


Print on Demand Publishing

The Wave of the Future?


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Print on Demand Publishing

(Also referred to as POD)


Introduction



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Introduction


- The Print on Demand field has many players.
- The Print on Demand field is still shaking down, even as it grows.
- The Print on Demand field is still a minefield.



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What Print on Demand Publishing is Not

It is not vanity publishing!





Then what is Vanity Publishing?

- Paying hundreds, even thousands of dollars to an editorial house that promises to make your manuscript saleable.
- Paying thousands of dollars up front to a publisher for a print run of a thousand or more hardback books.




...vanity publishing

- Having those books sit in your basement or attic, or the root cellar, or the sewing room
- or paying monthly rental fees for a Public Storage unit.



What Print on Demand is...


A sea change...



A sea change?


“ Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.”

The Tempest, act 1




Technology seems to be using
sea change (without the hyphen)

- Self-publishing, which encompasses print on demand publishing, is a sea change that's making traditional publishers suddenly look over their shoulders at what's becoming a revolution.




What does this mean?

- Will high quality books go away?
- Will we drown in an ocean of garbage?
- Will we swim in flotsam and jetsam soup?




It means...


- Self-publishing, including print on demand, and traditional publishing will continue to co-exist.
- Quality will still rise to the top.




What will the impact really be?



The Impact...




- ...of self-publishing will be similar to what happened in the mid 15th century when Johann Gutenberg perfected his invention of the printing press.



To the dismay of the incumbents,

- suddenly what people read isn't controlled by just a few powerful people or conglomerates.





A Career...

- ...as a writer is now open to anyone with:
 - ◆ Talent
 - ◆ Persistence
 - ◆ Determination
 - ◆ Luck.



You mean I can earn a living?!


- Whether or not a career as a writer will pay the bills is another matter entirely!



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The Reality


- Very few traditionally published authors make a living just from writing books.
- But now the playing field is being leveled.
- It's still a lot of hard work.
- You will find many ways to promote your books.
- This will probably include giving talks.



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Where can I find more information?


- First, go to Dan Poynter's web site and look around - www.parapublishing.com Dan's the self-publishing guru.
- Buy his book "The Self-Publishing Manual"
- Also check into "The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing" by Tom & Marilyn Ross.



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Finding information...

- Look through copies of writer's magazines at the library or buy them new at the bookstore to see ads by POD publishers.
- Also, do an Internet search, using "Print on Demand" (Entering "POD" will bring up a whole lot of unrelated, though amusing, matches).




Printer or Publisher?

- "I'd really like to self-publish. I've got a half-dozen quotes from different printers and I'm willing to work very hard to market my book. But I just don't have the money for even a small print run of 250 books. Now what?"



Can't pay the printer?

- First, join the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) (www.pma-online.org) or Small Publishers Association of North America (www.spannet.org) for great advice and events about self-publishing.
- When there's just no way to beg or borrow the funds to print your book under your own imprint...



What will print on demand cost?

- Basic POD fees generally range from \$200 to \$500 for setup, plus additional fees for any optional marketing package you may choose.

But watch for other costs! Needed items like copyright registration, ISBN numbers, graphics charges, and many more can add up quickly, if you choose the wrong POD.



Choosing a POD publisher

- Make sure you, the author, retain ALL rights to your manuscript. Ditto for graphics, if you supply them.
- Often the POD publisher will produce the cover art, possibly making it difficult to take those files with you if you move on. But many do a terrific job!




Narrowing down the list ...

- Make sure the agreement can be terminated instantly or within 30 days, in writing.
- Otherwise, it will be difficult to negotiate a contract with an interested, more traditional publisher if the POD publisher retains the right to market your work for another year after written notice of cancellation.




Narrowing it down even more...

- The previous three slides indicate critical requirements that will eliminate a lot of POD publishers from serious consideration.
- To recap:
 - ◆ Watch total costs
 - ◆ Author must retain all rights
 - ◆ Agreement can be terminated immediately or within 30 days – no marketing rights left with the print on demand publisher




More considerations...

- Ask for a sample book from the print on demand publisher (or any printing house you're thinking of partnering with):
 - ◆ Production quality should be high in perfect bound and clothbound books - No excess glue. No smeared ink. No blemishes. No crunched up pages.




...and more

- ◆ Be aware that, in print on demand publishing, color saturation for the book's cover can vary, even during the same print run. Some covers will be lighter, some darker.
- ◆ The publisher should use acid-free paper.




**If a sample copy isn't available
...or even if it is...**

- BUY an existing book from the catalog on the POD website. You'll be supporting other self-publishing authors, as well as furthering your own research! We do need to support each other, not just bewail scarce buyers of our books.




What format for my manuscript?

