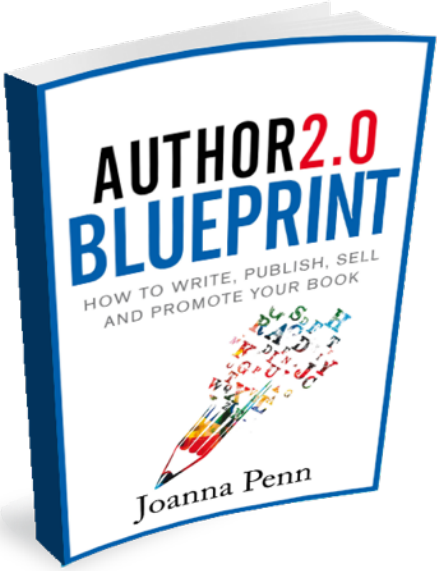

Author 2.0 Blueprint:

On Writing, Publishing, Book Marketing and Creative Entrepreneurship

Feb 2016 Edition

Joanna Penn

TheCreativePenn.com: Voted one of the Top 10 Blogs For Writers

*** Although this book can be read as pure text, it is best read on a tablet or computer in order to click through the links for extra material ***

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ABOUT YOU

You're a writer.

You have a book, or books, already or you want to write one (or several). You'd love to have people all over the world reading your words.

You want to improve your craft and learn from people who are more experienced than you. You want to experiment with your creativity. It's your dream to be a successful author.

You want to be published.

It would be great to have your book on the shelves of your local bookstore, selling globally and a big publishing deal. But you don't know how to achieve this or even what the publishing options are these days. You've heard that it's hard to get published, or maybe you've been rejected before, and you don't know much about how publishing works in general. Perhaps you've been traditionally published before, and now want to explore this new world of digital publishing.

You may have heard about self-publishing or even tried it yourself. You'd like to publish a print book but you don't want to get ripped off in the process.

You want to know more about ebooks and the Kindle, Kobo, iBooks and Nook. You've heard success stories of people who have made a lot of money through self-publishing and you wonder whether you can do this too.

You want to sell your books and make a good income from them.

Your book might be available for sale but not performing as well as you would like. Or you're coming up to a book launch and don't know where to start.

You know that you need to learn about marketing. You've heard that you need to blog and be on social networks but you don't want to waste your time. You'd rather be creative but you know that writers have to pay the bills and a book that's being talked about sells, so you want to find the most effective ways to market your book. Perhaps you'd like to leave your day job and make a living from your writing.

You've been reading lots of books and blogs but **you're still overwhelmed by the amount of information online**. You don't know what you should do but you're keen to learn more. You want to cut through the noise and move forward with your dreams and goals of writing, publishing and marketing.

You're ready to learn.

Is this you? If any of this applies, you'll find this ebook useful.

ABOUT ME

Hi! I'm Joanna Penn.

Like you, I'm on the writer's journey and in the last few years I've learned a lot about writing, publishing, book marketing and being a creative entrepreneur. I want to share my lessons in order to save you time, money and heartache along the way.

Firstly, here's a bit about me so you know where I'm coming from.

Writing as J.F.Penn, I'm a New York Times and USA Today bestselling thriller author, selling in 74 countries and five languages with over 400,000 copies sold. The ARKANE series are kick-ass action-adventure books described as "Dan Brown meets Lara Croft." I also have the London Psychic series and dark fantasy novel, *Risen Gods*, for those who like their stories a little darker.

I write non-fiction under Joanna Penn, aimed at inspiring and educating authors and creatives. Successful Self-Publishing: How to self-publish an ebook and print book does what it says on the box :)
How To Market A Book, you've guessed it, is for authors who want to learn about marketing. If you want to make money with your books, check out: How to Make a Living with your Writing. And if you want to take your writing into the realm of running a business, check out Business for Authors: How to be an Author Entrepreneur.

Career Change is for people wanting to discover what they really want to do with their lives, and describes my journey from IT consultant to full-time author-entrepreneur. Finally, Public Speaking for Authors, Creatives and Other Introverts helps those who want to expand into public speaking.

My site, The Creative Penn, offers articles, audio and video on writing, publishing, marketing and creative entrepreneurship, and has been voted one of the Top 10 Blogs for Writers several years running. I'm also an international professional speaker on creative entrepreneurship, digital publishing and internet marketing.

But it wasn't always like this! Let's wind back the clock a little.

I have always wanted to write a book. I'm sure we have that in common! Since I was a little girl, I just wanted to be a writer and see my name in print! Here's me at a young age, lost in thought while writing (I try to avoid the biscuits these days!).

But somehow, as the years went by and life got serious, I moved away from creative pursuits and into the corporate world.

I worked all over Europe, Australia and New Zealand as an international IT consultant with large companies, specializing in implementing financial systems. It was a great life in many ways but there was always a nagging sense that I was missing the real point of my life. Over time, I felt my creative spark dwindle and die. I wasn't happy but I didn't really know what to do about it.

Back in 2000, I resigned, left London for the Australian outback and swore never to go back to consulting. My adventures were fantastic (yes, that's me on the bottom right) but eventually I ran out of money and went back to IT.

This cycle repeated itself a number of times, and I tried starting several businesses that didn't work out either…

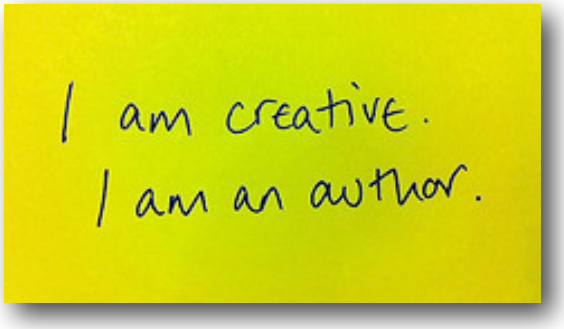
Finally, in 2007, I was really, seriously, over it.

I began investigating what else I could do with my life that would be helpful to other people and also enable me to escape my day job. I wanted to love what I did every day, but how could I achieve that?

At the time, I read two books that made a huge impact on me: The Success Principles by Jack Canfield and The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch. They talked about following your dreams and using affirmations to set your intentions, as well as taking 100% responsibility for your life.

But the problem with changing your life is that you need to know what you want instead of the status quo. And when I looked at what I had always wanted, it was only ever to be a writer.

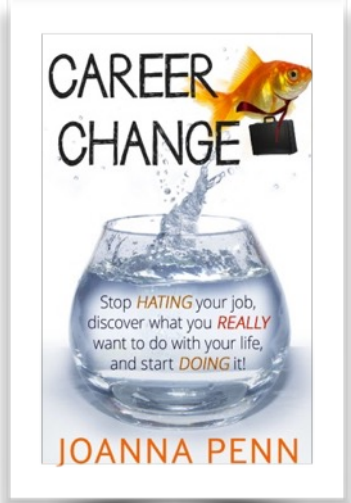
So I came up with my affirmation:



"I am creative. I am an author."

I carried those words with me on a card in my wallet, because at the time, I was not creative and I was not an author. Sure, I wrote diaries and letters, but I couldn't associate the word creative with myself. I couldn't even say the phrase out loud at first, but then I started whispering it on the commute home (when no one was around!)

I moved to four days a week at the day job to give myself head-space to write my first book. I sacrificed money for time. This is now my #1 tip for changing your life. You need to clear a space for the new you.



I spent the extra day every week, as well as the weekends and evenings, researching why I was so unhappy and how I could change my life. This turned into the subject for my first book, now rewritten and republished as Career Change: Stop hating your job, discover what you really want to do with your life, and start doing it!

After writing it, I initially thought I would go down the traditional publishing route but after researching the amount of time it would take, I decided to self-publish.

So in April 2008, I self-published my first book.

I was so happy and proud of myself. I thought that I was going to change the world and free millions of corporate slaves from their miserable lives. I spent money on printing physical books and did press releases, featuring on radio and national TV. That's me, right, at Channel 9 in Australia, recording for 'A Current Affair,' a national TV show.

But I only sold a few books.

Literally, a few. Even with national TV, print and radio.

I was devastated, but I didn't intend to give up (the affirmations were really kicking in now!). I discovered that the first book you write will change your life. It really did change mine, as I learned the process of writing and publishing a book. I had found my purpose.

In order to make this into a career, I needed to actually sell books as well as write them.

At that point, I didn't have a clue about marketing online. I had focused on learning traditional PR, but surely the internet was the way to reach more readers?

So I started researching and buying books and online programs to learn about blogging and podcasting and other methods of internet marketing.

After a couple of other attempts at blogging, I started The Creative Penn in December 2008 to share what I had learned with the 'failure' of my first book.

For example, I had spent thousands of dollars on printing books which didn't sell (left), and only later discovered print-on-demand and selling on Amazon. I'd also been sucked into a scam on compilation books which made me angry and disillusioned.

I was determined that no one else would pay the price I did, and I wanted to save people time, money and emotional energy on their own journey.

I had also started feeling more creative, and the name 'The Creative Penn' came to me on the commute one day. I claimed the word 'creative' for myself and have grown into it over time!

Since then, The Creative Penn has expanded as I have personally grown as a writer. I continue to invest in my education as an author and entrepreneur and I absolutely love the online author community.

In 2009, I decided that **it was time to try fiction as my next expression of creativity**. I participated in NaNoWriMo, National Novel Writing Month, which sparked the ideas for my first novel.

After learning a whole new set of skills, I self-published Pentecost, my first novel in February 2011. I re-titled and rebranded it as STONE OF FIRE in 2015. (Yes, you can do that when you self-publish!)

The sequel, CRYPT OF BONE, was published a year later and I have continued to add to my number of books - fiction and non-fiction. In March 2014, my book, One Day In Budapest, was included in a thriller box-set which hit the New York Times and USA

Today bestseller lists. Quite a journey! I now have 10 novels and 5 non-fiction books available in ebook, print and many in audiobook format as well.

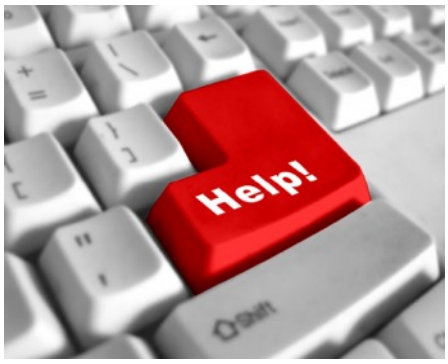
In October 2011, I decided that my affirmation had been fulfilled and resigned my day job as an IT consultant in order to focus on my fiction writing and also on The Creative Penn community of writers and authors. My income now comes from the sale of my fiction and non-fiction books, online courses for authors and professional speaking. This is now my business as well as my passion! You can see a breakdown of my six-figure income here, if that is something you are wanting to achieve as well.

I wanted to share my journey with you as encouragement, because I know the fears that come with writing and the doubts that plague all of us. I'm an introvert, so a lot of things continue to challenge my comfort zone, and I've been crushed and hurt along the way, as I'm sure you have too.

But I'm also truly excited about the years to come, as we are part of an incredible change in the industry. I hope that this book inspires and educates you, because being an author right now is a fantastic adventure!

I hope you'll join me on the journey.

HOW TO USE THIS BLUEPRINT



This book is about empowering you as an author, to help you understand your choices around writing, publishing and marketing, as well as creative business.

It is aimed at helping you through the massive amount of information on the internet because in this fast-moving publishing world, things change all the time.

I get emails every day from people who are unsure of their options or who have been ripped off by companies who take their money and their rights. I hear from authors who have signed all their rights away to publishers who don't utilize those rights, and authors whose book has come out and then they have been left alone to market it without any education.

I want you to know what's possible for authors these days.

So I've tried to be succinct and draw together disparate sources of information from the various areas so you can read it through from start to finish, or just dip in and out of the chapters if there is something you're particularly interested in.

There are **lots of hyperlinks to more information,** indicated by underlined text, so it's best to read online in order to click through.

Most of my information is free, but I'm also running a business, so throughout the Blueprint, you will find links to my own books, courses and products as well as affiliate links to those that I use myself. I only recommend people I trust and/or products and books I've used personally, so I hope you will find them useful if you want to delve in further.

Of course, there is no guarantee of success for any of us, but the information in this Blueprint should help you with new ideas for what you can do.

Part 1 is on **writing and editing.** Even though many people's questions are around publishing and marketing, the creation part of the process is still the most important. Writers write - then they publish and market.

Part 2 is about your **publishing options** and aims to educate you on your choices, so that you can make the right decision for your book.

Part 3 is an overview of **book marketing principles** and options.

Part 4 is about **making a living from your writing** and becoming a creative entrepreneur.

You should know that I'm not (yet) a famous millionaire from my books.

I'm just an author trying to make an impact and share what I learn along the way. I am always experimenting and there is an amazing network of authors online who are sharing what they do and their results.

Together we will work our way through this new publishing world. So let's get started!

WHO IS AUTHOR 2.0 ANYWAY?

In the olden days, Author 1.0 would toil away for years writing their book.

Finally, they would finish it and send it to an agent or publisher in a big envelope. They would write lots of query letters and proposals, attend pitch-fests at conferences and send a lot of submission emails.

Then they would wait for the response ... and wait ... and wait ... and hope.

Meanwhile, agents and publishers sat amongst piles of these great works and despaired at their overworked lives. There were some gems, but it was hard to find them in the cluttered inbox or slush pile of paper.

They tried to do their best but they secretly wondered if there could be a better way.

Some of the manuscripts made it out of the pile and onto international bookshelves, but most did not.

The writer continued to wait ... and slowly, the rejection slips piled up.

Publishers gave huge advances to big name authors and famous people, and agents told new authors to:

"Go build your platform and then we might be interested."

Author 1.0 suffered many rejections before getting published and then waited over 18 months to see their book on the shelves. They held physical book signings and saw meagre sales in local bookstores. They relied on the company book publicist to make the press. Review copies were sent out and Author 1.0 hoped for some media attention.

Then they sat at home and waited for royalty checks, working a day job to make ends meet, hoping to win the lottery that is literary success.

The publicist went onto the next book in the queue. The bookstore returned the extra copies that didn't sell. The publisher turned to the next book on the list. The author had no way to reach the readers who loved their book to tell them about the next one.

But the good news is that Author 2.0 has arrived!

The publishing world has changed and Author 2.0 has choices and opportunities to write, publish, sell and promote online, direct to the book-buying public.

They can build their own platform and attract agents and publishers, with the advantage that they can sell and promote their own books, making a living along the way.

Author 2.0 is empowered to write, publish and promote their own books or use the tools they learn about to leverage a publishing contract.

Writing your book has changed.

You can write online, build an audience and get feedback on your work through sites like Wattpad or blogs. You can collaborate using virtual spaces and crowdsource as you create. You can experiment with online experiences, transmedia stories, apps and serialized books, and play with subscription models.

You can use tools like Scrivener to help you organize your work and optimize your output. You can educate yourself on the craft of writing by listening to free podcasts or buying online courses, because authors are now sharing their experience online through blogs and books.

Publishing your book has changed.

You can hire a professional freelance editor, as well as a cover designer, a proofreader and any other specialists you might need if you want to self-publish.

You can use **Print-on-Demand technology** to get your book directly onto the biggest bookstores in the world, Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble, as well as niche online bookstores globally. You don't need to hold stock, and there are no hassles

with storage or postage, you just get paid royalties monthly. And it's environmentally friendly, because no excess books are pulped.

You can **publish your ebook on Kindle, Kobo, NOOK and iBooks**, as well as other global ebook retailers through sites like Smashwords and Draft2Digital. You can reach a global audience with your words within 24 hours as well as receiving up to 70% royalty. Readers can consume your books on e-readers, tablets and cellphones, as well as in print anywhere in the world.

You can **distribute your book as an audio book or as a podcast** through services like ACX. And you can even start to consider other language markets through sites like PubMatch, IPR License or joint venture deals with translators.

Author 2.0 understands their choices around publishing, and pro-actively decides per project which way to get the book to readers. They may choose to go with a traditional publisher, and they understand the contractual clauses that can be detrimental to their career. They may choose to self-publish and reach readers on their own. They may choose to be a hybrid author, selling partial rights for one book, or doing some books with traditional publishers and self-publishing others.

Promoting your book has changed.

Author 2.0 reaches readers directly through online tools to market their books. They own their website and email list, building a core group of readers who love their work and who are ready to buy when the next book is announced.

They use **content marketing** to attract people through blogging, video, images, audio or other useful, interesting or entertaining media. They use **social media** to network with other authors and build their brand in a crowded market, using authenticity to draw people in.

They give away books, seek reviews from book bloggers and focus on **forms of marketing that have a clickable link to buy**. They say 'yes' to traditional PR opportunities but understand these rarely sell books.

They know that marketing is about **long-term investment and growing an audience**, as well as spike sales and short-term promotions to hit the bestseller lists.

They understand that traditional publishers generally want authors who can market and promote themselves online and off. So regardless of publishing direction, marketing is a necessary skill for authors these days.

Author 2.0 makes money through multiple streams of income, receiving royalties from online retailers from multiple, global markets. They may also have income from product sales, speaking fees and affiliate sales.

Above all, Author 2.0 is empowered.

I hope that you will feel like an Author 2.0 by the end of this blueprint.

PART 1:
Writing and Editing

FOR THE LOVE OF WRITING

This is not a book on the craft of writing, and I certainly don't claim to be an expert. I haven't written enough myself yet, and I'm still learning every day. I hope to keep learning until the day I die.

But I *am* passionate about writing. I believe that it can help us express our imaginations and heal the deepest wounds. We can connect with people across time and distance through our words. We can entertain, make people think or even change their lives.

Writing for the sake of writing is absolutely fantastic!

I've been writing journals for many years. I have piles of them next to my desk, mostly plain-paged Moleskines in black and red, with a few other types thrown in (see right). I've written journals all over the world, and some of those thoughts appear in my published work. But I journal for the sake of writing, for the need to work through what's in my head.

My friend and creative mentor, Orna Ross, uses free writing every day as a way to connect with her unconscious, uncover new understandings and center herself creatively for the day. Many creative people have a similar practice, in the same way a musician might play scales or warm up for the main creative process.

