

10 STEPS



from

IDEA

to

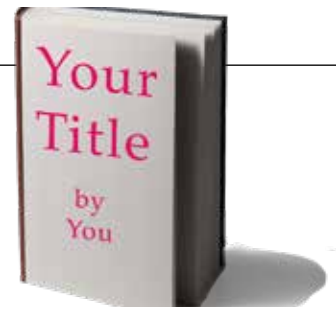
PUBLISHED



Gray Bear Publications
an imprint of Gray Bear Coaching LLC

graybearpublications.com

Get published.



WHY THIS GUIDE?

Getting published has never been easier. If you can write it, you can publish it. Whether it's a marketing book for your business, your thrilling memoir, a collection of original poems, an epic fantasy romance novel, or something else, the power to make it real is in your hands.

You can do it all yourself, or you can hire pros to help each step of the way—editing, design, formatting, distribution, marketing, publicity. But if you've never done it before, how do you know what all those steps are?

ABOUT PUBLISHING

Traditional publishing is an opaque, Byzantine industry that's been in dramatic transition over the past two decades. Getting your book published through a traditional publisher requires incredible perseverance, tremendous luck, and very good timing. Not to mention a phenomenal book. In return, you give control of your rights to the publisher, pay a percentage of your take to your agent, and end up doing most of your own publicity anyway. Did you know that 98% of traditionally published books in 2020 sold fewer than 5,000 copies?* The next time you're in your local bookstore, look at the authors who get the prime visibility. That's where the traditional publishing industry is putting all their resources.

Additional source: Writer Beware at <https://www.sfw.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-beware/>

BENEFITS OF INDIE / SELF PUBLISHING

Self-publishing means taking on all aspects of making your book real. It can be a lot of work, and traditional publishers have more resources to draw on... if they invest in your book.

But self publishing also has many benefits you might not think of. First, you retain all rights to your work. Not only do you keep full creative control, but you get to decide when, where, and how your book will be sold. You aren't subject to the industry's timelines, needing to sell out a big print run in the first six months. You get to decide what success looks like, and how you want to achieve it.

WHO IS GRAY BEAR PUBLICATIONS?

Gray Bear Publications was founded by Peter Dudley in 2023 to bring more art, wisdom, and insight to the world. Peter is an award-winning and best-selling author who has personally executed every step in this guide, while self-publishing numerous novels and other pieces. He's now a life and leadership coach who provides publishing services, self-publishing training and support, and publication of multi-author books. Gray Bear Publications is an imprint of Gray Bear Coaching, LLC.

*Source: New York Times



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Get set up.

1 WRITE THE BOOK

You can't publish what isn't written. If you have an idea but can't seem to get the product finished, get accountability partners. Find a writing group, have friends read chapters as you progress, or hire a book coach to keep you on track. Once it's written, spend quality time editing it and utilize beta readers for feedback. Many people swear you need to hire a professional editor, but that is entirely up to you.



2 CHOOSE YOUR PLATFORM

Don't just go with Amazon because Amazon is the biggest. Many self-publishers use IngramSpark for global distribution of their print and ebooks, and also publish their ebook directly with Amazon's KDP. There are other platforms such as Lulu, Draft2Digital, Smashwords, and Barnes & Noble. Consider which formats you plan to publish, whether the platform is exclusive, and what promotional opportunities you need.

3 GET YOUR ISBN

Every book needs its own ISBN, the unique identifying number used throughout the publishing world. The publisher is responsible for assigning an ISBN to each book. Self-publishing platforms may offer you one for free, but then the platform owns the ISBN and is technically the publisher. You can purchase your own through Bowker. If you're only publishing an ebook directly on Amazon, you can forego the ISBN and just use their ASIN stocking number instead.

Build the book.

4 DECIDE PRINT SPECIFICATIONS

Paperback? Hardcover? Both? Check out what other books in your genre look like. What dimensions will your book be? Will your interior be color or black & white? What quality paper and what type of cover will you have? Look at popular books in your genre to see how they present. You can go simple and standard, or customize to your liking. Every choice has a different cost.

