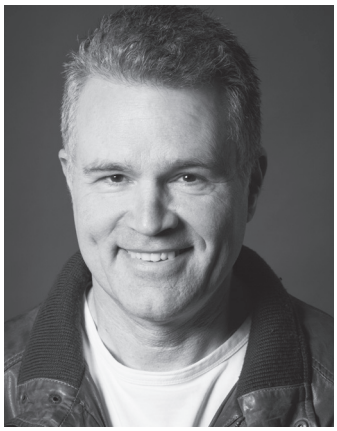
Your Book
PUBLISHING OPTIONS

About the Author



Dr Euan Mitchell is an author, editor, publisher and lecturer in professional writing. Originally a staff writer and commissioning editor for an independent educational publisher, Euan became a senior editor for a multinational publisher before he successfully self-published his first novel in 1998. Since then he has continued writing fiction and non-fiction books, both published and self-published, while helping other writers launch their works into orbit. The movie rights to his two novels, *Making Noises* and *Feral Tracks*, have been optioned by film producers. The worldwide upheavals in book publishing during 2011 prompted Euan to write this new book for all Australian writers, regardless of whether they are seasoned authors with out-of-print titles or students looking to publish their first short story. He welcomes your feedback and can be contacted via euanmitchell.com.au.

Your Book
PUBLISHING OPTIONS

How to Make and Market Ebooks and Print Books

EUAN MITCHELL

Published by OverDog Press
PO Box 1244, St Kilda South VIC 3182 Australia

Distributed by Woodslane Pty Ltd
10 Apollo Street, Warriewood NSW 2102 Australia
T: (02) 8445 2300 E: info@woodslane.com.au

Text and technical diagrams copyright © Euan Mitchell, 2014
Cartoons copyright © Robert Stephenson, 2014
The moral rights of the author have been asserted.

Screenshots of Adobe InDesign® and PhotoShop® reprinted with permission of Adobe Systems Incorporated. Screenshots of Microsoft Word®, used with permission of Microsoft Corporation. Screenshots of Calibre, used with permission of Kovid Goyal. Screenshot of the Australian Society of Authors website and cover image of *Australian Book Contracts* used with permission of the Australian Society of Authors. Screenshot of the Small Press Network website used with permission of the Small Press Network. Cover image of *The Australian Writer's Marketplace* used with permission of the Queensland Writers Centre.

All rights reserved. For permission to reproduce, store or transmit any part of this book, please email the publisher: info@overdogpress.com

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:
Mitchell, Euan, 1961- author.
Your book publishing options : how to make and market ebooks and print books / Euan Mitchell.
ISBN: 9780975797969 (paperback)
Includes index.
Publishers and publishing.
Electronic publishing.
Self publishing.
Books--Marketing.
070.5

Photocopying. If recommending this book to friends, family or colleagues, please keep in mind that photocopying threatens the viability of future editions. Please help our small press to ensure all Australians continue to have access to the trade secrets contained in this unique resource.

Cover design by Euan Mitchell with images from Shutterstock and Harry Mitchell. Cartoons by Robert Stephenson. Author photo by Mackenzie Photography. Typeset in Sabon 11.5/15. Printed by McPherson's Printing Group, Victoria.

Please note: all care has been taken in the preparation of this book. However, the publisher and author shall have no liability to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damaged alleged to have been caused directly or indirectly by the information contained herein, which was correct at the time of writing but subject to change.

Dedication

For my fellow writers who would like to further their knowledge of the options created by the greatest revolution in literary communication since Gutenberg's printing press of the mid-15th century.

Trademarks

Trademark information has been omitted from the main text to assist readability. The publisher and author acknowledge corporate ownership of the following trademarks. Amazon, Kindle, Kindle Direct Publishing, Paperwhite, Kindle Fire, CreateSpace are registered trademarks of Amazon.com, Inc. Acrobat, Acrobat Reader, Acrobat Distiller, InDesign, PhotoShop, Illustrator are registered trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated. Mac, Macintosh, iBooks, iBookstore, iBooks Author, iPhone, iPad, TrueType, Pages are registered trademarks of Apple, Inc. Microsoft Word, Microsoft Publisher, Windows, Windows Operating Systems, Windows Speech Recognition are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. Google, Google Play, YouTube, AdWords, Google+, Google Analytics, Google Drive, Google Docs, Android Operating Systems, are registered trademarks of Google, Inc. QuarkXpress is a registered trademark of Quark, Inc. Dragon Naturally Speaking and Dragon Dictate are trademarks of Nuance Communications. Lulu and Lulu Marketplace are trademarks of Lulu Enterprises, Inc and Lulu Press, Inc. Nook, Nook Press and Pubit! are trademarks of Barnes & Noble, Inc. Lightning Source is a registered trademark of Ingram Content Group, Inc. WordPerfect is a registered trademark of Corel Corporation. Facebook is a registered trademark of Facebook, Inc. Twitter is a registered trademark of Twitter, Inc. LinkedIn is a registered trademark of the LinkedIn Corporation. Lightning Source is a registered trademark of Ingram Content Group, Inc. Demibooks Composer, Creative Book Builder, Book Creator, eBookMagic and all other trademarked brands quoted within are owned by their respective corporations.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of Your Book and This Guide 1
Overview of the Publishing Process 2
Your Budget 4
Your Timeline 14

