

KEEPING COSTS LOW

Valerie's ACFW Presentation Notes/More Tips

FOR THE RECORD (and worth repeating here):

- #1. My experience in publishing paperbacks is limited to Amazon's KDP. I've published eBooks through KDP and use select sales channels offered by Draft2Digital.
- #2. I use Microsoft Windows and am not familiar with Mac software or other programs designed for writers.

EDITING

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION RESOURCES:

- *The Chicago Manual of Style* (also available online with a subscription) is great for an overview of book matter, editing fundamentals, text presentation, copyrights, etc.
- Merriam-Webster's online dictionary/thesaurus keeps me from misusing a word, shows me when to use a hyphen or not, and on occasion, it reveals that a word I'm using as a noun is only an adjective.
- Early Readers and pre-publishing readers who are knowledgeable in the areas of grammar, punctuation, and word usage.
- Take inventory of people in your life who have the know-how, background, or talent required to edit a book. Think of educators, fellow authors, librarians, individuals whose work requires high-quality written communication, or savvy people who are sticklers to—and lovers of—the written word. Give them a sample scene or chapter and see if the two of you can work together to turn your novel into a professional masterpiece.

CONTENT RESOURCES:

- Merriam-Webster's online version includes up-to-date definitions/slang references, sample sentences, and often shows the year in which a word was first used.
- Search idioms online for their origins, and read ALL of the current meanings.
- As a writer of historical fiction, I subscribe to the newspaper archives that are available in my story's time setting.
- Research books. My go-to budget book store is www.abebooks.com where a host of used book stores make their inventory available.
- Early readers and pre-publishing readers.

FROM MANUSCRIPT TO PUBLISHING:

- Whether you choose to publish a paperback, eBook, or both, Amazon KDP has step-by-step resources to help the author format the interior file and create covers. The author needs to be familiar with his/her own computer software in order to set up the proper margins, page layout, and page breaks per KDP's specifications, but KDP's instructions are detailed and clear. This is the link to their Paperback Formatting page:
https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G201834190
- I have not used KDP's manuscript templates, but here is the link:
https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G201834230
- KDP does not charge a fee to create a book on their platform. You can upload your interior file, create a cover using their templates and artwork, or upload your own cover. If your files are not accepted, or if you do not care for the outcome, you can upload revisions until you're pleased with the result. When I'm tackling unfamiliar software, if I know I won't "hurt" anything or "lose" any content, I'm willing to give it a go. That assurance—and a lot of revised uploading—helped me turn my writing dream into reality.

FORMATTING

We want our finished products to look like those of traditionally published authors. When in doubt, do as they do.

PAPERBACK BASICS:

- Use paragraph indentation settings, not tabs.
- Follow KDP guidelines for margins. Trim size, page count, etc. impact the specifications.

Fonts:

- Some fonts are copyrighted and may require licensing for commercial use. Restrictions may apply to fonts that come with Microsoft programs. This is Microsoft's legal prose on the subject:
<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/typography/fonts/font-faq>
- Embed fonts before uploading your file:
 - Follow this path in Word: File Tab, Options, Save, Preserve Fidelity when sharing this document, CHECK Embed fonts in this file, UNCHECK Do not embed common system fonts. To exit, click OK.
 - Embedding makes the file significantly larger and can slow down your editing. For that reason, I don't embed the file until I'm ready to upload to KDP.

Uploading the file:

- KDP accepts a Word file, but I prefer to upload a PDF document. I've found that pagination can change on a Word document when it goes through KDP's auto-formatting process.
 - Saving a Word document as a PDF creates a huge file that won't likely load on KDP. Instead, select the File Print option, use the printer drop-down arrow, and select PRINT TO PDF.
- Once the interior file and cover are uploaded, you can open KDP's online viewer and see your book baby page by page. It's a tear-rendering experience for a lot of us.
- I always order a printed proof before I publish.

