

The Whys and Woes of Self-Publishing

Tips and Tools

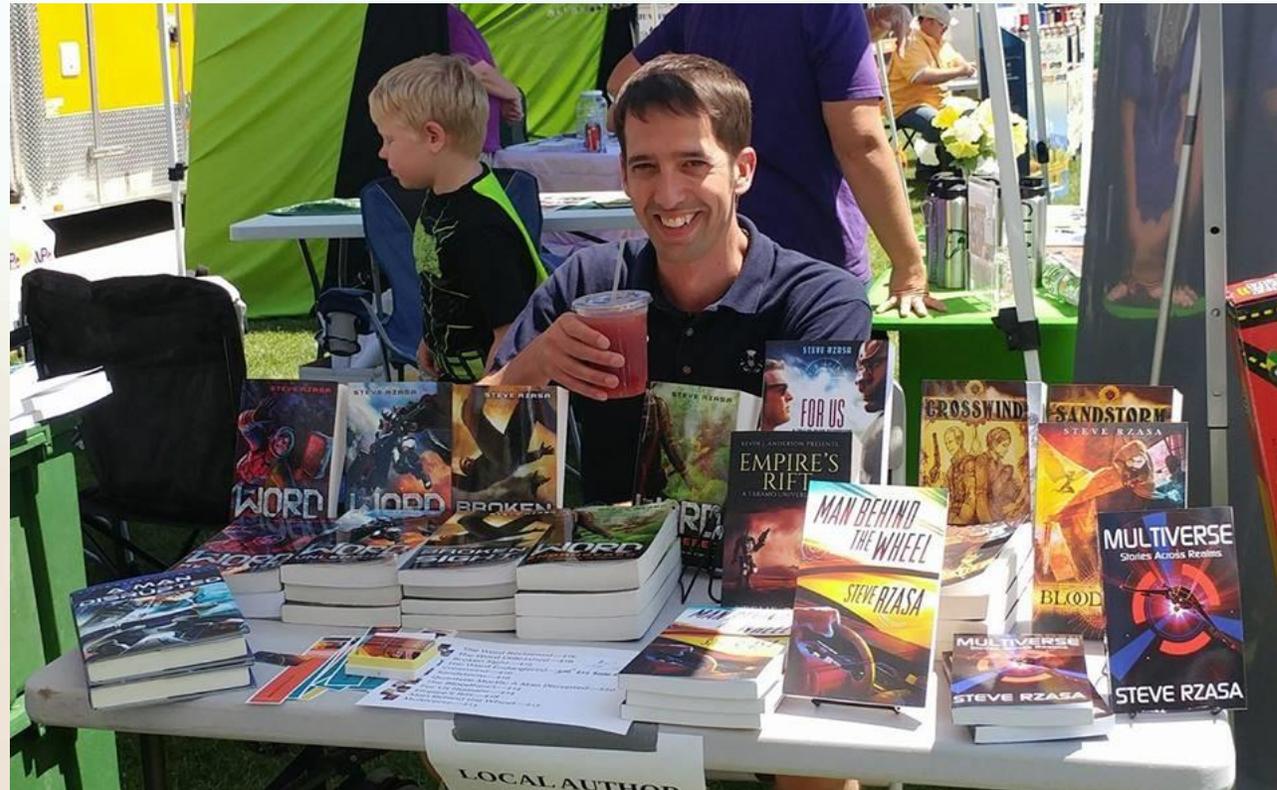
Why do I want to be published?