So indulge your need to write and express whatever you want to, but I presume you are reading this because you want to take your words further than your own private life.

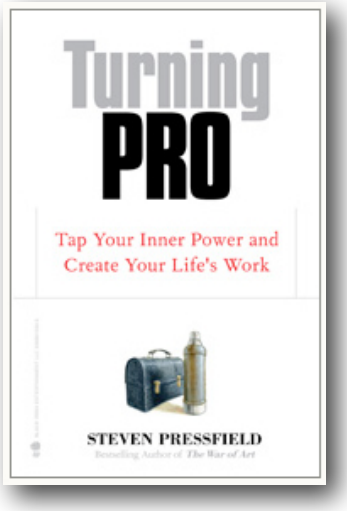
You want to be read, you want to connect with readers.

So this section includes a few things that might help you with the process of turning your writing into something worth publishing. But the words are still the most important thing. After all, you can't publish and market a book that hasn't been written.

People always ask for book recommendations, so here are some of mine for writing:

- Bird by Bird - Anne Lamott
- Writing down the bones - Natalie Goldberg

- On Writing - Stephen King
- War of Art: Break through the blocks and win your inner creative battles - Steven Pressfield
- Turning Pro: Tap your inner power and create your life's work - Steven Pressfield

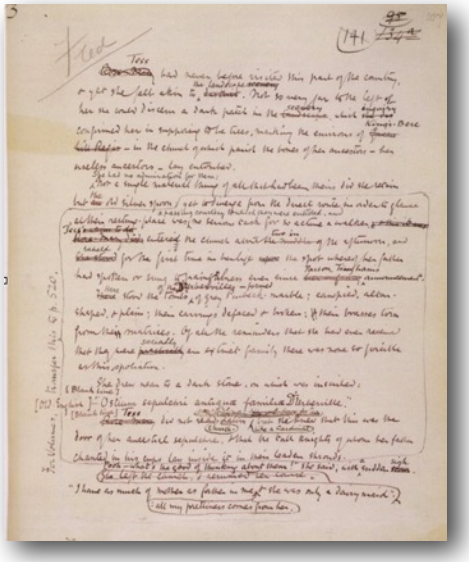


You can see a whole load more book recommendations on my Books for Writers list.

HOW TO WRITE FIRST DRAFT MATERIAL

To write any kind of book, you have to get words on a page. That is simple, but not easy, and remains the constant challenge of any writer.

But one realization changed my own writing life and freed me from the myths of creative genius: Your first draft material is allowed to be crap, and often is, and it's meant to be so.



Don't worry about it, just write.

As evidence, if you visit the British Library in London, you can see a draft of Thomas Hardy's 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' (left). His handwritten scrawl and crossing-out marks litter the page, and he is considered one of England's finest literary writers.

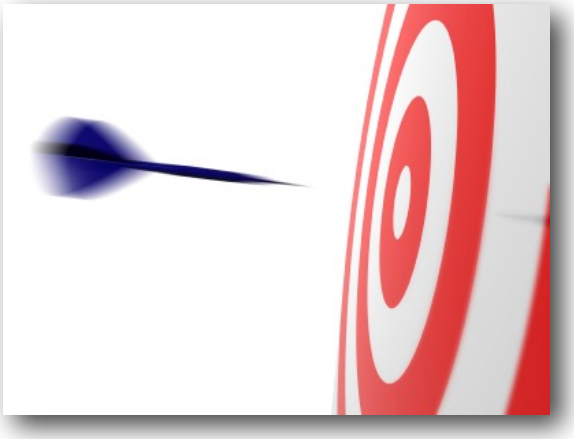
"Write shitty first drafts" *Anne Lamott, Bird by Bird*

A perfect sentence does not appear fully formed on the page, and it is not followed by another one, and another, to create a perfect story in one go. That's not how writing works for most authors, but it is the myth of writing which we must dispel in order to move forward.

"Writing is rewriting" *Michael Crichton*

Remember that, and then go write a ton of first draft material that you can shape into something marvelous later. I don't recommend sharing it with anyone until it has been edited, and there's more on this later.

So how do you get your first draft material from your head onto the page? Here are some of my tips.



(1) Set a word count goal

Many pro-authors, like Stephen King, have a goal of 2000 words per day, even birthdays and Christmas. If you don't have some kind of goal, you won't achieve anything. I really believe that. It also breaks the work down into manageable chunks.

For a full length novel, say 80,000 words @2000 words per day = 40 days of consistent writing.
For a novella, say 30,000 words @2000 words per day = 15 days of consistent writing

Of course, you have the editing process after that, but **you can't edit a blank page.** So set your word count goal, and get writing. I always use a word count goal for my first draft phases and log them on a physical calendar on my wall. I relax that during the editing phase. That's just my way of working, and you must find what works for you.

(2) Write Or Die

This awesome software at WriteOrDie.com is a way to burst through the internal editor that snipes at you as you write a load of crap in your first draft phase.

The software allows you to set a goal in time or word count, and then you have to keep typing or it will play some psycho violin music, or the screen will start turning red, or, in kamikaze mode, your words start disappearing. At the end of the session, when you reach your goal, trumpets sound and you can save the text.

I highly recommend this if you are struggling. It's how I wrote 20,000 words in my first NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) and created the core of what eventually became Pentecost. Maybe 2000 words survived the culling/editing, but you have to write a lot of crap to shape it into something good (at least when you're starting out, anyway!)

(3) Scrivener

Scrivener is amazing software for writing and publishing, and it also has some cool productivity tools. You can **set Project Targets**, 50,000 words for example, and you can also set **Session Targets**, so mine is set at 2000 words. Every time you sit down to write, you can have those targets floating by your work and the progress bar moves so that you can see how it's going. I find it very motivating, and the first thing I do when I sit down to write is put up the Target.

I also like to put as many one-line scene descriptions in as possible as placeholders before I start writing, so I have somewhere to start each day. This is basic plotting or outlining, one of the tips to writing more and faster. I will likely change them, add to them, but it means that whenever I sit down for a writing session, I can start filling in the blanks if I don't know what else to do.

There's also a **Compose mode** where you can fill the whole screen with a blank piece of paper, which keeps you focused. For more on Scrivener, here are 8 ways it can help you become a more proficient writer. Or try the software here for Mac and here for Windows.

I also recommend the Learn Scrivener Fast training to save you time and pain in working it all out for yourself :)

(4) Set a timer for focus sessions, and use Freedom or other software to turn the internet off

As part of my daily productivity tools, I set my (iPhone) timer for 90 minutes and then I write, or edit, or work on a specific project for that long. But you can start with 10 mins or 15 or whatever you can manage.

The important thing is not to get distracted in that time, and DO NOT check the internet or Twitter or your email or make a cup of tea or anything. You can use software like Freedom or Anti-social to stop you accessing the net if you really can't resist without help.

(5) Get up really early and work while your brain is still half asleep

I wrote my first four books, as well as building my blog, while working full time. I used to get up at 5am and write for an hour before work.

I think the early morning helps because your brain isn't polluted by everything that has happened in the day, and your internal editor is still asleep. However, this totally depends on whether you're a night-owl and also your family situation. So find your own groove, but the point is, you need to schedule some time that you don't have normally to get stuff done.

Trust the process of emergence

I heard this in an interview with Brene Brown on Jonathan Fields' Goodlife Project, and it's totally true.

Even if you plot your books, sometimes you won't know what is coming until the words appear on the page. Something happens when you commit to writing regularly, and you write through the frustration, annoyance and self-criticism.

Creativity emerges. Ideas emerge. Original thought emerges.

Something happens – but only if you trust emergence and get on with it. Again, it's simple, but it's not easy (but it's worth it!)

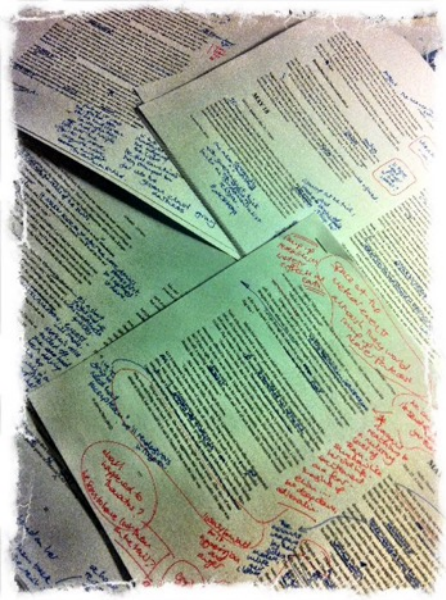
If you don't force yourself to get the first draft material down, you will never have anything to work with.

So fight resistance and get it done.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE FIRST DRAFT?

So now you have a load of words on the page, but I get emails all the time from writers who are confused about what happens next.

Here's my editing process, and I believe it's relevant whether you are writing fiction or non-fiction.



(1) Rewriting and redrafting. Repeat until satisfied.

For many writers, the first draft is just the bare bones of the finished work and often no one will ever see that version of the manuscript. You can't edit a blank page, but once those words are down, you can improve on them.

I love the rewriting and redrafting process.

Once I have a first draft, I print the whole thing out and do the first pass by hand. I write all kinds of notes in the margins and scribble and cross things out. For fiction, I note down new scenes that need writing, continuity issues, problems with characters and much more. For non-fiction, it's often more structural issues, chapter order or material to be added or removed. That first pass usually takes a while. Then I go back and start a major rewrite based on those notes.

After that's done, I will print again and repeat the process, but that usually results in fewer large changes. After that next rewrite, I add all the changes back into Scrivener which is my #1 writing and publishing tool.

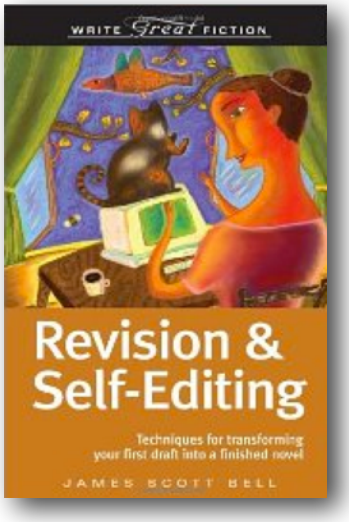
(2) Structural edit/ Editorial review

I absolutely recommend a structural edit if this is your first book, or the first book in a series. A structural edit is more like a manuscript assessment with feedback provided as a separate document, broken down into sections based on what is being evaluated.

I had a structural edit for Stone of Fire (previously Pentecost) in 2010 and reported back on that experience here. As the other ARKANE novels follow a similar formula, I didn't get structural edits for the later books.

Here's how to vet an independent editor if you are considering one.

(3) Revisions



When you get a structural edit back, there are usually lots of revisions to do, possibly even a complete rewrite. This may take a while …

For more on self-editing, check out Revision and Self-editing by James Scott Bell.

(4) Beta readers

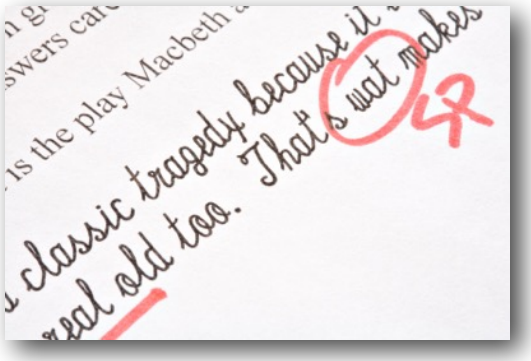
Beta readers are a trusted group of people who **evaluate your book from a reader's perspective**. You should only give them the book if you are happy with it yourself, because otherwise it is disrespectful of their time.

This could be a critique group, although I prefer a hand-picked group of 5 or 6 who bring different perspectives. I definitely use a couple of people who love the genre I am writing, as they will spot issues within the boundaries of what is expected, and then some people who consider other things.

My main rule with beta readers is to make changes if more than one person says the same thing. Click here for more on beta readers.

(5) Line edits

The result of line editing is the classic manuscript covered in red ink as an editor slashes your work to pieces! This particular kind of editing also seems to be called different things in various countries so be sure to verify your expectations against your editors when you query.



You can get one of these edits before or after the beta readers, or even at the same time. I prefer afterwards, as I make broader changes of the book based on their opinions, so I want the line editor to get the almost final version.

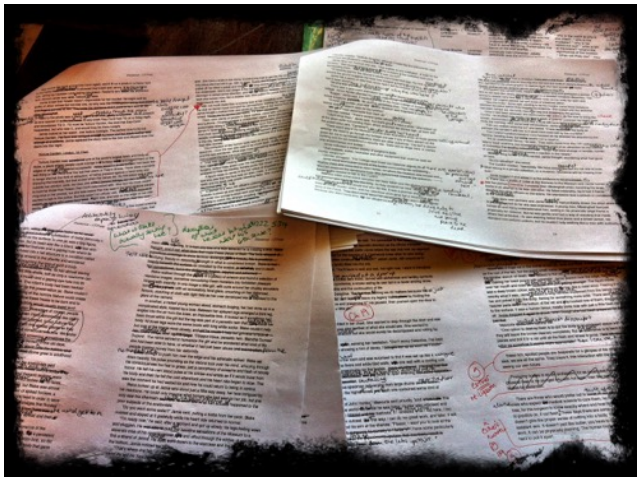
Line edits are more about word choice, grammar and sentence structure. There may also be comments about the narrative itself but this is more about the reading experience by someone who is skilled at being critical around words.

The first time you receive a line edit, it hurts. You think you're a writer and then someone changes practically every sentence. Ouch.

But editing makes your book stronger, and the reader will thank you for it. Editors make us better writers and I learn something new every time I go through the process. That's why I think that professional editing is non-negotiable for serious career writers.

(6) Revisions

You'll need to make more changes based on the feedback of the beta readers and line editor. This can sometimes feel like a complete rewrite and takes a lot of detailed time as you have to check every sentence.



I usually make around 75% of the changes suggested by the line editor, as they are usually sensible, even though I am still resistant at first. It is important to remember that you don't have to change what they ask for, so evaluate each suggestion but with a critical eye.

After this last rewrite, you cannot even see any mistakes you might have made. You are likely to be fed up with your manuscript entirely! At this point, I suggest resting your manuscript for a couple of weeks, or longer if you can bear. You can then go back to it with fresher eyes and make any final changes.

At some point, you have to stop editing. There will always be more to change, but when it is just the last 2% every time, then stop and move to the next phase.

(7) Proofreading

Inevitably, your corrections for line editing will have exposed more issues, albeit minor ones.

Just before publication, I now get a final read-through from a proofreader. After Prophecy was published, I even got an email from a reader saying congratulations because they had failed to find a single typo. Some readers really do care, for which I am grateful and that extra investment at the end can definitely pay off in terms of polishing the final product.

(8) Publication

Once I have corrected anything minor that the proofreading has brought to light, I will Compile the various file formats on Scrivener for the ebook publishing platforms. I

will then back the files up a number of times, as I have done throughout the whole process, before publishing. More on that in Part 2.

(9) Post-publication

This may be anathema to some, but the beauty of digital publishing is that you can update your files later. If someone finds a typo, no problem. If you want to update the back matter with your author website and mailing list details, no worries. If you want to rewrite the whole book, you can do that too (although some sites have stricter rules than Amazon around what is considered a new version.)

Budget: Time and money

Every writer is different, every editor is different and there are no rules.

But in terms of time, **your revision process may take at least as long as the first draft** and probably longer (unless you're Lee Child, who just writes one draft!). For one of my books, Desecration, the first draft took about four months and the rewriting process took about six months. There are people much faster than me, and much slower - so don't compete, just find your own process.

In terms of money, I would budget between $500 – $3000, depending on what level of editing you're looking for, and how many rounds. You can find a list of editors and their prices here.

I believe that editing at all these different stages is important, because it is our responsibility to make sure our books are the best they can be. But if you can't afford professional editing, then consider using a critique group locally or online, or barter with other writers in the genre. The more eyes on the book before it goes out into the world, the better.

HOW TO BALANCE YOUR TIME

One of the most common questions I get asked is, "how do I balance my time between writing and marketing, as well as the rest of life?"

But marketing doesn't have to cannibalize your writing, because there are two kinds of time:

(1) Creative time

This is when you have the energy to be at your creative best. This may take you some effort to work out, but for me, it's always the morning. When I had a full-time job, I would get up at 5am to write before work, because after work, I had nothing left. I was exhausted. But everyone has different approaches, so pick whatever time is right for you.

This doesn't mean that you can magically stream gorgeousness onto the page at that time every day, because **creativity is hard work, with occasional moments of flow.** But mostly, it's about getting your butt in that chair and writing words that you can later edit into something fantastic.

So decide on a time and then make sure that you actually use that time to create something new in the world.

(2) Downtime

Then there is the other time that is not taken up by your family, or work commitments, but it is time when you're mentally tired. When I worked full time, this was generally any time after work, or during any breaks I managed to snatch, plus evenings.

This is where you will have to make some decisions.

How much do you want this?

We all have the same number of hours in the day, so you have to decide what you will do with yours. Here's how I changed my life to make room to do the other stuff, the marketing stuff, the business-building, the platform ...

*** Seven years ago, we got rid of the TV.** I know that will upset some people, but seriously, it is life-changing. We still watch specific shows by downloading them, but it means you only watch ~40 mins of actively chosen entertainment rather than passively watching whatever comes on. This frees up 2-3 hours per night, or even just one extra hour that you can use. Or if you're a night owl, use this time to write and your early morning slot for a marketing session.

* **Gave up 20% of my income.** This is pretty hardcore, but I decided to move to four days a week at work, meaning I could spend an extra day on writing and building my business. This was a serious career change for me, but I was willing

to invest in it. I had already spent eight years on other failed business ideas (see my book Career Change for more detail!) so I was committed.

I realize that these steps might not be for everyone, but you have to decide what you want to achieve, and by when, and then consider what you will give up for that. How will you make room in your life?

No, it's not easy, but then nothing worthwhile is. Luckily for us, writing is a lifelong career and so is building your personal brand and platform online. Where do you want to be in 5 years' time?

How do I manage my time now?

Now I am a full-time author-entrepreneur, I have to balance my time carefully. My best tool is my Filofax diary: yes, a physical diary on my desk that I write everything in. It's planned about 3-6 months ahead and includes days in the library for fiction writing, speaking days and personal appointments.

