



The Beacon

Your guiding light for writing and publishing

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Print on Demand: what is it?

Print on Demand or POD is revolutionizing the publishing industry. Everyone has heard of it, few have tried it. All of us wonder what it is, who it is for, if it is worth considering, and what are the drawbacks, if any.

POD's laser technology and electronically formatted text allows books to be printed one at a time rather than in the print runs of several thousand copies that fill warehouses and self-published authors' garages. POD is used mostly by subsidy (vanity) publishers, authors who want to self-publish, and electronic publishers who offer POD as a way to produce print versions of their e-books.

The advantages are obvious: no major financial outlay for traditional printing at the outset, no inventory to house, and no fear of heavy returns or remaindering. But authors need to be careful - there are disadvantages. Questionable companies exist out there too and POD is not suitable for all types of books.

POD's production costs per copy are higher than that of traditional printing - quite a bit higher. If you are self-publishing, this means that if you can sell more than 300 copies, the traditional method will be cheaper for you. Likewise, if your book is longer than 200 pages or has many colour illustrations. However if your book needs frequent revision, like manuals or companion volumes for workshops and seminars, POD is ideal because changes can be made easily, though for a fee.

Authors considering POD should also be careful when choosing a company. Most offer an array of printing services, from very basic to quite sophisticated. None offer editing, unless they are also a commercial publishing house. Fees vary widely - from \$99.00 to over

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From the editor's desk

The quality of writing and formatting of manuscripts at this year's Surrey Writers Conference was definitely higher than usual. I am pleased about that as it means more aspiring authors are taking the time and effort to learn how to present their work in an acceptable, professional manner. But in the same breath, I wonder if it also means the competition is ratcheting up a few notches. Something to ponder...I think.

My epubliher has just gone out of business - one of many to do so in the last few months. What to do? I have found another royalty-paying epubliher, but shall be producing the print version of my second book under my own imprint, *Beacon Publishing*. This brings me to tell everyone how easy it is in Canada to get ISBNs and CIP data. Go to the National Library website and apply on line. My ISBNs arrived in 18 hours and my CIP data in about 36 hours. Not bad, I thought, and free!

Best wishes for the festive season!!

Julie H. Ferguson

A New Idea in Book Promotion...

Everyone enjoys getting a free gift, so I capitalized on this universal desire when thinking up a new way to promote my second book. I made up a preview of my book and copied it onto 3 1/2 " diskettes.

About 16 pages long, the preview contains the print flyer I use for promotion mail-outs, the cover page of the book with an invitation to look at the preview, and 1-2 chapters with illustrations. I included my "About the Author" page with a photo and ended with the ordering information and how to reach me. I also designed an eye-catching label for the disc with a picture of the book's cover, the author's name, ISBN, and the website URL. Formatted in Adobe Acrobat, the preview cannot be tampered with and my publisher was thrilled.

I tried the idea out at the Surrey Writers Conference in October where fifty diskettes were snapped up in 2 hours and I reckon I could have given away another fifty. Both writers and publishers wanted them and none had seen this promotional method before.

The investment is low - just the cost of the diskettes and the labels - but the good will generated is huge. Try it out!

Print on Demand/ from p.1

\$1700.00 USD and may include cover design, formatting, ISBNs, CIP data, etc., and may not. Most companies sell your book through their websites and may have arrangements with Amazon.com and other online bookstores. Most do minimal promotion and so expect you to take up the slack yourself.

POD companies do not pay advances but do pay royalties, often much higher than print publishers, and you may be able to recover your initial POD fees if you sell lots of copies.

Reputable POD companies take no rights from their authors. This is very important because POD books never go out of print. In the traditional publishing world., this would mean the author would never be able to get their print rights back. But watch what rights, if any, you *are* asked to give away....

Try: www.trafford.com
www.electricebookpublishing.com
www.double-dragon-ebooks.com
 All are Canadian companies.



Forthcoming events

- Feb 15:** **Writing with Power!!** for SD 42 (Maple Ridge) teachers' annual conference. Location to be announced.
- Feb 22:** **Writing with Power!!** and **Essay Planning and Self-editing** for SD 43 teachers' professional development day. 9-3pm. Centennial School, Coquitlam.
- Mar 2:** **Writing Irresistible Query Letters** (9-noon) and **Writing Online** (1-4pm), both at Johnston Heights School, Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma Program. \$26.00 each. Call 604-589-2221
- Apr 9:** **Writing with Power!!** for SD 42 teachers' professional Development session. 4-7pm at Resource Centre, Maple Ridge.
- May 11:** **Speaking and Writing: The Indivisible Twins** for the BC Chapter of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers. 1:30-4:30pm

**Julie enjoys presenting workshops to writer's groups of 8 or more.
 Call 640-469-1319 to check her availability.**

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 receive the newsletter, please notify the editor:

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