The Short Guide to Self-Publishing

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Table of Contents

Introduction

I wrote the first draft of this document in 2006 after self-publishing *Bread Science*. Ten years later, I found it in my files, after self-publishing *Somewhere and Nowhere*. In those ten years, self-publishing had become much more mainstream. Discussions like "why you need a website" had become fairly obsolete. There are now dozens of detailed books about how to self-publish. This guide is intended as a short overview of the whole process, to let you know what you're in for if you decide to do it.

Thoughts on self-publishing

When I began my first book, I planned to find a publisher. Self-publishing seemed like the path for people whose books weren't good enough to get a publisher. Grad school advisors—scientists—reinforced this idea, because in the science world, getting published was the measure of your worth. (It also wasn't that hard, given the hundreds of scientific journals.) I'd also heard negative reviews of "vanity presses," places that charge authors a lot of money to publish their books. These "publishers" are not committed to the success of the book or to turning out a quality product; this is not the same as self-publishing, where you are the publisher.

After trying to find a publisher for a year (including reading "how to get published" books, targeting appropriate publishers, and reworking my proposal with professional advice), I could not wait any longer. I decided to self-publish.

I had to convince myself that self-publishing was a valid route. I knew that I would do a proper job organizing, editing, and designing the book, but I accepted that some people would need to see the finished product to believe it was any good. Someone suggested that the best way to get a "real" publisher is to self-publish the book and prove that it sells. I used this as a backup justification for self-publishing.

Another thought that helped me is realizing that working with a publisher means selling the rights to your book. Someone in the business said to me, "Even if you get a publisher, there's a fifty-fifty chance you'll have a terrible experience." One best-selling author watched her second book be destroyed by the publisher, who cut out the personal parts that had made it special to her. A self-publisher I met sold his book after years, only to have the new publisher print it on cheap paper, in black-and-white, much to the detriment of the pictures involved. Publishers can even let your book go out of print while still retaining the rights to it.

Self-publishing *Bread Science* was a lot of work and frustration (much of which I hope you will bypass with this guide), but I wouldn't change my route for anything. I love how my book turned out, and self-publishing *Somewhere and Nowhere* was much easier. Marketing and distribution is continual work, but I interact with readers and get first-hand feedback. Ten years after self-publishing *Bread Science,* I had an offer from the publisher I had most wanted to work with, a publisher that had rejected me in 2005. As I communicated with them, I realized how intensely the motive to make money drove

them; they wanted me to update the book so I could resell it as a new edition to the original buyers! I decided to stick with selling it myself.

More resources

This guide is intended as an overview. I hope to help others understand the self-publishing process and—if they decide to do it—get started. I want to make self-publishing approachable and alleviate the frustrations of doing it the first time.

This is not a complete guide! It is just an outline, like a state roadmap, and is based on my two experiences. If you decide to self-publish, please look into the myriad full-length books on the subject. Topics such as marketing a book can fill an entire volume. You may need these details (the "city maps"). This guide is just a start.

Research the Market

Why to research the market

I thoroughly researched bread books when publishing **Bread Science** because I was trying to get a publisher. I had to know what other bread books existed and what made my book different.

This research remained useful when I decided to self-publish. When people (like bookstore owners) talked about the market, I knew the books they mentioned. I could describe mine in terms of the others, and explain what made it different. I got ideas of styles I liked. I even altered my idea to appeal to a new niche: **Bread Science** was mostly a how-to book until I decided to include more science, giving it material that no other book had. You might realize your idea is already taken, but you can alter it into something new and different.

Thinking about your goals

Researching the market is a good time to think about your goals for your book. These might include the following:

• simply seeing your work as the finished product of a book

• recording information (your knowledge or story) for future generations

• sharing information with people who want it

• spreading the word about something important to you

• encouraging people to do something they don't know about or they think is too difficult

• becoming famous or mildly famous

• making money

These were all goals when I published **Bread Science**. But only a few were goals for **Somewhere and Nowhere:** creating a book, recording my story, and encouraging people to ride their bikes. I realized that I already felt successful, because I had learned so much about myself when writing the book; writing was a continuation of the journey. I had no expectations that the book would have great sales, and I only printed a few hundred.

Think about your goals and act accordingly. If you mainly want to create a book or to record your story, then you can skip researching the market. Try to be realistic about how the book might sell, though. If you want a best seller, learning about your project relative to other books will help you communicate to people why they should buy it.

How to research the market

What is your book about? Where would you find it in a library or bookstore? If you don't know, spend some time thinking about your topic to narrow down the answers.

Go to libraries and bookstores and flip through all the books on your topic. Don't read the whole book, but get a sense of it: Who is it aimed at? How expensive is it? How long is it? Why is it in the bookstore: is it a classic, or a new or popular book on the subject? Take notes because the books will blend together after a while.

View additional books online, where everything is available; you may be able to partially flip through online books. Also look at websites on your topic, which may list recommended books.

Is your book different from these others? I found myself grouping the other bread books into categories: recipe books, recipe books with introductory how-to sections, baking science books, high-tech bread science books, and colorful but impractical coffee table books. The newer recipe books all included a how-to section, which showed me that this how-to information was becoming popular. Mine was a how-to and science book, not a recipe book, and had more detail than the general baking science books but was more understandable (and cheaper) than the high-tech books, which often targeted commercial bakeries. My book offered something new (in-depth how-to information and detailed bread science written for artisan bakers with no science background) in an economical format. Focused on bread and without pages of recipes, it was small and affordable.

