VBW PUBLISHING
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VIRTUALBOOKWORM.COM PUBLISHING GUIDE

THANKS FOR TAKING A LOOK at Virtualbookworm.com Publishing. Since our formation in March 2000, we have grown beyond our wildest dreams. Based on feedback, this tends to be due to our customer service, value for the money and the fact that we only produce high-quality products.

This booklet was prepared in an effort to answer many of the questions authors have when searching for the right publisher. Please read this entire booklet, as it contains a number of helpful formatting tips, formatting samples and much more. If you have any questions after reviewing this booklet, please browse our Frequently Asked Question Database at: virtualbookworm.com/faqs

We'd like to thank Helen Gallagher, for allowing us to use portions of her book, *Release Your Writing*, for the first section of this booklet.

If, after reading through this booklet, you still can't find the answer to your question, please go to our Customer Support Center at: virtualbookworm.com/support

Getting Published – An Introduction
(from "Release Your Writing" by Helen Gallagher)

NOTE: The full version of "Release Your Writing" can be purchased at http://bit.ly/vbwpub

Whether you're a writer just starting out or you're finishing a book, you *can* get your work published.

You know the long road to publishing success: attract an agent who has time and connections to place your book with a publisher, and follow the slow journey to publication. But there is another way: publish it yourself!

My book, *Release Your Writing,* explores traditional publishing and offers strategies for success with self-publishing, putting you in control of the process.

But what about the writing itself, and managing computer files, and formatting a book for publication? How does an author handle marketing and promotion? We'll take you there too. *Release Your Writing* walks you through the whole process, not just publishing options, and is based on extensive research publishing my own books as well as advising clients on the best route to successful and timely publication.

Why self-publish? Perhaps …

- You want your work to be seen. No one can read what's in your desk drawer.
- You want to help people with what you've learned, and share your expertise.

- You have a collection of essays or stories you'd like to sell.
- You want a book for professional reasons, as an adjunct to your business.
- You've studied the markets and you know you aren't likely to attract a major publisher...

Then self-publishing might be perfect for you.

When I wrote *Computer Ease,* to celebrate my tenth business anniversary, I wanted it on the market for the December 2005 holiday sales season. Working back from that deadline, I had to get on the publisher's schedule for early October. August and September were consumed by all the important final revisions plus editing, cover design and the book's front and back matter. My publisher, Virtualbookworm.com, took care of the rest. *Computer Ease* is still enjoying life, as "the book that won't beep, crash, or call you a dummy." Bringing it to life and enjoying book-signing parties is a marvelous reward for the effort. *Computer Ease* was chosen by Forbes Book Club, won a non-fiction award from Illinois Women's Press Association, and still sells well... because I believed in the project, and I got it out there.

Release Your Writing presumes no strong computer skills and recognizes not everyone writes with a computer. Yet technology does lend a hand if you compose and edit your work via computer and need to format a manuscript for publication. You'll learn techniques for manuscript management and revision. Even advanced computer users will find time-saving techniques, formatting tricks, ways to polish documents, and manage the business of writing.

Release Your Writing moves you toward getting your work published, whether a benevolent agent/publisher relationship is around the corner, or you have the time and money to fund the publishing process. Most of all, it offers you a strategy for preparing your manuscript and getting your book published through print-on-demand (POD), a technology becoming more and more embraced by the book industry. Authors are learning

they can realize success with their book, control the process and keep the profits.

So let's get started on publishing your book, *your* way.

A Changing Publishing Industry

Publishing as an industry has grown by almost 17 percent per year since 2005, and net revenues for all books reached $40.3 billion in 2008, according to Book Industry Study TRENDS 2009 report. A few companies, just five or six, control over 80 percent of the industry. Most books in bookstores come from those few firms. Only one to two percent of unsolicited submissions are purchased for publication.

That's why self-publishing and print-on-demand (POD) are projected to show continued growth and why they've gained acceptance as valid publishing choices.

Let's take a brief look at traditional publishing methods, before we launch into publishing *your* way.

For traditional publishing, an agent is considered essential to present your manuscript to publishers and negotiate the best deal. That's what they do best. In return, most agents earn about a 15 percent fee on your advance and future sales. Publishers prefer to work through agents because of their expertise, so most won't even look at unagented manuscripts.

Agents' work is not unlike the real estate business, in that there is an agent, a buyer, and a seller. An agent won't take your book on unless he or she believes it has a chance of being sold. Agents do not make money representing you until you make money.

Scout the market for agents who might represent you, use your contacts for referrals and track likely publishers. Don't overlook small and regional publishers if that fits your niche. Then sit down with a few good books on how to write

a book proposal. If you don't put your best writing into a book proposal, it won't attract interest from an agent.

Even though self-publishing is changing some of the old rules, knowledge about book proposals will help you organize and target your writing. It will ensure you define your core audience, and know the market for your book.

Getting published may not be a good use of your time, if it means shopping for an agent, writing a lengthy proposal, and waiting to sell it to a publisher. And, the road to rejection can be quite long. Do you want to wait six months to get a "No, thank you," from a publisher?

Unless you've already been published and have an agent to represent you, your chances of selling a book to a publisher are extremely low.

Traditional publishers excel at their marketing knowledge and distribution. Those are the two primary areas where a new writer will benefit from using a traditional publisher. If you write a best-seller, yes, you, your agent and your publisher will reap profits for years, but most of the advice in this book enlightens writers about other ways of achieving publishing success, instead of waiting for the Publishing Gods to send for us.

