

INDIE AUTHOR MAGAZINE

SELF PUBLISHING SHOW SPECIAL ISSUE

From Bookshelf to Bookstore:
Exploring Lulu.com's Four
Major Marketing Avenues

The Transformative
Power of Transmedia
Storytelling

Merch Jar's Method Helps
Indie Authors Tame the
Amazon Ad Beast

An Inside Look At
Formatting Software
Options

10 Tips for:
Revitalizing Your
Backlist

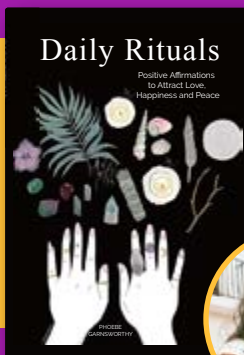
The Cost of Creation: What
Should Authors Expect to
Pay for Professional Editing
and Design?

Authorpreneurs in Action



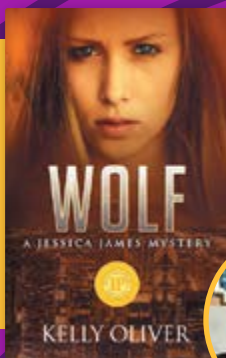
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Katie Cross, katiecrossbooks.com



“Having my own store has given me the freedom to look at my creativity as a profitable business and lifelong career.”

Phoebe Garnsworthy, phoebegarnsworthy.com



“Lulu has a super handy integration with Shopify. Lulu makes it so easy to sell paperbacks directly to readers.”

Kelly Oliver, kellyoliverbooks.com



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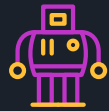
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Welcome to London!

It's London, baby! To those of you reading this at the event, welcome to the fourth Self Publishing Show (SPS) Live, and the best one yet. Headlining this year's conference are two of the biggest-selling Romance authors on the planet, E. L. James and Lucy Score. The records set by Erika James are well documented, but perhaps less well known is how much she gives back to the author community, giving advice and encouragement to other writers in forums and attending events like SPS Live. Lucy Score and her other half, popularly known as Mr. Lucy, are a powerhouse in indie publishing. If you want to run a self-published business right, you will do no better than following their example.

This year's theme is "Change: Adopt & Adapt." As Spotify disrupts the audiobook market and AI continues to reveal its myriad implications for our world, there's no doubt the winds of change are blowing in the self-publishing community. It feels to me as if we have had it our own way for a long time, building and devising marketing methods that have become industry standards. Now, with AI and major corporate players, we have to make some adjustments.

But you know what? That's okay. It happens in every industry. Actually, for those of you who are dedicated to your success, it's helpful because if you adopt and adapt fast enough, you'll find yourself where those early pioneers were back in the late noughties and early 2010s, miles ahead of the curve.

Some aspects of AI face backlash. Concerns surround the viability of trades, such as cover design and the flood of AI-authored books entering the market. For that reason, some in our community have brandished all things AI as "the enemy."

But not me.

I see fighting AI akin to fighting the tide. You won't win, and you'll most likely drown trying. The opportunities presented to us with these tools are immense, and many of them can be exploited without damaging anyone's career.

Take ad images, for instance. Before, it was cost and time prohibitive to order a dozen new ad

images every month from a cover designer. Firstly, if everyone did that, you'd be in a six-month queue. Secondly, you'd be broke. But today, we can use tools such as Leonardo and Midjourney to refresh our Facebook campaigns every few weeks. This is a new way of working that doesn't take anyone's job. It adds to the power of your marketing, harnessing AI to accelerate your existing methods. Refusing "on principle" to do this reminds me of those cover designers in the '90s who refused to use Photoshop, instead insisting that a good cover could only come from an illustrator. Today Photoshop is one of the most widely used design tools in the world and a staple of every cover designer I know.

Using AI ethically is possible and, I would suggest, a necessity to keep up.

At this year's SPS Live, ProWritingAid founder Chris Banks will talk about using AI for a first round of self-editing in his talk—another excellent way of bringing your manuscript up a notch before it goes to your professional editors. We'll also hear from companies using AI to voice audiobooks. While you can argue this does take someone's job, I suspect it will open up audiobooks to authors who cannot afford the expense of a human narrator. Again, this is "work" that would not have happened without AI.

We're not just focused on change; this year's sessions will also focus plenty on the more eternal issues writers face in our industry, such as writing productivity, storytelling, marketing your way to a full-time career, and direct selling, to name a few. If you're attending the conference, definitely seek out some fellow authors to chat to. You never know who may become lifelong friends and publishing partners. Finding success as an indie author has always meant embracing challenges and forging your own path, but there have always been others carving their own roads right beside you.

There's no better time than now to decide where our roads will lead.

James Blatch
Host of *The Self Publishing Show*

The Self Publishing Show LIVE!

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Once again sponsored by Amazon KDP and attended by hundreds of authors plus major industry players including: Audible, Reedsy and ProWritingAid, Europe's premier indie author conference is going to be bigger and better than ever. The 2024's two day line up features the amazing EL James, Lucy Score, Steve Higgs, Sacha Black, Craig Martelle, Rachel McLean and many more.

TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW: learnselfpublishing.com/spslive

SPS Live 2024 SCHEDULE

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DAY 1 - TUESDAY 25TH JUNE 2024

- 9.00 AM WELCOME - JAMES BLATCH
- 9.10 AM YOU CAN TOO! - STEVE HIGGS
- 9.45 AM THE THREE SECRETS OF FINDING YOUR AUDIENCE - SUZY K QUINN
- 10.30 AM BREAK
- 11.00 AM 3 STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE NEW RELEASES WITH BOOKBUB ADS - AUDREY DEROBERT
- 11.35 AM A: FEAR, LOATHING & ACCEPTANCE - JAMES BLATCH
- 12.10 PM LSP COURSES UPDATE - RICARDO FAYET & JAMES BLATCH
- 12.30 PM LUNCH
- 1.30 PM CRACKING THE AUDIOBOOK CODE - CRAIG THOMSON
- 2.15 PM HOOKING ONE MILLION READERS - E.L. JAMES & LUCY SCORE
- 3.00 PM BREAK
- 3.30 PM THE FUTURE OF AUDIO BOOKS PANEL - RACHEL MCLEAN, MILES STEVENS-HOARE FROM WF HOWES, VICTORIA GERKEN FROM PODIUM AUDIO & WILL DAGES FROM FINDAWAY VOICES BY SPOTIFY
- 4.35 PM GENERATIVE AI & EDITING - HAYLEY MILLIMAN
- 5.15 PM FINISH

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 26TH JUNE 2024

- 9.00 AM DAY 2 INTRODUCTION - JAMES BLATCH
- 9.05 AM WORDS HAVE VALUE: MAKING THE LEAP TO BECOMING A FULL-TIME AUTHOR WITH KDP - HANNAH LYNN, CLARE LYDON AND SACHA BLACK
- 9.50 AM FINDING HUNGRY READERS - ALEX NEWTON
- 10.25 AM EFFECTIVELY USING EMAIL PROMOS: FROM INBOX TO BESTSELLER - MIKE HOURIGAN
- 11.00 AM BREAK
- 11.30 AM DEEP DIVE INTO AUDIBLE - LEE JARIT
- 12.05 PM UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR AUTHOR WEBSITE - STUART GRANT
- 12.45 PM THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR AUTHOR CAREER - RACHEL MCLEAN
- 1.30 PM LUNCH
- 2.30 PM WIDEN YOUR WORLD - DAN WOOD
- 3.05 PM THE DIRECT SELLING ECOSYSTEM - DAMON COURTNEY
- 3.50 PM DEALING WITH CHANGE - CRAIG MARTELLE
- 4.20 PM GOODBYE - JAMES BLATCH
- 4.40 PM FINISH

Please note:
Conference sessions are subject to change at short notice.

LONDON



SELF PUBLISHING SHOW SPECIAL ISSUE

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From the EDITOR IN CHIEF

A lot of us started in this industry the same way our characters do at the beginning of our novels: there was a lot for us to learn.

Some knew more than others. Plenty of indie authors transitioned from traditional publishing; they already knew at least some of the terminology we throw around daily, like ARCs, front list, or back matter. Others had mentors who played a vital role in leading them on their journey. Who else discovered self-publishing thanks to someone they met in a writer group or at a publishing event?

But no matter where we started, the beginnings of our careers were as much about paving a path as they were following it. Bright eyed and fresh faced, many of us didn't know exactly what being an indie author meant or how to go about it.

That truth inspired *Indie Author Magazine*. Co-founders Alice Briggs and Chelle Honiker wanted to create a resource for authors at any stage of their publishing career and share insights, tips, and stories of success from others in the community. Three years later, that truth also inspired this special issue, which compiles previous articles and new features on groundbreaking tools, platforms, and strategies in our industry. The truth is there's still a lot for us to learn, and as we watch markets shift, artificial intelligence grows more advanced, and our methods of connecting with readers change, even authors who have been publishing for years are reconsidering their business models and adapting to what's on the horizon.

We've always believed there is no right way to be an author, and now more than any other time, there are countless ways for you to grow your business and share your stories with the world. Like with your characters, it's up to you where your story leads.

Nicole Schroeder
Editor in Chief
Indie Author Magazine

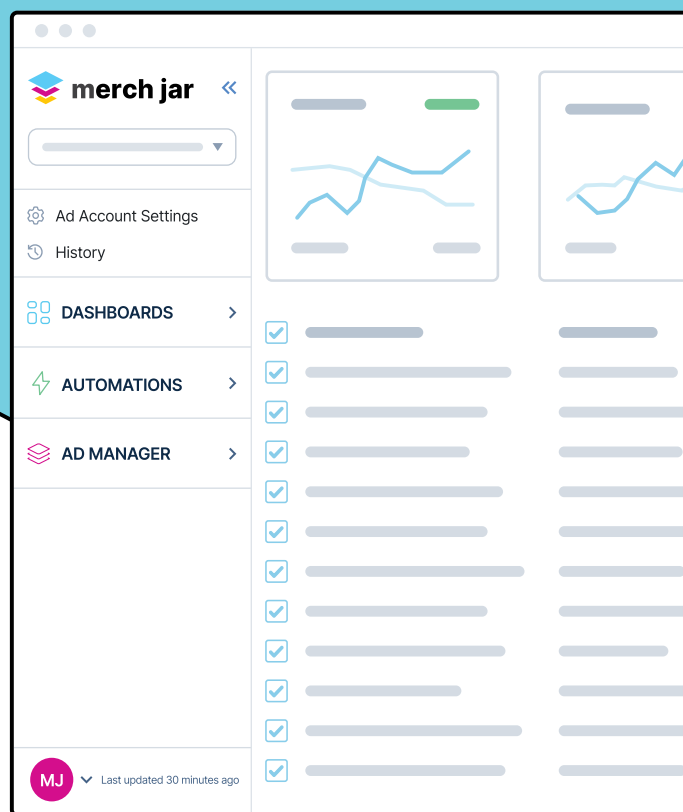


Nicole Schroeder is a storyteller at heart. As the editor in chief of *Indie Author Magazine*, she brings nearly a decade of journalism and editorial experience to the publication, delighting in any opportunity to tell true stories and help others do the same. She holds a bachelor's degree from the Missouri School of Journalism and minors in English and Spanish. Her previous work includes editorial roles at local publications, and she's helped edit and produce numerous fiction and nonfiction books, including a Holocaust survivor's memoir, alongside independent publishers. Her own creative writing has been published in national literary magazines. When she's not at her writing desk, Nicole is usually in the saddle, cuddling her guinea pigs, or spending time with family. She loves any excuse to talk about Marvel movies and considers National Novel Writing Month its own holiday.

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MARTELLE'S MOTIVATION

The Time Is Now

I submit that there has never been a better time to be a writer. We have to highlight the change in the publishing landscape and the advances in opportunity between 2009 and 2017—most notably the windfalls that came with public acceptance of e-books and the viability of self-publishing thanks to Amazon.

Traditional publishers had their methodologies for selecting authors to reward with contracts and advance royalties. Many good authors were pushed aside because their stories didn't fit with what a publisher was selling. That makes sense. Who wants a product they don't think they can sell? But that barrier to entry has been removed. Some may contend that bad books predominate on Amazon, as there is no gatekeeper to keep them out.

Is that what the twelve publishers are saying who rejected *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*?

I suggest that the greatest arbiter of a good book is the reader. Bad books will fall by the wayside. Good books will see the light of day, but only if the readers consider them good. The challenge is how to find those readers, and self-published authors are exploring innovative ways to contact and expand their readership.

Who am I to make these claims? I run a group with over 75,000 self-published authors. We share best business practices. We share successes. We don't promote to one another; our fellow authors are not our target audience. Readers are. They are varied and sometimes elusive, but they're out there. I wouldn't have been able to sell a



million books without the knowledge I've learned in that group. And I'm still learning something new every day. This business isn't static. It's constantly evolving.

What we have now are ways for authors to improve: to get feedback, rewrite, and try again. We have extensive market experience to advertise to a narrower audience, specifically those who could like our books. You'll find that some of us have reader numbers that any traditional publisher would envy. Self-published authors—"indies," as we call ourselves—are shoulder to shoulder as we learn how to sell to the reading public.

The self-publication model is far different and more appealing to today's audience. Our e-books aren't priced to make physical books more attractive. Self-published authors can price an e-book at \$5 and pocket \$3.75 from the sale.

Marketing is more challenging now than it was just two years ago, but groups like 20BooksTo50k® and Successful Indie Author break down the walls to understanding. It is easier now than ever before to learn what you need to know when you need to know it. Being an author is a lonely business, but we don't have to be alone. It is not a zero-sum game. One reader can read more books than we can write, and they will read the books they like, no matter who published them.

Most of the full-time authors I know, including me, are making a full-time living, many reaching seven figures a year. There's never been a better time.

A rising tide lifts all boats. ■

Craig Martelle



Craig Martelle

High school Valedictorian enlists in the Marine Corps under a guaranteed tank contract. An inauspicious start that was quickly superseded by excelling in language study. Contract waived, a year at the Defense Language Institute to learn Russian and off to keep my ears on the big red machine during the Soviet years. Earned a four-year degree in two years by majoring in Russian Language. My general staff. career included choice side gigs - UAE, Bahrain, Korea, Russia, and Ukraine.

Major Martelle. I retired from the Marines after a couple years at the embassy in Moscow working arms control issues.

Department of Homeland Security then law school next. I was working for a high-end consulting firm performing business diagnostics, business law, and leadership coaching. For the money they paid me, I was good with that. Just until I wasn't. Then I started writing.



ALLI EXCLUSIVE


Building a Business Mindset

For successful authors, writing is not just an art. It is also a business. In fact, the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) refers to its top tier members, who have access to special benefits, such as a literary agent, as “authorpreneurs” because they are authors but also entrepreneurs. It’s a mindset all authors who wish to be successful should consider adopting. And at each stage of your business, there are ways to develop that business mindset.

BEGINNERS

When starting out, some authors want to publish and not spend any money doing so. We know meeting professional publishing standards can create a financial barrier for some authors. A good cover, for example, can cost \$500. A good editor can cost \$700 to \$1,200, depending on the length of your book. As part of its commitment to advocacy, ALLi offers a guide on how to self-publish for free, as we do not want finances to be a barrier to any writer. You can find the guide here: <http://allianceindependentauthors.org/campaigns/selfpub3>.

However, this can also point to a mindset shift that needs to happen when you decide to self-publish.



