Self-Publishing Your Book

Printing a book is not the same as publishing a book. To self-publish a good book it's best to follow the production steps used by most professional book publishers. We'll talk about printing your book a little later.

Copyediting. Every book needs to be edited. Even yours. You can find a copy editor through the Editorial Freelance Association's website at http://www.the-efa.org or by simply asking friends who might know editors or former editors willing to work freelance. Copyediting work is typically done while the manuscript is in a word processing document.

Designing/typesetting. When you have implemented the changes suggested by the copy editor, your book is ready to be transformed into book format. There are various graphics programs developed specifically for book typesetting. You will need to find someone, again most likely freelance, who specializes in typesetting books. You can pay for a design that is specific to your book or you can ask the typesetter to adapt an existing design. To find freelance book designers and typesetters Google "book design."

Book cover design. Buying a cover design is kind of the same process. Find someone who specializes in freelance book cover design and whose work you like. To find a book cover designer Google "book cover designer" and take a look at the websites. You will also find sites that recommend book designers.

Proofreading. Once the book pages have been typeset they are ready to be proofread. You can find proofreaders through the Editorial Freelance Association (see above) or you can ask for the help of a meticulous English major in your life. Proofreading corrections are input by the typesetter.

.pdf files. A portable document format file (.pdf) is what you you'll send to the printer to get your book and cover printed. You will also want to have the files of the graphics program so that you can make changes to the pages.

Of course the steps above are overly simple but might help get you started. There are also book production companies that you can hire to perform the same production steps.

Printing. There are two printing options to consider.

> **Offset (ink) printing.** The traditional printing process is to send your book and cover files to an offset printer that specializes in book printing. The books are printed and bound in quantities of at least 250 copies. If you decide go this route you will want to get estimates from at least two companies. Costs vary quite a bit from one company to the next. Also, before deciding the number of books you want printed, think carefully about where you can store the cartons. To find an offset printer Google "book printing self publishing."

> **Printing on demand (POD).** Once you have the .pdf files of your book and cover you have lots of "on demand" printing choices. On demand can mean anything from printing small quantities digitally (like a high tech laser printer as opposed to ink on a press) to printing one copy at a time as your book is ordered. The quality of these digitally produced books is quite good. There are many choices and with various levels of service available. Google "self publishing a book" and you will find lots to read.

Good luck! And if you want to talk to me about general ideas with regard to a self publishing project you can reach me at jmcdonald@uua.org.

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