Looking Beyond Top Publishers

Just as independent bookstores serve a different niche than national book retailers, so too do smaller publishers. Even large publishing companies try various imprints, small in-house brands aimed at specific markets. HarperCollins has several imprints, such as Ecco, launched for classic literature, and Fourth Estate for edgy fiction and non-fiction. Some publishers are now collapsing their imprints back into one brand, noting they create clutter and confusion in the industry.

Small presses are big business in America. This includes university, regional and independent firms. Small presses

comprise a huge part of the book industry, over 80,000 firms. The Jenkins Group, Inc. reports that small and self-produced books represent 78 percent of all titles. Learn more about small presses at IndependentPublisher.com. Many small publishers are willing to work with authors, even unagented, and tend to keep books in print longer than larger firms. Of course, your book can still be remaindered or rejected for a second print run if sales don't meet the publisher's goals.

While a publisher's advance and the promise of royalties hold allure, royalties, often in the range of 2 to 12 percent aren't paid to the author until the publisher makes back the advance. So even on a small advance of $5,000 it will be a long time before you begin receiving a percentage of sales. If your book is a best seller, you can move to an island off Crete. For the rest of us, there are other options we'll explore in depth.

Publishers generally expect projects to sell at eight to ten times the cost of production. Their gross profit pays for a full editorial staff, design team, and a big marketing budget. A publisher's goal is to produce a book that gives them a nice net profit. After all, they are taking most of the financial risk. For most authors, it's a tough way to make money, so other publishing options start to look pretty good.

Most books need to sell a minimum of 1,200 copies to be considered a marginal success in the publishing world and over 7,000 copies to sustain interest. If you hand-sell and reach 600 copies, or 800, are you a failure? Is your book a flop? No, because you can keep selling your book as long as you wish.

Publishers make sales estimates based on tight marketing budgets, cash flow needs, and calendars of new books coming along. Only you can sustain interest in your own work. The traditional publishing method hasn't changed in over 100 years, and leaves something to be desired in the 21st century. Bookstores keep books on the shelf only a few

months, drop them if they don't sell and return unsold merchandise, regardless of condition.

With a traditional publishing contract, a publisher can allow a book to go out of print, or refuse to do a second print run. By self-publishing, your book is never out of print. People can order as little as one copy and your POD firm handles the order, requesting the digital press produce the book, usually overnight. You can order any quantity, at a large discount, for resale.

If you have a book that's gone out of print with a publisher, check your contract and see if you have the right to reprint it yourself or with another publisher. Print-on-demand is perfect for reprints.

Self-Publishing

As the industry changes and gains respectability, self-publishing is promoted by organizations that wouldn't have considered it just two or three years ago. *Writer's Digest* magazine has an annual self-published book award, and an issue devoted to self-publishing and *The Writer* magazine runs articles on self-publishing success.

Getting Your Book Published is Within Your Reach

I frequently hear people say: "I will probably self-publish if I can't get a publisher." Yet, self-publishing is not settling for second best. It's the right choice if your book won't likely capture the attention of a large publisher and you don't want to spend years waiting to see your book in print.

In fact, many self-published authors do attract a traditional publisher, once their book is a success, so you're not closing any doors by publishing your books independently. Authors such as Margaret Atwood, Stephen King, Jack Canfield and Deepak Chopra chose self-publishing, even after a long successful career with traditional publishing companies.

We often hear why self-published books and POD are a bad idea: No agent to represent you, no bookstore distribution. We rarely hear why it's a good idea. You control the production process, cover, pricing and marketing, you can still get agent representation, and your book need never go out of print.

There are two primary types of self-publishing. It can mean "the works," where you design and typeset the book, pay out-of-pocket to have thousands of copies printed and delivered to your care. You personally fulfill and ship all orders, receive payment, and do all bookkeeping. Or self-publishing can mean print-on-demand, which is much easier.

If you choose true self-publishing, you can create your own entity, such as Sunny Street Publishing. You're in charge of the entire production process, finding an editor, a cover designer, obtaining ISBNs (defined below), and getting the book printed to your specifications. You choose the binding, paper weight, cover layout, make page formatting decisions, and order a large enough print-run to be cost-effective. Since you may be ordering 3,000 books, you have to make sure all those details are perfect.

Print-on-demand is the second type of self-publishing, which we'll explore shortly.

Manuscript Editing

Beyond the mechanics of word processing, which we'll cover below, allow plenty of time for high-quality editing. Not using a traditional publishing firm means you forgo the expertise of a salaried editor laboring over your grammar, punctuation, and every turn of phrase. Expert editing is a requirement for your book if you self-publish. Unless you've made a career as an editor, you'll have to pay for professional editing or perhaps trade for in-kind services.

To find a good editor, check *The Writer* and *Writer's Digest,* or ask other authors for a recommendation. They work is

not cheap and it shouldn't be. Read that last sentence again. That's exactly the kind of mistake you might not catch. As I said, their work is not cheap and it shouldn't be. It's essential. Some self-publishing firms will edit your book for an added fee, but make inquiries to be sure it is high-quality editing, not just spelling and punctuation.

As a full self-published entity, while your book is being printed, you arrange for warehouse storage, and find a distributor. A distributor acts as middleman, handling inventory, warehousing and getting the book to retail outlets. Their reps visit book buyers to show catalogs and take orders. And that costs money. Most proponents of full self-publishing tout the low cost per book, yet offset print costs, distributor fees and the value of your time all add up.

And while you *can* format the book in your word processing program, you don't want the finished copy to look like plain vanilla text. If you don't have an eye for it, you'll pay someone to format your manuscript for chapter headings, callout boxes, graphics, sub-heads, and a table of contents.

Compared to the ease of POD, when you manage the publishing process yourself, you own every copy and need a bank merchant account for credit card sales, shipping, recordkeeping, inventory storage and tracking. You'll spend a lot on mailing costs and give away a lot of books, maybe 50 or 100 to get reviews and publicity. Once you have the inventory, you're pretty much committed to getting steady sales to recover your costs.