3 Reasons:

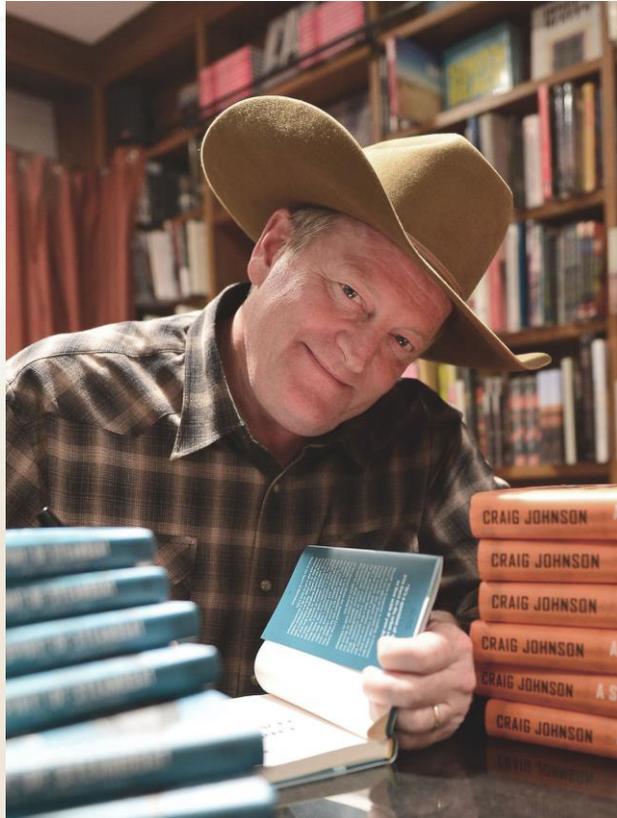
1. Have a book for family



2. Create books as a hobby



3. Pursue a writing career



Your choice determines

- How much time you will spend on producing your book
- How much money you will spend on producing, marketing, and selling your book
- How much time you will have for writing more books (if you want more than one)

In 2018, the Authors Guild partnered with 14 other writers organizations as well as some publishing platforms to conduct [a survey of 5,067 professional writers](#) in the United States. The median 2017 income of participating authors was \$6,080 with just \$3,100 of that being from book income alone (as opposed to speaking fees, teaching, book reviewing, and other supplemental activities). The median income of people who described themselves as full-time authors was just \$20,300 when including all book-related activities.

- *bookriot.com*

According to the latest ProQuest Bowker Report (October 15, 2019), nearly 1.7 million books were *self-published* in the U.S. in 2018, which is an incredible 264% increase in just five years. By 2019, the total number of books published in the U.S. exceeded 4 million in that year alone—including both self-published books and commercially published books of all types—according to data provided to me by ProQuest. - -
Berrett-Koehler Publishing, June 2020

That said, the average author spends \$2000 to \$5000 to publish their books, and few authors earn any money.

- CreativeIndie

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TOP 44 EBOOK SUBGENRES (OUT OF 44 FOUND)



10 records per page

Search:

#	Genre	Share of Units	Share of Revenue
1	Literature & Fiction	70,610,173	\$330,926,873.53
2	Mystery, Thriller & Suspense	35,429,137	\$187,673,043.62
3	Romance	50,957,116	\$162,028,816.90
4	Science Fiction & Fantasy	18,996,783	\$81,406,605.35
5	Business & Money	4,194,976	\$41,325,645.77
6	Religion & Spirituality	6,455,761	\$36,500,248.29
7	Teen & Young Adult	7,230,307	\$34,336,298.95
8	Biographies & Memoirs	4,567,017	\$33,107,908.66
9	Health, Fitness & Dieting	4,076,865	\$30,935,130.61
10	History	3,931,305	\$29,700,133.66

Showing 1 to 10 of 44 entries

As of mid-2017...



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- Genre is King



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As of mid-2017...

- Genre is King
- Out of 216,000,000 ebooks...
- 24% were Romance (almost $\frac{1}{4}$)



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As of mid-2017...

- Genre is King
- Out of 216,000,000 ebooks...
- Less than 9% were sci-fi and fantasy

Things to Consider -

- Producing a book
 - Associated costs – editing, layout, cover design
 - Self-publishing venues
- Submitting a book
 - Literary agent or no?
 - Small, independent presses
- Marketing
 - The “S”-word (social media)
 - Book signings

Costs

- Editing
 - Depends on length of book and rates of editor
 - Copy/line edit
 - Full edit
 - Can range from a few \$100 to a couple \$1,000s
- Cover
 - You can do it yourself
 - Can cost anywhere from \$50-\$100 to a couple \$1,000s
 - The more you spend, the better-looking product you should get

Costs

- Advertising
 - Amazon ads
 - Facebook ads
 - Costs per click add up
 - **Building a newsletter following**
 - Not dependent on social media
- In-person events
 - Gas, food, table fees, registration
 - Transporting your stock
 - \$\$ to build up your stock
 - Signs, tablecloth, “swag,” etc.