Self-published authors are publishers as well as writers, and publishing is a business. A business owner invests money to make more money, so you'll do best if you think more about return on investment than costs when it comes to certain expenses. This mindset shift can take time—and seeing some profits—before it sinks in, so start small. Instead of asking, “How much does it cost?” get into the habit of asking, “How much return can I expect on this investment once I can afford it?” There is no business where you would expect success without putting in at least a little money up front.

Another important part of building a business is having the right people around you. The term “self-publishing” implies you'll be doing everything on your own. In actuality, taking on every responsibility yourself will not only wear you out but also result in a lower quality product. Successful indie authors take the time to choose great cover designers, excellent editors, and professional software, among other elements, to lighten the load on themselves. ALLi's book *Choose the Best Self-Publishing Services: ALLi's Guide to Assembling Your Tools and Your Team* by John Doppler can be useful for choosing services that work for you, and ALLi's vetted Self-Publishing Services Directory has a comprehensive list of publishing services, all of whom have been checked for quality and value. Both are free to members and available for sale to non-members.

Self-published authors also benefit from collaborating with their fellow authors and being ready to learn new skills as they go along. Indie authors today are in a great position to learn from some of the most successful self-publishers. There is a wealth of excellent advice, both free and paid, within the industry, so even if you are new to self-publishing, you can confidently make good publishing plans and set them in motion. ALLi's book *Creative Self-Publishing* covers the seven processes of self-publishing, step by step. This is free for members or can be bought at ALLi's online bookstore, <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/bookshop>, by non-members. Chapters 20–23 cover distribution, marketing, promotion, and licensing rights.

EMERGING AUTHORS

As authors move on from those early days of publishing, their business mindset also grows. Parts 7 and 8 of *Creative Self-Publishing* focus on what it means to be a creative business and offer different business models to consider. Where many authors might begin with an exclusive model in which they only publish to Amazon, for example, others may consider other options, from “going wide,” or publishing non-exclusively, to a “creator” model, which sees authors selling directly to readers and includes various products and services alongside books, such as premium digital content, subscriptions, memberships, reader clubs, paid video and audio content, crowdfunding, and/or patronage.

Many emerging authors may hope one day to pass on marketing work to an outside agency, but recent data has shown that the most successful indie authors still do their own marketing, even if they use tools or assistants to help, as they know their books and care about them more than anyone else. Some even enjoy putting on different “hats”—being a writer for part of their day and a marketer for the rest.

Marketing is a creative area of business work, so being a creative person already will stand you in good stead. Get to know your readers, then think about how to connect with them in new and engaging ways. ALLi has regular blog posts and podcast episodes on all aspects of marketing to give you new ideas on how to enliven your reader connections.

As your author career grows, be sure to set aside time for business just like you do for writing. Start by reading ALLi’s Big Indie Author Data Drop report (<https://allianceindependentauthors.org/facts>), which is a visual guide to facts and figures about the self-publishing industry that all authors should know.

EXPERIENCED AUTHORS

Even the most experienced indie author can miss some business opportunities. It’s worth taking strategic

planning time away from your already successful writing and publishing business to consider what next steps you could take.

Seventy-five percent of indie authors have not put in place a will that covers their literary estate. In the US, books remain in copyright and can make money for seventy years after the author's death, if well managed, so this can be a big missed opportunity. Setting up such a will and a guide to managing your IP could be an important step for experienced authors to take. ALLi's *The Author Estate Book* and *The Author Heir Handbook*, available in the ALLi bookstore under Author Handbooks, can guide you through the process. Although an experienced author can achieve many publishing opportunities by themselves, at a certain level, it makes sense to explore what rights could be better exploited by licensing IP. Receiving self-publishing commissions or publisher royalties is only one revenue stream for your books. There are many other possibilities, from translations to video games, merchandising to print. Translation rights are a current hot topic among successful authors wanting to open up new markets. But the rights world is a complex mix of formats, platforms, apps, territories, and terms, and each market and buyer offers different opportunities and operates by different rules. *How Authors Sell Publishing Rights* is ALLi's comprehensive guide to rights licensing, covering everything you need to begin successfully licensing your publishing rights. The guide is available in the online bookstore.

Work on making those mindset shifts toward being a more entrepreneurial author, and embrace the business side of your writing. It can be the difference between authors who are successful and those who wish they were. ■

Melissa Addey, All's Campaigns Manager



Melissa Addey, former ALLi Campaigns Manager

The Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) is a global membership association for self-publishing authors. A non-profit, our mission is ethics and excellence in self-publishing. Everyone on our team is a working indie author and we offer advice and advocacy for self-publishing authors within the literary, publishing and creative industries around the world. www.allianceindependentauthors.org

Dear Indie Annie,

If I'm being honest, AI concerns me. I worry about its impact on the publishing industry and that it is taking jobs away from creatives. I also worry about the potential for plagiarism with what it creates. But I don't want to turn it down outright. Are there ways I can use these programs ethically as an author?

Apprehensive about AI

DEAR APPREHENSIVE,

That's a long and not very positive first name. Do you mind if I call you Appy?

Sweetheart, no offense, but you're not a very "appy" bunny, now are you?

I understand your concerns; I really do. I mean, who is to say that my gorgeous colleagues at *IAM* haven't run this response through a creative writing app? Maybe these beautiful words are actually the soulless outpourings of an online robot. After all, I am an avatar.

Or perhaps I was uncharacteristically lost for words and popped your question into an AI program for inspiration. I assure you I did no such thing. But, sweet Appy, would it really matter if I had?

Wasn't it Bobby McFerrin who sang "Don't Worry, Be Happy"? Wise words, indeed. As Mr. McFerrin stated, "When you worry, you make it double." I put it to you. Would a bot have such wisdom and insight?

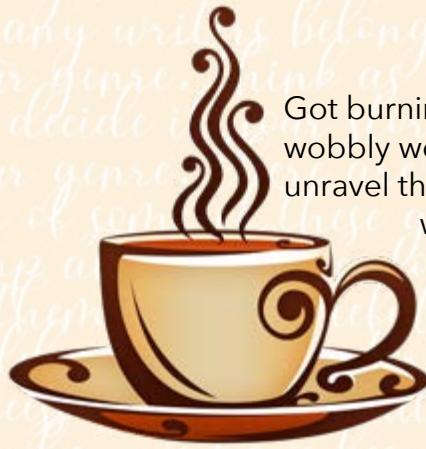
Whilst these terrifying algorithm-munching cyborgs may, on command, produce a witty ditty or a stunning image here and there, they do it at our behest. They take their inspiration from the digital world around them, a world that thousands of years of human creativity and innovation forged. And if you are worried that, using this inspiration, they will one day replace us creatives? Maybe they will. None of us own a reliable crystal ball with which to tell the future, but

looking at how these things have played out in the past, I doubt it.

As for concerns about copyright and plagiarism, has there ever been a time when we haven't borrowed ideas from those around us? Did the first cave person to spit terracotta pigment around their hand on the inside of a mountain worry about their technique being copied or improved upon by the generations that followed?

Copyright and plagiarism are modern concepts developed as we commercialized our art. And trust me, my dear, darling Appy, I believe plagiarizing lowlifes should compensate us if they steal our work. A time of reflection behind bars could also be desirable, arguably. As with all issues around copyright, that is an argument best left to those





Got burning questions about the wibbly-wobbly world of indie authoring? Eager to unravel the mysteries of publishing, writing woes, or anything in between? Give your quizzical quills a whirl and shoot your musings over to indieannie@indieauthormagazine.com. Your inky quandaries are my cup of tea!

trained in the legal profession. I am a sassy columnist and would never venture near giving any form of legal advice.

I am certain, in time, the protectionist laws we trust to ensure we receive a fair reward for our hard work will catch up with the developments in AI. In the meantime, what can you do to protect yourself as an artist or a writer? Do what you do already.

Ensure you assert your rights online. Have your copyright on your website, published book copy, images, etc. Use full disclaimers where you have used AI. Credit any artist who has worked with or for you, and insist they do the same. Be wary of who you share unpublished work with. I could go on, but I am sure these processes and protocols are covered more expertly elsewhere.

As to using these tools ethically, if you are not one of those plagiarizing lowlifes I mentioned above, what are you worried about? Consider how much AI you already use in your writing and your day-to-day life. Though I have not run this baby through a creative writing bot, I have run it through spelling and grammar programs. I have a couple I use all the time and love to watch them battle it out. Sometimes they disagree with each other and then I, the human creator—indeed, the ultimate word wizard—decide whose suggestion

is right and whose alternative is to be cast into the fiery pit of digital oblivion.

And once those perfectly curated words are ready to flee my nest, the lovely Nicole, our editor in chief, edits them again before they are published, after which an AI voice speaks for me for those amongst us who prefer to listen rather than read. Isn't the world of AI wonderful?

All innovations can be threatening. Change and progress usually are. The Luddites in nineteenth-century England famously broke the machines in their local factories, but the industrial revolution still happened. Those who adapted survived. Remember, dear Appy, there was a time when stories were told orally until someone invented writing. The printing press revolutionized the accessibility of those written words. E-books gave us a quick, global route to an audience of avid readers. Some prefer audiobooks, but many still prefer to hold a physical copy in their hands.

What never changes is that we humans love a good story. Bundle up all your worries and woes, and direct them into something compelling. Construct a great tale, and AI won't bother you.

Happy writing,
Indie Annie



10 TIPS FOR REVITALIZING YOUR BACKLIST

Your backlist is a vital part of your author career because it's always available. A book you wrote ten years ago may seem like old news to you, but it will be just as fresh as it was on launch day to readers who find it today.

Backlists take the pressure off grueling production schedules for new titles. The bigger your backlist, the more money you can earn. However, it's normal to feel overwhelmed by the idea of refreshing your backlist. The process can take time and effort—but it doesn't have to be hard.

You can approach revitalizing your backlist in three steps:

1. Review your books.
2. Review your marketing materials.
3. Send traffic to your backlist.

Read on for ten tips to get the best out of your backlist with little time, effort, and money.

STEP 1: REVIEW YOUR BOOKS



ASSESS YOUR BOOK COVER

Older book covers might need a redesign, but consider the cost, especially with a large backlist.

According to the book cover design company MiblArt, common mistakes with cover designs include bad fonts, bland designs, and poor image quality. New authors often make these mistakes.

Identify bestselling self-published books in your subgenre that were published after your book so you can spot new trends. You should look at self-published books because their covers are most likely to be appealing to your target readers. You can also use tools like K-Lytics (<https://K-Lytics.com>) and Publisher Rocket (<https://PublisherRocket.com>) to do market research and find comparable books quickly.

Pro Tip: Place your book cover with ten recent best-selling indie covers on a Pinterest board. If it blends in, rebranding might not be necessary. If it doesn't, consider a rebrand. Send the Pinterest board to your designer, and ask them to design something that fits on the board.

2 **SPRUCE UP YOUR BOOK DESCRIPTION**

Unlike cover design, rewriting your book description is free and may help grab potential readers' attention just as effectively.

According to BookBub, it's important to keep your specific genre in mind as you write your sales copy. Pay careful attention to the language that indie bestsellers in your category use in their descriptions, and analyze your book description against comparable books, carefully reviewing the hook and first paragraph in particular. Also be sure to include sales words, like "captivating," "spell-binding," and "full throttle." You can even consider adding snippets from reviews to your book description—all of it helps to build hype for your book.

While you're here, don't forget to refresh the metadata for your book. Look at your categories and keywords to see if they need updating.

Pro Tip: Use AI tools like ChatGPT or Claude for rewriting tips. They can help you find hidden opportunities to use more sales words, making your description more appealing.

3 **REVAMP YOUR BACK MATTER**

In your back matter, consider an Other Books By page to promote your most popular backlist titles. If you have a small backlist, you may have to update this page from time to time as you release new books, but an outdated page is still better than no page at all.

If your backlist contains series that are different from your current one, sending readers to those backlist books can be a good way of keeping them entertained until you launch the next book in your active series, especially if you don't release new work quickly.

STEP 2: REVIEW YOUR MARKETING MATERIALS

4 **ADAPT YOUR AUTORESPONDERS**

Autoresponders are a series of pre-written emails that are sent to your mailing list in response to specific triggers, like new signups. Most email marketing platforms allow you to create them.

The Alliance of Independent Authors recommends updating your autoresponder sequence to inform readers about your backlist. They also recommend adding to your autoresponder sequence each time you release a new book or series.

5 EXPAND INTO NEW EDITIONS

Your book is likely to exist as an e-book and trade paperback, but consider the following additional formats:

- hardcover (case laminate or dust jacketed);
- limited edition hardcovers, with a foil-stamped cover, illustrations, or custom chapter headers;
- large print; or
- audiobooks or translations, if your books are selling well and you have the money.

These editions are easier to create than ever before now that many cover designers are familiar with them and IngramSpark no longer charges setup fees.

Pro Tip: Consider launching a Kickstarter campaign to help you fund the creation of these editions. While time-intensive, Kickstarter is a great way to drum up renewed interest in older books.

6 CREATE COVER MOCKUPS

Use a tool like Book Brush (<https://BookBrush.com>) to create compelling mockups of your books that you can share on social media. These tools allow you to put your book on mocked-up tablets, phones, and even paperback books. Mockups are more eye-catching on social media feeds than flat book cover images and may draw more eyes to your promotional posts.

You can also use Book Brush to create ads for Facebook and BookBub Ads, so it can serve a dual purpose in your revitalization efforts.

STEP 3: SEND TRAFFIC TO YOUR BACKLIST

7 UPDATE YOUR WEBSITE

Consider spotlighting a featured backlist title or series on your website's homepage, just below the fold—before users have to scroll. The homepage is often the most visited page on a website, so it is prime real estate to promote your backlist.

Find other creative ways to promote your backlist on your website, such as in the menu bar of your blog, the footers of your blog posts, or a dedicated page for each of your books or series on your website's navigation menu.

8 WRITE A NEWSLETTER

It's easy to overlook your newsletter, so if you haven't communicated with your readers recently, run a \$0.99 promotion and send a quick email to your readers to let them know about it.

Keep your email brief, but be sure to include your new cover if you have one, your revised book description, and any creative mockups. Remind your audience about your backlist every so often—if anyone is newer to your mailing list, they might not realize you have other books available until you tell them.

9

RUN ADS

Ads can be a great way to test your rebranding efforts. Experiment with small-budget ad campaigns on Amazon, Facebook, and BookBub. If you're active on TikTok, consider ads there as well.

If you're not familiar with these ad platforms, consider investing in a paid course to learn the basics quickly. Although these platforms have a learning curve, you will have lessened your work considerably if you have a new cover, revised book description, and creative mockups.

You can also stack promotions with a \$0.99 sale using sites like CraveBooks (<https://CraveBooks.com>) to help you get more out of your promotion campaign.

10

SELL DIRECT

Selling books directly on your site can also help your backlist sales. Whether you sell on Payhip (<https://Payhip.com>), Gumroad (<https://Gumroad.com>), Shopify (<https://Shopify.com>), or a similar direct sales platform, you can create special offers for your readers.

With the increasing popularity of tools like BookFunnel (<https://BookFunnel.com>) and StoryOrigin (<https://StoryOriginApp.com>) delivering books directly to readers, many readers are more familiar with purchasing books direct from authors. Selling direct is a great way to increase your income.

Use direct sales platforms to offer special coupons and upsells that you can't create on retailer sites. For example, you might offer a 10 percent Christmas coupon, or, if a reader buys book 1 in a series, you might upsell them books 2 and 3 at a small discount.

