



August 2007

AUGUST 8 Meeting


Field Trip to Fenton: A POD Pizza Party!

This month, SLPA focuses on printing, with a spotlight on **Print on Demand**. Our monthly meeting will be a unique one for us. We're taking the Wednesday meeting on the road to the facilities of a local printing company, **Creative Imaging**. But this will be much more than simply a tour of a printing plant.

We'll have discussion, plus Q&A on important topics that can affect your bottom line—which we never have “enough time” to dive into. This is a great opportunity to see it all happen as well as get your answers straight from the experts. They'll discuss:

- **Digital & offset printing comparison:** learning what technology is right for you
- **The book ordering process:** how to control your costs and get what you want from your book printer

We'll actually get to watch a book get printed, cut and bound during a tour of the facility. And if this wasn't fun enough, there's more! **To celebrate SLPA's tenth Anniversary, we're serving a Pizza dinner.** (Pizza, salad, soft drinks and anniversary cake.)

The meeting will be hosted by **Creative Imaging, Inc.** and their book division **No Waste Publishing**.™ Representatives, some with more than 25 years of printing experience, will be available to provide recommendations on pre-print production and guidance on how to make your book a reality. A tour of their facility and top-of-the-line Xerox iGen3 will be provided. 

Same time, different location.

 *Directions on page 3!*

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Explaining Printing by Sid Smith

Print On Demand (POD) Versus Offset Printing

On my site we talk quite a bit about **print on demand**, and we compare it to offset printing. This article provides a brief description of the two processes, and the advantages/disadvantages of each. More detailed information about the offset printing process described below can be found at How Things Work (www.howthingswork.com).

There are nine main types of printing processes:

- Offset lithography — what we are exploring in this article
- Engraving — think fine stationery
- Thermography — raised printing, used in stationery
- Reprographics — copying and duplicating
- Digital printing — used for Print on Demand publishing
- Letterpress — the original Gutenberg process (hardly done anymore)
- Screen — used for T-shirts and billboards
- Flexography — usually used on packaging, such as can labels
- Gravure — used for huge runs of magazines and direct-mail catalogs

Offset printing

Most books printed by traditional publishers and many self-publishers use the offset lithography process. It wasn't long ago that everyone considered the quality of offset printing to be vastly superior to digital printing. But all of that has changed. Recent advances in digital printing have helped them catch up in

quality, although it may be years before they can match the price points of offset printing.



How Things Work: “Offset lithography works on a very simple principle: ink and water don't mix. Images (words and art) are put on plates (see the next section for more on this), which are dampened first by water,

then ink. The ink adheres to the image area, the water to the non-image area. Then the image is transferred to a rubber blanket, and

continued on next page

from the rubber blanket to paper. That's why the process is called "offset"—the image does not go directly to the paper from the plates, as it does in gravure printing."

With offset printing, the document must be converted to film and "plates." While these film negatives might be created from digital files, this is different from digital printing. The images are transferred to the printing plates, and when the plates are exposed to light, a chemical reaction occurs that allows an ink-receptive coating to be activated. This results in a transfer of the image from the negative to the plate.

These printing presses can be quite expensive because of the cost of the plates (made from aluminum). Thus, they get economies of scale by printing thousands of copies of a book at once. They want to use those plates as much as possible to keep the cost per book down. It would be cost prohibitive to print one or a few books after creating these plates.

And, to top it off, each of the four primary colors (black, cyan, magenta, and yellow) must be on a separate plate. [This is called four-color printing process.]



The paper is fed through the machine as one giant roll, then cut to size after printing. While they can also use individual sheets, they won't get the same cost savings as they do from using large rolls.

Print on demand

With digital printing (print on demand), the book is stored in digital format (PDF, Postscript, or TIFF, typically), and printed one at a time. A single copy of a 300-page book can be printed in less than one minute and bound in less than five minutes. Try that with your ink jet printer at home.

