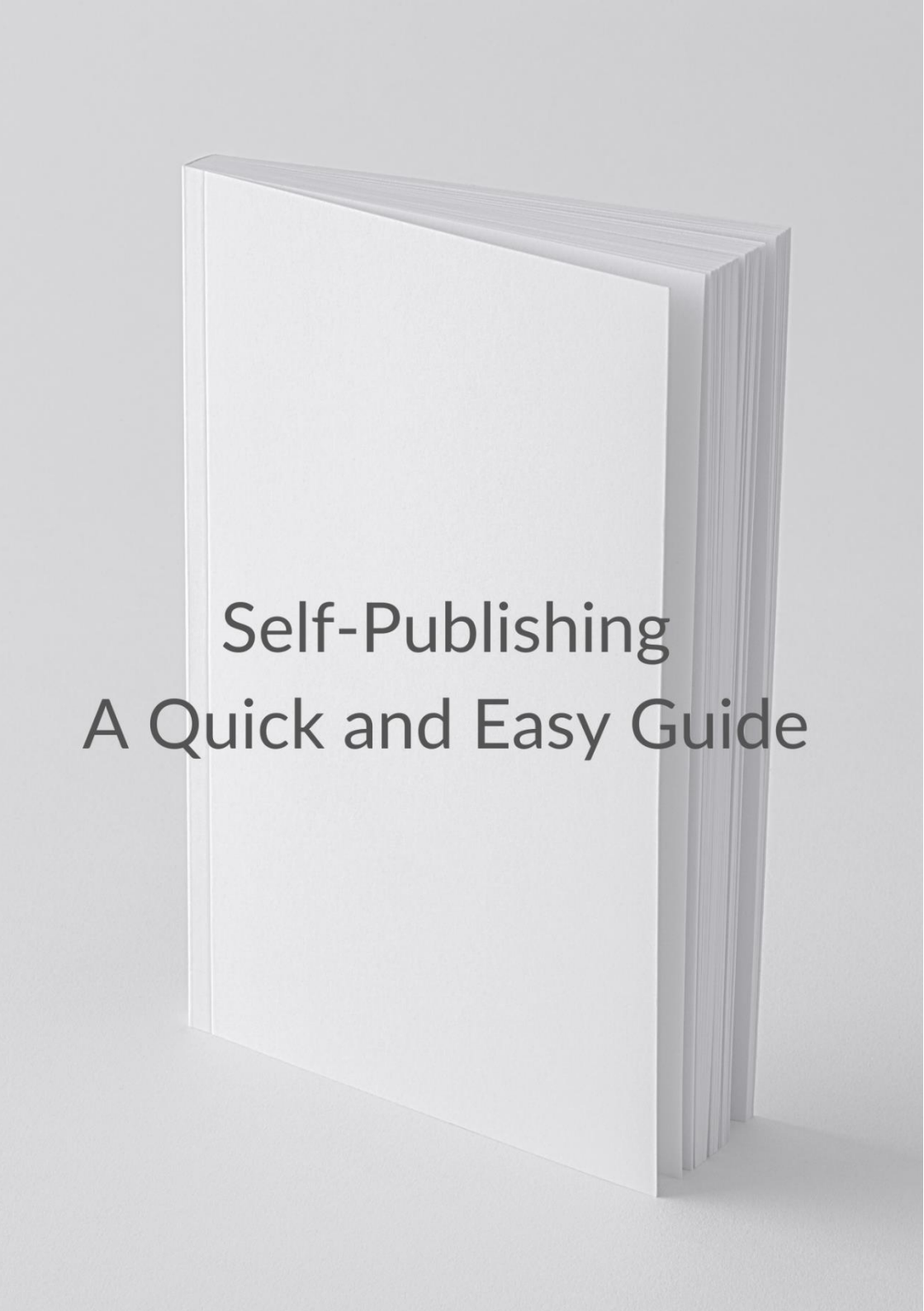

Self-Publishing
A Quick and Easy Guide

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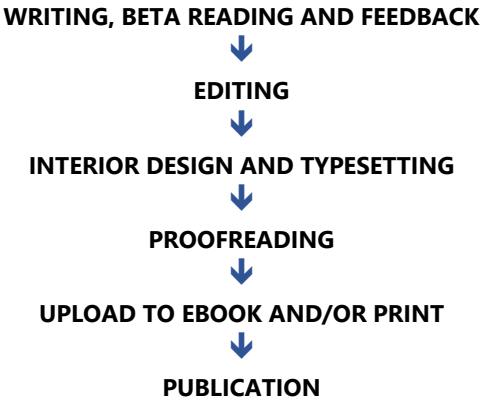
Introduction

If you're a new author or considering self-publishing for the first time, you might be needing information on how the editorial production and publishing process works.

This handy guide outlines the tasks step-by-step.

The book production process

Production follows these linear stages:



(NB: This guide doesn't address the writing process, feedback or beta reading: for more on this, see my guide *How to Get Feedback on Your Writing*.)

Publishing also involves the following, done concurrently with editing, design and proofreading:

COVER	TASKS	SALES AND MARKETING
CONCEPT AND BRIEF	CATALOGUING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA	SELECT PUBLISHING PLATFORM
DESIGN AND PROOFING	ORDER ISBN AND BARCODE	AUTHOR PLATFORM/WEBSITE
	DISTRIBUTION	PUBLICITY
	LEGAL DEPOSIT	LAUNCH

Self-publishing involves project management, so you'll need to schedule these tasks, allocate timeframes and gather a professional team to achieve best results.

Let's look at editorial and production first.

Editing

There are six different types of editing:

- Manuscript assessment
- Development editing

- Structural editing
- Line editing
- Copy-editing
- Proofreading

If you're unsure which input might be right for you, consulting with a professional editor can help you work out the best options for your specific needs.

(For more on editing and proofreading, my guide *The Different Types of Editing* is an accessible explainer of each task, and how they can help you shape and produce your manuscript for publication.)

Design and typesetting

Ebook

An editor will work with you to produce files ready to take forward to design, including images.

If you don't have the technical background or experience to create an ebook – which is understandable! – it's advisable to get a professional designer/formatter to do this for you.

If done without the right knowledge, ebook formatting direct from Word can result in functional errors such as

download/e-reader issues, artefacts (random odd characters), bad links, layout glitches and more in the EPUB file.

All of these are best avoided!

Designer/formatters create ebook files ready for upload to your publishing platform of choice. Many designers also offer a handholding service for the upload process.

It's key to note that some platforms (e.g. Amazon) don't allow service providers/others to upload files for their clients – suppliers can't act for you as the author/content owner, as it's a breach of the platforms' terms of service. However, a designer/formatter can help by walking you through the process step-by-step.

This is often a good route to take, as it relieves you of technical burden and assures you of good platform provision and downloading for your readers.

Print

If you're going into print, it's definitely advisable to commission a professional designer to lay out your book interior.

The reason is that this is specialist work requiring typographical knowledge, experience and craft for a good, publishing-standard finish.

Do note that generally, editors tend not to be book designers as standard: design isn't included in editing or proofreading.

Some editors can do both and are trained for the task: you would need to specify those requirements and request both, if they do supply design/formatting as well.

Otherwise, when you're commissioning an editor, their usual remit is just to focus on the text itself, and prepare Word files for your designer to flow into InDesign (the specialist program that lays out your content and exports it to final files).

Choosing a designer

If you're publishing in ebook and print, do look for a designer who can provide both services, as it will save you commissioning two different people.

Be sure to check their portfolio:

- examine their work and who they've designed for – subject areas, publishers, genres

- look at client testimonials
- download samples from online platforms to look inside
- note how ebook versions look and function – try it from your e-reader
- if you can, visit libraries or bookshops to see what they've done in print.

It's worth being aware that designers who *only* do creative, corporate or agency work such as company reports, product packaging, marketing or advertising *are not* suitable or trained for book design.

Book work requires a completely different technical skillset and approach. Do be sure to commission a designer with a solid track record in the book sector.

Proofreading

This comes after design, and a task that shouldn't be expected to deliver a full or comprehensive edit of your book. It's only a final check of your text when laid out.

