SELF PUBLISHING

Panel Discussion – Part 1

Panel Discussion Participants

Heather Smith http://www.hdsmithauthor.com

• Self Published & Traditionally Published – eBook Only

Enrique Sampayo http://blogdepracticacreativa-enrique.blogspot.com/

• Self Published – Printed Books - School Presentations/Book Fairs

William Speir http://www.williamspeir.com/

• Self Published – Printed/eBook – Non-Fiction and Fiction

In Self Publishing, YOU are the Publishing Company, and YOU have to do everything that a publishing company normally does.

SELF PUBLISHING OPTIONS

eBook

Cover Art (high res)

Formatted Manuscript

Fastest to Market

Major Players:

Kindle Direct Publishing (Amazon)

Smashwords (all major retailers)

Print on Demand (POD)

Book Size Consideration

Cover Art (exact formatting required)

Formatted Manuscript

DIY could still be pricey

Major Players:

Create Space (Amazon)

Lulu *

Lightning Source *

Other

Vanity Press

Subsidy Publishing

All Inclusive Services

Traditional Self Publishing (DIY print & sell)

Audio Books – ACX (Amazon)

OTHER OPTIONS

Vanity Press/
Subsidy Publishing/
All Inclusive Services

Vanity Press – Publisher with no quality control, author pays all fees, very expensive

Subsidy Publishing – Publisher with some quality control, author could still pay fees, but more marketing by the publisher may be involved

All Inclusive Services – An option for eBook and POD where a third party handles most of the work, author pays fees, but service doesn't retain any rights and/or royalties, this could be pricey

Traditional Self Publishing

Traditional Self Publishing – DIY where the author prepares and prints hard copies of their book and sells them by hand to retail locations or directly to the public

Audio Books

Audio Books – A fast growing market that is becoming more accessible thanks to acx (Amazon), also there are middle men like Spoken Book Publishing that can handle this for a cut of the royalties, if traditionally signed with a publisher, author will need to retain audio writes to DIY this

I'VE WRITTEN THE BOOK. NOW WHAT?

Editing

Proof Read

Friend/Critique

Content Edit

Line Edit

Polished Manuscript

Cover Art

DIY

Professional Designer

Less Expensive

May Look Amateurish

More Expensive

Must Shop Around

Often Required for POD

Formatting

eBook

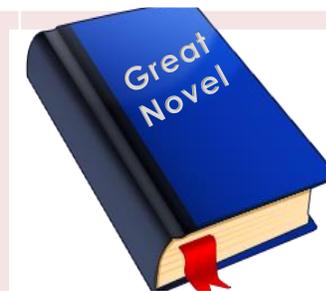- ☐ Always follow instructions
- ☐ Less involved
- ☐ Word or RTF files

POD

- ☐ Always follow instructions
- ☐ More involved
- ☐ May Require PDF

Great Novel

Book Title

Extremely Important

Google it

Search Amazon

Ask Friends

EDITING

Proof/Friend/Critique

Proof reading – Put it aside for a month - read it again, edit as you go

Ask Friends/Family to read it – You may not get constructive criticism from this group – they may love it no matter what

Join a Critique Group – This may take a lot of time to work through your book – feedback is probably better than what you will get from family and friends – you may not get content editing type feedback from a group that only reads small snippets at a time

Content Edit

Story Structure

Character Consistency

Overall Flow

DIY/Friends Only – At your own risk

Critique Group Only – some risk

Professional – Shop around

Line Edit

Grammar

Spelling

Punctuation

DIY at your own risk

Professional – Shop around

COVER ART

DIY

Good editing software is important

Photoshop Elements is relatively inexpensive, there may also be free options as well, but these may not be as robust

Most sites are going to expect jpeg or png image formats with very high resolution

When buying images, buy the version that is at least 300dpi, the smaller sizes will not create the high res image you need

POD has very specific requirements (because you also need back cover image and know the size of your finished book, for the spine size needed)

Designer

Always shop around

Prices for creating POD vs. eBook could be different, don't expect your designer to provide both for one fee unless they offer that as a package

Always review the covers they have on their website. If you don't like them, don't pick that designer

Always be specific when requesting changes, try to request all changes at one time, respect their time and know that many have day jobs

Image Costs

Be sure you have the legal right to use any image that is on your cover

If there is not a separate cost for the images used by the designer, ask how they were sourced/paid for

Don't assume you can just use any image for any book. If you are writing erotica and want to use the face of a model on your cover, you may need to get separate permission

Usually the "standard license" covers distribution up to 250,000 or 500,000 copies. Generally the "extended license" can be purchased later if needed