OPTION 1: WRITING A MANUSCRIPT

Overall Goal for Option 1 19

DECISION TREES:
1A. To Write, Co-write or Delegate the Writing? 20
1B. To Write Your Passion or Gauge the Market? 25
1C. To Take a Writing Course or Not? 27
1D. To Research, Plan and/or Discover as You Write? 30
1E. To Write with Pen, Computer, Voice and/or App? 36
1F. To Rewrite or Move to the Next Stage? 39

FAQs: Writing a Manuscript 43

OPTION 2: DETERMINING YOUR PUBLISHING VEHICLE

Overall Goal for Option 2 51

DECISION TREES:
2A. To Pitch or Not to Pitch? 52
2B. To Write a Self- or Publisher-centric Submission? 59
2C. To Choose This Publisher or That One? 64
2D. To Delegate Publishing Tasks or Not? 69

FAQs: Publishing Vehicles 75

OPTION 3: EDITING THE MANUSCRIPT

Overall Goal for Option 3 79
The Three Levels of Professional Editing 80

DECISION TREES:
3A. How to Approach Each Level of Editing? 83
3B. What Initial Agreements are Made with an Editor? 88
3C. Which Way to Work with a Copyeditor? 95
3D. How to Resolve Editorial Disputes? 99

FAQs: Editing 102

OPTION 4: CREATING COVERS

Overall Goal for Option 4 105
Which Scenario Applies to Your Book? 106

DECISION TREES:
4A. How to Come Up with Concepts for Covers? 109
4B. How to Create Mock-ups of Selected Cover Concepts? 118
4C. How to Turn a Mock-up into an Ebook Cover? 122
4D. How to Lay Out a Cover for a Print Book? 129

FAQs: Creating Covers 143

OPTION 5: PREPARING EBOOKS

Overall Goal for Option 5 145
Building Your Confidence with Ebooks: Part 1 147
Building Your Confidence with Ebooks: Part 2 149

DECISION TREES:
5A. Who Will Make the Ebook Edition? 157
5B. Which Type of File Should be Used to Make an Ebook? 162
5C. Which Levels of Formatting to Apply to my Word File? 165
5D. Who Converts the File and Checks its Accuracy? 174

FAQs: Preparing Ebooks 178

OPTION 6: PREPARING PAGES FOR PRINT

Overall Goal for Option 6 181
Setting the Standards for the Design of Your Pages 182

DECISION TREES:
6A. How to Set Up a New File for the Pages? 184
6B. How to Set Up the Body Text? 187
6C. How to Set Up the Other Text Elements? 194
6D. How to Set Up Extra Pages and Features? 196
6E. How to Set Up the Press-quality PDF of the Pages? 202

FAQs: Laying Out Pages 205

OPTION 7: PRINTING BOOKS

Overall Goal for Option 7 209
Digital vs Offset Printing 210

DECISION TREES:
7A. How Many Copies to Print? 213
7B. Should the Trim Size be Adjusted to Save Money? 216
7C. Which Type of Binding to Use? 218
7D. Which Type of Paper to Print On? 220
7E. Which Type of File to Send to the Printing Company? 222
7F. How to Check What is About to be Printed in Bulk? 223
7G. How to Transfer the Print-ready Files? 225

FAQs: Printing 226

OPTION 8: DISTRIBUTING PRINT AND EBOOKS

Overall Goal for Option 8 229
The Importance of an Effective Distribution Strategy 230
How Bibliographic Catalogues Work 235
Self-Distributing Print Books to Stores 237

DECISION TREES:
8A. Scenario 1 – Distribution for New Writers 243
8B. Scenario 2 – Distribution for Corporates 245
8C. Scenario 3 – Begin with an Ebook, Add on a Print Edition 247
8D. Should My Book be Distributed to Bricks-and-Mortar Stores? 251
8E. What Are My Options for Withholding Tax Reductions? 253
8F. What Other Networks Support My Book's Distribution? 258

FAQs: Distribution 260

OPTION 9: MARKETING YOUR BRAND

Overall Goal for Option 9 263
Should 'Brand' be Applied to your Writing? 264
Three Main Communication Modes 266

DECISION TREES:
9A. Which Way to Launch Your Book? 268
9B. How to Determine Targets in Traditional Media? 272
9C. How to Present Your Book to Traditional Media? 276
9D. Which Website Options to Choose? 282
9E. Which Social Media Should a Writer Use? 290
9F. To Advertise or Not? 293
9G. Which Ebook Marketing Strategies to Use? 295

FAQs: Marketing Your Brand 299

Appendix 1 301
Appendix 2 304
Glossary 308
Useful Contacts 314
Acknowledgments 319
Index 320

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of Your Book and This Guide

The purpose of your book may seem obvious to you, but what assumptions are you making? Do you intend your book for a mass or niche market? Do you expect stores to stock your book in one particular section or several? Do you have a private project with semi-commercial or commercial potential? Do you want to sell a combination of (digital) ebooks and (paper) print books? Do you aim to make a profit or just cover costs? Do you mind taking an initial loss if the book enhances your career, personal interests or business brand in the long term? Do you want your book to be a stepping stone towards becoming a professional writer?

