

# Scott Editorial

## Self-Publishing, Hybrid, or Traditional

*A practical guide to choosing the publishing route that aligns with your goals, working style, and long-term direction.*



This workbook is designed to be practical. Move through it slowly, write into it honestly, and return to the exercises more than once. The strongest manuscripts are not built by inspiration alone, but by careful decisions made page by page.

## How to use this guide

Choosing a publishing route is not about selecting the most prestigious option. It is about selecting the route that allows your work to move forward in the strongest possible way.

Editor's note: Many writers delay this decision or treat it as something that comes later. In reality, your publishing route shapes how you prepare your manuscript, how you position your work, and how you build momentum.

Before using this guide, ensure your manuscript has been professionally edited. Every route depends on the strength of the work.

### **How to use this workbook.**

Designed as a working guide. Use it while preparing your manuscript for submission or publication. Be clear about your priorities and honest about the process you want to commit to.

## Traditional Publishing

### What it is

- Submitting your manuscript to agents or publishers who acquire the rights and manage production, distribution, and sales.

### What you gain

- Industry recognition and validation
- Established distribution channels
- Financial investment from the publisher

### What you give up

- Creative control over elements such as cover, blurb, and sometimes character and plot
- Speed, timelines are often long
- Certainty, acceptance is competitive

### Who this suits

- Writers who prioritise reach, recognition, and are prepared for a slower, competitive process.

## Self-Publishing

### What it is

- You independently manage or commission all aspects of publishing, from editing to release.

## **What you gain**

- Full creative control
- Faster timelines
- Higher percentage of royalties
- Direct relationship with readers

## **What you take on**

- Upfront investment
- Responsibility for marketing
- Full decision-making at every stage

## **Who this suits**

- Writers who want ownership, flexibility, and control over their work and career direction.

# **Hybrid Publishing**

## **What it is**

- A collaborative model where the writer invests in the process and works with a publisher.

## **What you gain**

- Structured support and guidance
- More control than traditional publishing
- A collaborative working relationship

## **Key considerations**

- Usually requires upfront investment from the writer
- Commonly operates on a 50/50 profit split between publisher and writer
- Quality varies, careful selection is essential

## **Who this suits**

- Writers who want professional support but do not want to manage every aspect alone.

# **How to choose your route**

## **Step 1**

- Reach and recognition → Traditional publishing
- Control and speed → Self-publishing
- Support and guidance → Hybrid publishing

## Step 2

- Are you prepared for a competitive, slower process?
- Yes → Traditional publishing
- No → Continue

## Step 3

- Do you want to manage the process yourself?
- Yes → Self-publishing
- No → Hybrid publishing

## Step 4

- Are you willing to invest upfront?
- Yes → Self-publishing or Hybrid publishing
- No → Traditional publishing

## Bit of advice

Whichever route you choose, the manuscript remains the most important element. A strong, professionally edited manuscript will give your work the best possible chance, regardless of the path you take.

## A Note of Caution: How to Spot a Vanity Publisher

Not all publishing routes are created equally, and one of the most important distinctions for new writers to understand is the difference between a reputable hybrid publisher and a vanity press.

A **vanity publisher** charges writers significant fees while offering little real value in return. Their business model is built on selling services to writers, not selling books to readers.

## Key Warning Signs

### 1. Guaranteed acceptance

- If a company accepts your manuscript without a meaningful selection process, it is not operating as a publisher.
- Reputable publishers, including hybrid models, are selective.

### 2. High upfront fees without transparency

If you are asked to pay large sums without a clear breakdown of:

- what is included
- who is doing the work
- what standard it will meet

walk away.

### **3. Vague or inflated marketing promises**

Phrases like:

- “We’ll make your book a bestseller”
- “Global exposure guaranteed”
- “We’ll handle all marketing”

are not grounded in reality.

No publisher can guarantee sales.

### **4. Lack of distribution clarity**

Ask:

- Where will the book be available?
- Through which retailers?
- Is it returnable?

If the answers are unclear, the book is unlikely to reach readers effectively.

### **5. Poor-quality output**

Always review:

- their published books
- cover design
- editing quality
- formatting

If their existing titles look unprofessional, yours will too.

### **6. Rights and royalties that favour the company**

Check:

- Who owns the rights?
- What percentage do you receive?
- Are there long-term restrictions?

If the contract heavily favours the publisher while you are also paying upfront, this is a red flag.

## **Where Hybrid Publishing Fits**

Hybrid publishing can be a valid route, but only when:

- the publisher is selective
- pricing is transparent – YOU BOTH PAY!
- the work meets professional standards
- the partnership is clearly defined

Many writers are drawn to hybrid because it offers support. That is valid. The key is ensuring you are paying for **quality and expertise**, not simply access to publication.

## Hybrid vs Vanity Publishing: What’s the Difference?

Use this once you begin revising.

Area	Reputable Hybrid Publishing	Vanity Publishing
Selection process	Selective, manuscripts are reviewed and not all are accepted	Accepts almost everything, minimal or no real selection
Business model	Makes money from book sales <i>and</i> author investment	Makes money primarily from authors, not readers
Upfront cost	Transparent, clearly broken down, tied to real services	Often high, vague, bundled packages with unclear value
Royalties	Fair split (often around 50/50 or better for the author)	Low or unclear royalties despite author investment
Creative control	Collaborative, author retains input and involvement	Limited control despite paying for the service
Distribution	Clear, real distribution channels (retailers, wholesalers)	Often limited to online listings with little reach
Marketing	Realistic, clearly defined support (not guaranteed outcomes)	Inflated or vague promises (e.g. “bestseller exposure”)
Published books	Professional covers, strong editing, competitive with market	Poor quality output, inconsistent or amateur presentation
Reputation	Industry-aware, verifiable authors and results	Frequent complaints, difficult to verify success stories

## Known Vanity Publishers (Examples to Be Aware Of)

This is **not an exhaustive list**, but these companies are widely cited by organisations such as *Writer Beware* and industry watchdog groups as operating vanity or vanity-adjacent models.

- Austin Macauley Publishers
- Pegasus Elliot Mackenzie

- Olympia Publishers
- Morgan James Publishing
- Page Publishing
- Christian Faith Publishing
- Newman Springs Publishing
- Dorrance Publishing
- Vantage Press
- American Biographical Institute
- Famous Poets Society
- Poetry.com / International Library of Poetry
- Tate Publishing