

Self-Publishing A Start-up Guide For the Independent Author



Self-Publishing -A Start-up Guide for the Independent Author,
by Sonja McGiboney

Hello,

There is a common saying that “Writing the book is the easy part.” While this is not entirely true, I think the publishing can be more overwhelming than figuring out your plot twists.

Because I like to teach, and ensure others don’t make the same mistakes, I share all of what I’ve learned for you.

When I first started writing I had no clue about the world of publishing. I paraphrase Chuck Palahniuk who wrote the book, *Consider This* when I say:

- It’s more than talent and skill.
- Even fantastic writers don’t finish projects.
- Great ideas don’t’ always get written
- Some Authors write one book and get disillusioned by the process and never write again.

I paraphrase Palahniuk who paraphrases the writer Joy Williams in saying that, writers must be smart enough to hatch brilliant ideas —but dull enough to do all the work,

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Writing a story is all about tweaking your plot, editing, collaborating, proofing, and often, starting over.

Use this as a map to guide you on your own journey.

This guide is NOT:

- It is not a marketing scheme to sell my books.
- It is not an endorsement. All mentioned companies, people and places in this outline are mentioned for the purpose of instruction. I have experience with some items but others are things I learned about too late to apply them to my previous endeavors.
- This is not instruction on how to get a traditional publisher.
- This is not a manual on the craft of writing.

I discovered this website recently and wondered why I never thought to Google “Mistakes Self-Publisher’s make” According to this website, here are the following mistakes authors make. I’ll share my experience with each. <https://nybookeditors.com/>

1. **Not getting Beta Readers:** My first book was a photo album of my dog’s first year. People liked it and urged me to write more. Because the photos in my books are adorable, people loved them. But as I look at some of my earlier books, I realize mistakes that I made in the formatting. Some of my rhymes should have been on one page instead of spread over two where the reader will say them more effectively. Someday I might fix it all.
2. **Not getting a professional editor:** My husband is my proofreader and my editor. It’s great for manuscripts of less than 300 words. But for my MG novel, I spent the money and hired a professional. She told me to get rid of the guns in my book. Yes, I saw the logic in getting rid of my guns. I tried. I’m on chapter 6 of the rewrite and it’s been 6 months. Another editor tried to get me to lengthen my short stories. Perhaps they are right, but the feeling that my words weren’t good enough is hard to shake. Yes, all my short stories can be longer. I should feel happy that the editor wanted them to grow. But my short stories are written for the reader to make up the missing parts, to perhaps wonder about them. If I explain it all, it’s no longer a story for them to ponder, is it?
3. **Trying to design their own cover:** I have designed my own covers for all my Jazzy Books. At a festival, a lady asked me, “Are all your books about pitbulls?” That’s when I realized that my covers, as adorable to me as I thought they were, could be construed in that manner. I’ve reworked most of my covers so there was no doubt that the book was about alphabets, or counting, or shapes, etc.
4. **Not building a professional team:** I don’t have a team. It’s just me and my hubby, so I suppose we are a team of two. But I have a few followers that are dedicated and that came from years of persistence. Anyway, I looked up “who should be on a writer’s team and this is what came up: agent, contract manager, assistants or intern, editor, editorial director, editorial assistant, copy editor, publicist, marketing manager, account manager, art director, production specialist, subsidiary rights agent or manager, and book-to-film agent. As a self-published author you are all of those things unless you outsource the work. <https://writerunboxed.com/2021/09/07/whos-who-in-your-publishing-village/>
5. **Not properly formatting your manuscript:** This can make a world of difference when you publish. It took me several books and tries to figure out what works for me for my books. Book size, pagination, chapter headings, font choice, orientation, and more things to think about. All will affect your product.

6. Not writing the metadata: Write what your book is about as many ways as you can on everything you touch. This is how the internet finds your product at the end of a customer search.
7. Not understanding your target audience: Ah, this one is tricky. Your target audience isn't always what you think it will be. I thought mine was parents.. Turns out, that parents don't really want to buy my books, but educators do. I had to rework my entire marketing strategy.
8. Not launching your book correctly: There is no "correct" way to do this. Launch your book any way you want. However, some ways are more successful. I've never, "launched" a book. I just write the next one and add it to my list. Ergo, I don't sell a lot of books. For me, it's a hassle, but if you want your book to be important to others, you have to make it important to them. That's what a launch will do.
9. Not sharing with your network:
10. Only writing one book: This one I understand. I've got 23 children's books now. I have a passive income of profits from about 3 books a month. I know, it's not great, but I don't do all the marketing things, I just ignore it all. But, every month it's three different books.
11. Stopping with Amazon: I started exclusively with IngramSpark. I don't think the quality of their paperbacks is as good as Amazon. Their production time is longer and their uploading system is still klunky. Amazon is easier. But Amazon doesn't cater to bookstores and libraries. Where do you want your book? Choose according to that. Or do both. (Just remember to unclick Amazon when you upload to IngramSpark). This is a good article.

<https://selfpublishingadvice.org/can-i-use-ingramspark-and-kdp/>

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- 1) **The Beginning: Writing** –Pick your genre! A SIMPLISTIC VIEW – General guidelines
 - a) Picture Books: 300–800 words – lots of pictures, easy “sight” words, content for kindergarten or younger level
 - b) Early Readers: 200–3500 words – lots of pictures, longer sentences, harder words, content for kindergarten to second grade level
 - c) Chapter Books: 4000–10,000 words – pictures usually limited to chapter headings, content for 1st grade to third grade level
 - d) Middle Grade: 25,000–40,000 words – no pictures, content for 4th to 6th grade
 - e) Young Adult: 25,000 to 50,000 words – no pictures but content is more mature
 - f) Adult: Up to 100,000 words is good. No limit on content type

- 2) **Research:** Why are you writing this book? If it’s for yourself and your family, an heirloom of sorts, then stop now, print your book through Amazon and don’t worry about it. But if you want to make a living as an author, you must do research into the market in which you will write. There is a reason agents are so picky. They look at market trends and other factors when they accept books. You have to be your own agent. Find out what books are selling. Visit the local bookstores and view the racks. Talk to the retailers. Search online. Are they looking for thrillers? What themes sell better?

- 3) **Tools**
 - a) Vellum: (Book design /writing software for Mac) <https://vellum.pub/>
 - b) Scrivener: (writing/ organizing/ growing long manuscripts) <https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener/overview>
 - c) InDesign: (Layout and page design) <https://www.adobe.com/products/indesign.html>
 - d) Book Brush: (Media Images for your books.) <https://bookbrush.com/>
 - e) Photoshop: (Graphics/ layout/ jpeg to cymk conversion) <https://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop.html>
 - f) Canva: Designing graphic for your book
 - g) Reedsy: The website has a book writing tool and also provides vetted services by independent contractors. <https://reedsy.com/marketplace/search?service=translation>
 - h) Fiver: Freelance services <https://www.fiverr.com/>

4) Inspiration and Learning

- a) Read books about writing – Teach yourself – I have a bibliography on my author website of “educational” books that I’ve read and what I thought of them.
<https://sonjamcgiboney.wixsite.com/sonjamcgiboney/bibliography>
- b) Join author organizations
- c) Find a local book club
- d) Find a local author group
- e) Go to conferences
- f) Attend Webinars
- g) Take Online courses
- h) Read Writing forums
- i) Join Facebook groups
- j) Take a college course
- k) Read free info on publishing Sites or online magazines like Writer’s Digest.

