

INTRO TO PUBLISHING TERMINOLOGY

- Acquiring Editor:** Person who has the authority to buy a book for a publishing house; more frequently this decision has to go to a committee, which includes marketing and other departments.
- Agent/Agency** (Literary agent): Person /organization representing authors and selling their work for a percentage of their income. AAR is professional association.
- Agency/Wholesale:** Top 2 current methods by which publishers deal with distributors/retail. In Agency, the publisher sets the price of the book, receiving a percentage of each sale from the distributor. In wholesale, publisher and distributor agree on a set amount distributor will pay publisher per title; distributor can then set price as it chooses, the different coming out of (or adding to) distributor's earnings.
- ARC:** Advance Reader Copy, also called a Review Copy. Sent free to reviewers.
- Auction:** When more than one publishing house wants to buy the same manuscript.
- Backlist:** Author's previous titles, which can be reissued.
- BISAC codes:** Book Industry Standards and Communications; Codes designed to categorize books in an organized format. Created and overseen by the Book Industry Study Group (BISG)
- Blurb:** Short overview of/introduction to book that's on back cover of a paperback, inside flap of a hardcover, sales page of ebook. A K A **book description**.
- Boilerplate:** The basic contract a publishing house offers. (Before any negotiation).
- Complete:** A completed manuscript offered for sale. (See **Proposal**)
- Contract:** Agreement in which author licenses specified rights for a specified amount of time for specified compensation (see Royalties) with many, many caveats for and limitations on the author.
- Copy Editor:** The editor (frequently a freelancer) responsible for ensuring the book adheres to house style as well as basic grammar, spelling.
- Cover quote:** Quote lauding the book/author; frequently from other authors, sometimes from previous reviews.
- Dashboard:** Online interface where authors can view sales numbers/other data (often in near-real-time.) Some publisher have some info online for authors.
- Digital:** General term for the world of e-books.(See **E-Books**)
- Discount/ terms:** The percentage discount a publisher gives to a bookseller.
- Discoverability:** How easy it is for a potential reader to find you book.
- DRM (Digital Rights Management):** Methods of protecting copyrighted material from being copied by unauthorized users.
- Dump:** A display in a bookstore purchased or co-opped by publishing house.

E-Books/ Ebooks): Electronic books have no physical presence. They are downloaded to and read on an electronic device/smart phone.

E-Reader: An electronic device dedicated to reading e-books and other digital material. Nook, Kindle are examples. Phones increasingly used as ereaders.

Editorial: Department of a publishing house that, traditionally, has been responsible for selecting, acquiring, editing and preparing for production a book.

Earn Out: When enough copies have sold so that monies owed to the author equalize the advance paid to the author. Beyond the earn-out, the author is paid royalties.

Face Out/Spine Out: How a book is presented in a book store. Face out is with the front cover visible. Spined/Spine Out draws less attention.

Fan-Fic: Works written by self-described fans that appropriates copyrighted characters, settings, backgrounds and stories.

Formats: Print: Hardcover, Trade* Paperback (larger height/width than mmp), Mass Market Paperback. **E-book/digital:** EPub is open source format; some eReaders use proprietary format (such as Kindle's mobi.) **Audiobook:** Increasingly digital. *Trade can also refer to sales channels in trad publishing, such as bookstores.

Galleys/Page Proofs/Proofs: A copy of the book in the printing format, which is the author's opportunity to make (small) changes and corrections.

Genre: Both specific kinds of books (mystery, western, romance, thriller, etc.) and the group of all such books.

High-Concept: An idea that can be expressed succinctly that catches the attention of marketing (frequently involving action.)

Hook: A beginning that grabs the reader and pulls him/her into the story.

House Style: Standards of design, editing and punctuation that is determined by individual publishing house.

Imprint: Name of publisher/line under which title is issued. With consolidation and conglomerate buy-outs, more often represents a publishing brand/line rather than independent publishing company.

Indie: An author who self-publishes and retains all rights to his/her work.

ISBN: International Standard Book Number. Ten- or 13-digit unique identifier for each title published. The number – a language prefix (0 or 1 for English), a publisher prefix, a number relating to the individual title, then a check digit (validates rest of the number) – is in bar code on back of the book.

Legacy publishing: The "old-fashioned" method of an author selling a book to a publisher who produces and distributes a book. (Also **traditional publishing**.)

Line Edit: Line Editor (sometimes in-house, increasingly freelance) goes through the manuscript line by line, ideally editing for issues of character development, pacing, conflict, consistency, and more.

Market: Potential readership for title; territories where title may be contractually sold.

