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What is On-Demand printing and it is worth your while if you are self-publishing a book in print?

Print On-Demand is sometimes called on demand printing. Print on demand (POD) is the commonly-used term for the digital printing technology that allows a complete book to be printed and bound in a matter of minutes. Digital printing makes it easy and cost-effective to produce books one or two at a time or in small lots, rather than in larger print runs of several hundred or several thousand.

But is this on demand method of printing books the right option for you the author?

Print on demand publishing allows the author to determine how many books he or she would like to keep hold of or distribute at a time. If you are self-publishing and are unsure if your book is going to sell this might be the option for you. If you have a small order that you want to print POD might be the option for you as well. Print On-Demand companies are not as cheap as printing your books from a local print shop.

Through my publishing experience, the larger the quantity you print the cheaper the book will be. In other words, if I print 200 books the price per book to print might be £1.68. If I decide to print 400 copies of my book in print it might be £1.58. Therefore, the larger the quantity you purchase the cheaper the book. If you choose to order 10,000 copies of your book from an overseas printing company you may pay as little as £.01 for each book you print.

Which printing option is better for you?

Personally, I have had no luck in selling my own POD book. Along time ago I published a young adult poetry book using an American POD company. At the time I had no idea it was a POD company. I thought they were going to publish my book, market my book and the young adult poetry book would be very popular. On the contrast, a few of my family members ordered the book, but that was it. I didn't know how to walk into a bookstore, show them the book and ask if they would like to stock the poetry book. This was more than 10 years ago.

These days I am an expert on self-publishing, distribution as well as marketing ebooks and books in print. And, I want to share my knowledge with you.

The thing that I found helpful is that a) if you order 200-400 books the first time around you will be motivated to sell them b) you will be able to send a few out to be reviewed by bloggers, newspapers and magazines (which will help you circulate them) c) you can organise a book launch (where you will need to sell at least 50 copies of your book) d) the more books you order the cheaper it will be per printed book.

Questions you need to ask yourself if you think POD is something you want to do as an author:

How are people going to find out about your book if you only have 20 copies in your hands? How long will it take to order and print your book? Do you know at least 100 people you could sell your book to (friends and family account for something)? How many followers do you have on our blog (organise an online book launch)?

Depending on your internal motivation will determine whether or not you choose POD or personal self-publishing to publish your book in print. You will make more money if you self-publish. It is more cost effective if you self-publish your book in print by using a local printing company.