
UPDATES

to

Your Book Publishing Options

as of January 2017

Although 99% of *Your Book Publishing Options* remains the same, there have been some useful updates since publication in early 2014.

1. BookBaby, the world's biggest aggregator for indie writers, has become more competitive with prices and services over the past year. It has now become the benchmark against which to measure other quotes for ebook conversion and distribution.

In late 2016, BookBaby finally offered an **ebook conversion-only package** for US\$99. This means you can send the Word file of your book to BookBaby for them to convert into an ebook in EPUB and Kindle formats without requiring you to distribute your ebook through BookBaby. Browse for their prices and services via: <https://www.bookbaby.com/>

The following screenshot is from the BookBaby website on 24 January 2017:

***New!* eBook Conversion Only**

Professional eBook conversion for just \$99.

Don't need promotion or distribution? Use our new conversion-only service and transform your manuscript into a professional-looking eBook compatible with any eReader device, including a final format proof for your review. **Get started.**

However, if you want BookBaby to distribute your ebook, then a **conversion, distribution and basic promotion package** is currently US\$149 (plus \$2 per image included in the ebook). Fortunately, BookBaby has **discontinued** its annual service charge of US\$19 per ebook, which now makes the company a much more attractive option.

One caution: if you want to opt into KDP Select (Amazon Kindle's option to make your ebook available exclusively from Kindle for free on 5 days across 90 days, so you can run promotional offers), then you will have to upload your ebook to KDP yourself, then wait out the 90 days before BookBaby will distribute your ebook to other retailers.

In addition, BookBaby has recently reduced its prices on **print-on-demand books**. This is a particularly good option for those who want to print fewer than 250 copies. The distribution is done through Ingram, the world's biggest book distributor, so your book can be made available via the UK's Book Depository (the second biggest book retailer to Australians, after Amazon), even if bricks-and-mortar bookstores don't order in copies.

The POD option from BookBaby is now a benchmark against which indie writers should compare other quotes and tools offered (or not) by Ingram Spark, Lightning Source, Blurb, Lulu, CreateSpace, and Australia's BookPod.

2. Australian tax file numbers can now be used to minimise withholding tax for ebook sales through Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing and Smashwords.

When you do Amazon's newest version of its online tax interview – in order to reduce your withholding tax from 30% to 5% – individuals can now enter their Australian Tax File Number, either an ABN or TFN. If you are a sole trader, you are no longer considered a “corporation”, as was the case in the US prior to 2014. Sole traders are now treated in the US as individuals and must use the W-8BEN form to reduce withholding tax. (Amazon-KDP generates the appropriate W-8BEN form at the end of its tax interview.)

Smashwords also requires a copy of the W-8BEN form to be filled out by sole traders/individuals, now using an Australian ABN or TFN. (If you would like to see a generic version of how the W-8BEN form can be filled out by an Australian author, then please email me.)

If you are running a **company**, then both Amazon and Smashwords will require you to fill out a **W-8BEN-E** form with your ABN on it.

3. BookGorilla and The Fussy Librarian are new ebook marketing services.

The world's leading ebook marketing service is still **BookBub**, but also consider putting your ebook up for selection and paid promotion by **BookGorilla** and **The Fussy Librarian**. Google these names to browse their ebook marketing terms and services.

4. The free image-processing program Paint.net has become a preferred option for many writers who can't afford PhotoShop.

While it is hard to source accurate statistics on which free programs are preferred by writers (who are non-designers) for creating ebook covers or processing images such as photos, Paint.net has come up time and again in my discussions with indie writers as user-friendly and intuitive.

Check out Paint.net (free download) at: <http://www.getpaint.net/>

The Paint.net website can be a little confusing at first, with so many places to click. There are three main clicks to do before the software can be saved to your computer. The first is near the top right of the home page. The second is more obvious, towards the middle of the screen. The third is again near the top right of the screen. (N.B. **Pinta** is like Paint.net for **Mac** users.)

GIMP is still a great free image-processing option for more tech-savvy users. Interestingly, when I tried to download the well-known free Photoscape program in mid 2014, my new laptop's security system flashed up so many warnings that I didn't proceed.

5. InDesign, Illustrator and PhotoShop are now available from Adobe only through their Cloud subscription service (monthly or yearly rates).