5) Editing

- a) Beta Readers. Beta readers are for feedback. Send them a pdf copy of your work to read for consistency, glaring errors, plot problems, etc. Your critique group is like a beta reader, but if you use a critique group, they become as invested in your story as you are and will sometimes miss things a beta reader, who sees your manuscript for the first time, will find.
- b) Join a critique group: They will help while you write and be honest about what you write. I cannot say how helpful this is. They will call you out on misinformation; they will tell you when a scene doesn’t work for them. They will help guide you to better solutions for problems you didn’t even know you had. They are like a beta reader.
- c) Get a professional Editor
 - i) Find one that edits books in the genre you are writing
 - ii) Ask for referrals on author sharing sites/ Facebook groups/ from your author network/
 - iii) Ask editor to provide a list of successful books they have edited
- d) Find professional organizations for editors
 - i) SCBWI: The Book
 - ii) Editorial Freelancers Association: <http://the-efa.org/>
 - iii) Hire professionals to critique your work. This is a good article.
<https://katiefrawley.wordpress.com/critiques/>
 - iv) Editorial Freelancers Association: I just found out about this. They offer a rate chart so you can see ball park figures. <https://www.the->

efa.org/rates/?fbclid=IwAR1Hth0lhCv5JpaB2GySWLOxUVXG8aUE_GM8Oo3AXzZ9cd28FV5uh5g9p3E

v) ARC copies. Advanced Reader Copies. These are print copies of your final draft after multiple revisions and editor edits. Send ARCs, the final product, to targeted readers. Where to get ARC copies?

- (1) You can create a digital ARC in PDF, ePub, or Mobi format and distribute the ARC by emailing it directly to your readers, or through a website like NetGalley, BookFunnel, or Instafreebie. Another option is using a publishing platform such as Kindle Direct Publishing to create your digital ARC—just don't fully publish your book until you are ready.
- (2) Print: Printed ARCs are the standard—it's what the big publishers use and what big name reviewers expect. However, printed books come at a higher price tag and as an independent or self-published author, you foot the bill. Plus, you need to pad your timeline to allow time for printing and shipping the books. You can print your ARC using a short-run printer or by using a print-on-demand self-publishing platform, such as IngramSpark or Kindle Direct Publishing. Which option you choose may depend on how much design support you need to create the print-ready file, or the format and length of your book (which affects print costs). You have the option of creating an ARC book file with these types of platforms, or, KDP allows authors to order Proof Copies.
- (3) Remember to include disclaimers in the book. Make sure it says ARC copy somewhere inside.
- (4) Customize the cover: Arc copies should have a different cover : Include disclaimer on front cover identifying it as an ARC. List key book metadata and marketing info on the back cover. Here are some details to include: title, author, publisher, price, format, page count, ISBN, publication date, publicity contact information, and marketing plan. Remove or hide the ISBN barcode. This helps prevent your ARC from being sold in retail stores. If you cannot leave the ISBN barcode off due to printing requirements, you can place a sticker over the barcode before you distribute the ARCs.

6) **Hiring illustrators:** best practices / cautions/ prices

- a) Be careful: Always get a contract with an illustrator and decide what rights the illustrator has regarding your book. Will you allow their name on the cover? Will you offer them royalties? What will you pay them? You can find more information with a Google search. I have not had to use illustrators.

- b) Make sure your book is completely done before having a cover or illustrations created.
(Or you may be in for some major revisions.)

7) **Design and formatting** of physical book and print ready files

- a) Do it yourself by using templates from online publishers like IngramSpark, KDP, Bookbaby...etc. They all have templates and such you can use
- b) Use an application like InDesign and create your own pages to export to your choice of book printer.
- c) Hire a professional

8) **Before Your Print-----Library of Congress-MARC record**

- a) If you wish for your book to be accessible to libraries, you may consider registering your book with the Library of Congress. Do you need it? No. Is it helpful? Yes if you wish to get your book into libraries in the US. But note letter h below. To obtain a LCCN number, apply on this website.
https://locsmcexternal.servicenowservices.com/auth?id=request_lccn
- b) MARC is the acronym for Machine-Readable Cataloging. It defines a data format by which computers exchange, use, and interpret bibliographic information, and its data elements make up the foundation of most library online public access catalogs used today. If your book already has a MARC record, libraries are more apt to accept your self-published book.
- c) **Can a librarian create a MARC record for your book after it has been published?** Yes, but it, apparently, is not a skill they all know how to do or know that they are able to do.
- d) **Where can you find MARC records?** MARC records can be found at the website,
<https://www.worldcat.org/>
- e) You can find your book's information here. You can add more tags. You can view libraries that have added your book to their collections. You can see one of mine here:
https://www.worldcat.org/title/princess-jazzy-how-to-prove-youre-a-princess/oclc/1285527831&referer=brief_results
- f) **Can I create my own MARC record?** I am not sure. However, there is a company based in Canada that is able to add your book data to WorldCat which is where MARC records are placed for librarians to download them. <https://www.special-cataloguing.com/>
- g) **Submitting your book** must be done before it is printed. There are stringent guidelines and timelines for this to happen. See on their website:
<https://www.loc.gov/publish/cip/about/ineligible.html>
- h) **These categories of material are ineligible for CIP**
 - i) General
 - ii) Books that are already published
 - iii) Books without a U.S. city as place of publication on the title page or the copyright page

- iv) A statement indicating distribution in the U.S. is not sufficient.
- v) Books in non-Western European languages
- vi) Books paid for or subsidized by individual authors (but they now have exceptions based on content of the self-published books. See website for current information.
<https://www.loc.gov/search/?in=&q=self+publish&new=true&st>
- vii) Books published on demand
- viii) Books published by firms that have published books by fewer than three different authors
- ix) Books for which a Library of Congress Control Number has been preassigned via the Preassigned Control Number (PCN) Program

i)

9) **Production:** Do you have an ISBN? What is an ISBN? International Standard Book Number. The ISBN is a unique identifier for a book or other book-like product (such as an audio book) that specifies its format, edition, and publisher.

- a) How many ISBNs do I need? You will need one ISBN for each edition and format of your book. The ISBN identifies the publisher as well as the specific book title, edition and format (hardback, paperback, ePub, PDF, Mobi, Audio...). Any variation of a book would require the use of a unique ISBN to identify it properly. This allows retailers to help the customer understand exactly which version of a title they are purchasing.
- b) How do I purchase an ISBN:
 - i) Self purchase at Bowker: <https://www.myidentifiers.com/> single, group of ten, one hundred or one thousand.
 - ii) Amazon: Amazon will auto-generate an ISBN number for your print book and register it with Bowker and www.booksinprint.com and even generate the appropriate EAN barcode for the back of your printed book. An ISBN isn't required to publish an eBook with KDP. Once your content is published on KDP, Amazon will assign it a 10-digit ASIN (Amazon Standard Identification Number), which is unique to the eBook, and is an identification number for the Kindle eBook on Amazon. The free ISBN from KDP can only be used on KDP for distribution to Amazon and its distributors. It cannot be used with another publisher or self-publishing service. If you use your own ISBN to publish your hardcover, you can use that ISBN to publish your book elsewhere.
 - iii) IngramSpark: Info here copied from their blog.
<https://www.ingramspark.com/blog/isbn-facts-for-self-publishers> United States publishers can purchase an ISBN from Bowker when setting up a title in their IngramSpark account. United States publishers can also receive a free ISBN, non-transferable and owned by IngramSpark, if desired, at the same stage of title setup.

United States IngramSpark publishers who purchase ISBNs through their account get a special discounted rate to own their own ISBN. (We're working to be able to offer ISBNs in Australia and the United Kingdom, but aren't quite there yet due to different rules and regulations. We're sorry for the inconvenience, but encourage you to own your own ISBN by purchasing from Thorpe-Bowker in Australia and Nielsen in the United Kingdom.)

10) Barcodes:

- a) What is a barcode? A barcode is a machine-readable code in the form of numbers and a pattern of parallel lines of varying widths, printed on and identifying a product.
- b) How can I purchase a barcode?
- c) Can be purchased via Bowker when you buy your ISBN or separately
<https://www.myidentifiers.com>
- d) Amazon makes their own for your book when you publish through them. I've not had this experience, but it says that on their website.
- e) Ingram can also provide you one based on your ISBN. You can download a cover template from them which will have the barcode applied. You can modify the position of the code on your cover.
- f) You can also generate free ones. I've not been able to get a free one to work, but another author mentioned "Bookow are absolutely fine. Just use PNG version and DO NOT scale or otherwise modify the file you receive in any way. They are designed exactly to the industry specs."
- g) Do I put a price on the barcode? You can, to make it easier for sales, but then you are stuck with that price or any "sales" price. I prefer not to add the price to the barcode.

