



How to Self-Publish a Book

The Complete Guide to
Publish Like a Pro



IngramSparkSM

How to Self-Publish a Book: The Complete Guide to Publish Like a Pro

The book industry is thriving, and self-publishing is on the rise! If you want to learn more about how to self-publish a book, you've come to the right place.

In this guide, we're going to address the various aspects of self-publishing a book.

1. What are the **benefits** of self-publishing?
2. What are the **steps** to self-publishing?
 - a. Writing
 - b. Book Editing
 - c. Book Design
 - d. Book Metadata
 - e. Publishing
 - f. Distribution
 - g. Marketing
 - h. Join the Indie Publishing Community
3. How much does it **cost** to self-publish?
4. How should I **price my book**?
5. How much **money** do authors make?

Ready to deep dive into self-publishing a book? Continue your journey below.



Benefits of Self-Publishing

There are so many [pros of self-publishing](#) a book.

No Gatekeepers

There are no gatekeepers—no literary agents or publishers standing in your way. This allows for diversity to flourish and for underrepresented voices to finally have a space to share their work.

Higher Margins

Not only are the barriers to entry lower, but the margins are higher. When you work with a traditional publisher, they have to take their cut. By self-publishing your own book, you can earn more for each book that you sell.

More Control

When you self-publish, you own your work and have complete control over the publishing process. For a lot of authors who have poured their hearts and souls into writing a book, it's very important for them to have power to make decisions throughout the publishing process.

Equal Quality

As technology has improved, self-published authors now have access to the same high-quality printing and book distribution networks as traditionally published authors. Your self-published book will look exactly like the other books on the shelves.

**So what are you waiting for?
Let's learn more about how to publish a book yourself.**

8 Steps to Self-Publishing a Book



| Step 1: Writing

This might sound obvious, but we can't overlook the writing process!

Waking up every day and putting in the work to write a book is no easy feat. [Here are seven essential writing tips for authors:](#)

Less is More

Why say in 20 words what you can say just as well in 12? Using unnecessary words makes your work come across as less readable, boring, and unprofessional. The Chicago Manual of Style suggests avoiding the phrases "whether or not", "at the present time", "due to the fact that", "in the process of", and several others. Ask yourself whether phrases you've used are redundant or verbose. If the answer is yes, then change them.

Skip the Clichés

You may know people who speak in clichés, and perhaps you're one of them. But when it comes to reading, tired phrases make your writing sound amateur. "Time will tell", "at this point in time", "without a care in the world", "a shiver down my/his/her spine", and "loved her more than life itself" are good examples of clichés you should avoid if you want to sound like a professional.

Separate Dialogue and Narrative

Conversations will read much better if they are stacked, meaning separated out from narrative paragraphs. Don't let clever dialogue get lost among asides and unnecessary descriptive language.

Show, Don't Tell

You've heard this several times before, but it's one of the most important writing techniques you should employ and bears repeating. Using dialogue and action to convey emotion is more powerful and interesting than narrating it. In other words, don't write that Jack furrowed his brow; convey his concern with the language he uses when speaking to another character.

Use Correct Punctuation

Professional editors, agents, publishers, and readers will get distracted by your unnecessary insertion of en- or em-dashes, overuse of commas, and misplacement of semi-colons. Unless you're writing something meant to be highly experimental, don't invent your own punctuation rules. The ones we already have work just fine.



Use Proper Capitalization of Pronouns

It's simply lazy for a writer not to check the correct spelling and capitalization of pronouns. And remember not to capitalize a civic title, such as president or governor, unless it is used as part of that person's name. Here are two examples of the correct way to use a civic title:

- "It was time for the governor to speak."
- "It was time for Governor Watkins to speak."

Avoid Zigzags in Your Storyline

Although it might be tempting to flip back and forth from one time period to another, this is a technique best left to the masters and even among them only occasionally. Stick to a chronological storyline or you're likely to confuse and irritate your readers. Flashbacks and zigzags can have your readers spinning unless you are able to write them seamlessly.