Pro Tip: Use a printer like Bookvault (<https://Bookvault.app>) to enable direct print sales on your website. Bookvault integrates with Shopify, and when readers purchase the book, it ships directly from Bookvault, and you don't have to keep inventory.

You don't have to do all of this in one day. Take it one step at a time, and you'll be well on your way to revitalizing your backlist, growing your income, and keeping your books fresh for years to come. Your backlist will thank you! ■

Michael La Ronn



Michael La Ronn

Michael La Ronn has published over 80 science fiction & fantasy books and self-help books for writers. He built a writing career publishing 10-12 books per year while raising a family, working a full-time job, and even attending law school classes in the evenings. He is also the Outreach Manager at the Alliance of Independent Authors, a nonprofit organization for self-published writers. Visit his fiction website at www.michaellaronn.com and his resources for writers at www.authorlevelup.com.

Introducing BookCovers.com, Draft2Digital's Revitalized Book Cover Marketplace

Draft2Digital acquired Smashwords in March 2022, becoming a self-publishing juggernaut that now supports close to three hundred thousand authors and publishing professionals. At the time of the Smashwords acquisition, the company reminded the indie community that its mission is to improve the lives of authors by providing the industry's best publishing tools.

Not known for shying away from a challenge or resting on its laurels, Draft2Digital surprised the indie community once again in July 2023 when it announced it had acquired SelfPubBookCovers.com, the pioneering book cover marketplace that was founded in 2012. At the time, we promised a better way for authors and artists to collaborate on the perfect cover design, and we promised a redesigned marketplace would be coming soon.

That day is today.

REFRESHED, REBRANDED, AND RELAUNCHED: INTRODUCING BOOKCOVERS.COM

We are excited to unveil the new BookCovers.com, formerly known as SelfPubBookCovers.com, now revitalized and part of the Draft2Digital family. This transformation is more than just a facelift; it's indicative of Draft2Digital's mission to provide indie authors with tools and services that help reduce the cost and complexity of essential publishing functions for not just cover design but also book production, distribution, marketing, and business management.

The redesigned BookCovers.com features a sleek, user-friendly interface and enhanced search functionality, making it quicker and simpler to find the perfect cover. New tools for real-time customization and previews allow authors and artists to collaborate more effectively, ensuring every cover is just right and eliminating the time-consuming,

back-and-forth iterations necessary with conventional custom cover design. With the relaunch of BookCovers.com, we're providing a new look and a new way for indie authors and artists to thrive in the digital age.

AFFORDABLE OPTIONS FOR EVERY AUTHOR

At BookCovers.com, we understand that budget is often a constraint for indie authors. That's why we offer a wide range of premade covers that combine quality and affordability alongside customizable options to suit various budgets. Whether

you're looking for an economical quick fix or a distinctive custom design, our platform caters to all your needs without breaking the bank. Authors can expect to pay between \$69 to \$99 for most covers, but since BookCovers.com is a marketplace, covers outside of that range will also be available. Authors only purchase once they're 100 percent satisfied.

A THRIVING MARKETPLACE FOR ARTISTS

Not only is BookCovers.com a resource for authors, but it's also a vibrant marketplace for artists. Designers can showcase their work, set their prices, and connect with a global audience of authors seeking their next cover. This model fosters a creative community and offers artists a lucrative opportunity to sell their designs and build a reputation in the publishing industry. We'd love it if every professional cover designer in the world could participate in, and profit from, BookCovers.com's unique marketplace.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR BOOKCOVERS.COM?

If you know Draft2Digital, you know we don't take many breaks. We aim to support authors with streamlined tools from cover design to book distribution, making it easier than ever to publish a book that looks as good as it reads. In the future, we plan for BookCovers.com to become more tightly integrated with the Draft2Digital publishing platform. We're working hard to get the site launched, but as with any massive undertaking, there's always more to do! Visit BookCovers.com/launch to see where we are in the process, and what's coming next. ■

Nick Thacker, Draft2Digital Vice President of Author Success

An Inside Look at Formatting Software Options

Independent authors wear many hats: author, editor, cover designer, blurb writer, and more. Among all those responsibilities, however, one self-publishing task that often gets funneled to the back of the queue is the formatting of the book's interior. While not as top-of-mind as the book cover or blurb, interior formatting is a crucial element that must look professional if an author is going to be taken seriously by the public.

"Typography is important to establish professionalism and legibility," says Ziad Ezzat, the owner of Feral Creative Colony, who has worked in typography, art, and graphic design for over three decades. "People may not realize they're judging what they read based on typography, but a book that's poorly laid out can deliver a terrible experience for the reader—and make the reader think the author is bad, when really it's the typography that's bad."

In the last decade, over a dozen options have come on the market for authors to lay out the interiors of their own books in both electronic and print versions. This is an overview of many of those options—and the right option for you and your author career might be on this list.

PURPOSE-BUILT SOFTWARE

Two pieces of software, **Vellum** (\$249) and **Atticus** (\$147), are built specifically for self-published authors to format book interiors. Both include tools for creating pre-populated sections common in many books: a copyright page, back matter, chapter headings, and so forth.

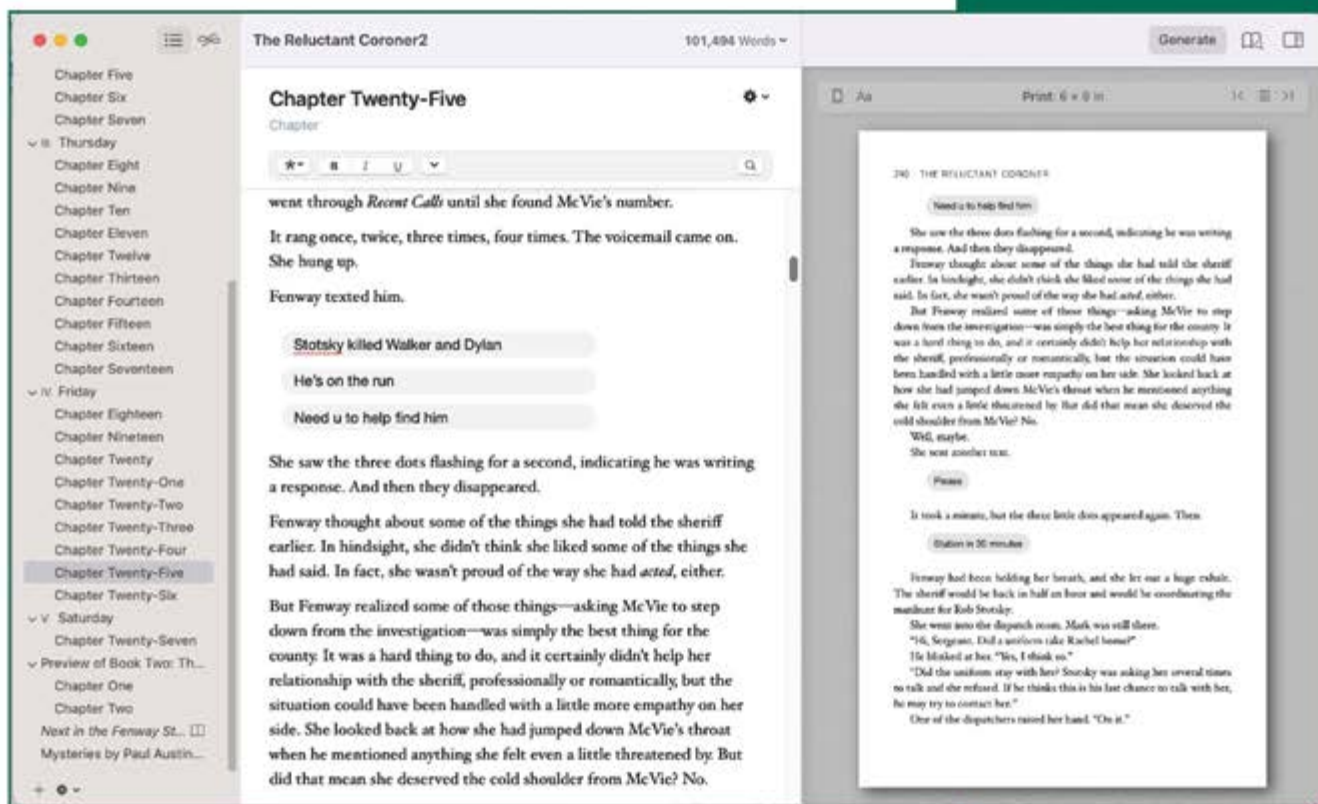
Vellum was an early entrant in this space, released a decade ago, and is available only for the Mac operating system. Of those interviewed, it was used by more authors than any other tool.

“It was an investment,” says Ki Brightly, who, along with co-author M.D. Gregory, has published more than fifty LGBTQ+ Romance novels. “My writing partner bought a Mac specifically for Vellum. It has the best options, is the easiest to use, and saves us so much time over everything else we tried. It was a pain in the neck, but it was worth it.”

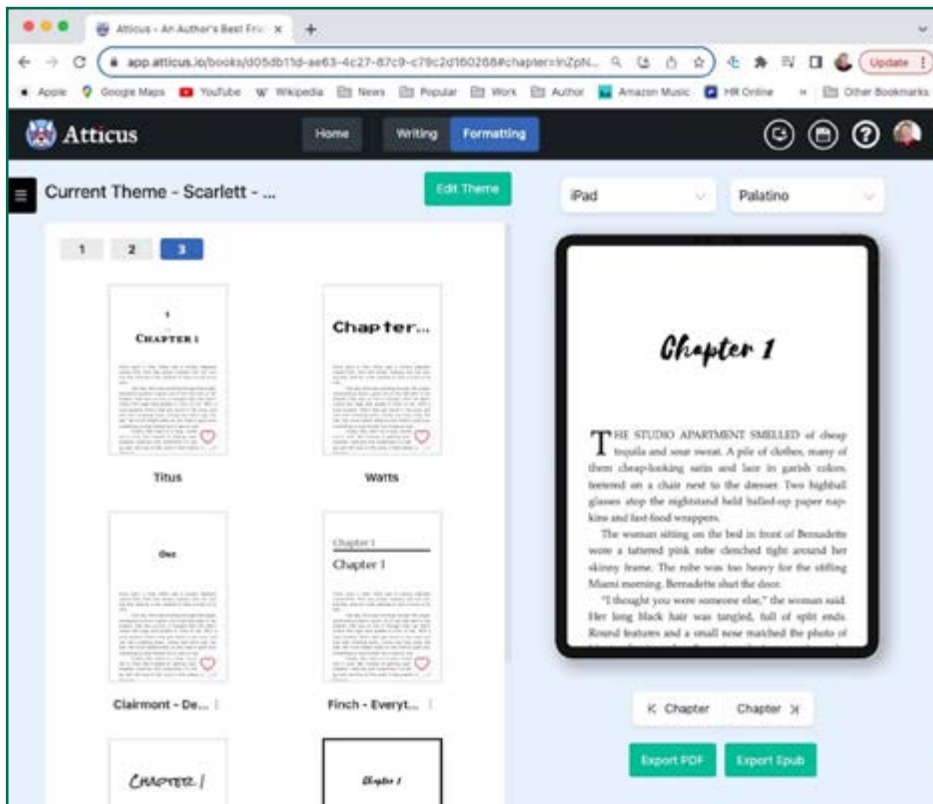
“Vellum is idiot-proof, and that’s what I needed,” says T.M. Baumgartner, a Speculative Fiction author.

Mystery, Sci-Fi, and Romance author Chris Ward agreed. “I used to format with Microsoft Word—what a nightmare that was,” he says. “Once I used Vellum, I never looked back.”

Vellum continues to add features. One of its recent releases introduced text message formatting, as well as additional overall styles and new fonts.



Vellum is a popular internal layout program, adding support for text message formatting in a recent release.



Dave Chesson's Atticus program is cross-platform with creative themes and popular layouts for print and EPUB.

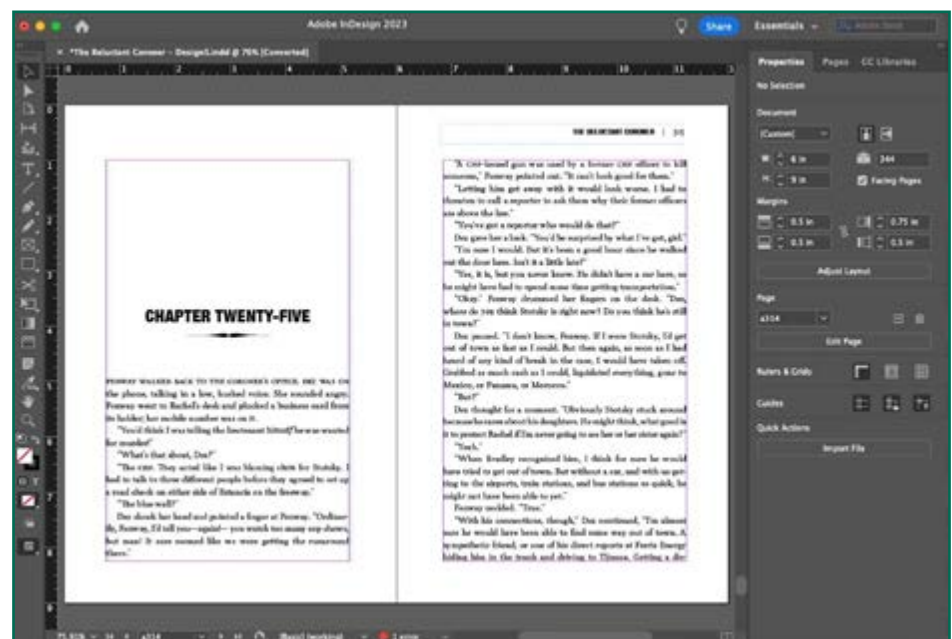
Dave Chesson, who runs the popular Kindlepreneur website and founded Publisher Rocket, released Atticus over a year ago. Unlike Vellum, Atticus is cross-platform. "I'd heard great things about Vellum, but as a PC user, I chose Atticus," says memoirist B.J. Glassel. "It gave me great results and was easy to use."

Both Vellum and Atticus provide options for PDF and EPUB exports. The options for layout and fonts are limited in both programs, but many common page layout choices are automated. "What used to take me five days in a page layout program took twenty minutes," Baumgartner says.

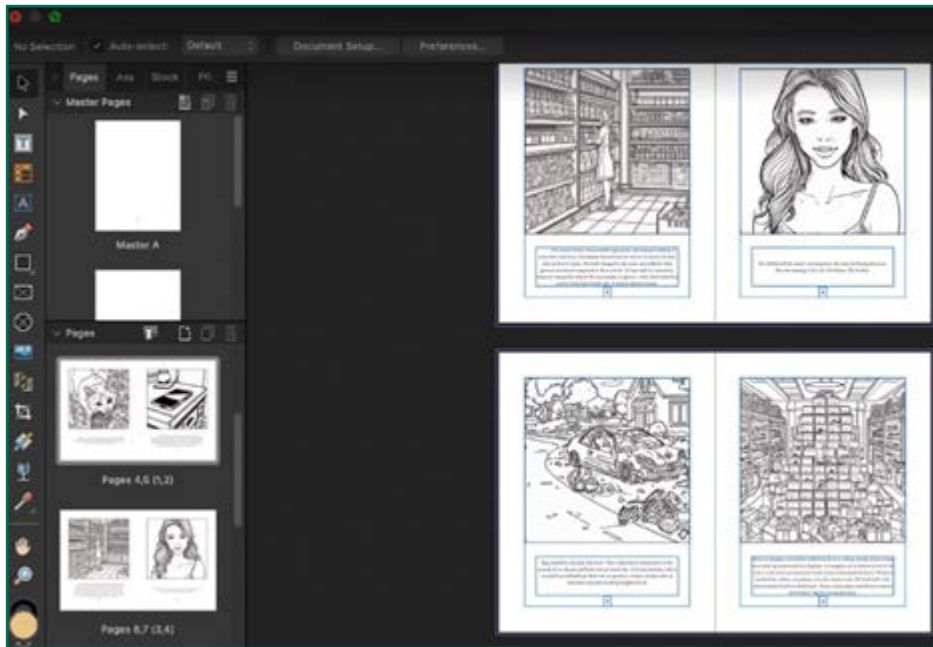
PAGE LAYOUT SOFTWARE

Before the advent of software built specifically for book layout, some authors chose page layout software tools. **Adobe InDesign** (\$21 per month; subscription only) and **Affinity Publisher** (\$70; one-time purchase) are two page layout programs that still have footholds with independent authors.