11) **Production Budget:** How will you pay for it all? I've done all my stuff "out of pocket" but here is the buzz I've seen.

- a) Out of pocket: loans, ask mom, work overtime (Yuck!)
- b) Fundraisers: Crowdfunding, ????
- c) Sponsorships: Maybe there is a company out there that aligns well with the theme of your book.
- d) Crowdfunding: is a way for people, businesses and charities to raise money. It works through individuals or organizations who invest in (or donate to) crowdfunding projects in return for a potential profit or reward. To make it work, study publishing projects on crowdfunding sites to get an idea of what makes for success. Sign up at one of the sites, decide how much you need (include site fees), create rewards you want to give to people (work the expense of those rewards into your budget), set a time frame for pledging, promote yourself and your book out the wazooka. Videos, pictures, endorsements, and justifications. Keep it active like a social media page. Some sites include:
- e) Kickstarter: <https://www.kickstarter.com/>
- f) IndieGogo: <https://www.indiegogo.com/>
- g) FundMyBook: <https://www.gofundmybook.com/>
- h) Unbound: <https://unbound.com/>

12) Where to Print: There are many printing options for your book. What size (trim) you choose may direct your printing process.

- a) Choose Size: What size, format, and length is right for you and your market. I got these figures from Reedsy.com <https://blog.reedsy.com/standard-book-sizes/>
 - i) Fiction: 4.25 x 6.87, 5 x 8, 5.25 x 8, 5.5 x 8.5, 6 x 9.
 - ii) Novella: 5 x 8.
 - iii) Children's: 7.5 x 7.5, 7 x 10, 10 x 8. (I have printed in 8x8 , 8x10 and 11 x 8.5. I like hardback as 11 x 8.5 it's a good size, allows landscape perspective for images and fits on most shelves.
 - iv) Textbooks: 6 x 9, 7 x 10, 8.5 x 11.
 - v) Non-fiction: 5.5 x 8.5, 6 x 9, 7 x 10"
 - vi) Memoir: 5.25 x 8, 5.5 x 8.5.
- b) Decide Format: What formats do you want: ebook, audio, paperback, hard cover.
- c) Print Process: Do you want print on demand or do you want to store large quantities of books somewhere? Here is a good webpage that has articles about publishing with different kinds of publishers.
<https://www.authorlearningcenter.com/search?q=publishing>

13) Printing in the US vs Overseas printing (China most common)

- a) US Printing: There are so many options for printing but the path you choose will determine several things like your income from sales, your tax liability, the amount of legwork you need to do to produce and distribute your book. I like to think of Amazon and IngramSpark's publishing platform as a consignment shop. You put your book in their hands. They print it and offer it for distribution. When it sells, they take their cut for costs and fees and you get the rest.
 - i) Amazon is the biggest retailer of digital and print books and owns 2 [self-publishing service companies](#)—Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) for ebooks and CreateSpace for print books. If you include Amazon's KDP, Apple's iBooks, Barnes & Noble's Nook, and Kobo in your distribution plan, you would have covered the channels that account for 97% of ebook sales. Smaller retailers account for a negligible proportion of sales, but they help to increase visibility. Amazon: print on demand – Soft cover only. You have to purchase your own author copies. Great for books with few or no pictures but make sure you format properly for pages. Satisfactory for picture books with illustrations but have a good designer to ensure your pages don't bleed out, colors are cymk, and text is fitted properly. Photo books may or may not print well.
 - ii) If you do not want to deal with individual companies, you can publish with an ebook aggregator such as Draft2Digital (Smashwords used to be one too but just got acquired by Draft2Digital) . Ebook aggregators distribute to multiple retailers and

- format books to the requirements of each. They also give access to channels that authors cannot approach directly, such as Scribd, a digital library with a subscription service used by 80 million people worldwide. They are also, usually, free. They get paid when you get paid.
- iii) IngramSpark: print on demand- you have to purchase your own author copies. They offer hardback and soft cover. They have help with formatting, but the same applies, upload finished, print ready, formatted products and you should be okay. Some have complained they have the same problems as with Amazon.
 - (1) Your book is usually placed on Amazon and Barnes and Noble's page but don't be surprised to see it pop up on ebay and other sites as "used".
 - (2) Your book is available for distribution worldwide but worldwide retailers will not always choose your book to sell.
 - iv) Vanity Press: Not recommended, these companies ask outrageous fees to print your books. They may offer editing/ formatting and other production services, but usually do not offer any distribution services. You also have to purchase your own author copies. Examples are: CKC Publishing House or Archway Self Publishing (A Simon and Schuster subsidiary. They called me out of the blue and offered to print my book. They made it sound so wonderful then said for this service I'd pay this amount.)
 - v) Hybrid Press: I have no experience. Wikipedia says, "A hybrid press or hybrid publisher is a publishing house that operates with a different revenue model than traditional publishing, while keeping the rest of the practices of publishing the same. The revenue source of a traditional publisher is through the sale of books (and other related materials) that they publish, while the revenue of hybrid publishers comes from both book sales and fees charged for the execution of their publishing services. To be a hybrid publisher, a company must uphold longstanding publishing industry standards and best practices."
 - vi) Other "online" printers: not necessarily distributors but I've never used them: Bookbaby (seems similar to Ingram), 48hour books, bestbookprinting, lulu, thebookpatch, usually pricey, may be good for a first, short run just to see. Look through the websites and see what they offer. You can also print your book easily via Shutterfly, but that is more if you want to see what it would look like. I wouldn't use them as a printer for a larger quantity.
 - vii) Small Publishers: The advantage to using a Small Publisher is that you get your book published through a hopefully "reputable" name. There are many small publishing companies that are doing a wonderful job for independent authors. They work similarly to traditional publishers in that you have to query your book. Many are listed at <https://publishersarchive.com/Virginia> but you can find more that are not

on this site. Ask other authors at events where they publish their books. Just remember, check out each one to see if they print books in the genre you write. No use querying a publishing house with a children's book if all they print are horror stories.

viii) Offset Printing: These are companies that can print large quantities of books

ix) Local Printer: Find a local printer to print your books from digital files: I printed at a place in Timonium, MD. This company produces paperback manuals for large companies, card stock, business cards, etc. They are not a "book" printer, but I used them because my daughter worked for them. My books were 8x10 paperback with roughly 32 pages, perfect bound. There is no title on spine. But the photo quality is unbeatable so far. However, there is no help with distribution. They print and ship and it's yours to do the rest. I've also used a printer in NC for my Jazzy Explores Murfreesboro book. They were okay but a little pricy

b) Learn print terminology:

- i) Paper quality: size, weight, brightness, material, coated vs uncoated, color, inkjet or laser, photo glossy, photo matt, bleed, inner file, cover file etc.
- ii) Binding options: case (hard cover) stapled (saddle stitched), perfect bound (glue softcover) and spiral (not recommended for author books)
- iii) Page layout terms: bleed, cymk, font, kerning and tracking (white space between letters) leading (space between lines) justification and alignment, widows and orphans (paragraph ending that ends on the next page), double spaces (a no no now, only one space after punctuation), em dash (-) or m dash, m-rule, (often demarcates a parenthetical thought or some similar interpolation), paragraph indents, hanging punctuation, baseline.

c) Overseas Printing: Who can help? Printing overseas is a viable option if you can handle storage of all your books. You can do it yourself and deal with taxes, shipping, contact, etc. but you could also contact one of these wonderful people and ask for their help. There is a fee but it's worth it.

- i) Larry Issa: Email him at Larry@Lmi-design.com
- ii) Jay Malesky: Check out the website <https://iapcbooks.com/>
- iii) Authorpreneur Central <https://authorpreneurcentral.com/about/> founded in 2019 by indie authors' Claressa Swensen and Nathan Andersen (Anders Roseberg). After realizing how difficult it was to find a reputable and affordable offset printer, they decided to launch this platform which offers authors the same high-quality printing available to traditional big publishing houses.

