

Authors' Advice Directory

compiled by David Brawn
for Instant-Books UK Ltd
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www.instant-books.org

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‘What Books work with Instant-Books?’

Really any book will work as an Instant-Book but here are a few points to remember about the reader of your book that could help you decide if your idea might sell well as an Instant-Books Edition.

Instant-Books Editions are Adobe Acrobat pdf files with an A4 page size.

A4 is the same size as the paper used in your computer printer so your book pages will print out exactly as you designed them. A4 is widely used in conventional publishing for educational materials, instruction manuals, parts catalogues etc, but it is not commonly used in the publishing of books designed to be sold through bookshops. If your idea looks good on A4 paper then it will look good to your book’s buyer.

‘Illustrated’ Books are particularly suited to Instant-Books

Using the A4 page size with Adobe Acrobat pdf file format lends itself to the type of ‘Illustrated’ book that would be expensive to produce as a conventional book.

Think ‘Haynes Car Manual’ - you don’t need the whole book for one little job, so just print the pages you need.

Black and White ‘line art’ illustrations create small file sizes for your Instant-Books Edition pdf. Colour pictures make larger pdf files. File size being important to make sure that your reader gets an uninterrupted download.

Fiction Novels can be Published as Instant-Books

If your book project is all text, a novel or biography without any illustration, then while it could be published as an Instant-Books Edition you will need to think carefully about your page design as an A4 page of just text is not the most exciting reading prospect. Good design is vitally important to make your pages easy to read; think about dividing the A4 page layout into two A5 pages, don’t use all the ‘printable area’ of the page, put line breaks between paragraphs, make chapter headings stand out and start each chapter on a new A5 page.

The more you can make your Instant-Books Edition feel like a paperback novel the easier it will be for people to read.

As an alternative to an Instant-Books Edition you might also look at eBook publishers who specialise in ‘text only’ books.

Any Topic will work as an Instant-Books Edition

Writing and Editing

Books are about Writing - even Illustrated Books need Writing.

As a first time Author then it may come as quite a shock just how much writing you are going to have to do to fill just one book. Think in terms of ‘tens of thousands of words’ and even in terms of ‘hundreds of thousands of words’. Even illustrated books will still need to be written so don’t think you can get away with any sloppy writing; that old adage ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’ doesn’t apply and you’d do better thinking that ‘a picture is a good way of illustrating a thousand words.

Given that you are going to have to type a lot of words, all of them your own words - don’t even think of copying someone else’s published work, don’t go there! - you’ll need to get into writing regularly. Some people almost freeze when they realise that what they are typing will be published and read by others, each key stroke requiring Herculean effort, words being forced out by mental pressure. If this is you then try to train yourself out of this nervousness by writing lots of words so that the process of building up the words needed to complete your Instant-Books Edition becomes a smooth flowing process.

If you are a slow at the keyboard you might try other ways of getting your thoughts into a typed form.

Dragon Naturally Speaking software which allows you to dictate into a word processing programme without even touching the keys; at about £70 this programme might help you.

Perhaps you are better at longhand writing than keyboarding, in which case you might have to find a typist to turn your longhand into a word processing file. Another approach could be to dictate your words into a recorder and then use an audiotypist to produce your word processing file. Perhaps you’re more creative, and relaxed, in longhand and then type up your corrected longhand draft.

Choose the method that best suits you because however you get there good writing is what defines a good book.

Keep your Writing Organised

Nobody is going to simply sit down and type an entire book in one sitting, so structure your work and keep it organised. Divide your book up into its chapters as its basic structure, put in the topics that make up each chapter and when you have this Chapter/Topic structure to your liking then start writing the topics. Topics added together make Chapters, and Chapters added together make your Instant-Books Edition.

By breaking down the big task of ‘Writing a book’ into its components of Topics and Chapters you have manageable writing tasks and see your writing build into your book as you progress.

Organise your word processor files in the same structure, and use the same names, to avoid possible confusion.

