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Publishing Locally

By Mike Blackledge.com

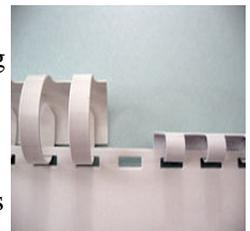


In a recent program for AGS, author and scientist Nigel Hey spoke of the environment for publishing today. He informed us that publishing companies don't even bother to send out rejection slips if you were to submit a manuscript. Nigel ended up 'self-publishing' through Troubador, somewhat of a United Kingdom version of CreateSpace.com (CreateSpace is owned and operated by Amazon.com) for self-published books. This column explores closer-to-home options for self-publishing your research findings.

Most writers would tell you that the most difficult part of writing is coming up with the content. In genealogy, the content is the easy part! It is formed as we gather more facts, events, stories and enter them into our genealogy (software) program. Along the way, we scan in a few photographs and historical documents, which always add interest to our research facts. In the May 2011 Quarterly, Computer Corner discussed The Magic Button¹, a near-instant book (or narrative report) option available to all of us who use genealogy software programs. Not only do we genealogists always have the latest version of the content at our fingertips, we can actually create a 'reader-ready' narrative report of our findings at a moment's notice.

So how to publish? There are numerous options available, and some of the criteria for which option to choose refer to cost and to number of copies desired, two critical and related factors. Let's say you just want a few copies of your report, to provide as Holiday gifts, or to present at a family reunion. You can then print out those copies on your home computer, staple them yourself, or take them to a local printer for some type of binding.

Comb binding: Comb binding is one of many ways to physically assemble or bind loose pages together into a book. Comb binding is sometimes referred to as plastic comb binding or spiral comb binding. This method utilizes round plastic spines with 19 rings (for US Letter size) or 21 rings (for A4 paper size)² and a hole puncher that makes rectangular holes. To bind a document, the user first punches holes in the paper with a specialized hole punch. Pages must be punched a few at a time with most of these machines. If hard covers are desired, they must be punched as well. In bulk applications, a paper drilling machine may be used.



You can purchase a comb binding machine from numerous vendors, to include the ubiquitous Amazon.com, for about \$85. These machines allow you to manually punch the rectangular holes required at about 10 sheets at a time, and then bind up to 150 sheets, using 3/4" comb. Some machines allow the user to punch and bind

¹ The "Magic Button" is the Narrative Report feature of your genealogy software. We note that AGS Member Dale Lawson experienced a problem here: *"I used Legacy to build my data base, but I do not recommend the product. When I was ready to create the .rtf to export to Word, there were problems. When contacted, the Legacy help desk readily admitted that they knew of the problems, did not have a fix, and no estimate of when or if they would. I created a GEDCOM file and ported the file to Roots Magic 5, which worked well."*

² A4 size and US Letter size aren't all that different. Letter-sized paper (also known as US Letter), measures 8.5" by 11". With few exceptions, when people in any other country reach for a sheet of paper to write or print on, they reach for a piece of A4-sized paper, measuring 210mm by 297mm, or about 8.26" by 11.69", thus skinnier and longer than "our" paper. These two constitute the two standards for size of writing paper in the world.

continuously for greater productivity. AGS member **Dale Lawson** tells us that he purchased a comb binding machine about 10 years ago for \$50, and still uses it today for small jobs – however he reminds us that for the heavier grade paper, such as 28 lb paper, one can only punch about 3 sheets at a time. This works well for binding family files and smaller pamphlets and directories, such as volunteer work for organizations.

PDF files: For our larger narrative reports, we live in a world where PDF files are the common currency among printers and binders. PDF (Portable Document Format) is a formal open standard known as ISO 32000, maintained by the International Organization for Standardization. PDF files are viewable and printable on virtually any platform Mac OS, Microsoft® Windows®, UNIX®, and many mobile platforms. PDF files look like original documents and preserve source file information text, drawings, video, 3D, maps, full-color graphics, photos, and even business logic regardless of the application used to create them. Of particular interest to genealogists, all PDF documents are fully searchable, and the Adobe Reader comes with a sophisticated search engine just click on the binoculars icon (or press Ctrl-f) to search for any phrase.

You can always determine which version of PDF reader your computer is using by clicking on the Help tab at the top of the Adobe Reader page and see what version of Adobe Reader you are using. If it does not list a line that says at least, "About Adobe Reader XI" then there is a more current version available to you: Vers. 11. To upgrade to the latest version of this free reader, visit **www.adobe.com**

Sewn Binding: A more professional look than comb binding is sewn bindings. Stitched or sewn bindings come in two different types: One type is constructed just like a hard bound book but without the hard covers. The binding is considered as durable as a hard bound. The other type is constructed by stapling through the centerfold, and is known as saddle-stitching. Saddle-stitching connects a set of nested folios into a single issue. This is often seen in magazines such as comic books.

