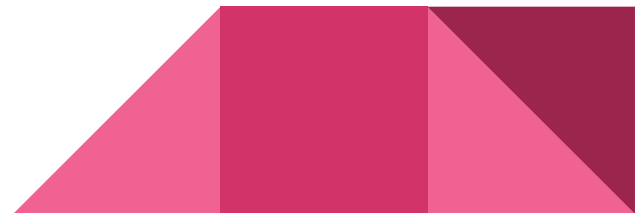


Going Indie: Before You Leap

SCBWI Shop Talk
April 21, 2018

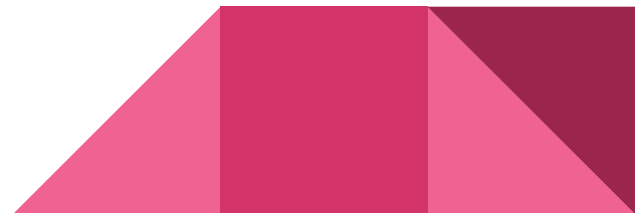
Background

- Indie Author: An “author entrepreneur” ([Joanna Penn](#)).
- Traditional publishers sign books they believe they can sell.
- Selling books is not about being better than all the rest.
- Indie publishing is not new, but the number of indie authors is increasing all the time.



Successful Indie Examples

- Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*: Self-published in 1901 and picked up in 1902 by Frederick Warne & Co.
- Andy Weir, *The Martian*: Indie published, turned into a movie, and book was re-released by Crown.
- Ronald H. Balson, *Once We Were Brothers*: Self-publishing sales topped the 100,000 and St. Martin's Press acquired the rights.



Marketing Funnel

AWARENESS

Readers see your book through marketing or advertising.

CONSIDERATION

Add your book to “tbr” or download a sample.

CONVERSION

Download a free copy or purchase your book.

LOYALTY

Sign up for updates; purchase future books.

ADVOCACY

Write a review or recommend your book to others.



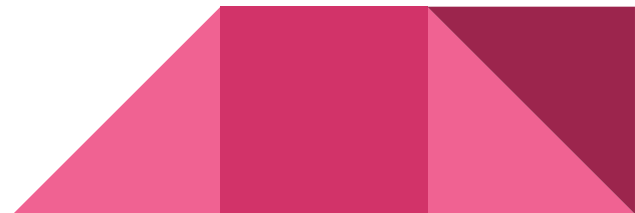
Indie vs Traditional Publishing

	Indie	Traditional
Marketing	Author marketing required	Shared
Ownership of rights	Retain all rights	Depends on contract
Royalties	No advance; higher royalties	Advance; lower royalties
Reputation	“Hit or miss” *	Reliably high-quality
Editing & Proofreading	Dependent on author	Managed by publisher
Publishing schedule	Can be fast; depends on author	May be slow or never

** As a staunch supporter and avid reader of indie books, I find that I reject about 30% of books that I download as samples. Of the ones that I eventually read, another 50% have at least one obvious formatting error on Kindle.*

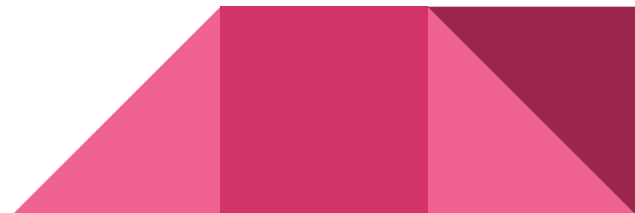
Planning a Solid Foundation

- Critique groups and beta readers can be an important part of the process.
- Professional editing
- Professional proofreading
- Professional cover design
- Captivating book blurbs of various lengths (cover description, Amazon description, Twitter post, etc.)
- Art/photography for various purposes
- Keep writing!



Planning for Launch

- Plan the date in advance
- Release ebook and print simultaneously
- Research bloggers and reviewers ([The Indie View](#))
- Provide ARC (advance review copies)
- Press releases for your hometown newspaper/radio (they care!)
- Online options
 - Blog tour
 - Launch team
 - Launch party / meet the authors
- (Are you still writing?)



Planning for Ongoing Marketing

- Monthly Budget
- Options
 - Promotions through KDP (free downloads / countdown deals)
 - BookBub is widely considered the best paid option
 - Amazon ads
 - Facebook ads
- Giveaways - use to get email signups (not good for reviews)
- PUBLISH MORE BOOKS!



Should I Self-Publish?

- What are your goals?
 - I want complete creative control. I feel empowered to do what it takes to market and produce my own high-quality product.
 - I am willing to give up a lot of control, and I'd rather leave all the business details to someone else.
- A self-publisher is an entrepreneur
 - Write because you must and not to make money.
 - Don't define success by earnings.
 - Write, write, write your way to success.
 - Be in it for the long haul; don't be discouraged by early failure.

