

ALLi (The Alliance of Independent Authors) is the non-profit professional association for authors who self-publish and want to do it well.

Our motto is “**Working together to help each other**”

GO DIGITAL WITH THE 5 STAGES OF SELF-PUBLISHING

In our ALLi guidebook “How to Choose a Self-Publishing Service” we identified five stages a self-published author needs to consider when producing their book. But before we familiarize you with these important stages and share three Ask ALLi tips for each stage on the journey you’re embarking on, let’s look at why you, as an indie author, should be going

WHY INDIES AUTHORS SHOULD CHOOSE DIGITAL OVER BRICK

In the old days, the divide seemed simple. If they were paying, you had a publisher; if you were paying, you were vain and you had a vanity publisher. Actually, it never was that clear-cut.

Even in the relatively closed system of late 20th-century publishing, many great books were self-published before being picked up by the trade.

The vanity accusation was a good way of keeping authors feeling insecure, and in some quarters, the stigma from that time lingers still.

Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, there are a plethora of choices and the problem for the author is not a tight, closed system but a cornucopia of choices that can confuse, even overwhelm.

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1. Find out why indie authors choose digital over brick.
2. Learn the five stages a self-published author needs to consider when producing a book.
3. Discover three invaluable tips for each self-publishing stage.

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12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD GO DIGITAL

By selling well-written and published digital products in online bookstores, indie authors can compete on price and the reader won't know, and doesn't care, who published the book.

1. It levels the Playing Field
2. It delivers Global Readership
3. It pays better royalties
4. It gives readers a point-of-purchase at the moment of discovery
5. It keeps books in publication
6. It allows authors to set prices directly
7. It allows for content changes and revisions
8. It is flexible and nimble
9. It delivers great analytics
10. It allows authors to afford tools and talent
11. It gives creative freedom
12. It encourage literary forms

"The business model of print books selling in bookstores is not commercially viable for most indie authors. Economies of scale means we currently can't compete with trade publishing in print. But with digital — e-books and POD (print on demand) — we can."
Orna Ross

selfpublishingadvice.org/opinion-every-author-should-self-publish-at-least-once/

"Being able to compete head-to-head like this is unprecedented and a fantastic opportunity for all of us who publish books," says ALLi advisor and self-publishing guru, Joel Friedlander. "This creates an environment in which it's your own passion, your own persistence and your own promotional creativity that will sell your book. That's great, because all those things are within your power."

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Stage 1: Editing

Every author needs *some* kind of editor.

Maybe you don't need a development editor, and a few associates can handle proofreading, but I haven't found anyone yet who could do their own copyediting.

ALLi evaluate editing services based on what we can see. As an example, if a service is under consideration for an ALLi partner membership, we'll ask members if anyone has used the company's services, and what their experience was. We also check the company's website, and if there are errors, we would have a difficult time recommending them.

Many editors charge by the word, or page. Some will only provide a quote after reviewing a sample of the work.

It's imperative that you and the editor determine up front if you are compatible. The best way to do that is for you to submit a sample of your work and they provide a sample of their editing.

This is more difficult with a content/developmental editor, so a conversation on the phone, and/or references, might be better.

Ask ALLi Top 3 Tips: Editing

1. Establish what kind of editorial help you need.
2. Work out how you are going to beg, borrow, steal or barter good editorial for your book.
3. Becoming a good self-editor will save you a lot of time and money over the course of your career.

Two great books are:

For Fiction: Self-Editing for Fiction Writers, Second Edition: How to Edit Yourself Into Print

By Renni Browne & Dave King

www.harpercollins.com/9780060545697/self-editing-for-fiction-writers-second-edition

For Non-Fiction: On Writing Well: The Class Guide to Writing Non-Fiction
By William Zinsser

www.amazon.co.uk/Writing-Well-Classic-Guide-Nonfiction/dp/0060891548/

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Stage 2: Cover Design

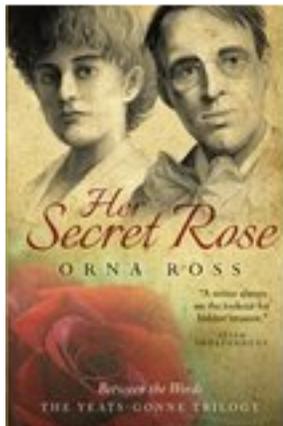
If you are one of the lucky people who has the talent to design and create your own covers, then you are ahead of the game. But remember, a book's cover is one of the most important parts of promotion. Despite what many people think, books really *are* judged by their covers.

So before you decide to undertake this task yourself, make sure you have the skills. And afterward, gather opinions from a lot of people—friends, fellow authors, and readers.

