

Self-publishing Made Simple

A How-to Guide for the Non-tech-savvy Among Us

Melinda Clayton

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I recently unpublished my how-to guide, *Self-publishing Made Simple: A How-to Guide for the Non-tech-savvy Among Us*. The publishing world is forever changing, and I'm just not able to update it as it needs. I do, however, want to continue to share any knowledge I may have gained that others might find useful. For this reason, I'm offering it for free as PDF, epub, or mobi. Please feel free to share at will, but please don't claim it as your own or try to republish it.

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Note: This book, now free, was not edited after the latest 2018 revision. Any mistakes that made it through are solely my own.

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Self-publishing for the Non-tech-savvy Among Us

MAYBE YOU'RE HERE because you've finally written that family history your mother spent years begging you to write. Or maybe after querying dozens of agents without a nibble, you've decided to go it alone. Perhaps, like me, you've recently terminated contracts with a publisher and are eager to have your works republished even though you've not a clue how to do it. Whatever the reason, you now find yourself at the precipice of an exciting adventure, the first step just a mere tap of the fingers away.

And that's where you're stuck.

If, like me, you grew up with sporadic access to a rusty old Royal typewriter (with an *e* that always typed midway up the line) and a gummy bottle of Liquid Paper, the online world of choices, directions, templates, and opportunities can seem overwhelming.

While there are many guides available to address the various aspects of self-publishing, my experience has been that the majority of them start a good three steps ahead of my level of comprehension. *Create a TOC by bookmarking* is only helpful if first, you know what bookmarking *is*, and second, you know how to *do* it.

As I schlepped my way through pamphlets, websites, books, blogs, and discussion boards (all while quietly cursing at my computer late into the night) I took copious notes, translating, if you will, techy-speak into language even I could understand.

After a couple of blog posts of my own and a plethora of questions from other writers struggling with some of the same issues, I decided to pull my notes and information together in order to help those who, again like me, were born well before the age of *online* anything. Know upfront this is not a writing guide, nor is it a marketing guide or a promotional recipe.

Instead, it's a plainspoken, nuts and bolts instruction booklet to help guide learning, non-tech-savvy authors through the maze of confusing information. While tech-savvy folks may find much of the information useful, the simplified instructions provided in the chapters on formatting will likely irritate anyone with an above-middle-grade working knowledge of technology.

The information provided within is based on the steps I took as I transitioned from having a publisher to self-publishing, and it includes everything from avoiding questionable publishers to registering for an Employee Identification Number, choosing publishing and distribution

venues, registering copyrights, and formatting the previously mentioned TOC (table of contents, for those unfamiliar with the acronym).

I provide specific manuscript formatting instructions for Kindle Direct Publishing and Draft2Digital, and provide tips, clarification, and links to free templates to use in preparing your manuscript for KDP Print and/or IngramSpark. I'm working in Microsoft Word 2016 so my formatting instructions are specific to that program. If you're working in an earlier version of Word the terms and commands will be the same, but the locations on the toolbar may be different. If you're working in HTML code or using a Mac, the chapters on formatting your document may not be very helpful to you.

Finally, links to the websites discussed in the ebook version of this booklet are embedded into clickable words or phrases. In the print book, links to the websites discussed are available on the "Helpful Resources" page in the back of the book.

The world of self-publishing is rapidly changing and growing; information and links contained within this booklet were accurate on the day of publication, but may be subject to change at some point in the future.

Self-publishing or Traditional: When Not to Use a Publisher

IF YOU'RE STILL undecided about your preferred route to publishing, know there are many mid-sized and small publishing houses with stellar reputations and years of proven experience. Know, too, for each of those, there's at least one that will eventually end up on a "scam" list.

Google "publishing scams" and you'll uncover pages and pages of warnings against publishers who mislead and steal from hopeful authors. [Writer Beware](#), [Absolute Write](#), and [Preditors and Editors](#) are must-read sites for any aspiring writer.

Some companies (according to one [Absolute Write discussion](#)) are allegedly designed to take advantage of not only authors, but readers, too.

Other companies (and I believe this number to be far higher) seem to have been established with the right ideas in mind, but failed for a number of reasons and ended up on the "scam" list just the same. A love of books does not a businessperson make.

Hopefully by now it goes without saying money should flow *to* the author, not *from* the author, so I won't cover that here other than to say never, ever pay a publishing company—not a reading fee, not a publishing fee, and not a promise to buy a certain number of copies.

Certainly, some small presses are very upfront with what they do and do not offer. I'm only speaking about the ones who aren't, the ones who tell you they'll do things for you that you later discover they haven't done.

That said, the following is a list of some of the signs to watch out for when querying small presses, those independent publishers not affiliated with the "Big 5" New York publishing houses. None of these warning signs should be taken as gospel, but when lumped together should be viewed as enough of a concern to warrant more research. I've divided potential concerns into three categories: External, Internal, and Personal.

External: Signs on the web

1. It goes without saying in any business one should do some research before signing a contract. Do an internet search and ask yourself the following: How long has the business existed? Are there complaints against it?

There are many sites designed to protect authors, including the aforementioned Absolute Write, Writer Beware, and Preditors and Editors. Is the publishing company listed or discussed on any of those sites?

2. Are they listed anywhere (such as a state database) as a registered business? If so, what type? A sole proprietor (SP)? A limited liability company (LLC) or partnership (LLP)? Are they “doing business as” (DBA)?

The registration of a company (or lack thereof) is a good indicator of business knowledge. A company that throws up a website without registering as a legitimate business isn't necessarily out to scam anyone, but it would raise a red flag for me and I'd certainly question their business acumen. For example, a business registered as a DBA or SP has left not only business assets but personal assets at risk in the event of a lawsuit. I want a company that knows to separate personal interests from business interests on all levels.

Internal: Signs on the company front

1. The website: Are there misspelled words or broken links on the site? If so, do you really want your books listed with a publishing company that misspells words?

2. Books and authors: There are several things to look for here. First, how long has the company been in business and how many books have they published? This is important, because getting a book ready for publication takes both time and money. If you're thinking of signing on with a small press that churns books out on a weekly or monthly basis, this should serve as a warning sign.

Can a company publishing books so quickly really give your book the attention it needs to succeed? For example, are they taking time to ensure the book is properly edited and formatted? Are they taking time to find quality, relevant covers? Are they taking time to send books out for review, or to market before publication? If not, these are things that will negatively affect sales. Is this where you want your book?