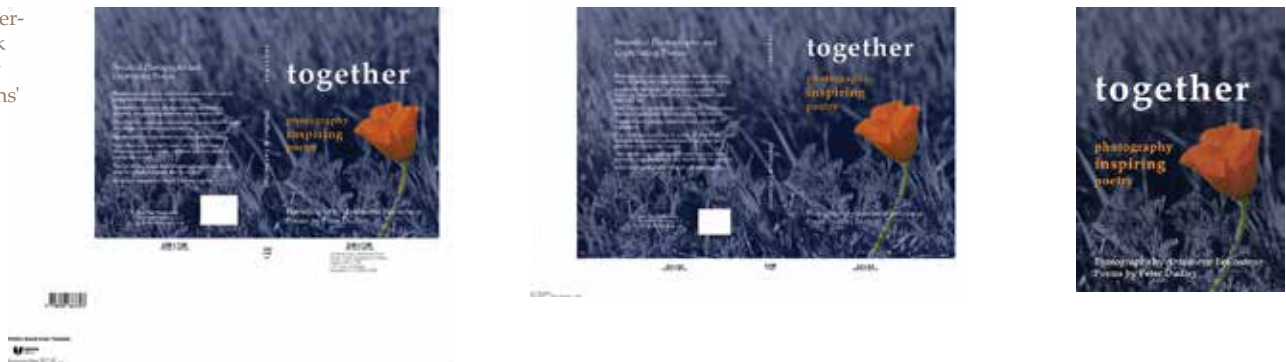
5 FORMAT THE INTERIOR FILES

Every self-publishing platform offers templates. Use them. Most platforms prefer PDFs for both print and ebook files. If you have a complex interior, you might hire a designer to make sure it's right. For simple books like novels, if you can format a Word doc, you can do it all yourself. For print books with photos, learn how screen color (RGB) differs from print color (CMYK), and how your paper choice will affect the final product. Here's where you should also make sure your copyright page is complete.

6 DESIGN YOUR COVER

People *do* judge a book by its cover. Your design must look great on a bookshelf but also as a tiny digital thumbnail. Cover design can be complex, so if you're doing it yourself and haven't before, plan extra time to learn. You can also hire a designer. The platforms will provide custom templates based on your book size, paper type, and page count (which determines spine width). Plan to create a different cover for your paperback than your hardcover. Love your cover! You'll be seeing a lot of it in the future.

Hardcover, paperback, and ebook covers for Gray Bear Publications' first book.



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Build the channel.

7 CREATE THE METADATA

Metadata is what the industry uses to sell your book. It includes author, illustrator, and contributor names as well as short and long descriptions, keywords, and the BISAC subject codes that tell online retailers where to display your book. This can feel like a speed bump in the publishing process if you wait until you're uploading files, so try to plan it out beforehand. Much of this content you'll repurpose in your marketing later.



8 SET YOUR PUBLICATION DATE

Many, but not all, of the platforms allow you to set a publication date in the future. This allows for a presale period when you can send out review copies, build up excitement and demand, and make special people feel like VIPs with pre-release copies. If you're publishing any print formats, make sure to leave enough time in your schedule to go through the print proof approval cycle in Step 10.

9 SET PRICING AND DISTRIBUTION.

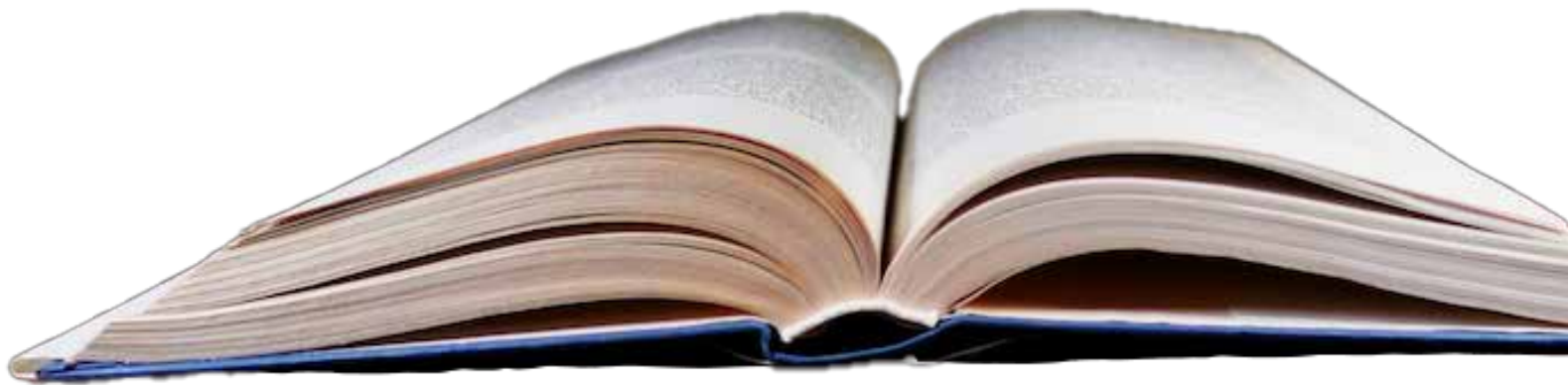
Each platform has a price calculator so you'll know the cost of manufacturing and can set a price that works for you. Look at comparable books in your genre to learn customer expectations. If you hope to have retailers carry your print book, expect to set a retail discount between 35% and 60%. You'll also have to decide if you'll allow bookstores to return unsold books to you... at your own expense. With print-on-demand, you don't have to manage your own inventory, but you can. Finally, be aware of your platform's exclusivity requirements, if any. This can affect whether you can sell the book on your own website or not.

