

SELF-PUBLISHING  
HACKS NO ONE TELLS  
YOU ABOUT



WHAT THE OTHER AUTHORS  
ALREADY KNOW

BY RACHEL RUEBEN

## Preface

This book is for those who find themselves lost in the self-publishing process. I took great care to make this book easy to skim through so you don't have to thumb through tons of unnecessary verbiage. There are multiple resources listed with links to various articles and websites. I am not affiliated with any of the businesses, products or the websites mentioned in this book. I'm just a regular ol' independent author who has been studying publishing for the past 5 years. I've learned through my own mistakes as well as from those fearless indie pioneers who went before me. We've made all the mistakes so you don't have to!

*\*Warning\** This book contains grammatical errors and terrible puns. If you're not into that sort of thing, please read another book. For those of you who just want straight shootin' I invite you to just enjoy the ~~types~~ typos.

A lot of these chapters can be found on [my blog](#), if you wish to dig through years of old posts, feel free. However, for those of you who don't have time to read blogs, this book is a huge time saver.

This book was created with several of my friends in mind, who want to make the leap, but are overwhelmed by all the options.

*~Rachel Rueben*

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## Chapter 1

### Getting Others to Pay for Your Self-Publishing Expenses

It's been called the no money, no problem solution in self-publishing, I'm of course talking about crowd funding. Crowd funding got its start in response to a very dark past, when self-publishing was much like gambling. Back in the day, it was unlikely an author would ever recoup their initial investment let alone make it big. In those primitive days, aspiring authors would charge all their publishing expenses on credit cards or withdraw from retirement accounts in order to make their dreams come true. Sadly, many indie authors watched their life savings depleted by expensive vanity publishing contracts and unscrupulous con artists. This is the reason self-publishing has a bad reputation amongst authors. However that is slowly changing as more and more cheaper and legitimate businesses sprout up. With their help self-publishing is becoming cheaper and easier.

Since we indies (independent authors) are running a business, the question remains, why don't we raise capital like a normal business? Well, we can. There are several online sites that industrious authors can use to fund their self-published projects like; [Kickstarter](#), [PubSlush](#) and [Pentian](#) just to name a few.

#### *The Dark Side of Crowd Funding*

Most popular crowd funding sites take a 2-9% cut of all money raised. However the fees don't end there, some banks and middle men like in the case of Kickstarter, (Amazon Payment) take another 3-5% for credit card processing fees. Also, authors can't forget the tax man because not properly including all income sources can easily trigger an audit. In fact, Kickstarter addresses this in a [Tax Guide](#) on their website. That means authors are going to have to carefully do the math and possibly raise their monetary goals to accommodate these additional expenses.

Here is a nice Slide Share presentation you should take a look at if you're seriously considering crowdfunding. [Kickstarter by the numbers](#) from [Michael Wolf](#)

In a popular [Ted Talk](#), performance artist Amanda Palmer, encouraged artists to “ask without shame.” Amanda by the way, held the record on Kickstarter for raising the most money for a music project with over one million dollars in donations. The money she raises not only goes to fund the project but also allows her and her band to giveaway their work free of charge. In an age where most artists discourage torrents and file sharing Amanda and her band actually encourage it. This is blatantly counter intuitive to most corporate business models in which freebies are used only as a short term marketing ploy. However, Amanda's strategy is more long term, using digital music as a promotional tool, rather than a money making venture. As the industry argues over .99¢ songs, Amanda and her band have successfully cut out the middle man and are setting up their next tour.

So how does an author repeat this success?

### *Social Media to the Rescue?*

Many indie artists take to the web by guest posting on popular blogs, or even advertising on social media sites like Facebook to raise awareness for their self-publishing endeavor. Those who have a larger social media following generally do better than those that don't. We're talking about 25,000+ *engaged* followers.

Here are a few tips on how to run a successful campaign:

- Successful campaigns are funded by tiny increments, so set the pledges to smaller amounts like \$5 or \$10.
- Campaigns with videos explaining your project and enthusiasm seem to do better than those without them.
- Have a compelling blurb explaining your project with a call to action.
- Promote your project on social media because most projects are funded 80% by family and friends.
- Fund other projects in popular niches like movies, gaming, or music to get visibility on the site as well as some good karma.
- Advertise on social media

- Do guest posts on popular blogs and include a link to your campaign in the byline.

Crowd funding can be a viable path for the more savvy author who already knows how to promote a book since the steps are so similar, but even then, there are no guarantees of a successful crowd funding project.

## Chapter 2

### Why You Must Spend Money on Editing

It's the dilemma most indie authors face: should we bother paying for an editor? After all, we're understaffed, under budget and often overwhelmed. The correct answer to that question will always be yes, yes, yes! Thankfully, we live in the age of the indie author and with it, are plenty of people peddling their editing services. But what kind of editing should an indie author pay for; copy editing, line editing, or proof editing? And what's the difference?

Let me begin by explaining the different types of book editing:

1. **Line/Developmental Editors** go over the general story and look for poorly constructed characters and holes in a story's plot. If problems are huge they may ask you to rewrite sections.
2. **Copy Editors** look over facts, and also go over punctuation or poor dialog.
3. **Proof Readers** look only for grammatical errors and misused punctuation.

Many indie authors pay big bucks for several rounds of editing to avoid looking *self-published*, a problem that plagues many indie books. However, indie authors aren't the only ones who are using freelance editors. In fact, there are several bestselling authors who pay for some "light editing" before sending it to their New York editor in order to preserve their reputations as literary geniuses. So like it or not, we're all doing it.

### ***Will Editing Get Rid of All My Errors?***

No, editing will not make your book mistake free, all books have errors but some less than others. For example, *Fifty Shades of Grey* and *Twilight* are considered some of the worst written books, yet both authors had editors. In fact, I'm sure their work passed through many hands before it went to print. Yet that doesn't stop the literary snobs from pointing out the poor prose and redundant verbiage in these bestselling books.

### ***How Much Does Editing Really Cost?***

The typical editor makes about \$1 a page and up. However, there are those that charge per word, usually they ask anywhere from \$.03 – .35 cents and up. Also, there are those who are paid by the hour and they are usually the most expensive. In any case, a professional editor will ask to evaluate your manuscript *before* they give you a final quote.

Price ultimately depends on your skill level and the overall complexity of your book. Some books require fact checking and extensive rewrites. However, there are indie authors who forgo the entire process and just publish *as is*. These guys are the reason why there is a stigma on self-published books.

Then there are those on the opposite side of the spectrum, those indie authors who spend thousands on editors and still wind up with errors in their book. Personally, I have erred on the side of frugality when it comes to editing. Meaning, I refuse to spend thousands on an editor who used to work at Random House but I also wouldn't pay for one of those penny-a-page editors that operate out of the Philippines either.

### ***What to Look for in an Editor***

The rules are simple when hiring any freelancer and they are:

1. Samples: If someone has no samples, don't trust them.
2. Testimonials: Avoid those who don't have testimonials that can be verified.
3. Research: Go to author forums like [Absolute Write](#) or [Editors and Predators](#) to see what other authors say about them. You can even Google the company name plus the word *reviews*.

4. Make sure a company has a money back guarantee policy, or will at least correct any botched job for free.

Do not hire anyone who cannot prove they have command of the English language. There are tons of editor mills where unscrupulous editing companies outsource their work to people in non English speaking countries like India, or The Philippines in order to maximize profits. Try to find an editor based in the U.S., Canada, or the U.K. if you want decent results. I personally used [LinkedIn](#) to find my editor.

### *Here are some resources for legitimate editors:*

Copyediting:

- [Edit911](#)
- **Kirkus:** Yes Kirkus, the company that charges indie authors for book reviews also has offer a copyediting service.
- [Edit Me Fast](#)

Line Editing:

- [Editor's World](#)
- [Book Editing Associates](#)
- [National Association of Writers and Editors](#)

Proofing:

- [Bubble Cow](#)
- [Elite Editing](#)
- [Editorial Freelancers Association](#)

### *About Those Self-Publishing Packages*

Most presses like Lulu, and CreateSpace have editing services they offer with their self-publishing services. For example, Amazon's CreateSpace charges \$0.016 per word for up to 10,000 words and \$160.00 for manuscripts up to 100,000 words. This sounds bit on the low side and could be a mill, so author beware.



## **A Final Note**

I can't really say how many rounds of editing your particular book may need. Honestly, that depends on your budget, experience and also, your self-esteem. Yes, I said self-esteem because if you don't believe in your work, why bother?

## **Chapter 3**

### **Where do I Publish?**

I hear it all the time, where do I sell my books? This can be a complicated answer depending on the author. You see, there are many authors who hate certain retailers like Amazon because they believe they're the *Evil Empire* that's out to destroy publishing. Then, there are authors who will only publish on Amazon because they don't see any point in selling anywhere else.

Now despite what you've heard, Amazon's indie program Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) is not a traditional publishing company, it's just a site that allows self-published authors to upload their books to the Amazon store. Now don't get me wrong, Amazon does have several traditional [publishing companies](#) but KDP isn't one of them.

### **Getting Your Ebook into Amazon, or Barnes & Noble**

There are two ways to get your ebooks into major retail stores, you can do what many frugal independent authors are doing and that's upload your books directly, which requires another chapter to explain. However right now, I'm only going to explain how to find a service, (an aggregator) to upload your ebooks to all the major online retailers.

First, I need to define what an aggregator is, usually, an aggregator is a piece of software or website that uploads your books (files) to retailers according to that retailer's specifications. For example, Amazon's Kindle only reads files in .mobi while Barnes & Noble's Nook only reads .epub files. This is often necessary because most of the popular word processing software like MS Word does not convert to these kinds of files.

The most popular aggregator by far is [Smashwords](#), which doesn't charge an upfront fee, but they do take a 20% cut of your royalties. The second most popular aggregator is [BookBaby](#), which has several services that range from 20% of your royalties, to a flat fee of \$249.