- This varies with the POD publisher. Some common formats used include:
 - ◆ Text (.txt)
 - ◆ Word (.doc)
 - ◆ PDF
 - ◆ Camera ready hard copy




Acceptable manuscript formats

- Be sure to follow the publisher's submission instructions!!
 - ◆ Some PODs do all the formatting.
 - ◆ Some subcontract it or give you the names of editors and others they have worked with to fix the problems (for a fee).
 - ◆ Some print the MS exactly the way you send it, warts and all! They don't have time to hold your hand.




Manuscript corrections ...

- Proofread, proofread, proofread...before you mail off the manuscript.
- Two sets of eyes are better than one, so ask a friend or colleague with “an eye for detail” to proofread the MS for you.
- If English is not your first language, make sure your proofreader is an educated native speaker.




...corrections...

- ◆ This doesn't mean you or your proofreader need advanced degrees, but if either of you flunked high school English, it's a good indication you need to find someone more comfortable with grammar and spelling.




...corrections

- ◆ Depending on the book's subject matter, your own high school student may be just the person to proofread for you. Are your kids avid readers? Do they cringe at all the misspelled signs in our society?
- ◆ It's your call. Just remember that fixing typos after the publisher has set up the manuscript will cost you, in time and money. So, be very picky about your proofreader(s) and don't rush!




Book formats...

- Some print on demand publishers produce hardback (clothbound) editions; some only publish paperback (perfect bound). If you select paperback, go for laminated covers. They look nice and hold up better.




...book formats...

- If you self-publish under your own imprint, also choose clothbound or perfect bound.
 - ◆ Avoid saddle stitching/staples, unless it's a booklet.
 - ◆ Workbooks, cookbooks, reference books or children's books are often suitable for coil binding, so they'll lie flat.




...book formats

- ◆ Even corporations sometimes use plastic comb binding. It's cheaper, it looks cheap and it irritates the reader when it falls apart! But if you have less than 20 pages, it might be a very reasonable option. Consider your purpose, your audience, then weigh those against the cost of professional-looking coil binding.



What about eBooks or e-books?


- We've finally got to the hottest new format!
- At this point in time, it may be best to avoid print on demand publishers who also make your book available as an electronic book. That's "may be," not "is."
- The jury is still out on eBooks. There may not be enough safeguards in place to prevent a buyer from e-mailing your book to a hundred friends while you get paid once for it.



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...eBooks


- ◆ For some books, this not only doesn't matter, it can be an advantage. It depends on the author's strategy for future books or if there'll be future books. (Give 'em a free taste and they'll come back to buy.)



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Can a POD publisher handle all kinds of material?


- Generally, no. Because the technology used is most often one of the Xerox® DocuTech® 6100 series printers, PODs can't handle children's books with many color illustrations. Exceptions are expensive and not always pleasing to the eye.
- Black-and-white illustrations are fine. And many authors have brought out-of-print books back into circulation through print on demand.



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How is my book priced?

- Print on demand publishers have a base price, the wholesale price. And they suggest a retail price, often based on the number of pages in your book. Blank pages count and may put you into a higher category.
- You can set a higher retail price, but once the price is imprinted on the back cover, you can't charge more if you change your mind. Not without paying for a new cover and a new barcode.




...pricing

- One advantage to self-publishing would be that you could keep the price flexible by not imprinting it on the cover. But it's usually better to go down in price, not up, if the book has already been advertised. People don't like seeing one price and then when they return the following week to buy, encountering a higher price.




Advances and Royalties

- There are no advances paid in print on demand publishing.
- Royalty checks will be small at first as orders trickle in.
- The royalty schedule varies from publisher to publisher, so be sure to read their material carefully.




...advances and royalties

- You will probably receive 10% of the WHOLESALE price on most sales through bookstores and online bookstores.
- You may receive 20% of the RETAIL price if the customer orders direct from the publisher. Maybe not.
- There are better royalty deals out there, but look at everything else in the contract, too, along with the production quality of the book.




Will the publisher market my book?

- They'll do some limited marketing. You will do most of it yourself, the same as with a traditional publisher.
- A good POD publisher will get your book listed with the online bookstores, including amazon.com, bn.com, booksense.com, booksamillion.com and others. A slow process at first.




Marketing my book

- A good POD publisher will also get your book into the Ingram database, so that bricks 'n mortar bookstores can order your book for customers. Again, this can take several months, so you'll need patience and a lot of it.
- Getting the book into the Baker & Taylor database for library purchase is also important. But you'll probably need a Library of Congress number, so librarians can order the book without extra expense. PODs can't always get LOC #s for you.




Other marketing options

- Keep researching ways of marketing your book through Internet searches and networking with other self-publishers.
- Don't forget the various book fairs held every year. These include national and international fairs, as well as the regionals. Again, becoming a member of IBPA can be a big help to you.



What is My Own Experience with POD?

- I am not an expert and may never be an expert.
- So far I have published one book through Print on Demand. It is a short story collection, and I would have waited many more years trying to interest a traditional publisher. As a rule, they want your short stories only after you've proved yourself as a novelist.



DISCOVERIES

A Journey Through Life
by
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