DIY Self-Publishing

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Today's slides are posted at http://emilybuehler.com/wp-content/uploads/SelfPublishing2019.pdf

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Emily's History with Self-Publishing
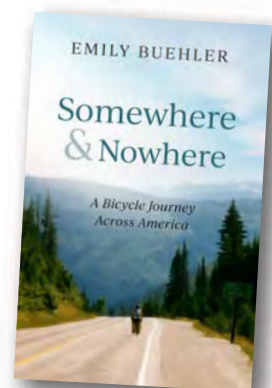
Bread Science, 2006
- Very "DIY" method
- Stumbled through process

Somewhere and Nowhere, 2017
- Repeated 2006 process
- Missed opportunities

Today's talk
- Overview of entire process with no intermediaries
- Places where using an intermediary m

Outline of Presentation

- Is Self-Publishing Right for You?
- Research the Market
- Write the Book
- Find a Printer (or Not): Print Books
- 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

Note: You might choose to skip some steps

Is Self-Publishing Right for You?

Some reasons to self-publish:
- You cannot find an agent or traditional publisher
- You want to prove your book can be successful to attract an agent or traditional publisher
- You don't want to sell the rights to your work
- You want control over your book (e.g., its appearance, its contents, its price)
- You've heard that traditional publishing is not that great of a deal financially, or that traditional publishers are cutting corners

Is Self-Publishing Right for You?

Is Self-Publishing Right for You?

What are your goals?
- Having the thrill of a publisher accepting your work
- Becoming famous or mildly famous
- Going on the book tour you've always daydreamed about
- Making money
- Having your work in the form of a finished book
- Recording your knowledge
- Sharing a story or information, perhaps to encourage others
- Connecting with readers

Whichever way your goals lead you, have realistic expectations

Is Self-Publishing Right for You?

Research the Market

Why?
- To find books similar to yours
- To understand the categoriy where your book fits
- To know how your book is similar to others (i.e., readers who like Books X, Y, and Z will like mine) and how it is unique
- To speak knowledgably to potential retailers and customers

How?
- Read or skim books in your category in the library, at a bookstore, or online
- Consider which are the best sellers
- Talk to people in the industry (booksellers, librarians) about the category

Research the Market

Write the Book

Get inspired by reading about writing, but balance this with *actually* writing

My top suggestions for making yourself write:
- Participate in NaNoWriMo
- Start a writing group
- Make writing your #1 priority

Expect to have many drafts; tips for self-editing:
- Noah Lukeman, *The First Five Pages*
- Renni Browne and Dave King, *Self-Editing for Fiction Writers*
- Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi, *The Emotion Thesaurus*
- Take a break from the manuscript, or edit on paper, or read out loud
- Get feedback from beta readers

Write the Book

Work with an Editor

Developmental editing: a detailed assessment of the manuscript with specific suggestions and recommendations about improving it ($$$$)

Manuscript critique: an overall assessment of the manuscript ($$)

Professional beta read: get feedback from a reader point of view

Heavy copy editing, aka line editing: an edit that corrects errors, rewrites awkward or overlong sentences, and generally improves readability

Light copy editing: an edit that only corrects grammatical errors

Proofreading: a final error check of ready-to-print page proofs

An editor can assess your manuscript and suggest the level that's needed

Different editors use different terms; be clear about the services to be performed

Write the Book

Secure Permissions

- **Copyrighted material:** quotes of copyrighted works (which includes almost all written material, even a letter), photos by others, photos of artwork
- Personal material that infringes on the **right of privacy** of another person
- Personal material that infringes on the **right of publicity** of another person

This is tricky!

- There are a lot of little things you might not think of
- Laws such as "fair use" are vague
- Avoid committing libel
- Even if you're right, **you don't want to go to court ($$)**
- Best practice is to secure permission

Write the Book

Permissions and Libel: Resources

- Permissions editors
- Educate yourself
  - Books
    - *The Writer's Legal Guide* by Murray and Crawford
    - *Self-publisher's Legal Handbook* by Sedwick
    - *Copyright and Permissions* by Peterson
    - *The Copyright, Permission, and Libel Handbook* by Jassin and Schechter
  - Online articles
  - Webinars, classes, conference sessions
- DIY: Make a spreadsheet with every possible problem, then solve each one
- Options: keep, remove, revise, get permission
- Don't put your head in the sand!

