

# PUBLISHING YOUR BOOK

**G**etting a publisher or a literary agent to read your manuscript or discuss your idea is almost impossible. Hundreds of manuscripts arrive on the desks or via the internet at publishers' offices every day of the week. This is called a slush pile – and most are returned or ignored.

However if you have a burning desire to write or publish a book this will not deter you.

Here are some very basic guidelines on what you can do:

## Your manuscript

Before your book is published is it called a manuscript. Many would-be authors and published authors find that a writing course is enormously helpful, not only in getting started but in structuring their work and their research.

In NSW you will find courses at:

The NSW Writers Centre - <http://www.nswwriterscentre.org.au> which now also offers on-line courses. Writers Centres in other states are listed on the website of the Australian Society of Authors. <http://www.asauthors.org>.

UTS

<http://www.newwriting.uts.edu.au/courses/index.html>

There are websites about writing that you may also find interesting such as

The Fellowship of Australian Writers [www.writers.asn.au](http://www.writers.asn.au)  
Sydney PEN <http://www.pen.org.au/>

If you are interested in a particular genre such as Romance Writing you will find courses and websites that are directly relevant.

Such as:

Romance Writers of Australia - <http://www.romanceaustralia.com/>

Charlotte Dillon's Resources for Romance Writers - <http://www.geocities.com/charlottedillon2000/characters.html>

You may decide you need ongoing help with your work. The NSW Writers Centre and the Australian Society of Authors <http://www.asauthors.org/> offer mentoring programs, but if this is not open to you an editor may be the answer.

Once you have finished your manuscript you may approach a publisher or a literary agent, or you may decide to enter a competition. Some competitions lead to publication. You will find competitions on the website of the NSW Writers Centre <http://www.nswwriterscentre.org.au> and in their monthly magazine *Newswrite*.

## Your editor

Editors can have a number of different roles.

You may choose an editor for

- **Project management.** If you have a proposal and would like the editor to take it through either to final manuscript or through the printing process as well, you will choose a project editor. Their job is to find the editorial and design team, to organise printing quotes, to plan a production schedule, and also to



supervise or edit the project, all within a budget and to a schedule. Production editors manage the production process from manuscript to final printing, but do not manage the other aspects of the project.

- **Manuscript assessment.** This editor may get involved even before you begin writing. Planning the publication, organizing the research and developing the project may be part of the editor's role. You will find a list of individuals and companies offering manuscript assessment on the Australian Society of Authors website. <http://www.asauthors.org>
- **Structural editing.** This can mean a total re-jig of your manuscript. It is very important that you respect and can work with your editor – and the feelings must be mutual. It is easy to be resentful of an editor who seems to have no understanding of an author's ownership of their work. The content may be mostly there, but it may need to be re-organised. The editor may ask you to re-write, add new sections, and do more research. He or she may do some re-writing and delete content that they do not think is relevant, or that is out of date. They will also decide on a style and make sure the content is consistent with it.
- **Copy editing.** A copy editor will determine a style for the project, for example how words are spelt, what jargon will and will not be used - if any, and edit the copy so that it conforms to the style. They may also re-work figures and tables

Many editors will organise an index if required, can mark up copy for the typesetter or word processor, proofread (that is read the copy through for mistakes and inconsistencies) after it has been edited and corrected, check permissions and do copy fitting.

At this stage you may decide that you would like to approach a publisher or a literary agent. You will find a list of literary agents on the website of the Australian Society of Authors, <http://www.asauthors.org> or in the Yellow Pages under Writers, Consultants and/or Services.

If you are unable to find an agent to represent your work you can go one of two ways:

- Represent the work yourself. You will need to be persistent and innovative. Network through your writing courses and at writing events and writers festivals. Investigate what types of publications each publisher is interested in and do not submit your work to those who do not publish in your genre.
- Self publish. In which case read on!

## Design

A book needs to be designed. Not only does it need a suitable cover, it also needs the type and layout to be included in the overall design. A project editor can help you write a design brief for the designer or you can use a desktop publishing program such as Adobe GoLive or QuarkXpress.

Using a professional designer will give your book a professional look. You will find designers in the Yellow Pages under Designers - Graphic.

If you choose to go the desktop publishing way then a course in design, not just operation of the program, will help you to achieve a good looking book.

## Printing

Not all printers can create a book. You will need to shop around to find a printer that is interested in doing short runs and is accustomed to printing books for self-publishers. If you decide to go the way of self-publishing then do read both the book and the PDF in **Find out More** below.

