

I flat out love the open publishing system...

I flat out love the open publishing system where you can send a book to six or seven publishers and it'll be available in a day, or a few, to anybody who wants to know what you want to share.

Not that I think, with exceptions, that the self-pub, do-it-yourselfers are going to be able to push the big names and big houses off their pedestals. But because anybody who will put in the effort and write a solid book, get it proofed, and make it presentable has a shot at changing a wee piece of the world by what they say. (Even if it's not too presentable and it's not too well proofed, as painful as both can be, it still has worth.)

And because those people are much, much the better for having done it, even if 90% of the readers stumbling into their words think those words are awful or worse. I can't say "who cares?" because the naysayers seem to care a lot, and the writers care too. They'd love to have some critic with a deep-pocketed following laud their penned wisdom and help propel it into triple digits. But in the larger scope, enough books freely shared will make a difference at every level. And I suspect that there are real winners out there who hang in and get a few dumb offerings out of their system before their best books appear. (Anyway, who knows which of their books are the dumbest and which move mankind a few inches upwards or sideways or somehow? It may be their first.)

Why is this important today, as I'm wrapping up many hours of pecking and cover designing?

Because I just finished two wee books that will probably sell 100-200 copies each, and neither will take cover design honors

(because I'm not going to spend hundreds of dollars putting a grand cover on a book without much return.) I know, if the cover was just a bit fancier...blah, blah.

One is called [Surviving Prostate Cancer](#) and it's a good look at what that survival is like while the inflicted is surviving. The survivor was me, of course, and I wish I'd had someone else's insight when I was trudging off to the urologist and radiologist and the other ...gist who helped me through. But let's face it, that book isn't going very far. Despite good proofing and a nice format and the rest.

The other is called [100 Ready-to-Use Treasure Hunt Clues](#), which I'll send to CreateSpace tomorrow—and which I already sent to Kindle in ebook format to try their 90-day captured program to see if giving away free copies makes any sense at all. (Keep your eyes open: it'll be out gratis for five days probably in August. In the meantime, they are selling it at \$3.99.)

What I feel best about is that I've been able to figure out (and share by blog) how to produce these wee books for a song, assuming Amazon and Nook and Smashwords and CreateSpace and the others will include them in their almost-free publishing system.

I go to fotolia.com and find some pretty, professional art for the cover. It costs \$5-10 to get all rights to something I like but could never create myself. That's about it for the ebook cover: the art, the title, my name, and maybe a zinger catchphrase, all big enough to be seen on a thumbnail.

For the CreateSpace cover I just expand on the ebook cover, figure out the spine size (if it has more than 130 or so pages multiply the number of pages by .002252 to see how many inches thick it must be), and for the back I create some grabber text to accompany the bar code and some benefit-directed key lines. Then two final hurdles.

One, the CS cover must be sent in .pdf (as must the interior text) so I get both the interior and the cover in ready-to-go Word format, then call up that .doc file and tell the printer to find CutePDFWriter and just save it in that format. It's Free, fast, and reliable. (You must save the software the first time on your computer. It takes about five minutes.)

Still, I have three unlinked sections of a paperback cover—front, back, and spine—and no software to marry them to send in one file to CreateSpace. Fivver.com to the rescue, where for \$5 (bless him) redhellfire will put these three together, leave space for the barcode (inserted by CreateSpace), and send me back the ready-to-go cover for submission. (You can see these covers at the landing pages, [100 Ready-to-Use Treasure Hunt Clues](#) and [Surviving Prostate Cancer](#), so you have a better idea of what I mean. Just don't yell at me about how stupid I am... if I'd just...).

That's about it. Two good books, decent covers, good proofing, standard formatting, and I'm in the ranks of the great writers and publishers of all time. Well hidden and probably near the rear, but ain't it grand! Fifteen years ago (when I was 60) nothing like this existed. You could get around the big houses by niche publishing (you still can, very profitably) but plain old folks foreign to the innards of any kind of publishing who drove cabs and replaced car windshields and sold shoes, then hurried home to write their opus, were mostly left out to dry. No more.

So that's why I love open publishing. It's an open door for anybody gutsy enough to walk through it.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett