

# ISSUES AND THEMES **in** PUBLISHING



*Edited by*

**KINGSLEY NWADIUTO IGWE  
ABDULGANIY OKANLA AHMED**

## Issues and Themes in Publishing

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## **Fundamental Processes Involved in Publishing**

*By*

***Edeama O. ONWUCHEKWA  
Happiness C. MICHAEL-ONUOHA***

### **1. Introduction**

The word publishing means different things to different people and to different professions. In a simple way, publishing simply means to make public. To make any information public, there has to be a medium through which the information will be conveyed. It could be via books, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, journals, reports and electronic medium. When it is about book publishing, different processes abound. These processes undergo different stages and at the end the information contained in them are sent out for public consumption. It is only when a manuscript has been transformed into a book and then distributed to its intended market place, that the process of publishing is completed.

Enang and Umoren (2011) are of the view that publishing is very important in national development because of its role in information dissemination and as a repository of human culture, history, and knowledge. Publishing has emerged as a strategic industry in determining the educational system of a country. Books are not only recognized as reservoirs of cultural heritage, but are also carriers of information and knowledge vital in making informed choices necessary for developing a people and the nation. Publishing is the process of producing information for dissemination of facts and fiction, books, journals, films, computer programmes, records, newspapers, discs, bulletins, magazines, and other literary materials.

Books have been produced in one form or another for some 4,000 to 5,000 years. A book in itself to a layman is simply a number of printed sheets fastened together with a cover such that it could be flipped easily. This definition is not really complete as it were. But a succinct definition has been given by the UNESCO which has been defined as "a non-periodical printed publication of at least 49 pages excluding covers". A book is a medium through which information is conveyed within space and time. A school of thought defines a book as "a written document of at least 49 text pages that communicates thoughts ideas or information"

Very formally, book publishing therefore is a process involving a medium called book through which information is conveyed to the public for consumption. Okwilagwe (2001) submits that books are cultural products and often bear the essence of the culture in which they originated and were published. He explained that books also record a people's experience and artifacts and he gave an example of the Nigerian Year Book 1992 published and printed by Times Press (Nigeria) which contains virtually all that one might want to know about Nigeria.

At the heart of the book publishing industry lies the ability of a publisher to select or commission content that the reading public will be ready to purchase, which will satisfy their interests in a variety of thematic areas. Book publishers produce this content in print and/or in other formats (electronic versions of books, periodicals, websites, blogs, etc.) and use sales and marketing skills to sell this content to readers. Book publishers are creators, acquirers, custodians, and managers—owners and users—of intellectual property rights. They possess certain rights in the books they produce and sell, and they hold other rights on behalf of third parties.

## **2. General Processes of Publishing**

According to Althbach (1995), book publishing is the activity of selecting, manufacturing and marketing material that has been gathered in a book form. Okwilagwe (2001) enumerates the processes of publishing to include the conceptualization of ideas; the realization of the ideas in a somewhat temporary or semi-permanent form called manuscript; the perfection of the manuscript in order to enhance its

communication potential-editing; the determination and standardization of all the elements that make up the book cover and the text-designing; the composing of the manuscript into somewhat permanent page proofs-typesetting; the reading of the composed pages to ensure that they are free of errors-proof reading ; the buying of the materials for printing and determining the nature and quality of the physical attributes of the product-production and finally the distribution and marketing of the printed materials –promotion and sales.

Publishing as earlier defined is a process of making the work of an author public. Publishing a book is not a work that can be done single-handedly. It is a team work. The word processes are defined as series of steps taken in order to achieve a particular task or operation.

Therefore the processes involved in publishing are divided into two as there as two different versions of publishing which include print and online version of publishing. Normally the process begins with submission of author's manuscript. Digital manuscripts which are created in any word processing program such as Word, WordPerfect, and Quark etc are accepted.

A publishing house performs a number of discrete functions. They are:

- i. Content acquisition: acquiring a manuscript from an author.
- ii. Content development: developing and enhancing the manuscript via the editorial process.
- iii. Book design: creating the look of the book's cover and pages.
- iv. Management of the production cycle: creating cost analysis documents and production cycle estimates.
- v. Prepress, printing, and binding: preparing the finished product.
- vi. Marketing: determining the suggested retail price, crafting a campaign to market and promote the book.
- vii. Sales: selling the book in the channels of distribution.
- viii. Fulfillment: managing the warehouse and distribution of books into channels of distribution; supervising all book returns.
- ix. Customer service: handling all inquiries and orders from



customers before, during, and in the after-sale period for new titles as well as for all backlist titles.

- x. Other revenue stream: supervising all sub rights, foreign rights, foreign sales licensing activities, special sales, etc. (Greco, 2004).