Don't fall into the trap of putting a book out because *you* like the cover. Verify that others like it too. And don't stop at confirmation that someone likes it. Make sure your cover does its job—a cover must be appealing/intriguing enough to make a reader want to stop what they're doing and look further.

When seeking opinions, only show the cover in the size it would appear online, in stores

like Amazon, Apple, Barnes and Noble, etc.



Thumbnail

That's where most potential readers will see it, so it's more important that it looks good in thumbnail size than in full print size.

Ask ALLi Top 3 Tips: Cover Design

1. Ensure you understand the elements of a good book cover and what each does
2. Your cover must be genre appropriate. Look at other books in your genre in online stores, to see what's popular now.
3. Your author bio will appear on your print book. Make it short, sharp, relevant, and genre appropriate.

See: <http://selfpublishingadvice.org/how-to-write-the-best-author-bio/>

Your Author Bio

To sell more books, you need to sell yourself. It all starts with the bio... stop pretending that you aren't running a business. You are. It's a book-selling business.

Bryan Cohen: Host of the Sell More Books Show

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Stage 3: Layout & Formatting

This is not as easy as it sounds. Assuming you plan on offering both ebook and print versions, that means you have to produce the book in several different formats: mobi, epub, and pdf.

Not only do you have to ensure the accuracy of these files, you have to also ensure that each file works on as many devices as you can test. And you also have to make sure it looks good in print.

Ask ALLi Top 3 Tips: Layout and Formatting

1. Don't begin this phase until you understand the difference between the free-flow formatting needed for ebooks and fixed formatting for pbooks
2. Keep it simple is your guiding rule until you fully understand the formatting process.
3. Know your genre by checking other books at the top of the bestseller lists and evaluating and how they do it.

Non-exclusivity is key to indie success.

Ask ALLi Top 3 Tips: Distribution

1. Go direct, if you can, to Amazon KDP, Apple iBooks and Kobo for ebooks; Createspace and IngramSpark for print.
2. Make your books available in as many formats as possible in as many outlets as possible using a good distributor.
3. Only give your book exclusively to one service if you are clearly getting a good benefit in return.

Stage 4: Distribution

Understanding Distribution is the key for self-publishing, and this seems to be where many authors get confused. It's also where they fall victim to companies whose sole purpose is to prey on self-published authors.

What format you plan on distributing (print, ebook, audio) plays a key part in choosing the optimal distribution channels for your book.

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Stage 5: Marketing & Promotion

If there is one area where self-published authors struggle more than any other, it's marketing and promotion. By nature, many authors aren't geared toward marketing and they either flounder and do nothing, or they fall victim to social media spamming. Neither of those strategies are good.

Before you commit to a specific marketing plan you need to determine the budget you're comfortable with.

There are a myriad of free and paid advertising options, but some only work for specific genres.

Ask ALLi Top 3 Tips: Marketing and Promotion

1. Think of marketing as letting readers know your book exists and promotion as specific incentives to encourage them to buy it.
2. Use the same tone, thought, language and approach to sell a book as you did to write.
3. The more creative you are with your marketing, the more you'll enjoy it and the more you'll attract readers who "get" you and your books.

What's Next?

In upcoming PDFs in this Beginner's Guide to Self-Publishing we will be diving into each of these stages in more detail.

These 5 stages covered today are a simplification of the end-to-end self-publishing process, and we will break many of them down into more manageable informational chunks so that they don't become overwhelming.

By the end of the series you'll be equipped to make informed self-publishing decisions that are right for you and your indie author journey.

How-to For Authors



Alliance of Independent Authors

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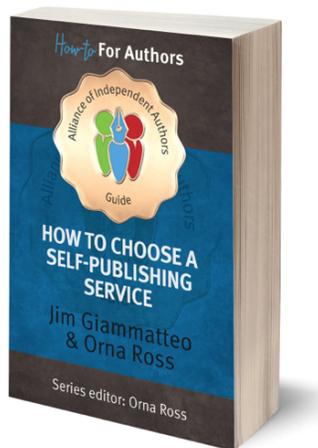
ALLi publishes:

HOW TO CHOOSE A SELF- PUBLISHING SERVICE

The only annually updated guide to the global self-publishing services industry

[The 2016 edition is now available here](#)

(Free to ALLi Members)



FREE ONLINE 24-HOUR CONFERENCES FOR AUTHORS INTERESTED IN SELF-PUBLISHING



We offer the best self-publishing advice and education for indie authors across the world — using the global reach of the ALLi network.

And we are still (and always will be) run by authors for authors, so it's all free!

We hold three online international events each year on the heels of London Book Fair, Book Expo America, and Frankfurt Book Fair.



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