

# Publishing

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Publishing** is the process of production and dissemination of literature, music, or information — the activity of making information available to the general public. In some cases, authors may be their own publishers, meaning originators and developers of content also provide media to deliver and display the content for the same. Also, the word publisher can refer to the individual who leads a publishing company or an imprint or to a person who owns/heads a magazine.

Traditionally, the term refers to the distribution of printed works such as books (the "book trade") and newspapers. With the advent of digital information systems and the Internet, the scope of publishing has expanded to include electronic resources such as the electronic versions of books and periodicals, as well as micropublishing, websites, blogs, video game publishers, and the like.

Publishing includes the following stages of development: acquisition, copy editing, production, printing (and its electronic equivalents), and marketing and distribution.

Publication is also important as a legal concept:

1. As the process of giving formal notice to the world of a significant intention, for example, to marry or enter bankruptcy;
2. As the essential precondition of being able to claim defamation; that is, the alleged libel must have been published, and
3. For copyright purposes, where there is a difference in the protection of published and unpublished works.

There are two categories of book publisher:

1. Non-Paid Publishers: The term non-paid publisher refers to those publication houses that do not charge authors at all to publish the book.
2. Paid Publishers: The author has to meet with the total expense to get the book published, and the author has full right to set up marketing policies. This is also known as vanity publishing.



Printer working an early Gutenberg letter press from the 15th century. (engraving date unknown)

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## The process of publishing

Book and magazine publishers spend a lot of their time buying or commissioning copy; newspaper publishers, by contrast, usually hire their staff to produce copy, although they may also employ freelance journalists, called stringers. At a small press, it is possible to survive by relying entirely on commissioned material. But as activity increases, the need for works may outstrip the publisher's established circle of writers.

For works written independently of the publisher, writers often first submit a query letter or proposal directly to a literary agent or to a publisher. Submissions sent directly to a publisher are referred to as unsolicited submissions, and the majority come from previously unpublished authors. If the publisher accepts unsolicited manuscripts, then the manuscript is placed in the slush pile, which publisher's readers sift through to identify manuscripts of sufficient quality or revenue potential to be referred to acquisitions editors for review. The acquisitions editors send their choices to the editorial staff. The time and number of people involved in the process are dependent on the size of the publishing company, with larger companies having more degrees of assessment between unsolicited submission and publication. Unsolicited submissions have a very low rate of acceptance, with some sources estimating that publishers ultimately choose about three out of every ten thousand unsolicited manuscripts they receive.<sup>[1]</sup>

Many book publishers around the world maintain a strict "no unsolicited submissions" policy and will only accept submissions via a literary agent. This policy shifts the burden of assessing and developing writers out of the publisher and onto the literary agents. At these publishers, unsolicited manuscripts are thrown out, or sometimes returned, if the author has provided pre-paid postage.

Established authors may be represented by a literary agent to market their work to publishers and negotiate contracts. Literary agents take a percentage of author earnings (varying between 10 and 15 percent) to pay for their services.

Some writers follow a non-standard route to publication. For example, this may include bloggers who have attracted large readerships producing a book based on their websites, books based on Internet memes, instant "celebrities" such as Joe the Plumber, retiring sports figures and in general anyone a

publisher feels could produce a marketable book. Such books often employ the services of a ghostwriter.

For a submission to reach publication, it must be championed by an editor or publisher who must work to convince other staff of the need to publish a particular title. An editor who discovers or champions a book that subsequently becomes a best-seller may find their reputation enhanced as a result of their success.

## Acceptance and negotiation

Once a work is accepted, commissioning editors negotiate the purchase of intellectual property rights and agree on royalty rates.

The authors of traditional printed materials typically sell exclusive territorial intellectual property rights that match the list of countries in which distribution is proposed (i.e. the rights match the legal systems under which copyright protections can be enforced). In the case of books, the publisher and writer must also agree on the intended formats of publication — mass-market paperback, "trade" paperback and hardback are the most common options.

