

A Boomers Guide To Writing And Self Publishing



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A Boomers Guide to Writing and Self-Publishing Fiction

There are many ways to build an income, especially online. One of these ways is through creative fiction writing. You can write short or long works of fiction and start a career as a self-published indie author.

This is a good way to snowball your income and you get to determine how often you work and what that work entails. You can write in any genre that you want to – whether it's something you, yourself enjoy reading, or just something you find easy and enjoyable to write.

There are some writers who love reading science fiction, but find writing sweet romance much easier, or vice versa. The great thing is, this is a business model that doesn't require any money up front – the platforms you sell on will take a small cut of the sale once it goes through.

The process is very easy and it allows you to maintain control of your book empire. There are so many people quietly earning thousands each month publishing their stories and books online, and you can be one of them.

Indie Authors Are Raking in Money By Self-Publishing

Indie authors, also known as self-published authors, can make plenty of money. In fact, many indie authors will make more profit by selling their writing themselves rather than selling their books traditionally.

If you sell your books traditionally, it means that you have to go through a long process. You have to finish the book, get it edited and then start sending out query letters in order to land a literary agent.

What you might not know is that your query is the introduction of your novel. It's a way to entice the agent to want to read your manuscript. But most authors never get their manuscripts read this way.

Instead, they end up in the slush pile because someone read the query letter and judged the entire novel based on that one letter. Without an agent, it's extremely difficult to get accepted into a publishing company.

In some cases, it's impossible - because many publishers will not review any manuscript that's not submitted by an agent. It can take years of submitting and months of waiting to hear back - and even then, there's no guarantee your book will ever be accepted.

You don't have to put yourself through that long wait and hassle. You don't have to let someone else determine if your work has value to an audience. If you want to make money with self-publishing, you can.

In fact, studies have shown that indie authors actually keep more of the publishing dollars in their pocket by not having to split it with an agent or a publisher. It's not difficult at all to get started in self-publishing.

You might wonder if there are truly any successful indie authors out there. There are plenty of them and they're raking in the cash. You can look up the track record of authors such as E.L. James.

This indie author started the Fifty Shades of Grey series from what was first a fanfiction titled "Master of the Universe." The book was a huge success that turned into lucrative movie deals and the author now has a net worth of millions.

While it might seem that an indie author making millions is just a lucky shot, there are others who have done the same. Amanda Hocking is one of them. This writer self-published her first book on Amazon because she wanted to raise a few hundred dollars for something she wanted to do.

The book took off, she went on to write more and now she's also a millionaire. Lisa Genova self-published "Still Alice," worked on marketing it, and that book ended up going to auction among publishers before selling for six figures.

Other authors such as Darcie Chan and Michael J. Sullivan, who both became USA Today as well as a New York Times bestselling authors also managed to find success through self-publishing.

And there are hundreds of others who books achieve those levels, and the authors quietly publish story after story or book after book, and they're not out there bragging about their income. It just happens.

Popular Genres to Consider

Once you've decided that you want to self-publish, you need to choose a genre. You want to be careful here. Some people say you should choose a genre that you like to read.

If you don't enjoy reading books of a particular genre, you may not enjoy writing it either. Every type of book fits into a genre. These are considered the main genres. Main genres are ones such as thrillers.

But under the genre of thrillers, you have sub-genres under that umbrella. These fit into categories such as psychological thrillers, or crime thrillers. Most people feel that a mystery is also the same thing as a thriller, but it's not.

The two are different in that a mystery focuses on solving the puzzle presented to the reader within the story. A thriller focuses on the plot between the hero/heroine and the villain.

In these books, the hero/heroine must usually overcome, battle, or bring the villain to justice. Romance is a popular and wide-selling genre for books, too. This genre has many subgenres.

They can also be broken down by age into areas like young adult, new adult and adult. Historical is a subgenre of the romance genre. These types of books focus on stories that happened in a time that's already passed, and the era you'd focus on would be in the late 1800s to early 1900s.

Though a historical romance does have that historical setting, the story must still center on the romance of the couple for it be considered a historical romance. Contemporary romance simply means a romance story set in present times.

Under the genre of romance, there's also the paranormal subgenre. For example, the bestselling series *Twilight* is considered a paranormal romance. It's a story that features characters, situations, or settings that are outside the everyday world.