There are free sites like [BookTango](#) that don't charge anything to upload your ebooks nor do they touch your royalties. However, they only upload files to 8 major retailers but that would be a good start for someone with a tight budget and who's short on time. They do offer paid services if you're interested but I'd stick to the free services in the beginning. Now whichever service you choose, you need to make sure they upload to all of the major retail sites.

The major online U.S. ebook retailers are

- Amazon
- Barnes & Noble
- Apple
- Kobo
- Google Play

If you can get into those major shops, you're pretty much set, but there are those indie authors who want their book available *everywhere*. They claim if your book isn't available everywhere then you're leaving money on the table which could be true, if your book takes off. However, I don't hear many indie authors being inundated with sales from sites like OverDrive or Scribd. Most self-published authors make most of their money with Amazon or Barnes & Noble.

### **Selling Your Print Book Online and Off**

There are several businesses that can help you sell your book online and even get it into a brick and mortar stores. However they will all require your money, as well as your patience. I'll only discuss print on demand (POD) since it's the most popular option for indie authors.

The most popular place for self-published authors to get their books printed and distributed is [CreateSpace](#). It's a print on demand publisher owned by Amazon and offers expanded distribution to all the major book stores for a percentage of your [royalties](#) depending on how much your book is priced. They do have other services like editing and marketing with fees ranging from \$948 to \$5,120

There's also [Lightening Source](#), which is owned by Ingram, one of the largest book distributors in the world. Ingram is one of the few distributors that will actually take self-published books. They are the darling of most book stores because they offer returns and returns are a must for print books. LS has fees for everything ranging from uploading to their website to even catalog fees. The

site isn't user friendly like CreateSpace and many authors complain about not understanding the fees. Sadly, if you want your book in brick and mortar stores or in libraries, you'll need to publish through Lightning Source and not CreateSpace.

If you're going to choose any print on demand service make sure they distribute to the main book retailers like:

- Amazon
- Barnes & Noble
- Books-A-Million
- Half Price Books

Now these aren't the only places you can publish and distribute your books, they are only the most popular publishers that indie authors use. There's also Lulu, and IngramSparks as well as many others.

In the next chapter, I'll discuss how to format and upload your books DIY style.

## Chapter 4

### **Ebook or Print? Don't Worry, They're Both a Pain to Format!**

The big problem most indie authors have is how to format their book for either print or ebook. Honestly, there are many methods that range from free and irritating, to expensive and not worth it. When given a choice like this, it's always best to learn what you can and farm out what you can't to a professional.

#### ***Ebooks***

Despite what you may have heard, ebooks are not easy to produce especially, if you have images, or live links in them. Though you wouldn't know that by the accounts of some authors who've described the process as, "*Just click publish and go!*" I can't tell you how wrong they are.

For example, I ran into several issues uploading my Word document to Kobo and Barnes & Noble. For some inexplicable reason, the darn thing wouldn't upload. So I had to convert my Word .doc to an .epub file. However, in order

to do that, I had to get Scrivener, a type of software that converts Word documents into .epub, or .mobi. Scrivener cost me around \$40 and I soon discovered why it's so cheap. Apparently, Scrivener doesn't read its own compiled (converted) files! To read the .epub or .mobi file you just created, you'll have to get an extension on your web browser, or download some free ereading software. See, I told you, it was a pain!

### ***Resources:***

If you must try to convert your own files, here are a few resources to help you get started. Be warned, paid services generally have customer service, so if something goes awry, you can get help. The free sites however, don't always offer those options so read the conditions carefully.

### ***Downloadable Software that Helps Convert Word documents to eBooks***

- [Scrivener](#) (Software) \$40
- [Liquid Story Binder](#) (Software) \$45.95
- [eCub](#) (Free Software)
- [Calibre](#) (Free Software)

### ***Websites That Convert Word Documents to ebooks***

- [Press Books](#) (Free Website to convert files but if you want distribution to stores like Amazon, B&N and Apple it's \$99 and it's done through [BookBaby.com](#) )
- [Smashwords](#) (Website 20% cut of royalties).
- [Book Tango](#) (Free Website)

### ***Ereader Extensions for Your Browser in Case You Want to Read Your Darn Book!***

- [Google Chrome](#)
- [Firefox](#)
- [Internet Explorer](#)

### ***Print Books***

I published my paperback on CreateSpace and regretted every second of it. First, I'm no expert in book design or layout. I didn't know which size to choose, 6x9, or 8 ½ x 11? I had no idea which would look best. When you can't make a simple decision like this, you know you're in a lot of trouble!

Foolishly, I listened to the advice of the self-publishing gurus and made the size of my book too large, which made my book appear too short, like a novelette.

I spent days adjusting gutters and formatting the cover, when a professional would've had my book done in hours. I even tried using the templates provided by CreateSpace but that just turned my text into all caps. Even when I got my book looking somewhat decent, I still wasn't very happy with the results. There were still obvious rookie mistakes like starting a chapter on a left page instead of a right one, headers on the chapter pages, etc.

To add insult to injury, after fixing my mistakes, the print books didn't sell nearly as well as the eBooks. That wouldn't have happened if I had done a little market research.

If I could do it over again, I would skip the print book, or at least pay for a professional to do the interior.

## **Resources**

### ***Paying Someone to Format Your Print Book***

Paying a freelancer or professional designer is going to cost you anywhere from \$35 to \$375. Many services charge per page or even according to genre.

- [CreateSpace](#) has its own designers and professionals who will help you design the best book possible, but it'll cost you around \$249.
- [BookServ.com](#) has prices starting at \$250 for up to 160 pages and \$375 for up to 500 pages.
- [TheFastFingers.com](#) has a service starting at \$100 for fiction, \$150 for children's and \$250 for nonfiction.
- [IndieDesignz.com](#) has a book formatting service starting at \$35 for short stories and \$85 for novels.

### ***Templates***

If this is out of your price range, you can go with a template to format your print book and do a copy and paste.

- Recently, Joel Friedlander of the [BookDesigner.com](#) created affordable and professional looking templates for MS Word starting at \$37
- [Self-Publishing Inc.](#) has templates that come in three book sizes for free

- [Book Baby](#) has some very basic templates to help you with the layout of your print book also, for free.

### **Disclaimer:**

Before signing up with any services, always read the fine print especially, when putting any money down. Also, do your due diligence to find people who have actually used their services. Google the name of the company and the words, *reviews*, *complaints*, and *rip off* to see if there are any dissatisfied customers. Remember an educated author is a happy author.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Cheap Book Covers that are Professional Looking**

It's one of the biggest mistakes I made as an indie author, and I'm not the only one. Many self-published authors design their own covers in PowerPoint or PhotoShop and guess what? It looks like it! There are so many indie books that look God awful! In fact, there are several websites dedicated to mocking [lousy book covers](#) by both indies and [trade publishers](#).

The cover of your book is too important to leave up to personal taste. Your cover is literally going to be the first impression that readers get of you. It needs to be professional, as well as eye catching in order to compete with the millions of other books out there. You have to understand that readers spend literally seconds deciding whether they'll bother clicking on your book. The cover you chose with either draw them in, or repel them.

### **Money Issues**

The reason why I and most indie authors choose to design our own covers is lack of cash. Many designers charge hundreds, if not thousands for their services and they deserve that kind of money. Sadly, we indies can't afford those prices unless we bleed our retirement accounts dry, or max out our credit cards. But never fear, there are ways to get cheap book covers that are professional looking and gorgeous.

## Project Bidding Sites: Freelance Designers

Here's how it works, you launch a *contest* or project telling the potential designers what you want in a cover. You can even submit a sketch or photo to give them a better feel of what you need. Then, designers jockey for your project by submitting their work. It generally costs \$299 for a book cover.

[99 Designs](#) is one of the most popular and well known cover designers to indie authors. They create not only book covers, but business cards, t-shirts, and even web page banners.

Similar sites where you can hire freelance designers are [Elance](#), and [Guru](#). You post a job, and freelancers from all over the world will then bid on your project. At these sites, freelancers are paid by the hour or per project. You either have to set a budget or agree to someone's per hour rate by coughing up the cash and putting it in *escrow* as a sign of good faith. Beware, there may also be fees to post on the site, contracts that you have to sign and 10-99 tax forms.

## Direct Hire:

There are agencies either run independently or that consist of several book designers that can help indie authors with their covers. Some create unique art, while others use stock images that they've altered according to the theme of a book or the specifications of the author.

- [The Scarlett Rugers Book Design Agency](#) uses royalty free stock photos and does ebook, print and can even design banners for Facebook, or your website from \$350 to \$1095.
- [Robin Ludwig Design](#) (GoBookCoverDesign.com) creates book covers using stock photos as well. Prices here range from \$80 to \$120 depending on the time and turnaround.
- [ExpertSubject.com](#) offers unique book covers starting at \$150 and going up to \$224 for print.
- [Indie Designz](#) that provides basic book covers at \$75. They also do print covers and format ebook covers for print as well. The first two drafts are free but those afterward, will cost you \$5.

## Premade Covers:

It's just what it sounds like, here authors purchase book covers based on work already completed by a designer. Here what you see is what you get, after the purchase it's up to the author to add text, and font.

- [The Book Cover Designers](#) is one site with premade book covers, the smallest price I've seen here is \$25.
- [Indie Author Services](#): here prices are \$30.
- [SelfPubBooks.com](#) here, they guarantee a unique cover and will immediately stop selling the cover once you purchase. The lowest price here is \$69.

## If You Must do it Yourself!

I know some of you are thinking, "Why should I pay someone to format a stock photo? I can do that myself!" Really? That's what I thought too. But if you are determined to do it, read on...

## Stock Photos/Art: Licensing

When purchasing a stock photo or illustration, you are purchasing a license to put an image on your product. The image will still be available for sale on the site, leaving open the possibility for a copy cat cover popping up somewhere else. However don't fret, many big publishers also buy stock photos for their ebooks, just check out this Goodreads thread called [Cover Clones](#) and see for yourself.

## The Perils of Stock Images: Terms of Use

It's imperative that an indie author reads the conditions in the licensing terms very carefully before putting down any cash. Not all images are being licensed the same way. For example, an editorial license may forbid you from altering an image. Also, there are licenses that limit the amount of times you can print an image. If the restriction is 5,000 then you'll have to go back and purchase a new license if you sell over 5,000 print books.