14) **Reviews/ Beta Readers:** Reviews are important for book sales.

a) Reviews

i) Buy Reviews from a reputable book review company. Starting prices listed.

(1) Kirkus: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/> is an industry standard review company - Traditional Review-\$425 Picture Book \$350

ii) Free Review Companies: Again, be careful.

(1) I just sent my book to be reviewed by Readers Favorite
<https://readersfavorite.com/> We will see what happens.

(2) School Library Journal

iii) Individual Reviewers: Reach out to reviewers and interviewers that do this on the side. Create a spreadsheet of bloggers, reviewers, Twitter ARC-sharing groups, Instagrammers, YouTubers, local media, etc., then spent days sending emails.

iv) Reviews where your book is sold or displayed: Get people to review your books on Goodreads, Amazon and Barnes & Noble

b) BETA: A beta reader is usually a test reader of an unreleased work of literature or other writing (similar to beta testing in software), who gives feedback from the point of view of an average reader to the author.

c) ARC Team: ARC stands for Advance Reader Copy, which means it's a copy that gets distributed to reviewers ahead of the release date of that book so they can read and review it.

15) **Copyright:** You are not required to submit your book to the Library of Congress or to register it with the US Copyright Office in order to gain copyright. But registering your work may give you additional protection in the event of infringement. See more info on Copyright.gov <https://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap4.html>
<https://www.copyright.gov/>

- 16) **What is Marketing?** Do you know your audience and how do you plan to let them know about your book? How do you get stores to pick up your book?
- a) **Start before your book is out, or even done.**
 - b) Clearly Identify your audience. Your book is not for everyone. Do this early on and evaluate your product market fit.
 - c) Create an avatar/ logo which represents your ideal reader. Ask yourself these questions: Who is your book for? What are their interests, their demographics and how does your book help them?
 - d) Build community. Your mama might tell her friends about your book, but she won't get it out to the world. Do not rely solely on family, it's not sustainable. Networking adds value, collaborating with like-minded individuals adds value and credibility, and creating mutually beneficial relationships may put you in the right place at the right time. If you can build this community before launching your book, you are one step ahead.
 - e) You must engage with your community, even if it's only one person You must have a relationship with them. Focus on authentically and consistency. See [marketing tools](#)
 - f) If you are creating a book for sale in Europe, there are standards on what is considered a "BOOK" vs what is considered a "TOY" . I created a coloring book and someone pointed out that I had to have EU CE testing done on it. I thought they were kidding, but they were not. Here is a link to the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SME's from the European Commision. https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/toys/toy-safety/guidance_en?fbclid=IwAR0U03RsStPU9C8GI8h33dPTjoY7349piLMsj0wdsDJ7L03kIwZueVpoL8M
 - g) Marketing Ideas:
 - 1. Ads on Amazon and Facebook - there is a learning curve to it that I haven't figured out yet, but some people have success with that.
 - 2. Newsletters - build a fan club. There's no better marketer than someone who has purchased your book. Offer incentives for people to sign up for your blog.
 - 3. Talk to libraries.
 - 4. Offer to read to kids at libraries and at schools, not only your book but others that fit the curriculum.
 - 5. Search for blogs that review kids books and apply to have your's reviewed on their blog
 - 6. Join an organization that aligns with your book and network with like minded individuals
 - 7. Offer freebies - buy this book get that plushy toy kind of thing.
 - 8. Join a local author group.

9. Ask people to review your book - but have patience. You may have to send gentle reminders.
10. Offer free books in exchange for reviews, or use Goodreads. Goodreads does book giveaways.. you pay and they run it for you. The idea is that people get a free book and in return, they write a review... I don't know if it's profitable but people do it all the time, including big named authors.
11. Record you or a friend reading your book and share the video.
12. Write up a press release about your book and yourself and send it to the local newspaper, or the online news, or the city's "about" page.
13. Earned Media: This is when other people review your book. Most authors scavenge to get reviews because reviews help. But you can also find other media to review, they don't just have to be Amazon. Try finding a blogger, an influencer, or a podcaster that will tell the world about your work.

17) **Professional Organizations/Clubs:** These are based on my interest as a children's writer, but I am sure you can find a group that fits the genre you like to write.

a) Virginia:

- i) Chesapeake Bay Writers <https://www.chesapeakebaywriters.org/>
- ii) Virginia Writers Club <https://www.viriniawritersclub.org/>
- iii) James River Writers <https://jamesriverwriters.org/>

b) Global:

- i) Pages & Platforms <https://www.pagesandplatforms.com/fbm-replay>
- ii) **Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators** - SCBWI: <https://www.scbwi.org/>
- iii) Authors Guild: <https://www.authorsguild.org/>
- iv) Writers and Publishers Network (WPN) <https://writersandpublishersnetwork.com/>
- v) National Endowment for the ARTS <https://www.arts.gov/>
- vi) The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) <https://www.ibby.org/>
- vii) United States Board on Books for Young People, Inc. (USBYY) c/o Center for Teaching Through Children's Books 5202 Old Orchard Road, Suite 300 Skokie, IL 60077 Tel. [int. +1] 224 233 27 98 E-mail: secretariat@usbby.org www.usbby.org Self publishing meeting
- viii) Alliance of Independent Authors <https://www.allianceindependentauthors.org/>

18) **Build Your Web Presence:** People will want to know who you are. An effective and professional web presence will always be helpful. It's where agents will go to see who you are. It's where readers will find you. Social networks and blogs are the most common/popular free types of web presence. You can also pay to have your website on a larger platform with more options for blogging/ selling/ marketing. Whatever platform you choose should align with where you print and distribute books. If you sell on Amazon, you won't need a website with a "store" front. You can link the Amazon sell page directly to images on your free blog. If you sell your own books from home, you would want a website with "store" capabilities. Or you can create a marketplace on Amazon.

<https://sell.amazon.com/sell>

- a) **Facebook:** The number one social platform allows you to create engaging pages for your business, hobby etc. Build an author page using one of these. You can buy and sell directly via Facebook now too and/or offer links to your Amazon or other site for selling. They offer advertising (they won't let you forget that you can "boost" your post.) Ingramspark has a good article on this. <https://www.ingramspark.com/blog/3-creative-pitfalls-to-avoid-when-you-advertise-books-on-social-media>
- b) **Word Press:** Is a blogging site rich in customizable content and information. If you want to sell via Word Press, you usually have to get some type of "eCommerce" plug-in.
- c) **Weebly:** Weebly joined forces with Square Inc. and is now part of the Square suite of products. You can still create a free website but you can also sell via a Square platform. <https://www.weebly.com/>
- d) **Wix:** Wix is a do it yourself, as much as you want, website builder with options. The free option will have "wix" in the address name (URL). The paid options offer many choices for designing, marketing, selling, newsletters, email campaigns. This is my Wix website: <https://sonjamcgiboney.wixsite.com/sonjamcgiboney>
- e) **Squarespace:** More about selling than writing, but it's an option. <https://www.squarespace.com/>
- f) **Blogger:** This is a Google platform and is all about writing articles. It is easy to create and manage. This is my Blooger Website for my pen name. <https://allyallowinter.blogspot.com/>

19) **Domain Name:** Along with your web presence, you might want to consider getting a personal domain name. This can be called anything you want as long as it's not taken by another person. If you ever see something like, "marysmith12345.com" it's probably because marysmith.com was already taken. **Think long and hard about what use.** It's what people will search for when looking for you. If you use your book series name "jokesfordummies.com", or something that is generic like, "Ilovetowrite.com" rather than your own name, you may regret it later on when you write something in a different genre, subject or style. Mostly, using your name is a good policy.

20) **Creating Online Stores:** There are a number of ways and tools you can use to sell your book. Many are easily integrated with your website. This is a list of the ones I know.

