

The Truth About Self-Publishing

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Agenda

- Some definitions of terms
- Choosing a digital-first/only publisher vs. self-publishing
- Overview of self-publishing process
- Marketing a self-published book
- The million dollar question (pricing)
- Show me the money (sales #s)

Definition of Terms

- Traditional publishing
- Digital publishing
 - Digital-first vs digital-only
- Self-publishing

The New Speed of Publishing

- ~50,000 new eReader-capable devices purchased per month
- ~300,000 new potential ebook buyers every 6 months
 - The cover, sales blurb, and price point that worked 9 months ago are all but outdated
- Source: Nina Paules, founder of eBook Prep, ePublishing Works and eBook Discovery

Choosing a Publishing Option

- Reasons to choose a digital-first/only publishing house over traditional:
 - Higher royalty percentages
 - 35%-50% of net as opposed to 25% of net
 - No upfront costs to you
 - Editorial input
 - Wider distribution
 - Most pay monthly or quarterly
- Reasons to choose self-publishing:
 - Complete control of the product
 - Cover art, editorial, pricing, DRM, etc.
 - Can distribute through most retailers
 - All Romance eBooks, Amazon, Apple, B&N, Kobo, Sony, Smashwords
 - Earn 35%-85% of the sale price
 - *Instant* access to sales figures

Self-Publishing Retailers and Splits

	Publisher Split	Formats	Special Info
Amazon (KDP)	35% (0.99-2.98) 70% (2.99-9.99)	.mobi	Will price match other retailers; no direct free option.
B&N (PubIt!)	40% (0.99-2.98) 65% (2.99-9.99)	.epub	Does not price match; no direct free option.
Are	60% (any price)	.epub, .mobi, .pdf + more	Does not price match; distributes to Apple; provides free ISBNs.
Apple	70% (any price)	.epub	Must have Mac and an ISBN. Prices rounded to nearest .99 with free as an option. No price matching.
Goodreads	60% (\$1.00 min)	.epub	Does not price match.
Kobo	Unknown	.epub	Complex registration process. Must have an ISBN.
Smashwords	85% for direct sales; ~55% for 3rd party sales	.doc converted to epub, mobi, pdf, etc.	Distributes to Apple, B&N, Diesel, Kobo, and Sony; free option available; offers free ISBNs.

The Self-Publishing Process

- Cover art
 - Extremely important, especially in romance
 - Cost: Anywhere from \$15 - \$1,000
 - Artists
 - **Kim Killion, Hot Damn Designs**
 - Robin Ludwig, Robin Ludwig Designs
 - Phatpuppyart
 - Nathalia Suellen/Lady Symphonia
 - Romance Novel Covers (Jimmy Thomas stock, many premade covers)
- Content editing
 - This step is often done by people who call themselves “book doctors”
 - Idea is to fix plot/characterization/arc issues
 - Can be very expensive (2-3 cents per word)
 - Many skip this step and/or rely on beta readers/critique partners
- Copy editing
 - Cost
 - Figure approximately a penny per word
 - Some editors charge less, some charge more
 - Be wary of “cheap” editors
 - Freelance editors I know/recommend:
 - Leanne Salter (professionaledits@gmail.com)
 - Natasha Fondren (spyscribbler@gmail.com)

- Formatting
 - Three main formats:
 - .epub
 - .mobi
 - .pdf
 - Smashwords requires you to upload a .doc file, which their software converts
 - B&N and Amazon will let you upload .doc or .rtf file and convert it
 - Not recommended, as formatting tends to be sloppy/inconsistent and difficult to correct
 - You can pay someone to do your formatting for you
 - Hot Damn Designs
 - B10MediaWorx.com
 - 52novels.com
 - DIY formatting:
 - For Smashwords, aim for simple Word doc
 - No tabs (use indents or extra paragraph space), no fancy fonts, etc.
 - You can edit .epub files with Sigil (free)
 - You can edit .mobi files with MobiPocket Creator
- ISBNs
 - You'll need to buy your own:
 - To upload directly to Apple or Kobo
 - To have sales tracked by any bestseller lists
 - 1 for \$125 or a block of 10 for \$250 from Bowker.com
 - Smashwords and ARe provide free ISBNs
- Copyright registration
 - Can protect you in the event someone plagiarizes your book
 - \$35 for online registration
 - <http://www.copyright.gov/eco/>
- Final verification
 - Anne Victory's Oops Detection service
 - \$30 (with no formatting add on)
 - \$20 (to look at formatting issues, too)
 - \$1 per mistake she finds

Marketing a Self-Published Book

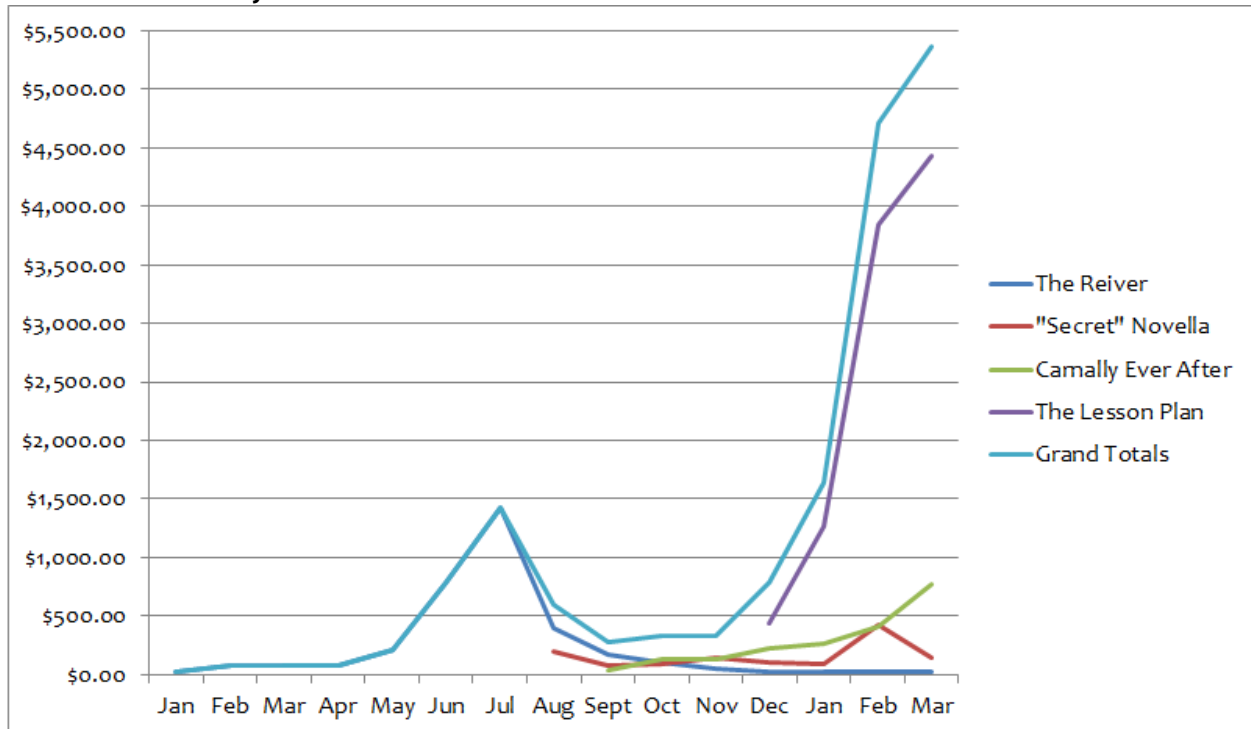
- Best marketing plan is a good book
 - Eye-catching cover art, great hook, solid editing
- Promote the same way you would a traditionally published book
 - Ads
 - Goodreads, Kindle Daily Nation, Eye on Romance, etc.
 - Give free copies on Twitter/Facebook/GR
- The Power of Free
 - Single best promotional tool available
 - Works best when you have a linked series
 - Hook readers with the free story
 - Going free on Amazon
 - Try to get them to price-match a free copy elsewhere
 - Use KDP Select option
 - Your book must be exclusive to Amazon for 90 days and you get 5 free days in that period

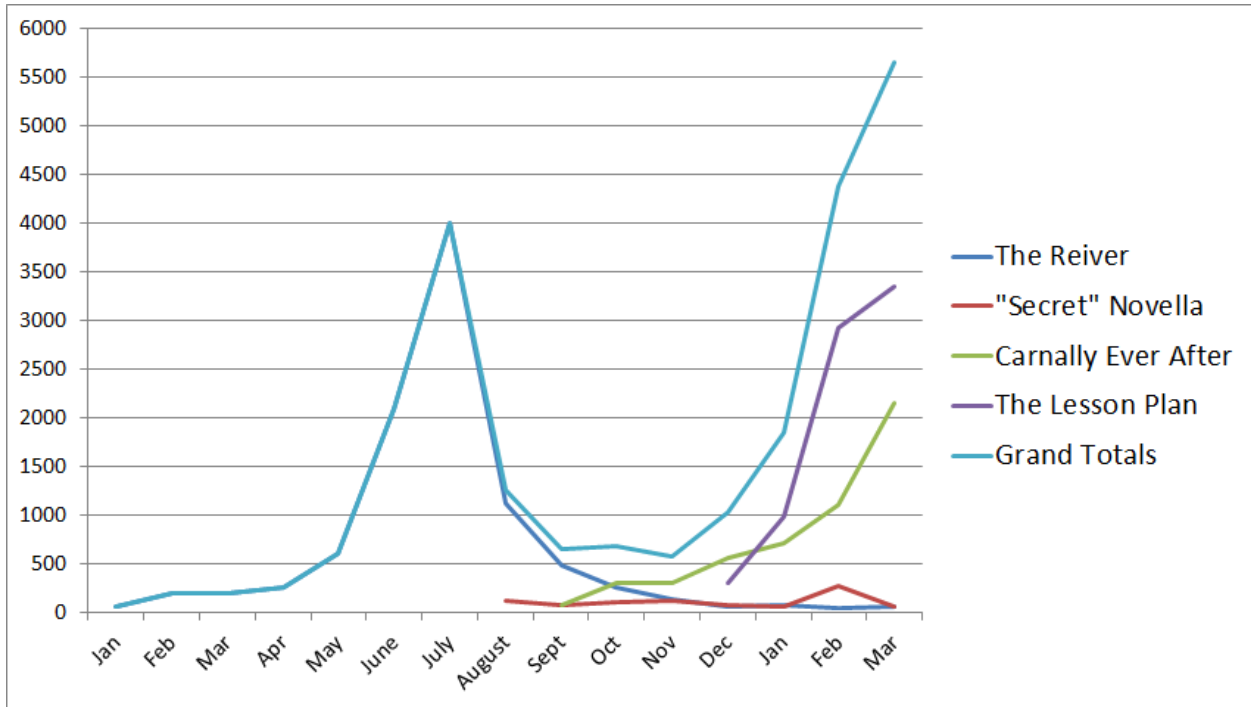
- What a publisher can do that you can't:
 - List books for pre-order and specify a drop date
 - Major disadvantage of self-publishing
 - Get your book into additional retail outlets and/or Overdrive (libraries)
 - In general, publishers (both digital and traditional) expect authors to do heavy promo lifting

The Million Dollar Question

- How much should you charge for your book?
 - Things to consider:
 - How long is it?
 - How much did it cost to produce?
 - What's the royalty split at your price point?
 - What are your sales goals?

Show Me the Money





- *His Magick Touch*
 - Price = \$0.99
 - Gross: over \$2,000 (first 2 months after release)
- *Caribbean Scot and My Cursed Highlander*
 - February: \$516.27
 - 2 titles: \$5.99 each