### ***Too Good to be True Prices***

Be wary of prices, I've seen pictures advertised as .20 cents but you have to buy *credits* on these sites which come in packages ranging from \$9.00 to \$1,000. So that .20¢ photo is really gonna cost you \$8.80. Go figure.

You can buy all sorts of images like; cartoons, art, and even photos from these sites:

- [Dreamstime](#)
- [iStockphoto](#)
- [Shutter Stock](#)

### ***Book Covers on a Shoe String Budget: Freebies***

There are photo sharing sites that allow you to use a photo free of charge because it's either a public domain work, or the owner wants free publicity, which means you got to give them or their company credit somewhere in your book. Again, read the conditions carefully.

- [Flickr.com](#)
- [MorgueFile.com](#)
- [Stock.xchng](#)

### ***Jazzing Up Your Stock Image: Software***

There are all kinds of software that help you edit photos, Windows for example, has Paint and it's standard with most home versions of Windows. Also, there's the standard Adobe PhotoShop and even Corel PaintShop, but if you don't have these programs, you can always get the same photo editing capabilities for free.

### ***Free Downloadable Software:***

There are plenty of places that offer free software but you have to be careful about updates and read their privacy terms.

- [Gimp](#)
- [InkScape](#)
- [Paint.net](#)

### **Free Websites:**

I'm a huge fan of these websites because they're user friendly and there's no software taking up space on your hard drive. Here, you just upload your photos and alter them on the website itself. No fuss, no muss.

- [Pixlr](#)
- [PicMonkey](#)
- [FotoFlexer](#)

### **One Final Word...**

I hope I showed you that you don't need a ton of money to have a professional and gorgeous book cover. If you know of an indie author who needs to read this, please pass this along. Maybe one day, we'll be able to put that *self-published look* to rest.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Are ISBNs A Necessary Evil?**

Today I want to talk about ISBNs, what they are and why you may actually need one. To begin, ISBN stands for *International Standard Book Number* which is basically a 13 digit number that is assigned to a book which identifies its *bibliographic data* (title, edition, publisher etc) to book sellers and lenders.

Whether indie authors even need an ISBN is a contentious argument that has many indie authors on a shoestring budget wondering if this is just another unnecessary expense.

So let's cut through the crap and find out why you may, or may not need an ISBN for your book.

### **Myths About ISBNs**

**Myth #1:** Indie authors who are only publishing eBooks need not worry about ISBNs.

**Fact:** Not true, places like Apple, won't allow eBooks in their stores without an ISBN. Also, libraries won't even consider eBooks without ISBNs.

**Myth #2:** You can purchase ISBNs from anywhere.

**Fact:** There is only one place in every country where the owner/publisher of a book can purchase an ISBN. Places that offer packages or discounts on an ISBN usually are buying in bulk and probably not reporting the books bibliographic data properly. It would be wise to purchase an ISBN on your own. It's the difference between someone buying your book, or accidentally purchasing yet another copy of Harry Potter. Seriously, J.K. Rowling doesn't need the money!

**Myth #3:** You can't buy an ISBN after a book's been published.

**Fact:** You can indeed purchase an ISBN after a book's been published.

**Myth #4:** You don't have to buy separate ISBNs for a book translated in multiple languages.

**Fact:** Sorry, you do need different ISBNs for each translated version.

**Myth #5:** Barcodes and ISBNs are the same.

**Fact:** Barcodes identify either price, size or even color of a product, ISBNs identify publisher, editions, etc.

***More Need to Know Info:***

CreateSpace assigns books with ISBNs but only Amazon's KDP assigns ASIN (Amazon Standard International Number) numbers to their eBooks for the sake of their database. You can capture the ASIN number of any given book in the URL Amazon assigns each book.



As nice as that is, you need an ISBN for your eBook as well one for the print edition of your book. Sorry, there's no easy way around this expense. If you want to have your books in libraries, brick and mortar stores, and even *non-Amazon* websites, you must buy an ISBN for your eBook.

However before you spend money on this special number, you need to consider how far you want to go with your book. Do you want to sell your books just on your website or at conferences? If so, an ISBN is an unnecessary expense.

I hope I cleared the confusion about ISBNs, what they are what they really for. If you need one here are a few places to purchase them:

In the U.S. [ISBN.org](http://ISBN.org) (Bowker)

In Canada: [CISS](http://CISS) (Canadian ISBN Service System) ISBNs in Canada are free, I'm told. First you'll have to join and fill out a form.

In the UK: Things are a bit more complicated, the ISBN system is run by [Nielson Books](http://Nielson Books) and you must buy ISBNs in blocks of ten. The price for ten blocks of ISBNs is £92.

## Chapter 7

### Copyrights: Why You Need Proof of Ownership

Registering your manuscript with your government's copyright (intellectual property) office is one of the most basic responsibilities of any indie author. To claim the copyright of any work, one needs legal documented proof from a government copyright office. Though copyrights are not free, they are much cheaper than hiring a lawyer and paying court fees in the event the authorship of your book comes into question. In [the U.S.](#), it will run you about \$35, in [the U.K.](#), £39 (for 5 years), and in [Canada](#), \$50. Trust me, it's money well spent.

What you get is not legal protection but evidence. Your work is legally yours when you commit it to paper or digital file. What you are paying for here is a paper with a registration number that legally connects you to your book.

#### *Myths About Copyrights That Will Not Die*

- You can skip the whole legal process by mailing your manuscript to yourself via certified mail. This is called the *poor man's copyright* and no, it's not true.
- It annoys editors at publishing companies who want to buy your work. Who cares? Children annoy me, but you don't see me trying to discourage people from having them!
- Anything you write down is automatically copyrighted and can't be stolen. That's like saying your car won't get stolen because it belongs to you, try telling that to a car thief!

Still not convinced a copyright is a necessary expense? Here's a story for you: several years ago, there was a guy plagiarizing thousands of books on Amazon. Many of those authors he was ripping off sent several cease and desist letters to Amazon hoping for a simple solution. However, Amazon asked *them* (the authors) to prove they were indeed the real owners of the intellectual property. Remember indie author stands for independent author. Nobody's watching our backs, not Amazon, or anybody else.

I hope none of you ever has to defend a copyright but let's not base our writing business on wishful thinking. In the real world there are thieves, con artists

and dream killers, don't open yourself up to being robbed of what's rightfully yours. \*Stepping off soapbox\*

## Chapter 8

### Is Expanded Distribution Worth it?

Talk to any indie author and they'll tell you that distribution is a huge problem. Many authors can't get their books into certain stores without serious drama. Why is that and is there something we can do about it?

#### *Expanded Distribution: Not Worth the Trouble?*

Newbie authors often don't understand that distribution is a part of marketing. If your book isn't available for purchase, nobody will be able to buy it. There are expanded distribution deals offered by places like CreateSpace, and Author Solutions but they're often crap.

The sad reality is that many major distributors won't touch a self-published book, because most retail stores won't touch a self-published book. It's all due to returns, if you don't offer a return policy on your book, stores won't bother. This is where the big publishers have us beat. They can afford to take books back or even pay to have them destroyed, most indies can't. However, if you're willing to risk negotiating this sort of deal with a store, understand what you're getting into. Many indies have been burned and have gotten books returned to them that have been obviously used and worn out. One author online claimed she got a book back with coffee stains on it!

#### *Lightening Source*

For those of you who don't know, Lightening Source, a subsidiary of Ingram, (one of the biggest book distributors in the world.) is a POD service but unlike CreateSpace, they offer returns, to their business partners (bookstores). [This makes LS a darling](#) to bookstores especially, smaller independent ones who can't afford to warehouse books on their shelves indefinitely.

There are other distributors besides Ingram, and [here's an article listing them](#).

#### *You Will Still Have to Convince Stores to Buy*

If you want to see your books in Barnes & Noble or your local bookstore, then you will have to pitch them. Just because your book is in a retailer's database and available nationwide, doesn't mean stores and libraries will buy. They won't know that your book is available unless someone tells them and since you are your book's PR person, that will *have* to be you.

That means creating a possible script, and practicing your sales pitch until you have it perfected.

Now, if you're absolutely terrified of talking to strangers, then hire a book shepherd or a sales person to get your books into stores. As a small business you can offer them a commission or flat fee for every book sold. Here's a list of people who can help you sell your book.

- [Green Leaf Book Group](#)
- [Odesk](#)
- [Indeed](#)

Despite what you may believe, you'll have to price your book competitively just to make money. There is a reason why many bestsellers are priced at \$20.00 and it's not because some big named author wrote it. It's because there are so many people taking a cut of the profit and the publisher needs to get the most from the initial marketing push.

### ***Final Thought:***

It's quite simple, if your book is popular, then the more people will want it. This is why it's called *Expanded Distribution* if you're lucky enough to become the next literary sensation then, your books may warrant wider distribution. However if your book isn't selling, then why expand its distribution? It's just more work and it takes time away from your next project.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Websites: The Hub of an Author's Career**

Today's author has to be more tech savvy than the previous generations before if not, they risk being left behind. It's a blessing and a curse. Sure, we're free to create our own hubs independent of a publisher but there's so much work

and information to digest that many authors just avoid it. I myself am guilty, I put off building my own website for about a year.

But if you want to self-publish and secure sales on your own, independent of Amazon, or any corporate entity then, a website is a necessity. So let's get started...

### **Domain Names**

You need to claim or register a domain name first. Usually authors claim their names/pseudonyms, book titles or company name. I've purchased two domains, one for my author name *Rachel Rueben* and the other, for my business/blog, *Writing By The Seat Of My Pants*. Typically, a domain name will cost you anywhere from \$3.98 to \$15 a year. Yes, you must renew yearly, or risk losing your domain name.

To get you started, here are just a few services that get high marks from their customers.