To do further research, check on [Novelrank](#) to see if the publisher's books are selling. While Novelrank shouldn't be used as an absolute, I've found their numbers to be fairly accurate. If a quick search indicates the company's books aren't selling, that's a major red flag.

3. Book blurbs, previews, and excerpts: If you're thinking of going with a small publishing house, check out their book blurbs, previews and excerpts on Amazon, Goodreads, Smashwords, etc. Have the books been properly edited? Are they riddled with misspelled words and grammatical errors? Is the writing clunky? If so, this is another red flag.

4. Are the company's paperback and/or hardback books available on Barnes & Noble? This might seem like a strange question, but it's actually quite important. Many small publishing houses use KDP Print (formerly CreateSpace) as their printer and distributor. As most probably know, KDP Print is affiliated with Amazon, so upon hitting "publish," the book is automatically listed on Amazon.

KDP Print offers a program called Expanded Distribution, which will list your paperback in the Ingram catalogue (the largest U.S. book distributor). If the book is only being distributed through KDP Print and Expanded Distribution hasn't been checked, your book is only available on Amazon. It won't be available on Barnes & Noble or other online retailers, nor will it be available for brick-and-mortar bookstores, libraries, universities, and schools to order from Ingram. What does this mean? It means the book is virtually invisible.

Plug one or two of the publisher's titles into GetTextBooks.com to see where their books are sold. Look for new editions, as used editions will pop up everywhere.

We'll discuss more about wide distribution for paperbacks and hardbacks when we get to "Paperbacks: What Are the Options?"

5. Is the book's copyright registered? I don't mean does the book have a copyright notice; I mean is it registered in the U.S. Copyright Office? Again, some small presses are upfront about letting their authors know they don't register copyrights. I have a friend whose publisher informs authors they won't be registering copyright, but the author can pay the \$35.00 to file if they so choose. That's fine, if that's known upfront. But it's something to know before signing. Common belief is that simply by publishing, your work is protected, but that's not necessarily the case. According to the U.S. Copyright office, courts [will not automatically recognize your claim](#) if your copyright isn't registered with the copyright office.

6. Are their books listed in the [Library of Congress](#) (LOC)? As with filing copyrights, some small presses are upfront about not listing with the LOC. But again, it's something to know before signing because it affects where your books might be listed. For example, some public libraries and schools won't stock books that aren't registered with the Library of Congress.

Personal: Signs noticed—hopefully before, but more likely after—signing

1. Does your contract match the statements made on the website? A friend originally agreed to a contract with her previous publisher partially because their site stated they would put books on local shelves and would send copies out for review. She had found information during previous searches to support that claim. She had also been pleased to find that some of their authors had placed in various contests and competitions. Those were all good signs.

Unfortunately, those policies changed just as she signed. She was told books would no longer be sold in brick-and-mortar stores because the return fees were too high. She never received any official word regarding reviews, contests, or copyrights, but could only assume review fees (such as Kirkus) were also too high, as were fees for entering contests and competitions or for registering copyrights, as these things were also not done.

Two red flags here: one for not following through with previously promised/advertised services, another for the subtle (or not so subtle) indication that the company was struggling financially.

She also discovered her books weren't listed with the Library of Congress, although prior to her signing, books through that publisher had been. This is a free service for publishers who've published the work of at least three authors and been accepted into the Cataloging in Publication Program (CIP), so it's difficult to understand why that changed, but because of the change, her books were not eligible for placement on the shelves of her own hometown library.

Had she known these policies would change, she'd never have signed on. Unfortunately, she didn't make sure those items were specified in her contract. Lesson learned. Make sure your contract specifies all the promises listed on the website.

2. Royalties: It seems to be almost expected (and accepted) in the writing world that royalties will arrive late. There's a lag between when the book sells, when payment is made to

the publisher, and when the publisher pays the author. Most publishers, in my experience, pay either semi-annually or quarterly.

The date of payment in your contract should be specific, and payment should arrive on that date accompanied by a detailed statement. If even one pay period passes in which you don't receive a statement (even if you haven't sold enough to make payout, you should still receive a statement), that's a huge red flag.

I can't emphasize this point enough. If your payment is late and/or isn't accompanied by a detailed statement, that's a problem. It's amazing how many excuses we can both accept and make for late/missing payments or statements.

Bottom line: It doesn't matter if the publisher fell ill, had a computer crash, misplaced the checkbook, is moving homes, had to open a new bank account, got hacked, lost the mail, or any other number of excuses. Your contract with your publisher is a business agreement. It doesn't make you heartless to expect payment when payment is due. It makes the publisher manipulative (not to mention criminal) to avoid paying you by plying you with excuses.

There you have it—hard-won knowledge shared in order to assist others in avoiding some of the pitfalls. As stated above, I think the majority of small presses who fail start out with the right intentions, but due to mismanagement end up on scam lists. In the end, the reasons don't really matter, and your choice is clear: Either continue querying reputable agents and publishers, or strike out on your own. This booklet is for the latter category.

Self-publishing: Business Odds and Ends

WHEN I FIRST decided to republish my books I made a list of the basics, a very specific, literal list of steps I needed to take. While the majority of that list consisted of information specific to publishing, there were some business-oriented tasks that had to be completed. Self-publishing is, after all, a business, even if that business consists of only the author.

Disclaimer: These are the steps I took, but they may not be the appropriate steps for you. I am not an attorney. My goal isn't to steer in one direction or another, but to provide a point of reference from which others may start. Keep in mind it's always a good idea for any self-employed person or new business owner to contact the appropriate professionals to discuss options.

Business information

1. Setting up as a business: If you're simply self-publishing with no plans to expand, this first step may not be necessary for you. If, however, you think you might eventually want to publish the work of other authors, you'll need to contact a professional to discuss options that will best protect your legal interests.

After weighing my options, I chose to establish a Limited Liability Company (LLC). I went with this option because my family and I chose to form a small publishing company in order to republish our work after terminating various contracts. At this time, I have no immediate plans to expand and publish the work of other authors, but if I ever change my mind, I want my personal assets to be protected. **Edit 2018: We now publish the work of several other authors.**

I could have approached my attorney to help with this process (as I did several years ago when establishing my psychotherapy practice), but after learning my attorney would charge \$3,000.00 to fill out the paperwork, I decided to explore other options. There are several reputable legal sites online, and I chose to go with [NOLO](#).

It bears repeating: This is the option that worked best for me, but it may not for you. It's always advisable when forming a business to consult with the proper professionals (one of whom I am not) before acting.

