



Publishing Nonfiction Books on Spirituality

benebell wen

MODULE 4 SELF PUBLISHING

Workbook H Self-Publishing Logistics

At this time you should have a completed final draft of your book. This workbook will walk you through the logistics of self-publishing, though the main focus will be on print-of-demand publishers and printing presses. At the back of this workbook are checklists for reviewing all key steps of the publication process. Review this workbook first, and then listen to the five accompanying audio lectures for Module 4 in the order as listed on the course syllabus. Then revisit this workbook and begin going through the prompts.

Deciding on a Title

If you're not concerned about whether your book will gain any market exposure, then don't worry about your book title. Otherwise, worry about your book title.

For your book title to get on the radar of your target audience efficiently, you need to craft a book title that will be one of the top search results when your target audience searches for their go-to keywords. If your target reader is Buddhist, then chances are this reader will use the keyword "Buddhism" when looking for books he or she might be interested in. A book on Buddhism with a title like *A Reflection on the White Lotus Within* sounds creative and spiritual to you, but a competing book on Buddhism titled *Buddhism Blah Blah* will turn up in a search before yours will. *Buddhism Blah Blah* will sell many more copies than you simply because keywords in the title make search engine algorithms think it is more relevant than *A Reflection on the White Lotus Within* to the subject of Buddhism. That is something to think seriously about when deciding on a book title. Not only does the form of your title have to reflect your book, but the function of the title has to give your book its best chance at getting into the hands of your target reader. A compromise might be a subtitle or alternative title, such as *Buddhism for the Modern Day: A Reflection on the White Lotus Within* (or whatever).

Recall your brainstorm of 15 keywords to describe your book, back in Workbook C. Transfer those keywords into the table on the subsequent page.

Brainstorm of 15 key words that you hope to be descriptive of your book.

Think about how you can capitalize on the best keywords and incorporate those words into your book title in a way that will make sense.

Brainstorm at least 5 different prospective book titles, using key words.

What about subtitles?
For example, my first book is *Holistic Tarot*. Then after that main title, there's a colon and then a subtitle, *An Integrative Approach to Using Tarot for Personal Growth*. A subtitle helps to further explain what your book is about. It's also a chance to integrate more keywords to help facilitate search results that will pull up your book. Brainstorm possible subtitles that, again, incorporate as many keywords as possible.

Formatted Galleys

Most writers will write the manuscript on standard page size 8.5" x 11" and in double-spaced print, font size 12. Needless to say that is not how you will publish your book. Just open any book on your shelf for a general sense of the formatting you'll want to go for. Galley, or proofs, are the preliminary version of your book in the design and format you plan on publishing it in. You then review these proofs for errors before finalizing it for printing. The handout "Template for Self Published Manuscript" is a Word document that you can use as a template for putting together your galleys. Follow the in-text instructions in the document.

When putting together your galleys, observe the following:

- To insert image files, be sure to use **Insert** > **Picture** and then click into the image file name. Do not manually copy and paste image files into the document because this can undermine the print quality of the images.
- Don't forget about the headings and footers. In the "Template for Self Published Manuscript," there are no headings for the front or end pages; no headings on the first page of any new chapter section; chapter title on the even pages and book title on the odd pages. All footers are the same: centered page numbering. End pages are numbered by roman numerals.
- Convert tables into image files. You're prone to encountering problems with table formatting if you're using a print-on-demand file uploader. To avoid risk of such problems, convert tables to image files and then insert the table into the manuscript the same way you would insert image files. Although not the most graceful way to turn tables into images, what I do will work: take a screen shot of the table (Ctrl + Alt + PrtScn), magnified to as large as you can on the computer monitor, then paste into your photo editing program (Photoshop or Jasc Paint Shop Pro), crop as needed, and then in the photo editing program, save the image file at 300 dpi resolution. Then tinker with the image file so the text in the table cells is clear.

Book Cover Design

It's always a good idea to get a professional designer to help you with your book cover. Only venture to DIY your own book cover design if you are experienced with graphic design. Designing your own book cover is a bit like doing a tarot reading for yourself. You can do it, but you run a rather significant risk of being blind to your own flaws.

When designing your book cover, bear in mind that you are not designing for yourself. You are designing for your target reader. Yes, the way things tend to work out, what you love is probably what your target reader loves, and vice versa, but just to be clear, you're not designing a cover for you. Always be mindful of the target reader's preferences and interests.

Revisit Workbook A where you characterized your target reader. Reread what you wrote about your target reader's personality and demographic profile. Now think empathically through this target reader.

What is your target reader's favorite color?