- [NameCheap](#)
- [Hover](#)
- [Name.com](#)

You may notice I didn't list GoDaddy.com that's because after their very public DNS issue, which forced millions of businesses offline, I honestly didn't think they were the best bet. Also, there are many complaints about the company spamming their customers and having hidden fees.

### **Themes/Templates**

Themes are just templates that people can use to personalize their own website. One must have a little tech knowledge in order to make this work, but it's not over the average person's head. If you can personalize a blog, and know a little HTML, you're halfway there. This can cost anywhere from \$30-\$400 for a basic site.

Most popular websites like CNN and even eBay use Wordpress because it is considered the standard in website building. You'll be seeing a lot of themes based on Wordpress design.

- [Authorlicious](#)
- [Themeforest](#)



- [WordPress.org](https://WordPress.org)
- [Elegant Themes](#)
- [Organic Themes](#)

### *Freelance Web Designers*

If you have no tech skills then you need to call someone who does. Most freelance web designers work either by the hour or based on a given budget.

- [Design Crowd](#) (Crowd Source Design)
- [Writer.ly](#)
- [Web Design Relief](#)

### *Web Hosts*

Now that you have an idea about what you want your website to look like, you're going to need a web host. Web hosts offer space on their servers so that your website can be store and accessed on the world wide web. Usually, people are charge by what kind of traffic they expect to their site. The more people who visit your site, the more you will have to pay, or you risk having your site crash. The lowest price per month is \$3.95 to \$19.95.

- [Dream Host](#)
- [Hostgator](#)
- [BlueHost](#)

### *What should be on this Website?*

Your website doesn't need to flashy, but it does need to be easy to read, and even easier to use. A website's main purpose it to tell people who you are, what's for sale and how to buy it. It also needs to be mobile friendly so people can access it on their smart phones. If you haven't noticed, there are some people who are simply attached to their phones.

1. **Contact Page:** On this page ought to be your email or social media handle.
2. **Bio Page:** You need to tell people what you write and why. Also, a photo wouldn't hurt.
3. **Media Kit:** A place where you offer your bio, contact info and the name of your books.

4. **Portfolio:** Show people what you've written in the past either web or magazine articles/stories if applicable.
5. **Sales Page:** Let people know where and how to purchase your books.
6. **Hire Me/Available for Speaking Engagements:** If you're interested in securing any business, like paid speaking engagements, or hosting special events like workshops or seminars then, this is a must.

### *What if You Can't Afford it?*

Another alternative a lot of indies on a tight budget do is use a free [Blogger.com](https://www.blogger.com) or [WordPress.com](https://www.wordpress.com) blog as their website and link their domain name to it.

A website is imperative for an author these days, you need *something* to send people to in order to find out more about you. Sorry folks, but Facebook and Twitter aren't enough. It's too restrictive. You can't sell your books directly, or even run contests without a heap of rules, which by the way, are constantly changing. You need something YOU own. Some place where you can't be censored or harassed by someone else's rules.

## Chapter 10

### Marketing: the ABCs

Marketing is a subject so misunderstood that many authors find themselves demoralized when they post a Facebook ad and don't magically wind up on the bestseller's list. Newbie authors don't know that marketing is a layered and complex process, I mean, people go to college to learn this stuff!

Case in point, author James Patterson, one of Forbes highest paid authors, was the vice president of a marketing firm before becoming an author. Do you think this multi-time bestselling author's success was a fluke? Hardly!

Now despite what you may have heard, advertising and book reviews alone are not marketing. Marketing consists of production, distribution and sales, so let's break this down:

- Book marketing actually begins when an author chooses a genre or topic to write about. The more popular the genre, the better your chances of selling well.

- Packaging: By creating a book cover and interior that is competitive with what's on the market, you increase your odds of success.
- Distribution: You need to get your book to as many people as possible to get lots of sales. Many authors are going to Amazon, the largest online retailer to give their book the best shot at reaching as many readers as possible.
- Sales: You need to generate buzz via advertising, reviews, media (both off and online) or by holding giveaways and contests.

Looks like there's nothing to it huh? Sadly, none of that is true. This is a complicated project to manage. It takes time management skills, coordination (team building) and business communication skills to succeed.

So how does an indie author win at this? Easy, we study the big publishers and learn from their mistakes by adopting what works for them and discarding what doesn't.

### ***Secrets of the Big Six: The Soft Launch***

For those of you not familiar, a soft launch is where you put your book on sale, but tell only a select few like; reviewers, members of the media, and even newsletter subscribers. Some authors suggest taking a few months before doing an official push, just so you can get your ducks in a row. Here's what an author generally does during a soft launch...

### ***Look for Annoying Mistakes and Formatting Issues***

When I published my YA novel, I found a grammatical error on the first page. Needless to say, I was very upset. I worked so hard on that darn thing and still I missed things. Obvious things. If I had done a soft launch this wouldn't have happened.

### ***Start Collecting Reviews***

Ever wonder why when a famous author releases a book, there are already 200 glowing reviews on Amazon? It's because the book was already available for sometime but kept on the down low. A release date doesn't really mean, a book was actually published that day. A release date is more like a push date, where the author and or publishing house start their marketing bonanza.

### ***Score Blurbs***

Blurbs are different from reviews, blurbs are a seal of approval from someone significant in your genre or within the publishing industry. Blurbs almost legitimize your book if you're an unknown. This is important for indie authors since the self-publishing stigma is alive and well. Finding a big name who is willing to give an opinion on your book is hard but worth it.

### ***Create Media Kits***

Creating a media kit would have helped me and those curious about who I was. If you're going to query book bloggers, journalists, or podcasters it would help if you gave them a link to your media kit. This way they don't have to Google you and get lost in a sea of authors.

### ***Schedule Social Media Posts***

If you don't have [Hootsuite](#) or [Buffer](#) I don't know what you're doing with your life. These two free services offer the ability to auto post during peak hours on your social media accounts. This way you can schedule posts telling your followers about sales, interviews or giveaways you'll be doing. Priceless, for the author who is short on time and energy.

### ***Schedule Guests Posts with Popular Blogs***

This will take the most work, but it is necessary to find people who allow authors to guest post on their blogs. If you're going to make this work, you'll need to offer a sweet incentive, maybe a bribe, like a book for their audience, or offer them a favor, such as hosting them on your blog. This is totally up to you.

## **Chapter 11**

### **Building Your Social Media Following the Non-Douchey Way**

Imagine being at a rock concert and the band hands you the microphone, the spotlight is beaming and all eyes are focused on you. What do you say? How do you act? Social media can often feel like this to a lot of shy authors.

Sadly, there are authors who have ruined their reputations simply by being inappropriate or crude online. In fact, there are a few authors who've had to delete their accounts at the request of their own publishers. Please don't be that author!

### ***Regurgitation and Deviation, Oh My!***

I'm going to regurgitate some of what the other gurus have said \*sigh\* but in order to build a following, you may need to bug your family and friends.

But what happens if nobody responds to the call? Then you'll have to go where all the other nerds go to find ~~dates~~, umm...I mean **likes**.

Now here's where I deviate from the advice and tell you how people really get followers without spending money or humiliating themselves. On just about every social media site there are hacks for finding fans, likes and followers. Let's start with the world's largest social media site, Facebook...

### ***The Secret World of Facebook:***

On Facebook there are pages, groups and even like events where page owners help each other by liking one others page. It's a reciprocation thing and if you're not cool with it then, forget it. You'll have to advertise or use a promoted a post.

I've found that the best way to get likes outside of advertising are events. I participated in one of these several months ago and managed to secure 60 new likes. It was an open event where you were allowed to invite others as well. Here are some tips on [how to create a Facebook event](#). Make sure you invite people with pages or people interested in what you do otherwise, you won't get much of a response.

***\*Tip\*** If you really want a big turnout, promote your event on writer's groups to spread the word. However, make sure you have permission to post first!*

Having said that, there are also groups and pages devoted to helping page owners get a few likes. Now before you ask, no, I haven't altered the names of these groups to amuse you. It really is this easy to find these people just by typing, "Like My Page" in the Facebook search engine.

1. [Like My Page](#)

2. [Like My Page](#)
3. [Like My Page](#)
4. [Like My Page](#)
5. My personal favorite: [You Wanna Like My Page](#)

### ***On Twitter***

You can search hastags like, [#TeamFollowBack](#), [#INeedTwitterFollowers](#), or [#FollowMeBack](#) And before you ask, yes, Facebook has groups for those looking for Twitter followers, here are a few:

1. [Twitter Followers](#)
2. [Twitter Followers](#)
3. [Twitter Followers](#)
4. [Follow Me on Twitter](#)
5. [Follow Me on Twitter](#)

Another way to get followers is to participate in a trending topic. There are many writing related topics that are discussed on Twitter and here's a [list of the who, what and when.](#)

### ***Goodreads Likes, Votes, etc***

The same rules apply to Goodreads but you must be careful here, this is a place where you don't want to make a fool out of yourself. It's where the readers and reviewers actually hang out.

### ***On Goodreads:***

1. [Authors Helping Authors](#)
2. [You Like Me, I Like You](#)
3. [Indie Book Club](#)
4. [Independent Author Services and Promotions](#)
5. [Tips for Self-Promotion, Sales and Advertising](#)

### ***Congratulations, You've Won Half the Battle***

Now that you have a few likes/followers, you're on to the hard part. You're gonna need engagement and that means reaching out to other authors and cross promoting. That includes liking other pages and getting to know people. Don't like someone's page and message them with something stupid like, "Okay, I liked your page, now like mine." I've actually received these kinds of

messages on Facebook. And by the way, no, I don't ever bother with these people!

### ***Why Are We Doing This All Crap?***

It's a sad but God awful truth, that agents and editors want authors to have a large following on social media as this former editor explains [here](#). It's also a fact that some agents are now [Googling prospective clients](#) just to see what you're up to online. So if you're self-publishing to get the attention of an agent or publishing company, you'll need to show them some sort of online presence.

Personally, I wouldn't drive myself crazy with social media, it's just one pillar of an author's platform. I don't believe you should be paying for fans or ads on social media especially, when there are free alternatives to build your numbers.

