



The Beacon

Your guiding light for writing and publishing

Number 36, Summer 2010

Getting E-published: Now is the Time!

The arrival of Apple’s iPad on the world scene has been a wake-up call for many traditional publishers. The big boys have set up digital divisions and the medium houses are formatting their back lists, but many smaller houses are not quite sure how to get going.

For aspiring and established authors, it’s time to learn more about e-publishing and perhaps how to do it yourself. Ask your publisher what they are doing with your titles, if they’re not already e-pubbed. Note that commercial publishing contracts are changing in step with the e-book push – both in the electronic rights clauses and in how royalties are calculated. Writers must tune in and stay current. One way, at least in Canada, is to keep an eye on the Writers’ Union of Canada site at www.writersunion.ca, as well as other associations for writers and reputable bloggers.

If you own the e-rights to previously published books or if you self-publish, now is the time to reformat your titles for e-readers, like the Kindle, Kobo, Nook, Sony, iPad, etc. It is quite easy and takes a couple of days per book, once you’ve got the hang of it.

Probably the most efficient route to go is with [Smashwords](#), a company that uses the universal e-Pub format, which is compatible with most proprietary e-readers, including iPad and smart phones. SW’s downloadable [style guide and manual](#) is excellent and assists you in the preparation of a ms for any platform. I converted my mss into HTML (but you can stick with MS Word) and followed much of SW’s advice, especially for layout and spacing. I ended up with a book that was one long page. Perfect!

With 1.5 million Amazon Kindles in use globally (they are still selling well), this market is attractive just by itself. As their [Digital Text Platform](#) allows authors anywhere to prepare and upload their e-books onto Kindle, you may choose to start with this platform. Sign-in with your usual Amazon account and you can use either MS Word or HTML files. Follow the same formatting rules as files for Smashwords. Amazon provides lots of assistance too, and you can preview the result, tweak it, and upload again, before completing a form and clicking on “Publish.”

You will need **new ISBNs** for each e-book version – I got mine within 24 hours from the National Library of Canada [site](#), though Smashwords will be providing support for US writers

Best of all, e-pubbing costs authors nothing to do but your time. When books sell, you get paid a percentage. The sales, however, depend on your promotional skills, which today are grounded in social media.



From the editor’s desk

With summer almost upon us, what books are on your reading list? If you’ve never read an e-book or listened to an audio-book, now’s the time to try your first.

Sales of both e-readers and e-books are exploding – they have arrived. I have a Kindle and just after an iPad, though that will have to wait a bit. I thoroughly enjoy reading on my Kindle and have discovered many websites with books in Kindle format at no charge. I download them onto my desktop or laptop, then transfer them to my e-reader. And, no, I don’t view e-books as better, just different, and easier to carry when travelling.

I also listen to audio-books that I download to my iPod, again free, from the [British Columbia Libraries](#). My favourites are Patrick O’Brian books because they are so wonderfully read by an actor who uses different voices for the main characters. All you need is your library card to access audio-books. Great on long flights!

Or maybe it’s time for you as a writer to read outside your comfort zone – new genres, new authors, new categories. Borrow them from your library in case you really can’t finish them.

HAGS,

Julie H. Ferguson

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Why Use a Freelance Editor

by Joyce Gram, writer and editor

Some readers of *The Beacon* have asked: Why would I need a freelance editor? What does a freelance editor do that a publisher's editor doesn't? The answer that comes immediately to mind—an answer that may sound flippant but is decidedly not—is that a freelance editor may make the difference in whether your manuscript ever reaches the desk of a publisher's editor.

In days gone by, publishers and publishers' editors spent a great deal of time, often extending to years, mentoring promising writers in their craft. There are even famous relationships between writers and editors that have themselves become stories and the subject of books (for example, the relationship between F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby*, and his editor Max Perkins). Sadly, those days are largely gone. Publishing has become tough business, and publishers haven't the time, patience, or money to draw the best out of writers, especially new or little-known writers. Those writers must come to publishers *already at their best* to have any chance of being noticed.

And that's where a freelance editor comes in. You, as a writer, may have written for years, attended writing classes and a critique group, read the latest and best guides on the craft. But you may never have had anyone take a dispassionate look at your entire manuscript with a view to what it would need to break through that ever-growing barrier into publication. An experienced freelance editor, not under the gun of publication deadlines, can spend the time that publishers' editors used to spend with promising writers, guiding them or, as Susan Bell says in *The Artful Edit*, freshening their notion of what editing can do. A freelance editor can never promise publication—even an agent can't do that—but she can show you what's possible and help you gain perspective on your work.

Susan Bell, *The Artful Edit: On the Practice of Editing Yourself*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

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Events/courses for Writers

July 2-4: *Book Magic: Turning Writers into Published Authors* at **Write on Bowen**, a Festival for Writers and Readers. Details and registration available at <http://www.biac.ca/writersfestival/>.

July–August: The Port Moody Writers' Group is meeting over the summer for the first time. Two sessions – July and August on Thursdays, 10a.m. to noon. \$40.75 each. Register [here](#) or call 604.469.4556; July's # [34075](#); August's # [34076](#).

The annual summer **Publishing Workshops** at Simon Fraser University (downtown campus) can be accessed at www.sfu.ca/publishing. The program includes courses for writing and editing of all sorts, as well as others for those more interested in the book and magazine publishing industry.

Fall schedule, course details, and registration for the **Surrey Writers' School** are available at <http://surreywritersschool.com/coursesandregistration.aspx>.

New/Old Summer writers' group

For over 30 years, the **Port Moody writers' group** has provided support and critique for emerging and experienced writers. Over time, the group has earned a stellar reputation and often has a wait list.

Up until now, the group has not met over the summer months. But demand has grown and 2010 marks the first summer sessions, one in July and the other in August at \$40.75 per session. (See below for registration details.)

This group is a Port Moody Recreation Department offering and is called *Creative Writing*, a misnomer considering what it is. Many participants have been members for over 20 years and write in all genres. They include an editor, published authors (fiction and nonfiction), poets, and freelancers. New writers are welcome, but [register](#) soon as the summer sessions are capped at 12 spots - July already has 8 signed up and August, 6. July course # [34075](#); August's # [34076](#)

Please visit **The Beacon Blog** at: www.beaconlit.blogspot.com for monthly *Beacon Flashes* and current news for writers



The Beacon is published quarterly by Beacon Literary Services and is distributed electronically free of charge to those who are interested. If you do not wish to continue to receive the newsletter, please notify the editor:

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