How to self publish the easy and FREE way

(Lecture notes)
By Matt Misbach

Introduction

Computers and technology are invaluable aids to us in our genealogical research. When it comes to preserving and presenting your family history information, nothing beats a good old fashion paper book.

For some people it's hard to believe, but it's true. The best "backup" you can make of your information is in a plain analog paper book. However it is the advancements in technology that are enabling us to self publish our books more easily and at a significantly reduced cost. It can be done absolutely free with zero risk, and I'll show you how to do it.

The key to doing it for free and without any risk is made possibly by utilizing the print on demand book publishing model. There is ZERO inventory to pay for or worry about. You don't have a book printed unless you already have a buyer. No more need to print large quantities to reduce printing costs, and fill up your garage with an inventory of books that don't sell.

This lecture will show you how to self publish your book from start to finish.

Lulu.com

A "free" service from Lulu.com handles all the printing, shipping and payment collection for your books. They have taken all the painful and expensive aspects of self publishing away. This lecture will take you through the steps of publishing your book through the Lulu.com service.

They have two publishing options
1. Published by Lulu - **$99.00**
   Publishing rights are granted to Lulu. One free ISBN number.
2. Published by You – **FREE**
   You are the registered publisher of the book, and you must get your own ISBN number.

Formatting Your Book

Lulu accepts the following file formats for you book. You can use any word processor you want that can save into one of the formats below. Once you've chosen what software program you are going to use to write your book, you need to decide the size of your book. Lulu has several to choose from such as 8.5" x 11", 6" x 9", etc. You can not however choose a custom size, it must be one of the sizes they offer.

Make sure you use one of the template files. Lulu has template files (.doc & .rtf) you can download for free that have the page size, margins, and page numbers already setup for you.
   • Microsoft Word (.doc)

- Rich Text Format (.rtf)
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Works
- WordPerfect (.wpd)
- OpenOffice (.rtf or .doc)
- PDF (.pdf)

Book Cover

You can design your own cover, or use Lulu's cover wizard to design a basic cover for you.

After you upload your book Lulu will tell you the exact dimensions (in points and inches) your book cover should be to fit your book appropriately. You can use these dimensions to make sure your cover artwork is sized correctly.

Your book cover is a separate file and must be at least 300dpi and in one of the following file formats, JPG, GIF, or PNG. For covers that wrap-around the book (perfect bound, or dust covers) the cover art must be in PDF format.

ISBN Numbers

R. R. Bowker is the exclusive source for ISBN numbers for the United States. The smallest quantity of ISBN numbers you can buy is ten for a total of $245. You can buy them online from this URL:
https://commerce.bowker.com/standards/cgi-bin/isbn.asp

Free services that create ISBN barcodes:
http://www.terryburton.co.uk/barcodewriter/generator/
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Completing Your Book

After you have finished writing your book, and creating your cover art, all you need to do is follow Lulu's publishing wizard. During this wizard you will need to be prepared to answer the following questions:

- Author, title and description of book
- What category the book should be in
- Who can purchase the book (Private, Direct, General Access)
- Price of book as well as PDF (if applicable)

That's it, you have published your first book!

Now you can place an order for as many copies of your book as you want. You get to buy your book at cost, not the price you set on the book. If you order 25 or more copies you start to get discounts as well.

If you get stuck!

Lulu has great free technical support 24/7! Their live online chat support is fast and very good. Their email is good as well, but slower turn around time.

Promoting Your Book

amazon.com®

Now you its up to you to decide how you want to promote and sell your book. A quick and easy way to get a store front is to use the free one Lulu provides for you. For example my store front is located at http://stores.lulu.com/misbach

Another option you might consider is to have your book listed on Amazon.com. To do this you need to join their Advantage program. The cost is $35 per year and you can list all your books. The URL for more information on this program is http://advantage.amazon.com.

If you decide to sign up for the Advantage program you might consider enabling the "Search Inside" feature for all your books. To sign up go to this URL, http://www.amazon.com/gp/sitb/publish

You can also try selling the electronic PDF version of your book on some of the eBook sites such as:
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Revisions and Edits

Don't be afraid to make frequent revisions and edits to your book. Lulu provides a way to update your book even after you have "published" it. Make sure you also update the revision status in the book so people know what version they have. To upload a new version of your book you must "un-publish" your book, then Lulu will allow you to upload the new book text.