You are bound to hear a lot of unsolicited advice from friends and would-be writers as you write and publish your book. Just make sure that the guidelines you follow along the way come from a professional or experienced source. The suggestions listed above are only some of the essential writing tips every successful writer knows and uses.

Writing a book is a huge accomplishment. If you've made it this far, we hope you take a moment to stop and congratulate yourself on a job well done. Now, let's get ready to share it with the world!

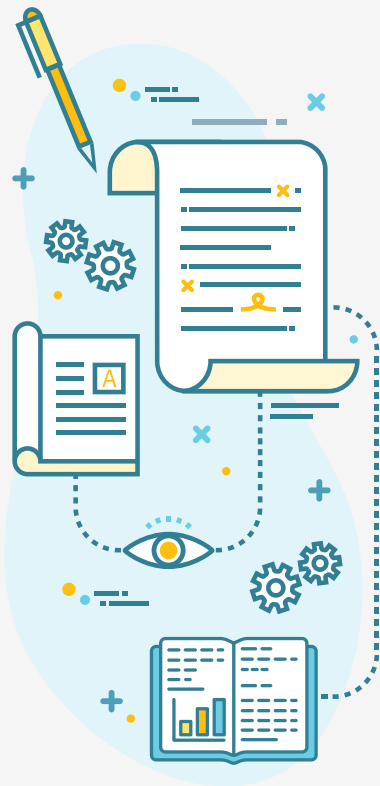
I Step 2: Book Editing

There are a few **different types of editing**—and each serves a unique purpose for a manuscript. You'll have to assess your work to determine what level of editing to start with.

What's the big deal about editing? You add some periods, delete a few commas, run spellcheck and voila, you've just edited a book—well done! Nope. It takes years of dedication to the craft before editors develop the necessary skills to help authors say precisely what they want to say in the most effective, affecting way possible.

For the new author, the whole editing process can feel overwhelming. One of the most confusing parts is simply understanding the different types of edits. You'll have to assess your work to determine what level of editing to start with, but here are a few to consider.

Things to Consider



Manuscript Critique

this is a high-level examination of your manuscript. It looks at things like narrative voice, plot, and character development. With this type of critique, editors give feedback on items that will help improve your overall story.

Comprehensive Edit / Line Edit

a comprehensive edit addresses structural issues (similar to a manuscript critique) but it also involves a line edit, which looks closely at writing style and language. With a line edit, an editor focuses on the use of language to communicate your story to a reader.

Copyedit

a copyedit is often confused with a line edit, but they're very different steps in the editing process. A copyedit reviews technical flaws—issues with spelling, grammar, and punctuation—and looks for internal inconsistencies throughout the text.

Proofread

this is the final step in the editing process. A proofreader examines the final copy of the manuscript (usually after typesetting) for any awkward page breaks, and he or she might perform some light copyediting.

| Step 3: Book Design

The next step is designing your book! There are two main steps in the book design process: interior design and book cover design.

What's the big deal about editing? You add some periods, delete a few commas, run spellcheck and voila, you've just edited a book—well done! Nope. It takes years of dedication to the craft before editors develop the necessary skills to help authors say precisely what they want to say in the most effective, affecting way possible.

Interior Book Design

Interior design might not sound like the most exciting part of the design process, but it is necessary to create a professionally published book. Typesetting, commonly referred to as book formatting, has “rules” for widows, orphans, hyphens, and various other elements within a book to make it more readable, ensuring a pleasant reading experience for your audience.

Book Cover Design

Your book cover design is the first impression readers have of your book. While it's important to be unique, it's equally important to pay attention to what comparable covers in your genre look like.

Visit your local bookstore and look at the books in your genre. What are the trim sizes? What do the front covers look like? The spines? Take note of the imagery, the fonts, the colors, and more. Observe and ask yourself, what elements of these book covers do I like? How can my book cover stand out—in a good way?

The back cover of the book will be made up of common elements such as book reviews, the book description, author bio, and barcode. The spine often contains the name, author, and publisher logo. Study these elements to make sure that your book will fit in on the shelf, and booksellers will feel comfortable stocking it.

