

Outline of Presentation

- Is Self-Publishing Right for You?
- Research the Market
- Write the Book
- Find a Printer (or Not): Print Books (for Ebooks, see below)
- Take Care of Miscellaneous Tasks
- Design the Book: Interior Design and Cover Design
- **Proofread and Publish**
- Set Up Your Office: Website, Credit Card Processor, Order Fulfillment Plan
- Print Distribution
- Ebooks and Ebook Distribution
- Marketing
- Final Tasks

Proofread and Publish

Proofread

- Book is written, edited, designed, laid out, ready to print
- Proofreader finds errors and “awkwardnesses”
- You fix typos and make last-minute changes
 - Laid-out book
 - Word processing file

Publish!

- Follow printer specifications to export files (cover and interior) as PDFs
- Send files to printer (e.g., upload at their website)
- Ideally, printer looks for problems (e.g., one image on cover is in RGB mode, not the CMYK mode required for printing)

Set Up Your Office: Website

Free option:

- Use free hosting site (like Wordpress)
- Build it yourself
- Accept the generic domain name (yourauthornamessite.wordpress.com)

This is doable but can be confusing if you're not tech savvy

- Read reviews of which free website builders are easiest, reliable
- Read reviews—is it really free?
- Use a site with templates that you fill
- Building is hardest; you might get help building but learn to update yourself
- Find current how-to guides online (software changes constantly)

Set Up Your Office: Website II

Register domain name, such as yourauthorname.com or yourbooktitle.com

- Looks more professional
- Annual fee ~\$15
- Registered in your name; you keep it if website moves to a different platform
- Requires personal information submitted to a public registry → spam
- Some companies will protect your information by using their own (but \$)

Pay a company to host your website

- Get tech support
- Get email addresses (you@yourauthorname.com)
- Get free “add-on domains” (pay once, create multiple sites)
- Dedicated IP address (costs extra)
- Can be confusing to set up and use (control panel, backups)

Websites: Two Approaches

Approach 1 (old)

- Start with host company
- Register domain name through them
- Install software (like Wordpress)
- Build site, manage from host's control panel

Approach 2 (new)

- Start with free site (like Wordpress.com)
- Follow their instructions to register domain
- They are hosting your site; you log in at their webpage
- If needed, upgrade to paid plan

Websites Can Be Confusing

- Best practices are debatable
 - Some say, register domain at A, host site at B
 - It seems simpler to do everything at one company
- If you start with the host, don't choose on price alone (migrating = headache)
- If you hire someone to build but want to update site yourself...
 - Make sure web developer keeps things simple (avoid numerous or obscure plugins, obscure themes, custom code)
 - Website software updates constantly; plugins and themes must update to match; custom code can be lost during updates
 - Tradeoff: site looks unique versus keeps working with updates
 - Get all site info (like site administrator's password); you'll need this information if you hire someone different for help in the future
- Plan to backup and update site (outdated software = vulnerable to hacking)

Set Up Your Office: Credit Card Processor

- Enables you to take credit card payments, they take a fee per sale
- How it works:
 - You create an account, accept user agreement, get verified
 - You create a “button” with book price, shipping information
 - You get code to paste into your website that makes button appear
 - Customers use button to buy book
 - You receive a notification (make sure this is turned on)
 - You get paid; you transfer money to bank account
- Read processor’s rules about buyer complaints and seller rights
- Choose a processor that does not require customers to create an account
- Note: some user agreements include “no surcharges”

Set Up Your Office: Order Fulfillment

- Best shipping options (USPS media mail, special envelopes)
- Supplies: padded or special envelopes, packing tape, black marker
- Reply to customer: automated thank you or *personal email*
- Policy if book doesn't arrive (tracking, time limit)
- Discounts (e.g., student or bulk discounts)
- Sales tax collection: rules vary by state
- Policy for bookstores: 40% discount plus shipping, invoice, plan to follow up
- Plan to track orders, income, expenses, receipts (spreadsheet or record-keeping software)
- Plan to pay taxes: do you need to file any quarterly?