I also have a word count calendar on the wall with my daily achievements, and I use the OfficeTime app on my iPhone to track the hours I spend in creating vs. all of the admin side of my career. Here's more on how to create a writing habit.

Essentially, you have to decide on your goals and take control of your life and your time. That's it. **It's simple, but like so many things, it's not easy.**

Consider some of the following questions:
* How do you spend your time now?
* Where do you want to be in 5 years' time in terms of your book sales?
* What can you potentially give up to make some room for writing and marketing activities?

Click here for more articles and audio on writing and editing.

PART 2: Publishing

YOUR PUBLISHING OPTIONS AND YOUR GOALS

There's a lot of confusion about publishing options right now. The industry is in a state of flux, with things changing every week, so even those of us who monitor publishing news are often just keeping up.

In this section, I'll outline your broad options for publishing, as well as trying to give some direction on how you can make decisions about your future.

My aim is to empower you with knowledge so that you can make the best decisions for you and your creative work. Your decisions are likely to be different to mine, or other authors, so assess the information and then work out your own journey. There are no rules, and that is both exciting and intimidating, but armed with this knowledge, you will hopefully be better off.

The broad spectrum of publishing choices

As an overview to the rest of this section, let's briefly outline the current publishing options. It used to be traditional publishing vs. vanity press, but now there are a rainbow of options.

- **Traditional publishing.** This is the established route of querying agents and submitting to publishers. However, what has changed is how authors can potentially get picked up. Agents and publishers are now interested in working with savvy self-publishers or authors with existing platforms, and may pitch the author directly. There are also digital-only imprints which don't do print editions, so traditional publishing may no longer put you in the bookstore. All publishers are not equal, as all contracts are not equal, so do your due diligence if you are pitching. If possible, check

with other authors published by that imprint to see how working with them has been.

- **Professional self-publishing/indie authorship.** The author treats the creative production of their book as a business, investing in professional services upfront. The author distributes directly if possible, e.g. through Amazon KDP and Kobo Writing Life, and uses indie distributors like Smashwords for other platforms. The author receives income directly from the sale of books and the only middleman is the distributor.

- **Hybrid authorship**. You don't have to do either traditional OR the indie route nowadays. You can be a hybrid author and have some projects with traditional publishers, and other projects as indie. You can even split your rights on one book, as Hugh Howey did with Wool, selling print rights and retaining ebook rights.

I'll go into the models in more detail in the following chapters, outlining the pros and cons, but the above are the methods that I recommend. The fantastic Jane Friedman has come up with an infographic including these models.

Then there are the assisted routes, which potentially have the most pitfalls for the author.

- **Agent-assisted publishing.** This has only emerged recently as agents have realized that many of their clients have huge backlist catalogues from which they could be making income. The agency publish the works themselves and receive a percentage of sales, on top of which the distribution percentage will be taken out. It is relatively simple to publish your own books through the same distributors, so you have to be really sure that you want to pay your agent 15% on royalties forever in order to save yourself a few hours of technical challenge.

- **Fully assisted publishing.** The author pays upfront for services and the publisher handles all design and production tasks, as well as offering marketing services. The author has no ongoing control over the distribution,

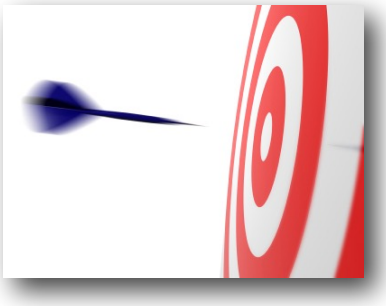
pricing etc and all payments go through the publisher. *Be wary of this model*, as there are increasing numbers of service providers that authors are unhappy with. Please spend a couple of dollars on 'Choosing a self-publishing service,' if you want to go down this route. It was written by authors, for authors, based on our own experiences. You can also check the acceptability of a service at Preditors and Editors. I get emails every day from authors who feel that they have been ripped off by these services, so please be careful. Buyer beware!

What are your goals? For your book but also your career?

In assessing these options and in thinking about your publishing options, it is critical to consider your goals for

A) your book

B) your longer-term career as an author



Here are some questions for you to think about:

- Do you just want to write one book or do you want a long term career as an author?
- Do you want to make money from it, or is it just the fulfilment of a life goal?
- Do you want your book to be in your local, physical bookstore or are you happy to sell through online distributors like Amazon?
- Do you want to sell to readers all over the world?
- Do you want to win literary prizes or do you want to make a living wage?
- Do you want to be accepted at literary festivals?
- Do you want to make a full-time living as an author?
- Where does a book fit into your business?
- Do you want control over your creative output?
- What is your definition of success? Selling 1000 copies? A NY Times bestseller?
- Are you willing to experiment and try new things?
- How much are you willing to learn in order to become successful?
- Do you just want someone else to do it all for you?

From that starting list, many more questions will arise, but it is so important for you to think about what YOU want before you go into any kind of publishing situation.

One of the big issues with publishing in general is that expectation rarely matches reality, because we have been sold the dream of the outlier: the six figure book deal on a first novel, the

success, the money, the fame. But that is an incredibly unlikely scenario. I'm not saying that it's not possible, but you have to consider what your definition of success is and aim for that first.

IT'S NOT JUST ONE BOOK, YOUR RIGHTS AND HOW TO EXPLOIT THEM.

Before we get into the nitty-gritty of how to publish, you need to understand how valuable your work is.

Warning: this may blow your mind! It blew mine when the penny finally dropped on what this truly means for my lifetime creative opportunities.

You may not care about the financial side of the business, perhaps money isn't a driver for you, but whether you want a traditional deal or to go indie, **you need to know how your manuscript can turn into multiple streams of income**.

The publishing business is not a charity.

Publishing companies are interested in making money, and your manuscript enables them to do that. I'm passionate about this because a friend of mine just signed a contract for all rights, in all languages, in all territories, for a tiny sum of money. She was so excited about being published by a big brand publisher, she just didn't understand the ramifications of signing away those rights.

So if you want to sign with a publisher, go ahead, but know what you're doing. If you're an indie, I hope this excites you about the possibilities, because the road ahead is tremendously exciting!

The diagram on the next page outlines the rights model as I see it today. Below the diagram I go through each of the specific rights and in subsequent chapters, I'll explain how to actually exploit those rights. The word 'exploit' in this context is a publishing industry term. It means to exercise your rights or put them into practice. Many publishers buy rights that they never exploit, so it is your responsibility to make sure that you retain as much as possible and if necessary, exploit them yourself.

Disclaimer: I am not a lawyer and this is not legal, contractual or financial advice. It is just my opinion and I can't answer any legal or financial questions.

Your manuscript starts as just one document. Authors therefore generally think in terms of one book equals one product, and they forget that multiple streams of income can flow from this small beginning. But you can turn that one book into:

(1) Ebook edition - available for sale on multiple devices: Kindle, Kobo, Apple devices, all cellphones through apps.

(2) Print edition - available for sale on Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and many other online bookstores, as well as being available to bookstores, libraries and universities.

(3) Audio edition - available for sale through Audible, iTunes, Brilliance and other services.

Most of my books are now available in ebook, print book and audiobook versions - that's three income streams from each manuscript.

(4) Multiply these editions by country markets, which come under 'territory' in publishing contracts

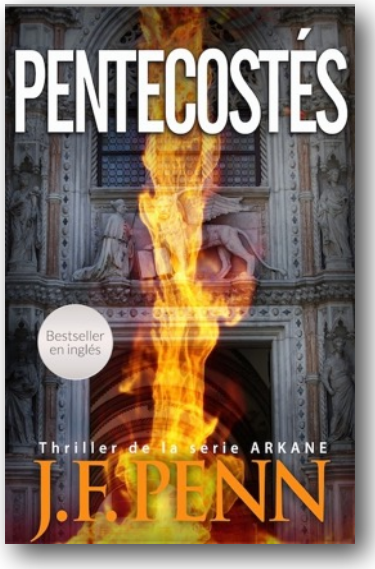
Through Amazon, Kobo, iBooks and NOOK as well as aggregators like Smashwords, you can reach multiple territories. As of Nov 2015, I have sold books in

69 countries including such diverse places as Burkina Faso, Nepal and Colombia, as well as the bigger markets of US, UK, Canada, Germany and Australia. My map of sales from Kobo Writing Life is shown left. Now that's exciting!

Although the volume is quite large in the mature markets, most of those country sales are small right now, a trickle in each country. But that's because the online book sales markets are just beginning.

Right now, I have 12 books available for sale in these 61 countries, each giving me a little trickle of income. **Fast forward a few years and I think you'll see how different things will be.**

Check out this article on other ways to exploit your foreign rights.



(5) Multiply these editions by language

If you want your books in other languages, you can hire professional freelance translators, in the same way that you can hire editors. Indie authors have also started to do joint venture deals with freelancers, giving them a chance to build a reputation for themselves, as well as longer-term income.

My books are now available in German, Spanish, French and Italian as well as English. I have done joint venture deals with freelance translators and I share all my lessons learned in this series of articles. I'd caution that this is an advanced indie author strategy, but it's very exciting!

You can also negotiate with a foreign rights agent to sell on your behalf, or use sites like IPR License or PubMatch, as well as investigating BabelCube as other options (although I haven't used those myself, lots of authors are starting to use them).

These language rights can expand your market in a completely different way.

Other subsidiary rights

There are also opportunities for subsidiary rights. For example, I sold some short stories to Kobo, which they used for the launch of Dan Brown's Inferno and then for an exclusive period.

But after six months, I got the rights back and I published 'A Thousand Fiendish Angels' as a free short story collection.

You can also turn your non-fiction book into a multimedia product with video and audio that sells for more money than a book.

But I absolutely acknowledge that some rights are hard to exploit without expert knowledge. Film and TV rights, for example, are not something that most indies are getting into yet, although again, indie author Hugh Howey managed to attract Ridley Scott with Wool.

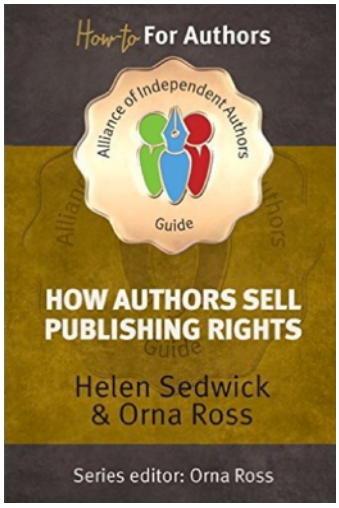
When do you want to sell rights?

It's completely up to you, but the position of professional indie authors these days is more about partnership with publishers on rights deals that are good for both parties. Hugh Howey, Bella Andre and others have taken print only deals in English, keeping their ebook and audiobook rights. I've also done an audiobook deal with a small press in the US, as well as a German language deal for Desecration-Verletzung.

I would definitely consider any print-only deal, as well as foreign language deals, in order to get into new markets. For example, **I'd love to have my books available in Mandarin and Arabic**, which together encompass a huge market worldwide. My books feature Israel heavily, so I'd also love to be published in Hebrew. But for me, it's definitely about partnership.

Bottom line. Your work is valuable.

Remember that.



More resources:

I'm not a lawyer and I'm not giving advice here, just telling you what I see as the opportunities for authors. I can't answer any legal questions, so please don't ask me any, but here are a couple of resources that may help educate you further:

- How Authors Sell Publishing Rights by Orna Ross and Helen Sedwick

- Deal Breakers: Contract terms that writers should avoid by Kristine Kathryn Rusch. Fantastic investment of just a few dollars for a book that could save you thousands and a lot of heartache. **A MUST READ** if you want to sign any publishing contract.

- Helen Sedwick and her book, Self Publisher's Legal Handbook

- Passive Voice Blog - contracts collection. Here are a couple of choice posts: Is this the worst paragraph in a publishing agreement? And a bad contract is your fault. The blogger at Passive Voice, David P. Vandagriff, is also an intellectual property attorney.

PROS AND CONS OF TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

Let's talk about traditional publishing first, because I know that many people still dream of the book deal. This information is gleaned from my extensive network of author friends who have had book deals, because I haven't signed one a big one myself. I've linked to resources within the text and have also added more at the end of the chapter.

Benefits of traditional publishing

- **Kudos, prestige**, validation by the industry, authority, social proof, and let's face it, ego. And there's nothing wrong with that! Many writers dream of having a big name publisher on the spine of their book, and dreams are good. Just weigh them up against your definition of success.

- **Top quality print production and distribution** to physical bookstores. Publishers specialize in this and have been doing it successfully for many years.

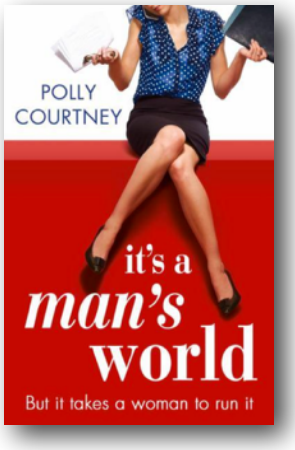
- **Help from a professional team** who know the business. If you are traditionally published, you will have an editor to help you to hone the book, as well as a production team to work on getting it out to the world, and some marketing support.

- **Reach a different audience.** Independent authors make most of their income from ebook sales, but traditional publishers can still reach an audience of people who shop for physical books in stores, airports and other retail outlets.

- **Acceptance into literary festivals and literary prizes.** While some prizes and festivals are beginning to open up to indie authors, most are still the bastion of traditional publishing.

- **Potential exploitation of other rights** e.g. film. Yes, Hugh Howey's indie book Wool was optioned by Ridley Scott, but that's an outlier, for sure. I want Morgan Sierra, from my ARKANE series, to be the next Lara Croft, so I need people with the right contacts to make that happen. I know the film deal is a lightning strike type of luck, but some authors make it, and I have always had stretch goals and dreams!

Drawbacks of traditional publishing



- **Lack of control** over anything except the words. You may have input but you don't have the final say around cover design, blurb, timing, price or promotional activities. A friend of mine, Polly Courtney, famously dumped her publisher for using fluffy and degrading covers on her novels.

- **Amount of time everything takes.** It may take a couple of years to get from your first manuscript to signed contract, but then it will likely take at least another year or 18 months until your book is seen on the shelves. If you have a time-critical book, or you're just ready to move onto the next project, this can be a long time to wait.

- **Lower royalty rate.** Many authors dream of a six-figure book deal but remember, the advance is against royalties, so you have to sell books to offset that amount of money. Many authors don't see royalty checks after that advance for years, if ever. Yes, there is a slim chance that you will hit it big, but various sources report that the average number of copies sold for a book is usually a few hundred to a few thousand.

- **Marketing is not a given anymore**. If you're counting on the publisher to do the marketing for you, there's a shock coming. Publishers should market your book to bookstore buyers, but nowadays, authors are expected to participate in marketing direct to readers. In April 2013, Pulitzer prize winning playwright David Mamet announced his decision to self-publish "because publishing is like Hollywood - nobody ever does the marketing they promise."

- **If you don't make it big, you can be dropped by your publisher/agent and left alone to manage anyway.** There are a lot of disillusioned authors out there, many of whom are now happily self-publishing. They thought that their dream had come true on publication and then found out that reality is not quite

as dreamy. Not every author becomes a brand name like Stephen King or JK Rowling. Again, it can happen but it's more of a lightning strike or lottery win.

Process for traditional publishing

Publishing is a complex environment these days and no single writer's journey is the same as another's. But the general process for traditional publishing is as follows:

• Complete your fiction book. For non-fiction, complete a proposal.

• **Submit to agents.** Identify the right agent, and pitch them with a synopsis and sample chapters according to the process on their website. Rejections and waiting are a normal part of the process.

• If an agent accepts you, go through **another edit** on the book based on their recommendations. Then they will submit the books to select editors at publishing houses. Rejections and waiting are also a normal part of this process.

• If your book is accepted at a publisher, go through the **contractual issues**. (Make sure that you read this book on contract clauses before you sign anything if you make it this far.) Go through **another edit** based on their recommendations. Go through the **production and launch process**, so that your book is out in the world. Maybe have a publicist work with you for the launch period (about a month), and then everything will move on as the publisher gets working on the next book in their schedule.

Here's an interview with Orna Ross, who moved from traditional publishing (Penguin) to going indie

The sites I recommend for opening your eyes about traditional publishing are:

Dean Wesley Smith's specific articles on Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing and the new world of publishing. Dean has been in publishing for a long time so he knows the scene and tells it like it is.

The Business Rusch by Kristine Kathryn Rusch - specific articles about the business of publishing and being an author in this new world. Dean and Kris are married and also business partners - between them, they've seen it all over long, varied and prolific careers.

The Passive Voice Blog - lots of links to publishing articles but also lots on contracts and the nitty gritty of rights

Importantly, self-publishing will not prevent you from getting a book deal. It may even help these days.

The press is full of examples of how self-published authors have gone on to attract amazing book deals based on their success. From Amanda Hocking to Hugh Howey, from Mark Edwards to Kerry Wilkinson, these deals are no longer big news because they are so common.

SELF-PUBLISHING VS BEING AN INDIE (INDEPENDENT) AUTHOR

The terminology and language are still evolving in this space, but I do see a difference between self-publishing and being an indie author.

Self-publishing for a personal project is brilliant. For example, I helped my 9 year niece to self-publish her first book, The Adventures of Jasper and Chaos. It was a creative project to be proud of, put onto the family bookshelves and into the school library.

But it was not a commercial prospect and wasn't ever intended to be.

Your grandfather's war journal, or your own diaries could be a similar project. Self-publishing doesn't have to be a commercial proposition, it just means that you publish by yourself, without the need for a publisher.

To many people, self-publishing means bad quality books with no editing published by one of the vanity presses. The main concern is that this crap is flooding the world and readers can't find quality in the mass of rubbish.

I know that these books do exist, but I hope you agree that we, as authors, can do a lot better than that these days. I also believe that readers are the new gatekeepers, so sales online, reviews and rankings will ensure that the cream rises and the bad stuff drops out of the picture.

The term 'indie author' has been increasingly claimed by authors who want a new label, one that does justice to the work involved.