Creating page layouts for manuscripts is not automated in either program, so adjusting a project's page flow can be a time-consuming process. However, these programs provide the most flexibility and control for authors.



Adobe InDesign provides unlimited control but has a steep learning curve.



Affinity Publisher provides InDesign-like control for a cheaper price.

Adobe InDesign is the priciest of all the software in this article and has a steep learning curve. Affinity Publisher has much of the same functionality as InDesign for a fraction of the price. Both programs offer export to EPUB format as well. Many authors who use InDesign have a background in graphic design or publishing, so InDesign is already an arrow in their quiver.

WRITING SOFTWARE

Software like **Microsoft Word** and **Scrivener** were never meant to be page layout programs. However, both programs can create EPUBs and export PDFs for print use. For some authors, the ability to use their existing writing software to create e-books and print books is worth the hassle of wrangling the programs.

“I keep a Microsoft Word template specifically for publication of my books,” says Elizabeth Hurley, a Romance author who writes Science Fiction and Mysteries under pen names. “When I’m ready to publish, I drop the text in. All gutters, margins, headers, and page numbers are all in place. All my fiction titles are the same size, so I don’t have to reinvent the wheel.”

“Scrivener creates a beautiful, clean EPUB,” says Jamie Thornton, an author of YA Dystopian novels. “I was surprised it worked so well, and I use it for all my novels now.”

FREE TOOLS FROM AUTHOR-FOCUSED WEBSITES

Draft2Digital and **Reedsy** offer many tools and services for authors, including free online interior book design.

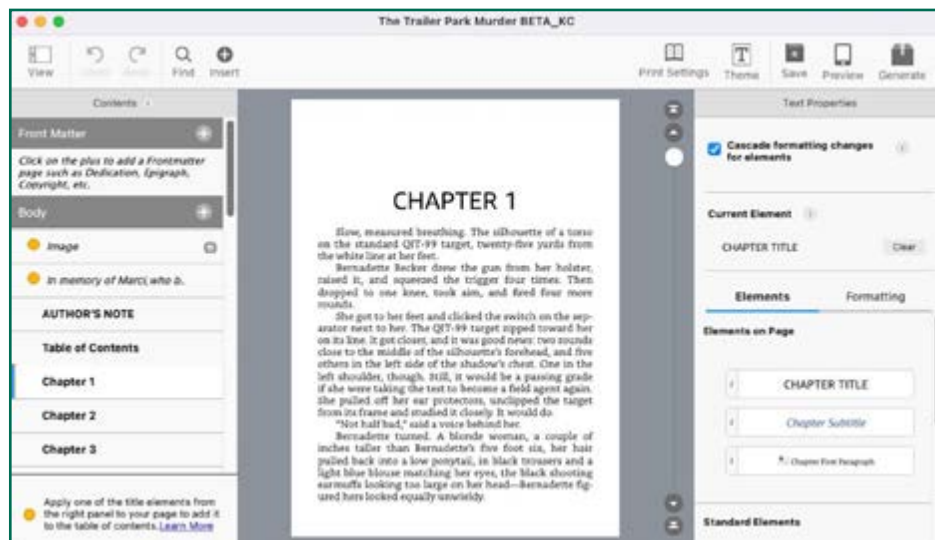
In the **Draft2Digital** book creator tool, the author uploads a Microsoft Word file, and the site spits out both EPUB and print layouts. The tool has genre-specific layouts and chapter graphics as well. However, the Draft2Digital tool is persnickety—the Word file must be formatted properly. There are no opportunities to “fix” the manuscript after it’s been imported; authors will have to reformat the Word document, usually by applying different paragraph styles and cleaning up spacing and paragraph issues, before the resulting file is professional enough to publish.

The **Reedsy Book Editor** allows the author to write directly in the tool. Like Atticus, the tool is cross-platform and based inside the browser.

Although it doesn't have as many options for formatting, fonts, or styles as Vellum, Atticus, or Draft2Digital, it is both simple to use and purpose-built for authors—and unlike Vellum and Atticus, it's free.



Reedsy's book editing tool is cross-platform.



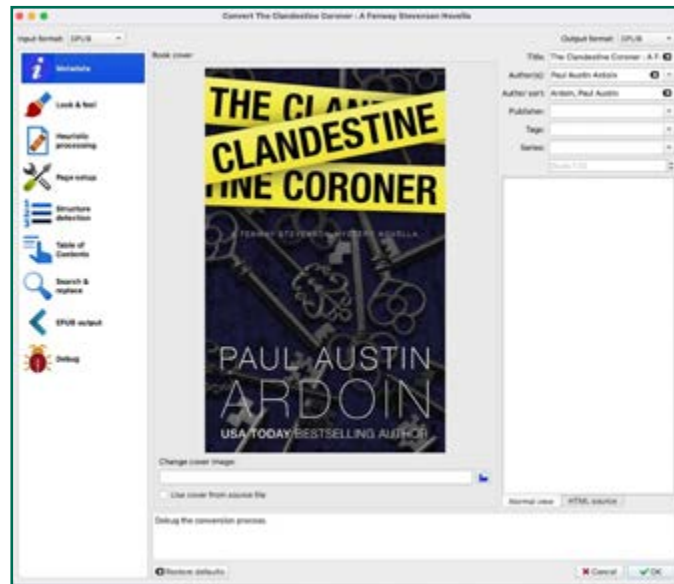
The Kindle Create tool is free and only creates files that can be uploaded to Amazon's KDP system.

For authors who are exclusive to Amazon, the **Kindle Create** application for Windows and Mac, also free, provides a specific formatting experience. There are few options, but the resulting file is easy to upload to Amazon and publish. Kindle Create also provides limited print options, and the resulting KPF file has a print book package in it as well as the e-book package. Both the print and e-book files are only uploadable on the KDP website, not on other storefronts.

E-BOOK-ONLY OPTIONS

Calibre (free) is a cross-platform tool that exports electronic book files, like EPUB. Although its built-in formatting tools are basic, authors who know HTML can customize the look and feel of the documents. Other e-book-only tools like **Jutoh** and **Sigil** (both free) have even more control and power but require more knowledge of HTML programming in order to export well-formatted files.

“One caveat,” says Baumgartner regarding free EPUB creation tools, “is that if you distribute to Kobo, you must be sure your EPUB works there.” Baumgartner has seen KEPUB files, Kobo’s special flavor of EPUB, render poorly on Kobo e-readers.



Calibre is a free tool that exclusively creates EPUBs and other e-book files.

HIRING A PROFESSIONAL

Many authors hire someone to format the interior of the books for them. Thriller author D.F. Hart likes the way Vellum formats book interiors. “But I have a PC, not a Mac,” Hart says, so hiring someone who has a Mac—and Vellum—is her preferred method.

Some contractors who format using Vellum will charge \$50 to \$200; others who use Adobe InDesign, especially if the author has specific requests that Vellum doesn’t support, can charge \$300 or more to design the interior of a book.

WHICH APPROACH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

In stark contrast to the dawn of self-publishing, indie authors now have many options for book interiors. Choose the option best suited for your budget, your skill levels, and the time you can spend on these design tasks, and you’ll get a professional, good-looking book interior that’s right for you. ■

Paul Austin Ardoin



Paul Austin Ardoin

Paul Austin Ardoin is the USA TODAY bestselling indie author of The Fenway Stevenson Mysteries and The Woodhead & Becker Mysteries. He holds a B.A. in creative writing from the University of California, Santa Barbara and an M.B.A. in marketing from the University of Phoenix. His book *Zero to Four Figures: Making \$1,000 a Month with Self-Published Fiction* was published in June 2023.

The Cost of Creation

WHAT SHOULD AUTHORS EXPECT TO PAY FOR PROFESSIONAL EDITING AND DESIGN?

These days, you can write and self-publish a book on Amazon without spending a penny. You can also buy dollar sushi from a gas station, but should you do either of those things? When putting out a quality publication that stands a chance of reaching your target, it's impossible to overstate the importance of working with professional editors and cover designers.

But how much should you reasonably invest in editing and cover design? And how can you make sure you get the most bang for your buck?

Over the last ten years at Reedsy—yes, it's been ten years already, and no, I can't quite believe it either—we've been fortunate enough to build a network of over three thousand professional book editors and designers. Through our platform, they have worked on well over one hundred thousand projects, which, in turn, has given us a wealth of data and unique insight into how much it costs to hire a developmental editor, a proofreader, a cover designer, or an illustrator.

The professionals on Reedsy are vetted and handpicked from hundreds of thousands of applicants. Our editors mostly come from traditional publishing and have generally worked within the Big Five: Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, Hachette Book Group, and Macmillan. In other words, Reedsy editors and designers are at the top of the market—and the average prices you'll see here reflect that. This will give you an idea of what you should expect to pay for the services of experienced, proven professionals.

HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU PAY FOR EDITING?

Editorial costs will vary depending on a few factors, the first one being the type of editing that you're after or that your manuscript needs. The table below lists the average cost for an eighty-thousand-word manuscript, split by editing type.

Editing service	Description	Average Cost
Editorial Assessment	A comprehensive review for early-stage rewrites, providing a report on story, structure, commercial viability, and suggestions to guide your rewrites.	\$1,830
Developmental Editing	A nose-to-tail structural edit offering recommendations on characterization, plot, pacing, and craft, including in-line suggestions for authors who've taken their book as far as possible by themselves.	\$2,540
Copy Editing	Detailed sentence-level revisions focusing on prose clarity, eliminating repetition, and correcting inconsistencies to "fine-tune" the manuscript.	\$1,900
Proofreading	The last step in editing, focusing on catching spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors, and ensuring consistency with the publisher's style guide.	\$1,360

Editorial assessments are often chosen by writers when they're unsure of committing to a full developmental edit. Those who are serious about publishing to industry standards will usually opt for developmental editing, copyediting, and a final proofread, a combination which can run an average of \$5,700.

Genre is another important factor to consider. Some nonfiction genres require more research or

fact-checking during the editorial process, which drives the costs up. Inversely, Romance editing rates tend to be lower, especially for developmental editing and copyediting. The following table displays average developmental editing rates for editors on Reedsy, split by genre.

If you want a more precise idea of what you should expect to pay for editing based on the service, your word count, and genre, you can play around with our editing costs calculator at <https://rdsy.me/cost-of-self-publishing>.



reedsy

Genre	Average Editing Rate per Word
Romance	\$0.0220
Thriller, Crime, Mystery	\$0.0255
Sci-Fi and Fantasy	\$0.0280
YA	\$0.0264
Historical Fiction	\$0.0268
Literary Fiction	\$0.0278
Children's Middle Grade	\$0.0276
Memoir	\$0.0314
Business, Self-Help	\$0.0363

HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU PAY FOR COVER DESIGN?

Similarly to editing, the cost of a professional cover design can vary from one project to another. According to our latest data, the average price of a professional book cover design is around \$850, with over 50 percent of the cover design projects on Reedsy falling between \$500 and \$1,000.

The final price will depend not only on the designer's experience but also on the genre, the type of design, and the formats required. Fantasy or Science Fiction covers often involve illustrations, digital painting, or hand-lettering—elaborate techniques that nudge prices up. As a result, the average cover design price for these specific genres is just above \$1,000.

Similarly, an e-book cover will be cheaper than a print one that needs a wrap-around with additional design for the back cover and spine. Need a square audiobook cover? That will also cost extra.

If you're working on a series, it's generally better to commission covers in bulk, at least for the first few books. Not only will this drastically reduce the cost per individual cover, but it'll also ensure strong consistency in branding across all books in the series.

Of course—and I can't emphasize this enough—these are just averages! You will find professionals on Reedsy who charge more and others who charge less. The best way to know what you should expect to invest in your project is to sign up for free and [ask for quotes directly](#).



Reedsy also offers a range of other resources for authors hoping to publish on a tighter budget without sacrificing quality. From the free EPUB *How to Market a Book* to online courses and even our popular writing and formatting app, Reedsy's goal is to provide you with access to the tools and knowledge you need, so you can focus your budget on the things that will affect your book's success. Visit <https://reedsy.com> to learn more and get started with the platform today. ■

Ricardo Fayet, Reedsy co-founder



Ricardo Fayet, Reedsy co-founder

Reedsy offers a suite of tools to help authors write, publish, and market bestselling books. On the Reedsy Marketplace, authors can connect with the world's most talented publishing professionals, from developmental editors to proofreaders, cover designers, ghostwriters, marketers, and literary translators. Search by service and genre, get free quotes, and find the perfect collaborator for your project: reedsy.com. Reedsy Studio is the ultimate free planning, writing, and formatting tool. Complete with outlining boards, timelines, writing goals, track changes, and export to EPUB and print-ready PDF, it is the only tool you'll ever need to use from idea conception to publication: reedsy.com/write-a-book. Finally, Reedsy Learning offers a series of free 10-day courses on a variety of writing, publishing, and marketing topics, as well as a premium 90-day novel writing course: reedsy.com/learning.

Merch Jar's Method Helps Indie Authors Tame the Amazon Ad Beast

The world of Amazon advertising can often feel like a labyrinthine maze for indie authors. With its complex metrics, ever-changing algorithms, and a seemingly endless array of options, the platform can be daunting even for seasoned marketers.

The sheer volume of data involved—especially when considering the royalties earned from Kindle Unlimited (KU) page reads—can quickly become overwhelming. Merch Jar (<https://merchjar.com>) emerges as a guiding light in this maze as a comprehensive platform designed to streamline and simplify the ad management process for self-published authors.



THE DATA OVERLOAD CHALLENGE

For many authors, the biggest hurdle in Amazon advertising is not a lack of data but the overwhelming abundance of it. Traditional metrics like Advertising Cost of Sale (ACOS) often fall short of capturing the full picture, especially when considering the royalties earned from KU page reads. ACOS is a metric that helps authors understand the efficiency of their ad spend by calculating the percentage of ad spend relative to sales revenue. For example, if you spend \$10 on ads and make \$50 in sales, your ACOS is 20 percent.

While this metric can indicate how cost-effective your ads are, it doesn't account for royalties from KU pages read, which can be a significant part of an author's income. This omission can lead to misinformed decisions, misguided strategies, and ultimately, missed opportunities. Authors frequently find themselves buried under heaps of data, trying to decipher what it all means for their ad performance and profitability.

