

# PUBLISHING OPTIONS: GETTING INTO PRINT!

## PETER E. RANDALL PUBLISHER

5 Greenleaf Woods Drive, U102, Portsmouth NH 03801 • www.perpublisher.com  
Phone: (603) 431-5667 • Fax: (603) 431-3566 • E-mail: Deidre@perpublisher.com

## FIVE PUBLISHING OPTIONS

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- The “trade” publisher
- The “on-demand” press
- The “vanity” press
- The “subsidy or custom” publisher
- “self”-publishing

## COMPARISON OF PUBLISHING OPTIONS

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### • The “trade” publisher

- book design: The publisher has full control. Book content can be edited.
- publishing costs: The publisher pays all costs, and chooses manuscripts that have commercial appeal.
- marketing: The publisher promotes the book through advertising and reviews.
- distribution: The publisher employs a distribution agent or handles that from within her own company.
- sales income: The trade publisher pays the author a royalty of book sales (8 % is an average).

### • The “on-demand” press

- book design: The author has some control, often through the use of templates for book’s look and cover.
- publishing costs: The author pays for each book as it’s printed. In some cases there are set-up costs which the author pays.
- marketing: The author promotes the book through advertising and reviews. Most review journals only accept books for review directly from a publisher. The publisher promotes his company, not individual books. Sometimes they offer marketing services which can be purchased separately, or “do-it-yourself” marketing kits.
- distribution: The author handles this on her own, using the press web site to place orders.
- sales income: The on-demand press prints books which are ordered and pays an author a percentage of sales, or prints a specific number of books for a distribution effort. The author has total control over the number of books printed and the author owns any books which they order and purchase.

### • The “vanity” press

- book design: The author has some control, through the use of templates.
- publishing costs: The author pays all costs, and receives a certain number of “free” books. Then authors may purchase copies at an author discount. The press owns the books. No specific number of books are printed. The contract specifies the number of books which must be sold for the author to break even.
- marketing: The author promotes the book through advertising and reviews. They may purchase marketing services, or a do-it-yourself kit. The author is responsible for generating most sales.
- distribution: Limited services are available from the press. It is difficult to get attention from a distributor for one title.
- sales income: The press pays the author a percentage of book sales, sometimes up to 33%. Usually the cost per book is deducted, so percentages can be based upon the retail price of each book. It is up to the author to stimulate the sales, within a certain time frame.

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## COMPARISON OF PUBLISHING OPTIONS *(continued from page 1)*

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### • The “subsidy or custom” publisher

- book design: The author has full control, with guidance from the publisher.
- publishing costs: The author or sponsoring group pays all costs. The author owns the books. A specific number of books are printed. The number is based upon a joint assessment, by the author and publisher, of the potential market for the book.
- marketing: The publisher and author work together to promote the book through author events, direct mail, advertising and reviews. The author is a full partner and driving force in this effort. The author maintains full control over the schedule of the publication, with no delays, common in trade publishing.
- distribution: The publisher employs a distribution agent or handles that from within his own company.
- sales income: The publisher sells some books, through a distributor or in-house distribution, paying the author up to 60% of sales income. The author retains 100 % of sales income from books sold personally at readings, signings, lectures, or classes. The publisher assists in arranging and publicizing events and stimulating media interest in the book.

### • “self”-publishing

- book design: The author has full control. The author is responsible for writing, designing, proofing, gathering ISBN and LOC data, printing and binding, promotional efforts, distribution, and all publishing costs.
- publishing costs: The author pays all costs. The author owns the books. A specific number of books are printed.
- marketing: The author promotes the book through advertising, author events, direct mail and reviews. The author is a driving force in this effort. The author maintains full control over the schedule of publication.
- distribution: The author coordinates all distribution or works with a distributor who takes a percentage of sales, generally providing a 40% discount for retail outlets and retaining an additional 15 to 20% for the company services. It is very difficult to get attention from a distributor with one title to sell.
- sales income: The author retains 100 % of sales income from books sold personally.

## SUBSIDY OR CUSTOM PUBLISHING PRODUCTION PROCESS

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- Contact publisher with story ideas and receive guidance on market potential for chosen topic.
- Write manuscript, collect illustrations, consider a title, and cover idea.
- Enter into a contract with publisher.
- Submit materials in total, all text on computer disk and all photos or illustrations as quality originals for scanning. Please ask for Submission Guidelines.
- Receive page proofs from publisher for author corrections. Make adjustments to design and layout, but hopefully few or no changes to content at this point.
- Receive blueline proofs from printer, for final approval by author and publisher.
- Receive bound books and begin selling.
- From the time that a contract is signed with a publisher the process can take four to six months.
- A strong marketing effort can take from six months up to a year to establish, but it is most effective if it's a thread of activity which begins when publication begins and continues throughout the process, increasing when the bound books arrive.

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### Helpful organizations

Publisher's Marketing Association—[www.pma-online.org](http://www.pma-online.org)  
Small Publishers Association of North America—[www.SPANnet.org](http://www.SPANnet.org)  
The Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network—[www.spawn.org](http://www.spawn.org)  
The Small Press Center for Independent Publishing—[www.smallpress.org](http://www.smallpress.org)  
New Hampshire Writers Project—[www.nhwritersproject.org](http://www.nhwritersproject.org)  
Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance—[www.mainewriters.org](http://www.mainewriters.org)

### *From:* **American Association of Publishers—(AAP) Book Publishing Links**

American Booksellers Association — [www.bookweb.org](http://www.bookweb.org)  
Book Industry Study Group — [www.bisg.org](http://www.bisg.org)  
Book Publishing Reports — [www.simbanet.com](http://www.simbanet.com)  
Literary Market Place — [www.literarymarketplace.com](http://www.literarymarketplace.com)  
Publishers Weekly — [www.publishersweekly.com](http://www.publishersweekly.com)  
R.R. Bowker — [www.bowker.com](http://www.bowker.com)  
Subtext — [www.subtext.net](http://www.subtext.net)  
U.S. Copyright Office — [www.loc.gov/copyright](http://www.loc.gov/copyright)

### More Web sites

Book Sense (independent bookstores online) [www.booksense.com](http://www.booksense.com)  
Barnes and Noble—[www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)  
Border's Books—[www.borders.com](http://www.borders.com)  
Amazon—[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)