**Summary of Librarian Survey**

*Results reflect 145 total responses.*

Question 1: How big is your library’s service population? (one answer)

* Less than 5,000: 15 (10.42%)
* 5,000-10,000: 15 (10.42%)
* 10,001-25,000: 42 (29.17%)
* 25,001-50,000: 23 (15.97%)
* 50,001-100,000: 21 (14.58%)
* Greater than 100,000: 28 (19.44%)

Question 2: How many self-published books has your library purchased within the past year? (one answer)

* None: 20 (13.89%)
* 1-5: 43 (29.86%)
* 5-10: 14 (9.72%)
* 11-25: 13 (9.03%)
* More than 25: 12 (8.33%)
* I don’t know: 42 (29.17%)

Question 3: How many authors have contacted you about purchasing their self-published book(s) within the past year? (one answer)

* None: 8 (5.56%)
* 1-5: 46 (31.94%)
* 5-10: 43 (29.86%)
* 11-25: 18 (12.5%)
* More than 25: 13 (9.03%)
* I don’t know: 16 (11.11%)

Question 4: What causes you to hesitate to buy self-published books? (Check all that apply.) (multiple answers possible)

* They are generally of poorer quality than traditionally published books: 100 (68.97%)
* They are too expensive and/or we don't have room in our budget: 16 (11.03%)
* The authors are too pushy when it comes to trying to sell their books: 42 (28.97%)
* We try to find good ones but can’t find any: 7 (4.83%)
* We don’t know where to find out about quality self-published titles: 29 (20%)
* They are generally not available through any vendors or websites we normally use for ordering: 71 (48.97%)
* We have no hesitation to buy self-published books: 11 (7.59%)
* Other: 49 (33.79%)
* Authors often want to do a book signing and selling and we do not allow that here.
* cataloging for them is not available so we are unable to add them to our electronic catalog
* Lack of cataloging records.
* Typically do not circulate once they have left the "new book" shelf because nobody has heard of the author or read reviews about the book. No buzz.
* The quality of the binding does not look like it would hold up to circulation. This is especially true of children's picture books. Also, we like to have professional reviews to back up our selections and these books rarely have that.
* often a niche need, outside collection scope, poor physical quality for price, few or no reliable reviews
* There are plenty of titles available that have gone through the ordinary publishing process. We rely on the ordinary publishing process to eliminate some of the low-quality material that could exist. Also, a fair percentage of our purchases tend to be series or other items created by well-known authors for patrons who are eager to get the next work in that writer's universe of stories.
* they are not well-edited/written, often, tho not always of course
* We occasionally buy self-published book, or more likely they are donated to us by the author or a relative of the author. Most of the ones we get are by local authors
* They circulate less well than mass published books.
* If they are not already in Worldcat, we most likely will not buy them (unless they are local authors).
* They are hit and miss when it comes to quality. Some may be excellent, and others do not have the quality we look for.
* I can't speak for the other librarians at my institution, but I generally don't buy books suggested to me by the author.
* Many authors that approach us to sell their self-published books use vanity presses, and to be honest the quality is terrible. Vanity presses have soured many librarians' attitudes towards self-publishing.
* We rely on OCLC MARC RECORDS AND HAVE TO HAVE RECORDS CREATED (APPROX. $12 PER RECORD
* If the book is highly rated by readers, and the topic is a necessary one for our collection, we buy CreateSpace books.
* Hard to know if they will still be popular in 5-10 years -- are we getting money's worth?
* We sometimes have book signings for local authors who have self published a book and usually will add those locally written books to our collection. Also usually read reviews of books before purchasing.
* I am more likely to by fiction than nonfiction. It's hard to determine author's authority on nonfiction subjects.