This guide helps you answer – from an informed basis – the above questions and many others. The options presented here offer choices and alternatives you may not have considered. Clear explanations of technical terms and processes are given. Solutions to common publishing problems are suggested. The overall purpose is to streamline the publishing of your book, minimise the costs and maximise the benefits. This know-how is for:

- New and emerging writers who want to pitch to publishers and/or self-publish their first short stories and books
- Indie writers who have been published but choose to self-publish for reasons of ease and/or economics
- Authors with out-of-print books (the rights to publish have reverted from the publisher/s back to the author)
- Students in writing and publishing courses
- Small press publishers
- Companies or entrepreneurs managing publishing projects.

Publishing a book can be one of the most satisfying achievements in life. At first, such a goal may seem out of reach. But by breaking down the process into clear steps and applying the know-how from these pages, you can *make* your book happen. Rest assured, you may be pleasantly surprised as you discover your own capabilities along this path.

Overview of the Publishing Process

The word 'publishing' is associated with a myriad of media: books, magazines, newspapers, music, DVDs, multimedia, computer games, databases, blogs and websites. The principle behind publishing is to pass on knowledge, information and entertainment set in material forms – not just talk or thought – from creators to others. This principle was behind primitive paintings inside caves, hieroglyphics on pyramids and manuscripts by monks. In years to come, humans will devise ways of publishing yet to be named, but the principle will endure.

When talking about making books, it's important to distinguish between publishing and printing. Many people use the two terms interchangeably. Book publishing, however, is a multi-stage process, of which printing is only one stage (now optional), as the chart opposite summarises.

The developments in publishing from Johannes Gutenberg's printing press of the mid-15th century to today's World Wide Web have involved countless technological and social changes. The current digital revolution in publishing involves a wave of change that can seem daunting. Making sense of the new array of electronic reading devices is a long way from the relative simplicity of opening a paperback. The closure of numerous traditional bricks-and-mortar bookstores has been distressing for many.

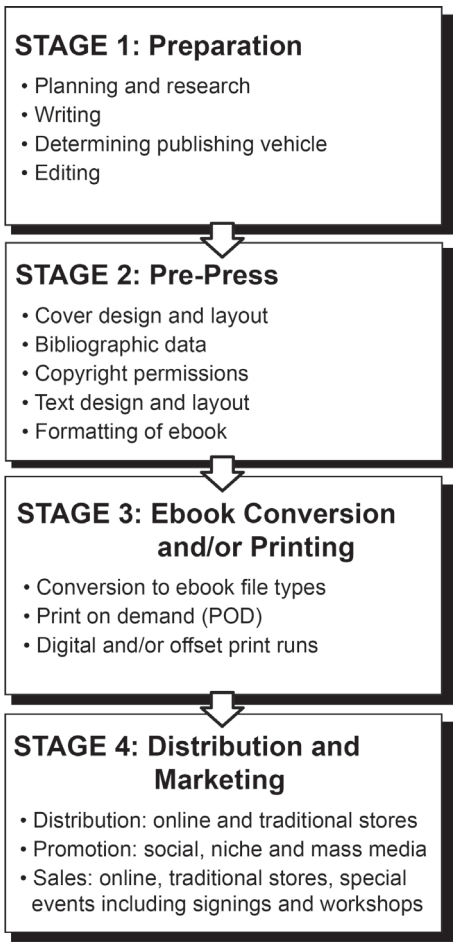
The ongoing changes, however, are to be understood not feared. Adapting may be difficult for some, but exciting for others. Print books will continue to sell while new opportunities emerge for ebooks to entertain and inform. For instance, imagine the delight of a small child who is presented with a digital picture book read by her grandparents who live on the other side of the world.

Technology in the 21st century has provided new ways for anyone, experienced or not, to publish books. A generation ago, the following aspects of today's publishing practices were still dreams:

- Economically print a single (paper) book on demand
- Create an ebook on a home computer
- Market books globally via a personal website and social networks.

With so many new options, the long-standing constraints of a publishing budget and timeline take on fresh and critical complexity.

The four main stages of the book publishing process

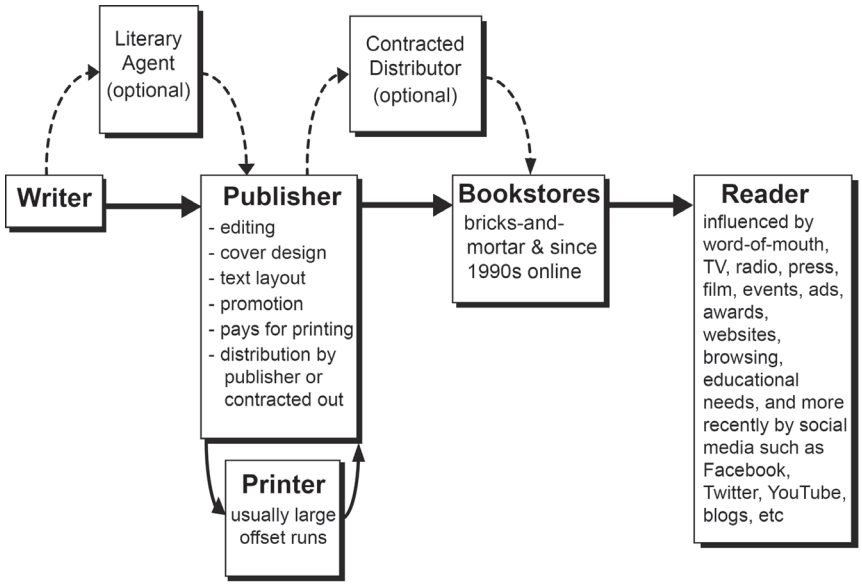


Your Budget

Publishing budgets can range from a few dollars to many thousands. There can be direct costs such as paying a graphic designer for a cover, the printing of a paperback, sending out media kits or hiring a freelance editor. There are indirect costs (overheads) such as a computer, internet access, software, office space and utilities bills. Time spent on your project may initially cost you opportunities in some areas while later opening doors to new career possibilities. Percentages will also be deducted from sales made through distributors and retailers.

To understand the flow of money and expertise through book publishing, consider its traditional supply chain charted below. This model was almost unrivalled until 2011 when most Angus & Robertson stores closed (formerly Australia's biggest book chain), Borders Books went broke worldwide, Kindle e-readers spilled into Australian shops, sales of tablet computers and smartphones soared, Amazon bought the UK Book Depository, digital self-publishing surged, and Australia's largest independent book distributor, Scribo, went out of business.

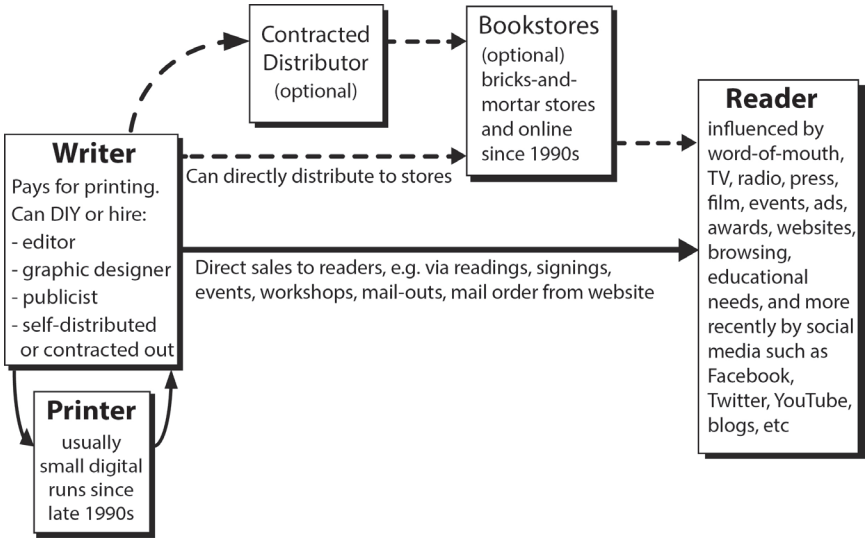
Traditionally published print-book supply chain



A writer typically approached a publisher directly or via a literary agent who acted as a go-between (costing about 15–20% of the writer's royalties if successful). If the writer's manuscript was accepted, the publisher would edit, design, print, promote and organise distribution of the book to bricks-and-mortar retail bookstores, topped up by online sales. Although ebooks have been around since the 1990s, these were considered by many publishers, up until about 2010, as optional extras to the main game of selling print books.

A variation on this traditional model is the self-published print-book supply chain, which became more accessible to writers during the 1990s, as shown in the chart below. This was stimulated by greater access to professional publishing software as well as improved digital printing technology that made short print runs economically viable.

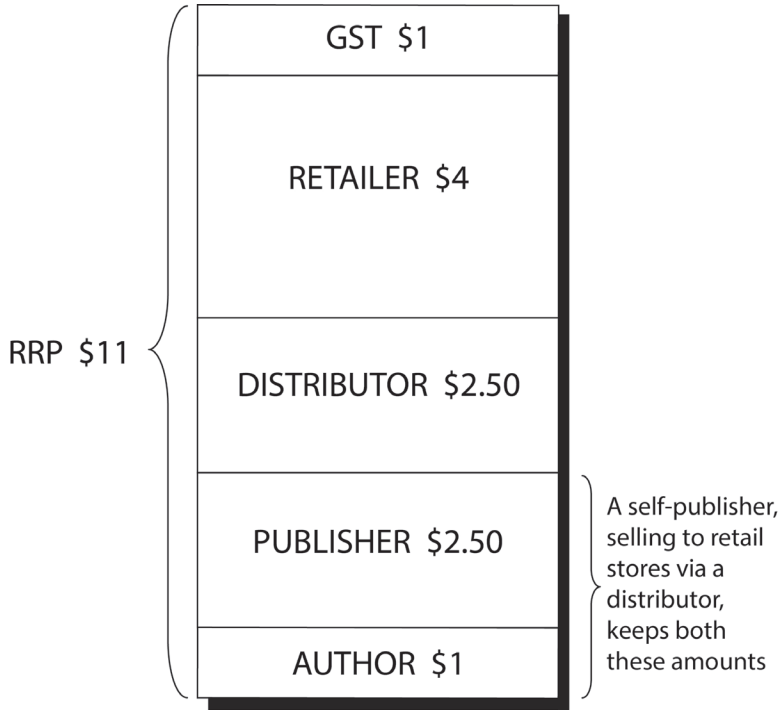
Self-published print-book supply chain (older model)



The use of the above self-publishing model has declined, particularly since 2011, but can still be utilised by a writer who believes their print book will receive healthy publicity, or who finds the online success of their ebook justifies the release of a print edition through bookstores.

The traditional and self-published print-book supply chains can both include the same basic stages of preparing a book to be printed then sold, but they have differing degrees of complexity and volume, and therefore widely varying production budgets. Yet both supply chains share the following typical divisions of revenue from print-book sales in bricks-and-mortar bookstores (via a distributor), see below.

Approximate division of revenue from a print book sold via a traditional store for $11 (to keep the figures simple) in Australia



Think about the above figures for a moment. Ignoring the goods and services tax (GST), a published author typically receives 10% of RRP (recommended retail price) from the sale of books in bricks-and-mortar stores. This means if you are a self-published author who directly sells one book to a reader at full price, say after an author talk or event (not via a bookstore), then you receive the equivalent return that a published author would for selling 10 books through retail stores.

Of course the self-published author isn't supported by a major publisher's promotional clout and widespread distribution, but resourceful individuals often find ways to generate publicity via media reviews and interviews that give them a fighting chance in a crowded marketplace.

The Rise of Ebooks and Social Media

The influence of the above print-book models has been challenged by the rise of ebooks. The Australian Booksellers Association expects sales of ebooks to account for about 25% of the Australian book market by 2015. The 2010–12 boom in ebook sales made this estimate look conservative, but in 2013 the growth in ebook sales began to slow. Nevertheless, ebooks in the US accounted for about 25% of their total trade sales during 2013.

Regardless of the precise market share of ebooks in coming years, it is safe to say they have modified the way the previous supply-chain models are applied. In addition, the rise of social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc) has created extra opportunities to promote books. These developments affect publishing budgets in three important ways:

1. The costs of storing and distributing ebooks, compared to print books, are minor because ebooks can be stored on a computer (not a warehouse) and are distributed as mere data over the internet (not via trucks and vans).
2. Ebooks eliminate the major costs of paper, print and binding. By comparison, the costs of formatting and converting *most* ebooks are minor.
3. Social media networks enable writers to do more promotion from their own computers, relying less on publicists and traditional media such as radio, press and TV.

Publishers grounded in the print tradition were generally slow to adapt to the rise of ebooks and social media. Some publishers outsourced the creation and distribution of ebooks to aggregators that charged fees and/or 30–35% of sales revenue. But others developed, or are in the process of developing, their own in-house processes for digitising books, as well as managing social media.

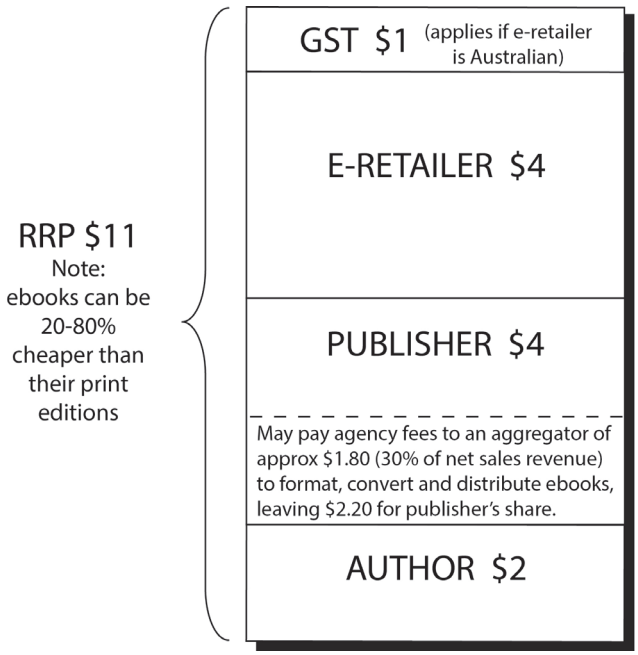
In addition, the success of several small publishers who specialise in ebooks – treating print editions as optional extras – has encouraged some of the big publishers to create imprints (subdivisions of their main brands) dedicated solely to ebooks.

All publishers expect to sell their ebooks at a lower price than their corresponding print editions. The discounts are often about 20–50%, but some recent mainstream releases have discounted the $29.95 print edition to a mere $6.99 – almost an 80% reduction.

This leaves precious little for authors, even if a publisher is paying royalties on ebook sales at 20–25% of RRP (also known as 'list price'), rather than the 'standard' 10% of RRP from print sales.

The effect of discounting ebooks should be kept in mind when comparing the following chart with the breakdown of revenue on page 6, because the RRP of $11 is used below only to keep the figures simple. Furthermore, the royalty rates for ebooks offered by publishers are still evolving, so the following proportions should be seen as a general guide with notable variations.

Approximate division of revenue from an ebook sold via an online store for $11 (to keep the figures simple) in Australia

