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Assisted Publishing Program

HOW THE FEARLESS ASSISTED PUBLISHING PROGRAM WORKS

For over 20 years, I have assisted scores of authors in the process of publishing independently, drawing on my own experience as a small press owner since 1997. Following is a description of the major elements of the Assisted Publishing (AP) program and a listing of its advantages compared to mainstream publishing.

The AP program enables the publication and worldwide distribution of both paperback print-on-demand (POD) and digital editions. Three main printing and digital publishing platforms are utilized:

AMAZON KDP: Through its worldwide print and Kindle distribution, Amazon provides the lion's share of sales for both print and digital editions. This is a direct-to-consumer platform. Amazon takes orders and prints books per order (hence "print-on-demand"). Print royalties are usually about 30% of the cover price, compared to the 7-12% offered by mainstream publishers. This works out to about \$5 per print copy, compared to \$1 from mainstream publishers. KDP is also the recommended platform for printing your own copies for resale, at an average author's cost of \$3 to \$4 per copy. (Most mainstream

publishers give their authors a 50% discount on copies for their own use or resale, so a book retailing at \$16.95 would be available to the author at about \$8.50 per copy.)

INGRAMSPARK: This POD platform is a subsidiary of Ingram, the world's largest bookstore distributor. Although IngramSpark also enables ebooks, the AP program uses this platform only to make the print edition available to bookstores. This is critically important for two reasons:

1) Amazon does not reliably provide bookstore distribution; and
2) an IngramSpark edition enables indie authors to set up their own readings at bookstores without having to arrange consignment. Most bookstores utilize Ingram for their inventory. Because IngramSpark is a wholesaler-to-bookstores rather than a direct-to-consumers platform, the average royalty per copy is about 15% of the cover price. IngramSpark also enables the cataloging & posting of indie press books with Barnes & Noble and Bookshop.org, an indie-bookstore competitor to Amazon online.

DRAFT2DIGITAL: This electronic platform is utilized by AP to provide ebook distribution in formats other than Kindle, including Apple iBooks, Kobo, Barnes & Noble Nook, and many others. While Amazon attempts to corner the ebook market through its Kindle Select program, offering certain promotional options in exchange for exclusive digital rights, I recommend that authors engage with both Kindle and Draft2Digital for the maximum distribution of their ebook edition.

Hands off your rights & royalties...

Unlike so-called "hybrid publishers," Fearless AP does not retain any rights or royalties for your book project. Instead, you sign up with KDP, IngramSpark, and Draft2Digital as an independent publisher, and provide each of them with your direct-deposit bank information. Using your sign-in information, I will manage the uploading and publication of your book with each platform.

Once the AP fee is paid and your book goes live in both POD and digital editions, you will directly receive monthly payments (beginning 60-90 days after launch). This compares well to the biannual royalties paid by mainstream publishers, which are always accompanied by mostly incomprehensible royalty reports.

I do retain the option of representing your indie edition to mainstream publishers if your first edition is successful enough to be of interest to them. In fact, the first title I produced for an author besides myself, Gary Renard's *The Disappearance of the*

Universe, sold 15K copies in its first year and was thereafter licensed to Hay House for six figures, going on to become an international best-seller. Several other AP authors have used their indie edition as the centerpiece of their writing & speaking careers.

How your book is produced

Depending on the starting point of your project, I can provide manuscript coaching and/or editing, design & layout of the POD edition, and digital formatting for the ebook. Cover designs are always collaborative; occasionally an author will bring in another designer. Otherwise I do all the production from start to finish, including the uploading of publishing files to the three platforms mentioned above. I do not use preformatted or AI-generated templates for design; every book production is custom-produced. I do not “churn” a high volume of projects for the sake of maximizing cash flow, and the AP process is characterized by my close personal attention to each project.

Assisted Publishing promotion

Every AP project is displayed on the [Assisted Publishing page](#), with its cover linked to a sales page featuring the major online ordering options (see for instance [Meditation for the Modern Yogi](#).) I promote new titles to my Facebook pages (5000+ followers) and send a newsletter announcement to my mailing list of 1300+ subscribers. You will be provided with a complete PDF copy of your book, including the front and back covers, which can be used as a review copy for free distribution. I also create a “sell sheet,” a full-color PDF that you can print out and provide to bookstores. The sell sheet shows the front cover, along with a description and bibliographic information and a top banner announcing that your AP title is **‘AVAILABLE ON STANDARD TERMS FROM INGRAM’**. This sheet can be given to any bookstore manager or buyer, to remind them that your title is readily available to them from Ingram.

