2020 UPDATES

to

Your Book Publishing Options:
How to Make and Market Ebooks and Print Books

by Euan Mitchell

Although 98% of *Your Book Publishing Options* remains the same, there have been some useful updates since publication in early 2014.

1. 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 (KDP).

They have not replaced it, so I recently made a video to step writers through the process, then uploaded it to my YouTube channel **'Indie Book Publishing with Euan Mitchell'** at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0s0_WRN_h4I&t=19s

2. Ingram Spark is a new option for print-on-demand (POD) services, 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://www.ingramspark.com/

3. The National Library of Australia has a new and more efficient system for issuing the non-compulsory but 'good to have' cataloguing-in-publication data (CiP data), which helps libraries catalogue their books.

The service has been renamed: the **Prepublication Data Service**. You can visit their updated website at: https://www.nla.gov.au/content/changes-to-the-cip-service

4. Legal Deposit is now available for ebooks in Australia, in addition to the long-standing requirement for print books.

For details about the new services, you can visit: https://www.nla.gov.au/legal-deposit-faq
For updated state and territory legal deposit requirements, you can visit:
https://www.nla.gov.au/legal-deposit/australia-wide

5. 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 (an ABN is preferable). 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 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.

6. 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).

2020 Updates

7. BookBaby, which claims to be the world's biggest aggregator for indie writers, has become more competitive with prices and services in recent years.

It has now become the benchmark against which to measure other quotes for ebook conversion, print-on-demand and distribution. 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 (international) 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 and CreateSpace (recently merged with Kindle).

8. Australian aggregators and indie publishing services have also become more competitive, e.g. IndieMosh, Publicious, Green Hill, Australian Ebook Publisher.

Working with a local indie publishing service is an option many Australian writers prefer. Services such as those listed above will allow writers to opt for a range of services, depending on the level of help needed with editing, design, marketing and distribution.

9. 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/

10. 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

11. 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.

12. 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 best is near the top right of the home page. The second is more obvious, towards the middle of the screen. (N.B. **Pinta** is like Paint.net for **Mac** users.)

GIMP can still be a handy 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!

13. InDesign, Illustrator and PhotoShop are now available from Adobe only through their Creative 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 Creative Cloud in order to access these programs. There are pros and cons of using the Adobe CC. 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).

14. There are numerous free videos I have uploaded to my YouTube channel 'Indie Book Publishing with Euan Mitchell'.

The most popular is on using InDesign: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww6Qk4uRPlY

15. Nielsen BookData has a new registration process to enable indie publishers to enter their book's details for free into their catalogue for book retailers.

You can visit their website for more details about their new Title Editor service:

https://nielsenbook.com.au/publish/

16. 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/

17. Google Play has a new link to its direct ebook publishing services.

Personally, I have found Google Play's upload service cumbersome and not worth the effort because of their relatively small market share of ebook sales. But this could change in future because Google is not a company to be underestimated. This is the new link to Google Play's opening page for indie writers: https://play.google.com/books/publish/

18. Sony has sold its ebook operations to Kobo.

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

19. 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. A complex ebook like *Your Book Publishing Options* is only about 6 MB. So 10MB is plenty to play with.

20. The two biggest book specialist (bulk) printers in the Australia are still McPherson's Printing Group (VIC) and Griffin Press (SA).

However, when it comes to small print runs (100-400 copies), McPherson's is now likely to direct clients to Ligare Book Printers in Sydney (02) 9533 2555; and Griffin Press is now likely to direct clients to Ovato Book Printing in Adelaide (08) 8253 2000.

It is still not really economical to do a (bulk) digital print run of fewer than 200 copies with the printers listed above – better to consider print-on-demand options for numbers under 200.

But certainly do consider requesting comparative quotes from these bulk printers because prices can vary according to how busy they are. Hint: they are usually very busy in the two to three months before Christmas.

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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 48 hours: **euan@euanmitchell.com**