### **3. Stages in Publishing**

The processes in publishing vary for the type of media being published. A daily newspaper is usually a 12-hour process of intense planning, writing, coordinating and printing a book is a much longer process. The following example outlines the many stages of publishing a book

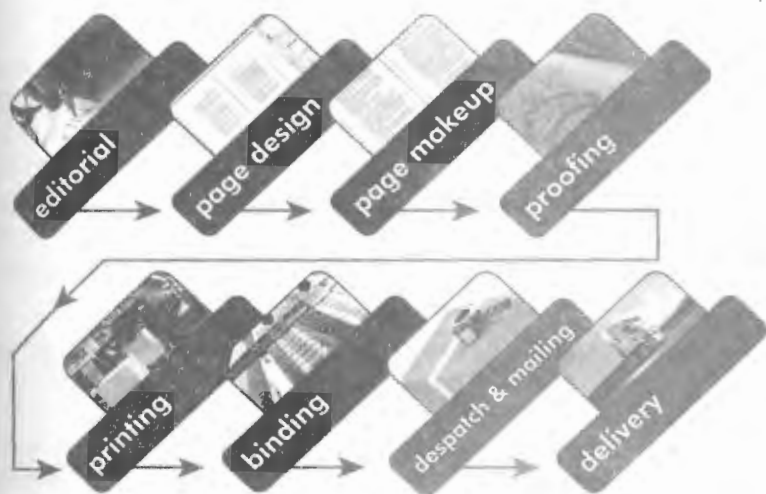
- **Launch meeting:** All concerned in the publication team meet to be acquainted with the book and expected steps.
- The author /editor receives an offer and decides to publish with a chosen press
- **Conclusion of the contract** (agreement on the publication features and the numbers of copies to be printed)
- **Copy Editing:** The book production editor begins editing the manuscript online with disks provided after he or she has thoroughly reviewed the hard copy.
- **Checking of the file and, if necessary, corrections by author**
- **Interior Book Design:** While the author reviews the copyedited manuscript, the graphic designer oversees the design of the book's interior pages. During the design process, the content, audience, and reading level of the book are taken into consideration.
- **Once a design is created, the typesetter creates sample 'dummy' pages of the design** (Covers should be both visually enticing and appropriate for a book's content and audience.)
- **Proof Reading:** Checking of the proof copy and printing release by the author, if there were any corrections, another proof copy can be made.

- The author will be asked to double-check the following during the editor's review – running heads, tables and figures, references, misspellings, and final queries
- Front Matters: this comprises of the copyright page, the title pages, and the table of contents, acknowledgments and dedication pages, author bios and affiliations, a preface, and a foreword etc.
- Index: The book production editor provides another set of proofs to a professional indexer for indexing.
- Allocation of the ISBN, imprint and cover design by the publisher, subsequent proof copy
- Simultaneous creation of the cover as a PDF file, as well as checking and printing release by the author
- Publication production
- Delivery of author's copies

For the online version:

- Editing of the PDF file by the publisher (bookmarks, password protection)
- Creation of the front page.
- Generally, the publication is published online at the same time when the print copies are delivered. (Kassel University Press, 2013)

In summary, below are the essential Steps in Book Publishing



#### 4. Book Production Process

The process of producing a book is ongoing throughout the stages of production and this is very similar to the steps in publishing. The author, the editor and the book agent considers elements of design that pertain to the scope and purpose of the book, the desired approach to the subject matter, whether illustrations should be used, and other issues such as chapter headings and their placement. In determining those elements, the intended audience will be considered, along with accepted editorial standards. A school of thought is of the opinion that once the book is written, editors and authors must refine the manuscript to attain a final edited version prior to production. This involves a process of reviewing, editing, proofreading, revising and final approval. After the manuscript design factors are completed, editors and art directors will determine the page size and style, typeface size and style, the type and weight of paper for the text and cover, use of color, presentation of visuals/illustrations in the text, cover art/illustrations.

## 5. Materials for Book Production

Books are made from a variety of different coated and uncoated paper stocks that differ in weight and sizes. The front and back covers are usually made from a heavier stock of paper. Book (2015) explains that hardback books have a durable cardboard stock cover while paperback books are made from a thinner paper stock. Since the nineteenth century, book production has entailed the use of sophisticated machinery, including typesetting machines, a web or sheet-fed printing press, and book binding machines.

Book production has remained much the same since the early twentieth century, except for changes in typesetting. While dedicated typesetting machines (linotype or monotype) have been standard equipment in print shops and typesetting businesses since 1900, desktop publishing on microcomputers has become a cost-effective alternative. With the proper typesetting software and a laser printer, users can generate text, insert graphics, and create layouts and page designs that are as sophisticated and detailed as those produced by traditional typesetting machines. As a result, authors, publishers, print shops, and virtually any other business have been able to set type and perform page layout and design on microcomputers.

## 6. Summary

Fundamental processes involved in publishing have been explained in this chapter. It covered the general processes of publishing, stages in publishing, book production process and materials for book production.

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