

Self-Publishing Your Book Online

PDF, CreateSpace, Kindle, Lulu and iBook2

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Overview

In this presentation we will look at 5 of the dozens — perhaps hundreds — of potential self-publishing methods or technologies that can be achieved in the online environment: PDF, CreateSpace, Kindle, Lulu and iBook2. These are the methods that have proven to be most popular and/or efficient and can be relied upon for the best success and profitability.

PDF

The Portable Document Format has been around longest and PDF readers are available free to all users (Acrobat Reader) and can be found on 98+ percent of all computers. This is not a good format for small mobile devices, because the page size is fixed.

Nevertheless, most free books online at Google Books, archive.org, etc. are PDFs. These generally used for research purposes, since lengthy books are hard to read online and too massive to print.

While most PDF books on line are “images,” software is at hand to subject them to OCR scanning to create text. Quality of the image, and thus of the resulting text scan, varies. A PDF book you create will already be text.

PDFs can be publish from numerous programs, including Word, Writer (Open Office) and InDesign.

Some of the advantages of PDFs: easy to build/update; searchable (no index needed); color possible; uou control design; hot-linkable; Google can spider. A couple of disadvantages: it lacks pizzaz/cachet; it's easy to redistribute with author/publisher cut out of the picture.

Another advantage to consider is the ability to take advantage of multimedia: video, audio and Flash animation. The only more “high-tech” book arrived with the new iBook 2 last week. PDF is thus the most basic yet one of the most advanced self-publishing methods.

An important consideration in using PDF is that the document oftentimes will be printed out and then read. So using links is not a simple act. For example, if you want to refer to the page at Amazon.com that refers to Kindle books eligible for the **70% royalty rate**, you can simply do that within the text, like has been done here. That works fine online, but not when printed out. Thus you may want to include the actual link: **<http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=176060&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1443030&highlight=70%20percent>**. That way, the reader can type it in at any computer. Yet it's sort of clunky. A compromise might be to include a shortened link, such as **<http://bit.ly/z1dKI5>**, which can be more easily typed in, yet looks better on the page.

Also because it's often printed, be judicious in adding heavy-duty graphics or backgrounds or very light colors or dark highlights.

When to use: short information books, instruction manual, for a document that has lots of links, niche-market booklets, articles or monographs, short stories or give aways.

CreateSpace

Advantages of CreateSpace are: relatively easy, relatively quick, dirt cheap, most-favored-nation status with the world's largest bookseller and, in terms of standard paperbacks, it offers good variety. It's also fast to market, easy to make changes and good looking (at least it can be). Among its disadvantages are that the output is not better quality than the input, may not have a great rep because anybody can publish almost anything and it requires do-it-yourself marketing.

Who should use it? Anyone who can't get – or doesn't want to get – a traditional publisher and anyone who doesn't want to give a publisher that big of a cut.

Here's what a publisher does for you: Vet and weed, edit, design, market, build sales contacts and pay advances. If you self-publishing, you'll thus have to: make good decisions, Find readers/editors, design it yourself, market it yourself, find your own bookstores and do without advances.

What to do first: Write your book, get your book edited, gather collateral material, decide on size, decide on design, get a cover (back and front). Then you need to read the CreateSpace site thoroughly. Read it again. Download and read a Kindle book about using CreateSpace.

At that point, you'll be able to start making decisions such as deciding on your trim size. CreateSpace offers 11 choices for black and white and 10 choices for color, There are "custom" sizes available for B&W, but there are some limitations. Then you can start to put your book together: Set up your word processing program to match your trim size, checking requirements for margins. Flow your text into these pages, leaving room for illustrations, chapters headings, etc.

If you're doing the design yourself, look at books you like to get some ideas on type size, spacing, leading and the like .Try to match this, printing out one of your pages and comparing it to the model and then make adjustments. Following your "model" book, asking questions like Where do folios go? What pages come up front? And in the back? What info goes on these pages? Where does page numbering begin? It's quite all right to draw components from several "model" books.

Get all this decided upon before you begin to deal with CreateSpace.

Think about illustrations. Images may be CMYK or RGB color. All images should be sized at 100%, flattened to one layer and placed in your document at a minimum resolution of 300 DPI. The 300 DPI requirement means you can't just pick up photos from the internet and place it in your book. Photos and other art also must respect the margin requirements. Tip: You may wish to turn a photo sideways to take maximum advantage of space. You will want to take advantage of CreateSpace's **Interior Viewer**.

When all is said and done, you will upload your interior as a PDF. There are 3 ways to do this and CreateSpace offers **specific directions** for each of them.

In creating a cover, there is lots to consider. As well as the trim size of cover, you need to consider width of spine, which is determined by number of pages and type of paper. If all else fails, CreateSpace has standardized covers that are available at no cost. They also will build you a cover at a variety of prices. As you are designing your cover, remember it will be one piece that includes the back, front and spine. At this point, you'll need to remember that the CreateSpace system will place your ISBN barcode in a 2" by 1.2" white box in the lower right-hand corner of your book's back cover. The standard trim size templates will show you exact barcode placement.

All books need an ISBN and a barcode. You can get one free from CreateSpace, but remember that then, CreateSpace is the publisher. You can buy your own ISBN and barcode from Bowker, but it will cost \$125, or 10 for \$250. (1,000 of them cost \$1,000; that's how CreateSpace can afford to give them away.) If you want to use your own imprint, CreateSpace will sell you a custom ISBN for \$10 that can be used just with CreateSpace. A universal custom ISBN will cost \$99.

If you want Library of Congress cataloging for your book, you have to **get that up front**. Cost is \$49.

The \$10 ISBN won't get you into the CreateSpace distribution to libraries, however.