Remember, weaknesses can be turned into strengths. One publisher rejected **Bread Science** because "the bread market is flooded right now." This showed me that bread books were popular. And since I knew my book was different than all the others, this led to the marketing idea that my book was a complement to all the bread recipe books.

If possible, find an expert at a bookstore or website that specializes in your topic, or any connection you have in the publishing industry. (With **Bread Science,** I got invaluable advice from the owner of a cookbook store who had worked in publishing.) Ask about books similar to yours, and see what the expert thinks of your idea.

Write the Text

Writing a book from start to finish includes writing and revising the text, getting feedback from readers, planning images, adding supplementary materials like notes and captions, and making sure you have permission to use everything you've included.

Write the text

How to write a book is a topic that itself could fill an entire book—and there are many out there. Here are my favorite personal tips:

Create time to write. (If you work full time, go to bed early and write at 5 AM. Enjoy one weekend day and use the other for writing—not that you can't enjoy writing, too. Reduce your expenses and work part time, to allow more time to write.) Then schedule writing time and tell people "No" when they want you to babysit or go out. Tell them you are working—which you are, because you are writing. Others may not see your writing as work, especially if you are not getting paid for it, but it is.

Find a good place to write—a desk or a table with your paper/typewriter/computer and any other tools you need. Keep it set up if possible. Keep distractions to a minimum. Jot down distracting ideas to deal with later.

Don't expect to write perfectly from start to finish. Just start writing and tell yourself, I can go back and fix it. When you hit a problem, leave a note and keep going. (I use "XX" to mark a place I must return to; later, I can find it using Word's Find function.)

Read books about self-editing, and apply the lessons to your draft. Note that there are different opinions: for example, some books still favor using descriptive adjectives, while others exhort the writer to remove all adjectives and "use a better noun."

Read books in the genre you are writing. Note what works and what makes you stop reading. When I was writing ***Somewhere and Nowhere,*** I bought every memoir I found at the thrift store and at library book sales. What worked? Several books began with a climactic scene, only to leave me hanging and go to the beginning of the story. I decided to begin my memoir with my first view of the Rocky Mountains; people who asked about our cross-country trip almost always mentioned the Rocky Mountains. What didn't work? One book had a narrator who droned on about himself with no action. One book had a narrator for whom I felt no interest or sympathy. I took notes and then worked on these problems in my own book.

At some point, print out your work and put it in a notebook. This will make you feel like you are accomplishing something, and you can show friends and call it "my manuscript." I find it helpful to do a few rounds of editing on paper, as if reading on paper gives me "new eyes" for my work.

Write the WHOLE text

Do not lay out the book until the text is done!

Do not start positioning images in the Word (or other word processor) file, unless you are adding them temporarily for the benefit of early readers. You will need properly scanned images and a text-only text file when you lay out the book.

It can be tempting to put your text into a page layout program (I used InDesign) and to apply styles and add images before the text is finalized. But this creates a second version of your book: you now have the Word file and the InDesign file. Any changes will need to be made in two files. (You'll want to keep the Word file up to date because you'll need it to create an ebook. Also, it's just a good idea to have a final version of your text in Word format; maybe you will lay out the book again someday, as a new edition, and need it.)

If you want to learn to use InDesign before it's time for the final layout (which is a good idea), use some dummy text or an excerpt of your book. An exception would be if you simply cannot wait to have an approximate page count of the book: you'd have to place all the text into InDesign and choose the font. You can do this without investing a lot of time altering the text's appearance.

So, what does writing the whole text entail?

• You write and revise several drafts, self-editing until you are happy with the manuscript.

• You read books about how to self-edit.

• If needed, you hire a developmental editor to work with you or to give a detailed assessment of the manuscript. Or, you hire an editor to provide a manuscript critique—an overall assessment of the manuscript. (This is cheaper than a developmental edit.)

• You continue to revise.

• You have some friends read the manuscript and provide feedback.

• You read the manuscript with "new eyes." Ideally this means putting it aside for months (or years) and working on something else. I put aside *Somewhere and Nowhere* for about two years and wrote a fiction story, and read several books on editing fiction. When I returned to *Somewhere and Nowhere,* I saw so many changes I wanted to make. It's not always possible to wait, however, and it's good to use "new eyes" many times. Other ways to do it are to edit on paper (if you've been editing on a computer) and to read the text aloud.

• You take care of all permissions and do any revising that results (more below).

• You hire a copyeditor. Note that this is not a proofreader; a proofreader actually checks the book for errors AFTER the pages have been laid out.

Finally, in direct contradiction to the point of this section, I actually did place my text into Indesign and apply some of the styles, knowing that I would have to redo the work. I find that printing a final-looking version of the book is an additional way to read it with "new eyes," and I wanted as many chances as possible to do this. Also, I was concerned about the length of my book. Placing the text allowed me to see where a chapter ran onto a new page with a few words; I could cut a few words to cut a page from the book. But, I knew that I was expending time for the purpose of another round of editing, and I planned to re-place the text when it was finalized and redo the formatting. I edited the laid-out version on paper and applied the edits to my Word file. I did NOT try to keep the two versions identical.

Notes and the table of contents

Regarding notes and the table of contents: both Word and InDesign have features for automatically numbering notes and for pulling chapter titles into a table of contents (TOC). You want InDesign to create the TOC because you want the TOC to use the page numbers AFTER the text is laid out.

Being a bit of a luddite, and because I've witnessed Word footnotes hopping around crazily and didn't know how they'd translate into InDesign, I numbered my notes manually. First, I decided to use endnotes instead of footnotes because they seemed easier to deal with during the layout process, and because I didn't want the reader interrupting the story to read a footnote. I didn't number the notes until the text was finalized. It's possible a note will be cut or added, throwing all the numbers off. Instead of a number, I used a caret (^) in the text. When the text was finalized, I searched for the carets and substituted in the numbers, and numbered the notes accordingly.