* I always ask for a donation, they usually oblige
* It depends on the subject and if we have room in our collection as well as does it fit our material selection policy
* I really need to see reviews in order to assess whether an item meets our standards, and self-published items normally don't have professional reviews. When we can add a book from a university press, why would we buy a self-published one? We also do not buy fiction unless it wins a major literary award. The self-published books we have added are by our librarian and faculty members, and we get them as donations.
* Libraries tend to rely on professional reviews to make purchasing decisions, and often there are no reviews of self-published works. Also the quality is very inconsistent. Many self-published books are equivalent or better quality to traditionally published materials, but there are also many that are not, so we don't want to buy a pig in a poke..
* I've heard we hesitate because the quality of the writing is often not as good as professionally published books.
* It's usually 50/50 on whether or not the title will be of high interest and good quality, or if it will be riddled with typos and errors and just bad writing in general.
* We rely on peer reviewed items and usually these titles are not.
* lack of editorial guidance and correction
* Traditional review sources don't always review self-published books
* Lack of professional book reviews to help us judge the quality.
* They are sometimes more challenging for cataloging staff
* They usually never get checked out.
* If the book has been reviewed (say by Kirkus), we are more likely to buy it. If it is a local author who gives us a chance to examine the book first, we may buy them.
* Often require original cataloging which takes longer. Unless needed for a specific reason, we can often find the information in a traditionally published book that is available from our regular vendor and has a record we can copy on OCLC. However, when the book is of interest and unique, we will purchase and catalog as necessary.
* We maintain a local author collection and the quality of construction and content are set aside for this collection. The items in the collection are accpeted as donations. We do not purchase materials for this collection unless it is a known author we would have generally purchased for the general collection and then it is not likely self published.
* The ones we are sent look terrible.
* While we do not hesitate to buy from self-published authors in our area, the books are generally of poorer quality than traditionally published books.
* our acquisitions budget is TINY - don't have a lot to spare on self-published books
* Local authors give us books, so we don't usually purchase them.
* Are not professionally reviewed.
* They often don't circulate as often as mainstream titles. They often do not have catalog records, so they require more time to get through processing.
* We like to read reviews of material before purchase. Generally, we cannot find information on books sold by the author
* We are happy to buy any self-published book that is meaningful to our community. Most offers are from out of state; without review mechanisms to guide our purchase it is hard to justify. In addition, our book budget is (like all our line items) rather small so we must spend those dollars where we know the community's interests lie.
* Harder to promote; demand is usually lower and once they come off of the new shelf they may never be read again. This is a bigger problem with fiction than nonfiction.
* As far as i know, we haven't been contacted by an author of a self-published book, but if we/I found one that would be a quality addition to our collection, I would not hesitate to order it.
* Purchases made depending on reviews.
* I generally will buy them if the author is local. But if I receive an email from someone not in my district or even my state...I do not purchase them.
* They are generally poorly written, poorly edited and not very interesting.
* time consuming original cataloging
* Difficult to catalog!

