

GETTING A NOVEL PUBLISHED IN THE 21ST CENTURY

You long time writers with a novel - or two or three - under your belt know the stressful, harrowing and sometimes disappointing process of finding an agent and submitting your work to the big five publishers. The day your manuscript is accepted is a happy day indeed, one of the best. An advance, a percentage of sales, your book in print. Published. Does it get any better?

If you're an aspiring novelist, working on your final manuscript, consider the following alternative scenario for getting a novel published in the 21st century.

Right up to the end of the 20th century, getting a novel published was a long and arduous road to travel, an emotional and logistical rollercoaster ride from beginning to end. Novelists can be eccentric and often reclusive people who don't do well in the large publishing house culture. Agents, editors, contract negotiations and marketing issues can make a mess of your artistic sensibilities. A year further down the road, your book comes out. By that time, you're well into your next book and still starving, but fashionably so.

Here in 2008, getting a novel published can be effected in an entirely different manner. We're talking about self-publishing, a fairly controversial topic among writers today. The net makes it possible to reach millions of customers, publish your book in both electronic and print formats and keep all of the profits instead of a tiny percentage. You can continue to promote and sell your book for as long as you please.

Marketing is still an issue, but is predominately performed by electronic means. It's easy to get your book listed on the online giants, like Amazon, Barnes & Nobles and Borders. You might actually enjoy the process. Sounds like a plan, don't you think?

You'll want to make some calculations on the potential financial gains in each approach to getting a novel published.

Let's say your novel sells just 5,000 copies, at \$12.95 through the big publisher. You got a \$15,000 advance and receive 2% in royalties. This is a simple scenario, sans the contract's fine print, but represents the maximum you'd receive. That works out to \$1295 in royalties, plus the \$15,000 advance for a total income of \$16,295.

In the self-publishing approach, you sell the same number of books at \$12.95 and receive \$64,750 from which you must deduct your expenses. So self-publishing

wins this round.

You must also consider that the big publisher drops your book after the initial printing of 5,000 copies. End of income. If you self-publish, you can continue to receive passive income for as long as you're willing to market the book.

You can see that there's more than one way to approach getting a novel published in a legitimate and respectable way. You owe it to yourself to do a little investigation into the issue. It could pay off nicely.