

# PREPARING TO SELF-PUBLISH

## MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

### 1. Have you finished writing?

- |     |         |
|-----|---------|
| Yes | Go to 2 |
| No  | See 3   |

### 2. Has your manuscript been read/edited by a professional editor?

- |     |         |
|-----|---------|
| No  | Go to 3 |
| Yes | Go to 5 |

### 3. What edit might you need:

- development edit** – this in-depth analysis is especially useful if this is your first book or if no objective reader has fed back on your manuscript; for *fiction* it looks at plot cohesion, character development, pace and dialogue, style and setting, and whether it fits the genre and market; for *non-fiction* manuscripts it concentrates on logic of the structure, and strength and completeness of content
- copy edit/line edit** – this is a thorough consistency check for spelling, capitalisation, punctuation and formatting; it looks for possible issues in referencing and copyright; it is an essential step to making sure the manuscript is as good as it can be; for *fiction* it checks for character, plot and timeline consistency; for *non-fiction* it makes sure that all material and references are there
- proofread** – this term applies to what happens *after* your book is designed and typeset; it catches the inevitable leftover typos and makes sure everything is there and in its proper place.

### 4. Clean up your text to reduce editing and typesetting costs:

- keep a style sheet so you can easily check you are spelling names, locations and other slippery words or terms correctly and that you are being consistent when using hyphens, capitalisation, numbering systems and more
- apply Word styles rather than use manual formatting
- do not use tabs to indent paragraphs (use Word styles to create indents)
- do not use paragraph returns to create spacing (use Word styles)
- do not use double spaces after punctuation
- double and triple check your text for logic and consistency.

## SUPPORTING CONTENT

### 5. Does your manuscript use quotes and/or references?

- |     |          |
|-----|----------|
| No  | Go to 6  |
| Yes | See 5a/b |

- Have you listed all the references and styled them consistently? **See 6d**
- The length of quotations must not exceed 'fair use'. There are sites that can help you check copyright and payments (see **Useful Links**).

### 6. Does your book contain, or would it benefit from:

- a table of contents** (ToC) – this can be useful as a content check at manuscript stage, but a new ToC is always freshly produced and designed at layout so that page numbers are accurate. Not all fiction books need a ToC, most non-fiction will benefit from one. If you want more than chapter titles included in a ToC (i.e. subtitles or headings to a certain level) then you need to specify this to the typesetter, but otherwise there is no need to spend ages on the one in your original document
- a glossary** – make a list of all the terms in your manuscript you think your readers might appreciate an explanation of (e.g. foreign language phrases, technical jargon); it will save you money if *you* create one; your editor will check it is complete, or they can create one from scratch
- a list of abbreviations** – if you use an abbreviation more than once then it is best to explain it the first time, then use just the abbreviation from then on; make a list so readers can look them up; your editor will check it is complete, or they can create one from scratch
- a bibliography/list of references** – one or other is essential if you refer to original sources. List all the works, articles, journals, blogs and websites you are extracting information from – either in a separate document or, preferably, as linked notes. An editor's job is to check that everything that needs a reference has one. The list will need styling in a consistent fashion.
- an index** – a truly helpful index is not just a list of important words, it creates efficient links between concepts for the reader, and is pretty essential for non-fiction books. Professional indexers need booking well ahead (use the **Society of Indexers** directory).  
If you are producing your own then **either** create an alphabetical list for the typesetter to use, **or**, if using indexing software, avoid page ranges because that can cause problems at layout stage.  
Indexing is best done after the book is typeset.

# MANAGING ILLUSTRATIONS

7. Are you using images you have created/commissioned yourself?

- YesSee 7a
- NoSee 8

a. Have you written a copyright line/illustrator acknowledgement to go in the book and to go in the metadata.

8. Are you using pictures you have downloaded from the internet?

- YesSee 8a/b

a. Have you kept a list of the source and copyright information for each image?  
b. The majority of images that come up in an internet search are copyrighted. You need to check whether you can use the image at all; or only if you pay for it; or if you acknowledge the source. If you don't, you could be subject to litigation.

9. Do you still need to source images?

Produce or source photographs and graphics or get in touch with an illustrator.

10. Are your images available in the following file types?

- a. Word, PowerPoint, Excel
- Images need to be available as picture files, not as images inserted in one of these file types (see b.)
- b. jpg, png, tiff, gif, ai, PDF, psd, indd, eps, raw. svg
- These are graphics/picture files that can be manipulated to be in the appropriate format for the publishing medium (i.e. paperback or ebook). If your file extension is not in this list then there might be problems using it.

11. You need to show where in the book you want each picture to go (the final position may adjust to suit the layout).

There is no need to insert the image in the manuscript file, just type the picture file name or number or (better still) the caption, in its own line in the text, within either [square brackets] or <angle markers>, which makes the place easy to find during layout

The caption should also contain copyright and source information.

# CHOOSING A FORMAT

12. Have you decided whether you want one or more of the following formats:

- HardbackSee 12a
- PaperbackSee 12a
- ebookSee 12b

a. One interior file will often do for both these formats, but first check the printer can produce the chosen size, in the chosen format, on the chosen paper – particularly if you are using print on demand (POD), which offer limited sizes for hardbacks. Each format will need its own separate cover file. Files for print need to be CMYK PDF/X-1a or /x-3.

b. If you are only producing an ebook then you can work from a Word document, but make sure all excess formatting is stripped out or funny things can happen in an ereader. If you are producing an ebook as well as print books, then begin with the print file and reformat it as an ePub with RGB images. You still need a front cover image (RGB, minimum 1600 px on the shortest side, preferably 2560px on the longest side) and it needs to work when it's at thumbnail size.

