

# A Book from A to Z: Project Management of the Publication Process

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# AKA: Doing Business Without Capitalism

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# Ellipsis Imprints

<https://www.ellipsis.cx/~liana/ellipsisimprints/>

- Small press based in Durham, England.
- Founded spring 2020.
- Publishing books written by and for children; science fiction and fantasy; poetry collections and other anthologies; popular nonfiction.
- Eleven books published between 2020 and 2022.
- Three more books forthcoming in 2023 and 2024.

# The birth of a press (1)

Question: What do you do when your daughter comes to you and asks, “Mummy, could we write a story together? And maybe someday, it could be published, like a *real book*?”



# The birth of a press (1)

Question: What do you do when your daughter comes to you and asks, “Mummy, could we write a story together? And maybe someday, it could be published, like a *real book*?”

Answer (Part 1): You look up how to purchase ISBNs (= International Standard Book Numbers) and what types of print on demand services in the UK offer global distribution!

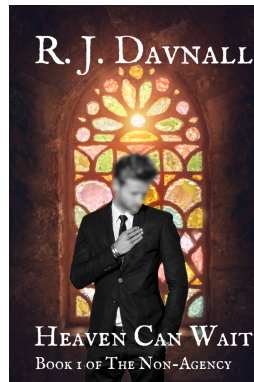
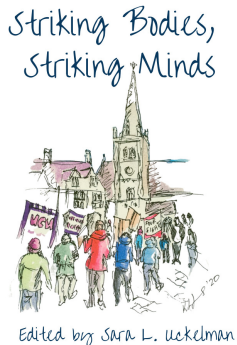
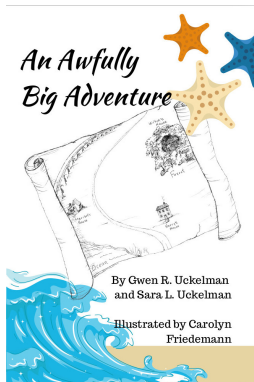
## The birth of a press (2)

Answer (Part 2): 1 ISBN costs £91.00; 10 ISBNs cost £174.00; 100 ISBNs costs £379.

So you buy 10 ISBNs because the marginal price difference is so significant, and then find 9 other books to publish.

What is an ISBN? "The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is a unique product identifier for books and related material. Whilst it is not a legal requirement to allocate ISBNs to your books, it is used by publishers, booksellers and libraries for ordering, listing and stock control purposes. It enables them to identify a particular publisher and allows the publisher to identify a specific edition of a specific title in a specific format within their output. Systems used by publishers, booksellers and libraries all rely on the ISBN to identify books ensuring they select and stock the correct title and edition."

# The birth of a press (3)



# Publication model

- Print books: Print-on-demand, through Blurb, which is tied to the Global Retail Network, via Ingram (the world's largest distributor of books). Online sales through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Waterstones, etc., plus chain and independent bookstores can order stock through ISBN.
- Ebooks: Through Smashwords, which sells on its own site and also distributes through Apple, Barnes & Noble, OverDrive, Scribd, Kobo, etc. (We offer Amazon Kindle options on a case-by-case basis).

# Overview of the process

- 1 Prospective authors submit 20 pages or the first chapter (which ever is larger) plus a synopsis of the work.
- 2 The poetry editor reviews poetry submissions; the editor-in-chief reviews all other submissions.
- 3 Either a proposal is declined or the full manuscript is requested.
- 4 If a full manuscript has potential for publication, contract negotiations begin.
- 5 The timeline from contract signing to publication is max 18 months, often much shorter.
- 6 We provide developmental and line-editing services, as well as cover design.
- 7 Upon publication, deposit copies of all books are sent to the British Library, the Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library, the National Library of Wales, and the Library of Trinity College Dublin.
- 8 Once a book is published, royalties are paid to authors on a quarterly basis.

# How to decide what to publish? (1)

Big Publishing Companies:

- What will maximize our profits?

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- What will maximize our profits?

Decision making is easy.

# How to decide what to publish? (2)

Ellipsis Imprints—not a big publishing company:

- We have no salaried employees.
- We set sale prices and contract terms so that the majority of royalties go to the authors.
- The bulk of the work—reading submissions, providing editorial feedback, typesetting, cover design, arranging review copies and blurbs, setting books up for distribution, producing ebooks, marketing, advertising, running social media (Twitter, Facebook, and Discord)—is done by me.
- Our poetry editor is a volunteer.
- When we need to commission covers or cover art, we always pay, but we can't pay much.



# Doing business with capitalism

If profit-maximisation is the goal, the decisions about what books to publish have consequences and effects that are not just about profit:

- Social effects (such as what types of customers or consumers are favored)
- Environmental effects (such as how costly to the environment the business is to run)
- Aesthetic effects (such as the quality and beauty of the product created)
- Moral effects (such as harms or benefits done to individuals or groups of people).

These effects are all secondary to the effect of making money, and often negativities arising from these effects are considered reasonable “costs.”

# Doing business without capitalism (1)

- If profit-maximisation is *not* the goal, then what sort of decision frameworks can a business use to guide their decision making, and what are the secondary effects of these frameworks?
- Can we prioritize social/moral/aesthetic/environmental considerations instead?
- (Money still matters: Driving the owner into penury is not a successful strategy!)

## Doing business without capitalism (2)

### Thought Experiment:

*If money were of no concern, what sort of books you want to publish?*

# What we want to publish

- Books that amplify voices that are traditionally shut out of publishing (minority voices, BPOC voices, queer voices).
- Books that I want to read even if no one else wants.
- Books that support and encourage writers.
- Books that provide people with new ways of thinking about things.
- Books that make me happy.
- Books that make knowledge available.

# How do we (want to) publish them

- Books that look and feel like “real books”—higher standard than self-publishing. Not just high-quality editing, but high-quality formatting and typesetting.
- Books that are a pleasure to hold and to read.
- Books that are affordable. Our ebooks are all under £3.00 and we aim to keep our print books under £15.00 (most are under £10.00)

## Production details

- Print books are typesetting using  $\text{\LaTeX}$ .
- Ebooks produced via converting  $\text{\LaTeX}$  to epub.
- Covers designed via Canva.
- Projects tracked through Trello.

# Where we're at

2020



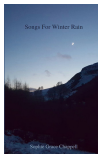
Striking Bodies,  
Striking Minds



Edited by Sara L. Uckelman



2021



2022



# Where we'd like to go from here

- Commissioning cover art.
- Marketing and advertising.
- Internships?
- Large print books/books in other accessible formats.
- Audio books

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Caveat: Nothing without appropriate recompense!



Thank you and...

Questions?