Make it real.

10 PROOF AND PUBLISH

Upload all your files to your platform and walk through their online process to enter the metadata, set the pricing and distribution, and ensure that your files uploaded correctly. You'll approve a digital proof, and for an ebook that is all you need to be ready to publish. For print, however, you'll have to have at least one proof copy manufactured and shipped to you so you can approve the physical result of all your hard work. This can take some time, especially with the first files you upload. It's important! Be prepared to pay for the proof copy (typically at manufacturer cost) and shipping for each proof you order.

No matter how good an editor you are, you will probably find things in the printed proof you need to change. So be sure to allow plenty of time to get the proof copy made and shipped, to review it thoroughly, to make any necessary changes, and to go through the whole process again. Each time you make changes, you will need to manufacture and review a new physical proof. Once you've approved the final printed proof copy, it's ready to publish!



... and more

BOOK PROMOTION

You can't promote what you don't have, so publish that book! Promotion can include getting professional reviews from places like Kirkus and BookLife, submitting to contests in your genre, advertising and traditional promotion, pursuing reviews in the local or national press, making sure your book is listed on Goodreads, getting readers to post reviews, and setting up a book tour or podcast appearances. And make sure to list your book on bookshop.org, too.

AUTHOR PROMOTION

And now that you're an author, you need to promote yourself! You may want to have your own author website. If your book is on Amazon, consider setting up author pages in AuthorCentral and Goodreads. Many authors arrange readings or signings at bookstores; if you do, be aware that you should be bringing your audience to the bookstore as much as you expect the store to provide an audience for you. Look for interview and speaking opportunities, and build your social media platform.

EXPAND BEYOND

In this guide we haven't even touched on several topics that can expand the reach and marketability of your intellectual property. Topics like getting your book into libraries, turning your book into an audiobook, or having it translated into other languages. Depending on your content, you can even consider interactive online experiences and book-related merchandise. Many authors provide book group discussion questions, hold book-related scavenger hunts, or make up other clever games to get people excited about the book.



Our Services

Call for submissions

After publishing *RELIT: How to Rekindle Yourself in the Darkness of Compassion Fatigue* in 2024, we are looking for your next great idea for a multi-author, collaborative book. Visit <https://graybearpublications.com/anthology-submissions> to see our guidelines.

Gray Bear Publications

BOOK COACHING

Book coaching helps you get your book written. Clarify your ideas and your approach, find your voice, get disciplined, and write your book already! Define your project plan and follow it to completion.



EDITING

Professional editing makes your book the best it can be. A developmental edit is a hands-on, collaborative assessment of your manuscript to ensure the structure, story, and consistency are all excellent. A copy edit focuses on the quality, voice, and correctness of the text.

ASSISTED SELF-PUBLISHING

Get your book from written to published. We can do every step of the publishing process from providing ISBNs to managing orders and distribution. Our standard packages cover most needs, but every author is unique and every book deserves its own plan. We'll help you do the parts you want to do, and we'll do the rest.



COLLABORATIVE BOOKS

Multi-author books are a great way to promote your expertise alongside other experts in your field. Provide a chapter for one of our projects, or gather other authors together and publish your collaborative book through our process.



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