

IMPORTANT!

Please read this general overview of the publishing industry first.

Most authors approach publishers without fully understanding the way that the publishing industry works. Accordingly, there is a considerable amount of confusion on the part of the prospective author, which can – and often does – put the author in a disadvantaged position when dealing with prospective publishers.

Currently, there are two main approaches to getting your book published and ‘into the system’; (i) the long established ‘traditional publishing’ model, and (ii) modern Print-On-Demand (or POD) publishing. Without a clear grasp of the differences between these two publishing models, many authors fail to understand exactly what it is they are applying for when they submit their manuscripts for appraisal. The following table will hopefully illustrate the key differences, and the respective advantages and disadvantages of the two competing models, and therefore help the prospective author make the right decisions, without getting embroiled in costly delays and confusion, and without falling prey to the many unscrupulous operators who would so willingly separate you from your cash.

A third publishing option not covered in the table below is that of self-financed self-publishing, whereby the author engages a printer directly to print a run of books. This option however, is only suitable for those who do NOT need their books readily available in bookstores for ordering, dispatch and delivery worldwide. The following comparisons may include some generalisations. Not all publishing companies of course, will fall precisely and exactly into one of these categories.

	Traditional Publishing Model	Print-On-Demand Publishing
1	Began with the invention of the European printing press in 1440	Began with the advent of modern digital technology in the late 20 th Century
2	Uses large ink-and-paper printing machines, type-set plates and/or lithographic plates	Uses compact laser printers and computer-generated digital files
3	From manuscript to publication usually takes many months	Book files that are ‘print ready’ can be turned into a new book in days
4	Uses a host of middlemen and a series of technical and mechanical steps to prepare the book for printing	Can be prepared for printing by one well-informed and capable person. No mechanical aspect or related costs are involved
5	Needs to print numerous copies upfront in order to get price-per-copy down to a reasonable retail figure per unit	Can print one copy at a time and still have a reasonable retail figure per unit
6	Needs a physical storage facility (warehouse) for the inventory whilst awaiting distribution	No storage is required, as book files are purely digital, and can therefore be ‘stored’ on a computer.
7	Needs a physical distribution network to transport the books (warehouses, trucks, drivers etc)	Uses existing distribution networks (such as Amazon.com / Ingrams etc) to move orders. Delivery costs are taken from the profit margin.

8	Needs a sales and marketing department to ensure the books are taken up by high street bookstores	Relies chiefly upon internet sales and marketing such as Amazon.com, and the direct promotions of the author and publisher (in some cases) to generate sales
9	Needs to sell the bulk of the pre-printed books in order to justify the cost of the print run in the first place	Doesn't have to sell any books at all in order to justify the creation of the book in the first place (such as private family memoirs etc)
10	Publisher assumes all the costs, and may even forward an advance to the author (which is later deducted from net profits)	Most POD publishers require the author to pay them for their services. Other POD publishers may enter into 'partnership publishing' or even offer 'traditional' contracts (such as CheckPoint Press), and then share in the royalties
11	Because of the upfront costs and investment, the author usually surrenders all their legal rights and most of their royalties	Because of the relatively modest <u>upfront</u> costs (no costly inventory; no paper-and-ink; no extra staff etc), author <u>should</u> keep most rights and bulk of royalties, depending upon contract terms, and the ethics of the POD publisher
12	Publisher assumes full control of book and its future (films, sequels etc), and strives to profit to the maximum	Publisher (if they are ethical) negotiates fair terms with the author that reflects the realities of POD publishing; receives fair compensation regarding the genuine investment of the publisher (in time, skills and costs); and rewards the author fairly
13	Book will be available for ordering to all bookstores worldwide, and will usually have some physical copies in high-street bookstores at some point in their history	Books will be available for ordering to all bookstores worldwide, but will usually NOT be placed in high-street bookstores. However, this <u>can</u> be done, although the author will invariably end up paying all the related costs and expenses
14	Books placed in high-street bookstores are required to offer the store discounts of up to 60% off the retail price	To negotiate up to 60% discounts with high street bookstores; then print unsold books upfront; then pay for the return of unsold books somewhat defeats the whole concept of POD (print-on-demand) publishing.
15	Unsold books have to be returned to the publisher – or destroyed – at the publisher's expense	Under normal conditions, no POD book gets printed until <u>after</u> it has been paid for. Therefore, no returns or related costs are generated.
16	Because of the need to make substantial book sales, the overall 'quality' of the book itself is guaranteed. Book designers, editors and type-setters will all have played their part in constructing a quality product.	Because most POD publishers make their money upfront for 'author services' (vs actual book sales), there are few guarantees that your book will be produced to industry standards. Also, unscrupulous publishers will often mislead the aspiring author into thinking they can 'place' the book into high street bookstores, simply by the author paying more fees. This is a deliberate scam. Please be aware!
17	Books need to be commercially viable – at least to the point where they cover their considerable set-up costs and make some profit for the publisher. Accordingly, many 'worthy' books do not get accepted, and many questionable ones do.	Because of the relatively low set-up costs, non commercially-viable projects can be taken on. That is, even if a particular book is not going to be a commercial-retail success, it may still be published in small numbers and remain available to bookstores worldwide