# LAYOUT (TYPESETTING)

A manuscript in Word is all very well, but it is difficult to finesse a professional look without knowing a great deal about Word styles, typography and templates.

You'll get a polished product and save yourself many a headache by using industry standard layout software (such as QuarkXPress or InDesign), or hiring a professional who uses it. The software makes it easy to produce alternative layouts and formats, such as ebooks, hardbacks, paperbacks and PDFs.

If you have the patience and the technical know-how then you could join the band of self-publishing authors who use the following DIY systems:

- guidelines and templates from KDP –for paperback or for ebook
- Vellum (for Mac only)
- Jutoh, for digital publishing.

13. Have you got the following ready for layout? (\*required/†if appropriate):

- \*title page copy (title, subtitle, author name, logo)
- \*imprint page (publisher's identity/location/date/edition/copyright statement/ ISBNs – could also contain credits/sources)
- †acknowledgements/dedication/epigraph
- †table of contents or list of illustrations
- †glossary or list of abbreviations

- \*fully edited text (including preface/foreword/introduction, if using)
- †all illustrations
- †list of references/bibliography/index.

## BOOK COVER

A book cover is your shop front and has to work as a thumbnail image for online sales. Research the style for your genre because readers make snap decisions about whether they are even going to read the blurb, let alone buy the book.

Full covers cannot be produced for print until the inner layout is done and the number of pages is known. Use a template with barcode (barcodes are required on books for sale, but you shouldn't need to pay to produce one).

### 14. Have you decided to:

- use your own image (which can integrate into a cover template)
- commission an image from a cover designer (often just the front cover, which then needs incorporating into a full cover template)
- just use typography for the cover.

### 15. Have you got the following ready for your cover? (\*required/†optional)

- title\*
- subtitle†
- author name\*
- barcode† (\*if book is for sale)
- ISBN† (\*if book is for sale)
- book blurb\*
- image†
- reviews†
- author bio/pic†
- publisher logo†

## DO YOU NEED AN ISBN?

If you are only going to produce a few copies for family and friends, then no, you don't need an ISBN.

If you are planning to sell your book at any time then yes, it is worth investing in an ISBN. If you do use an ISBN you have to send copies to the relevant Legal Deposit Agency (in the UK this is 6 copies for each ISBN).

### 16. What is an ISBN?

It is a unique number that identifies a particular edition of a book and is used by booksellers and libraries to order books. You need a different ISBN for each format you produce (i.e paperback has one, hardback has one and ebook has one). An ISBN is owned by a publisher (or author) and is not transferable.

### 17. How do you get hold of an ISBN?

If you are only planning on a single book then find a 'publisher' to assign you an ISBN at cost (c. £16). You retain copyright and all rights.

If you want to develop your own publishing identity and produce several books then invest in your own ISBN account:

- in the UK, you need to take out an account with **Nielsen** for purchasing and a separate account for **registering** assigned ISBNs
- for the US and Australia, contact **Bowker**
- for any other country go to the **International ISBN Agency** for information.

## METADATA

This is the information you need to register your ISBN and to input files on POD services. Metadata helps to catalogue your book and point it to the right audience.

It is a good idea to keep this information on a spreadsheet because you will have to refer to it repeatedly. Make the first column your list of ISBNs and then create the subsequent columns when you register your first ISBN. The information you need includes:

- |             |                       |                            |                                |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. title    | d. other contributors | g. number of pages         | i. audience                    |
| b. subtitle | e. format             | h. number of illustrations | j. short and long descriptions |
| c. author   | f. size               |                            |                                |

You also need to decide on the cataloguing information which you can obtain from BIC and Thema [https://ns.editeur.org/bic\\_categories](https://ns.editeur.org/bic_categories)

Make a note of both the code and the description because you'll find the descriptors are subtly different when you upload files for POD.

## MAKING YOUR BOOK AVAILABLE

### 18. Do you want to print copies and hold them as stock?

If you have a sales point then that's great, but if you don't, think about:

- where you are going to store your stock
- how you are going to manage money and P&P
- how people are going to know where to order from.

It is always worth getting several print quotes because they can vary widely. Make sure they are quoting on the same paper stock, binding and type of cover.

### 19. Do you want to use print on demand (POD)?

This is a system whereby you upload the files to an organisation that prints copies to order and then sends you the profits (compensation) made on sales at regular intervals. You don't have to worry about storage or P&P and can concentrate on marketing (and writing). Authors/account holders can buy copies at cost, singly or in bulk, for delivery at any address.

The main POD providers are:

- a. **IngramSpark** (IS): international distribution of print and ebooks (including on Amazon). Bookshops and libraries will buy via IS. Take out your own IS account to manage uploads, book prices and to receive your compensation directly. Having your book on IS does not prevent you from also making it available through other services.
- b. **Amazon KDP**: most useful if you are only producing an ebook but does do POD for paperbacks (is planning to introduce hardbacks). Be careful about signing up to any programme that prevents you from using any other service. Amazon make it difficult for third parties to access accounts.
- c. **Lulu**: the younger kid on the block; does allow third-party access.

## SELLING YOUR BOOK

If you are serious about distributing and selling your book then you have to get serious about publicity and marketing. This takes time and effort and even the big publishing houses rely on their authors participating fully in marketing. There are services on offer, but you'll still have to feed them with information and your time.

If you become an ALLi member you'll pick up loads of tips from other authors and might find a useful contact in their directory.

So bite the bullet and think about:

- having an author website
- using social media
- emailing family, friends and other contacts
- contacting local bookshops, book fairs, writers' events.

### 20. Do you want to concentrate on selling ebooks?

Then you need to crack the Kindle market through KDP, but don't ignore all the other services on offer, including:

- **Draft2Digital** (free)
- **Smashwords**
- **bookfunnel**

