

E-Publishing for Free! YOU do the work...

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IF YOU'RE AN INDEPENDENT UNPUBLISHED author and you're working on a limited budget, you can still publish and promote your books on-line completely free of charge, and without the need or approval of any other publisher apart from yourself. You may want to sell your books on-line. Or, if you're like me, then you always enjoy your work and you always work for free—so that's why you post your books on-line, simply to share what you've written with the global internet community. And you can teach any would-be self-published authors among family and friends how to do the same—once you've gotten the hang of it. So here's my simple step-by-step method for the independent e-publisher to publish your books to the Internet:

1) We'll assume that the independent author already has a new computer with a reliable internet connection, and is using Microsoft Word since it's the most popular word processor—which if used judiciously can produce professional-looking books (in the eyes of the average reader). Remember, we're NOT trying to impress elitist publishers or their college-educated graphic designers and typesetters who use hi-end publishing software with a library of postscript typefaces. It's nice that they do that, and we all benefit from their professional artistry every time we visit a bookstore. But...

The **ONLY** people who the independent author wants to impress are the author's readership. The vast majority of readers out there simply aren't that picky about how perfectly an on-line book is edited and formatted. As long as your book looks and reads like a book, and your material and writing-style grabs and holds the reader's interest, then you're well on your way to e-publishing success. You don't need to be a professional.

2) You must have written and at least casually edited your book as time permitted you. I'm so busy writing that I leave a few typos in my wake. That's because I'm more interested in content and the overall purpose of my work. For example, which would you rather

hear, a bad recording of the Beatles or a perfect recording of Kenny G? This is because form ALWAYS follows function. In this day and age where most people are so busy that they'll be lucky to finish writing one or several books in their lifetime, it's a given that so many published books nowadays contain more than their fair share of typographical errors. Just ask anybody who reads paperbacks on a regular basis. So don't be too concerned if your editing experience falls short of a Ph.D. in English. Most readers won't even notice a few relatively insignificant errors. They're used to it. So it's better stay busy developing and refining your writing style and your understanding of the subject matter of your work, whether it's fiction or nonfiction.

And above all, don't worry if your writing style is singularly unique and unorthodox. That's what separates you from the crowd, and identifies you with your work—drawing much-needed public attention to your books, provided you promote them through the Internet search engines (we'll get to that later in item #7).

- 3) Before you format your book for on–line e–publication, you'll want to digitally sign every chapter of your book and post it onto the Google newsgroup archives, using any one or several newsgroups of your choosing. Get the free PGP software here: <http://web.mit.edu/network/pgp.html>. If you're shy or for any reason unsure of yourself, then pick a newsgroup that few if anyone post to. That way, you won't likely be heckled by the veritable Legion of newsgroup "trolls" who are notorious for disrupting the more popular newsgroups with their filthiness and childish insults. Or, if you're accustomed to newsgroups and the warring factions who post and reply to them,—and you know how to use kill–files,—then you should digitally sign and post your book to those newsgroups which relate more or less to the subject matter of your work, and let the trolls troll themselves into an early grave (for all I could care). Posting to popular groups draws more attention to your work, and generating publicity is what every self–publisher must do.

And if your writing tends to be controversial or "forbidden" by orthodox science or religion, then you'd be well–advised to maintain anonymity and post your books through anonymous remailers like I do. This is sound advise in any case, given the pandemic problem of identity theft if for no other reason. And by digitally signing your work, you kill two birds with one stone. You've certified the autograph authenticity of all your work (PGP clear–signed messages are admissible as evidence in lawsuits involving plagiarism etc.), and you've assured your readership that YOU are YOU, and not some rogue forger such as the "trolls" are so well known for doing. And the Google archives will time– and date–stamp every post made thereto, so you can cite the archived URL of every book and article that you've digitally signed and posted to any of the newsgroups.

For example, my Google-archived books are linked on this URL:

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As you can see, every chapter is digitally signed, and shall remain permanently archived and available to the public for many decades to come. Once you've Google-archived your book, then you're ready to move on to the next step, formatting...