Proofreading also checks that your ebook file is true to the text and functions properly, finding and eliminating any technical glitches.

Do note that best industry practice for editors is *not* to proofread their own work. It's better to get a second, fresh eye, as by this stage both you and your editor will be too close to the text to be able to spot anything that might need to be corrected.

Further, be sure not to rely on your designer to spot errors or infelicities independently, or to correct anything textual without editorial instruction at layout or proof stage.

Designers aren't trained editors, so reading and amending the text itself is beyond their purview. Their role is to design, lay out and set the content, follow marks and instructions from editors and proofreaders, and take in amendments and corrections – their remit ends there.

All of this is why having your book edited and proofread is so important, because the work is editorially-led!

Proofreading especially is a final opportunity to catch any residual typos and finesse layout, ensuring the result is as visually clean and textually error-free as possible.

When your proofreader has checked the proofs and you have also read and signed them off, your designer/

formatter can format your ebook file ready for uploading, and convert the PDF to the final file for print.

Warning!
Avoid any proofreader who says they can *only* read or mark proofs on hardcopy. Standard industry practice for proofreading is marking PDFs: if they can't do that, they need to update their skillset.

Hardcopy proofreading is outdated task performance, and incompatible with the workflow and programs that editors and designers use. These days, we work onscreen.

Do make sure your proofreader can competently work on and supply marked PDFs.

The quality issue

Sometimes, publishing professionals – editors and proof-readers especially – are demanded to deliver a perfect result. Because everyone in the process is human, that is basically impossible to achieve and a somewhat unrealistic expectation. No book can ever be published 100% error-free, not even by the best traditional houses!

So, what we aim for in publication is 'good enough'.

Please be reassured, this doesn't mean sloppiness. It still means high quality and excellent standards: good enough to get your book out of the door and to your excited and waiting readers!

Other publishing tasks

Concurrent with the book's interior production process, you'll need to arrange the following.

Cover design

Some book interior designers also do covers, while commissioning a different designer for this is an option too – particularly if it's their specialist area.

Again, it's advisable to engage a professional for this task.

Cover designers know your genre and market: they're expert in visual language, and experienced in working with client briefs.

They translate the content and intention of your book into a powerful image to attract your target audience.

There is one really important aspect to be aware of around covers, and it's this: it's advisable not to try and create your own!

Covers help to sell your book: done well, they're a key tool to hook readers and get them interested enough to buy. No doubt you'll have noticed, scrolling through online book platforms, that it's only too obvious when they haven't been designed professionally, sitting alongside those that clearly have.

Moreover, cover design for print is a technical process. Physical covers need to be measured precisely to the extent (i.e. length) of the book in pages, the weight of paper that's going to be used inside it, and the type of binding – all of which deliver the correct spine width.

If these dimensions aren't accurate to the millimetre, your printed cover will literally not wrap around your book!

Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) data

When a book goes into production, the publisher needs to apply for cataloguing information from the national library in the country/countries of publication.

This registers the book in the national bibliography/ bibliographies and catalogues it for library and other organisations, as well as for distributor and bookshop information.

The publisher applies for the data, and includes a statement of application in the book's colophon (i.e. legal imprint) page, to show this has been done.

(If you're unsure how this should be worded, just take a look at the colophon pages in published books, and consult your editor. They can advise you on what can – and should – be included on your own imprint page.)

In the UK, application for CIP data goes to the British Library in London; in the USA, the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

In other countries, be sure to search for your national library and check its requirements for CIP data application and cataloguing.

On receipt of CIP data, the publisher must hold it safely on file. This is especially important if the data hasn't arrived in time to be included in the book – often it doesn't.

ISBN and barcodes

International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) are unique numbers that allow libraries, bookstores and distributors to identify specific editions of books.

If you're only planning to publish in ebook on Amazon, that platform has its own book numbering system (called ASIN).

For other ebook formats and platforms, you may need to use their numbering or purchase an ISBN: do be sure to check individual requirements for this.

If you're going into print, you will need to buy an ISBN. Various organisations sell ISBNs worldwide (in the UK and Ireland, it's the Nielsen agency).

If you're thinking about producing different print editions of your book, it can be worth buying a block of numbers.

A barcode also needs to be purchased for the print cover with a unique number and price, so the book can be physically scanned and sold.

Again, Nielsen and other agencies sell these.

Legal deposit

Printed copies of a work, whether a book or other matter, must be lodged with the legal depositories mandated by the country in which they're published.

In the UK, deposit is with the British Library and other officially designated depositories under the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003. This states that copies must be deposited with these places within one month of publication.

In the USA, copies must be deposited with the US Copyright Office within three months of publication.

You can find more information on this online for your specific country: just run a search for 'book legal deposit'.

Sales and marketing

Your marketing effort will depend largely on bandwidth, time and budget – but it's safe to say that in today's highly competitive publishing landscape, working at publicity is essential to get your book in front of the people you want to see and buy it.

This needs to be started well in advance, rather than when the book is published.

Some ways to get the ball rolling are:

- a cover reveal on social media (please openly credit your designer!)
- releasing short excerpts in advance to whet readers' appetites
- blogging on work in progress.

When your book is in proof, another way is to send out advance review copies (known as ARCs) to book bloggers, industry influencers and readers who can post on social media and write articles to garner traction and interest.

Gathering a group of people who can read your book, advocate for your writing and rave about how fantastic it is (aka your 'street team') is another great way of getting it on your target audience's radar before it's out.

Wherever you can, try to get endorsements – especially if you're publishing non-fiction and/or practical content. This lends authority and weight to your book's offer.

They could be from known figures in your field, or notable or high-profile, marquee names – all of these look great

in your book and on the cover, encouraging your target audience to buy!

Author platform

A bespoke author website isn't essential, but it is important to have some kind of home online for PR. If you already have a website, you could include a page for it there.

It's easy to set up a free or low-cost website specifically for your book, which acts as a hub for readers and other interested people to find and contact you as the author-publisher, as well as a sales funnel.

It's also a good place to locate your author blog and any other writing or posts of interest, which you can link to from social media (another essential activity to raise awareness and get your book out to the public).

Marketing

How you approach marketing will be up to you – as we've seen, showing up online is essential to establish and increase profile and reach.

Other ways to do this are:

- readings
- book signings and in-store events
- fireside chats and discussion, Q&As
- podcast guesting
- guest blogging
- articles
- interviews
- traditional media – magazine and newspaper features, radio and TV.

The media are always hungry for fresh stories – if your book is of interest to their audience, try crafting an enticing press release.

If you're in business, no doubt you'll be looking to use your book to expert-position and act as a lead magnet.

Keynote speaking, conferences, networking, workshops, webinars and discovery sessions, where you can promote or take along copies to sign and sell, are all valuable PR opportunities!

Distribution

Having published, you need to get your book to readers. If you're on Amazon or other online sales platform, ebook

delivery takes care of itself: readers can buy direct to their chosen devices.

With online platforms you can also offer print on demand: every time someone orders a copy, it will be automatically printed and shipped to them.

If you're placing a bulk order for hundreds (or more) of printed copies, warehousing enters the equation and organising storage somewhere will be essential.

And if you're looking to stock your title in bricks-and-mortar bookstores, you will need to consider applying to book distributors.

Depending on your subject area/genre, a local indie bookstore might be open to receiving a few signed copies (you could try offering your time free to help sales such as a book reading, meet the author, Q&A or suchlike to sweeten the deal).

But generally, bookshops – both independents and major high-street retailers – do not deal direct with self-publishers. Their stock and ordering systems operate through established book distributors.

Distributors tend to specialise in certain subject genres and publishing sectors, so it's important to research carefully which ones might be right for you, in your own country.

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I hope you've found the advice in this booklet useful.

As you can see, there's quite a lot to think about when self-publishing your book!

So for more information, to discuss or soundboard your idea and project, or if you'd like to talk about working with me, contact me:

 lisa@lisacordaro.com

Connect with me:

 www.linkedin.com/in/lisacordaroedit/