Keep in mind, many authors have done well without social media, but if you want to get an agent or a decent contract with a trade pub then, you'll need to impress them. Tragically, the only thing that seems impressive to them these days is not your ability to write, but your ability to pimp a book.

## **Chapter 12**

### **How to Approach and Pitch Social Media Influencers**

It's a problem that many social media admins and page owners complain about all the time and that is complete strangers wanting favors. Don't think it's a problem? Just go to Twitter and type the words [Please RT](#) or [Help Me](#) into the search engine and you'll find an endless feed of begging. Now, I'm not shaming anyone because I used to do it too, thinking that was the way social media worked. Unfortunately, I listened to the social media *experts* who told people to ask, ask, ask which got me absolutely nowhere. In fact, I'm pretty sure I lost a few followers because of it!

### ***The Inherent Problem with Social Media***

The biggest problem most indie authors have is that their following on social media is small to nonexistent. I mean, who follows an unknown author? With no little or no money, we can't buy ads or promote posts which naturally puts us in a pickle. However, what most indie authors don't know is that they can

*borrow* somebody else's network. So how do you get someone to lend you their audience?

### ***Whatever You Do, Don't Skip This Step!***

If you really want to get on someone's radar, you'll need to join the community you'd like to target. And you're going to have to be a *good* community member, which means sharing, and commenting on the page whenever you can. If you're friendly as well as helpful, you'll get noticed in no time. If not, you might want to consider moving on.

Now keep in mind, you're building a relationship so this will take time. For example, when I joined Red River Writers, I was a member of their community for nearly a year when they announced they needed a virtual assistant. Of course I applied, and didn't need to feel anxious about approaching them because I was already acquainted with them.

### **A Cautionary Tale:**

In a previous [blog post](#), I mentioned a viral incident where a young woman approached a job recruiter on LinkedIn who ended up berating her for her poor etiquette. She was called, "*entitled and tacky*" by the recruiter and despite everyone's outrage, I understand the hostility. Now I'm not agreeing with how the recruiter behaved but I do know this could've been easily avoided if the young woman had simply introduced herself and expressed interest in becoming a part of the recruiter's community.

### ***Your Angle, You Do Have One Right?***

As long as you view this as a business proposition and not a handout, then you shouldn't feel uncomfortable pitching to a social media influencer or any influencer for that matter. However you first need to ask yourself, what do you bring to the table? Can you offer a free book, tee-shirt or a gift card? As a marketer, you're going to need an angle.

### **Things You Need Before You Pitch:**

- A familiarity with the page admin and the community.
- An appropriate book. Don't pitch a romance novel to a sci-fi page.
- A bribe or special offer.



## ***With Facebook's Crappy Algorithm Come Many Opportunities***

Since Facebook has limited the reach of most pages, page owners are scrambling to hang on to their following. It sucks for them because many page owners can't afford to advertise but you can easily bring a bit of buzz to their page with gifts and bribes. I believe now that Facebook is an easy target for indie authors looking to promote their work.

On the [Reading Between the Wines](#)' Facebook page (You need to be logged in to see the link) they occasionally offer *author takeovers*. A takeover is just like it sounds, an author takes complete control of the page in order to hold contests, answer questions and even interact with readers. Believe it or not, these types of pages aren't hard to find.

*Tip of the day: You can find author friendly pages on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and even [Google+](#) by typing, **Author Takeover** in the search engine and investigate which authors are doing takeovers and where.*

## ***Because I Care, Here Are More Resources***

Here's a Google spreadsheet compiled by author Dale Adimei called: [23 Facebook Pages/Groups with over 10K Potential Readers](#)  
[Bloggers who Interview Authors](#) by Lisa Kalner William (You must be logged into Google)

A list of [80 Book Reviewers on Twitter](#) Compiled by Yours Truly @WritingPants

## **Chapter 13**

### **Cheap Advertising for Indie Authors**

Long ago, we had a discussion on the podcast about marketing and one of the guests who had a background in marketing said something interesting, "Many authors buy Facebook ads and don't sell anything." She went on to explain that PR and marketing were different animals and not many authors know that. I agreed, though I had to come to that conclusion the hard way. I too advertised on [Facebook](#), and [Goodreads](#) then, wondered why I got no return on my investment. I quickly learned that the best places to advertise are in email newsletters but not all of them are cheap or indie friendly, so I went on a quest to find affordable and effective advertising.

In my search I found lots of sites with poor web traffic charging upwards of \$6,000 for an ad. And when I say poor web traffic, I mean sites with less traffic than my own blog. Indies have to be careful, there are a lot of people looking to take advantage of a naïve author. Case in point, a website catering to ebook readers emerged recently and was actively promoting on indie forums. However, when several authors did a little digging, it was discovered the site had an Alexa rating that was comparable to that of a small blog. To add to the confusion, they (the site) boasted of a subscriber base of over 100,000 readers which seemed impossible. Then a theory was purposed that maybe the site had purchased an email list and was most likely spamming people. I won't list that one here and I'm warning all indies to do their research *before* handing over any money for an ad.

It wasn't easy finding 10 sites that are cheap and indie friendly. I searched in author forums, blogs and even went to social media to find out what authors were saying about their experiences buying ads on these various sites. Those with bad customer service were automatically left out, while those with no tangible ROI outside of *exposure* were kicked to the curb. Some of the places listed are well known in the indie community, while others might be new to you.

### ***The Obvious Disclaimer:***

I need to warn you that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to advertising. Just because one author had success with a particular site doesn't mean you'll reap the same benefits. There are many factors that come into play when it comes to a successful marketing campaign like; popularity of genre, timing, placement, packaging and platform.

### ***10 Cheap Promotional Ads for Your Books***

#### [Pixel of Ink](#)

Is free, but your book must be .99 cents or lower to qualify and there's no guarantee that your book will be picked. From what I've been told, it's hard to get in.

[Ereader News Today](#) Takes 25% of all sales made through their ads and they exclusively use PayPal. Many indie authors swear by this site.

[Masquerade Books](#): Offers to Tweet your book 200-500 times as well as post a promo ad on their site for \$20-\$30.

[Book Praisers](#): Advertises your book to 120 sites including social media groups \$30

[Ebook Booster](#) Advertises your book (which must be priced at 0.99 cents) to over 30 sites for \$30.

[Kboards](#): Their ads range from \$35 for a featured book 1 day to a 7 day feature book at \$195.

[BookBub](#) Another popular site that indies swear by. Prices here range depending on genre with the lowest price at \$40 for LGBT themed books, to the highest being \$300 for Mysteries.

[Book Send](#) is set up like BookBub where they charge you based on Genre, the lowest price being \$10 for YA and \$100 for Romance. They claim to have over 60,000 subscribers.

[Kindle Nation Daily aka Book Gorilla](#)

Now I know this one is a wee bit expensive but I'm listing KND anyway. Why? Because I used this site myself and it worked for me and many others. Prices starts at \$99 for a one day feature and ends at \$529 for *Thriller of the Week*.

[Kindle Books and Tips](#)

I just discovered this site via the Kboards. At \$50 this site has done well for both fiction and nonfiction authors.

### **Freebie, Shmeebie**

For those of you doing a giveaway, there are millions of sites on the internet willing to help you promote for free. Heck, if you do nothing to promote your free ebook it will probably still do well in most cases. Here is a thread you need to check out on [LinkedIn](#) and also this article on [GalleyCat](#) (be sure to read the comments section) which should help you if you want to advertise a free book.

## **Chapter 14**

### **Where to Find Beta Readers**

When I published my first book, I made the horrible mistake of not getting any beta readers. Instead, I focused on editing and reviews which nearly drove me mad. I honestly think a beta reader would have put me at ease a little bit, but you know, hindsight is always 20/20.

Depending on your goals, beta readers can be fans of a particular genre, or even a fellow author. The ultimate goal is to get feedback you can use to strengthen your work. “*It’s cool*” or “*I liked it*” won’t cut it for most authors. The typical beta reader goes over a story to check for consistency in style, glaring grammar mistakes and even plot holes. In short, they critique books before they’re published.

### ***Should You Edit First?***

Many authors edit before giving a beta reader their book but there are those who use beta readers as an *editing filter* so they don’t have to pay so much on editing later on. I don’t like that kind of thinking, I mean, what beta reader is going to like a manuscript that’s not complete?

### ***Don’t Troll for Beta Readers***

Keep in mind, a beta reader is not a reviewer and authors shouldn’t confuse the two. In fact, I found this blog post called, “[\*\*When I Bought Your Book I Didn’t Sign up to be Your Beta Reader\*\*](#).” It’s an interesting take on authors responding to reviews and even changing books according to those reviews. Beta readers can help you avoid this publish and republishing nonsense.

### ***What to Look for in a Beta Reader***

Some authors are looking for a writing partner, while others are looking for a mentor, and some just want to see what the average Joe Shmoe thinks. Again, it all comes down to your goals. Whoever you choose, make sure to do your research. Make sure that person has actually done some beta reading in the past. This way you won’t waste time on those who are just looking for a freebie and avoid the flakes who never critique anything.

## **Different Types of Arrangements**

- Writers who offer an exchange, they’ll read yours if you read theirs. These are most popular with indie authors.
- Paid beta readers who offer their time and opinion for a price. The quality varies depending on the service as well as the beta reader.

- Regular readers who will offer an honest opinion on your work though they are rarely skilled at offering an in-depth critique.
- Writing groups usually made up of aspiring or rookie authors often critique manuscripts but beware, not all groups are created equal. Some consist of writers from various genres and may not have any clue about what your target reader likes.

### ***Be Mentally Prepared to Hear Their Opinion***

Some authors have described their experiences with beta readers as either pointless or nightmarish. Remember as an author, it is your responsibility to allow readers to hate your work without fear of retribution. They are not stupid or tasteless just because they don't like your book.

