

the

IngramSpark[®]

Guide to
Independent
Publishing

by Brendan Clark



GRAPHIC ARTS
BOOKS[®]

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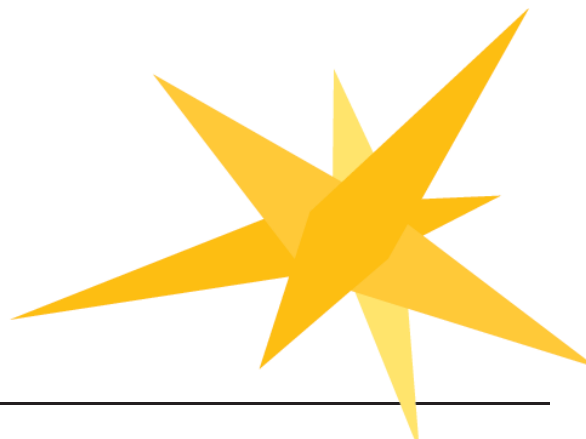


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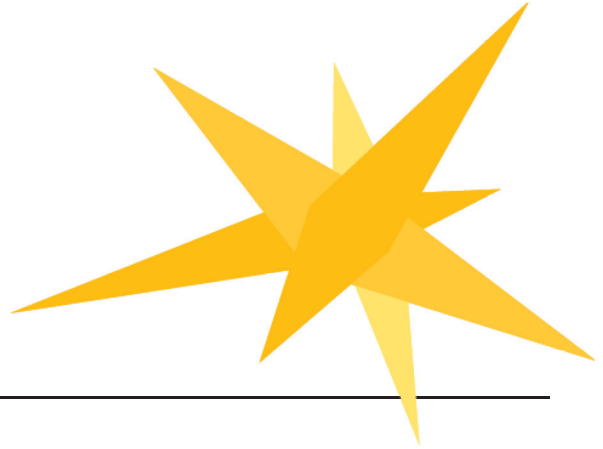
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INTRODUCTION

Publishing: Traditional vs Independent

To the delight of authors everywhere, recent advances in print-on-demand technology have lowered the cost of short-run book manufacturing and made the opportunity of independently publishing oneself accessible to thousands of writers. The practice of “indie” publishing has been employed to great success throughout literary history (e.g. Mark Twain, Beatrix Potter, Stephen King, Barbara Freethy, and Hugh Howey, among many others), yet within the past several decades, it has been prohibitively difficult for authors to distribute their books on a national level, unless they have been signed by an established publishing house.

In most cases, traditional publishing requires a process of submitting one’s manuscript to agents, who in turn pitch the manuscript to acquisitions editors at publishing houses. Once the book has been accepted, the publisher invests in the cost of editing, designing, producing, marketing, and distributing the book. Authors who choose to publish themselves essentially shoulder the responsibility and costs for all of these tasks. In exchange, indie authors retain absolute artistic control, not to mention a higher percentage of the profits from their total book sales.

Don't make the mistake of underestimating the various compounding costs of publishing a book! The process of preparing a manuscript for production, getting it in print, digitizing it as an e-book, and then publicizing it to readers involves a massive investment of time—several months at least, sometimes even a full year. Authors should also be prepared for the financial investment involved in ISBN (see page 56) registration, paying freelancers or service providers for editing and design services, paying a printer for the cost of materials, printing promo materials, hiring publicity agents and website designers, etc.

There's a very good reason entire corporations are built around the process of shepherding a book from its roughest form to bookstore shelves—when done right, it can be a lengthy and expensive process. To deal with these obstacles, publishing houses delegate tasks to skilled professionals with experience in crafting books. Likewise, indie authors would be wise to surround themselves with professionals who specialize in the particular phases of polishing and publicizing books. We'll discuss those professionals, and how to make the most of their services, in later sections of this guide.

Those who have experienced the entirety of this process often draw a startlingly accurate analogy between publishing a book and birthing a child. Both are an arduous, emotional journey, in which months of labor and devotion culminate in the creation of something totally unique. Just like expectant mothers and fathers, authors must exercise a great deal of patience and often endure considerable stress while the development of their manuscript takes place. But just as an infant bears the genetic code of its parents, a finished book bears the artistic signature of its author—no one else could have written your book but you.

