

AI Book Publishing

VOLUME 2

Construction, Production and Budget Publishers

INCLUDES: The \$3,000 Audible Audiobook Production Process Revealed

Everything that happens between finishing your manuscript and going live on Amazon. Editing, cover design, formatting, audiobook production, publisher selection and the complete AI tools comparison.

Built by William C. DeShon — Licensed Ohio Realtor #SAL0000356801, Amazon Published Author and Audible Audiobook Producer

This is a self-study PDF guide. No coaching or support is included.

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Professional Editing on a Budget

Your manuscript is finished. Now comes the step most self-published authors skip — and the step that separates books that look amateur from books that look professional.

THE THREE TYPES OF EDITING

Developmental Editing — Big-picture edit: structure, flow, missing content, chapter order. Done first. Cost: \$1,000-\$5,000 for professional

Copy Editing — Sentence-level edit: clarity, consistency, grammar, voice. Done second. Cost: \$500-\$2,000 for professional

Proofreading — Final pass: spelling, punctuation, formatting errors. Done last. Cost: \$100-\$500 for professional

HOW TO EDIT WITH AI FIRST (SAVE \$2,000+)

Before spending money on a human editor, run your manuscript through AI. A thorough AI edit can catch 80-90% of issues a professional editor would find:

- Paste each chapter into Claude and ask: "Edit this chapter for clarity, flow, redundancy and grammar. Suggest specific improvements."
- Ask Claude: "Does this chapter serve the book's core promise? What is missing or unnecessary?"
- Use Grammarly (free version) to catch grammar and spelling errors across the full document
- Use Hemingway App (hemingwayapp.com — free) to check readability score — aim for Grade 8-10
- Use ProWritingAid (free version) for style analysis

WHEN TO HIRE A HUMAN EDITOR

After AI editing, consider a human editor if:

- Your book is in a technical field where accuracy is critical (medical, legal, financial)
- You plan to submit to traditional publishers or literary agents
- Your manuscript is your primary income source or brand foundation
- You have gone through 3+ AI editing rounds and still feel something is off

Budget option: Reedsy.com marketplace. Verified professional editors. Post your project and receive quotes. Average cost \$0.02-\$0.03 per word for proofreading = \$300-\$450 for a 150-page book.

Cover Design That Sells — Budget AI Methods

You absolutely DO judge a book by its cover on Amazon. Readers make their decision in under 3 seconds. A bad cover kills sales. A great cover doubles them.

WHAT MAKES AN AMAZON COVER SELL

- **Readable at thumbnail size** — Your title must be legible at 1 inch wide on a phone screen
- **Genre-appropriate design** — Business books look different from self-help. Research your genre conventions.
- **Professional typography** — Font choice signals quality. Avoid free fonts that look amateur.
- **Strong contrast** — Dark background + light text OR light background + dark text. No muddy middle.
- **One dominant visual element** — Not five things competing for attention. One powerful image.

FREE AND BUDGET COVER DESIGN OPTIONS

Tool	Cost	Best For	Skill Level
Canva	Free / \$13/month	Templates + easy editing	Beginner
Midjourney	\$10/month	AI-generated cover art	Intermediate
DALL-E (ChatGPT)	\$20/month	AI image generation	Beginner
Fiverr Designers	\$25-\$100	Professional custom covers	None needed
Reedsy Cover Design	\$300-\$600	Premium professional cover	None needed
BookBrush	\$8/month	Book cover templates	Beginner

AI PROMPT — Cover Art Generation:

"Generate a professional non-fiction book cover image for a book called [TITLE] targeting [AUDIENCE]. Style: [describe your desired aesthetic]. Main visual element: [describe]. Color palette: [colors]. The image should look professional enough for Amazon and communicate [core benefit] at a glance."

Interior Formatting and Manuscript Preparation

Amazon KDP has specific formatting requirements. If your manuscript does not meet them, your book will look unprofessional on Kindle or have print errors in the paperback.

FREE FORMATTING TOOLS

Reedsy Book Editor (reedsy.com/write-a-book) — Best free option. Write in their editor and export KDP-ready files for both Kindle and print simultaneously.

Draft2Digital (draft2digital.com) — Free formatting and distribution. Upload your Word doc and it formats automatically.

Atticus (atticus.io) — \$147 one-time. Best paid option. Formats for all major platforms simultaneously.

Vellum (Mac only) (vellum.pub) — \$199 one-time. Most beautiful output. Only works on Mac.

KDP FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

For Kindle (eBook):

- File formats accepted: .docx, .epub, .html, .mobi
- Use Heading 1 for chapter titles — KDP auto-generates table of contents
- No fixed page sizes — readers can change font size, so avoid fixed layouts
- Images: 300 DPI minimum, saved as JPEG or PNG
- Recommended: Export as .epub from Reedsy or Draft2Digital

For Paperback Print:

- Trim sizes: 5x8, 5.5x8.5, or 6x9 inches (most popular)
- Margins: Inside margin 0.75 inch (for page count 300+), outside 0.5 inch
- Font: 11-12pt for body, 14-16pt for headers
- File format: PDF preferred, .docx also accepted
- Check KDP's print preview tool before ordering proof copy

Producing Your Audible Audiobook — The Full Process

William paid over \$3,000 to produce the audiobook for his first Amazon book. This phase reveals the entire process — what it cost, what it included, where the money went and how you can do it for far less today.

WHAT WILLIAM PAID AND WHY

William chose a professional production studio route because he wanted the highest quality output for his first book. Here is where the \$3,000 went:

Service	Cost	Notes
Professional narrator	\$1,800	Experienced male voice actor, studio quality
Studio recording time	\$600	Multi-session recording at professional studio
Audio editing and mastering	\$400	Noise reduction, level normalization, ACX compliance
Project management	\$200	Coordination between narrator, studio and publisher
Total	\$3,000+	High quality but unnecessary for most authors

WHAT WILLIAM WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY TODAY

For a first book — I would use the ACX Royalty Share program or AI narration. The quality difference is not worth \$3,000 when you are building your first audience.

