

Advice on Self-Publishing

Contributed by Manuela Pop
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Here's one more take on self-publishing. This author chose iUniverse for some of the very same reasons other authors have chosen companies like Infinity Publishing. Like most authors, Manuela Pop has strong opinions. Is self-publishing a hobby? For some, this is absolutely true. Others will adamantly disagree. What do you think?

One Person's Advice on Self-Publishing

A few people have emailed me for advice on self-publishing, so I decided to write a small guide. There is much hype today about self-publishing and some companies are profiting from thousands of people who want to see their books in print.

My experience with self-publishing has been an OK one. Would I advise you to self-publish? Sure, as long as your expectations are not too high. Keep in mind that you will not make much money from self-publishing. [Editors note: some people do make thousands from self-publishing]. It is better to see the world of POD (publish on demand) as a hobby, but nothing else. The royalties in self-publishing are so low that you actually have to sell thousands of books to make money.

I put a lot of effort into my writing and promoting my self-published book. Writing is hard, but promoting your book is even harder. When you choose a self-publishing company, make sure you read the fine print carefully. The company I chose is iUniverse. What I like about iUniverse is that if you choose a package that includes the evaluation, they will tell you what is wrong with your book. You then get a chance to improve and resubmit your book. If you have the budget, I advise you to buy editing services, such as line editing. This is what I did to correct the grammar and spelling errors.

Many self-publishing companies offer several services, depending on how much money you want to invest in your book. Keep in mind that you will not make much money out of self-publishing. [Editors note: Intention is everything... be realistic, but don't set yourself up for failure] If you are a very talented writer and you think you have an amazing book, I advise you to keep looking for a traditional publishing house to publish your book. I tried to publish my book with a traditional publishing house, but it was really a 'mission impossible.'

Other traps to look for in self-publishing: there really is no need to keep pouring money into your book. There are many companies out there who will do anything for your book for a large sum of money. iUniverse for example, offers expensive editing with the help of skilled people. After a few thousand dollars invested in your book, you can get the label 'Editor's choice' and if you sell five hundred copies, you get a chance to see your book re-published by a traditional house. It sounds very promising, but trust me from my experience, to sell five hundred copies is a really hard thing to do. Many people are still very skeptical about buying a self-published book.

I worked very hard at promoting my book. Here are some ways to promote your book: send it to reviewers; distribute printed postcards about your book; tell all your friends; and advertise it as much as you can on the internet (or anywhere else).

I put together a list of self-publishing houses that you should look at: iUniverse, AuthorHouse, Infinity Publishing, Llumina Press, Aventine Press, etc. Of course there are some other companies out there, some more expensive than others, but those are the ones I would recommend. I do not recommend the really cheap self-publishing companies, such as LULU, because they do not check the content of your book. They will print just about anything for money. If you think your book is fantastic and needs no additional work, then you can publish very inexpensively with them.

[Editors note: We'll soon have a self-publishing guide that compares the 40 top print on demand publishers - sign up for our newsletter or become a member of the site (free) to receive notification and a discount]

There are many places where you can send your book for review. BookConnector has been a great help for me in finding internet sites that do book reviews. You should not pay for a book review! I had very positive experience with most of the review sites, except for one, from where I got a bad review. Try to read other reviews first to see if they give decent reviews. Some places might scrutinize your book too much and you really don't want that for publicity. In the writing business, opinions can differ so much from one person to another, so you really need feedback from a lot of people before you decide if your book is good or not. If ten people gave you good reviews and one person gave you a bad review, you might tend to forget about the later one. Otherwise, I had a good experience with reviews, so I definitely recommend you to send an email query first to ask for a review.

If you believe you have a fantastic book, you can also send it to local newspapers or radio stations for interviews. But really, try to query the place first to see if they want to accept your book.

Self-publishing is a great hobby and unless you have a passion to write and promote your own book, you will not be able to succeed. A traditional way of publishing is definitely the key to success, but it really is almost impossible to get in.

[Editor's note: You STILL have to promote and market your book with traditional publishing. Sorry - you can't escape that one!]

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