](#). Short pdf article.

[Paul Baker Typography, Inc.](#) Some matters illustrated.

[Free e-texts on typography](#). Short listings but useful.

[All Graphic Design](#). Article and examples.

[dot-font: The Last Word on Book Design](#). CreativePro article.

[Desktop Publishing StyleGuide](#) Basics of DTP design. \$37.20

### 5.4.2. Laying Out Text

Typesetting, or the laying out of text in an attractive fashion across the page, is an important aspect of self-publishing, and one on which whole libraries have been written. Fonts in particular are a consuming passion to graphic designers, being an expensive addition to their software.

Typesetting may be part of the prepress services offered by your printer, when they may well be attractively priced. Alternatively, you may want to contract out this aspect to specialists. The golden rule is to shop around and ask for samples of work done, though this presupposes that you have the experience to judge what's acceptable to the book trade. A few suggestions therefore, on what to check, or adopt if you're doing your own typesetting:

- **Font choice.** Sans serif faces are used for display headers and book covers, and serif typefaces are used for body text. You can modify to express your book's personality, but readability remains the key, and the fonts that look fantastic for a poem would be intolerable in a novel. Baskerville, Bembo, Garamond, Janson, Palatino, and Times Roman are the typefaces most widely used for body text.
- **Size.** Don't make the typeface sizes too small, under 8 pt for sans serifs like Helvetica, Arial, Verdana and Tahoma, or 10 pt for serifs like Berkeley, Palatino and, Garamond. Typefaces change their characteristics with size, and this is particularly the case on covers, which need to be readable at a distance.
- **Variety.** Two typefaces on a page is enough, and often the one typeface in its various incarnations (italic, bold, bold italic) will do all that's required.
- **Originality.** Great book designers can break the rules, but they do so after long experience. If in doubt, aim to be conservative, but with that extra attention to detail that shows professionalism.
- **Letter and line spacing.** Though desktop publishing programs allow the line spacing (leading), the letter spacing (kerning) and the word spacing to be adjusted, these controls do need care. Space saving is important in journals of fixed length, but too much compression looks cheap.

- Numbering conventions. Blank pages are left completely blank. Page numbers are not displayed on the title, half title or promotion pages. Lower case Roman numerals are used throughout the front matter pages. Arabic numerals are used for the main body text, which begins on the right-hand page. Chapter headings also begin on the right-hand page, and are not commonly numbered. Poems start on a new page, and page numbers generally appear in the bottom margin.
- Margins have to allow for binding and trimming, and so should be ample, but not so over-generous that the body text looks impoverished.
- Page sizes. The mass-market paperback is something around 4.18 x 6.88 inches. The standard paperback is 5" x 8" or 6" x 9". Technical manuals are generally larger: 7.5" x 9.25". See what sizes your preferred printer will accept before going too far.

As always, the best policy is to learn from others. Look at the better productions of large publishing houses to see how they have:

- kept within the conventions for the particular book genre.
- created a proper personality with the typesetting.
- coped with individual layout difficulties.
- achieved a proper balance of text and white space.

### 5.4.3. Page Order

Even the best page layout software (Quark Xpress or InDesign) is not going to make your publication acceptable to the trade unless your book adopts the usual page arrangement. In the front, before the main text, comes:

Half-title (optional)

. . blank. .

Title

title

author

publisher

copyright

previous publications (optional)

Library of Congress catalogue number (or equivalent)

ISBN

Copyright notice

name and address of publishing company

Acknowledgements

permissions to quote

previous appearances of material

personal acknowledgements (if no Preface exists)

. . blank. .

Dedication (optional)

to person or persons, often in italics

. . blank. .

Epigraph (optional)

quotation that sets tone

. . blank. .

Table Of Contents

subject, chapter or poem title

. . blank. .

Foreword

. . blank. .

Preface

personal acknowledgements: must begin on the right-hand page

. . blank. .

Not all these introductory pages are necessary, many being employed to simply mop up what would be otherwise left blank by the printing process, which operates in multiples of four (and occasionally eight: octavo).

At the back of the book, following the main text, will come:

Appendices (optional)

Glossary (optional)

Index

Advertisements (optional)

Binding

The trade jargon is:

Casebound

Hardback books with covers of cloth-covered card and dust-wrapper. They're expensive, but were standard before the paperback revolution.

### Trade Paperback

Larger format, pages are stitched and paper is of better quality.

### Perfect Bound

Smaller format, with the spine squared off and fixed with printer's glue. Cover may be heavy-duty cover stock or (generally) plastic laminated stock. Not made to last.

### Saddle-Stitched

Pages are secured by staples along the spine: usual for booklets of 64 pages or less. Covers are cover stock (but may have dust-wrappers in de luxe editions).

### Stock

Commercial printing paper comes in two categories, coated and uncoated, and is subdivided into weights. Text stock is the lighter weight paper used for the inside pages: 50# and 60# white offset text are the more usual. Cover stock is the heavier and more durable paper used for covers: 80# or 100# gloss cover are often preferred, especially for colour printing. Heavier paper costs more, but suggests quality.

### Paper Sizes

US and European usages differ. See [here](#) for a handy table of book sizes.

### Resources

[Bookbinding](#). Wikipedia article.

[Bookbinding for Beginners](#). Craft of bookbinding.

[Gigabooks](#). Bookbinding supplies and information.

[Common Paper Stocks](#). NPC, Inc: a commercial supplier.

[Paper Stock Considerations](#). Introduction to what's involved.

[A Paper Tutorial from PrintPlace.com](#). More detailed treatment.

## 5.4.4. Desktop Publishing

Proper DTP software may be a wise purchase because:

- results will be more professional-looking, which translates into acceptance by bookshops and decent sales.
- digital output (i.e. files) can be sent directly to commercial printers.

If you don't have the money for (or time to learn) professional software, then:

1. Design the pages of your book with a word-processing package, and run off camera-ready copy from your laser printer. You'll have limited control over complicated layouts, and the text may not look so pleasing, but that won't matter for the in-house publication or family history booklet.
2. Get a friend, perhaps a graphics design student, to use her software (PageMaker, Quark Xpress or InDesign) to lay out the pages and save them on CD. Half the professionally-trained graphic designers seem to work outside their calling, and your friend may do a first-rate job for very little.
3. Use Microsoft Word to set the pages.
4. Set the pages with an amateur DTP package.
5. Follow the practice of most small publishers and send the text out to a prepress company.

#### 5.4.5. Using Word Processors

Packages like Microsoft Word and Corel WordPerfect include formatting facilities (fonts, line spacing, paragraphing), spell- and grammar-checkers but the page layout is fairly basic. Nonetheless, simple documents can be typeset to a near-professional standard with Word, but you must use the full facilities of the program—far more than the average user is familiar with.

Certainly there are many situations where Word will fail dismally, e.g. graphics-heavy documents like glossy magazines and flyers. There is no word spacing as such (only kerning), and you cannot flow text into prepositioned text boxes. Most important of all, InDesign will typeset to better colour (evenness of spacing) than Word: a small difference the average reader won't notice but printers and booksellers may. You can see what's entailed by looking at the [Aeonix page](#), but note the Word example

is not a fair one: the 'rivers' and text looseness can be corrected with the typesetting tips given below.

On the plus side, Word is much better at producing footnotes and indexes than Xpress or InDesign, though not up to the standard of Framemaker and Corel Ventura, which you should consider for long technical manuals and the like.

There are many versions of Word. Window programs are generally better than Mac ones. Later versions offer more features but are not so readily customized. Jack Lyons prefers Word 95, and then Word 2000. Menus differ slightly between the versions, and the menu steps below apply to Word 2000, which we have used for this book.

### Document Preparation

Start by setting up the document logically. Jack Lyon's **articles** will guide you, but briefly:

1. Compile chapters into a single document.
2. Set the page size: File>Page Setup>Paper Size.
3. Set up columns and margins: File>Page Setup>Margins.
4. Set headers and footers: Layout>Header.
5. Save the template: File>Save As>Document Template.
6. Insert page breaks at chapter ends, turning off 'Link to previous' for both headers and footers: Insert>Break.
7. Set 'Section start' to 'New page: Layout>Section Layout.
8. Insert page numbers: Insert>Page Numbers.
9. Use the 'Show next' to go to the next header: Layout>Header>Show Next.
10. Turn off automatic repagination: Insert>Page Numbers>Format.
11. Check, if you delete a page break, that headers and footers have not been messed up.

12. Check the text spreads look good: View>Print Layout.
13. Tick 'Do full justification like WordPerfect 6x for Windows' in the Preferences menu: Tools>Options>Compatibility.
14. Choose the typeface and set the size from the dropdown list, adding a .5 manually if desired: Format>Font.
15. Set the leading or line spacing: Format>Paragraph>Indents and Spacing: set Line spacing to Exactly, and enter value.
16. Set Page and Line Breaks: Format>Paragraph: Line spacing.
17. Create, test and modify Styles: Format>Style.

### Typesetting Hints

To create text of good 'colour'—i.e. evenly spaced, without gaps, rivers and compressed words:

1. Control the horizontal spacing by kerning: Format>Font>Character Spacing>Spacing. Expanded or condensed by 0.1 pt is usually enough.
2. Control the hyphenation. Select the relevant word and prevent its hyphenation: Format>Paragraph>Line and Page Breaks>Don't hyphenate.
3. Prevent 'widows' and 'orphans': Format>Paragraph>Page and Line Breaks.
4. Employ a Word Macro like **WordSetter** (\$29.95: 45 day's free trial).

### Templates

Word templates are useful, allowing you to use saved setups for other documents. You'll need to experiment for your own purposes, but we have found the following allows satisfactory viewing at 600 x 800 resolution on a 14 inch monitor, and better with more up-to-date equipment. The Word document is first prepared with these particulars, and then compiled into a pdf document with Abbyy tools.

### PDF Viewing



Page Size: Custom: 7.8 x 11.8 cm ( or 295 x 446 px for cover image creation)

Margins: top 0.8, bottom 0.9, left 0.9 right 0.7, header 0.0, footer 0.5

Body text: Arial 8 pt/12.5, paragraph indent 0.4 cm, space after para 6 pt

## PDF Printing

Page Size: A5: 14.8 x 210 cm ( or 420 x 595 px for cover image creation)

Margins: top 1.7, bottom 1.9, inside 2.0 outside 1.5, header 0.8, footer 1.3

Body text: Bookman Old Style 8.5 pt/12 pt, paragraph indent 0.5 cm, space after para 0 pt

The Handbook you are reading had these particulars:

Page Size: A4: 210 x 297 cm

Margins: top 2.0, bottom 1.8, inside 2.0 outside 2.0, header 1.0, footer 1.0

Body text: Verdana 13 pt/19 pt, space before para 0 pt space after para 12 pt

## Word Resources

**Page Layout Programs:** Compares Word, Pagemaker and InDesign.

**The Math Forum.** Programs to typeset formulae in Word.

**Editorium.** Competitively priced Word macros (add-ons) and resources.

**Topica.** Index of Jack Lyon's articles: indispensable.

**Template Basics in Microsoft Word.** One of many excellent sections on this site.

**Editing.** Eserver TC Library of useful articles.

**WordMVPSite.** Help site for Word: packed with good advice.

**Word MVP.** Microsoft's help site.

**Vanessa Grant's Microsoft Word Templates.** Handy introduction to Word template.

**Perfect Pages** by Aaron Shepard (Shepard Publications, Washington): \$16. Hardly an attractive product, but this 138 pp book will tell you practically all you need to know.

**Microsoft Word Book Templates.** Simple layouts free: Wizard 2.0 is \$35.

**Word Templates.** Free but more for brochures and flyers.

**InZone.** Professional templates: wide choice at \$12/template or \$80/year.

## 5.4.6. Types of DTP Software

The more professional programs make it easier to integrate text and images, manipulate the page elements, create artistic layouts and multipage publications such as newsletters and books. They also offer colour separations, imposition, and fine typographic controls. Not all are difficult to learn. Some suggestions:

Home Publishing: *The Print Shop*, *Sierra Print Artist*

Small Business Publishing: *Microsoft Office Publisher, Serif PagePlus*

Professional Page Layout: *Adobe InDesign, QuarkXPress, Adobe PageMaker*

Long Documents: *Adobe FrameMaker, Corel Ventura, InDesign CS2 V.3*

Business Publishing: *Adobe FrameMaker, Corel Ventura, Quark XPress*

Database Publishing: *Adobe FrameMaker, Corel Ventura, QuarkXPress*

## Resources

**Using PDF for Print Production.** Some background on pdf.

**Page Layout Programs.** Look carefully at the typesetting examples.

**The Self-Publishing Manual.** A thorough and popular guide: \$13.50

**Complete Guide to Self Publishing: Everything You Need to Know to Write, Publish, Promote, and Sell Your Own Book.** Includes much common sense. \$13.60

**Desktop Publishing StyleGuide.** Basics of design, without which the best software is useless. \$37.20

**How to Start a Home-Based Desktop Publishing Business.** In case you want to publish other people's work. \$12.20

## 5.4.7. Graphics Software

Fiction is mostly text, but there's no reason why it shouldn't be made more appealing with illustrations or well-chosen photos.

Illustration programs work with vector graphics formats, which allow more flexibility when creating drawings that have to be resized or go through multiple edits. Well-known programs include Adobe Illustrator, CorelDRAW, and Macromedia Freehand.

Image editing programs, also called paint programs or photo editors, work with bitmap images, which are needed for photos, scans, or other 'realistic' images. They are also best for web graphics. Well-known programs include Adobe Photoshop, Corel Photo-Paint and Jasc Paint Shop Pro.

## 5.4.8. Adobe Acrobat

Adobe Acrobat is not a page layout program but a way of compiling pages created by other programs, anything from simple HTML to pages set to the most discerning needs with InDesign. PDF files are rather large, but illustration and layout is attractive, and the pdf pages can be placed inside

webpages for internet viewing. The program is increasingly used for company brochures and white papers, and will also make **attractive e-books**.

### 5.4.9. Amateur Publishing Software

Is amateur publishing software worth considering? Yes and no. Proper dtp programs cost money, and take time and effort to master. If you're short of all three, you may want to look at the alternatives, especially for:

- simple layouts.
- inhouse work.
- trial publications.

A brief comparison of the best amateur publishing software:

	Publisher Pro	Page Plus	Print Shop Pro	MS Publisher	Print Shop	Print Shop Essentials
general templates	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
catalogue templates	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
cover templates	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
colour correction	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
frames	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
cmyk editing	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
pantone matching	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
fonts supplied	500	400	300	100	300	300
picture insertion in text	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
text to curve fitting	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
text wrap	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
transparency/gradient	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
spell check	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
colour separation	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
print alignment	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
PDF/Postscript output	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
overall grading*	8	7	6	6	6	6
ease of use*	8	8	6	8	6	6
project organization*	8	7	7	8	6	6
graphics tools*	8	8	7	6	7	7

text tools*	8	7	6	6	6	6
printing*	8	7	6	6	6	6
support*	8	7	7	6	6	6
retail price (US\$)	90	90	80	169	40	20

### Sites for more information:

**DTP Software Review:** More detailed comparison of top ten programs: source of \* grading in table above, but check Amazon reviews.

**Best Desktop Publishing Software in 2021.** Includes top-end programs.

**About:** Top seven myths and misconceptions about desktop publishing.

**DesktopPublishing.Com:** Good range of articles and resources.

**Desktop Publishing Forum:** Advice from working publishers.

**Yahoo:** Reasonably selective: place to find specialist programs or services.

Check with the publisher if you're taking the PoD route, as many will not allow layout with amateur publishing software (though pdf and postscript output should be safe).

## 5.4.10. Professional DTP Software

Professional desktop publishing programs are expensive, but worth considering if you're self-publishing more than the one book.

A broad and subjective ranking of desktop publishing programs, based on our experience and internet reading. Ranking is from 1 (missing) to 10 (superb).

feature	InDesign CS	Quark Xpress 6	PageMaker 7	Framemaker 7	Corel Ventura 10	MS Word
market	commercial design studios	commercial design studios	business users	long technical manuals	long technical manuals	home and business users
text flow	7	8	6	7	7	4
typographic control	9	6	4	7	6	5
master page control	8	6	5	8	8	5
section saving	7	7	6	7	7	1
drag and drop	8	3	7	2	7	5
program to program	7	5	7	7	5	3

conversion						
macros	8	7	7	3	7	8
layout tools	8	8	6	8	8	5
colour control	8	5	6	3	3	2
image manipulation	9	5	7	6	6	2
PDF handling	9	8	8	7	7	2
preflighting	7	9	5	6	6	1
integration with Adobe programs	9	3	4	8	5	2

The groupings are general, but many graphic design studios are moving to Adobe's InDesign. Plug-ins exist for both InDesign and Xpress (indexing, tables, etc.), and for all shortcomings there are work-arounds. Backward convertibility remains an important issue (you can't read InDesign CS2 files with InDesign 2), but InDesign is a program engineered from scratch, and seems easier to learn. Corel Ventura and Framemaker address a loyal but specialist market (long, highly structured technical manuals in XML).

Microsoft Word is not a page layout program but a word processing package with advanced features—one that, with basic image manipulation, macros and DBA programming, can be made to do most things in the commercial and scientific environments.

You will also need manuals to get the best from Desk Top Publishing programs, for which visit your local computer bookstore, second-hand booksellers like [Alibris](#) and [Abebook](#), and/or booksellers like [Amazon](#). Also consider sites and books on page layout. Some suggestions:

[Typesetting](#). Extensive Wikipedia set of articles.

[Typography 101](#). Covers basics, with brief listing.

[Typography for Writers](#). Short pdf article.

[Paul Baker Typography, Inc.](#) Some matters illustrated.

[Mark Boulton](#). Professional's site with much good sense.

[Free e-texts on typography](#). Short listings but useful.

[Typography](#). A detailed site.

[Editorial Freelancers Association](#). Resources for editors and publishers.

[Design and Publishing](#). On-line magazine with articles and critiques.

[All Graphic Design](#). Article and examples.

[dot-font: The Last Word on Book Design](#). CreativePro article.

[The Elements of Typographic Style](#) . A long-established favourite. \$19.77.

[Desktop Publishing StyleGuide](#) Basics of DTP design. \$37.20.

Check with the publisher if you're taking the PoD route, as many will not allow layout with DTP programs, insisting on text, pdf or MS Word submissions.

## 5.5. BOOK COVERS

Book cover illustration design—these are the matters that turn a MS into something people wish to purchase and (hopefully) treasure. No doubt a book shouldn't be judged by its cover, but it invariably is, and quickly. The average bookstore browser spends 8 seconds looking at the front and 15 seconds looking at the rear cover. Reviewers should know better, but they are also guided by first impressions. And of course booksellers know immediately what they're dealing with.

Book covers in full (CMYK) colour are expensive, beyond the means of many authors. Some alternatives:

- get a friendly graphic designer to produce a simple B+W illustration.
- use an out-of-copyright woodcut or illustration.
- employ the templates provided by short-run printers.
- just put the title, but in the right font, size and placing.
- nonfiction books need testimonials, quotations or review blurbs, which appear on the back cover, but are sometimes used as a lead-in on the front.
- employ .jpg or .gif graphics for ebooks: you'll find royalty-free photographs on [iStockphoto](#), [vivozoom](#), [freedigitalphotos](#), [dreamstime](#), and elsewhere.

For novels and poetry, advice on these aspects is much more difficult, and necessary. Most covers of poetry books are dull beyond belief, and those for novels do not always serve their best interests: triumphs of design but not creating a mood of pleasant anticipation.

The best advice is to look around bookstores, notebook in hand, for books similar to your forthcoming work. What attracts and why? What is the page layout and typeface? How is the cover designed? Does the blurb do its job? Armed with more decided requirements, you'll then be able to decide from the portfolios of book cover artists appearing on the internet.

Illustrators specialize, not only in this branch of graphic design, but by genre and price range. You'll get the picture if you organize your impressions, and enquire about fee ranges of designers that appeal to you. Some short-run printers have in-house designers or affiliates who can give your cover an individual personality without wrecking the budget.

Like everything else in the arts, design is a personal matter, but some book covers do attract the right customer, and many do not. If you've written your publisher's proposal correctly, then you'll know what market sector selling into, and what covers here typically look like. *The Practical Guide to Pet Health* is not a sober academic treatise, and a novel will indicate not only the subject matter but the genre and level of readership. A major publisher will have worked out those aspects by the first few paragraphs of your manuscript, and there may be little you can do when the cover design is presented. If you're publishing yourself, or working with a smaller and more flexible publishing house, then the following may help:

1. Identify the market you're selling into—i.e. not simply crime but what sub-genre: thrillers, exotic, highbrow, police detective, etc. Who are your favourite authors in this genre, and what do their covers look like? Match the contents but also be original.
2. Who are your targeted readers? You should have a good picture of their tastes, income, hobbies and preferred reading matter (newspapers and magazines as well as books). Books are bought as much for show as reading: would your book cover sit gracefully in their Texas ranch, suburban house, town apartment?
3. Get advice from fellow authors at book fairs, workshops and internet sites. What worked for them, and what didn't?
4. Look at covers in your market sector, dozens of them, and work out which you like and why. Consider amalgamating the best into a template for your own work. You'll need some design skills, but even a rough

mockup will assist a professional illustrator if you decide to hand over (the illustrator will also scan the market sector, or should do).

5. Ensure your design scales properly for reproduction in magazines, Amazon and other outlets.

6. Proof and double, double check the cover *before* going to print. Everything. Get feedback from folk in the publishing business.

7. Test your cover's pulling power. As marketers say: there are companies that continually test, and those which go out of business. Consider placing alternative designs on your website, and monitoring results carefully with split testing. Change the cover that appears on Amazon, and see how sales are affected. Experiment with friends: what do they think of the various possibilities?

## Book Cover Resources

A small selection of what's available online.

[Book Covers and Jackets](#). Admirable advice and examples.

[Do's and Don'ts of Books Cover Design](#). Essentials, sometimes overlooked.

[Design Book Covers](#). CafePress advice, including bleed and safety zones.

[Design Tips: Making Memorable Book Covers](#). Creative Pro article.

[Underneath the covers](#). Guardian article on Germano Facetti, with small selection of Penguin covers.

[Judging the Book by its Cover](#). Bookslut blog.

[Book Design Review](#). NYT's choices for 2006.

[Aulicino Design](#). Handy grouping by genres.

[Book Covers](#). Online gallery

[Archer Graphics](#). Look at the different market sectors represented.

[Will Harris](#). Mid-market range.

[Floricanto Press](#). Spanish and Latino titles: a different design tradition.

[Shearsman](#). At the top end: postmodernist poetry.

[Front Cover: Great Book Jacket and Cover Design](#) by Alan Powers. One of several books featured by Amazon.

[Book Cover Express](#). Mass market paperback covers: email for price list.

[Book Cover Pro](#). Software to design your e-book cover: basic but includes ISBN bar code creator: \$167.

[Open Directory](#). Some 60 book-cover graphic artists listed.

[Reference.Com](#). Approx. 100 companies/designers listed, not all for book covers.

[Trafford's List](#). Illustrators and cover graphic design: graded.



**INK.** Graphic designers listed by US State.

**Freelance Illustrators.** Print Industry's listing.

**Creative and Design Services and Consultants.** Listing of The Independent Book Publishers Association.

**ZDNet Business Directory.** Listings by major US cities.

**eBook Services Directory.** Covers apply to e-books too.

**All Graphic Design.** Article and examples.

**Design Book Covers.** CafePress article, with templates and guides: many excellent articles on site.

**dot-font: The Last Word on Book Design.** CreativePro article

**Covers Sell Books.** Article arguing for good book covers.

**Art Listings.** Short listing on Preditors and Editors.

## 5.6. BAR CODES

### 5.6.1. ISBN Registration

ISBN registration gives your book a unique ID. The International Standard Book Number is a 10 figure code (13 from 1st January 2006) that specifies the country of origin, publisher and title version. ISBN registration is not a legal requirement, but you'd be well advised to consider the service because:

- a production otherwise looks amateurish
- bookstores prefer them
- Amazon will not list your book without an ISBN

The ISBN is commonly printed on the back cover of the book, and is also (with the book's price) recorded in the bar code.

ISBN registration unfortunately costs money. Fees are set by the country concerned, and can vary with the publication (being sometimes cheaper for a publishing company than a private individual).

#### USA

In America the ISBN is supplied by Bowker at \$245 per ten ISBNs. To buy only one (for \$125) you'll need to phone 877-310-7333; select option #4 in the voicemail and ask them to fax you an application form. If you take

the PoD route, the publishing company will get you an ISBN for around \$25, but may register it to themselves rather than you, a disadvantage when you come to market the book independently: check.

## UK

ISBNs in the UK are supplied by the [ISBN Agency](#), and cost £94.00 for a block of ten. ISBNs are not available singly.

## Canada

Your source here is [Library and Archives Canada](#): prices on application.

## Australia

Australian ISBNs are sold by [Thorpe-Bowker](#) at A\$73.00 for ten, or A\$34.50 for one.

For ISBNs in other countries see [ISBN. Org](#).

### 5.6.2. Bar Codes for CDs

For other forms of media the unique ID is called the Uniform Product Code (UPC).