Write the Book

Writing: Don't Waste Time

Don't get ahead of yourself in the publishing process
- Don't apply styles to the text
- Don't insert images (but do gather images and get permissions)
- Don't start laying out the book in a page design program

Write until you have a final copy

Write the Book

Parts of a Book to Consider

- Copyright page
- Table of contents
- Acknowledgments
- Figure captions
- Footnotes/Endnotes
- Bibliography
- Glossary
- Index
- About the author page

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Find a Printer: Print Books

Offset printing
- Traditional method, cheaper for large number of books
- The printer prints, binds, and ships the books (to you or to a storage location)

Digital printing
- Newer method, cheaper for small number of books
- The printer prints, binds, and ships the books (to you or to a storage location)

Digital, print on demand (POD)*
- Printer prints and ships books as they are ordered (by you, a retailer, or a customer)
- No large printing bill or storage needed, but per-book cost is more
- Requires long-term use of an intermediary

*Some people assume that self-publishers will use POD

Find a Printer

Find a Printer (Offset or Digital, not POD)

- Get quotes
  - You'll need information like book size and page count
  - You can make up numbers to get started, and use them to compare printers
  - You can get an updated quote when you are ready to print
- Make sure company is a real book printer making quality books
- Consider non-cost factors
  - Quality
  - Good customer service
  - Environmentally friendly and fair
  - Location of actual printing
- Get recommendations from other self-publishers (mine: Sheridan)
- Ask questions!

Find a Printer

Find a Printer: Questions to Ask

- Can I see book and paper samples?
- Can I see samples of both offset and digital printing?
- What are your standard page sizes?
- How many pages are in each section/signature (8, 16, etc.)?
- Do you have a guide for creating and converting files? Which programs can I use? (Free PDFs vs Adobe PDFs)
- What are your company's environmental practices? Do you offer recycled paper? Are the books printed at your facility or elsewhere?
- Do you work with self-publishers? (You want to work with someone who answers questions and will notice major production errors)

Find a Printer

Find a Printer: Keeping Cost Down

- Use one of the printer's standard page sizes (cheaper than custom sizes)
- Understand the paper's "pages per inch" (ppi) specification
    - Larger ppi: cheaper paper, thinner book
    - Smaller ppi: more costly paper, might look nicer
    - Paper needs to be thick enough that images won't show through
    - Book thickness affects postage for customers
- Get multiple quotes, for offset versus digital and various print runs
- Color images add to cost; color cover might (but is important)
- Understand the policy on "overs" and "unders"
- Consider costs of shipping books to you (might be extra)

Find a Printer

Find a Printer (POD)

POD scenarios
- You buy batches of POD books and sell them to customers yourself
- You direct customers to the POD printer's website; POD printer = retailer
- The POD printer acts as a distributor, sells your book through a retail partner

Types of companies
- Traditional printers who've added POD services (e.g., Sheridan)
- Printers who only offer POD, display books in their online store (e.g., Lulu)
- Distributors that arrange the POD printing as well (Kindle Direct Publishing [formerly CreateSpace] and IngramSpark, discussed in the following)

Find a Printer

Find a Printer (POD)

Things to keep in mind

- Quality issues
  - Process might be done automatically
  - Are samples available?
  - Read independent reviews
- Printing costs
- Additional fees for shipping books to customers or displaying books in an online store
- Scams: read all agreements and **do not transfer your copyright**

Find a Printer

Misc. Tasks: Create Publishing Company

- Use a publishing company name to make your book look professional; see the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) website for naming advice
- Create a company logo or hire a professional designer
- Get a PO box to accept checks (and fan mail!) without listing your address online
- Register your website domain name; possibly build the website now*
- Use a professional-looking email address (comes with website hosting; e.g., emily@twobluebooks.com versus twobluebooks@yahoo.com)
- Look into state and local requirements (e.g., license, filing name, sales tax ID**)
- Consider opening a business bank account
- Free help: SCORE, https://www.score.org

*Beware of domain name stealers! Once you search for a name (to check availability), someone else might buy it to try to sell to you for more; plan ahead, then search and buy right away; if you are not building your site now, GoDaddy is a popular place to register domain names
**Sales tax ID enables you to avoid paying sales tax on book printing

Misc. Tasks

Miscellaneous Tasks: ISBN

- A universal book identifier
- Required by bookstores but not Amazon
- There is only one place to buy an ISBN in the United States (http://www.isbn.org), and buying only one is expensive
- Each book "version" requires a new ISBN (version = open for interpretation)
- Buying an ISBN from a reseller means the ISBN is registered in the reseller's name; this may also be true with self-publishing companies who "give" you an ISBN when you work with them
- After you publish your book with the ISBN in it, you'll need to assign the ISBN to the book at the ISBN company's website