Question 5: What do self-published authors need to do to convince you to purchase their books?

* I generally take all self-published titles that are donated. If they want me to purchase a copy, then it has to be something that is of regional interest, or that fills a gap in the collection.
* Our collections are very specific. We DO purchase authors from our states. If the self-published author donates a copy, we'll be more likely to put it in our collection. Also, it is extremely helpful if they have a good review in a reputable source. This is mostly difficult to impossible for them to procure.
* Be established, build word of mouth, or buzz, around the book. We don't have time to read or review all the books people want us to add to the collection. Good reviews in established publications (Library Journal, Kirkus, BookPage) will help.
* Need a larger audience to justify purchase
* have an excellent book that is reviewed, has good cover art, and has cataloging information available. Also published in the last 3 years.
* Let us make the decision to not purchase it without them getting mad. We're small in size and budget and don't have extra money to spend or space to spend on books that won't get used. Recently had a patron bring in a children's picture book insisting we purchase it: I did read it and it will not be one the kids will go for; it's one paragraph on a page with a generic non attention art work: the kids won't like it. It's also written more for adults; I could not see a 4 or 5 year old understanding it. Yet she wanted us to spend 20 on it; too expensive for our budget. It would be nice if they would accept your "sorry, but not at this time". Stop being pushy and rude to the potential buyer.
* Have a good editor and independent reviews.
* I'm not really sure how to answer this question. One of the largest issues is credibility: this hasn't necessarily been reviewed by anyone other than the author. Without reviewing and fact checking the item personally, we couldn't really promote the veracity of the item. Purchasing from a known academic publisher helps to allay some of the issue with those kinds of problems.
* Honestly, I tend to stumble on them through patron requests. The main vendor we use does not offer many for purchase.
* Professional review. Nice cover art, good quality book construction, layout, formatting, etc.
* show me a review, besides Amazon. At least at this point. I don't have the time or inclination to consider a self-published work. Perhaps even some references of other libraries who have purchased it?
* They need to be written by local authors or requested specifically by patrons.
* Demonstrate that the book the have is quality (edited, not filled with typos (not that the major publishing houses are doing a great job with this))
* Get reviews from reputable sources
* Appeal to local community, a readalike for an author that circulates well in our collection
* Hire an editor.
* Books should be well-written, expertly edited, professionally designed and illustrated, and fit the needs/preferences of our community.
* They need a review from a critical source.
* Get a "real" publishing house behind them. Since these books lack proper editing and objective criticism through the process, they usually are not well written.
* They need to tackle a subject no one else is writing about or they need to tackle a subject of importance using research about best practices. As a children's librarian, I am often approached by self-published authors with books that discuss bullying. But these books were obviously written by authors who have not researched best practices recommended by schools or child psychologists and they contain bad advice. Self-published picture books are also often not age appropriate. They have too much text for the age they are aimed at or they attempt to discuss a topic with language that isn't on best level for target age or the topic is one for much older children who will not respond to the picture book format. And of course I'm looking for the basics- quality writing, quality illustration, and cover art that will excite readers.
* provide reviews, be available for purchase at least through Amazon if not other library book jobbers
* Meet or exceed professional standards.
* One possibility is showing us that the content has a lot of cultural relevance or immediacy, and applies to our location. This would probably be a work of non-fiction. Or, we would have to be convinced that this person is the next big regional writer. In Michigan we have authors like Jim Harrison or Bonnie Jo Campbell who have some cultural currency, and Campbell has a history of selection for things like a Pushcart Prize and a Guggenheim Fellowship.
* many self-publishing local authors donate a copy of their book. that is most useful
* Offering to let one of our staff read their book to determine if it fits well with our collection would be a good way to start. Since there are usually no professional reviews we would hesitate to put it on our shelves without personal examination.
* Have credible reviews. Make sure the books are properly edited.
* Have them professionally polished and edited. Good binding, quality covers, and extreme copy-editing are paramount. Books should not look "homemade", nor should they be full of spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.
* In general, if I'm going to purchase a book, it needs to have been reviewed in one of four major sources: Kirkus, Publishers Weekly, Library Journal (or School Library Journal for children's materials), or Booklist. I will accept donated books supported by reviews from other sources, however.
* Provide reviews, ensure it is already in Worldcat, available for purchase through one of our major vendors.
* We try to keep to local authors for self-published purchases.
* Hire an editor!
* Offer to do a free author talk so we can get to know them and their style possibly offer to just sit at the library to speak to patrons, come to a book club or luncheon program. The biggest turn off is many times they come in and just expect us to purchase the book and even seemed offended that we don't just hand over the cash. and for smaller libraries, maybe a really good price or even free to get their foot in the door.
