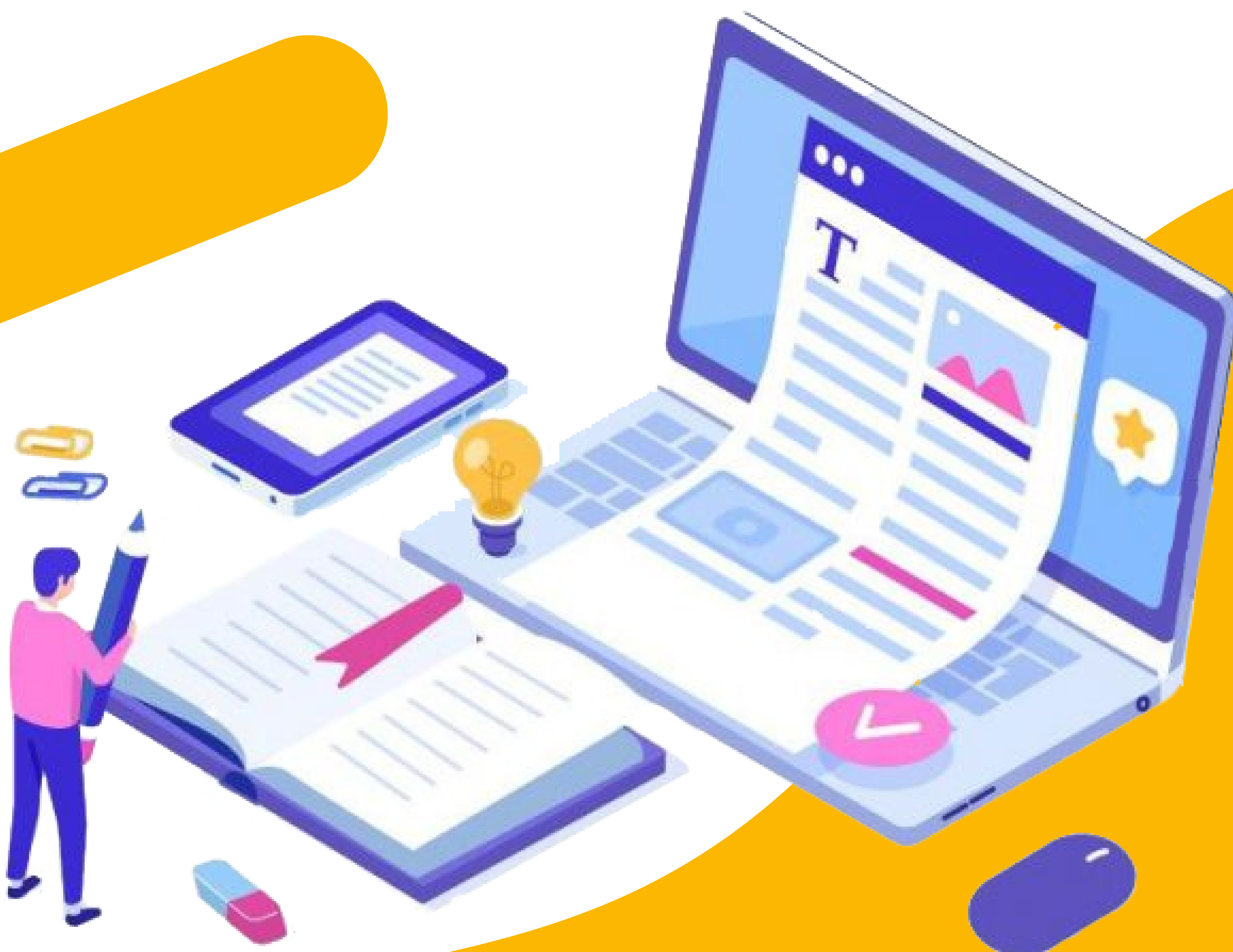


WHICH PROGRAMS DO YOU NEED TO SELF-PUBLISH?



Are you afraid that self-publishing is very demanding and that you must have a lot of programs to make it happen? Then here is good news for you.