For DVDs you are expected to become a member of the Uniform Code Council, where a minimum membership fee of \$750 buys a block of 100 codes. Annual renewal is \$150. Resellers have naturally appeared, and you can obtain a UPC from [Subdivisions](#) for \$35. You will also have to pay a one-off \$75 registration fee, but the price includes a TIFF of the actual bar code. [Simply Barcodes](#) will supply UPC and bar code for \$89, and if [Discmakers](#) duplicate your DVD they will include a free UPC bar code.

A UPC for a CD can also be obtained through Simply Barcodes or Subdivisions, but for music CDs you can use [CD Baby](#): \$35 for the sign-up and \$20 for UPC and bar code. [Indie Artist Alliance](#) is even cheaper at \$10. These UPCs are non-exclusive, and can be used on Amazon.

### 5.6.3. British Library and Library of Congress Listings

Cataloguing in Publication (CIP) alerts public libraries to your work, but needs to be sought well before publication: a CIP cannot be given to a book

that's already been published. [KSU Libraries](#) explain the coding, and a paid-for submission service is available from [Quality Books, Inc](#) . Many sites provide instructions for CIP application: [Publish and be Damned](#), [Writing World](#), [Deveraux](#) and [WFNS](#).

PoD companies usually include a CIP listing in the price.

On-line self-published books do not [qualify](#) for CIP unless already listed by another major library, but try the [Internet Public Library](#).

#### 5.6.4. Printed Bar codes

You'll see bar codes on the back of any professionally produced book. One of the bar codes refers to the price, and the other (larger) will be the ISBN. Both will be supplied by the PoD company if you take this route. Otherwise, if self-publishing, the ISBN bar code may be supplied by the ISBN agency, leaving you to produce a price code for the price. In fact you can find many companies on the internet that will supply bar codes for pricing and ISBN. Typically, you pay a small fee, type in the ISBN and price details, and then download the bar code as a graphics (usually TIFF) file. Or you can buy the fonts/software if you'll be using bar codes frequently.

Bar codes are best printed with the book cover, but if you forget to do so, or want to change the details later, you can order self-adhesive bar code labels.

[ABC](#). Bar code fonts from \$20.

[Bar Code Graphics](#). ISBN and UPC: \$10 per code.

[Barcode-US](#). Labels and software (from \$225).

[Film Masters](#). Wide variety of bar codes, plus information: p.o.a.

[IDAutomation](#). Bar code creation software.

[Fotel](#). Supply bar codes, labels and barcode-reading equipment.

[Morovia](#). Bar codes for most requirements.

[General Graphics](#). Wide range of bar codes and labels: p.o.a.

[Barcode Software Center](#). Truetype bar code fonts from \$35.

[BarcodeIsland](#). Extensive list of bar code providers.

What's the best price for your book? What you can get away with is the usual reply, but in fact you have to balance profit margin against numbers sold. \$12.99 is obviously the preferred price in the example below:

price	profit margin	no. sold	total profit
\$9.99	\$2.99	25,400	\$75,946
\$12.99	\$5.99	18,300	\$109,617
\$18.99	\$11.99	7,800	\$92,820

Anticipating sales is anything but easy, of course, which is why the traditional publisher doesn't let you fix the price—and many PoD publishers won't either.

If you're self-publishing, these suggestions may help:

1. Much depends on supply and demand. If yours is the only decent book on Indian native coinages, and there are thousands of collectors out there, you can charge much as you please. Scholars accept that books on specialist areas will be expensive, and companies pay tens of thousands of dollars for one-off marketing studies.
2. If demand is uncertain (fiction and poetry) then you'll price as similar books are priced. Slashing the price won't turn the book into a best-seller, and overpricing will kill it.
3. A handsome edition (illustrations, slightly better layout and paper) may work if the book is going to be treasured—a town history, short stories based on local characters. Nonetheless, don't overdo matters: many small PoD companies have gone out of business supposing customers will pay extra for individually crafted editions.

#### 5.6.5. Royalties

Consult the royalties calculations in the **PoD section** if you're taking this route. Also note that on-line bookstores give your productions useful exposure, but may make a nonsense of profits. If you've self-published the \$12.95 book, for example, you may have got costs down to \$4.00 per copy. But after Amazon have taken their 55% commission, your profit per book is \$12.95—\$4.00—\$7.12 or \$1.83. Even if you sell 5000 copies the resulting \$9,150 is not a huge sum for the months of writing, publishing and marketing the book. You'll need to consider other outlets.

## 5.7. PRINTING

### 5.7.1. Introduction

After your spats with editors, writers and other thin-skinned and sometimes difficult types, dealing with printing companies should be a doddle. Nonetheless, printing is a complex industry where professionals naturally prefer to work with other professionals, and if you're not conversant with the business you may want to consult the resources below. Or find a middleman: many book cover designers will act for you, ringing round for quotes, and seeing the book through the press: they're often happy to ensure their work comes out as intended. Or you may want to take a standard printing package: not too flexible perhaps, but generally safe. And if you're suddenly charged with seeing your company's annual report through the press, then it may be wise not to change printers but work through the individual who's familiar with your needs.

Printers want a steady, trouble-free flow of work through their machines, and an equally steady flow of cheques from satisfied companies. Business largely comes from repeat orders and word of mouth recommendations. Anything that interrupts the workflow harms their reputation, and costs management time to sort out. Often it's a loss-loss situation, leaving both parties aggrieved. If your book is printed without the title-page, and that title-page was in the original file sent them, the printing company will reprint at their expense. If it's the third appendix that's missing, and the file was sent under separate cover because you were working on some last minute corrections, then the blame is less clear. Even if an e-mail drew said the appendix would be sent in a few days, the information may have been missed, or not added to the job number properly. The printer will probably pay some compensation, but may not reprint unless you're HarperCollins, or yours is an account they particularly want. Make sure both you and the printer understand what's being requested. Explore anything unclear, including the prepress cost of corrections. Even if it's a repeat order it does no harm to spell out the requirements: the employee normally handling your account may be on sick leave, or have moved on.

The price quoted is based on the information you provide, and this information should specify:

- Deadline: when you need to have it.

- Quantity: how many pieces you need.
- Paper stock: how you want your job to look.
- Coating: whether you need varnish or lamination.
- Extra charges that may apply for corrections, new file submissions, additional proofing or short deadline issues.
- Delivery needs or warehousing.

The printer will tell you what file types are accepted, but particular settings are often needed for pdf submissions, which your printer will advise on, often through his website. Files are generally sent by email if under 2MB, and FTP if larger. Again enquire. Get several quotes.

Printers are craftsmen, a very different mentality to literary types, and, like all good craftsman, they take a professional pride in their work. For most of the time, commonly over 99% of jobs, work comes out at an acceptable standard, often superbly so. Common areas of trouble are colour reproduction and laminated covers. You'll get a proof, and the printer will do his best to match that proof, but the match is generally not perfect with CMYK printing. If colour is critical—perhaps for your company logo—they you may want to consider spot colour, expensive though it is with several colours. Your printer will advise if you put him in the picture. Again with lamination: covers do curl, as you can see in your local bookshop, and the printer cannot produce better than his equipment will allow. Be fair and realistic. It's a long-term relationship you want with your printer, and the more you understand his business the smoother that relationship will be.

## Resources

**Small Business Printing Advice.** Extended article with checklist.

**A Primer into the World of Self-Publishing Your Comic.** Brief but sensible advice.

**Prince Chameleon Press.** Self-publishing workshops and Can \$20 workbook.

**Handling Problems—What to do when a printing job goes bad.** Self-publishing article

**Dealing with the Devil.** Pros and cons of Print Management Companies: for the larger order.

**Glossary of Commercial Printing Terms.** To talk to your printer on his terms.

**The Ever Changing World of Prepress.** October 2006 article on printing trends.

**Color Printing.** Introductory Wikipedia article.

**Printing Quote: A Guide to Inexpensive Flyer Prints.** One of several simple articles on this site.

**Uprinting.** One of many such companies, but with helpful options.

**Printing For Less.** On-line print shop, with some technical advice.

**Printing News.** On-line trade magazine, with directories.

The All New Print Production Handbook. Peter Bann. 2007. Watson-Guptill. 224 pages.

Getting It Printed: How to Work With Printers and Graphic Imaging Services to Assure Quality, Stay on Schedule and Control Costs. Eric Kenley. 2004. How Publishers. 208 pages.

### 5.7.2. Printing Booklets

Poetry sites and societies often offer a 'chapbook service', which is the same creature as booklet printing. Rates can be excellent, but you should again shop around for benchmarks. Also remember that companies with reputations to protect will be far more demanding than the fledgling author. Sales literature is especially important, and if a publishing company can turn out brochures, booklets and flyers day after day to the most exacting standards, they can handle your work. Ask for specimens if you're not sure what's being offered.

Booklet printing is costed on paper quality, colours employed, type of reproduction (line work and half-tone is obviously less expensive), binding, and print-run. A sliding scale operates, and four hundred copies are often little more expensive than two hundred. But don't order 5,000 simply for the economies: the unsold copies will have to be stored somewhere, and garages and attics are not ideal for this purpose.

Printing is a trade, a fascinating one, and you should spend some time learning its jargon and getting to know the various types of paper in use. Your local printer will usually explain the differences between coated and uncoated, and show you examples of paper weight.

Booklets under 80 pages are generally saddle-stitched, i.e. stapled.

Full colour printing uses a four-colour build process called CMYK, and there will be differences between this printing and what a colour laser or ink-jet printer can produce. Simple graphics or logos often use spot colours referenced against the Pantone PMS colour system.

Delivery costs are often extra, and small jobs tend to get slotted into a convenient space, i.e. the turnaround time may be longer.

What does a booklet printing company expect from you? Ask them if their terms and conditions are not spelled out sufficiently. Submissions will be in digital form or 'camera-ready copy' of some sort, usually sheets produced by laser printer at 600 dpi or better, with crop marks shown where important (e.g. for covers or illustration work). Some printers insist on digital copy, however, usually desktop published or MS Word files, which can be sent by email attachment or ftp.

On the whole, booklet printing companies are friendly and easy to deal with, but they respect professionalism, and expect you to be reasonably familiar with their world.

Order from the high street franchise, as most amateurs do, and you'll probably shell out twice or three times the going rate for something that lacks the professional touch.

### 5.7.3. Printing Books

Everything changes when you have a book to print: scale of costs, submissions and range of options. The situation, broadly, is this:

1. Traditional printing (i.e. offset) produces the best product but only becomes economical at print-runs of 2000 or more. Printing and other companies can handle warehousing and distribution for you (i.e. fulfilling customer orders) but the costs are such that most authors prefer to take delivery and store unsold books on their own premises.
2. Digital printing by Lightning Source technology allows details of your book to be stored electronically for later printing on a one-off basis. You don't have to take delivery of a single copy, and the printing company will also handle customer sales. The drawback is book quality and loss of control.
3. Midway between traditional and Lightning Source printing lie the newer technologies of digital printing. Some produce excellent books—crisply printed pages in a tight binding—but a minimum order/payment is required. Prices can be attractive, however, (e.g. 200 copies of a 120-page book for



\$650) and the printing company will also handle warehousing and distribution. Recent advances in printing (Versamark and DocuTech 6100) and binding (Amigo Perfect Binder) technology make this possible, and will increasingly do so in future.

Approaches 1 and 3 need some experience. Camera-ready copy (with cover, ISBN and price bar codes) has to be submitted in standard format (generally Quark Express, PageMaker or InDesign) with the fonts and colour separations in place. Files can be delivered on CD or sent ftp to the printing company, though some also require paper copies. A reputable company would probably phone if it saw problems, but ultimately you are responsible for prepress work, and have to live with any oversights.

A few resources:

**PrintOnDemand.Com** Industry news and proper perspective on the business.

**OnDemandJournal**. Search database for 'trade books'.

**US Digital Printers**. PrintOnDemand's handy listing.

**Books Just Books**. Competitive pricing for self-publishers.

**C & M Press**. Short-run and digital printing.

**Book Masters**. All types of book printing, including e-books.

**Offset Paper Manufacturers**. A well-known FOD and traditional printer.

**DeHarts**. Recommended for short-run printing.

**Tri-State Litho**. Offset and digital: free self-publishing guide.

**Central Plains**. Traditional and digital (short run) printing.

**Morris Publishing**. Specialize in short-run printing: fee schedule on site.

**PrintUSA**. Finds you the best match to your requirements.

**Buying Book Printing**. Useful listing of recommended printers: digital, offset, some non-US. Approx 60 listed, but not all current. \$19.95.

You might want to distribute your work on a CD, and there are companies that will duplicate your CD with printed labels. Prices are naturally cheaper for long runs, but even 15 can be turned out for \$4 apiece. An internet search will locate companies, but here are two possibilities:

**MidSouth Duplication**. DVD and VHS duplication: competitive prices.

**Disc Makers**. Full range of services, including wallets and promotional material.

### 5.7.4. Digital Printing

In digital printing you take the PoD route but deal direct with the digital printers, thus cutting out the PoD company. Details of your book are also stored electronically, and copies can be printed in small numbers, sometimes individually. Digital printing is already widely used for trade brochures and company flyers, but is only slowly making inroads into traditional printing of trade books: novels, textbooks: DIY manuals and the like. Nonetheless, the new (essentially laser) technologies of Versamark, Docutech and others can produce pages indistinguishable from offset printing, and some experts believe that digitally printed books will represent one-third of all books printed by 2011.

PoD publishers come in many shapes, from amateur services that mean well but have little trade experience, friendly local printers that offer an independent service, large concerns that provide fee-based PoD, companies masquerading as traditional publishers with token advances, to outright vanity companies that damn your publication in the trade and overcharge all round.

Basically, you have two options, to use a PoD company that handles everything for you, or a FoD company that just looks after printing (and possibly warehousing and distribution). The first is more expensive, and may place restrictions on your printing choices, publishing rights and pricing policies. The second (FoD: fulfilment on demand) is the approach used by many small publishing companies. The printer has the same or similar type digital printing setup as a PoD printer, may offer basic services besides printing (prepress, warehousing, distribution, order fulfilment) but has a minimum order (10–100) and does not assume any publishing role (i.e. no MS evaluation, preparation or marketing). Essentially a printer, though often to an excellent standard, catering to large company requirements. Many have helpful websites, but you'll need to know some of the technicalities of printing and desktop publishing to handle submissions properly and get an accurate quote.

**POD and FOD Printing.** Brief article on differences, with recommendations.

**OnDemandJournal.** Search database for 'trade books'.

**Offset Paper Manufacturers.** A well-known FOD and traditional printer.

**DeHarts.** Also recommended for print-on-demand jobs.

**Self-Publishing.** Oversees printing for you, and sells 'how to' books and CDs.

**UbuildABook.** FOD printer

### 5.7.5. Print Brokers

If you have an expensive printing job (over US \$10,000), or plan to use an overseas printer, then you may wish to consider a print broker. Such brokers are independent operators with the experience and contacts to secure the best solutions for print buyers. Most work for large companies, of course, but their services do offer insights into the publishing trade. A few references:

**The Art of Business: Confessions of a Print Broker.** When it makes sense to use one.

**Cypress Press.** FAQ from a print broker.

**Printing in Asia.** Star Print Broker's services. Quotes available.

**Print Brokers.** AllPages listing for the USA.

## 5.8. BOOK DISTRIBUTION

You won't need to warehouse if your book is marketed by a traditional publisher, nor for a book in electronic form. But the self-publisher may indeed need what the trade calls 'distributors to booksellers', 'book distribution services' or 'fulfilment warehouses' in these cases:

- you don't have the facilities to store books safely.
- you don't want to be burdened with fulfilling book orders.
- you live outside your main market area.

If, for example, you live in Turkey but have the book printed in Hong Kong for a US market, it will make more sense to ship the entire print-run to the States for a US company to a. distribute to bookstores and chains and b. fulfil individual orders. How?

You have four options:

### 5.8.1. Fulfilment by the Printing Company

Many short-run printers, and those serving the small presses, provide a fulfilment service. Here are some better-known companies: you'll find more through internet searches.

**BookMasters.** Full service, single orders or distribution to bookstores/chains.

**Printorium Bookworks.** Canadian company with services for authors and publishers.

**WebCom Link.** Handle book and CD fulfilment, Canada and overseas.

**Faithworks.** Essentially for Christian publications.

**FidlarDoubleday.** Short-run printer with warehouse and fulfilment services.

**Lightning Source.** Distribute through Ingram.

### 5.8.2. Employing a Fulfilment Company

Many of these have sprung up to meet the needs of ecommerce. You'll find these listed under 'fulfilment company' on the internet search engines, but below are a few of some hundreds. The fee structure is 1. one-off setup, 2. storage per month (including insurance), 3. handling per item and 4. returns charges. There is often a minimum monthly fee, with package materials and shipping being charged at cost. You may also need to own the ISBN.

**Para Publishing.** Book Fulfilment: Order Entry, Picking, Packing and Shipping. A how-to booklet with useful listings. \$19.95.

**Warren & Carmack.** Offer complete publicity services, including order fulfilment: family history orientation.

**PA Department.** From \$10/month storage, \$2.30/item. \$50/month minimum.

**Biblio Distribution.** Aimed at smaller presses: p.o.a.

**Autologic.** Full range of services, fees on application.

**eFulfillment Services.** US fulfilment services. From \$2.00 plus per order plus \$0.30 per product. Storage from \$68.50/month.

**Webgistix.** Free quote on site.

**Shipping-and-Handling.** Fulfilment services for smaller companies, authors, musicians. From \$2.35/item.

**Zeetech Shipping.** Charges on application, but 500 square feet storage is \$250/month.

### 5.8.3. Warehousing by Book Distributors

Publishing houses don't of course keep their publications on the premises but employ a chain of companies to get the books into bookstores. Many distributors deal with the larger publishers only, and some require the publisher to produce five books or more per year.

Book distributors are often confused with book wholesalers, since both help to get your work into bookshops, but there is a crucial difference. Wholesalers merely supply books that have been ordered by individual customers or sales outlets. Distributors actively market your work: promoting it with catalogues, reps, adverts and the like. That sounds

admirable, and so it is, but distributors also want to be sure the work will sell in sufficient quantity, and that you are putting your full weight behind its promotion.

Distribution costs money. In general, a publisher will receive one-third of the list price of a book, and the distributor two thirds, out of which the distributor will give 40–60% discounts to bookstores and wholesalers. That doesn't leave them much over when sales reps, warehouses, staff, accounting, administration and overheads have been paid, and some do go out of business periodically. The services they supply you as publisher are invaluable—warehousing, cataloguing, sales representation, shipping, billing, collections, marketing and editorial consultation—and may be your only realistic chance of getting your book into more than a few local bookshops. At an added cost, they may also exhibit your work at book fairs, advertise in trade periodicals, mail bookstores when you're appearing on local radio or TV, or even fulfil individual orders. It makes sense to use them where possible because distributors add kudos to your publication, making it more likely that you will appear on local TV, and that chain stores will stock your book. Book distributors also provide the electronic ordering systems that chains and larger bookstores look for, which are often too expensive for the individual publisher.

Now the bad news. Distributors are choosy. Only some fifteen US distributors carry a wide range of books: most specialize in fiction, new age, cooking, travel, local history, etc. Many only take on 200 new titles a year, preferring to stick with existing clients. On anything offered them, especially from a new publisher, they will ask themselves:

1. Can we move this title in quantity? Your own sales to date will be relevant.
2. Is the book professionally produced? Covers are especially important.
3. Is the book backed by a suitable marketing plan, and budget to match?
4. How many books does the publisher produce? The one-book publisher needs to have something special.
5. How long has the publisher been in business? Rookies learning the business will waste too much of management time.

Distributors also specialize on outlets. Some target the super chain stores, some the regional chains, or schools or libraries. All will want exclusive distribution rights, so they can monitor results and give reps their customary commissions. Distributors pay 90–120 days after delivery, and of course something is retained for returns.

You may want to submit your book to the **PMA Trade Distribution Program**, where books are screened for appeal to the big buyers.

One much touted advantage of PoD is the automatic appearance of your masterpiece in Ingram, the largest book wholesaler in the States. As one well-known PoD company puts it: 'Your book will be listed in the Xlibris on-line bookstore and major on-line stores, including Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, Borders.com, Buy.com, Chapters.ca, and many more. Xlibris books are listed in the database of Ingram, the largest U.S. book distributor, so they can be ordered at most bookstores in the US.

But you can get your book listed with Ingram anyway, can't you, so why take the PoD route?

As always, the truth's a little more complicated. With **Baker& Taylor, Ingram** are the largest supplier of books in the States. They stock huge numbers, and can supply as required. If a customer wants something not in stock, the sales clerk simply looks in the Ingram listing, picks up the telephone, and the book is delivered to the store overnight. Even better, instead of writing checks at the month-end to every publisher, and there may be hundreds of them, the bookstore writes only a handful to their wholesalers. Everyone is happy.

How does it work for you, the publisher? You sign a contract with the wholesaler, usually paying a small setup fee and providing them with books at an appreciable discount. The wholesaler fulfils the orders from individual booksellers, allowing them a smaller discount. The difference between the two discounts is what wholesalers live on, though they will sometimes charge for freight. For example: Ingram, who sell over \$2 billion worth of books every year, and list some 100,000 titles, require a 50% discount, but do pay the freight. Baker & Taylor, who concentrate on educational books, selling around \$800 million annually and listing some 120,000 titles, require a 55% discount, insist that books are fully returnable, and put freight down to your account.

Can you use both Ingram and Baker & Taylor, or even several of the smaller wholesalers? You can, but it's wise to give one wholesaler exclusivity, especially when those books have to be returned. Yes, a good proportion of books are sent back, over 50% sometimes and of course you pick up the bill. Hardbacks are returned generally so badly packed that they cannot be sold again. Paperbacks are gutted, just the covers being returned for a full refund. The wholesaler passes the refunds on to you—or usually withholds payment for the eventuality. Given that booksellers are notoriously late payers, the wholesaler pays you 90 to 120 days after shipping to the booksellers. As publisher you're at the end of a long chain of selling, though of course the author is even further away from payment. It's a madness, as everyone in the book business admits, but that's how it works.

To return to Ingram: you can ship to them directly, right? Possibly, but it's unlikely. Wholesalers are not as choosy as distributors, but they have a distinct aversion to dealing with small publishers—naturally, as sales won't cover management time. Even worse in their eyes are publishers just starting up, with only a few titles, and no proven demand for those titles. At the least they will want to see decent reviews, and some figures for promotional efforts. In short, that novel you have self-published, or that first collection of poems, is not going to fill them with happy anticipation, despite your stunning website and those encouraging university readings. For PoD it won't matter, since they don't carry physical stock, but if you want to get your traditional book listed by Ingram, then you'll have to start selling it seriously first. No doubt that's a Catch-22 situation, but anyone looking round bookshops may wonder if we're not overwhelmed already with reading matter.

Lastly, wholesalers don't market books, they simply fulfil orders. You as author or publisher have to create that demand. Moreover, since booksellers don't like books that can't be returned, they are often reluctant to order a PoD item unless the customer pays in advance. While PoD makes sense in many cases, getting the product listed in Ingram will not necessarily boost sales.

Libraries—school, college, public and institutional—are an important outlet for your books. In 2004, the USA had 70,000 school libraries, 3,000 college libraries, 16,000 public libraries and over 3,000 institutional libraries. Each library may have thousands of volumes: the New York Public Library alone

has 11 million, and Harvard has 14 million. In all, US libraries spend around \$1.5 billion on books, accounting for some 14% of books published. Their buying periods tend to be the end of June and of December, when they use up their budget or break into a new one. How do you get your books in?

Some general points. Libraries buy books that have been well-reviewed, will fit on their shelves (no spiral bindings) and which fill a gap in their coverage. Since books wear out, on average every 2 years or 18 lendings, libraries will often repurchase or buy several copies. Their problem is the cost of ordering and processing the order, which can exceed the cost of the book itself, and most therefore order through wholesalers or specialist distributors.

Since funds are tight, all purchases have to be carefully considered, sometimes by the acquisitions librarian, an acquisitions committee, or more often through an area supervisor. Reviews are critical, and you will want to get your book reviewed in [Library Journal](#), [Publishers Weekly](#), [ALA Booklist](#), [Kirkus Review](#), [Choice](#) and the [New York Times Book Review](#), and by every trade, profession and hobbyist association that is relevant. E-mail, write and phone them, sending more than one copy if the book will be reviewed by several experts.

Given a handful of encouraging reviews, you can move to the next step, which is some combination of:

1. distribute through [Quality Books](#), which requires a 55–60% discount, a consignment contract, fully returnable books (no PoD) and 90 days to pay. The Company knows its market, and returns are low. Nonetheless, Quality Books will not handle poetry or fiction, nor books too expensive or specialist.
2. becoming a stock publisher with [Baker&Taylor](#), who sell around \$800 million annually, require a 55% discount, insist that books are fully returnable, and require you to pay freight.
3. joining the [PMA Trade Distribution Program](#).
4. contacting the largest libraries with a press release and/or promotional package.
5. placing a small ad in specialist magazines and the [Library Journal](#), etc.



### 5.8.4. PoD Distribution

Most PoD publishers will handle book distribution for you, at a cost but conveniently through Ingram and/or other national distributors—a point to bear in mind when selecting your Print on Demand publisher.

#### Book Distribution Resources

**Publishers Weekly.** Useful articles on book wholesalers and distributors.

**Publishing Central.** Good listing of book distributors.

**Book Distributors, Wholesalers, and Fulfilment Houses.** Morgan Printing's useful list.

**Advanced Marketing.** Distribute 1 million books/year internationally.

**International Specialized Book Services.** Historical, specialized or academic books.

**Small Press Distribution.** Handles distribution for 500 small presses.

**Ingram.** World's largest book distributor.

**National Book Network.** Works with 70 small-medium US publishers.

**Independent Publisher's Group.** US and worldwide book distributor.

**Yankee Book Peddlers.** Distribution to academic and research libraries in US and UK.

**Publishers Group West.** Serve US independent publishers.

**Consortium Book Sales and Distribution.** Exclusive distributor for over 50 US and Canadian publishing companies.

## 5.9. DOING YOUR SUMS

How much does self-publishing in general cost, and how does it compare with a package provided by a print-on-demand company? Everything depends on the little extras that turn an average book into a superb production, but here are a few calculations based on ballpark figures taken from internet sources.

### 5.9.1. Printing Costs: Worked Example (1)

Our example is a 78,000-word novel, printed as a 200-page trade paperback with a colour-printed cover of laminated coverstock. Proofing is \$3/page. Print run is 1,000 and all copies are sold, through bookstores, which charge a 40% commission. Cover price is \$14.95. iUniverse royalties are 20% of sales receipts.

How much does self-publishing in general cost, and how does it compare with a package provided by a print-on-demand company? Everything depends on the little extras that turn an average book into a superb

production, but here are a few calculations based on ballpark figures taken from internet sources.

service	general range	self-publishing	iUniverse (Premier)
PoD	150–2000	-	1100
text input	1–3 cents/word	-	-
proof-reading	1–5 cents/word \$3–5+/page \$30–100/hour	1200	1170
typesetting	\$0.80–20/page	300	included
cover	50–5000	1500	included
ISBN, bar codes, listing	50	50	included
review	0–350	350	360
printing (1000 print-run)	3000–8000	3500	see below
warehousing and distribution	10–20% of retail price	2240	included
marketing	up to you	1000	included
total outgoings	-	10,140	2630
sales proceeds net commissions	-	8970	-
royalties	-	-	1790
net profit or (loss)	-	(1170)	(840)
service	general range	self-publishing	iUniverse (Premier)

Clearly:

- big expenses are proofing, typesetting and cover design.
- profits are derisory if only 1,000 copies are sold.
- 1,500 copies need to be sold just to break even with the PoD route, and some 1250 by the self-publishing route.

If some 10,000 copies are sold, then the PoD route will yield a profit of some \$15,000, and the self-publishing route a profit of around \$50,000.

### 5.9.2. Printing Costs: Worked Example (2)

PoD was never intended to compete with traditional publishing at larger print-runs. Let's therefore consider a specialist publication, the printing being done by the latest laser technology: \$550 for 100 copies. Most of the

proofing is done by the author, the MS just needing a quick run-through. Two cases, de luxe and basic:

service	self-publishing (de luxe)	iUniverse (Premier)	self-publishing (basic)
PoD	-	1100	-
text input	-	-	-
proofing	250	1170	done in-house
typesetting	300	included	done by author
cover	500	included	template
ISBN, bar codes, listing	50	included	50
review	350	360	-
printing (100 print-run)	550	-	550
warehousing and distribution	220	included	-
marketing	250	included	-
total outgoings	2470	2630	600
sales proceeds net commission	900	-	900
royalties	-	180	-
net profit or (loss)	(1570)	(2450)	300

### 5.9.3. Printing Costs: Conclusions

The obvious points of this little exercise—you'll do many of these for your own particular requirements—are that:

1. Sales of 1,500 odd are needed to start making money with the publish-on-demand route. If this figure is unrealistic, then a basic service with the cheapest PoD company should be considered (Lulu is \$150).
2. Self-publishing can be made to pay if costs are cut to the bone, or if sales exceed 1250. If professional services are needed, but sale of 1250 copies is judged unrealistic, then the self-publisher should consider electronic books (or possibly a pay-to-view website for business and financial information.)

## 6. ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

### 6.1. BACKGROUND

#### Background to Self-Publishing Companies

Before plunging into e-book publishing, you should understand the pros and cons of this approach, and its current prospects.

**Ecommerce Digest** (which we also produce) has been surveying the electronic publishing scene since 2001, and their reports over the years can be summarized as follows.

#### 2001–2002 Performance

Conversion rates for on-line book sales were 42% with Amazon, but average 5–8% overall. {1} Mainstream publishers were beginning to take up material originally self-published or published in electronic form. {2} The year saw a steady growth in e-book sales, with the main publishers reporting year on year increases from 40% to 100%. Palm Digital Media alone sold 180,000 e-book titles in 2001, and 5 million copies of Microsoft Reader were downloaded for use on desktops, notebooks and pocket PCs. {3}

#### 2003–4 Prospects

Ecommerce Digest could not find a reliable internet survey of immediate prospects for e-publishing and e-book marketing. Trade articles and the output of e-book hardware suggested an accelerating acceptance of e-publishing, however, and no doubt more success stories. The really exciting developments—lightweight flexible screens, wireless downloads—were proven technology, but cheap products were still some years away. Nonetheless, and more than other forms of ecommerce, e-publishing would change entertainment habits, and widen educational opportunities.

#### 2004–5 Prospects

The heady predictions had been toned down, and even scholarly publishing seemed to prefer the old-fashioned book. {4} Nonetheless e-book sales rose 28% on last year, according to figures from the e-book trade

association, generating €2.7 million in the first quarter of 2004. {5} 2003 e-books accounted for 15% of total book sales in Holland, totalling €307m, a 28% increase on digital content sales in 2002. {6} To judge by these rather scattered figures, e-book sales seemed likely to increase a further 25% in 2005, a figure supported by reports of e-book revenues up 25% for the third quarter of 2004. {22} In contrast, US net sales for books were \$23.7billion in 2004, only a 1.3% increase over 2003, according to AAP figures. {23}

## 2005–6 Prospects

The picture was mixed, with talk of imminent 'tipping points', but the market was still small: 1000 copies may be a good sales figure for an e-book, but not for a magazine or paperback. Some booksellers doubted if the e-book revolution will ever happen. One leading UK publisher said, 'Novels on hand-held terminals are not important. The novel does not suit electronic dissemination. Most people buy books to read for comfort. Many books bought are not read, but sit on shelves or on coffee tables. Books are cheap. Why would we replace that with something that is not that cheap or could go wrong.' Nonetheless, e-publishers reported increasing sales to scholars, scientists and students, if not the general public. {24} Several e-book sites seemed either not to have been updated properly, or have little to report. E-book compilers continued to appear, one of the latest being WebWorks ePublisher Pro for Word, a \$1,000 package handling HTML, XHTML and DHTML. {25}

## 2007 Prospects

Despite disappointing results in their home countries—the natural result of high hardware prices, limited reading choices, and draconian DMR (digital management rights) measures—several Chinese and Japanese e-book readers were being re-engineered for the US and European markets. Librie had been re-released as the Sony eBook, and the Sigma, Argosy and EasyRead were under development, probably with distribution agreements now being tied up with e-book suppliers. {37} Many of the last offered a good range of material, up to 30,000 titles in some cases, {45} but readers disliked being tied to specific outlets, and the books themselves were expensive. The DMR could be disabled, but not all users had the technical expertise or wished to tamper with expensive equipment. The potential market was enormous. US publishers alone sold 2.3 billion books in 2004,

but only 0.1% of these were e-books. Opinion was therefore divided on prospects for this new generation of hardware. The price tag was still too high (\$200-\$700), and the screens too small. The success of miniaturized MP3 players showed what is possible, however, and sales here—vastly more demanding technology, and prices as low as \$70—could have persuaded the manufacturers of e-book readers to take the obvious course.

In marked contrast to text on screen, MP3 technology opened a new digital age in audio books. Many customers of Audible (the UK distributor of audio books in the iTunes format) had never bought a book before in CD or cassette format, and the company reported that downloads accounted for 6% of the \$800m audio book market in 2004, but had been increasing annually at 80% per year since. {38} Apple's iPod had done much to make audio books acceptable to the young, and there were clones and cheaper alternatives, though none so popular. Apple was to introduce software that spoke the song title, bands, and albums (safer when driving) {39}, and Microsoft to bring out its own iPod shortly.

The proliferation of file formats was a pressing difficulty for publishers of e-books, and many e-books were more expensive than they should be, given the ease of duplication. Schoolchildren, university students and adults were increasingly turning to e-books for information and entertainment. Authors were also finding that e-publishing gave them a better chance of being read. British publishing houses, for example, print more than 160,000 new titles a year, but only 5% of these were from unsolicited manuscripts submitted without a literary agent. Self-publishing was therefore growing—200,000 titles in 2005, up 25 per cent from the year before. The self-publishing company Lulu featured 45,000 titles on its site, and over 1,000 new titles appeared every week. Most were not commercially viable, but surprises happened. GP Taylor, an Anglican parish priest from Scarborough in England, sold 20,000 copies of his fantasy children's book in the first month of national publication. The book was picked up by Faber and Faber, and the American rights sold on for £314,000. {40}

Podcasts and audio books were also making inroads on traditional guidebooks and customer support. Lonely Planet supplied Podcast supplements to their guides, and some 200,000 podcasts were downloaded in less than a year from Virgin Atlantic Airlines' site. {41} Increasingly, US libraries were providing audio books, and these were popular among

schoolchildren who must otherwise lug heavy textbooks in backpacks (3,400 were treated in emergency hospitals for resulting back injuries in 2002). Of the \$7.5 billion that US school districts spent on textbooks in 2004, \$2 billion was for electronic textbooks and other digital teaching materials. {42} Yahoo announced in November 2004 an e-book service allowing publishers to have their material distributed as plain text, one long page per chapter, {43} and Microsoft had invested an initial \$2.5 million to digitize 25 million pages of content at the British Library. The documents would be readable at [print.google.com](http://print.google.com). {44}

### Subscription Services: 2004 Survey

Very different from e-books were subscription services. While the distinction between content downloaded and content read on-line may seem purely technical, internet users did not like subscription charges. The content providers argued, understandably, that their material cost money to collect, analyse and present, and that charging was becoming more acceptable, if not inevitable, since advertising revenues had dried up. {18} But 70% of on-line adults in a recent survey could not understand why anyone would pay for on-line content. {19} Only 12% in fact paid up when faced with subscription charges,{20} and anecdotal evidence suggested that even that 12% could be optimistic. Content providers trying to estimate future conversion rates should have noted that commercial schemes for individual pages are even less popular. Nonetheless, spending on web content nearly doubled from 2001 to \$1.3 billion in 2002, led by dating, financial advice and lifestyles sites. An extra 4 million paid for on-line content in 2002. {21}.

Against this trend, research firm Outsell's 2004 report showed the market for paid content on-line stood at \$50 bn, or about 35 times larger than commonly reported if all aspects were included—dispelling the common notion that users would not pay for valuable content. {11}

US subscribers paid \$853 million for on-line content in the first half of 2004, {12} and time spent viewing content on-line surpassed that on communications (e-mail or instant messaging) for the first time in the history of the On-line Publishers Association's Internet Activity Index. {13} MediaBay, an audio entertainment company, was to offer audiobook titles on the MSN Music Service, supplementing their download music service.

{14} According to Spectrum Strategy, paid-for content revenues from the fixed internet were predicted to grow from around £0m currently to £400m by 2007 in the UK, and on-line advertising revenues from around £200m to £300m by 2007. {15} The European on-line information market grew by 14% in 2003 to a value of €2.799m, according to IRN Research. By the end of 2003, on-line accounted for 49% of all STM information sales in Europe, and this share was predicted to be well above 50% by mid 2004. {16} Spending on on-line content in 2003 rose to nearly \$1.6 bn, an increase of 18.8% over 2002. {17}

US consumer spending for on-line content reached \$1.8 billion in 2004, a 14% increase over 2003, boosted by growth in games (+22%), sport (+38%) and lifestyles/entertainment (+90%). {18} Newspapers were losing out to web portals and local TV newscasts as purveyors of news. Women preferred the local TV and men the internet. The last would become the dominant news source over the next three years, despite the dislike of excessive ads. {19} Faced with such competition, more newspaper web sites were considering, or perhaps hesitating, to charge for on-line access. Currently, only one US national paper, The Wall Street Journal, and some 45 small dailies charged readers for content, though an announcement was expected from the New York Times. {20} The big news was Google's plan to scan and index books from five major libraries, a six-year task for the University of Michigan's seven million volumes. The company had applied for a patent called 'Method for searching media,' which may enable Google News to index print magazines and newspapers, and then charge a subscription for viewing. {21}

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20. Can Papers End the Free Ride?; Publishers Face the Risky Economics of Charging On-line by Katherine Seelye. 14 March 2005. [New York Times](#).
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22. Top Selling eBooks of 2004 Announced Strong Q3 in 2004 with Double Digit Sales Increase Over 2003. 12. January 2005. [OpenEbooks](#).
23. Book Publishing Industry Net Sales Totaled \$23.7 Billion in 2004. [AAP](#).
24. UK publishers 'ignoring e-books' by Darren Waters. 8 June 2005. [BBC News](#).
25. Quadralay Ships WebWorks ePublisher Pro for Word. 21 June 2005. [eContent](#).
37. For technical details see [Comparisons](#), and [Resources](#) for references.
38. Audio books open a new chapter in digital age. Kate Mackenzie. 2006. [Financial Times Deutschland](#). 2006.
39. Talking Apple iPod? 10 Jul. 2006. [Laptop Logic](#).
40. The publishing revolution: from Caxton to cyberspace. Elizabeth Day. 7 May 2006. [Daily Telegraph](#).
41. Audio Travel Guides. Jeffrey Goldfarb. 23 Feb. 2003. [Reuters](#).
42. On-line textbooks just a click away. Walter Dawkins. 27 Mar. 2006. [North Jersey Media Group](#).
43. Turning Pages for Those Who Can't . Stephen Edwards. 24 Jan. 2006. [Wired News](#).
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45. Amazon's Kindle e-booker reader (\$399, with 90,000 titles) sold out shortly after launch in December 2007.

## Sources for Further Reading and Research

1. [Arts Journal](#). A daily digest of arts and cultural journalism.

2. **Authors on the Web**. Book news and articles: now dated.
4. **AAP** Book industry statistics from the American Association of Publishers.
5. **ABM Market Facts**. American Business Medium's compilation of statistics for the business press.
6. **Boston Review** A political and literary forum with occasional articles of interest.
7. **Bookwire** Extensive resources, but not specific to e-publishing or sales.
8. **Bookweb** American Booksellers Association: good research and statistics listings.
9. **Rumor Mill** User groups on various aspects of books and publishing.
10. **EPS**. Excellent source of statistics for the on-line publishing industry.
11. **EContent Magazine**. Digital content strategies and resources.
12. **ClickZ News**. News and events in the advertising world.

### 6.1.1. Current Outlook

Amazon's *Kindle* (launched in late 2007) and cheap tablets (which display pdf files) have revolutionised the e-publishing scene.

But if the advantages of e-publishing are obvious—lower production costs, shorter times to market, greater power and profits to authors and adventurous publishers—why hasn't the industry left traditional books far behind? Probably because of:

- hardware costs. Tablets and Kindle readers are still more expensive than a paperback, and more liable to be stolen. {1}
- proliferating platforms. Acrobat, Microsoft e-book, Gemstar, PalmOS—which platform should authors write for and readers stock their library with? Hardware and software can be discontinued without warning, and no one wishes to buy into obsolescence. {2}
- limited range of titles. Lists are steadily increasing, but only a small fraction of print books are also available as e-books — particularly out-of-print scholarly works.
- quality filters are unclear. Traditional publishing builds on specialist skills—MS selection, editing, proofing, typesetting, illustration, warehousing, marketing, reviewing—each adding a quality filter to the final product. Buyers of e-books do not have these reassurances. {3}

- preference for printed books. Despite advantages of backlit pages, graphics and multimedia, electronic readers are not yet as comfortable as the traditional paper book.
- fragmented nature of the publishing business. The USA has over 50,000 publishers. {4} Add publishers in Canada, UK and Australia and the total in the English-speaking world may exceed 100,000. Not all are profitable. Many publishers are small, local and specialized. Publishing, accounting, warehousing and marketing procedures vary widely, as does the software employed. Hence a broadly satisfied reading public, but also great waste and difficulties in implementing common IT standards. {5}
- e-books are easy to copy, and booksellers do not want to be plagued with returns. {6})

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2. p. 258 in Curtis and Quick.
3. p. 71 in Curtis and Quick.
4. [Bizmark.Net](#). Several close analyses of the US publishing scene.
5. Learning to e-read in E-trends.: Making sense of the electronic communications revolution. 2001. Profile Books Ltd. London.
6. [Bizmark.Net](#).
7. Re: ebook Industry by G. Sanders. February 2001.

All that said, ebooks are admirable for:

- free sample chapters or 'tasters'.
- books not otherwise commercially viable.
- publications that need to be updated frequently.

Creating e-books is easy. There are three main routes.

1. pdf documents that can be viewed on most computers, tablets and phones. The original word-processor file is converted to a pdf document (online or by specific software, much of it free), the pdf document can be downloaded directly from the internet

site, or attached to email documents. Password protection of pdf documents is standard, but digital rights management is more costly. Most drm software for pdf documents is aimed at big companies, but **softlocker** is \$12.95/month.

2. webpage compilers. The software simply takes the webpages and compiles them into an executable file that can be sent over the internet as a file, say *mynovel.exe*. The purchaser places the file in their folder of choice, double clicks on the file and *mynovel* opens into pages that can be read on purchaser's desktop or tablet. Many webpage compilers also have password generators, which can be general (the same password for all purchasers of *mynovel*) or specific to that particular computer (digital rights management). In the second case, the purchaser supplies the seller with the code generated by double clicking on *mynovel*, the seller runs that code through his software, and emails the purchaser with the password generated. The seller can also set up a web-page providing the password. It's a secure method that prevents copies of *mynovel* being sent on to other parties (the password is specific to that computer, and will not work on others) but it's also fiddly, and sometimes more trouble than it's worth: some customers have trouble with even the simplest of instructions.
3. kindle books. These are ebooks that can be read on kindle devices or in the 'cloud' by computers and tablets. Kindle documents are black and white only, and have limited formatting facilities: complicated tables and illustrations may not display properly, requiring you to buy or rent inexpensive third-party **software** to edit the book properly. If layout is not an issue, you can simply email the Word document to Amazon, and they will do the rest, exhibiting your kindle book among their many thousands and charging a **35% commission** on sales.
4. flash books: see below.
5. audio books: see below.
6. desktop author: see below.

Whatever route you take, the e-book will have to be marketed properly, which is where time and costs pile up.

## 6.2. ADOBE'S ACROBAT SYSTEM

### 6.2.1 Introduction

Adobe's Acrobat program is used widely for document distribution, even for e-books. The advantages are:

- popular: customers feel safe with the software
- an industry standard: most printing companies will accept the pdf format.
- versatile, producing good screen displays and paper printouts.
- wide range of software add-ons have been developed.
- works on the Windows, Mac and Unix platforms

The disadvantages are:

- proper security add-ons are expensive.
- pdf files can be bulky.

Acrobat is available in several versions, and as various clones. Some suggestions:

1. If you run a busy graphics studio, then there's no question. You'll set up the latest version of Acrobat Professional on a dedicated machine, and bless Adobe for providing so many prepress functions.
2. If you simply want to create pdf documents, however, with no frills attached, then you'll probably be better off with Acrobat clones, which are much cheaper: many indeed are free.
3. Between these two extremes lie a host of possibilities. Acrobat 5, for example, provides most of the functions you will need, and is well-behaved (i.e. won't take over your desktop and other programs). It's no longer marketed, of course, but you can pick up a second-hand version at your

local computer exchange or on eBay. Thereafter, the features in the standard versions (not the professional) are only slowly added to, though the price increases steeply. Version 8, for example, comes in at \$299 retail, but improves over Version 5 only in these aspects. You can:

- combine multiple documents in one file.
- unify a pdf document with consistent watermark, header and footer.
- more easily conduct and track reviews.
- participate in real-time collaboration via Acrobat Connect.
- streamline pdf form creation.
- permanently remove sensitive information.
- more rapidly convert autocad files into pdf documents.
- automatically archive e-mail in Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Notes.

Street prices are lower, but you might want to check your needs carefully and read the reviews before parting with hard-won cash. Resources:

[Adobe Acrobat 5](#). Designer Info Review.

[Adobe Acrobat 5 Review](#). HTMLCenter review.

[Three New Acrobats](#). PC Magazine's review of Acrobat 6: elements, standard and professional.

[Acrobat Professional Win](#). Amazon reviews of Acrobat 6, not all enthusiastic.

[Acrobat 6 Professional: Adobe Targets Creatives with Nimble Acrobat](#). Creative Pro's review.

[Acrobat 7.0 Review](#). About review.

[Acrobat 7 Feature](#). PlanetPDF review.

[Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional](#) (Windows Upgrade) Amazon reviews: still more negative.

[Acrobat 8 for Windows](#). CNet Review

[First Look: Adobe Acrobat 8](#). Acrobat User Review

[Converting MS Word to PDF Documents](#)

There are many Acrobat clones, some of the best known for MS Word to pdf format conversion being:

1. [FinePrint](#): \$50–100.
2. [MakePDF](#): \$35.

3. **EasyPDF**: €20.
4. **PDF Writer Pro**: \$50.
5. **Cute PDF**: free (\$50 for Professional Version).
6. **PDF995 & PDFEdit995**: free (\$20 for edit tools).
7. **Lead Tools**: \$49.
8. **Click to Convert**: \$89
9. **Abbyy PDF Transformer**: \$99.
10. **Adobe Flashpaper**: \$79

Adobe provide a free add-on that will convert MS Word documents to pdf format, but that won't work with all configurations. Reading the product bulletin boards that enable customers to help each other, suggests problems are specific to the user's operating system and software. Do not put your trust in reviews, therefore, but test a product carefully, on the PC(s) you will use, for all tasks you may want to perform.

Nonetheless, our findings were:

#### Cute PDF

The free version is fine for simple Word document conversion and is indeed recommended for document submission by some commercial printers. Links and layouts were preserved, and fonts embedded.

#### PDF995

The free program works well for simple conversions, but is a little slow. The program will also convert Word documents to HTML pages.

#### Lead Tools

The program gives a choice in page display and preserves layouts. It does not embed Type One fonts, however, and hyperlinks are only partly retained (simple URLs were retained but not complex URLs or hidden links.) Like PDF995, the program will also convert Word documents to HTML pages.

#### Click to Convert

The program excels in creating HTML pages, but its pdf conversion was similar to that of Lead Tools, though it also lacked the page display option.

Abbyy PDF Transformer.

The program does not have a page display option, and does not fully convert Word documents to HTML pages. In all other respects, Abbyy PDF Transformer is outstanding, being the only program to always and faithfully retain hyperlinks. It will also extract text from pdf documents created by scanning documents.

### 6.2.2. Printing Your PDF Documents

Adobe let you print your pdf pages as continuous or facing. You can also reduce the size of the pages, rotate them through 90 degrees and print two A5 pages on an A4 sheet of paper, for example (View>Page Layout>Facing. Print Setup> Properties: set Finishing to '2 pages per sheet'. Print: make sure 'autorotate and centre' box is checked.) Nothing could be easier.

But suppose you want to make an A5 booklet? There, as you'll see if you fold a piece of paper, you'll have to rearrange the printing order of pages. In the simplest case, an A5 booklet of folded A4 pages, will have pages 1 and 8 on one side of the A4 sheet, and pages 2 and 7 on the other side. The second A4 sheet will need pages 3 and 6 on one side, and 4 and 5 on the other. But perhaps you'd like the booklet to be smaller still, which means much more complicated arrangements, particularly something with 64 or more pages. You have four ways of doing this:

1. The simplest approach is to hand over the task to your friendly printer, providing either the pdf file or 'camera-ready copy' printed pages. He will devise the **printer spreads**, arranging the **signatures**, make the plates and offset-litho print your booklet for you at some modest cost, though the minimum print-run may be fifty copies or more.
2. If you have a recent version of **Adobe Acrobat**, then you can use the File>Print Booklet function (Similar functions are available as software add-ons for DTP programs, of course: e.g. the **Quark Print Collection** for Quark Xpress. **Word 2002** has a built-in facility.)



3. A makeshift approach, fiddly, and not giving best quality, is to save your pages as gifs (Control-PrintScreen), assemble the gifs in a graphics program, and then print the pages of gifs, turning the sheets over and printing them on the other side as well if your laser or ink-jet printer is not duplex.