A professional book cover designer can help steer the creative direction—but you know your book best, and it's important for you to bring your own ideas to help create a cover that brings your book to life.



| Step 4: Book Metadata

What exactly is **book metadata**, and why is it important?

Book metadata may sound complicated, but it's relatively straightforward. It consists of all the information that describes your book, including your title, subtitle, price, trim size, author name, book description, and more.

Book Title

Writers often ask for tips on [how to come up with a book title](#).

A good rule of thumb is to follow the PINC Acronym, coined by Michael Hyatt.

- Make a **Promise**: let readers know what to expect from reading your book.
- Create **Intrigue**: engage a reader; entice them to pick up your book.
- Identify a **Need**: if there's a common problem that your book has the answer to, identify this common ground and promise (back to P!) a solution.
- State the **Content**: keep it simple and straightforward. What is your book about?

You Want Your Title to Be

Original. Book titles are not protected by copyright, so it is possible to select a book title that's already in use—but not recommended.

Memorable. Make sure your title is unique enough to be remembered, but not so long that it's easily forgotten.

Searchable. Once you have a few ideas, do a quick Google Search. See what shows up in the results and ask yourself a few important questions. What shows up on the search results page? Does my book stand a chance? Is it too broad to rank, or too specific for anyone to be searching for?

As you're brainstorming ideas for your book title, keep in mind that you have an opportunity to enhance your short title with a longer subtitle. A good book subtitle varies from one genre to another, but here are a few [subtitle examples](#) to get you started.

- **Novel:** *Venetian Blood: Murder in a Sensuous City*
- **Memoir:** *The Art of Waiting: On Fertility, Medicine, and Motherhood*
- **Self-Help:** *No Excuses: Nine Ways Women Can Change How We Think About Power*

Book Description

The cover of your book draws a person in...the title intrigues... and the book description closes the deal.

So, how do you write a good [book description](#)?

- Keep it simple and straightforward
- Aim for 150-200 characters
- Use paragraph breaks, bold, and italic formats to provide emphasis when necessary
- Insert bullet points when applicable
- Avoid time-sensitive language like "coming soon"



Another tip for writing your description—look up reader reviews for books that are similar to yours. What language are they using? Let their descriptions of similar books help guide you as you write yours.

Your description is more than just text on the back cover of a book. It's detailed, descriptive copy that will be used in your marketing and help your book's discoverability. You want your description to appeal to a person picking it up off the shelf at a bookstore, as well as Google's search algorithm. The keywords in your description impact your book's discoverability online—so be sure to keep keywords in mind as you write and incorporate them into your description when it's natural and appropriate.

ISBNs

You're probably wondering, *[what is an ISBN?](#)*

ISBN stands for International Standard Book Number. It's an internationally recognized identification number, similar to any product number you would find on other products you buy, like a box of cereal or a pair of shoes.

Do you need an ISBN?

You need an ISBN if you want your book to be available for sale in bookstores, libraries, or with an online retailer or wholesaler. You'll want to purchase this before your book designer begins work on the cover of your book, so that it can be included in the back barcode.

If you don't want your book available for sale, IngramSpark can assign a SKU to your book for printing and manufacturing purposes only. If the book is not available for sale with an ISBN, then you will be the only person capable of ordering a copy of your book. You might select this option if you're printing a book for personal use or as a gift for a friend.

Many self-publishing platforms offer indie authors the opportunity to use a free ISBN. What many authors don't realize is that if you don't purchase the ISBN yourself, your publisher imprint will not be associated with your book. This means that if you use a free ISBN through a service, it will hold the service's imprint, not your own. Not purchasing an ISBN yourself may also limit where you can print and distribute your own title.

At IngramSpark, we believe it's in your best interest to be recognized as the owner of your work and a publisher in your own right, which is why we encourage publishers to purchase their own ISBNs.



How many ISBNs do you need?

You'll need an ISBN for each format of your book. Let's say you want to publish hardcover, paperback, and ebook versions of your upcoming book—that means you'll need to purchase three unique ISBNs.

What's the difference between an ISBN and a barcode?

An ISBN acts like a product number, while the barcode is how the actual number is translated and readable by a scanner. If you want your book to be made available in brick-and-mortar bookstores, you'll want to include a barcode with your ISBN.