- 4) There are numerous freeware Document-to-PDF format-conversion utilities available for download, such as "CutePDF", "WinPDF", "PDFMoto", "PDF4U", "PDF995" etc. over the Internet. I suggest downloading and installing at least several of these programs:

http://www.google.com/search?as_q=freeware&num=100&hl=en&btnG=Google+Search&as_epq=&as_oq=CutePD

With these freeware PDF conversion utilities installed, then you'll need to open your book in Microsoft Word (or whatever publishing program you're running). Hopefully, you've already got at least several dozen high quality fonts installed. But if not, you can obtain them on-line from a variety of sources, preferably freeware. Postscript fonts work best, but if you have only TrueType fonts available, that should suffice for now. Later, consider acquiring some higher quality Adobe or other brandname postscript fonts to achieve superior results, since postscript fonts always kern better and print better than do trueType fonts, and many postscript fonts come in families much larger than the usual normal, italic, bold and bold-italic. Again, most average readers are not likely to notice any difference, at least not on a conscious level. But a better quality typeface will have a benefic influence on their reading experience--whether they realize it or not, especially where the font is well-matched with the material.

Always format your Word document file to print hardcopy editions of your book. I recommend printing double-sided pages duplexed 2-up on landscaped letter or legal size paper, since it's surely the cheapest, most popular and widely available paper there is. Be sure to set the margins to mirror. Open a few paperbacks and notice how the page headers are formatted, with page numbers on the outside, book title centered on the left pages, and chapter title centered on the facing pages. It's the most commonly used format. It'd be a good idea to browse through the newest books of your writing genre next time you're at the bookstore, so you can see what format is the most popular for your subject matter. Generally, works of fiction fit better on 5.5" wide by 8.5" tall pages (2-up letter size), whereas a nonfiction textbook benefits from the legal size paper making pages 2-up 7" wide by 8.5" tall.

And because you're printing on both sides of the paper, consider using a lighter, ink/toner-friendly typeface like Berkeley Old-style Book for bodytext. A lighter font reduces the "bleed-thru" shadows of the printed text on the back side of plain white bond while reading. This will save you ink/toner, and save you money.

I've used this typeface for the bodytext in all of my own books, set by default at 11 points, and with 1.2 lines of line spacing. And Berkeley Oldstyle Medium works great for titles and subtitles, and for the smaller page numbers & headers, which I set at 10 pt.

But here I'm only sharing my personal preferences and experience. You really need to experiment and decide for yourself what looks best for YOUR style and genre of work. For example, I've typeset several dozen books over the years for my family and our friends, employing nearly as many varieties of typefaces according to the general feel and sensibility of their mostly fictional storylines. Perhaps the best reception any of these books have had came from a book in which I'd selected the truetype font "Poor Richard" for the text, which is a rather heavy, ink-consuming "Alminach"-like typeface. Fine for printing presses, but not so kind to a common ink bubblejet or toner-consuming printer, especially when you're printing and binding hundreds of copies. But in this case, this font proved worthy of its merit, and the book has done very well in print. Thus form DOES have an effect on a book's readability, where the typeface and textual theme are "married" so to speak.

Keep this in mind when choosing the right typeface for your work. As for the Poor Richard font, it requires slightly heavier matte to counteract bleed-thru, and it worked extraordinarily well for that particular book. But each book has its own unique character, thus having a comprehensive library of fonts can really pay off in the hands of a discerning typesetter. So use your own judgment and experiment until you've matched the best font with the story.

Truly professional book publishers entreat each worthy book as a genuine work of art unto itself, and so every page from cover-to-cover is envisioned and produced by consummate graphic designers such that the book itself manifests in print to the satisfaction of the reader. Remember it's the READER who pays the publisher's bills, whether you're an international "Fortune-500" corporation, or if you're working completely on your own, a Hermit, like I am. Of course my readers don't pay my bills. I do that all by myself.

- 5) Browse through the newest and most popular books of your writing genre at your local bookstore, and buy the one that really stands out as the book you like the most, especially for its layout and readability. Take it home and refer to it when constructing your book's "template". Hopefully, the book you bought is a good book to read. At least, it's a marketable template upon which you can draw inspiration and create a hybrid facsimile for your own books. In this case, you needn't match the fonts being used in the book that you purchased, but focus rather on the book's layout since it caught your attention. If your book includes some pictures or illustrations, then consider how these pictures will best enhance the text by their placement within the story.

Cover design of your book will depend on the market for your work. Black text on a white cover is pristine, and is easiest to format. Allow lots of white space and use no more than two or three fonts. Be sure that your book's title generally tells your readers what the book is about, and try to do so using as FEW words as possible. And you might want your book's cover to be more bookstore quality, more graphical & colorful with multilayered 3D effects. Go for it! But limit colors to three (unless it's a photo or an illustration). Search the internet for professional "tips and tricks" to help you design the best cover for your book. I'm satisfied with black text.

