

How Do I Decide? Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

→ Most importantly: this decision is up to YOU.

Traditional publisher:

- Buys rights to publish your book
- Pays royalties, and usually pays an advance against royalties
- Goes through an editing process
- Designs the interior of the book and the cover
- Physically produces the books, prints it, and ships to retailers.
- *The term “traditional publisher” refers to a company that pays the author on an advance-against-royalty basis, and handles all editorial, production, printing, marketing, sales, and distribution of the book.*

Self-publisher:

- Author arranges for the various elements of publishing a book as described above—much like a building contractor
- Author is responsible for all of the costs associated with publishing. Editing, design, marketing, printing, etc.
- Author doesn't get paid until the book begins generating revenue.

Six Book Publishing Paths

→ Jane Friedman's Infographic: Key Book Publishing Paths

1. Big five: PRH, HC, S&S, Hachette, Macmillan. (Each has dozens of imprints.)
2. Other large and mid-sized publishers
3. Small presses
4. Assisted and hybrid presses
5. Indie/diy
6. Social

Traditional publishing: 4 advantages

1. Editorial and Design Expertise
2. Marketing, Publicity and Distribution
3. Validation
4. You Get Paid

Self-pub: 4 advantages

1. Freedom & speed
2. Career boost
3. Intrinsic reward
4. Bigger slice of the financial pie

Weighing the Options

What's the SAME no matter which way you choose?

- When people buy and read your books, it feels great. At that point, it doesn't matter how you got published. People are reading your books and that was your goal in the first place.

So how do you make the decision? Pay attention to your goal in publishing as you consider the merits of traditional vs. self.

KEY TRAITS TO CONSIDER IN MAKING THE DECISION

1. **Writer or business person?**
2. **Solo entrepreneur or collaborator?**
3. **You pay them, or they pay you?**
4. **How much of a hurry are you in to get your book published?**
5. **Do you prefer to direct all aspects of a project, or are you comfortable with a collaborative approach?**
6. **Validation: Do you see any value in being accepted by a traditional publisher as a legitimate validation of your worthiness as an author?**
7. **Have you tried to pursue the traditional route yet?**

ONE LAST THING:

The #1 problem for both indie and traditional authors is DISCOVERABILITY.

- Traditional publishers put out 500k to 1 million new books per year, and it's estimated that there are anywhere from 1.7 million to 3 million self-published books per year. Those numbers are not even comprehensible.
- This means that there's no way for readers to find your book without a dedicated marketing effort. This is why authors —both trad & indie — need to build platforms. Most authors are marketing their books to their own platforms.
- Keep in mind, this is true no matter which way you publish.