4. The best approach, at least for short runs, is to employ software that intercepts the instructions being sent to your printer, rearranging the pages as required. A good choice now exists, and the programs are not expensive. A few resources to check out:

**Printer-Driver**: Works on all documents: \$69.

**FinePrint**. Allows much rearrangement in pdf documents: \$50.

**ClickBook**. Works with most Windows applications: \$50.

**Document Printer**. Takes a wide range of formats: \$38.

**VeryPDF ArtPrint Driver**. Creates 2, 4, 6, 8 or 16 pages on a single sheet of paper: \$38.

**BookPrint XP**. Creates 2, 4, 6, 8 or 16 pages on a single sheet of paper: €25.

**CZ Print Polisher**. Prints multiple pages per sheet, exports to BMP, JPG, TIFF, EMF, TGA etc: \$40.

**Booklet Printing**. Good listing of programs and their features.

You may want some background to dealing with printers:

**Top 7 Ways To Build A Good Relationship With Your Printer**.

**Preparing your Files for Printing on a Commercial Printing Press**.

**All Graphic Design**.

**Glossary of Commercial Printing Terms**.

### 6.2.3. Printing a Book

You can print your own books, an approach feasible in the following circumstances:

1. you wish to have hard copy of what is available only in digital form.
2. demand is limited, and subscribers are willing to pay for the effort involved: specialist works, family histories and the like.
3. you produce hand-crafted art-books.
4. your material is too confidential to send to outside printers.
5. you produce bound copies of proposals or tenders.

Generally, you will first need to turn out sheets printed on both sides in the right page order: a photocopying centre will do this, or you can use the software listed above.

Thereafter, the approaches group into three:

### 1. Simple Do-it-Yourself: the Craft Approach

Saddle-stitched booklets, i.e. stapled: you may need a commercial stapler and guillotine.

Perfect Binding, with papers and covers hand-glued in place: tedious but not difficult.

Some references:

[Bookbinding 101](#). Short article, with comments.

[Making Books by Hand](#). Book describing 12 step-by-step projects: \$19.

[Simply Perfect Binding](#). PDF document by Will Decker.

[Gigabooks](#). Book printing supplies and advice.

[The Fun and Easy Guide to Binding Your Own Paperback Books at Home](#). \$1.95

### 2. Automate the Process with Professional Machines

A wide range of equipment exists, from \$65 for a simple binding machine to over \$2000 for perfect binding machines.

Some references

[Letterfolders](#). Good ranging of binding machines, from \$65.

[Whittaker Brothers](#). Binding machines etc. from \$379

### 3. Other Approaches: Photo Albums

If you're making a children's book, or have many illustrations, you may want to turn out a photo album.

Some references

[How to Create a Family Cookbook](#). Another, simple approach.

[Inside Lightroom](#). Article on [MyPhotoBookCreator](#).

[Book Assembly Photo-Journal](#). Toby Craig's DIY account.

## 6.3. WEB-PAGE COMPILERS

### 6.3.1. Introduction

Web-page compilers take pre-existing pages and compile into an executable (.ex) file. A few e-book creation programs will accept text or MS Word files, but the majority compile HTML pages. That means:

- programs can be reasonably cheap.

But also that:

- layout is more restricted (HTML tables will be supported but not CSS).
- pages that look good on the screen won't always print out neatly.

Many of the programs listed below are no longer available, though can still be found on eBay and computer exchanges. If you do have a choice between web-page compilers, the key features to consider are:

1. type of computer / operating system the e-books will be read on:

desktop PCs and laptops: operating systems:

Windows

Macintosh

UNIX / Linux

e-book readers: operating systems:

Windows

Windows CE

Linux

Proprietary

hand-held devices: operating systems:

Palm

PC

HPC

Windows CE

Linux

2. layout precision required: program

compiles HTML pages

simple formats only

complex formats preserved

employs own layout language

through editor

requires hand-coding (not listed in table below)

### 3. e-book content

text only

text and graphics

basic multimedia

flash and/or videos

includes pdf Acrobat files

### 4. e-book functionality

individual pages can be hidden/password protected

printing can be disabled

copying can be disabled

indexes easily created

search facility can be added

### 5. level of security required

password protection of whole document

password protection of individual pages

time expiry of e-book

expiry after certain number of times used

access restricted to single machine/user

user tracking

Many of the programs have free trials or demo versions, which are well worth testing.

## Creating E-books: Security Considerations

Once the password is provided, what's to stop your e-book from being unlocked and copied/sold across the internet? To be doubly safe you'll have to create e-books that will 'lock' into the hard disk specification of the individual PC, or which need to look up a password from a website you control. Details are in the table below, but be warned that the installation instructions can be both a turn-off and a time-waster. Not everyone wants to be bothered with instructions, and sorting out unlock codes for customers can be exasperating. Many e-book publishers have now dropped the security features, accepting their work will be pirated, but updating regularly so that previous editions act as publicity.

### 6.3.2. Creating E-Books: Software

E-book generators come in a wide variety of shapes and prices. An e-book generator commonly has a free trial or demo version, which is worth trying out. This is a fairly complete list.

site	price US\$	viewing platform	input as	accepts graphics	accepts flash plug-in	mult- media	hide pages	disable printing	password protection	tracking facility	notes
Acrobat Acrobat eReader	300	W M O	g h t v w	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no	1 10 19
Activ EBook Compiler	30	W	g h p w	yes	yes	3	yes	no	yes	no	2 3
Adobe Framemaker	800	W M O	g t	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no	21
Adobe Pagemaker	520	W M O	g t w	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no	20
Astound Dynamite	125	W	g t	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no	-
Book Generator	27- 97	W	g h t w	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	8	yes	7
DesktopAuthor	127- 1500	W	g t	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	no	-
Easy Ebook Creator	20	W	g h t	-	no	-	-	-	yes	no	
Ebook Pack Express	29- 79	W	g h t	yes	no	yes	-	yes	yes	no	
eBook Edit Pro	78	W	g h t v	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	4	no	-
eBook Gold	97	W	g h	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	5
EBook Pro	197	W	g h t v	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	18	yes	-
eBooks Writer	129	W	g h t	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	5	no	6
Exbook	0-50	W	g h t	yes	no	no	no	-	yes	no	23
Express Collage	30	W	g h t	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes	no	
Fast Ebook Compiler	40	W	g h t	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Flip Publisher	30	W	g h t	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no	
eBookPaper	47	W	g h t	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	9	no	-
HTML2Exe	39	W	h	yes	no	no	no	yes	11	no	-
Hyper Publish	179	W	h t g	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no	5

Hypermaker	149	W	a g h t v	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	5	no	5
Keeboo Creator	50–320	W	h t	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	22
Microsoft Reader Add-In	0	W P	w	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	no	14
Mobipocket	30–149	D	g h p t w	yes	no	no	no	no	yes 8	no	-
Natata	40	W	g h t	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no	
NeoBook	200	W	g t	yes	no	yes	15	15	15	no	15
Presenter	125	W	g t	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	12
tk3 Author 1.0	149 or 59/yr	W M	g t v	yes	no	yes	16	16	16	16	16
Web Compiler	160	W	g t v	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	17
WebEx	40	W	g t h	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	
Webpacker	99–149	W	g h t v	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	5	no	-
WinEbook	40	W	g t w	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	no	-
yBookmaker	0	W	h t	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	no	-
key											
viewing platform	M=Macintosh, W=Windows, O=Palm OS and PocketPC, P=Pocket PC 2002, D=PDA formats including PalmOS, Windows CE/PocketPC, Psion, Epoch R5 and R6, Franklin eBookman,										
input as	a=Acrobat pdf files, g=graphic files, h=HTML, p=MS Powerpoint t=text or rtf files, w=MS Word										
notes	1=fully featured including support for XML, asian fonts and third-party security, 2=security features include time-expiry and individual passwords, 3=multimedia add-on for \$50, 4=security features including time expiry and restriction to single user machine, 5=security includes password protection, restriction to single user machine and time-expiry, 6=marketing software available for extra \$120, 7=e-book cover generating software available for \$97, 8=security features include restriction to single user machine, 9=security features include password protection of book and pages, time expiry and number of viewings, 10=e-Book reader available for Windows and Macintosh platforms, 11=security includes password protect of whole document and time-expiry, 12=essentially a complete multimedia presentation package, 13=£50 add-on allows export to Flash, 14=includes site to market your books when you purchase Pocket PC 2002, 15=additional plug-ins for security (\$20) and increased functionality (\$30), 16=security features include password protection, time expiry, restriction to single user, disable printing and disable copying, 17=supports IE4+ but not NN browsers. 18=security via internet tracking, 19=wide range of add-on programs available, 20= advanced page layout program that can save in Acrobat format, 21=advanced page layout program that exports to pdf, .LIT and Palm Reader formats, 22=compiles from internet searches 23=autosale feature: registration at manufacturer's website.										

You'll also find the following useful:

**eBook.** Answers.com short but useful introduction.

**Ebook Compilers.** Short list of e-book generating software.

**Microsoft Reader.** Information on the product and a free plug-in to convert MS Word documents into MS Reader files viewable on a PC and PocketPC 2002.

**Mobipocket.** Software to convert text, graphics, MS Word and Powerpoint documents into PDA format, including PalmOS, Windows CE/PocketPC, Psion, Epoch R5 and R6, and Franklin eBookman. \$149.

**Palm OS and Pocket PC Software.** Information on and coding required to make e-books in Palm OS and Windows CE/Pocket PC formats.

**Create PDF.** Converts (on-line) most files to pdf format. \$10/month or \$100/year. Currently available only in USA and Canada.

**eBook Express.** Converts (on-line) most files to .lit format for Microsoft Reader viewing. Free.

**eReader Pro.** Software for the Palm, Macintosh and Windows operating systems. \$10.

**GoHTML.** Converts text and word processor files to pdf or HTML formats.

**PrintToPDF.** Converts text files to pdf format (but without security features). For Mac OS7–9 platforms. \$20.

**Reader Works.** Software to convert various documents to Microsoft Reader format.

**Rudenko Bookreader.** Gives the VDU a book-like appearance. Free.

**Tiny eBook Reader.** Reads .txt, .html, .zip and Lit formats on the PocketPC. \$14.

**Win2PDF.** Converts text files to pdf format (but without security features). For Windows platform only. \$35. Pro version (with security features) is \$69.

**PDS Information.** Handy information on e-book software and accessories for hand-held devices.

### 6.3.3. Flash Books

While not creating e-books strictly, the following programs convert Microsoft documents (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) into Flash files that can be incorporated in HTML pages, added to **Flash** or **Swish** introductions or sent as email enclosures. Quality is excellent, the files are remarkably small, and the Flash document folders produced come with sizing, page view and word search controls. Both programs have a free trial version or period.

**Adobe Flashpaper.** Creates documents in Flash and PDF formats. Preserves original tables, fonts, graphics, page numbers and hyperlinks. \$79. No security features (you'll have to use third-party programs like **Flash Protection Gold** and **swfProtect**). Not being developed further, and difficult to purchase outside the USA.

**Print2Flash.** As Flashpaper but 1. does not create PDF formats, 2. does not preserve hyperlinks and 3. does provide some security features. The Free version is marked as such. The Basic version (\$60) removes the free label. The Pro version (\$80) has additional features (restrict copying and printing, remove buttons).

## 6.4. AUDIO BOOKS

In marked contrast to e-book readers, MP3 players have opened a new digital age in audio books.

You can make an e-book available in MP3 format by:

- a. recording yourself or someone else reading the text—either directly into MP3 format, or via WAV audio files. Software exists for both direct recording and WAV-MP3 format conversion.
- b. using audio software that automatically reads .txt, .doc or .html files.

The first option gives by far the better result, and you may want to employ a professional narrator. Very broadly, a text is read at 145 words/minute, and one minute of recording MP3 will produce a file size of 0.5 MB. A 75,000-word novel will therefore take some 8.6 hours to read and require 260 MB to store on disk.

To prevent 'piracy' you will have to install DMR: third parties can provide this, but it's expensive and restricts your market.

### Downloading Your Audio Book

1. MP3 music (which includes most audio books) is supplied in two forms:
  - a. By subscription. You pay a monthly fee, can download and play as much as you like, but you cannot burn the tracks onto a CD for later use: you can only play your music while the subscription lasts. MP3's rating of services now available:

Product name	MP3 Editors' rating
Rhapsody 3.0	8.0
Napster	7.8
Yahoo Music Unlimited 1.1	7.0
Virgin Digital with Red Pass	6.7



MTV Urge	8.0
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b. By purchase. You pay item for item for what you download. More expensive, but you can make backup copies and save on CD. Popular distributors include: Audio LunchBox, BuyMusic, eMusic, iTunes, Live Downloads, MSN, Napster, Rhapsody, Sony Connect, Virgin Digital Music Store, Wal-Mart Music Downloads, and Yahoo.

Hardware is an added complication. The only MP3 Players listed as supporting iTunes, for example, are **Apple iPod**, **Apple iPod Video**, **Apple iPod Nano**, **Apple iPod Shuffle**, and **Motorola Rokr** (though you can convert the iTunes file to another format with something like BlazeMedia Pro).

2. Added to this complexity are the different file types and bit rates employed by the distributors, which also affects your choice of **MP3** hardware. The different formats:

Music store/service	File type(s)	DMR	Download bit rate	Streaming bit rate
<b>Apple iTunes</b>	AAC	Yes	128Kbps	n/a
<b>Napster</b>	WMA	Yes	192Kbps	192Kbps
<b>Rhapsody</b>	RAX (Harmony)	Yes	192Kbps	160Kbps (hi-fi)/64Kbps (lo-fi)
<b>Yahoo Music</b>	WMA	Yes	192Kbps	128Kbps
<b>MSN Music</b>	WMA	Yes	192Kbps	n/a
<b>Musicmatch</b>	WMA	Yes	160Kbps	128Kbps
<b>Wal-Mart Music</b>	WMA	Yes	128Kbps	n/a
<b>BuyMusic</b>	WMA	Yes	128Kbps for most; select songs at 256Kbps	n/a
<b>Virgin Digital</b>	WMA	Yes	128Kbps	128Kbps
<b>Sony Connect</b>	ATRAC3	Yes	132Kbps	n/a
<b>eMusic</b>	MP3	No	VBR (192Kbps to	n/a

			320Kbps)	
Audio Lunchbox	MP3 and OGG	No	192Kbps VBR	n/a
Live Downloads	FLAC	No	Lossless	n/a

To check hardware compatibility, go to [CNet](#), select the service, and click on each of the listed players to get brief specifications.

## Audio Book Sources

[AudioBook Reference Guide](#). Tenth edition: \$50. Site also has reviews of audio books from some 20 publishers.

[eBookMall](#). List 150,000 titles and offers publishing services (\$245/title/format).

[Buy Audio Books](#). Short listings of cassette and CDs at £1/each, listed by author and genre.

[AudioBooks.org](#). Good listing of audio book sources: several languages, commercial and free.

[Audible](#). Sell audio books in iTunes format: 30,000 titles.

[Naxos Audio Books](#). Good range of titles, educational and popular.

[Orion Books](#). UK publisher with over 3500 titles.

[Random House](#). Search with 'audio books'. Over 1000 titles available.

[Chivers](#). BBC publishing company with 10,000 titles.

[Talking Bookshop](#). Both MP3 downloads and CDs.

[iPrepress](#). Sell textbook and other audiobooks for the iPod.

[Calibre](#). UK cassette library for visually impaired.

[eBay](#). Audio books at competitive prices.

[Fictionwise](#). Republishes books in electronic form.

## Audio Software

[DailyMP3](#). Good range of software with downloadable samples.

[MP3 Machine](#). Good range of software in helpful categories.

[MPEG](#). Basic but informative site with extensive listings.

[Hitsquad](#). Free, shareware and commercial software for MP3 recording and editing.

[MightSoft](#). Audio software generally.

[NCH](#). Excellent range of commercial software for most audio tasks.

[Audioholics](#). Home theatre systems reviewed.

[MP3-Converter](#). MP3 software for Linux platforms.

[TechBuilder](#). Practical article on MP3 music serving.

[Verbose](#). Text to speech converter: from \$28.

[Text Aloud](#). Text to speech converter with wide range of voices: from \$30.

[BlazeMP](#). Converts DRM-protected WMA files to WAV, OGG, MP3 etc. formats: \$50.

**Blaze Media Pro.** Converts between most audio and video file formats: \$50.

**CD Freaks.** Music download and conversion: technical details and software.

**SwiftDisc.** Simple software to burn audio and DVD disks: \$20.

**Podcasting News.** Articles and resources for making recordings and podcasts.

**Transom.** Simple instructions on adding streaming MP3 to your webpages.

**iTunes Partnering.** Various schemes to market iTunes products and sell your own.

**TradeBit.** Using MP3 on RSS/XML feeds.

## 6.5. OTHER E-BOOK READERS

Kindle is by far the most popular format, but a decade ago saw a more crowded market, as the list below indicates. A few alternatives to Kindle still exist, or turn up in computer auctions. You are probably better off sticking to Kindle, but for the record we present the situation of yesteryear, where the listings feature:

e-book readers proper (items 1 to 11)

pda units with some text display (items 12-13)

portable CD players (item 14)

readers for the visually impaired (items 15-19)

MP3 players (items 20-24)

portable VDU unit (item 25)

and ultra-small laptops (items 26-28)

The listing for e-book readers proper is as complete as we can make it at present, but more models exist for other categories.

e-book reader	diagonal screen-size (inches)	screen dpi	body dimensions (inches)	weight (oz)	storage/ battery life	e-book formats	retail price (US\$)
<b>iLiad 0100</b>	8.1	1024 x 768	8 x 7	13.7	20 hrs	PDF, XHTML, TXT, and MP3	around \$800
<b>Cybook</b>	10.1	600 x 800	8 x 10 x 1	35.2	3-6 hours	PDF, HTML, RTF and TXT	\$400-500
<b>Hiebook</b>	8	320 x 480	4.5 x 5.8 x 0.7	8.8	10 hrs	EMOS	\$250 (\$100)

							on eBay)
Sony eBook Reader	6	600 x 800	5 x 7.5 x 0.5	10.6	15 books	PDF, HTML and TXT in time	\$350
Franklin eBookman	6.1	240 x 200	5.2 x 3.4 x 0.7	6.5	-	Mobipocket	\$100-180
Kindle	6.0	600 x 800	7.5 x 5.3" x 0.7	10.3	one week	unstated	\$399
RCA REB1100/Gemstar	5.6	-	6 x 4	17	8-12 hrs	Rb Rocket	\$300 (\$180 on eBay)
Ectaco Jetbook	5.0	Reflective TFT	6.0 x 4.3. x 0.5	7.5	4 hours	.TXT, .PDF, .JPG, .GIF, MP3	\$350
eBookwise	5.6	-	6 x 4	17	15 hrs	HTML, RTF and DOC	(\$115 on eBay)
Argosy EB683	6.5	480 x 640	7 x 5.3 x 0.7	10.6	15,000 pages	DOC, PDF, EBK, MP3	\$180
Easyread	9.1	-	7.4 x 5.8 x 0.8	12.3	18,000 pages	EBK	\$180
Sigma	11.8	1024 x 768	11.5 x 8.7 x 0.5	17.6	-	-	\$230
Amida Simputer	3.8	240 x 320	5.6 x 2.8 x 0.8	7.3	-	MP3 + X Windows	\$240-480
Tapware Zodiac	3.8	480 x 320	5.6 x 3.1 x 0.55	-	16 hrs	Palm OS 5.2	\$300-400
Portable CD Players	0	-	5.5 x 5.5 x 1.1	8	12 hrs +	MP3, ATRAC3plus	\$20-80
Book Courier	0	-	5 x 2.4 x 1	-	-	MP3, Audible, DOC, Daisy	\$379
Kurzweil 1000	0	-	-	-	-	MP3, WAV	\$995
Victor Reader Wave	2.4	-	6 x 5.5 x 1.3	10.6	10 hrs	MP3, Daisy	\$325
Victor Reader	0	-	9.5 x 8.3 x 1.7	42.2	3 hrs	MP3, Daisy	\$485
Book Port	0	-	4.7 x 2.7 x 1	-	60 hrs	MP3, Daisy	\$395
Apple iPod	2.5	320 x 240	3.3 x 1.0 x 0.3	0.8-5.5	12-14 hrs	text clippings only	\$150-400
Argosy MP180	2.1	-	2.5 x 3.9 x 0.7	5.1	13 hrs	MP3 WMA	-
Nomad MuVo	1.1	96 x 32	1.4 x 2.9 x	1.5	18 hrs	WMA DRM, ADPCM,	\$70

			0.6			MP3,	
Creative Zen	1.7	-	2.3 x 3.9 x 0.6	5.8	20 hrs	WMA, MP3, WAV	\$200
Archos AV500	4	480 x 272	10.5 x 7.2 x 5.0	51.2	4.5/15 hrs	MP3, WMA, WAV	\$500
Flybook	9.2	1024 x 600,	9.3 x 6.1 x 1.2	43.3	3 hrs	all windows	\$2,600
Sony VAIO VGN-SZ1VP	13.3	1280 x 800	12.4 x 9.2 x 1.3	59.5	7 hrs	all windows	\$2,400
OQO Pc Tablet	5	800 x 480	4.9 x 3.4 x 0.9	14	3 hrs	Windows Tablet Pc	\$2,000
Flipstart	5.6	1024 x 600	5.8 x 4.0 x 1.5	16	2 hrs	Windows XP	around \$2000
Key	- indicates no information currently available						

## 6.6. DESKTOP AUTHOR

**DeskTop Author** is an electronic publishing program that lets you create 3D page-turning digital web-books in the form of e-brochures, multimedia presentations, digital photo albums or surveys. The web-book can be presented as web pages, or as stand-alone e-book for users to download and view on their PC. Since its inception five years ago, the price has risen from US \$87 to \$165 (\$204 if you include two major upgrades) but its features have been greatly enhanced to include multimedia, on-line forms, on-line editing and seamless ecommerce.

Desktop Author is an unpretentious program, appears to work well, and only occasionally requires text to be input again. It comes with software to automatically create supporting HTML pages and upload all necessary files to the website.

A brief but useful review is to be found on [KickStartNews](#), but we add a few notes on points not entirely clear, or not covered sufficiently on the Desktop Author website.

The greatest shortcoming for many will be the limited layout facilities. Fonts are not embedded, so you will have to use common typefaces or risk your e-book not being universally readable. There is no kerning, no adjusting the line spacing (leading), and paragraph inset only works on regular text, not multipage text flow. Page numbering is primitive, through a work-around given on the site. To judge from the users' forum, there are no plans to immediately address these issues. The program only works on the Windows platform, not Mac or Linux.

On the plus side, Desktop Author allows you to disable printing or copying of e-book, create on-line forms, and employ text that can be edited by the viewer. You can make pages or sections of pages invisible by using the transparency feature, which is useful for half-spreads like covers.

Examples on [site](#) show what the program can achieve. Many will have been crafted textbox by textbox, page by page, but DTP packages work much the same way.

All the information needed to run the program is provided by the user manual plus on-line tutorials. Additional matters are covered by the user

forum. Threads are basic, though the program hardly needs explanation. You can consult manual, videos and forums before you buy the program.

Teething difficulties with digital rights management (on-line registration of web-books) seem to have been sorted out, and we purchased a web-book without difficulty. We read the free section of the locked web-book, continued to the section requiring payment, and input our credit card details. Once these were accepted, the web-book was automatically unlocked, and could be copied and used in any folder on our PC. The unlocked copy could also be e-mailed and copied to other PCs, but immediately reverted to its locked form. Registration took less than a minute.

The processing power needed to compile a web-book is modest. We compiled a 78,000-word novel (one cover illustration) in 4 minutes on a 3 GHz machine running XP Professional with 1 GB RAM.

In comparing DeskTop Author to Adobe Acrobat, you'll recall that Acrobat is not a page layout program, is more expensive, and does not offer PC-specific password protection. By way of compensation, Acrobat will preserve sophisticated layouts, and provides audio text reading with its free viewer.

**PDF2PageTurn** is similar to Desktop Author but converts PDF documents to Desktop Author equivalents. It is much easier to use but note:

- fonts, tables, page numbers and graphics are preserved, but not hyperlinks.
- The user interface is not intuitive. To create files on your PC for subsequent FTP upload you need to 1. chose Advanced Mode, 2. click 'Browse', select the PDF file and click 'Open', 3. ignore 'Setup where to store uploaded files' (i.e. leave the entry fields blank), 4. enter information for Title, Keywords and Description, 5. click 'Convert and/or Upload', 6. 'Export' the converted file that appears in 'Processed DPF files (previously converted and uploaded)' to a folder of your choice.
- there is no seamless ecommerce facility.

The program costs \$65, and comes with a free trial period. Examples on the PDF2PageTurn site show what is possible, and we experienced no problems once we'd got the hang of the user interface.

## 6.7. WRITING FOR THE KINDLE PLATFORM

Affordable tablets, and specific ebook readers offered by Amazon, Apple, Sony, and others have finally made epublising an exciting and rapidly expanding field. The 2010 US ebook market share was 6.2%, with some 950,000 titles available. The corresponding figures for the UK were 6% and approx. one million titles. Stand-alone Kindle books (i.e. without a paper version) are generally under \$5, and in the \$1-1.50 range for educational books in India. eBook versions of conventional books are generally 55-60% of cover price in the UK and USA, but some 80-90% in Europe. China is a large potential market, with €8.2 billion in annual book sales, but only 200,000 ebook titles currently available. Media Console and similar systems have greatly helped ebook distribution to libraries, schools and other outlets.

