



# SELF-PUBLISHING ROAD MAP

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Alexandra Amor, The Self-Publishing Coach  
[TheSelfPublishingCoach.com](http://TheSelfPublishingCoach.com)

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# WELCOME

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## Getting from manuscript to published book



The intention of this guide is to take you from finished manuscript to published book.

As with traditional road maps, there's often more than one way to get from A to B. The instructions in this booklet are one example of how to become an independently published author, but they are not the only way.

If you have any questions about the publishing process and/or about the information in this guide, please feel free to reach out to me at: [alexandra@TheSelfPublishingCoach.com](mailto:alexandra@TheSelfPublishingCoach.com). I offer 30-minute complimentary coaching sessions to interested authors.

Please note there are some affiliate links in this roadmap.

Wishing you all the very best on your publishing journey!  
Alexandra

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Alexandra Amor  
The Self-Publishing Coach



## BOOK PUBLISHING PHASE 1



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# FINALIZING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

## PART 1

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### You've finished your book. Now what?

The road to publication begins with the steps listed below. Some can be done concurrently (e.g., while your manuscript is with your editor you can be working on the description).

It's easy to get impatient at this stage and to want to jump right into publication. But having all your ducks in a row before you do that will make the rest of the journey run more smoothly.

*Check off the tasks as you complete them to track your progress.*

- ☐ Hire an editor (I have some recommended [editors](#) here)
- ☐ Receive the editor's changes and apply the ones you agree with
- ☐ Hire a proofreader
- ☐ Receive the proofreader's changes and apply them

*Now you've got a clean manuscript – **do not** make changes or additions after this point.*

*While your editor is working on the book you can do the following. Or if you're feeling extremely patient, you can do all the things mentioned below and then send your bio, description and other pieces of front and back matter with your manuscript to your editor.*

- ☐ Create front matter, which can include:
  - Copyright page
  - An ISBN (optional for your ebook)
  - Dedication

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# FINALIZING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

## PART 2

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- ☐ Create back matter, which can include:
  - About the Author page with your bio
    - Pro tip: You can also use this bio at the online retailers
  - Acknowledgements page (if you choose)
  - Do you have other books? Create an Also By the Author list
  - Is there anything else you want to have at the back of the book? An author's note? A glossary (for non-fiction)? A thank you page that directs the reader to your website?
- ☐ Write a description of the book

You will use this at all the online retailers as well as on the back of your book (if you publish a paperback or hardback) and on your website, if you have one.

Pro Tip: Go to books in your genre and see how their book descriptions (also called a blurb) have been written.

- What do they focus on?
- How to they create interest for the reader?

The objective of a book's description is not to simply summarize the plot. It is to create interest for the reader, to pull them into the story with teaser-like elements.



## BOOK PUBLISHING PHASE 2



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# PREPARE FOR PUBLICATION

## PART 1

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This is where the publishing heavy lifting begins.

There are many details to get right at this stage and it can sometimes seem overwhelming. Take it one step at a time. Patience and tenacity are your friends during this stage.

- ☐ Format the book using a tool like [Vellum](#) or hire a [formatter](#) (like me!)
  - You'll likely need a minimum of two formatted versions of your book, one for ebook and one for paperback
  - For ebooks I put the copyright page at the back so that it doesn't take up space in the Read Sample area
  
- ☐ Have a cover designer create a cover
  - If you are doing both an ebook and a paperback (recommended) you'll need a cover for both.
  - The ebook cover is the thumbnail image you see at the online retailers
  - The paperback cover has a front, back and spine
  - You'll tell the designer what 'trim size' you'd like the book to be, i.e., how big the book will be. Common trim sizes are 5" x 8", 5.5" x 8.5", 5.25" x 8", 6" x 9".
  - You'll give the cover designer a page count so that they know how wide the spine should be

**Important:** A book cover needs to SCREAM that it is part of the genre it belongs to. Do some research about what covers look like in your genre and give your book cover designer some examples of what you're looking for.

Learn more about the essentials of book cover design with my online course, [Readers Will Judge Your Book By Its Cover](#).

