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# SELF- PUBLISHING QUESTIONS ASKED & ANSWERED

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The Official Book Publishing FAQ  
for Independent Writers Seeking  
**Professional Book Publication**

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**BRENT SAMPSON**

Bestselling author of the award-winning *Sell Your Book on Amazon*



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# Part One



# What is Self-Publishing?

According to Wikipedia, self-publishing is the publication of a book where the author is in control of the entire process, including format selection, pricing, cover design, interior design, inventory management, distribution, marketing, and public relations. Authors either elect to do everything

themselves (which can be quite time-consuming or could possibly lead to a less-than-optimal outcome) or they outsource the work to multiple independent contractors or to a single self-publishing company that offers all the services they need.

Self-publishing may be experiencing a heyday, but it is nothing new. Homemaker Irma S. Rombauer independently published The Joy of Cooking in 1931. Five years later, the Bobbs-Merrill Company acquired the rights and then things really started cooking for Ms.

Rombauer (in the form of over 18 million copies sold)! Her book wouldn't be the runaway success it is today without self-publishing.

Before Matt Damon showed Mars who was boss in the Hollywood blockbuster The Martian, sci-fi writer Andy Weir released the book (his debut novel, by the way) chapter-by-chapter on his blog before self-publishing it as an e-book in 2011. Crown Publishing purchased the rights and re-released it in 2014, just months after Twentieth Century Fox optioned the film rights. Weir went

on to win multiple awards, including a Hugo for Best New Writer, and the film went on to gross over \$200 million worldwide.

And, of course, there is the story of Fifty Shades of Grey, which started off as Twilight fan fiction on E.L. James' website before being self-published through a small Australian company. Vintage Books subsequently picked up the rights, republished it (to the tune of 70 million copies), and paved the way for a movie trilogy in the process. To call it a self-publishing success would be an understatement.



The key difference between The Joy of Cooking and the second two examples is that Ms. Rombauer had to spend considerable amounts of time and money designing her manuscript for publication, purchasing bulk copies, storing her inventory, and seeking wholesalers, distributors, and retailers to carry the book. Nowadays, advances in print-on-demand and e-book technology have empowered authors like Weir and James (and you?) to publish professionally and affordably.





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**PART**  
ONE





# WHAT IS SELF-PUBLISHING?

**ACCORDING TO WIKIPEDIA**, self-publishing is the publication of a book where the author is in control of the entire process, including format selection, pricing, cover design, interior design, inventory management, distribution, marketing, and public relations. Authors either elect to do everything themselves (which can be quite time-consuming or could possibly lead to a less-than-optimal outcome) or they outsource the work to multiple independent contractors or to a single self-publishing company that offers all the services they need.

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