

Get Ready to Self-Publish!

by *nonfiction book editor & author coach* [Daniel J. Tortora](#)

Page 1 gives you a punch list. Pages 2 through 4 give you the resources I trust.

Are you ready to self-publish?

You are ready to self-publish when you have:

- written and revised your book and had it reviewed by beta readers (optional) and professionally edited—especially copy edited (recommended)
- worked with a cover designer to design a category-appropriate cover image
 - gotten a high-resolution JPG image of your cover
 - (authors with design skills and savvy might design a cover with Canva.)
- formatted the interior of your ebook or print book file, which may include self-formatting with the [Reedsy Write a Book tool](#) or another program or working with a professional designer
- prepared your ebook and/or print book file and proofread it or had it proofread by a professional
- indexed your book or had it indexed (optional; rare for a self-published book)
- chosen your self-publishing path
 - selected which formats to publish
 - selected whether to self-publish direct to retailer (i.e., Amazon or Barnes & Noble), using a distribution service (i.e., IngramSpark or Draft2Digital), or using a self-publishing services company (i.e., Blurb)
- prepared your metadata
 - finalized the title/subtitle and prepared to paste in the series number and (if it applies) the edition number (a new edition is, by definition, a book that is 10 percent different from the previous)
 - prepared your author name and bio and contributors' names (if applicable), including writing your short 50-word author bio
 - written and finalized your book description and formatted it (you may also need a short description handy)
 - selected BISAC Subject Codes
 - researched and prepared keywords
 - selected the trim size for your print book(s)
 - decided on pricing
 - purchased (or assigned) your ISBN
 - prepared your ebook and/or print book files
 - decided on trim size and paper type
- systematically proofread your book or had it proofread

Continue to pages 2 through 4 for the resources you need (and I trust) to guide you through the self-publishing process!

Resources for Metadata

Resources for Title/Subtitle information

- Check the capitalization (use headline style), punctuation, and spelling.
- Your title should be short.
- It should capture the essence of the book (title) and tell what the book is about or, for self-help books, the transformation offered (subtitle, optional).
- It must spark people's interests, emotions, or desires.
- It must be memorable and shareable.
- It must include words or terms that people will be searching for.
- The title (registered with Bowker) can be changed before the publication date.

Resources for author names and bios

- Spell your name consistently. If your name has changed, that's okay. But you won't be able to change it in your book's metadata once it's published.
- Don't include M.A., PhD., etc.
- An author bio includes the author's other books, what they do/title, credentials, and personal tidbit(s); have a 50-word and 100+-word version available.

Book Descriptions

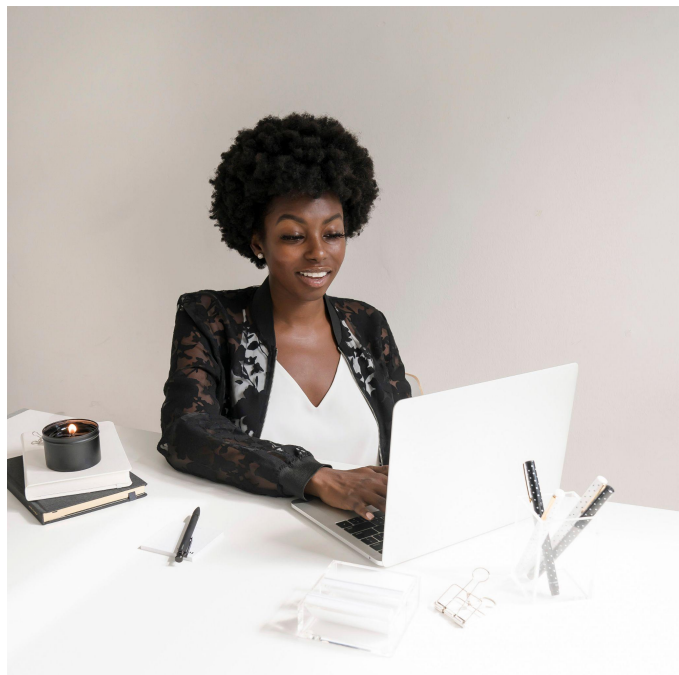
- Closely follow the instructions in the video.
- Use the [Kindlepreneur Book Description Generator](#), a free tool, to format a description that you can copy and paste.
- Read [Master the Art of Writing Book Descriptions That Sell with These 10 Tips](#) (danieljtortora.com).