- 6) Now that you've got your book completely formatted cover-to-cover, print it to disk using the PDF printer driver of your choice. Some of the Doc-to-PDF utilities increase file size beyond the more compact Adobe output, but the result is fundamentally the same. Print your book cover-to-cover to PDF format and check it for any errors.

Once you're satisfied that your book is ready for publication, then connect to the Internet, and upload your PDF files to your websites. You can get free websites on Yahoo, Angelfire et al free webservers: http://www.google.com/search?as_q=&num=100&hl=en&btnG=Google+Search&as_epq=free+web If you need help getting your site up and running, why not ask your children or grandchildren to help you? Young people today are more savvy on the Internet than are the majority of the over-fifty crowd, and getting them involved in any case will encourage them to write books and post them on-line just like you're doing. Everybody wins! The freeware PDFMoto for Windows makes this process especially easy. Download it on this URL: <http://www.pdfmoto.com/downloads/index.shtml>

And you may want to build a more comprehensive website beyond just posting your books on-line. If you're intent on selling your books or additional goods and services, then you'd do well to develop a good business plan before proceeding, and study books on internet commerce. But unless you're a serious and experienced entrepreneur with some capital to risk, selling your books may not be practical, and in some cases could even be illegal. By giving your books away for free, you risk nothing, and your work will have a better chance of being downloaded and read by those visiting your websites—which brings us to the final item in our e-publishing list, e-promotions!

- 7) While everyone with an email address and a website should print up hundreds of business cards and keep some with you at all times (and pass them out only if asked, for to do otherwise is unprofessional), promoting your books through the search engines is absolutely essential to putting your website up on the World Wide Web radar screen. With so many free URL meta-submission sites on-line, this is really fast and easy to do. Since I only recently put up my first webpage with links to my PDF books and Google-archived plain text homepage, it just started showing up on AltaVista, Yahoo, etc. last week. So I've been busy adding "mirror" sites to as many of the free website hosting servers as I can find on the search engines, and submitting

these new mirror sites to the search engines in every single case. Doing so continually increases ones Internet presence and visibility, which in my case is a double-edged sword, because I've been an avid and unabashedly outspoken socio-political and religious activist for nearly seven years and counting. Myself being a staunch Republican and Biblically-correct right-winger, I've attracted myriad enemies.

This is another good reason to digitally sign ones email and news-group articles, since only my PGP-clearsigned messages can ever be legally attributed to me. Every falsehood anyone has said about me cannot be linked to one or more of my PGP-clearsigned messages thus are lame forgeries & false statements—the usual disinformation and obfuscation tactics employed by the left-wing liberals. But I'm not dissuaded nor distracted by it. Much to the contrary, I'm elated by all the publicity I get no matter how immature my inept critics are! International *fame* is independent of ethics, morality or humanity.

Thus, my advise to every genuinely-independent on-line e-publisher is this. Never worry about what other people say about you or your accomplishments. Wear your critics' attacks like a badge of honor. This will bolster your Internet standing a thousandfold, and helps your name appear in the search engines irrespective of whether the Internet community is complementary or critical of you. Typically, good people are criticized a thousand times for every one time he or she is complemented. That's just the way of the world. But it is GOOD publicity for you to have your name repeated on-line, and will help to promote your books should you wisely choose to make them available on-line. For example, if I type my name into the AltaVista search engine, my name comes up only 200 times or so:
<http://www.altavista.com/web/results?itag=wrx&pg=aq&aqmode=s&aqa=&aqp=Daniel+Joseph+Min>

Same thing happens with Yahoo, because my name isn't mentioned that much on the World Wide Web—not yet, that is. I still working on it:
<http://search.yahoo.com/search?fr=slv1-fp&p=%22Daniel+Joseph+Min%22>

But if I type my name into the Google Groups (newsgroups) search:
http://www.google.com/groups?as_epq=Daniel%20Joseph%20Min&as_scoring=d&lr=&num=100
Bingo! More than 20,000 hits and counting. That's good publicity no matter whether you like me or not. By contrast, type your own name into the same search engines and count how many times your name comes up. If you've been very active on the Internet, and you always use your real name or consistent alias, then it should come up plenty of times in the search engines. But if you haven't been very active on the Internet, then your name will come up less.

Also, be sure to include your best-known name along with a few well-known "buzzwords" in your homepage metatag header in order to boost your ratings in the search engines. You can find plenty of helpful advise on how to do this on the search engines; search "metatags":
http://www.google.com/search?num=100&hl=en&lr=&as_qdr=all&q=metatags+%22improve+your%22+ratings&bt

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Daniel Joseph Min

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