I also created my TOC manually because it comprised only some of the chapter titles and all of the part titles. (The automatic version would've used all the chapter titles, and I wasn't sure I could make it include chapters AND parts.) Chapter titles might change during editing, so I waited until the end to assemble them. Once the text was in InDesign, with page breaks and styles applied, I found the final page numbers and inserted them into the TOC.

Gather images and obtain permissions

Gather up all the images you want to use. If the image is not your own or in the public domain, you need permission to use it. You also need permission to use an image of copyrighted artwork or of recognizable people, even if you took the photo. Do not start scanning or processing images until you choose a printer. (The printer will have specifications about how to scan images and what size is needed.) Just gather them so you can work on permissions.

You also may need permission to use copyrighted material, like quotes from songs or stories. You may need to pay to obtain permission. Even with books written on the subject of copyright and permission, it is very tricky to maneuver because the laws are intentionally vague. For example, short quotations may be considered fair use, but there

is no set percentage that defines short, and you can still be sued, even if you are in the right. There are also tricky examples, such as a letter you want to quote; the author owns the copyright, even if he sent the letter to you!

In addition, if you are writing nonfiction, you must consider the privacy of people in the book. You can change names, but sometimes that isn't enough to hide a person's identity. You must be particularly careful if you are writing something negative. You might end up rewriting parts of your book to protect people's privacy. This can be hard because it seems like you're lying to the reader. I reconciled myself to it by realizing the reader would not know of the alterations, and by preserving the tone and theme of the altered scenes, merely changing details.

I combed through my text and made a spreadsheet of every possible copyright and privacy issue. Then I worked through them one by one, after reading several materials about copyright and privacy. I left out some song lyrics, knowing that music copyright is particularly contentious and not wanting to deal with it. I rewrote a few passages to avoid copyright issues or to protect the privacy of someone I could no longer contact. I sent letters to a few people to ask permission. You can hire a permissions editor to make such a spreadsheet, to advise you, and even to obtain the permissions.

Find a Printer

There are dozens of companies that can print and bind your books.

First, be clear about what you want.

• Sometimes "printer" is confused with "publisher." When self-publishing, you are the publisher. You can hire out parts of the process. This document describes doing most of the process yourself. But, unless you are producing some sort of hand-bound artist-printed book, you need to pay someone to print and bind.

• You need a printer that produces real, bound books. Sometimes "printer" means a photocopy center that mostly prints pamphlets and flyers, and can bind a book with a spiral at the spine.

• There is traditional offset printing and digital printing. Digital printing is generally cheaper for small print runs.

• Some printers do "print on demand" where they handle the sales of your book, printing one digitally each time one is ordered. In this scenario, the company takes a cut.

In 2006, I used offset printing because digital was new and potentially had quality issues and because I was printing a large quantity of books. I also liked the idea of the craft of printing, with plates and rollers pressing ink onto paper.

I narrowed down a list of printers by reading recommendations at self-publishing websites. You can submit your project to several printers for price quotes (usually using

an online form). You'll need some information about your book to do this, such as the page count, size, and kind of paper to use. You can make up numbers simply to get quotes to compare, using the same made-up information with each printer. Printer reps will respond with various levels of persistence; you might rule out some that are unresponsive or difficult. Don't worry about the expiration date on the quote; you're just getting an idea of price and will get a new quote when you are ready to print.

Pick a few printers and ask for paper samples—they'll send you a booklet of all the papers they offer or even whole books. You might find that the printer with the cheapest price doesn't produce as high quality printing.

You might also consider asking the printer for a technical contact person, to ensure that you'll have access to this person for questions about your project and that you can understand him or her. I'm hoping that as more people self-publish, printers will develop staff who are intended to work with first-timers.

I eventually narrowed my list to one printer when I realized that printing my book was a chance to put my environmental beliefs into practice by choosing a printer who offered recycled paper and soy-based inks. I also wanted the books to be printed in the United States to reduce their carbon footprint and to hopefully ensure fair labor practices. I chose Thomson-Shore, an employee-owned company that's a member of the Green Press Initiative.

Once you choose a printer, you can obtain information needed to design your book:

• What standard paper sizes do they have? These will be cheaper to use.

• What programs can you use to lay out your book?

• What are the specifications for scanning and processing images?

You can start making decisions—you might request more price quotes comparing these items:

• How many books will you print?

• Will you use offset or digital?

• What size will your book be?

• What paper will you use?

• Will you use any color inside the book? This can be very expensive!

• What cover stock will you use?

• How many colors will be on the cover?

If you're unsure, particularly about the book size, measure some books you like.

With **Bread Science,** I chose a thicker paper because there were so many images, and I didn't want them showing through. With **Somewhere and Nowhere,** I chose a thinner

paper because the book's length concerned me. (Each paper has a "pages per inch" spec that determines how fat the book will be.) I also wanted one hundred percent recycled paper. I used a one-color cover for **Somewhere and Nowhere** (black and white don't count) both to reduce cost and because I was designing it myself and wanted to keep it simple.

Take Care of Early Details

There are some details that you should take care of early because they could take time to accomplish. Get a three-ring binder or some other organization system to keep all your new paperwork in so you can find it when needed. Keep track of how long each process is supposed to take (e.g., "You'll receive your number in four to six weeks") and of relevant contact information you receive, which can be difficult to find on websites. I had some long waits that resolved as soon as I called to check into them.

