

## Online On-Demand Book Publishing - John DeLapp

Online publishing is relatively easy and fun! There are many web sites that specialize in photo books and other printed products. Based on the few that I have reviewed or used, they can generally be characterized by the following:

- Most provide templates and/or programs for designing and laying out your book.
- Their software is either downloaded (for free) and resides on your computer, or you upload your photos to their site do the design and layout work at their site online.
- Most templates allow you to choose from a number of layouts and styles for your pictures, text, and cover.
- For most, there is no need to provide PDF files of your photos/text as is usually required by traditional publishers.
- Most companies have several options for book sizes, types of covers, bindings, and paper type and weight.
- Books are printed on demand and ship to you quickly (usually within a week).
- You can order 1 copy or many copies. Some companies give discounts for bigger orders.
- Some companies offer the option of obtaining an "ISBN" number (International Standard Book Number) and bar code for the back cover so that the book can be offered for sale to the public in retail outlets. Some also will have it listed with Amazon or other outlets (for a fee). If you provide the ISBN number, you are the publisher; if they provide it, they are the publisher of record.
- In most cases, you retain the rights to the content of the book, while the company retains the rights to the layout design and graphic elements of the book.
- You are totally responsible for all the content and all spelling and proof-reading. They print exactly what you send them.
- Costs range from about \$10 to \$50 per book depending on size, number of pages, style, cover type, etc. (not including shipping).

### Things to consider before starting a book

- What will the content be, pictures only or a mix of pictures and text?
- Which pictures will you use?
- What order will they appear in the book?
- What size will the book be and what format – square, vertical, or landscape?
- How many pages and how many pictures per page?
- Will you use one layout throughout or multiple page styles?
- What is the message or story to be told by the book?
- Who will your readers be?
- Do you want to make it available to the public?

Selecting and optimizing your images (Knowing how to batch process a group of images will save you a lot of time with this task!)

- Provide your normal density, contrast, and color corrections. (You should be using a calibrated monitor or you may be surprised by the colors in your finished book.)
- Size your images to be 300 dpi at their finished dimension. In other words, if the finished picture in the book will be 5"x7", your image needs to be 1500 pixels by 2100 pixels in size.
- Select images that will fit well in the space provided on the book's page. (Most page templates will crop the standard 35mm aspect ratio in one way or another.)
- Images should be JPEG format. I saved mine at "number 10" quality. A lower quality might also give acceptable results. Some sites don't provide much guidance on file size and types, others provide very specific guidance.
- Color space: One site recommends sRGB for photographs, another CMYK, but most are silent on this parameter. B&W should be submitted as gray scale unless you are trying to get some color toning in which case they should be submitted as RGB files.
- Don't oversize your files - keep in mind that big image files will take much longer to upload to the publisher's site. (My 120 page book took over 3 hours to up-load on a cable modem line.)
- Sharpening: This is a dilemma since you can't judge it until after your book has been printed and then it is too late to make any changes. I sharpened my images somewhat less than I normally would for an ink jet print and got reasonably good results....

## Comparison of Selected Online On-Demand Publishers

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	<b>blurb.com</b>	<b>lulu.com</b>	<b>photoworks.com</b>	<b>mypublisher.com</b>	<b>mpix.com</b>	<b>createspace.com</b>
<b>Book sizes and base prices</b>	7x7 \$12.95 10x8 \$18.95 8x10 \$18.95 13x11 \$54.95	“photo books:” 9x7 \$14.95+.50/pg 8.5x11 \$15.95+.50/pg  Other color books: 9x7 \$9.33+.15/pg 6x9 \$9.33+.15/pg	4x4 \$16.95+.49/pg 7x5 \$12.95+.99/pg 11.5x8.5 \$29.95+.99/pg 12x12 \$69.95+1.99/pg	7.75x5.75 \$12.95+49/pg 11.25x8.75 \$29.80+.99/pg 15x11.5 \$59.80+2.99/pg	Hard cover: 5x5 \$20+.50/pg 10x10 \$30+.50/pg 11x8.5 \$30+.50/pg Soft cover: 5x5 \$15+.50/pg 8.5x8.5 \$20+.50/pg 7.75x10 \$25+.50/pg	5x8, 6x9, 7x10, 8x10, 8.25x8.25 \$3.15 +.012/pg +20% of price?
<b>Page limits</b>	Min. 20	Min. 20 for “photo books” Min. 32 for other color books	Min. 20, max. 80	Min. 20, max. 100	Soft cover: Min. 12, max 40 Hard cover: Min. 20, max 50	Min. 24, max. 100
<b>Type of covers</b>	Hard Soft	Hard Soft	Hard Soft Leather	Hard Soft	Hard Soft	Soft
<b>Software and Templates</b>	Free download	Use their software online	Use their software online	Free download	Free download	None – you must upload PDF print ready files
<b>Other printing services offered</b>	none	none	Greeting cards, calendars mugs, mouse pads, etc.	none	Prints, calendars, cards, puzzles, etc.	none
<b>ISBN option</b>	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Volume discount</b>	Yes (10 or more)	Yes (25 or more)	No	No	No	Yes (50 or more)
<b>Marketing or distribution services offered</b>	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes