

Print on Demand Creates New Opportunities in Self-Publishing

By Tom Moates, Spinning Sevens Press

Spinning Sevens Press is helping pioneer the recent revolution reinventing the publishing industry. Utilizing print on demand (POD) technology, this press demonstrates how small and mid-sized publishers, and even individual authors, now go head-to-head in the marketplace with the big guys, both domestically and internationally. Any size publishing operation now can produce high-quality, competitively priced print books in any quantity with minimal start up costs and overhead. Traditionally, publishers printed and warehoused large quantities of books hoping to sell them—with POD both the up-front investment and environmental impacts of publishing are greatly reduced as books only are printed as needed.

In addition to extremely affordable per book printing costs for short run orders of any quantity, from one to a gazillion, POD companies now offer direct wholesaling to mainstream, worldwide distribution channels. Online retailers, from Amazon.com on down the line, are easily and cost effectively furnished books straight from the POD provider. This innovation allows the small publisher to wash its hands completely of warehousing books and fulfilling orders—an entire publishing business now can be conducted over the web with a publisher simply and profitably following the sales through his POD vendor from wherever he lays his laptop.

The case of Spinning Sevens Press, founded by Tom Moates, is a quintessential example of a single author emerging from the mainstream book publishing world to develop a business structure utilizing POD that brings creative control, marketing, and money back home to the writer. A notable equestrian author and journalist, Moates enjoys a loyal readership in a niche market built up from more than 400 magazine article bylines in the U.S, U. K., Canada, and Australia, and from authoring a string of well received horse based books. POD replaces the typical experience of the long established culture and royalty-based business model in the publishing world and increases the writer's income while allowing for improved marketing and sales strategies of the author's titles.

Today, Spinning Sevens Press is about to branch out. Other writers currently are in the process of having their manuscripts published through the press. The huge benefits found with the POD process Moates discovered for his own books likewise provide the opportunity to pass on great deals to other writers while growing the publishing company. Spinning Sevens Press becomes a real partner in publishing authors' books by splitting profits evenly rather than having a more exploitive relationship that often results from many existing publishing royalty models and printing modalities.

A critically important and enormous improvement of POD over the former print technology is the speed with which books can be set up to print and then provided to the marketplace. POD is blisteringly fast compared to the old school method. At Spinning Sevens Press, a completed manuscript is edited and sent to production along with any photos or illustrations for design while a cover is generated for the author to begin presales activity. Production of the book's design averages two weeks, cranking through layout and being reviewed in pdf form.

There are do-it-yourself options available, but contracting the graphic design work maximizes the ability to utilize skilled artisans to produce an excellent overall design and visual theme for a book, and to get an awesome cover to catch a reader's eye. It also allows a

knowledgeable professional to liaise with the POD company technical staff, which improves the efficiency of getting a book into the POD system, and getting things right the first time.

The book then is given an ISBN number and uploaded into the POD system via a secure link on the Internet.

It usually takes about a week to receive a printed proof copy in-hand. Then, if it looks good, a simple click of the mouse releases the title to whatever channels of production and distribution are desired. Easily within a month, a finished Word draft of a manuscript transforms into boxes of completed books on your doorstep, or wherever you'd like them shipped. That same process, from completed manuscript to books finished, printed, and shipped, requires an entire year or more with many typical mainstream publishing companies (!).

Another vast improvement with POD publishing is the speed at which money flows. Moates went from two royalty statements/checks a year with his book published in the mainstream tradition, to either no wait when marketing the books directly to readers via website sales, signings, or wholesale deals, or a monthly direct deposit payment on a 90 day delay for any POD system wholesale sales through the large distribution channels.

Tom Moates is a leading equestrian journalist, author, and owner of Spinning Sevens Press. This award-winning writer is on the masthead of *Equus* magazine and articles he pens run in many major horse magazines in the United States and abroad. Moates's five horse-based books are firmly established titles in the library of modern horsemanship literature. Moates's latest publishing news is available at www.TomMoates.com.