Notes on Self-Publishing

The Writers and Poets Club has gained some experience in self-publishing fiction, humorous works, and personal experience stories. The following miscellaneous notes are presented for your consideration in your self-publishing endeavor. Please note that marketing your book is not covered in this piece. Marketing your work is entirely another matter.

Writing is fun, but self-publishing your creation is work. It requires learning something new, perhaps foreign, and scary to those not particularly blessed with computer skills.

One of the most surprising and annoying glitches we have dealt with is that everyone who writes on a computer generally does so on an 8.5 X 11 page size and prints on 8.5 X 11 sheets of paper. That paper size is so universal and common that any other size sold for computer usage is not even available and most computer users don't ever think about this issue.

Unfortunately, books are normally printed in the following sizes, and 8.5 X 11 is only found in the textbook group.

Fiction: 4.25 x 6.87, 5 x 8, 5.25 x 8, 5.5 x 8.5, 6 x 9
Novella: 5 x 8
Children's: 7.5 x 7.5, 7 x 10, 10 x 8
Textbooks: 6 x 9, 7 x 10, 8.5 x 11
Non-fiction: 5.5 x 8.5, 6 x 9, 7 x 10"
Memoir: 5.25 x 8, 5.5 x 8.5
Photography: Whatever you see fit!

So before you begin the extensive work of laying out your pleasingly, beautiful, organized pages, keep in mind that the paper size in which you publish will most likely be smaller. So, start working in the finished size early in order to eliminate the additional, annoying work required to reformat your beautifully composed and perfectly edited piece just as it is about to be submitted for publishing.

Great! So, what size should you pick? That depends on the subject matter, the number of words, the print size, the margins and of course the number of pictures. Taking all of these items into consideration, you should be shooting for a book that's between a half and one inch in thickness. Thick books generally turn the casual reader off and cost more to print. The author's price for printed books in black and white, less than one inch thick will be under five dollars each, an important consideration when you plan to order some for family and friends.

Together Works has found the following numbers work out pretty well. A book size of 6 X 9 inches with a font size of 12 point, number of words around 60,000 and no pictures creates a book about 3/4 of an inch thick.

Do some practical research on size. Make a visit to the library in the Madera Clubhouse and check out the book sizes, page counts, word counts and font sizes that other writers have used.

The second major glitch that The Writers and Poets Club has encountered in the publishing process is that authors don't always make use of the formatting tools available in their word processors. Some authors use spaces and tabs exclusively to place items where they want them. When minor changes have to be made, this method of formatting text generally leads to time-consuming chasing of words around the page and pages around the book. So, learn how to use extensive formatting tools like page breaks, section breaks, paragraph indentation, justification and margins. Try working in multiple page layout so you can see how your book will actually appear in left and right pages.

One of the most popular self-publishing enterprises is Amazon's Kindle direct publishing. According to Wikipedia, during 2016 Amazon released four million e-books and 40% of those titles were self-published under KDP. Amazon offers extensive help in their easy-to-navigate publishing information page. They also offer marketing help if and when you get to it.

Your book can be printed in paperback or hardcover and with a little extra effort, it can also be offered on Kindle for those readers who prefer

ebooks. It costs nothing to upload your work to the Kindle publishing service. You only pay when you order author copies.

If you elect to publish using Amazon Kindle, you will have to create a user login and password. If you already have a login with Amazon you can use the same login to publish on Kindle. Click here to go to Amazon Kindle publishing information. The Amazon page will invite you to Sign in at the top of the page. You don't need to sign in just to access the help topics on the left. But if you want to explore the Bookshelf page, you must sign in. If you do not have an Amazon account you can create one by hitting the Sign in.

Before you can upload your book, the Kindle process will require you to submit personal information that will be used to inform the IRS of your intention to sell books and make money. Yes, as you might expect, your government wants a cut of your grand scheme to make tons of money. Amazon will automatically provide a 1099 in time for taxes.

Front Matter, Chapter Pages and Back Matter from Amazon help

It's not a requirement, but Amazon recommends the following standard pages to start your book and chapters. Having worked on your book only on a computer screen, you may not have thought much about it up until now, but your book will have left and right pages. In addition to your sparkling body matter, your book will most likely also have front and back matter like title pages, index, prologue, etc.

