Self-Publishing Tools, Tips, and Techniques

Presentation to the Boulder Writers Alliance, May 14, 2016

These slides are available online at http://www.dvorkin.com/selfpub/bwa.pdf
Based on the forthcoming book. For details, see http://www.dvorkin.com/selfpub/
Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

Pluses and Minuses

The Very First Step

Self-Publishing

• When you’re satisfied with your book, it will be published. Your publisher (you!) loves it.

Traditional Publishing

• Breaking in is very hard, and it’s getting harder every year. Staying in is also hard and getting harder.
Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

Pluses and Minuses

Paying Money & Earning Money

Self-Publishing

• You pay for editing, layout, production, and marketing.
• You only earn money if the book sells copies.
• E-book royalties are 30%-80%. You decide for print.

Traditional Publishing

• Publisher pays all costs.
• Big publishers pay you money up front.
• E-book royalties are 25%, 6%-15% for print edition.
Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

Pluses and Minuses

Publicity, Exposure, Marketing

Self-Publishing

• Little chance of getting important reviews.
• No chance book will be in major bookstores; small chance it will be in small bookstores. Online sales only.

Traditional Publishing

• Fair chance of getting important reviews.
• Very good chance book will be in major and minor bookstores, supermarkets, etc.
Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

**Pluses and Minuses**

**Subsidiary Rights Sales (mmpb, movie, foreign)**

**Self-Publishing**

- Very hard to sell these.
- But you keep all the money. *(Possible agent fee.)*

**Traditional Publishing**

- Some chance that the publisher will sell these rights.
- You typically only get 50% of the money.
Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

**Pluses and Minuses**

**Your Book’s Appearance**

**Self-Publishing**
- The book has your perfectly chosen title.
- You have full cover control.

**Traditional Publishing**
- Publisher chooses the title—often a really dumb one.
- Publisher creates the cover—often an embarrassing one.
Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

Pluses and Minuses

Your Book’s Content

Self-Publishing

• Write what you want, when you want, length you want.
• You approve all edits.

Traditional Publishing

• Books must fit tightly defined marketing categories as to content and length. Publishers are reluctant to publish different types of book by an author.
• You can reject their edits, but in practice you’d best not.
Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

Pluses and Minuses

Selling Copies

Self-Publishing

- Your book remains on sale forever. You own all rights.
- Selling a few thousand copies is very, very good and earns you a very nice amount of money.
- You reissue your old, traditionally published books.

Traditional Publishing

- Print copy is on sale for 3–4 weeks. E-book may remain on sale—but as a ploy for publisher to hold onto rights.
- Selling a few thousand copies is a disaster. Publisher dumps you. Agent is slow to return your calls.
- Publisher only interested in your old books if you’re Stephen King. (In which case, why are you here today?)
The Nail in the Coffin

• 1975: 71 first-class, independent publishers on my list for sf

• 2016: The Big Five
  – Hachette, owned by Lagardère (French)
  – HarperCollins, owned by NewsCorp (Australianish)
  – MacMillan, owned by Holzbrinck (German)
  – Penguin Random House, jointly owned by Pearson (British) and Bertelsmann (German)
  – Simon & Schuster, owned by National Amusements (American!)

Self-publishing is the way to go.

What do I do now?
What This Talk Is Based On

- We’ve edited, formatted, and published 30 client books.
- I’ve formatted and published 13 client books.
- We’ve reissued 12 of our own traditionally published books.
- And self-published 11 of our own original books.

>Note: I’m a Windows user.
Three Publishing Sites

• Smashwords
  – E-books in every conceivable and inconceivable format
  – Online sales at Smashwords.com, Barnes & Noble, Apple’s iBooks store, Kobo, library distributors, and many more

• Amazon
  – E-books, mobi (Kindle) version
  – Online sales in USA, UK, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Japan, India, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Australia

• CreateSpace
  – Print edition
  – Online sales at CreateSpace.com, all Amazon sites above, Barnes & Noble online site, a number of others worldwide
And How Much They Pay

- **Smashwords**
  - 85% of whatever Smashwords receives

- **Amazon**
  - 35% or 70%, depending on cover price, country of sale
  - In addition, VAT is taken out in some countries.

- **CreateSpace**
  - The sky’s the limit.
What Does Self-Publishing Cost You?

