

# ***MAKING YOUR OWN COVERS— A GOOD OR BAD IDEA?***





Buying a cover is expensive. But an amateurish-looking cover makes no sales. What should a self-publisher do?

Many courses and guides will tell self-publishing writers to buy their covers. They must look professional, they say. You cannot do that yourself, they say.

And if you have tried your hand at a cover and even you can see that it looks nothing like the covers you see in bookstores, then they may be right.

At least at first.

The problem for a new indie publisher is that a cover can become a considerable expense. If you have only one or two books published already, you are probably only making “coffee money.” That is when the thought of writing and publishing another book will make you sigh. Another expense.

You begin to think the wrong way, thinking of new books as expenses, not as possible income streams.

And you are right in doing so.

## **Fiverr Covers**

If you try to bring the expenses down by ordering covers on Fiverr, they will often lack the professional look that the best-selling books have.



Fiverr sellers will only make a few dollars for each cover, unless they have raised their prices. That means that if they want a profitable business, then they have only a few minutes for each cover.

The best of those Fiverr cover makers use templates that are professionally made. This secures a professional look, but it also means that your cover will look like thousands of others, except for a few differences.

You can see this for yourself, if you check “Kindle covers” on Fiverr. Check their samples. Then go a tour on Amazon and see if you can recognize some of them in different forms.

A Fiverr cover can work as a temporary solution for you to test out if your book sells at all.

## **Premade Covers from a Shop**

There are places where you can buy pre-made covers. One of the oldest and best known is GoOnWrite.com. You can choose between the covers the artist has already made, buy it, and he will add your author name and title of your book. Then he will remove that cover from his shop. Those covers are more expensive than the general Fiverr cover, but also slightly better, because they are unique.



## Outsource the Design to More Than One

Sometimes a course will tell you to hire two Fiverr artists to make sure you get a better result. You could do that... Or you could go all in and ask many graphic artists to design your cover, and only pay for the one you decide on.

A place like 99Designs.com is made for that.

You simply write what you want, and artists will make covers based on their interpretations of how they think your cover should look. You look at the results, and you pick the one you like the best.

Prices start at \$299, but if you don't find a design you like, you can get your money back.

## Hire a Cover Artist

You can get good, bad, excellent or mediocre results by hiring a cover artist. Before you do, make sure to see samples of previous work and perhaps even ask for a second opinion from other writers. When you hire a cover artist, expect to pay from \$100 and up. Way up.

Now you have heard about the outsourced solutions to get a more or less professionally looking cover.

What is the alternative?



# Create Your Own Cover

If your cover attempts look like a five-year-old had fun drawing mom and dad, then despair not. There are several ways to overcome that hurdle.

If you publish on Amazon's KDP platform, you can use their cover templates. They are better than nothing, but you will also see several other books that will look exactly like yours, only with the title and author name different.

A better alternative is to learn how to make covers yourself. Professionally looking covers. But how do you do that without spending years learning graphic design?

You imitate other successful covers.

You do not copy, ever. That is both unethical and illegal. But you can find a cover you like and use it as an inspiration for your own.

First, go to Amazon and look up your sub-category. Check the best-sellers in that sub-category and notice, overall, how the covers look. Are there people on the covers? Do we see their faces, their bodies, or only one of the two? Do they look at you or walk away from you? Are there buildings or landscapes on the covers? Or are there only words and names?



How are the colors? Dark? Bright? Many colors combined, or only one or two? Feed your subconscious with all that knowledge.

Then pick one cover you like.

Create your own imitation with Photoshop/Illustrator, Affinity Photo/Designer, or an online app like Canva.

Use other pictures, other colors, and of course add your own title and author name. Use similar-looking fonts.

(Make sure you have the rights to use the pictures and the fonts on your cover.)

Those three things alone will make your cover look very different from the original. But it will look professional, giving, of course, that you chose a professional-looking cover to begin with.

## **Does this take time?**

Yes, it will still take you some time to learn this, but for every new cover you create, it will get easier. And it will make it easier for you to decide to write and publish a new book, when you do not have a heavy expense hanging over your head.



# Creating Better Covers

Sometimes you cannot copy existing covers. Perhaps your title is a lot longer than the original, or shorter. Or you want your own style at the end, something that brands your series of books better.

Then there are courses you can take.

There are plenty of free YouTube guides that will show you how to use your preferred design tool.

But where you can really tell an amateurish cover from a professional is how the title and author name looks.

If there is one skill that can make you better at making your own covers, then it's "typography."

Even unskilled readers can spot a bad cover from a good one based on the choice of typefaces on a cover, and the size of the letters, how close or spread ahead they are, and how they are organized.

When you are ready to go this route, there are plenty of that kind of courses on LinkedIn. You can even try them out for free for a month.



## So, What Should You Do?

If the thought of paying for a cover is keeping you from writing your book, then use Amazon's templates or get a cheap Fiverr cover.

Over time, you will be better off learning how to make your own covers. Spend the time learning, first by imitating. Later by learning more of the craft.

Or maybe by then you have made so much money with your books that you can afford a real cover artist.

Fiverr Example:

[www.fiverr.com/rakibhasanpriyo/do-book-cover-design-kindle-cover-ebook-cover-design](https://www.fiverr.com/rakibhasanpriyo/do-book-cover-design-kindle-cover-ebook-cover-design)

Here's where he got his templates:

<https://bookcovermall.com/dreamcoverpack-version-1>

99Design prices: <https://99designs.com/pricing/book-cover-design>