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Amazon has a service to help anyone self-publish books. It works with genealogy books as well as with almost any other topic. Even better, publishing with Amazon means that your new book is also listed in Amazon's catalog and is available for anyone to order at Amazon.com. However, I don't think many people know about this service. At least, I didn't know about it until recently and the three genealogists I asked today admitted they had never heard of it. That may not qualify as "many people" but it is enough to motivate me to write this article.

I haven't had a chance to test self publishing on Amazon myself, as I don't have a book manuscript lying around, ready to go. However, I can repeat the instructions:

Go to Amazon's self-publishing web site, CreateSpace, at <https://www.createspace.com/> and create a free account.

Select the size of the pages in the book you wish to publish and then download a Microsoft Word template for that size of book.

Copy your manuscript into the template. That template will determine left and right side pages, generate page numbers, generate the table of contents, and more. You should paste in only the raw text without any formatting at all. The template will handle the formatting for you although you can make some adjustments after the template has finished its work.

Make a cover. You can do all the art work yourself or hire it out or use one of CreateSpace's pre-defined formats combining their templates with images, fonts, etc.

Save the result as a PDF file and then upload it to CreateSpace. The CreateSpace service will even assign the ISBN number, if you wish. You also need to determine the price of the finished book.

CreateSpace will then send a proof to you. If you approve, the finished book will be in Amazon.com's catalog within two or three business days.

The royalty paid to you varies widely, depending upon the price you set and the size of the book, meaning the number of pages as well as the physical size of each page. You always know the royalty before you approve the book so you can back out at any time without making any commitments. I experimented with several prices on a 200-page book of varying sizes and the royalties seemed to vary from 25% to 75% of the final price. In all cases, the royalty payments appeared to be much higher than that received from traditional publishers.

CreateSpace can also assist with design, editing, and marketing services. However, those services will cost extra, if you select them.

One of the nice features of CreateSpace is the customer support. If you have any question at all, you click on an icon that says "Call Me" and, within 30 seconds, a customer service representative will call your phone.

CreateSpace is "print on demand." You can:

Always have inventory available without a large, "up front" investment.

Reduce supply chain costs and eliminate warehouse and shipping fees.
Provide broader selection to maximize long tail sales.
Test market new titles without investing in offset print runs.
Offer large print and custom books.
No products are manufactured ahead of time so there is no inventory to worry about, and your titles are shipped directly to the end customer.

On the downside, the marketing is up to you. Amazon will place your new book in its catalog but will not do much else. If you wish to advertise or hold book signings, you supply all the work and you pay all the expenses, unlike traditional book publishers.

CreateSpace can also publish audio CDs, video DVDs, MP3 files for download, and an eBook for the Kindle. After all, it is a division of Amazon, the company that created and sells the Kindle!

Self-publishing is not for everyone. However, if it appeals to you then you might search for companies that will work with authors. One of those is CreateSpace, a division of Amazon.com, at <https://www.createspace.com/>

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