The downside of this type of self-publishing includes:

1. You may need a large cash outlay.
2. Too often, self-published books look unprofessional.
3. It's hard to get reviewed, because there is an impression that self-published books are not well edited, and publications like *The Wall Street Journal* or *Woman's Day* won't review a book that isn't available through physical retail channels.

4. It can take a long time to make back your investment.

Copyright Protection

You automatically own the copyright to anything you produce. Copyright lasts for seventy years after death, after which works become public domain. A good intellectual property attorney will help you plan for transfer of your book's rights so they don't fall into public domain. If you publish through a traditional publisher, the copyright is registered for you. If you self-publish in the U.S., you need to mail two copies of your book to the Library of Congress for official recording of the copyright. Many authors also mail a copy of the book to themselves, leaving it in a sealed envelope with postmark, as further proof.

Don't confuse copyright with an ISBN registration (below). You own the copyright to your work the minute you write it. Registering the copyright with the Library of Congress (www.loc.gov) proves you are the author.

What is an ISBN?

The International Standard Book Number is a unique number assigned to every book published. It identifies the publisher and is used for inventory control.

If you're self-publishing just one or two books, you can avoid the expense of buying ten numbers, since a POD firm will use one of their ISBNs, and include the cost as part of your publishing fee. They probably buy a thousand at a time. But if you plan to be in the publishing business full time, or plan a series of books, owning the ISBN yourself may suit you. If you publish multiple books or publish your book in multiple formats, (softcover, hardcover, CD, DVD, ebook, audio book) each needs its own ISBN.

Until recently, ISBNs were ten-digit numbers, and are now expanded to 13 digits. The first few digits of an ISBN identify the country and publisher. If your publishing plans are

ambitious, buy either the minimum ten, or the next size block, which is 100, so the publisher prefix remains the same for all the works you produce.

The POD Segment

For self-publishing without the heavy lifting, look to an affordable, high-quality POD firm to print your manuscript, help with cover design, make it available for sale on all the major online book-selling sites, and handle orders. You'll find some POD firms overpriced and short on quality, so it's essential that you do your homework before choosing a publisher.

POD firms are <u>not</u> what used to be called vanity press. Those firms charged extraordinary fees, paid no royalties, and took all your rights.

POD is digital printing, to produce books on demand in any quantity. POD books are "perfect-bound," a book binding technique using glue rather than stitches. Almost all trade paperbacks are perfect-bound. POD also refers to a distribution method of printing and shipping books to meet demand for orders.

POD books are immediately listed in online databases. These include the obvious places where you'll want to sell your book: Amazon and BN.com, but also Powell's, Borders, Books-A-Million, and the Books In Print database at Bowkerlink.com. Not everyone shops at Amazon. People have their favorite resources, so spread your exposure far and wide.

You can purchase discounted copies of your book from your POD firm, to sell on your own. Large inventory is not an expense, and there aren't costs associated with shipping an entire print run to you or to a warehouse. Yet the cost per-book is higher than offset printing.

Digital doesn't mean only single copies though. You can order copies to use at a corporate workshop, or for a charity

event, with special covers. POD isn't literally one copy at a time although it can fulfill an order for a single book. It's also for short print runs, such as when a bookseller or library order several copies, when you need 100 copies for a conference, or if you get a special order for a large quantity. My POD firm, Virtualbookworm, offered to move to offset printing when Kinko's and Sam's Club were considering my first book. That would allow me to offer the book to them at a lower cost.

With full self-publishing you may pay for a large print run, typically 1,000 to 5,000 books for a lower cost-per-book and you make back your cost as you sell them. And that takes a long time. You are either handling sales yourself or paying for distribution. That's when POD starts to look pretty good. Your costs for POD are often lower than full self-publishing where you only earn money for the books you sell, not all that you print. While you pay a higher price-per-copy for POD books, your total cost of publishing is much lower than full self-publishing, so you need to recoup less cost before turning a profit.

With POD, you know your total cost going in and have no further expense with the publisher. Quantities are printed as orders are placed and you share the profits of those sales.

Your share of profits comes to you as royalties on all copies sold, except those you buy at a reduced price for resale. You receive sales reports and when royalty reaches a minimum level, usually $25 or $50, you receive a check. Some POD firms pay monthly, others are slow, with royalties calculated at the end of the quarter and then paid within sixty days. That's a five-month delay.

Royalties are based on a book's price. A good POD firm lets you determine the selling price, based on your market, not their desired profit. It's important, especially with POD and self-publishing, that you have control over the price. After analyzing the market, you know the price of comparable

books, and you know your target audience, so set the price to fit the market.

Here's the best part: From your first month as a POD author, you earn a royalty on sales. Host an event where you do back-of-the-room sales and you might sell 40 books in one day. If you purchased those copies from the POD publisher, you won't earn royalties because you got them at a discounted price, but you keep 100 percent of the sales price.

With full self-publishing, if you print 3,000 copies of your book at $4.00 to get a good price on the print run, you're out $12,000 until you sell enough books to recoup your cost for printing, distribution and storage.

If you use POD, you pay a higher price per book, but pass that price on to the reader, exactly as mainstream publishers do when they sell a book at 70 percent over cost. They're making a profit and you should too.

We often hear of successful authors who publish through traditional publishers and never see a penny after their initial advance.

Is POD right for you? You will succeed with it if you write a good book and market it well. Focus on online exposure, local book-signing events, public speaking and offering your book to independent bookstores.