You might find these stories centering around protagonists that are werewolves, vampires, shape shifters and more. The romance genre also includes subgenres like suspense, romantic comedies-known as romcoms, inspirational and more.

You'll find that many romance books are defined by heat level. These are often labeled as steamy, meaning there will be graphic detail within the books or they're written as "clean" or "sweet," which just means that there's no specifics mentioned.

Fantasy is a genre with a lot of subgenres under it. They'll also fall into categories such as high or epic. Stories that focus on fairy tales or fairy tale retellings are part of the fantasy genre.

Science fiction books can also be further divided by subgenres. These are books that often center around things like alien invasions, apocalyptic worlds, and parallel universe. *The Martian* by Andy Weir was self-published originally. It went on to land on the New York Times list and eventually became a movie.

Standalone Versus Series Fiction

Once you've decided that you want to get into self-publishing, you have to choose your genre, then decide if the book you're going to write is going to be a standalone or a series.

When you write a standalone story or book, it just means that you're writing a book that's generally not part of a series – it's one and done. What some self-published authors do is create a standalone book within a series, but that's not as common.

Writing a standalone novel means that your character's story ends when the book does. There's no cliffhanger ending, no plot threads to tie up in another book. The ending is the completion, contained within a single book.

If you choose to write a series, it means the story is going to continue beyond one book. You can write a series in a variety of ways in order to make them connect. Some authors create a series that centers around one protagonist.

This protagonist is then featured in each subsequent book. But you don't have to tie a series together by using the same character. Instead, you can choose to create a world or a universe, but each book features a different character.

The writer would introduce the newest character at the beginning of the book and that book is then just that character's complete story. Pros to writing standalone novels is that some readers dislike having to read an entire series.

There's a large audience of people who like reading individual books by authors. There's no continuing character arc to keep up with and when the story is done, the author can also move on.

The drawback to writing a standalone is that you must create a world or setting from scratch each time you write a story. Though it is possible to earn substantially with a standalone, many of them never have the same income power that a series does.

The benefit to writing a series is a greater income potential and you're writing in an established world. You already know the world or the continuing characters, so a series can often be easier to write.

Plus, you can build an audience who's hungry for the next in the series. You're more likely to have higher pre-orders whenever you announce an upcoming book. And if a reader enjoys your first one, you can almost guarantee they're going to snap up the rest of your available series to devour, too.

But if a reader doesn't start from book one, it can be difficult for them to make sense of the story. You may end up rehashing information you've already put in prior books in the series, and this can quickly bore your established fan base.

The length of the books you write can vary according to genre and market expectation. If you want to write middle grade books, you'll write between 20,000 and 50,000 words. Young adult novels are anywhere from around 45,000 to 70,000 words but if they're in the epic fantasy category, the word count is usually well over 100,000.

Children's picture books are usually between 500 to 800 words, but usually never longer than that. A novella is not less than 10,000 words but usually never over 40,000. A standard novel can range from over 40,000 words to over 100,000.

Amazon also has a short reads section. These are stories that can be read in 15, 30, 45, 60, 90, or 120 minutes. The word count for each of these sections varies. Fifteen minutes is around 5,000 words, 30 is between 7,000-9,000, 45 is between 8,000-10,000, 60 is between 10,000 and 12,000, 90 is between 15,000 and 18,000 and 2 hours is usually between 20,000 and 25,000.

Understanding Tropes and Writing to Market

A trope is a story device used within a genre. The tropes will vary, depending on the type of novel. Readers like tropes and expect certain ones in their favorite genres. An example of a common trope is the misunderstood geek is really a superhero.

There's also the popular story of a nobody who becomes the king or queen. You can mix more than one trope within a story. If you have the nobody becomes the king or queen and you're writing a romance, then you can pair that with the trope of opposites attract, or enemies to lovers.

In fantasy novels, a common trope is usually a quest of some type. These quests can center around a place such as a forest or a sea quest, it can be an object such as a sword or it can be a parallel world - trying to find access to that world.

In romance stories, there are a lot of different tropes, and these are often known as category tropes. Certain categories of romances have tried and true tropes. Some of these are the accidental pregnancy - this is the catalyst that forces the hero and heroine together.