Start your business

Decide your business address. You'll need it to fill out a lot of forms for the other items in this section. If you have a permanent home, you may choose that address. I was renting and knew I'd move eventually, so I got a post office box. (This also enabled me to avoid posting my home address on my website for orders sent by mail.) I tried to postpone getting the box, to avoid paying the fee until necessary, but this caused lots of hassle, because I kept needing my address to put on forms.

Choose a business name. Even if "the company" is just you, you want your book to be published by a business with a name. There is a lot written about how to choose a good name—search it online and you'll find advice like "make it easy to spell" and "avoid puns." There's also practical advice like "make sure no one else is using the name." The U.S. Small Business Association (SBA) has a helpful article here: https://www.sba.gov/starting-business/choose-register-your-business/choose-your-business-name.

You'll want to register your website domain name (which you've already determined is available) as soon as you decide on the business name to ensure that you get it. You'll have to pay a small annual fee. You may want to go ahead and set up a website now, so that all the parts are done at once, with the same company. There are a lot of options for doing a website, and I don't have recommendations about which is easiest or most reliable. I've always used a host company (paying for the site to be hosted), but there weren't free options when I started in 2006. Building a website is discussed in more detail later.

You may want to use a separate business email, particularly if your personal email is goofy or otherwise unprofessional. If you are paying for your website, you'll have the option to create email addresses that use your domain name. I began my business with a free email address because it was easiest. Ultimately I changed to the more professional-looking address that matched my domain name, and I wish I had used it from the start. It

was a pain to switch, and I now feel obligated to maintain the old address because there are thousands of books in the world with the old address printed in them.

Look into local business requirements. The SBA has a lot of resources online. I got advice from a local chapter of SCORE (a nonprofit that offers free advice to small business owners) about what I needed and what I could skip. For example, I needed a state sales tax id number. The down side of it was that I had to start filing state sales tax every three months (via a very confusing online form), even if I didn't sell any books in my state. The up side was that the number enabled me to avoid paying sales tax when I bought the books, because I was going to resell them. Find out what's needed in your state. You may want to open a business account at your bank; if you don't, make sure that customers paying by check write the check to you, not your business name.

Get all your numbers

Get an ISBN. The ISBN is a number that identifies your book—it is universal in the book world. You need it to sell your book at physical and online bookstores. If you only plan to sell at your own website or electronically, you might still get one to avoid complications that could result. There is only one place to buy an ISBN in the United States (Bowker, http://www.isbn.org), and the price drops drastically if you buy several at once. (In 2005, they didn't offer one ISBN, but they have added it at an outrageous price now that self-publishing is popular.) You can buy one ISBN from a reseller, but the ISBN will always be registered in the reseller's name.

There is a lot of interesting reading online about this "government-sanctioned monopoly" that hurts authors; for example,

• Canada gives authors free ISBNs,

• Bowker has continued to increase the price of ISBNs, even though they are a digital product with no actual cost,

• Bowker says it is illegal to resell single ISBNs but cannot enforce it, and

• Amazon uses its own number (the ASIN) and no longer requires an ISBN for ebooks published through Kindle Direct Publishing.

You are supposed to assign a new ISBN to each version of the book; you assign ISBNs using an online portal that adds your books to a registry. (Do this after the book is done because you'll need information like the publishing date. Some self-publishers don't bother with the registry.) Bowker says versions include new editions and new formats (hardcover, softcover, and each type of ebook [EPUB, MOBI, etc.]). You may disagree.

In 2006, Bowker tried to get me to pay for an "online logbook" of my ISBNs. I wrote them all down instead. Now they are available when I log in (at https://www.myidentifiers.com/), but it's probably a good idea to keep a list of them.

Get a barcode. A barcode is necessary if you want to sell your book in bookstores, where everything must be scanned with a price in the computer. I did not put a price on

the barcode, so that I will not have to get a new one (or redo the book's cover) if I increase the price. This also enables bookstores to charge more without looking bad, which has been useful for selling in Canada and other places where the bookstore needs to offset additional costs. The ISBN people sell barcodes, but so do many other companies. The barcode will arrive as an image file which you can easily place on your book cover.

Get a Library of Congress catalog control number (LCCN). The LCCN allows Library of Congress to catalog your book and is used by libraries. I'm not sure how necessary it is, but I thought it was kind of cool. Also, it's free! You just have to send a copy of your book to them after it is published. There are two kinds of number, described on the Library of Congress's website (the PCN and the CIP). I don't understand the difference between them, but apparently the PCN is appropriate for self-published books.

There were other numbers that I read about, but I didn't get any of them and I haven't missed them. They may be necessary if you want a distributor or for some other aspect of the process that I did not do.

Ask for testimonial quotes

Most books have an endorsement on the back cover—a quote from someone "famous" saying the book is good. If you study these testimonials, you'll notice that the quoted people are not always famous. They do, however, always have a bio that shows their relevance: "author of" or "instructor at." This credential is important, even if it doesn't indicate that they're a good judge of literature, because it shows that they're not your mom; it makes the quote more believable.

It would be great to have a famous person give your book a testimonial. If this is not possible, think creatively about whom you can ask, so that your book can have the expected back cover quotes. (As a backup plan, if you can't secure any testimonials, design a very creative cover.) Here are some possible people to ask:

• Another author in the genre (fiction) or field (non-fiction)

• An expert in the field (non-fiction)

• An expert in the subject matter (for example, a middle school teacher for a young adult novel or a psychiatrist for a novel with a mentally ill character)

• Local celebrities who are somehow related to your topic—a chef, a shop owner, a politician, a sports figure

• Someone who shares your mission or has had a similar experience, as long as you can think of credentials for a bio (e.g., "founder of" or "three-time winner of")

If you cannot ask for a testimonial in person, send a letter or email and either the whole book or excerpts. (Excerpts might be less overwhelming.) I'm uncomfortable asking so I include language to allow the person an out, such as "I understand that you're busy and may not have time for this."