We've established that the POD process requires no long print run, no formidable lead-time, and no need to handle sales and shipping. Your POD vendor handles all the details of printing and sales. You pay a one-time upfront fee for production and receive royalties on sales.

POD publishing and self-publishing are excellent ways to establish a market for your book, and even build the market to such an extent that you can sell the reprint rights to a much larger publisher for a good advance, if the book does

well. Indeed, many larger publishers now scour the web for self-published and POD books that might fit their publishing program.

Choose POD …

- If you want to control book production, timing and process: the content, title, cover, layout, and format.
- If you want your book to reach a targeted audience.
- If time matters. It can routinely take 12 to 18 months for a publisher to produce your manuscript. You can publish through POD in about six weeks.
- If you want 30 to 50 percent royalties instead of slow-drip publisher royalties averaging 2 to 12 percent.

The long route to an agent and publisher wasn't right for my needs when I published *Computer Ease*. My goal with the book, full of timely, current computer information, was to meet the immediate demand of my clients. Without the magical 'platform' required to attract the attention of a national publisher, I decided to write the book, create a cover, and choose a POD firm, Virtualbookworm. After I submitted my manuscript electronically, and approved the final galleys, it appeared on major online retailer websites within three weeks. That's successful POD in a nutshell.

Publishing Statistics
- Only one to two percent of unsolicited submissions are purchased for publication.

- 95 percent of all books sell 7,500 copies or fewer.

Source: EbookStand.com

With any publishing method, the marketing still falls to you. But don't worry; we have a plan for you to succeed with that too.

POD Book Production

When it comes to preparing your manuscript, good computer skills will come in handy. Most POD firms request online submission of all materials. In fact, some charge extra for snail mail. Once you sign a contract and submit your book components to the POD firm, the files remain on a computer ready to reprint with no setup costs and no large print run.

Basic submission files for manuscript assembly:

- Cover art, generally in separate file
- Bio and back cover text at end of main document
- Final table of contents and index included in the main document
- Chapter titles, font size, position on page and page margins follow publisher's guidelines
- If your book has images, send a separate list of images, by file name, and indicate page numbers for placement. Don't send poor quality images and hope they turn out okay. Learn how to adjust images and graphics (.jpg or .gif) for the required resolution (measured by dots-per-inch, .dpi).

You'll get galleys to proofread and then the actual printing process is pretty quick – just four to six weeks in some cases. POD usually offers very little editorial input so don't rush through the galleys. In fact, take the time to read them aloud. This is your last chance to fix any errors. Final quality is up to you. The publisher will send your first few books free, and at that time, it's already available for sale at Amazon, Barnes & Noble (bn.com) and scads of other online venues.

Your POD firm obtains the ISBN, creates a corresponding barcode, does the assembly and layout, and sends the file to Lightning Source to be printed. Lightning Source is the same printer used by most large publishers. Self-published books account for 38 percent of their production.

Publishers Weekly industry statistics show Lightning Source prints about one million books per month. Not by coincidence, Lightning Source partners with Ingram Book Group, parent company of the wholesaler that supplies books to bookstores nationwide. Lightning Source also has a UK branch so your books will appear on amazon.uk and worldwide book selling sites as fast as in the US.

Ingram Book Group is the primary wholesaler used by bookstores. An order placed with Lightning Source before 6 PM will be in Ingram's warehouse by 4:30 AM. Ingram lists thousands of POD titles as "in inventory." A few years ago they used to show "delivery in three weeks." Technology has erased the disadvantage of slow turn-around printing for POD.

If your book needs extra work, you might wish to purchase additional editing or design services from your POD firm. Many of the services offered are tasks you can do yourself, so don't be eager to sign up for extra services at a fee. You might want to pay extra for cover artwork, or editorial services, but not for creating an index or table of contents, which you can easily do. Keep in mind, lack of editing and poor covers are generally cited as two primary reasons why self-published books don't sell well.

Production time varies, based on backlog and processing speed. If you want your book ready to coincide with a newsworthy event, plan ahead and ask your POD firm about their production schedule.

POD Printing

Is POD print quality as good as other publishing methods? Yes, largely because Lightning Source prints almost all books. They use high quality, acid-free, book-grade opaque paper stock. All books with trim sizes of 6"x9" or smaller are printed on a 55 lb. natural shade opaque. Larger books are printed on a 50 lb. white stock. Paperback covers are printed on a bright white 80 lb. cover stock. Almost all

mainstream publishers and those who do traditional self-publishing get their books printed by this source.

Choosing a POD Firm

Comparisons are difficult because the firms offer various packages, and some services require additional charges. Check contract details carefully. Make certain you understand the critical components of rates, rights, and royalties. Then check for any added costs to produce your cover, number of corrections included in price, whether they offer manuscript editing or just spell-check, and whether editing is mandatory. Don't assume an item that goes unmentioned is favorable. As the saying goes: "If it isn't in your contract, it isn't in your contract."

Beyond the basics, you'll want to check each vendor's website. Watch specifically for:

- What other books and categories they publish.
- How many books are in the "what's new" area.
- How easy their online order process is.
- Any special programs and promotions.

Publishing costs with POD depends on your appetite – softcover, hardcover, artwork, graphics, and of course number of pages. That determines ideal selling price although with most POD firms, you have the final say on price.

If you haven't seen a book published by the vendor you're considering, ask to see a sample, either hardcover or softcover. Some hardcover books by POD firms are case-bound, instead of a traditional dust jacket.

If your book needs a dust jacket, or special features like a spiral-bound workbook or CD/DVD included, you might need to self-publish independently and use a book packager to manage the production of those components. Some POD firms limit their offerings to the most common

book styles and sizes, to offer uniform pricing. You can always ask for pricing on special services and packaging.