The situation is slightly more complex if electronic formatting is to be used. Where distribution is to be by CD-ROM or other physical media, there is no reason to treat this form differently from a paper format, and national copyright is an acceptable approach. But the possibility of Internet download without the ability to restrict physical distribution within national boundaries presents legal problems that are usually solved by selling language or translation rights rather than national rights. Thus, Internet access across the European Union is relatively open because of the laws forbidding discrimination based on nationality, but the fact of publication in, say, France, limits the target market to those who read French.

Having agreed on the scope of the publication and the formats, the parties in a book agreement must then agree on royalty rates, the percentage of the gross retail price that will be paid to the author, and the advance payment. The publisher must estimate the potential sales in each market and balance projected revenue against production costs. Royalties usually range between 10–12% of recommended retail price. An advance is usually 1/3 of the first print run total royalties. For example, if a book has a print run of 5000 copies and will be sold at \$14.95 and the author is to receive 10% royalties, the total sum payable to the author if all copies are sold is \$7475 (10% x \$14.95 x 5000). The advance in this instance would roughly be \$2490. Advances vary greatly between books, with established authors commanding larger advances.

## Pre-production stages

Although listed as distinct stages, parts of these occur concurrently. As editing of text progresses, front cover design and initial layout takes place, and sales and marketing of the book begins.

### Editorial stage

A decision is taken to publish a work, and the technical legal issues resolved, the author may be asked to improve the quality of the work through rewriting or smaller changes and the staff will edit the work. Publishers may maintain a house style, and staff will copy edit to ensure that the work matches the style and grammatical requirements of each market. Editors often choose or refine titles and headlines. Editing may also involve structural changes and requests for more information. Some publishers employ fact checkers, particularly regarding non-fiction works.

## Design stage

When a final text is agreed upon, the next phase is design. This may include artwork being commissioned or confirmation of layout. In publishing, the word "art" also indicates photographs. Depending on the number of photographs required by the work, photographs may also be licensed from photo libraries. For those works that are particularly rich in illustrations, the publisher may contract a picture researcher to find and license the photographs required for the work. The design process prepares the work for printing through processes such as typesetting, dust jacket composition, specification of paper quality, binding method and casing.

The type of book being produced determines the amount of design required. For standard fiction titles, the design is usually restricted to typography and cover design. For books containing illustrations or images, design takes on a much larger role in laying out how the page looks, how chapters begin and end, colours, typography, cover design and ancillary materials such as posters, catalogue images, and other sales materials. Non-fiction illustrated titles are the most design intensive books, requiring extensive use of images and illustrations, captions, typography and a deep involvement and consideration of the reader experience.

The activities of typesetting, page layout, the production of negatives, plates from the negatives and, for hardbacks, the preparation of brasses for the spine legend and Imprint are now all computerized. Prepress computerization evolved mainly in about the last twenty years of the 20th century. If the work is to be distributed electronically, the final files are saved in formats appropriate to the target operating systems of the hardware used for reading. These may include PDF files.

## Sales and marketing stage

The sales and marketing stage is closely intertwined with the editorial process. As front cover images are produced, or chapters are edited, sales people may start talking about the book with their customers to build early interest. Publishing companies often produce advanced information sheets that may be sent to customers or overseas publishers to gauge possible sales. As early interest is measured, this information feeds back through the editorial process and may affect the formatting of the book and the strategy employed to sell it. For example, if interest from foreign publishers is high, co-publishing deals may be established whereby publishers share printing costs in producing large print runs thereby lowering the per-unit cost of the books. Conversely, if initial feedback is not strong, the print-run of the book may be reduced, the marketing budget cut or, in some cases, the book is dropped from publication altogether.

## Printing

After the end of editing and design work, the printing phase begins. The first step involves the production of a pre-press proof, which the printers send for final checking and sign-off by the publisher. This proof shows the book precisely as it will appear once printed and represents the final opportunity for the publisher to find and correct any errors. Some printing companies use electronic proofs rather than printed proofs. Once the publisher has approved the proofs, printing – the physical production of the printed work – begins.