Consider incorporating that color into your book cover design in a significant way. Note that color has a profound effect on our mood and psyche. We make buying decisions based on color, whether we are conscious of it or not. So consider color when designing a book cover and also when branding yourself through your marketing materials and author website.

Red	Power, strength, confidence	Black	Mystery, sophistication
Orange	Energy, enthusiasm, warmth	White	Purity, clarity, neutrality
Yellow	Optimism, joy, creativity	Gray	Knowledge, intellect, refinement
Green	Luck, vigor, reliability	Brown	Comfort, stability, endurance
Blue	Peace, calm, loyalty	Pink	Innocence, freshness, hope
Purple	Nobility, spirituality, wisdom		

What is the dominant color to appear on your book cover? Why have you chosen this to be the dominant color?

Also consider art for your front cover. You can ask an artist friend for permission to use a work of art for the cover. Alternatively, you can opt for art from the public domain. Use the handout "Flowchart for Determining Public Domain Works" from Module II to determine whether a work of art is in the public domain.

You will also need to design the back cover for your book. On the back cover, leave space along the bottom right corner for your ISBN bar code. If you're going with a printing press, then once you've obtained your ISBN and bar code, which you should do well before your publication date, insert the ISBN bar code onto the book design. If you're going with a print-on-demand publishing site like Lulu or Amazon, you can leave the space blank for now and obtain your ISBN and bar code through the print-on-demand publisher.

Typically back covers will include the book description. Along the top left or right corner will be the main category that the book falls under. For example, "New Age Spirituality" or "Psychology" or "Eastern Religions." Sometimes the back covers will also include the author biography, especially if both book description and author bio will fit. Otherwise, the author biography can go inside the book, on one of the end pages.

Book Description

The book description is by and large what will sell (or not sell) your book. Do not write a Cliff Notes summary of your book! That won't sell your title. Instead, your book description has to answer the question, "Why should I buy your book?" without, of course, directly answering the question, i.e., don't write "You should buy this book because...." For starters, your book description should be in third person.

How do you craft a great book description? Revisit Module 1, Workbook A. Remember when you summarized the main takeaway point of your book, in 1-2 sentences? Is it still relevant, now that you have a completed manuscript? If yes, those sentences can be a good starting point. What did you say about how your book might be controversial? A few provocative sentences inspired by that in the book description is going to help sell your book. Pull out all of these texts and use them to begin your brainstorm process.

The hook needs to be in the first line of your book description. Think about the best selling point for your book and phrase that into a first sentence. For *Holistic Tarot*, the best selling point was how comprehensive the book is intended to be and the more pragmatic-analytical tone it'd take, so that would be conveyed in the first sentence. For *The Tao of Craft*, the best selling point is how much of what the book covers is being published in the English language for the first time (in a manner of speaking...). So for your book, think about what the best selling point is.

Remember the various brainstorms of key words I put you through throughout the modules of this course? It's time to revisit those key word lists and insert as many of them as you can into your book description. Turn it into a game and see how many you can cleverly include. On a serious note, this is important for search engine reasons. It will help significantly in gaining the right exposure for your book. Compile a master list of all key words you imagine a target reader searching for, which relate to your book content. Try to include as many of those key words a possible throughout your book description.

If you can, strike an emotional connection with the reader. Appeal to one of the reader's desires. For example, your book will help the reader achieve ABC or become better at XYZ. Sell a result to your reader. Promise that a certain objective will be achieved and clearly state that promise.

Keep the tone and style of your book description as close to the tone and style of your book as possible. You want your book description to be an accurate and reliable representation of your book. Above all, be mindful of the purpose of a book description: it is not a summary of your book; it is an advertisement. The purpose is to convince your target reader to buy your book.

I studied 50 book descriptions among the bestselling titles under "New Age & Spirituality." The shortest book description I came across was 142 words and the longest was 356 words. Everything else fell in between that range. 40% were between 142 and 199 words; 35% were between 200 and 299 words; and 25% were over 300 words in length.

Brainstorm the write out the initial draft for your book description here. Keep each paragraph short, about 3-4 sentences. The total length shouldn't be longer than 400 words.

Browsing Categories

When you list your newly minted title on Amazon, the site allows you to list up to 5. Use all 5. Under “Books” and then the broad category of “Religion & Spirituality,” there are a wide range of sub-categories to choose from, such as “New Age & Spirituality” or “Occult & Paranormal,” etc. Try to select a good representative hodgepodge. If your book covers Eastern philosophy or metaphysics, tap that in. Or maybe your book covers psychology. In that case, make sure one of your browsing categories is under “Psychology.”

Consider which browsing categories you’re more likely to be a strong competitor in, and be sure to list those. That gives you a higher chance of becoming a #1 bestseller in that category, which of course you can then brag about. “Bestselling author [*insert your name*]” always sounds nice.

(Note, however, that there is some snobbery about who can and should not refer to themselves as a bestselling author. Most members of the literati will tell you that you shouldn’t refer to yourself as a bestselling author unless you’ve made it onto the New York Times. Yet by and large you’re going to come across commercial-focused authors who’ve made it onto the top 50 bestsellers list on Amazon for some stupid, obscure category no one has ever heard of and those authors will claim they’re bestselling authors. It’s up to you how you want to approach this.)

Browsing categories are important because that’s how your target reader is going to find you (or not find you), so pay careful consideration to this step and don’t overlook its significance.

The following categories are all taken from Amazon listings. Use this list as a starting point for brainstorming which browsing categories to list your book title under.

Atheism, Agnosticism	Buddhism	Christianity
Hinduism	Islam	Judaism
Memoir	New Age Spirituality	Occult
Paranormal	Psychology	Philosophy
Angels	Ancient Knowledge	Astrology
Chakras	Channeling	Divination/Fortunetelling
Dreams	Eastern Mysticism	Eastern Religion
Goddesses	Hermeticism	Inspirational
Interpreting Sacred Texts	Kabbalah	Magic Studies
Meditation	Mysticism	New Thought
Occultism	Paganism	Parapsychology

Reincarnation	Self-Help	Shamanism
Spirit Guides	Spiritual Healing	Theosophy
Sufism	Unexplained Mysteries	Witchcraft
Sacred Texts	Ghosts/Hauntings	Metaphysics
Social Sciences	History	Counseling
Social Psychology	Psychotherapy & NLP	Research
Reference	Creativity & Genius	Theology
Humor	Entertainment	Pop Culture
Adult Coloring Book	Art Therapy & Relaxation	Communication
Social Skills	Dreams	Emotions
Motivational	Personal Transformation	Self Esteem
Self-Help > Spiritual	Religious Studies	Worship & Devotion

Author Biography

With some carefully thought-through exceptions, write your author biography in third person. The purpose of your author biography is to establish your credibility for writing the book that you have written. “Why should I trust you to impart knowledge to me on this particular topic?” That is the question your author biography needs to answer. You can even brag a little.

Write an author biography that is compelling, one that conveys to the reader what you do professionally and why you’re qualified to write on the topic of your book. Concluding with a few appropriate personal statements can help with emotional appeal.

I’m not very good at writing author bios myself, so I should probably end here and not try to give any more advice. No, wait, I’ll end on one final point about author bios. Ever notice how really well-known, well-established, generally over-qualified authors have rather short biographies while “who is he again?” types like to ramble on for lengthy paragraphs about how wonderful they are? Something about an excessively long and braggy author bio will give the sense that you’re really not that awesome. So brag, but be modest; be comprehensive, but concise. We don’t need to know about every single award you’ve ever won and don’t list out more than a couple of key certifications. More than that and you risk losing the attention of your reader.

Keep your author biography between 50 and 150 words. The author biography needs to be a strong reflection of your author platform, so be sure to review Workbook B - Establishing Your Author Platform, from Module 1.

Pull from the author biographies you've written previously and draft a finalized author biography here for your book.

Library of Congress Control Number Registration

Registering a pre-assigned control number (PCN) with the Library of Congress is optional. You'll need to be recognized as a publisher first before you're able to register PCNs. The audio lecture "Understanding ISBNs, Bar Codes, and LOC Listings" covers the main points about PCNs. Links to the applicable LOC pages are provided in the course syllabus.

ISBN Registration

Go to: isbn.org
Direct link: www.myidentifiers.com/barcode/main
(You will want to order the ISBN and bar code package.)

If you go with print-on-demand publishing and are okay with the print-on-demand publisher (i.e., Lulu or Amazon Digital Services) being listed as the publisher of record, then you do not need to register for an ISBN or obtain a bar code. The POD publisher will walk you through the process and an ISBN and bar code will be assigned to you automatically.

If you want to be the publisher of record or have set up a company, such as an LLC, to be the publisher of record, then you will want to register your own ISBN and bar code, even if you go with a print-on-demand service. Then when you walk through the POD service to upload your files for publication, have your ISBN and bar code image ready on hand. There will be prompts during the upload process for providing such information.

U.S. Copyright Registration

Go to: copyright.gov
Direct link: <http://copyright.gov/forms/formtx.pdf>
(Fill out this form to register a copyright for a book or a deck.)

Complete the form, print it out, and prepare a check with the right filing fee. Mail to: Library of Congress, Copyright Office, 101 Independence Avenue, SE, Washington, D.C. 20559 6000.

