



**WRITERSWORLD Newsletter - Issue No. 71**

## **WHY IN MY OPINION THE LIGHTNING SOURCE TREATMENT OF AUTHORS WHO CHOOSE TO PUBLISH THEIR BOOKS THROUGH INDEPENDENT PRINT ON DEMAND BOOK PUBLISHERS IS MORALLY WRONG.**

**By Graham Cook**

**©2006**

Somebody has to maintain and administer a database of information for every book published: its title, the name of the author, the ISBN number, its retail price, any commissions to be offered to retailers, and of course personal contact details for the author including the physical address, e-mail and bank account details for the payment of royalties. All of these pieces of information need to be maintained throughout the lifetime of the book whether any copies are sold or not.

If you are a print on demand book publisher working with the printer Lightning Source, you get your own account with your own log in details. But you can only use your own ISBN prefix numbers. Immediately your authors are disadvantaged as they cannot have ISBN numbers in their own names. This deficiency has been covered in our Newsletters before. But there is another problem with the Lightning Source system: it only permits the publisher to enter one rate of book retailers' commission for all books on the publisher's account, and as a consequence removes a fundamental choice from the author.

Once again, the author is totally dependant on the management ability and business strength of the print on demand book publisher, who is most unlikely to have enough income from the book to meet those administration costs.

Lightning Source issue one statement per month to the publisher showing sales from the UK and from the US for all of that publisher's authors. There are entries for all the following column headings:

ISBN	TITLE	AUTHORS (s)	LIST PRICE	DISCOUNT	WHOLESALE PRICE	QUANTITY	NET SALES	PRINT
CHARGE	SETUP	RECOVERY	OTHER	NET	PUBLISHERS COMPENSATION	REMAINING	RECOVERY	

Naturally, after a book is published, each author is interested in how many books have been sold and what royalties have come in. The author relies upon the print on demand book publisher accurately transcribing and calculating the information, and has to suffer a *further* deduction from the royalties to pay for this extra administrative step (plus a profit element)!

What are the options for Lightning Source and their publisher? In order to keep the author up to date on sales, the publisher could photocopy the entire monthly statement from Lightning Source and send it to each author, somehow blanking out records for all but the intended recipient. This would be subject to a high degree of error, and consequent violation of UK data protection rights for all the other authors. They could cut the statement into pieces and try to mail each piece to the right author. Or they could transcribe the information onto their own statement system – again opening up possibilities of error, no matter how carefully the work is done.

The crunch is really whether or not any of these methods are viable: with rare exceptions, there would simply not be enough royalty payments coming in for the print on demand book publisher to pay for this administration process. It raises considerably the break even sales point for an author's book.

Why not simply cut out this administrative step? Why not record ISBN numbers in the authors' names and allow authors to open up accounts with Lightning Source in their own right? Not only would

authors then receive their own statement direct from Lightning Source, the author would also have the right to amend any details that relate to their book. Most importantly – royalties and information would come to the author without administrative deductions or delays.

In my last Newsletter I promised to submit this text to Lightning Source for their input before publication. I thought this a great idea and only fair. Unfortunately it appears every executive of Lightning Source that is relevant here has blocked my e-mail address! Such behaviour puts me in mind of the story of the ostrich with its head in the sand.

### Graham Cook

Ps: Got to run, as I head into retirement I'm off to write my second book; another autobiography which I think will be entitled "How I fell out with Lightning Source and Graham Smith" one of their independent print on demand book publishers who has threatened to "bury me". His threat was sent to me after the last Newsletter. As to any author caught up with the antics of Lightning Source under the terms described in my last Newsletter my compensation offer is increased to £2,500.00 per book title.

To download and view a PDF version of this newsletter, please [click here](#).

## SUBSCRIPTIONS & LEGAL NOTICE

Subscriptions to the **WRITERSWORLD** Newsletter are free and please distribute it freely.

**WRITERSWORLD** - The leading book publisher in self-publishing, print on demand books and book reprints in the United Kingdom that also issues the books ISBN number in the author's name, pays the author 100% of the royalties and supplies the author with copies of their books at print cost.

[www.writersworld.co.uk](http://www.writersworld.co.uk)

**www.writersworld.co.uk**  
We can publish your book.