We'll discuss how to purchase ISBNs in the "how much does it cost to publish a book" section!

BISAC Codes

BISAC codes essentially identify what your book is about – the primary genre(s), topic(s), and theme(s). While a reader might not be trained to search for books based on a BISAC code, retailers and booksellers will use your BISAC code to determine in which category to place your book on their website, or where to shelve it in their bookstore.

For a full list of available BISAC codes, see BISG's [Complete BISAC Subject Headings List](#).

How to Choose BISAC Codes:

First Code = Most Specific: the first BISAC code that you enter should be the most accurate and the most specific code to your book. This will be the main BISAC code used to categorize and shelve your book.

Choose Three: we recommend that you choose three BISAC codes for your book. It's required that you select at least one, but three BISAC codes increase chances of discoverability.

Be Honest: Choose BISAC codes that reflect the full breadth of your book. This is not a time when it's best to choose a category that you think has the most readers. You want to avoid confusion for readers who think they've selected a book about one thing and find it's much different than what they expected.

Your BISAC code tells others (human beings and online stores) how to categorize your book. Take the time to do this right, because if you don't, no one else will do it for you. Booksellers and librarians skip over titles that make their jobs more difficult, and they typically don't dedicate additional time trying to determine where they would put your book on their shelves. If it's not clear to them at first glance, they'll move on.

Step 5: Publishing

If you haven't yet, now is the time to choose how you're going to share your story with the world.

There are various self-publishing companies to choose from—but IngramSpark provides many features that you won't find anywhere else.

IngramSpark offers indie authors and publishers the ability to create professional print books (paperback and hardcover) and ebooks. With IngramSpark, you can self-publish a book and make it available to 40,000+ retailers and libraries—in stores and online—through our global distribution network.

In addition, IngramSpark authors receive:

- ✓ 24/7 customer support
- ✓ Online sales reporting
- ✓ Free publishing tools and resources
- ✓ Affordable advertising opportunities
- ✓ Discounts with outside experts on publisher services

Some self-publishers simply wish to print a select number of copies, and don't wish to enable their title for distribution—and you can do that! However, if you're looking to reach the masses, IngramSpark's distribution network has you covered.

Step 6: Distribution

Now that you've finished your book, let's discuss making it available for readers to purchase.

Book distribution used to be a major stumbling block for self-published authors. They would spend weeks, months, even years writing their book. They would go through the editing, design, and printing process—and then would have no way to get it into bookstores and libraries.

Now, indie publishers can receive the same book distribution channels available to major traditional publishers in New York. IngramSpark makes titles available to 40,000+ retailers, libraries, schools, and e-commerce companies including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Indigo, Foyles, Waterstones, and more across the globe.



How does book distribution work?

Many retailers aren't willing to purchase a book straight from an author. They would rather make all of their purchases from one supplier versus making individual purchases from thousands of different suppliers. Distributors, such as Ingram, make it easier for retailers to do business, which is why retailers almost exclusively order from distributors. With Ingram's print-on-demand service, a retailer can order a physical title through Ingram Book Company and the order prints, ships, and arrives to the customer, store, or library within a few days.

As a new author with a first book where the demand is unknown, there's a tremendous amount of value in using print on demand (POD) as a means to get broad book distribution. It's not always the best idea to invest in large amounts of inventory at the beginning of your publishing venture, but if you've already done it and want Ingram distribution, don't worry. You can use inventory you've already printed for your own direct sales coming from your website, giveaways, events, and speaking engagements. Then, you can get broader book distribution by setting up the book through a POD/distribution program like IngramSpark.

Don't Limit Your Distribution

The best part about Ingram's distribution is that you aren't putting all of your eggs into one distribution basket. Because Ingram distributes to all of the major players around the globe, you have access to an incredible amount of opportunities to sell your book.

Entering into exclusive deals with Amazon and beyond limits your distribution and your book's potential reach. While Amazon is a very large part of overall book sales, it is not the whole marketplace and we recommend not wagering your book's future by ignoring every other retail option. Doing so could be turning your back on potential sales.

