

2017 KEY BOOK PUBLISHING PATHS • BY JANE FRIEDMAN • JANEFRIEDMAN.COM

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING			ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING		
BIG FIVE	MID-SIZE & LARGE	SMALL PRESSES	HYBRID PUBLISHING	SELF-PUBLISHING: ASSISTED	SELF-PUBLISHING: DIY
<p><b>WHO THEY ARE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, Hachette, Simon &amp; Schuster, Macmillan (each have dozens of imprints).</li></ul> <p><b>WHO THEY WORK WITH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authors who write works with mainstream appeal, deserving of nationwide print retail distribution in bookstores and other outlets.</li><li>• Celebrity-status or brand-name authors.</li><li>• Writers of commercial fiction or genre fiction, such as romance, mystery/crime, thriller/suspense, science fiction and fantasy, young adult, children's.</li><li>• Nonfiction authors with a significant platform (visibility to a readership).</li></ul> <p><b>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Publisher shoulders financial risk.</li><li>• Physical bookstore distribution nearly assured, in addition to other physical retail opportunities (big-box, specialty).</li><li>• Best chance of mainstream media coverage and reviews.</li></ul> <p><b>HOW TO APPROACH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Almost always requires an agent. Novelists should have a finished manuscript. Nonfiction authors should have a book proposal.</li></ul> <p><b>WHAT TO WATCH FOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Author receives an advance against royalties, but most advances do not earn out.</li><li>• Publisher typically holds onto all publishing rights for all formats for at least 5-10 years.</li><li>• Many decisions are out of the author's control, such as cover design and title.</li><li>• Authors can find themselves unhappy with the level of marketing support received, and find that their title "disappears" from store shelves within 3-6 months. However, the same is true for most publishers, regardless of size.</li></ul>	<p><b>WHO THEY ARE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not part of the Big Five, but significant in size, usually with the same capabilities.</li><li>• Examples: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Scholastic, Workman, Sourcebooks, John Wiley &amp; Sons, W.W. Norton, Kensington, Chronicle, Tyndale, many university presses (Cambridge, Oxford).</li></ul> <p><b>WHO THEY WORK WITH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authors who write mainstream works, as well as those that have a more niche or special-interest appeal.</li><li>• Celebrity-status or brand-name authors.</li><li>• Writers of commercial fiction or genre fiction, such as romance, mystery/crime, thriller/suspense, science fiction and fantasy, young adult, children's.</li><li>• Nonfiction authors of all types.</li></ul> <p><b>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identical to Big Five advantages.</li></ul> <p><b>HOW TO APPROACH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doesn't always require an agent; see submission guidelines for each publisher. Novelists should have a finished manuscript. Nonfiction authors should have a book proposal.</li></ul> <p><b>WHAT TO WATCH FOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Same as Big Five, but advances and royalties from mid-size publishers may be lower than Big Five.</li><li>• Some mid-size publishers may be more open to innovative or flexible agreements that feel more like a collaboration or partnership (with more author input or control).</li><li>• University or scholarly presses typically pay a very low advance and have very small print runs, typically with a focus on libraries, classrooms, and academic markets.</li></ul>	<p><b>WHO THEY ARE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This category is the hardest to summarize because "small press" is a catch-all term for very well-known traditional publishers (e.g., Graywolf) as well as mom-and-pop operations that may not have any formal experience in publishing.</li><li>• Given how easy it is in the digital age for anyone to start a press, authors must carefully evaluate a small press's abilities before signing with one. Legitimate small presses do not ask authors to pay for publication.</li></ul> <p><b>WHO THEY WORK WITH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emerging, first-time authors, as well as established ones.</li><li>• Often more friendly to experimental, literary, and less commercial types of work.</li></ul> <p><b>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Possibly a more personalized and collaborative relationship with the publisher.</li><li>• With well-established small presses: editorial, design, and marketing support that equals that of a larger house.</li></ul> <p><b>HOW TO APPROACH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rarely requires an agent. See the submission guidelines of each press.</li></ul> <p><b>WHAT TO WATCH FOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You may not receive an advance or you'll receive a nominal one. Your royalty rate may be higher to make up for it. Diversity of players and changing landscape means contracts vary widely.</li><li>• There may be no physical bookstore distribution and/or the press may rely on print-on-demand to fulfill orders. Potential for media or review coverage declines when there is no print run.</li><li>• Be very protective of your rights if you're shouldering most of the risk and effort.</li></ul>	<p><b>KEY CHARACTERISTICS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Author funds book publication in exchange for expertise and assistance of the publisher; cost is often thousands of dollars.</li><li>• Author receives better royalties than a traditional publishing contract, but makes less than if self-publishing on their own.</li><li>• Such books will rarely be distributed into physical retail bookstores, although in some rare cases, it may happen.</li><li>• Each hybrid publisher has its own distinctive costs and business model; always secure a clear contract with all fees explained.</li></ul> <p><b>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get a published book without having to figure out the service landscape or find professionals to help. Ideal for an author who has more money than time.</li><li>• Some companies are run by former traditional publishing professionals, and offer high-quality results.