Kindle books are electronic documents made popular by Amazon's Kindle ebook reader, of which over three million units had been sold by 2010. Though the Kindle Fire reads .pdf documents reasonably well (but for annotation), but other Kindle readers do not. The .azw format allows digital rights protection. Equally popular are the .mobi and .epub formats which can be read by most tablets, and an application even enables a Kindle book or Nook book to be read on an iPad, laptop, iPhone, iPod Touch or Android phone. Collaborative publishing environments like Booktype and Inkling habitat allow automatic publishing to print, Amazon, lulu.com, iBooks and almost any ebook reader format.

Kindle books can be made from these file formats: Word (.DOC, .DOCX), Rich Text Format (.rtf), Text (.txt), PDF, Scan of print book, FrameMaker, InDesign, PageMaker, QuarkXPress XML (such as DocBook, etc.), HTML, XHTML and EPUB (also known as IDPF or OEB). All generally need to be reformatted, with layouts considerably simplified. You can do this yourself following Amazon's Kindle Publishing Guidelines and submitting the file to Amazon, by using software, or employing third party conversion companies.



Amazon are reported to now employ quality filters, and the days of publishing content scraped from Wikipedia and free web pages are probably over. Amazon (and no doubt Apple) have a reputation to maintain, and look for authority, good writing and information not readily available elsewhere.

## References and Resources

*The Present and Future of Digital Publishing* by Joshua Gans. [Harvard Business Review](#). February 2011.

*Improved Reading of Free E-Books, As The Open Library Launches a New E-Reader* by Audrey Watters. [ReadWrite](#). December 2010.

*E-Readers Everywhere: The Inevitable Shakeout* by Douglas MacMillan. [Business Week](#). January 2010

[Amazon Kindle](#). Technical aspects of Kindle ebook readers.

[Electronic Book, e-Book, eBook, eJournals, and Electronic Journal Watch](#). Plain presentation but good articles and listings.

[Google's e-Book Store](#). Large store but not yet available to all countries.

[Kindle Direct Publishing](#). Amazon's gateway to self-publishing books for sale in the Kindle Store.

[Amazon Kindle Publishing Guidelines](#). Detailed guide in pdf format on typesetting requirements.

*Review: My Amazon Kindle Single publishing experiment* by Larry Dignan. [ZNet](#). January 2011. Introduction providing the essentials.

[Kindle Publishing: A Step by Step Guide](#). 2014 results.

[How I Sold 7000 Kindle Books](#). Also covers realities.

*How to Publish Your Book on Amazon Kindle*. [Lifehacker](#). January 2011. Simple steps approach.

*How to Publish Your Own Amazon Kindle Ebook* by Tony Bradley. [PCWorld](#). August 2011. Focuses on using the Amazon Direct Kindle service.

*How To Self Publish Your Book with Amazon's CreateSpace* by Y. Ziv. [Mashable](#). July 2011. Clearly explained.

*How to Make Money Fast – with Amazon – 10 Step Tutorial* by H. Mann. [HonestHolly](#). March 2011. Walks you through the steps.

[Bookbaby](#). One of many conversion companies. Fees from \$99-\$249 depending on formats needed.

*How to Publish and Distribute Ebooks to the Apple iBookstore*.

[Smashwords](#). Conversion and distribution services, but provide many free guides.

*Comparison of e-book formats*. Extended [Wikipedia](#) article.

*Make Your Own E-Books with Pandoc* by Lincoln Mullen. [Chronical of Higher Education](#). March 2012.

[Sigil eBook Editor](#). For the mobi and epub formats. Free. Runs on Windows, Mac and Linux platforms.

[Mobipocket eBook Creator](#). Free, and includes DRM and Emulator to test and preview the eBooks created.

[Calibre](#). Similar to Mobipocket software. Both work best on documents with simplified layouts.

[Online Convert](#). Free online conversion between ebook formats (including text to epub).

[ToolBook 11.5](#). Creates interactive content, quizzes, assessments, and simulations: p.o.a.

[Dozuki](#). Produces rich media manuals, etc. From \$49/month.

[Inkling Habitat](#). Cloud-based publishing environment for interactive content, particularly textbooks.

[Booktype](#). Open source, collaborative publishing environment: free for 1 book, \$16/month for 50.

[OverDrive Media Console](#). Free application used for digital distribution to libraries, schools, and retailers. Reads most ebook formats.

*eBook Publishing*. Review of the field: technicalities and statistics.

## 6.8. DIGITAL PUBLISHING PLATFORMS

Many companies now offer digital publishing platforms. You supply the content, and they do the rest, including chase up subscriptions. Though many are aimed at the corporate publisher, some are in fact free, at least modest levels of use. They offer far too much space for a single author to use, but writing and poetry societies may like to consider this option. Platforms are certainly easier to maintain than large websites, though again need marketing effort.

A few resources:

7 Best Digital Publishing Platforms for Your Business. [Kitaboo](#).

Four Free Digital Magazine Publishing Sites That Can Help You Share Your Message and Your Passion. <http://thefutureofink.com/digital-magazine-publishing-sites/>

20 Excellent Digital Publishing Platforms For Mobile And Desktop.  
<http://magazine.readz.com/digital-publishing-platforms-tools>

Joomag. <https://www.joomag.com/>

Issuu. <https://issuu.com/>

Yudu. <http://www.yudu.com/>

## 7. INTERNET PUBLISHING

Internet publishing is often seen as second best, as something to consider when a traditional publisher cannot be found. In truth, while no doubt much second-rate material does get put up as webpages, the internet also contains some of the most enchanting, informative and on occasion life-saving material to be found in the media world. The internet increasingly serves special interest groups, the arts, political commentary and indeed anything that lacks the mass-market appeal of traditional commercial publishing.

You can use the internet as:

- a way of getting media attention.
- your main literary medium: you write for the internet
- a selling medium: you produce 'pay to view' pages.
- publicity for your specific works, providing excerpts or sample chapters.
- supplementary income through advertising or affiliate sales.

Blogs and websites are similar, but the skills involved are as follows:

aspects	websites	blogs
pagebuild expertise needed	moderate to extensive	practically none
graphic design skills needed	moderate to extensive	practically none
security aspects to be covered	moderate	basic
pay-to-view pages	easy	more difficult
making some money (but not much) through advertising and affiliate sales	easy	easy
time spent writing copy	moderate	extensive
site marketing through search engine optimisation	extensive	extensive

## 7.1. WEBSITES

Websites and blogs have many advantages:

- whereas you'll be lucky to sell more than a few hundred copies of a first novel or poetry chapbook, work on your website can be read by thousands every month.
- costs are a few dollars/month only.
- lavish colour and design, much too expensive for the average book, come as standard.
- pages can be updated as often as you wish.
- you can add a subscription service in the form of pay to view pages.
- with minor changes, your site can be compiled into an e-book for sale or easier distribution.
- website costs can be recouped by subtle advertising and affiliate sales.

The disadvantage is the marketing needed to get your site noticed among the thousands, or indeed millions, that offer literary material today. Many strategies exist, but all boil down to two things: having good content and making your site friendly to the search engines. Large companies devote much time and effort to these matters, and so, without spending a fortune, must you.

### 7.1.1. Content

By content is meant more than a few articles, or even your life's work. Your pages have to be genuinely useful to thousands of viewers, giving them what they can't readily find elsewhere. That need is yours to find, unfortunately—to research by thinking what you yourself are looking for, what fellow writers talk about, what other sites don't currently offer. Many niches have now been filled, and the obvious gaps that still exist—reviews of popular literature, a searchable index of specialist ezines—require a lot of work. You may want to team up with fellow writers or enthusiasts.

### 7.1.2. Search-Engine-Friendly Site

Search engine promotion is dealt with later, but all savvy companies (though unfortunately few literary sites) start by doing the following:

- decide what market their site is going to serve, and arrange for relevant content to be spread over 30+ pages, each page being written about a particular theme or keyword.
- use software to find keywords which receive good traffic but don't face impossible odds (no more than ten to twenty thousand competing sites in Google).
- keep searching for keywords and adjusting plans until their site can be represented by 30+ optimal keywords.
- write pages about those keywords, i.e. each page has proper content but also weaves in the optimal keyword in the required place and the correct number of times.

That may sound complicated, but it's only what thousands of webmasters do every day. And without that effort, frankly, your site is not going to be ranked well by the natural search engines and receive decent traffic.

### 7.1.3. Design

Search engines don't care about the visual aspects of a site—indeed can't detect them—but your visitors will. Make your site pleasing to look at, and easy to navigate, but don't go overboard on graphics—especially Flash animations, fancy fonts and the like. Your library will have books on graphic and possibly web design, but you can learn by simply looking at good coffee-table books. Small graphics, tables and cascading style sheets will serve you well.

If you do need royalty-free photos, consider these sources.

**Getty Images.** Over 100,000 high-quality photos supplied on CD. Also fonts.

**iStockPhotos.** High-quality royalty-free photos: from \$10 for 20 credits.

**PictureQuest.** Supplies nearly 500,000 images from 14 royalty-free providers and 35 rights-protected agencies.

**Photos.com.** 80,000 non-royalty photos and photo objects. One month's subscription is \$129.95.

Design is a personal matter, but these sites seem to us worth emulating if you want something striking:

**Poetry Society of America**. Clean design with repeated motif for continuity.

**The Margins**. Simple colours and textures, mixture of reading and display fonts, good use of photos.

**Nakahara Chua**. Rather complicated design behind strong visuals.

**Shearsman**. Breaks the rules with rich colours and dark backgrounds.

## 7.1.4. Building the Site

### 7.1.4.1. Basics

Build is straightforward, and you'll be familiar with collections of HTML pages grouped around some URL like <http://www.mysitename.com>. Websites can be ambitious, with stunning graphics, animation, sound, database search systems, customer recognition and a good many other features. But they don't need to be. More can be less, and 'wow' sites will only hinder visitors getting to your content, and make promotion more difficult.

Your site still needs to look professional, which means you can:

- hire a web design company. Thousands exist, conveniently collected into directories. Think hundreds of dollars. Also consider using freelance staff in India or the Philippines, who can be much cheaper. Look in [Craigs List](#), [Elance](#), [Guru](#), [Backpage](#), [Scriptlance](#) and [RentaCoder](#).
- build your own pages using HTML-editing software. Easy-to-use editors exist for all pockets, some of them shareware or even free.
- use 'out-of-the-box' sets of templates.
- rent space on a web-hosting company offering site build on-line. Much like the out-of-the-box solution, the hosting company gives you templates and wizards to create a distinctive and professional-looking site. Unfortunately, in most cases, you can't migrate that site to third parties offering better hosting terms.

## Finding an URL or Internet Domain

The URL (uniform resource locator) is your address or domain on the internet. You'll want something that identifies your company and possibly your line of business.

You visit an on-line company offering domains for sale. If you're a commercial concern, you'll go for a .com, or possibly a .biz domain. Otherwise .org or .info may be more suitable. You'll try possible names in the search box provided until you find a suitable one available.

Suppose your poetry magazine is Late Night Cafe. You find that late-night-cafe.org has been taken, and so has late-night-cafe.com. But late-night-mag.info is still free, and you therefore take that domain for a few dollars a year. An on-line credit card facility accepts your order, and an e-mail a few minutes later confirms the purchase. Just as soon as ownership is recorded by the relevant authorities, usually within a couple of days, the domain is yours to go on with to the next stage.

## Hosting Your Site

You're halfway there. You have the site built, and a domain name to host it under. Now you have to upload the site to a web-hosting company that will display it on the internet, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Thousands of such web-hosting companies exist, and there are now web-hosting directories that enable you to select by cost, platform type, and facilities—all of which are explained by on-site notes. You make your choice of hosting company, click through to their site, pay their hosting fee, and can then upload your site to that company's server. The hosting company will explain how. It's simple, but you'll need a cheap or free piece of software called a ftp program. This you can obtain from any software supplier, and use it to maintain your site thereafter. Once uploaded, your site goes 'live'. You're on the internet.

Of course if your site has been built by a web design company, then they'll upload it for you. And if you've built your site on-line, all you need do is e-mail the hosting company that you're ready to go live.

## Designing the Website

Web site design serves two purposes:



1. gives an attractive look to your pages, increasing customer confidence and trust, and
2. makes pages friendly to the search engines.

Professional web site design will be too expensive for many literary sites, but time spent with graphic design books, and looking at other sites will pay dividends. A decent website has to :

- have attractively written and useful content.
- follow a consistent design scheme and copy style.
- be laid out intuitively, with clear navigational elements.
- still look good in 256 colour monitor displays.
- display properly in the main browsers and their usual versions.

## Web Design Resources

You'll find helpful advice and examples here:

**AlertBox**. Jacob Neilson's twice-monthly (free) article on web usability.

**BigNoseBird**. Handy collection of HTML tips, scripts and articles on web design and hosting matters.

**Really Big**. Over 5000 graphics, HTML script and other resources for the web developer.

**Tips and Tricks**. Advice and tips on building good web pages.

**User Interface Engineering**. How to design a customer-friendly site.

**WebDesign**. Excellent advice and resources.

**WebDeveloper**. Advice and tutorials on web builds, marketing and programming languages.

**Web Monkey**. Popular tutorials on most aspects of webdesign and marketing.

## Page Ranking Resources

Though not entirely free any more (i.e. with 'pay per click' services), search engines still provide the best promotion. Help your ranking, therefore, by ensuring your pages have optimal design.

**Dr. Watson**. Free on-line service checks links, word counts, browser compatibility and HTML coding of your pages.

**FaganFinder**. Handy free tool that analyses your pages for links, word popularity and readability.

**LinkSleuth**. Excellent free software for checking links.

**NetMechanic.** Various packages to check links, coding, appearance under different browsers.

**Website Optimization.** Tools and services to improve site design and click-through appeal.

**Website Test Tools.** Good listing of tools and services for website testing and management.

### 7.1.4.2. HTML Editors

Our own experiences suggest that you'd do best with an old version of Dreamweaver or GoLive bought second-hand on eBay or your local computer auction. But if you're just doing the odd site and want something cheap and intuitive, then consider:

**Basic Web Editor.** Not WYSIWYG but has wizards for tables. \$25.

**PageBreeze HTML Editor.** Both text and WYSIWYG. \$30.

**Quickie Webpage.** Uses wizards to create websites. \$30.

**AiMCo.** Text-based editor with WYSIWYG mode. £39.

**Best Address HTML Editor.** Split-screen approach. \$45.

**Coffe Cup HTML Editor 2006.** Popular WYSIWYG program. \$49.

**EZ Generator.** No HTML to learn, and access to 15,000 royalty-free photos. \$99.

The following are free and create satisfactory pages:

**AlleyCode.** Includes XHTML tags and CSS. Not WYSIWYG.

**AceHTML.** Basic version free: Pro is from \$30. Not WYSIWYG.

**Amaya.** A more advanced package.

**HTML Kit.** Basic program free, plug-ins cost \$55.

**Matizha.** Text-based editor with WYSIWYG mode.

**Mozilla Composer.** WYSIWYG web editor with a word processor interface. Not WYSIWYG.

**Nvu.** Fairly intuitive.

**Selida.** Not WYSIWYG but split-level viewing code editor.

Many more exist, as an internet search will show. Try a shareware version to ensure you're comfortable with the program before purchase. Visual (WYSIWYG: What You See Is What You Get) interfaces are easier to work with, and indeed what many professionals use for all but the tricky bits.

### 7.1.4.3. Webpage Templates

If you're staring at a blank page, or want to liven up your present site, then why not get off to a good start with HTML templates? A small selection:

**1stSiteFree.** Lists some 16 sites offering free templates.

**Boxed Art.** Thousands of templates and graphics for \$50/year.

**GoDaddy.** Over 470 templates plus 2500 photos. \$14.95, plus \$35 for first website you post.

**Layout Gala.** 40 free templates styled with CSS.

**OSWD.** Over 1600 free HTML templates.

**Template Foundry.** 100 stylish HTML templates for \$25. Also Flash and Photoshop templates.

**Template monster.** Over 2,000 templates, flash templates, logs and fonts. Various options: details on site.

## FTP Programs

Once you've designed your webpages, you'll need to upload them to the server. Many FTP programs are advertised on the internet, but all you need is something simple:

**AceFTP.** Basic but free.

**FileZilla.** Perhaps the best.

**WS\_FTP LE.** A long-time favourite.

**FTP Commander.** Has all you need and is free.

With CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) there's no reason your webpages can't be laid out to discriminating standards. You won't have the perfect typographic control a good DTP package provides, but you can (and should) set the following:

font type (to some extent: see below)

font size

font style

Kerning (letter spacing)

paragraph indent

text align (right, left, centre, justify)

word spacing

line spacing

margins

padding

borders

CSS can also be used to produce sophisticated layout, but you must understand CSS well if your pages are not to fall foul of different browsers and their versions.

### 7.1.4.4. Embedding Fonts

Suppose you want to use fonts on your webpages that users may not have installed on their PC? There are four ways of doing this:

- Create the text as graphics. Safe for small images, but whole pages created this way will be slow to download and may not print well.
- Embed the fonts in Flash movies. Not all visitors will have Flash installed, or will necessarily install the free viewer, even if you obligingly provide a link.
- Embed the fonts in HTML pages with links to fonts saved on your server. There were two approaches to font embedding, via Microsoft's free WEFT tool, and Bitstream's expensive TrueDoc tool. Both can still be used, but font embedding has not caught on—not all browsers will display the type properly, and you'll have to hand code (though it's not difficult).
- Create the page in MS Word and save as a web page. You'll need to embed fonts in the Word pages (Tools>Options>Print: tick the embed true fonts box). Word will create a reasonable copy of the original, though 1. the file sizes are large (slowing down page display), 2. the line spacing may not be preserved (you'll have to add CSS), 3. the HTML is not standard (difficult to modify later), and 4. a separate folder will be created to hold the font information (more to upload).
- Use **Google fonts**: the well-nigh universal solution nowadays.

Before going far along this road, you should see what can be done with the web-safe fonts everyone will have, i.e. Georgia and possibly Trebuchet for text, and Arial and Verdana for display and text. Remember that onscreen reading is not a pleasant experience, so 1. let users adjust text size on their browsers for easy reading, 2. keep line lengths short, 3. allow plenty of white space and 4. provide a printer-friendly version.

To put some meat on these bare notes:

#### Software to Create CSS Pages

**StyleMaster**. Advanced CSS editor. \$60. Best, but for CSS only.

**TopStyle Pro**. Advanced CSS and XHTML editor. \$80. Builds the whole page.

**Coffee Cup Style Sheet Maker**. Not as slick as the above, but adequate: \$34.

## Page Layout with CSS

**CSS Layout Techniques.** CSS layouts to borrow, plus useful CSS links.

**Page Layout with HTML.** Introduction, but in fact it's *not* easy. Experiment a bit.

## General Articles on Web Fonts

**Web Font Basics.** Will Harris article, useful though dated (2000).

**EsperoFonto.** Typeface selection system: free on-line tool.

**Fun with Fonts.** Articles and examples of work.

## Text as Graphics

**Fireworks.** Macromedia's popular program for creating text graphics. Consider an earlier or S/H version unless you're a professional web designer.

**ImageStyler.** Adobe equivalent.

## Text As Flash Movies

**Flash text effects.** One of many such tutorials on the web.

**Creating Flash text.** Extended series of tutorials on using Flash.

**Adobe Flash Professional.** CS3 package is \$699.

**Coffee Cup Website Font.** Inserts text in any of 1000 typefaces into your HTML pages: \$34. Note that CSS has only limited effect on tags so created, and long pages can be slow to display.

**Mix-Fx.** Creates Flash text effects without Macromedia's Flash software: \$27.

**Amara Software.** Several products for simple Flash effects: \$20–50.

**SWF Text.** Offers 160 text effects and 40 backgrounds: \$40.

**SwishMax2.** Creates whole Flash sites: easier to use than Macromedia Flash: \$150.

## Embedding Fonts

**Embedding Fonts in Your Web Pages.** All Graphic Design list of relevant sites.

**Font Embedding.** Short Article giving main points.

**How to Embed Font within Web Page/Email.** Short article and links.

**About Font Embedding.** Detailed Microsoft article.

**Embedding Fonts Tutorial.** Web Monkey article on the TrueDoc approach to font embedding.

**Web Embedding Fonts Tool.** Free Microsoft software.

**TrueDoc.** Bitstream's solution: some information but p.o.a.

## Google Fonts

**How to use Google Fonts in your next webdesign project:** stepwise guide.

**Google web designer help.** Introduction.

**Google fonts:** select from here.

**CSS Google Fonts.** Ww3 guide to correct code.

#### 7.1.4.5. Complex Page Layouts

Web pages can be created in these ways:

1. Create an appropriate graphic of the required size (usually with Photoshop and/Illustrator), slice into segments (e.g. with Firework's slice tool), export sliced segments as a web page, replace segments by text, and add the appropriate html, css and javascript.
2. Purchase commercially available templates and modify accordingly.
3. Create the page by nested HTML tables, adding graphic and text to cell elements.
4. As 3. but use CSS throughout (i.e. for layout as well as text).
5. Use a WYSIWYG editor (like Coffecup's VisualSite Designer or Webflow).

Approach 1 is the industry standard, is suitable for HTML, XHTML and XML pages, but needs good HTML skills. Remember that Google will now penalize pages that are slow, do not have SSL certificates and are not 'responsive', i.e. automatically adjusting to the viewing size, from large monitors that designers use down to mobile phones screens. Webpages today use CSS extensively and call third-party javascript libraries of functions.

Approach 2 is a good alternative, and the template will come with all the required HTML coding, CSS and javascript. Nonetheless, you will need graphic skills to generate the appropriate art-work, and reasonable coding skills to modify/update the template.

Approach 3 is no longer viable: the static page will be penalized for not being responsive.

Approach 4 is possible, but javascript is needed to make pages responsive.

Approach 5 needs careful thought. Simple programs like Visual Designer are only suitable for simple designs. There are many more **sophisticated programs** allowing online build, but generally allow the resulting website to be hosted only on their servers: you cannot migrate your build to other

hosting companies offering cheaper and more dependable services. **Webflow** does allow you to migrate the website built to other hosting companies, but the html of your build is not entirely standard, which may give problems when standards change, or javascript libraries are found to have security problems. You will then need some developer skills to tinker with the Webflow code, and may indeed have to rebuild the site on Webflow again — a nightmare scenario when hundred or thousands of pages have to be updated. All things considered, approaches 1 and 2 are the safest and cheapest in the long run. Web designers will prefer approach 1, while others with more modest skills will stick to approach 2.

#### 7.1.4.6. Hosting the Website

Cheap web hosting service or webpage hosting is what you'll see widely advertised on the web, and may be just what's wanted. But before signing up, read some of the articles listed below. You get what you pay for, largely, but your ideal requirements for a web hosting service may be detailed, perhaps like this:

- competitive prices
- good reputation: look for awards and genuine testimonials.
- uptime of 99.9% or better.
- 7/24 e-mail and telephone support.
- SSL (Secure Socket Layer) to provide security for payment transactions.
- adequate security measures.
- appropriate operating system (Unix, NT/Windows 2000, Frontpage, ColdFusion).
- direct feed of website data into accounting and inventory databases.
- Enough disk space, with opportunity to add more.
- sufficient bandwidth, with affordable increases.
- no more than 10 accounts on same server.
- on-line help: tutorial, manuals, control panel.
- detailed traffic statistics.
- regular site backup, preferably daily.
- opportunity to upgrade package, preferably to dedicated server.
- T3 connection (with no more than 30% average utilization).
- close to backbone (not many upstream providers).
- redundant connections (to minimize bottlenecks).
- backup power supplies, usually diesel generators.
- guarantees, e.g. free monthly trial.

fast and helpful response to detailed precontract questions.

No hosting of porn or gaming sites, or your site may be blacklisted by the search engines.

Consult the directories of hosting companies for helpful articles on requirements in this list, and security aspects:

## Cheap Web Hosting Service: Directories

### :US-Based Hosting Companies

**Compare Web Hosts.** Includes tutorial and directory of web designers.

**DotEasy.** Cheap/free webhosting and emails (without banner ads).

**Host Compare.** Wide choice, excellent articles and resources.

**Host Review.** Helpful articles. Over 1600 hosting plans listed.

**Top Hosts.** Leading directory with good articles and extensive listings.

**The Directory.** Internet resources: webhosting company by area code lookup in USA, Canada and Caribbean.

**Web Host Directory.** Hosting companies by type: ecommerce covered.

**Web Hosters.** Extensive searchable lists: also on-line tools to test your site.

### :Hosting Companies Outside the USA

**Host Index.** Worldwide listings, helpful articles and detailed ecommerce search

**HostSearch UK.** Directory of UK and European hosting companies.

**Hottest Hosts.** Helpful articles. Also listings for Canada and Europe.

**Top Hosts Australia** Directory for hosting companies in Australia and Singapore.

**Top Hosts Canada.** Directory for Canadian hosting companies.

**Top Hosts UK.** Directory for UK hosting companies.

**UK Host Search.** Searchable database of UK hosting companies.

US companies generally provide the better rates, but you may prefer a local or national company when it comes to telephone support. Unfortunately, neither directories nor comparisons are now over-reliable (i.e. too much chase the commission with their recommendations) but no hosting company survives for long by giving an appalling service. Use a large and well-established company, not one that promises 'a truly individual service.'