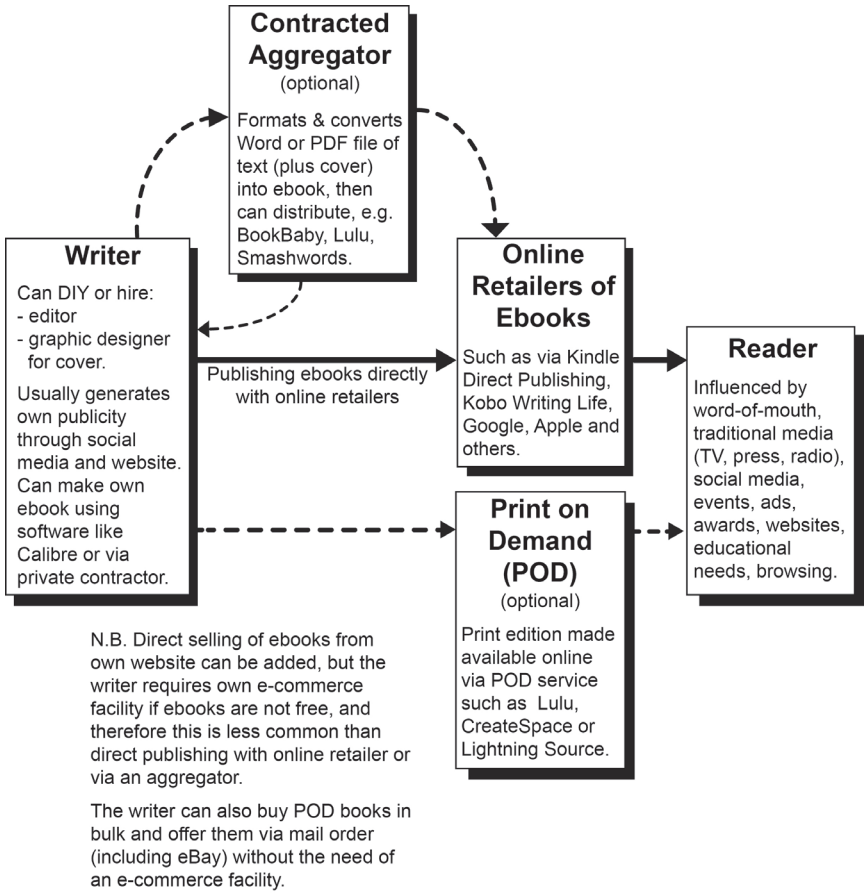


Definition of ebook 'aggregator'

An ebook aggregator is a business that charges publishers or self-publishers a fee and/or percentage of sales revenue to format, convert and/or distribute ebooks to online retailers. US-based aggregators include BookBaby, Smashwords, Lulu, BookTango and Vook. Australian-based aggregators include Australian eBook Publisher and Port Campbell Press.

One of the best ways to understand how ebooks have changed the supply-chain models in publishing is to study the chart below. It summarises the ways many indie writers and self-publishers are now making and marketing books.

The new indie or self-publisher ebook and POD supply chain



A self-publishing writer might employ the model on page 9 if established publishers reject their writing as commercially unviable. But growing numbers of published writers are choosing to self-publish ebooks, sometimes backed up by print-on-demand editions, because this approach generally provides a simpler and quicker path to readers, as well as higher royalties. These writers often call themselves 'indie writers', or even 'hybrid writers'.

Compare the chart on page 8, which shows ebook royalties from traditional publishers, with the chart below that summarises the ranges of ebook royalties available to writers directly publishing through four retailers: Kindle, Smashwords, Kobo and Google. (Smashwords enables easier access for Australian writers to Apple's iBookstore and giant US book retailer Barnes & Noble.)

Four international ebook retailers and their ranges of royalties for writers publishing directly

E-retailer	Author's Share	E-retailer's Share
Kindle Direct Publishing (world's largest ebook retailer - Amazon)	35–70%	30–65%
Smashwords (US-based aggregator and e-retailer that also distributes to Apple, Barnes & Noble and others)	40–85%	15–60%
Kobo (based in Canada)	45-80%	20-55%
Google Play (partner program)	52%	48%

Since 2007 any writer, armed with a Word doc of their text and a JPEG file of their front cover, has been able to directly publish for free with Amazon's Kindle division, which currently has about 60% of the world ebook market. The royalties earned by directly publishing with Kindle range from 35–70%. But the traditional media generally expect that a book worthy of their limited time to review will include a print edition. And without publicity in traditional media, a book will usually struggle to sell.

However, ebooks that are not supported by a print edition are increasingly breaking through onto bestseller lists due to readers discovering and talking about them online. A spike in sales caused by an online 'buzz' may attract the attention of traditional media. The resulting broader exposure can boost ebook sales into the stratosphere, prompting the release of a print edition, as happened with the books by E L James.

The three major types of ebook

1. EPUB is an open format for ebooks that is not owned by any particular company. The filenames have .epub at the end.
2. Kindle formats (which include MOBI, KF8, AZW) are owned by Amazon, Inc. Kindle has about 60% of the global ebook market.
3. PDF (Portable Document Format) was a popular early ebook format, easily and cheaply derived from the print edition, but its *fixed* page layout does not allow text to *reflow* in order to fit the screens on the new generation of electronic reading devices. In other words, you can zoom in and out of a PDF, but you cannot change the font, its size or line spacing as you can with EPUB and Kindle formats.

There are more than 20 ebook file formats, but EPUB is the most common retail format outside Kindle. Most of Apple's ebooks are in EPUB, even though many are in its proprietary iBooks format. Apple's iBookstore is the second biggest player in the Australian ebook market. Apple allows self-publication under stringent conditions, such as owning a Mac laptop or desktop and no uploading of Word files. It is generally easier for writers to submit their ebooks to Apple via aggregators that help with formatting (arranging text and images in ebooks so they display accurately) and conversion (such as from Word to Kindle, EPUB or other ebook formats). Apple also sells apps (purpose-built computer applications) like iBooks Author (which uses fixed page layout) to help writers publish exclusively through its iBookstore.