</li></ul> <p><b>WHAT TO WATCH FOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some self-publishing (assisted publishing) services have started calling themselves "hybrid publishers" because it sounds more fashionable and savvy, but such companies may be nothing more than an assisted self-publishing service.</li><li>• Not all hybrid publishers are created equal. Fees dramatically vary and quality dramatically varies. Research carefully.</li></ul> <p><b>EXAMPLES OF HYBRID PUBLISHERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Curated. These companies are selective or may have editorial guidelines to follow. Examples: SheWrites Press, Greenleaf.</li><li>• Crowdfunding. Authors must raise money for the publisher to contract the work. Example: Inkshares, Unbound.</li></ul>	<p><b>KEY CHARACTERISTICS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Similar to hybrid publishing: authors pay to publish. An older term for this would be "vanity publishing."</li><li>• Contractual arrangements vary, but the best services charge an upfront fee, take absolutely no rights to the work, and pass on 100% net royalties to the author. They make money on charging authors for the services provided (editorial, design, marketing, and so on), not on copies sold.</li><li>• Such books will almost never be stocked in physical retail bookstores, although in some rare cases, it may happen.</li><li>• Many assisted publishing services have different packages or tiers of service, while others offer customized quotes.</li></ul> <p><b>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get a published book without having to figure out the service landscape or find professionals to help you. Ideal for an author who has more money than time.</li><li>• The best and most expensive services offer a quality experience that is comparable to working with a traditional publisher.</li></ul> <p><b>WHAT TO WATCH FOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most marketing and publicity service packages, while they can be well-meaning, are not worth an author's investment.</li><li>• Avoid companies that take advantage of author inexperience and use high-pressure sales tactics, such as AuthorSolutions imprints (AuthorHouse, iUniverse, WestBow, Archway).</li></ul> <p><b>EXAMPLES OF GOOD ASSISTED SERVICES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Matorador, Mill City Press, DogEar, Radius Book Group, Book in a Box, Girl Friday Productions. To check the reputation of a service, search for Mick Rooney's Independent Publishing Magazine website.</li></ul>	<p><b>KEY CHARACTERISTICS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authors manage the publishing process and hire the right people/services to edit, design, publish, and distribute.</li><li>• Each author has to decide which distributors or retailers they prefer to deal with.</li></ul> <p><b>VALUE FOR AUTHOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Author keeps complete and total control of all artistic and business decisions.</li><li>• Author keeps all profits and rights.</li></ul> <p><b>WHAT TO WATCH FOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some authors don't invest enough money to produce a quality product.</li><li>• First-time authors may not have the knowledge or experience to know what quality help looks like or what it takes to produce a quality book in their genre.</li><li>• Bricks-and-mortar retailers, professional reviewers, and mainstream media will rarely offer you help or coverage.</li></ul> <p><b>DIY PRINT AND EBOOK SERVICES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Primary ebook retailers that offer direct access to authors: Amazon KDP, Nook Press, Apple iBookstore, Kobo. Primary ebook distributors for authors: Smashwords, Draft2Digital, Pronoun. These services offer little or no assistance.</li><li>• Print-on-demand (POD) makes it affordable to sell and distribute print books via online retail. Most often used: CreateSpace, IngramSpark. If you have printer-ready PDF files, it costs little or nothing to start. If not, you'll have to hire assistance.</li><li>• These retailers and distributors operate primarily on a nonexclusive basis and take a cut of sales; you can leave them at will. There is no contract.</li><li>• Some authors may hire a printer and manage inventory, fulfillment, shipping, etc. and sell via Amazon Advantage.</li></ul>
SPECIAL CASES			FOR MORE INFORMATION		
<p><b>AGENT-RUN EFFORTS</b></p> <p>Some agents have created publishing arms, either as part of their agency or as a separate business. The most significant example is Diversion Books from agent Scott Waxman. Usually these efforts are limited to print-on-demand or ebook only distribution.</p>	<p><b>AMAZON PUBLISHING</b></p> <p>With more than a dozen imprints, Amazon has a sizable publishing operation that is mainly approachable only by agents. Amazon titles are sold primarily on Amazon, since most bookstores are unwilling to carry their titles.</p>	<p><b>DIGITAL-ONLY OR DIGITAL-FIRST</b></p> <p>All publishers, regardless of size, sometimes operate digital-only or digital-first imprints that offer no advance and little or no print retail distribution. Sometimes such efforts are indistinguishable from self-publishing.</p>	<p><b>• How to Get Published:</b> <a href="https://janefriedman.com/start-here-how-to-get-your-book-published/">https://janefriedman.com/start-here-how-to-get-your-book-published/</a></p> <p><b>• How to Self-Publish:</b> <a href="https://janefriedman.com/self-publish-your-book/">https://janefriedman.com/self-publish-your-book/</a></p> <p><b>• How to Evaluate Small Presses:</b> <a href="https://janefriedman.com/evaluate-small-publisher/">https://janefriedman.com/evaluate-small-publisher/</a></p> <p><b>• A Definition of Hybrid Publishing:</b> <a href="https://janefriedman.com/what-is-a-hybrid-publisher/">https://janefriedman.com/what-is-a-hybrid-publisher/</a></p> <p><b>• Should You Traditionally Publish or Self-Publish?</b> <a href="https://janefriedman.com/should-you-self-publish-traditional/">https://janefriedman.com/should-you-self-publish-traditional/</a></p>		
			<p><b>WHO CREATED THIS?</b></p> <p>Jane Friedman has more than 20 years of experience in the publishing industry. She is the former publisher of Writer's Digest and co-founder of the industry newsletter for authors, The Hot Sheet. Find out more at <a href="http://hotsheetpub.com">hotsheetpub.com</a>.</p>		