Misc. Tasks

Miscellaneous Tasks: Other Numbers

Barcode
- Needed to sell in bookstores
- Makes book look "normal"
- Available from the ISBN company or elsewhere
- Comes as an image file that you place in your cover file
- Optional: put price on barcode (flexibility vs. looking "normal")

Library of Congress catalog control number (LCCN)
- Used by libraries
- Free (you must send a copy of your book)
- Two types; Preassigned Control Number (PCN) for self-published books

Misc. Tasks

Miscellaneous Tasks: Testimonials

- For the back cover
- Makes book look "normal"
- Can come from many types of people
  - Famous person
  - Another author in the genre
  - An expert in the subject matter
  - A local celebrity
  - Anyone with a relevant credential: "founder of," "winner of," etc.
- Ask in person, if possible
- Give reader only an excerpt to save time, or make testimonial suggestions (??)

Misc. Tasks

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Design the Book

Book design includes…
- Book cover
- Book interior pages

How to do either the cover or interior:
- Do it all yourself
- Do it yourself with a template
- Hire a designer

Design

Book Design: Interior DIY

Many aspects to consider
- Fonts of text, headings, running heads, chapter titles
  - Easy to read
  - Font width (affects page count of book)
- Margins
- Images: positioning and style (border, drop shadow, etc.)
- Title page, table of contents, and other special pages
- Position and font of page numbers
- Details (drop caps, small caps at start of chapter, section breaks, etc.)
- And more!
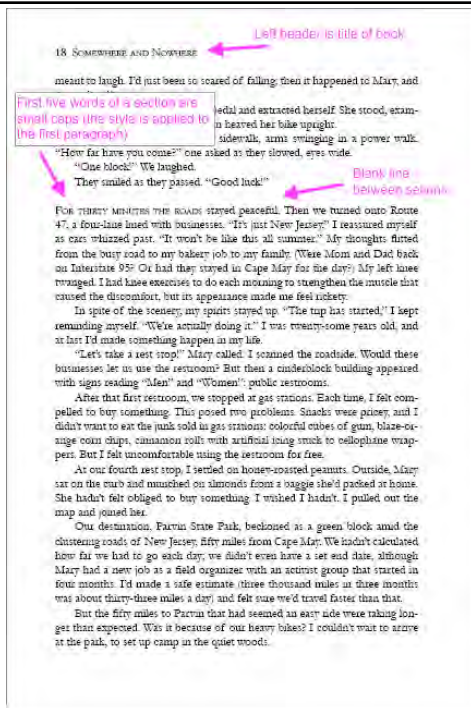
Use IBPA checklist (see Resources at end)

Design

Book Design:
Interior DIY

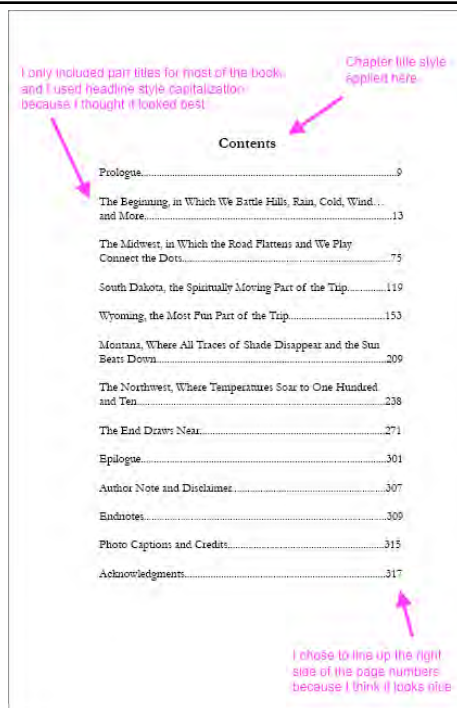## Look at other books to find designs you like:

- Book size
- Fonts (use "What the Font" app to identify)
- Image treatment
- Details like drop caps

Design

Design

Book Design: Interior DIY

Page layout programs
- Page layout programs produce higher quality PDFs than word processors
- Traditional printers may require a page layout program
- Industry standard: Adobe InDesign; it has a steep learning curve and is not free
- POD printers may accept books designed with other software

If you DIY…
- Practice with a small test file and one image
- Use specifications from printer (image size and resolution, how to convert to PDF)
- Include an image, headings, fonts, and the other elements in your test file
- Ask the printer to look at the test file's PDF
- Then once you have the process down, go through it with your manuscript

