

12/14

flush left

CreateSpace vs. KDP Print

Last fall, 2016, KDP announced a beta program, KDP Print, to print paperbacks as part of their services. It is in direct competition with CreateSpace (CS). There is no way at this time, to know what Amazon intends—whether CS will be absorbed into KDP, the KDP Print experiment will end and it will be brought into the CS umbrella, or both print-on-demand services will continue—but there are good, sound reasons to use CS for print books.

CS and KDP Print, appear to use the same facilities and materials, but with different policies and recommendations:

Policy	CS	KDP
Easy to follow, complete, illustrated guidelines	✓	
Digital proofs	✓	✓
Printed proofs	✓	
Author copies (at cost)	✓	
Test books (at cost)	✓	
Industry Trim Sizes	15	16
Custom Sizes (4" x 6" to 8.5" x 11.69" (B&W) or 11" (color))	✓	
Minimum font size	None	7 pt
Minimum line thickness	None	.75 pt
Bleeds from Word files*	✓	
References to other publishing companies †	✓	
References to Amazon, Amazon affiliated companies. Kindle, Createspace, etc. ‡	✓	
Vector images can bleed	✓	

Recommended		
No color profiles §		✓
Minimum 300 dpi		✓
Grayscale background minimum 10%	None	✓
Only one color space		✓

* The option to choose bleeds for files uploaded as doc, docx, html, or rtf files is not offered by KDP Print.

† Presumably bibliographies, footnotes, recommended books, etc. cannot mention publishers in KDP Print.

14/26 Times Justified

10/12 Times Justified

ctr

12on14.us

- ‡ Prohibiting mentioning these (as KDP Print does) would prevent, for example, books on creating Kindle books or formatting books for print using CreateSpace.
- § CS permits color profiles or tagged color management; whereas KDP recommends against using profiles, saying that it will strip profiles from images. I suspect, and have said, that CS also strips profiles, in part or in their entirety—it *must* remove *some* profile information.
- ¶ Ambiguous: KDP, “Images less than 300 DPI will be flagged prior to publishing *so you can resubmit updated images*” (emphasis added); whereas, CS will give a warning but will permit images at lower resolutions.

Although both CS and KDP Print will accept a range of file formats, it is recommended that you submit a PDF, and only a PDF. Changes can occur when a file is converted to PDF; although they shouldn't, this is much more likely when either CS or KDP does the conversion. For example, both CS and KDP Print will attempt to embed fonts if fonts are not embedded. Different operating systems and programs will handle fonts differently. The same font (literally the same font file) used on a PC and a Mac will be slightly different. Most differences are easily absorbed and don't distort the formatting, but even a slight change in size of a comma can cause a paragraph to expand enough to add a line: this extra line can cause all sorts of problems downstream from it. This is significantly less likely to happen on your own system, and once the PDF is created, it is less likely to print in an unexpected way.

Examine your PDF very carefully, page by page, before uploading it.

If you upload a PDF, there is really nothing a digital proof (DigitalProofer, downloadable PDF, etc.) can tell you that your PDF, itself, won't. No digital proof will tell you how your book will print.

For most people, the biggest difference between the two p-o-d companies is that CS offers printed proofs. The printed proof:

- shows you how the cover will look because it is printed;
- shows how color and grayscale images will print;
- shows you whether or not the fonts print correctly;
- permits better proof reading: studies show that we read with better comprehension from print than monitor;
- acts as a contract proof:
 - *The contract proof is the one that says to the printer “Everything looks good, let's go to press.”* <<http://desktoppub.about.com/cs/proofs/g/contractproof.htm>>
 - *Contract Proof: In printing, a [color] proof pulled from the press that represents the agreed-upon appearance of the finished printed product by the printer and the client. It is commonly the last proof made before printing begins in earnest. Hence, it is also called a final proof.* <http://printwiki.org/Contract_Proof>
 - *Final Proof: Alternate term for a contract proof.* <http://printwiki.org/Final_Proof>
 - *After book files have been reviewed and approved for printing, members have the opportunity to order an Author/Printed Proof to make sure they are satisfied with the final, printed product prior to making the title print-ready and available for purchase.*

[Glossary_of_Createspace_Terms.pdf, page 2 . . . CS also defines “digital proof,” and an “In-House proof,” referred to as a Hard Copy Proof, HCP: three entries for “proof”]

Therefore, when this proof is correct, it is the proof you approve—it will have the word *Proof* across the back page, along with the date and location of printing. Save it, it is your reference copy in case something goes wrong in the future.

- permits you to do test books, often a necessity for books with images.
 - Generally, a test books costs, delivered in the contiguous US states, under \$12.
 - Image preparation can be nothing, and sometimes it can take days per image. It makes sense to do what it takes to create as good an images as possible and as necessary. Also, there are often a variety of things you can do to an image to prepare it, some might work well, some not at all. Testing a variety of images can make the difference between a great book and a mediocre one.

[KDP Print Publishing Guidelines](#)
[CS PDF Submission Specifications](#)

]12on14.us[

© 2017 Walton Mendelson
walton@12on14.us ♦ www.12on14.us