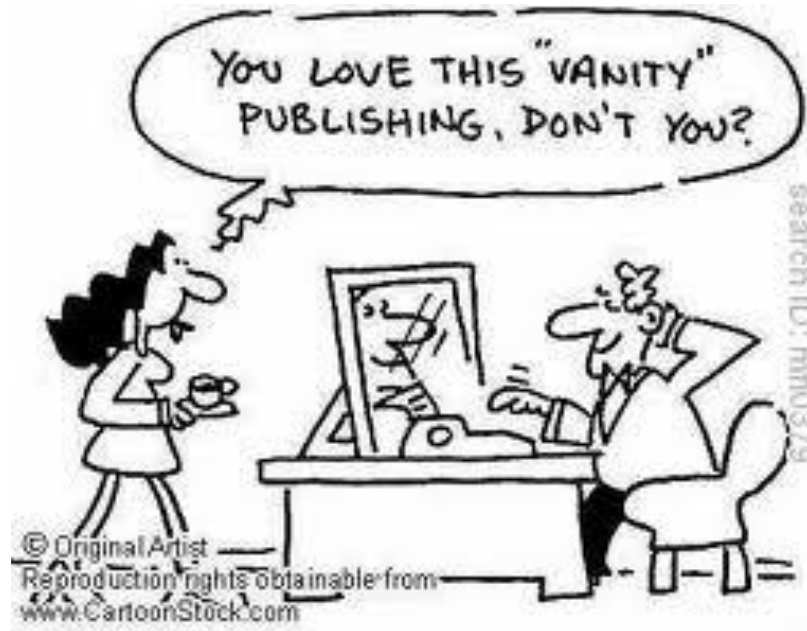


**Why self-publishing now demands
research rather than disdain**

Educational Research Forum

Friday 15th June, 2012

Self-publishing has not had a good image:

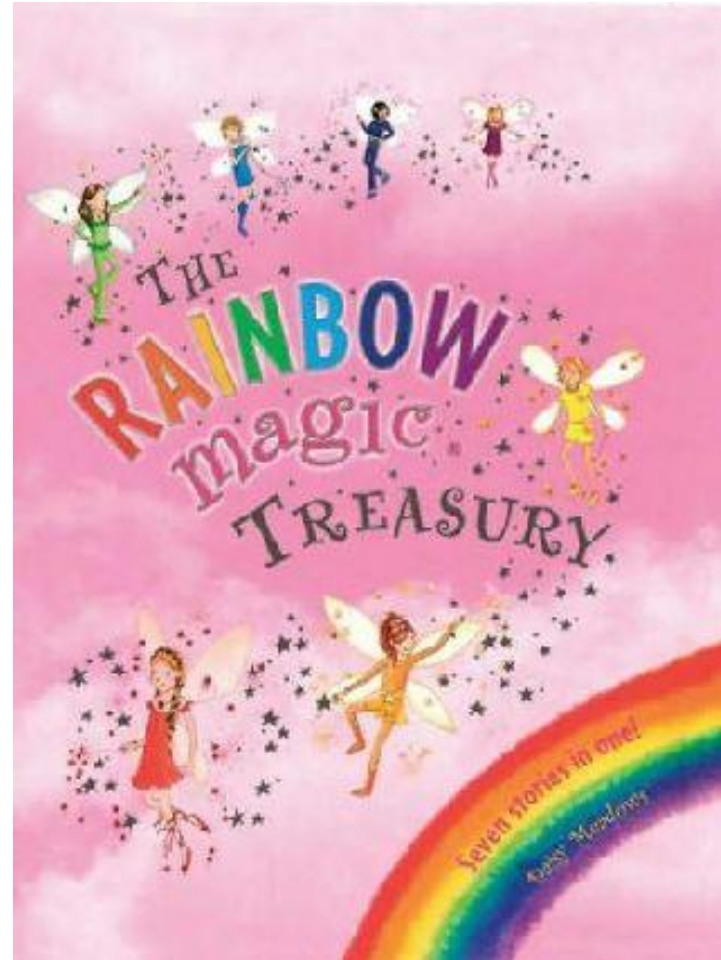
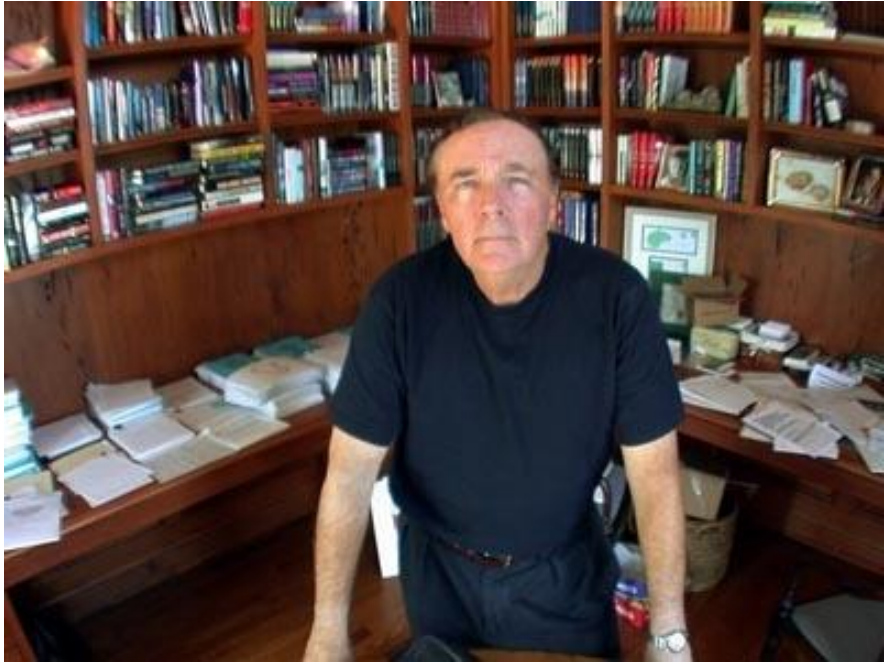