A new printing process has emerged as printing on demand (POD). The book is written, edited, and designed as usual, but it is not printed until the publisher receives an order for the book from a customer. This procedure ensures low costs for storage and reduces the likelihood of printing more books than will be sold.

## Binding

In the case of books, binding follows upon the printing process. It involves folding the printed sheets, "securing them together, affixing boards or sides to it, and covering the whole with leather or other materials".<sup>[2]</sup>

## Distribution

The final stage in publication involves making the product available to the public, usually by offering it for sale. In previous centuries, authors frequently also acted as their own editor, printer, and bookseller, but these functions have become separated. Once a book, newspaper, or another publication is printed, the publisher may use a variety of channels to distribute it. Books are most commonly sold through booksellers and through other retailers. Newspapers and magazines are typically sold in advance directly by the publisher to subscribers, and then distributed either through the postal system or by newspaper carriers. Periodicals are also frequently sold through newsagents and vending machines.

Within the book industry, printers often fly some copies of the finished book to publishers as sample copies to aid sales or to be sent out for pre-release reviews. The remaining books often travel from the printing facility via sea freight. Accordingly, the delay between the approval of the pre-press proof and the arrival of books in a warehouse, much less in a retail store, can take some months. For books that tie into movie release-dates (particularly for children's films), publishers will arrange books to arrive in store up to two months prior to the movie release to build interest in the movie.

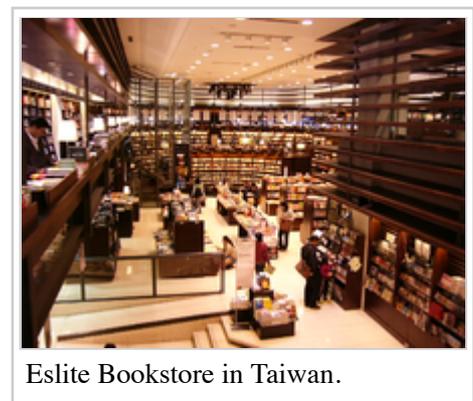
## Publishing as a business

Derided in the 1911 *Encyclopædia Britannica* as "a purely commercial affair" that cared more about profits than about literary quality,<sup>[3]</sup> publishing is fundamentally a business, with a need for the expenses of creating, producing, and distributing a book or other publication not to exceed the income derived from its sale. Publishing is now a major industry with the largest companies Reed Elsevier and Pearson PLC having global publishing operations.

The publisher usually controls the advertising and other marketing tasks, but may subcontract various aspects of the process to specialist publisher marketing agencies. In many companies, editing, proofreading, layout, design and other aspects of the production process are done by freelancers.<sup>[4][5]</sup>

Dedicated in-house salespeople are sometimes replaced by companies who specialize in sales to bookshops, wholesalers and chain stores for a fee. This trend is accelerating as retail book chains and supermarkets have centralized their buying.

If the entire process up to the stage of printing is handled by an outside company or individuals, and then sold to the publishing company, it is known as *book packaging*. This is a common strategy between smaller publishers in different territorial markets where the company that first buys the intellectual property rights then sells a package to other publishers and gains an immediate return on capital invested. Indeed, the first publisher will often print sufficient copies for all markets and thereby get the maximum quantity efficiency on the print run for all.



Eslite Bookstore in Taiwan.

Some businesses maximize their profit margins through vertical integration; book publishing is not one of them. Although newspaper and magazine companies still often own printing presses and binderies, book publishers rarely do. Similarly, the trade usually sells the finished products through a distributor who stores and distributes the publisher's wares for a percentage fee or sells on a sale or return basis.