Finalized processing of registration from date of submittal is typically about 4 months, so plan accordingly. You can also file for your copyright online. Direct link to the login page for electronic submissions of copyright applications is provided in the course syllabus for Module 4.

Going with a Printing Press: Obtaining Price Quotes

Whether you're publishing a book or a deck, obtain at least three price quotes from different printing presses for proper price comparison.

	<i>Company 1</i>	<i>Company 2</i>	<i>Company 3</i>
Name of Printing Press Company			
Address for Headquarters			
Name of Direct Contact			
Telephone Number			
E-Mail Address Contact			
Website URL			
Year Established			
Minimum Order Quantity			
Price Quote*			
Estimated Taxes			
Estimated Shipping Cost			
Down Payment			
Key Payment Terms			

* For the Price Quote, be sure you're giving the same specifications to the three printing presses. For example, get the price quote for a book with 6" x 9" trim, paperback, perfect bound, 350 black and white pages, full color matte cover, order quantity: 500 copies. If you're obtaining price quotes for a deck, make sure to inquire in detail about cardstock quality and packaging.

Checklist for Launching a Self-Published Book

Getting to the Galleys	
	You have completed the final draft of your book manuscript, still in double-spaced standard page size format.
	You have personally read through that final draft beginning to end for copyediting purposes.
	An editor or close friend who has a hawk's eye for editing has copyedited your book manuscript and you've made all edits as needed.
	You have personally read through the final copyedited draft and are satisfied.
	You have prepared your manuscript into galley forms, per the format provided in Handout 1, "Template for Self Published Manuscript" or something similar.
	You have personally read through the galleys in the entirety for copyediting purposes.
	An editor or close friend who has a hawk's eye for editing has reviewed your galleys for copyediting purposes and is satisfied.
<p>PRINT ON DEMAND PUBLISHING: Using Kindle Digital Publishing (KDP) or Lulu.com for Print on Demand Publishing. Assuming you're okay with Amazon Digital Services or Lulu registering the ISBN and obtaining the bar code on your behalf and having your book listed as being distributed by these services, then follow the below instructions. Note that these services also offer a paid option to list under your own publishing house name or business entity, for a nominal additional charge.</p>	
	All tables in your book have been converted to image files and inserted into the manuscript as image files.
	All image files are 300 dpi resolution or higher.
	If you're using MS Word to prepare your galleys, all chapter headings and subheadings have been appropriately hyperlinked and your table of contents pagination has been updated. Double-check to make sure page numbers are correct.
	Your front book cover design and back book cover design are completed and ready to be uploaded for book publication. You have left adequate bleed margins for the covers.
	Your book description is ready to go.
	Your author biography is ready to go.
	You have on hand up to five browsing categories to file your title under.

	Register for an Amazon AuthorCentral login account to list your book on Amazon. (Link provided in the course syllabus.) List your book on Amazon.
	Register your book or deck with the U.S. Copyright Office.
GOING WITH A PRINTING PRESS:	
Independent Book Printing and Distribution. Instead of going the cheaper print on demand route, you plan on producing your own printed books and, as they say, sell them from the trunk of your car. This section also applies to tarot and oracle deck creators.	
	You have checked with at least three different printing presses for price quotes and are confident you will be going with one that gives you a good deal.
	Register for an ISBN and obtain a bar code. If your book will only appear in one form, i.e., only in paperback, then you only need one ISBN. However, if your book will be available as both a paperback and an e-book, then you need two ISBNs, one for each. With the publication of card decks, you do not need a new ISBN for reprints or re-orders of the same deck, but if you're offering your deck in different shapes, formats, or sizes (e.g., one version is full color and a second version is black and white), then you need an ISBN for each separate version.
	Your front book cover design and back book cover design are completed and ready to be uploaded for book publication. You have left adequate bleed margins for the covers. The back cover design includes the ISBN and bar code, along with your book description. If you're publishing a deck, then your packaging design is ready to go and make sure there is space somewhere on the product packaging for the ISBN bar code.
	Negotiate a purchase order ("PO") for the production of your book or card deck. You can ask the manufacturer for their minimum order quantity ("MOQ") and ask about discounts per quantity ordered. Then you'll need to do a little math to determine the best purchase and quantity option for you.
	Figure out how you will be packaging and shipping the books to customers who order it from you. Order the packaging materials in bulk.
	<i>Optional:</i> Apply for a Library of Congress Pre-assigned Control Number.
	Register for an Amazon AuthorCentral login account to list your book on Amazon. (Link provided in the course syllabus.) List your book on Amazon.
	Register your work with the U.S. Copyright Office.
	More than any other author, you will need to prepare a press kit (or media kit), print out high-quality hard copies of that kit, and start going door to door to all the local bookstores and metaphysical shops to get your books into these stores.