



Checklist for Self-Publishers

COURTESY OF PAPER TRAIL PUBLISHING

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Editorial

- consult editor to determine levels of editing your manuscript requires
- get estimate and hire professional editor to edit your manuscript
- negotiate editorial changes and finalize manuscript
- apply for International Standard Book Number (ISBN)
- have designed book professionally proofread (and indexed—optional)
- if publishing an e-book, make sure editing takes this into account

Design

- gather or commission illustrations, if using, and obtain permissions
- decide on size, format and approximate length of book
- get estimate(s) and contract with one or more book designers for cover design and interior layout (typesetting)
- provide “design brief” to designer, indicating layout preferences
- before proceeding with full layout, commission from designer at least two sample covers and chapter layouts
- make final decision on fonts (size, style) and other design features (chapter starts, subheadings, running heads or footers)
- make a minimum of changes to the content at the design (proofreading) stage to keep costs down
- simplify layout as much as possible for an e-book

Print Production

- establish print run based on estimated book sales and giveaways
- contact at least two printers for quotes and contract with one
- establish “publication date” and, working backwards, create a production schedule allowing for each stage in the production process (editing, design, proofreading, indexing, printing)

Distribution

- investigate distribution options for your book, including selling to libraries and listing your book on Amazon.ca and Amazon.com
- contact local bookstores to gauge their interest in your book
- if warranted, contract with distributor for help in reaching a broader market (regional, national or international, e.g., United States)

Marketing

- consider your book’s market and genre when setting its price
- create a detailed marketing plan that includes an online component
- solicit advance testimonials to use in the book and/or in marketing
- establish date of book launch and book a venue; issue invitations
- distribute press releases to appropriate media outlets, tailoring these to specific audiences or geographic locations if necessary
- follow up with media to get interviews and generate buzz
- contact appropriate publications, including blogs, to run announcements or feature excerpts from your book
- collect additional testimonials and book reviews to use in marketing
- enter relevant award contests (e.g., heritage, independent books)
- to generate and maintain sales, schedule speaking engagements, readings or other events for at least a year following publication date