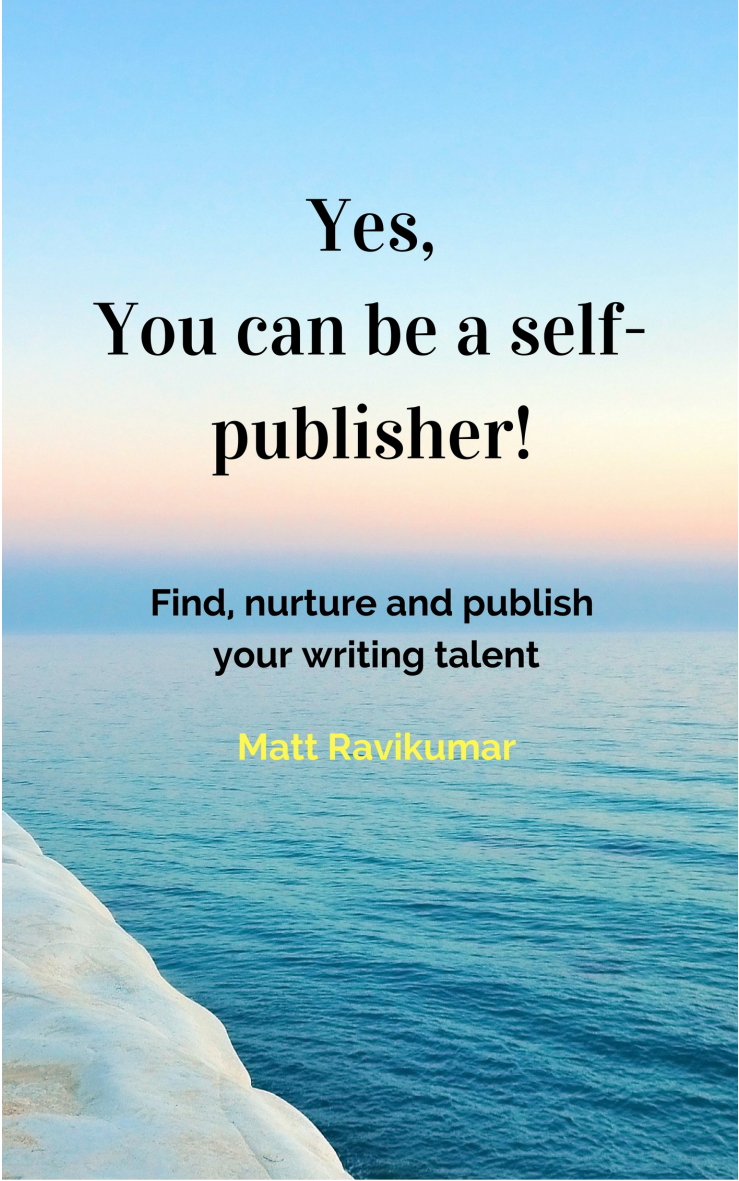




Yes, You can be a self- publisher!

**Find, nurture and publish
your writing talent**

Matt Ravikumar

Contents

Foreword

Starting Point

Your Motivation

Writing Tool

Cover Page

Compilation Process

Publishing Process

About the Author

Foreword

First thing first! Am I qualified to write this book?

Yes, I have published five books so far over the last four months!

Five in four months? Can't believe it? I do have full time job to pay bills.

That's what this book is about. You can be a self-publisher that fast!

You may not truly believe that my publishing journey started twenty years back. I have published articles in trade journals, news papers or newsletter contents, blogs, etc. I was content with writing two or four page newsletter type of materials. My project towards getting MBA was on company newsletters- how they connect employees and management. It was quick enough to write them and made corrections in order to push it out the publisher. I have been asked many times to revisit the content and re-word them completely. I have attended many community school evening programs on writing. One of them was in Stanford school too taught by well-known author.

But like others I had accumulated lot of subject content in many documents, saved web sites, scribbled note-sheets and journals. My journey to public library will always to the magazine shelf containing current and previous magazines on writing. (example: Writer's Digest; Writer Magazine)

I have reached out to many publishers over many specific contents in the area of non-fiction. There will be total silence, sometimes an acknowledgment after four months. Rarely, some one will write back to me saying to start website (or) web-blogs on that subject to develop audience for my subject content. Getting into your book published means lot of hopes and uncertain expectations. I think publishers are still looking for fresh content but play safe with their time & effort on the preferred few.

But things have changed lot time back (which I was not aware!). Self-publishing has become very easy and fast. These days many self-publish first, which gets noticed by regular publishers later. Then they write exclusive for the regular publishers. There are statistics out there saying self-publishing may sell like 100 copies. But I believe you create your own eco-system when it comes to writing and publishing.

Why another book on self-publishing? You can always spend few hours in google researching all the aspects of book publishing. First, I would like to share my experiences and in that process I still learn something new. As there is a saying, teaching is the gift which does not leave the giver! Secondly, spending any number hours in google will leave with distracted

mind and probably procrastinating the writing part altogether

This book has three main parts. First part talks about writing in general. Second part talks about the writing tool you need to get your thoughts converted into words. Third one talks about the web sites where you can start self-publishing the contents

Like any learning process, writing gets improved based on the user feedback. Please do write back to me and post comments in my web sites.

Starting Point

Where to start?. There is a unique term for this situation in writer's world: 'writer's block'. The condition of being unable to think of what to write or how to proceed with writing.