### ***Where to Find Beta Readers***

1. **Absolute Write** has a forum called: [Beta Readers, Mentors and Writing Buddies](#)
2. **LinkedIn** has a group called: [Beta Readers: A Subgroup of Let's Talk About Writing](#)
3. On **Goodreads** there is a group called: [Beta Reader Group](#)
4. **World Literary Café** has a [beta reader forum](#) but you must be a member.
5. On **Tumblr** there is a blog called [Find Your Beta Reader](#)
6. Even **Facebook** has several groups for [Beta Readers](#)

If you're not interested in cultivating relationships, then you may have to pay someone. There's a new site called, [GetBetaReaders.com](#) where you pay someone to go over your work. However, they're still in beta, imagine the irony!

## **Chapter 15**

### **What to Expect from a Paid Review**

I've been fascinated with this subject, and even wrote a little about it but I've never met an author who actually paid for a book review. Well, not one that

would actually admit to it. So I went to the internet to find out what you really get when you pay a reviewer. Investigating the most legitimate (popular) paid services Publisher's Weekly Select and Kirkus, I tried to find out the truth.

What surprised me about this investigation was the belief that some authors had about paid reviewers. Some believed that these reviewers were somehow more qualified to judge their work. But nowhere have I seen any resumes or qualifications listed on the reviewers. In fact, most of these reviewers are forced by the company to remain anonymous. So honestly, you have no idea who's reviewing your book.

Another shocking belief: All publishing companies pay for reviews. Honestly, that's unknown, though it's been alleged for years. The rumor being that big media outlets like the *New York Times* won't review books by publishing companies that haven't purchased advertising. By the way, it's very expensive to advertise in NYT, just check out their ad rates on their own PDF [here](#).

### **Kirkus Confessions**

It was this [confession](#) of a Kirkus reviewer who talked about how difficult it was to fulfill his assignments which got me thinking. If they're having issues with meeting assignments/quotas how on earth are these books getting reviewed?

According to a few dissatisfied authors, they're not! One author I found in a chat room, claimed that Kirkus simply skimmed her submission and gave an incorrect review of her book. In her complaint, the author alleges that the reviewer didn't get the arc of the story right and didn't seem to even know what the book was about. That's bad, considering they charge around [\\$425 to review a book](#), not to skim one.

### **Publisher's Weekly (Select)**

It gets no better with Publisher's Weekly Select program. Again, a few authors discussed the merits or lack thereof on the [Kindle Boards](#). Some cited that the reviews are necessary if you want your books in libraries and book stores. The logic being that since Kirkus and PW are marketed to book stores, libraries and those within publishing industry, your book will get in front of the right people. However I don't agree, you need an ISBN as well as expanded distribution through places like Amazon, Ingram, or Baker and Taylor not reviews from PW or Kirkus. Most importantly, you need big sales numbers!

As I read on, things got worse, one person claiming to be an agent said, that several of his clients paid for reviews only to have them put in a newsletter squished between 50 other reviews. Another author said it was a waste of money and that their book was never reviewed. While another person alleged that PW only chooses poorly edited books to slam.

### **The Inherent Problem**

The problem with the review business is there's no real way to manage it. How would a supervisor or managing editor know for certain a job is being done unless they read every book themselves to make sure details are not skipped or forgotten.

Another problem is lack of understanding, how can someone review book on World War 2 when they don't have a firm grasp on that time period? And how can a suburban middle-aged soccer mom review a book about a YA urban romance? See how this is all subjective? Indie authors are paying real money for an opinion that may or may not be relevant, let alone, intelligent.

I would be remiss in not mentioning that it's considered unethical to pay anyone for a review.

### **This is the Part Where I Tell You How Get Free Book Reviews**

There are sites that indie authors can submit their books for free, or only for the cost of shipping, to get an honest review. Hopefully, you've built a network on social media of fellow authors who review books in your genre. You can even solicit reviews on your blog or newsletter.

- Library Thing [Member Giveaways](#)
- [Libboo](#)
- [BookSneeze](#)
- [Goodreads](#)
- [World Lit Cafe](#)
- A Twitter List I Put Together of [75 Reviewers](#)

## **Chapter 16**

### **How to Get Your Book into the Library**

How can indie authors get their books into the library? Surprisingly, it may be easier to get into the library than it is to get into a local Walmart store. By the way, Walmart doesn't accept indie books due to return policies, and distribution problems.

Before I go on, I need to emphasize that this won't work unless you have legitimate buzz and impressive sales. While, indie authors have successfully gotten their books into their local libraries, many can't seem to breakout further than that. That's because many acquisitions librarians only purchase books based on their budget as well as a book's popularity.

Another point I need to make is that your book needs its own ISBN (For both the ebook and print edition) as well as distribution via Baker & Taylor or Ingram in order for a library to consider your book. These endeavors will cost you some money, but since you asked, I'm telling...

### **Catalogs**

#### **Edelweiss**

[Edelweiss](#) is a catalog used by many librarians across the country, it is also a site used by publishers to get their books in front of the acquisitions librarians. The cost is \$500 per year and \$30 per title as well as transaction fees that ranges anywhere from .22 to .08¢ per download.

#### **NetGalley**

Though technically [NetGalley](#) is about posting galleys it's also got a newsletter you can get into via their [marketing program](#). It's very popular with librarians looking for a *try before you buy* scenario.

### **Wholesalers/Retailers**

#### **OverDrive.com**

[OverDrive](#) is like the Amazon of digital retail store for libraries in fact, they actually send their customers to Amazon in order to download certain titles. Gotta love the irony, huh?

Many publishers have issues with their relationship with Amazon and librarians have issues with OverDrive's costs. The site is not for the casual



indie, meaning you need to have your own publishing company as well as a website that sells your books. Keep in mind, they will check during their vetting process.

As if that weren't bad enough, your book must be priced over \$1 and must be *commercially priced* according to their (SRP) Suggested Retail Prices. Also, you're not allowed to provide links or metadata within the file that sends customers to a competing site according to their guidelines [here](#).

There are other sites just like OverDrive such as; 3M, Ingram Library, Net Library and Baker & Taylor.

## **Reviews**

It's no secret that many libraries are under budget and understaffed. In response, many acquisitions librarians use book reviews as an important part of their vetting process. Some of these reviewing services require a fee like Publisher's Weekly Select and Kirkus but there are free sites like ForeWord Reviews and Midwest Book Reviews that are free to indies.

### **ForeWord Reviews**

[ForeWord Reviews](#) offers indie authors a place where they can submit their books for an honest and professional review. It's consider a place where media professionals go to find the latest and greatest in indie publishing. Did I mention it's free?

### **Midwest Book Reviews**

[The Midwest Book Review](#) services is free for print books but has a \$50 fee for ebooks, ARCs and uncorrected proofs.

### **Publisher's Weekly Select**

In 2010, PW introduced an indie program where they *announce* books on their website and even offer the possibility of a book review. It's only a small possibility because according to PW's own site there's a 75% rejection rate so the odds aren't good. This means you're basically paying for a blurb on a website, which seems more like advertising to me, but I digress...

I haven't heard of any librarians searching PW's Select program, because their place of choice is the *Publisher's Weekly Magazine*. However, no indies are allowed there unless, you're advertising, which is something to consider since the librarians are actually [there](#).

But if you're determined to try PW Select, the price is \$149 for both the listing and the 25% chance for a book review. I only recommend PW if you got money to burn and have your book in the other places.

### **Kirkus:**

[Kirkus](#) is a site used by publishing professionals as well as librarians. Unlike PW, they don't relegate indie books to the back of the bus. Getting a review here will cost about \$425-\$575.

### **Library Journal**

[Library Journal](#) is a media source for librarians all over the country, sadly, they're not open to unsolicited books. However, Library Journal does accept photos, guest posts and letters on a variety of topics. Just make sure you get a byline and mention your book in said byline.

### ***The Free Way to Get in the Library***

I know what you're already thinking, "Rachel, why don't I just donate my book?" and that's a good way to get your book in a library but if you want a library to *buy* your book, then you'll have to get on their radar in other ways.

### ***Telemarket/Spam Your Way into the Library***

There are directories that authors can use that list the websites of [libraries around the U.S.](#) You can email or call the acquisitions librarian and ask them if they would be interested in your book. Many indies have done it though there are no stats on how successful it is. However in telemarketing, I hear a 2% response is actually considered a good thing.

### ***In Conclusion***

There is no easy way to get your book into the library. I think many indies are putting the cart before the horse when they approach libraries in the beginning of their book launch. You don't want to start here, many libraries are on a

tight budget and have no room to spend carelessly on unproven books. Also, if you haven't noticed, it's expensive to get into the catalogs and online stores that librarians seem to favor. Save it for when you actually start to make a profit. You don't want to do too much too soon and wind up broke.

## Chapter 17

### **Assistants: They're Not a Luxury Anymore!**

Many authors figure only the rich can afford such luxuries, while others are control freaks and couldn't imagine handing over any aspect of their business to someone else. However that's total BS, if you are finding yourself overwhelmed by social media, email lists, and blogging then an assistant is exactly what you need! I'll admit, it took me a long time to become comfortable with farming out work to someone else. I mean what if they screw up? Worse yet, what if they walk out on a project? But what if they do an amazing job and save you time while preserving your sanity? I hate to break it to you but the latter usually happens.

#### ***The Money Excuse***

It's no secret that most indie authors are flat broke even after publishing multiple books. But we can all afford *something* and that's where we're going to start. If you value your time as a business owner then there are many things an assistant can do for you:

1. They can handle your social media accounts.
2. An assistant can investigate the names and email addresses of acquisition librarians.
3. They can deal with technical issues on your website, or ebooks.
4. They can research markets and databases to help you find more places to sell your books.
5. Pitch the media for interviews/reviews.

#### ***Author Assistants are a Growing Business***

Many vanity presses are notorious for over billing self-published authors for services like press releases and file conversion but a virtual assistant is *way* more cheaper. In fact, they're sometimes thousands of dollars cheaper than

what a vanity press charges. Here are just a few sites to investigate if you're considering making the leap.