The advent of the Internet has provided the electronic way of book distribution without the need of physical printing, physical delivery and storage of books. This, therefore, poses an interesting question that challenges publishers, distributors and retailers. The question pertains to the role and importance the publishing houses have in the overall publishing process. It is a common practice that the author, the original creator of the work, signs the contract awarding him or her only around 10% of the proceeds of the book.<sup>[6]</sup> Such contract leaves 90% of the book proceeds to the publishing houses, distribution companies, marketers and retailers. One example (rearranged) of the distribution of proceeds from the sale of a book was given as follows:<sup>[7]</sup>

- 45% to the retailer
- 10% to the wholesaler
- 10.125% to the publisher for printing (this is usually subcontracted out)
- 7.15% to the publisher for marketing
- 12.7% to the publisher for pre-production
- 15% to the author (royalties)

There is a common misconception that publishing houses make large profits and that authors are the lowest paid in the publishing chain. However, most publishers make little profit from individual titles, with 75% of books not breaking even. Approximately 80% of the cost of a book is taken up by the expenses of preparing, distributing and printing (with printing being one of the lowest costs of all). On successful titles, publishing companies will usually make around 10% profit, with the author(s) receiving 8-15% of the retail price. However, given that authors are usually individuals, are often paid advances irrespective of whether the book turns a profit and do not normally have to split profits with others, it makes them the highest paid individuals in the publishing process.

Within the electronic book path, the publishing house's role remains almost identical. The process of preparing a book for e-book publication is exactly the same as print publication, with only minor variations in the process to account for the different mediums of publishing. While some costs, such as the discount given to retailers (normally around 45%)<sup>[7]</sup> are eliminated, additional costs connected to ebooks apply (especially in the conversion process), raising the production costs to a similar level.

Print on demand is rapidly becoming an established alternative to traditional publishing. In 2005, Amazon.com announced its purchase of Booksurge and selfsanepublishing, a major "print on demand" operation. This is probably intended as a preliminary move towards establishing an Amazon imprint. CreateSpace is the Amazon subsidiary that facilitates publishing by small presses and individual authors. Books published via create space are sold on Amazon and other outlets, with Amazon extracting a very high percentage of the sales proceeds for the services of publishing, printing and distributing. One of the largest bookseller chains, Barnes & Noble, already runs its successful imprint with both new titles and classics — hardback editions of out-of-print former best sellers. Similarly, Ingram Industries, the parent company of Ingram Book Group (a leading US book wholesaler), now includes its print-on-demand division called Lightning Source. In 2013, Ingram launched a small press and self-publishing arm called Ingram Spark.<sup>[8]</sup> Payment terms are much closer to those of Amazon and less favorable than those they offer to more established publishers via Lightning Source. Among publishers, Simon & Schuster recently announced that it will start selling its backlist titles directly to consumers through its website.

Book clubs are almost entirely direct-to-retail, and niche publishers pursue a mixed strategy to sell

through all available outlets — their output is insignificant to the major booksellers, so lost revenue poses no threat to the traditional symbiotic relationships between the four activities of printing, publishing, distribution and retail.

## Industry sub-divisions

### Newspaper publishing

Newspapers are regularly scheduled publications that present recent news, typically on a type of inexpensive paper called newsprint. Most newspapers are primarily sold to subscribers, through retail newsstands or are distributed as advertising-supported free newspapers. About one-third of publishers in the United States are newspaper publishers.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Periodical publishing

Nominally, periodical publishing involves publications that appear in a new edition on a regular schedule. Newspapers and magazines are both periodicals, but within the industry, the periodical publishing is frequently considered a separate branch that includes magazines and even academic journals, but not newspapers.<sup>[9]</sup> About one-third of publishers in the United States publish periodicals (not including newspapers).<sup>[9]</sup>

### Book publishing

Book publishers represent less than a sixth of the publishers in the United States.<sup>[9]</sup> Most books are published by a small number of very large book publishers, but thousands of smaller book publishers exist. Many small- and medium-sized book publishers specialize in a specific area. Additionally, thousands of authors have created publishing companies and self-published their own works.

Within the book publishing, the **publisher of record** for a book is the entity in whose name the book's ISBN is registered. The publisher of record may or may not be the actual publisher.

Approximately 60%<sup>[10]</sup> of English-language books are produced through the "Big Five" publishing houses: Penguin Random House, Hachette, HarperCollins, Simon & Schuster and Macmillan. (See also: List of English-language book publishing companies)

### Directory publishing

Directory publishing is a specialized genre within the publishing industry. These publishers produce mailing lists, telephone books, and other types of directories.<sup>[9]</sup> With the advent of the Internet, many of these directories are now online.