Print Distribution

- Rapidly changing for self-publishers
- DIY method: sell your book from your own website
- Other channels offer so much exposure that they may be worth using

Term “distribution” can be confusing; many types of services

- Traditional distribution (active selling)
- Traditional distribution (book merely available; e.g., Ingram)
- You distribute via online retailers (e.g., Amazon)
- POD distributors (e.g., IngramSpark and CreateSpace)

Print Distribution

Tactics

- List book as many places as possible
- List book with the biggest sites
- Start with a few sales outlets and add more later
- List book in certain countries (in best sales outlets in those countries)

- Place book into retail outlets one by one (minimize distribution fees)
- Hire a company to place the book into multiple outlets (easier)

Search “online retailers for self-published books” to find options

Read all agreements!

Amazon Programs

- Amazon is the biggest US online retailer
- Self-publishers can access several services
- Look for updated information on their website (programs might change)
- Read all agreements carefully!
- For example, with Amazon Advantage, Amazon sets the book price, and can charge you a handling fee if you don't meet certain packaging requirements
- When order comes, you must ship in two days
- You want to have a good "seller rating"
- Amazon is buyer-friendly if book doesn't arrive

Amazon Programs

- **Amazon Advantage:** Amazon is the seller; they order books, you pay to ship books to their warehouse; when a customer orders, Amazon ships to that customer; if there is no demand, they will stop carrying your book; annual fee of \$99; you receive 45 percent of the list price, not the usual 60 percent
- **Fulfillment by Amazon:** You are the seller; Amazon stores and ships books, books are eligible for Amazon's shipping and customer services; you pay fees for fulfillment based on book weight, plus monthly storage fees based on number of books stored
- **Amazon Marketplace:** You are the seller and shipper; you create account at “Seller Central” and list your books and their prices; Amazon sets shipping price; professional account (\$39.99/month plus selling fees) or individual account (\$0.99 per item sold plus selling fees)

POD Distribution

- You follow instructions to prepare and upload PDF files
- The POD company makes book available
 - To book sellers
 - To customers
- When an order arrives, the company prints and ships
- The biggest POD companies:
 - Amazon-owned CreateSpace
 - Ingram-owned IngramSpark
- Some book sellers do not like working with POD companies, particularly CreateSpace, since Amazon is their competition

POD: IngramSpark vs. CreateSpace

Many online reviews compare them—look for recent information:

- IngramSpark requires ISBN and lists you as the publisher
- CreateSpace has options (your ISBN vs. their ISBN)
- CreateSpace charges larger fees for distribution to non-Amazon channels
- Different charges for items like color printing and hardcover
- Different opinions on quality and customer service
- Many people consider CreateSpace simpler to use