Bookbinding and Printing in Albuquerque: Dale and **Jeanene Lawson** did quite a bit of research on local printing and publishing options in the Albuquerque area. The best option they found was Minuteman Press for the printing, and Bookbinders of New Mexico for the binding. You may have different favorites; however here are some of their findings as reported by Jeanene:

“Dale had a 400 page book printed at Minuteman Press, (6300 San Mateo Blvd NE, www.albuquerque.minutemanpress.com. Phone 505-857-9771). We went to many printing shops in Albuquerque to get quotes. Dale had a few pictures that were color but most were black and white. I think the cost was 5 cents a copy for black and white pages while the color copies (pages containing color photos) were 15 cents a copy. Minuteman was not only the most reasonable but quick. We ordered one copy of the book and it was ready the next day. Many of the companies we checked with said that would email us a quote. Some never did get back with a quote and some finally got back to us a week or two later. They, of course, were automatically taken off the list.

“Dale gave Minuteman Press a CD that had a PDF file of his book plus a pedigree chart PDF file. A PDF file is the preferred method that the printers want. I don't know but there may be an extra charge if you bring in hard copy pages (etc).

“The PDF file included the color photos embedded in some text pages. (No loose photos). Dale had a list of pages that he wanted to have in color. All the printer had to do was set up the printer and print what was on the CD. The person at Minuteman looked at the CD to see if he had any questions and it was good to go. The book was printed on 24 pound paper. There was no one time setup charge. There was no discount for more than 10 or 100 copies. When we picked up the printed book pages, it was in a small box ready to take to the binder.

“There were extra charges, I believe, for different size paper, paper choice (heavier paper), and other choices that are available. We were happy with the 24 pound paper, as the pictures did not bleed through to the next

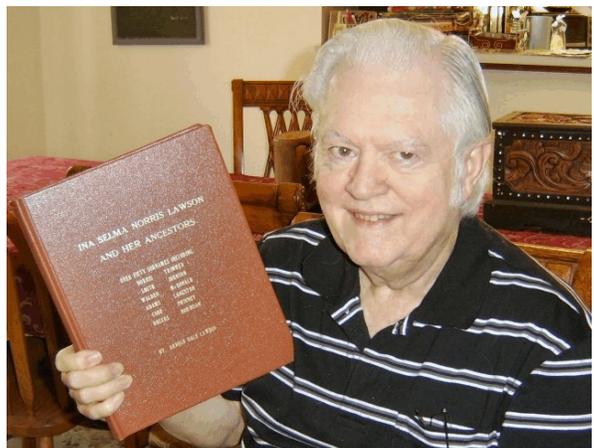
page. The printing looked like what you would see viewing it on the computer.

“The Bookbinding was done at Bookbinders of New Mexico. (2400 Morningside NE, nmbookbinders@aol.com. Phone 505-830-1499; no web site). They only do bookbinding and as far as I can tell they are the only ones in town that do bookbinding. They were quite reasonable. We had one hard bound copy made 8x11. They trimmed the edges of the paper and bound it. We had a choice of many colors. They put the name on the edge of the book. We could have had the name of the book on the front for \$2.00 more per book. They said it may take 4-6 weeks, and we got it in 2.

There is a price break of 5% after the first 20 books. I would recommend both companies in a heartbeat! We were extremely pleased. The bookbinding was \$25 plus tax while the printing was about \$25. About \$50.00 per book for our 400 page book.

“We went this route because the printers didn't seem to know much about the bookbinding. They didn't have samples or suggestions. What we found out is that the bookbinding is farmed out to Bookbinders of New Mexico. So, we eliminated the middle man.”

Dale brought his finished product to the OAFs luncheon (Online Ancestry Finders, an open lunch at Shark Reef Café held each first Wednesday of the month, organized by Howard Henry) for their perusal, and the group was quite impressed with the professional look achieved. More importantly, Dale was very happy with his book! Dale is willing to talk to AGS members about his experience. You can contact him using the information in your AGS Members Directory.



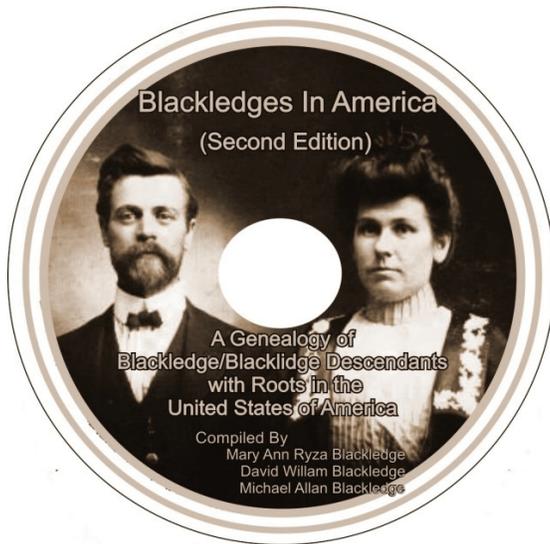
Publishing on CD: Dale’s work related to a good-sized book (over 400 pages) and a relatively small run (about 10 copies). For even larger books and larger runs, the cost of hard copy printing can be prohibitive, at least for many of your genealogy contributors. Here you may want to consider publishing your book on a CD – again, as PDF files. For the Blackledge lineage in the United States, our 3-person team of compilers published our First Edition (950 pages) as a hard copy book, and our Second Edition (3300 pages) as a book on CD.