OPTION 1 — ACX ROYALTY SHARE (FREE)

ACX (Audiobook Creation Exchange — acx.com) is Amazon's audiobook production platform. The Royalty Share option lets you produce a professional audiobook for ZERO upfront cost:

- Create an ACX account at acx.com (free)
- Post your book as a "Rights Holder" looking for a narrator
- Narrators audition for your project — you listen and select
- Choose "Royalty Share" — the narrator records for free in exchange for 50% of your audiobook royalties
- ACX handles distribution to Audible, Amazon and Apple Books automatically
- You pay nothing upfront. You share royalties only when books sell.

Ideal for: First-time authors, lower-budget productions, non-fiction books

OPTION 2 — HIRE A NARRATOR ON ACX (PAY PER FINISHED HOUR)

If you want to keep 100% of royalties, pay narrators per finished hour:

- Budget narrators: \$100-\$200 per finished hour
- Mid-range narrators: \$200-\$400 per finished hour

- A 150-page book reads in approximately 3-4 hours of finished audio
- Total cost for budget narrator: \$300-\$800
- Use ACX marketplace or Voices.com to find narrators

OPTION 3 — AI NARRATION (LOWEST COST)

AI voice technology has improved dramatically. These tools produce near-human quality audio:

Tool	Monthly Cost	Quality	ACX Compatible
ElevenLabs	\$22/month	Excellent — most human	Yes
Murf.ai	\$26/month	Very good	Yes
Play.ht	\$29/month	Good	Yes
Speechify	\$139/year	Good	Yes
Amazon Polly	Pay per use ~\$4/1M chars	Decent	Yes

ACX TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Audio format: MP3, 192kbps or higher
- Noise floor: -60 dBFS or lower
- RMS: between -23 and -18 dBFS
- Peak: no louder than -3 dBFS
- Each chapter = one audio file
- Opening and closing credits required

Budget Publisher Recommendations

Choosing the right publisher determines where your book appears, how much you earn per sale and how much control you keep. Here is the complete comparison:

Publisher	Upfront Cost	Royalty %	Distribution	Best For
Amazon KDP	FREE	35-70% Kindle 60% Print	Amazon only	Most authors — recommended
IngramSpark	\$49 setup	45-55%	Worldwide bookstores	Bookstore + library distribution
The Empire Publishers	\$200-\$500	50-70%	Amazon + select	Traditional feel, full service
Draft2Digital	FREE	60-65%	Apple, B&N, Kobo etc	Wide distribution beyond Amazon
Lulu.com	FREE	50-60%	Lulu + Amazon	Print on demand quality
BookBaby	\$399-\$799	100%	Amazon + 60+ retailers	Premium full-service option

WILLIAM'S RECOMMENDATION: Start with Amazon KDP (free) for your first book. Add IngramSpark (\$49) if you want bookstore distribution. Both together is the sweet spot for most non-fiction authors.

Best AI Tools for Writing Your Book — William's Comparison

William used multiple AI tools while writing his Amazon book. Here is the honest comparison of what works, what costs what and which tool to use for each part of your book creation process:

Tool	Monthly Cost	Best For	Rating
Claude (Anthropic)	\$20/month	Long-form writing, keeping YOUR voice, professional non-fiction	5/5 — Top Pick
ChatGPT-4o (OpenAI)	\$20/month	Brainstorming, outlines, research, title ideas	5/5 — Top Pick
Sudowrite	\$19/month	Book-specific writing tool, chapter expansion	4/5
Jasper AI	\$49/month	Business books, marketing copy, professional tone	4/5
Reedsy (free)	FREE	Writing AND formatting — exports KDP-ready files	4/5
Novelcrafter	\$10/month	Organizing chapters, tracking structure	3/5
Grammarly	Free/\$12/month	Grammar, spelling, style checking	4/5
Hemingway App	Free online	Readability scoring, sentence simplification	4/5

WILLIAM'S PERSONAL TOOLKIT: Claude + ChatGPT + Reedsy = \$40/month total. This combination produces a professional, publish-ready book at the lowest possible cost. Claude writes chapters in your voice. ChatGPT handles research and brainstorming. Reedsy formats and exports your finished manuscript for free.

WHAT TO AVOID: Any tool charging \$50+/month for book writing alone. Claude and ChatGPT at \$20/month each outperform most expensive dedicated tools. More expensive does NOT mean better for books.

REAL COST COMPARISON — WHAT WILLIAM PAID VS WHAT YOU SHOULD PAY

Service	William Paid	Budget Option	You Save
Editing	\$500+	\$0-\$150 with AI tools	\$350+
Cover Design	\$200+	\$25-\$50 on Fiverr + AI	\$150+
Interior Formatting	\$100+	\$0 with Reedsy	\$100+
Audiobook Production	\$3,000+	\$0-\$400 (ACX royalty share or AI)	\$2,600+
Publishing Setup	\$200+	\$0 Amazon KDP / \$49 IngramSpark	\$151+
AI Writing Tools	\$0 (wrote manually)	\$40/month Claude + ChatGPT	Months of time
TOTAL	\$4,000+	Under \$500	\$3,500+ saved

READY FOR VOLUME 3?

Volume 3 covers: Publishing your book on Amazon KDP step-by-step, going wide beyond Amazon, getting your first reviews, marketing with AI and building a business around your book — including realistic income projections.

Get Volume 3 at WealthHorizonsAcademy.org