EBOOKS:

- A simple tool to convert a manuscript to an EPUB file is available FREE on Draft2Digital, whether the author uses the Draft2Digital distribution services or not. They offer templates based on genre, some with chapter and scene-break artwork. Their conversion process creates a table of contents to include the chapters, Author Notes, etc. (Headings in the source file need to be consistent and easily differentiated from the text.) Once the manuscript is converted, the EPUB file can be uploaded to Amazon and elsewhere. Here are the D2D basics:
<https://www.draft2digital.com/steps/>
- Another straightforward set of instructions and a list of more file conversion resources are described on Jane Friedman's website: <https://www.janefriedman.com/word-epub/>
- Personal observations worth sharing:
 - I have a habit of hitting a paragraph return at the end of a chapter and then inserting a New Page break. In an eBook, that extra paragraph return can create an unwanted blank page.
 - Fonts are not embedded in an eBook, and the use of symbols or artwork for scene breaks may result in an unexpected character. Before converting my file, I replace my scene-break artwork/symbol with the tilde ~ character.

BOOK COVERS:

- KDP has templates and artwork available for covers, but keep in mind that other authors have access to the same collection.

FONTS:

- Whether you use system fonts or those purchased elsewhere, confirm the license permits commercial use.
- Free and/or affordable fonts are available through a variety of vendors, including:
 - fontspring.com
 - fontquirrel.com
 - myfonts.com
 - 1001fonts.com
- I use the book cover's title font on my paperback title pages.

ARTWORK:

- When you obtain a license for a photo or artwork, you do not own that piece. Others may buy a license for the same work.
- Non-royalty photo licenses are offered at various websites, including:
 - shutterstock.com
 - depositphotos.com
 - istockphoto.com
 - bigstockphoto.com
 - unsplash.com
 - pixabay.com

Other Resources:

- I've used free photos available from the New York Public Library's online digital collection, the National Archives, and organizations that promote local history and preservation.
- Pixlar.com has a free tool to remove photo background. It's an "OK" tool, but they offer paid services that probably do a great job.
- As with editing, you may have people around you who are adept with formatting files or creating artwork. Others who have access to photo editing software may lend a hand too.

Notes:

- Your cover requires a resolution of 300 dpi (dots per inch). If you purchase a photo or artwork, and you need to enlarge it to fit your book's trim size, make sure that it will retain the minimum resolution. (i.e. a 4"x4" 300 dpi photograph will not retain the minimum resolution if you enlarge it to fit the height of a 8.5" x 5.5" book.) Most sites offer downloads of varying sizes and resolution.
- I always credit the source of the cover artwork on my Copyright page.

My DIY Microsoft Publisher Cover Strategy:

I don't want to pay for Adobe or other photo-editing software in order to produce one or two covers each year. Although Microsoft Publisher is limited in comparison, I've learned to manipulate artwork to produce a quality cover. Because I can't always edit a photo to the degree I need, I "copy" the picture and see if I can edit it before I purchase the license.

I have a rather convoluted but effective process that I use to create the resolution and file-type requirements that meet KDP guidelines.

- Set the Microsoft Publisher file size per book dimensions, calculated spine width, and printing allowances per KDP specs (all margins = 0). Here's a link to their book cover calculator, which also creates a template after you insert your specs: <https://kdp.amazon.com/cover-calculator> (Yes, the choice of white or cream paper matters. They are not the same paper weight.)
- Insert artwork, title, author name, blurb, and barcode (or allow space for KDP-generated barcode per KDP specs).
- "Group" all elements.
- Save file as a .jpeg photo and select the option for high quality printing/commercial press 300 dpi.
- Create a new Publisher file with the same dimensions as the original.
- Insert the grouped photo, resize it, if necessary, center it, and save it again as a PDF document, selecting high quality or commercial press printing. (This final document needs to be 300 dpi)
- Upload the PDF file to KDP.

KDP FINISHING TOUCHES:

For the Description and Blurb you enter into KDP's book details, both of which are what the customer sees online when they look up your book, KDP recommends using HTML text. Directions and samples are online. A simple cut and paste of your text may not retain your paragraph spacing, and the appearance may not be as you desired. KDP has instructions and examples. It looks harder to implement than it is. Honest.

If you have questions, feel free to connect with me at valerieloves2write@yahoo.com.

~ Blessings to you as you continue your writing journey. ~ Valerie