* We're more likely do buy something of local interest
* Their works need to be well reviewed and accessible through our vendors. They need to be professional and not display a negative attitude - any time they are trying to promote their books to anyone. (e.g. I was at a lit fest speaking to an author who did not know I worked at a library. I didn't immediately purchase her book, but said I'd see if I could get the first book in the series at the library first. She went into a rant about how I couldn't get it at a library, how they aren't helpful, etc.)
* Be able to write
* It's not so much about the authors themselves. For me, if I have strong patron interest, I am much more likely to purchase a self published book than if an author is pitching themselves to me.
* quality speaks for itself. Aggressive marketing is a turnoff
* Local authors, especially if they donate a free copy to preview before we buy more.
* Have positive reviews from qualified, trustworthy review sources. Also, they need to be available through one of our approved vendors. HAVE MARC RECORDS ALREADY CREATED WITH OCLC
* I'm not sure; none of us like unsolicited sales calls. I guess the authors need to write a well-edited and well-received book.
* Have local readers interested in them, asking for them. Cheaper paperback prices would help - I often buy the ebooks for our circulating Kindles but not the print.
* I would consider purchasing a self-published book only if the author was a resident of our community and even then would have to ensure that it complied with our collection policy.
* Provide a sample or selection
* give us a copy of the book to review.
* Make them available for purchase from online bookstores, physical bookstores. We do not purchase direct from individuals.
* Personally I don't like to be contacted by book sellers in person. Would much rather look at things online, in catalogs with reviews or preview books without the pressure of a salesperson. If self-published authors books were reviewed in reputable sources, Kirkus, Library Journal... they would probably be purchased more often.
* Provide a good summary and a sample of the book to see the quality of writing would help too. If nonfiction a bio of the author explaining their expertise in that subject would be nice.
* Positive reviews would help, from an unbiased source--not Amazon, where the author could have had friends and relatives give kudos.
* non-fiction, I like to see an index. I like to see that they have a blog or website about the item
* Give us time to review the book. Most come in and want us to decide right now. It can take some time, library staff needs to review the material, see if we have a need for it, does it fit in our collection, etc.
* They need to get their books reviewed by authoritative review journals. And I know that's a huge challenge. But I do buy some self-published titles that are positively reviewed.
* Get Baker & Taylor to carry it. We use esp to evaluate pertinence to our collection,
* As an academic library, we wouldn't buy self-published nonfiction unless it was very well reviewed in standard review sources. We only buy any fiction when it is the winner of a literary award, no matter who published it.
* Honestly, I'm not sure. Sadly, (and I know this is terrible) I still feel like there is a huge stigma attached to self-published books that they are going to be poor writing quality, poorly edited, poorly printed, etc. I try to be open minded, but I can't help being skeptical of the quality of any self-published books. The few that I have personally read have been poor quality (writing style) and it has really thrown a wet blanket on my desire to purchase more self-published titles. The one exception I would make though, would be self-published local history type books - we usually purchase those based on local interest alone.
* The number one thing is to demonstrate that there is a demand for that work by community the library serves.
* Let us read them before we agree to buy. If it's quality work we will probably purchase.
* They need to have their books reviewed in a professional journal.
* That is a very good question. I honestly have no idea what they could do.
* Honestly, there is not much they can do if their works are not reviewed and evaluated by librarians in publications like Booklist or Library Journal. The only exception I make is for local authors who are community members or have been in the past.
* Edited Reviewed by reputable journals
* They need to be available through our distributor (Ingram in our case.) They also need to be edited for both content and grammar.
* Not have an inferior looking product that will take staff hours to convince a library patron to take a chance on.
* Demonstrate that they have a quality book that has actually been edited by someone who is an actual editor. Also, having 5 positive Amazon reviews done by your family and friends isn't helpful either. If they can afford it, possibly donating a copy or providing a copy as a galley so library staff can read and make their own decision to purchase or not purchase the book.
* Write quality books, publish in a quality format (paperback is okay, but often the cover art is really bad or the actual print is bad, or the ink is poor quality). Otherwise we need to know about them like all books; marketing in traditional review sources (eg Kirkus, PW).
* Improve cover art, improve binding, use a professional editor to clean up grammar, spelling, etc.
* Sample reading pages
* I don't like this question because it shouldn't be a matter of persuasion. Our patrons don't like self-published books generally. Unless one patron requests a book, we don't buy it. And then that copy doesn't circulate well. There should be no actual conversation with a self-published author, if that's what is being implied.
* Providing independent reviews, or digitized sample pages or chapters, would be helpful.
* Honestly, unless they're local, I probably won't buy it.
* Reviews, other libraries own, author track record
* Get reviewed in industry publications or by other objective sources; prove an independent editor was involved; have a relative on the library board.
* Provide discounts on their books.
* That the book will be a good fit with our patrons.