2. No matter which avenue you choose for publishing and selling your books—Amazon, Smashwords, KDP Print, or any of the others—you’ll be required to provide information such as would be found on a [W-9](#). After all, any company paying you has to report to the Internal Revenue Service, who in turn will expect you to pay taxes on income earned. If you’ve earned \$10.00 or more from a particular publishing/selling platform, you’ll receive a [1099-MISC](#) towards the end of January. (It’s often stated you must earn \$600 before you receive a 1099, and this is true for certain types of income, but royalties are handled differently.)

As a self-employed person you certainly want to get paid, but you may not feel comfortable putting your Social Security number on W-9 forms or other paperwork. One option is to obtain an Employee Identification Number (EIN) to use instead. It’s quick, free and easy, and can be done through the [Internal Revenue Service](#).

With those first essential steps out of the way, I was ready to focus on publishing.

Ebooks: What Are the Options?

PERHAPS THE FIRST question to ask yourself is, “Do I want ebooks, print books, or both?” Many authors just starting out see ebooks as a cheaper, faster way to publish their works. Others, however, want the added benefit of having their books in print.

The following section serves as an introduction to some of the different platforms for distributing ebooks, discusses the pros and cons of each, covers payment rates and schedules, and provides specific information for formatting for both Kindle and Draft2Digital.

Kindle Direct Publishing: Pros, Cons, Royalties and Payments

[Kindle Direct Publishing](#) (KDP) is often considered the premier place for publishing ebooks. KDP is an extension of Amazon, after all, a company often cited as cornering the market on books.

Pros:

1. KDP offers the ability to create your book cover for free using their [Cover Creator](#) tool. This is a particularly nice feature, given that the creation of book covers is often one of the most expensive aspects of self-publishing.

2. KDP also offers a free downloadable application to use to check your manuscript once you've submitted but before you've published. Check for formatting errors, typos, alignment, correct display of graphics, etc., before publishing. If errors are found, simply correct them on your manuscript and resubmit.

3. Publishing on KDP does not require that you provide your own International Standard Book Number (ISBN). We'll discuss ISBNs later in more detail, but as you'll see, free ISBNs are a big deal.

Instead, of an ISBN, Kindle assigns your book Amazon's own (free) specific identifier, the ASIN, a series of letters and numbers used to identify your book in the Amazon system.

4. Directions for uploading your manuscript and book cover on KDP are straightforward and easy. Your manuscript can be uploaded as a Microsoft Word document (more on formatting requirements later), and your cover as a JPEG. Once you hit "publish," your ebook typically shows up on Amazon within twenty-four hours (and often much sooner).

5. You can make changes to your cover and/or manuscript at any time. Simply resubmit the new version when ready. Although your new version will show as "in process" for twenty-

four hours or so, your previous version will still be available for purchase on Amazon until your newer edition goes live.

6. You can change your prices at any time, but unless you've joined the KDP Select program (more on that later) you cannot set your price to "free."

7. If you own the rights to your work in all territories, you have the potential to sell in the following countries:

US Kindle Store

UK Kindle Store: United Kingdom (including Guernsey, Isle of Man, and Jersey)

AU Kindle Store

DE Kindle Store: Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, and Switzerland

FR Kindle Store: France, Monaco, Belgium, Switzerland, and Luxembourg

ES Kindle Store: Andorra, Spain

IT Kindle Store: Italy, San Marino, Vatican City, and Switzerland

Japan Kindle Store: Japan

BR Kindle Store: Brazil

MX Kindle Store: Mexico

CA Kindle Store: Canada

8. Kindle Direct Publishing *Select* (not to be confused with plain old KDP): A couple of years ago KDP began offering KDP Select, a ninety-day program that provides additional benefits for those enrolled. While the program has changed some over the years, authors who've currently chosen to enroll in KDP Select benefit in several ways.

First, KDP Select gives the author the ability to price books as "free" for five days. The free days can run consecutively or they can be spaced out over the ninety-day period. Some authors have found the exposure gained by offering a book for free for a limited time to be beneficial.

Next, books enrolled in KDP Select are available for lending through the Kindle Owners Lending Library, a digital library enjoyed by Amazon Prime members. Authors receive royalties

when their book is checked out. Royalty payment is based on the number of participants, but seems to hover around \$2.00 or more per checkout.

Additionally, KDP Select authors are eligible to earn 70 percent royalties in countries that typically only pay 35 percent. These countries currently include India, Japan, Brazil, and Mexico. More information about KDP Select can be found on their [website](#).

Finally KDP recently added another incentive to join KDP Select. According to the KDP Select announcement, authors who enter their books into KDP Select will now benefit from time-bound promotions. KDP Select authors can discount their books for a chosen length of time. During that time, a countdown feature will be visible on the Amazon book page to “help generate excitement for the price discount.” Authors will also retain a 70 percent royalty rate on those books even if the sale price drops below \$2.99 (more on this later).

Cons:

1. There are very few cons to publishing through KDP, but the biggest is debatably the KDP Select program. If an author chooses to sign up for the ninety-day enrollment, the author’s book cannot be sold through any other retailer. To do so will result in expulsion from the KDP Select program, and in extreme cases, may result in expulsion from KDP altogether.

Royalties and payments:

1. Although royalties are somewhat complicated, in the majority of cases KDP pays 70 percent royalties in most countries for books priced between \$2.99 and \$9.99. Books priced below \$2.99 may only earn a 35 percent royalty, and some countries have a royalty rate of only 35 percent. Details can be found on the [website](#).

2. Payment occurs monthly, typically at the end of the month, 60 days after the sale is made. For example, if you sell a book in January, you’ll receive payment for the sale at the end of March.

Before we walk through formatting for Kindle, let’s take a look at Smashwords and Draft2Digital, the second most popular ebook publishing venues.

Draft2Digital: Pros, Cons, Royalties and Payments

[Draft2Digital](#) (D2D) is an online ebook distribution site that distributes ebooks to Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Kobo (including Kobo Plus), Tolino, OverDrive, Bibliotheca, Scribd, 24Symbols, and Playster

Pros:

1. D2D accepts the same manuscript Kindle Direct Publishing wants, so there's no need to format it differently (more on formatting requirements later).

2. D2D will convert your manuscript into both an epub and a mobi, and you can download these files to your computer to use anywhere you'd like, even if you decide not to distribute through D2D. D2D also has a variety of nice templates you can choose from to use for your conversion.

3. D2D assigns an ISBN to your ebook for free.

4. As with KDP, directions for uploading your manuscript and book cover on D2D are simple and direct. You can upload a Word file for your manuscript, and a JPEG for your cover.