• From nothing at all to far too much
• If you hire good help, $500–$2,000
• Cost areas:
  – Editing manuscript for spelling, grammar, usage, consistency, continuity, and structure
  – Designing and creating a cover
  – Print edition layout
  – Conversion to e-book edition(s)
  – Uploading print & e-book editions to online sites
Cost Areas

• First two are the most costly, most neglected.
  – You don’t think you need editing. You almost certainly do.
  – Quick & dirty and/or amateurish covers are common. They’re a terrible idea.

• Last three are the most feared, but the easiest to do yourself.
Editing

• Badly written/edited books are published by major publishers. Editing staff cut because of costs. Editing is outsourced or not done at all.
• A good editor finds continuity errors, inconsistencies, incorrect references, etc.
• $500–$1500 in our experience
Covers

• Photoshop or Gimp, or ...
• Avoid amateurish art, cluttered look. (Google *bad book covers* for examples of what not to do.)
• Experiment. Liberate the artist within.
• Look for art and images online or use your own.
• Pay a cover designer if necessary, but shop around.
• For e–book covers: 96 dpi, at least 1600 X 2400 pixels, but maintain the 2:3 ratio.
TIME and the SOLDIER

David Dvorkin
Self-Publishing

Tools, Tips, and Techniques

David Dvorkin
Chance Encounter

Tony Medeiros
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    https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/
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    http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection
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  – National Gallery of Art
  – Google Art Project
    https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project
  – New York Public Library Public Domain Collections
    http://www.nypl.org/research/collections/digital-collections/public-domain
Prisoner of the Blood I:
Insatiable

David Dvorkin
Print or E-Book Edition

• Always do both.
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• Libraries and bookstores are markets for print editions.
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Invent a Publisher
Print Edition

Note: This discussion is for CreateSpace.

- Avoid internal color. Huge increase in cover price. Grayscale internal images.
- Images (internal and cover) must be at least 300 dpi. Check Word’s Save As settings.
- Use endnotes instead of footnotes.
- New section for each chapter.
- Use 6” X 9” book size (industry standard and favorite).
- We prefer cream paper and glossy cover.
Print Edition (cont.)

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Children of the Undead

by

David Dvorkin
CHAPTER ONE

Lily Morgenstern Flicker groaned. "Christ, look at this place."

"The sooner we start," Jerry Morgenstern said, "the sooner we can put it on the market. You take the bedroom closet. I'll take the hall closet."

"You're taking the easy one."

Jerry sighed. "Let's not argue, now that it's finally over. Okay, we'll switch. I'll take the bedroom."

"Wait a minute. That's where all the valuable stuff is. Maybe I should take the bedroom, after all."

"Jesus Christ."

Jerry was about to say more when he realized that his sister was looking with horror at something behind him. Her face was pale, her mouth was open, and her eyes were wide.

He spun around and found himself facing his father. Jerry's expression began to resemble his sister's.

The old man was dressed in the suit he had been wearing when the coffin lid was closed on him. The undertaker's caked-on makeup still covered his face, but it was cracking and falling off in pieces. Or maybe it was his skin that was falling off. Jerry couldn't tell for sure.

"Still bickering," his father said. "You kids will never stop. What are you doing in my condo?"

"Who are you?" Lily asked.
“I’ve been dead for a week, and already you’ve forgotten me? I’m not surprised. I told your mother it would be that way."

“But you’re dead,” Jerry said. “You can’t be Dad.”

“I was dead. Didn’t like it. Told them I was going home.”

“You can do that?” Jerry asked. “When you’re dead?”

“You think I was going to let them tell me what to do? What are you doing in my condo?” he repeated.

Ignoring him, Jerry said to Lily, “It’s some sort of scam. This guy’s pretending to be Dad so he can get hold of the condo and sell it.”

“Sell it!” the older man said. “Of course not. We’re going to live in it, just like always.”

Lily looked around the place, her nose wrinkling. “You call this living?”

“We?” Jerry said.

“I had to walk all the way from the cemetery,” his father said. “In my condition. Why didn’t you leave my car there?”

“We didn’t think you’d ever need it again,” Lily said. “We, um, we got rid of it.”

“You sold it? I bet you didn’t get enough for it. You always let people take advantage of you. Where’s the money?”

“We gave it away,” Jerry said. “To a charity. It was for a good cause.”