Titles published in the traditional fashion typically receive significantly more exposure than indie titles, due to the tremendous marketing efforts of industry professionals and the distribution channels connecting publishers with retailers and the

general public. However, truly committed indie published authors can invest in marketing to dramatically enhance the sales potential of their books. There are numerous ways to generate buzz for a new book—hang up posters around town, have an article written about your book in your local newspaper, raise funds through an online crowdfunding campaign like Kickstarter or Inkshares, offer signed copies to folks who preorder the book, make noise on social media, suggest your book to local book groups, and schedule a reading event at your local bookstore. Later on, we'll discuss how national distribution can be essential for reaching distant readers, once your marketing has spread interest in your book beyond your own circle of acquaintances.

Bear in mind that indie publishing should not be viewed as an exclusive alternative, but as a possible step along the path to being traditionally published. Consider how much more impressive a well-edited bound paperback would be than a loose-leaf manuscript in the eyes of an agent. This arrangement is a win for publishing houses as well; in their eyes, an indie book that has already established a readership and demonstrated strong sales is a much safer investment than a totally unproven title that could become either a hit or a flop.

Many excellent books have been written on the general topic of self- and indie publishing. In this book, my goal is to guide you through a uniquely versatile tool for accomplishing your indie publishing goals—IngramSpark.

Welcome to IngramSpark

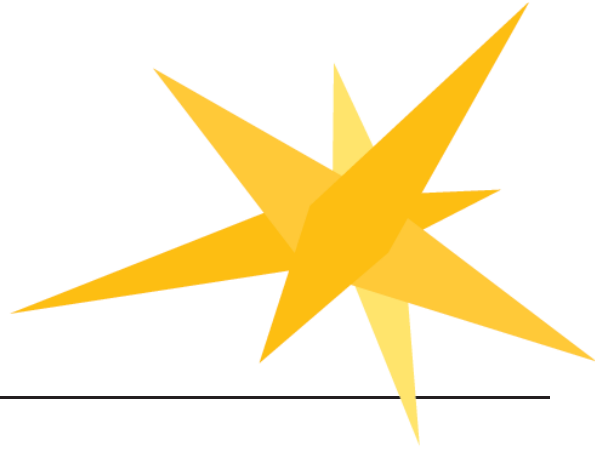
If you were to ask the employees at almost any bookstore in the United States where the books on their shelves came from, they'd likely tell you that most were ordered from Ingram. Established nearly 50 years ago, Ingram Content Group is the largest book distributor in the world, serving 39,000+ book retailers worldwide, of both the brick-and-mortar and the online variety.

Ingram's primary function is to channel books from publishing houses to retailers, but the distributor also owns the world's most technologically advanced print-on-demand company, Lightning Source, which produces books at multiple facilities around the world. In July of 2013, Ingram introduced IngramSpark as a portal for independent publishers and authors to access its print-on-demand services, print distribution channels, and e-book distribution channels—these complementary functions make IngramSpark a true one-stop platform for publishers who want an easy and comprehensive way to bring their books to a national audience.

Since then, IngramSpark has expanded its services to include resources for editing your manuscript, designing your book, shipping books directly to your customers, and promoting your book to retailers and libraries. Since books uploaded through IngramSpark are entered into the same database as frontlist titles from established publishers, retailers can search for and order these books as they would any other distributed title. When such orders are placed, your book is printed on demand, shipped to the retailer (with the option for trade standard wholesale terms), and sold to readers.

For the next few chapters, I'd like to walk you through the most essential steps to preparing a manuscript for production and discuss how IngramSpark can be utilized effectively for each step; then, we'll explore the process of uploading and managing your titles from the IngramSpark online Dashboard.

While the magnitude and variety of steps involved here may seem intimidating at first, IngramSpark is designed to streamline the process into a sensible order. This book includes a glossary should you encounter any unfamiliar terminology. Also, Ingram's responsive customer support team is available at [www.ingramspark.com/Portal/Help] to answer any questions you might have.



PREPRODUCTION

Editing

Once you've finished writing your manuscript, think of it as a roughly hewn sculpture. The raw materials have been compiled, the basic shape is there, but it takes a great deal of polishing before the project can be considered finished.