I have had this many years. I frequently visit public libraries to read magazines on writing/publishing (writer's digest or writers magazine). My motivation to write will stop the moment I leave the library. I have attended classes on writing at Stanford University programs. The teacher was a well-know publisher on biographies. He gave us exercises and asked us to develop writing proposals. I have sent many proposals to literary agents and no one cared to respond!. Of course, the teacher was talking more about his books and asked us to keep referring his books to our friends.

Then I started searching Google on publishing. There were many web sites where you can submit your proposals. If you're lucky you may get a response after many months, which is typically a rejection letter. Some times, they will ask you to develop blogs (or) generate followers (known as tribes) on your focus area. Basically there is lot of competition out there!. The other option is to attend literary conferences or writing workshops in your area. You may get some idea on the pick up lines to sell your ideas but every one seems to be on the same situation. Every one is looking for that break to get that fancy book deal signed.

I was very late to the self-publishing game. I have heard and read about this process many times. The kindle and Amazon made this popular. But my challenge was to come up the final script quickly with reasonable content. I was good in making newsletter type of contents easily using word or other software. But writing a book was a long process with lot of research and compiling many points, that needs to be arranged into subjects later. We will talk about the tool in the next chapter.

Back to the subject, you have to keep looking for the book idea all the time. Even today, I read a physical copy of a published news papers like USA Today or Wall Street Journal. As you read the stories, some thing else may come to your mind and I will note it down on my iphone notes. At the end of the week, I review them and organize to my writing software. Almost all the time, I get ideas for my cartoons from these stories. I publish political and economic cartoons on-line every week. (www.cartooncartons.com, #cartooncartons)

I also look back on my life journey and note down the lessons learned. It could be the list of events attended (or) my own upbringing in the small

town in Southern India. Four of my self-published books came from these thoughts. It does happen that your idea become obsolete within a week (or) you may feel not worth pursuing further. Don't waste your time if you are not convinced as an author!

What's your motivation?

People become authors because they want to contribute some thing to the world. They write books to express their thoughts and beliefs. They like the visibility or limelight from the attention of an 'author'. They like to hit big and make a very decent living from the royalties and book tours. Or simply, they would like leave a present to the world before they leave this world.

My motivation falls into all of the above reasons. I also find writing interesting in many ways. First, thoughts flow automatically and writing gives an outlet for them. I am happy if I am able to influence one more person in this world about my thoughts expressed in my writings. As I seek guidance from others on professional and personal matters, I want to be the counselor on certain subjects. I still mentor lot of people and expressing this knowledge share is a part of myself. The writing also helps me as a distraction from my work schedule (or) endless online browsing, if I am in front of the computer monitor!.

I am not expecting you to write down the motivation. This motivation is going to change down the line. You may make it big into the publishing process (or) your passion may take you into another form. But the satisfaction of publishing something unique is a priceless one. No wonder, thousands of books are published every month and many of them are from new comers.

As you start writing sample chapters, you may find your hidden potential soon. You may be good in story telling (novelist) or writing about events/travel (travel blogs). I tend to write on non-fiction and that's the area I am very much comfortable. I have written many business related articles and published them in professional journals in the past. Linked-in has tools to publish your content on business or economic subjects. There are many blog sites you can keep writing contents. You can create your own facebook page free and start posting contents. Your genuine friends may motivate you (or) many of them just start ignoring you too.

Another interesting area is on 'how to write'. I tend to write on many books parallel even though conventional wisdom is against it. I like this way of writing many books bring fresh ideas quickly and gives me a variety in thinking. After all, 'variety is the essence of life'.

You need to plan ahead with certain activities:

- The book cover. You can always outsource this work to professionals. But if your budget is limited and you have talent to design your own cover you do it easily. There are sites like canva which all users to create book

cover and download the JPG or PDF formats. There is monthly subscription models for advanced features, but I never needed those subscriptions.

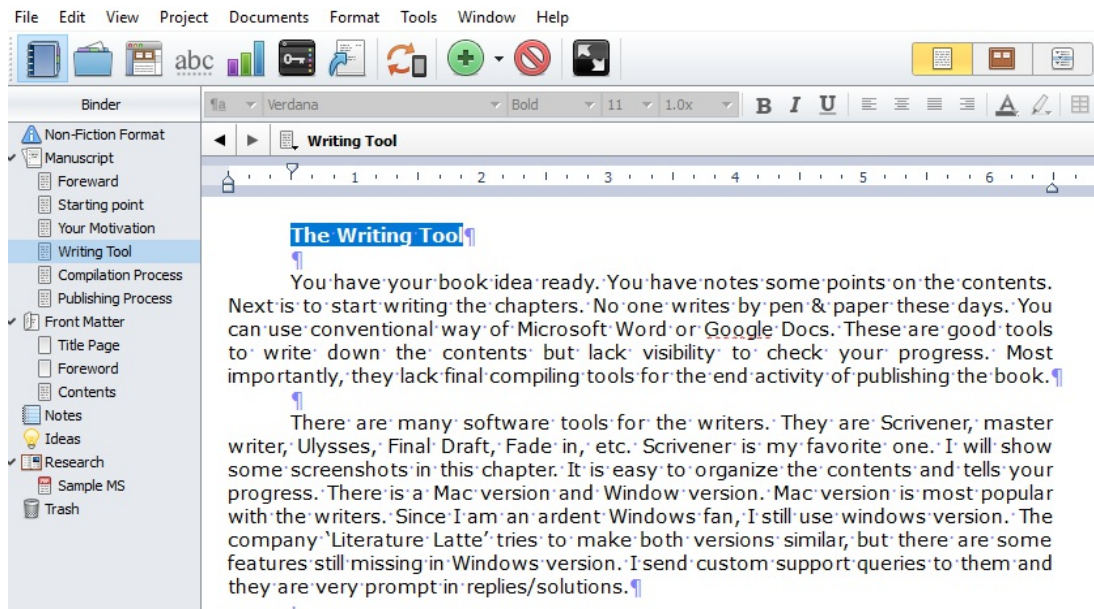
- About the Author page. You can start writing about yourself so that readers can get to know you. Include your social media presence like your websites, facebook, twitter handles, etc.