After you've thought through all these basics, you can begin setting up your account and printing your book. Remember to set your book up for "Look Inside." The more you "give away," the more likely you are to get a sale.

Kindle

How many Kindles have been sold? Amazon doesn't say, but the number is perhaps 30-40 million. Kindle books can be read on a multitude of devices, however. (Compare that with 40 million iPads by the end of 2011, a much shorter period.)

Certainly Kindle offers a further outlet for already published books as well as an exclusive option, if you choose. Revenue can be greater because author can get 70% and there is virtually no cost.

Production is in many ways more complicated than with a physical book at CreateSpace. But Amazon has made great strides in **making the process easier**.

As with CreateSpace, read the instructions at the Kindle site. Then read them again. There are many Kindle books on creating Kindle books.

Kindle takes a number of common formats: Word (.doc or .docx), ePub (.epub), Plain Text (.txt), Mobi-pocket (.mobi or .prc), HTML (.zip, .htm, or .html), Adobe PDF (.pdf), Rich Text Format (.rtf).

However, Kindle recommends using a Word .doc file, because, it says "it's extremely easy to format." In your layout, you can use indentations, bold characters, italics and headings, as they will translate into your Kindle book. But, bullet points, special fonts, headers, and footers will not be transferred, so be sure to avoid those. Enter a page break at the end of every chapter to prevent the text from running together. To insert a page break in Word, click "Insert" at the top menu bar and select "Page Break."

Images should be inserted in JPEG (or .jpeg) format with center alignment (don't copy and paste from another source).

Remember to strip page numbers from your text. Readers are in charge of page flow on Kindle, because they can adjust the type size.

You can use Word's Table of Contents creator to create an active TOC for your Kindle book.

Kindle offers a number of tools to help publishers. Previewer is a tool that emulates how books display on Kindle devices and applications. Previewer makes it easy to preview the layout of a book and make sure its text displays properly for any orientation or font size.

During the publishing process, Amazon attempts to match title, author name, and other title information to physical counterparts available in the Amazon catalog. If you include a subtitle such as (Kindle Edition) to your title, Amazon may have a difficult time associating the title with a physical edition.

You can change your book. KDP compresses your book content file into a ZIP file which contains an HTML file of your text content, as well as any included images. You can download and unzip the ZIP file, edit the HTML file, then re-zip and re-upload the book content file. Kindle recommends opening your HTML file in Word to make changes.

Remember to put a link in your Kindle book to your product page on Amazon. You can't link from that page to your personal website, however.

KDP takes the first 10% of your content and creates a sample that customers can view before purchasing the Kindle Edition of your title.

iBooks 2

The coolest development yet! Free authoring software, but only for Mac. Go to the Apple website and watch the videos; go to iTunes and watch the keynote address from Jan. 19. There will be lots of info, third-party instructions, etc. online as this unfolds. Right now you can link to all that at the bottom of **Apple's homepage**.

Here are a couple of videos to watch:

CreateSpace overview

How to publish on Kindle

Pricing Your Book

Pricing is in some ways more art than science. Some would say it's a black art.

For the PDF book, prices range from give-aways to triple digits, depending on value of information to your audience. Note that it's harder to control distribution with a PDF, so consider that when pricing.

For print books, review similar books on Amazon or other bookstore. Use CreateSpace royalty calculator to determine what you will get. Talk to potential customers about what they pay for similar books. Determine how you will sell your books.

If you're selling a 200-page book for \$15 through a local store: Cost (including shipping) is \$4. Bookstore wants 40% discount, or \$6. That leaves you with \$5.

For that book, your best deals, in order, are:

Selling it yourself

Selling thru your eStore

Selling thru Amazon.com

Selling thru local store

Selling to library, etc.

This order will vary with cost and price, of course.

If you think pricing a paperback book is an art, it ain't nothin' compared with pricing an ebook. No matter what you think the value of your book is, note that **readers are rebelling** when ebook prices are as high as those of print books.

But if you want sales, you can't ignore ebooks. According to the Association of American Publishers, ebook sales reached \$164.1 million for the months of January and February 2011, a 169.4 percent increase when compared with the same period in 2010. For the same period, sales of combined categories of print books fell 24.8 percent, with \$441.7 million sold.

With Kindle, at retail prices of \$2.99 to \$9.99, author gets 70% of sales price net of costs (35% for non-U.S. sales). At other prices, author gets 35%. To qualify for 70%, Kindle book must be at least 20% below lowest list price for print book.

You probably will want to sign up for the Kindle lending program. The KDP Select program and its Kindle Lending Library component have scored a huge hit both with readers and with indie authors. The number of titles available in the Kindle Lending Library has grown from under 5,400 to over 87,000 since December 9 when Amazon launched KDP Select, and readers borrowed 295,000 of those "copies" in the last 3 weeks of December alone. Those free borrows nonetheless turned into \$1.70 per borrow for participating authors, and to put it in perspective that prorated share of the \$500,000 dedicated fund created by Amazon became 20 to 40% of the total ebook income for many indie authors and small press publishers.

Marketing Your Book

Just being on Amazon does not guarantee success. Self-publishers give up having the major force of a big-name publisher behind them. That means your efforts are more important. Use social media. Start while you're writing the book, if possible. Contact bookstores in your region to get book signings.

Contact media outlets and get interviews. Send out lots of free copies to book reviewers. Get family and friends working for you.

Get a book on book marketing and find some pointers that you can use. Use them.

Just as CreateSpace, Kindle, Lulu, iBooks and the internet as a whole make book publishing easier for you, they also make it easier for others, causing competition for buyers to skyrocket.

You need a niche. You need expertise/talent. You need strong marketing. You need perseverance. And you need to keep writing and publishing.

Good luck with writing, publishing and selling your book!