5. As with KDP, you can revise your covers or manuscripts as needed. Simply upload the new version when ready. D2D pushes the revised edition out to stores very quickly (within a few hours for most stores).

6. Like KDP, D2D allows you to change your prices at any time. Unlike KDP, you're allowed to set your price to "free" for all stores except Amazon. If you choose to use D2D to distribute to Amazon instead of using KDP directly, Amazon will price your book at \$0.99.

Cons:

1. If you decide to distribute your book through D2D, you're ineligible for KDP Select (remember, Select is a specific program offered by KDP that requires exclusivity).

Royalties and payments:

1. D2D can pay by check, direct deposit, Paypal, or Payoneer. There is a \$100 minimum threshold if you decide you want to be paid by check, a \$20 minimum threshold if you use Paypal, 1 \$20 minimum threshold for Payoneer, and a \$10 minimum threshold for international direct deposit. D2D pays monthly (if the minimum threshold is met for methods requiring one).

2. D2D keeps approximately 10% of the retail price for each sale you make.

Smashwords: Pros, Cons, Royalties and Payments

[Smashwords](#), an online ebook publishing and selling site created by British author Mark Coker, started out as a place to sell ebooks compatible with virtually any platform, but has quickly evolved to offer even more.

Pros:

1. Smashwords offers the opportunity to sell your ebooks directly from the Smashwords site in a format compatible with virtually any e-reader.

2. If your ebook qualifies for inclusion in the Smashwords Premium Catalogue, you'll have the opportunity to sell your ebooks in a variety of places: Sony, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Diesel, Page Foundry, Baker and Taylor, Baker-Taylor Axis360, Flipcart, Oyster, and Library Direct. Mr. Coker has even published a free [Smashwords Style Guide](#) to assist with obtaining Premium Catalogue status (more on this later).

3. Smashwords assigns an ISBN to your ebook for free.

4. As with KDP, directions for uploading your manuscript and book cover on Smashwords are simple and direct. Your manuscript can be uploaded as a Microsoft Word document (more on formatting requirements later), and your cover as a JPEG. As soon as you publish on Smashwords your ebook will be available for purchase on the Smashwords site. It will automatically be submitted for review to determine eligibility for inclusion in the Premium Catalogue. The review process for the Premium Catalogue can take up to two weeks. If approved, your ebook will then be shipped to the previously discussed Smashwords affiliates.

5. As with KDP, you have the ability to revise your covers or manuscripts as needed. Simply upload the new version when ready. Your revised version will be available immediately for purchase on Smashwords; however, it will have to go through the Premium Catalogue approval process again before Smashwords affiliates receive the new version.

6. Like KDP, Smashwords allows you to change your prices at any time. Unlike KDP, you're allowed to set your price to "free."

7. Smashwords provides the opportunity to create coupons for each of your books. The discount can be as much as 100 percent. This is extremely helpful when querying book reviewers, because you can generate a coupon for a free download of that specific book and email it to the reviewer who's agreed to review your book. They'll be able to conveniently download a free review copy onto the e-reader of their choice.

Cons:

1. The major drawback of Smashwords is the "meatgrinder." The "meatgrinder" is what Smashwords calls its manuscript conversion process. It's quite picky, especially if you format in Word. Word is known to have hidden HTML code scattered throughout, and this code can throw off your formatting when the manuscript is converted to an ebook. Although they provide a free formatting guide, many authors still struggle to get their manuscripts safely through the meatgrinder.

2. Just as with Draft2Digital, if your ebook is available through Smashwords, it isn't eligible for KDP Select.

Royalties and payments:

1. When you sell directly from Smashwords you'll receive 85 percent in royalties. If you make it into the Smashwords Premium Catalogue and make a sale through one of their affiliates, the affiliate will, of course, take a cut of the profit. Instead of 85 percent, you'll typically earn 60 percent (though they do clarify some retailers may vary).

2. Smashwords pays monthly, typically at the end of the month, thirty days after the sale. Payment is via PayPal.

Other Ebook Distribution Services

THERE ARE MULTIPLE other venues for selling ebooks, some fairly well-known, others not, and each with its own set of pros and cons. The following are ebook distributors not affiliated with KDP, D2D, or Smashwords. There are no doubt others; these are the ones with which I have some working knowledge. **Note: This section was written in 2013 and, because I don't use these distributors, has not been updated since that time. Information may have changed.**

1. One that seems to be gaining traction is [Google Play](#). Google Play sells ebooks downloadable for Android devices. The first step toward selling through Google Play is uploading your ebook into Google Books via the [Google Books Partner Program](#). In Google's [words](#), "By matching the content in your books with user searches, Google Books connects your books with the users who are most interested in buying them." Viewers get a 20 percent preview (that's the default setting; you can increase it, but not decrease it), and buy links are included on the side of the page. If you sell from your own site, your link will be listed first. Another bonus: Google Play provides a free ISBN if your book doesn't have one.

That's the good news. The bad news is their instructions for submitting books leave a lot to be desired. I submitted all four of my novels and can share some of the stumbling blocks that gave me pause.

Once you have an account (if you have gmail that's the information you use to sign in), it seems relatively simple to "Add Book." The first page takes you to general information you have to fill in, such as title, number of pages, blurb, bio, BISAC....

Wait...what?

Chances are, if you haven't yet published on KDP Print, you may have never even heard of it. BISAC: Book Industry Standards and Communications. Basically, all the categories and subcategories in which a book will fit. A complete listing is on the Book Industry Study Group [website](#).

On the Google Books form you'll see "Subject," then a drop down menu from which you'll choose the appropriate system for categorizing your book. For those of us in the U.S., it's BISAC. From there you'll be prompted to add your categories. Luckily, when filling out the

form, if you begin to type in a category a dropdown list will appear—but only if it’s an exact match to an existing BISAC category, so it might be helpful to keep the link above handy.

The next snag I experienced was directly under that: Language. The instruction was to list the language in which the book was written in ISO 639-2/B code. I had no idea what that meant, but after some searching, I found a listing of codes through the [Library of Congress](#).

Once finished with that page, find “Google Books Settings” on the menu to the left and click. This takes you to the page that allows you to choose the percentage you want viewable, as well as where you verify your rights (if you have rights everywhere, just enter “World”).

When finished there, go back to the toolbar on the left and click “Content Files.” Google Books needs either an ePUB or PDF file of your entire book, along with a JPEG of the cover.