Traditional ACOS calculations typically only consider sales from e-books, paperbacks, and hardcovers. This can create a distorted view of an ad campaign's performance, leading authors to believe they are spending more than they are earning, when in reality, their KU royalties may be offsetting those costs. This oversight can make optimizing ad campaigns seem like a shot in the dark and convince authors they need to spend more or shift a campaign that's already successfully attracting new readers.

MERCH JAR: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO AD MANAGEMENT

Merch Jar addresses these challenges head-on with a comprehensive platform that not only centralizes relevant data but also leverages automation to simplify the ad management process. By integrating all aspects of an author's ad performance data, including KU royalties, Merch Jar can ensure authors have a complete and accurate understanding of their ad performance.

Their current pricing starts at \$15 per month for their Essentials Package for ad spend, up to \$1,250 per month and 1,000 active ads.

Plan	Price	Ad Revenue	Ad Revenue %	Active Ads	Historical Data	Data Syncs	Automation Runs
Premium	\$400/mo	Up to \$50,000/mo	0.8%	2,000,000	Unlimited	4x daily	Up to 4x daily
Standard (Most Popular)	\$75/mo	Up to \$7,500/mo	1.0%	250,000	2 Years	2x daily	Up to 2x daily
Essentials	\$15/mo	Up to \$1,250/mo	1.2%	1,000	1 Year	1x daily	Up to 1x daily

KEY FEATURES AND FUNCTIONALITIES

Delving deeper into Merch Jar’s functionalities, we’ll explore how the platform’s features can empower authors with valuable insights and streamlined workflows for advertising campaigns.

BLENDED PROFIT AND BLENDED ACOS METRICS

Merch Jar’s unique metrics incorporate KU royalties, providing a more accurate and holistic view of an ad campaign’s performance. Authors can make informed decisions about their advertising strategies, ensuring they are truly maximizing their ROI. By seeing the full picture, authors can better understand how their ads are performing across all revenue streams.

SMART CAMPAIGNS

Merch Jar’s Smart Campaigns automate the creation and management of keyword campaigns based on a book’s metadata. This innovative feature eliminates the need for manual keyword research and bidding adjustments, saving authors valuable time and effort so they can focus on writing.

BID OPTIMIZATION

Merch Jar’s algorithms continuously analyze your ad performance and adjust bids in real time to optimize your budget and potentially minimize overspending. At the same time, authors retain the ability to set bid limits or adjust bids for specific keywords manually if needed, ensuring a level of control over their advertising strategy.

KEYWORD MANAGEMENT

Merch Jar streamlines your keyword strategy by automatically identifying high-performing keywords from search terms and filtering out underperformers. This improves ad relevance and helps you reach your target audience more effectively. Authors can still manually add relevant keywords or exclude terms they deem irrelevant, allowing them to further refine their targeting strategy.



BULK ACTIONS: STREAMLINE CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT

Merch Jar empowers authors managing multiple books or ad campaigns by allowing them to make simultaneous changes across campaigns. With Bulk Actions, tasks like adjusting bids or targeting become quick and efficient.

Imagine you want to decrease the bids for a specific group of keywords. Here's how Merch Jar simplifies the process:

1. **Navigate to the Keywords page:** This page displays all your broad, phrase, and exact-match keywords from manual campaigns.
2. **Refine your search:** Utilize the search bar to filter results by campaign name or group. Alternatively, use filters based on performance, targeting type (enabled/paused), or current bid amount.
3. **Select keywords and initiate Bulk Actions:** Check the box next to each keyword you want to adjust. Click the "Bulk Actions" button, followed by "Change Bid."
4. **Set the adjustment amount:** Choose to increase or decrease bids by a percentage or a specific dollar amount. You can also set a fixed bid for all selected keywords.
5. **Confirm and apply changes:** Enter your desired adjustment amount and click "Change Bid." Bulk actions can be applied to all rows on a page by selecting the appropriate option from the Records per Page dropdown menu.



GRANULAR CONTROL AND DATA CONSISTENCY

Merch Jar provides flexibility within Bulk Actions. You can set minimum and maximum bid limits in your master settings for smart bids. This ensures adjustments don't exceed your predefined thresholds. Additionally, Merch Jar automatically re-syncs data with Amazon if discrepancies are detected, preventing failed adjustments and ensuring changes are applied accurately.

UNLIMITED DATA STORAGE

Unlike Amazon's limited data retention, Merch Jar stores your ad data indefinitely, allowing for long-term analysis and historical comparison. This can be invaluable for identifying trends, optimizing strategies, and making data-driven decisions. Authors can look back at past campaigns to understand what worked and what didn't, refining their strategies over time.

BEYOND AMAZON ADS: A WEALTH OF RESOURCES

Merch Jar's commitment to empowering indie authors goes beyond just ad management. The platform offers a wealth of additional resources to support authors in their publishing journey.

- **KDP Playbook:** A comprehensive guide to Amazon Advertising automation, offering step-by-step instructions and expert insights. This resource is invaluable for authors who want to take full advantage of Merch Jar's automation capabilities.
- **Educational Content:** A vast library of articles, videos, and webinars covering a wide range of topics, from ad strategy to book marketing. Authors can continuously learn and improve their skills, staying ahead of the curve in the ever-evolving world of self-publishing.
- **Community Support:** Merch Jar boasts a thriving community of users who are eager to share their experiences, insights, and advice. This valuable forum provides space for authors to connect with their peers, learn from each other's successes, and get support when needed.





A PLATFORM DESIGNED FOR AUTHORS, BY AUTHORS

Merch Jar's founders understand the unique challenges of the world of self-publishing and have designed their platform with those challenges in mind, with a user-friendly interface, robust customer support, and a commitment to providing the tools and resources necessary for authors to succeed in the competitive world of Amazon advertising. The platform's design reflects a deep understanding of the author's journey, making it an intuitive and indispensable tool for any self-published writer.

With its comprehensive features, user-friendly design, and a wealth of resources, Merch Jar stands out as a must-have tool for any indie author looking to optimize their Amazon ads and boost their book sales. It simplifies what's complex about ad management and makes it accessible and manageable, so authors of every experience level can optimize their marketing strategy and get back to doing what they love—creating great stories for their readers. ■

Chelle Honiker



Chelle Honiker

As publisher of Indie Author Magazine, Chelle brings over two decades of executive operations and leadership experience. She's a grounded digital nomad currently hunkered down near her adult daughters in Texas, but can't wait until the world opens back up and she can take her empty nest back on the road. It's said she could run a small country with just the contents of her ever-present backpack. She'd rather not put it to the test.

What We Know about What's Next

THE TRANSITION FROM 20BOOKS VEGAS TO AUTHOR NATION

20Books Vegas, held November 6-10 at the Horseshoe Las Vegas casino hotel, was the largest conference for indie authors in 2023, attracting more than two thousand five hundred attendees. Ten tracks of sessions covered topics such as marketing, audio, craft, and business, led by industry experts like Joanna Penn, John Truby, Ines Johnson, Bryan Cohen, and dozens more. Since 2017, 20Books Vegas has been an excellent in-person networking opportunity for indie authors and offered insights to the industry for those attending virtually. Following the event, most of this year's sessions have been made available on YouTube for those who could not attend in person at <https://youtube.com/@20Booksto50kRRLiveEvents>.

2023 was the last year for 20Books Vegas, however, as co-founder Craig Martelle, who has led and coordinated the show since its inception, announced in July he is stepping away to focus on health issues. For 2024, the conference, now called Author Nation, will be led by Joe Solari—who taught several sessions at 20Books on successfully running an author business—as well as a consortium made up of leaders in the indie publishing community. Chelle Honiker, publisher of *Indie Author Magazine*, is also among the consortium as the content committee chair.

Many 20Books Vegas attendees have questions about Author Nation, and Solari's company, Author Ventures LLC, has created a website, <https://www.AuthorNation.live>, for interested parties to sign up to receive updates.

WHAT ISN'T CHANGING FOR AUTHOR NATION 2024

Author Nation will take place at the same venue as 20Books Vegas, Horseshoe Las Vegas. It will be the same time of the year as 20Books: November 11-15, 2024. The cost for authors to attend in person will still be \$399.99.

Like 20Books Vegas 2023, an Author Nation ticket will cover attendance for Monday's Industry Expo, author education sessions Tuesday through Thursday, and admission to the Reader & Author Vegas Event (RAVE) on Friday.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF AUTHOR NATION

Even with several similarities, "Author Nation is not the same conference with a new name," Solari says. "Michael Anderle owns the trademark for the name '20Books,' and his team is planning other events with the 20Books name. Author Ventures LLC assumed the liability of the event contract from Craig Martelle, and we all support each other going forward, but we're no longer part of 20Books."

Authors will see a philosophical change in the Author Nation conferences. "Let's figure out what your best life through writing is," Solari says. "It's great if you want to be a seven-figure author, but that might not be the best way for your writing career to serve you. How do you build your best writing career? Kindle Unlimited, going wide, Kickstarter, subscrip-

tions—there are a multitude of pros and cons, and it's our job to help you navigate success with an approach that best suits your goals, personality, and business.”

In Author Nation emails and social media communications, Solari outlines his vision that value in publishing is created in the connection between authors and readers.

A major change will be how Author Nation markets RAVE to readers and book buyers. The Author Nation team is prioritizing growing attendance to the event on Friday, November 15. “I want authors to sell ten times what they sold in 2023,” Solari says. To attract readers, Author Nation will host a keynote for Author Nation and RAVE attendees the night before RAVE, November 14, 2024, with indie filmmaker Kevin Smith (*Clerks*, *Dogma*, *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*).

LIVE-STREAMING AND DIGITAL TICKETS

In a November 15, 2023, communication, Solari stated that Author Nation will not offer a live stream option in 2024. “If you only included the live-stream attendees, 20Books would still have been the biggest author conference of the year,” Solari says. “In past years, the same people who were trying to make sure the event was going smoothly for the live attendees were also slammed with issues from the live-streaming.” At the 2023 show, technical issues made several of the sessions unwatchable remotely.

“A live-stream event is something we want to offer in the future,” Solari says, but “the team doesn't have the bandwidth to support it in 2024.”

Instead, Author Nation will offer a digital ticket to access recorded videos after the conference. While

20Books offered videos on YouTube after the show for no cost, Author Nation will require a digital ticket to view sessions and other content. “We can focus on the recording quality and post-production to make the videos the highest quality possible,” says Solari. Ticket holders will have access to an extended Q&A after each session. Solari calls these remote sessions “after-parties.” Speakers and vendors have been positive about the idea, Solari said, because it will give them the ability to give complete, thoughtful answers without being pressed for time.

HELPING AUTHORS GROW THEIR CAREERS

“One of the goals of Author Nation 2024 is to ensure that Author Nation attendees will be in a better place in their career the next year,” Solari says. “We want the 2024 attendee who has never published to have written and published their book in 2025. We want the author who is losing money in 2024 to break even or be profitable in 2025.”

“We have great DNA from 20Books Vegas, and Author Nation includes a team of people that are being thoughtful about what the author community needs for the next three to five years,” he says.

Although attendees should expect significant differences from 20Books Vegas, the conference will continue to prioritize author success. “We're doing this because we believe there's more than one right answer,” Solari says. “Author Nation is the place to come to collect the information and make that decision for yourself and your author business.” ■

Paul Austin Ardoin



Paul Austin Ardoin

Paul Austin Ardoin is the USA TODAY bestselling indie author of *The Fenway Stevenson Mysteries* and *The Woodhead & Becker Mysteries*. He holds a B.A. in creative writing from the University of California, Santa Barbara and an M.B.A. in marketing from the University of Phoenix. His book *Zero to Four Figures: Making \$1,000 a Month with Self-Published Fiction* was published in June 2023.

Chart Your Course to Success at Author Nation

No matter if you're a Pre-Published Explorer, an Emerging Storyteller, or an Inquisitive Voyager, you'll spend five value-packed days with your people in Las Vegas this November.

Build your technology inventory and establish a robust support network of mentors, peers, and readers to level up your author career.

Map Your Journey through our various tracks:

- Craft
- Marketing
- Advertising
- Business & Finance
- Transmedia
- Production & Workflow, and Mindset
- Wellness, & Productivity.

Led by industry experts and accomplished authors, our lectures, workshops, and discussions are tailored to help you build a comprehensive system that supports your best life through writing.



Get your tickets now!
<https://writelink.to/an2024>





November 11-15, 2024 | Las Vegas, Nevada

TECHNOLOGY

From Bookshelf to Bookstore

EXPLORING LULU.COM'S FOUR MAJOR MARKETING AVENUES

In the intricate tapestry of self-publishing, indie authors are constantly searching for ways to better control their income and their relationship with their readers. Lulu.com stands out not merely as another publishing platform but as a comprehensive solution to the dilemma. The platform supports a myriad of projects, from print books to photo books, comic books, magazines, yearbooks, calendars, and e-books. But it also offers authors four distinct distribution avenues tailored to various facets of the publishing journey: a dedicated online bookstore, the Lulu Direct platform, expansive retail distribution, and innovative crowdfunding possibilities.

After creating an account on Lulu.com, you can begin crafting your first project. Then, select one of the four methods to distribute your work to eager readers. Let's delve deeper into each of these.

Select a Goal

Start by telling us what you plan to do with your Book. From printing your own copies to selling around the world or on your own website, we've got you covered!

Publish Your Book
Publish your Book to use any or all of our retail options to sell your Book. ^

Lulu Bookstore
Sell your Book on the Lulu Bookstore.

Lulu Direct
Sell your Book on your website or ecommerce store.

Global Distribution ⓘ
Sell your Book through 40,000+ global retailers using Lulu's distribution service. Please note that a title page, copyright page, and ISBN are required.

Print Your Book
Upload your Book files to your account and purchase copies.

LULU'S RETAIL BOOKSTORE: BRIDGING INDIE AUTHORS AND GLOBAL READERS

Lulu.com promotes itself as the largest indie bookseller of those currently in the market, forging a space where authors can connect with an international audience. Its platform accommodates multiple currencies, simplifying transactions for readers worldwide. Amid the expansive retail landscape, the platform carves out a niche that aims to cater specifically to the indie author community, amplifying reach while fostering the vital author-reader bond.