InDesign steps on my website: http://emilybuehler.com/miscellany/how-to-guides/

Design

Book Design: Interior w/ Template

- Templates available online for free and for purchase
- Purchased templates may include more features
- You can try some free ones and see if you're happy with the results
- You download a file that includes a title page and sample chapters with the fonts and section breaks in place, then paste your material in
- POD and self-publishing companies might offer templates
- Joel Friedlander's Book Design Templates: these get good reviews, look good, are supposedly easy to use, and cost less than $100
  https://www.bookdesigntemplates.com/

Design

Book Design: Interior by Designer

Get recommendations from other self-publishers

View samples of work

Ask questions

- What is the cost?
- When will it be ready?
- Who owns the file?
- What type of file (native file vs. final PDF) will they send? If they send a PDF, what is the cost to get a change made at a later date? What if they retire?
- Are they using a template or creating a custom design?

Design

Book Design: Cover

Cover must look professional and fit in with genre!

- People are trying NOT to buy your book; a bad cover gives them a reason
- Fitting in signals to readers what they will get and makes them comfortable
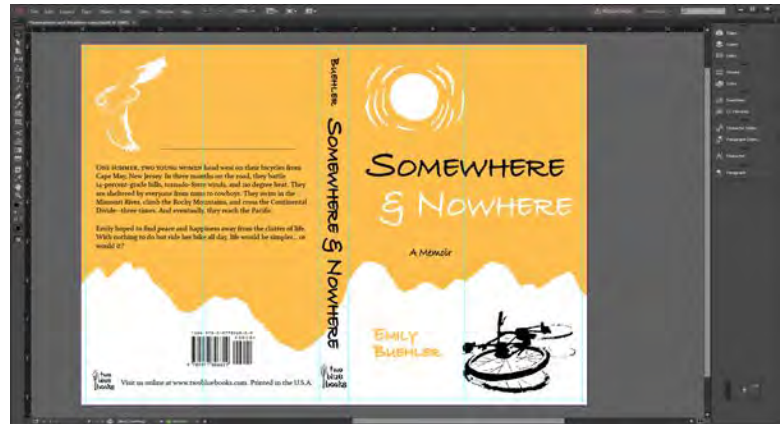- Design is a lot harder than it looks (especially fonts!)
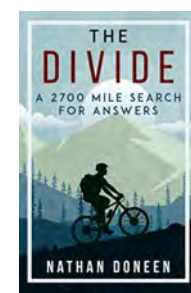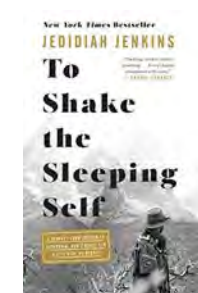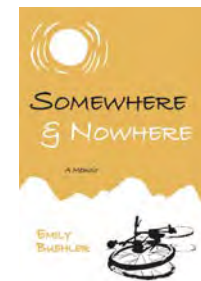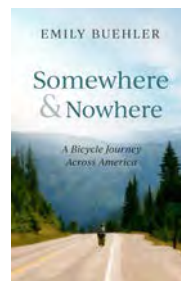
Design

Book Design: Cover

If you do DIY…

- Need to create **entire cover**, including back, spine, bleed
- Calculate spine width using page count and ppi value of paper
- Follow printer guidelines (programs to use, bleed settings, color modes)

Design

Book Design: Cover

DIY tips
- Look at other books (front, back, spine) in your genre to get ideas
- Cover must look good as a thumbnail (e.g., when sold on Amazon)
- Once you have a draft design, get feedback
- Use IBPA checklist (see Resources at end)

Cover image considerations
- You must own or have permission to use any images
  - Your own photo; cannot depict copyrighted work or people without permission
  - Public domain image
  - Image you have purchased the rights to (from a website or photographer/artist)
- If you buy an image, be clear on what you are buying
  - Ideal: photo is work for hire; you become owner of photo's copyright
  - If photo is licensed, how you can use it may be restricted (e.g., one edition, first 1000 copies)
 - Can other people use the same image?

Design

Book Design: Cover w/ Help

- Cover templates (similar considerations to interior templates)
- Cover created via a self-publishing company
  - Templates to use
  - Make sure you know who owns what
- Graphic designer: pre-made design
- Graphic designer: custom design
  - All considerations from interior templates apply (recommendations, samples, etc.)
  - Who owns the cover? Can you use the cover on subsequent editions?
  - How much do changes cost in the future?
  - Where do images come from? What license agreements are in place?
  - Fonts are also copyrighted; are they buying fonts or using free ones?