Once you’ve uploaded everything, hit “Publish.” If everything is accepted, your book will be listed in Google Books. From there, it’s a simple click to enroll your book in the Google Play store; however, a word of caution: Google Play reserves the right to change the price of your ebook without explanation or warning. If you also have your book published through KDP, remember that Amazon price-matches. This means if Google Play lowers the price of your ebook, Amazon will follow suit.

Another point worth mentioning: The Google Play site states that authors will receive the majority of their royalties, but nowhere (at least nowhere I could find) does it state a specific percentage.

For these reasons, I chose to keep my books enrolled in Google Books (hopefully increasing online visibility) but bypassed the option of selling through Google Play. More on that later.

2. [Lulu](#) is another online distribution option for both print and ebooks. Once uploaded on Lulu, ebooks may be distributed through the Apple IBooks, Barnes & Noble, and the Lulu site. Lulu provides the ISBNs, and the author keeps 90 percent of the profit.

Because I’ve never used Lulu, I’m not as familiar with it as I am some of the others. Initial research indicated that Lulu requires a different book cover size than KDP, D2D, or Smashwords, so this is something to consider if you’re paying a cover designer.

Lulu requires an ePUB file in order to distribute to retailers. While they do offer a free converter for files uploaded as a PDF or DOC, a cursory glance at Lulu discussion boards would

seem to indicate some issues with the conversion process. Lulu does offer for-fee services such as assistance with converting files, the lowest starting at \$99.00.

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, there are undoubtedly other ebook publishing and distribution options not covered in this booklet. The first edition of this guide covered three such services no longer in existence.

The ones I've discussed are the ones with which I'm most familiar. My goal is not to encourage any particular choice, but rather to share information I've gathered since diving headfirst into the world of self-publishing, and to provide new authors (and/or publishers) a starting point in a journey that can at times seem overwhelming. Throughout the process, I've chosen the options that work best for me; you may very well decide differently.

Formatting in Microsoft Word for Kindle Direct Publishing and Draft2Digital

NOW WE GET to the fun stuff (although believe me, I wasn't calling it that my first time through). The good news is, once you get the hang of it it's really not that difficult.

As I mentioned earlier, Mark Coker, founder of Smashwords, has a [free publishing guide](#) available for download on Smashwords. It contains detailed instructions for formatting your ebook manuscript for Smashwords, so I won't cover that here. This section will help you ready your ebook manuscript for upload to both KDP and D2D.

I'm working in Microsoft Word 2016, so as mentioned previously, all my instructions are specific to that program. If you're working in an earlier version of Word, the terms and commands will be the same, but the toolbar may be designed differently. If you're working in HTML code or on a Mac, these instructions may not be as helpful for you.

Before we begin, it's important to remember ebooks aren't hardcovers and can't be formatted like hardcovers. Hardcovers have page numbers and headers; ebooks don't, because they flow. The "page" isn't static; it depends on the font style and size chosen by the reader. If you try to use a header or page number with an ebook, you'll end up with random page numbers and headers scattered throughout the book. They won't stay in place like they do with a hardcover book.

Hardcover books tend to start chapters midway down a page. You don't want to do this with an ebook manuscript, because this will cause the reader to have to scroll through unattractive and unnecessary "white space" to reach the beginning of the chapter. If you try to adjust space in an ebook manuscript by hitting "Enter" repeatedly or using tabs, it won't convert correctly. Instead, we'll use Word's built-in styles along with page breaks to ensure the manuscript converts correctly.

Using Word Styles:

The easiest way to ensure your manuscript is free of unwanted HTML and ready for conversion to a mobi or epub is to set your styles before you ever begin typing. To access Word's styles, click on the tiny, nearly invisible little arrow underneath the row of styles up on your toolbar. This should bring up a Styles menu on the right side of your screen.

1. **Body style:** On that menu, hover your mouse over “Normal” until you see a dropdown arrow to the right. Click on that, and select “Modify.” This will take you to a pop up that lets you select your font size, style, and color. Ebooks convert best when we keep things simple. Font should be Times New Roman because it’s closest to KDP’s proprietary font, which is the default font for Kindles. You can use another font, but remember, the reader gets to choose the font they prefer, so if you use another one, it’s likely to be overridden by the user. If the reader doesn’t choose a specific font, KDP’s default font will be the one displayed.

Make sure color is set to “Automatic” and size is set at 12. Again, readers can override your choices, and keeping them simple decreases the chance of something going wrong during conversion.

At the bottom left of your popup you’ll see a button that says “Format.” Click it, and choose “Paragraph.” You’ll be presented with another popup that lets you select paragraph settings.

Next to “Alignment,” choose “Justified” if you want a nice, uniform look. Under “Special” select “First line,” and under “By,” set your indent to 0.3. Anything over 0.3 will look huge in an ereader.

Make sure “Before” and “After” are both set to 0. Have you ever seen a paper that had extra space between paragraphs? We don’t want that, and we get rid of it by making sure “Before” and “After” are on 0.

Under “Line Spacing,” select “Single.”

Now your body style is set.

2. **Chapter titles:** Hover your mouse over “Heading 1” on your style menu, and when the dropdown appears, click to “Modify.” We want to use “Heading 1” for our chapter titles, because that will allow us to use Word’s “Insert TOC” function to create our table of contents. Ebooks have to have a clickable table of contents, and this is how we’ll get it.

When you click “Modify” you’ll get the same popup you got last time, but this time your settings will be different.

Again, choose Times New Roman and select “Automatic” for your color. For size, we’ll choose 14, which looks quite big on an ereader. Click the bold “B” to make your chapter titles bold.

When you’ve finished that, click the “Format” button on the bottom left and select “Paragraph.” This time, we want to choose “Centered” instead of “Justified.” Under “Special,” select “None.” We don’t want our chapter titles to be indented. Have you ever seen a title that looked off-center? That’s because the person typing told the title to “center,” but didn’t remove the indent first.

We can use “After” to preset any space we want to have between our chapter title and the body of our manuscript. For example, if I set “After” to 12, a blank line will automatically be inserted after my chapter title. I like to have at least 1.5 lines between my chapter title and the body, so I set “After” to 18.

Leave “Line Spacing” at single.

Now your chapter titles are set. Some of my books have two-part chapter titles. For example:

Chapter 2: Tabby

December 12, 2012

When I have a two-part chapter title, I use Heading 2 for the second part. I set it up the same way I set up Heading 1, but I decrease the font size to 12.

3. Typing the body of the manuscript: As mentioned previously, hitting “Return” repeatedly will result in white space the reader has to scroll to get where they want to go. We’ll avoid all that by using page breaks instead.