- [Writer.ly](http://Writer.ly)
- [Zirtual.com](http://Zirtual.com)
- [Elance.com](http://Elance.com)

### ***Dead Broke?***

If you're publishing on a shoestring budget, you might want to consider hiring a college intern. The only caveat here is that you must offer them real world experience. Also, there are laws governing how businesses utilize free labor, such as, how many hours they can work before they're considered an employee. So be sure to research the labor laws in your part of the world.

Here are some places to get you started:

- [Internships.com](http://Internships.com)
- [Barefoot Student](http://Barefoot Student)
- [InternJobs.com](http://InternJobs.com)
- [InternMatch.com](http://InternMatch.com)

I hope I gave you something to think about in the future when you begin to find yourself overwhelmed and overburdened by things non-writing related. Remember, there's no shame in needing help. Most businesses, even the Fortune 500's are hiring interns and freelancers to help with redundant tasks like accounting and social media management. That way they can keep the main thing, the main thing.

## **Chapter 18**

### **Book PR 101: How to Find Interview Opportunities**

When I was marketing my novel, I would often find myself envious of all the media attention some authors received. Little did I know the author had a team of helpers to scour the earth for interview opportunities. Another fact I didn't know was that sometimes these teams were hired by the author and not

their publisher. In fact, many authors spend their entire advance (if they get one) on marketing their book.

This is where that assistant comes in real handy (chapter 17) because book PR is a lot of work.

If you hire an assistant, you can get bypass that awkwardness when asking for an interview. Just write a pitch letter for your assistant and ask *them* to send it, this way you're still in control.

### ***Timing is Everything!***

It's been said a million times but I need to remind you, most magazines and websites publish by editorial calendar. For example, some magazines start looking for Christmas stories in July and Halloween articles in May. This is why it's so important to send a pitch or query many months before your promotional blitz. Consider this part of your soft launch.

### ***Pitching the Right People***

It should go without saying that you have to be careful as to who you pitch because not all media members are indie friendly. In fact, some places are downright hostile to self-published authors. I think it's because some of them blame us for the [downfall of publishing](#). So save yourself the frustration and anger by learning about the publication you wish to break into. Also, learn the name of the editor or assistant editor responsible for the section you'd like to appear in. They hate, *Dear Editor* pitches and often delete them or worse, they forward them to the interns. \*gasp\*

### ***What to do if you Want to Break into a Magazine that Doesn't Feature Indies?***

If you absolutely must get your name in O Magazine, or the New York Times, then you'll need to write an article that will captivate their audience. However, this isn't the same as promoting your book, yes, it will give a nice byline but little else. However think about it, when was the last time you've read the byline of an article?

Here are a few resources to find the right interview opportunity for your book:

- [Poets and Writer's Database](#)

- Wikipedia Database of [Book Review Magazines](#)
- [World-News Papers](#)
- [World Literary Cafe](#)
- [MediaBistro](#) (Paid Service)
- [Writer's Market](#) (Paid Service)

### ***Finding Opportunities on Social Media***

Social media is a great place to find information for opportunities not available anywhere else. There are newspapers and magazines that update their social media accounts more often than they do their own websites. The search engines of Google+, Facebook, Goodreads and Twitter should be your best friends.

#### **Research Tips:**

Try typing the words: *author interviews* or *looking for author interviews* into the search engines and see what you find.

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Google+](#)

You can do the same thing for the Goodreads search engine, just be sure to click both the *events* tabs as well as the *groups* tabs at the top.

### ***Podcasts***

I would be remiss if I didn't talk about podcasts. This past week, Red River Radio launched its first [Facebook page](#) and the turnout was tremendous. In less than 24 hours, they had over 270 likes, and several authors contacted them directly about wanting to be on the network.

Podcasts are a great way to land an interview as well as get a book reviewed. Hat tip to BookBuzzr for this list of [Podcasts for Authors](#).

**Research Tip:** Go to Blogtalkradio, Podbean or iTunes and type the words: *authors* or *books* into the search engine. Be sure to listen to the podcast before you request an interview to see if it's the right fit for you.

## **Radio Programs**

Yes, it's been said radio is dead but in certain parts of the country and even the world, radio is alive and well. Many radio programs offer interview segments and some are absolutely desperate for guests. This is where you come in with your free books and t-shirts. You can find thousands of stations on this website called, [Radio-Locator](#) and another international one called, [RadioStationWorld](#).

## **Television**

Believe it or not, television is still an option for indie authors promoting a book. Sure you may not end up on *OWN* (Oprah Winfrey Network) or the *Today Show*, but you don't need to. There are plenty of places that want to interview authors of any stripe. Just check out a few local programs in your neck of the woods. Here's an online [station locator](#) and another [here](#).

## **Who and How to Approach?**

Many radio and television stations have a contact us page like this one [here](#). Depending on what you have in mind, you can offer a contest of some kind or just request an interview. Whatever you choose make sure to perfect your query/pitch letter before clicking send. It would be wise to approach the producers (if you want an interview) or the marketing department (if you only want to run a contest) in order to get an actual response. If that information isn't easy to find on the site, Google it. That's how I found the producer of the local morning show in my town. Most television stations have terrible websites. Google or Bing should be able to help you demystify a poorly designed website.

# **Chapter 19**

## **Building Your Email Lists**

Since everyone and their mother is talking about email lists, I decided to add my 2 cents and explain why email lists can make or break an author's career.

If you haven't noticed it's getting harder and harder to stay in touch with your readers on social media. I'm not only talking about the Facebook algorithm

changes, as much as that sucks, it's not the only thing standing in the way of indie authors when it comes to reaching their readers. As more people and corporations build websites and blogs, it makes for more competition in cyberspace. To add insult to injury, online ads are becoming more expensive, not to mention, ineffective when promoting a book. So what do we do?

Lots of authors (myself included) are building their own email lists and are having success at getting readers to sign up. I've heard of authors who have over 30,000 people on their lists. Yes, there are authors who have more subscribers than some major newspapers! And don't think this is an indie thing, I know several traditionally published authors who are quietly building their own email lists. You know, in case they get the shovel from their publisher. That way, readers can follow their favorite author and not the stinking publishing company.

Email lists are quickly becoming more important than social media to a lot of authors. It's gotten so important that even Amazon is collecting email addresses on **your** Amazon author page!



My Amazon author page (Above)

The cool thing about email lists is that they're not time sensitive or at the mercy of some search engine's algorithm. Bestselling authors like C.J. Lyons have even replaced blogging with email newsletters. So if you find yourself overwhelmed and short on time, this may be the route for you. An email newsletter once a month is doable even for the busiest author.

Long ago, I explained the importance of [newsletters](#) so I won't rehash, but I will be giving you a few tips on how to grow your email list, you know, just in case there's a social media apocalypse or you don't feel like blogging anymore.



## Free eBooks

Hands down, many authors and online writers swear by this technique. Here's how it works, an author offers a free book, readers opt in, they get a coupon code or a file to download and boom—new subscriber. Don't worry, if you have only one book out, you can always write a short prequel. This way you don't feel like you're sacrificing your paid writing time creating freebies.

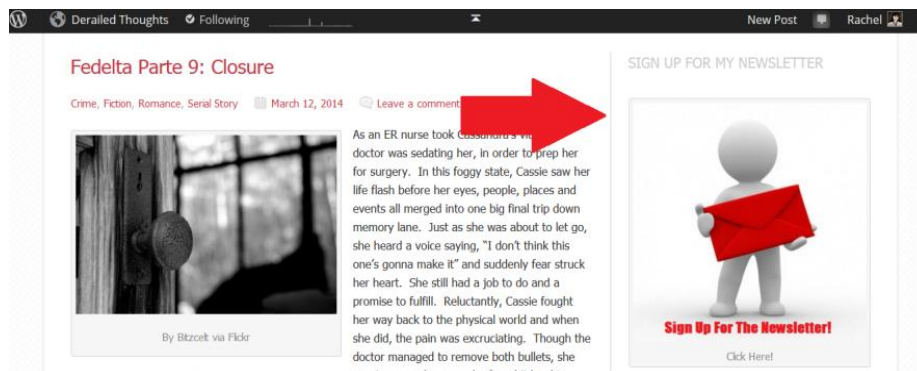
**Tip:** *It also wouldn't hurt if you put a link to your opt in form in any existing ebooks you've already published.*

## Ads

Personally, I wouldn't try advertising unless I had a few bucks lying around but if you have a nice freebie or contest to offer, then why not advertise? Just beware that there are people on the hunt for freebies who may just sign up, collect their freebie then, unsubscribe. So be careful where you advertise.

## Where to Put Your Links

The most obvious place to put your opt in link is on your blog, or website and make sure it's big and bold like the widget I created here on my author site:



The opt-in widget on my author site (Above)

Another idea for the blogging author is to create generic template for your posts with a byline containing your link. Don't relegate yourself to the generic bio that WordPress or Blogger has for you, they don't allow clickable links.

## ***Use Social Media to Promote Your Email List, Not the Other Way Around!***

While it's still free to use, social media can be a good place to link to your list. Instead of just putting your website or blog address, in the about section, why not put the link of your email list instead? I did this on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and even [Wattpad](#). And don't forget to mention it occasionally in your updates and posts.

## ***Blog Tours or Guest Posting***

If you're going to post on someone's blog it would be wise to leave your form's link in the bio. If they don't allow it, create a sales/landing page on your blog with your opt in form like I did [here](#).

I'm sure you've gotten the point by now, authors really have to promote their email lists and not so much their social media accounts these days. This way we can weather the storms of social media evolution and advertising extinctions without breaking sweat. There's nothing worse than being dependent on something or someone that cares nothing for your success.

## **Chapter 20**

### **Book Promotion: What They Won't Tell You!**

There are some things you just can't know unless you ask and I, as well as many indie authors never ask one important question and that's: how do you get your book featured on big websites like *Amazon's Editor's List* or *The B&N Review*? In this very long chapter, I lay it all down and give you email addresses as well as submissions guidelines to the editors at Amazon, Goodreads, Kobo and even Barnes & Noble. So enjoy!