As stated earlier, in both the hardcopy route and the book on CD approach, the ‘coin of the realm’ is PDF files. Every new computer comes with an Adobe PDF reader already installed. I recommend using the Adobe reader directly, or Internet Explorer reader – I have experienced the Mozilla Firefox Adobe Reader hanging sometimes with a large PDF file. Portable Document Format (PDF) ensures your printed or viewed file retains the formatting that you intended. The PDF format is also useful if you intend to use commercial printing methods. Today all printing companies from Office Max and Staples to large printing houses work from PDF files on a CD or a thumb (flash) drive. Your computer can easily download such files to a CD, or save them to a thumb drive. Additionally, if you are working in Microsoft Word 2007 or later, you have the “Save as PDF” option available to you.

It is helpful to realize that the bulk of the CD business is music CDs, not book CDs. Because of this, there are two techniques in use: CD **duplication** and CD **replication**. CD replication is primarily for high-quality music CDs, and for a large run of 500 or more. For your book on CD, the CD duplication process is all that is needed or wanted.

There are numerous vendors found on the Internet who would like to help you publish your CD-book. An investigation will yield, among others, these companies: US Digital Media (Phoenix, AZ), Nationwide Disc (Richland Hills, TX), and Copycats Media (Minneapolis, MN). You can ask each by email for their bid on however many CDs you think you might want, but to level the playing field, make sure you describe the same

package for each bid – say, each CD packaged in a jewel case with a two-panel insert and a tray card, with clear overwrap (which you might think of as shrink-wrap). The “jewel case” is that plastic box in which CDs are packaged. The two-panel insert is the front and inside-front of the jewel case, and the tray card is the outside back for the jewel case, plus the spines (side flaps) which fold up to create a ‘tray.’



Since this was my first time and I wasn't at all sure about handling the graphic images for the CD jewel case, I wanted to use a Local Publisher for this CD process, and found a few in the Albuquerque area. The one I settled on was **Roadrunner Duplication**, which like most of the CD duplicators is a one-person company, in this case Mike Candelaria operating out of his home. I was impressed with Mike's willingness to work with the customer, even coming to my house to show me samples and, eventually, the jewel case and CD work. Unlike the Internet companies, Roadrunner charges you nothing until the final product is delivered and you are satisfied. He also uses local talent, such as the non-profit *Adelante Development Center Inc* for the shrink wrap/packaging final step in the process. However, this is also a disadvantage, as when *Adelante* is backed up, the customer waits for his order. This would not happen with a large Internet company such as Nationwide.

CDs: Pros and Cons The overwhelming advantage of books on CD over hard copy is the cost, both for production and mailing. If you order 100 CDs, the cost will be no more than \$2.50 per CD, and perhaps as low as \$2. This is regardless of the number of pages or photos, and note that a CD can hold up to 600 MBs. Color photos are ‘free’ on a CD. Our 3300 page book, plus a folder of ‘extra’ photos, did not even take up 60 MBs. Still \$2.50 per CD, whereas the book if published as hard copy would be about \$150 per copy, plus another \$15 or so to mail, even as media mail. It costs only \$2.24 to mail your CD as a First Class Small Parcel in a clasp envelope to any address in the USA.

One disadvantage of books on CD is that you don't have a book you can hold in your hand, and, say, flip open to page 127. Your ‘customers’ must use a computer to read your book, or at least an e-reader such as Kindle or iPad. However, with PDF files, as noted earlier, you can do a full text search, even for names or terms that are not in the Index. If you want to search for *Civil War* or *liver disease* or *Dorcas*, go for it! Another consideration is that you will want to come up with some graphics for your CD – this is both a positive (describing your product) and a negative (one more thing to worry about). However, most CD duplication services will provide templates to ensure you line up your artwork or text for the CD and the jewel case so it will print properly.

Summary: Genealogists can create the content for a book (or a narrative report) at any time, using their genealogy software program. Any large city such as Albuquerque offers a wide range of options for local publishing, both in hard copy with bookbinding, and as a book on CD. With CDs you will need to decide on the packaging, e.g., clamshell, jewel case, or DVD Library Box. Among the questions to be considered by the genealogist is how many pages are in the book, how many copies are desired, and how important is it to control costs. There are many businesses in the Albuquerque area who will want to help you with your project.