Writing & Editing 2

You've typed the last full stop at the end of your book. At last it's finished, you've written it! Wrong, what you have written is the 'First Draft' of your book. Now the hard work begins in making sure that what you have written becomes the best you could have written.

Writers Write; Editors Edit.

If you have the misty-eyed dream that somewhere in the publishing process there is somebody dedicated to correcting your poor writing into good writing, then you are in delusion. There is no 'magic person' or 'magic software' that could change your writing. It's your Writing and You are responsible for how it turns out.

At Instant-Books we Trust Authors so we don't need 'Editors' but you being a 'Trusted Author' does mean that it is your responsibility for how your Instant-Books Edition appears.

We expect you to be your own Editor, in fact we expect you to be a Ruthless Editor determined to ensure that your Instant-Books Edition is the best book you can produce.

Spell Check

All of your writing should be 'Spell Checked' as part of your normal writing process. Being Instant-Books UK Ltd we like our Instant-Books Editions to use English, as compared to American, spelling. Many 'Spell Check' functions have American English as their default setting; we set ours English English, the choice is yours after all its your book.

Proof Read

A 'Spell Check' will only look for misspelt words. It will not know that 'ham' should have been 'hat' so Proof Read everything you have written, correcting where necessary.

Proof Reading on screen is OK but you might find it easier to print off your writing to read it, and it means you can give it to someone else for them to read through. Second, and third, opinions on your writing are a valuable method of improving your first draft; not just for spelling mistakes but for 'style and content' as well.

Editing and More Editing

When 'Proof Reading' your writing you should not just be looking to correct any errors, you should be 'Editing' your work by constantly looking for ways in which your written description could be improved.

It's often difficult to convince new writers of how important their 'Editing' of their own work is to the quality of their final submission. As a 'Rule of Thumb' we advise new writers to spend at least as long Editing their work as they took writing it in the first instance.

If you think this is a lot of work for little reward then perhaps you shouldn't be writing at all. Few first drafts of writing stay that way, the vast majority being improved through the Author's Editing process. If you think that 'I've written it, so it's finished' almost certainly it's not good writing.

Writing & Editing 3

We are now approaching your 'Final Draft', what was your 'First Draft' that has been spell checked, proof read, corrected, possibly rewritten in parts; every stage designed to improve your writing from your first attempt to 'the best you could have written' which will be your 'Final Draft'.

Ruthless Editing & Criticism

Instant-Books UK Ltd gives you an opportunity to have your Instant-Books Edition published quickly and painlessly; hopefully for you to go on and collect plenty of royalties.

Perhaps we are making it 'too easy' for you to get your book published, because the temptation is to avoid any criticism of your book until after it is published. We expect you to be a 'Ruthless Editor', not afraid to change your own work in any way that will make for a better book; but however ruthless you are with your own work it is only your own opinion. What do others think of your writing?

The Role of Criticism

None of us likes to be criticised but as a writer inviting people to critically review your work is one of the best ways of making yourself a better writer.

Good writers value criticism, they don't necessarily like 'criticism' but they recognise the value of criticism in making them produce a better book; it's like Corrie and East Enders, they both need each other but they don't have to like each other. As an author it's very tempting to defend your work from criticism, rather than listening to the criticism. If you can subdue that temptation to defend and listen to what others think of your work in an open minded way you can learn a lot about how your writing could be improved. Listen to all criticism, consider each point being made, decide if the point is valid or not, then look again at your work in the light of what others have said - you might find some very valid improvements that you hadn't thought of.

Who Should Review My Work?

You should attract criticism of your project by asking friends, colleagues, family etc to review what you have written, positively inviting criticism. Be aware that friends will often give you an 'excellent review' because they are your friends, rather than in any way criticise you.

Finding good, impartial reviewers of your work is difficult but you can help the process along by asking these people 'Where do you think I could improve the writing/design?' If you ask for this type of help, rather than the rather aimless 'Tell me what you think of this?', people are likely to take the task seriously in positively trying to help you improve.

Thank Your Critics

It's a painful experience the first time, actually every time, but unless you submit yourself to this type of review then you are in danger of your Instant-Books Edition being less than it could be.

When these people have criticised your work don't take it as a personal insult. It's very flattering that they have taken the time and effort to look at your work in detail. Their criticisms or comments are intended to help you improve your own work. They give you another person's insight into what you have written, along with the opportunity to improve your finished work.

Book Design

Good Book Design is rather like Good Writing in that the more you do of it the better you become. As a new Instant-Books Author you are faced with designing your Instant-Books Edition from scratch, which could be a daunting task without any guidance. To help you bring your book into a well designed Instant-Books Edition lets look at some common factors that will help you, and how Discovery Walking Guides converts it conventional books into Instant-Books Editions.

Common Factors of Instant-Books Editions

A4 Page Size.

All Instant-Books Editions are designed to be read on-screen and printed out (at the buyer's option) on normal home computer printers. As home computer printers use A4 paper then it is logical for our Instant-Books Editions to have an A4 page size. You might want to divide your A4 page into two A5 pages in 'landscape' layout.

Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (pdf) Files.

Adobe Acrobat's PDF Reader is widely available as a 'free download' or already installed on people's home computers. As well as 'pdfs' being a 'stable print design' they are also formed by a very good 'pdf' compression programme; meaning that the 'pdf' file of your Instant-Books Edition can be much smaller than the 'design' file they are created from. Small file sizes mean quicker downloading to your Instant-Books Edition buyer with less chance of the download being interrupted.

Conversion to Instant-Books Edition PDF after completing Book Design.

Instant-Books Editions are PDFs, but we don't design our books as a pdf. For designing your book you can use any design software that you like because the PDF conversion takes place after you have completed your design. This gives you the freedom to choose the software that suits you best. As Discovery Walking Guides we design all of our books using CorelDraw, partly because its what we've always used and we are familiar with using CorelDraw; we don't even use the latest editions as we like working in version 7 for most of our designing and occasionally use version 8 - both of these versions were superseded many years ago but still work for us - and we have CorelDraw version 13 as it handles a wider range of file formats but usually we are working in version 7. Choose the design software that you like best. PDF Writing programmes are widely available, see www.pdf995.com as one example; you do not have to invest in a full Adobe Acrobat program for your Instant-Books Edition.

Book Design 2

Basic Book Design for your Instant-Books Edition

Good Book Design is about the design of each page being pleasing to the reader, for Instant-Books Editions this means 'pleasing' when read on-screen or when printed as an A4 sheet of paper. We are always looking for the most pleasing balance of 'printed text', 'illustrations' and 'white space' - note the 'white space' because if you simply 'cram' as much information as possible onto each A4 page the result will be awful!

Here is how we prepare our Discovery Walking Guides ready for Instant-Books Editions.

Written Text:

All written text for a book is prepared in a word processing program (usually Lotus Word Pro) on a 'chapter by chapter' basis and each 'chapter' file is saved as a 'Rich Text Format' file; if you save your files as either 'Text Format' or 'Rich Text Format' it should avoid any problems when 'importing' them into your page design.

Page Size & Estimated Pages:

In our DTP software (CorelDraw7) we open a new project with A4 paper size (297mm high, 210mm wide) and specify the estimated number of pages for the project; typically 80 pages but we can always add or delete pages as our project nears completion. If you want two A5 pages as your A4 page design use the 'landscape' view and divide your A4 page in half by setting a vertical guideline down the centre.

Deciding Printed Area of Pages:

On the opening 'Page 1' we draw a 'paragraph text' box and give it the attributes for the standard text (Times New Roman), font size (9pt) and justification (fully Justified). The 'Printable Area' of an A4 page is 294mm high by 204mm wide but if you use this 'maximum printable area' each of your pages will look distinctly crowded, also should you have your book 'plastic comb' bound by a copy-shop the binding will obscure your text. As a starting point try giving yourself a 15mm margin around your text box, resulting in a 267mm high 180mm wide text box. If you are planning to print out and 'plastic comb' bind some copies of your Instant-Books Edition, or if you expect buyers to do this, you might want to move your text box another 10mm to the right.

Copy 'Paragraph Text' Box onto All Pages:

We simply select the Paragraph Text Box on Page 1, copy it 'Control + C' if using a keyboard shortcut, go to Page 2 and paste the Paragraph Text Box 'Control +V', go to Page 3 'Control +V', Page 4 'Control +V', and so on until we have pasted our standard Paragraph Text Box onto every page.

Book Design 3 - Illustrations

Preparing the Images for your Book Design

Illustrations really can turn 'text' into interesting page designs. For DWG book designs we use a combination of photos (digital), map sections taken from our Tour & Trail Map designs, a specially designed 'Summary Bar' unique to DWG, along with coloured 'headers' for chapter headings and 'footers' for page numbering.

Have a look at a DWG Walk! guide book to see how simple illustrations combined with judicious use of 'bold' and 'coloured' text come together to produce 'Good Book Design'.

Your illustrations can be in any form that you want but try to remember that 'more colour' means a bigger file size for your Instant-Books Edition.

As a very general guide to choosing illustrations here are the basic types:-

- Black and White Line Drawings are best drawn in your DTP programme as a separate design complete with the text included in the design. This produces a much clearer image that conventional drawing and scanning to make an image file. B&W Line Drawings can be saved as a 2 bit B&W image, which is the smallest file size of any type of illustration. Particularly good for 'technical manuals', 'teaching materials', 'Paper Plane' books etc.
- Grey Scale Pictures might sound a bit 'old hat' in this colour age but can bring 'atmosphere' to any subject where an historical aspect is required; e.g. old photos, historical images. Saved as 8 bit Grey scale images they are the most economical file sizes for 'picture' style illustrations.
- Full Colour Illustrations, including digital photos, are usually saved as 24 bit RGB colour jpeg images, but if you want smaller file sizes for these illustrations you can convert the image into 8 bit Paletted colour jpegs, but you will lose some colour definition.

Some Do's & Don'ts for your Illustrations

When preparing images for your illustrations try to consider the file size and the balance of Good Design you are trying to apply to each page of your book. Generally the PDF conversion of your finished book into an Instant-Books Edition will be carried out at a 300dpi resolution, so there is little (if any) point in having your images at a higher resolution.

Digital cameras are a great way of obtaining the photos for your illustrations; you can transfer the images direct to your computer, adjust/correct/manipulate these images in 'Paint' style programs, change their size and resolution etc etc. It is tempting to think more is better when thinking of the Megapixels available between different digital camera, but bear in mind all of our DWG digital images are taken on little Olympus 3X optical zoom pocket sized cameras with maximum resolutions of 2 and 3 Megapixels. At a 300dpi resolution in our book design our pictures only a camera resolution of 1 Megapixel.

Buying an expensive digital camera is no guarantee that you will have better photos for your book.

Book Design 4 - Bringing your book together

When you have all the components of your book; text files, images, contents etc, ready then it is time to move towards creating your final design - you've probably already designed sample pages by this stage.

Make your first page, Page 0, your Cover; even though your Instant-Books Edition is digital a good cover design will help you in promoting your book and will be used in the Instant-Books Catalogue.

Then Page 1 can be the Copyright notices as in a traditional book, so that Page 2 will be the start of your Contents. Then you are into your Book proper with the various chapters that make up your Book.

Which Typestyle? Which Font?

There are so many options available that it can be very confusing trying to decide which Typestyle, Font Size and Size of Illustrations to use in your design.

You have hundreds of choices so to make it simpler we normally prepare text in Times Roman 9pt Font Size or Arail 9pt Font Size; though we do use Comic Sans and Brush Script fonts when we think they are appropriate; in a recent design of 'Bumping About Brittany' I used French Script Font for contents, chapter headings and picture captions to give it a 'French' feel.

What Size Illustrations?

All our illustrations are prepared separately from the book and saved in appropriate file format; jpeg or png files for pictures. After the text has been imported into the 'Paragraph Text' boxes on the pages we import the illustrations, check the 'Properties' of the imported illustration and tick the 'Wrap Paragraph Text' and 'Size 1.00mm' boxes. Now the text flows around the picture which we can then drag into the position we want on the page, the text automatically rearranging itself.

It is tempting to throw all your digital pictures into your book design, but wait and think about it. You are trying to achieve a balance between text and pictures that makes for a pleasing page design with the pictures complementing your writing.

Achieving Good Page Design.

Too much of one thing can unbalance the page so as a general rule are the pit-falls to avoid:-

- too many, or too large, pictures simply because you can.
- pictures incorrectly positioned, remember they complement your text, not compete with it for attention.
- too many different Font Styles, or Font Sizes, on a page confusing the reader.

Work on your design on-screen until you are satisfied, then print it out to see if it looks good as a physical reality.

Finally Print Your Instant-Books Edition as a PDF File.

Select your 'Print' option, select the 'Acrobat Distiller, or PDF Creator' printer. In your printer properties select 'A4 Page Size', 'Black & White' or 'Colour' option, and 'eBook' print specification. Check in 'Print preview' that you have selected the correct options, correct if necessary, and then click 'Print'. You'll need to specify the File Name you want your book saved as, and the location where this file is to be stored; then the lengthy conversion of your design into a pdf file begins and it can take some time depending on your design.

When your design has been converted Adobe Acrobat reader will automatically open on-screen displaying your Instant-Books Edition.

Pricing DWG's Instant-Books Editions

Discovery Walking Guides Experience

At Discovery Walking Guides (DWG) we're into our second decade as a conventional publisher and feel that we are a bit more scientific than other publishers in pricing our products as we do ask our DWG Client Family what they think. For our Walk! UK series of books we asked which type of binding they would prefer, given that 'wire-O spiral binding' compared to traditional 'perfect bound' would mean the books had to be priced at £12.99 rather than £11.99. Replies to DWG's e-mail poll of our clients showed 84% in favour of 'wire-O spiral binding' even though the resulting books would cost a £1 more - DWG's Walk! UK series was published in 'wire-O spiral binding' with a recommended retail price of £12.99.

Instant-Books Editions of Discovery Walking Guides Books & Maps

Instant-Books faces a slightly different dilemma in that 'digital downloads' in UK are subject to VAT at 17.5%, while conventional books and maps are Zero Rated for VAT. When converting DWG titles into Instant-Books Editions we decided to drop the 'printing cost', along with our 'pick, pack, post' costs of supplying DWG titles by mail order.

The result, after taking into account a warehousing and financial risk cost, is that we could offer an Instant-Books Edition of a DWG £12.99 book at £4.99 while paying our Authors the same amount of royalty per copy sold; that whopping 40%! Now they make more if they sell an Instant-Books Edition than if they sold the conventional book!

For DWG's 'Tour & Trail' maps the situation is slightly different as Instant-Books will be offering a slightly different product in technical specification. Tour & Trail Super-Durable Maps at £7.99 are widely recognised as great value maps but we will be pricing these Instant-Books Editions at only £2.99 per map sheet; yet as the author I make a higher royalty on the digital Instant-Books Editions.

A General Pricing Model for Instant-Books Editions

DWG's policy on pricing digital Instant-Books Editions is that the saving we make by having a digital product are passed to the buyer of that product, while the author earns as much (or more) as selling a conventional book.

Taking out the costs of producing, storing and delivering a conventional £12.99 book mean we can sell the Instant-Books Edition at £4.99 with Instant 'no cost' Delivery.

Our client gets a £12.99 book for £4.99 in digital form.

Our Author gets a £1.70 royalty, compared to £1.30 on a conventional book.

Even 'HM Revenue & Customs' gets £0.74 VAT, compared to Zero on a conventional book.

It's an **'everyone wins'** situation.

Pricing Your Instant-Books Edition

Public Perception and Pricing

Price is Important in any decision to buy a product - few of us are rich enough to buy something irrespective of the Price. So when a potential buyer is looking at your Instant-Books Edition in the catalogue they need to see that they are getting good value if they buy that title. Remember that they are buying and unseen product so the buyer will have to decide if they are getting Good Value by comparing:-

'Title', 'Cover' and 'Detailed Description' (the product) with the Price
If they decide it is Good Value then they will Buy your Instant-Books Edition.

Instant-Books helps encourage buyers of your Instant-Books Edition through:-

- Instant Delivery, no having to go to a bookshop, or waiting for mail-order delivery.

- Simple, secure payment for Instant-Books Editions through PayPal or credit-card.

All you have to do is tell people about your Instant-Books Edition, show them it is Good Value, and they'll buy it!

Price Banding for Books

At Instant-Books we recognise that lots of people buy on Price. With 'nil print costs' and 'nil delivery costs' (actually there are costs but those are the overheads of Instant-Books) you can look at:-
'How Much' your 'Intellectual Property' is actually worth to Potential Buyers.

We believe that Instant-Books Editions should exploit the 'Price Breaks' of 'Public Perception':-

- £2.99 a 'pocket money' price; what else could you get for £2.99.

- £4.99 an 'under a fiver' price.

At these prices buying an Instant-Books Edition is only a very small financial risk, so encouraging people to 'impulse purchase' your book.

Instant-Books Pricing Model for Instant-Books Editions

From our experience of DWG products and 'Price Banding' we are setting our standard Instant-Books Prices as:-

Small Books	£2.99	being £2.54 Retail Selling Price + £0.45 VAT
General Books	£4.99	being £4.25 Retail Selling Price + £0.74 VAT
Special Books	£7.99	being £6.80 Retail Selling Price + £1.19 VAT

We would like to keep the vast majority of Instant-Books Editions at these Standard Prices but we can accommodate your preferred price, so long as it is reasonable, if you feel your Instant-Books Edition does not fit our pricing model.

Royalties earned by sales of your Instant-Books Editions are calculated on the Retail Selling Price received by Instant-Books, not on the VAT we have to hand over to HM Revenue & Customs. Where Instant-Books Editions are supplied to clients outside of UK then the product is classified as a Zero Rated Export and here you will earn royalties based on the price paid by the Instant-Books client.

Instant-Books UK Ltd - ‘General Publishing Guidelines’

Instant-Books UK Ltd believes that all authors should have the opportunity for their book to be published so long as that author has the commitment to their project that can bring the design of their book to a publishable form in A4 page size format.

We believe in Authors and we trust Authors to produce their Instant-Books Edition as they would like their readers to see their book.

What is Publishable by Instant-Books UK Ltd?

Basically ‘Everything and Anything’; no subject is excluded for being too obscure, too esoteric, too small a market. At Instant-Books we don’t know where the next ‘Best Seller’ is coming from, so our intention is to give every Author the chance to see their book in publication; for Instant-Books UK Ltd this ‘publication’ is in the form of a digital Instant-Books Edition available for Instant Download by web users World-Wide.

There is no limitation on what your Instant-Books Edition contains so long as it meets our fundamental guideline of ‘not offending the reader’. Remember that ‘reader’ could be anyone anywhere.

General Publishing Guidelines for Instant-Books Editions

Your final submission of your Instant-Books Edition must comply with the following four guidelines:-

- the Book is entirely the author’s own work and where any permissions to use material in the book are required these permissions have been obtained by the author in writing.
- the Book does not contain any direct, or inferred, reference to encouraging the reader to commit a criminal offence as defined by UK law.
- the Book shall in no way, directly or inferred, encourage the reader into acts of religious, racial, sexual, national intolerance.
- the Book does not contain any pornographic content.

Potential Breaches of Instant-Books UK Ltd ‘General Publishing Guidelines’

When submitting your Instant-Books Edition you will be required to complete the Instant-Books Publishing Agreement which includes you indemnifying Instant-Books UK Ltd against any action should your Instant-Books Edition fail to meet these General Publishing Guidelines.

Should there be a complaint by a client that an Instant-Books Edition title is allegedly in breach of the ‘General Publishing Guidelines’ then Instant-Books UK Ltd will examine the complaint, and if it is found to have any substance then that Instant-Books Edition will be withdrawn from the Catalogue while the complaint issue is resolved between the Author, Client and Instant-Books UK Ltd.

Promoting Your Instant-Books Edition

Instant-Books Authors are committed to their book projects, you know this because your project is with Instant-Books and all of us together want your book to be a success; especially in the number of copies that your Instant-Books Edition sells.

Promotion of Your Instant-Books Edition

Promoting your book is the most important factor in generating sales. Instant-Books has given you the platform to get your book published and into our Catalogue, but don’t think that’s all there is to success. Successful Self-Promotion will mean that more people get to know about your book and that will result in more sales, as readers of your book tell other people so more people get to know of you and your sales grow further; hopefully resulting in a ‘Best Seller’ but it doesn’t happen on its own.

All Books Need Promotion

It doesn’t matter whether its an Instant-Books Edition or a conventional book, all books need promotion if they are to eventually reach their readers. As the ‘Expert’ for your Instant-Books Edition you are best placed to know where your potential readership are located and how best to reach them.

At Instant-Books we’re promoting Instant-Books so that more Potential Authors have the opportunity to become Published Authors. For your book you need to let your potential readership know that your book exists, why it is relevant to them, and how to buy your book.

Where To Start

Your first stage in ‘Promotion’ is to make sure you have a good product to promote; so your Instant-Books Edition needs to be the best it can be plus it needs to be well described in the Instant-Books Catalogue through its ‘Title’, ‘Cover Design’ and especially through the ‘Description’ you have used to describe your book - so important are these elements in turning browsing into buying that we devote a whole chapter to making sure this goes right - Your Instant-Books Summary

Promotion - Discovery Walking Guides Case Study

Walk! UK Series Case Study

In January 2006 DWG launched its new 10 book series of Walk! UK titles onto the UK market. For our tiny company this was a big project involving recruiting new authors, training them in researching, writing and satellite-navigation, licensing in OS mapping, producing the final book designs (Ros) and mapping (David), negotiating with printers over specifications and bindings; and not least financing the massive print bill.

We had started two years earlier, 2004, in starting our recruitment drive and now we faced the final test of whether these 'cutting edge' walking guide books would sell.

DWG, as publisher, did its share of promotion through our eNewsletter and mailed Newsletter, new Catalogue featuring the Walk! UK series, Pre-Publication Offer to our mail-order client base, review copies to the national and specialist press.

Working closely with Stanfords meant we had window and interior displays in their London, Manchester and Bristol stores.

Walk! the Brecon Beacons was nominated 'Book of the Week' by the Mail on Sunday Travel Editor.

Quite an impressive display of promotion by DWG.

We encouraged our Walk! UK Authors to look at opportunities for Self-Promotion within the regions covered by their books. Self-Promotion does not come easily to many people but four of our nine authors set to with a will, approaching local newspapers and magazines, local radio and in one case regional TV, visiting Tourist offices and bookshops to promote stocking (and subsequent sales) of their book, and in the case of Vivienne organising the Pre-Publication sale of her book through the regional newspaper chain she works for.

