

Las Vegas Quill Keepers Lesson 12: POD People!!**By Cathe Jones, (cathejones.com)**

“Cathe, I wanted to get my book out NOW because it has to do with flooding related to weather. Is it okay to self-publish?”

“My question is, if get this printed out on my own, will I lose credibility?”

“I am tired of hunting for agents, and publishers. I have an audience waiting for my books.”

The hottest issue in publishing today, other than Yahoo and Google working to provide printed books as searchable resources, is Self Publishing v. Traditional Publishing. In researching the article, I discovered there are fierce opinions on both sides. My goal is to provide information as to HOW to self-publish, rather than to offer yet one more debate in why this is a good or bad route.

Electronic publishing has taken great leaps in the last few years. With the push for many writers to opt for Printing On Demand, (POD), online bookstores are increasing their profits. I've received dozens of emails asking about the benefits of POD or other self publishing options. Writers gain the advantage of a faster turn around from manuscript to product, allowing them to earn profits sooner than if they go for a contract with a printing press.

Vanity publishing was once thought to be a bad writer's gateway to a finished book. For an oftentimes outlandish fee, a writer could send their work to a post office box number, and in a mere few weeks, find a crate of materials sitting at their front door. Sometimes the quality of these bound books is close to that of a grade school kid's diary, while other

times, the books are indiscernible from those found on the shelves of the finest libraries in the world. The bookmaker's craft greatly depended upon the writer's skills with a computer or typewriter. (Remember those?) Editing, publicity, and even cover design was often up to the submitting scribe.

We're now in a technological play land. Many writer's not only have access to computers and high end desktop publishing software, but also back up drives and CD burners which allow large digital media packages to be easily worked on from any computer accessed. Besides the advent of new paths of sharing media, software packages for manuscript layout, plot ideas, character developments, and even those of multilingual spelling capabilities build manuscripts from first time authors which appear far stronger than ever before.

The two major issues faced by authors is the cost, and if the Literary Chic will look down upon her. The long standing feeling that self-publishing is VANITY based, rather than TALENT based is unfounded in the computer generation. Again, since this isn't an ethical argumentative article, I will just cover cost issues.

The solo author must budget wisely. She is, in most cases, responsible for :

- Purchasing an ISBN (Varies from country to country)
- Obtaining Copyrights
- Writing and Editing
- Layout and Design
- Cover Art
- Galleys
- Purchasing Copies/Setting Costs

- Marketing and Advertising
- Publicity and Promotion
- Getting Endorsements
- Distribution

As you can easily see, there is very little time for writing. All of the author's day is spent in learning how to be profitable.

There are marked successes in POD. In POD, the author works with a publishing house. The manuscript and cover art is approved, and then a contract is signed authorizing the publisher to sell books as they are bought. The reader comes away with a book made especially for him, and the author has a strong method of tracking her own sales. But, the most interesting fact of the POD market is that many authors who have already published under traditional houses, now offer POD. Seeing this trend, the myriad of top publishing houses around the world are offering POD as part of standard contracts.

Self Publishing works a little differently. As a writer, you are responsible for all aspects of the publishing process. Not only are you writing the book, but you are editing it, submitting galleys for endorsements, and contacting book stores for sales and signings. You are able to work with any printing house, from the local copy center, to a high end press. The choice is up to you, and the money you have to invest.

The third choice is to go with a multi-faceted printer. These companies allow you to add options to their printing packages which include anything from Marketing, to Sales Reports, to Paperless publishing. Amazon and Barnes and Noble are both working toward building their POD Packages to be more effective as a sales tool.

Whatever you choose to do with your written word is entirely up to you. The technology exists to create a clean self-published piece. The biggest success in recent years has been with the “Chicken Soup for the Soul” series. The day of selling books out of the trunks of cars has been replaced with selling books on Amazon. Even Stephen King opted for POD from his website for some books and essays.

Here are some recommendations for places to Self Publish, and also provide your readers with a Publish On Demand option for purchasing your work:

- Lulu

<http://www.lulu.com/>

- IUniverse

<http://www.iuniverse.com/>

- Beckham Books

<http://www.beckhamhouse.com/jointventure.html>

- Books Just Books

<http://www.booksjustbooks.com/>

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