Barnes & Noble is a giant American book retailer that may not be a household name in Australia, but claims about 20% of

the US ebook market. Ebook market-share figures are notoriously inaccurate, even misleading, but, suffice to say, Barnes & Noble, with its Nook electronic reader, offers a large retail opportunity for many Australian writers. At the time of writing, however, Australians couldn't download ebooks from B&N, not even free ebooks, without entering a credit card number linked directly to an American bank account. B&N also has a self-publishing program called Nook Press (formerly Pubit!) that is expanding internationally, so it may become accessible to Australians.

Fortunately, aggregators like Smashwords, Lulu and BookTango enable Australian writers to gain free access to Barnes & Noble as well as Apple. In addition, Lulu and BookTango offer paid services to writers who need assistance formatting and converting ebooks. Paid assistance ranges from about $50 to $300, assuming the book has fewer than 20 graphics. An extra charge is added if a designer is needed to create an ebook cover.

The rest of the retail ebook market comprises Kobo, Google Play, Sony's Reader Store, and numerous other online stores. Google Play currently has a small share of the global ebook market, but is set to expand significantly by leveraging its powerful brand – not to mention the unique position the company will attain if successful in its goal of digitising all known existing books. Google's Partner Program enables writers to publish directly, as does Kobo's Writing Life. Sony is yet to offer direct publishing.

In summary, an Australian writer can globally publish an ebook for free – if the investment of their time learning the process is not counted – or with paid assistance that may cost a few hundred dollars if a modest number of graphics is involved.

Budget Scenarios for Print Books

If a writer wants a small number of copies of her or his book printed, then print-on-demand (POD) companies such as CreateSpace (Amazon) and Lulu provide services that can print a single copy of a book for less than $10 (if not too large or complex), plus postage. The advantage of POD is that copies can be printed after they are ordered so storage is not an issue. POD services are also offered by Australian companies, and can be googled for comparison.

There is no cost to set up an account with Lulu or CreateSpace, but each charges for add-on services if writers need help to create files ready for printing (print-ready files). The companies also offer packages to turn a print book into an ebook. However, be aware that selling print books into Australian or overseas bricks-and-mortar bookstores via CreateSpace or Lulu POD services is highly unlikely despite it being technically possible.

Lightning Source is another large POD company, but it is better suited for small presses and self-publishers who already know how to create press-quality PDFs and expect to regularly sell print books through bricks-and-mortar bookstores as well as online retailers. Unlike Lulu and CreateSpace, Lightning Source has set-up costs (about $150) and its contracts are more complex.

At the next level of budget, you might have a private family history that costs a few hundred dollars to photocopy and bind at Officeworks or at an instant printer like Snap or Kwik Kopy. Perhaps you'd like to compile an extended family photo album produced via the Australian websites of Apple iPhoto, Blurb, Photobook or a similar online service (google them). Family members can chip in for the bill or help host the reunion when the book is 'launched'.

Moving up a level, if you want to digitally print a 300-page novel, then expect to pay about $1500 for 250 professional quality copies. Not bad value if you sell 100 copies at your launch for around $20 each.

At a niche (retail) market level, you can print 2,000 copies of a paperback for about $7,000 with a book specialist such as McPherson's Printing Group or Griffin Press. Their printing usually takes about two to three weeks.

The cost of a good publicist starts at around $2,000. A freelance editor costs about $60–80 an hour. A graphic designer might reasonably charge $500–1,000 for a cover. These are all round figures, carrying lots of provisos, but they should give you a rough idea of how much money is involved in making a print book.

To help you further gauge the costs of competing in the commercial book market, keep in mind that small to medium publishers in Australia consider sales between 3,000 and 5,000

copies to be healthy, but major publishers will typically expect sales of at least 6,000 to 8,000 copies. These sales figures may seem modest compared to some other commodities, but the flow-on effects such as paid talks, a career boost or an increased business profile may be significant.

Now you have a general idea of the various book publishing processes and budgets, the next crucial consideration is allocation of your time.

Your Timeline

Approximately 24 hours after the infamous attacks on 11 September 2001, there was a book published on the subject. More followed within a week. By contrast, researching and writing a book can take more than a decade. The question most people have to ask themselves is how much time can they or their business afford to spend publishing a book?

The time spent writing a book needs to be demarcated from time spent on the rest of the publishing process. This is very important. A book can take years to write and rewrite. Once a book is written, mainstream publishers can comfortably have it ready for sale within six to eight months, but may take more than a year. Most established publishers focus their promotion of a book within a single month. By contrast, self-publishers and smaller presses (including the growing number of specialist digital publishers like The Writer's Coffee Shop in Sydney) can move quickly to put out a book within a few weeks if there is a compelling reason. These smaller enterprises may spread their promotion of a book over several months.

There is often a 'twilight zone' between finishing the writing of a book then confirming the next stage of publication. This is the time when a book might be pitched to one or more publishers with or without the help of a literary agent who acts as a go-between. Sometimes deals are landed that make the author a pile of money. Unfortunately, there are also instances when publishing houses sign an author, then delay or even change their minds about releasing the book.

Authors who aren't picked up by an established publisher might self-publish – sometimes competing successfully in the marketplace against similar publications from companies that rejected their writing. A few may stoop to using vanity publishers, which are marginal companies charging highly inflated prices to package a book for what turns out to be very low sales figures. There are also custom and partnership publishing services, but more about these alternatives is in Option 2: Determining Your Publishing Vehicle.