Other tropes are ones such as cowboy, fake engagement, forbidden love, best friends to lovers, the girl or boy next door, marriage of convenience, mistaken identity, revenge, royalty, SEALs, military or law enforcement, secret baby, ugly duckling and more.

You can use more than one trope within a romance novel. Writing to market means writing your story so that it fulfills reader expectation. You're writing what readers love within that genre - what they want to read.

These are established readers of the genre and if you're writing what they like, your books will sell. To find what writing to market is in your genre, you need to look up the type of book that you plan to write.

If you plan to write science fiction, you need to go to Amazon and pull up their science fiction books. What you're looking for are the top, bestselling books. Study these books to find out what each of them have in common.

For example, do the better selling ones feature things like a ship's captain and crew facing a battle with an unknown enemy? If you want to write fantasy novels, you need to do the same or similar.

Once you pull it up, you'll see that they often have things in common like a hero or a heroine who's the Chosen One, they're set in Arthurian times, or they have mythical creatures.

Always write to market, which means you're giving the readers what they want and expect. If you get into the romance genre and instead of a happily ever after ending, your characters break up, that's going to be very disappointing for your audience.

Going Through the Self-Publishing Process

Years ago, the belief existed that self-published novels were somehow inferior to novels that were published through an established book company with an agent in tow. Many writers, not understanding the market or how to put their best story up, would slap up a novel that was rife with typos, grammatical errors, poor plot devices, and bad covers.

As a result of that, a certain contempt for self-published novels was born. But it's not the same today. Thanks to well-established, high-earning self-published authors, this means of publishing has become just as popular and can earn more in income than what traditional publishing can.

To write a book and have it do well, though, there are certain steps you must take during the process. Never rush a book to market. If it's not your best effort, this will show in the kinds of reviews that you get.

Readers are not satisfied with anything less than your absolute best effort. You must start by having a professional cover. Many writers think this means thousands of dollars, but it doesn't.

You can expect to pay between \$50 for covers to \$350 or more. Premade covers can cost even less. Knowing which cover to choose for your story is a matter of reader expectations.

Go back to Amazon and look at the covers in the genre that you want to write in. A thriller or suspense novel would not have a cover featuring bright colors, or a cheerful background.

The colors are usually darker, and the font plain. The colors are usually gray, black, brown, blue and red. Some will have lighter colors or white, but these are the exception, not the majority within the genre.

Science fiction novels usually have the same colors as thriller or fantasy. Romance category novels usually use bright colors unless they're in the suspense subgenre, then those covers are darker.

You need to make sure that your book is well-edited. If you can't afford to hire an editor, then first use the tools online that help you weed out spelling errors and poor grammar. You can even upgrade to some one-time payment or monthly payment tools that do more, such as pointing out repetitive wording.

You can also use beta readers. These are people who will read your book without charge because they happen to love the genre and appreciate the opportunity to read books for free in exchange for their feedback.

You can find beta readers in writing groups on places such as Facebook. The platforms you can use to sell your novel depend on how much effort you want to put into it as well as the kind of royalties you want.

You can upload your novel to Amazon through their Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) link and the process is pretty easy for new writers. You can sell eBooks or paperbacks and Amazon will print these on demand.

You get to choose the royalty plan for your books based on the price point you choose, which is the 35% or the 70% option. There are different terms for the different choices. If you decide to publish on Amazon using the KDP Select option, you cannot offer your book for sale anywhere else - including on your own website - or this violates the terms of service and you'll get kicked from the program.

You can also choose to go wide. This simply means that you upload your novel on several other platforms in addition to Amazon's KDP program. You can sell it from your own website or online store.

You can upload it to Barnes & Noble using the Barnes & Noble Press site. Apple Books, part of iTunes, also has a self-publishing platform. You can also use Kobo for your books. Some local bookstores will also carry books by self-published authors if you approach them.

The self-publishing process is something that can bring excitement to your online career. You get to create stories and build a loyal following of enthusiastic reader who will consume every piece of work you release.

If you want to, you can start with a series of short reads, or dive straight into the novel-writing process. You can use one or more pen names and write in multiple genres, too. Most of all, have fun with it, because this is one of the more enjoyable business models you can pursue that has unlimited profit potential.

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