With ***Bread Science,*** I sent a letter to Martha Stewart asking for a testimonial. The form reply said that Martha does not publish other people's books, which suggested that no one had actually read my letter. I then secured testimonials from Bill Smith, a local chef who'd recently published his own book, and Peter Reinhart, a bread instructor and author whom I met at a bread festival.

Prepare Your Book

Once your manuscript is written, edited, and finalized, it's time to lay out the book in the format to be printed. You'll need a cover design as well. Then you'll convert these files to send to your printer.

Lay out your book

Laying out or designing your book refers to positioning the text and images on pages, choosing fonts, applying styles (like chapter titles), inserting page numbers and headers, and so much more. It also means designing a cover and creating a cover file. I worked on my high school newspaper and so I approached the layout task with some knowledge of page layout programs. It's hard for me to judge how feasible this step is for a beginner. I also had access to a suitable program; many programs will not produce the high-quality file needed for printing. You may want to seek additional advice or hire someone to help with this step.

Once you choose a printer, you'll know what programs you can use to lay out the book. You'll also have specifications for scanning images. If this is your first time, make a test file that includes text and an image, convert it following the printer's specifications, and send it to the printer for feedback. I wasted a lot of time with ***Bread Science:*** I laid the whole book out, with images, in Word before realizing that Word is not a page layout program and would not be high enough quality for the printer. I also spent days scanning and processing all 200+ images—very slow work on my 2002 laptop—only to discover that I was saving them in the wrong file format and that I had performed an unnecessary processing step. Thankfully my printer caught the error, which resulted in weird interference patterns on all my images, before printing the books; I did have to reprint the covers. (FYI, a scanner produces a halftone image—you don't need to perform an additional conversion!) Each step was complicated by the large size of ***Bread Science***'s files; it would have been much easier to figure out the correct process using a small test file.

I used Adobe InDesign to lay out ***Somewhere and Nowhere***. (I ultimately used PageMaker for ***Bread Science*** and later converted to InDesign.) My printer had me convert the book to PDF (following very specific specs) before sending, but had me send the InDesign file for the cover, including all linked files and font files. I've typed up my notes about how I used InDesign for ***Somewhere and Nowhere*** and posted them on my website, emilybuehler.com. If you have access to InDesign and have mastered the basics, the notes might be helpful.

Cover considerations

You might want to hire a graphic designer to design your cover. If you decide to do it yourself, you can get ideas by looking at other books in your genre. Remember that you must own any images you use; I used my own photo on **Bread Science** and drew the cover of **Somewhere and Nowhere.** There were many iterations of the latter cover, and I got feedback from graphic designer friends.

The printer will provide information regarding how to set up your cover. For example, my printer required an eighth-inch "bleed" around the edges; a bleed is a margin that will be chopped off after printing, and that the cover design extends onto. You'll also need your book's spine width; the cover layout includes the back cover, spine, and front cover, all in one file. The spine width depends on the number of pages and on the pages-per-inch value of the paper. The layout of the cover of **Somewhere and Nowhere** is shown.
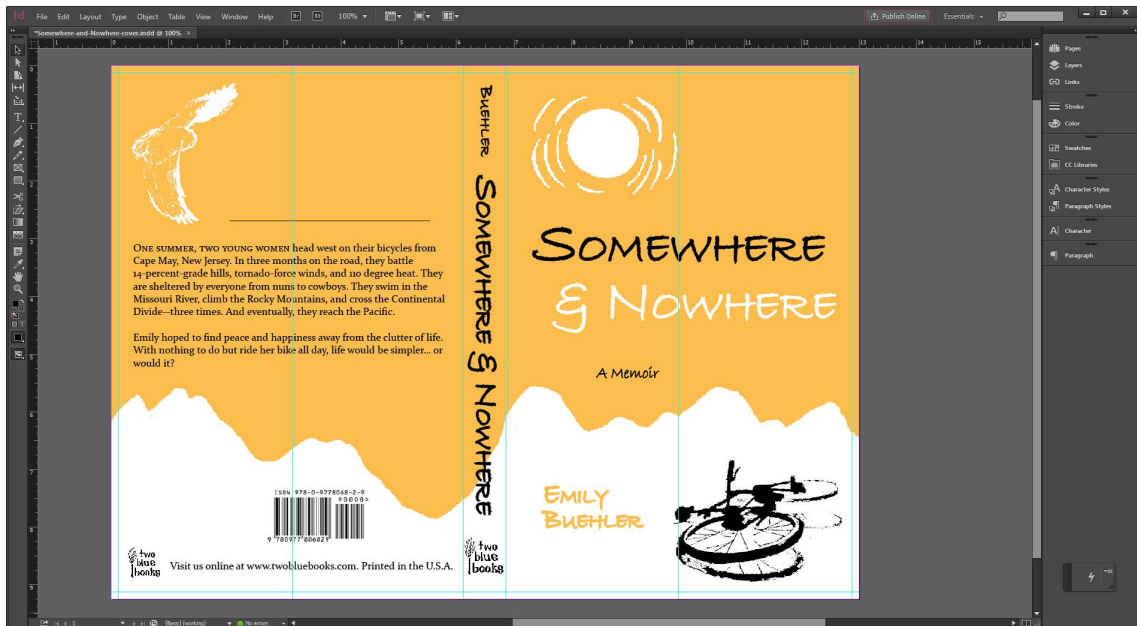
Proofreading

Once the pages are laid out, it's time to hire a proofreader. The proofreader reads the final pages (a.k.a. proofs) looking for errors the copyeditor missed or errors that were introduced during the layout process. I felt more comfortable having the proofreader work on a PDF (so that there would be no weirdness from sending my InDesign files to another computer), and I added her changes by hand. I applied the changes both to the laid-out book in InDesign and to the original Word file.

