

Answers on the Self-Pub Business Setup course

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

I found myself being asked a number of questions I'd already answered, so I'm going to post abbreviated versions of the questions, and my answers, here so people can find them.

The questions have helped me get a much clearer vision of what the course has to be—as well as allowing me to understand the limitations I will have to impose in order to create it.

- **Will the course be free?**

No.

- **I don't see a segment on copyright and obtaining an ISBN and library of Congress number for your book.**

In the US, you already own copyright the instant you create your work. You can choose to buy ISBNs, (and I've done so), but if you use CreateSpace, you can get a free ISBN for your print book, and the only site that requires you to use them for ebooks is Apple, which I no longer am using or recommend (at least not if your time has value to you).

You get legitimate ISBNs at Bowkers: Here's the link.
<https://www.myidentifiers.com/>

But what you need to know on ISBNs, Library of Congress numbers, and considerably more you can find out here:
<http://www.thomsonshore.com/support-guidelines/publisher-resources/isbn-library-of-congress>

- **Will you be covering promotion?**

Yes. It appears to be the biggest item on the course

wish list.

▪ **Is this material covered in (HTTS, HTRYN, HTWAS...)?**

No. *Nor will it be.* My writing courses are designed to be universal—they are built around foundational principles of writing that apply to ALL genres, to ALL forms of fiction, and are designed to be useful to every sort of writer, from massive planners to pure pantsers.

The Business Setup course will not be universal.

This course will require that you use specific software—most free, a couple of items purchased. Everything I use will work for both Windows and Mac users, and I will take you through step-by-step walkthroughs in which you will first learn how to, and then actually DO, the following:

PROVISIONAL Course Objectives (Subject to addition if I come across things within the scope of the course that I forgot to mention).

1. USE Scrivener (\$45 if you don't already own it) to create an ebook template, format your book, create separate versions for print, Mobi, epub, and PDF for your own store AND for Amazon, Kobo, B&N (if available to you) and your own eStore.
2. CREATE a professional-quality book, and include site-appropriate self-promotional materials IN your books to help sell your future books as well as existing ones.
3. LOCATE and PURCHASE an appropriate royalty-free image for your cover art. (under \$5)
4. CREATE a quality cover in both e-book (for ALL

ebook versions) and wrap-around print format (designed to work on CreateSpace), install the cover art into each version of your ebook, using GIMP (free) as your image editor.

This is the ONE place where the course diverges from what I actually use. I use Adobe Fireworks, but that's \$300 all by itself, and my objective is to keep your one-time business setup expenses right at \$100 for everything.

5. PURCHASE a website and domain name if you don't already have one. You may choose your own host, but I will recommend mine because of its excellent security and customer service. My host also includes your chosen domain name for free when you sign up. The domain is unentailed (YOU own it, not the host), so that you may take it with you if you later transfer to a different host. HOWEVER, a website is NOT a one-time purchase, but an ongoing expense. It is the ONLY mandatory recurring expense you will incur in setting up your business.

It is NOT the only RECOMMENDED one (more on that in the self-promotion bits).

6. INSTALL WordPress (free) on your own website if you don't already have it, and learn how to use its basic features.
7. SET UP a free, highly configurable WordPress theme that allows you to configure your website to include a blog, pages for teaser chapters and other reader goodies, and your shop.
8. SET UP necessary Privacy Policy, Terms of Service, Legal Page, Affiliate Legal Page, and other required pages (**DISCLAIMER:** I can show you how to set up your pages, and where to find information on what you need, but you are wholly responsible

for making sure you have the correct pages for your business and location.)

9. INSTALL your estore plugin INTO your WordPress theme and build a working shop from which you can sell products and receive Payment through PayPal. (Other payment options are also available.
10. CREATE a sidebar shopping cart, a bookstore front page, an individual product page, your download, and at least one neat freebie—a free “sample chapters” PDF with links back to your site and shop.
11. SETUP and LINK your CREATSPACE book to your website to allow readers to purchase the print version.
12. CREATE discount coupons for both the ebooks and print version of your work that you sell from your site.
13. **OPTIONAL:** Purchase and install software for an affiliate program. (This purchase is ABOVE the \$100 setup cost for required software.)
14. SETUP pages for and run your affiliate program, including creating Affiliate Links
15. WRITE quality self-promotion content for your weblog and site pages.
16. ACQUIRE MAILING LIST and AUTORESPONDER service, and insert working signup forms on your site.

Aside from natural traffic from search engines to your site, a mailing list is the core self-promotional part of your business. Better than Facebook, better than Twitter (this I know absolutely), probably better than Goodreads.