When considering a POD firm, search Amazon.com to see what other books each publisher is selling. It's not a great sales measure, but check it out by clicking "Advanced Search" and inserting the publisher's name.

Like comparison-shopping for anything else, watch out for feature creep. Stick to the elements you know are important to you, and consider your overall budget before paying for extras.

What You'll Pay for POD

Basic packages have one price, such as $350 or $600 for all production work, printing costs, distribution, ISBN, and listing your book on Amazon, BN.com, Powell's, Books-A-Million, Borders, etc. Your book will also be listed in the Ingram database for bookstore orders, and Baker & Taylor for library orders.

The price you pay also covers making your book available through the POD firm's website and fulfilling orders placed through the publisher in addition to online booksellers. You earn higher royalties on those direct sales than sales discounted for online booksellers. Most online retailers, like bookstores, want a substantial discount. Some POD contracts allow you to set the discount.

The best POD firm will offer you a 50 percent discount on books you purchase for resale, and also 50 percent on any orders taken and fulfilled through their website. Be aware that a few POD firms don't offer this important online sales channel.

Contract Issues

Check POD contracts before choosing a publisher. You may be surprised at how much they vary.

Comparing publishers is not easy, because, like cell phone contracts, they don't make it easy. So narrow the field to those firms who are responsive to your inquiries, who publish books that look professional and then dig in to sort out the parameters that are important to you.

Since we know traditional publishers offer royalties from 2.5 percent to about 12 percent, and the average royalty is 10.7 percent of net, POD books offer an attractive return. POD royalties range from 20 percent to 50 percent, and ebooks generate a higher return due to low production costs.

Most retail bookstore chains don't order self-published books because there are no co-op advertising fees, no marketing support to create customer demand, and return of unsold copies is not permitted, unless you pay an upfront fee for return service. But it's also true that they don't carry most books, period. They focus on bestsellers that are highly marketed by authors and publishers to spur sales. If your customers ask for your book, a store will readily order it, sometimes acquiring a few copies to keep on hand.

Every good POD firm makes your book available to Ingram for bookstore orders and to Baker & Taylor for public library orders. Libraries generally order a book if patrons request it, so don't assume you can't get your book into libraries. As a start, donate a copy of your book to a library in your town.

We're all so lucky to be writers. We have the curiosity and desire to explore our own thoughts, and express them publicly. By writing, we constantly test ourselves to learn what we know. Whether writing is a hobby, passion, or career, it turns life into a remarkable journey.

About Virtualbookworm (VBW)

Is VBW Interested in My Book?

Virtualbookworm.com will consider manuscripts of all genres, as long as they are of good quality and original works of the author (we will consider editions of older works with expired copyrights as long as you add original material, such as commentaries, maps, etc.). However, we do not accept manuscripts that promote hate, violence or deal with New Age/Occult or eroticism (please see our Frequently Asked Questions for more information). Romance novels will be considered, as long as they are tasteful. We will consider how-to and business books/booklets, as long as they contain valuable, true information and are not scams. We reserve the right to refuse any manuscript for any reason.

So if you're still reading, then your manuscript obviously falls into our acceptable categories. Great. Now make sure you have read all of the downloadable documents from our information section at http://www.virtualbookworm.com/info. We're not trying to confuse you with information; we just want to make sure you feel totally comfortable with the process.

Hopefully you've already looked over our various publishing packages and have determined which one is right for you. If not, please look them over. Don't worry, we'll wait right here until you are done.

Got everything together? Good.

Then you should first submit your full manuscript for approval. You can either upload the file online at virtualbookworm.com/submission, or you can snail mail it to Virtualbookworm.com Publishing, PO Box 9949, College Station, TX 77842. Please note that the submission/review process is free unless you decide to submit via snail mail. This takes additional processing and, therefore, you will need to submit payment of $25 to cover this.

Layout Etc. (For the Do-It-Yourselfer)

In an effort to give our clients more input into the design of the interior of their book, Virtualbookworm offers some optional templates. We have always designed the interior based on the subject matter, size of the book and projected demographics of the intended audience. So please keep your reader in mind as you go through this booklet and try to determine the "look" that's best for your book.

There are, however, some other things to keep in mind. As you know, the retail price of your book is based on the number of pages of the finished product (not the submitted manuscript). If you have a rather large book, it's a good idea to consider a 10- or 11-point font. If your book is shorter, then a 12-point font may be your best choice. A 12-point or larger font should also be used if your audience may be older and require larger type (no offense intended).

You can use this booklet to help mark your requests on the publishing information forms, or you can even attempt to layout your manuscript to these guidelines. It's really up to you.

Choosing the Trim Size of Your Book

Virtualbookworm.com Publishing offers a number of trim sizes, which can be found at virtualbookworm.com/bw for hardcovers and softcovers with a black-and-white interior, and virtualbookworm.com/colortrim for full-

color books. Fiction books are best at either 5X8", 5.5X8.5" or 6X9". The 8.25X11" size is best for textbooks and workbooks. If a book is very lengthy, it's a good idea to choose the 6X9" size. This gives the layout artist more "real estate" to work with and helps reduce the page length. When a 6X9" book is combined with 10-point type, the length of a manuscript is reduced considerably. If the book is shorter, a 5X8" trim size may be preferred since it will lengthen the book (especially when used in conjunction with an 11- or 12-point font).