Design

Book Design: Ebooks

- Understand positioning of text and images
- Apply styles to indicate function of text
- Follow a guide to properly format your document
- OR use a template (included with some ebook publishing services)
- Create cover: image file
- Ebooks are ever-changing! Search online for the latest guides
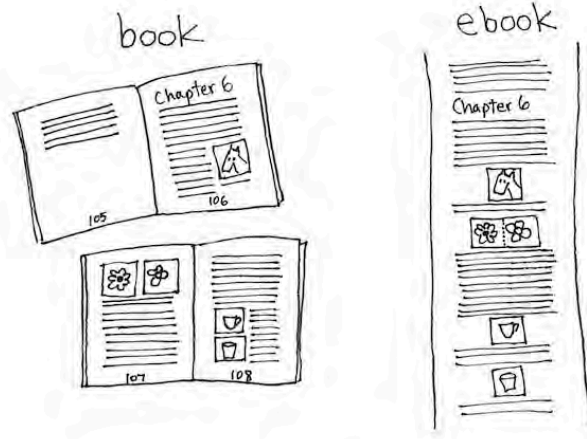
Design

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Proofread and Publish

Proofread

- Book is written, edited, designed, laid out, ready to print
- Proofreader finds errors and "awkwardnesses" like gaps in spacing
- You fix errors in layout program AND in final 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)

Proofread and Publish

Set Up Your Office: Website

Do you need a website?

- A website is one place to sell books but there are other options
- A website can be a marketing tool and a place to connect with readers
- Having a website can make you seem professional

What are your options?

- Free options exist
- DIY is possible but can be confusing at first
- There are many guides online
- Websites require maintenance (software updates, changing standards)

Some tips on websites follows that you can read if you are interested

Set Up Office

Websites

Free option:

- Use a 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 Office

Websites

Register domain name, such as authorname.com or booktitle.com
- Looks more professional
- Annual fee ~$15
- Register in your name; you can keep domain if you switch platforms
- Requires personal information submitted to a public registry → you'll get spam
- Some companies will protect your information by using their own info (costs $)

Pay a company to host your website
- Get tech support
- Get email addresses (author@authorname.com)
- Get free "add-on domains" (pay once, create multiple sites)
- Get dedicated IP address (costs extra)
- Can be confusing to set up and use (control panel, backups)

Set Up Office

Websites: Two Approaches

Approach 1
- Start with host company
- Register domain name through them
- Install software (like Wordpress)
- Build site, manage from host's control panel

Approach 2
- 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

Set Up Office

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…
  - I recommend making sure the web developer keeps things simple (avoid numerous plugins, obscure plugins/themes, custom code)
  - Website software updates constantly; plugins/themes must be updated to match; sometimes plugins/themes stop being supported; custom code can be lost during update
  - It's a tradeoff: a fancier, unique site is more likely to break 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
- Understand security measures at your site
- Plan to create regular backups if you blog; otherwise have one backup on hand
- Plan to update site as needed (outdated software = vulnerable to hacking)

Set Up Office

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 (for multiple books, you'd create a shopping cart)
  - 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 state "no surcharges" (you can't mark up price to cover fee)

Set Up Office

Order Fulfillment Procedure

- What are the best shipping options?
  - (I use USPS media mail and USPS flat-rate priority envelopes that I special order from the USPS)
- What supplies do you need: envelopes, bubble wrap, packing tape, black marker
- How will you reply to customer?
  - (I send a personal email, which has helped me connect with readers and get testimonials)
- What is the policy if book doesn't arrive?
  - (All books are tracked. I verify the address, show them it was delivered, and ask them to look for it. Usually they find it. I do re-send if not, which rarely happens.)
- Do you offer discounts (e.g., student or bulk discounts)?
- What are the sales tax collection rules in your state?
  - (Note: rules are changing, so far, rules apply only over a certain income or number of sales)
- What is the policy for bookstores?
  - (I do a 40% discount plus shipping, then I send an invoice due in 30 days)
- How do you plan to track orders, income, expenses, receipts?
- When do you need to pay taxes: do you need to file any quarterly?

