



# The Beacon

Your guiding light for writing and publishing

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## E-publishing: the new trend

Traditional print publishers are busy setting up e-publishing divisions; e-publishers are acquiring electronic rights from authors who reserved them; in 1999 50 million books were sold online and sales of e-books rose to 5.4% of *all* sales, up from 1.9% in 1998.

These facts were enough for me to take a serious look at the opportunities that might be out there for my second book, *Deeply Canadian*. I quickly discovered that Canada has only a few e-publishers but Britain, the US, and Australia have lots. Many are vanity (subsidy) presses that the author pays to get their book published. However there are enough regular publishers in cyberspace, who select and edit the books they want to publish and that pay royalties, to be of interest to authors. Few companies have been established long--most, only a couple of years.

I found out that e-publishers are not as selective as print publishers have to be, probably because their costs have dropped so much. They do not pay advances, but their royalties are 40-70%, and most contracts for electronic rights are for finite periods. My contract is for one year only and *Deeply Canadian* will be available as a download, a CD, and a book. (I chose these options largely due to my type of reader and niche -- naval history buffs are not all online!) Although the retail unit price is much lower than that of a hard copy book (\$3.75 for a download), I will earn almost the same.

I am expecting to do ALL the promotion. E-publishers put a thumbnail and blurb on their website for the author and that is about it. For me, doing the promotion is a given -- I know how to reach my readers and the methods I use are not standard for the print pub-

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### From the editor's desk

When my publisher terminated the contract for my second book last year, I chalked it up to experience and moved on. Now I am pleased to announce that the Crossroads Publishing Company will publish *Deeply Canadian* in the fall as a download, a CD, and a book. Yes, I am making the move into the electronic age and it's been quite an eye-opener. Learn more about my experience in this issue's lead article.

Thank you to everyone who completed my survey over the last few months. Results indicate that seventy-five percent of you write non-fiction, which supports the Canadian industry figures. All replies inferred that there was sufficient material available in Canada to assist aspiring authors in getting published, which is a surprise--maybe my next book is unnecessary. Help is most needed in the development of effective book proposals, pitch statements, and synopses. Two-thirds of those polled take writing courses and everyone is connected to the Internet, but less than half of you are members of a writers' group.... Hmmm.

May the muse be with you!

**Julie H. Ferguson**

## Publishing Myth # 5:

### All you have to do is send a query letter....

Non-fiction writers hear this all the time and are the envy of novelists because of it. But, for *unpublished* authors, sending the query letter is the culmination of a great deal of hard work.

Before non-fiction writers sit at the keyboard to draft a query to a publisher, they will have done hours of work that include:

- ✓ researching the book's market and competition;
- ✓ creating the perfect "pitch statement;"
- ✓ writing a bio in 2-3 sentences and a few paragraphs;
- ✓ writing a full book proposal; and
- ✓ completing three chapters of their book.

(It isn't a bad idea to have the manuscript almost finished because publishers derive much confidence from that fact.)

The purpose of queries is to get publishers to ask for your book proposal and sample chapters. Once they decide that they want the material, writers must be ready to mail it immediately.

### Forthcoming Events

- 24 Sep - *A Canadian Writer Explodes Some Myths!*** A FREE workshop for aspiring authors at **Word on the Street**, Library Square in Vancouver. 1-2pm.
- 3 Oct - *Get Published on Your First Try!*** Eight Tuesdays at 7:00pm. Register with Douglas College at 527-5472 or [www.douglas.bc.ca/ce/cellpa/cellpacw1.htm#4](http://www.douglas.bc.ca/ce/cellpa/cellpacw1.htm#4).
- 20/22 Oct - *Surrey Writers' Conference.*** Meet Julie in the Blue Pencil Café for an insightful and encouraging discussion about your work. Register [www.surreywritersconference.bc.ca](http://www.surreywritersconference.bc.ca).
- 28 Oct - *Surrey Creative Writing Diploma Program*** offers ***Get Creative...with Power Words!*** 9am-12noon, \$25.00. Call Guildford Cont Ed at 589-2221 to register.
- 1 Nov - *Writing with Power!*** For writers, students, or employees. 7:00-9:30pm. Register with Douglas College at 527-5472 or [www.douglas.bc.ca/ce/cellpa/cellpacw1.htm#4](http://www.douglas.bc.ca/ce/cellpa/cellpacw1.htm#4)
- 9 Nov - *Writing with Power!*** Two workshops for selected middle school students from School District 43 in Coquitlam.
- 27 Nov - *Writing with Power!*** for School District 40 teachers at Douglas College. 1:30- 4:00pm. Call 527-5472 to register.
- 23 Feb - *Writing with Power!*** for teachers of School District 43. (District-wide professional development day.)

## E-publishing...

lishing industry anyway. I will also ensure that web surfers can order my book directly from my own website with a click of their mouse.

My learning curve has been nearly vertical -- the formatting requirements, the contract, and the relationships with editors all needed an open mind and an ability to adapt fast. Being a bit of a risk-taker helped too!

One last impression I gained is that e-publishing seems better suited to non-fiction at the moment, even though many more novels are e-published. Non-fiction makes an easier product to sell over the Internet than fiction, especially when tied into workshops, lectures, etc., as mine will be. I'll keep you posted!

*If you are interested, a listing of e-publishers can be found at [www.coredcs.com/~mermaid/epub.html](http://www.coredcs.com/~mermaid/epub.html) and the top ten at [www.themestream.com/articles/101140.html](http://www.themestream.com/articles/101140.html)*



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