### Academic publishing

Academic publishers are typically either book or periodical publishers that have specialized in academic subjects. Some, like university presses, are owned by scholarly institutions. Others are commercial businesses that focus on academic subjects.

The development of the printing press represented a revolution for communicating the latest hypotheses and research results to the academic community and supplemented what a scholar could do personally. But this improvement in the efficiency of communication created a challenge for libraries, which have had to accommodate the weight and volume of literature.

One of the key functions that academic publishers provide is to manage the process of peer review. Their role is to facilitate the impartial assessment of research and this vital role is not one that has yet been usurped, even with the advent of social networking and online document sharing.

Today, publishing academic journals and textbooks is a large part of an international industry. Critics claim that standardised accounting and profit-oriented policies have displaced the publishing ideal of providing access to all. In contrast to the commercial model, there is non-profit publishing, where the publishing organization is either organised specifically for the purpose of publishing, such as a university press, or is one of the functions of an organisation such as a medical charity, founded to achieve specific practical goals. An alternative approach to the corporate model is open access, the online distribution of individual articles and academic journals without charge to readers and libraries. The pioneers of Open Access journals are BioMed Central and the Public Library of Science (PLOS). Many commercial publishers are experimenting with hybrid models where older articles or government funded articles are made free, and newer articles are available as part of a subscription or individual article purchase.

## Tie-in publishing

Technically, radio, television, cinemas, VCDs and DVDs, music systems, games, computer hardware and mobile telephony publish information to their audiences. Indeed, the marketing of a major film often includes a novelization, a graphic novel or comic version, the soundtrack album, a game, model, toys and endless promotional publications.

Some of the major publishers have entire divisions devoted to a single franchise, e.g. Ballantine Del Rey Lucasbooks has the exclusive rights to *Star Wars* in the United States; Random House UK (Bertelsmann)/Century LucasBooks holds the same rights in the United Kingdom. The game industry self-publishes through BL Publishing/Black Library (Warhammer) and Wizards of the Coast (Dragonlance, Forgotten Realms, etc.). The BBC has its publishing division that does very well with long-running series such as Doctor Who. These multimedia works are cross-marketed aggressively and sales frequently outperform the average stand-alone published work, making them a focus of corporate interest.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Independent publishing alternatives

Writers in a specialized field or with a narrower appeal have found smaller alternatives to the mass market in the form of small presses and self-publishing. More recently, these options include print on demand and ebook format. These publishing alternatives provide an avenue for authors who believe that mainstream publishing will not meet their needs or who are in a position to make more money from direct sales than they could from bookstore sales, such as popular speakers who sell books after speeches. Authors are more readily published by this means due to the much lower costs involved.

## Recent developments

The 21st century has brought some new technological changes to the publishing industry. These changes include e-books, print on demand and accessible publishing. E-books have been quickly growing in availability in major publishing markets such as the USA and the UK since 2005. Google, Amazon.com and Sony have been leaders in working with publishers and libraries to digitize books. As of early 2011 Amazon's Kindle reading device is a significant force in the market, along with the Apple iPad and the Nook from Barnes & Noble. Along with the growing popularity of e-books, some companies like Oyster and Scribd have pursued the subscription model, providing members unlimited access to a content library on a variety of digital reading devices.

The ability to quickly and cost-effectively print on demand has meant that publishers no longer have to store books at warehouses, if the book is in low or unknown demand. This is a huge advantage to small publishers who can now operate without large overheads and large publishers who can now cost-effectively sell their backlisted items.