When we (DWG) look at the sales of our Walk! UK series of titles the 'Best Sellers' are those where our Authors successfully Self-Promoted their Book. Through their efforts we are now selling their books in shops, and through distributors, that we previously didn't know about. Because these four authors put in a successful effort in Self-Promotion when their books were published the good early sales are now being added to as more people hear about their books from the readers who have already bought a copy, gradually the 'snowball' is gathering momentum - but only if you start making the 'snowball' move yourself.

Self-Promotion by DWG's Authors has shown us that sales success comes to those that work at promoting their book.

Promotion Opportunities for Your Instant-Books Edition

While every book and every author is different there are a number of opportunities common for all of us seeking to promote our Instant-Books Editions. Promotion Opportunities that involve meeting with people will be helped if you have a printed copy of your book available at the interview; trying to explain the concept of Instant-Books as well as promote your own book only dilutes your message. Have your pages bound at a copy shop including the cover design; I have the pages punched and plastic comb bound with a clear front plastic sheet and coloured back sheet, it makes professional looking product for less than a fiver.

Here are opportunities Ros and myself, and our DWG Authors, have taken up in recent times:-

- **Local Radio**, especially BBC Local Radio. Many radio presenters like to include local news and personalities in their shows. Before approaching your local radio station do listen to the programmes so that you get to know the presenters. Write a short snappy and positive letter explaining your book project, and if you can call in at the station to ask their advice so much the better. Try to meet the presenter before going live 'on air' so that they know about your project and know what to ask.
- **Local Newspapers**. Editors are always looking for interesting articles that they can use to keep the adverts apart. As with radio send a letter, or call, first. Make it easy for the editor to make an article out of your news by providing a synopsis of yourself and your book; again a printed and bound copy of your Instant-Books Edition is useful and means they can photograph you with your book.
- **Technical and Special Interest Magazines**. If your Instant-Books Edition is about a specialist subject then the magazines read by aficionados of that subject is your most profitable Self-Promotion opportunity. If possible go to the magazine's office to explain your project; printed and bound copy useful again.
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That's a very steep learning curve that you've been through, with all of that learning being valuable to a conventional publisher thinking of taking you on as an Author.

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There are two straightforward ways to be ‘conventionally published’:-

- **Self-Publishing where you take all of the risks but also all of the Profits, or Losses.**
- **Convincing a conventional publisher that they should take you on as an Author.**

Self-Publishing is Easy

You could probably get away with a budget of £10,000.00 to turn your book into a conventionally published format along with some marketing to try and turn your stock into sales.

Successful Self-Publishing is something much rarer, most Self-Publishers simply end up with a stack of unsaleable books cluttering up their garage.

There are lots of conventionally published guides to Self-Publishing, definitely read them before committing yourself and your financial resources.

Convincing a Conventional Publisher.

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Final Word

Thank you for reading this far. I hope you have found my view of writing and publishing relevant for your own situation and possibly enlightening in explaining how the publishing process works.

In my Discovery Walking Guides manager’s role I have worked with our authors, a small but dedicated group, where we have developed a ‘DWG Family’ style for our Walk! series of guide books. It also unfortunately falls to me to tactfully decline the unsuitable projects presented to DWG by hopeful prospective authors; the pain of trying to let these prospective authors down gently was a motivating factor in forming ‘Instant-Books’.

Instant-Books gives you the opportunity to be ‘Published’ quickly, and at minimum cost; our two £11.75 (£9.99+vat) fees being less than the cost of sending your project round publishing houses. Once your Instant-Books Edition is published you’ll be able to promote your book, make sales World-Wide earning a 40% royalty, but most importantly your Instant-Books Edition can act as a showcase for your work. Instead of sending manuscripts to publishers, adding to their ever mounting ‘Slush Pile’, you can simply refer them to your Instant-Books Edition - they can buy a copy and if they think your work is commercially viable for them, offer you a publishing contract. It might even be us, as Discovery Walking Guides, offering you that all important contract.

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David Brown June 2008