Back In the Day

Back in the day, the first writers wrote their books with pens. Then the typewriter made things a lot easier, and for decades it was the main tool when it came to writing books.

The author would send the typed manuscript to a publishing house, where a typographer would copy the book by setting typefaces into a metal frame. Then with the help of those frames, ink and a press, they would copy the words onto paper.

A writer did not have to worry about any of this. He just had to type the text with no errors, which was hard enough when you could not just go back to correct them.

But then the writer depended on a publishing house to buy and print his book.

Poor Man's Publishing

There was a time when you had to print the pages of your books yourself and then staple them together if you did not have money to go to a printer. And if no publishing house would buy your book.

But nowadays, you just need a text file, and you are good to go.

That is... in principle. Because in reality it can take a little more than that, but let us look at that here.

You Can Publish a Simple Text File

Today, you can get published, simply by having your manuscript in a simple text file.

You need nothing fancy. Text, with headlines and sub-headers, will do.

Therefore, you can use a program you are already using when you write. Programs like Word, Open Office, or even Google Docs work fine.

If you want more features, you can go with Scrivener, which gives you a great overview. That is helpful when you write books with more than three chapters.

Scrivener can show you a chapter alone, or even a scene alone, if you write fiction. It can also show you an index card overview, and you can move the index card around.

The prices of those programs go from free (Open Office and Google Docs) to around \$49 (for Scrivener).

But in one form or another, you need a writing program, because even as a self-publisher you need the text file in electronic form. Not paper.

If You Want to Format Your Book Nicely

Depending on your demands, you can format your book with your existing programs, or you can buy more expensive solutions.

You need two different files for the electronic version of your book and the paperback version.

The electronic version should be in a specific format, for example ePub, and the print version should be a PDF file.

Some print-on-demand services will have specific demands, and some will even accept Word documents. You have to check with the service you use.

KDP (Amazon's self-publishing platform) offers an addon you can use with Word. With the help of that addon, you can format your manuscript, so it looks nice both in the electronic version and in paperback.

The addon is called Kindle Create, and it is free.

Scrivener can be set up to format your books, both for the electronic version and the paperback, and once it is set up, it only takes a few clicks the next time you want to format a book.

Scrivener will then create the output either in ePub or another electronic for you choose, or in PDF.

You can also use programs like Vellum (only for Mac), Adobe Illustrator, or Affinity Publisher to format your pages nicely. Those programs are not fitting for writing the book, only for taking the finished text and format it nicely.

Kindlepreneur has a program called Atticus. You can use it both for writing and formatting your text.

If you use Draft2Digital, you can post a simple Word document and format the book on their platform.

But unless you want to outsource this part, then you need a program to take care of the formatting.

Programs to Make Covers for Your Book

If you create your own covers, you can use an online application like Canva. It has limited possibilities, but it is good for beginners, because it is click and drag, and you have your design.

For more professional covers, you need a stand-alone program like Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator, or Affinity Photo or Designer.

Those programs can handle treatment of the images like removing backgrounds, changing colors on photos and graphics, and you can arrange them nicely so you make the covers look professional.

Those programs also have typing features so you can add titles and author names to your covers. Some of them will allow you to move letters closer together and wider apart, change the line space and more. Others, like Canva, have more limited options.

If you are on a shoestring budget, you can use a free program like Gimp. It can feel less intuitive to use than Canva or Affinity's programs. But it is free, and it does a good job of handling graphics.

One thing is certain: you cannot make a cover without having a program that is dedicated to graphic works.

Three Programs—That Is All It Takes

Thanks to online bookstores and print-on-demand services, that is all you need.

Three programs, and you can get them all for free.

Or you can invest a little money in them, which will bring better results and an easier workflow for you.

You need a program to write your book.

You need a program to format your book, so it looks nice.

Word, Scrivener, and Atticus can take care of both tasks, which means you save money on only having to buy one program.

You need a program to create your cover.

That is, it. You are good to go, and you can self-publish your book on Amazon, Lulu, Draft2Digital or elsewhere.

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