The term 'professional self-publishing' is also being used, as well as 'author-publisher' but I like the term **'indie author,'** as it resonates with the legacy of indie musicians and indie film, two industries that have already experienced the upheaval that publishing is now facing.

Consumers are also becoming more used to buying directly from artists and creators. Think about it. Do you shop at farmer's markets, preferring home grown veg to supermarket? Do you buy from craftspeople on sites like etsy.com or NotOnTheHighStreet.com, preferring individual gifts over mass market high street homogeneity? Do you try micro-brewed beer or artisan bakeries, trusting that the individual creators are aiming for excellence and originality? That's the spirit of indie I believe in!

Indie author means truly independent

At its most basic, indie means that there is no separate publisher involved. Many indies may have set up their own micro-press, so their books still have a publisher name that is not the author's, but the publisher is not one of the 'author services' companies. The indie pays the bills and is paid by the distributors, e.g. Amazon/ Smashwords, directly. The only middleman is the distributor.

Indies are entrepreneurs and business people

The Creative Penn is a limited company. My books and my website, as well as my professional speaking, are a business. I have an accountant and I do monthly accounts. I monitor cash flow, income and expenses. I invest in creating good quality assets (books) for my long term income.

Indie authors may not all have such a developed business, but t**hey treat their writing and publishing in a professional, business-like manner**. That means they have to think about financials but also sales and marketing, as well as production, on top of the creative side.

This entrepreneurial attitude also spills into why people go indie in the first place. We like speed and we like control. Taking action and seeing what works comes naturally, and jumping into new media, new technologies and opportunities is part of what we do. By the time I had written my first novel, I already had a platform, so it was worth the experiment to publish immediately and see what happened. As many entrepreneurs say, fail fast, fail often and then go with what works.

Indies employ professionals as publishing involves teamwork

We all need editors! We all need help with cover design!

The term self-publishing is a misnomer because we don't do it all ourselves. We have a team in the same way big publishers do.

One of the biggest criticisms of self-publishing is the poor quality of the finished product, which is why it's important to take these extra steps.

As indies, we budget for and employ professional editors, professional designers and formatters for digital and print books. We know that the value of our work includes the way it is perceived on the page as well as the work itself. The charge of bad quality is one we can avoid by investing in a collaborative process. Click here for a list of pro editors and here for a list of book cover designers.

Indies are (generally) still interested in deals with traditional publishing

Traditional publishing and self-publishing are not mutually exclusive.

There is a vocal camp that have now sworn off traditional publishing forever, but I think many indies are still interested in a rights deal, especially if it offers something that they can't do or don't want to do themselves.

Most indies don't hate mainstream publishing either, despite the noisy few who make it look like we do.

In actual fact, we are all book lovers and advocates of reading in whatever form people want to consume.

We all want the publishing industry to thrive and for readers to continue to buy lots of books, and in fact, most authors are also huge consumers of books.

The hybrid model, where some books are traditionally published and others are indie published, seems to be growing, and is perhaps the sweet spot for the most successful authors. It's certainly where I would like to get to myself.

Creative Director

Here's the definition of 'independent author' from the Alliance of Independent Authors, of which I am a proud member and advisor. It focuses on the idea of

being a creative director as well as a writer.

At ALLi, 'independent' is an inclusive description and always relative (everyone needs help to write and publish well). Some of our members are fiercely indie-spirited, as DIY as it's possible to be. Others are happy to collaborate with a publisher where that seems advantageous, some working with paid publishing services, others with trade publishers.

So what marks out an indie from other authors? The Alliance allows that you are an independent author if:

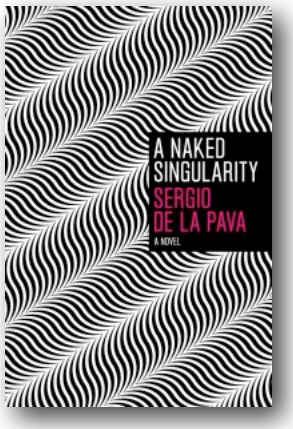
- You have author-published at least one book.
- **You see yourself as the creative director** of your book, from conception to completion through publishing and beyond.
- You expect that status as creative director to be acknowledged in any partnership your negotiate, whether a paid author-service or in a deal with a trade publisher or agent.
- In any trade-publishing deal, you expect your status as an author-publisher to be appropriately acknowledged, in contracts and terms, not just lip service. If you have an established author platform, you should receive a higher royalty rate and advance than an author who does not.
- **You recognize that you are central to a revolutionary shift in publishing** which is moving from seeing the author as resource (in the new parlance 'content provider') to respecting the author as creative director.
- You are **proud of your indie status**, which you carry into all your ventures, negotiations and collaborations for your own benefit and to the benefit of all writers.

Self-publishing is no longer the last resort

It is actually the first choice for many independent authors, myself included. In this brilliant article, understanding self-publishing in 5 books, David Vinjamuri notes how these books, and more, have changed the game:

- **Wool by Hugh Howey** - a self-published novella series that made Howey a million dollars on his own, before the series was optioned for film by Ridley Scott, and then Howey signed a print-only rights deal with Simon & Schuster. This was one of the first print-only rights deals and more have followed,

marking a change in the way in which authors can negotiate with traditional publishing and form mutually beneficial partnerships.



- **A Naked Singularity by Sergio De La Pava** - a self-published novel that went on to win $25,000 PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize, proving that indie work isn't the 'tsunami of crap' some claim it is, plus you can win literary prizes this way.

- **The Cuckoo's Calling by Robert Galbraith**. This book had only sold in the hundreds of copies, just like most new authors, before it was revealed to be JK Rowling's pen name. Then it really took off, proving that publishers can't easily make a bestseller with a new author. We are all in the same marketing game!

PROS AND CONS OF BEING AN INDIE AUTHOR

Here's my opinion of the benefits and drawbacks of being an independent author.

Benefits of self-publishing/ being an indie author:

Please note that these may NOT apply if you go with one of the assisted publishing options.

- **Total creative freedom and control.** You make all the final decisions over content and design, as well as pricing and timing. The book doesn't even have to be a commercial prospect, so you can express your own creativity, publishing the words that you want the world to hear. There are many books that traditional publishing wouldn't consider a big enough seller that you might want to self-publish. You might also want to have a commercial bestseller, but to do it on your own terms.

- **Faster time to market.** Your ebook can be for sale less than 24 hours after clicking publish. Your print book can be for sale within 2 weeks. If your book is time-critical, this can be a real market advantage.

- **Sell by any means, in any global market.** There's no need to wait for

anyone's permission. My books already currently sell in 61 countries worldwide, and I don't need anyone's permission to do this.

- **Higher royalty share.** Although self-publishing is definitely not a get-rich-quick scheme, Amazon, Kobo and other distributors offer up to 70% royalty to the author, compared to ~15% from traditional publishing (plus another 15% of the author's share to an agent if one is used).

- **Low risk way to test the market and get into the game.** Agents and publishers are increasingly looking for successful independent authors to work with, so by self-publishing you could attract an agent faster than going through the slush pile.

- **Positive energy** of creation, production, entrepreneurship and seizing the day, rather than the negative energy of rejection, waiting to be picked or given permission to speak. **Indies are empowered!**

Some of the challenges of self-publishing:

- **There's less prestige in self-publishing** and some consider that there is still a 'stigma.' There is no validation by the publishing industry, unless of course, you hit the bestseller lists, at which point you're likely to be pursued by agents. But customers who buy on the online retail sites don't usually shop by publisher, so this stigma is more about your own perception as an author.

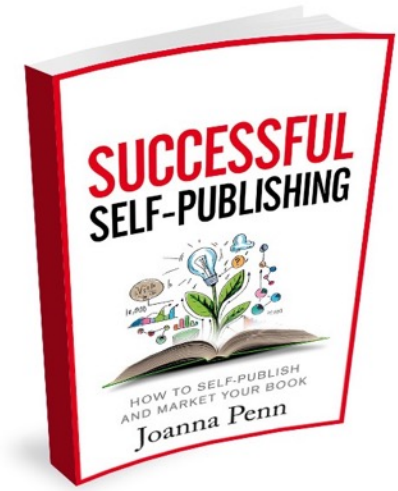
- **Print distribution into physical bookshops is difficult** for independent authors although Ingram Spark are trying to change things with their new services. The best book to read about this is Opening up to Indie Authors: A Guide to Bookstores, Libraries, Reviewers, Literary Event Organizers and Self-Publishing Writers.

- **You have to find professionals to help you and you might not have the connections.** Utilizing author networks can help with this. For example, check out my lists of editors and cover designers, and organizations like the Alliance of Independent Authors for more.

- You need an **entrepreneurial spirit** and to **treat your writing as a business** if you want to be successful. You need a budget up front, and you need to have a project management mindset to get everything done. Here are 10 qualities

you need to succeed as an indie author (but remember, you can develop these over time).

- **Exploiting other rights can be a challenge.** Selling foreign language rights as well as subsidiary rights like film/media can be difficult without a specialist agent. But increasingly this is changing, as successful indie authors are approached by professionals looking to work with new, emerging talent.



If you want to read a **book on self-publishing** to get more detail, I have included a whole load more information in my FREE ebook, **Successful Self-Publishing: How to self-publish an ebook and print book**.

It's free on all ebook stores - just click the link for your favorite store:

Amazon

iBooks

Nook

Kobo

If you'd like more practical help, check out my multimedia course: Self-publishing Success: How to self-publish an ebook, print book and audiobook.

It contains everything I know plus behind the scenes video, audio and slides of my own self-publishing process after 17 books.

I also recommend these other books if you want some varied opinions:

- Choosing a self-publishing service – Edited by Orna Ross from the Alliance of Independent Authors
- Let's get digital: How to self-publish and why you should – David Gaughran
- Write. Publish. Repeat. - Sean Platt, Johnny B. Truant and David Wright from the addictive SelfPublishingPodcast.com

If you want to join a community of active self-publishers who help each other out with information and advice, check out the Alliance of Independent Authors. (I'm an active member and advisor). There's also a great blog: How to successfully self-publish.

YOUR BOOK FUNDAMENTALS

Before you can self-publish your book, you will need the following things in place:

- **Full edited, completed manuscript.** Click here for a list of editors. The manuscript must then be formatted into the correct version for the publishing platform. I've included some options for formatting in the next chapters on publishing.

- **Book cover** for the ebook and print book. The ebook is just the front panel and a print cover has a back and spine. Click here for a list of designers or check out on how to design your own cover in MS Word.

- **Book title and sub-title.** If your book is non-fiction, I suggest that you research keywords for your title and sub-title. When I changed my book title from 'How to enjoy your job' to 'Career Change,' the number of sales went up tenfold as more people search for the latter.

- **Book sales description/back blurb**. This is what is printed on the back of your book, and also acts as the sales description for your book page on the retailer's site. Make sure that you research other books in your genre to get an idea of what a good sales description is. Here's how to write back blurb for your book and here's a great article on the 11 ingredients of a sizzling book description.

- **Categories for your book.** However original your book may be, it still needs to be found by readers, so it needs to be published in a category. You get to choose 2 - 5 depending on the platform, so aim for a categories that make sense for your book but also that you can more easily rank in. Clearly 'Romance' will have a lot of big name brand authors in but you could try sub-categories in which you could possibly rank. Even literary fiction is now split into sub-categories, so be as specific as you can.

- **Keywords.** You can add 5-7 keywords that will help readers find your book, so learn how to research them before you choose them. The keywords can also be used for browse category rankings e.g. I used the keyword 'conspiracy' for 'One Day In Budapest' and it became a bestseller in Conspiracy Thriller.

- **Pricing.** This is one of the most difficult things for indies, and opinions continue to change in this space. Brand new authors often try to entice readers with low prices e.g. 99c or free.

  More established authors with multiple books will often have books at multiple price points, from free to expensive, in order to cater for all types of reader. You can do short-term free promos, or set your book as permanently free. You can do limited time sales, and you can change your price at any point, so don't obsess too much over this at the beginning, as you can always tweak later if you self-publish.

- **ISBN.** This is a number that identifies the specific edition of your book. You need separate ISBNs for ebooks, print and audio. There are two schools of thought around ISBNs these days. Some indie authors buy packs of ISBNs and use them to identify their own company as the publisher. Others use free ISBNs from Createspace and the ebook retailers. You don't even need an ISBN to publish on most platforms. Personally, I have never seen any evidence that owning your own ISBNs actually helps you to sell any more books in the digital space, and they seem to be a vestige of the traditional, print dominated industry. Other indies are convinced they are critical. It's basically up to you. Here's a considered article that looks at the issue.

For more specific details around Amazon keywords, categories, sales algorithms and more, read David Gaughran's Let's Get Visible: How to get noticed and sell more books.

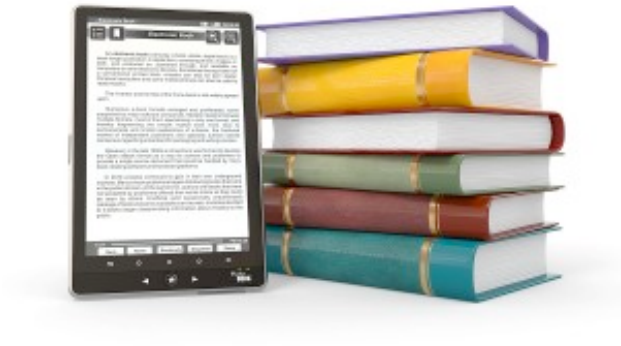
I also recommend the fantastic free video series from Nick Stephenson on finding your first 10,000 readers, which goes into many of these details.

Click here to get the free video training.

Finally, the most fundamental thing is to **write great books and continue writing them.**

The more books you have, the more readers you will please, the more sales you will make. If you want a career as a writer, check out Stephen King, Janet Evanovich, Dean Wesley Smith or Kristine Kathryn Rusch. They just keep writing.

HOW TO PUBLISH AN EBOOK



The opportunities are amazing for independent authors in this rapidly moving and fast growing digital market. If you ever see me speak live, you'll notice how much I bounce with enthusiasm when I talk about this!

It seems that every day something new happens in this arena, and we are in a Wild West phase where people are just experimenting and seeing what happens. Indies are also increasingly sharing this information, so you will find a wealth of information on blogs and forums. Follow me on twitter @thecreativepenn where I share all the updates.

The basics

An ebook is basically a version of your manuscript that you can read on the Kindle, Kobo, Nook, Sony Reader, iPad, Android devices, your computer, your cell-phone or basically anywhere that's not print or audio. The devices for e-reading continue to proliferate, which makes reaching readers even easier. **Ebooks have changed the way in which books are defined and how they are read**, especially in commercial fiction. As younger readers move onto digital reading within education, the whole marketplace will continue to shift as they grow up.

Personally, I'm a Kindle junkie, and now read 99% of my books on my Kindle Paperwhite or using the Kindle app on my cell-phone. I estimate that I read five times as much on the Kindle as I did in print, because of the ease of buying and reading anywhere, as well as the change in pricing. Studies show that I'm not the only one.

Even if you're a confirmed ebook skeptic, **you need to know about this market if you want to sell your own books to a rapidly growing audience**.

As stated earlier, in the rights chapter, ebook growth may have slowed in the mature US market, but it has barely begun in most of the rest of the world. If you're self-publishing, most of us make the vast chunk of our income from ebooks, because there are no restrictions on sales and readers don't even have to know who published the book. Thank about your favourite book. Do you even know who published it? Most readers don't even care.

If you have existing contracts for your books, and /or have been published in the past, **check that you have the rights before you self-publish**. If you're a new author, you have the rights and you can do what you like. You can publish in any or all of the following ways. **There are no rules and you can sell globally!** (woohoo!)

How to publish an ebook. The fully DIY option

(1) Format your book yourself.

I realize that this idea is scary at first, but here's why you should do it yourself.

Because you will want to change your ebooks in the future.

I can almost guarantee that you'll want to change something. It might be that one crazy typo that annoys you, that you'd otherwise have to pay someone $50 to fix. But more likely, it will be that you want to update the back matter of your ebooks with the links to your latest book over time.

Yes, it's likely that you will have more than one book if you get into this seriously!

Every time you publish a new book, you will want to return to the others and link to it at the back. You might also want to update your bio with website details, or ask people to sign up for your email list or whatever. If you can't make the change yourself, you're always at the mercy of others.

I format in Scrivener software to create a .mobi (for Kindle), ePub for Kobo and most other platforms or Word, PDF or loads of other formats. Scrivener is only $45 and the compile function is just one tiny part of the amazing writing software, which many authors (including me) swear by.

I also use and recommend the fantastic Learn Scrivener Fast training, which will help you optimise your use of the software quickly, including how to format ebooks.

Click here to take a look at Learn Scrivener Fast

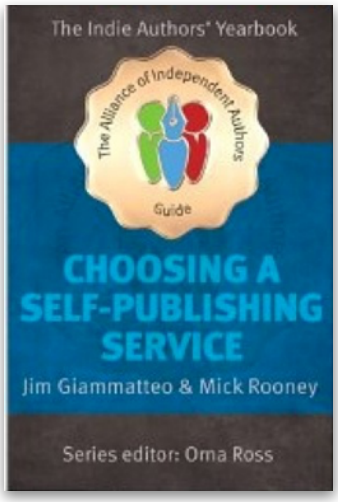
(2) Publish on the ebook stores

For the best royalty rates, you want to **go direct to the retailers** if you can and the process is pretty easy for each one. There's plenty of help on each of these sites and the screens are easy to use, so you don't have to know any programming to use them.

- Publish on Kindle at KDP.Amazon.com
- Publish on Kobo at Kobo Writing Life. You can also watch/listen to this interview from Mark Lefebvre, Kobo's Director of Self-Publishing here.
- Publish on Barnes & Noble NookPress
- Publish on iBooks through iTunes Connect

You can also publish to all these stores and more through Smashwords (free with % royalty per book sales) or Draft2Digital (free with % royalty).

How to publish an ebook. The paid services option



I know that some authors don't want to mess around with ebook files or the tech side of publishing.

If you definitely want help, there are lots of services that can do this, so you should shop around, check reviews and testimonials and ask other authors what they think.