- a) Square Register: I've used this for my mobile at events. They send you a free swipe device (I think the chip device costs something) and they keep track of sales etc.
<https://squareup.com/us/en>
- b) Look on your webhost. Many have add-ons that allow you to create a product page and accept payments. (see example on my Jazzy's Books wix page.
<https://www.jazzysbooks.com/shop>)
- c) Paypal now has something but I've never used it.
<https://developer.paypal.com/docs/business/>
- d) Aerio: I've never heard of them until today, 8-1-2012, but it looks like it would work. It integrates direct to reader book marketing tools. It is powered by Ingram Content Group. <https://www.aer.io/about>

21) **Marketing Tools and Locations:**

- a) Amazon: has its own series of marketing strategies/ click ads/ page ads/ which work on algorithms. You got to do it to know it. I have no experience with this.
- b) AllAuthor <https://allauthor.com/allauthor.com> is a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to Amazon sites. AllAuthor focuses on the requirements of all types of authors (newcomers, indie, bestsellers) and have come up with ways to help them achieve their promotional goals by supporting them with branding and provides them with various utility and automation tools for promotions.
- c) Social media: Merges Public Relations with Direct Marketing allowing you to talk directly with consumers. It's a two way avenue for direct marketing, but also an opportunity to cultivate a brand identity, awareness and develop relationships with key influencers. Sites include: Baidu Tieba, BookTube, Facebook, Instagram, Line, LinkedIn, Medium,

Messenger, Pinterest, QQ, Qzone, Reddit, Snapchat, Tik tok, Tumblr, Twitter, Telegram, Viber, WeChat, WhatsApp, Youtube

- d) When you post on your page, share it to your other pages and tell all your friends to share it too.
- e) Some Facebook Groups include:
 - i) KIDLIT411 – also has a website
 - ii) Chesapeake Bay Writers <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChesBayWriters>
 - iii) Children's Book Authors and Illustrators: Publishing, Marketing and Selling <https://www.facebook.com/groups/187350425346975>
 - iv) IngramSpark Publishers <https://www.facebook.com/groups/194307751305128>
- f) BookFunnel: A digital marketing service <https://bookfunnel.com/>
- g) IngramSpark: IngramSpark has a series of informational “courses” you can take. <https://www.ingramspark.com/self-publishing-courses>
- h) IngramSpark via Ingram Book Group, IngramSpark titles are automatically made available to tens of thousands of retailers, libraries, schools, e-commerce companies, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Independent bookstores, Walmart.com, Target.com, Chapters/ Indigo (Canada) and other well-known retailers and wholesalers across North America (this is straight from their website <https://www.ingramspark.com/how-it-works/distribute> but they do offer a charge for putting your title on a catalog they produce.
- i) Book reading website: Become involved in an online book lovers community. You can promote your books all you want by saying they are your favorites.
 - i) Goodreads <https://www.goodreads.com/>
 - ii) Read Print <http://www.readprint.com/>
 - iii) BookFinder <https://www.bookfinder.com/>
 - iv) LibraryThing <https://www.librarything.com/>
 - v) Google Books <https://books.google.com/>
 - vi) BookCrossing <https://www.bookcrossing.com/>
 - vii) Litsy <https://www.litsy.com/web/home>
 - viii) Book Mooch (book trading site) <http://bookmooch.com/>
 - ix) Online Book Club <https://onlinebookclub.org/>
- j) Local stores might carry your book.
 - i) Local specialty shops or galleries
 - ii) Consignment shops
 - iii) Wal-Mart or Target (It never hurts to ask)
 - iv) Pharmacies
 - v) Nature Center Gift shop
 - vi) Museum Gift Shops

- k) Online Retailers of ebooks: They will format the books for you and send them out to online retailers. They take their cut when the book sells.
- i) Draft2digital (just acquired Smashwords) <https://www.draft2digital.com/> is one many authors use.
- l) Reach out to reviewers and interviewers. Create a spreadsheet of bloggers, reviewers, Twitter ARC-sharing groups, Instagrammers, YouTubers, local media, etc., then spent days sending emails,
- m) Get people to review your books on Goodreads, Amazon and Barnes & Noble
- n) Book Launch Party- I've never done one but I hear they are good.
- o) [Publication Slip](#) – Have one at the ready. You can see one of mine at the end of this guide
- p) [Press Release](#) – Have one ready, or at least a template. You can see mine at the end.

22) Getting into Libraries:

- a) Have a professional-looking cover. Librarians must judge a book by its cover because their patrons will too.
- b) Research the library's collection development policy. They are the ones who determine what books will be added and removed from the shelves
- c) Research the community. If you write a book about how to take care of a French Poodle in NYC I'm not sure a cowboy in Utah would want to read it. You get the idea.
- d) A list of Libraries is on the American Library Association Website.
https://libguides.ala.org/mailling-lists?fbclid=IwAR1VBuZ1iH3THpElxiHnjQM7kAsxiKCvYvD6gzFolwxmkWHPIrsZwcbc_Y
- e) Find the best way to contact the collection development librarian. Learn their name so you can address them properly when you write to them. Provide the pertinent information about your book, including a brief synopsis, reviews, and the ISBN. (NOTE: Most libraries purchasing children's books want to purchase hardcover copies because they are more visible on the shelf and last longer.
- f) I sent a survey to several Virginia libraries. Here are some of the responses:
 - i) **Where do you purchase your books?**
 - (1) Ingram
 - (2) Baker & Taylor
 - (3) Thorndike Press (Large Print)
 - (4) Cengage
 - (5) Center Press Publishing
 - (6) Amazon or Amazon occasionally
 - (7) Pennworthy
 - (8) Junior Library Guild

- (9) Other established reputable book vendors.
 - (10) Sometimes from Barnes & Noble
 - (11) Generally from library vendors
 - (12) CenterPoint Large Print
 - (13) **From vendors that are city-approved contracts, such as Baker and Taylor and Ingram.**
 - (14) We purchase all our physical books through Ingram. Our eBooks are purchased/leased from Overdrive.
 - (15) Many children's fiction & Non-fiction publishers
 - (16) **Several major book vendors including Ingram and Baker & Taylor as well as a few others; Amazon.com; Barnes & Noble occasionally; other specialty vendors for Large Print, Non-English languages, etc.**
- ii) Do you purchase directly from bookstores?**
- (1) Very Rarely (2)
 - (2) Occasionally
 - (3) No (III)
 - (4) Almost never, No bookstores in our county
 - (5) Not usually
 - (6) Sometimes from local independent bookstore, generally if we are hosting an author
 - (7) **Very rarely, although we have done so for particular items.**
- iii) Do you welcome solicitations from independent authors?**
- (1) We are happy to consider books from independent authors but they must be professionally reviewed and meet our collection policy criteria
 - (2) I always read the emails. Sometimes they compel to go look for more info. I do NOT appreciate people coming in unannounced and expecting to buy on the spot
 - (3) Yes
 - (4) Sure. Good to know what else is out there.
 - (5) Yes (2)
 - (6) Local authors (RVA and surrounding counties) may donate copies of their books for consideration. More information on our [local author page](#).
 - (7) **Yes, though normally specifically local authors.**
 - (8) We welcome donations from local authors and help to support them by offering lobby tables where authors can host signings at all our branches. Please visit our website for more information: <https://www.librarypoint.org/local-authors/>
- iv) What types of books do you normally look for?**
- (1) Books that would interest our library patrons that have good peer reviews
 - (2) Popular titles, best sellers, core collection titles

- (3) I buy for all ages from birth through Teen. I prefer library bound and hardback. I tend to avoid paperbacks especially stapled bindings.
 - (4) Read the collection policy
 - (5) We try to create a balanced collection that offers both educational and entertaining materials. STEM and DEI have been recent areas of focus.
 - (6) All types, juvenile to adult, fiction and non-fiction
 - (7) Books that would be of interest to our patrons
 - (8) Fiction and non-fiction in adult, teen and children's books.
 - (9) We purchase a variety of books to meet the needs of our diverse community.
 - (10) Books of local interest, popular books, trending topics, non-fiction for children
 - (11) We're a large public library system serving a diverse community of over 480,000 people—so all kinds
- v) Would you purchase books from an author that provided a one-time program in return?**
- (1) We could consider a proposal from the author
 - (2) A purchase is not a guarantee of a program and vice versa. I want to know the story is quality, the images are quality, and the binding is going to hold up to library wear and tear. I want to know a program is going to catch the interest of my patrons. There is work involved in setting up and advertising a program. The quality of the presenter and the message has to be worth the effort.
 - (3) No
 - (4) Possibly. It would depend on the book. I wouldn't buy the book just to get the program.
 - (5) Possibly
 - (6) Yes we have done that, again usually with local authors.
 - (7) If we are hosting an author we do like to have their materials available for checkout. When we host our annual Rappahannock Reads program we always ensure we have copies of the books available for request.
 - (8) Perhaps has never come up
 - (9) Programming is handled separately, and not tied to purchasing. We certainly do sometimes feature local and independent authors
- vi) Would you allow an author to host a book launch party in your library?**
- (1) I have only done this for authors with whom I already had a working relationship such as a local teacher.
 - (2) We could consider a proposal from an author
 - (3) No, We do not sponsor author talks or book sales
 - (4) Potentially. Books would typically not be allowed to be sold unless partnered with the Friends of the Library as per "14.No financial transactions may take place in the rooms or the Library. No products may be sold or promoted. The

Friends of the Waynesboro Library and the Waynesboro Library Board of Trustees events are the exempt.”