For more than 50 years, Ingram has developed relationships and connections within the book industry to allow your book to be available to the masses. We have print facilities in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, and we have print channels in China, Germany, India, Italy, Poland, Russia, South Korea, Spain, and Brazil. By self-publishing with IngramSpark, you're giving your book the best chance of reaching a global audience.

| Step 7: Marketing

Learning how to market a book is essential for indie authors.

When you take the time to write, edit, and design a book, it's easy to get wrapped up in the to-do list and never stop to think about marketing until a few weeks before your publication date. This is a big mistake for self-published authors!

While this is one of the last steps in our self-publishing process, we highly suggest that you begin thinking about your marketing strategy during the writing process. Building an author platform doesn't happen overnight.

Consider the following tactics to market your book:



Author Website

It's important to have your own website when you publish a book. This lends credibility to your name as an author and is a great place for readers to go to learn more about you, your book, your events, and more. If you hope to create an engaged audience over time, a website is the first step.



Social Media

If you aren't already on social media, then it's time to look at creating some social accounts. You don't have to be active on all social channels. Pick two or three that you enjoy—but make sure you ask yourself, where are my readers? If you wrote a young adult novel, you won't have success promoting it on LinkedIn. Consider the demographics of each channel before devoting your time and energy to it.



Advanced Reader Copies (ARCs)

ARCs are copies of your book that are printed in advance to generate buzz for your book. You can send ARCs to a bookseller to inquire about stocking copies for the release date or to book reviewers to gain reviews for your book before your publication date. ARCs are also used to get endorsements, which can be added to the final cover of your book before printing.



Tip Sheets

A tip sheet can also be referred to as a "sales sheet" or a "one sheet." This one-page paper contains high level, relevant information about your book—basically, your high-level metadata such as the title, subtitle, publisher, publication date, etc. You can send this to bookstores alongside an ARC, or to the press when requesting media.



Author Events

Whether it's your book launch party or an author reading, events are a great way to connect with readers in your community. Bookstores and libraries are great options, but you should also think outside the box. What other venues might want to feature your book? If you wrote a cookbook, perhaps there's a local winery or brewery where you can pair some of your tasty food with some local beverages.

Marketing your book can be fun when you take the time and effort to understand your audience and provide them with a valuable reason to join your tribe and ultimately, purchase your book!

Step 8: Join the Indie Publishing Community

The indie publishing community is a tight-knit, supportive group of creators, entrepreneurs, and go-getters.

Find like-minded people who want to see you succeed. Share your work with them and ask for feedback along the way.

Your community might have a writing collective that offers courses, workshops, and meetups. Your local independent bookstore likely has resources to help you succeed in publishing, and the booksellers can help you understand what they look for when they choose whether or not to stock a book. Your local librarians can give you insight into what they look for in a self-published book, and what the local community is most interested in reading. Take the time to immerse yourself in your local literary community before you publish your book. This will make your job much easier when it's time to turn around and ask for their support.



There's an online #WritingCommunity that's incredibly active. Whether you're on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, every day there are writers and authors sharing tips and encouragement to help each other succeed.

To continue your book publishing education, IngramSpark offers a free online course: [How to Self-Publish a Book](#).

How Much Does It Cost to Self-Publish a Book?



Now that we've gone through the steps to publishing a book, let's talk about the cost.

The **cost to self-publish a book** varies depending on your budget, the type of book you'd like to print, and ultimately, your publishing goals.

Here are the most common areas where you may spend money to successfully publish a book:

1. Book Editing
2. Interior Design
3. Book Cover Design
4. Publishing
5. Printing and Shipping
6. Book Marketing

1. Book Editing

The cost to edit a book varies widely based on a few factors.

- **Quality of Manuscript:** some manuscripts require more work than others to produce a professional, ready-to-publish piece.
- **Genre:** cost varies by genre. Historical fiction and nonfiction, for example, require more time dedicated to fact checking.
- **Experience:** the cost to hire an editor with more experience will be higher than a newer, less-experienced editor.

