

BLOT PUBLISHING

Service Agreement for Text and Cover Layout Design

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1.0 INITIAL DISCUSSIONS

During our initial discussions, we will agree the main details of your book, e.g. trim size, word-count, complexity, etc. I ask clients to be involved at this stage, as it avoids surprises later. (I’m happy to offer advice and guidance for these and other decisions.) We will also decide on a timescale. My quote will be based on the details decided at this point.

1.2 Sight of the manuscript

Usually, I will ask you to email me a copy of your manuscript to help provide the most accurate quote, particularly if the layout contains more complicated elements (tables, lists, letters, illustrations, etc.). Be assured that any files you supply will never be shown to, or shared with, anyone else (unless required by law), and will be deleted if you decide not to go ahead.

1.2 Background image for covers

Please note, I don’t source background images for covers, so you will need to supply your own in digital format (see section ‘2.2 Submitting Cover Images’ for specifications). Please also expect to obtain the appropriate **copyright licence**, if applicable (including making payment if necessary) for the image’s use in a commercial context (if you are planning to sell your book, that counts as commercial).

2.0 THE “GO-AHEAD”

Once you have given the go-ahead for your project to be typeset – based on agreements made during the initial discussions (see above) – I will ask you to submit all relevant documents by email. I then take responsibility for completing the layout design and supplying a print-ready-PDF and/or epub file(s) by the deadline(s) we have agreed. Equally, you agree to the terms and conditions set out in this document, including final payment on (or, in rare cases before) receipt of the final PDF/epub file.

2.1 Submitting text

Manuscripts should be submitted by email in docx format. Other formats may be acceptable, but please check first.

Please ensure your text has been comprehensively edited, proof-read, and corrected before submitting it for typesetting. Making major changes after the initial layout (v1) has been started can generate a significant amount of additional work, resulting in delays and/or incurring extra charges (see sections 3.3 Excessive Text-Corrections, and 4.0 Re-setting, below).

2.1.1 Sample Proof (paperback)

In most cases I will provide a sample PDF-proof (“title_v0”) of the first few pages of your paperback for your approval. The rest of the book will then be based on this version. There is no charge for a v0 proof.

2.2 Submitting cover images

Your chosen background image should be submitted in png, tiff, or jpg format (jpps must be maximum quality). See sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, below, for sizes. I’ll also need details of your title, author name, tagline (if applicable), blurb, and any additional information you’d like included on the cover.

2.2.1 eBook cover images

The image for an ebook cover needs to be in portrait format (i.e. taller than it is wide), or croppable to portrait proportions. Final resolution, after any enlargement and cropping, should ideally be 2,560 x 1,600 pixels (minimum 1,000 x 625px). I’m happy to offer guidance on this.

NOTE: An ebook cover can be derived from an existing paperback cover, but not the other way around. If you are thinking of publishing your book as a paperback at any point in the future, it will be more cost-effective to design the full paperback cover from the start (see section 2.2.2, next)

2.2.2 Paperback cover images

The image for a paperback cover will need to be in landscape format (i.e. wider than it is high), so there is spare to wrap around the spine and back cover. The focus of your front cover will need to be on the right-hand side of the overall image. Final resolution, after any enlargement and cropping, should be a minimum of 3,500 x 2,450px. I’m happy to offer guidance on this.

3.0 FULL PROOFS

Once your text is fully typeset, I will email you a proof of the whole book: in PDF for paperbacks and/or epub file for ebooks – this is version one (called “title_v1” or “title_cover_v1” or similar).

3.1 Correcting paperback proofs

For paperback corrections, **I very much prefer working from hardcopy** i.e. a proof that you have printed out and marked by hand*. (Depending on the number and nature of corrections, I might be able to work from a pdf or emailed list, but *please check first*). This is your chance to fix any final typos and/or ask for minor tweaks to the layout (things often look different on the printed page). Please do not make multiple editorial-changes at this stage – **your text needs to be thoroughly edited, proof-read, and corrected before you submit it for typesetting** – major changes after v1 are likely to incur extra costs (see, 3.3 Excessive Text-Corrections, below).

Hardcopy proofs for correction should be printed at a scale of 100% (which usually means only one book-page per sheet of A4). Single-sided is preferred, but double sided is fine in emergencies. You don't need to print pages that don't have errors, nor do you need to bind or clip the pages together, and it's not necessary to send a printed list of amendments too – if I have queries, I will ask.

If you *do* need to change a large section of text (e.g. multiple changes to a paragraph, or whole new sentences – see note about extra costs, above) an emailed copy of the new text (in addition to the hardcopy) reduces the risk of errors.

***Formal proof-reader's marks are preferred, but not not essential:** if you are *not* using them, please make your notes as clear and as neat as possible.