- (5) Again, possibly. It would depend on the book and whether we thought there would be local interest. Programming currently on hold due to pandemic flare-up.
- (6) We have allowed book/author meet and greet, however our meeting room policy does not allow sales including book sales.
- (7) No. Local authors may schedule lobby space to sign and sell copies of their books. ([see Richmond author page](#) Please note: lobby visits are currently suspended.
- (8) [We have two annual literary festivals for independent and local authors instead of this—Fresh Ink and Black Ink.](#)
- (9) We don’t have book launch parties but we do allow author signings, host a local author conference each year (first Saturday of November), and host an annual local author get together each spring
- (10) If I thought the community would be interested
- (11) That would be up to programming

vii) Do you Schedule Author visits?

- (1) Yes
- (2) Yes, on a strictly non-profit basis. No sales allowed
- (3) Not lately due to the pandemic. Have done them in the past. Our County is pretty far off the beaten track for most authors.
- (4) We sometimes have an “Authors’ Night” event with various authors in which we do allow book sales. We haven’t had this since the pandemic.
- (5) We do literary festivals instead
- (6) Yes, authors can sign up to host a lobby stop to advertise their books at all our locations
- (7) Just beginning to –have one on Saturday
- (8) [Once again—our Office of Programming and Outreach handles these](#)

viii) Do you shelve donated books?

- (1) We review donated books for the collection and sell the ones we don’t select
- (2) Shelf? If you mean do we add them to the collection, we do on occasion. The item would have to meet our criteria laid out in the collection development policy as it costs time/money to catalog items and prepare them for library use. The majority of donations go to the Friends of the Library Book sale.
- (3) We evaluate all donations for potential inclusion in the collection. Donations are often good sources for well-loved titles that we need to replace.
- (4) Yes
- (5) If donated books meet out [collection development](#) criteria.

- (6) Yes, some are put in the collection. The majority of our donated books go to our book sales.
 - (7) We catalog local authors' books if they live in our service area
 - (8) Sometimes- depending on the age, popularity, topic
 - (9) If they are added to the system—that is handled on a case-by-case basis.
- ix) What determines where you will put donated books?**
- (1) Collection policy, professional reviews
 - (2) Reviews, quality of binding, overall condition of the book, quality of the story, quality of the images.
 - (3) We try to keep the stock of books in the book sale area fresh and appealing. After a few months on the shelf without selling, items are donated to other organizations.
 - (4) Quality, topic, potential to circulate.
 - (5) Standard cataloging practices
 - (6) Condition, our collection development policy, and how many copies we already have.
 - (7) If we already have enough copies, if the book isn't in great condition (but still in okay condition), if the item doesn't meet our collection requirements, etc
 - (8) Condition, publication date, popularity of author, topic
 - (9) Appropriateness to the collection, condition, and need.
- x) Do you have any other feedback regarding the purchase of books from independent authors?**
- (1) We rely on professional reviews as a starting point for selections for the collections
 - (2) Hardback is always better than paperback. Get the title of the book on the spine. Titles on spines make a book findable by a patron. Books without titles on spines don't get checked out by the browsing patron.
 - (3) Collection development policy + local interest + costs of original cataloging & item preparation.
 - (4) The most effective way to get books purchased by libraries to have them sold via a major jobber like Baker & Taylor, Ingram, etc.
 - (5) The discovery and purchasing aspects are key. I have a very small staff – 9 full-time employees for 3 branches. Finding and selecting books to purchase is one of the many duties they perform. So it needs to be easy and efficient. We have accounts with the distributors who also process the books for us to make them shelf-ready. This streamlines the acquisition process. Getting into that chain will make it easier for authors to sell books. We read the book review publications like Booklist, Library Journal, etc. Getting mentioned there also helps as you well know.

- (6) Library card holders have access to Pressbooks to create and edit print-ready and eBooks, which can be submitted to Indie Author project. More information [here](#)
- (7) [We have a section in our main branch dedicated to our local authors. Authors send us a copy, which our selectors check to make sure it fits our policy, and then we add it to this collection.](#)
- (8) Focus on the libraries in their service areas first. Independent authors have found huge success with good writing, hard work, and the right marketing. Lisa Genova literally drove around the state of Massachusetts when she was trying to get attention for her book Still Alice. The Martian by Andy Weir started as self published
- (9) directors have purchased independent authors' books from the Virginia Children's Book Festival, which is held at Longwood College in Farmville VA. Authors set up and sell books to attendees, but I'm not sure of the details of how that comes about. It has been virtual only since I became director
- (10) **We are always open to discovering new authors.**

23) **Getting into Bookstores:** I approached one book store. It was an independent bookstore in Virginia Beach. They told me they wouldn't take my book because it didn't have a spine with my name on it. That turned my publishing around drastically. I still haven't approached the biggies below, but through IngramSpark, (IS) my book is on all their online catalogs. The following information was taken from the IS blog.

<https://www.ingramspark.com/blog>

- a) Before you approach a bookstore, do the following work: Taken from the IS blog.
 - i) Booksellers do not want to hear about your Amazon success and they might not take your book if it's published by their biggest competitor
 - ii) Be a good customer – cultivate a relationship with the people who work the store. Encourage your family and friends to buy at the store rather than from Amazon. Find out what kinds author events the store usually hosts or doesn't do and use this info in your pitch. (Don't say you'll do author visits if the store doesn't allow that.. etc.)
 - iii) Know the store's demographic – check out the types of customer's that go in and look at the store's inventory. If it's mostly comic books and fantasy, you won't want to pitch your memoir there.
 - iv) Offer discounts and allow returns
 - v) Make sure your print quality is spot on.
 - vi) Ease in shelving. If your book doesn't fit into a genre because it is so "original" the store won't know where to shelve it. If most books in your genre are a certain trim size and has a certain quality to the cover, make yours fit it. It doesn't have to copy them, but industry standards do help make it easier for the book store.
 - vii) Pricing: Be diligent and make your book price equivalent to the genre you are in. Nobody buys a 25 page kids book for \$45. Etc.

- viii) Easy Ordering: Consider using a distributor that retail stores normally use. It's hard for the individual stores to keep track of all the different authors and how to order their indie books.
- ix) Market the book for that store. Ultimately, the book store wants customer to buy from them, so point customer to the store. Booksellers want to know that you can bring in customers.
- x)
- b) Barnes and Noble: Go to the site and read their instructions.
<https://www.barnesandnobleinc.com/publishers-authors/sell-your-book-at-barnes-noble/>
- c) Indie Book Stores: Contact the store directly, pitch your book to them, send them copies, and offer to do book signings or readings. Some independent book stores might charge an author for the time they spend at the store. (I know of one in Richmond) You can find indie bookstores by going here: <https://www.indiebound.org/indie-store-finder>
- d) Online Retailers: You'll have to investigate them, but there is a large list on Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_online_booksellers

24) Marketing your brand: According to Sue Campbell, "A better definition of marketing is: Building long lasting connections with readers."