Most print on demand printers are what are called Electrographic printers. These are essentially laser printers that fuse toner on paper. Now, the big guys, especially Lightning Source, which has

printed well over 30 million books, use high-end printers, such as the IBM Infoprint 4100 series.



The Infoprint 4100-HD1/HD2 and 4100-PD1/PD2 printers are continuous-forms printers (not cut-sheet) that use laser and IBM infoprint electrophotographic technology to print text, images, graphics, and bar codes at up to 762 ipm (impressions per minute). That's fast.

Advantages and disadvantages of print on demand versus offset printing

This part is really quite simple. Offset printing relies on big rollers that can print books at an extremely high rate. The cost per book is four to ten times less than the cost of printing one book with digital printers. They can print more books at a fast rate and at a lower cost.

When you need a couple thousand books, you'll find offset printers who will do it for less than a dollar a book. Order more books at one time, and your cost will go down. If you can find an offset printer who will do an order for less than 1500 books, you won't save much money over digital (print on demand) printing.

One print on demand book from Lightning Source (paperback, about 250 pages) will cost you about \$3.00. Ten books will cost you \$30.00. One thousand books will cost you \$3,000. Get the point? The cost is the same whether you order one or five thousand books.

But—and this is important—you CAN order just one book.

For the beginning author, print on demand has been a major blessing. Finally, you can get your book published without mortgaging your house (which has been known to happen!) This is why you'll see even the big traditional publishers using digital printing for book reprints, which are done in much smaller quantities. As you can see, offset printing will be around for some time—at least until someone figures out how to dramatically reduce the cost of digital printing. 📖



Sid Smith is the founder and president of Business WordSmiths, Inc., a business dedicated to the success of authors and small businesses. His motto is, "We'll write what you can't." Business WordSmiths creates persuasive marketing copy for business owners and entrepreneurs, as well as all manner of book writing, editing, marketing, and publishing services. Sid now has his own small publishing firm, Infinity Press, a subsidiary of Business WordSmiths, Inc. For additional information about Sid, the services of Business WordSmiths, and self-publishing, please contact him through this web site. www.writeandpublishyourbook.com

Smashing the Book Competition Myth

There's a common refrain you hear in the book world about competition and the crowded marketplace. In particular, experts like to point out the number of new books that are published every year.

It used to be 150,000 new titles per year; now it's closer to a quarter million new books published worldwide every year. And, the gurus remind you, this is in addition to the millions of titles already in existence. (I think Amazon offers some 4 million titles.)

It's enough to scare off any would-be author and make indie publishers want to get out of the business while there's still time. The only thing is, there's a serious flaw with this logic. Let me explain...

Yes, there are tons of books that get written and printed each year, especially now that people are learning about low-cost digital printing options. I admit, it's a noisy world with a dizzying array of messages competing for our attention.

That said, I still believe you should NOT let the Fear of Competition wrap its evil hands around your neck.

Here's the problem...

Implying that you have to compete with 250,000 or 4 million or however many other titles is simply preposterous. It assumes that every human being with the ability to purchase books is a potential customer for every book that is available. And if you think about it for two seconds, you'll realize how ridiculous that premise is.

There are huge segments of the adult population that will NEVER buy a gardening book or a self-help book or a do-it-yourself plumbing book. Heck, there are huge segments of the population that will never buy a book, period.

And of all the people who do buy gardening books, for example, only a small percentage of them will ever consider purchasing a gardening title on bonsai or topiary or outdoor feng shui.


Here's the truth...

You are NOT competing with every other book in the marketplace; only with books in your specific category. In the same way, every book consumer is not mulling over a decision about which book to buy among every book in existence. That kind of thinking is insane.

People buy books because they have a specific need to be educated, enlightened or entertained, so they go in search of the best book to satisfy whatever that specific need is. People also buy books

based on the recommendations of friends, reviews or mentions in the media. But they only hear or read about these titles because they expose themselves to people or media that align with their interests.



Bottom line: Focus on YOUR BOOK and YOUR AUDIENCE. Tune out everything else. You'll be a lot more sane because of it. 