Marketing: Dept. in publishing house with responsibility for promoting titles published; activity increasingly expected of authors by publishers; activity indie authors devote a great deal of time to, including advertising, promo, social media.

Midlist: Books that are not best-sellers, but expected to generate profit for publisher.

On Spec (speculation): A book written before it is under contract

Option: A contract clause that allows the publisher the first crack at buying author's next work (it is critical for author to negotiate limitations on this clause.)

Out of Print: A contract definition that is a basis for determining if the rights eligible to be reverted to the author.

Packager: Puts together writers, illustrators and anything required to prepare a book for publishing; publishers frequently use packagers for YA series or other series that stem from marketing concept (rather than an author's individual idea.)

Permissions: Written okay to use someone else's copyrighted material in a work; obtaining, paying for, all legal hassles over permissions fall entirely on author.

Piracy: Reproducing intellectual property without the consent of (or compensation to) the creator. Rampant and evolving on the Internet.

Platform: A built-in audience and/or fame/notoriety that an author and/or a book offer. Trad publishing wants to know platform in a proposal. Used to be only for non-fic, now also fic.

POS (Point of Sale): Where books are sold; prime real estate in bookstores, fertile ground for physical marketing efforts.

Print Run: The number of copies of a book published (if a book has additional editions beyond the first, each has a print run) and therefore the maximum number of books that can be sold; contrast to **POD (Print on Demand)**, a rising technology that allows books to be published as they are ordered.

Production: The department responsible for typesetting, printing, proofs, etc. At some publisher design elements (covers, page design) comes under this department.

Proposal: Package of material author prepares to try to sell not-yet-completed work. For a novel, it consists of first three chapters and a synopsis of the entire book. Increasingly, publishers also want author's marketing plans.

Rejection: Agent or editor declining to work with an author.

Remainders: Books still in a publisher's inventory after the demand for them subsides; such books sold at a steeply discounted price and for which author receives a steeply discounted royalty.

Reserves: Percentage of not-returned books on which publisher does not pay royalties to the author in case they will be returned at a later date. This percentage should decline over royalty periods; with an end-point an important clause in the contract.

Returns: The number of books returned by booksellers for full credit.

Reversion: When the licenses to publish that a publisher contracted for with an author expire, based on contract clauses, and revert to the author.

Revisions: Changes to a manuscript requested by an editor; traditionally, changes that could not easily be made at the line-edit stage; more frequently revisions are required before a publisher will make an offer to purchase a book.

Rights: Under copyright, the creator(s) of intellectual property has control of that creation. By way of a contract, the creator grants publisher the ability to exploit that control in particular areas in exchange for payment.

Royalty: Payment to the author based on a percentage of the cover/sale price for each copy sold. (Important to know if it's cover or sale price!)

Royalty Statement: Periodic totaling by the publisher of the sales of an author's books.

Self-Publish: When an author pays for the editing, design, production, distribution and marketing of his/her work. (See **Indie**.) Retailer then sends proceeds to author.

Sell-Through: The percentage of the print-run that is not returned by booksellers (and thus assumed to have sold.) Also, the percentage of books sold in a series.

Slush-pile: Unsolicited submissions, which often do pile up in editors' offices. They are read in the order they arrive, frequently given first reads by entry-level editorial employees.

Small press/publisher: Frequently a niche publisher, focusing on one genre. Can be print only, e-book only, or both.

Strip: What is done to the covers of paperback books that booksellers conclude they cannot sell. The stripped covers are then mailed to the publisher for full credit on those books; rest of the book, by contract, is to be destroyed. If you find a stripped book, someone at a bookstore has broken the contract.

Subsidiary rights: Contract rights to publish a book in various formats in specified markets are considered primary and sometimes secondary rights. All other rights are subsidiary, including **Foreign Rights**.

Synopsis: A summary of the plot of the book; generally in chronological order. Written in present tense.

Terms of Service: Agreement author signs to sell books via online retailers.

Thumbnail: Small cover size, seen online. Covers need to convey mood in this size.

Traditional publishing (or Trad pub): Also called "New York." See **Legacy Publishing**.

Vanity Press: As with self-publish, an author pays for the editing, design, production, distribution and marketing of his/her work. But vanity publisher then "pays a royalty," giving author only small percentage of the income even after author bore the expenses. Beware!

Wide: In Indie, books available for sale at multiple major retailers instead of exclusively on Kindle via **Kindle Select** (called **Kindle Unlimited/KU** on consumer side.)

Write for Hire: Writing a work for a flat fee; copyright almost always resides with the solicitor of the work, rather than the author.

YA: Young adult; books for teens. MG stands for middle grades, a younger group