If you hope to have a viable business, rather than operating on luck alone, you’re going to have to have one. BUT in this instance, I’m going to simply teach principle of mailing list and autoresponder creation and management. Why?

Because I use Aweber, which is superb. But Aweber is neither free, nor cheap. The minimum monthly outlay is \$20. So I'll show you what to do, and explain what to look for in an email provider, and give you a raw list of providers, for which I can offer no data beyond links.

17. WRITE quality self-promotion content for your mailing list and autoresponder.
18. LEARN what I've found out about Twitter and Facebook, and determine how or if you want to use them.
19. I have no data yet on Goodreads. I just joined a few weeks ago, I found the time to do some minimal setup on my account, but I have not yet reviewed or recommended any books. This is one area of the course that will be modified once I have something to go on.

- **If I decide to pursue commercial publishing, but later want to self-publish, what rights should I keep?**

This one's a freebie. **Hang on like hell on steroids to e-rights.** If the bastards have e-rights, having the ebooks up on one site means your book is still in print, and nothing will ever revert to you again, nor will you see another dime from that work

Voice of pissed-off experience here, remembering contracts from ages ago where editors and agents were all saying, "Oh, e-rights aren't important," and idiot me believing them.

- **When will this be available?**

I'm in the brainstorming process.

If I can get a small group of folks together to spend every day for a week with me as we actually build their sites, I could probably offer the open-enrollment

version pretty soon.

I'd have to do the prep checklists and probably the initial workshop in my evening "off" hours, because I have existing commitments to finishing **Create A World Clinic**, the **How To Write A Series Extension**, and the **HTTS Walkthrough**.

But now that Margaret's completed drip and we have it working, I'll be able to start doing a few live projects like this one, then adding them to the shop.

I don't know when yet, though. First I need to be able to clearly see WHAT. ☐

- **I want to do this, but why can't I use (insert free weblog service here)?**

The issue here is simple. You can't set up a store on Blogger. In general, terms of service on the free blogging sites forbid you using them for commercial purposes, which ALSO means you'd be in violation for promoting your books with sales links from those sites.

If you're going to have a business, it's going to take some money to start. Not a lot. But some.

Bare minimum, you're going to have to own your own website. That's \$7.95 a month or thereabouts, depending on where you go. Most places, you get a significant discount if you prepay by the year. Figure \$80-ish dollars. Wordpress is free.

The estore software I use is a one-time purchase of \$50, free upgrades for life, EXCELLENT customer service and support), and set up correctly, it's easy for customers to use.

Scrivener (writing, editing, formatting AND publishing software) is \$45. One-time purchase, most upgrades are

free, EXCELLENT customer service and support.

Kindle charges, but only when you sell.

B&N charges, but only when you sell.

Kobo charges, but only when you sell.

And PayPal charges, but only when you sell. If you pass a certain monetary threshold, you have to upgrade your account and pay a monthly fee—but if that happens, you're making enough money through them that the \$20 bucks or so is worth it.

I know there are a lot of by-the-month rent-a-shops you can hook into, but the way I build, you OWN everything with no monthly outlay but the website. Writing is NOT a business where you want to speculate on whether you'll make enough every month to pay credit card merchant fees, monthly paid cart service fees, and other things.

When you are living on your fiction OWNING rather than RENTING will **save you** during lean months. Your business with MY set up will keep your monthly expenses for the ENTIRE business to **under \$8/month without an email provider, and under \$28/month with Aweber.**

- **Would you share the name of your estore software provider? I would appreciate the opportunity to check them out.**

Tips & Tricks eStore

- **Why aren't you including (X SOFTWARE) in your course?**

I wouldn't be able to teach this, because I don't USE (X SOFTWARE)

I use exactly what I'm teaching you to use (with the image editor and mailing list/autoresponder service already noted out).

I use what I use **because** it is is a on-time expense (and a small one at that) and because after testing numerous other alternatives, from free to >\$1000 price tags, the solutions I offer are the ones I have found that work best for a writer sustaining herself on a self-publishing writing income, cause the fewest headaches, offer the smoothest workflow, and produce the desired results.

I'm not going to be teaching what's possible. **I'm going to be teaching what I know works.** The difference is immense.

The purpose of this course is not going to be to teach writers how to theoretically build a business at some time in their futures.

The purpose of this course is for writers to HAVE their own complete, working business on graduation day.

Holly

P.S. For others who might consider doing so, please understand that posting your affiliate link for a product you recommend on a site you don't owe is both ungodly rude and a form of spam.

ANY site owner decides the content of his own site, and I removed and marked as spam the post from the person who did it in my previous post. – HOLLY

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