Bob Baker
president@stlouispublishers.org



"Focus in on the genre you want to write, and read books in that genre. A LOT of books by a variety of authors. And read with questions in your mind."

— Nicholas Sparks
(American Author and Writer, b.1965)

Field Trip to Fenton: A POD Pizza Party!

Directions

Be there! Creative Imaging
1568 Fencorp Drive, Fenton, MO 63026
636-717-0690 or toll free at 1-866-845-2665

FROM LODGE AT DES PERES:

- Take I-270 South.
- Take the I-44 W/US 50 W to Exit 275 Soccer Park Road.
- Veer to the right. You will be on Yarnell Road, which winds down and to the right then under the highway.
- After you go under the highway, turn right on Rudder Road. Rudder Road will run parallel with the highway. You will pass Fabick Construction Company on your left.
- There will be one stop light with a Marriott Hotel on the left. After that stop light, turn left onto Fenpark Drive.
- At the stop sign, turn left onto Axminister Drive.
- Turn right onto Fencorp Drive.
- Look for a gray sign with a pink butterfly. This sign marks four companies: Creative Communications for the Parish, Binder Graphics, Accent Fulfillment and our firm, Creative Imaging, inc.
- Turn left into the parking lot at the sign and go straight. There are two sets of glass doors. **We are the second set of doors with 1568 etched above them.** There will be a table with someone to direct you to the correct room.

Lightning Source 101:

A primer on Lightning Source Inc. and its role in print on demand and self publishing

*Excerpted and adapted from the book **Aiming at Amazon: The NEW Business of Self Publishing**, Shepard Publications, 2007*

Anyone interested in self publishing has probably at least heard of author services like iUniverse, Xlibris, AuthorHouse, Lulu.com, Booklocker, Outskirts Press and Amazon's own BookSurge—services commonly referred to as “self publishing companies.” (Many self publishers prefer to call them subsidy publishers, but I'll stick to the common usage here.)

You may also know that these businesses are based on print on demand. Though this term describes a printing technology, it usually refers also to a distribution model—which, to the self publisher aiming at Amazon, is just as important. But to understand print on demand as a distribution model, you need to know a little about how the industry is set up.

Most people assume that the big self publishing companies print the books they sell, but in most cases they don't. In fact, the only one in the U.S. that does is Amazon's BookSurge. Nearly all the rest rely entirely on the company that is the real heart of the industry: Lightning Source Inc.

Never heard of it? I wouldn't be surprised. Lightning—as I'll often call it for short—doesn't want you to! They don't want to work directly with “authors” at all, only with publishers and author services, because otherwise they'd be overwhelmed. So, Lightning Source lets the self publishing companies act as “front ends” for the operation. Those services take your book, convert it to a form that Lightning can use, and take care of all the submission and administrative details. Meanwhile, as of 2006, Lightning churns out a million books a month!

But let's get back to distribution. There's something else you need to know about Lightning Source: It's owned by the same company that owns Ingram Book Group, the biggest book wholesaler in the U.S. Almost every bookstore in the country, along with many libraries and schools, orders books from Ingram.

As you might expect, Lightning Source has a direct line into Ingram. In fact, Ingram “carries” every title printed by Lightning—even if Ingram doesn't really keep the title in stock. Actually, it does stock popular Lightning titles, but the others it can get from Lightning overnight. So if a bookstore inquires, Ingram reports any Lightning book as immediately available.

So, by working with any of the self publishing companies that feed into Lightning Source, you automatically make your book available to booksellers throughout the U.S. (Contrary to what many new self publishers think, though, Ingram does not promote books and get bookstores to buy them. Ingram only makes them available and waits for orders.)

Foremost among the booksellers that can get your book from Ingram is Amazon.com. And because Amazon draws book data directly from Ingram's electronic catalog, you are guaranteed that Amazon will automatically list your book. What's more, because Amazon regularly uses Ingram for drop shipping, all Lightning titles are normally listed on Amazon as in stock or available within 24 hours, even if Amazon doesn't have its own copies at the time.