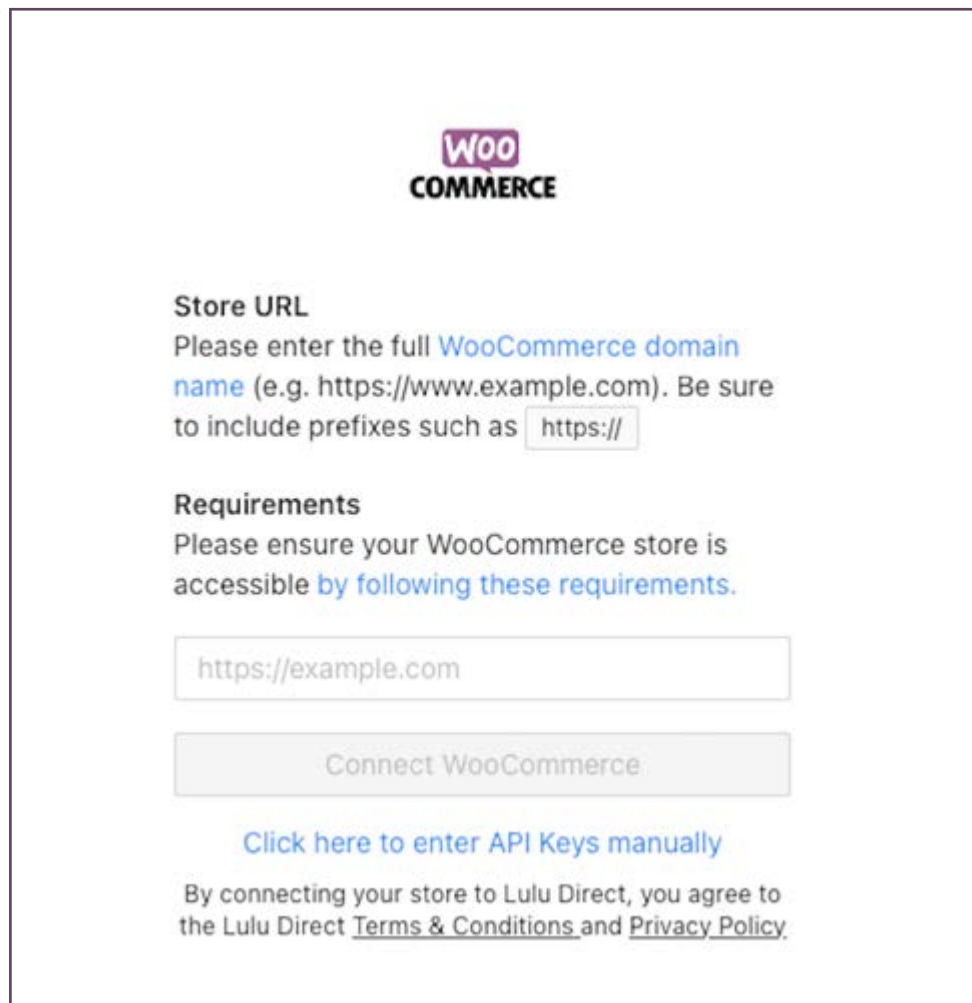
LULU DIRECT: FACILITATING DIRECT SALES FOR INDIE AUTHORS

By integrating with popular e-commerce platforms like Shopify and WooCommerce, Lulu Direct—an extension of Lulu.com—streamlines selling books directly from an author's personal website. This bypasses the need for third-party retailers, potentially offering higher profit margins.

In this scenario, the author lists products they want to sell on their website, and Lulu fulfills the orders transparently. The platform acts as a drop shipper, handling the print-on-demand and shipping duties and leaving the sale in the hands of the author.

Authors must set up their websites to ensure they follow security protocols for credit card collection and privacy policies, as well as tax collection and shipping rates. For more in-depth information on how to create a WooCommerce store, see *Indie Author Magazine's* previous reporting on direct sales from September 2021, or explore Indie Author Training's Direct Sales course at <https://IndieAuthorTraining.com>.

The processes connecting WooCommerce and Shopify are similar, though if you want to connect a Shopify store, you can visit <https://authortechsummit.com> for a video walk-through. To connect a WooCommerce store, first, navigate to the Lulu homepage and locate the My Stores option in the navigation menu. Click the "Connect A Store" button.

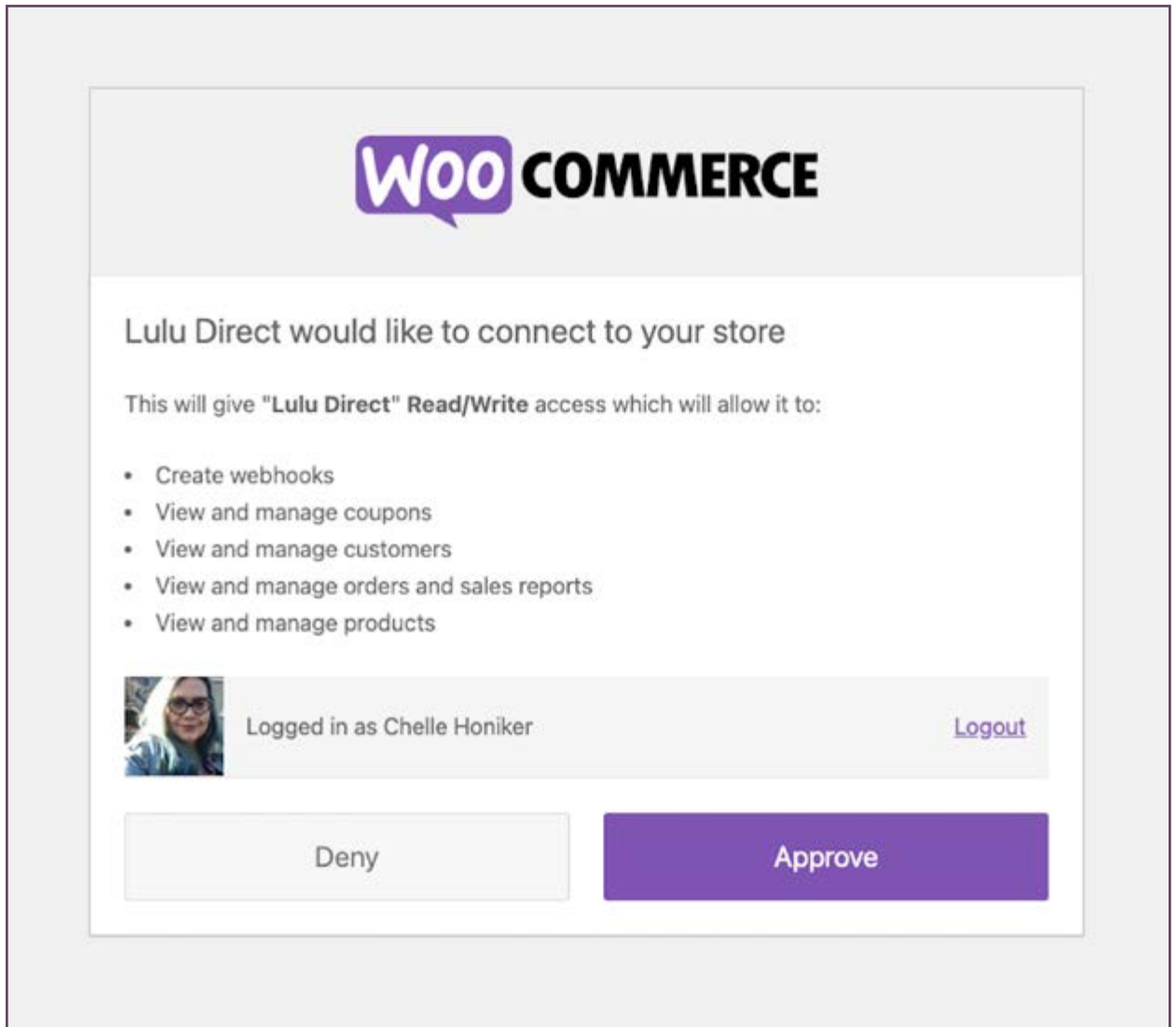


The screenshot shows a form for connecting a WooCommerce store. At the top is the WooCommerce logo. Below it is the heading "Store URL" followed by instructions: "Please enter the full WooCommerce domain name (e.g. <https://www.example.com>). Be sure to include prefixes such as

Below this is the "Requirements" section: "Please ensure your WooCommerce store is accessible by following these requirements." Underneath is a text input field containing "https://example.com".

At the bottom of the form is a button labeled "Connect WooCommerce". Below the button is a link: "Click here to enter API Keys manually". At the very bottom, there is a disclaimer: "By connecting your store to Lulu Direct, you agree to the Lulu Direct [Terms & Conditions](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)."

Input your store URL. Remember to use the HTTPS protocol, as Lulu Direct doesn't support HTTP connections. Once done, hit the "Connect to WooCommerce" button, and approve the connection.



Pro Tip: Before cementing the connection, ensure your WooCommerce store has permalinks enabled. This can help prevent potential connectivity issues when integrating with Lulu Direct.

Once your site is connected, Lulu gives you a helpful checklist to complete to be sure you're ready for website sales to process.



THE BILLING SYSTEM

Lulu Direct operates on a unique drop-shipping model, streamlining the sales process for indie authors. Once an order is placed on an author's WooCommerce or Shopify website, the author collects payment directly from the customer. Subsequently, Lulu Direct processes the order using the author's stored credit card and shipping details. While the customer pays the author, the author's payment details on Lulu Direct are billed for the printing and shipping costs. This system allows authors to manage customer payments and fulfill orders efficiently, while Lulu Direct handles the backend logistics.

Pro Tip: Create a custom packing slip for your store with your return shipping address and any refund/return policies. Because Lulu acts as a drop shipper, your customer will only have your contact information. If they wish to return their item, they'll send it directly to you for processing, whether it's a refund or replacement. You can also craft a personal message to be included with each order on the packing slip.

There are a few other things to keep in mind when using Lulu Direct's store for sales through your website.



Elevate Your Edges

Premade and
Custom Page
Edge Designs
for Print on
Demand

Full Formatting
also Available

Get Your Free
Quote Today

Production Delay

Every order is subject to a production delay, which provides authors the flexibility to make last-minute tweaks or even cancel the order. This is a safeguard against hasty decisions or inadvertent errors, and Lulu Direct permits you to adjust this window up to twenty-four hours based on your comfort level.

Automatic Order Approval

If you're confident about your orders and wish to expedite the production process, you can enable automatic order approval, allowing orders to proceed to production after the production delay, without the need for manual oversight.

Automatic Payments

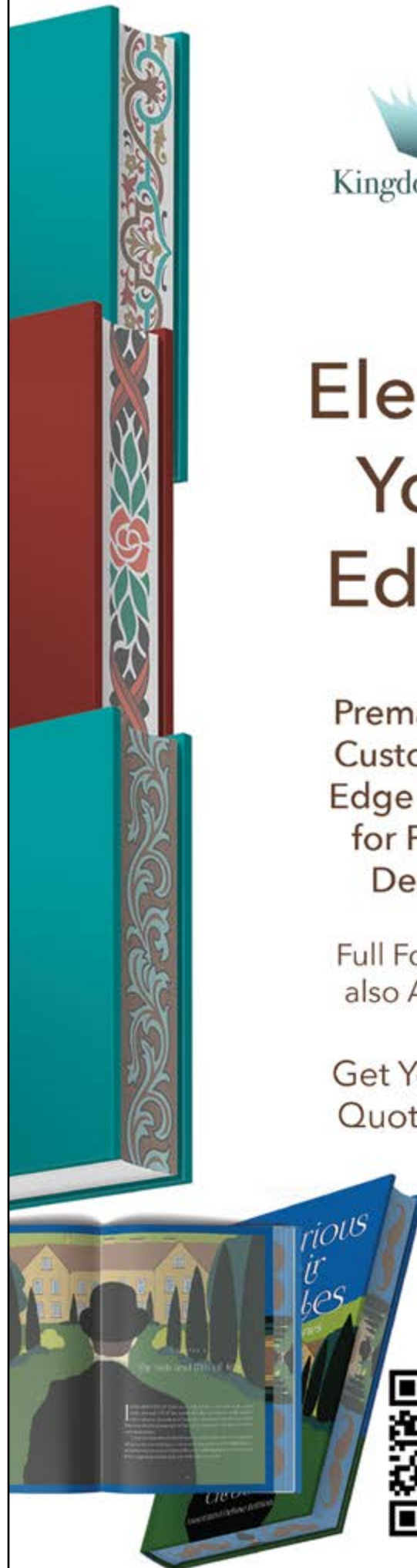
If automatic payments are enabled, Lulu Direct will handle the financial aspect of fulfilling an order. Following the production delay, the platform can use your saved payment method to cover printing and shipping expenses.

Shipping

Lulu Direct prioritizes both cost effectiveness and traceability. When a customer chooses a shipping method, the platform auto-selects the most economical trackable option available. However, if the author has specific preferences or needs, the platform allows for manual adjustments on the Order Details page before the order payment is processed.

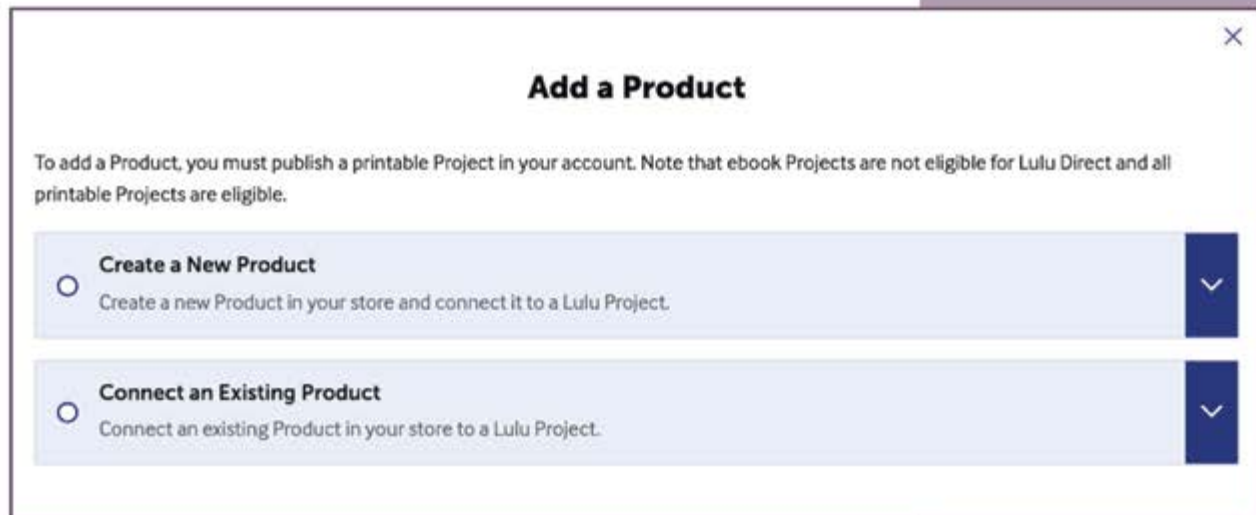
To get a clearer picture of the shipping costs and options, Lulu Direct offers a pricing calculator for estimated rates on its website.

Once you've completed the steps to complete your contact and billing information, you can create a product for sale on your website. Note that the site differentiates a "project"—what you're selling: print book, photo book, comic book, magazine, yearbook, calendar, or e-book—and a "product," a listing on your website for sale.



CREATING A PRODUCT

Once you have your projects prepared in Lulu and have set up your store details, you can create a product. When you click on “Add a Product,” you have two choices: Create a New Product or Connect an Existing Product.



Creating a new product uses the basics of your project and attempts to create a new product in your WooCommerce store on your website. This method should be the most simple, but some users report that varying WordPress security settings can make this glitchy and produce errors without a clear direction to resolve them.

The more reliable method is to connect an existing product by first creating a WooCommerce product on your website and then connecting it to Lulu.

Pro Tip: Keep the product listing on your website simple to start. The bridge between your website and Lulu will time out if your description is over two hundred fifty words. Connect the product with the project, then revise the product on your website with the full blurb and sales copy you want your customers to see.

RETAIL DISTRIBUTION: CENTRALIZING SALES AND DISTRIBUTION

Along with Lulu’s own bookstore, the platform offers an integrated global distribution service, linking

authors to various online and physical retailers and allowing them to oversee all sales and revenue from a single dashboard.

When compared to managing sales via platforms like Amazon's KDP or Ingram Spark, Lulu's approach is streamlined. Instead of juggling between platforms, everything is centralized.

For those considering Lulu's distribution, keep in mind the following:

- **Submission and Approval:** Authors start their project and select the Global Distribution option, and must provide essential details like an ISBN.
- **Fees:** For print editions, authors must order, review, and approve a proof copy. E-books have a one-time distribution fee, which varies.
- **Guides:** Lulu offers detailed guidelines to aid authors. The Global Distribution Guide and the Eligible Products Guide provide insights into the requirements and eligible product types for global distribution.