Set Up Office

Print Distribution

- Options are rapidly changing for self-publishers
- DIY method: sell your book from your own website, keep all the money
- Other channels offer so much exposure that they are worth exploring

Term "distribution" can be confusing:

- Traditional distribution (someone is active selling the book)
- Traditional distribution (book is merely available; e.g., Ingram)
- You distribute printed books via online retailers (e.g., Amazon)
- POD distributors (e.g., IngramSpark and Kindle Direct Publishing)

Print Distribution

Print Distribution

Tactics
- List book as many places as possible
- List book with only the biggest sites
- List book with one sales outlet, and add more later
- List book in certain countries (in best sales outlets in those countries)

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

Read up-to-date information online about the major retailers
Read all user agreements!
Some information on Amazon follows, which you can read on your own

Print Distribution

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 and mark shipped
- You want to have a good "seller rating"; buyers can rate you as a seller, and Amazon will dock points if you are late or do anything wrong
- Amazon is buyer-friendly if book doesn't arrive

Print Distribution

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 (e.g., Amazon Prime); 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; you can choose a professional account ($39.99/month plus selling fees) or individual account ($0.99 per item sold plus selling fees)

Print Distribution

POD Distribution

- You follow instructions to prepare and upload PDF files
- The POD company makes your book available to readers and bookstores
- When an order arrives, the company prints and ships
- The biggest POD companies:
  - Amazon-owned Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP, formerly CreateSpace)
  - Ingram-owned IngramSpark
- There are complications when selling to bookstores
  - Some bookstores do not like working with POD companies, especially KDP
  - Booksellers want to be able to send back unsold books, which can cost you a lot
  - Bookstores expect a certain discount

A comparison of KDP and IngramSpark follows, which you can read at home

Print Distribution

IngramSpark vs. Kindle Direct Publishing

**Many online reviews compare them**—look for recent information

Here is some information that may be dated:
- IngramSpark requires ISBN and lists you as the publisher
- KDP has options (your ISBN vs. their ISBN)
- KDP 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 KDP simpler to use

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

You do not need to use one of these companies!

Print Distribution
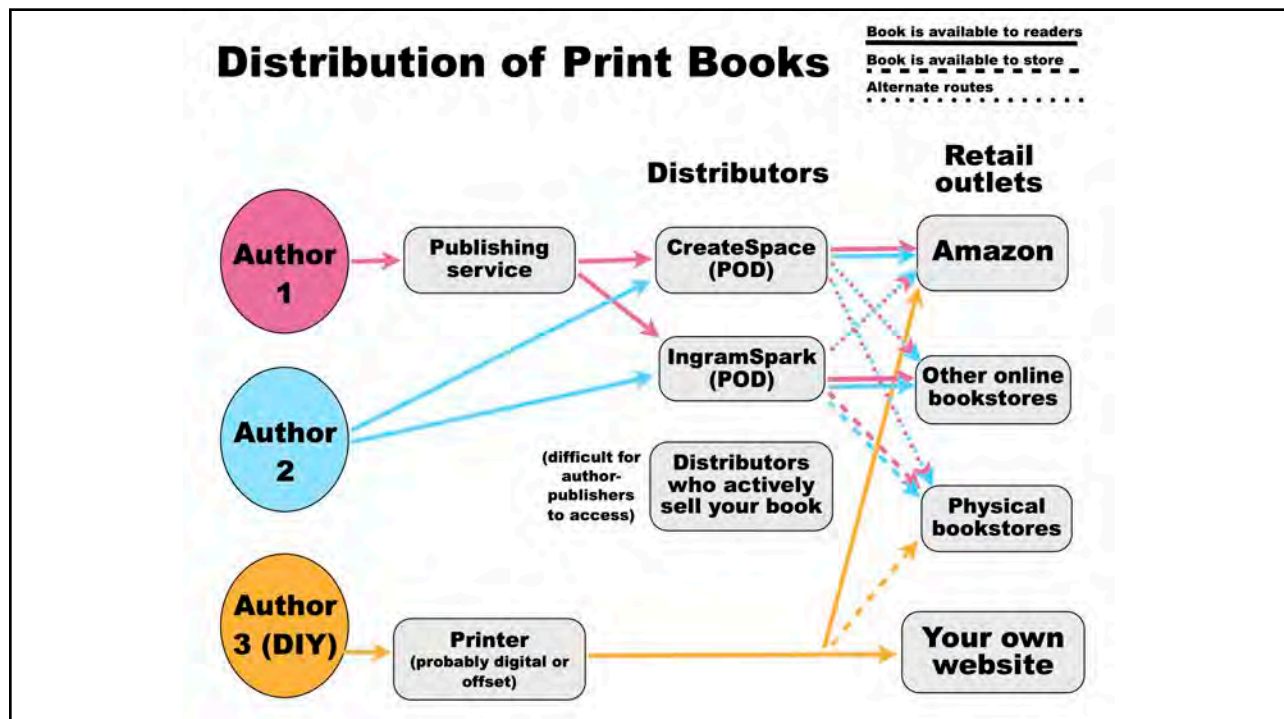
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Ebooks

Ebooks

- Technology is constantly changing, best practices are difficult to find
- Many companies and services are available
- Terminology is confusing

Main formats
- MOBI (the format used by Amazon's Kindle)
- EPUB (the format used by everyone else)
- PDF (not really an ebook—text doesn't flow, reader needs to zoom and scroll)

How to convert: I will let you read this on your own

What does DIY look like, and what are other options?
- Coming right up

Ebooks

How to Produce an Ebook

- 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
- (Optional) Tinker with file's code, fix errors
- Upload file to sites where you will sell it
- Notes on my website: http://emilybuehler.com/miscellany/how-to-guides/

Best practices are not clear
- A web developer told me the "industry standard" is InDesign to EPUB! This makes no sense to me.

Ebooks

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

But see next page!

Ebooks

Strategies to Produce Ebooks*

- Use a DIY conversion tool
  - One ideas is to use Scrivener or Pages to start, then Sigil or Calibre to fine tune EPUB
  - Buy Vellum if you can
- Hire a service to convert:
  Jane Friedman recommends https://ebookpartnership.com/ (costs $50–300)
- Upload to Draft2Digital, convert to EPUB, then download EPUB
  - They let you do this even if you do not use their distribution services
- Use free Reedsy editor to generate an EPUB

* recommended by Jane Friedman

Ebooks

Ebook Distribution: DIY

- DIY ebook method: create EPUB and MOBI, sell from your website
- Complications with this method:
  - Buyer expects immediate access to ebook
  - 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)
  - You create an account and upload your ebook to their site
  - You link your website to your product on their site (can also embed on your website)
  - They handle payments and distribution
  - They charge a fee (might include the credit card processing fee)
  - They periodically send you your money

Ebooks

Ebook Distribution: Other Outlets

- Listing your ebook with other outlets gains exposure
- Also, you don't need to create the EPUB or MOBI file (they do it)
- Types of outlets:
  - **Retailers** you can access directly (major and minor)
  - **Distributors** that access retailers for you (saves time and is easier because you post ebook in one place and they send it out, but makes less $)
  - Companies that blend ebook distribution with ebook production and other services (e.g., editing, cover design)
- It's confusing and there are lots of scammers!
- Read independent reviews of companies before you get involved
- Read all contracts; do not sign away rights to your book

Ebooks

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

Ebooks

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
- You cannot have a lower price elsewhere (?)
- Optional digital rights management (DRM); it's breakable and reader unfriendly

Ebooks

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 (outside US)
  - Streetlib (outside US)
- Saves time vs. DIY if you update ebook: make updates in one place, they distribute the new version to all retailers
- Avoid scams: you should be able to leave the service at any time, control pricing, and easily/cheaply update your ebook
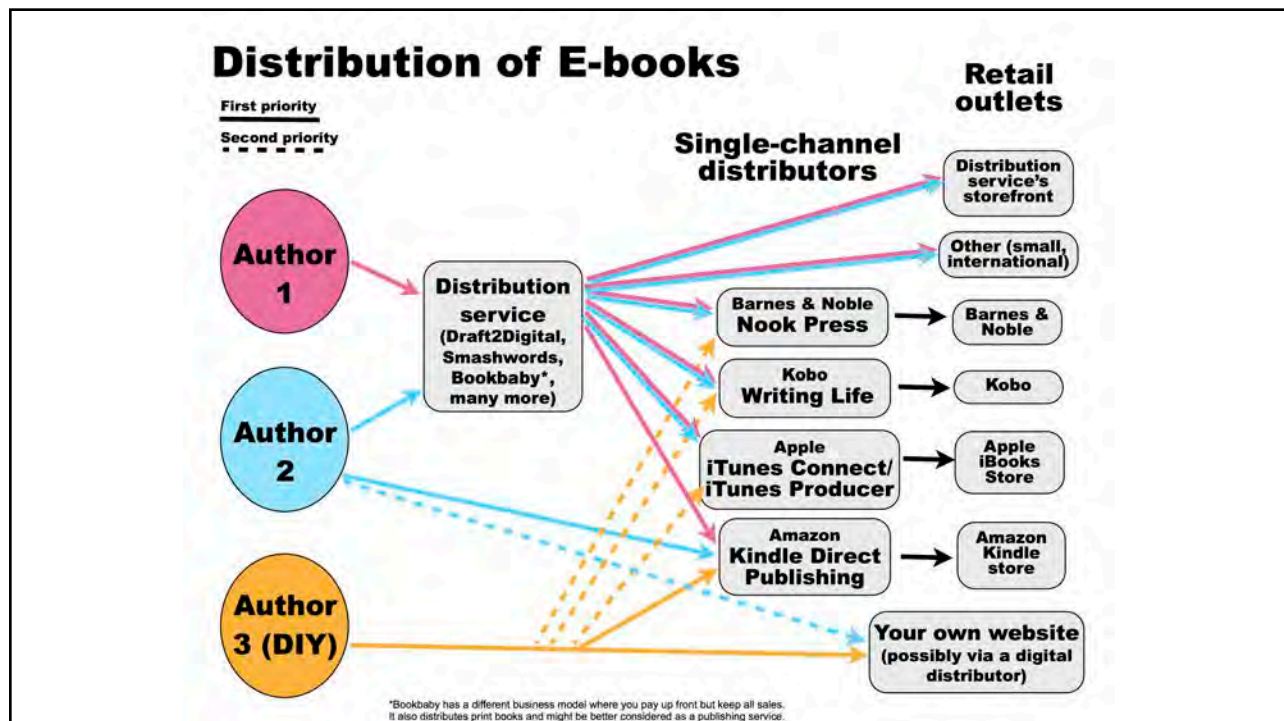
Ebooks