The connection between Lightning Source and the rest of the U.S. industry is even stronger than that. A few huge booksellers have the resources to tap into Lightning Source's electronic systems and order directly instead of going through Ingram. These include

- Baker and Taylor, the second largest U.S. book wholesaler and the largest supplier to U.S. schools and libraries.
- NACSCORP, another major wholesaler, as a service of the National Association of College Stores.
- Barnes & Noble, including BN.com.
- And of course, Amazon.com. Though Amazon normally orders from Ingram to fill immediate customer demand, it orders directly from Lightning to stock a book.

Meanwhile, Lightning's overseas branch, Lightning Source UK, is similarly well connected. Among the companies it supplies are Gardners Books and Bertram Books—prime U.K. book wholesalers and major suppliers of Amazon.co.uk—and the national chain Blackwell's. Books handled by Lightning in the U.S. can easily be earmarked for printing and distribution by Lightning UK as well—and vice versa.

Despite its printing in only these two countries, Lightning Source's books show up on all Amazon sites worldwide. Books from Lightning in the U.S. are sold also by Amazon in Canada, while books from Lightning UK are sold by Amazon in Canada, France, Germany, and Japan.

Of course, BookSurge—Amazon's own self publishing service—will get your book onto Amazon.com as easily as can any company associated with Lightning Source. But it can't begin to match the rest of the distribution that Lightning automatically provides. In fact, at this writing, BookSurge can't even get your book onto Amazon in other countries! Amazon.com might be your main marketing target, but you still want your book available as widely as possible.

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So, just as print on demand can remove cost as a deciding factor in publishing, print on demand through Lightning Source can also remove what has traditionally been the biggest roadblock for self publishers: lack of access to the channels of distribution. What's more, it does it in a way that eliminates most of the ongoing labor of publishing. Success no longer means you must spend your time taking orders, shipping copies, and sending invoices and reminders for payment.

Instead, just let booksellers, schools, and libraries order your book from Lightning Source or one of its partners or major accounts. Then all you need do is sit back and wait for your monthly check. In fact, except for maybe a few copies for promotion and gifts, you don't need to keep a stock of your book at all. (And as one who remembers having a hallway full of printed books in the "old days," I can't begin to tell you what a blessing that is.)

So, you should run right out and sign up with one of the self publishing companies, right? Not if you can help it!

As I said, self publishing companies like iUniverse and Xlibris are basically front ends for Lightning Source Inc., which does all the printing and maintains the distribution channels. The cut that these companies take for their middleman role is no doubt well-earned, but it's hefty. In fact, for each copy printed, it about doubles your cost of getting the book out.

But what can you do about it? Lightning Source declines to work directly with authors, limiting its dealings to publishers and author services. How can you get around that? Well, you can become a publisher.

Now, this may or may not be the best idea if you're handling only a book or two. But especially if you'll be producing any more, then setting yourself up as a publishing company makes very good sense—even if it's only to work with Lightning. Doing that can not only cut your costs in half, it can also let you set your own terms on discounts and returns!

If you live outside the U.S. or U.K., you're not left out. Because of the Internet, it's no trouble to work directly with Lightning or Lightning UK from anywhere in the world. Once you set yourself up as a publishing company, you're ready no matter where you live. No other avenue to Amazon can match the full range of benefits available to publishers who work directly with Lightning Source. Working with Lightning, then, is a key element to the new business of self publishing. If you plan to keep going in publishing and don't need a lot of handholding, Lightning is the very best way to aim at Amazon.

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We Welcome

Our Newest Members

Rosemary Whitelaw

rosewhitel@yahoo.co.uk
www.elizaeasman.com


Eliza Earsman has worked as a policewoman, and has extended legitimate work experience in a variety of situations. In London, while living on city streets, she was narrowly missed by an IRA bomb. Her book *Days of Elijah* will be available in August.

Susan Vollmer

Bootheel Publishing
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Susan's first book, *Legends, Leaders, Legacies*, has been published by Bootheel Publishing, a company dedicated to providing information that benefits society. She has worked as a newspaper reporter / photographer, and publications editor, and currently serves as a manager in international transportation.

