

WHAT IS ONE MAJOR TREND IN BOOK EDITING AND PUBLISHING TODAY?
HOW WILL THIS IMPACT THE ROLES OF EDITORS AND PROOFREADERS IN THE
NEXT DECADE?

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Proofreading and Copyediting

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The publishing industry is a dynamic world that may be difficult to forecast. Before a few years ago, it was believed that e-books would entirely displace print books. If books were sent electronically to a device, fewer trees would be cut down, no books would need to be produced and shipped worldwide, and resources would be conserved. Thus, these inventions and developments are constantly welcomed. The publishing sector has been significantly influenced by recent advancements in the entertainment and information industries and by the growing ecological consciousness, which, together with economic factors, has led to a transition from print to digital media.

Self-publishing

Self-publishing is a big trend in book editing and publishing nowadays. In the past, publishing meant printing anything under the sponsorship of a publishing business. However, with the internet and mobile ecosystem, it is now possible to virtually self-publish anything on several previously unimaginable platforms. Since 2010, when around 153k ISBNs were granted to self-published publications, the number of books published independently has increased. In 2018, this quantity rose to about 1.6 million books. In 2020, the epidemic and e-book popularity appeared to heighten the trend. Last year alone, Smashwords recorded a 5.3% rise in the number of writers served and a 5.5% increase in the number of books produced.^[1]

Self-publishing attracts authors, especially beginning authors, since they have complete control over their books. The author chooses the cover design, manages the editing, and sets the pricing, as opposed to a publishing firm. In recent years, authors who have previously published successfully with a traditional publisher have also moved to self-publishing. Wattpad is an example of a popular platform for self-publishing. However, the platform's idea differs from the

typical self-publishing approach. The website and app Wattpad revolve around a social storytelling community. Users read the articles they enjoy and leave input on the ones they like. Most stories on Wattpad are free; but, there is also a section for "paid stories." Several of the site's most successful tales have been published as books by Wattpad Books and adapted into films by Wattpad Studios.

With the rise of self-publishing platforms, many authors bypass traditional publishing in favor of producing and distributing their works on their own. This shift is an excellent choice for people who have a large online following and want to leverage that community to sell books. As social networking facilitates face-to-face connection and revenues at scale, self-publishing may challenge established publishing methods in the long run. However, it may also signal development potential. While there have been many self-published books, there is little evidence to suggest that these publications have diminished the sales of imprints. Self-publishing can provide publishers access to previously unreachable markets and audiences.

Firstly, it appears that many authors are eager to publish and distribute their work in both print and digital formats. Businesses can use this strategy to improve their activities and become more effective and profitable when it comes to contacting authors, requesting submissions, and evaluating works for publication. With an expected stream of millions of self-published books in the years ahead, it is hard to see how established publishing houses will keep up. Secondly, when authors try out new markets and titles, self-publishing might help cushion some financial risks that traditionally fall on traditional publishers. In this sense, the self-publishing revolution may benefit publishers by allowing them to select works based on data-driven success indicators rather than the previous method's heavy reliance on risky investments.

This movement has a poetic quality since it has been promoted to escape the standard constant formality of the publishing industry. This trend serves as a wake-up call for publishers as customers, fashion, and technology alter our relationship with words and stories. Individually, we experience this in real time, often without even realizing it. A corporation, however, must understand and respond to these changes. Authors and digital publishing platforms have never had more options than they do now, with self-publishing capturing a growing share of the publishing market. Today's trends will determine whether or not organizations will thrive in the future.

Changing Roles

The gratification of self-instant publishing, especially when using today's many user-friendly publishing tools, appears to have a strong correlation with brevity. What exactly does this idea entail? Because e-books are so simple to republish, authors enjoy spending less time on proofreading than they do with other sorts of publications. There is a negative correlation between the ease of publishing a book and the author's perception of their work's significance. Because of this newfound freedom, the publishing platform has become an ideal testing ground for novel ideas. When authors are informed of mistakes in their novels, some of them reissue the entire work, while others use early versions of their works to seek developmental input from readers actively. Although this seems unprofessional, we know that technological advancements have simplified many operations, necessitating adjustments to our routines and practices.

Once content has been copy-edited, the publisher will send it to a typesetter, and once the typesetter's work has been printed, the publisher will know it is ready for publishing. It is important to remember that the proofreader is not making changes to the files themselves but is instead providing comments on them. On the other hand, self-published writers have distinct

needs at the moment. They will often provide raw-text files for the proofreader to edit directly. The proofreader may be asked to structure the content, decide on all the stylistic choices, and fix phrases. The proofreader must also determine the project's scope and create a budget and timeline that accommodates more significant editorial input.

In the future, what it means to be an "expert" editor may change significantly. More authors are turning to self-publishing, and this has increased the need for editors as they become more conscious of the importance of having a second set of eyes go over their work. Unfortunately, only a tiny percentage of writers can afford extensive editing by industry professionals. With the rise of online and collaborative writing, serialization, and works-in-progress, it's not hard to see a future in which savvy fans play the role of an author's first editors.

Established authors, who had to hone their craft on their own and fight for acceptance from gatekeepers, worry that new writers are rushing to get their work out there without considering quality. A new model is taking shape that allows for early manuscript publications while also allowing authors to refine their work based on beta readers' comments. We can see this concept in action in fan fiction forums and on Wattpad.^[2] An author's use of trustworthy content editors, copy editors, and proofreaders is a natural next step for beta readers as their career progresses, and their body of work grows. Assumingly, editors are more involved and motivated to produce their best job when they are compensated with a share of book sales, as in several existing community and digital publishing models.^[3]

Crowdsourcing as a replacement for development and content editing is another potential, especially for nonfiction. This method of writing and revising is being tried out by Sourcebooks, a commercial publisher, under their "Agile Publishing Model." Those with a background in technology are likely already familiar with such an iterative process and structure, which speeds up content delivery, gathers real-time feedback from the intended audience, and modifies the final result based on collective input. As a result of digital technology and its effects on data processing and new product development, a new profession may emerge to conduct specialized user research and testing. By combining this with the current information available to editors, we may be able to help publishers improve their services and achieve greater commercial success by "improving a commissioning editor's grasp of end-users to boost market reach and customer happiness." It is possible that in the future, editors will find it challenging to maintain their position and will instead only be influential if their names are already well-known among readers. Do editors feel comfortable promoting their names and identities as brands? Given the widespread belief in the publishing industry that influential editors "disappear" and are rarely mentioned, the future may be difficult for those currently working in the field.

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[2] Josh Howarth, "Key Publishing Trends for 2021-2024." Exploding Topics, December 30, 2020. <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/publishing-trends>.

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