Accessible publishing uses the digitization of books to mark up books into XML and then produces multiple formats from this to sell to consumers, often targeting those with difficulty reading. Formats include a variety larger print sizes, specialized print formats for dyslexia,<sup>[12]</sup> eye tracking problems and macular degeneration, as well as Braille, DAISY, audiobooks and e-books.<sup>[13]</sup>

Green publishing means adapting the publishing process to minimise environmental impact. One example of this is the concept of on-demand printing, using digital or print-on-demand technology. This cuts down the need to ship books since they are manufactured close to the customer on a just-in-time basis.<sup>[14]</sup>

A further development is the growth of on-line publishing where no physical books are produced. The ebook is created by the author and uploaded to a website from where it can be downloaded and read by anyone.

An increasing number of small authors are using niche marketing online to sell more books by engaging with their readers online.<sup>[15]</sup> These authors can use free services such as Smashwords or Amazon's CreateSpace to have their book available for worldwide sale. There is an obvious attraction for first time authors who have been repeatedly rejected by the existing agent/publisher model to explore this opportunity. However, a consequence of this change in the mechanics of book distribution is that there is now no mandatory check on author skill or even their ability to spell, and any person with an internet connection can publish whatever they choose, regardless of the literary merit or even basic readability of their writing.

## Standardization

Refer to the ISO divisions of ICS 01.140.40 and 35.240.30 for further information.<sup>[16][17]</sup>

## Legal issues

Publication is the distribution of copies or content to the public.<sup>[18][19]</sup> The Berne Convention requires that this can only be done with the consent of the copyright holder, which is initially always the author.<sup>[18]</sup> In the Universal Copyright Convention, "publication" is defined in article VI as "the reproduction in tangible form and the general distribution to the public of copies of a work from which it can be read or otherwise visually perceived."<sup>[19]</sup>

In providing a work to the general public, the publisher takes responsibility for the publication in a way that a mere printer or a shopkeeper does not. For example, publishers may face charges of defamation, if they produce and distribute libelous material to the public, even if the libel was written by another person.

## Privishing

Privishing (**private publishing**) is a modern term for publishing a book in such a small amount, or with such lack of marketing, advertising or sales support from the publisher, that the book effectively does not reach the public.<sup>[20]</sup> The book, while nominally published, is almost impossible to obtain through

normal channels such as bookshops, often cannot be special-ordered and will have a notable lack of support from its publisher, including refusals to reprint the title. A book that is privished may be referred to as "killed". Depending on the motivation, privishing may constitute breach of contract, censorship,<sup>[21]</sup> or good business practice (e.g., not printing more books than the publisher believes will sell in a reasonable length of time).



World Intellectual Property Organization, Geneva

## See also

### General:

- Accessible publishing
- Concentration of media ownership
- Lists of publishing companies
- List of book distributors
- Mass media
- Open access publishing
- Open publishing
- Publication
- Self-publishing
- Serials, periodicals and journals
- Small press
- Writing
- Zines

### Publishing on specific contexts: Publishing tools:

- Academic publishing
- Books published per country per year
- List of best-selling books
- Document management system
- Scientific literature
- Writing circles
- Desktop publishing
- Electronic publishing
- Mobile publishing
- Web publishing tools

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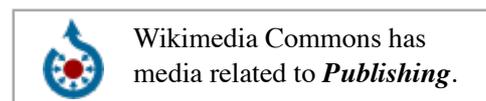
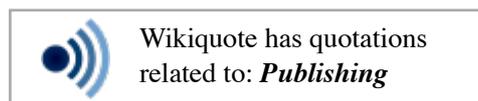
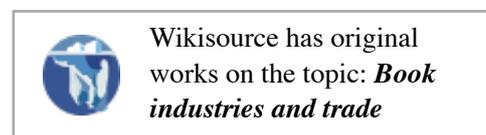
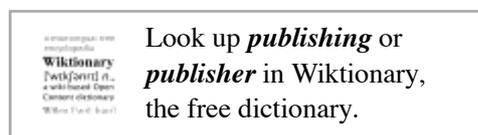
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## External links

- International Publisher's organisation



(<http://www.internationalpublishers.org/>)

- Book Publishing News (<http://www.bookpublishingnews.com/>)
- Book Publishing Statistics (<http://www.sethchernoff.com/connection/fifty-shades-of-book-publishing-and-why-bother/>)

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