CROWDFUNDING WITH KICKSTARTER VIA LULU

Crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter offer an avenue for authors to fund publishing projects, whether it's their first book or a special edition. When leveraging Kickstarter, authors set a funding

goal and craft a campaign page with details about the book and reasons readers should support it. Various rewards at different funding levels can reward backers. Once the project attains its funding goal, authors receive the funds, which can be allocated to editorial services, cover design, and printing copies for backers.

For those who achieve their funding goals in a crowdfunding campaign, Lulu can simplify the process of fulfilling bulk orders for backers. After publishing the book on Lulu at no cost, authors can employ the Order Import tool to upload a CSV file containing backers' order and shipping details. Lulu then takes on the responsibility of printing and drop-shipping the orders to backers globally.

SUMMING UP LULU'S VERSATILITY

The journey of self-publishing is intricate, with multiple paths to traverse. Platforms like Lulu.com present indie authors with a comprehensive toolkit catering to various facets of this journey. From retailing on Lulu's dedicated bookstore to facilitating direct sales through Lulu Direct, ensuring expansive retail distribution, or leveraging the power of crowdfunding, Lulu endeavors to be a holistic solution for indie authors. As the publishing landscape continually evolves, being equipped with the right tools and knowledge can make all the difference, and Lulu.com stands as a potent ally in this endeavor. ■

Chelle Honiker



Chelle Honiker

As publisher of Indie Author Magazine, Chelle brings over two decades of executive operations and leadership experience. She's a grounded digital nomad currently hunkered down near her adult daughters in Texas, but can't wait until the world opens back up and she can take her empty nest back on the road. It's said she could run a small country with just the contents of her ever-present backpack. She'd rather not put it to the test.

The Transformative Power of Transmedia Storytelling

In 2019, actor Henry Cavill brought monster slayer Geralt of Rivia to life in the series adaptation of *The Witcher* on Netflix. Thus, a new segment of fans was introduced to the elements of Andrzej Sapkowski's world from the novels: the Continent, its fantastical monsters, and its beloved characters.

 VELLUM



Ebook. Paperback. Hardcover.
Easy Formatting. On your own.



Originally begun as short stories in his native Poland, Sapkowski expanded and released his five-book *Witcher* Saga in Polish over a five-year period from 1995 to 1999, with English translations released from 2008 to 2017. The *Witcher* fandom in his native Poland and eastern Europe is often described as cult-like in their appreciation of his work.

Novels were just the beginning. Comic books, video games, role-playing games, and animated shorts were developed, expanding the global fanbase. Other authors followed with spinoffs in cooperation with Sapkowski as a means to keep his fans engaged. These short stories featured familiar characters as well as new ones. Meanwhile, the original stories were translated into multiple languages and adapted into a movie in 2001 and a television series in 2002.

Sapkowski's work and career is just one recent example of the power of transmedia, a method of using a variety of platforms and mediums to expand upon an original story. For indie authors, the practice offers a creative, versatile way to broaden your readership and grow your business—if you know how to use it.



STUART GRANT

DIGITAL AUTHORS TOOLKIT

YOUR AUTHOR WEBSITE.
DONE.



SCAN ME

OFFICIAL SPONSOR AND SPEAKER AT SPS 2024



digitalauthorstoolkit.com

HIGHEST RATED WEB DESIGNER ON  reedsy



THE CAPITOL

FOR THE DISTRICTS
BY THE CAPITOL

PANEM TODAY,
PANEM TOMORROW,
PANEM FOREVER.

CAPITOL CONCERNS

ONE PANEM

CAPITOL TV

DISTRICT HEROES



TRANSMEDIA VERSUS ADAPTATION

You'd be forgiven if you heard the word "transmedia" and didn't immediately understand the term or how it relates to an indie author. You'd also be forgiven if you conflate transmedia with adaptations.

An adaptation takes an existing work and translates it into a different format, such as a movie, graphic novel, translation, or audiobook. The substance of the work remains essentially the same.

Transmedia, on the other hand, makes use of other media. Fantasy and Science Fiction author Jim Wilbourne says, "Transmedia is taking a core story or core world that your story is built in and then expanding it into different types of media so that different readers or different viewers can experience your world but a different story or experience within that world."

For example, in *The Witcher*, adaptations are different versions of the original work—transla-

tions from Polish to English, audiobooks, movies, and both television series. Transmedia, on the other hand, are new works—graphic novels, animated shorts, video games, board games, and LitRPG.

You'll likely recognize many mainstream examples of transmedia from pop culture and well-known entertainment franchises:

Pokemon successfully used card games to engage their fandom, which evolved into smartphone apps connecting users globally.

Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*, recently released as a Netflix series, produced a companion "Dreamcast" on Spotify—a collection of podcast episodes introducing the characters and the land of Dreaming. Gaiman also narrates a bedtime story bound to give you nightmares.

The creators of *The Hunger Games* movie created short videos for YouTube, produced as if sanctioned by Capitol TV and featuring actors describing the different Districts.

The creative team at Watson built two interactive websites for the Hunger Games franchise, one as if it were managed by the oppressive government of the Capitol and another that replaced it during the marketing campaign of the final movie, depicting a takeover by Katniss Everdeen's resistance.

Although these are major mainstream media examples, indie authors can use transmedia to their advantage as well. Urban Fantasy author E.G. Bateman created <https://cornerdown.com>, which serves to sell branded merchandise and showcase the whimsical Fae menu from her Faders series of books, with a review of the diner from a patron.

Cozy writer Penelope Cress created a church bulletin for her main character's workplace filled with Easter eggs for the next story and included it in her newsletter and on her website. Authors could create a website depicting other elements from their world—for example, the town where a series is set.

EAST COAST VERSUS WEST COAST TRANSMEDIA

Within transmedia, two schools of thought exist as to how the content should be used, commonly referred to as “East Coast” and “West Coast.”

Wilbourne prefers to refer to them as going wide versus going deep. Wide, or West Coast, transmedia takes core work and creates new works based in the world. These could include adaptations but also new stories in different forms—animations, web stories, short videos, audiobooks, podcasts, and other mediums. They are both new stories and new methods of delivering those stories. Think of a hub and spoke. The hub is the original work with its own set of fans. The spokes are new works in other forms of media, each with its own fans. They may or may not be aware of the other types of work. Some will



"Tasty food, set inside another dimension."

It was an real incredible experience for me. The quality of food was only matched by the quality of service I got. I wish I could keep the flavor in my mouth for ever. Thanks for making the evening an unforgettable one.

D R E A D L O R D M O N A M O N

enter the fandom and learn of the other mediums and become superfans. Others, like video game players, might stay within a single medium.

The deep, or East Coast approach, “[drills] down deeper and deeper for people who love that property already,” Willbourne explains. One example he shares is from *The Office*, whose creators filmed a YouTube video with the actors having a simulated everyday conversation in the accounting department.

Other examples could include artwork or podcast interviews with characters. Cozy authors often include recipes, complete cookbooks, or companion social media groups for recipe swaps.

“West Coast and going wide is about attracting different types of people to the property,” Willbourne says. “East Coast is more about deepening relationships.”

STARTING ON THE RIGHT FOOT

Indie authors have the benefit of owning their own intellectual property and licensing it as they see fit. If an indie author shares their world and invites other authors to write in it, control

still rests with the original author. They retain control as it’s an extension of their work rather than an adaptation.

Wilbourne says to approach adaptations and transmedia with the mindset that you’re a licensing company. “When you create an audiobook, or if you happen to sell your rights to your book, the company creates an audiobook. You have licensed that property to them. You have not given them the copyright of that. From the very beginning, you’re licensing, especially if you do anything outside of just purely writing a book and distributing it yourself.”

As with all things, an indie author has to also calculate the return on investment if they want to produce additional creative works. Everything takes time and money to build and maintain, and authors will often need to hire other creatives for ambitious projects.

As you evaluate whether to create transmedia, consider surveying readers if you have an active fandom to see what they’d like. Remember, if you’re going wide with transmedia, you’re looking to attract new fans that may not know about your books at all and might only be attracted to the app, game, or graphic novel you’re creating.

THE NEW WAY FOR READERS TO FIND AUTHORS SELLING DIRECT

DIRECT2READERS

A unique directory where you can connect directly with your fans and keep all your hard-earned profits.

💡 **Innovative Recommendation Engine:**
Our natural language recommendation engine helps readers discover books based on their preferences. Say goodbye to clunky categories!

📈 **New Market Access:** Gain exposure to a new segment of avid readers, all hungry for fresh indie voices.

💰 **Zero Commissions:** You read it right! We don't take a cut. Your profits are yours to keep.

🚀 **Boost Your Sales:** Benefit from our advanced marketing and influencer channels designed to supercharge your direct sales.



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Authors can often get caught up in the excitement of producing more without calculating the return on investment. Wilbourne suggests recouping your investment by including those assets in a Kickstarter or Patreon campaign. You can include different projects at different levels so that you will only need to pay to have them created if the campaign is funded.

WAYS TO START SMALL

When it comes to creating transmedia for your existing works, you're only limited by your imagination and budget. Here are a few ways you can get started with transmedia.

Romance authors can create a series of letters to and from the main characters, set before or after their story.

Create sound file narration and upload to podcast channels.

Fantasy authors can create a board game or dice featuring their characters.

Sports Romance authors can create a website for the fictitious team in their story.

Create printed maps for the world you've created.

Keep in mind that your goal is to delight and engage fans. Whether you go big or start small, your success will depend on ensuring you keep that in mind. "The relationship you build with your readers is invaluable," Wilbourne says. "And building that relationship with your reader is something more valuable than your next sale because they will go out and buy everything from you if you can create that really close bond." ■

Chelle Honiker



Chelle Honiker

Chelle Honiker is an advocate for the empowerment of authorpreneurs, recognizing the importance of authors taking charge of both their craft and careers. In response to this need, she has founded a media and training company dedicated to supporting these creative professionals. As the co-founder and publisher of Indie Author Magazine, IndieAuthorTraining, Indie Author Tools, and Direct2Readers.com, Chelle's team of more than 80 writers, editors, trainers, and support staff provides resources and insights that help authors navigate the complexities of self-publishing. Her role as the programming director for Author Nation, an annual conference in Las Vegas, further exemplifies her commitment to fostering a community where authors can grow and succeed. With a career spanning over two decades in executive operations and leadership, Chelle has honed her skills in managing complex projects and delivering impactful training programs. Her experience as a speaker and TEDx Organizer has taken her to many countries, where she has shared her insights with diverse audiences.

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EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO A VIBRANT COMMUNITY OF AUTHORS AND EXPERTS

Join a community where questions meet expertise. Benefit from the collective wisdom of fellow authors and receive guidance from the experienced staff of Indie Author Magazine. Whether you're stuck on a plot point or navigating publishing platforms, our community is here to support you.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING: WEBINARS, TECHNICAL TRAINING, AND MORE

Our interactive webinars and hands-on technical training sessions bring learning to life. Engage in product tours, insightful interviews, and get hands-on experience that empowers you to make informed decisions about your author career.

COMPARE TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

Discover the tools and technology that power indie author success. Dive into detailed product tours of popular software, meticulously curated for indie authors. This unique feature allows you to explore, compare, and choose the right tools to streamline your writing, publishing, and marketing processes, ensuring you're equipped with the best resources to bring your stories to life and reach your audience effectively.



TOOLS

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AUTHOR
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School's in Session

A DEEP DIVE INTO IAM'S NEW COMMUNITY-FOCUSED EDUCATION PLATFORM, INDIE AUTHOR TRAINING

The world of indie publishing is an exhilarating adventure, but it can also feel like you're navigating constantly shifting terrain. New tools emerge daily, promising to streamline workflows, boost productivity, and propel your self-publishing journey. But where do you, the busy indie author, find the time and resources to stay informed and equipped? Enter Indie Author Training, the innovative sister site of *Indie Author Magazine* designed to be your one-stop shop for mastering the ever-evolving realm of indie author technology.

The trusted team behind *Indie Author Magazine*, which has remained committed to providing unbiased information and supporting the indie author community since its inaugural issue three years ago, brings its same dedication to Indie Author Training, offering a marketplace of courses, product tours, and live webinars on every aspect of managing a publishing business, plus a range of other features. Here, we'll delve deeper into the platform, exploring how it's empowering authors to learn, connect, and thrive.

WEBINARS: A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO LEARNING

Indie Author Training's dynamic webinar series caters to the diverse needs of indie authors through a multifaceted approach to learning. Here's what you can expect.

- **Emerging New Tech:** In-depth sessions on new platforms showcase tech tools designed to free you up to focus on the heart of your passion—writing. Learn how these tools can streamline your workflow, from manuscript organization to formatting and distribution. See platforms in action and discover how they can empower you to get back to weaving your magic on the page.
- **In-Depth Analysis with Industry Experts:** The world of indie publishing is constantly bombarded with new information and trends. Indie Author Training cuts through the noise by offering insightful webinars





featuring established industry figures. These experts provide well-researched and balanced perspectives on crucial aspects of self-publishing, from the evolving landscape of marketing strategies to the nuanced functionalities of specific publishing platforms. Gain a comprehensive understanding from trusted voices to guide your decision-making and refine your self-publishing approach.

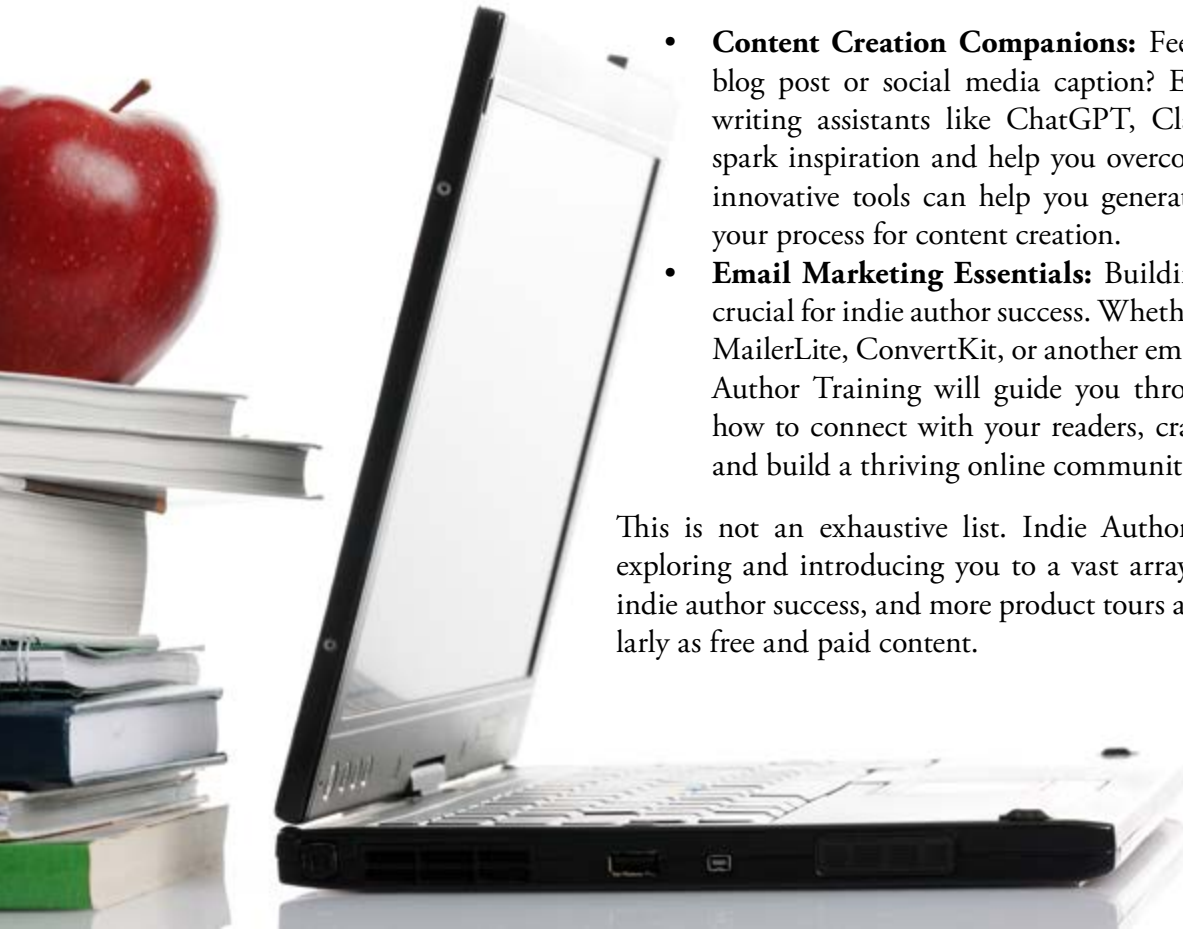
- **Build a Sustainable Indie Author Career:** Feeling overwhelmed by the constant pressure to optimize your workflow? The “Sustainable Career Tips” series explores innovative and research-backed strategies for building a long-lasting and fulfilling indie author career. These sessions delve into topics like work-life balance, incorporating healthy habits into your routine, and fostering a creative mindset for long-term success. Learn unconventional approaches that can help you unlock your full potential while prioritizing your well-being along your author journey.

