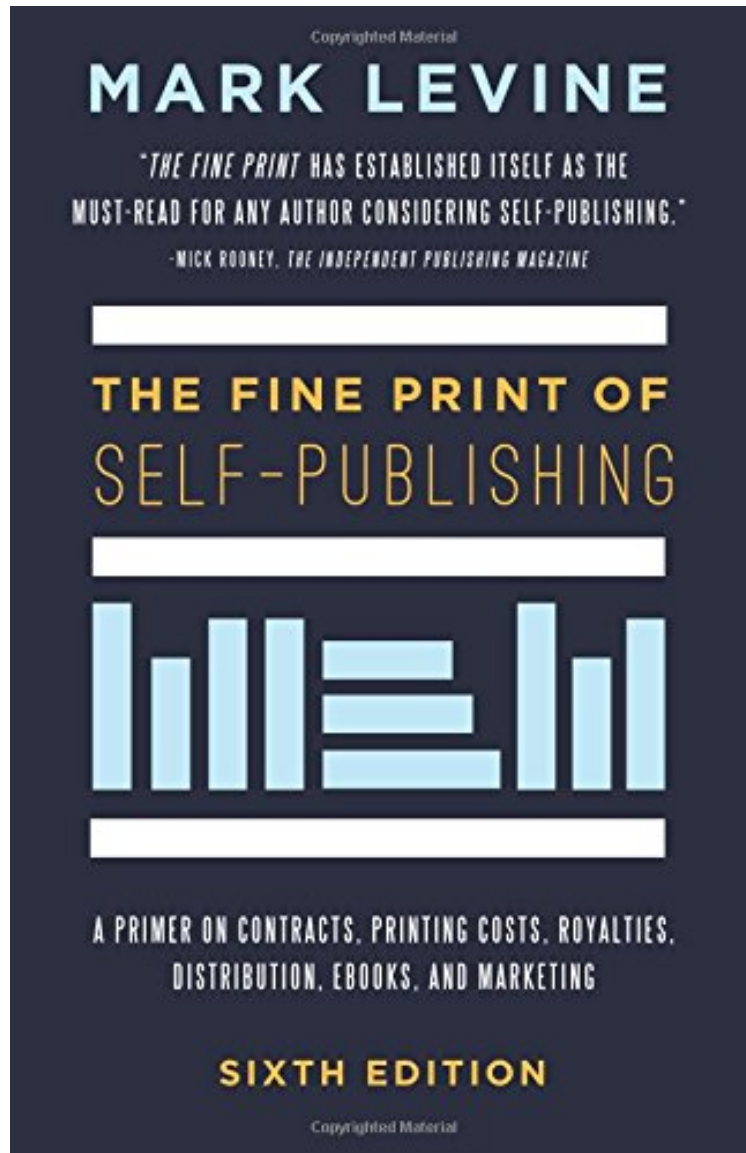


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The Fine Print of Self-Publishing, Sixth Edition: A Primer on Contracts, Printing Costs, Royalties, Distribution, Ebooks, and Marketing

Mark Levine

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Mark Levine : The Fine Print of Self-Publishing, Sixth Edition: A Primer on Contracts, Printing Costs, Royalties, Distribution, Ebooks, and Marketing before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fine Print of Self-Publishing, Sixth Edition: A Primer on Contracts, Printing Costs,