Color Books

Children's books, photo books, graphic novels, etc. just don't have the same pizzazz in black-and-white as they do in color. Since large books can be quite expensive in full color, Virtualbookworm offers a less-expensive, "standard color," as well as a "premium color" option. The main differences (in addition to cost) are the type of printer used and the paper weight. To read more about the differences, please go to virtualbookworm.com/color-options. We offer color books in both softcover and hardcover in a number of trim sizes, which can be found at virtualbookworm.com/colortrim

eBook publishing

Virtualbookworm can format your book for various devices, using primarily the .epub, .mobi and .pdf formats. Your book will be available through Amazon for the Kindle, Barnes & Noble for the Nook, iBooks for the iPhone and iPad, and Kobo. We will also have a .pdf version distributed through Ingram and make a version available for libraries that allow digital lending.

Hardcover Books

If you are considering a hardcover package, please note that the retail price of the book will be considerably more (we're not trying to deter you from the hardcover option by any means, we just don't want you to suffer from "sticker shock"). Our hardcover books come with a blue or gray

cloth cover with foil stamping on the spine. The foil stamping consists of the book's title and the author's name. The only drawback to this option is that there isn't a cover design.

Casebound hardcover books are basically four-color covers laminated into the casebinding. These books are less expensive than hardcover books with a dustjacket and tend to look very impressive. Every author who has chosen the casebound option has been extremely pleased. Another "plus" of the casebound book is the fact that it is extremely durable (most college textbooks are casebound).

But, of course, there are some authors who just prefer hardcover books with dustjackets. That's fine, but remember that they have the highest retail price. Also, many customers take the dustjacket off immediately so it doesn't get ripped. And what's under the dustjacket? The cloth cover, foilstamped hardback that would have been less expensive! Also, be sure to have a longer author bio and book description ready to fill the front and back flaps.

Choosing Your Font

The font you choose really does make a difference to the overall "feel" of your book. It is best to use only serif fonts for the body text. Sans serif fonts should be regulated to headings, headers and footers. For example, the text you are reading now is done in an 11 pt. Times font (serif font), while the heading font is either an 11 pt. or 18 pt. Helvetica font (sans serif font).

So what is the difference between a serif and sans serif font? The text you are reading now is in Goudy, a serif font. Basically, serifs have "hooks" or "stands" while a sans serif (sans=without) does not. Good examples of sans serif are Arial and Helvetica. You may have written your manuscript in a sans serif, since they tend to look more contemporary or "slick," but they tend to get rather tough on the eyes after lengthy periods — especially while reading a novel.

We suggest using either Times, Times New Roman, Goudy, Baskerville Old Face, New Century Schoolbook, Book Antiqua, Georgia, Garamond or Bookman Old Style.

GOUDY: The red fox jumped over the blue dog.
TIMES: The red fox jumped over the blue dog.
TIMES NEW ROMAN: The red fox jumped over the blue dog.
BASKERVILLE OLD FACE: The red fox jumped over the blue dog.
NEW CENTURY SCHOOLBOOK: The red fox jumped over the blue dog.
BOOKMAN OLD STYLE: The red fox jumped over the blue dog.

All of the fonts above are in 11-point. As you can see, some of the fonts are also more compressed than others. So the length of your book is again a factor. If you have a longer book, 10-point Times New Roman combined with a 6X9" trim size will help reduce the page length. If you have a shorter book, then 11- or 12-point New Century Schoolbook or Bookman Old Style used with a 5.5X8.5" trim size will help "beef up" the finished product.

Basic Formatting

We use a combination of Microsoft Word and Adobe InDesign. InDesign makes the adjustments of type, leading, etc. much more precise. However, most authors are satisfied with the layout job of a word processing program. If you want to layout your manuscript on your own, or just want a good idea of how long the finished product will be, set your page size to your trim size. Using Microsoft Word, for instance, you would go to FILE-PAGE SETUP and set the paper size to either 5.5X8.5" or 6X9" (or 8.25X11" if this is your preferred softcover size) in a portrait setting (sorry, we can't bind landscaped books).

Almost all publishers use different settings, but we have found the following to work best. Set your left, right, top and bottom margins to 0.8 and your headings and footers to 0.5. You can also set the headers and footers at "Different Odd and Even" and "Different First Page" if preferred.

Additional Tips

This section is important even if you choose to have us layout your manuscript. So please read through these tips very carefully.

1. MAKE SURE the manuscript has been completely proofed and is ready to go! Nothing slows down production more than having to make numerous changes and proofs. If you need editing assistance, we do have such services available for modest fees. DON'T just rely on Spell-Check or Grammar Check. They can make many, many mistakes. Be sure you (or someone else) read(s) over the entire manuscript.

2. Manuscripts should be formatted in Microsoft Word if at all possible. If you are using other software, please save your manuscript in Rich Text Format (can be achieved by going to FILE-SAVE AS in most packages). We will accept manuscripts in most other word processing programs, but there will be a $5 fee for conversion services. Most of the instructions below are for Microsoft Word.

3. First set your page size to the desired trim size (5X8" for example). In most versions of Word, you can do so by going to FILE- PAGE SETUP.

4. Margins should be set at TOP: .8; BOTTOM: .8; LEFT: .8; RIGHT: .8.

5. Set your manuscript to single spacing. This can be found in most versions of Word under FORMAT-PARAGRAPH.

6. Make sure there is only ONE space after punctuation marks. Forget the old rules of typing – books look best with only one space after periods, etc. If you have two spaces, you can go to EDIT-FIND and under FIND you can type two spaces and under REPLACE WITH type one space. The only time this may be a problem is if you hand-spaced your tabs (which is a no-no anyway... see next entry).

7. Make sure you EITHER use the First Line Indent on the tool bar OR your Tab key ... NOT both. And never, ever, hand-space your tabs. Most books look best when the tab is set at .3, not the standard .5. You can change all of your tabs at once (as long as you used the Tab key) by going to FORMAT-TABS.

8. BE SURE to use italics where you want them, so you don't have to ask us to add them later. If a character is thinking to himself/herself, it's a good idea to use italics rather than quotes.