Best practice: CreateSpace to sell on Amazon, IngramSpark to sell elsewhere

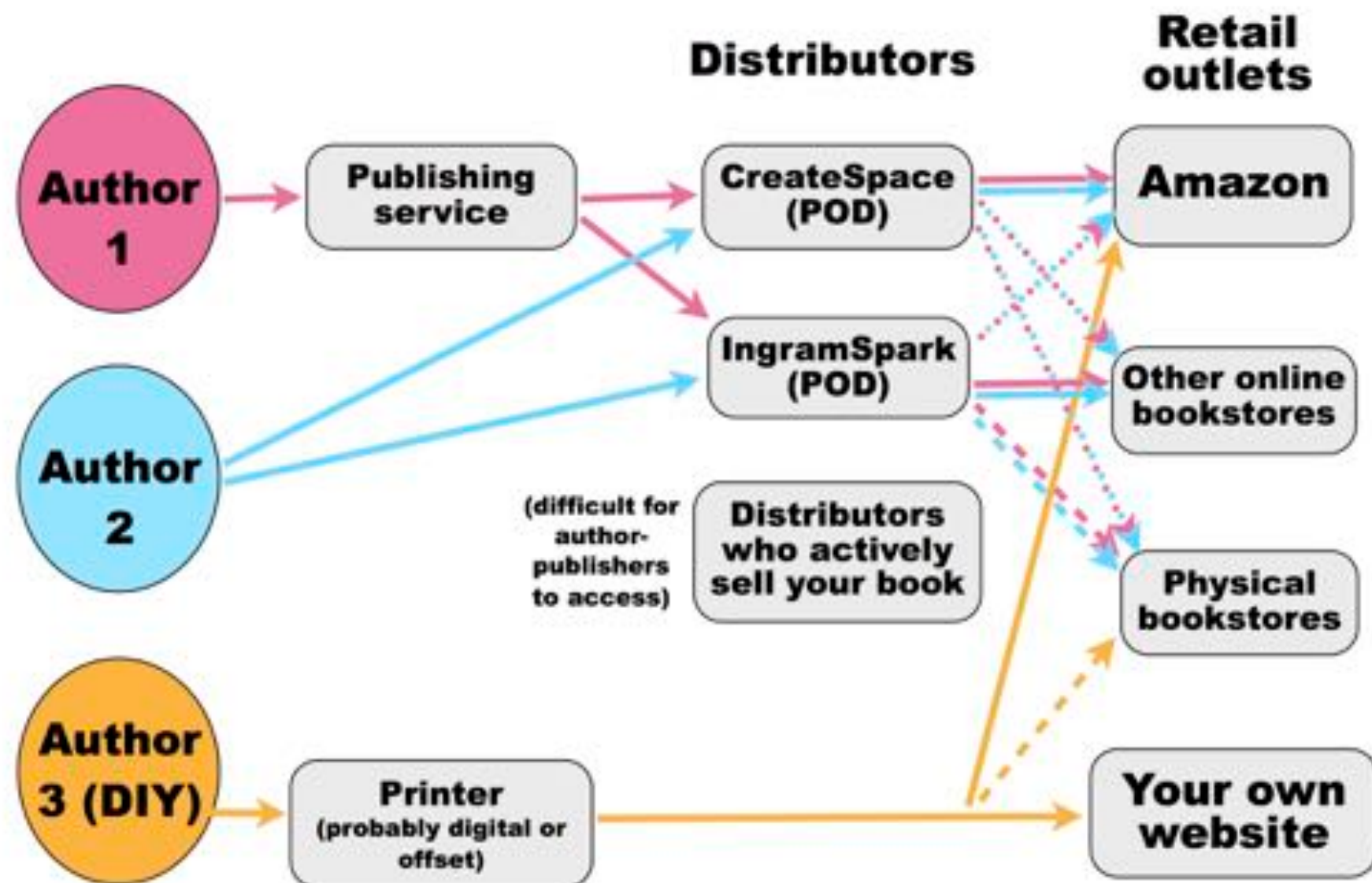
You do not need to use one of these companies!

Distribution of Print Books

Book is available to readers

Book is available to store

Alternate routes



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Ebooks

- Still new, technology still changing
- Best practices are up in the air
- Many new companies and services
- Confusing terminology: publishers, platforms, software, templates...
- Read online to stay up to date (see Resources)
- DIY or hire someone to format your document properly and convert it; Jane Friedman recommends <https://ebookpartnership.com/> (costs \$50–300)

Main formats

- MOBI (the format used by Amazon's Kindle)
- EPUB (the format used by everyone else)
- PDF (sort of—text doesn't flow, reader needs to zoom and scroll)

Ebook DIY Basics

- Use a word processing program, not a page layout program (but see below)
- Format the word processing document a certain way
 - Use styles/headings
 - Position images properly
 - Rethink text (e.g., you cannot refer to “the figure on page 8”)
- Convert the formatted document into EPUB and/or MOBI (see next page)
- Notes on my website: <http://emilybuehler.com/miscellany/how-to-guides/>

Best practices are not clear

- Follow instructions for how to format and save file on service company website
- Or, create EPUB and then tinker directly in EPUB file; upload EPUB directly
- Other web developer told me “industry standard” is InDesign to EPUB!

Tools to Produce Ebooks*

Easier to use

- Apple's Pages (size limits, cannot have too many images)
- Vellum (costs \$\$\$, Mac only)
- Pressbooks

Harder to use

- Jutoh (costs \$\$\$)
- Scrivener
- Calibre (I used this one)
- Sigil (Jane's favorite)

* recommended by Jane Friedman

Strategies to Produce Ebooks*

- Use Scrivener or Pages to start, then Sigil or Calibre to fine tune EPUB
- Buy Vellum
- Hire a service
- Upload to Draft2Digital, convert to EPUB, then download EPUB
- Use free Reedsy editor to generate an EPUB

* recommended by Jane Friedman

Ebook Distribution: DIY

- DIY ebook method: create EPUB and MOBI, sell from your website
- Complications with this method:
 - Buyer expects immediate access
 - If ebook is posted online for buyers, how do you keep the page secure?
 - You still need to use a credit card processor
- Use a digital-products distributor (e.g., Gumroad)
 - They handle payments and distribution
 - They charge a fee (might include the credit card processing fee)
 - You can link your website to your product on their site, or embed their ebook sales page on your website

Ebook Distribution: Other Outlets

- It's worth listing your ebook with retailers/distributors because of the exposure
- There are many kinds of service providers
 - Retailers you can access directly
 - Major retailers
 - Minor retailers
 - Distributors that access retailers for you (save time, easier, make less \$)
 - Companies that blend ebook distribution with ebook production and other services (editing, cover design)
- It's confusing and there are lots of scammers!
- Read independent reviews before you get involved
- Read all contracts; do not sign away rights to your book

Major Ebook Retailers

Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing

- Royalties are 35% or 70% based on ebook price, minus “delivery cost”
- Optional programs (KDP Select, Kindle Unlimited) that may help some authors (read more online to plan your strategy, experiment)

Apple's iBookstore

- Royalties are 70%; giveaways allowed
- Difficult to use (must use iTunes portal or iBooks author software)
- iBooks only work on Apple devices

Kobo Writing Life (big internationally)

- Royalties are 45% or 70% based on ebook price; giveaways allowed

Barnes & Noble's Nook Press

- Royalties are 40% or 65% based on ebook price; giveaways allowed

Ebook Retailer Example: KDP

It's easy

- Create account at Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP)
- Follow KDP's guidelines to format your document
- Create a new product, fill in some information, and upload your document
- KDP converts it to MOBI and publishes it on Amazon's website
- When customers buy it, you get royalty payments

Complications

- Royalty payments are confusing; vary by country
- Cannot have lower price elsewhere
- Optional digital rights management (DRM); it's breakable and reader unfriendly

Ebook Distributors

Distributor Type 1:

- No up-front fee; they take ~10% of sales
- Nonexclusive (you can work with other retailers or distributors in addition)
- Examples:
 - Smashwords (widest distribution, including libraries)
 - Draft2Digital (better customer service)
 - PublishDrive, Streetlib outside US
- Saves time if you update ebook: do it in one place, new version is distributed
- Avoid scams: you should be able to leave the service at any time, control pricing, and easily/cheaply update your ebook

Ebook Distributors

Distributor Type 2:

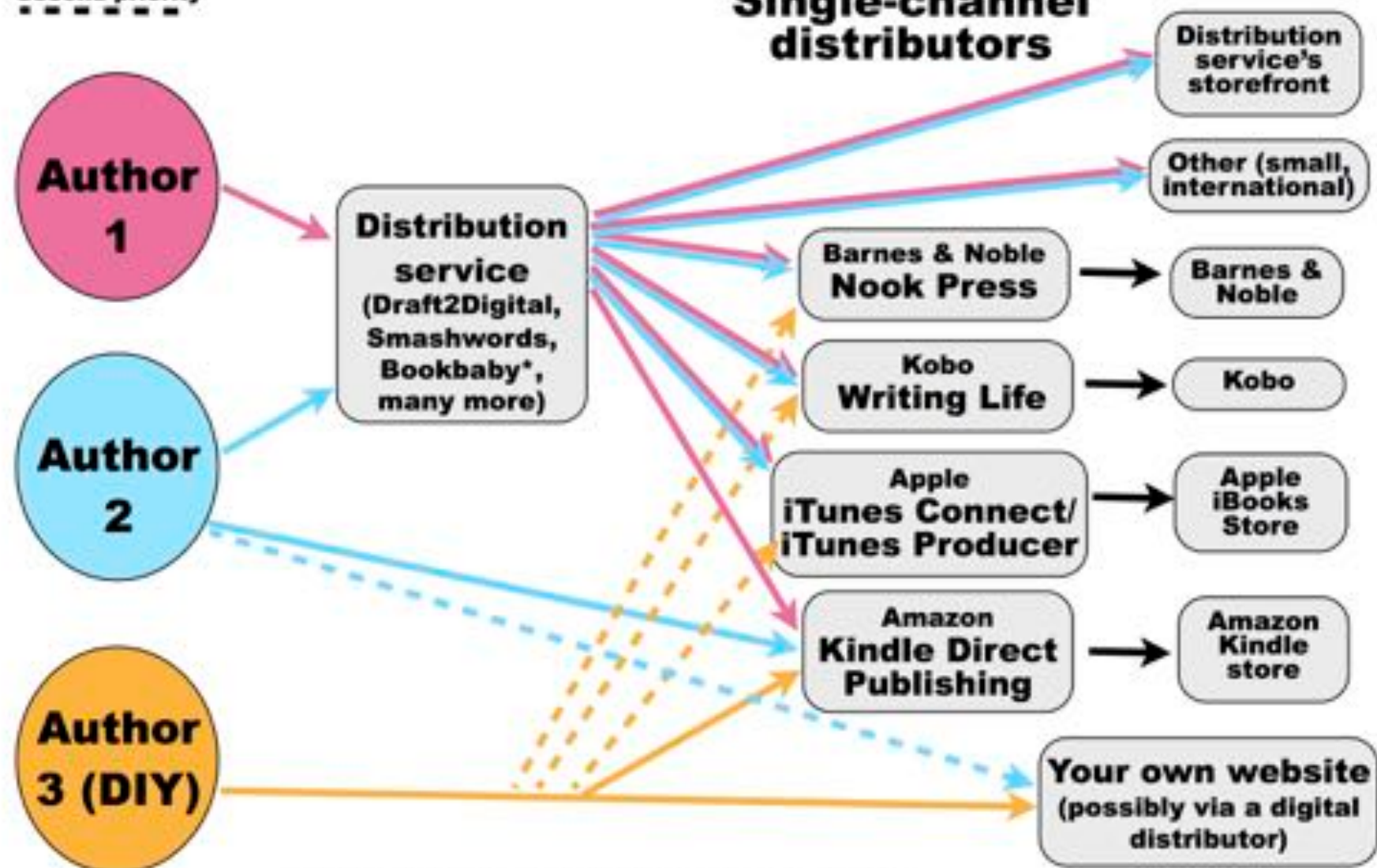
- Package deal, includes many service possibilities
- You pay a fee up front
- Services you can pick from (editing, cover design)
- They create ebook
- They distribute
- Mostly used by authors when book is special (e.g., highly illustrated, children's)

Note: There are also DIY programs you can use to create special books

Distribution of E-books

First priority

Second priority



*Bookbaby has a different business model where you pay up front but keep all sales. It also distributes print books and might be better considered as a publishing service.

Ebook Distributors: Example Scenario

- Sell yourself on your website (using a digital product distributor)
- Upload directly to Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing
- Upload directly to Apple's iBookstore
- Upload directly to Kobo Writing Life
- Use Draft2Digital to reach all other retailers

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Marketing

- Tons of ways to market a book
- Many resources—books, blogs, other self-publishers—to use for ideas

My top tips:

- Pick your tactics; tactics you enjoy, that will reach target market
- Keep trying; if one tactic produces no result, try a new one
- Try tactic a little bit to see if tactic works before investing
- Think creatively
- Be respectful and do not try to sell constantly

And...

- Write more books!

Marketing

Begin early

- Build a fan base (e.g., by blogging)
- When people ask what you do, say, “I’m a writer”; have a card ready
- Collect emails to notify when published (signup on website)
- Collect emails for an author newsletter or “reader club”
- Take preorders (tricking Amazon)
- Seek advance official reviews (some available to self-publishers)
- Seek advance reader reviews (e.g., Goodreads)*
- Set up an author profile on Goodreads, Amazon

*can offer to send e-version to save money

Marketing

- Ask bookstores to carry it (difficult; also they expect to return unsold books)
- Schedule an author reading (bookstore, other store, library, host your own)
- Ask niche online retailers (not bookstores) to carry it
- Ask relevant sites or bloggers to review it
- Set up vendor booth at relevant festivals or conferences
- Network: participate in online chat or forum
- Lure people to your website with free material
- Reader recommendations: ask permission to quote, post on website
- Get reader reviews (Amazon, Goodreads); be wary of “fake” reviews, don’t log in w/Facebook, have reviewers say where they got book
- Enter award contest (but, see Resources; there is often a time limit to enter)

Marketing: Giveaways

- You can (sometimes) run giveaways on Goodreads, Amazon
- There are email newsletters that offer readers discounted/free books
 - Bookbub (the top one, but difficult to get into and \$\$\$)
 - Written Word Media
 - Open Road Media
 - Fussy Librarian
 - Book Gorilla
 - See also, Reedsy database of 50+ services
- Sometimes you have to pay to be included
- Some are selective: they might not accept your book, book needs 4☆ rating
- Ebook giveaways don't cost as much

Why do this?

