



Choosing a publisher

This fact sheet provides information to help you choose a publisher. It is preferable to contact a publisher in the early stages of developing a resource.

Why use a publisher

Using a publisher to publish and distribute your resource has several advantages over self-publishing. Publishers are experienced in the publishing process and have established marketing and distribution channels. They may also be willing to underwrite your publication in exchange for a percentage of the profits.

What services can a publisher provide?

- editing
- proofreading
- design and illustrations
- indexing
- typesetting
- printing
- marketing including launch, catalogues, web and direct marketing
- distribution

You may decide to only use the publisher for some of these services. For example, you may have your own illustrator. This needs to be negotiated with the publisher at the outset.

What financial assistance will a publisher provide?

Make sure you discuss the royalty arrangements with any potential publisher. Unless you're self-publishing, it is not typical to be asked to pay for publication.

You need to have a clear understanding of the financial support the publisher will provide and how this affects the terms of the agreement.

You also need to discuss copyright arrangements, whether your organisation can sell copies, if you would like to provide free copies or discounts for particular groups and, if relevant, the impact of an online version on sales of the hard copy.

What information do you need to give a publisher?

An initial approach to a publisher may begin with a phone call or email to find out if they are interested, in principle, in publishing your resource. The kind of information they will need to make this decision may include:

- author / organisation profile
- table of contents and sample chapter
- number of pages
- a strong marketing rationale
- the previous edition, if available, or the extent of updating required for a new edition
- edition, previous publisher, and number of copies sold of previous edition.

You should make sure that you understand a publisher's submission guidelines before making an initial approach. Not all publishers accept unsolicited manuscripts and submission guidelines can vary widely.





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What to think about when you are choosing a publisher

- Do they have expertise and experience in plain language legal editing and publishing?
- Have they worked with community organisations before?
- Have their previous productions been high-quality and delivered on time?
- Do they have the capacity to market and distribute to bookshops, government, the legal industry, community groups and educational institutions?
- It might be useful to talk to other organisations who have used the same publisher.

How to find a publisher

Talk with other organisations who have published recently to understand publishers who may be interested in working with you.

Search databases of publishers such as the Australian Publishers' Association industry directory or the Small Press Network member list.

The following publishers have experience in working with community organisations to produce plain language law publications. The Law and Justice Foundation does not specifically recommend these publishers, they are simply suggested starting points for your own investigations.

Federation Press

www.federationpress.com.au

Halstead Press

www.halsteadpress.com.au

Thomson Reuters

<https://store.thomsonreuters.com.au/support/for/authors.aspx>