Convert and send your files to the printer

When the final edits are in, it's time to prepare your files for the printer.

Now would be the time to get a new price quote. The original quote will probably have expired but may still be valid. You may, however, have changed your page count or paper type since getting that first quote.

Follow the printer's specifications for converting to PDF; I had a detailed list of every single setting I should use in my version of InDesign. There were steps like embedding the fonts that had to be selected for high-quality printing; free PDF-makers might not include these steps. As mentioned above, if you've never self-published before, it's worthwhile doing the layout process with a small test file and making sure you are doing everything correctly before you attempt to convert your final book. (My original draft of this guide included an entire section on the mistakes I made with *Bread Science,* which were compounded by the relative slowness of computers in 2006.)

Find out how the printer wants your files sent—for example, on disk or by email. With *Bread Science,* my files were too big for email or for the disks available at the time (not that I had a burner), so the printer gave me an FTP password to use, to upload the files to their server. (Then there wasn't enough space on their server and they had to clear some for me!)

Once the printer has your book, assuming you've done everything correctly, you just have to wait. Also, you might think about where you are going to store the books.

Create the eBook

Creating an ebook requires only a word processing program. (I used Word, which is recommended by some ebook publishers and software producers.) You must format your manuscript certain ways to make it work as an ebook.

You can publish your ebook at sites online, the most popular being Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing. If your ebook is formatted properly, this is a straightforward process in which you fill out information and upload the file. It appears on Amazon a few hours later, and you can direct customers to buy it. You can use a company to publish the ebook on all such sites (Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.), but the company will take a cut of sales.

You can also sell your ebook from your own website. This will probably involve using a digital product distributor, who can take payment and immediately deliver the product. (The alternative is for you to email the product, which involves a delay that will annoy customers, or for you to direct buyers to the ebook posted online, which results in a security issue, because buyers can share the online address. In either case, you still have to use a credit card processor.)

I have typed up my notes about creating an ebook and posted them on my website, emilybuehler.com.

Set Up Your Office

Set up a website

The original draft of this guide included a section called "Why a website?" Probably this topic is now obsolete; even if you plan to sell only from places like Amazon, the website is still a marketing tool where readers will go to learn more about you. You can post an excerpt, reader comments, and links to reviews. Selling from your own website removes the middleman fee; I also find it less stressful because I'm not being rated for how quickly I mail the books or respond to buyer queries (as I am at Amazon). The ability of anyone to have a website goes hand-in-hand with self-publishing.

There are now many options for how to build a website. There are free sites available—sometimes the site will have ads on it or a URL like "emilybuehler.wordpress.com." Sometimes you can pay for a domain name (e.g., emilybuehler.com) while still having the site hosted for free. If you go this route, search for comparisons and reviews of the free websites available.

The other way to do things is to pay a host company for server space. You'll have a control panel where you log in to manage things, and you'll be able to install one of several content management systems (e.g., Wordpress). Sometimes hosts offer a free domain registration with a hosting package; I like having everything in one place so I register all my domains through my host. I am able to do "add-on domains" where I pay for one hosting package but have several websites. A host will also enable you to set up an email address using your domain name.

There may be additional costs. I was forced to pay my host for a "dedicated IP address" when my emails started getting marked as spam—someone else with a website at the host company was sending spam and making us all look bad. An "SSL certificate" is another cost. As far as I can tell (and I am not an expert), it doesn't actually make your website safer, it just tells others that it is safe. My host charges extra to keep my contact information, which is required in a directory of domain name owners, private; I didn't want to pay, and when I set up my most recent website, I started getting huge amounts of spam. If you go the route of using a host, read reviews of companies and make a smart decision, because changing is a big pain.

I am most familiar with the content management system Wordpress, which was one of the few options when I was first making websites. I don't know that it is better than other programs, but I know that it's well-respected and highly functional. I've typed up notes about how to create a website using Wordpress and posted them on my website, emilybuehler.com.

When I first began with websites, they seemed horribly confusing. I don't think the DIY tools now available are completely user friendly, so setting up a website for the first time may still be confusing. However, I do think it is possible to stumble through it.

Choose a credit card processor

Some people will take the time to mail you a check, but many people won't. Making the book easy to buy with a credit card will help you sell it.

In 2006, I chose Paypal because it was the only credit card processor I had heard of, and people gave it good reviews. I have stuck with it and have never had a problem with the company. Buyers can use a credit card with Paypal without having a Paypal account. Maybe three times in ten years someone in a foreign country was unable to use their credit card successfully. Some people seem to really dislike Paypal, and there are other options now available.

Paypal, and I assume all other credit card processors, charges a fee for each item sold, paid by the seller. For my $20 book with $4 shipping, the fee is $1. The fee is worth it to me because of the convenience of getting money this way and the sales that credit cards enable.

Once you have an account, there will be settings to adjust, like which countries you will take payment from. Be sure to know the rules about customer complaints and seller protections. You may want to link your bank account, enabling you to transfer your money to it (which for me does not involve a fee). You can create buttons for your website by inputting information about your product; you'll be given code to paste into your website that makes the button appear and causes a book to be ordered when a customer uses the button. (Note: paste code in the code or text view, not in the visual view.) You can also send or receive money by email, without using buttons; in Paypal this is called a "money request."