BISAC Subject Codes

- [BISAC Subject Codes FAQ](#)
- [Complete BISAC Subject Headings List](#), updated yearly
- [BIC Subject Categories and Qualifiers](#), used in the UK and Australia and selected by North American authors self-publishing on Google Play
- To find an Amazon-published book's categories, [use this link](#).

Keywords

- Use Google. Type in possible keywords and see what the auto-fill feature suggests.



- Use Amazon’s search box—[ebooks](#) or [print books](#). Type in possible keywords, and see what the auto-fill feature suggests.
- Use [KW Finder](#). It is a free online tool allowing up to five searches for free each day. It will tell you how popular certain keywords are.
- Use [Publisher Rocket](#). Not free but provides all sorts of useful data on how competitive certain keywords are on Amazon and Google.

Keyword do’s and don’ts

- DO use words or phrases that readers are likely to type when searching for your book on Amazon or Google.
- DO use short, generic words.
- DO limit your keywords to 1 to 3 words each. Amazon has a 50-character per field limit, 210 bytes total (accent marks and umlauts count as two characters).
- DO include the location where your book is set, if relevant.
- DO include words in a logical order if you have related keywords.
 - For example, if your book is about Cajun cuisine, and those words are not in the title, your keywords would be “cajun” and “cuisine” in that order.
- DON’T include references to comparable books or authors.
- DON’T include punctuation such as periods, commas, colons, and semicolons.
- DON’T include a, an, the, etc. These are unnecessary and don’t help with your searchability.
- DON’T repeat words that are in your title or subtitle. Your title and subtitle are already taken into account for searchability.
- DON’T use temporary and subjective words like “new book,” or “just published” or “available now.” Readers won’t search for these terms and certainly won’t in the long-term.

Resources for trim size

- Consider and choose based on similar books published in the past year or two.
- Weigh the page count and print pricing of your book.
- 8½ x 11 inches is rarely a good choice. It shows the author was too lazy to format their word document and it makes a book that is too large to be comfortably held and shelved.

Resources for pricing

- [How to Price a Self-Published Book](#) (from danieljtortora.com)

Resources for Proofreading

- Get my “Proofreading Checklist”

Resources for Indexing

- [How to create an index for your book using Microsoft Word](#)
- Consult the websites and indexer directories of professional indexing groups in your country:

- US: [American Society for Indexing](#) | [Indexer locator directory](#)
- Canada: [Indexing Society of Canada](#) | [Find an Indexer](#) service
- UK: [Society of Indexers](#) | [SI Directory of Professional Indexers](#)
- Nancy Mulvany, [Indexing Books, 2nd edition](#) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005)
- University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff, [The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition](#) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), chapter 16

Resources for ISBNs

- Read [ISBN information](#).
- US Resident? Get ISBNs from [Bowker](#).
 - Purchase one ISBN at a time from [myidentifiers.com](#).
 - See [Bowker ISBN Instructions](#).
- Canada resident? Get Free ISBNs from [ISBN Canada](#).
- UK resident? Get ISBNs from [Nielsen](#).
- Australia resident? Get ISBNs from [THORPE-Bowker](#).
- New Zealand resident? Get ISBNs from the [National Library](#).
- Other countries? Visit the [International ISBN Agency](#).
- Want to set up your own self-publishing company? I.e., do you want to assign a name to the “publisher” of your own books? [Read this article](#).

Resources for Copyrighting Your Book (optional for US authors)

- [Register your work with the US Copyright Office](#).
 - Learn more about [registering literary works](#).
- [Apply for a Library of Congress Control Number \(LCCN\)](#)
 - [Learn more about the program](#) (this is the PDF download)
 - Check the [Library of Congress catalog](#) at least 6 months after you send your LCCN-awarded book to the LOC to see if your book was cataloged and added to the LOC’s collections.

Resources for LOC Control Numbers (optional for US authors; most appropriate for books on US history, politics, culture, and society)

- Apply for a Library of Congress Control Number (LCCN) with [Pre Pub Book Link](#).
- Follow the instructions in the step-by-step [Author-Self-Publisher Guide](#).
- [Questions? Read this](#).

And don’t forget to [visit my website](#), where you’ll find

- Helpful [resources and how-tos for nonfiction authors](#)
- [Editing](#) and [author coaching](#) services
- Online courses on [self-publishing](#) and [book marketing](#)