## Cheap Web Hosting Service

If you're in a hurry to find a cheap web hosting service, then consider one of these:

**123Ehost.** Basic hosting from \$4.17/month for 100 Mb and 3 GB transfer.

**Altair.** Basic hosting with MySQL database: from \$2.95/month for 50 Mb web space and 1 GB/month data transfer.



**Arrivo.** Basic hosting, but good value: from \$2.50/month for 25 Mb and 2 GB transfer.

**BlueHost.** 6 domains and 999 GB/month data transfer for \$7/month. Good (cPanel) control panel, but technical support slow and unhelpful.

**DWHS.** Single domain hosting \$3/month, and 3 domain hosting \$7/month. Excellent control panel but slow technical support.

**GoDaddy.** 5 GB webspace plus 250 GB transfer and 10 MySql databases: from \$3.56/month.

**Host Colour.** Basic hosting competitively priced from \$25/year with MySQL database. \$95/year package includes domain registration, 600 Mb webspace and 20 GB/month data transfer.

**HostMonster.** Unlimited domains and 999 GB/month data transfer for \$5/month. Good control panel.

**Hostony.** 10 domain package, MySQL database and 10 GB data transfer/month costs \$6.95/month. Emails slow, but good technical support.

**IndHosts.** Basic hosting at affordable prices. From \$12/year for 5 Mb disk space and 250 MB/month data transfer.

**iPowerWeb.** Packages from \$7.95/month and include free shopping cart, MySQL database and 500 Mb storage space.

### 7.1.5. Taking Money On the Website

An electronic payment solution allows you to take payment over the internet in two situations:

1. granting subscription to your pay-to-view pages
2. selling your book (electronic or traditional)

#### Simple Merchant Accounts

You must have a merchant account to process credit cards, and these may be either a retail merchant account or an ecommerce merchant account. If you operate on low volumes (e.g. selling a book or two a day), or face little competition (subscription to a specialist ezine), you can simply take the customer's credit card details by phone or encrypted e-mail, authenticate as convenient, and then e-mail details of delivery.

#### Electronic Payment Solution

Quite different is the ecommerce merchant account serving e-merchants who process credit cards on-line in realtime. Such electronic payment solutions provide customers with sale acceptances within a minute, and show the tax and shipment details. Sophisticated software is needed to

handle the transactions, and the perceived risks are greater—which means higher charges all round.

Nonetheless, taking credit cards on-line is essential for many e-businesses, and the greater costs are more than outweighed by the advantages:

- decisive edge on the competition.
- enhanced sales.
- greater protection from fraud.
- more flexibility in processing orders and invoicing the customer.
- lower costs once sales exceed \$1,000/month or so.

Studies suggest you'll lose 60–80% of sales if you can't take credit cards on-line.

#### 7.5.1.1 Internet Payment Service Providers

We strongly suggest that you don't get your own ecommerce merchant account, however, at least until sales warrant the added expense and hassle (you're responsible for keeping customer details secure), but use an Internet Payment Provider. Setup is generally easy (the IPP will generally do it for you at no additional cost), and transaction charges are reasonable. For all its problems, Paypal is well known and accepted, though many other internet payment service providers exist:

PSP	setup fee	monthly fees	transaction fees (from)		transaction fees (to)		extra fees for	notes
website	US \$	US \$	US cents	%	US cents	%	-	see key
2Checkout	49	-	45	5.5	45	5.5	manual setup	-
Adult Merchant Services	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	AS
AlfaBank	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	RBP
Alertpay	inquire	inquire	25	2.5	25	2.5	-	-
Alipay	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	CPP

Asianpay	0	0	39	2.0	39	4.7	-	ThPP
Bibit	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
BillJunction	Rs 225-1149	0	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	IPP
BillMatrix	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
Business America	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	BP
Card Accept	0	33	25	2.24	25	2.24	-	-
CashtoChina	-	-	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	CBP
Charge.com	0	26.95	25	2.25	25	2.25	merchant account, gateway, statements.	SC
Charge Gateway	150-400	35-295	10	-	50	-	-	-
	9.95	0-9.95	50	4.99	50	4.99	-	SC
	inquire	inquire	€2.33	-	€2.33	-	-	BP
	inquire	inquire	inquire		inquire	-	-	DPP
	19.95	19.95	35	2.9	35	2.9	-	-
ClickBank	50	0	100	7.5	100	7.5	-	SC
ClickPay	-	-	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	CBP
CCBill	0	0	-	11.5	-	14.5	European customers	-
Cyberplat	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	RBP
Dibspayment	€220-1080	€55-110	0	1.0	-	inquire	monthly minimum	SPP
Ecommerce Exchange	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
eNets	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
ePassporte	0	0-35	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	BP
ePay	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	BUP
Epoch Merchant Services	inquire	inquire	0	13	0	15	-	-
eProcessing Network	inquire	inquire	inquire	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	SC

Gate2Shop	-	-	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
GeldKart	inquire	inquire	-	0.3	-	inquire	-	-
Global Payment Services	inquire	20	34	2.19	35	2.19	-	-
Inpay	0	0	-	1.0	-	4.0	-	BP
InstaBill	0	49	50	2.35	50	2.35	payment gateway. international merchants	-
Internet Secure	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
Kagi	0	0	15	2.5	500	2.5	credit card processing	UC CD
Liberty Reserve	0	0	-	1.0	-	1.0	-	BP
Membership Plus	0	0	-	18	-	18	-	AS
Merchant Accounts CA	5-199	5-39	CA\$ 0.15	-	CA\$ 0.15	-	-	CPP
Moneta	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	BP
Merchant Services Bergen	0	10	35	2.19	35	2.19	-	-
Money Bookers	-	-	€0.13	-	€0.5	-	-	EB BP
Moneris	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	inquire	-	-
Multicards	25	49/yr	45	4.95	45	4.95	-	EB
NetBanx	-	-	£0.10	-	£0.45	1.9	monthly minimums	-
NetBilling	0	25	15	1.5	15	1.5	-	-
NorthStar Solutions	0	0	45	6.5	200	4.0	-	UC CD
Ogone	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	inquire	-	-
PayBox	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	FPP
PayByWeb	0	30	38	2.29	38	2.29	-	-

PayEasy	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	JPP
Paymate	-	A\$0-33	-	1.5	-	2.4	prepaid fees	A
PayPal	0	0	30	2.4	30	5.4	-	-
PayPoint	£125	£30	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
ProPay	0	35-300	25	2.69	35	3.75	-	EB
PaySimple	0	30	29	2.29	29	2.29	-	-
PayStation	NZ\$200	-	NZ\$0.1	-	NZ\$0.1	-	monthly minimum	NPP
RegNet	0	0	-	20.0	300	10.0	-	UC CD
RegSoft	9.95	0	300	-	-	8.9	-	UC CD
SetSystems	0	0	-	15.0	-	15.0	-	UC CD
Safecharge	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	POA
Secure Trading	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	BPP
ShareIt!	0	0	100	4.9	100	6.9	-	UC CD
SWReg	0	0	100	2.9	100	2.9	-	-
Take Cards Today	0	0	-	2.14	-	2.14	gateway. statement	-
United Bank	295	10	0	-	150	-	-	BP
Velocity Money	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	BP
VeriPayment	699	40	65	4.95	inquire	inquire	-	-
Verotel	0-1000	30	-	13.0	-	14.0	-	-
Web Money	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	RBP
Western Union	0	inquire	various rates	-	various rates	-	-	BP
WorldPay	£200	£30	£0.56	4.5	£0.56	4.5	-	-
Key	A=Australian IPSP. AS=specializes in adult sites. BP=bank payment system. BUP=Bulgarian IPSP (in Russian). BPP=British IPSP. CD supply service. CPP=Canadian IPSP. CBP=Chinese bank payment service. CPP=Chinese PayPal (in Chinese). DPP=Dutch IPSP. EB= specializes in eBay sales. FPP=French IPSP (in French). IPP=Indian IPSP. JPP=IPSP for Japan, east Asia and Philippines. LBP=bank payment service for Latin America. NPP=New Zealand IPSP. RBP=Russian IPSP and/or money transfers by prepaid cards (in Russian). SC=Shopping cart supplied. SPP=Swedish IPSP. ThPP=Thai IPSP (in Thai). UC=supplies unlock codes							

## 7.5.1.2. Recurring Payments and Subscriptions

The following Internet Payment Providers also offer a subscription service.

PSP	setup fee	monthly fees	transaction fees (from)		transaction fees (to)		extra fees	notes
website	US \$	US \$	US cents	%	US cents	%	-	see key
123Ticket	0	0	€0.11	-	€2.06	-	-	-
Alertpay	inquire	inquire	25	2.5	25	2.5	-	-
AllCharge	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
BillMatrix	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
ClickBank	50	0	100	7.5	100	7.5	-	SC
CCBill	0	0	-	11.5	-	14.5	European customers	-
Chronopay	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	DPP
Crandy	inquire	inquire	€2.33	-	€2.33	-	-	BP
Gate2Shop	-	-	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
Global Payment Services	inquire	20	34	2.19	35	2.19	-	-
Membership Plus	0	0	-	18	-	18	-	AS
Merchant Services Bergen	0	10	35	2.19	35	2.19	-	-
Multicards	25	49/yr	45	4.95	45	4.95	-	EB
NetBanx	-	-	£0.10	-	£0.45	1.9	monthly minimum	-
NetBilling	0	25	15	1.5	15	1.5	-	-
PayBox	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	FPP
PaySimple	0	30	29	2.29	29	2.29	-	-
PayPal	0	0	30 F	2.4	30 F	5.4	-	-
SWReg			100	2.9	100	2.9	-	-
Verotel	0	0	-	16.5	-	18.0	-	-
WorldPay	£200	£30	£0.56	4.5	£0.56	4.5	-	-

Xiaonei	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	CPP
Key	A=Australian IPSP. AS=specializes in adult sites. BP=bank payment system. CD supply service. CBP=Chinese bank payment service. CPP=Chinese PayPal (in Chinese). DPP=Dutch IPSP. EB= specializes in eBay sales. IPP=Indian IPSP. NPP=New Zealand IPSP. RBP=Russian money transfers by prepaid cards (in Russian). SC=Shopping cart supplied. SPP=Swedish IPSP. ThPP=Thai IPSP (in Thai). UC=supplies unlock codes							

### 7.5.1.3. Telephone Billing

You can also take money in the form of a phone bill:

PSP	setup fee	monthly fees	transaction fees (from)		transaction fees (to)		extra fees	notes
website	US \$	US \$	US cents	%	US cents	%	-	see key
123Ticket	0	0	€0.11	-	€2.06	-	-	
Allopass	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-
BillJunction	Rs 225-1149	0	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	IPP
DaoPay	0	0	-	10	-	71	-	
Charge.com	0	26.95	25	2.25	25	2.25	merchant account, gateway, SC statements.	
NetBanx	-	-	£0.10	-	£0.45	1.9	-	-
Ogone	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	inquire	-	-
PayByWeb	0	30	38	2.29	38	2.29	-	-
Verotel	0	0-30	-	20.0	-	30.0	-	-
Key	IPP=Indian IPSP. SC=Shopping cart supplied.							

### 7.5.1.4. Micropayments

Micropayment schemes have yet to take off, but you may wish to investigate these services for single page views or articles:

PSP	setup fee	monthly fees	transaction fees (from)		transaction fees (to)		extra fees	notes
website	US \$	US \$	US cents	%	US cents	%	see key	see key
Allopass	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	-

AllCharge	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	SU
Clickand Buy	inquire	inquire	1	-	inquire	-	-	-
PayBest	inquire	inquire	inquire	-	inquire	-	-	MS
pico-pay				5		5		AD
Key	AD=paid by advertising. MS=music sales commissions. SU=status uncertain.							

### 7.5.1.2. Alternative Payment Methods

Not everyone uses credit cards, and you will increase sales by offering alternative means of payment. You should find something suitable in the list below.

**99Bill.** Chinese billing and payment system (in Chinese).

**Alibaba.** Global consumer to consumer portal.

**AnyBill.** Accounts payable system for the larger company.

**BillDesk.** Indian online bill payment system.

**Billeo.** eWallet system with information encrypted and stored on your PC.

**BillMeLater.** Innovative payment system by which customers pay after the point of purchase.

**ChargeAnywhere.** Several services, including worldwide merchant billing.

**CheckMAN.** Takes checks online, by fax or phone. Software \$40-95. Check paper approx. 5 cents/sheet.

**Checkmatic.** Bad check recovery service: from \$15/month.

**CheckSoftware.** Check printing service. Software \$70 - \$150, and check paper \$20 for 375 checks.

**Citadel Wallet.** Customers deposit funds into wallet: fees from 1.9% to merchants.

**Creditz.** US prepaid card system.

**CubeCard.** International wallet system integrated with a growing number of shopping carts. Fees on application.

**EBillMe.** Generates invoice that customers can pay through their online bank.

**ECA.** Telecheck's Electronic Check Acceptance Service. Inquire for pricing details.

**E-Gold.** Based on gold held by escrow service. Fees 1% p.a. plus sliding scale for spend fee: details on site. Status uncertain.

**ETrazact.** South African ecard system.

**ExpressCheck21.** Web-based ARC / Check 21 solution that converts paper items into electronic transactions.

**E-ZWich.** Smartcard system for the African continent.

**InternetCash.** Internet cash cards sold widely in USA in \$10, £20, \$50 and \$100 denominations.



**InZap.** Prepay invoice service. Inquire about monthly charges (free for first 90 days). Transaction fees 2.18% (30 days) to 5.00% (61-75 days). Plus a handling charge of \$0.9 to \$6/cheque.

**MyECheck.** Several services offered: inquire for details.

**NetGiro.** Provides credit and debit cards for global use, including Latin America.

**NoChex.** For UK transactions. No setup or maintenance fees. Transaction charges are 20p plus 2.9%.

**Numox.** eCard and escrow system. Card \$59: loading fees 4.9-5.9%: escrow service 50 cents to 1%.

**Obopay.** Sends cash from a prepaid account over your mobile: 25 cents/transfer.

**PayByCash.** Debit card system integrating with over 40 payments systems world wide.

**PayByCheque.** Enables e-traders to accept online payment by check. Apply for fee structure.

**PaySafeCard.** Prepaid card system for UK and elsewhere.

**PayTrust Small Business.** Several bill management services. 'PayAnyone plus Ebills' service is \$4.95/month plus \$0.50/transaction.

**PreCash.** US cash card system.

**TrialPay.** A form of incentive marketing, matching prospective buyers with their preferred brands.

**UKash.** Prepaid cash voucher system.

**Vcheck.** Check printing software. From \$100/year (200 checks/month).

**Versa.** Check printing service. Software from \$50, printers from \$55.

## 7.1.6. Marketing your Work on the Internet

### 7.1.6.1. Affiliate Marketing

As it's often difficult to get noticed on the internet, particularly in the first few months of start-up, why not get someone else to market your work? If you've written a book on your Himalayan adventure, consider a trekking or mountaineering site. Your novel is set in India? Consider a travel or holiday site. And so on. Affiliate marketing as it's called offers an excellent way of getting your work sold by:

- multiplying your selling outlets, and
- predisposing visitors to buy your work.

But how do you find suitable affiliates, and set up the affiliate marketing tools to handle such sales?

You want your products sold. Another company or individual would be happy to sell your products on a commission basis. Affiliate solution providers bring the two parties together, charging a fee for the matchmaking, and for keeping tabs on sales. Traffic from other sites is redirected to yours, but you only pay commission on sales made, plus a share to the affiliate solution provider. Whatever the link type employed—and it may be a banner ad, a storefront, email or a simple text link—an embedded piece of code identifies the originating site, allowing automated records to be kept for inspection and settlement. Some large and very small outfits still use their own affiliate marketing tools, but the majority of vendors have handed over the task to an affiliate solution provider.

You can run your own affiliates program, setting your own terms, conditions and commission rates, but we strongly suggest you do not because you'll have to:

- write or purchase the software needed to create links and track sales.
- maintain extensive records.
- handle queries and difficulties originating at the affiliate site.

### Finding the Software

Affiliate solution providers will generally provide the software required—to create links, store records of purchases, calculate commissions, allow commissions to be viewed, and to automatically send out payments.

### Finding Suitable Affiliates

It's the job of affiliate solution providers to supply you with a list of suitable candidates, and these will have signed up to common terms and conditions.

What will you look for in an affiliate? Probably:

- a popular and professional-looking site that enhances your reputation.
- complementary interests: the site has to endorse products readers want or need.
- good customer service: sales may be clinched at your site, but the affiliate should create a sense of community and trust—check they answer faxes and e-mails promptly.

What will your affiliates be looking for? Much the same:

- a fair contract.
- quality products or services.
- free offers and/or newsletter.
- content sharing.
- in-depth information on your products and services.
- regular supply of market-tested copy that sells.
- proper backup for your products.
- prompt payment of commissions.
- transparent accounting procedures: industry-standard software that allows them to check sales and commissions.

### Working with an Affiliate Solution Provider

Dozens of affiliate solution providers exist, some small and covering only a narrow range of products. Terms and conditions will vary, but all employ an editor to check that your product(s) and company are suitable. Therefore do your homework first, noting in particular:

- client list. Ask for testimonials, and permission to approach clients.
- fees. Three sets of fees are usually imposed: a setup or initiation fee, a monthly maintenance charge, and a commission on sales. All three vary widely: find a provider that won't break the bank if sales take off.
- exclusivity. You are not generally tied to using the one affiliate solution provider, but check should you ever want to complicate matters.
- tiers of commission. Affiliates will want to know if they can introduce others to your product and earn a share of the extra commission.
- specialization. Is the provider likely to find you the right affiliate? Check their client list.

- Set-up details. Your affiliates will probably be given a few lines of code to simply paste into their websites, but again ask: anything complicated, involved programming expense, will not be popular.
- terms and conditions. Ensure you understand the regulations and can live with them. Your terms and conditions have to match those of the affiliate solution provider—e.g. you can't offer a 'lifetime guarantee' if the provider limits the warranty to 3 months.

The better providers can be choosy, so make sure your site is looking its best before applying. And get that product page up to scratch. It is to this page that affiliates will link, and the provider will go through its details with a fine toothcomb.

### Affiliate Solution Providers

Affiliate solution providers are widely listed on the web. Here is a small selection:

**Affiliate First.** Small affiliate directory, but with good range of merchants.

**AffiliatesShop.** Handles more than 11,000 accounts.

**ClickBank.** Represent over 10,000 digital products through 100,000 affiliates.

**ClickQuick.** Extensive lists plus reviews of pay per click/impression/lead deals.

**Direct Leads.** One of the internet's largest: affiliates and pay per click.

**LinkShare.** Run the largest pay-for-performance affiliate network.

**Refer It.** Solution Provider section lists companies, rankings and fees.

**Share a Sale.** Affiliate directory, currently with 600 merchants but growing.

### 7.1.6.2. Marketing with the Free Search Engines

Some 85% of webpages are found through natural search engines—i.e. rather than through the pay-to-click variety—and searchers rarely use more than the best known, then only consulting the first few listings. It's therefore imperative to optimise your pages to rank well on the leading search engines: **google**, **bing**, **yahoo**, **yandex** and **baidu**, etc. though there are many **others**. Your options:

- employ a search engine marketing company.
- pay for a good ranking (i.e. pay per click services).
- do the work yourself with special tools and on-line services.

- use free online tools.

Your choice will be dictated by time and budget, but costs will rule out the first two for most small presses.

### DIY with Special Tools and On-line Services

Given the costs of professional services, many webmasters do their own ranking optimisation, using software to speed up the continual process of crafting pages for optimum ranking, submitting to search engines/directories, and monitoring the rankings that result. Some useful services/software:

**SEO Tools and Services.** Good listing of free and pay-for tools and services.

**28 of the Best SEO Tools.** Good listing, plus free tools.

**Best SEO Tools of 2012.** Top-end tools but sensible advice.

### Manual Optimization and Submission

It's a lot of work, but you can get by without purchasing special software. On-line services provide a cheaper alternative to buying software to run on your PC.

**27 Free and simple SEO Tools.** Limited but useful

**Attracta.** Free if you register.

**50+ Free SE Tools.** Includes more than SEO.

**60 Best Free SEO Tools.** Moz's listing.

### Optimising your Site

Even if you employ a search engine marketing company, you will have to optimise your site for proper ranking by search engines and directories. In fact, unless you're using other (and generally more expensive) marketing approaches, you will build your site to be optimally visible on the net. That entails:

- choosing a good domain name. One that includes your keywords will help the ranking: e.g. [oklahoma-poetry-society.org](http://oklahoma-poetry-society.org) rather than [oklposoc.org](http://oklposoc.org).
- deciding on keywords that reflect your business, are popular, and receive minimal competition from other sites. You'll have to

experiment, but our experience suggests that a well-designed subsidiary page should rank well if the number of competing Google sites does not exceed 5,000. For the index page you should be able to beat 10,000 competing sites.

- dividing your site into content-rich pages that will each contain a keyword or group of keywords. Each page will individually aim at a decent ranking. You may wish to optimize the pulling power of your keywords by testing alternatives in a short advertising campaign on one of the ppc search engines.
- adding proper metatags to each page: for title, description and keywords. Add the plural to increase coverage. Place headline text before any image(s) on the page. Write your copy to draw visitors, as Google and other search engines will use your page descriptions and introductory text in their listings.
- ensuring copy for each page reflects the metatags. Keywords should appear in the copy, in a particular density and pattern.
- minimizing elements that impede ranking: javascript, database content, frames, nested tables and multiple graphics.
- use text for links rather than images: especially important for Google. The text should be the keyword phrase used by outside visitors to find the page.
- keep javascript off the page by using an exterior file. E.g. `<script language=javascript src="javascript/remote_file.js" type="text/javascript"></script>`
- use SSI (server side includes) in place of database-generated pages.

Keep old pages until website traffic statistics show that they're not being visited any more (often a couple of months).

You can improve your ranking to some extent by employing site submission software but the overriding factors are 1. competing sites with your keywords, 2. incoming external links to your site (particularly important to Google) and 3. professionalism of the opposition. Excellent pages will always rise to the

top, but the process will take longer if there are tens or hundreds of thousands of competing sites—sometimes a year or two.

### Top Ten Search Engines and Directories

You do not now have to submit your site to the search engines: they will find you within a couple of days. You should, though, add a **sitemap** to help the search engines catalogue all your pages.

Search engine optimisation is a vast and somewhat contested topic, but an internet search will locate many hundreds of articles, many of which repay careful consideration.

#### 7.1.6.3. Using the Pay Per Click Search Engines

Pay per click search engines are those charging for each click-through they direct your way. The more you pay for a keyword, the more competition you'll beat and the more traffic you'll probably get. Using the service is straightforward, and the approach has become popular. Many searchers prefer these engines, knowing the listings are better maintained, and that advertisers are paying good money to appear.

Pay-per-click search engines will help you to:

- test the market for a new idea or product
- sell a book or service in a crowded market place.

Perhaps you're thinking of writing a popular account of linguistics, with special reference to native American languages. Publishers contacted are not enthusiastic, however, and you're not sure yourself whether it will be worth the effort. Why not do what all sensible marketers do?—test the proposition. Put up a couple of webpages, the second (buy me page) saying the book is not yet available. Offer the book through a brief pay-per-click campaign. If response is favourable you'll have data to convince sceptics, and, if not, then at least you've saved yourself months or years of work.

Pay per click search engines may also be helpful if you have written and are self-publishing a book through a modest website. If that website achieves a 2% conversion rate, and you pay 5 cents/click through, then your selling

costs are \$2.50 per book, which compares favourably with other marketing methods. Most bid prices, though, far exceed 5 cents.

For many e-merchants, in fact, the days when they could get decent sales from 'free' listings on Yahoo, MSN or Google are distant memory. Competition has sharpened, and the search engines themselves have stepped up their fees. Unless the site has lots of useful and possibly unique content—time-consuming to create and maintain—paying for click-throughs may be the only hope of getting internet traffic.

Unfortunately, there are now hundreds of pay-for-click search-engines to choose from. Successful campaigns tend to be expensive: the larger companies employ experts, and shell out tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars in click fees every month. Special software or services have to be employed to optimise the strategies, and to monitor results. The keywords themselves are often overpriced, perhaps kept purposely so by the big companies wanting to close down the competition. Some hostile 'customers' may generate clicks automatically with robots, and traffic logs need to be kept to get a refund from the search engine(s) concerned. And, if that weren't enough, the accompanying site descriptions can be rewritten by the pay-for-click search engines, requiring e-merchants to adjust their budget upwards or their traffic downwards.

You can still succeed, but you have to know what you're doing.

Submission is usually straightforward, and Overture's (now Yahoo's) is typical. You first open an account and deposit some money, usually through a credit card. Next you fill out the Overture Simple Signup form, bidding on the keyword phrases where you want your site to appear. You also specify a title (max 40 characters) and a description (max 190 characters). Your title and description can vary for each keyword, even if linked to the same page, but keywords must relate to your linked page. Since results depend on the title and short ad description, you may wish to employ a professional at this point.