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## PREPARE FOR PUBLICATION

### PART 2

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- ☐ Acquire an ISBN number (this is optional for your ebook)
  - If you decide to do this, you will need one for the ebook and one for the paperback
  
- ☐ If you are outside the US, you'll want to get an ITN number so that the online retailers don't withhold 30% of your revenue
  
- ☐ Decide on 7 keywords for your book
  - Keywords are the words or phrases a reader would use when they are searching for a book to read, i.e., female sleuths, or books about Vancouver, or sci-fi thriller
  - 'Keywords' is a bit of a misnomer, they should really be called 'key phrases' because a keyword can be more than one word, as in the examples above. For example, 'female sleuths' is one keyword.
  
- ☐ Give some thought to the categories the book will go into
  - These are similar to keywords but each online vendor has a specific set of categories, so you have to choose from pre-selected ones, i.e., mystery, thriller, memoir etc.
  
- ☐ What will the price of your book be?
  - Do some research into books similar to yours and what independent authors are charging
  - Note that traditional publishers tend to charge far more (especially for ebooks) than indie publishers charge
  - You will have two different price points: an ebook price and a paperback price
  - The paperback price will depend on how much it costs to print a copy of your book. The online retailer will give you this information when you upload the book files

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## PREPARE FOR PUBLICATION PART 3

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☐ For your paperback, decide if you're going to use expanded or limited distribution on Amazon

- Expanded distribution means that Amazon can provide your paperback to libraries and other retailers. However, please know that libraries are unlikely to buy your paperback from Amazon.
- Because of this, many authors will choose limited distribution at Amazon and then also publish the paperback at IngramSpark, where libraries and bookstores can purchase it.

☐ Decide if you're going to enrol the ebook into the KDP select program, in which case you won't be able to sell the ebook at any other retailer. (This does not apply to the paperback.)



## BOOK PUBLISHING PHASE 3



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# PUBLISH YOUR BOOK

## PART 1

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In this final stage of the publishing process, you'll be interacting with the various dashboards at the online retailers. Rest assured that if you make a mistake or upload the wrong file in the wrong spot you will be able to fix it.

The exceptions to this are your book's title/subtitle and your author name, so triple check the spelling of those before you press publish.

☐ In order to take advantage of advertising/merchandising opportunities, many indie authors do the following:

- Publish directly to Amazon
- Publish directly to Kobo
- Use an aggregator to publish to all other retailers (Barnes and Noble, Google, Overdrive, Scribd, Tolino etc.)
- My recommended aggregator is Draft2Digital.com

So you'll need several author dashboards – one at each of these locations

- Or not! You could use an aggregator like Draft2Digital for all sites – up to you

☐ Create an account at the sites you wish to publish directly to

☐ Fill in all the fields with the information you've collected / created from the previous steps in this booklet

☐ Upload your ebook (EPUB) and print (PDF) files as well as your cover files

☐ Set your pricing

- Tip: Don't let the system automatically set the international prices
- Manually go through and using a currency converter like xe.com figure out the closest price for the various international sites and round up or down to \$x.99

☐ Press publish!

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## PUBLISH YOUR BOOK PART 2

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Some final thoughts about the publishing process:

It will take 24 to 48 hours for the site(s) to approve your book and make it live. (It may take less time but always allow for at least a day's wait.)

Once that happens, I recommend buying a copy of the ebook to get the algorithms working.

You'll also likely want to order a proof copy of the paperback to double-check for any formatting errors. You can do this before you press publish as well.

Pro Tip: Create an Author Central account at Amazon (<https://author.amazon.com>) and set up your bio with an image of yourself, info about you, and a mention of your website. Then 'claim' your book so that your author page and book are linked.

Questions?

Book your 30-minute complimentary coaching session:  
[alexandra@TheSelfPublishingCoach.com](mailto:alexandra@TheSelfPublishingCoach.com)

# ALEXANDRA AMOR

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## The Self-Publishing Coach



Alexandra Amor is The Self-Publishing Coach. She guides writers from finished manuscript to published book, without any hassle or headaches. She also offers online courses to help authors navigate self-publishing, and formats ebooks and paperbacks for publication.

Since 2008 Alexandra has been writing and publishing fiction and non-fiction books, all with the themes of love, connection, and the search for understanding. She began her writing career with an Amazon best-selling, award-winning memoir about ten years she spent in a cult in the 1990s.

Alexandra is a proud member of the Writers' Union of Canada and a Partner Member at the Alliance of Independent Authors.

Sign up for your complimentary 30-minute coaching session at  
[TheSelfPublishingCoach.com/contact](https://TheSelfPublishingCoach.com/contact)