

INDIE PUBLISHING IN A NUTSHELL

Matty Dalrymple, The Indy Author

Download presentation at
TheIndyAuthor.com/Nutshell



WHO AM I?

Matty Dalrymple is the author of the Ann Kinnear Suspense Novels and Suspense Shorts and the Lizzy Ballard Thrillers, and the principal at William Kingsfield Publishers.

She also writes, speaks, consults, and podcasts about the writing craft and the publishing voyage as The Indy Author.

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WHO ARE YOU?

- Working on your first book?
- Finished your first book?
- Finished multiple books?
- Some indie publishing experience?
- Some traditional publishing experience?



THE A AND B OF TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

- **Access** – But not as much of a differentiator as it used to be
- **Bragging Rights** – It would be super cool to say you were published by a Big Five publisher ... but the chances are tiny

*Excellent writing is **necessary but not sufficient** for a trad deal.*

Marketing is a bigger consideration than art.



THE CS OF INDY PUBLISHING

- **Creativity** – Be creative on your own schedule.
- **Chronology** – Don't wait months (or years) for whatever's next.
- **Control** – Never have a cover you hate.
- **Care** – Nurture your backlist forever.
- **Cash** – Indies earn more than traditionally published authors, according to ALLi and Authors Guild 2023 income surveys.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE ...

... to be an author?

- Creator
- Editor

... to be indie?

- Gatekeeper
- Manager
- Marketeer

You are the CEO of your writing and publishing business.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE INDIE?

A willingness to *manage* all aspects of the publishing process:

- Editorial
- Design (interior and exterior)
- Production
- Distribution
- Marketing (ongoing activities like website maintenance)
- Promotion (time-bound activities like discounts)
- Rights licensing



CAVEAT RE: “INDIE” AND “TRAD”

- It's more of a spectrum than an either/or
 - The only clear delineation is who the gatekeeper is
- The choice can be book-by-book, not once-and-done

Penguin
Random
House



SIMON &
SCHUSTER

 macmillan



HarperCollins



hachette
BOOKS



THE INDY
—AUTHOR—

WHAT IS YOUR POSITION IN THE PROCESS?

- Traditional publishing – You’re the supplicant
 - You can’t *choose* to go trad, you can only choose to *pursue* trad
 - Gatekeepers decide if you’re good enough
- Indie publishing – You’re the boss
 - The buck stops with you, for better or worse
 - Readers decide if you’re good enough



WHY “INDIE” AND NOT “SELF-PUB”?

- Professional indie publishing cannot be done by *yourself*—you need to enlist the help of other creative professionals (editors, cover designers)

We’d never call a movie “self-produced.”



HOW DOES INDIE PUBLISHING WORK?

- We'll examine the three most common formats for books:
 - Ebooks
 - Print
 - Audio



WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PUBLISH?

- Edited manuscript > formatted content files
 - EPUB for ebook
 - PDF for print
 - MP3 or WAV files for audio
- Cover
 - Ebook front cover
 - Print wraparound cover
 - Audio square cover
- Metadata – title, subtitle, sales description, categories, keywords, etc.



PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION – EBOOKS



Manage everything from 1 dashboard

Pay D2D ~10% to get to other platforms



Manage everything from 2 dashboards

Get full royalties on Amazon



+



Manage each platform individually

Get full royalties on all platforms



AMAZON EXCLUSIVE OR WIDE – EBOOK

Exclusive (books on KU)

- Greater Amazon royalties
- Every borrow counts as a sale
- Better for certain niches
- Access to Kindle Countdown Deals and free book promotions

Wide

- Not putting all your eggs in the Amazon basket
- Get into libraries
- NOTE: Authors can choose to be exclusive to Amazon with ebooks but wide with print and audio



PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION – PRINT



Manage everything from 1 dashboard

Pay distributor to get to other platforms



OR



Manage everything from 2 dashboards

Get full royalties on Amazon



OR



+



Manage each platform individually

Get full royalties on all platforms



PRODUCTION – AUDIO

Royalty Share

- You split the royalties with your narrator
- You're locked into the contract for years

Gain entry into the market

Pay for Production

- You pay the narrator per finished hour (PFH)
- You own the rights

Retain your rights and royalties



PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION – AUDIO



Manage everything from 1 dashboard

Pay Findaway 20% to get to other platforms



Manage everything from 2 dashboards

Get full royalties on Amazon



Manage each platform individually

Get full royalties on all platforms



AMAZON ACX OR FINDAWAY – AUDIO

Amazon ACX

- Distribution to Amazon, Apple, and Audible
- Whispersync
- Discount on audiobook when purchasing ebook on Amazon
- Higher royalties

Findaway (wide)

- Not putting all your eggs in the Amazon basket
- Get into libraries
- Set your price
- NOTE: Authors can choose to be exclusive to Amazon with audio but wide with print and ebooks



THE INDIE AUTHOR MINDSET

- Never say “I’ll *just* self-publish it.”
- Commit to making any indie-publishing book as good as or better than traditionally published books.
- Never forget your role as gatekeeper.



RESOURCES

- [TheIndyAuthor.com](https://www.theindyauthor.com) (named one of the "101 Best Websites for Writers" by *Writer's Digest* 2022 | 2023 | 2024)
- [The Indy Author Podcast](https://www.theindyauthor.com/podcast) (with 250+ backlist episodes)
 - Especially episodes 101-107, "The Seven Processes of Publishing"
- [The Alliance of Independent Authors](https://www.allianceofindependentauthors.com)
- YouTube channels:
 - [The Indy Author](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
 - Michael La Ronn's [Author Level Up](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
 - [Dale L. Roberts](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



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