- Exposure
- Reader reviews

Final Tasks

- Register with the US Copyright Office, preferably within three months (protects your rights, allows you to bring lawsuits); you must pay a fee and send books; there is a website, they'll contact you with questions
- If you used a Library of Congress number, fulfill their requirement of books
- If you used an ISBN, officially assign it to the book at the ISBN website (requires date of publication)
- Send complimentary copies to people who helped, or as a marketing tactic
- Consider how you will autograph books—with only your signature or with a catchy slogan?

Resources

- Free guides on my website <http://emilybuehler.com/miscellany/how-to-guides/>
- Jane Friedman's blogs (subscribe!) and website; in particular, her list of resources: <https://www.janefriedman.com/how-to-publish-an-ebook/>
- Joel Friedlander <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/getting-ready-to-publish/>
- Writer Beware website and blog (fraudulent contests, vanity presses, emerging scams) <http://www.sfwaweb.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-beware/>
- Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) checklist for professional-looking books to avoid book being labeled as self-published/inferior (e.g., no "By" before the author's name) <http://www.ibpa-online.org/page/standardschecklist>
- North Carolina Writers Network (local conferences, more) <https://www.ncwriters.org>
- Contest ratings at <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/allis-self-publishing-service-directory/award-and-contest-ratings-reviews/>

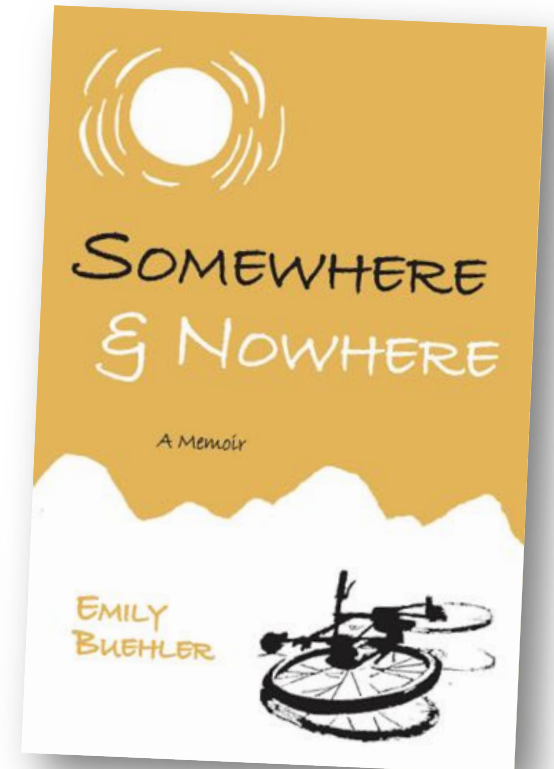
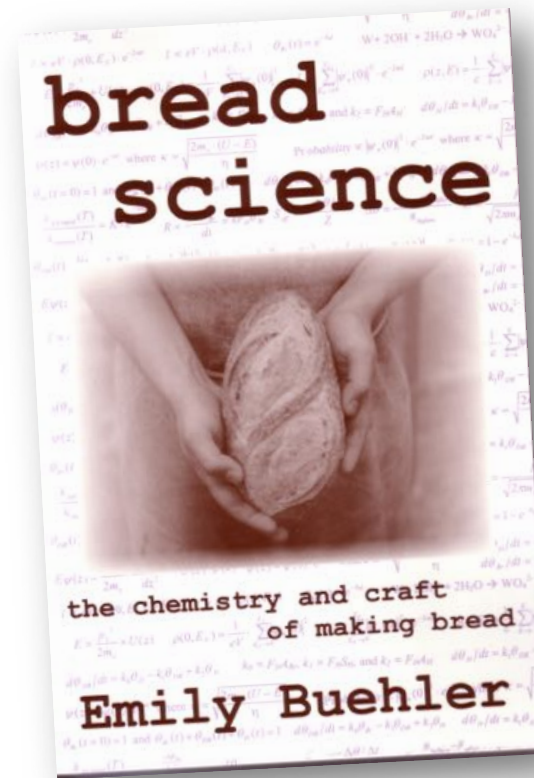
Thanks for coming!

Emily Buehler

<http://emilybuehler.com/>

emily@twobluebooks.com

Twitter: @ephemerily



Today's slides are posted at ...

<http://emilybuehler.com/wp-content/uploads/SelfPublishing2018.pdf>

and <http://emilybuehler.com/wp-content/uploads/SelfPublishing2018-part2.pdf>