* Helps if they're local, and are willing to drop their book off for us to check out.
* I'd prefer that self-published authors not contact us directly unless they are local or are publishing books of local interest. I prefer to select books based on reviews, so I would be interested in reliable, easy-to-access review publications / websites for self-published titles.
* Do a good job of editing and not be too pushy.
* Send me an email and I will look over it at my convenience. I do not like phone calls.
* Have a review from a reputable source.
* We streamline our processes, so we don't buy things that are not available through our vendors except for local authors or items with historical content (local history)
* Make us aware, have unique content, beware of poor quality cover art (people do judge a book by its cover!!) and price appropriately as we likely not receive a discount like we do on most books from our regular vendor.
* We usually limit purchases to titles of local interest.
* Have their books reviewed.
* Professionally edited and produced.
* Usually local authors only get added to our collection.
* Improve availability.
* Come in person and talk to us about the books. Do not send extra themed works like CDs or DVDs with the books, please.
* ...
* Honestly the first thing would be to get professional cover design help. More than anything, this is what turns me off.
* They need to be well edited and of good quality. If we are going to purchase a self-published title, it needs to be something pretty original and have a "wow" factor.
* Nothing
* Have them reviewed by reputable reviewers Ensure the quality of the layout and printing is excellent and will stand up to library circulation Work with major book distributors to be available for purchase in a streamlined manner
* The cataloging and stickering have to be done before being circulated (it is done before the books come to us).
* Reviews and/or awards. Be local. Have a focus on this area. Generally write nonfiction.
* Professional reviewing sources, better quality illustrations and text.
* Honestly, I'll consider it if they're a person of interest in our community. Otherwise, I'm not really interested in books that haven't been reviewed.
* Local subject matter is always a plus, which is the category many of our self published titles fall under.
* If they are any good and if they would circ just like any other books.
* They need to have it reviewed by someone (a professional in the publishing world) who does not profit from the sale of the book
* Make them available through Baker & Taylor or Ingram
* They need to stop contacting us. We buy well-reviewed books or bestsellers. If the book meets that criteria, we will buy the book. When they contact me, it causes extra work and it turns me off from wanting to purchase ANY self-published books. To improve the quality, they need to hire editors to fix spelling, grammatical, and formatting errors.
* Get reviewed by a reputable source
* Bring samples with them, make appointments to talk to the librarian whose collection development responsibility falls within their genre or subject.
* Outside reviews
* If it is backed by multiple reviews from reputable sources, I will consider it. We have purchased self-published books from our own local authors in the past, but recently created a policy that these books be donated rather than purchased by the library.
* For nonfiction, they need to demonstrate they have the credentials to write the book authoritatively, or if is a biography/memoir, they need to show it is locally relevant. For fiction, it needs to have an attractive cover, be reasonably priced, have a well-written and engaging summary, and have reviews available (either professional or peer reviews)--basically the same things I expect of a traditionally published book.
* bring a copy for the collection development librarian to look through.
* The should at least belong to a professional organization that helps...like SCBWI or RWA, etc.
* Produce quality items. They are often cheap looking, poor line spacing, bad covers, etc.
* Publicity, reviews, word of mouth, quality.
* Many self-published children's book authors seem to do so without any awareness of what makes a children's book good. Some of the materials I've seen include "chapter books" that are only approximately 60 pages but written at a 5th grade level, and picture books with text or illustrations of a quality that aren't appropriate for the picture book medium. I believe many people think writing a children's book is much easier than writing a book for grown-ups, and this is reflected in their work. They will do a much better job convincing me if their work would prove that they did their homework before trying to self-publish a book for children that just doesn't work. (FYI - My answers only pertain to children's materials.)
* Have them published through a reliable publisher.
* Good summary of their book.
* Generally we purchase books that local people publish about growing up in this area; or local history on towns and villages.
* Have an editor proofread them. Take a few writing classes and learn how to do it properly.
* I look for qualities the same as I do for other books - I look for reviews in journals and on blogs (journals aren't great about reviewing indie and self-published books generally speaking) and I look for more information about the book to see if it meets our collection development criteria.
* Get published by an established house or make certain the content is of local interest (i.e. local history or fiction set in local community)
* That it the book would actually be of interest and/or useful to our patrons.
* Topic and/or content needs to relevant to my community
* Many of our purchases of non-bestsellers are made based on reviews. We look for good, non-biased reviews.
* Brief summary of their book 2. Why they think it would add value to our library collection 3. One e-mail is plenty-more than that is when I start to get annoyed at how pushy they are being. 4. Where I can purchase this book 5. Are they local or non-local (local self-published holds higher value for our patrons)
* Write better books.
* Better editing? Lower prices. $20 paperbacks are ridiculous.