In writing, as in life, errors happen to everyone. And anyone who has been working on a manuscript for a long time is much less likely to spot grammatical mistakes than a reader approaching the manuscript for the first time. Seek a fresh set of eyes that can identify errors that the writer's eyes are likely to miss, or that can offer feedback regarding stylistic choices and organization.

Some particularly common errors to watch out for include:

- **Verb tense:** Jump, jumped, jumping, or will jump? Several verb tenses are acceptable depending on what kind of book is being written, but it is essential to keep your verb tense accurate and consistent.
- **Apostrophes:** Be sure to use apostrophes for contractions and posses-

sives, and use no apostrophe for plurals (e.g. “Don’t eat Mary’s cookies.”) Also, remember that “its” is possessive, while “it’s” is a contraction for it is (e.g. “It’s great when a business honors its values”).

- **Misspellings:** Keep a dictionary handy. Most publishers use *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. Or use the Internet, if you prefer.
- **Sentence fragment:** Any sentence that lacks both a subject and a predicate (i.e. an action). For example, “The marathon runner tied his shoes,” is a complete sentence, whereas “The marathon runner,” and “Tied his shoes,” are both sentence fragments.
- **Comma splice:** When two independent clauses are separated by a comma rather than a semicolon or a period.

If any of the terms above sound like gibberish, it would probably be a good idea to enlist the help of an experienced editor. Feedback from family, friends, and neighbors can be a vital aspect of your manuscript’s development—that said, professional editors have the skills to root out persistent global errors and hard-to-spot grammatical errors that most folks miss. Don’t underestimate the value of a trained outside perspective!

The best way to get on the same page with a freelance editor is to send her or him a small sample of your manuscript (e.g. 10-20 pages) as a test-drive. This way, you can get a sense of the editor’s style, ask for a cost estimate using the sample as a point of reference, and identify any issues in the feedback before the editor commits to working on the entire manuscript.

Be sure to communicate clearly regarding the variety of edits your manuscript needs. Freelance editing services will typically fall into one of three categories:

PROOFREADING involves weeding out all typos, misspellings, and punctuation errors. It is the least rigorous editing style, and therefore usually the most affordable.

COPYEDITING often includes correcting line errors, but also addresses formatting issues, fact-checking, and general stylistic consistency.

CONTENT EDITING delves deeper to provide qualitative feedback on the subject matter of a manuscript. In the case of fiction, the editor helps streamline the plot structure, comments on believability, and offers suggestions on various elements of the narrative. For nonfiction, the editor would primarily focus on clarity, flow, and how to most effectively organize the sections of the book. This variety of editing is by far the most intensive, and as such carries the highest price tag.

This stage of the process typically involves a substantial investment of time, but don't get discouraged! Ultimately, your book will be more polished and easier to read as a result of being thoroughly edited. Try inquiring about local editors at any schools, bookstores, or libraries in your area; you can also try the Chamber of Commerce.

Graphic Design

Interior

Designing the physical appearance of your book is another crucial step in the development of your manuscript. Before your book is ready to be printed, its pages must be sized according to the printer's specifications.

If you were to examine a published book, you'll notice that there's more than just text on every page—page numbers, chapter headings, flourishes separating

IngramSpark  supports the following book dimensions (in inches):

SMALL FORMAT

4.37×7	5.25×8	5.83×8.27	7.44×9.69
5.06×7.81	5.5×8.25	6.14×9.21	8×8
5×7	5.5×8.5	6.69×9.61	8.5×8.5
5×8	6×9	7.5×9.25	8.5×9

LARGE FORMAT

6.625×10.25	8×10	8.25×11	8.5×11
7×10	8×10.88	8.268×11.693	

For the most up-to-date list of compatible dimensions,
go to ingramspark.com/portal/booktypes.

sections of text, photos, illustrations, page headings with the title and author name—these elements are all added during the design phase. Not only should a reader be able to understand the content you've written, they should also be able to identify where they currently are in your book and be able to clearly see where distinct sections begin and end.

This is also an ideal time to add supplementary content to your book, including a copyright page, dedication page, table of contents, acknowledgments page, references section, and glossary. Though some of these extra pieces are optional for certain varieties of books (especially fiction), several of them provide essential organizational functions. Your copyright page protects your book from plagiarism by

To my friend Dorothy Nicholson, who never once stopped believing in me, and whom I'll never forget. — P. F.