Shipping can be tricky to deal with. Originally, I wanted to charge $4 for one book shipped in the United States, but not $8 for two books. I contacted tech support, and they sent me code that would charge $4 for the first book and $1 for each additional book. I directed customers to contact me for priority or international shipping. Later, I used the "shipping options" to allow the customer to choose economy, priority, or international shipping. I inputted prices for one, two, three, four, or five books, using the weight of the book and the USPS website to determine the costs. For six or more books, the customer would be charged shipping for five; tech support couldn't help. I decided to include a disclaimer on the website, saying that orders of six or more would need to pay additional shipping, and that customers should contact us for accurate costs. (I rarely had orders for six or more books.)

You'll probably want to receive a notification by email when someone orders a book. I receive the buyer's email and mailing address so that I can mail the book and send a thank-you email without needing to log in to Paypal.

Make an order fulfillment plan

When the orders start rolling in, you'll need to process and mail them efficiently. You'll also need to keep records for tax time.

We keep a stock of padded manila envelopes for regular orders and special, flat-rate priority envelopes and boxes (for U.S. orders and international orders, respectively.) We have to special order the flat-rate items from the USPS—they are not available at the post office—but they are free. We also keep priority shipping labels and customs forms at home, to fill out before going to the post office. And, we have packing tape in an easy-to-use dispenser.

It took us awhile to find the cheapest methods for sending the book, because the options are confusing and not always available at the post office. Rates frequently change, and the USPS staff often doesn't know what's available. (We've had to print USPS webpages to prove a price to them.) Know all your prices ahead; don't depend on the USPS staff to give you the best options. At the post office, make sure they input the correct zip code into the system—you can watch for it on the customer screen. The wrong zip code will result in your package taking a detour and arriving later.

You may also want to consider policies for when problems arise. All U.S. packages, even media mail, now include tracking numbers. This is a big help when people complain that their book hasn't arrived; when I show them that it was delivered, they often find that "someone else brought the mail in" or that they shipped the book to an old address. My general rule is to give someone the benefit of the doubt and send a second book if necessary; this has seldom happened.

International orders are trickier, as the USPS no longer offers tracking on first class packages, and priority packages (with tracking) are much more expensive. Also, even with tracking, the USPS website only shows the package's location until it leaves the country; then, the recipient country is responsible. We've never had an international order not arrive, but certain countries (Italy and Mexico) have been very slow, and packages have been held up at the holidays. We post eight weeks as the period before we consider the book lost.

I keep a record of all orders, which get an order number, in a spreadsheet. I include the income, the Paypal fees, and the shipping costs. I also list complimentary copies (income is zero but there is still a shipping cost). At the end of each quarter, I use the spreadsheet to get the information I need to file my state sales tax. At the end of the year, I can sum the information to use when I do my income taxes.

I also have some simple policies for wholesale orders, that is, orders from bookstores who'll be reselling the books. I give a forty percent discount (which is standard) and have a minimum order of three books. I charge shipping but no additional handling costs. I ask the bookstore if they prefer a paper invoice or a Paypal money request, and keep a stash of invoices that I can fill in quickly by hand and mail. I keep a list of who owes me money, so that I can follow up after thirty days.

One final bit of office work is that I send paper thank-you letters to customers who buy by check. I print out "stationery" with my logo in the letterhead to use.

Plan Your Marketing Strategy

Marketing is another topic that could fill a whole book. Technically marketing should begin early in the process—maybe even back when you're writing the book—as you consider your target market and send out pre-publication information. There are many different strategies you can try; I've included the ones I have experience with, but my list is far from all-inclusive. My main thought is that anything you try, you should try a little bit to see how it works, before spending a lot of money.

Traditional advice and the sell sheet

I read about all sorts of promotional materials in self-publishing manuals—there were different materials for approaching reviewers (before the book is out), for enticing booksellers (after the book is out), and for sending to newspapers (a press release—as if your book is breaking news), to name a few. I did not use many of these materials, not because I didn't think them worthwhile, but because I don't enjoy approaching people to ask for something, and because I didn't think they would work; none of the "how to get a publisher" advice worked, and I suspected reviewers would pay just as little attention to me as publishers had.

The one sheet I did make was a "sell sheet." It is an information sheet about the book—both its contents and how to order it. It has to convey a lot of information, make the book sound appealing, and be easily readable. There are various formats. Mine is pictured.

Before the book was available, I passed out the sell sheet to interested people. I passed the sheet out at a bread festival, where my coworker gave one to Peter Reinhart, who was interested in seeing an advance copy. I'd read that I should always be in selling mode. I think self-promotion turns people off so I don't push my book on people, but when people ask what I do, I say I'm a writer; they always then ask what I write. Before the book was out, if they expressed interest, I gave them a sell sheet. My website had a "coming

It's here—the book the bread-making world has been waiting for!

Bread Science:
The Chemistry and Craft of Making Bread
By Emily Buehler

Publisher: Two Blue Books
Format: Soft cover, 256 pages
ISBN: 0-9778068-0-4
Publication Date: August, 2006
Subject: How-to make bread
Price: 20.00

"A number of excellent bread books have been published in recent years that offer bits and pieces of the science that underlies the craft, but none that focus specifically on that science. Emily Buehler has brought bread science and technique together for us in an easy to comprehend manual, based on her work and study at one of America's finest artisan bakeries. This book will be an important addition to every bread lover's library, whether professional or serious home baker."
—Peter Reinhart, author, *The Bread Baker's Apprentice*

The bread-making world is swamped with recipe books, but none offer the information found in *Bread Science*. *Bread Science* covers the entire process in detail, including both the practical aspects of bread-making and the chemistry and biology occurring in the dough. Never before has the science of bread been available in one complete guide, written in laymen's terms! *Bread Science* is the perfect complement to any recipe book.