Question 6: What types of writing-themed programming has your library done? (Check all that apply.) (multiple answers possible)

* Author visits/book signings: 129 (88.97%)
* Author round-table discussions: 29 (20%)
* Writing workshops: 71 (48.97%)
* Writers’ Groups: 61 (42.07%)
* Book reviews 27 (18.62%)
* NaNoWriMo programming: 40 (27.59%)
* We have not made it a priority: 17 (11.72%)
* Other: 14 (9.66%)
  + We've had visits by NYT best selling authors, Elizabeth Berg, Chris Bohjalian, Lisa See, and we don't allow them to sell books, so please be respectful when we say we can't do book sales.
  + The University (not necessarily just the library) has had published professors give talks on their books and have had book signings. These weren't self-published books.
  + Local author fair
  + We would like to start a local author's fair.
  + We have an annual local author fair.
  + We do not see much turnout for author visits unless they are bestseller authors in the thriller genre
  + mostly for school age, Letters about Literature, hosted a writing camp
  + Poet Club and readings
  + All of our writing groups/workshops/NaNoWriMo have involved our teen patrons and teen librarians. Author visits/book signings/roundtables have been writers for childrens, teen, and adult audiences.
  + We had a writer's award at one point. Discontinued due to declining interest, much like our poetry writing contest.
  + Local Author Showcase
  + Annual Writer in Residence
  + Our community does not turn out for most author presentations.
  + Local author fair. We skype with authors when possible.

Question 7: How much do you agree with the following statement: Library professionals have a responsibility to help aspiring authors.

* Strongly agree: 9 (6.21%)
* Agree: 52 (35.86%)
* Neither agree nor disagree: 65 (44.83%)
* Disagree: 17 (11.72%)
* Strongly disagree: 2 (1.38%)

Question 8: How much do you agree with the following statement: Library professionals have a responsibility to promote the well-being of the writing profession.

* Strongly agree: 15 (10.34%)
* Agree: 66 (45.52%)
* Neither agree nor disagree: 51 (35.17%)
* Disagree: 12 (8.28%)
* Strongly disagree: 1 (0.69%)

Question 9: On a scale of 1 to 10 stars, with 1 being Poor and 10 being Great, how would you rate the current relationship between library professionals and self-published authors?

* 1: 4 (2.84%)
* 2: 8 (5.67%)
* 3: 26 (18.44%)
* 4: 15 (10.64%)
* 5: 43 (30.50%)
* 6: 25 (17.73%)
* 7: 18 (12.77%)
* 8: 1 (0.71%)
* 9: 0 (0.71%)
* 10: 0 (0%)
* Average: 4.72