

(Microsoft™)

# From **Word** to print

Cost-effectively produce 100 prints  
of a book like this with the help of a  
personal computer and Microsoft Word

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# Is this book for you?

You should read this book if:

- You have written or intend to write a book.
- You don't want to (or haven't been able to) find a traditional publisher.
- You want 500 or fewer printed copies.
- You would like to be able to produce a book similar in format to this one.
- You own (or have access to) a personal computer with Microsoft Word software.<sup>1</sup>
- You are interested in learning new skills that will help you format your book.
- You are willing to dedicate a significant amount of time and spend some money to get your book into print.
- You want to know the market price for the printing of a book like the one you have planned.

The following items are optional, but are particularly helpful: a scanner, a printer, and Adobe Acrobat or 5D PDF Creator software.

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<sup>1</sup> The descriptions in this book apply to Microsoft Word 97 running under Windows 95. However, the majority of the information would also be appropriate to Word running on other computer platforms as well as newer versions of Word.



# Introduction

If you have gotten this far, I'll assume that you have an idea for a book that you would like to see in print. It doesn't matter to me what it's about. If you have that idea, and a heartfelt desire to see your book in print, I can help you get that book into print. Your personal computer, Microsoft Word software, and today's digital printing technology provide you with the tools you need to circumvent the traditional publishing industry. In this book, I will show you how to go from manuscript to bound book.

## **The economics of traditional publishing**

If you have already tried to get your book published, you know that the traditional publishing industry is not very open to newcomers. It focuses on big names and proven authors. First-time authors are long shots unless they happen to be celebrities or involved in a scandal of large proportions. If you don't fall into one of those categories, chances are that a publisher will ignore your inquiries or return your manuscript unread. To get them to listen to you, you need an agent. If your book has a broad audience, and you want to address that audience through a traditional publisher, then I recommend that you put this book down and find a reputable agent.

Even with an agent, it is unlikely that you will strike it rich with a book – publishing is a tough industry, and only the top authors make significant amounts of money. Let's look at the economics of

publishing for a moment. What if your book sold 100,000 copies at \$20 a piece. By any measure, that's a huge success; \$2 million in sales revenue to be exact. But how much of that money would you, the author, be likely to see after the bookseller, the distributor, the printer, the publisher, and your agent have taken their share? You might get about 5% to 10% (or maybe as much as \$2 per book).<sup>2</sup> In the case of a \$20 book that sells 100,000 copies, 10% of the sales revenue would amount to \$200,000.

Now \$200,000 is a lot of money and you could make a nice living if you were prolific and your books performed consistently at this level. However the average book sells more like ten or twenty thousand copies, which leaves a much smaller amount to divide among the various players. Does your book have a broad enough appeal to sell 10,000 copies? What if your pool of readers is closer to 500 or 1,000? What publisher would be interested in that?

If all of this discourages you, read on. The revolution in personal computers, digital printing, and the Internet has given authors powerful tools to publish and market their own books, without the middlemen. You have the opportunity to take advantage of these technologies to create, print, and even promote and sell your book. If this sounds like a lot of work, well, it is, but if you've made it this far, I can show you how to get your book in print using a step-by-step achievable plan. I'll help you cut out unnecessary middlemen and work effectively with others who can help you. I can't promise riches or publishing miracles, but I can give you the satisfaction that comes from seeing a dream through to completion.

Today's digital technologies are extremely well suited for producing small quantities of books. This wasn't the case as recently as the late 1980s. Short-run books fill a tremendous gap

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<sup>2</sup> You might be able to bargain a larger percent, and maybe you have a hot property that Hollywood will want the film rights to, but 5% to 10% is reasonable for a first-time author.

that has existed between mass-market books and books with a more focused appeal. Do you have a family history, a topic of local interest, a fund-raising cookbook, a book of poetry, a memoir, a novel, or a military unit history? Perhaps your book is something that you simply had to write. This technology gives you the tools to bring your story to a broader audience.

I wrote this book because I could see the opportunities that today's technology provides to authors who want to publish their own books. This became exceptionally clear to me as I pursued, in my spare time, the writing of a book called "The Writing 69th".<sup>3</sup> Publishers ignored my proposals, even though I was firmly convinced I had a compelling story to tell. I decided to print a small quantity of books myself because I wanted to have copies to give to the dozens of veterans, family members, and others who had helped me while I did my research. I was motivated to do this because the veterans who had helped me were all in their seventies or eighties and I wasn't sure they would still be around when I finally found a traditional publisher. I also wanted to complete "The Writing 69th" exactly the way I wanted it, knowing that I would probably have to make significant concessions if and when I signed a deal with a publisher. By self-publishing a small quantity of books and putting them in limited distribution, I hoped to provide some visibility for the book and thereby improve my chances of finding a publisher.

I learned a lot through the process of having "The Writing 69th" printed and I'd like to share that knowledge with you. Most people don't realize the power of some of the software tools that come with a personal computer today. If you have a personal computer with Microsoft Word software, then you are ready to start. Microsoft Word is a word-processing tool that gives you the power

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<sup>3</sup>Throughout this book I will refer to my experiences in writing, formatting, and printing "The Writing 69th". You can find more information on "The Writing 69th" at the following Internet address:

[www.greenharbor.com](http://www.greenharbor.com)

to create a handsome book complete with a table of contents, index, captions, and footnotes. It is well suited for short- to medium-length book projects, and though it has its quirks, it can help you be your own publisher.

I will also assume that you have your own printer, but you shouldn't assume that you will be printing your book at home. In most cases, it will be far more economical for you to find a print shop with digital printing or copying services. A scanner is another nicety, particularly if you want to include photographs or other images. Another tool, which I will discuss in greater detail later in the book, is Adobe Acrobat software (list price approximately \$200). You can use this software to create a print-ready file when you are finished with the writing and formatting of your book.

You can dramatically reduce the cost of this project if you handle the time-consuming things instead of paying someone else to do them for you. However there will still be times when you will have to pay for the services of other people. For “The Writing 69th”, I paid an artist to create a cover image, a printer to print the cover in color, and another printer to print the inside of the book and then bind the book. I offered to pay a proofreader, but instead bartered my time for hers. The process of printing 100 copies of “The Writing 69th” cost me about \$1,700, or about \$17 a book.<sup>4</sup> This is a significant amount of money, but I felt it was worth it. I gave away most of the copies and sold a few. I did not intend this to be a moneymaking operation, but I took in enough money to cover some of the production costs. Future printings of the book will be significantly less expensive, probably around \$6 per book, because the initial expenses include extra covers plus other general overhead expenses.

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<sup>4</sup> “The Writing 69th” was 172 pages long and had many scanned photographs and illustrations. The cover was color and the inside was black & white. It was perfect bound (like a typical paperback book) and in 8½” x 11” format.

Keep in mind that this book is about formatting and printing small quantities of books. It is not about publishing. Publishing a book is a much more extensive process that involves marketing, distributing, and getting the book into mainstream bookstores. If you want to see your book displayed in national retail bookstores, I recommend that you publish it through a reputable publisher. However, this book will cover the importance of some key publishing issues including the International Standard Book Number (ISBN). An ISBN is required if you want your book to be listed with a distribution network that would allow it to be ordered through retail bookstores. This is the first step towards publishing, but it won't make your book magically appear on shelves in stores and it will not be effective unless it is done in conjunction with a focused marketing effort.

By the time you finish reading this book, you will know how to format and submit your book to a print shop. You will know the decisions that you will have to make regarding printing and binding. You will also know approximately how much it will cost to print your book. The book will also provide you with resources for tasks that you choose not to do yourself. There is even a section on vanity publishers<sup>5</sup> if you choose to go that route. (And even if you do, you can save money by following the advice contained in this book.)

In essence, you will know how to produce a soft-cover book that looks like the book that you are holding now.

## **Book fundamentals**

This book's chapters are structured around the five key tasks related to getting a book in print:

- Editorial tasks – Writing and editing the book

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<sup>5</sup> A vanity publisher charges the author money to publish a book.

- Design tasks – Designing and formatting the book
- Art tasks – Illustrating the book
- Production tasks – Assuring that the book will print well, including creating a print-ready file and delivering that file to the printer
- Printing & binding tasks – Working with a print shop to produce the finished book

Another chapter covers some key publishing tasks related to distribution and pricing. The “Publishing tasks” chapter also covers other resources, particularly those that are available through the Internet. These Internet-based services are changing traditional publisher/author relationships and opening up new opportunities for authors.

### *The way it used to be*

Here’s the way things used to work if you wanted to get your book published. You typed out your manuscript double-spaced on a typewriter and submitted those pages to the publisher. If your manuscript was accepted, the editor marked up any corrections on the manuscript and submitted those pages to the typesetter. The typesetter re-typed the manuscript and sent the formatted pages (or galleys) back to the editor. The editor (and maybe the writer too) made final corrections to the galleys, manually created the table of contents and index (if required), and returned the galleys to the typesetter. The typesetter made those corrections and sent the final pages to the printer. The printer photographed the pages and created printing plates.<sup>6</sup> The printer also created printing

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<sup>6</sup> In the past, making a printing plate was a very manual process that involved photographing the page from the designer, processing the film, and then cutting and taping the film from multiple pages together. This large piece of composite film was used to expose the plate material in a special graphic arts camera. The plate was then mounted on the press for printing. Today, many printers use an automated process that allows the printer to make a plate much more simply.

plates for the cover, which was based on artwork from an artist, typography from a typesetter, and a page layout from a designer.

### *Today's workflow*

Today, personal computers and word processing software have streamlined this process extensively. Authors still submit printed copies of their manuscripts, but of course once the manuscript has been accepted, the publisher asks the author for the manuscript as a computer file. Formatting the book is also greatly simplified if the author assigns standard styles to each portion of the book (i.e., heading, subhead, text, bullet, note, caption, etc.). In addition, many software programs are available that automatically create a table of contents and an index. To make a long story short, one person can handle the roles of author, editor, typesetter, designer, and artist if they have the right skills and talent. You can even print the book yourself if the quantities are small enough and you are satisfied with as simple a binding technique as a staple or a three-ring binder.

The chapters that follow will cover the key roles and responsibilities involved in taking a book from manuscript to print. You may not be able to handle all of them yourself, but you will be able to decide for yourself which ones you should perform and which you should delegate.