Campaigns need to be planned, usually with these overlapping objectives:

1. Search for optimal keywords, either with the tools provided by the company concerned, or third-party software and services. Understand what visitors are looking for under various keywords (your own website traffic



statistics will help). Find out which keyword gives the best ROI (rate of return on investment: not necessarily the most click-throughs). Experiment further to see how ranking affects ROI (traffic may be four times higher at the #1 ranking than at the #5 listing, but the bid price may be more than four times higher). Compare bid prices across search engines, again with third-party services. Organization of keywords by the buying cycle: research words (e.g. widget review) are usually less expensive than sale closers.

3. Add filters to keywords (e.g. bulk supplies) to eliminate unwanted traffic.
4. Get sufficient results to test your campaign by bidding high for the first few days, lowering the bid later in line with your marketing budget. (With Overture, moreover, a top three ranking will automatically give you a top ten ranking with Yahoo and other partners.)
5. Use 3–4 different keywords (changing title and description accordingly) and monitor results. Keep experimenting.
6. Vary the ad copy to a. distinguish your product, b. make it memorable, and c. filter out unwanted visitors.
7. Create special pages (landing pages) for your visitors that meet their expectations and drive them to the sale. Keep experimenting with landing pages. You'll probably need some client-side tracking program/service to monitor results.
8. Repeat the above with different pay-for-click search engines, making sure (different landing pages or with site tracking services) that you can differentiate between results. The less popular search engines are cheaper, but customers sent by them can be less 'serious', i.e. lower conversion rates apply.

A lot of work, but pay-for-click search engines do have helpful features, notably:

- automatic inclusion of your keywords in similar categories.
- no extra charge for keyword updates and additions.
- easy adjustment of monthly spend ceilings.

- good account-handling facilities.

## Pay-Per-Click Resources

[Pay for click \(PPC\) Marketing](#). Thrive's account.

[Pay-Per-Click \(PPC\)](#). Business study article

[Google Ads: SEO vs PPC](#). Google's simple distinction.

Many more will be found by internet search. Use realistic conversion rates in doing your sums: many ppc schemes are simply too expensive for everyday promotion.

### 7.1.6.4. Promoting your Website: Other Approaches

Though your website needs to keep its primary purpose in mind, some subtlety is called for. Repeat visitors are important, and you may wish to add some of the enjoyable extras listed below. Many are supplied free by the hosting companies, and you should always check the company will allow any programs you buy to run on their server.

On-line marketing solutions include:

#### 1. Classified Ads Board

What about a classified ads board on its own, something for visitors to place books wanted and for sale? Software is available from

[38 must-have ecommerce tools](#). More for the larger company, but illustrating what's available.

[Classifieds software for websites](#). Joomla add-ons, but similar exist for blogs and websites.

#### 2. Web Rings

Web rings link sites of a similar nature. Traffic at one site is passed on to another through a code snippet, which usually placed at the foot of the page. Visit sites in your market sector. A few examples (all needing a radical make-over):

[Poetry Café Webring](#)

[Geocities](#)

[Infinitum Poetry](#)

### 3. Cool Sites

Awards increase confidence, but to win them you must submit your site. Be careful here if something like these are offered you: web designers often produce beautiful sites that have nothing to do with their purpose.

[AWWWards](#). Impressive sites but presentation outdistancing function.

[36 Award Winning Best Websites 2021](#). Useful for website ideas.

[21 Award-Winning Website Designs and What They Did Right](#). Not literary.

### 4. Posting to Bulletin Boards

Whatever you are selling, there is probably somewhere on the internet a bulletin board/discussion forum where issues of common interest are debated. Participants may not always be knowledgeable, but they are mighty suspicious of commerce. Nonetheless, if you have some important information to offer, and you can do so without overtly plugging your productions, then a contribution is usually welcome. Your signature can include the website URL, and interested readers can take the hint. Thousands of such groups exist: a small selection of software:

[6 Best Free Bulletin Boards](#). Examples of popular systems.

[Find Best Open Source Projects](#). Some of an astonishing one million available

Tread carefully when posting to existing boards. Follow the discussion for a month or so before wading in, as you're expected to know what's gone before. Don't give your real name or e-mail address until you're sure of the response, as you can be flamed by hundreds of irate responses that will clog up your emails or even put you out of business for a time.

### Off-line Advertising

Don't overlook traditional advertising, particularly if you're selling in a local and/or specialized market. Small box or one-line adverts in trade journals or local directories can be effective, and adding your URL will refer people to your site.

#### 7.1.6.5. Making Money with your Website.

There are three ways of at least covering hosting expenses:

## 1. Google Ads

By displaying the ads that Google automatically sends through paste-in code, your website joins the tens of thousands that today earn a supplementary income. Commissions depend on a. number of click-throughs your pages achieve, and b. intrinsic value of the ad (which in turn reflects what customers are paying Google for the keywords concerned.) You cannot earn money by doing the clicking yourself, moreover: Google has software to stop payment in these cases, and will drop your site, pocketing proceeds to date.

How does AdSense work? You apply, remembering that Google does not like sites with profanity, drugs, pornography, or gambling, and will also reject personal pages, sites with excessive advertising or other content-targeted or text-based ads, or with incentives for clicking on the keywords. But a few days later, all being well, you'll get from them a few lines of code to paste into your pages, after which you can be earning in a few minutes. To make serious money, however, you'll have to:

- create many pages displaying AdSense ads.
- choose the AdSense words that pay well and craft pages accordingly.
- increase click-through rates by adjusting sales copy to the AdSense ads likely to be displayed.
- increase traffic to your pages, either through the natural or pay-to-click search engines.

How much can you make? Most sites make \$20 to \$100/month, but there are websites making that and more every day.

## 2. Selling Advertising

You can get companies to directly advertise on your site. Value, individuality and utility are the keywords. Your site has to be truly special and offer visitors what they cannot easily find elsewhere. That means providing some mix of unique content, comprehensive links, on-line games or entertainment, free software and/or services.

Naturally, you won't get the better companies to give your site a second glance unless it's a professional-looking affair that enjoys undoubted status and heavy traffic. Advertisers have their good name to protect, and agreements that don't bring appreciable numbers of new customers aren't worth the management time. With the current glut in advertising space, companies can afford to be choosy.

You will need something more than 25,000 visitors per month to interest advertisers, and that level of traffic is not easily achieved without considerable outlay in build time and marketing expense. You have to shell out a good deal before you can expect much to come in.

Many sites do cover their hosting expenses with Amazon ads, however. If your pages achieve a 2% click-through rate to Amazon Books, and 5% of these click-throughs convert to sales of \$15 books for which Amazon pay you a 5% commission, your takings will be  $0.02 \times 0.05 \times \$15 \times 0.05$  per page displayed, i.e. 0.075 cents/page, or \$7.50-month for a site with 10,000 page views per month.

### 3. On-line Affiliate Marketing

Here you're not selling advertising space but acting as a representative, selling products or services through your website. There are many ways of going, but the following sites will tell you more:

[Affiliate marketing in 2021](#). Sensible advice from BigCommerce

[What is Affiliate Marketing](#) Online calculator to estimate potential

[Affiliate marketing for Beginners](#). Nuts and bolts, with success stories.

Before indulging in dreams of avarice, however, you should remember that on-line affiliate marketing is now difficult. Each of the more popular products is promoted by thousands or tens of thousands of affiliates, some 95% of whom make little or no money.

#### 7.1.7. Internet Security Issues

Internet security issues loom large in any web business, and you can scare yourself witless by reading the horror stories. But all that's needed is a little

forethought, some inexpensive software, mandatory routines and a plan to meet eventualities.

Suppose a spyware program steals your passwords, the office burns down, or your hosting company suddenly goes out of business? However rarely, all these things do happen. Draw up a contingency plan, make sure it works and that colleagues or helpers know what to do.

### Office Security

The following are obvious but can be overlooked:

- use hard-to-guess passwords, restrict access to them, and don't leave them in desks or on PCs.
- ensure back-ups are made regularly, in sequence, and are intelligently labelled.
- check back-ups regularly, i.e. ensure that restores from back-ups are sound.
- keep paper copies, and in a safe place.
- store copies of all essential information, preferable encrypted and off-site in:
  - flash memories, CDs, zip disks, removable hard disks.
  - on-line storage facilities.

### Internet Security Issues: Viruses

Do the following:

- consider using alternative browser(s).
- get the suitable antivirus protection software, and keep it up to date.
- install a decent firewall.

### Internet Security Issues: Protection from Spyware

Many computers are infected by spyware of some sort. Most are 'harmless', but an increasing number pass into viruses that will steal and transmit

confidential information, even memorizing the keystrokes of passwords. You need to:

- avoid keeping confidential information on any machine connected to the internet.
- run spyware removal software.
- encrypt confidential information.

### Internet Security Issues: Hackers

Hackers break into computer systems, sometimes to prove themselves, sometimes with malicious intent. You need to:

- install a firewall.
- ensure sensitive information is encrypted.
- internet Security Issues: Webservers

Web hosting is technical, but obvious things to check or ask about:

- the financial standing of the hosting company, and how long they have been in business.
- guaranteed uptime
- security protocols to cope with denial-of-service and hacker attacks.
- regularity of back-ups: does it include user logs, product databases, order tracking logs, server-side scripts?
- whois database ([www.whois.net](http://www.whois.net)) to ensure that you and not the hosting company remain the administrative and technical contact for your domain and—most critically—the registrant of the domain.
- backup: ring them at 3 a.m. Sunday morning if they claim 24/7 telephone support.
- other sites being hosted with them (ask for webmasters to contact). Also check: association with spam or porn sites won't help your business.

- visit forums to see what webmasters think about hosting companies.

And:

- host alternative company domains with another company: you can then switch painlessly if the first goes out of business or suffers a prolonged denial of service.
- internet Security Issues: Webpage Content

You are responsible for the content of your webpages, which means ensuring:

- nothing is libellous or could be construed so.
- material does not infringe copyright.
- links don't damage the interests of sites linked to (deep-linking may).
- pages don't fall foul of search engine and directory requirements.

#### Internet Security Issues: Customer Data

You are always responsible for customer information: an onerous task if it includes credit card and/or bank details. Use secure webforms that automatically transfer and store customer information safely on a third-party secure site. Encrypt it. Keep it off internet-connected machines. Make several copies and store safely off-site.

#### Legal Matters

You are bound by the laws and regulations of the state or country in which you legally exist. Be especially careful of material that could offend the authorities or religious groups abroad, be considered inflammatory, or supportive of outlawed or terrorist groups

#### Tax

You'll have to pay tax somewhere on earnings, and matters have become further complicated by the global nature of ecommerce. VAT is a nightmare, particularly in Europe. An accountant can advise, but always keep proper records.



## 7.2. BLOGS

### 7.2.1. Background

Weblogs, or blogs for short, started around 2002 when webmasters began sifting the morass of material on the web and noting the more interesting sites. Blog were then simple webpages, and listings would have a few comments, with perhaps a personal comment or two.

Blogs have become more specific by:

- having a standard appearance, often created through templates.
- having entries arranged in reverse chronological order, i.e. latest topic at the top.
- having each post or content entry with its own URL—easy to link to, and for search engines to index.
- forming communities around common interests: weblog traffic exchanges.
- creating their own 'search engines'.
- being written from a personal perspective: interacting more with readers.
- adding RSS technology, allowing automatic update of information.

Blogs have also arrived on the business scene. Their importance to anyone selling on the internet lies in six areas:

- blogs can give you a human face, and so help to build customer trust.
- packed with honest, hard-to-find information, blogs make you an authority in some area: increased traffic and sales.
- blogs are an ideal place to announce new books and articles.
- blogs often achieve better rankings in the natural search engines than do comparable webpages—because there is less competition, and because blogs are inherently search-engine friendly: multilinked and frequently updated.

- selling advertising is easier on blog pages, especially with Google's AdSense.
- blogs are easier to maintain than newsletters, though possibly less effective: many individuals employ both.

## RSS

A key feature of blogs is RSS technology: an acronym for 'Really Simple Syndication'. Any site with the technology installed—and it's not difficult to set up—receives an alert from news feeder sites, and can update material with the simple click of a button: articles, news, announcements, product or website upgrades.

## Blogging Today

Over half Fortune 500 companies, and businesses of all sizes, are engaged in business blogging, usually as a supplement to their daily e-marketing campaigns. In February 2003, Google bought the leading blog site [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com), and has since added search technology to favour blogging. Many hosting companies now offer blogging, either as add-on software, or blog hosting as such, with easy setup and maintenance.

Blogs make ideal community boards, which therefore offer marketing opportunities for companies that—as with newsgroups—do not abuse the situation: i.e. provide help and information rather than hype and hard-sell.

The downside, as always with the internet, is that news travels fast, and some blog sectors are now overcrowded. RSS leads to hundreds or thousands of sites all carrying the same news item, and not only on the same day but over many weeks as blog owners can be slow to update their pages. That is far from what the internet requires, and the search engines will be developing technology to penalize such overkill.

### 7.2.2. Getting Started

Blogs are not difficult to install. You have three options as far as hosting is concerned:

- use a stand-alone blog-hosting company: e.g. [Blogger](#), [Mindsay](#), [Typepad](#), [LiveJournal](#), [Xanga](#) and [ModBlog](#).

- install blogging software on your own server: e.g. **WordPress**, **MovableType**, and **Greymatter**.
- use third-party hosting giving a choice of software: e.g. **Webcrimson** or **Quicksprout**.

Many hosting companies now offer a blogging service, moreover, either as easy-to-install programs at little or no extra cost, or as specific blog hosting. Rates are usually reasonable, but depend on the traffic, the number of sites linked to and/or size of the blog community (with social or communal blogs).

Most blog software is freeware, or at least allows free trial, giving you the chance to decide what features you will need. Services like Blogger are perfectly satisfactory for the church community letter or local enthusiast's club, but writers will probably want the better designs and greater choice afforded by WordPress and similar software.

### 7.2.3. Choosing Software

There's now a wide range of blog software, and your choice will be guided by:

- ease of installation and configuration: you'll need some technical expertise to set up WordPress, Movable Type and Drupal, for example.
- features: you'll probably want comments, permalinks, archives, and RSS/Atom feeds, and possibly moblogging capabilities and photo hosting.
- cost: blogging newcomers can usually get by with under \$50/year.
- suitability: for personal, business, and/or organizational blogging.
- ease of use: both to operate and maintain as the site grows bigger.
- platform: Unix or Windows? Originally designed by techies for techies, much of the cheaper software is still written for the UNIX platform.
- is the software 'open source', i.e. can you tweak it for your own needs?

- can you have your own domain name? (you can't with MSN Spaces).
- integration with other programs? (e.g. Messenger and Hotmail with MSN Spaces).
- personal or communal? (how many people can maintain the blog?)
- privacy: can you restrict usage or protect certain pages by passwords?
- can you update by email?
- can you carry adverts? (MSN Spaces won't allow Google AdSense).
- what blogging search and discover tools do you need?
- what layout facilities?
- can you use titles, linkwords and other features important to search engines?

#### 7.2.4. Blog Hosting

Here you don't install anything on your server but simply have your blog hosted on a third-party site, one of many thousands. Your web-hosting company may also provide blog hosting, usually at a small additional charge.

Blog Hubspot. 12 companies compared

22Blog. Free hosting, plus directory and forum.

20Six. Community weblogging: free or from £2.95/month with no ads.

Ace SEO. Short listing of blog-hosting companies.

Blog. Free hosting or from \$24/year without ads.

Blog City. Free, or \$2.50/month for premium account.

Blog Drive. Free if you carry the banner ad.

BlogEasy. Free blog hosting and site promotional tools.

Blogger. Free hosting: one of the earliest blog-hosting sites.

Escalate. Offer a more commercial blogging service: fees on application.

Google. Google's listing of blog hosting companies: some free.

**LiveJournal**. Free, or paid service at \$25/year.

**LSBlogs**. Short list of blog-hosting companies.

**Mindsay**. Popular free blog hosting.

**ModBlog.** Good range of features.

**MovableType.** Also partnered with Typepad and LiveJournal.

**SEO Blog.** Free blog hosting (without banner ads or popups).

**tBLOG.** Free hosting, with templates and range of tools.

**Typepad.** Three levels of service, from \$49.50/year to \$149.50/year.

**Webcrimson.** Free: excellent set of features.

**Xanga.** Community blogging: free or \$25/year.

## 7.2.5. Blog Software

If you want to install software on your hosting company's server, consider:

Functionality	WordPress	TextPattern	Movable Type	Expression Engine
Price (US \$)	free	free	free	\$100/250
Minium Server Requirements	hosted/PHP MySQL	PHP MySQL	PHP/Perl MySQL 4.0	PHP 4.06 MySQL 3.23
Comments	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Categories	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Subcategories	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trackbacks	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Pings	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
RSS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Atom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Search	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Blogroll/Lists	Yes	No	No	No
Number of blogs	1 (more with WordPress MU)	Unlimited	Determined by licence	Unlimited
News Aggregation	No	No	No	Yes
Extras	WordPress	TextPattern	Movable Type	Expression Engine
Moblogging	Yes	No	No	Yes
Photo Galleries	No	No	No	Yes
Tag cloud	Yes	Plugin	Code	Yes
Subscribe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Plugin soon

buttons				
Non-blog pages	Yes	No	No	Yes
Maintenance	WordPress	Movable Type	Movable Type	Expression Engine
API	Blogger, MetaWeblog, MT	Blogger, MetaWeblog, MT, Atom	Blogger, MetaWeblog, MT, Atom	MetaWeblog, Blogger, MT
Logs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Data Storage	Database	Database/No database	Database/No database	Database
Spam Fighting Tools	WordPress	TextPattern	Movable Type	Expression Engine
Blacklist	Yes	No	No	Yes
Visitor registration/login	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Captchas	No	No	No	Yes
Moderation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
URL NoFollow	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
IP/User/URL banning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comment Notification	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Design	WordPress	TextPattern	Movable Type	Expression Engine
Skins	2	7	7	27
Admin panel design configuration	No	No	No	No
Admin panel layout configuration	No	No	No	No
Publishing Interface	WordPress	TextPattern	Movable Type	Expression Engine
User Levels	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multiple authors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Image uploading	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Image thumbnailing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Post scheduling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Save without posting	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Bookmarklets	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Edit Templates Online	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Edit Templates Offline	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
File uploading	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Password Protection	Yes	No	No	Yes
Localization	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Work offline	No	No	No	Partial

### B7.2.6. Blogging Legal Issues

Blogging creates many of the same legal issues as websites. Create a blogging user's code, which ensures that you and everyone else stays well within what is sensible. The code should cover these area:

#### Disclosure

No representative of your organization can reveal material information to a select audience in violation of regulatory rules. These are laid down by Government bodies, which is the SEC (Security and Exchange Commission) in the States. Fairness is the keyword. By 'material information' is meant anything that could affect the organization's financial condition, ranging from quarterly earnings to new product information. When material is disclosed, that material must be disclosed simultaneously in the case of intentional disclosure, and promptly in the case of unintentional disclosure.

#### Intellectual Property

Companies protect their trademarks, and if your book is called *Kinters' Code*, for example, you'll expect your publishing group to use that term, and not *Klinter's Code*, etc.

Copyright is also important. Fair use allows you to quote a small part of copyrighted material, but nothing substantial. Nor can bloggers insert graphics, photos, music or video clips if these are someone else's property. You can link to other websites, however (the index page is generally safe),

quote material in the public domain like government reports, and rephrase facts and ideas (it's their expression which is copyrighted).

You may want to employ a **Creative Commons licence** to allow use of properly attributed parts of your blog posts.

## Defamation

Libel (written) and slander (spoken) are serious problems. In both cases you lay yourself open to claims for damages if you make a false and unprivileged statement that harms reputations. The rules and scales of damages vary from country to country, with the UK being the most notorious. Defamation in the USA has to pass three tests:

- the statement was published to someone other than the subject of the statement: a private e-mail will not be libel, but a blog would be.
- the statement is false, and
- the statement tends to be harmful to the individual concerned.

A public figure has to prove that the defamation was intended, but a private individual can sue for simple negligence. Be careful, therefore, as even frivolous lawsuits can be expensive to defend. Remove anything potentially libellous from comments immediately it appears, and/or monitor them before publishing.

## Right to Privacy

Many countries have strict laws on personal privacy, France in particular but less so the UK. If someone has not placed some fact about themselves (sexual orientation, membership of some society, personal history) in the public domain they may be able to sue for its disclosure. Again, the laws vary, even between States. In California, for example, a lawsuit has to pass four tests: 1. disclosure was public, 2. the information was a private fact, 3. the information disclosed was offensive to a reasonable person, and 4. the information was not a legitimate matter of public concern.

### 7.2.7. Promotion

You'll have to promote your blog, and the search engine promotion advice still applies. As far as blogs are concerned, remember to:



- provide quality content, with illustrations and photos as applicable.
- update regularly, at least weekly, preferably daily.
- define your readership, and write with that readership in mind.
- target keywords in titles, links and blog posts.
- participate in communities.
- visit other blogs and leave appreciative comments.
- mention your blog in business emails and correspondence.
- submit to blog directories and registries.
- ping blog tracking sites like Weblogs.com every time you update.
- use free or cheap advertising tools, including blog traffic exchange communities.

### 7.2.8. Making Money With Blogs

You can make money with your blog just as you can through your website. Wordpress has a specific plug-ins, but there are also blogging platforms specifically designed to make money:

**Best Blogging Platforms to Make Money.** Particularly consider Ghost.

## 7.3. USING eBAY

### 7.3.1. Introduction

Even a blog takes some time to set up, though it will pay dividends. If you want to cut corners, however, and don't wish to use **affiliates**, then consider eBay for two purposes:

- to test the market before putting pen to paper.
- to sell a book or e-book you've already written.

eBay is big business — 400,000 sellers and over 180 million registered users. Setup is simple. Do the following

### 1. Look up value of similar items:

- click search in upper RH corner of page.
- check completed listings on LH side of page: click again.
- note prices (those in red didn't sell).

### 2. check individual listings for starting bids.

- put a low starting bid (e.g. \$0.99) to encourage bidding.
- be cautious about a reserve (which scares people off).

### 3. Make the listing

- be succinct: bullets are fine.
- add one or more good-quality pictures.
- close the auction when folk have had a chance to get in from work and rest, e.g. Sunday and/late in the evening.
- check and double-check the spelling, particularly of title (or no one will find the item).

To sell successfully on eBay, you need positive feedback. How do you get that?

- describe your items fully and honestly.
- display your shipping and returns policy on your site, and deliver on promises.
- include an automated page soliciting customer response.
- buy courteously from other sellers and ask for feedback (which counts as feedback on you as a seller).

### Resources

Do a Google search to locate helpful articles and course. A small selection:

['eBay University' Course](#). eBay's own suggestions: free.

[SouthWest Ecommerce](#). 5-day free e-mail course.

[Auction Tips](#). 4-day free e-mail course.

**eBay Edge**. 13 post blog course on eBay copywriting

**Tangy Blue**. E-book/e-mail course: \$10.

**The eBay Newbie Course**. Includes wholesalers and dropshipper listings: \$17.

**Page Forward**. DVDs on eBay selling aspects: £43 - £85.

**Auction Genius**. 16 hour CD course: \$597.

**eBay Forum**. Research eBay partners and topics of interest.

**eBay Seller Tools**. eBay's free guide.

### 7.3.2. Presentation Software

To speed up listings and improve the presentation, you may want to consider specific software:

**Supreme Auction**. Simple presentation software for eBay: free.

**Auctioning4U**. Provides a shopfront interface to eBay: prices on application.

**AuctionRiches**. Helps write killer auction ads.

**InetAuction**. Package for internet auctioneers. 3.0% commission on sales. Inquire about setup/event charges.

**SpoonFeeder**. Creates and manages professional-looking adverts on eBay, etc. Range of options: trial version free.

**Tech Republic**. Many inexpensive programs for eBay presentation and management.

**Zoovy Merchant**. Lets you place and track products on eBay, Yahoo Shopping Auction, Amazon and others. Fees on application.

In passing, note that e-books of general interest sell cheaply on eBay. You may do better to become a recognized authority on some popular topic, when you'll earn from specialist information than your literary skills.

## 7.4. KEEPING TRACK OF VISITORS

It's not enough to know how many people visit your site, or even where they come from. You need to understand:

1. what motivates customers: why they come, what they are looking for.
2. who they are: social grouping, purchasing power, spending characteristics.
3. how their psychology integrates with your selling process.

The site traffic statistics in the hosting package will give you basic information, (particularly if package includes cPanel) and **Google** provide a

free tracking service. But to know more, so you can experiment with and optimise sales copy and site design, you'll need a third-party traffic monitoring service. You sign up, provide a few details, and are supplied with snippets of code to paste into the pages of interest. Visitor statistics are automatically sent to the monitoring company, and you access the results through a username and password. Most services offer a free introductory month, allowing you to get the hang of things before paying.