9. Clearly mark your Chapters. If you want a section or thought break within a chapter, please center asterisks (* * *) with a blank line before and after.

10. If you would like a dedication, please include it after your title page.

11. If you would like a Table of Contents, try to create one using the tool in Word (INSERT-REFERENCE-INDEXAND TABLES). This will allow the Table of Contents to automatically update when the document is changed.

12. If you'd like to include an INDEX at the back of the book, please tag the text as explained in Word. If you don't wish to use this procedure, or have already created it by hand, then we will have you renumber it based on the final manuscript. This will avoid any additional charges.

13. Be sure to submit your manuscript in ONE FILE, including the cover sheet, introduction, dedication, main body, etc.

That about does it! If you have additional questions, please first consult our Frequently Asked Questions section at: virtualbookworm.com/faqs

Now go get your manuscript ready and let's have some fun getting your book into production!

Virtualbookworm FAQs

Do you accept authors outside of the US?

Definitely! We have authors from around the world. However, please note that shipping charges for your purchases will be more. Other than that, there's no problem.

What makes VBW different than other POD providers?

Well, first off, we won't print garbage. You must follow the submission and genre guidelines ... and each manuscript must be reviewed and approved before we will accept your order. If we do accept the order, we will give you as much personalized support as necessary until the project is complete. This means your book won't be selling on the same site as a book that has tons of errors just because the other author had enough cash! Plus, Virtualbookworm.com is one of the most established POD publishers in the industry, having been in business since 2000.

Are you a vanity press? A subsidy press?

Neither! Although we do charge a small setup fee, this mainly covers art and layout time and the printing fees. Vanity presses charge up to $50,000 and make you purchase a large number of books. With us, you don't even have to purchase any initial books! The only way we really make money is if you make money!

Pure Self-Publishing from VBW

Do you want to publish your entire book yourself? Well, you can and we will be happy to help you through the process.

Since some authors think true self-publishing is when you do all of the setup, etc. yourself, we've decided to just put all of the services under one roof (er, website) for you. Instead of having to search for a cover designer, layout artist, editor, printer, etc., you can simply do it all at Virtualbookworm. Just let us know which services you need and how many copies you would like in your original order and we will send you an estimate.

Please note that you will be sent the master files of everything, so you can always go elsewhere to get the books printed if you prefer.

And if you ever decide to give print-on-demand a try in the future, we can set you up with our POD packages at a discounted rate.

For more information, including our services and pricing, go to virtualbookworm.com/self-publishing

POD and Self-Publishing Glossary

A
Acknowledgment(s)
This is the place where you can tip your hat to everyone who has helped with your book, influenced your life, etc. While acknowledgements and the dedication are different, many authors choose one over the other or sometimes list many of the same people in both. For example, you may want to acknowledge your spouse for putting up with your late nights, cussing and mental breakdowns while penning your book, but then dedicate the book to him/her as well (to stay out of the dog house).

Advance Copy
Advance reading copies (ARCs) are typically bound copies of a book before the final version is sent to press. The formatting, cover, etc. usually aren't the same as the final version since ARCs are usually created for reviewers, libraries, bookstores, etc. Some publishers now use galleys for this purpose.

Afterword
As the name implies, this constitutes the final remarks and thoughts of the author at the end of the book and usually ties up any loose ends. Part of the back matter.

Appendix
This usually contains supplemental material and is normally found at the end of the book. Some authors, however, include an appendix at the end of each chapter.

B
Back Matter
Also commonly known as end matter (and good for the gray matter), this can include the afterword, index, glossary, appendixes, etc. at the end of the book.

Bleed
Something we do after an author makes numerous changes. Oh, and when we're working on a book, you'll hear us refer to a "bleed" or "bleed area." This refers to printing that goes beyond the trim area. On covers, bleeds ensure that background colors, graphics, etc. fill the entire "live" area.

Bibliography
Part of the back matter, this lists books, articles and other reference material the author used while writing the book.

Binding
Refers to the way the book is held together. Authors and publishers often refer to soft cover (softcover), paperback, hard cover (hardcover), cloth bound, casebound, comb bound and saddle stitched.

Blog
Blog is short for weblog and is an online journal with reflections, commentary, etc. and often allows readers to comment on the posts. This is a great resource for authors to promote their writing, book signings, etc. and gives you a chance to show readers a different side of you (if you so choose).

Book Block
The entire interior of the book, such as the front matter, chapters and end matter.

Brick-and-Mortar Bookstore
A "physical" bookstore, as opposed to sellers who only have an online presence.

C
CMYK
The four ink colors that combine together in varying proportions to produce a full color, printed image. Stands for cyan, magenta, yellow and key (black).

Content Editing
Editing for organization, structure and style.

Copyediting
Editing for grammar, spelling, punctuation, clarity, etc.

Copyright
The ownership of intellectual property, giving the right to retain or sell copies.

Cutline
The caption or indentifying text of a photo or illustration.

D
Dedication
Part of the front matter, this is your chance to score some points by honoring the folks who inspired your book.

Defamation
A definite "no-no," this is a written or verbal attack on a person's reputation. "Libel" is the written defamation of character.

Design
The layout and overall presentation of the cover and/or interior text of the book.

Discount
Reduced book price percentage offered to wholesalers, bookstores and other resellers.

Distributor
Entity that purchases from a publisher and resells to retailers.

Digital proof
An electronic proof of the book and cover. Virtualbookworm sends pdf versions of everything to the author and requires them to sign off on the final version before it is printed.

Domain Name
A registered web site address, such as www.your-registered-domain-name.org.