Here are some options:

- Createspace conversion to Kindle file (for Amazon only)
- Bookbaby formatting
- Smashwords list of formatters
- Ebook Architects – for more complicated books
- Bibliocrunch author concierge services - or post a job to get someone to help you

If you want a full services company, please spend a couple of dollars on 'Choosing a self-publishing service.' It was written by authors, for authors, based on our own experiences. You can also check the acceptability of a service at Preditors and Editors.

IS IT WORTH DOING PRINT PUBLISHING ANYWAY?

I started out as ebook only, but here's why I now invest in print publishing:

• **Book groups, fans, family and friends all want a print copy,** plus my ego likes it!

• **Price comparison** on Amazon means that the ebook looks like a great deal next to the print version

• **I want to exploit all of my rights** and create multiple streams of income per book

• **The books are 'stable'** meaning that the ebooks have been through a few iterations and rewrites, typo fixing etc. Plus my own fiction platform and brand is now established at JFPenn.com and I wasn't clear on that when I first self-published in Feb 2011.

• When I started self-publishing, **I didn't have a big enough audience and it didn't justify the design costs back then**. But now I have a lot more ebooks and the print design is paid for by ebook sales.

If any of that applies to you, then considering print is a good idea. My recommendations are:

• If you're just starting out, **go ebook first and then do print once your book and brand have 'settled down'.** Give it at least six months so that you can see whether you are making enough in sales.

• **Use print-on-demand through Createspace.com or IngramSpark.com**. This means that the books are printed and shipped to the customer when they are ordered, and you don't need to buy a huge batch upfront. Printing thousands of books upfront is one of the top mistakes of indie authors. Don't do it unless you are a speaker or have an existing distribution method.

- **Use professionals for interior and cover design** to make sure that it is a quality product.

HOW TO PUBLISH A PRINT BOOK

You can still do small print runs as an indie author but **print-on-demand (POD) technology** has really transformed the possibilities.

POD means that the book is ordered from Amazon or another online or physical bookstore. The order goes to the printer, one copy is printed and sent directly to the customer.

Books are printed when they are needed.

No waste, no pulping. No massive outlay for a print run. No need to bother with shipping to customers. No trekking down to the post office or worrying about packaging. It's not just indies who are embracing this. Many traditional publishers are now using POD for backlist or niche books.

You can really be adventurous with your creative projects with print these days, and the beauty of POD is that the costs are quite low, so you can play around with ideas.

• Adventurer Alastair Humphreys walked across India and then created a paperback version, a hardback tabletop photobook, a full-size map as well as Kindle, iPad versions of his book 'There Are Other Rivers'. You can read about his adventures in publishing here.

- I helped my 9 year old niece, Anna, self-publish her first book. She designed the cover, the pictures and wrote the story. This experience has given her confidence and inspired her to create more.

So how do you actually go about publishing a print book with print-on-demand?

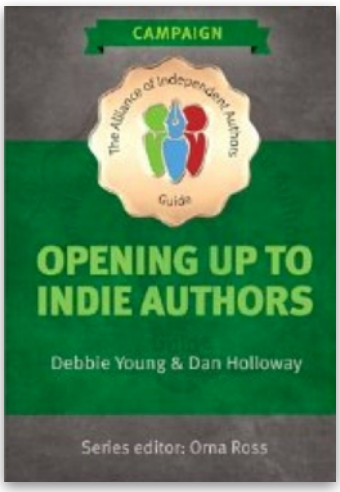
There are a number of companies who can help you do this but the most recommended are:

- Createspace - this is Amazon's own print-on-

demand company and has a great deal of help documentation as well as wizards to help you step through the process. It's free if you just publish without any extra services.

- Ingram Spark - While LightningSource is aimed at small publishers, Ingram Spark's new services are aimed at indie authors, offering wider distribution to bookstores, libraries and academic institutions as well as more printing options.

- Blurb - I recommend Blurb for photo-books and they also have a charity area, so it's great for not-for-profits. They also have a specific store for children's projects, popular with schools and families.



If you want to have the best chance of your book reaching bookstores, I also recommend, 'Opening up to Indie Authors: A Guide for Bookstores, Libraries, Reviewers, Literary Event Organizers and Self-Publishing Writers,' which has loads of great advice for optimising your print distribution.

How does the print-on-demand process work?

I use Createspace.com, which has an easy to use 'wizard' interface. You still need all the same book fundamentals, and then you have to **decide what size to print the book**. For my fiction I like 5x8, and for non-fiction I use 6x9, both perfect bound. Ingram Spark have more binding and size options as well as paper choice if you're serious about print as a business model. You can do your own formatting, but I prefer to pay a professional designer to create two files:

- **Print-ready PDF cover** - if you're already getting an ebook cover designed, you can usually get a better price for designing both at the same time.

- **Print-ready PDF interior** - or you can use a free template from Createspace to make your own, or use one of the reasonably priced templates at BookDesignTemplates.com

Once you have these two files, you can go to Createspace, Ingram Spark or any of the other DIY services and upload them, plus add in the other information e.g. description, price etc. You will then have to review the print edition. I always order a print copy, but you can also review online.

If you're unhappy, you can load new files. If you're ready to publish, you can release the book to the world and within a few days, sometimes sooner, your print book is available for all to buy online. Very exciting!

How do you decide on a print-on-demand company?

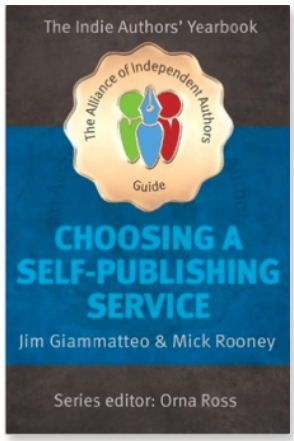
When you're deciding on a print-on-demand company, check:

Upfront costs - what are they charging you for? If you need help with cover design, ISBN etc., what will these cost you?

On-going costs and cover price - what percentage will they take from your book sales?

Where do you want to be distributed and how will they help you do that?

Is it easy to **make changes** to the files?



Please do your due diligence and don't get ripped off. Spend a few dollars on 'Choosing a self-publishing service' by the Alliance of Independent Authors. You can also check them out on Preditors and Editors which keeps track of the scams out there (and there are lots!)

AUDIOBOOKS: TIPS FOR DISTRIBUTION WITH ACX

The world of opportunity just keeps expanding for indies! We know how to publish and sell ebooks and print-on-demand, and now audio is the next frontier (along with global markets, but I'll come back to that in another post!)

Why you should care about audio

- **Audio is booming.** Shifts in technology mean it is easy to buy and consume in mp3 format directly through mobile devices. Publishers are doing full scale productions with famous names to lure new readers in. And after all, humans have been listening to stories for millennia. It's how we naturally take in content

•People can multitask while listening to an audiobook which **enables people to read on the go.** A survey from Bowker found that "47 percent of people who buy audiobooks listen while commuting in a car. About 25 percent listen while working around the house and 23 percent while exercising."

In this demographic survey of American readers, 15-20% of readers in the higher earning wage bracket have listened to an audiobook, as well as skewing towards the more educated groups. I would propose that many of these people listen on their commutes, heading to jobs that perhaps they would like to escape from!

The survey also showed that 84% of audiobook listeners also read a print book in the past year, and 56% also read an e-book. This means that if a listener enjoys one book, and can't find the author's backlist in audio, they may go find it in print or ebook. This crossover in the market means that audio is a new method of finding potential fans, and since the market is less crowded than ebook or print, you have a better chance at standing out.

- Most authors with a publishing contract will find that audio rights are included, but if you haven't signed them away, or you are self-publishing and own all the rights, then you have options!

Producing and distribution with ACX

Authors have always been able to produce and distribute audio themselves, for example, Scott Sigler still does free audio fiction for his audience, and J Daniel Sawyer continues to produce full production audio dramas.

But it has been very hard to produce professional work, and sell it to an audience, without paying a huge amount of money upfront. Self-published authors don't generally have lots of cash, so this has meant most indie books haven't been available in audio. That is, until ACX opened up, first in the US and now for UK authors. Exciting news!

I already have 11 books available in audio now so I am fully embracing this opportunity.

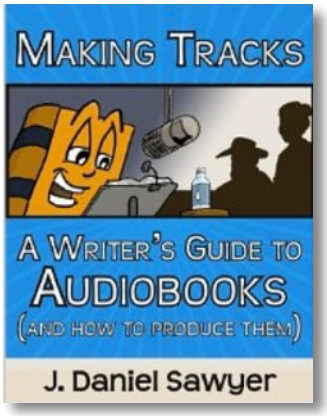
You can read the FAQ at the ACX site here, and here's a full post on the process with ACX from author Roz Morris.

To add to this, here are some of my specific thoughts:

- The setup is very easy in the ACX backend, with a wizard like process guiding you through. You need your manuscript and an audition selection, plus a high quality square image during the production process. Auditioning and choosing your narrator, as well as the actual quality side of listening to and reviewing your audio files are the most time consuming parts of the process.

- Amazon has Whispersync technology now, particularly high quality on the Kindle Fire, which means people can stop reading on the Kindle device and start listening at the same place, and then go back into the ebook at the new place when they stop listening. To optimize the chance of your book being accepted for Whispersync, check the guidelines here.

- **You have no control over pricing**, which is quite strange as an indie, since we are used to making decisions about all that. Also, if you choose the exclusive option, which you have to with royalty share, you can't distribute to other audio platforms. Neither of these are a big issue for me personally, but you can of course choose the paid upfront version and go non-exclusive. Or you can do the audio project entirely separately – if you want to do that, check out 'Making Tracks' by J Daniel Sawyer, and this podcast interview about audio options.



- In terms of the money, the royalty share is still a good deal (despite reducing just before ACX opened up to the UK). You can also get a bounty payment for bringing new people into Audible, which can be a good addition. Personally, I love doing joint ventures with other creatives, as both parties are more invested in the success of the finished product.

- At London Book Fair, both Bella Andre and Hugh Howey were talking about how good their audiobook royalties are, but of course, they are uber-indies! For most of us, I would expect a trickle, that may turn into a thin stream with enough books and exposure.

- Personally, I see this as a **longer term investment** in a new type of reader, and a way to reach new potential fans. I'm also thrilled to be able to profit share with other creatives in a collaborative process, and I see no downside at all with giving ACX a go!

For marketing audiobooks in particular, check the second half of this article.

HOW DOES THE MONEY WORK AS AN INDIE AUTHOR?

If you want to reach readers, then I presume you want to sell books. If you're going to sell books, you're going to make some money. (woohoo!)

Maybe money isn't your only goal, but you wouldn't take a job without knowing how you were going to be paid, would you? Yet I find that many writers don't seem to know how the money works for traditional and self-publishing.

So, here are some worked examples. Of course, **every author situation is different**, some better and some worse than this, but at least it will give you a better idea of how the money flow works.

[Disclaimer: this is not financial or legal advice. It just my opinion and only an example.]

Traditional publishing example

- Check details and **sign a contract.** Please re-read the chapter on rights before signing anything, as well as Kris Rusch's book Dealbreakers. The contract will include the royalty rates per right you are selling, for example, you might be paid 15% of the price of your book in ebook format, and 7% in print.

- **Get paid an advance against royalties.** Authors tend to forget that this isn't an upfront payment in return for nothing. It is an advance against the royalties that the publisher expects your book to earn based on the rates in the contract. This varies per contract, although advances have fallen in the last few years, especially for first-time authors.

- For the purpose of this example, let's assume a generous $20,000 in total, which you will need to split with your agent (15% = $3000). You're left with $17,000 which you'll also need to pay tax on. Assuming tax of 20% = $3400. You're left with $13,600 after agent and tax. The advance will likely be split into payments: a percentage on signing, a percentage when you produce the final

manuscript and a percentage on publication. So let's assume 3 payments of ~$4500 each over 18 months.

- Assuming that the price of the ebook is $4.99 and the print book is $9.99, you would get 75c per ebook and 70c per print book based on the royalty percentages I have used. **The publisher would need to sell over ~26,000 books (without returns or discounts) before your advance was 'earned out' and you would get further royalty payments.**

- Many authors find that the advance is all the money they ever receive from a publisher, and royalty statements are confusing and hard to read. These statements often only come every six months and are notoriously hard to reconcile, so marketing activities are hard to track. Some publishers are moving to portal-style reporting, in the same way as Amazon and Kobo use, but most are still using old back-end systems.

If you're interested in a publishing deal, make sure you discuss how the money works, when you're paid and how you will find out about sales volume/reporting from your agent or publisher.

Example of being a DIY indie author (going direct, rather than using a paid publishing service)

- **Pay professionals upfront** - editing and cover design. Budget approx $1500

- **Publish on Amazon KDP, Kobo Writing Life, Createspace and Smashwords**, all free to publish on. As above example, ebook is set at $4.99 at 70% royalty rate = $3.49 per sale for the author. For print-on-demand, you set your profit margin, which I normally set at $2 per book, but most indies make substantially more money through ebook sales than print.

- **You would only need to sell ~430 ebooks to make back your initial investment and break even.** Everything else after that is profit, although you need to factor in the tax on that income after your expenses have been recouped. You can keep selling that book for the rest of your life and your estate can continue selling for 70 years after you die. You would need to sell

~4900 ebooks to equal your advance from the traditional publisher above (before tax). And if you go on to sell 26,000 copies of that ebook at $3.49 each … well, you do the math. It's pretty exciting!

The risk, of course, is that you won't even sell 430 copies and you won't make your money back.

Of course, that can happen, but if you follow the best practices of successful indie authors and keep writing books, you can have some confidence in making sales over time. There's no rush! As an example, by Nov 2014, I had sold over 250,000 books as an indie author over the last four years. **The sales per month have grown as I have written more books and attracted readers over time**. For the first book, in the first year, I would have had my doubts too, but my situation has only improved with more books, more visibility and more time in the market.

- Amazon KDP, Createspace, Kobo, iBooks and NOOK all pay by **direct deposit into your bank account or by check every month**, ~60 days after the end of the month of sale. (But make sure that you check the terms of service). You receive separate payments from each Amazon store, so currently I receive six different payment amounts, plus separate payments from Createspace and Kobo. Smashwords pays quarterly by Paypal, and other services like BookBaby and Draft2Digital pay monthly.

- You can also check your sales daily through the various **online reporting portals, and download monthly reports**. These reconcile with the payments you receive, so the process is completely transparent. You can use software like Trackerbox to monitor your sales across all stores.

You can see how very different the financials are between the traditional and independent models, and that **there is risk either way**.

For traditional publishing, the risk is that you give too much away, and for self-publishing, the risk is that you don't even make your money back. You have to decide what you want to pursue, per

project, based on your goals.

Some authors are using crowd-funding to pay the upfront costs for self-publishing. That can work well if you have an established audience, but it can be difficult for a new author. Personally, I invested my own savings in the first book, and then invested sales income into the next book, which is how most start-up businesses are run.

A short word on tax

This is not financial or legal advice and I am not a lawyer or an accountant. This is just my opinion based on experience and I can't answer any questions on legal, tax or financial issues.

Whether you are traditionally published or going indie, you need to consider the tax implications of earning royalty income in your country. If you're a non-US citizen earning money through Amazon, Smashwords or other US companies (including traditional publishing companies), you need to follow the tax rules on this page. If you're struggling, I highly recommend the advice by Karen Inglis here. If you don't fill in your W8-BEN, you will have 30% tax withheld and your books may even be withdrawn from sale. Don't moan about it, just get it done!

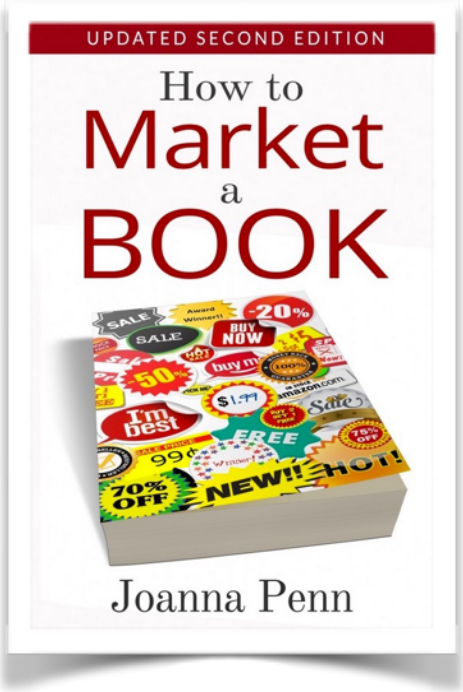
PART 3: Marketing

MARKETING INTRODUCTION

The first job of an author is, of course, to write great books, but these days, the second job is to market them.

Marketing isn't a skill that most authors have naturally, and there is little formal training. But when your book hits the shelves, and the sales don't start rolling in, there are only two things an author can do. Keep writing more books and … Get to grips with marketing.

There's lots of advice in the next few chapters on aspects of marketing, as well as free articles and audio interviews here.



I have also published a full-length book with everything I know about marketing, (un)surprisingly called 'How To Market A Book', available in ebook and print editions. It's actually a #1 Amazon bestseller, which is a relief, as it would have been embarrassing otherwise, for sure!

Before we move on, here's a little about the book, so you know what it includes.

***How To Market A Book* is for authors who want to sell more books**, but it's also for those writers who want to think more like an entrepreneur. It's for traditionally published authors who want to take control of their future, and for self-published authors who want to jumpstart a career.

There are some **short-term tactics** for those who want to kick up immediate sales, but the focus of the book is more about **instilling values and marketing principles that will help your long-term career** as a writer.

It's also about going beyond just the book, because the methods in this guide can take you from being an author into professional speaking, making money from other products and creating opportunities that you can't even imagine yet.

There are no rules in this game, but learning this kind of authentic marketing has certainly changed my life, so I want to share everything I know with you.

***How To Market A Book* covers an extensive range of marketing principles, strategies and tactics:**

- **Part 1: Marketing Principles** – including myths, how to balance your time, co-opetition and generosity

- **Part 2: Prerequisites for Success** – including an understanding of yourself and your target market, professional editing and cover design, your book page on the retailer websites, pricing and the use of free

- **Part 3: No Platform Needed** – Short-term marketing – including how to get book reviews, paid advertising, using traditional media and tips for TV, radio and press releases

- **Part 4: The Author Platform** – Long-term marketing – including the reasons why a platform is a good thing, author branding, your author website, list-building and email marketing, content marketing and blogging, audio and podcasting, video and book trailers, social networking, professional speaking, and becoming an author-entrepreneur.

