

Make Your Book: The Author and Writer's Workbook. A guide no author should be without!

For an independent press author, publishing a book is a daunting task. I have done it several times over and it is *always* a nerve-wracking experience. Not only do you have to write something unique and compelling that will draw audiences into your painted world, but once finished you have to ensure that your book can stand tall among the thousands of others out there.

Creating and formatting your Kindle and physical book is one of the most difficult aspects of the self-publishing process, and one which a lot of authors get wrong. If it doesn't look good in eReader, mobile, and paperback form, then it simply won't sell. This can be a tough pill to swallow – after all we are writers, not graphic designers. Thankfully, Alexis Aronis has got the latter part of the process covered. In the excellent *Make Your Book: The Author and Writer's Workbook*, Alexis exhaustively covers every single aspect of the book-building process in meticulous detail, analysing various pre-existing bestsellers as a starting point to decipher what makes them so appealing to audiences. Be aware that this is a very technical book from someone who clearly has a very methodical mind – so it's not for the faint-hearted! However, if you follow the clear and precise information presented, you will never put a foot wrong again. (I for one know I'll be using it from now on)!

Alexis uses research based solutions to cover everything from trim sizes to title and image placement and everything in-between to ensure that you understand why you are doing what you are doing each step of the way, by seeing specific examples of how it has worked before in the real world. The book doesn't just present ideas as facts – it has scientific based data to support all of its advice, and all sources are included in the index, should you wish to research further. In addition, the book incorporates diagrams and specific exercises to ensure that everything you have learned from the book becomes second nature. Everything is wonderfully presented in a colourful and clear format, with each titled section logically following the previous in a complete path through publication and beyond. If you pay attention and follow each section of the book you will almost certainly discover things you didn't know, which will help you on your writing journey. For example, with the *Hasea Chronicles*, I used to choose trim sizes for my physical books based on what I thought would look most appealing, whilst taking into consideration production costs. However, after reading *Make Your Book*, I have learned that there is actually a methodology behind what makes certain book sizes appeal to certain demographics, and by using the advice, I could actually improve my sales.

The second part of the book covers the promotion of your work post production – specifically getting reviews, the lifeblood of any Indie author. Again, the information isn't flowery like many other publishing guides, but uses technical research based data to analyse

and research the most effective ways to get reviews from a multitude of sources, and the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of communications with reviewers. If you are expecting informal advice from a quick book written by another author who had success using various tricks and tips, then this isn't for you. Much in the same way that a medical journal can teach a doctor almost everything they need to know about a certain condition, the book Alexis Aronis has created here is in-depth and empirical in its laser-focused advice on how to publish and promote a book in the modern world.

Part III goes into the book creating process a little deeper, giving step-by step instructions on how to format your work using Create Space, Amazon's incredibly popular book-building service aimed at independently publishing authors. What is usually a very complicated and daunting process – using a somewhat archaic system – is made far easier by Alexis' easy to follow guide. Part IV is where things get really invaluable, as the author brilliantly shows how to create a superior quality manuscript that will easily pass all of the automatic checks that self-publishing platforms used to check for errors. As an independent author myself, I can't stress enough how frustrating this part of publishing can be, as the smallest thing can cause the entire manuscript to be rejected, leaving you scratching your head as to what went wrong! Finally, section V is a miscellaneous part of the book that covers many aspects of the process that don't fit elsewhere, such as the difference between a writer and an author, how publishing on Kindle differs to publishing in paperback, and the importance of mobile technology as part of modern reading trends. Whilst it isn't as in-depth as the other sections, the advice is still very astute, divulged with the same pinpoint focus that Alexis shows through the previous areas of the workbook.

"In my opinion, Alexis Aronis divulges more information about the independent publishing process than veterans in the field have revealed throughout their entire careers. If you are serious about creating attractive books that sell, then you simply must own this workbook."

Overall, I would say that *Make Your Book: The Author and Writer's Workbook* is an exceptional creation that is invaluable for any author serious about presenting their work in the best possible light. Whilst some might disregard it due to its technical angle, they would be doing themselves a massive disservice. It is absolutely worth spending the money and taking the time to read this incredible book, as it will help any author see the process in an entirely new light. Simply put, I have never read anything that applies so much incredible attention to detail on a process that I foolishly took for granted, and for that alone I have the greatest respect for the author.

Stuart Meczes

Bestselling author of the *Hasea Chronicles*