Publicity

- Social media
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - **Instagram**
 - TikTok
 - Reddit

“What’s more, 20 million people follow the #books hashtag on Reddit. Of course, Morris noted, this compares less favorably to the 190 million who follow the #books on TikTok.” – *Publishers Weekly*,

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/international/trade-shows/article/89480-readmagine-2022-publishing-faces-its-future-in-madrid.html>

KDP – Kindle Direct Publishing (Amazon)

- Setup Cost
 - **Free**
 - You submit your own cover and upload your own files
- Getting your book
 - You pay the cost to print your book and the shipping
 - The more you order, the better deal you get on the cost
- Distribution
 - Amazon!
 - Easy to order
- **Pros**
 - Ease of use (step by step setup)
 - Excellent customer service
- **Cons**
 - Production issues – missing orders, printing errors (rare)

Ingram Spark

- Setup Cost
 - \$25 ebook, \$49 print, \$49 for both
 - Refund if you order 50+ books in 60 days
- Getting your book
 - Discounts for ordering in volume
- Distribution
 - Bookstores, libraries etc. may react better since it's not Amazon related
- **Pros**
 - Quality
 - Ebook and paperback in one place
 - Ebook not limited to Kindle/Amazon only
- **Cons**
 - More complex interface
 - Harder to set up

Booklocker.com

- Setup Cost
 - **High**
 - Several \$100s of dollars
- Getting your book
 - You pay the cost to print your book and the shipping
 - The more you order, the better deal you get on the cost
- Distribution
 - Easy to order
- **Pros**
 - Experienced at self-publishing since 1999
 - Excellent customer service
 - Small company, no Amazon
 - Layout, editing, cover services available
- **Cons**
 - High cost compared to other services
 - Books cost more, CS & Ingram Spark have better discounts

Booklocker.com

PROGRAM	**MOST POPULAR** At-Your-Service	Expedited	D.I.Y.
Print-publication time-frame	about 1 month	2 weeks	about 1 month
Setup Fees	\$875	\$1,199	\$25
Paperback	✓	✓	✓
Hardcover combo: \$499 (save \$327) (includes original hardback cover design)	add-on	add-on	add-on
Interior Formatting Assistance + PDF Conversion	✓	✓	see below
* Original Paperback Cover Design	✓	✓	add-on
ISBN	✓	✓	✓
Barcode	✓	✓	✓
** Basic Epub/Mobi (ebook) Formatting/Conversion/Distribution (listings on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple & Kobo)	✓	✓	add-on
Interior Formatting Verification \$75 - applies to D.I.Y. authors only	✓	✓	add-on
Cover Verification \$75 - applies to D.I.Y. authors only	✓	✓	add-on
Contract Type	Non-Exclusive	Non-Exclusive	Non-Exclusive
*** First Year Annual P.O.D. file hosting fee: \$18 (required by Ingram, the distributor, and BookLocker)	✓	✓	\$18
Print Proof - The first printed/bound copy of your book (U.S. shipping via Next Day Air included in prices above.)	✓	✓	\$35

All print programs include distribution through Ingram with listings on Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, BooksAMillion.com, and many more. Ingram distributes across the globe so your customers will be able to order your book from their favorite online and brick and mortar bookstores.

Draft2Digital



- Setup Cost
 - Free for ebooks
 - Has a new paperback option
 - Their production cost for a 350 page, 5.5 by 8.5 book is about \$4.98, vs. \$5.25 for Amazon (approximate).
- Distribution
 - Distributes ebooks to huge number of platforms
- **Pros**
 - Simple interface, good dashboard for keeping track of sales, regular updates/reports
- **Cons**
 - Quality of paperbacks??

Lulu

- Setup Cost
 - Easy to moderate
- Getting your book
 - Minimal volume discounts
- Has redone much of their website to put their prices behind sign-up forms, so that you can't see the costs unless you enter information about what kind of book you wish to publish.
- Their production cost for a 350 page, 5.5 by 8.5 book is about \$8.50, vs. \$5.25 for Amazon (approximate).

The Traditional Route

- Literary agents
 - The gatekeepers
 - Necessary for getting a book in front of a big publisher
- Independent/small publishers
 - Agent may not be needed
 - Often have submissions windows for “unsolicited manuscripts”

Short Fiction

- Short stories are great practice ... for submitting
- Helps practice summarizing your work
- Gets you in habit of following guidelines

Resources

- Writer's Digest
 - www.writersdigest.com
 - Excellent source of articles, advice, contacts
 - New literary agents listed, their preferences
 - Multiple writing contests
- www.kdp.amazon.com
- www.ingramspark.com
- <https://www.draft2digital.com/>
- www.booklocker.com
- www.lulu.com
- www.gohavok.com
 - Flash fiction publisher
 - Stories 700 to 1,000 words