Tom Hardin

Merchant Processing Associates
tomhardin35@aol.com
Advisory Services for Accepting Credit, Debit, T&E, Gift and Loyalty Cards. 

SLPA CO-OP Booth Opportunities

Coming in October (at The Big Read)
and November (at our November Event).

Watch www.stlouispublishers.org for details later this month!

August 15 PMAU Online Seminar

The next PMA Publishing University Online seminar is scheduled for Wednesday, August 15th at 2:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.

The topic for this session is 'Magnetize Your Website with Online Marketing.' Your website should help people to find, learn about and ultimately purchase your product, right? You'd probably like to establish an ongoing relationship with customers and keep them coming back for more information as well. Yes?

Peter Bowerman, the award-winning author of *The Well-Fed Writer* can help you put your website to work doing all those things and more.

To register, please visit our website at the following link:

http://pma-online.org/University_onlinenow8-15.cfm 



Save the Date!



We've said it before and we'll say it again. Mark your calendars NOW for a memorable Marketing, Media and Networking weekend that you won't want to miss.

November 2-4 (Friday evening – Sunday noon) SLPA presents a **10th Anniversary Gala weekend**

Drury Plaza Hotel, Downtown St. Louis. Full details and advance registration will be available in September, but here's a taste of what we're planning:

► Our keynote speakers

Brian Jud is an author, book-marketing consultant, seminar leader, television host and president of Book Marketing Works, LLC. www.bookmarketingworks.com

Penny C. Sansevieri is the CEO and founder of Author Marketing Experts, Inc., is a best-selling author and internationally recognized book marketing and media relations expert. www.amarketingexpert.com

Eric M. Kampmann, president, MidPoint Trade Books, has worked with independent publishers since 1981. He is the author of *The Book Publishers Handbook: The 7 Keys to Publishing Success* and has also taught book publishing courses at Harvard, Columbia, Hofstra and New York University. www.midpointtrade.com

► One-on-one consultations

In addition to numerous hands-on workshop sessions, Brian and Penny will be available for one-on-one consultations by appointment. (details to come with registration)

Over the course of the weekend, everyone will have the chance to develop their own comprehensive marketing plan, discover savvy, innovative ways to generate red-hot internet publicity and learn how to get on the air and how to handle those interviews once you're booked.

► Media training opportunities

During our special Media Morning, you'll learn about radio interviews, TV interviews and also marketing for introverts. Some attendees can volunteer to participate in mock interviews with Brian Jud and receive media tips from Penny.

► Choose your own break out sessions in specially focused tracks

- Design/Editing Tips
- Printer's Tips


Make your book its best featuring regional experts and sponsoring vendors.

► Maximizing your online presence

- Online How-To Workshop
- Taking Advantage of Amazon

► Network with leading service provider

An event of this scale would not be possible without the generous support of those who provide services to the independent publishing industry. These vendors will be in attendance and look forward to discussing your projects with you personally.

And plan to attend the SLPA 10th Anniversary Gala on Saturday evening, November 3. This will be an evening for all SLPA members past and present to gather and share an evening of celebration in honor of the first 10 years of our Independent Publishing organization in St. Louis. Details to come in September! 

We're not SPAM... be sure to let us in!

Make sure you receive all the timely news updates from SLPA. They'll come from this address: "St.LouisPublishers Assoc"
slpa.newsletter@yahoo.com



Questions About SLPA?



Contact Membership Chairman:
Christine Frank at 314-205-2679 or
Assistant Membership Coordinator:
Linda Austin at 314-822-1170

Next Deadline ► August 21

Don't be late – no kidding!

Send us news on your new releases or upcoming appearances or anything else you wish to share.

Get your news and articles in EARLY! Send your information, articles and announcements to newslettereditor@stlouispublishers.org.

SLPA Monthly Newsletter design by SLPA member Peggy Nehmen. Nehmen-Kodner Design www.n-kcreative.com