The following will get you started thinking about the fact that your book will have some separate layout rules for left and right pages, most notable the binding side of the pages which must be larger than the outer side. Some of the left-facing pages may end up blank. Right-facing pages are never normally blank. This information was copied from Amazon Kindle help pages which are readily available on the website.

Half-title page

Right facing

HALF TITLE

- Always falls on a right-facing page
- Doesn't contain page numbers or page headers
- Contains the book title

Title page

Right facing

BOOK TITLE

This is the subtitle
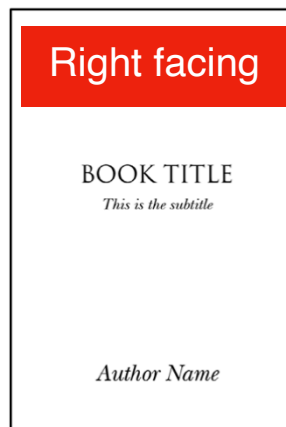
Author Name

- Always falls on a right-facing page directly after the half title page
- Doesn't contain page numbers or page headers
- Typically contains the book title, subtitle, and author name
- Doesn't include "by" before author name, even if contained in manuscript

Copyright page

Left facing

- Always falls on the first left-facing page after the title page
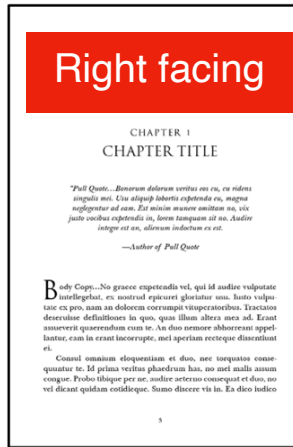- Doesn't contain page numbers or page headers

Dedication page

Right facing

DEDICATION

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, cu enim temporibus eam, ea modus novum vis. Ius an elegendi philosophia. Sea graece accumsan suavola eu, cu noluisse aliquando quo. Vidisse voluptaria argumentum vim ut. Eos animal docendi noluisse ut. Vocent maiestatis elaboraret nam an, ea eum labore voluptatum.

- Always falls on a right-facing page, usually after the copyright page
- Only contains page numbers and page headers if it extends beyond one page

Table of Contents (TOC)

TABLE OF CONTENTS
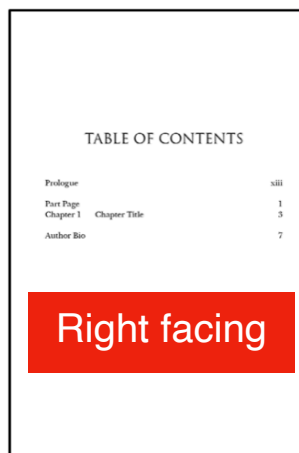
Right facing

- Always falls on a right-facing page
- Doesn't contain page numbers or page headers
- TOC may spread over more than one page
- Includes chapters and section names as they appear in the body of the manuscript. For example, if the manuscript TOC reads, "Chapter 1: The Big Dog," but the body of the book reads, "Chapter 1: The Large Dog," the TOC in the formatted interior should read, "The Large Dog."

Chapter title page

Right facing

CHAPTER 1
CHAPTER TITLE

- Chapter one starts on a right-facing page
- All subsequent chapters start on the next available page
- Doesn't contain page headers
- Page number formatting follow the selected design styles
- Capitalization and casing of the title, subtitle, and chapter numbers follow the selected design styles, not how it appears in the manuscript
- Starting paragraph doesn't have a first-line indent

Bibliography and reference pages

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Right facing

- These fall on a right-facing page.

Author bio page

Right facing

- This falls on a right-facing page.

Index

- Always falls on a right-facing page
- Only contains page numbers or page headers if it extends beyond one page, and this is to create consistent page numbering throughout the entire back matter section
- Flush-and-hang style
  - In printed works, all indexes are set in flush-and-hang (or hanging) indentation style
  - The first line of each entry—the main heading—is set flush left, and any following lines are indented