- **Part 5: Launching Your Book** – including how launching has changed, soft launch, launch spikes, post launch and relaunches as well as lessons learned from some major book launches.

- Plus tips for when you get overwhelmed and plenty more links to further resources.

*"Joanna Penn's How to Market a Book is the **most up to date, personable guide to modern book marketing I know**. Packed with tips from the charming and well-informed Penn, it's an essential guide for indie authors who want to keep up with the ever-shifting world of book marketing."*

~ Joel Friedlander, TheBookDesigner.com, A Self-Publisher's Companion ~

You can find How to Market a Book in ebook and print format here on Amazon.

In the following sections, I give some excerpts from the book, as well as an overview of marketing possibilities.

MARKETING MYTHS YOU NEED TO FORGET

There are a number of marketing myths around publishing that we need to explode at the outset. Sure, there are some lightning strikes where an author can buck the trend, but in general, these are myths. I also get emails every week from people who have paid for a marketing package from a company and feel let down by what has happened i.e. no results from a mass press release mail-out, so I want to stop that happening to you.

MYTH 1: If I get a traditional book deal, I won't have to deal with marketing

Authors have always had to do some kind of marketing, but it generally involved physical appearances at bookstore signings, literary festivals or conventions, as well as media appearances.

Some authors had publicists within the publishing house or an external marketing firm organizing that for them, so they could just show up and do their thing. But I'm not sure how true that ever was for new authors or mid-list authors who sold reasonably well but weren't superstars. Yes, a lucky few still get a publicist, but often only for the launch period, and that won't pay the bills for very long.

From authors sharing their experience right now, it seems that:

a) Publishers are interested in authors who already have a platform, people who have built an email list and a way to sell books to readers who know them.

You will have to include your platform in your pitch to agents and they will include it in their pitch to the publisher, so marketing comes into the equation before you even get a deal. Publishing is a business, so of course they are looking for ways to mitigate risk.

b) Publishers will do some marketing for you, but that will generally involve distribution and working with bookstore buyers, as well as potentially advising on what you can do to help them market the book. Even though you might have a team to advise over the launch period, you will still need to do a lot yourself. After the initial launch phase, you will likely be left alone as the publicist moves onto the next author on the publishing schedule.

In April 2013, Pulitzer Prize winning author David Mamet announced his decision to self-publish "because publishing is like Hollywood - nobody ever does the marketing they promise."

MYTH 2: Marketing is scammy, sucky and awful and I'm not the type of person who can do it (so I'm going to stamp my foot and moan about it!)

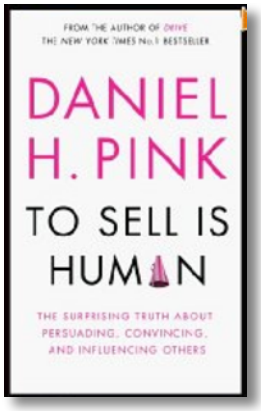
It's time to reframe marketing.

Think of it this way instead. **Marketing is sharing what you love with people who will appreciate hearing about it.**

You're writing a book about how you helped your kids escape from Type 2 diabetes. Don't you think people want to hear about that?

You've written a kick-ass action-adventure thriller that will blow the socks off those miserable commuters you share a train carriage with and help them to escape the grind for a few hours. Don't you think they want to know about it?

So: you've got to find ways to connect with the people who would want your book - that's marketing. It is not scammy or sucky or awful (if you don't want it to be). In my world, marketing is about authenticity, generosity, social karma and co-opetition.



You also need to reframe marketing because it turns out that we are ALL salespeople these days. In Daniel Pink's book 'To Sell Is Human' he explains how the world has changed and the job of 'salesman' really doesn't exist anymore, but we're all involved in selling every day. It might be 'selling' healthy food to your kids, or 'selling' yourself to get a career advancement, or as authors, it's pitching our ideas to agents and publishers or trying to get people to be interested in us and our books.

MYTH 3: A book publicist will be able to get me on <insert famous show here>

Let's face it, authors are often introverts and one of the worst possible things for us is cold-calling anyone. I don't take phone calls in general and I have to psych myself up for any that I HAVE to make. I really prefer writing ...

So when it comes to things like media and press releases and getting onto TV, the process is generally about pitching and being repeatedly rejected, until someone says yes, generally when your book hooks nicely into a hot newsworthy topic.

A publicist can do these pitches for you but they can only work with what you provide, so you'll still need to think about the 'hooks' that your book can be pitched around. The most important thing to remember about a publicist is that you generally pay them a specific amount as a retainer but they can't guarantee you any media attention.

MYTH 4: Getting on national TV or national newspapers or radio will sell millions of books

Too many authors assume that paying a few thousand dollars for a publicist will pay off in terms of sales.

But **traditional media is more about brand awareness** and social proof than actual sales because of:

a) the non-targeted, scattergun approach
b) the disconnect between where people are when they consume that media and the jump to actually buying a book.

I made it onto national TV, radio and into the papers, and it made negligible difference to my sales. In my experience, only forms of marketing with clickable Buy Links e.g. to an Amazon sales page, actually sell any books, which is why I focus online.

MYTH 5: The launch is everything OR one big marketing push will rocket my book up the charts and I'll be a multi-millionaire (yippee!)

The launch approach is something that comes from traditional publishing. Because of their business cycles, each book only gets a small window of opportunity to make an impact before everyone moves on to the next book.

But the world of book buying has changed and it's becoming more about the long tail, where there are very few blockbusters but lots of us making a decent living in the margins from people looking for different books over time.

So the launch doesn't have to be everything for us.

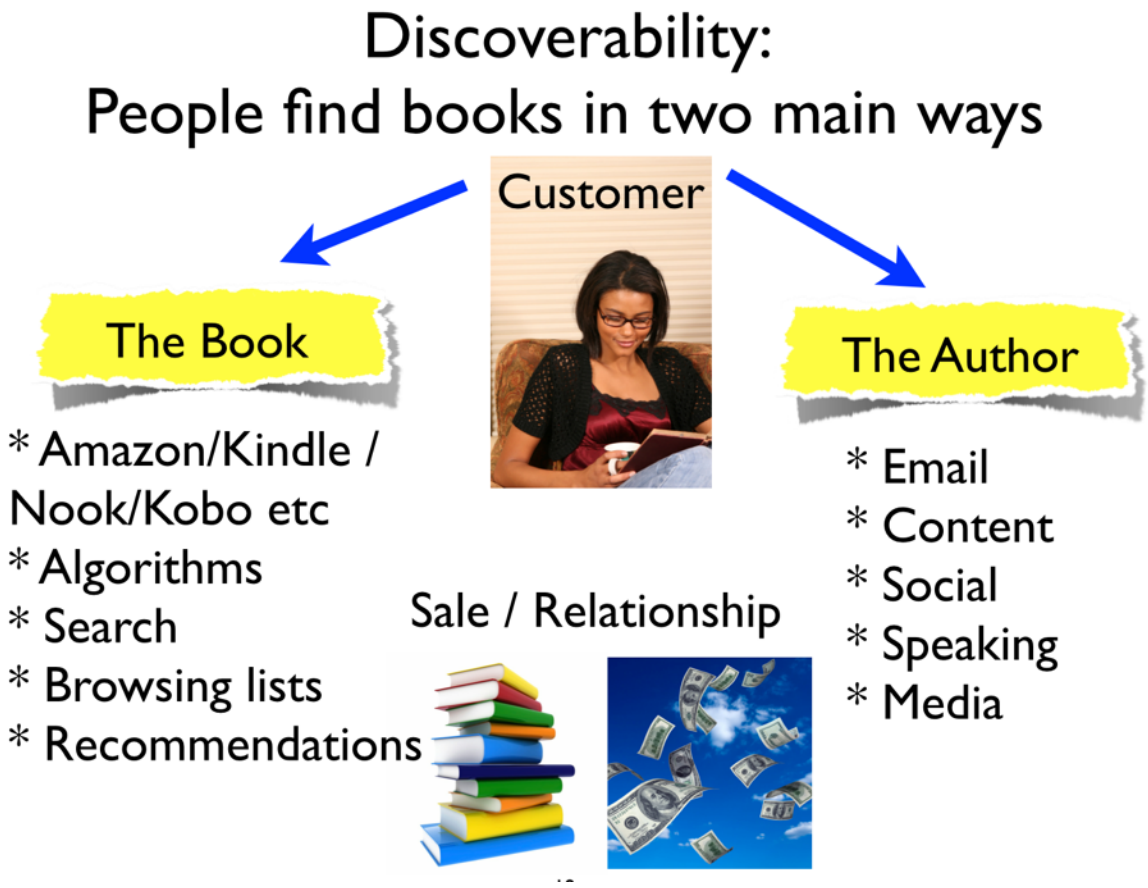
In fact, launch sales are generally disappointing compared to what happens once the Amazon algorithms kick in and you get some traction around reviews and reputation. In my experience, sales can be better a few months after the book is initially available. A book is always new to the reader who has just found it, even many years later.

In terms of making a lot of money, the authors who are financially successful usually have a number of books (fiction) or make their money from the 'back end' of products, services and speaking (non-fiction).

Once you understand some of the myths, you can become empowered as an author to get into marketing yourself and your books with knowledge on your side.

DISCOVERABILITY AND HOW PEOPLE FIND YOUR BOOK

Discoverability is a buzzword in publishing right now, and basically encompasses everything that will help your book to be found amongst the hundreds of thousands that come out every year. People will discover your book in two main ways.



(1) Through your book

As an author, you will also be a reader, so think for a moment about how you find new books to read.

- **You are at a physical bookstore and a cover catches your eye.** You pick it up and read the back and maybe check a few pages.

- **You go to Amazon or iBookstore or Kobo or Nook or whatever online store you shop at** and you browse the category you're interested in. I tend to browse

in Thrillers and Non-Fiction Business and search books published in the last 30 days for anything I like the look of.

- **You go to one of the online stores and search** for something in particular because you have a question, e.g. “I need a business plan”, and see what comes up. You browse and choose the book that jumps out.

- **Someone you trust recommends a specific book**, either online or in person, and you decide to buy it

- **You get an email from Amazon or Kobo or your favorite online site**. Maybe it's a daily deal, or a recommendation from your reading history, and you like the look of it so you click to buy.

- **You're on Goodreads** or another reading social network and you see some book reviews that look great, so you click through to the book.

You can see that this doesn't require you to have a website or a Facebook page or an email list. **People who find books this way don't care about the author** and, to be honest, they may not care about the author after they've read the book either.

Given that most of us sell books online and not in physical bookstores, most of these sales are driven by your book's metadata and the algorithms of the distributor. This is based on your book fundamentals: keywords, book title, description, people's browsing history, the sales of your book, reviews and rankings in particular categories and everything else that exists within the online bookstore ecosystem.

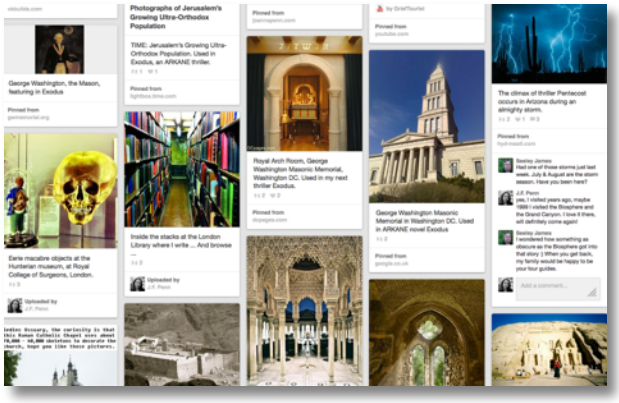
(2) Through you and your platform

The other way in which people discover books is through the author and every piece of marketing that you do which will lead people to you and therefore your books. Your ‘platform’ is however you choose to connect with readers, and the methods by which you reach them.

- Someone **listens to an interview** on a horror podcast about how you incorporated ancient mythology into your last book

- Someone finds a gorgeous set of **photos you posted on Pinterest** (like my Board for ARKANE research)

- You join a **# chat on Twitter** about parenting and someone clicks through to your profile and then sees you have a book



•Someone finds a **video** you posted on YouTube about effective business communication

•Someone reads an **article you wrote** about how to be mindful in a fast-paced world. They liked your philosophy, so they clicked through to check out your blog.

•You **gave an amazing talk at a conference** and mentioned your website. Some of the people present resonated with your speech and checked you out and joined your email list.

- You were at a **networking event** and you connected with someone personally and swapped business cards. That person checked you out and saw that you had a book available that might help them.

PLUS …

- People found your last book, enjoyed it a lot and **signed up to your email list**

- Your next book has just been released, so you can email your list and **tell them it's available**.

In my opinion, everything that you do platform-wise should be about trying to drive people to your email list so that you can contact them again. [Here's how I grew my own email list dramatically by just implementing a few small changes, relevant to both fiction and non-fiction authors](#).

I grew my list so fast because I used tips from Nick Stephenson's fantastic video course, Your First 10,000 Readers.

[Click here to get his free video series on growing YOUR email list.](#)

Platform is all about attraction marketing, about putting things out there that attract people to you.

Generally, this is useful, inspirational or entertaining content, which are the main reasons why people search for books. They want the answer to a question or a problem or to learn something new, or they want entertainment, to be moved, to have an adventure, or to laugh.

My personal marketing strategy is to be useful, interesting and passionate, sharing as much as possible to help others. This makes me intrinsically happy anyway, but it also serves the purpose of starting the process of getting to know me through my podcasts and videos and articles. Some of the people who find me that way may be interested in buying my books or products, or hiring me as a professional speaker for a conference.

The problem is that the impact of many of these marketing activities is not directly measurable, which is why so many people denigrate platform and social networking in terms of selling books and discoverability.

10 QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ANSWER HONESTLY IF YOU WANT TO SELL MORE BOOKS

My Amazon bestselling book, How To Market A Book covers everything in detail but the following checklist will also help you identify your problem and solve it quickly.

[As always, these are not rules, because there are no rules in this crazy, fast-moving self-publishing world. There will also always be outliers who get away with not doing any of the following, but these will at least help with some guidelines!]

1. Is your book available as an ebook?

99% of indie authors will not have print distribution in physical bookstores, and I would postulate that all the success stories we have heard in the last couple of years about indie authors and huge sales have come from ebook sales, not print.

Print books can be a good idea if you have specific reasons around wanting print. I decided against print a few years ago, but in 2013, I changed my mind, returning to print editions for all my books, as well as ebooks and audiobooks.

But if you want to sell a lot of books online, then make sure that you have an ebook for sale as well.

There has been an influx of ebooks (and print books) self-published in the last year, as well as traditional publishers beginning to re-issue backlists digitally. I've heard a lot of people complain about this so-called 'tsunami of crap', but personally, I believe that you can surf the wave and make good sales even if you're starting now. The ebook market is growing globally as new countries come online and even within markets like the US and UK, ebooks are becoming more widely accepted.

So first off, get your ebook published.

2. Has your cover been professionally designed?

Book buyers still shop with their eyes. If people make it to your book sales page and your cover is terrible, they will not click the Buy button.

Don't use a painting that your child did or that you did yourself. Don't DIY based on a YouTube video. Don't assume you can make a professional cover, unless you at least follow these design instructions for a DIY MS Word cover.

Do research your genre on Amazon and take screenshots of books that stand out in a good way.

Do take pictures of books you like with great fonts and design.

Do check out the ebook cover design awards at TheBookDesigner.com to see some great covers and some truly awful ones. Then hire a professional cover designer, give them all this information and work with them to create a professional cover.

If you don't have a budget for this, then work extra hard until you have that extra money. **Seriously, I believe this is non-negotiable if you want to stand out in a crowded market.**

3. Has your book been professionally edited so that it reads well?

I am passionate about the value of editing and editors, especially for new writers, or books in a new genre.

You should edit your books until you can't stand them any longer, and then you should consider hiring a professional editor to help you take it further.

You need other eyes, preferably professional eyes who will critique you honestly and tell you where the problems are, especially if the book is truly awful – and sometimes it is (and that's OK, because you can write another one).

Stephen King says in 'On Writing' to rest the manuscript for a while, so put it away and when you have some distance, read it again. You may be horrified by what you find but better now than when it's out there in the world.

If you can't afford a pro editor, then you can try using a critique group of readers within your genre, or join a group like the Alliance of Independent Authors to network with other like-minded authors in order to potentially barter your skills.

But definitely do not publish your book if only you and your best friend have read it.

4. Have you submitted the book to the right categories?

Sorry, but not everyone will like your book.

You may think that everyone will, but they won't. You might not want to put it in a box or a genre or a category, but you have to, because that's how readers find it. The category/genre reader has expectations and if you don't 'fit' they will be disappointed.
That's not to say that you need to follow any specific rules in your writing, but **when you load it up to the distributors, you do have to choose** which categories to use, and they need to be meaningful.

It's also important to match reader expectations and the promise of what your book delivers with what your book is actually about.

There is no point having a book with a swirly, girly pink chic-lit cover in the horror section of fiction. It won't sell, however good it is.

You can choose a category that fits your book AND is easier to rank in, for example, I use categories Action Adventure and Supernatural Thriller for the ARKANE series, occasionally swopping over to International Mystery and Crime. That's optimization, but it is still true to the book and to the reader's expectations.

If you're struggling with this, choose 3-5 modern authors, or books, that your book is like, not what you want it to be like, but what it is really like. That will help

you to find the right category to load your book in, as well as marketing approaches and book covers to model.

A great book for learning more about categories and Amazon algorithms is David Gaughran's Let's Get Visible.

5. Have you optimized your Amazon sales page with a hook, quotes from reviews and other material?

I have seen some Amazon sales pages with typos and terrible grammar, and some with just a one-line description. Some of them make no sense at all. Some are just the back blurb with no review quotes or other things that might draw a customer in.

Basically, you need to treat the product description like a sales page. People will not buy your book if your description is badly written or hard to understand because it's an indication of the quality of your book. Here's another great article on 11 ingredients of a sizzling book description.

You can format your sales description with colored headlines and other funky HTML by using Author Marketing Club's Premium service (which also includes a fast-track way to find appropriate reviewers).

6. Have you priced your book realistically, or at least tried different price points?

It's important to say on pricing that no one really has a clue how to price ebooks and authors are having success at many different price points. Check out this great article on The Passive Voice and the comments below to get an idea of the widely different levels of pricing and success.

However, I had one consulting client ask why his debut novel wasn't selling at all, and when I checked his sales page, the ebook was priced $11.99. It was his first novel and he had nothing else for sale. **However good your book, however marvelous the cover, your first novel is unlikely to sell at that price**. Most ebooks are under $9.99, and a lot of fiction is under $7.99, with many indie books under $5.

The 99c price point still has some power even after the algorithm changes but you might go somewhere in between, changing your price with

promotions as well. I have my own ebooks at price levels from free up to $6.99. You can set your own prices and change them over time, so don't obsess about this at the beginning.

7. Have you written, or are you writing, another book?

Sure, there are some breakout successes, but most indie fiction authors making decent money right now have five or more books. For non-fiction authors, you can expect to make your money on back-end products and services and not book sales anyway.

The more books you have available, the more virtual shelf space you have, the easier it is for people to discover you. Plus, if a reader finds one they like, they may buy them all, so you make more income per customer.

I was as guilty as anyone of trying to hype my first novel, because it took so long and I thought it was a precious snowflake. I still believe you have to hustle those first thousand sales with everything you have, but my sales and income jumped when I released the second novel with very little fanfare because I already had an established presence on Amazon and they do a lot of marketing for you when you have multiple books, e.g. emailing people who bought your last one.

I am also fascinated by **the rise of novellas and serials as a way to create more books, more quickly**. Hugh Howey is a great example of someone who wrote novellas in different series and then continued the direction of the stories for the novellas that took off, Wool being his most famous and lucrative. I now have my own 'Day' series of novellas: One Day in Budapest, Day of the Vikings and One Day in New York. They sell really well!

8. Have you done at least some kind of promotion or marketing to let people know it is there?

Again, **there are no rules** and everyone has different results from different marketing tactics. Some hit a mega-success with none at all, but I do think that you need to hand-sell your first 1000 readers because they won't just appear out of nowhere.

Remember: **Marketing is sharing what you love with people who want to hear about it.** You don't have to be hard-salesy, scammy or nasty. Just be authentic and share your passion.

If you need some starter tips, you should definitely be building your email list from your own website and also from a signup at the back of your book. Here are some other ways I built my own email list.

If you do that with book one, you will have some people to notify with book two. It's a start, and it grows over time. This is **my only non-negotiable recommendation for authors**, because you never know what will happen with all these sites we depend upon for sales. If they disappear, or the terms we publish under change, then your email list of fans and buyers is all you have.

I also believe that social media can sell books, but it is a slow build over time and you have to have other goals than just book sales, e.g. networking with peers and other authors. It's not instant sales, so you can't rely on it. The whole author platform thing is massively useful in so many ways but it is only one aspect of book sales.

If you have the budget, you can pay for promotion, but be targeted and track results.

The biggest leaps I had on the Amazon charts were from paid promotional pushes on sites that market direct to Kindle readers. I more than made my money back but the rankings were worth it. Crypt of Bone even hit the Action Adventure list above Lee Child. Of course, it dropped away but the screen-print is worth gold!

Free is still a great option, especially if you have multiple books, as it means people can discover your work with no risk. Fantasy author Lindsay Buroker talked about this in our interview where she revealed that the first book in her series is permanently on free with her other books at $4.95. You can do this by making your book free on Smashwords and eventually Amazon will price match it. Stone of Fire, an ARKANE thriller (Book 1) is now on perma-free and my discussion with Lindsay was one of the reasons why I went ahead with that.

There's much more on marketing here.

9. Have you asked for reviews, or submitted to review sites?

There's been a lot of scandal about sock puppet reviews, but reviews are still critical because **they give your sales page social proof** and they feed into the book site algorithms.

I give away free books to people who might like my genre and ask that they leave a review if they like it. No hard sell, no pressure, no expectation. This is easy if you have built up a list from the last book, or if you have built a platform and in fact is one good reason to do this.

Traditional publishing has been doing this forever so it is not a new or scammy tactic.

Remember that not everyone will like your book and not everyone will leave a review, or a good review, but it is a start. *[And remember, don't respond to bad reviews!]*

You can also contact book bloggers or Amazon reviewers to get more reviews. This is hard work if you do it manually, but you can use the Author Marketing Club's Premium service to short cut the process by finding reviewers for books like yours.

You can also listen here to Rachel Abbott talk about how this strategy got her to #1 on Amazon.co.uk.

Goodreads is the largest social network for readers and was purchased by Amazon in mid-2013. It has millions of book reviews from avid readers, and you can bet that the data is being incorporated somehow into the Amazon sales algorithms.

Goodreads was also incorporated into the US Kindle Fire and Paperwhite from Nov 2013, and presumably will be rolled out into other Kindle devices. This means that readers will be more easily able to review books, and can just leave star ratings instead of writing text, making it a more honest, emotional review response. You can learn more about Goodreads with these resources:

- How to use Goodreads as an author. Interview with Patrick Brown, Author Relations at Goodreads [audio]
- The ultimate guide to Goodreads for authors [article]

10. Are you working your butt off? Have you given it enough time?

I absolutely believe that you can be a great writer and make an income from writing.

I have to believe that for you, because I believe it for me, and I left a stable job and steady income to take a chance on being an author-entrepreneur. I've been on this path since 2007, when I decided to write my first non-fiction book, so I am several years into working my butt off to change my life.

Time in the market, as well as hard work, makes a difference as well. Although, of course, it's easier to say that in hindsight!

It took over a year before anyone noticed my blog, and over a year to get 1000 followers on Twitter. It took three years for me to write three novels, and only then did my book-related income look to be viable as a proper business for the future, and not just a hobby.

Writing books is not a get rich quick scheme.

I look at authors like CJ Lyons, Scott Sigler, Chuck Wendig, Bella Andre, Joe Konrath, Bob Mayer *and so many others* and I know that they are working their butts off every day writing and getting their work out there.

These authors are my heroes. They know that it takes hard work to get there and hard work to stay there. They write most days, they get the publishing done, and they focus on marketing over the long term through all kinds of methods.

So please, if your book is not selling much, go through this checklist and **honestly evaluate what you have done** and how much effort you have put in. Please also share this with other people who may be asking the same question.

HOW TO SELL BOOKS WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Various methods have always been used to advertise and sell books.

Social networking is just one of the latest incarnations based on technologies that allow worldwide connection. I wanted to include some more detail on it because people seem so confused about how it works and the benefits over time.

It's still about hand-selling to individuals, but this time on a global scale. It's about connection and relationships - all human activities.

Remember that behind any profile is a person. Social networking is not about traffic or about hard selling. It's about connecting with people, and the best way to use any of the sites is to always be authentic and real. Don't broadcast spammy sales messages, just be yourself. Don't make these social networking mistakes either.

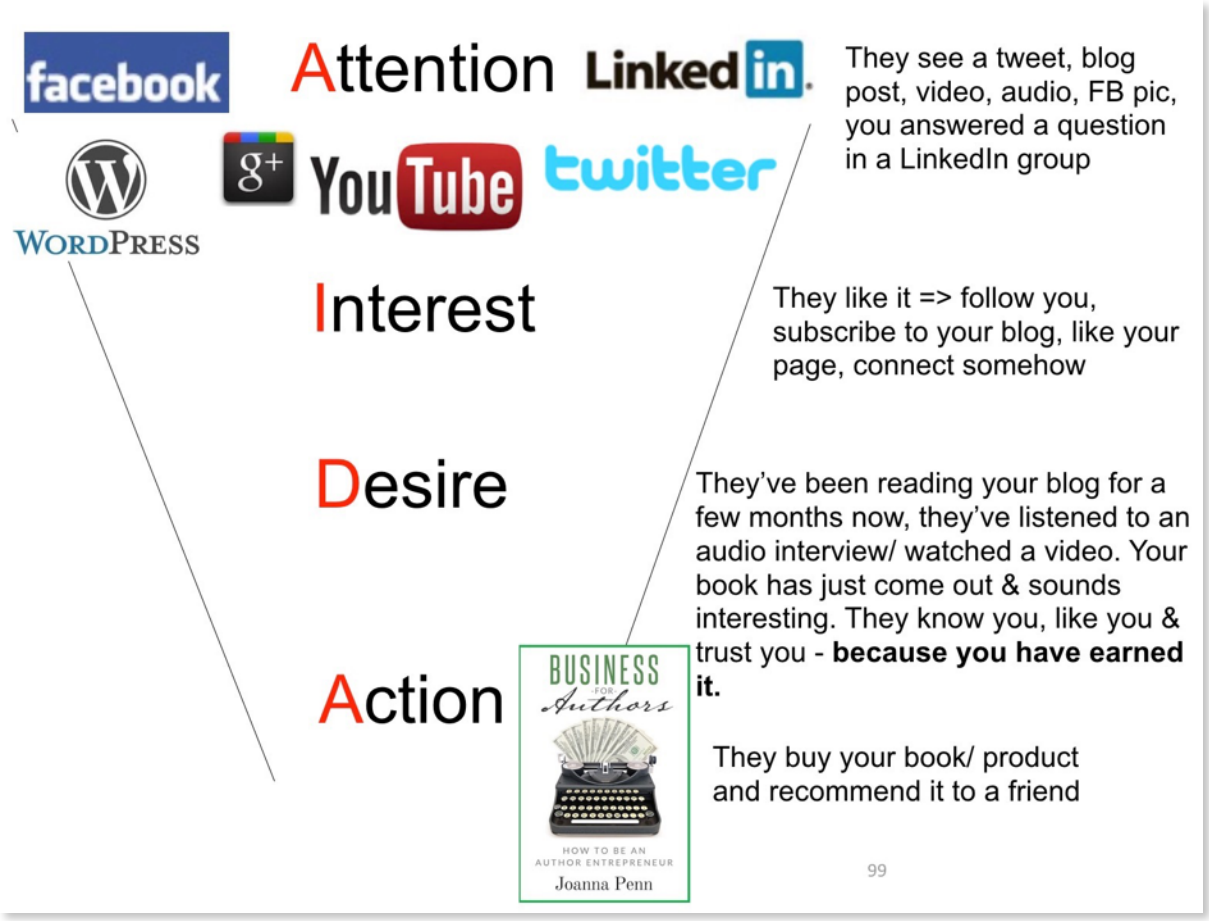
Do you really need social networking as part of your marketing activities?

Of course not, because nothing is mandatory, but social networking is a great way to connect with a group of like-minded people as well as fans of your work. It makes you and your work shareable and you'll be surprised how far your work can reach.

Apart from my blog, I would say that Twitter has played the most significant role in my 'success' online, because of the relationships and opportunities that have arisen from connections there.

How does social media sell books?

There are new tools all the time but the principles are the same regardless. The old adage goes: *"50% of marketing works. We just don't know which 50%"*. It is indeed an inexact science, but here's how the marketing principle AIDA works.



(1) Attention

Attention is hard to get in this speedy online world. Millions of books compete for it, as well as perhaps the more powerful media of video and gaming. Social networks are a way to grab attention for a moment in order to draw people into the funnel as above. Pieces of content are breadcrumbs leading to your door.

This could be a picture of the tequila your character drinks shared on Pinterest. It could be a piece from National Geographic that your niche audience would find interesting. It could be a link to an article you've written about an art gallery launch that sparked your creative flow. Be interesting, entertaining or inspirational and be sure to use an enticing headline so that people want to click and share.

(2) Interest

Social networking is pointless on its own as a marketing mechanism (although of course it can be enjoyed for its own sake). The aim is to get people to notice you and be interested enough to follow you or click through to your website. There needs to be a call to action. Make sure that you have all of your social networking links on every page or the sidebar, so that you are easy to connect with.

Social networks rise and fall. You don't own that real estate, you only borrow it for a while, so be sure to capture the interest yourself through your email list. This means that you need a website and a list mechanism so that people can sign up for your newsletter or updates, as described earlier.

I can't emphasize this list gathering enough, because if Facebook (or any other site) falls out of favor as MySpace did, anyone who has built their empire entirely on that platform will be out of business.

(3) Desire

Sometimes people will buy a book based on one contact but generally it takes time for people to make a buying decision.

Once people have found you and are interested in what you're doing, they will follow your blog, maybe listen to an interview with you and continue to follow you on social networks. They will also receive your email newsletter. By producing other pieces of content, you will expand the impact you can have.

Social networking is about people knowing you, liking you and trusting you enough to let you have a slice of their time and attention. **Authenticity over the long term** is therefore important, so that you can sustain this. Marketing, like writing, is a long-term activity.

(4) Action

Once people know you, like you and trust you, they are far more likely to try your books, or recommend you to others. There is no hard sell necessary. This method is about attracting people who might be interested in what you have to say.

How the 80:20 rule works with social networking

The 80:20 rule has nothing to do with the amount of time spent on social networks. It is about the percentage you spend on promoting others vs. yourself. One of the biggest mistakes of social networking is to make it all about you.

The focus should be on being useful, inspiring or entertaining, with occasional tweets that promote your own material or talk about personal things. This also brings about social karma, a generosity that comes when you promote others and results in enhanced word of mouth.

Social means social

Social networking doesn't work if you don't enjoy it or if you are unrelentingly negative. Networks are collective energy expressed in one place. If you exude negativity or hype or spam, then that's what you will experience in return. It is about enjoying yourself, joining a conversation, learning from people, sharing something interesting and making connections. **Yes, it's actually fun!**

Some people think that online relationships are somehow shallow or unreal, but for introvert authors, the online social world is often far preferable to live networking events or parties. Friendships formed on Twitter can spill into Skype conversations, meeting up in person and support networks, as well as mutual promotion. Some of my best friends these days are people I originally met on Twitter.

Of course social networking isn't a magic bullet to sell millions of books.

It's just one tool in the arsenal of marketing activities that some people enjoy. But from my personal experience, it can definitely result in book sales, and it's a lot of fun!

SELF-PUBLISHING CHECKLIST FOR NEW AUTHORS. A CASE STUDY.

It's been nearly six years since I wrote my first book, How To Enjoy Your Job, now rewritten and republished as Career Change.

I've spent the time since then embedding myself within this market. **Learning about writing, publishing and book marketing** is more than my career, it's also my hobby and my passion (and my fun, judge me how you will!)

But being so deeply involved for so long means that **it's now hard to remember what was difficult at the beginning!**

I helped my Dad, Arthur J. Penn, publish his first book, *Nada, a historical thriller with a romantic edge*. Think Captain Corelli's Mandolin set in Sardinia.

It helped me to revisit the process of publishing from scratch, so here's the checklist that I worked through, which might be helpful if you're just starting out.

I'm assuming that you have finished the first draft and then gone through the major editing and beta-reader process, so you have a finished manuscript ready to go.

(1) Finalize the manuscript

Once the final draft is finished, you need to add the extra material like the copyright page, dedication, author's note and acknowledgements. Remember to include a call to action at the end of the book for people to sign up for your email newsletter, as well as including your social media links, or at least your website.

Don't forget your back blurb/sales description, which also needs to be done before you publish. Check the list of book fundamentals for a full list.

My recommendation is to also **use a proofreader** for the manuscript, so someone new who reads the book just before you publish and notices the last typos and punctuation issues. This is the final cleanup of the manuscript.

(2) Organize cover design for ebook and print

This needs to be done in advance, as many designers are booked up, so email early and book your slot. Arthur had his own ideas about the cover, wanting to emphasize the sinister mask of the Marmuthones, which feature in the opening murder. The designer took his photo and added depth, with the heroine, Eleanor, in the background walking to her future. Here are my recommendations for book cover designers.

(3) Get your URL/domain name and website sorted

As Arthur is a new author, I decided to go with a basic, free WordPress.com site that is easy to build, set up and maintain. I bought ArthurJPenn.com as a domain and redirected it to the WordPress site, which gives it a more professional look and is easier to include on business cards and the back of the book.

I advise people who want to write as a career to host their own website, but you can move the content later, so after we see how the first book goes, we may look at

moving to a hosted site. I recommend Bluehost, which is very affordable, with Wordpress.org software.

Click here for my tutorial on how to build your own author website in under 30 minutes.

Another reason to use self-hosting is that you are then able to embed a signup form to an external list service like Aweber. You can get around this by hosting the form on the service itself and providing a re-direct, as I set up for Arthur. It's not perfect, but it's functional enough for a new author just starting out.

(4) Publish on Amazon for Kindle

This is a marketing decision, but because Arthur doesn't have an existing platform, I decided that it was worth going with KDP Select for the initial 90 days to get some traction with free giveaways.

After the initial 90 days is up, we will likely publish on Kobo and Smashwords for the other platforms. I'm generally not a fan of exclusivity, but for the short-term initial period, it's worth it for a new author with no platform.

When you first set up your profile, you have to fill in the tax information. Non-US citizens will have 30% withholding tax applied unless you sort out your tax numbers. It's not too hard: check out this great post from Karen Inglis.

You should also fill out your Amazon Author Central profiles – for the .com and then the other stores as well. You can claim your books and get them linked together.

(5) Publish on Createspace for print

There are many reasons to print your book, but when it's your first book, the main reason is to hold it in your hand and say "*I made this!*". It's a time to celebrate! We used a professional designer for the interior and cover, and then Createspace for print-on-demand.

Here's a short YouTube video of the unboxing (with some squealing from me behind the camera!)

(6) Decide on your marketing options

Writing and publishing are only part of the journey, but getting the book to readers is a whole other story. I gave Arthur a copy of my own 'How To Market A Book' but I realize that it is quite a learning curve for new authors.

