

Getting Your Book Into Print

The fastest, surest way to get your book into print is to use some form of self-publishing. However, if you expect to sell your book commercially, you should first consider having it published through a traditional publishing company.

Traditional publishers will not charge you any money to print your book (so if one asks you for money, run away!) They have their own distribution network to ensure your book will be available through normal retailers and online. The books they publish are often eligible for a variety of grants, and for reading programs that can help generate sales.

You may need to hire an editor to clean up your manuscript before sending it to a traditional publisher, and you will have to do some of the marketing yourself. Traditional publishing is a very slow process, and you will have little or no control over the final product, but for most books it is still the best option.

Some publishers only accept manuscripts from **agents**, while others will consider un-agented submissions. Reputable agents will not charge you for their services. They make their money from the publishing house.

What are both agents and publishers looking for? Books they believe will sell. Publishing a book is expensive and time consuming. They won't be interested in taking on manuscripts that will need a lot of work to be marketable. Your best chance of getting your book into print the traditional way:

- **Make your book the very best it can be.**
 - Read books about writing; Stephen King's *On Writing*, Peter Rubie's *The Elements of Storytelling*, Donald Maass's *The Fire In Fiction*.
 - Take creative writing courses at your local community college.
 - Join a writers' group for camaraderie and support. Weigh all the advice you get; do give serious consideration to the other writers' suggestions, but don't lose your own vision for your book. Make the changes that make sense.
 - Practice, practice, practice. Published author Adam Lewis Schroeder teaches creative writing at UBC Okanagan. He says it took several years to write his first novel; less than three years to write his second. Both took many, many drafts.
 - Clean up your "technical" writing skills. It's easier for an agent or publisher to get behind a clean manuscript. Again, books like *The Canadian Style* and websites like *The Blue Book of Grammar* can be very helpful. If spelling, grammar and punctuation just aren't your thing, get someone knowledgeable to help.
 - Enjoy the process, and expect it to take some time to get it right.
- **Research agents and publishers.** Which are most likely to be interested in your manuscript? How should you approach them? Check out the Association of Canadian Publishers' website for current information and advice.

Self-publishing can be a good option if you only want to produce a few copies, or if you are in a hurry. (Some successful authors have self-published their work, established a market for their product, and then had it “picked up” by a traditional publisher—for example, *The Wealthy Barber* and *The Celestine Prophecy*.)

Before self-publishing, most authors have two burning questions:

- How do I get my manuscript ready to print?
- How much will it cost to get my book printed?

The answers depend on several factors.

- Have you already had someone copyedit and proofread your book?
- How many images do you want to include?
 - Are they ready to place?
 - Have you already written your own captions for them?
- Do you have a firm expectation of how you want your book to look?
 - Do you know where you want the page numbers to go?
 - Do you want your name or the book’s title or the chapter titles to appear on each page of the book?
 - If so, where?
 - Are any of these details really important to you?
- Will you need a table of contents, a glossary, or an index?
- How many books do you expect to print?
- Do you plan to sell your books yourself?
- Do you plan to sell your books through bookstores?

Your answers to these questions can point you in different directions. As the publishing world continues to evolve and new printing technologies emerge, small self-published press runs are becoming more attractive. Here’s some of what you need to know:

Traditional book printers like Friesens and Hignell generally produce your book from a ready-to-print file. Their quote might provide a little bit of technical time for “tweaking,” but for the most part you will have already done the full layout. You’ll need to get your own ISBN and CIP data—but don’t worry, this isn’t difficult and it’s free—so you will retain all rights to your book.

Generally, book printers produce your books in bulk quantities; the more they print at one time, the less each individual book will cost. That’s still the most economical per-book option, but it leaves most authors with cases of unsold books.

With today’s **print on demand (POD)** technology, book printers can now produce **small press runs** (a few books at a time) for a reasonable cost.

Many authors are using the **POD services of supported self-publishing companies**. Be careful with these. Always do your homework before you sign on with one of them; check sites like “Writer Beware” or “Predators and Editors,” or Google the company name.

Supported self-publishing companies may expect you to do much of the layout yourself, or they may expect you to provide them with a basic document from which they will do the layout. You may be given several formats to choose from, and you may or may not be allowed to have a say in how the book is priced, and how it will look. Most of these—

including Trafford—have recently been absorbed into a single company. The industry is changing, companies are changing hands. Do your homework.

If you decide you would like to self-publish your book, I strongly recommend you hire a graphic artist to create your cover. The graphic artist may be able to create your book layout as well, and it's often easier to deal with one person who shares your vision.

I can help with all levels of editing, and I can help you with the book layout if you choose.

To see what will be involved, have a look at the four examples on the following pages: *Simple, Standard, Detailed,* and *Complex*. Your book will probably be similar to one of them.

Whether you hire me or not, it will save you time (and money!) if you perform the steps in the right order. Remember that the structural edit, then the copyedit, and then at least one proofread must be completed first, then the layout. Each of the examples includes time for a standard proofread. (If you are *absolutely confident* that your book has already been thoroughly edited, you would not need to pay me to do it a second time.)

Good luck with your book. I wish you every success in your grand adventure in publishing!

Simple

A simple book has up to 100 pages¹. It may include a dedication and/or acknowledgements page, a forward, and up to 3 images² with captions.