## Resources:

**FreeStats.** Free code to paste into your pages and provide site statistics.

**Conversion Ruler.** Tracks your ad campaigns: from \$20/month for 2,000 click-throughs.

**Coremetrics.** Live analysis of customer clickstream behaviour.

**CoreWebSoft.** Detailed statistics: from \$11/month for 100,000 page views.

**Hitslink.** Excellent statistics: from \$9.95/month.

**Hypertracker.** With detailed statistics for ppc campaigns: \$20/month.

**Marketing Insights.** Free, simple spreadsheet to track changes in the marketing effectiveness of websites.

**Network Computing.** Free report comparing leading web analytics software.

**Site Tracker.** Simple-to-install traffic analysis service: \$0 to \$9/month.

**Spotfire.** Graphical display of traffic data.

**Web Analytics Demystified.** Discussion board: see what the experts are saying.

**WebsiteStory.** Sophisticated tracking of customer behaviour: fees on application.

**Web Site Traffic Report.** Invisible code snippets track visitors through all pages of your site: 30 day free trial and then \$10/month or pop-up advertising.

**Web Analytics Demystified.** Discussion board: see what the experts are saying.

**Vertster.** Split testing services, from \$17.99 per month of 20,000 page views.

## 8. MARKETING YOUR WORK

### 8.1. PROMOTING YOURSELF

Your best marketing approach is you—your talents, your enthusiasm, your belief in yourself. If you talk, dress, publish and behave as a writer then you will be seen as one, and your work read with the care and insight it deserves. Until shown to be otherwise, you are taken at the value you place on yourself, and too much self-deprecation may only shift the spotlight to others less deserving.

Writers on the whole are modest and sensitive souls, who shrink from any notion of a marketing campaign. But the fate of the occasional novel that sells only a few tens or hundreds of copies when privately issued, but is then picked up and turned into an international best-seller by a major publishing house, shows not only the value of publicity but also, unfortunately, that the public does not trust its own judgement, but looks to newspaper stories and media buzz when choosing its reading matter. Even literary fiction, which does not sell in bulk, relies on the chain of reviews and study courses, the tutors remembering their own student days when they learnt that certain authors were worth the effort to understand and appreciate. No publicity means no reputation and no readers. Perhaps only real merit will sustain a reputation in the long term, but the process needs something and someone to start it off, and that person is you. Serious writers don't have lifestyle gurus, but from the work it takes to become accessible—and it takes considerable work—they learn much about themselves and human nature in general, which is the bedrock of any literature worth the name.

A few suggestions therefore:

- decide on the sort of writer you wish to be, design a career path, and stick to it.
- work out what you need to do at each stage, and make the opportunities happen.
- take an active part in the literary world.

- join writing clubs and societies.
- submit to local anthologies.
- get your work reviewed.
- serve on arts commissions.
- give talks at schools and community centres.
- get appointed to funding organizations.
- take up 'writers in residence' posts.
- review collections.
- write articles for local and national magazines.
- become the authority on a famous poet or branch of literature.
- appear on radio and TV.
- help host readings and bookstore signings.
- promote the work of local writers you believe in.
- lecture at the local university.
- be modestly assertive of your achievements, flourishing your latest collection if credentials are queried.
- become the living legend on the literary scene, endlessly helping others with practical advice and support.
- become an authority on some area of expertise, extending helpful articles into more creative fields.

Much depends on your talents, ambitions and the time at your disposal. Don't let playing the part overtake the writing, but do consult the garnered wisdom in the sites below. Though internet-orientated, they exploit what long experience has shown to be effective in retail sales.

**Ad Resources.** Articles and statistics on internet advertising.

**Book Marketing.** Resources and ideas for marketing your book.

**Cluetrain.** Advocates honest conversational style to advertising and product branding.

**DMoz.** Open Directory's list of marketing companies, many of which provide some statistics on e-business and internet traffic.

**Hanson.** Promotes guides to marketing strategies and research.

**Idea Site for Business.** Marketing ideas for entrepreneurs and the smaller business.

**Internet Advertising Resource Ad Guide.** Useful listings of resources and services under various categories: includes teaching software.

**Marketing Experiments.** Reports and monthly newsletters are now free.

**Marketing Tips.** Ideas and resources for internet marketing.

**Marketing UK.** Tips, articles, resources and newsletter from this long-established UK marketing portal.

**Psychology of Consumers.** Somewhat theoretical, but clear and thorough series of articles.

**Selling Power.** On-line version of magazine with 200,000 subscribers. Practical articles.

**Web Digest For Marketers.** Free weekly e-mail newsletter reviewing marketing-orientated websites.

**Yahoo.** Yahoo's list of web marketing companies, resources and advice.

You'll also need a standard profile of you and your work that will enable busy media types to create the write-up they need for articles, reviews and introductions. It will contain:

bio, with black-and-white photo

credits: what published where, what competitions won, awards or commissions received

interviews and reviews of your work

goals and motivations

objectives of your work or style

quotable quotes

Separate, but kept immediately on hand in a folder will be:

a fact sheet on your book: detailed contents, publisher, price, pages, themes

clips (photocopied) of reviews, interviews and feature articles

articles written on or by you

press release written for book launch

500–700 word personality profile, with photographs, that makes you into a living, interesting entity.

The media kit doesn't have to be a lavish document, but it should be detailed, accurate, up to date and professional looking. It's your visiting card into good society, and is judged so. Indeed it may be the most

important thing you ever write, being used, with selection and modification, to:

- accompany magazine submissions.
- guide interviewers and those introducing your readings.
- serve as flyers and local press announcements.
- serve as posters, suitable enlarged, at readings and book signings.

Get the document right, and ask a knowledgeable friend to look it over.

## 8.2. GETTING REVIEWS

Free book reviews are not free of effort, of course: you'll have to work especially hard to get your work noticed by the magazines and periodicals that count: *Publisher's Weekly*, *Library Journal*, etc. Also remember that reviewers often work from bound galley proofs, i.e. they require your novel or new collection well before the publication date.

You'll want to send out review copies to everyone who can put in a friendly word—colleagues, community magazine, local newspaper, magazines/e-zines that favour your style—but how do you reach the big boys, the literary editors of national newspapers and literary magazines? You send them a press release. Describe your book and why it is worth reviewing. Include contact information: phone, fax, e-mail, company URL, and name(s) of personnel who can be contacted for more information. Plus how to obtain a copy of your book (simply phone, fax, e-mail us on . . .)

Book reviews entail considerable cost, especially in mailing copies abroad, but you'd be wise to send out as many as possible, providing there's some reasonable chance of the review appearing (reviewers won't promise) and the review will help (i.e. prestigious publication). Remember:

- genre markets: if your novel deals with art fraud then an arts or painting magazine may be the answer.
- even a thumbs down helps (reviewed in '*Atlantic Monthly*') and may get your local newspaper to do a follow-up.



- you will select only the favourable bits for publicity, blurbs and Amazon pages.
- journalists may ring for more information, and the standard review develop into the more useful article on you and your career.
- many scams are in existence, usually involving paying for publicity in little-known publications or advert spaces: just use your common sense and check.

A few references, several illustrating the problems the self-publisher faces:

**Publisher's Weekly.** Self-published books only if with reputable distributor and first printing of 2000: 3 months before publication.

**Kirkus Reviews.** No e-books, self-published or poetry.

**Kirkus Discoveries.** Paid-for reviews under Kirkus brand: \$350.

**Library Journal.** Consider reviewing for the publication.

**Midwest Book Review.** Useful background information: will consider smaller presses.

**Rainbo Electronic Reviews.** Brief reviews on-line: fiction, non-fiction and children's books.

**BookNews.** Electronic reviews of published books in specific categories.

**How To Get Your Book Reviewed.** iUniverse article recommending alternative routes.

**How To Get Reviews.** Xlibris article, stressing the importance of persistence.

**Literary Market Place.** Find your suitable outlet here.

## 8.3. PRESS RELEASES

### 8.3.1. Introduction

Press releases are an admirable way of getting yourself known, which in turn will help you to get interviews and readings.

Releases are commonly issued to announce:

- launch of a new book or publishing service.
- new relationship with another business.
- good news or financial results.
- appointment of a senior executive.

All news is grist to the business mill, and correspondents rely on a steady supply. But how do you write press releases, and get them published? Distribution you'll have to leave largely to a news bureau, but the copy you can either compose yourself or hire a professional to write.

### 8.3.2. Writing Your Own Press Releases

Press releases are written to a standard newspaper format, which yours must follow to be taken seriously:

title: as with the newspaper headline, you must grab the reader's attention here.

summary: 2 or 3 sentences that stress the importance of the release.

body: 2 paragraphs giving the details, with individuals quoted.

company information: what the company is and does, location, when founded.

contact information: phone, fax, e-mail, company URL, and name(s) of personnel who can be contacted for more information.

Editors want news, not hype, and you'll be more successful if your piece is topical and includes leads to matters of current concern. Keep an eye on what's happening in your sector of the market, therefore, and examine other press releases for structure and ideas. Finally, make sure the piece is proofed and the facts checked: it's not the bureau's job to do this.

### 8.3.3. Hiring a Pro

Press releases are not difficult, but professionals are always happier working with other professionals. Whatever you write, it'll probably be given a final polishing if an advertising agency handles your promotion. Accept the situation, and just make sure the facts are right.

### 8.3.4. Getting the News Out

E-mail and the internet has helped the spread of business news, but the principles remain the same: your press release needs to land promptly on the desks of the relevant journalists and editors. First and foremost, the piece must be relevant to the business publication, and interesting to its readers. How do you get to the people concerned? Large companies have their own press officers, who keep up contacts in the business world. Smaller companies will also e-mail their pieces to editors of likely websites and magazines, but make more use of news bureaus, which e-mail the

piece to hundreds, if not thousands, of journalists worldwide. Some of the better known bureaus are listed below, but be aware that:

- before e-mailing you should first check (phone or write) with journalists and editors that they accept press releases.
- results take time: you may have to resubmit.
- releases must be brief and to the point: more information will be asked for.
- you should keep facts and figures to hand for subsequent phone calls.

### 8.3.5. Evolving Picture

Today, press releases are less aimed at trade and consumer media outlets, and more at providing solid company information to journalists and customers. According to 2005 surveys by Middleberg/Ross and the Pew Internet Project, 98% of journalists go on-line daily to:

- conduct article research (92%)
- find new sources and experts (76%)
- find press releases (73%)

Moreover, of the 68 million Americans on-line in any day, 27% use on-line news channels. And some 27 million searches are made every month at Yahoo News, Google News or other news search engines.

The trends are reflected in the larger news bureaus. PR Web sends out 60,000–100,000 press release emails daily, and its web-related sites are among the top 2,500 most visited. PR Newswire reaches 22,000 media points in the US, and its articles are archived in over 3,600 web sites, databases and on-line services.

Press releases can be effective. **Marketing Experiments** spent \$990 on 7 press releases to generate 3,000 visitors—which compares favourably with ppc charges. The press releases also generated 6 interviews and increased their incoming links from 2,500 to 12,500.

### 8.3.6. Press Bureaus

Many press bureaus specialize in market sectors: you can find these with search engines and directories. Many of the following will be too expensive for writers, but provide good background information:

**Bacons.** Leading PR register and source of media information.

**BusinessWire.** Communications service for Public and Investor Relations professionals.

**ClickPress.** Software/e-book to generate press releases: includes 6,800 US addresses. \$99.

**eRelease.** Press releases: submissions \$299, writing from \$299, both from \$499. Journalist resources, plus advice on writing and submission of press releases.

**ImediaFax.** Full press release service. From \$50. Also fax services at 25 cents/page.

**Internet News Bureau.** \$275 for submission to 13,000 journalists and business professionals; \$80 for additional media.

**News Bureau.** Public relations firm that charges for press release creation and submission according to results.

**Press1.** Press release preparation and distribution. Several services, e.g. \$179 for them to write, \$99 for distribution to 2,500 magazines.

**Press Release Network.** Leading international news bureau. Many options, e.g. \$1200 for global distribution.

**PRNewswire.** Press release services for the larger company: international.

**URL Wire.** Eric Ward's selective site review service for IT press.

**XpressPress.** Professional press services from \$99.

Don't neglect the listings for public relations and general marketing. Sites with information bearing on press releases:

**Care and Feeding of the Press.** Advice from the Internet Press Guild on getting the best from press releases.

**On-line Public Relations.** Extensive on-line resources for PR professionals. Explore to understand the business.

## 8.4. TV AND RADIO

As seen on TV is not an appetizing way of describing your latest masterpiece, but a fair description of how the media sees the arts. Set your preconceptions aside for a moment, and think of the publicity that will result if you project a proper enthusiasm for your work. Local TV is continually on the look out for interesting guests on chat shows, and you will fit the bill if you:

- have some accomplishments to your name: you've published collections, given talks and signings.
- your latest book is topical, of particular interest to the local community and/or has received rave reviews in national outlets.
- come across as a lively personality.

You need to do three things:

1. send out a television news release—like a press release but containing a complete media kit particularly stressing your public performances and any previous radio or TV appearances. It should include a routing box listing the News Director, Lifestyle Editor and Chat Show Hosts, all by name.
2. create and send out to all chat show hosts an 'available for interview' sheet (see below).
3. call the chat show hosts directly, stressing your experience and availability at short notice (if the case: 'no shows' are often a problem).

The 'available for interview' sheet will look like this:

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW	
photo	Name
	Brief biography
Accomplishments	
Details of your book	
Why and how it will be of interest to viewers	
Available: area and dates	
Contact information	



Once accepted, you must prepare carefully:

- study the program: how guests are seated, dressed, how long they speak for. Learn from this, and if necessary practise before a mirror or the family to project a friendly but assured personality.
- be word-perfect about your book: title, publisher, price, where available, general contents.
- anticipate likely questions and have answers off pat.
- type a few questions on to an index card and give this to the interviewer before the program.
- bring an art board with the cover of your book or a couple of poems clearly printed. Give this to the director beforehand, to be held up during the show or used as fade-in or fade-out.
- arrange for local bookshops to have sufficient copies of your book to sell once the interview is over.
- be ready to answer telephone calls on the book and matters arising.

Above all, try to enjoy yourself, and communicate that pleasure at being in front of the camera.

Don't overlook the less glamorous radio interview and appearance: these generally last longer than TV shows, and reach a wider audience. In Britain, and possibly the States, that audience tends also to be better educated, and more interested in literature and the arts generally.

Your approach will be as for the TV appearance, i.e. the radio station will take you seriously if:

- you have some solid accomplishments to your name: you've published collections or previous books, given talks and signings.
- your latest book is topical, of particular interest to the local community and/or has received rave reviews in national outlets.
- you come across as a friendly and informative person.

As with the TV appearance, you will need to:

- send out a radio news release—like a press release but containing a complete media kit particularly highlighting your public performances and any previous radio or TV appearances. It should include a routing box listing the News Director, Lifestyle Editor and Chat Show Hosts, all by name.
- create and send out to all chat show hosts an 'available for interview' sheet (see below).
- call the chat show hosts directly, stressing your experience and availability at short notice ('no shows' are also a problem).

The 'available for interview' sheet will look like this:

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW	
photo	Name
	Brief biography
Accomplishments	
Details of your book	
Why and how it will be of interest to listeners	
Available: area and dates	
Contact information	

The preparation is reasonably similar:

- study the program, particularly how guests respond to questions and pick up from each others' remarks.
- telephone the director and ask about fellow guests: you have to be as interested in their work as they should be in yours.

- be word-perfect about your book: title, publisher, price, where available, general contents.
- anticipate likely questions but don't have the answers too off pat: there will be time to explore the issues, and other guests will want to chip in.
- type a few questions on to an index card and give this to the interviewer before the program.
- arrange for local bookshops to have sufficient copies of your book to sell once the interview is over.
- be ready to answer telephone calls on the book and matters arising.

You'll probably be asked to read a poem or passage—so practise a few at an open reading, or before a discerning group of friends.

## 8.5 BOOK LAUNCHES

Book publicity takes many forms, but one of the most popular is the book launch, which is also called the autograph or publication party. These serve to:

- enhance your reputation and visibility, important when you're looking for grants and professional appointments.
- recoup your publication costs.
- celebrate a milestone in your career.

Unlike bookstore readings/signings, this form of book publicity is high-key, well-orchestrated and leaves no room for mistakes. It has to be organized expertly, which means first finding a suitable venue and/or sponsor, and then inviting the right people. Even before the launch you will have created a stir with newspaper articles and an appearance at the local radio and TV chat show.

### Sponsors

- Kindly individuals may offer to host a party for you, but, as tactfully as possible, you must ensure they possess sufficient social standing, a



large guest list, the financial means to send out hundreds of invitations, suitable premises, and the sheer party-giving skills to enable guests to enjoy themselves and queue up to buy your book. Put matters in the hands of professionals if in doubt, possibly one of these:

- arts council or society.
- well-known publisher who can rent the proper premises.
- poetry society.
- writers club with a large and active membership.
- local socialite.

### Guest List

Everyone on the guest list is invited for a purpose. Invitations go out two weeks in advance, and guests will include:

- more presentable friends, acquaintances and members of your family.
- local arts council members.
- writers from local societies and reading circles.
- library and bookstore personnel.
- other writers, the more prestigious the better.
- town dignitaries and local politicians.
- business associates, especially those in the printing or publishing trade.
- local professionals with possible literary interests.
- local newspaper journalists.

### Practicalities

1. Publicity is essential: notices in libraries and community centres, a mention in the local newspaper or radio show.

2. In general some 50% of those invited will turn up, so make the premises sufficiently accommodating but not so large that guests feel lonely.
3. Weekday evenings are best, 5 to 7.30, especially Tuesdays or Thursdays.
4. The party will have a table for eats and drinks, another with your book(s) on display and a third where you will sign books. Make sure someone is selling the books (i.e. has a till and credit card facilities).
5. After an hour or so, when guests start to leave, your host will get up and make a short speech, to which you'll briefly reply. Your host will then announce that you'll be personally autographing first editions, and friends will then move to your signing table. Such friends will have been specifically primed before to make a purchase (real or not) and their actions are essential to show others what needs to be done: buy a copy and get it signed. You'll need half a dozen purchases to get the ball rolling.
6. Unless a close friend, what you write in the book will be something simple: Best wishes to. . . followed by their name, your signature and the date. Ask again if you don't catch the name exactly.

## 8.6. POETRY READINGS

Poetry readings are often duller than they need be, and some are positively embarrassing. The author does not realize that reading is a performance requiring showmanship, or simply disdains to acquire any of the skills the tenderfoot actor has drilled into him day after day. Disaster is unavoidable. The chairperson mumbles a few words, the poet shuffles to the lectern, reads his work in a monotone interspersed by uncomfortable silences. Questions are invited, but the silence only grows more oppressive. A loyal friend buys one copy of the latest collection, and the author resolves never to go through the experience again.

To avoid these horrors:

### 8.6.1. Rehearsing

Performing can be learnt, in fact has to be learnt, and few realize just how hard the politician, the after-dinner speaker, or stand-up comic have worked at their craft: hour after hour for months or years: they never stop learning and improving. If you want to be taken seriously, then:

- acquire the basics of the actor's trade: relaxation, breath control, articulation, voice projection and modulation. Do this as a positive daily workout if you're on the reading circuit, not as a chore left to the night before.
- take an acting course. It's fun (sort of) and some of the friends you'll make will come to your readings or give professional advice. More particularly, you'll realize that acting is as much a skill acquired by practice as is writing.
- rehearse the performance so thoroughly that the reading seems habitual and natural.
- memorize the pieces sufficiently so only the odd glance at the script is necessary.
- video yourself, or rehearse in front of a few friends.

### 8.6.2. Planning

Rehearsal will give you the confidence to relax and enjoy yourself. If you have a good time, so will the audience, though you still need to plan meticulously:

- leave nothing to chance. Check lectern, microphone, space on the stage, how you make your entrance and place your script.
- at least pass a few bottles of wine around before the reading, and canapés if you can afford them.
- give the chairperson or person introducing you a short script to work from, not just your credits but what you hope to do in the reading.
- prepare introductions to every piece, something the audience can look out for and which will point understanding in the right direction.

Distribute copies of difficult passages in advance: at least the audience will carry away something from the reading.

- know where you are on the evening's list of readers, and arrange your pieces accordingly. You'll feel easier, and so will they.
- anticipate interjections and problems; prepare handy responses.
- set the pattern after the reading by having a couple of friends buy a copy of your work, which you then sign. Get someone to hawk the books around, and another to take the money. You can't mingle with guests, sort out change and sign books all at the same time.
- consider selling cassettes or CDs of your readings once you've acquired a good delivery.

### 8.6.3. Working the Audience

The audience is well disposed. They've come along specially to hear you, and will cheer you on if you give them half a chance. So:

- try to meet everyone and say a few words in the social half-hour before the reading. Remember names and work them into your introduction. *Bill Stocker here tells me he's written poems for twenty years. I guess many of you have. . .*
- warm up with a few jokes or anecdotes.
- start off with a poem in a lighter piece, something that picks up from your introduction.
- be human and explain what you're trying to do in each piece. Particularly is this important for the short lyric, which can be over before the words sink in.
- illustrate how others have tackled the problem, what came to you initially, and what happened.
- invite audience participation. *You don't like that last line? No, I have my doubts. Back to the drawing board, then. Now this piece. . .*

- be genuinely friendly to the audience. Address them directly. Secure attention. Play to their responses.
- construct a performance, with a clear beginning, middle and end. Tell your audience when you're reading your last piece, and make sure it's a good one.

## 8.7. BOOK SIGNINGS

### 8.7.1. Introduction

Book signing is part of a writer's life, and becomes enjoyable to the extent that the events are well organized and supported.

Bookstores, even superstores, will stock your books and help launch them if you convince them it's worth their while—increased sales, standing in the community, commitment to literature. Nonetheless, it requires effort and the personal touch: bookstores do not generally stock small press literature.

Remember also that a book signing needs to be a social occasion, with advance publicity, well-rehearsed readings and something to eat and drink. A simple bookstore notice that you'll be available to sign copies of your book at a certain time and date is unlikely to be anything but a lonely experience.

### 8.7.2. Research

First make a list of bookstores in your area: name, proprietor, person handling special events, address, fax and telephone number. Consult the Yellow Pages for chains and superstores. For others:

- Book Web.** Trade news and personalities
- Book Publishing News.** Articles and news snippets.
- Bookwire.** Comprehensive on-line portal of the book industry.
- Bookspot.** Extensive sets of links.

### 8.7.3. Personal Contact

Next make an appointment and turn up with:

- book itself
- copies of reviews
- testimonials for readings and other book signings
- personal information: flyer containing photo, bio and publishing credits.

In your brief meeting with store owner or special events organizer, be sure to present yourself as a 'people puller': enthusiastic, experienced and able to sell what's on display. Past readings should have created a local reputation, but you may want to suggest something extra:

- a local writers' panel that responds to enquiries about getting published.
- a presentation recommending books they have in stock ('hand selling')
- publicity: flyers to libraries, community centres and local writing circles.
- a regular monthly session open to other writers if first is successful.

#### 8.7.4. Reading/Book Signing

It will help to have attended a few, but readings/book signings are not difficult. You will have to settle the commission: usually 40% though you may get a better rate for a one-off popular event. For books you leave at the bookstore for later sale, you then sign a 'consignment agreement', which specifies the number of books left, the discount at which the store will sell the books, the sales reporting dates and for how long the agreement will apply. You can pick up a few ideas from these publisher's sites:

**New Pages.** Guide to independent bookstores and publishers.

**Brick Books.** Poetry publisher's site, but with some background.

**Bloodaxe Books.** UK poetry publisher, with news of poetry scene.

**Shearsman.** Poetry book publisher, with some news and reviews.

**Poetry Book Society.** Specialist poetry bookseller and a book club.

### 8.7.5. Other Outlets

You could think of selling your book at other outlets, where the discount is either 20–30%, or a certain number are sold outright at a 50% discount. The following may be possibilities for an attractively produced and relevant booklet of verse:

- florists
- card shops
- tourist/souvenir shops

## 8.8. ON-LINE BOOKSHOPS

### 8.8.1. Introduction

You can sell at an on-line bookstore like Amazon, giving you the exposure and status difficult to achieve on your own website.

Or you can use a PoD publisher, many of whom distribute through Ingram, which allows marketing through Barnes and Noble.com, Amazon.com, Booksamillion.com, Walmart.com and others.

Amazon has various **pricing systems**, but will take self-published work that sells only a few copies a month.

Here's what to do for on-line book marketing:

1. Make sure your work has an ISBN (for a book), or a UPC (for a CD).
2. Make sure your work has a bar code.
3. Apply to the **Amazon Advantage Program**, giving such details as book title and bank account where sales proceeds are to be deposited.
4. Amazon will then consider your application and let you know in the next few weeks.
5. If approved you'll ship them two copies of your book, securely packaged. Until received, Amazon will simply advertise the books as 'available in 2 weeks.'
6. As sales develop, Amazon may ask you to keep more than two copies with them.
7. A cover scan of your book helps sales. Amazon will do this, though many publishers prefer to make their own scan and ftp it to them.
8. Amazon will send you monthly emails of sales and transfers to your bank.
9. Bowker will allow you to register your book in its 'Books in Print' directory: free and a useful resource for bookstores and libraries.



How to sell Your Book on Amazon. One of many such guides.