BOOK COVER OR CROSSING GUARD TRAGEDY?
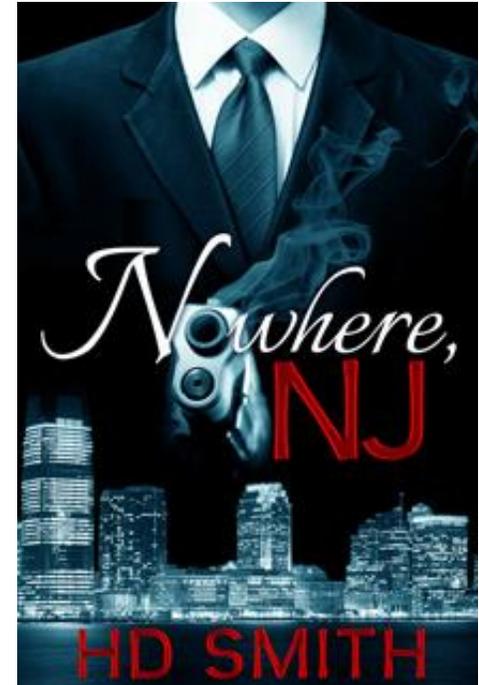
Original - DIY
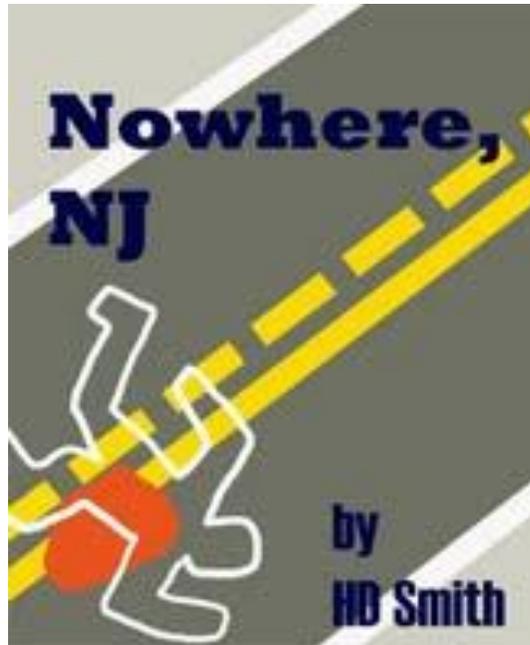
Comments from Judge

The cover was a bit simplistic and didn't capture the grittiness of the story—kind of appeared like a crossing guard tragedy rather than a seedy mob hit.

Judge, Writer's Digest Self-Published e-Book Awards

Designer

FORMATTING

Book Title

Very Important

Don't pick the first thing you think of

Don't make it too obvious (boy meets girl, is not a good title)

Google it, bing it, amazon search it, avoid over used titles

You can't copyright a title, so you can write your own "Moby Dick", but I wouldn't recommend it

Ask people what they think, get feedback, hesitation probably means they don't like it

eBook

Smashwords has a document on how to format your word doc to upload into their "meatgrinder" – follow it

Amazon may also have a document, but I used my smashwords formatted doc (with a few content tweaks) and it worked

You must have a cover, don't bother uploading to smashwords without one

Print on Demand (POD)

Print on demand may require more rigorous formatting than eBooks, always follow instructions provided by the POD company

Cover art is not optional, you must have it and it must be formatted correctly

POD company may require PDF upload, again always follow instructions provided

SELF PUBLISHING VS. TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING WHICH ONE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Self Publishing

You are the publisher, therefore you have all the control, but also all the expense

It is easy to upload your manuscript, it is hard to upload a polished professional quality novel

You can cut costs with DIY, but consider your skill level for each phase of the process

Traditional Publishing

Ultimately the publisher will have control over everything

You may be asked to provide input for the cover designer (character descriptions, etc), but maybe not

You will be expected to revise the novel based on editor feedback, this may include significant rewrites

Digital First and other Small Press options

Many of the NY big boys are starting to offer digital first (or digital only) imprints.

This allows them to compete with smaller digital first presses and publish shorter (novella) length manuscripts

Small digital first "traditional publishers" exist, which is kind of like a middle ground between the big boys and self publishing

Many small press and digital first imprints don't offer an advance

A small press may offer higher royalties on digital sales

RESOURCES

- http://www.wikihow.com/Self-Publish-a-Book

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-publishing

- http://reviews.cnet.com/8301-18438_7-10119891-82/self-publishing-a-book-25-things-you-need-to-know/