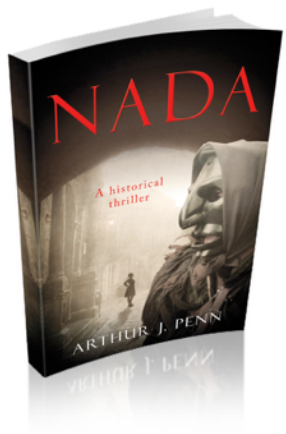
So my initial suggestions are:

a) Use some kind of **promo pricing**, or KDP Select free period in order to get some kind of data into the algorithms

b) Set up your author profile and then add your book in multiple formats onto **Goodreads**. Once that's all done, you can set up a print giveaway. This is at least a way to get some profile on the site and hopefully some reviews.

c) **Get business cards with the book cover on** one side and your details on the other. Use them for real-life word of mouth and networking. I use Moo.com but you'll find lots of options locally.

d) **Pick something you already like doing**, e.g. uploading/ looking at photos on Pinterest, or Facebook or Twitter, whatever is your thing. You can expand your marketing over time, but start somewhere and then push your boundaries later.



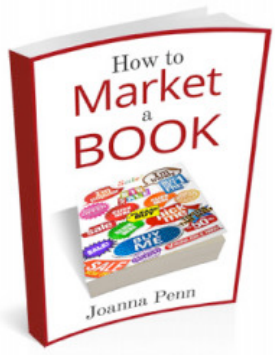
(7) Start writing the next book

… Arthur has already started the sequel, so watch this space for a Penn dynasty!

If you like historical fiction, you might like to check out Nada. ***A young woman's struggle to free herself from the manacles of fascism and the bigotry of faith.*** *For fans of Robert Harris and Louis de Bernieres Captain Corelli's Mandolin.*

***

If you want more on marketing, check out the following resources:



- Selected articles on marketing
- 'How To Market A Book' - in ebook and print formats
- Your First 10,000 Readers with Nick Stephenson

PART 4: How to make a living with your writing

THE ARC OF THE INDIE AUTHOR JOURNEY. FROM FIRST BOOK TO CEO OF YOUR GLOBAL MEDIA EMPIRE

When you first have a yearning to write a book, you're not usually thinking of running a global media empire!

So don't worry if you're not ready to assume the mantle of CEO of your own business just yet.

You don't have to know everything now. You can learn on the job. We all have to. None of us are born with the knowledge of how to do these things – we just find out along the way

This is the story arc of the author's writing and business life as I have experienced it (so far) and the main challenges at each stage, as well as how to overcome them.

Stage 1: "I want to write a book"

You've always been a reader and now you're reading all the 'how to' books on writing. You're attending seminars and conferences on writing. Perhaps you're writing lots already, or perhaps you're learning about writing without doing it yet.

Maybe you're scared that what you write will be terrible. Maybe what you're writing is terrible. But you know you want to be a writer, and you're going to put in the effort to write that first book. You have a huge learning curve ahead but you know you will persist.

Challenge:

- Actually writing and finishing a book. You can read all the books on writing but until you actually sit down and write, you won't get black on white and you'll never finish a book.

How to overcome it:

- **The realization that 'it's OK to suck'** in your first draft (as discussed by Mur Lafferty in her podcast, I Should Be Writing and in this interview). This is also the theme of 'Bird by Bird' by Anne Lamott, where she advocates writing "shitty first drafts." My own metaphor for this is Michelangelo's statue of David – Michelangelo said that he saw David within the marble and he just had to cut away the excess and then polish it until it was perfect. Authors have to create the block of marble with that first draft and then editing and rewriting will shape the statue. Creating that block is a hell of a lot of work.

- **Do timed writing exercises**, in a class if you don't have the discipline to do this alone. Set word count goals. Do NaNoWriMo. Use Write or Die software. Do anything to get a first draft done. It's hard work people. Writing a book is not easy, otherwise everyone who says they want to write one would actually do it!

- **Go through the learning curve while actually writing**. Don't read a book on self-editing until you're actually editing. Invest in a professional editor to help you with your writing. I learned far more from paying an editor to work on my manuscript than sitting in classes talking about other people's work. You also need to write a lot. You won't improve unless you write more.

- **Learn about editing and your publishing option**s – but don't obsess too much about the latter until you have at least a first draft. I often get questions about publishing from people who haven't even starting writing yet!

- **Read self-help books.** Listen to podcasts/motivational audios. Focus on shifting your mindset to that of an author. You can read the journey of my first novel here.

Champagne to celebrate the launch of my first novel!

Stage 2: "I am a new author"

You've learned the process to get from words to first draft to finished product, and you've worked with an editor to improve your book. You've learned how to self-publish, or you've made it through the lottery process of agent and publisher. You've got the book out into the world …

There are many people who say they want to write a book, but never actually get around to it. So congratulations if you have your first book!

Challenge:

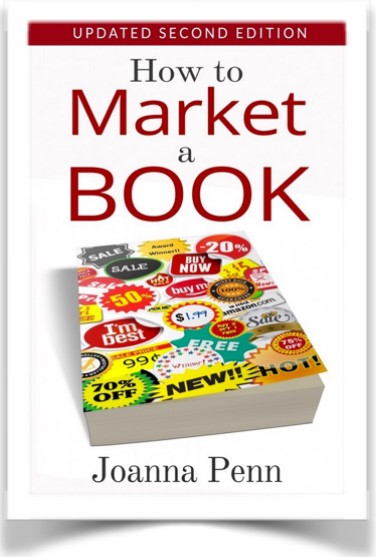
- Realizing that **very few people actually care** that you wrote a book, and that you have to learn about marketing or no one will ever read it. Realizing that you're not an instant millionaire and that the income from one book is not significant. Realizing that this is just the beginning of the next step.

How to overcome it:

- **Make a decision** on whether there will even be any more books. Was the process of writing a book worthwhile for you? Are you brimming with ideas for a new one? Are you excited about being able to reach people with your words? Are you enthusiastic about learning more?

- **Start writing the next book.** If you have the bug, the ideas will be plentiful and you'll be ready to tackle the next book. You might need a bit of a rest, but after a while, you'll get that itch again. So, get writing!

- **Learn about marketing.** Unless you are one of the very few authors whose publisher will do ALL the marketing for the rest of your life, as well as for the first month, you will need to learn about marketing. I started to learn when I had two thousand copies of my first book sitting in my house. I had thought they would sell themselves, but of course, they didn't! Most of them went into a landfill six painful months later.



Don't make my mistake! That initial failure kickstarted my own journey into learning marketing and over time, I've discovered I actually enjoy my marketing activities. After all, it's about connecting with readers who enjoy the same things you do – your tribe.

Check out what to do if your book isn't selling, and check out 'How To Market a Book.'

Stage 3: "I am an established author"

Once you've written a few books, especially if they are within the same genre or category, you know approximately what you're doing. It's still hard work, but you understand the process.

If you self-publish, you know the ropes and publishing takes very little time. If you have a publisher, the procedure is established and takes longer. You've got to grips with at least some aspects of marketing. You have a website and an email list. You get fan mail from readers.

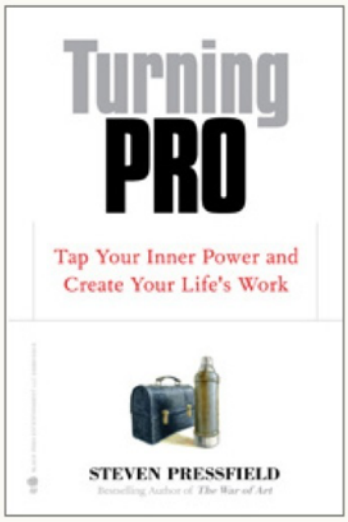
Perhaps you still work a day job, and you're wondering how to take it to the next level and become a full-time writer, or perhaps you want a side business that brings in extra money.

Challenge:

- **Balancing your time** between writing more, marketing what you already have, real life and probably another job as well as family. Trying to decide whether to give up your day job for the full-time writer's life, and potentially conflicting with family around this. You're making some money but perhaps not quite enough to pay all the bills and have some comfort margin.

How to overcome it:

- **Use a diary/schedule** to plan your writing time and focus on becoming more organized.
- **Get clear on your brand** and what you are delivering to what customers. This will help focus what you write and produce.



•**Establish criteria for going full-time** e.g. Income level of $2000 a month from books before quitting the day job. Reduce your risk e.g. Downsize, save six months income, go part-time at work.

•Read Turning Pro by Steven Pressfield

Stage 4: "I am the CEO of my creative company"

There is a tipping point where you go from being an author to running a business as an author.

You can now write for your living and you need to take the business side seriously, instead of your writing being just a hobby. The penny drops around rights exploitation and you realize how far your work can go through the opportunities available to authors now.

Whatever the catalyst, you decide to take control of your financial destiny and career as an author.

This may mean you go full-time as an author-entrepreneur, or you allocate a proper chunk of time to the business. To step into this phase means you are seriously about being an author-entrepreneur. You assume the CEO role – you're in charge.

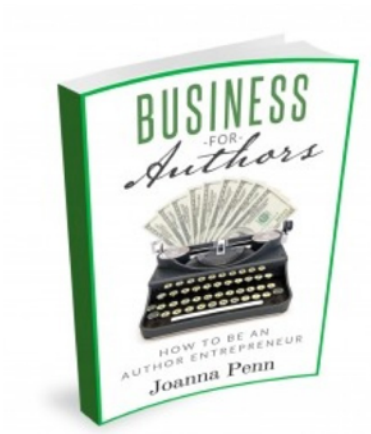
Challenge:

- **Juggling the writing, the marketing and the production side**, as well as trying to think about strategy, release schedules and more. Trying to keep track of all your products, the rights you want to exploit, the multiple projects you have going at once and keeping an eye on other opportunities as well as managing the contractors who work for you on various things.

How to overcome it:

- **Get clear on exactly what you want for this business and your life.** Look after your physical and mental health as well as your business. Say 'no' more so you can focus on your core target market and what enlivens you.
- **Establish your professional team.** You need a team in place at this stage, and preferably an assistant, or someone else full time in the business as well as contractors. One of the first people I hired was a book-keeper to help me with the (dreaded) accounts!

- **Streamline your processes.** If you have a production plan and you know what books are coming, you can book editors, cover designers in advance and tell fans what to expect. If you know where all your revenue streams are coming from, you can make sure all are reconciled to sales. If you manage your time, you can juggle being creative and being an entrepreneur.
- **Learn business skills** so you can work on your business, not just in your business. Check out The Business Rusch posts by Kristine Kathryn Rusch and my book, Business For Authors: How To Be An Author Entrepreneur, available now in ebook, print and audiobook formats.



THE RISE OF THE AUTHOR-ENTREPRENEUR: MULTIPLE STREAMS OF INCOME

An entrepreneur creates value from their ideas.

That definition certainly encompasses authors, and it's one of my particular passions to encourage writers to think of themselves in this way.

I love writing for its own sake, but I also love doing it for a living.

In September 2011, I gave up my day job as an IT consultant to become a full-time author, speaker and entrepreneur. I pay my bills from multiple streams of income that I generate through my ideas.

Is that risky?

In my opinion, it's not as risky as relying on one company to look after my future.

For me, **the entrepreneurial mindset** is all about constantly learning and improving, then applying the lessons learned to my business. It's about acknowledging the need to know about finance, sales and marketing as well as writing and publishing. Even if you end up with a traditional publishing deal, knowing about these things will improve your chances of being happy and successful as a writer.

So what are the multiple streams of income that you can make from your creative work?

Here's just a few of them.

(1) Turn your manuscript into multiple 'book-related' products

Go back to the section on rights and consider whether you have fully exploited them all.

- Have you turned your manuscript into an ebook, a printed book and an audiobook?
- Have you published your work in every country possible?
- Have you considered other languages for your work? Could you look at foreign rights deals?

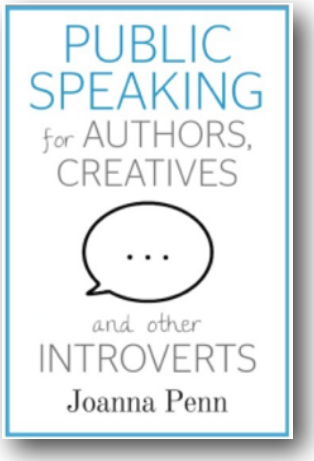
This will obviously take time, but it's worth looking into, especially as these tasks become easier for independent authors.

(2) Become a speaker / do live events / teach

Professional speaking is a great way to spread your message as well as earn extra income.

Many authors are introverts, but as Malcolm Gladwell says, *"Speaking is not an act of extroversion."* Gladwell is an introvert professional speaker, and so am I. It can be done and you just need to start putting yourself forward as a speaker.

Here's my speaking page as an example, and here are some tips for public speaking, filmed in Zurich for a writer's conference.



If you're interested in professional speaking, everything I know is contained in my book, Public Speaking for Authors, Creatives and Other Introverts.

(3) Turn your book into multimedia products

Online education through multi-media courses can be a great way to expand your range of products and services and leverage your time, especially for authors of non-fiction who also have a business in the same area.

Digital/online courses are particularly good, because there's no shipping or delivery cost, as people access the course themselves over the internet. You just create the content once and sell the password multiple times.

For example, I have the **Successful Self-Publishing Course**: How to self-publish an ebook, print book and audiobook.

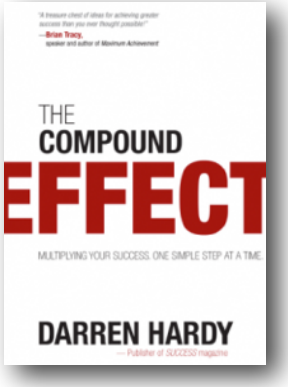
Click here to find out more.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

I hope your head is buzzing with ideas and that you're excited about the opportunities ahead!

You may also feel a little overwhelmed. That's natural!

I recommend reading The Compound Effect by Darren Hardy which will help you to get everything in perspective. Essentially, he says that:



Small, smart choices + Consistency + Time = RADICAL DIFFERENCE

You can apply this to wealth gain or weight loss but also to being a successful author-entrepreneur.

STEP 1: Choose your small, smart choices

For example, start writing 500 words a day on your book, write one blog post a week, or commit to one hour on social media a week. Read a book on marketing and decide on a curriculum for self-education.

STEP 2: Do something towards your goals every day.

Being an author is not a job for me. It is my life, my passion, as well as my hobby and my business. Some might say I am a workaholic, but I spent too long in a job I hated, and I am determined to make this a success. So, every day I am working on writing or publishing tasks or marketing, or a bit of all of them. And for writers, everything can become fodder for the page, so life itself becomes a facet of creativity. The key is working on it habitually.

STEP 3: Give it some time.

Patience is possibly the hardest thing as an author, but time in the market is absolutely critical.

My life is radically different to how it was six years ago. Back then, I hadn't started writing fiction, I had no website, no blog, no social media, no podcast, no YouTube channel, no professional speaking business. I pretty much had nothing but a day job I hated and a lot of dreams.

I now have 12 books in the world, 8 of them fiction and I'm a New York Times and USA Today bestselling author as well as an international professional speaker. The Creative Penn has been voted one of the Top 10 Blogs for Writers for several years

running. I've been voted one of The Guardian Top 100 Creative Professionals in the UK (amusingly, alongside The Rolling Stones, JK Rowling and Benedict Cumberbatch!).

None of this could have happened without small actions every day, consistently over time, for the last six years.

Want more from me?

If you need encouragement and the latest in writing, publishing and book marketing ...

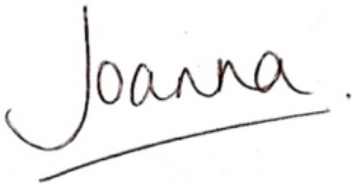
- For free articles, audios and videos twice times per week, you can subscribe to The Creative Penn blog by email, or by RSS
- I have a monthly newsletter that has lots of updates and extra info that isn't on the blog. Plus you'll hear about any special offers I have. Click here to signup. You'll already be on the list if you downloaded this blueprint on The Creative Penn directly, but if you downloaded it elsewhere, you might like to join the list.

- You can also subscribe to The Creative Penn podcast in iTunes and get the extensive backlist episodes here There's over 100+ hours of quality audio interviews, inspiration and information on writing, publishing, book marketing and creative entrepreneurship.
- Follow @thecreativepenn on Twitter or connect with me on Facebook, Google+, YouTube or Goodreads.
- If you need more in-depth help: check out my books for authors and also my multimedia courses
- I'm available for professional speaking engagements on digital publishing, internet marketing and creative entrepreneurship. I always welcome interviews so please do contact me if there's some way we can work together.

I hope that you've enjoyed this Blueprint. My hope is that it will save you time, money and heartache on the writer's journey and empower you to make decisions that will take you and your books into success, however you define it.

If you'd like to ask a question or just comment, please tweet me @thecreativepenn or connect on the Facebook page. You can also contact me here.

Happy writing, and all the best with your books,



CHECK OUT MY BOOKS FOR AUTHORS

Successful Self-Publishing: How to self-publish an ebook and print book (free on all ebook stores)

How To Market A Book. Everything you need to know about book marketing, written for authors, by an author.

How to Make a Living with your Writing. An overview of how you can make a living writing books and blogging.

Business for Authors: How to be an Author Entrepreneur. Everything you need to run a business as an author entrepreneur.

Co-writing a book: Collaboration and Co-creation for Writers: Written with J. Thorn after we co-wrote the dark fantasy novel, Risen Gods, about our lessons learned.

Public Speaking for Authors, Creatives and Other Introverts. Everything I know about professional speaking, from practicalities to confidence and how to get speaking work.

Career Change: Stop hating your job, discover what you really want to do and start doing it! Includes techniques for working our your path, and my own journey from business consultant to author-entrepreneur.

Love Thrillers?

Yes, I write non-fiction but I'm also a New York Times and USA Today bestselling thriller author as J.F.Penn!

ARKANE action adventure thrillers

Stone of Fire #1
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One Day In Budapest #4
Day of the Vikings #5
Gates of Hell #6
One Day in New York #7

London Psychic crime thrillers

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Delirium #2
Deviance #3

Plus,

Risen Gods: A dark fantasy thriller set in New Zealand

A Thousand Fiendish Angels: Three short stories inspired by Dante's Inferno, linked by a book of human skin passed down through generations. On the edges of horror, thriller and the occult.

Click here to get Day of the Vikings for free