Time Management

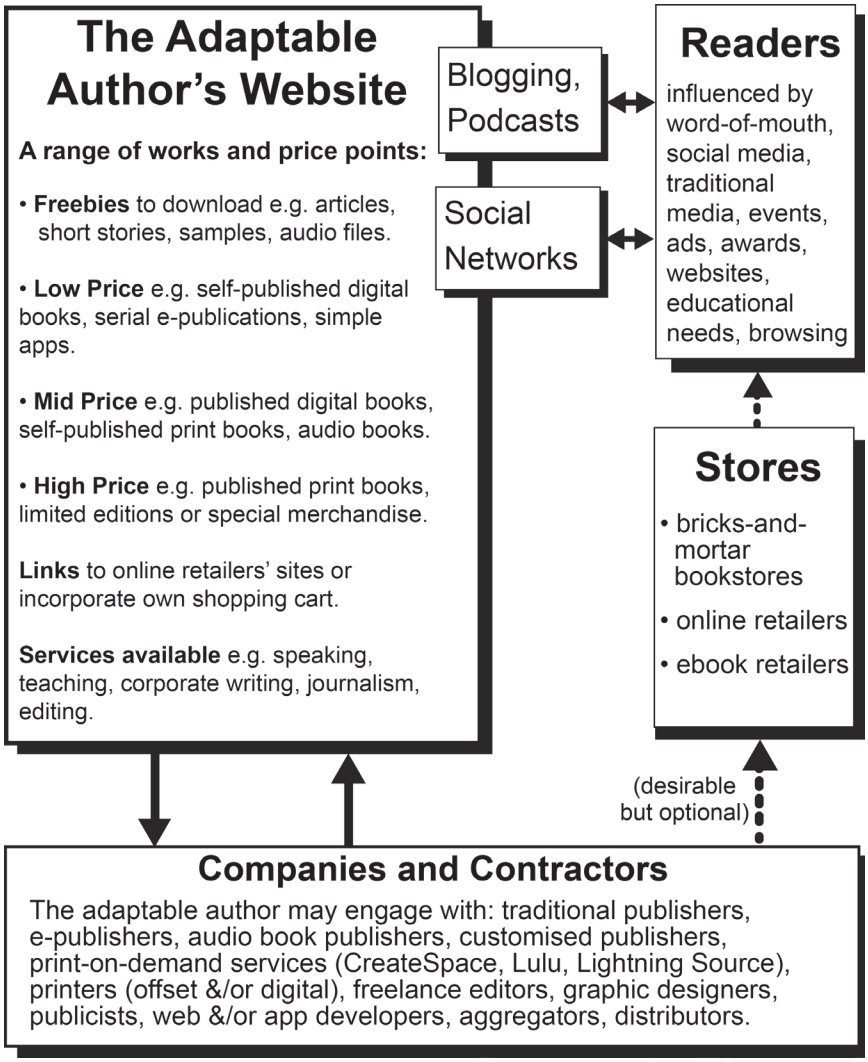
Given the flexibility of timelines, the more critical concern for many writers is how best to manage their valuable and limited time on a daily basis. It's all very well to have an ever-expanding array of book publishing options, but many writers feel overwhelmed by a rising tide of new technology, endless new jargon and relentless change. Some may give up in frustration, while others will seek new knowledge and skills to regain a sense of control.

The dream for many writers is to spend as much time as they like writing books, then have a publisher handle all the packaging and selling of their titles in a range of formats. Ideally, this process rewards the writer with enough money to keep practising their art while living comfortably.

The reality, however, for the vast majority of writers is a time-management dilemma. All but a handful of authors have to supplement their incomes with journalism, corporate writing, editing, teaching or other occupations. Authors must manage their time well in order to write good books and still pay their bills.

Many new writers are now establishing their platform (their presence in the market) via the internet before having their first book published. Their early works may be short stories, articles or zines (self-published writing presented as mini-magazines or roughly bound books). They are likely to be active through social media but may not yet have a personal website. So the model on page 16 will be a future aim for new and emerging writers, whereas experienced writers are increasingly organising their published and self-published works along the following lines.

Model for the 'Adaptable Author'



The key to the 'Adaptable Author' model is *engagement* with the digital community. Having a static website that acts as an online brochure is no longer likely to meet the rising expectations of readers. Many authors are regularly blogging and developing relationships with readers via Facebook and Twitter as well as other social media linked to their website, not simply displaying their books on a web page with some background information (that's 'old school').

If you think the Adaptable Author model, or a variation of it, might suit your purposes, then develop it in steps. Don't try to do too much in one leap. Seek professional advice and paid assistance where necessary. Most importantly, ensure you are not distracted from your *core* creative work of writing. This is easier said than done, but it starts by having clear aims, then limiting the amount of time you spend each day on non-writing activities. In short, you need to manage your time well to stay on top of your game. As in any field.

Although the Adaptable Author model may seem complex now, come back to it later, after you progress through the following pages as the four main publishing stages are broken down into nine key options, presented as chapters. For the moment, the general concept of the Adaptable Author is more important than the specific details chosen at the author's discretion.

Let's continue over the page by considering a series of key decisions and alternatives to guide you through what is usually the most time-consuming and complex part: writing the book.