“You mean someone told you it was for a good cause, and you believed them,” his father said. He shook his head from side to side. His neck creaked and cracked, and small bits of leathery tissue floated down.

Jerry was afraid the head would fall off. He was torn between an urge to leap forward and hold the head in place and an urge to run like hell.

“You were always so naive,” his father said. “Such a good brain, but so naive. Brain,” he repeated. “I’m hungry.” Returned away and opened the door of the refrigerator. The refrigerator was empty. “Where are the pickled peppers?”
“Pickles?” Lily said.
“Piper’s Pickled Peppers. We always keep a jar or two in here. I love them.” He turned back toward Jerry and glared at him accusingly. “Did you eat them? Just because you work here doesn’t give you the right to eat up all the Piper’s Pickled Peppers.”
“I didn’t touch the damned things.”
“Watch your language when you’re in my house!” Jerry’s father stepped forward threateningly.
Jerry stepped back. “After you, gr, after you left, there was a lot of old food in there. We had to get rid of it.”
“You threw away the Piper’s Pickled Peppers?” his father roared. “What’s wrong with you?”
“T’ll get you some more, okay? Never mind that right now. You said we’re going to live here. Who’s we?”
The front door opened and a woman walked in.
She looked like their mother but less so than the old man looked like their father. He looked like a dead man fresh from the coffin. She looked like a dead woman who was very unfeigned. Bone shoved through here and there on her face, and the dress she had been buried in hung limply on her in a way that made Jerry suspect that she was mostly bone underneath it. If this was a scam, the makeup was remarkable.
“I’m exhausted,” she said. “That was a long walk.” She noticed the brother and sister, and her face contorted stiffly into what could have been an expression of pleasure.
“Lily!” she said. “Jerry! It’s so wonderful to see you children again!”
Before Jerry could react, she had stepped forward and embraced him.
He responded automatically by putting his arms around her. On one side of her back, he could feel her ribs and the spaces between them. The other side felt normal. Up close, the smell of decay was staggering.
Print Edition Cover

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"An eye-opening view of life on the streets and beyond, a journey from the pits of darkness to a life of hope."
Jose Lopez, Board Member, First Steps for the Blind, Kansas City, MO

"Cry Purple is a story from the heart...a riveting memoir that will take you on a rollercoaster ride filled with sadness, adversity, pain, joy, and finally, peace."
Christy Bean, Freelance Editor, Kansas City, MO

"I don't see much beautiful stuff. These poignant words from the title chapter pretty much sum up the first two-thirds of this book. By turns, it's fascinating, informative, horrifying, heartbreaking, and hopeful. The author's straightforward style makes her account of the brutality that she endured all the more hard-hitting. How could she possibly have survived all that with any optimism and resilience left? Yet she did, and to an amazing degree. I found the chapters about her two young children particularly moving. The shortest chapter, 'And He Is Only Three,' brought me to tears. It may not be the only part of this book that will have the same effect on you."
Leonore Dvorkin, Author and Editor, Denver, CO

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Cry Purple
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    @page { padding: 0pt; margin: 0pt; }
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    <div><img alt="cover" src="../Images/cover.jpg" style="height: 100%" /></div>
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David Dvorkin

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Children of the Undead

Click on cover image for larger version.

A social and political satire disguised as a comic novel about zombies and pickles. Or possibly the other way around.

They're back, and they want to eat your brains. Again.

"Go in there."
"Hell, no. I'm going to send someone stupid in there with a pickle."

It's brains served with a side of pickles, hold the mayo. A terrifying tale of parents, children, brothers, sisters, friends, bosses, employees, wives, ex-wives, friends' wives, Republicans, deadly bacteria, zombies, tentacles, politics, religion, giant screaming earth mothers, and the armpit and other regions of Hell.

And pickles.
"Children of the Undead is engrossing—for its fast-moving story, for its wit and humor, for its sometimes biting political and social commentary, for its general intelligence. I highly recommend it."

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This wasn’t your run-of-the-mill zombie apocalypse. The dead were digging their way out of their graves, but they weren’t after brains. They wanted their homes and families and jobs back. Not that they would object to the occasional nice serving of brains, especially if it came with a side of pickles.

Length: 309 pages
Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Children of the Undead
David Dvorkin

Product Details
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Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited
Publication Date: September 8, 2012

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Children of the Undead

David Dvorkin

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