In addition, I often help AP authors brainstorm and pursue other publicity options, which will vary according to the particular subject and potential audience of an AP title. For the 2023 AP title [SECRETS OF THE BLUE BUNGALOW](#) by SF Chronicle columnist Kevin Fisher-Paulson, I managed a 3-month schedule of standing-room-only appearances for Kevin at bookstores all over the San Francisco Bay area. (This was the third title I developed and published for Kevin over the last decade.)

Advantages of the Assisted Publishing approach

I also work part-time as an agent for the [Linda Chester Literary Agency](#), promoting a small selection of titles to mainstream publishers. In my own writing career I have been published by mainstream houses several times as well as by my own press, Fearless Books. Thus I have a veteran understanding of what qualifies a title for the mainstream vs. the independent realm. I know firsthand that it's very tough to place a title by an unknown first-time author with mainstream publishers. Thus the independent route is not necessarily a "last resort" for aspiring new authors. In many cases it is the best option from the start, and offers the following advantages:

Guaranteed publication on a short schedule. With a fully edited manuscript that's ready to go into production, most AP titles can be produced within a schedule of 3-4 months. This compares well to the typical mainstream schedule, that can span several years with no guarantee of publication. Getting an agent can take months and you may not succeed in finding one. If you do, an agent usually needs at least six months to place a signed title and may not be successful. Even when an agent does place a title with a mainstream house, it is usually 1-2 years from the time of contract signing to publication.

Much higher royalty rates. AP authors receive 15-30% royalties on the cover price of their print edition (compared to the industry standard of 7-12%) and 70% of their ebook price (compared to 25% in the mainstream). Once a title is established, an AP author is paid monthly by the three distribution platforms, compared to every six months by mainstream publishers.

Control over all issues of design, marketing, promotion, and distribution. Many authors who sign with mainstream publishers do not understand all the effects of signing away their rights in exchange for a publishing deal. Control over such essential issues as design, marketing and promotion strategies, and the duration of a publishing term is greatly reduced or lost entirely.

As an AP author, you and I collaborate on all pre-publication processes and decisions, and after publication you retain control all marketing and promotion decisions. You also control how long your book stays in print. This is important because most mainstream publishers are looking for maximum sales within the first year to recoup their investment in the form of an advance. If the book doesn't meet their expectation, they are likely to lose interest in further promotion and distribution (or interest in any subsequent

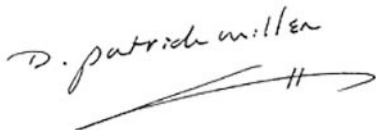
book you may want to do). As your own publisher, you can expect a slow but steady sales rate that is better in the book's second or third year than its first. Because POD and digital editions eliminate the need to maintain and manage an inventory, you can keep your book available for as long as you like at no inventory expense.

Costs and Scheduling

If your manuscript is incomplete or needs developmental and line editing before it can be published, that project will be priced and scheduled separately from Assisted Publishing (see www.fearlessbooks.com/Manuscripts.htm). For fully edited manuscripts of a standard length (40K to 65K words), the AP charge will be in the range of \$2700 to \$3200, depending on the complexity of the text and any special publishing conditions (like the addition of a hardcover version). I request a nonrefundable deposit of 50% to initiate the project. The balance of 50%, due near the end of the book production, may be discounted if the project runs smoothly under the time I estimate for its completion. Most AP projects can be completed within three to four months of getting started.

If you're interested in pursuing Assisted Publishing for a manuscript — or need a manuscript developed and edited for publication — [please write me](#) with a description of your book project. After I've assessed the project we can do a phone or Zoom consultation at no cost, to review the particulars of your project and settle on a cost and production schedule. I'll look forward to seeing what you're ready to create and publish!

with warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Patrick Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, horizontal flourish.

D. Patrick Miller, Founder
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