To Nanette, Marcia, Kaylene, Monica, and Michelle, who encourage me on the writing journey. — A. D.



▲ *Robert*

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For the animals, who enrich our human lives
And for my grandchildren, Tristan and Alyssa

HERBAL DIRECTORY

HERBAL CLASSES, SCHOOLS, APPRENTICE PROGRAMS

California School of Herbal Studies, 9309 California 116, Forestville, California 95436 www.cshs.com
Good Earth Garden School, Ellen Vande Visse, P.O. Box 2905, Palmer, AK. 99645; see www.goodearthgardenschool.com for CEGS classes in organic gardening and communicating with nature and Janice Schofield herbal classes)
SAGE, Rosemary Gladstar, P.O. Box 420, East Barre, Vermont 05649, www.sagemt.com
Sweetgrass School of Herbalism, Robyn Klein, 6101 Shadow Circle Drive, Bozeman, Montana 59715

HERBAL PRODUCTS, FLOWER ESSENCES

Alaskan Flower Essence Project, P.O. Box 1090, Victor, Montana 59875 www.alaskanessences.com
HERB PHARM, P.O. Box 116, Williams, Oregon 97544; www.herb-pharm.com
The Wild'Erb Company, Ohio Valley Herbal Products, Inc. 125 Saint George Street, Suite 5, East Liverpool, OH 43920; www.thewilderbcompany.com
Jean's Greens, 1545 Columbia Turnpike, Schodack, NY 12033; www.jeansgreens.com (herbs, supplies, containers, essential oils)

HERBAL ASSOCIATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Alaska Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 141613 Anchorage, AK 99514; native plant walks and newsletter; www.aknps.org
Alaska Mycological Society, P.O. Box 2526, Homer, AK 99603; The Wild Food Forum (quarterly newsletter) www.ecoimages-us.com

SEEDS

Abundant Life Seeds, P.O. Box 157, Saginaw, Oregon 97472; www.abundantlifeseeds.com
Seeds of Change P.O. Box 15700 Sante Fe, New Mexico 87506; www.seedsofchange.com (organically grown and heirloom seeds)

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Examples of typical front and back matter page layouts. Clockwise from top left: dedication, index, and references pages.

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The best way to ensure that the visual appearance of your pages encourages smooth reading is to hire a professional graphic designer. Some designers plug the writer's text into a premade template, while others build each book from scratch; in both cases, the designer's primary function is to mold your manuscript from a shapeless text block into an attractively presented, well-organized set of bindable pages. An experienced designer can also give informed recommendations on font choices, line length and spacing, and page margin width, all of which have a massive impact on your book's readability.

Cover

As the outside shell of your book, the cover overwhelmingly determines a potential reader's first impression. Like it or not, people do judge books by their covers. Folks browsing in bookstores are far more likely to pick something up off the shelf if it catches their eyes with an engaging cover (one that “pops,” as they say in the book business), while an unattractive cover practically guarantees that your book will remain untouched and undiscovered.

Covers also provide a great deal of functional information. A synopsis on the back, ideally with positive marketing blurbs alongside it, is often the first place readers will look to answer the question of whether a particular book is the sort of book they'd enjoy. An author photo with accompanying bio helps brand your book as yours. In the case of paperbacks, the book's list price should be displayed on the back cover, while most hardcovers display the price on one of the inside flaps of the dust jacket. Finally, a barcode can be easily scanned by retailers for sales and inventory purposes.

Whether you want your book bound in a tastefully minimalist solid color or a multi-layered collage of images and elaborate lettering, professional graphic designers possess the skills and experience to turn your vision into reality. Typically, a designer will confer with the author to discuss the general aesthetic of the cover and to collect any images the author may have compiled for design purposes. Then the designer will build the cover spread and send a draft to the author, making adjustments to the details as needed. Trust me, it's incredible what a graphic designer can do with a few scanned photos and a bit of artistic direction.

Like most print-on-demand binderies, IngramSpark requires that cover files be submitted as a full spread—back cover, spine, and front cover, with a quarter inch

of bleed space on all outside edges of the spread. IngramSpark provides you with a helpful template customized to your book's particular size specs and spine width, upon which you superimpose your cover spread before uploading (more on this in the "Title Upload" chapter).