- Tool to write the main content. This takes you to the next chapter.

The Writing Tool

You have your book idea ready. You have notes some points on the contents. Next is to start writing the chapters. No one writes by pen & paper these days. You can use conventional way of Microsoft Word or Google Docs. These are good tools to write down the contents but lack visibility to check your progress. Most importantly, they lack final compiling tools for the end activity of publishing the book.

There are many software tools for the writers. They are Scrivener, master writer, Ulysses, Final Draft, Fade in, etc. Scrivener is my favorite one. I will show some screenshots in this chapter. It is easy to organize the contents and tells your progress. There is a Mac version and Window version. Mac version is most popular with the writers. Since I am an ardent Windows fan, I still use windows version. The company 'Literature Latte' tries to make both versions similar, but there are some features still missing in Windows version. I send custom support queries to them and they are very prompt in replies/solutions.



There are lot of youtube videos on scrivener tutorials. Scrivener itself comes with tutorial project which is a very useful learning tool.

Here are my preferences:

- Like having chapters directly as text document without folders
- Upload the cover page in JPG in the title page content. That page will not take PDF.
- Set the font to Verdana 12 size

- When I am into writing mode, will use the full screen option to avoid any other distractions in the computer.
- Use print preview option occasionally to check whether the page breaks and fonts are working as designed.
- While I trust the spell-checks at Scrivener, I also export the chapter to word document to verify grammar and sentence formation. This is a tedious exercise but worth the efforts.

Cover Page

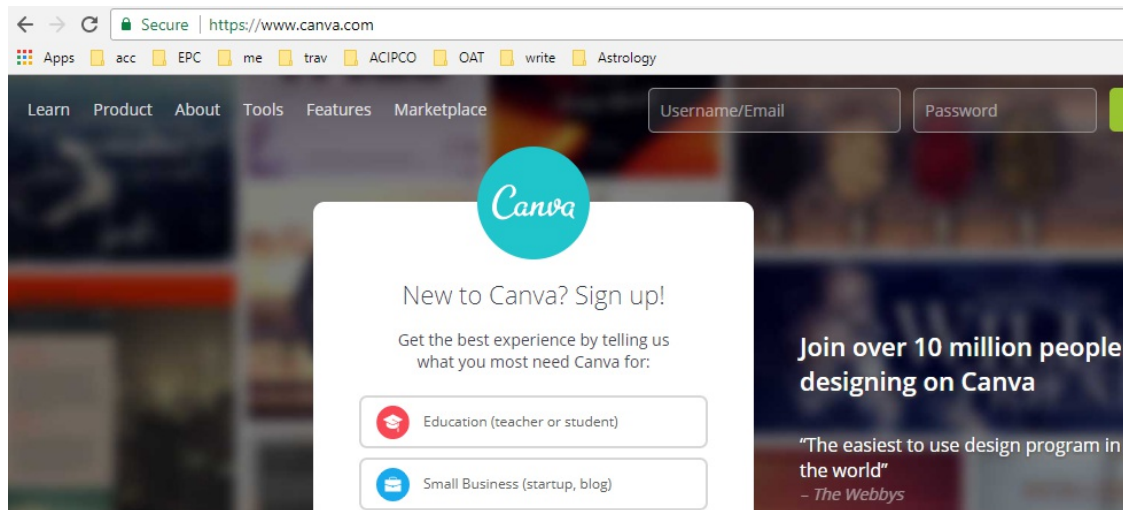
The book cover is the important work to get the attracting of your audience and also the traditional publishers later.

You don't have to go a drawing board and start painting something. There are many online tool or desktop software that handle this job quiet efficiently. The simple Microsoft office application may have these features.

We are going to talk about an online software tool called Canva.

You can create an account and start using it right away. They have many subscription plans.

You can always start as trial user and play around with the tool. They have many ready-made templates for the various publishing works. You can bring the template to your screen and make changes online. You can save the work as PDF or JPG. Canva charges like \$1 per sheet to download the final output. The output is very professional and very easy for computer savvy people



Compilation Process

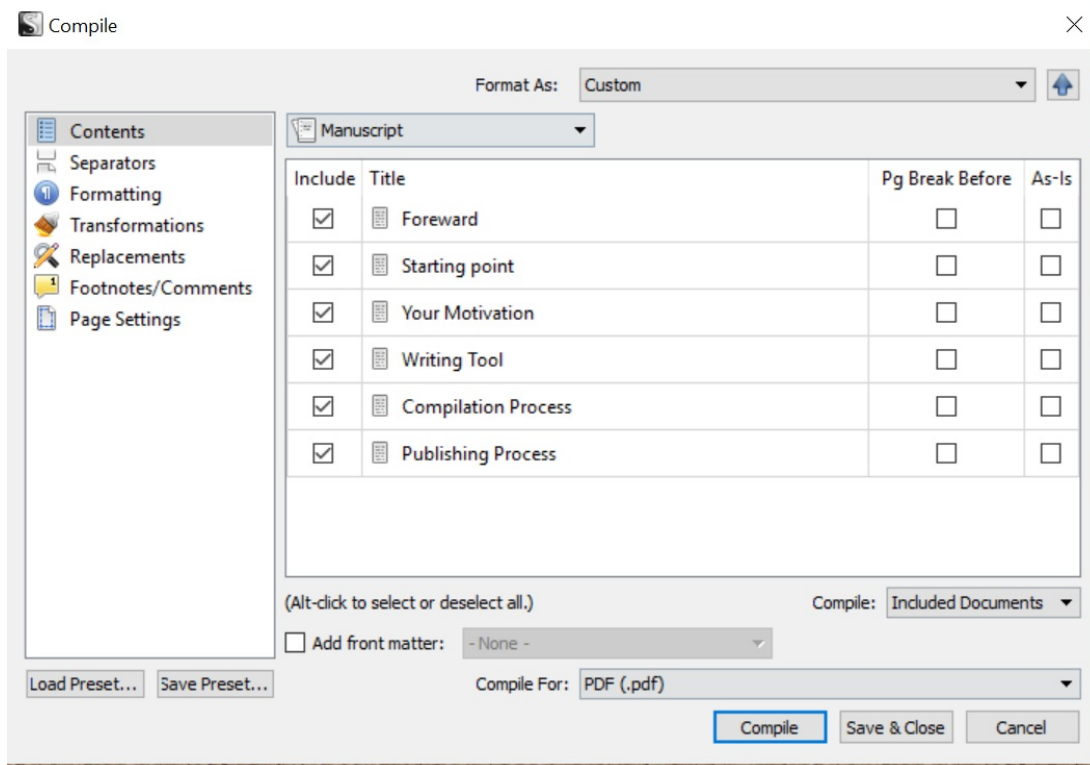
There two major challenges in writing a book. First is the content itself and getting that organized. Second is the compilation of the chapters into PDF, ePub/mobi, docx formats. Normally, I generate all the output types since publishing sites ask them based on the final product (ebook or paperback).

I would strongly suggest that you write few chapters first and start the learning on compilation for that book. You can delete the output for those chapters later. This will give you confidence when the final book form is ready. Also note that images of bitmap more than 150dpi is better for any published output.

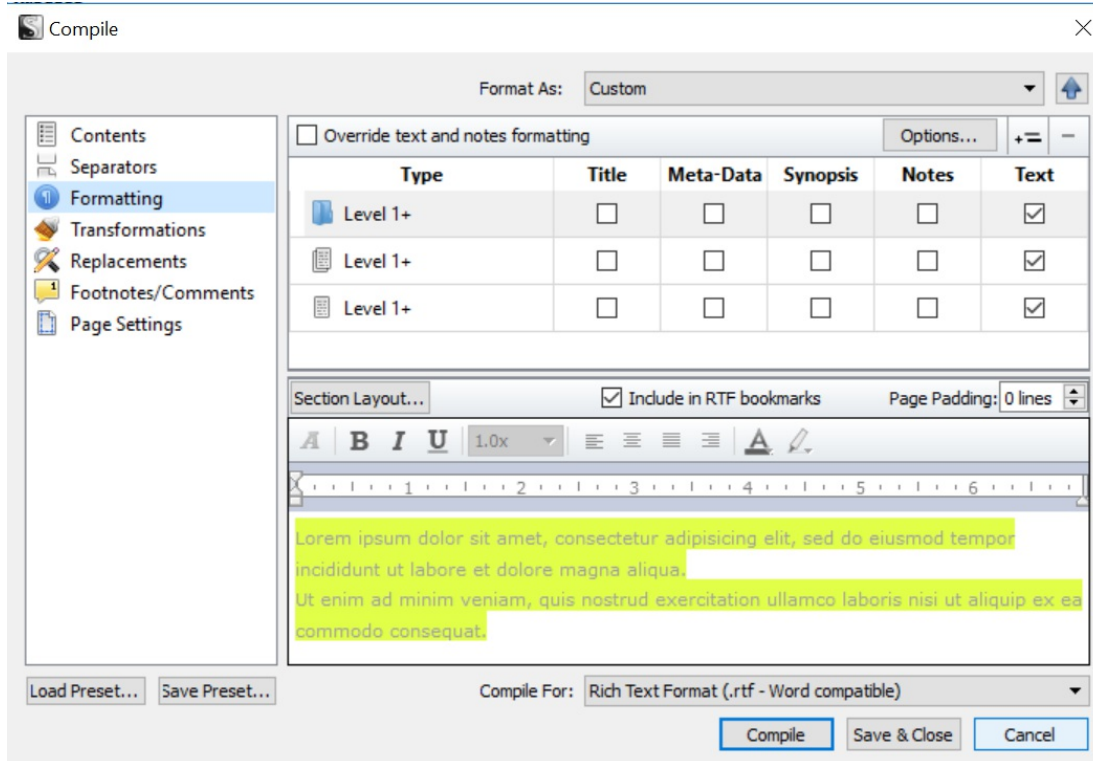
You may think the content looks good in Scrivener screens but when you generate the output in PDF the format may not be in readable mode. Then you have to completely edit your chapters again. Go to Format>Option>Show Invisibles. This will help to see the page breaks and other spaces while you're writing the content.

Some of the key configurations on the compile options are given below

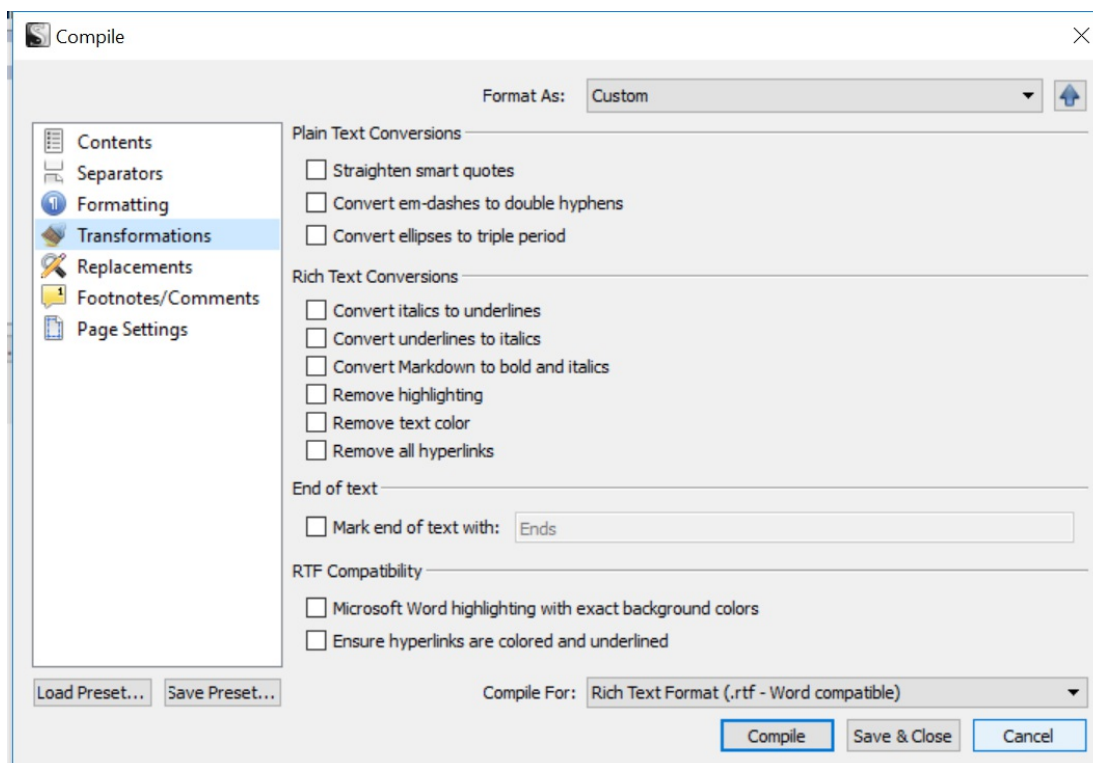
Contents: (see below). You can include/exclude chapters based on your needs. You may select few chapters and generate test output initially. Also if you get any error in ePub generation, then you will select each chapter as stand-alone basis to verify which chapter is giving errors.



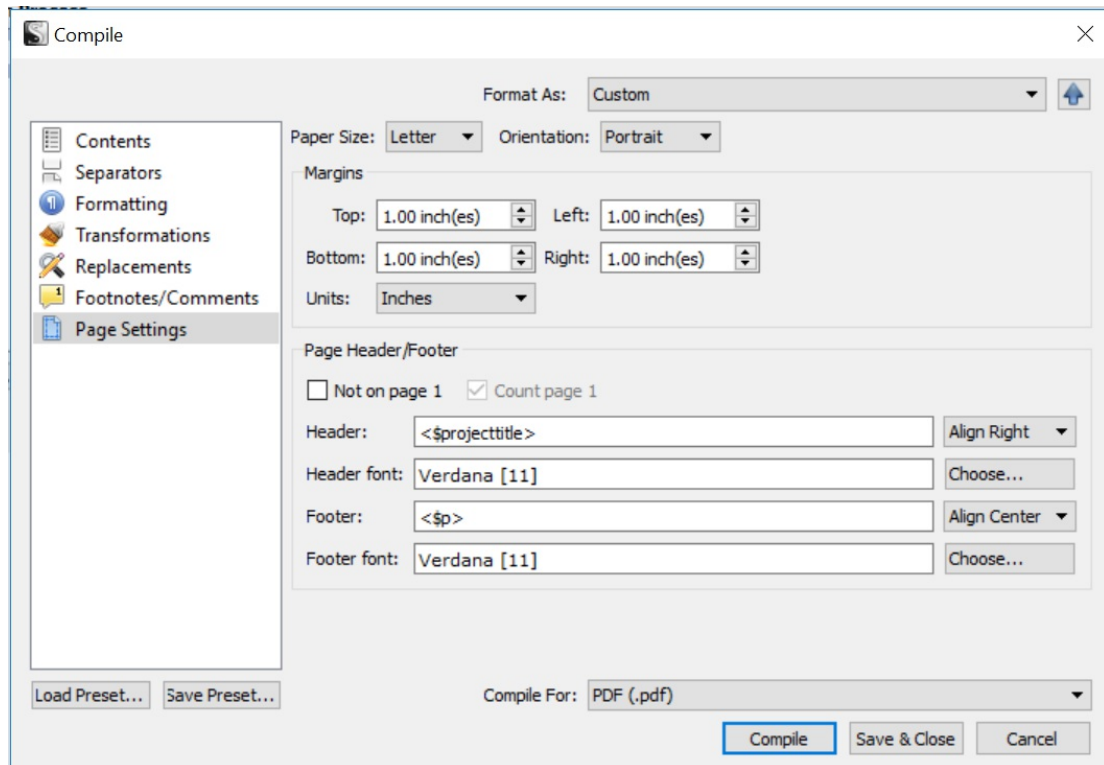
Formatting (see below). This is a key setup. If you include title again manually in your chapters then disable the title option here. Scrivener can put the chapter name automatically as the title. Another key parameter is the page padding. Ensure it is set to zero for each of the levels. Otherwise you chapter will start after few lines in the page and you will not know why it's doing like that.



Transformation (see below). This is simple to explain. My preference is to uncheck everything.



Compile: I tend use Verdana 11 font all over the document. Ensure margins are right enough for the document for comfortable reading. On the compile for option below there are choices of docx, ePub, PDF and mobi. Certain sites prefer docx and they can convert into PDF/ePub. Kindle format use mobi, which is can also be generated from ePub format.



Once you're comfortable with your setting you can save the preset for future use.

There are lot of instructional videos in Youtube on this tool.

Publishing Process

You have the compiled books in any ePub/mobi, docx, PDF form ready?

Checklist:

- Spell-check complete; format checks done; Proof read - Manuscript
- Able to generate all formats without errors. PDF, Docx, ePub/mobi
- Cover page of the book ready in JPG and PDF formats
- Author bio ready in text format
- Author profile picture ready in JPG format.
- Updated contents for Author's Page. This will help in cross-selling.

Now is the time to start the self-publishing process. There are many different ways to publish

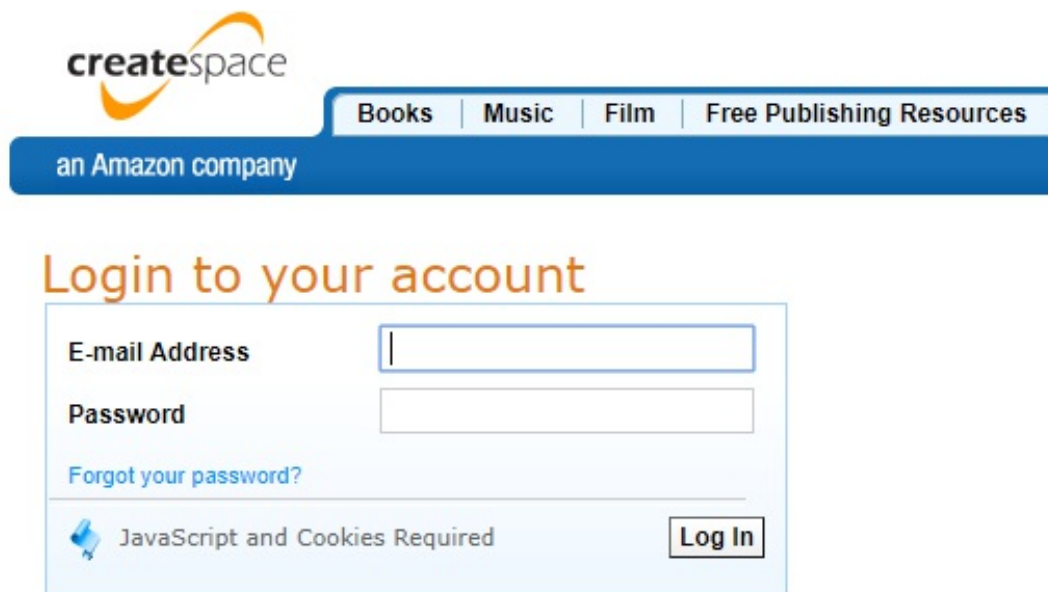
- You can still go through publishing companies.
- Individually publish in each of the platforms. Google on platforms like kindle, kobobooks, etc.
- Use websites like pronoun and you can publish in all together

Never under-estimate the time required to complete the publishing cycle. Some websites need a day or two to confirm back that your documentation fits the publishing process. Some will send email to you if there are errors. Typical errors faced are- using trademarks, not having chapter headings in 'header1' format, not having page breaks.

Option 1

Use the following screenshot. Create a new account and save your profile details. I tend to use my common gmail id for registration but I may suggest to have a new one for all the published works. You may have to finish tax-id details and also how the payment will be deposited into your bank account. These confirmations do take time and hence be prepared for the delays.

Createspace will allow to publish your book in amazon and then take you through publishing in KDP. You need about two hours to complete the entire publishing process, hence allocate your time accordingly. These sites do allow to save the steps to come back later.



createspace
an Amazon company

Books | Music | Film | Free Publishing Resources

Login to your account

E-mail Address

Password

[Forgot your password?](#)

 JavaScript and Cookies Required

After createspace upload, the website will automatically take you to KDP option. You can the choice do it immediately or come back later. There are various flavors of KDP. KDP select is exclusive distribution and your books cannot be published in another site. But the royalty income is higher on KDP Select. KDP scout is an option to publish your work to selected reviewers, and be considered for a publishing contract in 45 days or less. Google KDP scout to know the terms and conditions.

Some people prefer KDP option directly. Publishing in KDP is almost similar to createspace.

 You can now publish paperback versions of your books with KDP. [Learn more about these beta features.](#)

Create a New Title



- ✓ **Book Content:** You can upload a manuscript, or use our free creation tools to create children's books, educational content, comics, and manga. [Get started with Kindle content creation tools.](#)
 - ✓ **Book Cover:** You can use our online Cover Creator, or upload a cover of your own. [Creating a great cover.](#)
 - ✓ **Description, Keywords and Categories:** Tell readers [about your book](#) and help them [find it on Amazon](#).
 - ✓ **ISBN:** Get a free ISBN to publish your paperback. Kindle eBooks don't need one. [More about ISBNs.](#)
- [See all Getting Started tips](#)

Create your publishing account and start adding books.
The sales dashboard tells your performance over time period.

Sales Dashboard

[Historical](#) | [Month-to-Date](#) | [Payments](#) | [Pre-orders](#) | [Promotions](#) | [Prior Months' Royalties](#) | [Ad Campaigns](#)

View orders, sales, and Kindle Edition Normalized Pages (KENP) read for the past 90 days.

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	Women Power: Untold stories of wome... By Matt Ravikumar	Kindle eBook LIVE ▾ Submitted on October 17, 2017	\$6.00 USD View on Amazon ▾ ASIN: B076HFKXDT	KINDLE EBOOK ACTIONS Promote and Advertise
		Paperback LIVE ▾ Submitted on October 17, 2017	\$6.00 USD View on Amazon ▾ ASIN: 1549984683	PAPERBACK ACTIONS Edit details

	Kailash Calling: Spiritual Journey ... By Matt Ravikumar	Kindle eBook LIVE ▾ Submitted on March 19, 2017	\$9.00 USD View on Amazon ▾ ASIN: B06XR36Z8L	KINDLE EBOOK ACTIONS Promote and Advertise
		Paperback LIVE ▾ Submitted on July 16, 2017	\$9.00 USD View on Amazon ▾ ASIN: 1544798326	PAPERBACK ACTIONS Edit details

Option 2 (Temporary)

Use the following screenshot.

Again, create your userid and profile ahead of your upload work.

The site shows the progress in well-defined tabs but some times it is very difficult to look for the previously saved work. I would suggest to keep everything ready before uploading your work.

The site sends email updates on the uploads. Once you upload you have to download the document from the site (docx, epub/mobi formats). The download document will show publishing issues on the first few pages. You can fix them and re-upload again. This process make take few hours and multiple download/uploads till you get the ready for publish button. The typical issues are trademarks, page breaks and section headings.

You need to download the free kindle version for PCs to view your own published content for proof reading.

Reach more readers.

Pronoun's publishing platform empowers authors with a better, smarter, and fairer way to publish.

- Create a gorgeous ebook
- Sell on Amazon, iBooks, Barnes & Noble, and more
- Reach readers with customized marketing tools
- Update your book's details anytime
- Track your sales and keep everything you earn

All for free.

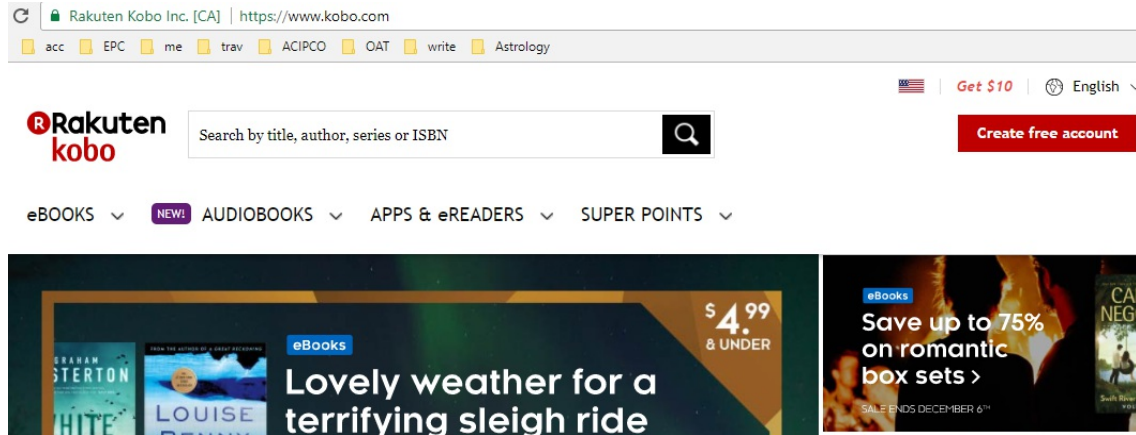
NOTE: Pronoun is quitting this business in early 2018. They do have migration path using KDP.