PRODUCT TOURS: DEMYSTIFYING YOUR TECH TOOLBOX

The sheer volume of tech tools available for indie authors can be overwhelming. Indie Author Training simplifies the process with product tours tailored to address specific needs in your creative journey. These comprehensive sessions showcase various tools in action, giving you a clear picture of their functionalities and how they can integrate seamlessly into your existing workflow. Here are some examples you might encounter.

- **Writing Powerhouses:** Delve into the functionalities of writing software like Scrivener and Atticus. Learn how these tools can streamline your outlining, manuscript organization, and editing processes, empowering you to craft compelling narratives with greater efficiency.
- **Grammar Guardians:** Unsure about comma placement or struggling with phrasing? Indie Author Training explores how grammar checkers like ProWritingAid can help you refine your prose and ensure your manuscript shines.
- **Design Decoded:** With the magic of design tools like Canva, you can discover how to create stunning visuals for your book covers, social media posts, and marketing materials. These tools can elevate your brand identity and attract your target audience.





- **Content Creation Companions:** Feeling stuck on that next blog post or social media caption? Explore how AI-powered writing assistants like ChatGPT, Claude, or Sudowrite can spark inspiration and help you overcome writer's block. These innovative tools can help you generate fresh ideas and refine your process for content creation.
- **Email Marketing Essentials:** Building a loyal reader base is crucial for indie author success. Whether you prefer Mailchimp, MailerLite, ConvertKit, or another email service provider, Indie Author Training will guide you through the features. Learn how to connect with your readers, craft engaging newsletters, and build a thriving online community.

This is not an exhaustive list. Indie Author Training is constantly exploring and introducing you to a vast array of tools to propel your indie author success, and more product tours are added to the site regularly as free and paid content.



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COURSE LIBRARY: A MARKETPLACE OF EXPERTISE

Forget the days of limited learning options. Indie Author Training's course library is a dynamic marketplace for knowledge, meticulously curated to empower your indie author journey. Here's how this innovative platform elevates your learning experience.

- **Learn from the Best:** Step beyond the confines of a single instructor. Indie Author Training functions as a marketplace, connecting you with a diverse range of industry leaders. Instructors set their own pricing, structure, and schedule, allowing them to tailor their courses to offer in-depth, practical guidance. Acclaimed authors, editors, marketing specialists, and publishing professionals bring their unique perspectives and proven strategies to the table. Whether you crave insights on crafting captivating narratives or mastering the intricacies of self-publishing platforms, you'll find a course led by a recognized expert who aligns with your specific needs.

- **Masterful Delivery, Lasting Impact:** Exceptional instruction goes beyond just content. Indie Author Training understands this and uses a state-of-the-art learning management system (LMS) equipped with a robust suite of tools designed to enhance your learning. Interactive modules, engaging quizzes, downloadable resources, and collaborative forums are all crafted by instructional design professionals.

- **Structured Learning beyond Lectures:** Indie Author Training's courses aren't just passive lectures. Instructors have designed clear learning paths and a structured environment, allowing you to progress at your own pace and ensuring you have space to develop a deeper understanding of the material before moving on to new concepts. Instructors may also offer templates, checklists, or software tutorials to enhance your learning experience and equip you with the resources to implement your newfound knowledge.
- **Dive Deep into Specific Skills:** Whether you're looking to craft captivating email newsletters that build a loyal reader base or leverage the power of platforms like Amazon ads and Facebook Ads to reach a wider audience, Indie Author Training has a course tailored to your needs. Expand your marketing expertise with courses like "Google Rich Results and Ads," or delve into the world of AI writing assistants with "ChatGPT Basics." Sharpen your storytelling skills by exploring the nuances of tropes, or learn the basics of editing. New courses are added every week, and anyone can make suggestions for new instructors or course topics.

DISCUSSION GROUPS: FOSTERING A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY



The journey of an indie author can be isolating. Indie Author Training fosters a vibrant community through its discussion groups. These safe spaces provide a platform for you to connect with fellow authors, ask questions, and share experiences, and they offer other key benefits as well.

- **Unwavering Support:** Discussion groups offer a supportive environment free from the whims of ever-changing social media algorithms. Here, you can voice your concerns, seek guidance, and connect directly with authors who understand the unique challenges and triumphs of the self-publishing journey. Gain encouragement, share your experiences, and learn from the successes and struggles of others in the indie author community.
- **In-Depth Discussions:** Groups on Indie Author Training allow you to delve deeper into specific topics and tech tools without searching. Whether

you're stuck on a specific aspect of marketing or seeking inspiration for your next project, forums provide a breeding ground for collaboration and shared knowledge. Learn from the collective wisdom of the community, troubleshoot challenges, and discover innovative approaches to navigate your self-publishing journey.

- **Direct Access to Experts:** For courses offered through Indie Author Training, dedicated discussion groups provide a platform to interact directly with the course instructors. This personalized access allows you to gain further insights and clarify any lingering doubts. Ask questions, receive feedback on your work, and benefit from the expertise of the instructors in a focused environment.

By combining informative webinars, insightful product tours, comprehensive courses, and a thriving discussion forum, Indie Author Training empowers indie authors to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of self-publishing. Indie Author Training is always open to suggestions for new topics and tools to cover. Head over to <https://indieauthortraining.com>, create your free account, and embark on a successful journey as an indie author. ■

Karen Guyler



Karen Guyler

Always being the new girl at nine schools on two continents was no fun at all so books became the only constant in Karen Guyler's life, even if they didn't help her get out of sports days. Now settled in Milton Keynes, England, Britain's best kept secret, she juggles reading with writing twisty thrilling stories, her children, husband and two grand-puppies - a much nicer mix!

She also teaches Creative Writing for Adult Education with lots of laughter in amongst the word wrangling and discovery.

Habits, the Atomic Way

THREE LESSONS JAMES CLEAR'S 'ATOMIC HABITS' OFFERS AUTHORS FOR REACHING THEIR WRITING GOALS

Since it was published in 2018, James Clear's book, *Atomic Habits*, has sold over fifty million copies and been translated into fifty languages. The book offers tips for any adult looking to improve their lives with better habits, but for authors and self-employed creatives especially, Clear's concepts offer a chance to build better, more sustainable business strategies through regular practice.

"Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become," Clear writes. Authors are aiming for a satisfying, sustainable, and reliable career. Regardless of the presence of financial specifics, goals set the direction. But to get moving in that direction, we need systems and processes that support those goals. Clear's book shares more in-depth concepts to smooth the way through those uncomfortable changes, but here are three key lessons we can use.

Lesson One

Lesson 1: Use good habits to your advantage to improve by a small margin—even 1 percent—per day. Over time, those small gains snowball into successes and habits that put goals within your reach. For example, if you haven't been writing at all, scheduling time to write is a step toward your goal. Making it into a habit by sitting down to write with your first cup of coffee will get you another step toward building the habit. This temptation bundling—rewarding the habit you need to form with the one tied to something you want—will cue your brain to do the habit you are trying to form and improve the chances of success.

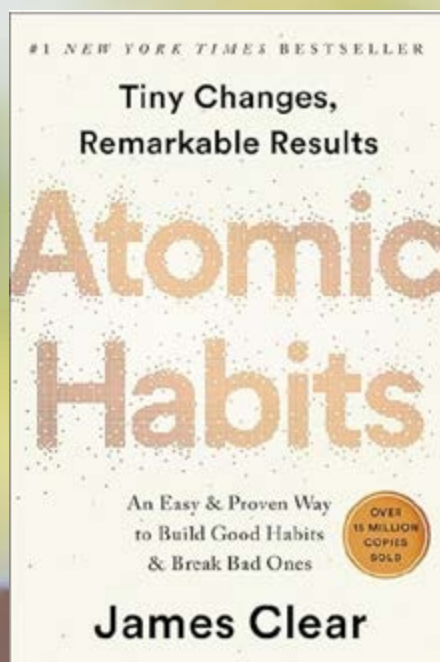
Lesson Two

Lesson 2: Focus on systems instead of goals. Without realizing it, you may have fallen into habits that don't support your goals. Time to pivot! It's definitely not easy, but in the example of struggling with writing, you need to build in a system that helps you write. Block out time, and be sure you have the tech, childcare, environment, and space needed to get work done effectively.

Lesson Three

Lesson 3: Create your identity and build supportive habits around it. Call yourself a writer, then prove it to yourself over and over again. All it takes is a small win. So when you sit and write, take a moment to think of yourself as a writer. Writers write, so the more often you do this, the more you'll reinforce the habit of writing—and around the cycle goes. ■

Jen B. Green



Jen B. Green

Jen B. Green has lived in five countries on four continents with her three sons, two daughters, and one great guy. She reads anything that stays still long enough, plays piano, and bakes everything sweet.

After earning her Ph.D. in psychology, Jen tried writing a novel for Nanowrimo and was hooked! Her days are spent traveling the world, teaching undergraduate psychology, and wrangling her growing homemade army, but her nights are for writing Urban Fantasy with witches and werewolves.

CORNER THE MARKET

An Easier Way for Authors to Boost Sales with BookBub

Plenty of indie authors tout the magic of BookBub for its Featured Deal promotions. These elusive deals can help spike sales, of course, but they're not the only way BookBub can help you find new readers.

When it comes to advertising, you may think BookBub ads are only for books that are free or \$0.99. But that is not how I use them.

On Facebook, authors who want to target the fans of certain authors with their ads can only do so for a handful of big names, such as Lee Child or Terry Pratchett. However, on BookBub, you can target almost anyone making worthwhile sales.

Let's say, for example, that you write a Cozy Mystery with a dog in it and want to target me because your covers and stories are similar in flavor to mine.



The author targeting section on BookBub Ads

By targeting me—or, more accurately, my readers—with your ads, you can aim your ad directly at the readers who like my books. In some cases, the pool of potential readers you're targeting will be small compared with the audiences you can find on Facebook. However, these are readers whose interest in books is sufficient to make them subscribe to a daily email.

You can test out comparable authors for just a few bucks and find out if their readers will be attracted to your books.

WHY IT WORKS

I don't have the column space to explain all the reasons you want to target successful authors with BookBub ads, so here is the biggest one: Amazon ads are all about relevance. New books have no sales data, so those titles have no relevance. But you know what books and authors should be good targets for your ads, and you can game the system by using BookBub to connect your books to those with sales data.

This is how it works:

- Target the author of your choice with BookBub ads.
- Sell enough books to show up in that author's also-bought section, meaning you're now relevant and have sales data on Amazon.
- Push more traffic to that author with Amazon ads.

AD CREATION

For my BookBub ads, I use the same images and captions as I do for Facebook ads. The pixel width and height are different, but most image platforms, such as Book Brush, have automated templates to account for this.



The image from a recent ad I ran

One good thing about BookBub is that you only need to worry about the image. There is no space for clever copy or headlines, so use images that worked for your Facebook ads and just give them a great caption.

SETTING UP YOUR CAMPAIGN

In my BookBub ad campaigns, I use cost-per-click (CPC) instead of cost-per-thousand (CPM). Many may argue with this, but if your ads get no clicks, it costs you nothing using CPC. BookBub will suggest a bid range, and I usually go a few cents over the minimum and run ads continuously at a low budget of \$5 per day. I then shut them off if they don't sell books.

How do I know if they are selling? I use Amazon Attribution Links to track individual sales for each ad I run. You can remove the guesswork and gain data to analyze by giving each ad a unique link.

Ad group ID	Channel ID	Publisher ID	Click-throughs ID	DPV ID	Purchases ID	Units sold ID	KINP read ID	Estimated KINP
Rev 10 ad 15 588104800791208110	Social	Facebook	16,715	17,060	97	97	88,537	
Rev 10 ad 2 592107764264285889	Social	Facebook	4,896	5,027	40	40	17,967	
Rev 10 ad 3 590532630992472875	Social	Facebook	1,408	1,493	11	11	12,982	
Rev 10 ad 1 594505372415991722	Social	BookBub	593	645	10	10	8,633	
Rev 10 ad 5 58101633766867198	Social	Facebook	1,095	1,059	8	8	5,976	

The campaign for one of my boxed sets. Fourth from the top is an ad group with BookBub in the title.

When you are setting up the attribution links, just click “New” in the Select A Publisher section and type in “BookBub.” In the ad group name, create a designation that makes it clear this ad is on BookBub. When you revisit to monitor your results, you will be able to see at a glance if the ad is generating sales.

Add ad groups and specify platforms and channels where your campaign is running on.

Ad group 1

Ad group name Select a publisher

Publisher Select a publisher

Channel Select a publisher

Enter a name for the unique attribution tag you are creating.

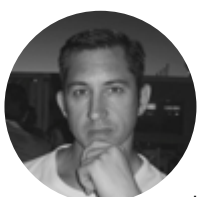
Choose the website, app, or other property where your media will be displayed.

The ad type (for example Display, Video, Social, Search, or Email).

Click “New” in the Select A Publisher section and type in “BookBub” to help accurately track your ads’ performance on the platform using Amazon Attribution.

BookBub’s Featured Deals earn plenty of attention among indie authors, but don’t overlook your advertising opportunities with the platform. Get the image and audience right, and you should see very good sales. ■

Steve Higgs



Steve Higgs

"When Steve Higgs wrote his debut novel, he was a Captain in the British Army. Now retired from the military, he is having a ball writing mystery stories and crime thrillers and claims to have more than a hundred books forming an unruly queue in his head as they clamour to get out. He lives in the south-east corner of England with a duo of lazy sausage dogs. Surrounded by rolling hills, brooding castles, and vineyards, he doubts he will ever leave."

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