Edit (from electronic files, using a recent version of Word): 3 hours

- proofread manuscript³
- send electronic file containing revisions to author for approval
- incorporate author's revisions into final text

Layout: 2 hours

- using the author's choice of sample designs⁴, place all text and images
- produce an electronic draft for author approval
- incorporate minor revisions from author
- create the final file and submit to author or to printer

Communication: 2 hours

- meetings (initial 30 minute meeting, no charge)
- telephone conversations and email.

Total: 7 hours

¹ If your book has more pages, increase the time for editing and layout.

² This example assumes that all image files are properly named, and that they are sized and adjusted (ready-to-place). If the images need work, add 15 minutes per image.

³ After the first hour of proofreading, I will know if the manuscript needs a more substantial edit. If so, I can either provide you with suggestions so that you can do much of the work yourself, or give you some idea of how much more of my time may be required.

⁴ If none of the sample designs appeal to you, choose the one best suited and let me know what changes you need. If you have an example of the perfect design, show me; that will save time.

Standard

A standard book has up to 200 pages⁵. It may include a dedication and/or acknowledgements page, a forward, and up to 10 images⁶ with captions.

Edit (from electronic files, using a recent version of Word): 5 hours

- proofread manuscript⁷
- send electronic file containing revisions to author for approval
- incorporate author's revisions into final text

Layout: 5 hours

- using the author's choice of sample designs⁸, produce an electronic draft of up to ten pages (including the front matter and at least the first two pages of the first chapter) for author approval
- incorporate author's minor revisions into the design
- place all text and up to 10 images
- send an electronic proof to author for approval
- incorporate minor revisions from author
- send a second proof to author for approval
- create the final file and submit to author or to printer

Communication: 2 hours

- meetings (initial 30 minute meeting, no charge)
- telephone conversations and email.

Total: 12 hours

⁵ If your book has more pages, increase the time for editing and layout.

⁶ This example assumes that all image files are properly named, and that they are sized and adjusted (ready-to-place). If the images need work, add 15 minutes per image.

⁷ After the first hour of proofreading, I will know if the manuscript needs a more substantial edit. If so, I can either provide you with suggestions so that you can do much of the work yourself, or give you some idea of how much more of my time may be required.

⁸ If none of the sample designs appeal to you, choose the one best suited and let me know what changes you need. If you have an example of the perfect design, show me; that will save time.

Detailed

A detailed book has up to 200 pages⁹. It may include a simple table of contents, a forward, a dedication/acknowledgements page, a simple glossary, and up to 50 images¹⁰ with captions.

Edit (from electronic files, using a recent version of Word): 5 hours

- proofread manuscript¹¹
- send electronic file containing revisions to author for approval
- incorporate author's revisions into final text

Layout: 15 hours

- using the author's choice of sample designs¹², produce an electronic draft of the title page plus up to three pages *each* of the front matter, the first chapter (including an example of each type of image), and the back matter for author approval
- incorporate author's revisions into design
- place all text and up to 50 images
- send electronic proof to author for approval
- incorporate minor revisions from author
- send a second proof to author for approval
- create the final file and submit to author or to printer

Communication: 3 hours

- meetings (initial 30 minute meeting, no charge)
- telephone conversations and email.

Total: 23 hours

⁹ If your book has more pages, increase the time for editing and layout.

¹⁰ This example assumes that all image files are properly named, and that they are sized and adjusted (ready-to-place). If the images need work, add 15 minutes per image.

¹¹ After the first hour of proofreading, I will know if the manuscript needs a more substantial edit. If so, I can either provide you with suggestions so that you can do much of the work yourself, or give you some idea of how much more of my time may be required.

¹² If none of the sample designs appeal to you, choose the one best suited and let me know what changes you need. If you have an example of the perfect design, show me; that will save time.

Complex

A complex book has up to 200 pages¹³. It may include a multi-tiered table of contents, a forward, a dedication/acknowledgements page, footnotes, a glossary, an index, and up to 100 images¹⁴ with captions.

Edit (from electronic files, using a recent version of Word): 5 hours

- proofread manuscript¹⁵
- send electronic file containing revisions to author for approval
- incorporate author's revisions into final text

Layout: 25 hours

- using the author's choice of sample designs¹⁶, produce an electronic draft of the title page plus up to three pages *each* of the front matter, the first chapter (including an example of each type of image), and the back matter for author approval
- incorporate author's revisions into design
- place all text and up to 100 images
- send electronic proof to author for approval
- incorporate minor revisions from author
- send a second proof to author for approval
- create the final file and submit to author or to printer

Communication: 3 hours

- meetings (initial 30 minute meeting, no charge)
- telephone conversations and email.

Total: 33 hours

¹³ If your book has more pages, increase the time for editing and layout.

¹⁴ This example assumes that all image files are properly named, and that they are sized and adjusted (ready-to-place). If the images need work, add 15 minutes per image.

¹⁵ After the first hour of proofreading, I will know if the manuscript needs a more substantial edit. If so, I can either provide you with suggestions so that you can do much of the work yourself, or give you some idea of how much more of my time may be required.

¹⁶ If none of the sample designs appeal to you, choose the one best suited and let me know what changes you need. If you have an example of the perfect design, show me; that will save time.