

# "Extreme" Self-Publishing Worked for Me!

Contributed by Diane Lau  
Sunday, 15 October 2006  
Last Updated Thursday, 10 January 2008

Nowadays most savvy writers are aware of the option of "self-publishing," that is, paying a company like Xlibris, AuthorHouse or iUniverse to convert a manuscript to a book. Most authors have been sufficiently frustrated with traditional publishers to contemplate this route. Here's another consideration you might explore...

## Self-Publishing the Easy Way

Nowadays most savvy writers are aware of the option of "self-publishing," that is, paying a company like Xlibris, AuthorHouse or iUniverse to convert a manuscript to a book. Most authors have been sufficiently frustrated with traditional publishers to contemplate this route.

{sidebar id=7}But there is another option not very many people consider: real self-publishing. By that I mean being your own publishing house. Not only can you save a bundle of money and actually make a profit with your book- you also have all the control.

Now you may be thinking, "What? Handle the business, the book design, the marketing, everything myself? That's too extreme!" But you'd be surprised how easy and rewarding it can actually be. Let me share with you my own story as proof.

Early in 2006, I was the best-selling author of a great small publishing house, happily doing advance promos for my soon-to-be-released fifth title, when suddenly I found out the company was going out of business.

This was the second time in my career I'd lost a publisher. The first time, back in 1998, my response was to start up a little sole proprietorship. I published two books in very short runs, using a printer that could do the job for an acceptable price. I still haven't fully recouped my \$2,000 investment, but all this while I kept my little company operational, using it to sell those two titles and to produce a few ebooks for free distribution.

The changes in technology since 1998 have completely transformed the publishing industry. The advent of ebooks and print-on-demand (POD) means book production can be done with extremely low up-front costs. Internet distribution enables readers around the world to find small press books and buy them. The web also provides countless free or inexpensive marketing opportunities that didn't exist in 1998.

So, once again "publisher-less" and tired of the volatility of the industry, I asked myself if there was anything another small, independent house could do for me that I couldn't do on my own. I could think of almost nothing. There was added incentive when I ran the numbers: I found I could lower the prices of my books and still make substantially more profit than my royalties had provided.

I was confident I could handle the requirements of the project. In the past I'd already done much of my cover design work. I knew how to typeset and design a print book from seeing my publisher do it, and had created ebooks. I understood how the distribution channels worked. And as for marketing, nowadays almost all of it falls on the author, no matter who the publisher is-I had plenty of practice with that.

Extreme self-publishing? Not really! The tools were there to do it all myself.

So, I recreated my two print books and six ebooks, as well as print and ebook versions of the new title I was planning to release. I worked directly with Lightning Source, Inc., the company many self-publishing services use for ebook and POD production, as well as distribution to all the major online bookstores. While holding down a full-time day job, I was able to complete the work in less than five weeks, which should give you some idea of what it takes time-wise.

It cost me less than \$750 to publish all those books. By contrast, I calculated what AuthorHouse would have charged in fees for what I did on my own, and it was over \$3,000!

I'm happy to say the new books look even better than the original versions. And as I guessed, my income is even better than before. But best of all, I have peace of mind: I know everything is in my control. No one but me will ever again make the decision to remove my titles from availability!

While the trend in Big Publishing is to neglect new authors, there is a revolution among writers and readers to bypass the old system. The new wave is small electronic presses, "self-publishing" companies, and authors like me who directly publish themselves. It's wonderful how authors and readers connect every day without any involvement by Big Publishing. It's a very exciting time to be an author, especially a self-publishing one.

So, if you've been thinking about self-publishing, why not go "extreme"? If you have even basic skills in business management, marketing, graphic design, and web design, I encourage you to consider the option of starting your own publishing company.

Diane Lau writes romance fiction as Diana Laurence. Her ebook Do-It-YourSelf-Publishing ([www.dianalaurence.com/diyp.html](http://www.dianalaurence.com/diyp.html)) details her blueprint for being your own publisher. It is available in pdf for \$2.99 from Powell's Books, \$2.75 from Diesel eBooks, or \$2.54 off from Living Beyond Reality Press ([www.livingbeyondreality.com](http://www.livingbeyondreality.com)).