- a) Branding: Branding is very important. When people see your name, what image do you want them to have in their minds? Are you an educator, an entertainer, a realist, a fantasy writer, a guru on certain topics? Make sure this is easy for a customer to see.
- b) Tag lines: These are words or phrases after your name that tell who you are. Here is a good article on them <https://litreactor.com/columns/build-your-brand-with-an-author-tagline>
- c) **Mailing list/ newsletter (service):** One of the best ways to get your name, your brand, your writing identity out there is to have a monthly newsletter. When you have an event, collect emails. A fun way to collect them is to have a raffle. The winner gets a free book or swag.
 - i) Your website host might have marketing features:
 - (1) Wix has Email Campaigns
 - ii) Mailchimp: <https://mailchimp.com/>
 - iii) **WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR EMAIL LIST**
 - (1) 1. The customer has just granted you permission to be in their digital or physical space. This is a must have when building relationships with your audience. It's the relationships that sell books. Start building a relationship via your email newsletters/ offers/ incentives.

- (2) Send good content regularly. Whether that is once a month or every other day is up to you but don't falter. Do not send emails only when a book is out, that's like your friend that calls you only when they need to borrow the car. Content can be a blog, podcast, social media post/event, video, speech, or readings. Or be creative.
 - (a) Tease your followers with a portion of your new novel
 - (b) Offer give-aways or other incentives for sharing your info with their friends
 - (c) Have contests
 - (d) Write short stories with your followers in mind and share them.
- (3) Build a relationship with an influencer: author in your genre, a blogger, a reviewer, podcaster, event booker, journalist, librarian, people with large social followings and email lists, and radio or TV media. Book an interview with them. When you share your details about the interview with your readers, you're helping the influencer. The influencer will spread the word about your upcoming event and your info will be shared. It's a win win situation
- (4)
 - d) Swag: Swag is, in essence, a bribe. It's a way of drawing attention to you, your book, your brand, your table at a fair, to your website, or other place where you sell books. Swag is stuff people, particularly children, want. It can be candy, bookmarks, character art/cards, coloring pages, activity sheets, stuffed characters, paint by numbers, stickers, pins, pens, pencils, temporary tattoos, etc. Ideally, the swag would be related to your book (s) but hey, if it gets them to you your job is half done.
 - i) Places to purchase Swag:
 - (1) Vista Print – Also has lots of marketing stuff, boards, posters, business cards etc. I have used them and the photo quality is good -<https://www.vistaprint.com/>
 - (2) Oriental Trading Catalog – novelty toys <https://www.orientaltrading.com/>
 - (3) Swag Simplified <https://swag.com/>
 - (4) House of Imprints – custom imprints on bags/ candy boxes, etc. <https://www.houseofimprints.com/>
 - ii) Places to purchase display cabinets, shelves for events and other selling supplies.
 - iii) <https://www.storesupply.com/> (I am still using the portable, wire bookshelf I bought. I had to buy 2 though, but I use them both.)

25) Marketing Events

- a) Conferences: Great place to network with other authors, learn new things, meet editors and publishers, get critiques, show your book off, see the "latest" in books,
- b) Vendor opportunities: Think about who will buy your book and choose locations that fit. They often charge a fee for you to have a presence at their event.

- i) Libraries often have book days, like Scholastic Book Fairs. View their websites for events
- ii) Book Festivals – Google it and you’ll find a lot.
- iii) Subject Festivals (animal books at pet expos etc.)
- iv) Local Festivals or Bazaars could be library sponsored, city sponsored or church sponsored
- v) State and local library association conferences
- vi) State and local home school association events
- vii) School sponsored fairs
- c) Free Presentations: Local area galleries, stores, clubs and other venues often invite speakers to their luncheons or their “openings” or whatever. Put together something you can offer, perhaps talk about your writing journey, the ins and outs of publishing, or what motivated you to use this setting or that character trait.
- d) Paid presentations: Given to organizations: women’s clubs on being an author, VFW’s, retirement communities (grandma’s buy books for their grandkids), chamber of commerce, etc.
- e) School Visits. Kids and teachers love for authors to come to schools. You can run them in many different ways, with or without books sales, virtual or in person. Subjects for your visit could a book reading, how you made your book, the writing process, or on the subject in your book. Activities could include worksheets, videos, student participation, student reading, prizes etc. Here are some resources for school visits.
 - i) Book Reference: Sell Books and get Paid doing Author School Visits (by Kim Norman, sold on Amazon)
 - ii) Facebook Group: Create Engaging School Visits
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/122633751263332>

26) Improve your sales technique: The hardest thing for me to do is tell people to buy my book. “Hey, come look and see what I made!” is so not me. But, if you want to sell your books you have to do that. Believe in yourself. Believe in your book. You are the best marketing agent for your work.

- a) Some general tips to help you.
 - i) Perfect your “elevator” pitch. The elevator pitch is a powerful marketing tool that engages a listener to want to find out more. Check out these two blogs for more info.
 - (1) <https://insights.bookbub.com/steps-to-writing-a-killer-elevator-pitch-for-your-book/>
 - (2) <https://jerichowriters.com/how-to-write-an-elevator-pitch-for-your-novel/>

- ii) Ask your customer a question. It could be you are taking a poll. You might ask them where they got that pretty scarf. Ask them if they like dogs or cats or whatever your book is about.
- iii) Make the conversation about them. Don't say, "My book is about..." say, "You will learn) Don't say "I've written ten books." Say "Do you think you could read all my books in a day?"
- iv) Tell them why they need your product. How it will entertain them? How it will educate them, etc.
- v) What is it about your book that will help them?

27) **Contests:** if you don't enter you can't win. The contest can be for a prize, an award, recognition, entry in a book, etc. List of Awards. I haven't done any of these, but plan to.

- a) Virginia Author Project <https://indieauthorproject.librariesshare.com/virginia/>
- b) Moonbeam Children's Book Awards – <https://moonbeamawards.com/>
- c) Independent Publisher Book Awards – <https://www.ippyawards.com/> (only one of many)
- d) IBPA Benjamin Franklin Book Awards – <https://www.ibpabenjaminfranklinaward.com/>
- e) Purple Dragonfly Book Awards – <https://www.dragonflybookawards.com/purple-dragonfly-contest-winners>
- f) National Indie Excellence Awards– <https://www.indieexcellence.com/>
- g) Readers' Favorite–
<https://readersfavorite.com/rfreviews/search?search=f+scott+service>
- h) Royal Dragonfly Book Awards– Story Monsters Approved! –
<https://www.dragonflybookawards.com/>
- i) Cybils Children's and Young Adult Literary Blogger Awards: <http://www.cybils.com/>
- j) Foreword Book Reviews INDIES Award:
<https://publishers.forewordreviews.com/awards/>

28) Taxes/ accounting/ business practices

- a) All businesses must spend money to get set up. Here are things you need to learn about.
 - i) Business License (requirement different for all states. Look on your state tax website.)
 - ii) Keep records
 - iii) What is tax deductible? Some of the following may be tax deductible. Look up the rules for all of them though: Self-Employment tax, Office Space, Equipment, Health Insurance, Hired Help, Travel, Meals (only for business meetings where you talk business.) Software, Conferences, Vehicle Expenses,
 - iv) Paying Sales Tax: Generally, you can set up your own sales tax account via your state website. You must research if you have to include local sales tax and county sales tax as well. Invoices or receipts must show that you have charged sales tax for personally selling your book or you must show "Sales Tax Included in Price" and make sure you then pay that percentage to the Tax Office.
 - (1) Monthly Sales Tax reporting is usually required for beginning businesses
 - (2) DON'T MISS A REPORT: Even if you don't sell anything, you must still report a "ZERO" sales tax report otherwise you might be charged a late penalty. In Virginia, if you forget to file, you pay a \$10.00 penalty.

- (3) Out of State: When you sell in another state, that state may expect you to pay their sales tax at their rates. I live in Virginia, but when I sold books in PA at a festival, I had to pay PA state sales tax.