DPI (Dots per Inch)
Stands for dots per inch and basically describes the resolution of an image. The higher the dpi, the better an image will reproduce. It is best to have all interior and exterior images at a minimum of 300dpi.

Drop Shipping
Virtualbookworm drop ships (or fill and ships) the orders for our customers, meaning authors don't have to worry about order processing or warehousing books.

E

eBook, ebook, e-book

Basically a book in electronic format. The more popular formats are .pdf, .mobi (used by Kindle) and epub (used by Nook and others).

Em

Can be extremely confusing, but basically it's the approximate width of the letter "m" and is used to measure spaces and dashes. It's also twice the width of and en-measured space or dash.

Endnotes and Footnotes

<u>Footnotes</u> refer to text or notes at the bottom of a page. Endnotes are collected at the end of a chapter or work.

F

Formatting

How the book is physically laid out using typefaces, styles, sizes, margin settings, etc.

Foreword

Often misspelled as "forward," this is part of the book's front matter. An introduction of sorts, this is best written by an expert or someone other than the author.

Fulfillment

The shipping and filling of book orders.

G

Genre

The category or kind of books, such as adventure, mystery or romance.

GIF

In case you're curious, it stands for Graphics Interchange Format. This bitmap format is one of the formats used to display images on the internet. This compressed format is not suitable for printed material, such as a book, but is suitable for use on a website or blog.

Glossary

Defintions of terms as pertaining to the book.

Grayscale (or greyscale, depending on your location in the world)

Images with a range of grays between white and black.

H
Hardcover Book
Book with vinyl or cloth covering a pasteboard/cardboard material. While these books are more durable, their production costs (and therefore retail price) are much higher than a softcover book.

I
Imprint
Put simply, the "brand" or publisher name a book was issued under.

Index
Part of the back matter, this is an alphabetical list of words or subjects in the book. The index gives a page number of location of the subject or word in the publication.

ISBN
The International Standard Book Number. Identifies a book (or version) and is used to catalog and order.

J
JPEG file
Stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group and is a file format primarily used to display images on the Internet. When not compressed and at high resolution, such files can be used in books.

Justify
Setting text so each line is flush right and aligned.

K
Kerning
Improving type appearance by adjusting the spacing between pairs of letters.

L
Leading
Rhymes with "Redding" and refers to the amount of space between lines of type.

List price
Full retail price of a book without discounts.

M

Manuscript
Originally referred to as the original handwritten version of a book, this is now commonly known as the version of the book prepared and submitted by the author.

Mass-Market Paperback
Often released long after a hardcover edition of a book, this is the smaller (often 4X7") and less expensive version of the book found in supermarket checkout lines (next to the candy and tabloids).

N

Net receipts
Amount publisher receives after all discounts and printing production costs have been deducted.

Niche
Not the brand of a shoe (lame joke, I know), this refers to a specialized target market or groups based on a specific interest or hobby.

O

OCR (Optical Character Recognition) Scanning
The recognition of printed or written text by a computer using specialized software.

Offset Printing
The printing technique where the inked image is transferred from a plate to paper via a roller, one layer at a time.

Online Marketing
Promoting your book and "name" through the Internet.

Orphan
The first line of a new paragraph that appears alone at the bottom of a page.

P

Pagination
The numbering or order of pages in a book.

Paper stock
The paper used for the printing of a book.

Paperback

A book bound with a flexible cover. Also called "softcover."

PDF (Portable Document Format)

Created by Adobe Systems, this file format is now commonly used for printing since it can be reproduced accurately on different operating systems and printers.

Pen name

Also known as a pseudonym, this is the assumed name a writer uses.

Perfect binding

The process in which the edges of the book pages are ground to create a rough surface and adhesive applied. A cover is then wrapped around and a squared spine results.

Point size

The height of a letter, such as 12-point type or 14-point type.

Preface

Part of the front matter, these are introductory remarks giving a brief explanation of the book and the goal of its writing.

Print-on-Demand (POD)

Also known as publish on demand, this printing process allows books to be printed when orders are placed. Publishers who use primarily this process are often referred to as PODs or POD publishing companies.

Public domain

Material not protected by copyright.

Publication Date

Date when a book is officially released to the public.

Q

Quality or Trade paperback

These books have a trim size larger than mass market paperbacks.

R

Recto

A right-hand page (typically odd-numbered).

Recto-verso

Two-sided printing.

Return on Investment (ROI)
Profit made after the initial investment has been recouped.

Revised edition
A previously published book with updated and/or supplementary material.

RGB
The color model used by computers, scanners and digital cameras for display.

Royalty
Amount an author receives for the sale of a book. Virtualbookworm authors receive 50% of net receipts.

Running Header
Text at the top of a book page. Usually has the book title, chapter number, author, etc.

S
Saddle stitching
Binding of a booklet by stapling the center.

Serif/sans-serif Font
Serifs, such as Times New Roman, have curlicues or strokes at the end of the characters and are the best fonts to use for the body text. Sans-serif fonts, such as Arial and Helvetica, don't have such "ornamentation" and are not recommended for body text since they tend to be more difficult to read for long periods of time.

T
Table of Contents
Part of the front matter, this lists the title and beginning page number of each chapter and can contain descriptive material.

TIFF or TIF
Tagged Image File Format. A compressed-file format for graphic images.

Trade Paperback
A trade paperback is bound with a paper or heavy stock cover, usually with a larger trim size than that of a mass-market paperback. Compare Mass-Market Paperback.

Trim size
The finished size of a book after pages have been trimmed and folded.

V
Verso
A left-hand, typically even-numbered page.

W
Widow
This occurs when the last line of a paragraph appears alone at the top of a page.

Z
Zip file
This has nothing to do with a ZIP disk and is a file that has been compressed using specialized software.