Why self-publishing interested me:

- Ongoing monitoring of publishing industry
- Extent of activity
- Those with strongest vested interests most against
- The irony of academic disdain
- ‘Vanity’ an outdated word but core relates to social media
- Dissemination of content through variety of new formats
- New responsibilities for authors promote s-p
- New writing patterns are springing up



PLR Chief earners 2009



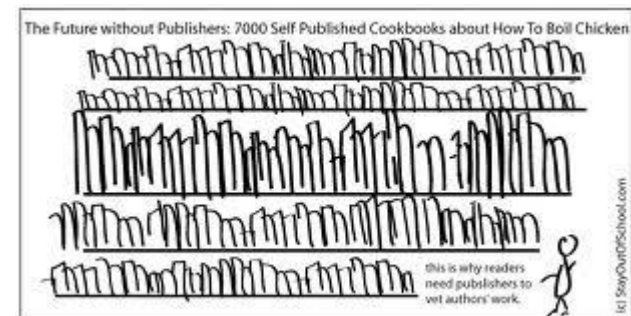
Research framework and methodology:

- Publishing is a confluence of disciplines (marketing, psychology, sociology, literary criticism, cultural studies, anthropology, linguistics)
- Conceptual, empirical, descriptive
- Detailed field work, collated and cross-referenced
- Published statistics
- Indirectly relevant metrics
- Sub-contraction of some sections



Research material:

- Authors who have self-published; various formats
- Associations: Society of Authors; Authors SE; LIBF
- Creatives in other media
- Contacts gained through social media
- Kingston contacts including 2010 conference
- Trade, general and writing press; *Writer's Forum*
- Research trip to US book trade and Smashwords
- Nielsen statistics
- PhD by published work



Research questions:

- What is the philosophy of self-publishing?
- How do you define successful publishing?
- What is the level of activity within self-publishing?
- What are characteristics of associated service economy?
- What stages are required for effective self-publishing and how do these relate to traditional publishing?
- How will all this impact on the role of the author?