29) Resource list: podcasts, blogs, leaders, programs/classes,

- a) Author based websites/ organizations
 - i) Children's Book Insider -Write For Kids: <https://writeforkids.org/about/> Children's Book Insider is a family business based in Fort Collins, Colorado. The website is full of tips, guides, webinars and weekly newsletters.
<https://writeforkids.org/blog/kidlitdistancingsocial37-self-publishing/>
 - ii) SCBWI: <https://www.scbwi.org/> World Wide children's authors and illustrators organization. Check out website for all they offer.
 - iii) Indies Unlimited <https://indiesunlimited.com/>
- b) Author Education
 - i) Coursera: <https://www.coursera.org/> Free or paid certificate courses in all types of subjects including writing, marketing, using mailchamp, etc.
(<https://www.coursera.org/projects/mailchimp-build-email-marketing-campaign>)
 - ii) Local Universities/ Community Colleges: Often offer certificate or associate programs with class titles such as: Alternate Publishing Goes Mainstream, Media Content Development, Advanced Book Editing, Children's Book Editing, EPUB and eBook Workflow, tec.
- c) Informational newsletters:
 - i) Book Marketing Buzz Blog: <http://bookmarketingbuzzblog.blogspot.com/>
 - ii) Nathan Bransford: Lots of query and writing help/guides
<https://nathanbransford.com/>
 - iii) The Writer's Digest <https://www.writersdigest.com/>
 - iv) Kidlit Website email. Distributes the latest and greatest news about children's literature. It is a good way to see what is new.
<http://www.kidlit411.com/p/about.html>
 - v) Authors Publish This is an online newsletter that sends out announcements of new articles and sometimes companies taking submissions. <https://authorspublish.com/>
 - vi) BookBub-The BookBub Partners Blog: BookBub is a free service that helps millions of readers discover books they'll love while providing publishers and authors with a way to drive sales and find new fans. Upon joining, members receive unbeatable deals selected by our expert editorial team, handpicked recommendations from people they trust, and real-time updates from their favorite authors. BookBub works with all major ebook retailers and devices, and partners with thousands of the

industry's leading publishers and authors to promote their books.

<https://insights.bookbub.com/>

vii) Brooke Vitale is an editor. Her website, though, has a lot of videos and articles on her blog are very helpful. <https://brookevitale.com/>

d) Keep Track of What is Current In Schools:

i) Common Core State Standards: <http://www.corestandards.org/standards-in-your-state/>

ii) Homeschool Curriculums: <https://www.homeschool.com/resource-guide/>

iii) Teachers Pay Teachers: TpT is created by a Teacher-Author and is tailored to a unique need or niche. When one teacher deeply understands how to bring rich, relevant, active learning to a classroom and shares that with other teachers around the globe, the benefits reach everyone, most of all the students. You can post activities that go with your books. <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/>

iv) IngramSpark has so much information on writing. They are about as long as a blog post and some of them are blog posts. Here are some of the many titles:

(1) 7 Phases of the Book Marketing Timeline

(2) How to Self-Publish a Book

(3) Social Media Marketing for Self-Publishers

(4) How to Build an Author Platform

(5) Online Discoverability Help

30) Ingram Spark File Format Help

- a) The website has all the information you need. There are so many articles. Sometimes is it overwhelming. I was easily confused. But if you need extra help, you can go to Sleepy Cat Books. She has resource files that are easy to follow. <https://sleepingcatbooks.com/>
- b) Facebook IngramSpark page has lots of confused people getting answers. (Ignore the ones that are complaining. If you use IngramSpark website submission form for a problem, they are very quick to get back with you.

Publication Slip: I didn't realize what this was, but basically it's all the information at the bottom of the Amazon page. This is one of mine. I don't include the hashtags if someone asks for this info, but I know where to find them if I need them.

Jazzy's Twelve Days of Christmas

Publication slip

Price: USD \$19.99

ISBN: 978-1-7333663-6-6

Genre: Children's picture book ages 3-7

Publication Date: September 14, 2021

Author : Sonja McGiboney

Publisher: Sonja McGiboney

Distributor: IngramSpark

Language : English

Pages: 42

Hardback 8.5 X 11

Description:

- Publisher : Sonja McGiboney (September 17, 2021)
- Language : English
- Hardcover : 46 pages
- ISBN-10 : 1733366369
- ISBN-13 : 978-1733366366
- Item Weight : 12.7 ounces
- Dimensions : 11 x 0.25 x 8.5 inches

The Twelve Days of Christmas have gone to the dogs, Well one that is. That's right! Jazzy is a cute, brown and white dog who sings her version of the traditional holiday song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas." She starts by getting the biggest bone. Each verse, like in the original song, adds something new and more of them until Jazzy reaches the number twelve. Jazzy loves everything, including the cookies!

The illustrations are colorful and the text is easy to read. Children will learn numbers and sequences. The repetitive verses make it a great tool for reading. The hardback book is forty-two pages long but it will go by quickly. Be prepared to sing your way to the end over and over again.

The illustrations are created from photos, or photo composites, taken by the author. Jazzy is a Boxer-Labrador-Pit-bull mix breed dog. All she ever wants to do is sit in Sonja's lap or work for treats. She loves being the star.

Email Sonja via her website and ask for some coloring pages to go with the book. She will send you a PDF of pictures to color. <https://www.jazzysbooks.com/>

#Christmas #Twelve Days #Song #music #children's music #counting #tradition #holiday #dog
#Jazzy #Jazzyofsmithfield #education #children #read #reading #sonjatheauthor
#childrensbooks #kidsbooks #bookstagram #books #illustration #reading #picturebooks #kidlit
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#picturebook #childrensbookstagram #bookworm #kids #storytime #booklover #childrensbook
#art #book #childrensliterature #illustrator #author #kidlitart #readaloud #read #homeschool
#bhfyp

Here is an example of my press release.

Contact Name: Sonja McGiboney
RELEASE

Phone: 757-871-5085

Email: smcgphoto@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.jazzysbooks.com>



FOR IMMEDIATE

The Twelve Days of Christmas have gone to the dogs!

Sonja McGiboney, a local author of children's books that star her dog Jazzy, has released her new book, "Jazzy's Twelve Days of Christmas."

The traditional Holiday song is sung almost everywhere by anyone. But this book is all about what Jazzy wants for her twelve days. Jazzy loves her big bone, tennis balls, stuffed animals, cookies and more.

The illustrations, based on photographs taken by Sonja, are colorful and the text is easy to read. Children will learn numbers and sequences. The repetitive verses make it a great tool for reading. The hardback book has forty-two pages but it will go by quickly. Be prepared to sing your way to the end over and over again.

On a sad note, Sonja has not yet received her copies of the book to sell locally, but they are available online and come much faster to your door.

When you get your book, send an email with a copy of your receipt to Sonja via her website and she will mail to you a special, autographed bookplate made out to whomever you wish. The bookplates are like stickers and can be attached to the inside cover of the book. She'll add a few coloring pages for fun. These bookplates will only be available to people who have made online purchases of her books.

Who knows? Your book, with this special plate, might be a collector's item one day.

A link to purchase "Jazzy's Twelve Days of Christmas" is available on her website. <https://www.jazzysbooks.com>

Price: USD \$19.99

ISBN: 978-1-7333663-6-6

The following information was sent to me upon my request. I wanted to know how to get into Baker & Taylor and they told me they do not accept independent authors anymore. But, I was given a link to request this information.



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Association of Publishers for Special Sales PO Box 715, Avon, CT 06001; Brian Jud, Executive Director, Tel 860-675-1344; Email: BrianJud@bookapss.org Web: www.bookapss.org

Arbor Books 244 Madison Avenue, #254 New York, NY 10016-2819; Olga Vladi, Marketing Director,

Tel 877-822-2500 Email: info@arborbooks.com Web: www.arborbooks.com

Colorado Independent Publishers Association 6142 W Pacific Cir, Lakewood, CO 80227; Veronica Yager, Executive Director, Tel 720-334-8376 Email: veronica@yellowstudiosonline.com Web: www.cipabooks.com

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