**About Silent Launch 4.0**

The aim of this research proposal project is to present a business case model plan of a paper-to-digital self-publishing platform involving an AI-IT service provider company in the UK to explore the scope of automation tools in the proposed digital publishing services.

It aims to offer customised publishing services that covers from manuscript submission to review process, editorial services, copyright infringement protection, quality management, layout and design to print. The proposed project, *Silent Launch* would serve as a proof of concept for building an author-centric MVP (Minimum Viable Product) intended mainly for writers, university students, research scholars and independent (indie) authors, will be stated as *Target users* in all future instances. This Indie Author Publishing Services Platform 4.0will act as an integrated publishing ecosystem, collaborating with indie authors, editors, designers and technology provider in the UK to drive digital transformation (Zul, 2024) in the publishing industry powered with technologies like AI, blockchain and cybersecurity-compliant cloud platforms.

The 1st objective is to perform preliminary research of several publishing services on the indie publishing platforms available in the market and gather data on the potential opportunities, pricing challenges, technological limitations, etc. This ideally helps me to practically gain an understanding based on support services, user-friendliness and integration of automation tools, etc., at this stage.

The 2nd objective is to identify some of the real-time challenges, benefits of existing publishing services through selective case studies. This involves interactions with young writers, university students and research scholars in gathering their experiential learnings and roadblocks. From the collected information, a survey will be created and circulated among the target audience (writers, university students, research scholars, publishing stakeholders, tool developers and cybersecurity specialists) in respective sectors with consent form to conduct online surveys and email interviews. All data will be collected and stored in accordance with university research ethics guidelines.

The 3rd objective is to study the reports of surveys generated through charts to explore the patterns and identify the gaps. From this data, the proposed publishing services, including the integration of automation tools will be categorised based on a proven business model like SWOT to get further clarity and structure, considering all aspects holistically. The key findings for the development stage can then be drawn to narrow down into essentials for indie authors from which the user flow architecture of author journey will be portrayed through Visio diagram.

The 4th objective is to present the developed user flow as a business case by involving an established AI & Cybersecurity-based model company in the UK, supporting as a technology partner to design the proposed publishing model. A thorough analysis of the model will be conducted and evaluated with a detailed report on the identification of the proposed publishing services, appropriate AI models, other security requirements, including copyrights, Intellectual Property rights and data protection, will be detailed in the platform for the authors to understand.

The 5th objective is to design the Indie Author Publishing Services Platform 4.0. Based on the provided business case report by the technology partner company, the feedback will be incorporated to build an MVP model (*Indie Author Dashboard*) for *Silent Launch*. The author dashboard interface design will include wireframes with UI/UX considerations with platform capabilities such as manuscript submission, copyright protection, AI-assisted cover designs and illustrations. Usability and functionality of the prototype will then be evaluated through feedback from *Target users* to validate the feasibility of automation tools proposed. Finally, the project proposal for *Silent Launch* will be demonstrated through a web application with a landing page, primary navigation menus and selected inner pages which would serve as a basis for future improvement and development.

The self-publishing industry has grown remarkably in recent years, driven by platforms like Amazon KDP, IngramSpark, Smashwords, Draft2Digital, to mention a few. Limited reach is the main drawback in the Amazon KDP, for instance, in selling the books with 10% content restrictions when it is posted online such as the author blog or Wattpad story (Sarah, 2024).

I intend to present a pilot business case model through which the Target users’ requirements to multiple publishing services are predominantly met on a single platform, especially with additional sample page reviews without any reading restrictions. Many young writers, university students and research scholars often find it difficult to identify appropriate platforms to avail specific publishing services based on their requirements. Eventually, this will make them search for an alternate way of publishing (Baverstock and Steinitz, 2013).

*Silent Launch* connects authors, editors and designers through an AI-powered integrated platform which explores how digital technologies can enhance independent publishing. Automation tools can be used for plagiarism checks, content analysis, edits, copyright protection, Gen-AI cover designs and layout adjustments based on print specifications, which can be streamlined through tier-based publishing packages.

*Silent Launch* is aimed to launch with a goal to provide an affordable and flexible publishing services to the Target users. From its viewpoint to the Indie authors: “The excellent thing about being independent is to explore the options of smart automation in publishing platforms, test or utilise them, and become successful to sustain in the technologically evolving industry.” It is evident that the increase in young budding indie authors will create more demand for self-publishing in the near future (Dollwet, 2024).

**Outline of study design**

This research project adopts a mixed-method study approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies aimed at developing and evaluating a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) for a self-publishing platform, titled *Silent Launch* intended mainly for writers, university students, research scholars and indie authors. The study is structured around five sequential objectives, beginning with market research in the creation of a prototype based on user-centred design thinking approach, considering UI & UX with a visual representation of indie author dashboard on a landing page of web application with primary navigation menus and selected inner pages as final deliverable. The user flow architecture forms the basis of indie author journey which will be illustrated through a Visio diagram to translate the findings of research into design requirements.

The design incorporates iterative feedback loops from the *Target users* to ensure the platform is usable, accessible along with the findings and various challenges from the user perspective. Furthermore, it also demonstrates how emerging technologies like AI and cloud security can be meaningfully integrated into self-publishing services during the technical collaboration and intervention at respective stages with an AI and cybersecurity service provider in the UK.

**Outline of study methods**

The proposed study methods for various stages of research will strictly adhere to academic guidelines and summarised below:

**Preliminary research:** Perform comparison study of several publishing services on the indie publishing platforms available in the market for understanding and identification of some real-time user challenges, in addition to the benefits of existing publishing services. This could be achieved through selective case studies, involving interactions with young writers, university students and research scholars. Based on these first-level data, the questions for the survey and email interview could be formulated.

**Quantitative method:** From the collected information, a structured online survey consisting of multiple choice and descriptive questions through Google Form will be created and distributed via email and WhatsApp among the *Target users* (aimed at 30-50) including publishing companies, tool developers and cybersecurity specialists. The survey will feature 17 multiple-choice questions and 3 open-ended questions to understand perceptions on automation, trust, pricing, and platform usability. In addition, email interviews comprising 5 questions will also be created, targeting around 5-10 industry stakeholders to get insights from their perspectives about the project subject topic. Participation will be voluntary and governed by university research ethical guidelines, including consent forms and data protection compliance.

In qualitative method a comparison study is done with few self-publishing platforms to analyse the gaps and various features offered in publishing services. Additionally, the project will investigate various subscription-based publishing options.

**Data analysis & implementation:** Data collected from above methods will be analysed to identify patterns or trends in user experiences, categorise them using frameworks such as SWOT analysis, and consolidate the findings into a sample report supported by technical documentation, mainly on the automation aspects.

**MVP development & evaluation:**

Based on above insights, a business case will be co-developed with a UK-based AI and cybersecurity company, RLogics Solutions, UK, in collaboration with its offshore digital partner Vcraftyu Company. The proposed MVP will feature key functionalities such as manuscript submission, AI-assisted editorial tools, copyright protection, and user interface wireframes. The MVP prototype will be evaluated through usability testing with select respondents from earlier phases, validating platform feasibility and feature integration.