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Book CollectorI recommend that every author (beginner or experienced) involved in self-publishing read this book from cover to cover.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. some good points, somewhatBy CustomerJust OK...some good points, somewhat self-serving5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A must-read for any author considering self-publishingBy Mick RooneySince 2004, Mark Levine, author of several editions of *The Fine Print of Self-Publishing*, has been making sense of the perilous and changing world of self-publishing and service providers for indie authors. The first edition of *The Fine Print* was published back in twelve years ago and it was the first serious book to directly tackle the contracts of many known self-publishing service providers, as well as providing insights on pricing, quality, depth of service, and critically defining the core things every author should look for when choosing self-publishing services. Though many books have been published over the years, few have ever become essential reading for authors in the way Levine's *The Fine Print* has carved its way into the self-publishing community as the go-to essential toolkit. A lot has changed over the years and self-publishing has now experienced a mass explosion. You can't talk about the publishing world (trade houses, small presses, or the service provider industry) without mentioning the growth and impact of e-books. Notwithstanding all that, Levine founded Hillcrest Media Group, operators of Mill City Press (a US-based provider of services for self-publishing authors), and a number of other publishing imprints. When the fifth edition of *The Fine Print* was published in 2014, Levine chose not to present as much detailed and in-depth breakdowns, point-by-point, of service providers. The fact is, service providers change their publishing packages and services as the market itself changes and develops. The fifth and the latest editions of Levine's book have become essential primers for self-published authors rather than exposés of the good, the bad and the ugly of publishing service providers. The new sixth edition provides a series of comparisons in a number of critical areas, like file ownership, print pricing, royalties and overall what authors should look out for, but there is less emphasis on hard-nosed service provider comparisons. Levine, through running his own service provider company combined with having to live up to the same gauntlet and lines he drew in the sand for quality and excellence for other service providers includes in his book much more detail and general guidance about what makes a suitable service provider. It struck me that the intervening years of experiencing in the self-publishing industry has introduced a more measured approach and maturity in the last two editions. What Levine provides is an essential knowledge toolbox, and he has rightly identified a lack of knowledge about what to look for in a good self-publishing service provider as the main reason leading many authors down a rocky road of bumps and pitfalls. The definite shift in this edition reflects an industry with an ever-changing and sometimes confusing array of providers, combined with the problem of trying to review and rank every company or service in a single volume. It's an arduous and futile task. Levine uses the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu to demonstrate his reasoning behind this edition. "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime" Levine wears the hat of an industry insider batting on the side of the self-published author. Better to apply sound and relevant advice that can be applied now and in the future. With any non-fiction book focused on a particular field, readers will always have a tendency to jump straight into the parts that most interest them from the get-go, rather than always reading cover to cover. I still think some readers of previous editions will be disappointed that the detailed company reviews and rankings are gone, but that's the first and perhaps hardest spoonful of medicine Levine delivers in his introduction. But there is balance here. Levine also sees it from the perspective of service providers. "Every self-publishing company, including the good ones, has its share of disgruntled authors. With access to review sites, blogs, and social media, even authors who have no legitimate complaints about a company use these forums to cloud a company's reputation. Yes, there are legitimate complaints that should be aired to warn others, but most of the complaints I've seen about good companies are just postings by authors who didn't read their contracts; these authors would have posted the same complaint regardless of which publisher they worked with." There are nine lengthy chapters following the introduction; including everything from the basics of self-publishing to the dos and don'ts, taking your book from manuscript to distribution, examining what makes a great self-publishing company, the profile and characteristics of a great self-publishing service provider and terms of service, a primer on understanding contracts, e-book publishing, marketing your book, and an apples-to-apples comparison of some of the bigger and more well-known providers. The final chapter specifically examines DIY publishing platforms and presents hands-on tests of CreateSpace and IngramSpark. The book concludes with a number of checklists and guide charts on royalties, print discounts and marketing. Levine makes it clear that traditional publishing may still be right for some authors but the decision must always rest with the author equipped with all information. Even if you traditionally publish, you will likely pay for some expenses associated with publication and/or marketing. If you're going to spend money regardless of how your book is published, is it better to control the process, the result, and your potential earnings? Only you can answer that. But, while you will control it all, keep in mind that if you have no platform, your climb from unknown to successful author will require much more than writing a check. You still have to find a way to reach consumers and convince them to take a chance on you and your unvetted work. Too many books I read in this area skim over the positives and negatives of new print technology, particularly POD (print on demand), demonstrating a lack of

