

Being your own Publisher

By Dr. Jacqueline Jeynes



Fed up with hassles and restrictions when dealing with a publisher for your books? Me too, so I decided to do it myself. Five years ago, I would not have considered it - too difficult to reach group buyers, too much marketing effort needed - but now, your side of the bargain seems to be expanding while theirs shrinks and you are expected to do all this anyway.

Forget the "vanity publishing" tag - this is about becoming a professional publisher as well as an author. I am referring to non-fiction in this instance, as I do not write fiction, but many of the principles will still apply. There are three important elements to consider:

ISBN

There is no point considering publishing unless there is an ISBN number. Most book shops will not stock without an ISBN and you need one to sell via sites such as Amazon. You have to buy them in a block of 10, around £125, and register your details with Nielsen ISBN Agency for UK and Ireland. It is a simple process and they have lots of guidance online to help - see isbn.nielsenbook.co.uk/. Once you register a title against a number, they include details on their own list that goes out to bookshops who can order online via Nielsen who pass the order on to you. You still have other numbers available, of course, so you can publish more titles in the future.

Printing

The first book I published 'Peg loom Weaving: all you need to know to get started' ISBN 978-0-9926100-0-5 was A5/ full colour/ 145 pages/ illustrations on front cover and around half the pages in the book. As a practical crafts guide, I specifically wanted spiral bound so that readers can open it flat, though bear in mind libraries do not like spiral bound as you cannot see the title when lined up on shelves unless you include an outer 'flap' across the spine. My local printer was happy to take on the job as long as it was pdf-ready to print. Once set up on their system, they can print off small quantities as and when I need them, for example 20 at a time. It is ideal as it does not involve storing large quantities of books or having to have a minimum of 500 printed at a time. This works out at around £5 a copy and we sell them for £12.50 each.



Two titles being published this year (with two more in a series next year) need a different format, so my printer recommended another in Aberystwyth Cambrian Printers. These books need to be A5, or between A4 and A5, with laminated cover and a mix of black and white/ colour illustrations. The best feature with this printing company is they have a choice between digital or traditional printing methods. The digital print is from pdf-ready file and can be in any small quantities you need at a time. If you need a bigger print run of 1000 or more, they will shift to traditional printing to keep the prices lower. Digital print is again around £5 a copy.

Practicalities

There are basic bits of information that have to be included in every book. These include the inner title page plus author name/ date first published. It also includes publisher's name and contact details/ printer's name and contact details/ standard statement about 'all rights reserved' etc. (provided by Nielsen) and a note that the book can be ordered direct from publisher. Once you have a printed copy, you have a legal obligation to send it to the Legal Deposit Office of The British Library within one month of publication. Also register the titles with Public Lending Right scheme



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Remember to have several copies to send out to relevant reviewers - if you get positive feedback, there should be the option to add a few sentences to the back cover as the digital format makes it easy to amend. List the title and details on Amazon. They add their own p&p amount for the total price charged to the customer, then they take off their own fee before passing the payment on to you. It is usually a bit less than the full selling price, but it involves little effort other than posting books out to customers. Website and social media pages are important, under your own and the publishing name.

E-books

Again, sites such as Amazon have a facility where you can set up the book as an E-Book. There appears to have been new EU legislation recently regarding electronic versions of goods sold to EU customers. You have to charge them VAT at the rate of the country in which they live (not the UK rate), but do not have to register for VAT for your other UK-based business income if below the turnover threshold of £81,000 p.a. (currently). This should not apply to E- books, but we will have to see what happens. I haven't set up any E-book yet so if someone out there has more information, let us know.



The only other issue now is the volume of sales and how you keep the income as publisher (total sales received) separate from income as author (% of total sales received). It depends how many millions you make I suppose!

Jacqueline became the publisher for her own craft book and is continuing with other titles that are all non-fiction. When she became frustrated with publishers expecting so much of her to promote her own titles she felt it was pointless actually signing with them. This persuaded her to go down the self-publishing route.

“Peg Loom Weaving: All You Need to Know to Get Started” on Amazon [here](#)

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