At the end of each chapter, hit “Return” one time. Then go up to your toolbar and click on “Layout.” Click the dropdown arrow beside “Breaks.” Under “Section Breaks” click “Next Page.”

You’ll be automatically transported to the next page. Hit “Return” again, and type the title of your next chapter.

4. **From the beginning:** As you’ve probably noticed, books all have what’s called “front matter.” This includes the title page, copyright page, dedications, acknowledgements, tables of content—everything that comes before the book starts.

Here’s one of mine:

Appalachian Justice

Cedar Hollow Series, Book 1

Melinda Clayton

As you can see, my book title is Heading 1. I typed it, then highlighted it with my mouse and went over to my Styles menu, where I clicked on Heading 1. That caused my book title to format exactly as I’d told Heading 1 to format it.

Remember when centering your subtitle or name to go up to your Paragraph settings and remove the indent. Otherwise, they’ll be off-center.

After I typed my name, I hit “Return” once, then inserted a page break. That took me to the top of the next page, where I hit “Return” again, and then typed:

Copyright 2013 Melinda Clayton

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the publisher, with the exception of brief quotations in a review.

This book is a work of fiction. While some of the place names are real, characters and incidents are the product of the author’s imagination and are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to events or persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

Cover Art: Clarissa Yeo

Thomas-Jacob Publishing, LLC
TJPub@thomas-jacobpublishing.com
USA

Also available in print from all major bookstores.

At the end of that, I hit “Return” once, inserted a page break, and was taken to the next page, where I hit “Return” again and dedicated my novel to my family. After that, I hit “Return,” inserted a page break, and was taken to the next page.

If you have nothing else, leave this page for your table of contents (TOC). We'll come back to the TOC later. For now, just leave it as a blank page, spacing down once and inserting a page break.

Now you're ready to type the title of your first chapter. Once you type it, highlight it and go over to your Styles menu, where you'll click on Heading 1. After that, it's time to start typing your story.

At the end of your chapter, hit "Return" once, space down, insert a page break, space down, and begin your second chapter.

Now you're on your way.

5. Table of Contents: Go back to the blank page we left for your TOC and place your cursor where you want the TOC to be inserted. From the toolbar, click on "References." This will bring up a new toolbar. On the far left, you'll see a "Table of Contents" tab. Click on that.

A dropdown will appear. Scroll to the bottom of it and click "Insert Table of Contents." Another screen will pop up offering several options. Because in this tutorial we only have one level of heading, select "1" under the "Show Level" option. Next—and very important—uncheck the "Show Page Numbers" box. Kindle does not use page numbers; therefore, the TOC shouldn't have them. Then click "OK."

Your "Table of Contents" page should now show a linked, working table of contents created by Word's "Insert TOC" feature.

Paperbacks: What Are the Options?

THE ADVENT OF ebooks in conjunction with self-publishing has given authors an amazing opportunity to publish and have their work seen by people who otherwise might never have been afforded the opportunity. For many, the publishing of ebooks is the perfect platform: a way to reach potentially thousands, if not millions, of readers without the expenses often incurred by the publication of print books.

For some readers, however (such as this writer), print books are still the preferred method of reading. Luckily, the ever-evolving world of self-publishing now offers several choices for publishing print books, as well.

KDP Print (formerly CreateSpace) vs. IngramSpark

AS WITH EBOOKS, there are certainly more paperback and/or hardback printers/distributors than the ones with which I'm familiar. The two we'll cover here, however, are two of the most well-known: KDP Print and IngramSpark.

KDP Print pros:

[KDP Print](#) is Amazon's do-it-yourself paperback distribution platform. With easy to follow directions and distribution to multiple countries in which Amazon has a market, KDP Print is possibly the most popular U. S. site for distributing self-published paperback books. In addition to identifying as a publisher, KDP Print also prints and distributes books.

1. Publishing through KDP Print is free.
2. Staff are quick to reply to requests for information and assistance.
3. The publication process is outlined in several easy-to-follow steps.
4. KDP Print has a free online cover-creator. If one of their many templates doesn't meet your needs, they also provide specifics for both [trim sizes](#) and [spine widths](#) to ensure the cover you provide will work with your manuscript.
5. Paper choices are either cream or white, and paperback cover finishes are either matte or glossy.
6. KDP Print provides [free downloadable templates](#) to ensure your manuscript is properly formatted for printing. (Note: This template also works for IngramSpark.)
7. KDP Print offers the option of using your own purchased ISBN, or using a free one they provide. The downside to using a KDP Print generated ISBN is that your book will be listed

as published by KDP Print. As much as we may not like to admit it, the sad truth is that listing KDP Print as your publisher may, in some cases, cause stores, libraries, and schools to think twice before purchasing your book. The world of self-publishing has come a long way in a few short years, but unfortunately there are still stereotypes to overcome.

If, however, you provide your own ISBN, your imprint (or your name) will be listed as the publisher.

8. KDP Print offers free Expanded Distribution. Expanded Distribution means your book will be available not only on Amazon, but in widely-known book distribution catalogues such as Ingram and NACSCORP. It will also be available in other online stores such as Barnes & Noble and Books-A-Million. Retailers rely on book databases and catalogues such as Ingram when ordering books.

Worth noting: Choosing Expanded Distribution will get you listed in catalogues, but it won't guarantee retailers choose to stock your book.

Another notable mention: If you choose to use your own ISBN instead of a KDP Print provided one, Expanded Distribution for your book will not include a listing in Baker and Taylor, a catalogue widely used by libraries and academic institutions. It's only by using the KDP Print generated ISBN—which lists KDP Print as the publisher—and selecting Expanded Distribution that you'll be listed in Baker and Taylor. Again, a listing does not guarantee a purchase; it's simply a listing.

9. KDP Print will provide a free barcode. Barcodes can also be ordered from Bowker for \$10.00, but there's no need, since KDP Print provides one. Just make sure, if you hire a graphic artist to design your cover, that she/he leaves the back bottom right corner vacant (no important graphics or text) to accommodate the barcode.

10. KDP Print allows you to order books, including a proof copy, for the cost of printing and shipping.

11. You can make changes to your cover or interior and re-upload the new editions for free at any time.

KDP Print cons:

1. KDP Print does not allow bookstores to return unsold books. This has historically been one of the markers that sets self-published and small-press books apart from books published through bigger houses. Stores are reluctant to stock books that cannot be returned if they don't sell.

3. KDP Print Expanded Distribution does get your book listed in Ingram, but with a wholesale discount of only 25 percent, most bookstores will not be interested. A standard wholesale discount is widely considered to be 55 percent.