3.1.1 Posting your hardcopy

Post your marked-up hardcopy to 15 Greenfields, Nyewood, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 5JH. I've never known a proof to be lost in the post, but you might want to keep a record of your amendments before posting (either in list form, or as photographs/scans of the pages involved). Some people also choose to use recorded/special delivery, but check timings first.

3.1.2 When there are only a handful of corrections

If you have only a dozen or so corrections, it might be possible to email them as a marked-up PDF or list; but hardcopy is always preferred, so please check first. (If for any reason I need to print a proof here, I reserve the right to charge extra for time and costs, as this service is not included in the original quote). Please also see the notes about changes to large sections of text, in section 3.1 above.

3.2 Correcting ebook proofs

Please list ebook corrections in an email, **by copying and pasting 'before and after' versions** of the relevant text. Please note, location numbers or e-reader page-references are useless when correcting proofs, as they are unrelated to the master copy. If a correction concerns the layout, screenshots will be helpful.

3.3 Excessive text-corrections

In order to keep proof corrections to a minimum, I reserve the right to levy a 10p charge on each additional amendment after the first fifty, across all proofs, i.e. paperback and ebook (books over 80k words have a pro-rata number of corrections included). If an additional amendment is down to a typesetting error, it will not be charged.

3.4 Correcting cover proofs

Cover amendments should be listed in an email, or you can mark up and email a PDF version if that's easier. This is your chance to fix any final typos and/or ask for tweaks to the layout. (Please ensure your blurb has been **thoroughly edited, proof-read, and corrected before you send it**).

3.5 Subsequent proofs

Once the master copy (interior text and/or cover) has been corrected, a second proof (v2) will be emailed to you. If further changes are needed after this, please mark them up and post as before (for interior text), or email the details (for ebooks and covers), and a third proof (v3) will be supplied. The third proof is intended as the final print-ready version for publication.

These three proofs (plus the v0 sample) are included in the quote. Additional proofs (v4+) will be charged at £25 each (plus the 10p charge per individual correction if applicable – see section 3.5 Excessive Text-Corrections). If a new proof is needed *solely* because of a typesetting error, there is no charge for it.

4.0 RE-SETTING

Sometimes projects become subject to unexpected alterations, necessitating a complete or partial re-set, meaning all or part of the layout design needs to be scraped and restarted (e.g. because new images have become available, or a chapter needs to be cut/added); in this case, I reserve the right to renegotiate the original quote.

5.0 TIMESCALE

Please be as clear as possible about your timescale/schedule during the initial discussions. Ideally, I ask for six weeks from the “go-ahead” to completion, which allows adequate time for proofs to be exchanged, checked, marked up, and returned; though rush jobs can sometimes be accommodated.

If you need to pause: I appreciate life sometimes upsets the best-laid plans, and I can usually re-jig my schedule in the event of unexpected disruptions – but please keep me informed, particularly if I have already started work. If the pause turns into a longer delay, I reserve the right to ask for full or partial payment before completion. (Please also see section 7.0 If Something Goes Wrong, below.)

6.0 PAYMENT

Once you are happy with the finished book, I will supply you with a file, formatted to suit your chosen platform or for sending to your printers (**note:** there are many ways to format both PDFs and ebooks, and not all formats work on all platforms, so it's important to let me how/where you plan to print/publish). I will then invoice you for the amount we agreed during our initial discussions. I am a sole trader, so I do not offer payment terms, and prompt payment by bank transfer is appreciated. If a bank transfer is not possible, payment can be made by cheque, but please confirm payee details first. No responsibility will be accepted for cash sent through the post.

7.0 IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

If you need to cancel a project before completion you will only be charged a pro-rata for the work completed (based on an hourly rate of £40/hr), up to and including the full-price quoted. If the project is not making progress due to major delays on your part, I reserve the right to cancel our agreement and/or bill for the work done up to that point, or ask for full payment before continuing. (Please note, much of the time spent on a project is in the preparation, so even if your book appears, for example, only 50% complete, the charge could well be higher than 50% of the original quote.)

7.1 Copyright

While you own copyright of the text itself, I retain copyright of the layout design (and the original artist/photographer retains copyright of any images). If you employ another designer at a later stage, and any element of my design persists in the subsequent version, I ask that Blot Publishing's details be retained on the copyright page (and/or back cover) alongside those of the new designer.

8.0 DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY

Your manuscript, emails, and any other details about you and your book(s), are kept on a password/firewall-protected computer (and/or passcode protected mobile phone), and an encrypted back-up disc, to which only I have access. No details are kept on the cloud. I'm happy to delete all your details if you ask me (in writing) to do so. I will never share your details, your work, or your files, with anyone else without your express permission (unless I am required to do so by law).

**If anything about this service agreement is unclear,
please ask for clarification *before* I start work on your project.**

Contact: projects@blot.co.uk

This service agreement was last updated on **10th June 2023**
and supersedes all previous service agreements
(except those applying to projects currently in progress).