Some editors charge per word, some charge per page, and some charge per hour. The Editorial Freelancer Association provides rough guidelines to give you an idea of common editorial rates.

- **Developmental Editing** (estimated pace 1-5 ms pgs/hr): \$45-55/hr
- **Substantive or Line Edit** (estimated pace 1-6 ms pgs/hr): \$40-60/hr
- **Basic Copyediting** (estimated pace 5-10 ms pgs/hr): \$30-40/hr
- **Proofreading** (estimated pace 5-10 ms pgs/hr): \$30-40/hr

When you're ready to hire an editor, do some research and request a few different quotes. Meet with them, if possible, or have a conversation to get to know whether or not they'll be the best editor for your book's content. Have they edited in that genre before? Do you feel like they understand your writing style? Ask them for references or examples of their work to make the most informed decision.

“*Get a few bids and consider paying a couple different editors for two hours of their work and compare. It's important to judge the work rather than the fee.*”—**Brooke Warner**

2. Interior Design

The typesetting process mainly focuses on readability, such as proper spacing and fonts. The cost to typeset a book will vary depending on length, genre, and whether or not you'd like to package it with a final proofread.

According to data from Reedsy, a marketplace for book publishing professionals:

- **17%** of people pay less than **\$500** for book formatting
- **47%** of people pay **\$500-\$1,000** for book formatting
- **19%** of people pay **\$1,000-\$1,500** for book formatting
- **16%** of people pay **\$1,500+** for book formatting

The price of typesetting will increase based on the number of images, graphs, and tables in your book.



3. Book Cover Design

Hiring a professional cover designer is an investment, and similar to the interior design, can range anywhere from \$300 up to \$1,500 for book.

The price of cover design is directly related to a designer's experience. If you're going to publish both print and ebook versions (which we recommend), make sure to look for a cover designer who can design both the print and ebook cover. Ask to see examples of a designer's work before signing a contract and expect to spend at least \$500 for a professional cover design.

4. Publishing

The cost to upload a print book is \$49, and the cost to upload an ebook is \$25. For the best value, you can upload both a print and ebook for \$49 when uploaded at the same time.

The only other publishing expense you'll incur is purchasing an ISBN (if you choose not to use a free ISBN). This is necessary if you'd like to enable your book for distribution, and each format of each book you publish must have its own unique ISBN.

ISBNs are sold by country: In the U.S., ISBNs can be purchased from Bowker directly through your [IngramSpark account](#) for \$85 each. You can also buy a block of ten ISBNs from Bowker for \$295. In the UK, you can buy them from Nielsen Book, while Canadian publishers get ISBNs for free. A full list of all ISBN distributors by country can be found on the [International ISBN Agency's website](#).

If you want your book to be available in brick-and-mortar bookstores, you'll need a barcode in addition to your ISBN. Some ISBN services sell barcodes, as well as ISBNs, but you can use IngramSpark's book cover template generator to get a free barcode.



5. Printing and Shipping

The cost to print and ship a book with IngramSpark depends on the following:

- Trim Size
- Interior Color and Paper
- Binding Type (paperback or hardback)
- Laminate Type (gloss, matte, or textured)
- Page Count
- Quantity
- Ship-To Address

To put it quite simply, a 48-page black-and-white paperback book will cost less to print than a 400-page premium color hardcover book. IngramSpark has a [Print and Ship Calculator](#) to help you understand how much it will cost.

Pro Tip: when you determine the cost to print a book, this will help you decide how to price your book so that you make a profit on each book sale.

6. Book Marketing

When you determine your overall publishing budget, make sure that you factor in a portion for marketing.

According to a [NetGalley study](#), “as authors’ budgets increased, so did their corresponding spend on marketing and advertising.”

Investing in marketing initiatives which which you can track dollars directly to sales is a good tactic for those with a smaller budget and less freedom to experiment. Whether you're putting in the work yourself or hiring a book marketing expert, it requires careful planning to successfully execute a marketing campaign.