4. KDP Print only allows for the publishing and printing of paperbacks; it does not provide resources for publishing or printing hardback books.

KDP Print royalties and payments:

KDP Print pays electronically sixty days after a book sells. Royalties are complicated, but the general explanation is that the author receives 60 percent net of retail after printing costs are deducted if the book is sold through Amazon U.S. If the book is sold through Expanded Distribution, the author receives 40 percent net of retail after printing costs are deducted.

Amazon Europe distribution channels will earn British pounds (GBP) and Euro (EUR). While royalties accrue in separate currencies, payments will be issued in the author's bank currency.

IngramSpark pros:

[IngramSpark](#) is a subsidiary of Ingram Content Group Inc.; yes, that's the same [Ingram](#) that, according to their website, provides "books, music, and media content to over 38,000 retailers, libraries, schools and distribution partners in 195 countries." Ironically, if you choose KDP Print Expanded Distribution, what they do is list the book in Ingram. One option is to bypass KDP Print Expanded Distribution (the "middleman") and list your book yourself by using IngramSpark.

1. Like books entered into the KDP Print Expanded Distribution program, books printed through IngramSpark will be listed in catalogues such as Ingram and NACSCORP and will be available for order through all major retailers. Unlike with KDP Print, all books distributed through IngramSpark will also be available to Baker and Taylor.

2. IngramSpark has historically had a reputation for providing better quality books than KDP Print, crafted of higher quality materials with a wider range of choices. (Note: As of 2018, the final product of each is virtually indistinguishable.) Like KDP Print, IngramSpark paper choices are either cream or white, and paperback cover finishes are either matte or glossy. But unlike KDP Print, IngramSpark also offers the option to print hardback books. These covers may be matte, glossy, or fabric-covered.

3. IngramSpark will provide a free barcode. It comes attached to their free cover template and must be added to the back cover before uploading the cover file to IngramSpark.

4. IngramSpark gives the author/publisher the option of accepting returns or having unsold books destroyed. This is important, because most stores will not stock unreturnable books.

5. While KDP Print sets wholesale discounts for the publisher/author, IngramSpark allows the publisher to set the wholesale discount. The standard is usually considered to be 55 percent, a number that pleases bookstores and makes placement on shelves more likely.

IngramSpark cons:

1. Publishing through IngramSpark is not free, not even for the do-it-yourself author. At the time of this printing, the price for uploading both your cover and interior on IngramSpark is \$49.00. However, they frequently email coupon codes that allow for a free upload.

2. There is a \$25.00 charge to change either your cover or interior with IngramSpark.

3. They do not provide a free ISBN. Authors in the U.S. must purchase their own ISBNs from [Bowker](#), which is prohibitively expensive. More on ISBNs later.

IngramSpark royalties and payments:

1. Payment is via direct deposit or Paypal and is made ninety days after the initial report date.

2. It is very difficult to get a “royalty rate,” because IngramSpark allows the publisher to set the wholesale discount. A standard wholesale discount of 55 percent will obviously mean a lower profit margin, but also makes it more likely bookstores will be willing to stock the book.

Printing costs are also higher through IngramSpark. According to their [calculator](#), my \$12.99 book, which cost \$3.94 to print through KDP Print, will cost \$4.22 through IngramSpark. That’s money that comes directly from the author’s profit.

Using KDP Print in conjunction with IngramSpark:

Some authors choose to purchase their own ISBN(s) and use both KDP Print and IngramSpark for distribution. Because initial publication on KDP Print is free—as are revisions—some authors feel it’s better to begin with KDP Print until the author is familiar enough and experienced enough to have quality products without having to pay for each revision needed. They simply upload the cover and interior on KDP Print, check a proof copy, and make revisions as needed. Once the manuscript is in perfect order and no further revisions are needed, they then publish on KDP Print without choosing Expanded Distribution, and also publish through IngramSpark.

In this way, the book is available on KDP Print for Amazon as well as on IngramSpark for inclusion in Ingram, Baker and Taylor, and NACSCORP and a better chance of being sold in brick-and-mortar stores. Leaving the book on KDP Print has the added benefit of providing lower printing costs should the author need print copies for book signings, etc.

Tips, Tricks, and Helpful Hints

Formatting your manuscript for publication might be one of the most challenging things you'll have to do before publishing, but there are still other matters to consider.

ISBNs:

If you purchased your own ISBN through [Bowker](#), once you've assigned it to your book it should be reported to [R.R. Bowker](#) as the database of record for the ISBN Agency. If your ISBN(s) are not reported, your books won't be listed in *Books in Print*, which means they're basically unsearchable in a host of databases.

Barcodes:

Both KDP Print and IngramSpark will provide a barcode for the back of your print book, but if you've selected a different printer and need a barcode, they can also be bought at [Bowker](#) for—at the time of this printing—\$10.00.

Registering Copyright:

While it's often stated that publishing your work serves as a “poor man's copyright,” courts will not automatically hear your copyright claim if you haven't registered with the [U.S. Copyright Office](#). Upon registration, by law you have three months to submit a Mandatory Deposit of your work. If your work has been previously published, your Mandatory Deposit will consist of two hardcopies of the copyrighted works. If your work has not been previously published, an electronic copy may suffice. At the time of this printing, the fee for filing the Mandatory Deposit is \$35.00. Easy-to-follow directions are on the website.

Library of Congress:

In conjunction with registering the copyright, publishers (those who have published the work of at least three different authors) may apply for acceptance into the Library of Congress [Cataloguing in Publication](#) (CIP) program. This is the database used by libraries to select books for purchase.

As of this printing, self-published authors are not eligible for the CIP program, but according to the U.S. Copyright Office, the Mandatory Deposit is [for the use of the Library of Congress](#). I'm unable to find statistics on the number of self-published authors accepted into the LOC catalogue, if any, but one can always hope.

Alexa rankings:

Although this booklet is not intended as a marketing guide, this is one helpful hint all self-published authors need to know. As a new author starting out, you want to get your book out into the world. There are a multitude of sites willing to help you do just that, some free, but many for a fee.

Before shelling out money for a paid advertisement, it's always wise to check on the [Alexa Traffic Rank](#) of the site you're considering. In everyday language, the Alexa Rank is a measurement of the global traffic a website receives relative to other websites over the span of a month. Given that there are millions of websites, you'll want to know if spending money to have your book listed on a specific site is a wise move. Are they listed as #4,567,890? Or as #67,000?