- Over 250 photos and diagrams
- Recipes to illustrate basic principles
- Fully referenced with annotated bibliography
- Bread-making data sheet to aid beginners
- Trouble-shooting guide
- Index and glossary including all scientific terms

Bread Science covers every step of the process. Learn **the basics** as well as **helpful tips**, including how to
- use preferments to increase the flavor of bread
- create and maintain a sourdough starter
- add strength to dough with a folding technique
- shape smooth, symmetric boules, batards, and baguettes
- properly proof dough before baking it
- modify a home oven to improve it for baking bread.

The **major science topics** are covered as well. Read about it all, including
- starches and sugars in flour
- fermentation pathways
- flavor development in dough
- bread-making yeast and bacteria
- how water hydrates flour
- the structure of gluten proteins
- the effects of kneading on gluten
- how gas is retained in dough
- the effects of salt.

Home bakers, professionals, bread lovers, and science enthusiasts alike will all enjoy reading *Bread Science*!

About the Author *Emily Buehler lives and works in Carrboro, North Carolina. She received her PhD in chemistry from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2001. Following an internship in the Office of Public Understanding of Science at the National Academies of Science in Washington, D.C., Emily began baking bread at Weaver Street Market, a cooperative natural foods store. The co-op's bakery is known for its top-quality artisan breads. Emily teaches beginning artisan bread-making classes, hosts bakery "open houses" for the community, and has published articles on several aspects of bread-making*

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soon" announcement and a submission form where visitors could submit their emails to get a notice when the book was available.

Bookstores

I made two attempts to get **Bread Science** into bookstores.

Locally, I visited stores with my sell sheet and asked in person. Several stores placed small orders, and one (a specialty food store with a book section) ordered a case. Another food store ordered a case and displayed the book by their bread. Most of these places didn't reorder, and I felt too shy to follow up to ask if they wanted more books. I suspect that the ordering system involves scanners and a distributor, and that being a free-standing enterprise, I didn't fit in. (One place sold a lot of books, but when my contact there moved on, the orders stopped.) Some local stores sold the books "on consignment"; this meant I didn't get paid until the books sold, and that they wouldn't pay shipping costs, so I had to drop off the books in person. After a while, and after losing books when stores closed, I decided not to do this anymore.

Nationwide, I sent letters with a sell sheet to targeted bookstores, asking them carry my book. I picked bookstores in bread-popular places like San Francisco and Asheville. I got zero response. I was glad I had started with a few dozen letters and not hundreds. I understand—bookstores have limited shelf space, and they probably get a lot of unsolicited mail. The bookstores that do carry Bread Science are food bookstores. I visited one to meet the owner and sent letters to the other two when I discovered them.

Online reader reviews and comments

If you're selling on sites like Amazon, your book will get reviews. Some people get their friends to write positive reviews, and there are even companies who will write them for you. I've never done this and don't recommend it; Amazon has been cracking down on fakes, plus the practice seems rife with bad karma. You might consider asking buyers for reviews; reviews do make a difference. I ignore online reviews as much as possible because the one bad one (or ignorant one) upsets me so much.

I created a page of reader comments on my website. When readers sent positive feedback, I asked if I could post it. (I think I received more feedback than is usual because I communicated with all the international buyers, who then would write again when the book arrived and tell me what they thought of it.) I used some of these comments on a poster when I sold the book at festivals.

Ideas that might actually work

Think about your target audience and how you can reach them. I sell lots of **Bread Science** when I set up a table, with science demos, at a bread festival or when I teach classes. Having the book reviewed on bread baker websites and forums has led to sales; you can offer to send a free book to a relevant blogger or site in exchange for a review. If

I had more time, I'd be active on bread baker forums, although careful to be there for the conversations and not to actively promote myself.

Local resources can provide exposure and sales, albeit modest ones. Several bookstores turned me down when I asked to do a reading for **Bread Science,** but I managed to have one, along with a signing event at the co-op where I baked. If I liked social events more, I might look for opportunities to offer a bread making demo (with book sales) at local churches or other organizations.

I'm not going to go into the possibilities of social media. My only advice is to find the channels you enjoy using.

You can give away free resources (like this guide) to connect with people.

Look for contests to enter. [fill in more here when i know more]

In general, you have to find your comfort level for selling yourself. I'm fairly uncomfortable with it, and consider myself lucky that **Bread Science** was reviewed online so that the word got out. I tried a lot of things that didn't work, but a few did, and eventually sales became steady.

Also, remember that part of marketing is "building your brand" and connecting with people. Don't always be pushing your product. Networking isn't that bad when you're just being yourself and getting to know someone.

Final Tasks

After your book arrives, you have a few tasks to consider.

• Register the copyright at the U.S. copyright office. This will involve a fee and sending in copies of your book. The book is copyrighted from the moment you write it, but registering it will protect you should there ever be an issue.

• If you got a Library of Congress number, send them the required copies of your book.

• Assign the ISBN to the book and provide the requested information at the ISBN company's website.

• Send complimentary copies to people who helped with the book.

• Plan how you'll autograph books—will you use a catchy slogan or write something new in each book?

Conclusion

Self-publishing a book is a lot of work if you do the entire process yourself. I wouldn't recommend it to everyone. But if you want to do it, it's possible and highly rewarding.