Pricing Your Book

If you plan to enable your book for distribution, pricing your book is an important step. When you determine the cost to print a book, this will help you decide [how to price your book](#) so that you make a profit on each book sale.

| Look at Competitive Book Prices

Evaluate books that are similar to yours in genre, format, trim size, and page count—how much do they cost? Visit your local bookstore and scan the shelves to find out, then make your book price similar. If most of the books in your genre are 6x9 paperbacks printed in black-and-white, then you might not need to spend extra money printing with premium color or in an unusual trim size.

| Consider Your Publishing Goals

Do you want to make as much money as possible, or do you want to reach as many readers as possible? Evaluating the price of similar book titles will help you estimate how much the average reader is willing to spend on a book in your genre.

If you want to maximize your profit, keep in mind that as you increase your price, you'll lose more price-sensitive readers. If you know you have a fan base that's willing to pay a premium price for your product, perhaps you can raise the price above the average market value. It comes down to understanding your audience and the value your book brings to them.

If you want to reach more readers (and aren't as concerned with making a profit), you can drop your price down below the average book price in your genre.

Author Salary

After discussing the costs associated with self-publishing a book, now you're probably wondering, ***how much do authors make?***

In January 2019, The Authors Guild shared the results from their 2018 Authors' Income Survey, concluding that:

“ *Median incomes of all published authors who were surveyed—including part-time, full-time, traditionally published, self-published, and hybrid-published authors—for all writing-related activities was \$6,080.*

The median income for traditionally published authors who participated in the survey—based solely on their book-related activities—was \$12,400. These days, unless you're a household name, it's becoming more and more difficult to be picked up by a traditional publisher. Within traditional publishing, many authors are unable to receive a significant advance for a book—if they're lucky enough to receive one at all.

The good news from the survey? Self-published author incomes are on the rise! As the publishing landscape continues to change, more and more traditionally published authors are choosing to self-publish instead—taking back control of their book, their royalties, and ultimately, their livelihoods.





Final Tips for Self-Publishing

As you're embarking on your self-publishing journey, here are a few [things to know before publishing a book](#):

1. Get Your Book Edited

Professional editing is absolutely necessary before publishing your book. Even the Stephen Kings and John Grishams of the world rely on editors to polish their work before publication. Recognize the value that an editor brings to your work and don't skip this step!

2. Consider Your Book Cover Design Carefully

Your book cover design is an important tool for marketing your book to readers. With great print quality and a good cover design, no one will be able to tell your self-published book from one that's published by a major traditional publisher. It's good to educate yourself on what makes a good book cover design, but if you aren't a designer by trade, it's also best to hire a professional.

3. Look Out for Overly Expensive Services

Unfortunately, like any business, there are people out there who care more about making money than about helping you publish a quality book. A high price tag doesn't always mean quality services. Do your research—ask for sample work from an editor, results from a marketing expert's campaigns, or references from previous clients.

| 4. Purchase an ISBN

An ISBN provides important data about your book to booksellers and labels you as the publisher. You need an ISBN if you want to sell your book and purchasing your own ensures that you have full control over it.

| 5. Go Wide with Your Book Distribution

It's important to partner with a global distributor, like IngramSpark, that can help you reach bookstores, retailers, and libraries all over the world. Don't limit yourself with an exclusive deal. You want to be available in all channels where your potential readers are.

| 6. Market Your Book

If you aren't a major public figure, it's unrealistic to think you can publish your book and the world will just stumble upon it. Making sure your book metadata is as good as it can be is one way for people to discover your book organically online, but you still have to promote your book in order for it to succeed. You can do this via guerrilla marketing efforts, book reviews, book publicity, social media advertising, and so much more. Be sure to plan your book promotion and get a handle on your book marketing strategy before you publish your book for the best results.

| 7. Be Realistic

Almost every author has a goal of becoming a *New York Times* bestseller. As self-publishing continues to rise, so does the number of books published every year. Competition is fierce in the publishing industry. How many books would you like to sell in the first six months? How many reviews would you like to have? Take the time to create realistic [author goals](#) based on comparable books in your genre.

| 8. Get Involved

Join a writing collective, become a patron at your local indie bookstore, and utilize the public library's resources. Develop relationships with people who can help support you and your book along your publishing journey.

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