### **How to Get Featured on Goodreads**

Just mention Goodreads to some indie authors and you may get a hostile response. There's no doubt that there have been several nasty author vs reader fights. But there is no reason to treat Goodreads like a social media ghetto. Seriously, you don't need to clutch your books tightly to your chest every time

a reader passes by! Yes I'll admit, there are trolls who wish to ruin your day, but on the flip-side, there are also *authors* harassing people on the site. In fact, it's gotten so bad that several groups on Goodreads have banned misbehaving authors like this one called, [Anti-Asshat Indie Authors](#).

You see, it goes both ways. My advice for social media has always been avoid drama, by having nothing to do with the people who cause it.

### ***Things to do on Goodreads***

Your first mission on any social media site is to claim some space of your very own. That means creating a profile and joining the [author's program](#). You have to do this in order to add your books and hold giveaways on the site.

Once you're done with all that, you're going to want to build up you fan numbers but before you go spending all your efforts on that, you might want to consider jazzing up your Goodreads author page. That means posting videos, creating quizzes, and sharing quotes from your book.

### ***Make Friends with the Cool Kids***

If you're going to follow someone, follow the people who are the power users. These people generally visit the site daily and sometimes have hundreds if not, thousands of reviews to their credit. Goodreads helps you find these folks using their [People](#) feature. It can help you find the most popular reviewers, and librarians who review books in your genre.

### ***Getting in the Goodreads Newsletter***

Did you know Goodreads has a newsletter? Actually, they have two, one for adults and another for the young adult crowd. Though indie authors aren't likely to get interviewed or reviewed unless, they buy one of the advertising packages, there is still a way to weasel your book into that newsletter.

Every month, the kind folks at Goodreads select the most popular Q&A sessions and put them in their newsletter which goes out to thousands people. If you can pull off an awesome Q&A then there's a good chance you can wind up in their newsletter. However, you must contact them well in advance before your Q&A is scheduled.

Here are suggestions from [Goodreads' own website](#): “Create a special group ‘Ask [Author Name]’ or [Author Name] hosts a Q&A.’ Make sure to categorize it as a ‘Goodreads Author’ group. The group description should clearly state what time range the author will be available to answer questions—we recommend running your group for a single day.”

You can contact them about it [here](#) and select **Author Program** in the question type drop down box.

### **Another Approach:**

The editors at Goodreads are open to book submissions from publishers (which you are by the way) so why not send yours? Keep in mind, it's very competitive, there are tons of authors and publishers submitting and wanting in, but it's still worth a shot.

[Here is the list](#) of the editorial team, as well as the instructions as to where and how to submit your book.

### **How to get Featured on Kobo**

Kobo is quickly becoming a book retailer to be reckon with, with over 12 million registered users on its site, it's a place indie authors should start paying serious attention to. Since the acquisition of [Sony's ebook library](#) (U.S. & Canadian only) Kobo is likely to continue growing. And although they don't have a large share of the American market, (that honor belongs to Amazon) they do command 20% of the global ebook market.

So how do you make your run with Kobo successful? Easy, you take advantage of Kobo Writing Life, which includes a [blog](#) as well as a [podcast](#) that gives authors good tips on how to promote their books on the site. Also, you get your ebook featured in Kobo's BookHub. And unlike [Goodreads](#), Kobo, will feature a book for *free* on their website if you meet their requirements.

Just like Amazon and Goodreads, Kobo, has several newsletters that regularly go out to readers alerting them of sales and new releases. Also, Kobo prominently features books on the front of their website and guess what, it's indie friendly! Though, I couldn't find the numbers on how popular this is, their *The Indie Next List* page has an Alexa rating of 5,000 globally which isn't bad.

## **The Kobo BookHub Rules**

Even though it's free to submit, you still have to make sure the links you provide are from your book's Kobo page and not Smashwords or \*gasp\* Amazon.

Here are the rules from Kobo's own blog: **What You Need to Know** – *Not all books will be featured; the selection will be made based on **perceived quality and available slots**. There will be more free books featured than bargains, and more bargains than full-price books. \*Bargains are all books priced below \$2 (regardless of whether it's a promotion or not), Full Price are all books priced above that.\**

So what does this all mean? It means your book needs to be free or cheap to get a push from Kobo. Also, your book needs to have several reviews as well as a sweet cover and blurb. So if you think you got what it takes, [submit here](#).

## **How to Capitalize on the Free Publicity**

Kobo isn't as sophisticated as Amazon with its chat boards and multi layered website but it is slowly catching up. If I were an indie with a new book, I would do this about the time I did a big push, mainly, to keep my book on everyone's mind. I'd lower my price or go free, and tell the world about it on all the websites and social media pages that feature book sales and freebies.

## **How to get Featured on Barnes & Noble**

It's the second largest book retailer after Amazon depending on who you ask. There's no doubt the past few years have been rough for Barnes and Noble with plummeting Nook sales, multiple store closings, as well as many layoffs, it's no wonder they're constantly compared to their former (now defunct) competitor, Borders.

However in spite of all that, B&N has begun to gain some steady footing by reorganizing their company and hiring a new CEO. So despite the rumors of Barnes & Noble's demise, they're not going anywhere, anytime soon.

### ***Why not go Exclusive with Amazon?***

Not long ago, I had a friend ask about my print book and when I told her it was available on Amazon, she ordered it through B&N which, I thought was a bit extreme. You see, there are many people who believe Amazon is the *evil empire* (generally those within the publishing community) and are actively boycotting the site. Also there is the fact that once Amazon becomes a monopoly, (and it seems like that's inevitable) they'll change their royalties so instead of 70%, that could be lowered to 50% or even 20%.

### ***The Difference between Amazon and Barnes & Noble***

Barnes and Noble was a company founded in 1886 and began as a simple book shop in New York. To this day, it's said that B&N still sells more print books than Amazon.com. However, Amazon dominates the digital market (eBooks). Amazon also sells a plethora of products on its site such as air conditioners and clothing, while B&N just sells books and entertainment items on theirs. The only real advantage they have over Amazon, are their brick and mortar book stores. B&N is offline as well as online and can offer things to authors like book signings and even bookfairs in their stores. All one has to do is call up one of their many book stores using their [store locator](#) and speak with one of their managers directly.

### ***In the Beginning there was the Ebook...***

When eBooks first hit the market, readers had two choices, Amazon's Kindle or Barnes & Noble's Nook, and believe it or not, many book lovers preferred the Nook over the Kindle for a short time. That alone is why it's a good idea for indie authors to get their books uploaded to the Nook. Also, B&N is launching a new device in [May of 2015](#) and who knows, it could rival the Kindle once again.

### ***The Site Formally Known as Pubit***

For those of you who don't know, [Nook Press](#) (formally known as Pubit) is the only way indie authors can upload their ebooks to the Barnes & Noble site directly. I talk about how to do that in [Chapter 4](#).

### ***Wait a Minute, You're not Done Yet!***

Like Goodreads, Barnes & Noble has a newsletter called [B&N Review](#) where they interview authors and review books. It would be wise if you sent them a proof or review copy of your print book to their address:

The Barnes & Noble Review  
Barnes & Noble.com  
76 Ninth Avenue  
New York, NY 10011

### ***In Conclusion***

I like Barnes and Noble but I spend most of my money online at Amazon because they have so much more to offer and let's face it, it's convenient. Also there's the issue with the Barnes and Noble search engine, it's nowhere near as good as Amazon's.

But needless to say, if they don't change their operating model soon and rely less on entertainment products like DVDs and CDs they will go into extinction like their competitor Borders.

### **How to get Featured on Amazon**

I saved the best for last, for those of you unaware, Amazon has a section on their website called, [Editor's Picks](#) where they review and even feature author interviews. They also have a blog called, [Omnivoracious](#) and an email newsletter that goes out to readers weekly and monthly. Today, I'm going to show you the who and where to send your book if you want to be considered.

### ***How do you become one of the Chosen Ones?***

I asked the kind folks at Amazon how does a book become an editor's pick and got no response. So I went looking in chat rooms and read in this [KDP Amazon Community thread](#) which says you need to sell a lot of books just to get on their radar. However, that made no sense because several picks have been books by unknown authors. The real reason why nobody in the indie community knows anything is because Amazon doesn't want you to know.

They get so many submissions from publicists and traditional publishers that they don't want any more dang books!

Now here's the kicker, Amazon only accepts review copies by snail mail! Yes you heard right, the biggest online retailer in the world is using ye ole' postman to pick their next big thing. However before I go on, here's the address:

Amazon.com

Attn: Editorial – [please insert appropriate department]

P.O. Box 81226  
Seattle, WA 98108-1226  
USA

*There is also an email address you can send a proposal to: amazon-books@amazon.com. This information is available on their website [here](#).*

### ***Before You Send Off Your Masterpiece***

Keep in mind, you need to have all your ducks in a row. When you submit your book, make sure you have the correct editor, here is [a list of all of the editors](#) and the genres they review. Don't give them an excuse to dismiss your book. Also keep in mind, they are under no obligation to review any unsolicited material.

**Important Tip:** Be sure to pitch during the end of your soft launch so that you have a few reviews just in case they need social proof.

### **What to include in your mailing:**

1. A review copy or proof.
2. A brief cover letter with an awesome blurb/synopsis.
3. Your contact information; website, blog, or email.
4. If you don't have any online presence, create a media kit with picture, bio, etc.



### ***In Conclusion...***

Before I sign off, I think I need to advise you to not get too depressed when a major company like Amazon, doesn't feature or review your book. The publishing industry is very competitive and it was way before self-publishing even took off. It takes time to get noticed and there are rarely any *overnight sensations*.

Self-publishing is a business which means it could take years to make a profit from your business. You'll need to take risks and be willing to make mistakes in order to find out what works for you. If you approach self-publishing like a business and not merely an art form, you can make a pretty good living from it. Like the saying goes: "*The sky isn't the limit, your mind is.*"

**The End**

### ***Author Bio Page***

Rachel Rueben is the author of several YA novels as well as a romance suspense book. She is also the head unicorn (blogger) at [Writing By The Seat Of My Pants](#) where she discusses self-publishing and whatever comes to mind. You can learn more about her at author website at: [RachelRueben.com](#).