The publishing industry, monitoring a state of flux:

- At first dismissive
- Difficult to get their attention
- Pressure on them grew due to press interest: 'The end of publishing as we know it'
- View of self-publishing as a short cut; them as gatekeepers, unable to convey the value they add
- Role of the foreword writer



Findings: s-p is a process, not a single product

- Copy of a book in progress, to assess and in the process become more objective
- Ebook to get attention of publisher or agent
- Local/family history, for wider sharing/not
- Catharsis/personal exploration; talk without interruption
- Poetry
- Book of personal expertise; augmented business card
- Photograph album/anniversary books



Findings: impact of new technology on rise of s-p

- Print on demand
- Ebooks
- Dissemination through internet; community websites
- New range of service companies
- Increased author confidence through experience
- Lack of long term investment/security from publishers

- Lots of reasons for publishing that are not profit dependent – satisfaction from completion; perpetuation
- Market not judging by traditional production standards
- S-p permitting extensive market research

Research questions:

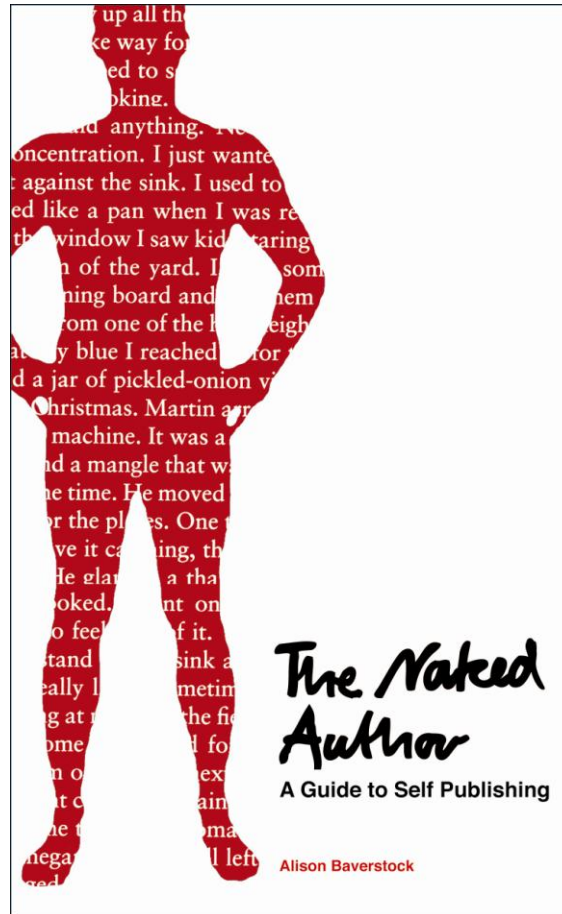
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Outcomes 1: the market for a publishing project

- Wrote an initial outline
- Publishers said a disdainful 'no'
- Blogging
- Gathered a following
- Wrote an extended proposal
- Went back to publishers who gave qualified 'yes'
- Publishers brought deadline forward twice
- Published UK October 2011, US in May 2012
- USPs

Outcomes 2: book launched Oct 2011; May 2012 in US



Outcomes 3: Long term impact on the publishing industry

- Self-publishing is now widely discussed – LIBF; Book Expo America
- Reading and books are kept on the cultural radar
- Publishers haven't conveyed the value they add
- Decision making no longer just theirs: the content provider has both confidence and power
- New business models emerging (Macmillan New Writing, Faber Academy, Bloomsbury Institute)
- Firms whose material is well formatted and whose brand means something will survive
- Big risk if major authors decide to go it alone

Outcomes 3: outcomes within academia

- What is the best route to influence? Boundaries blurring
- S-p brings a culture that is about responsibility and accountability – and offers metrics that prove influence
- Traditional peer review seen as slow and manipulated
- Hard-up students less likely to purchase high price/old fashioned textbooks - universities experimenting with s-p
- More demand for professional degrees/modules based on publishing skills







Further research needed into:

- Are self-published writers happier/less anxious? How does this correlate with writing quality?
- The distinction between those who read about writing and those who write – and are published
- The characteristics of the writer – current project with UCL and Manchester Business School
- Are we becoming a nation of writers not readers?
- In academia, how should material be shared/appraised?