Option 3:

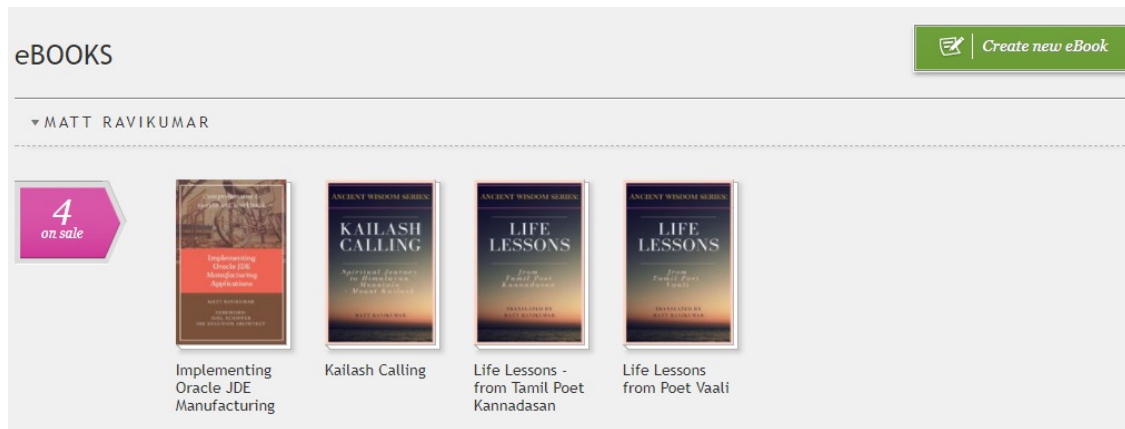
Go to [kobobooks.com](https://www.kobobooks.com) and create a free account for buyers.

<https://writinglife.kobobooks.com/dashboard>, for writers

Similar to createspace, you can upload your publishing content and go through their process. You can re-use the ISBN numbers.



Once you log-in to your writers account, your past published book will show up. Click on the create new eBook icon on the right side to start your new book publishing actions.



Kobo also provide lot of services like printing and getting user reviews. There will be subscription charges for these services

AUTHOR SERVICES

Kobo Writing Life is working with trusted partners to help you reach even more readers.

PRINT ON DEMAND

Thinking of turning your story into a printed book? We're working with select publishing professionals who can help you produce an affordable print version of your book.

[Request Details](#)

BUY ISBNs (US ONLY)

If you're an author in the United States, ask us how you can get a significant discount on as many ISBNs as you need.

[Request Details](#)

GET REVIEWS

Submit your books for professional reviews from Publishers Weekly, and enjoy a free six-month digital subscription to PW Select.

[Request Details](#)

After the book is published you can track the sales on the dashboard.

DASHBOARD

December 2017

This month

SALES AT A GLANCE

SALES BY BOOK

SALES BY REGION

STATS FOR DECEMBER 2017

ALL TIME

There are multiple resources available to guide your publishing process.

Some links are given below:

<http://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/self-published-ebook-awards>

<https://www.goodreads.com/giveaway/new>

<https://www.netgalley.com/member/dashboard>

<http://www.masterwriter.com/>

Tracking your progress

You will notice progress when you track your activities in writing/publishing. Some users will announce to their friends or family circle about their writing plans so that they will ask about the progress. Others, announce it in FaceBook to get comments and feedback. What ever is your style, having a plan helps

I use simple excel spreadsheet to identify the planned dates. This helps in prioritizing the work. You would have planning few hours for cover page preparation but it may take the entire day. Also the publishing process takes many hours so I would like to dedicate week-end for those type of work. The Lib codes (ASIN) can be reused amidst Amazon and kobobooks. The spreadsheet helps me to keep that information handy.

My Book list								
	cover page	main content-planned date	main content-revised date	lib code (ASIN)	CreateSpace (Amazon) date	CreateSpace (Kindle) date	Kobo books date	pronoun date
JDE Manufacturing								
Best Pracices in JDE								
Kailash Calling								
Kannadasan	3/1/2017	3/1/2017	3/10/2017	B06XJDZJWB	3/11/2017		3/11/2017	
Vaali				B06XR2Y2TB	7/16/2017	3/19/2019		
Women Power		9/4/2017			TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Learn QuickBooks								
South India's wisdom								

About the Author

Mathur (matt) Ravikumar holds bachelor of engineering degree and have done post-diploma work in management/accounting. He started as a factory material planner and handled management positions. With manufacturing knowledge he moved to business application software industry.

He has worked in many tier-1 ERP (Enterpriser Resource Planning) software companies as an employee and as consultant. He has worked in manufacturing and information technology field for more than three decades.

Born to a factory supervisor in Southern India, he studied high school in local language, Tamil- as medium of instructions. He thanks the mentors in life (both personal and work) for giving him the right opportunity and guidance. He learned the need for hard-work and helping fellow human beings from his parents.

He has written business white papers, newspaper articles and published content in professional magazines. He has published a book on his work skills and also presented papers in the world-wide technology conferences.

He was a speech-writer to a company CEO and still love to hear great speeches. The acquired and published material content are available at his website. He frequently blogs at websites and also writes in linked-in.

He is a regular meditator and trekked to Himalayas (Mount Kailash) towards a spiritual journey in 2016. He has written many books from his Himalayan Journey to translated works of Tamil Poets. His publications are available in Amazon.com and in kobobooks. (Author Search: matt ravikumar) He lives near San Francisco/California and can be reached by email or from web links.

He does political cartooning on weekends and his works are available under the websites.

Books published and available in Amazon:

- Kailash Calling (spiritual journey to Mount Kailash in Tibet)
- Implementing Oracle JDE Manufacturing (Technical book on ERP software implementation)
- Lyrics of Tamil Poet Kannadasan
- Lyrics of Tamil Poet Vaali
- Women Power (life experience of extraordinary women)
- Guru Shopping made easy (compilation of spiritual gurus)
- Yes, You can be a self-publisher (self help guide on publishing)
- Learn QuickBooks (self help guide to use QuickBooks)

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www.matravikumar.com

[www.linkedin.com\matravikumar](https://www.linkedin.com/matravikumar)

Contact email: matravikumar@gmail.com