
Self-Publishing? Watch Out for POD Sharks!

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In a recent interview with Angela Hoy of Booklocker (www.booklocker.com) and Writers Weekly (www.writersweekly.com), we asked her what she thought about the future of print on demand publishing (POD). She had some powerful, and quite provocative statements that might turn the heads of a few of the bigger print on demand publishers.

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In a recent interview with Angela Hoy of Booklocker (www.booklocker.com) and Writers Weekly (www.writersweekly.com), we asked her what she thought about the future of print on demand publishing (POD). Here's what she had to say:

The POD business is loaded with sharks. Most POD companies try to suck every last dime out of an author's pockets. They could care less if an author sells even one copy of their book to the public. Their whole business model is geared around selling certain number of books to the author and his/her family, plus selling the author publishing and marketing services at outrageously marked up prices.

Unfortunately, I don't see any of that changing much over the next five years.

What I'd wish the POD business would be is like the model of our company, BookLocker.com. We decided to offer the same publishing services (we use the exact same back-end printing and fulfillment service as our major competitors), but offer it at a reasonable price. The goal is to get a quality product into the market with the lowest initial investment for the author. Then we try to create an environment that favors book sales to the public.

In essence, POD is a great, low-risk way for an author to test the market for his/her book...provided they hire the right POD company. Ideally, this is how the publishing business should work. An author would come to a company like us, prove the market for a book at low-cost and risk, then get handed off to a traditional publisher who could take the author to the next level. This is much more efficient model than what happens now.

Another thing to know is that many large traditional publishers are now using POD technology to print their backlist books and many small traditional publishers are now using POD technology exclusively on all their titles. Traditional publishers are starting to realize that this technology makes more sense than printing and then warehousing copies of books that may never sell.

Them's fighting words to other print on demand publishers. Are they all sharks? No, not really. There are many quality print on demand companies out there. The key point, however, is that the technology of print on demand is here to stay - and it's growing quickly. That traditional publishers have embraced the technology is a good sign for authors who aren't

given the time of day by traditional publishers.

As little as two years ago I heard some publishers and book sellers claim that the quality of print on demand books was substandard. They could "tell" that a book was printed with this technology. Not so, today.

You'll likely see an increase in print on demand publishing, as well as a shuffling of the market leaders, in the coming years. The technology is still new enough to be confusing, and unfortunately as Hoy points out, there are some scrupulous publishers who take advantage of this confusion.

If you have any interest in learning the truth about print on demand publishers, I encourage you to become a member of www.writeandpublishyourbook.com (for free). You'll receive monthly (or sometimes more frequent) updates on the print on demand and self-publishing world. We'll present all points of view - even those to which we may not agree!