In general, an Alexa ranking of 100,000 or less is considered good—a site that receives quite a bit of traffic. Remember, there are literally millions of sites on the web. A ranking over 100,000 is considered not-so-good.

I recently saw a post on Facebook regarding a fellow author who'd spent \$50.00 to advertise his book on a site that claimed to have a high number of subscribers, tons of traffic, and many avenues for promotion.

I went to [Quango](#) to check out their ranking. You don't have to subscribe; just type in the domain name of the website.

A quick search showed that my friend had paid \$50.00 to list his book on a site that held a rank of nearly five million, an indication that it gets very, very little traffic, and that his money could have been better spent.

How Not to Sell A Book

It's been an extremely fun but incredibly busy time since I terminated contracts with my publisher and moved forward on my own. There's been a learning curve, to be sure, but one thing that stood out is the need for continued crash-courses (of sorts) in marketing. I stated in the introduction that this booklet isn't a guide on marketing, and it isn't. There are so many marketing blogs, websites, books and services available to tell authors what to do to market books there's nothing I could possibly add.

What I've realized, however, is that what we *don't* do to market is just as important as what we *do*. As self-published and small-press authors, we're often left on our own to stumble through and try to get our books noticed and listed in as many places as possible. Unfortunately, the way we do this frequently hurts us more than it helps.

Here's the thing. The rules are really quite simple for authors and publishing companies alike. Be polite. Be honest. Be professional. And don't do the following.

1. Don't offer to swap reviews. It's unethical.

There will undoubtedly be times when, in the social network of authors with whom you connect, you'll love another author's work. I certainly have, and sometimes, if I'm particularly moved, I'll leave a review (although these days I'm much more likely to just leave stars, having discovered I'm not a great—or even good—reviewer).

But for the few I've done, I've learned if I know the author (via social networking, shared publisher, etc.), I should preface those reviews with, "In the interest of self-disclosure," because transparency matters.

When all is said and done, the goal of a review isn't to boost the sales of the author; it's to let other readers know what you thought of the book. There will be times when that author also loves your book. They may also leave a review. If you write in a similar genre and have similar interests, that's not unusual. In those instances, transparency is crucial. **Edit 2018: Amazon no longer allows authors who write in the same genre to review each other's books. Will they always know? No, but if it comes to their attention, they'll remove the review.**

“Swapping” is a different matter. “Swap” arrangements are a deliberate “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours” relationship. Threads offering these arrangements pop up with some frequency.

Consider this: During the summer months my children and I like to visit our local farmer’s market. Several months ago we passed a table selling phone chargers (our farmer’s market is sometimes less “farm” and more “market”). Since we needed chargers and they were advertised at a great price, we stopped to look.

The vendor went on and on about the quality until a neighboring vendor piped in also, telling us how great the chargers were. In return, the phone charger vendor praised the neighboring vendor’s lighters. So, we bought them, both the chargers and the lighters.

Nothing worked after three days.

They weren’t interested in giving an honest appraisal; they were interested in helping each other boost sales regardless of the quality of the product. Now I won’t buy from either vendor.

That’s what “swap” arrangements can do.

2. Don’t comment on reviews.

When I was first published, I made a habit of thanking each and every person who reviewed my first book. It didn’t take long for me to realize that practice made readers uncomfortable. After all, they just want to read and discuss books. What they don’t want is to be put in a position to feel uncomfortable because the author is obsessively following reviews.

This is true for both positive and negative reviews. Notice I didn’t use the words “good” and “bad,” because a negative review isn’t a bad review. Some negative reviews offer the best information. But if it’s uncomfortable as a reader to realize the author read the review and even offered a thank you, imagine how uncomfortable it is to realize the author read the review and responded with anger.

Once you’ve released the book, you have to let it go. Not everyone is going to love it. Some reviewers will be polite about it; some won’t. It doesn’t matter, because the review isn’t about *you*. It’s about letting other potential buyers know what the reviewer thought about the *book*. As authors, we get so caught up in our work we say, “I got a negative review today.” No, you didn’t; your *book* did. It’s best to recognize the difference.

If you *must* read reviews left for your book, learn from them. Some will discuss plot, formatting, or grammatical errors. These are all helpful things to know. Some might take issue with the content. In those cases, leaving a negative review helps not only other readers—by warning them of potentially upsetting or disturbing content—it also helps *you*. After all, it's much better to have a reader not purchase your book based on a negative review than it is to have an uninformed reader purchase it only to hate the content.

3. Don't barge into discussion threads and fora that have nothing to do with your books and start marketing your book.

Until my sons' soccer schedules took over my life I belonged to a real-life book club. Once a month we met to discuss our latest read, always over dinner at a cozy bar and grill or similar place.

Imagine you're sitting with friends discussing a book you've all just read. Someone wanders over and expresses interest. Maybe they say, "Oh, I loved that book!" Or maybe they say, "Was it really good? I've been meaning to read it." You'd probably invite them into the conversation without hesitation, right? After all, they've added positively to the discussion at hand.

Now imagine that Thelma, who's been listening from the bar, wanders over. "If you liked that book," she says, "you should read mine."

Thelma hasn't added to the conversation; she's detracted from it. Instead of assimilating, she derailed the discussion and took it over. Her welcome isn't likely to be as warm. If she continues along that vein, someone in the group is likely to ask her to leave. At the very least, the group will avoid her from that point on and find somewhere else to meet. It goes without saying they probably won't be buying her book.

The internet is full of stories of "badly behaving authors," always followed with some story about "bully reviewers." The truth is, self-published and small-press authors don't have the luxury of a PR department or a spokesperson. There isn't anyone looking over our shoulder, warning us to step back, take a deep breath, and let things go.

We're excited about our book, thrilled to be published, and eager to spread the word. Because we don't have the luxury of a team of experts around us, we make mistakes. If you find

yourself in a situation in which you misspoke, reacted with anger, or became defensive, the best course of action is to apologize, learn from the experience, and avoid repeating it.

A Final Word

The above-mentioned printers and distributors, in conjunction with tenacious, talented authors, editors, beta-readers, graphic artists, formatters, and bloggers, have been instrumental in forcing change in an industry that for too long had forgotten the beauty of individual art and settled comfortably into the role of big business.

With change very often comes discomfort. As the literary world grows and adapts to the new landscape, there will be those who rebel, those who surrender, and those who eventually decide publishing a book isn't necessarily all it was cracked up to be.

There will also be those who succeed according to their own personal standards, and those who feel as if they've finally realized their calling.

Which will you be? Only you can decide.