Ebook Distributors

Distributor Type 2:
- Package deal, you pay a fee up front
- Includes services you can pick from (editing, cover design)
- They create the ebook
- They distribute
- Mostly used by authors when book is special (e.g., highly illustrated or a children's book)*

I know very little about this

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

Ebooks

Distribution of E-books

First priority
Second priority

Author 1 → Distribution service (Draft2Digital, Smashwords, Bookbaby*, many more)

Author 2

Author 3 (DIY)

Single-channel distributors

Retail outlets

- Distribution service's storefront
- Other (small, international)
- Barnes & Noble Nook Press → Barnes & Noble
- Kobo Writing Life → Kobo
- Apple iTunes Connect/ iTunes Producer → Apple iBooks Store
- Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing → Amazon Kindle store
- Your own website (possibly via a digital distributor)

*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 DIY ebook 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

Ebooks

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

Marketing

Marketing

- There are tons of ways to market a book
- There are many resources to get ideas (books, blogs, author forums)

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

And…
- Write more books!

Marketing

Marketing

Begin early
- Build a fan base (e.g., by blogging, connecting on reader forums); connecting with a conversation and one on one is best
- 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 official reviews (some are available to self-publishers)
- Seek reader reviews (e.g., send ARC to readers and they review on Goodreads)*
- Set up an author profile on Goodreads, Amazon

*ARC = advanced reader copy, you can send e-version to save money

Marketing

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 the book
- Enter award contest (but, see Resources; there is often a time limit to enter)

Marketing

Marketing: Giveaways

- You can run giveaways (availability comes and goes on Goodreads, Amazon)
- There are also email newsletters that offer readers discounted/free books, but you may have to pay or meet requirements
    - Bookbub is the top one, but is difficult to get into and $$$
    - Search online to find lists of the latest
- Ebook giveaways don't cost you as much

Why do this?
- Gain exposure for you as an author
- Get more reader reviews for book
- Give away book 1 in a series but sell book 2

Marketing

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 them books; there is a website where you create an account, and they'll contact you with any 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?

Final Tasks

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.sfwa.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/
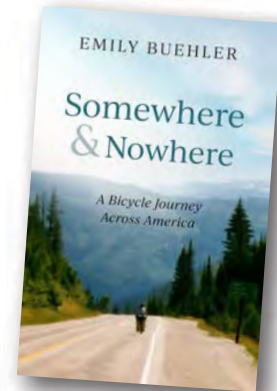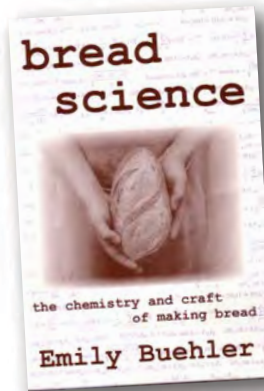
Thanks for coming!

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Today's slides are posted at
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