You will find there are companies that specialise in helping those who want to self publish. It is important to compare their prices with that of other printers and you may decide your money is better spent on a Project Editor, or a Publishing Consultant who knows how to assess a quote and offers other services as well.

Printers who work for self publishers include:

Hippo Books [www.hippobooks.com.au](http://www.hippobooks.com.au)

Mini Publishing [www.minipublishing.com.au](http://www.minipublishing.com.au)

Sid Harta [www.sidharta.com.au](http://www.sidharta.com.au)

Wild and Woolley [www.wildandwoolley.com.au](http://www.wildandwoolley.com.au)

## Rights and Responsibilities

There are number of procedures that you need to follow if you are going to be a publisher. You also have a responsibility to comply with legislation and procedures that ensure your rights as a writer and publisher are protected and that libraries can access your work.

- **Copyright.** When you write or publish a book the copyright is yours unless you sign it away. You cannot copyright a title or an idea. To find out more about copyright and your moral rights and responsibilities visit <http://www.copyright.com.au/>
- **PLR and ELR** If your book is available in libraries you may be entitled to Public Lending Right and Educational Lending Rights. To find out more about these payments and your entitlements check [http://www.dcita.gov.au/arts/arts/lending\\_schemes/plr](http://www.dcita.gov.au/arts/arts/lending_schemes/plr)
- **ISBN** This is the International Standard Book Number, issued by Thorpe Information Services in Australia that ensures your book has a unique number and can be found in libraries and book stores throughout the world. To find out more visit [www.thorpe.com.au](http://www.thorpe.com.au)
- **Cataloguing in Publication (CIP).** CIP is a free bibliographic service managed by the National Library of Australia that prepares an entry for a book before it is published. It gives your book an identity that is recognised by librarians, publishers and bookstores and means the book is listed in the directory called Kinetica that is produced by the National Library. The data provided is published in your book.
- **Legal deposit libraries.** Publishers are legally required to send copies of each book they publish to certain libraries in their state and to the National Library. It is important to send these copies off as soon as the book is published. There is no charge, but there is also no payment. You can find out more at <http://www.nla.gov.au/services/ldeposit.html>
- **EAN-UCC** This is the bar-coding system Find out more at [http://www.gs1au.org/\\_home.asp](http://www.gs1au.org/_home.asp)

## Distributing and Selling

There are sheds and garages in every suburb with undistributed books gathering dust and growing mould. Self publishers have to be particularly careful not to over order.

If the promotion, distribution and selling in of a book is not done well even the few copies you print could end up mouldering in boxes.

Before you decide your print run, talk to your potential market – or to a distributor. If you are planning to self-distribute be serious. After you've ascertained roughly how many copies your friends and relatives are likely to buy, you need to consider other avenues:

- Special outlets. Do you belong to a club or group that may be interested in your book?
- Are there specialist bookshops in your subject area? Approach them.
- Speak to a few distributors focusing on those who specialise in your subject area if they exist
- Discover the terms of the distribution trade and make sure you understand the difference between 'firm sale' and 'sale or return'. Find out how much the distributor wants to be paid and under what terms Remember distributors have offices and systems dedicated to taking and fulfilling orders and large warehouses and systems in place for getting books to the far corners of the country and overseas.

## Publicity and Advertising

Promoting your book by way of interviews, reviews and talk back shows is what a good publicist will do for you. Advertising your book to the book trade in magazines such *Australian Bookseller and Publisher* and to the public in literary sections of newspapers and magazines such as *Good Reading* and the general press is expensive. Advertising and publicity work together to raise awareness of your book. If you have a specialist book there may be magazines and newsletters – and possibly websites – where you can promote your book with advertising, or maybe an article.

Publishers provide publicists to promote new books and sometimes they also advertise a book. If you are doing it yourself be sure to seek expert advice and have a marketing and publicity program .

## Find out more

*Publish It.* A guide for self publishers [www.thorpe.com.au/forms/files/publish.pdf](http://www.thorpe.com.au/forms/files/publish.pdf)

*Style Manual.* For authors, editors and printers Sixth edition. John Wiley & Co.

For an idea of what professionals charge, you can check out the National Freelance Rates as advised by the Media and Arts alliance. These are available on the Australian Authors Society website or at [www.asauthors.org](http://www.asauthors.org)

Written by Carol Fallows, Fallows & Associates. [www.carolfallows.com.au](http://www.carolfallows.com.au) October 2005