In 2014 Adobe discontinued selling copies of its programs InDesign, PhotoShop and Illustrator. Instead, you now have to subscribe to Adobe's Cloud in order to access these programs. There are pros and cons of using the Adobe Cloud. Some people like being able to access these programs from multiple devices, others don't like their intellectual property being stored by a large corporation (especially if they want to change platforms).

6. Amazon has taken down its video tutorial on how to upload your Word file and cover file in order to publish an ebook through Kindle Direct Publishing.

This is probably to update the video's content, even though the vast majority remains the same. I've saved a copy of the original video until KDP uploads a new video. Click this link to see the original video via my YouTube channel: http://youtu.be/IpQxGP_Z8fs

7. Ingram Spark is a new option for print-on-demand, which is a simplified version of Ingram's Lightning Source.

Ingram Spark has recently made it much easier for first-time publishers to access Ingram's worldwide distribution and print-on-demand services. Ingram's Lightning Source option is still recommended for small publishing businesses, but Ingram Spark has lower set-up costs, simpler contracts and fixed discounts to bookstores that are part of a more streamlined approach to working with Ingram. However, I still do NOT recommend you publish your EBOOKS via Ingram Spark or Lightning Source because of their high sales commissions and strict release conditions (KDP, Smashwords or BookBaby will better suit most indie writers' ebooks).

You can visit Ingram Spark via this link: <https://www1.ingramspark.com/>

8. Blurb has risen in popularity as a print-on-demand option.

Blurb is mentioned on page 13 of the Introduction as a print-on-demand option, but CreateSpace and Lulu attract most of the POD attention in *Your Book Publishing Options*. Their relative importance to Australian writers has shifted.

During 2014 Blurb has gone from strength to strength. Blurb's rise in popularity is partly due to its increasing number of useful tools for writers (particularly for making books of photos), and partly due to its distribution deal with Amazon and Ingram (which supplies the Book Depository). See Blurb (Australia): <http://au.blurb.com/>

9. Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing has a new children's book creation option.

In mid-2014 Amazon launched their own children's (illustrated) ebook creation system to compete with the options offered by Apple and others. Click the following link to visit Amazon's information page on this new service: <https://kdp.amazon.com/kids>

10. The IRS in Philadelphia has changed the option you need to press when ringing to apply for an EIN (Employer Identification Number) to reduce withholding tax.

If you would still prefer to use an American EIN, not an ABN, then when you ring the IRS in Philadelphia and you are listening to the initial recorded message, you now press 1 instead of 2 for the correct option. (The phone number is on page 254; under Alternative 8E ii, in the ebook).

11. Atlantis word-processing software has become a popular and cheap option for creating valid (retail quality) EPUB ebooks on WINDOWS computers.

Although many indie writers rely on Smashwords to make a valid (retail quality) EPUB file, the new Atlantis Word Processor offers a free 30-day trial (and US\$35 thereafter) for word-processing software that can actually make valid EPUB files from complex manuscripts.

By contrast, Calibre software can only make valid EPUB files from simple manuscripts. Word does not yet offer an EPUB export option (but watch this space!) Atlantis is highly recommended if you need a valid EPUB: <http://www.atlantiswordprocessor.com/en/>

12. Google Play is steadily improving its direct ebook publishing services.

Google Play is steadily improving its ebook services and market share, but is still not as slick as Kindle Direct Publishing or as time-saving as Smashwords. This is the new link to Google Play's opening page for indie writers: <https://play.google.com/books/publish/>

13. For those pitching manuscripts to major publishers, Macmillan now has Manuscript Monday.

For further details, see: <http://www.panmacmillan.com.au/submissions/>

14. Sony has sold its ebook operations to Kobo.

Sony was one of the ebook retailers covered via Smashwords, but since Smashwords also covers Kobo, this update makes little difference to many writers.

15. Smashwords has increased the maximum size of its ebooks from 5MB to 10MB.

The Word file for most novels will be lucky to take up 0.5 MB, and even a complex textbook like *Your Book Publishing Options* (with nearly 100 images, plus hundreds of internal and external hyperlinks) is only about 6 MB. So 10MB is plenty to play with.

Some of these updates have been brought to my attention via the feedback of readers of *Your Book Publishing Options*. Thank you to those readers.

I look forward to receiving emails from any reader who would like to:

- share new publishing industry developments
- request extra help, or
- seek clarification on a point in the book.

I do my best to reply within 24 hours: **euan@euanmitchell.com**