understanding, and at times, create more confusion than explanation. This is where Levines experience of running his own publishing and self-publishing companies really comes to the fore carefully explaining the use and relevance of POD, while making the distinction with short run digital printing and offset printing. I always tell authors that while POD is an excellent way to minimise some publishing costs, when it comes to any form of traditional marketing and distribution, POD can be like trying to sell a car without letting the perspective buyers actually see the car. You still need physical stock to properly market and promote a book. Following a full read of the book from cover to cover, which is what I would recommend first, I suspect the checklist appendices and comparison charts are going to be the most thumbed pages of *The Fine Print*. Mark Levine's *The Fine Print of Self-Publishing* has taken equal balance in exposing those self-publishing services that take the piss out of naive authors and gouge them out of money with inflated print mark-ups and pointless marketing services, as well as celebrating the education of authors into what to look for from a great self-publishing provider. As I've indicated above, it's important when authors grasp a copy of this book in their hand that they are not purchasing a how to self-publish book, or expansive reasons and arguments why they should or shouldn't self-publish, but rather a book that enables them to identify good quality services and avoid the common trappings and pitfalls of selecting a provider once they've decided self-publishing is right for them. Levine offers some guidance on whether the self-publishing route is right for all authors, but this is not the book's primary focus by any means. Overall, *The Fine Print* has established itself as the must-read for any author considering self-publishing. It's an invaluable primer, toolkit and road map that will guide and equip you with the right information before taking those first important steps. Levine's experience, first as an author, then as a publishing company CEO, provides him with an understanding of the needs of authors, combined with an insight into the publishing industry, top to bottom. This sixth edition extensively explains how to make your self-publishing journey a financially smooth and emotionally rewarding one. Critically, this new edition also addresses some shortcomings in older editions: an overemphasis on print over e-book, and a bias towards assisted publishing services at a time when many self-published authors are gravitating to DIY publishing platforms.

Covering everything from how to determine printing costs and calculate royalties to the most up-to-date marketing strategies, *The Fine Print of Self-Publishing* has become the go-to book for authors considering self-publishing. Now in its sixth edition, *The Fine Print* delves into more topics than ever before, including a comparison of the quality of finished books produced by popular DIY service providers and newly expanded sections on printing and distribution options, ebook publishing, and online and traditional marketing ideas. And, like the previous editions, *The Fine Print* walks readers through the printing markups and royalty payouts of the top publishing service providers. Whether you're thinking about hiring a self-publishing company or handling the process on your own, *The Fine Print of Self-Publishing* will get you one step closer to achieving your publication goals. "[A] Must-read for any author considering self-publishing." --Mick Rooney, *The Independent Publishing Magazine*

"Mark Levine does his homework, and even better, shares it. With meticulous research and easy-to-follow charts, Levine compares the prices and options for various publishing pathways. Expanding on earlier editions, he walks writers through the DIY process with CreateSpace, Ingram, and Smashwords. Levine has written a useful, no-nonsense guide that will save writers tons of money and hours of frustration." --Helen Sedwick, author of *Self-Publisher's Legal Handbook: The Step-by-Step Guide to the Legal Issues of Self-Publishing* "I always recommend *The Fine Print* to any author who is considering self-publishing. . . . It's a reality check and an education for the savvy author." --Patricia Fry, executive director of Small Publishers, Artists, and Writers Network (SPAWN) "Invaluable . . . Levine's ten years of experience, first as an author, then as a publishing company CEO, provide him with an understanding of the needs of authors, combined with an insight into the publishing industry, top to bottom." --Mick Rooney, *The Independent Publishing Magazine* About the Author Mark Levine is the CEO of Hillcrest Media Group, which he founded in 2006. Prior to founding Hillcrest, Mark was the founder and CEO of the online business filing company Click Industries, Ltd. Mark's unique experience as both a published author himself and an executive in self-publishing gives him exceptional insight into what authors want and need, which translates directly into how he runs his author-centric publishing company. When he is not writing or working, Mark enjoys running, cooking, sushi, and investing in Internet domain names. Learn more about Hillcrest at HillcrestMedia.com.