

“In *Register Your Book*, David Wogahn makes a convincing case for something that those of us who have worked in publishing for a while already know: that registering your book—and doing it properly—is vital to your success as an author. Then he proceeds to break down this often-confusing process in bite-size pieces that even the least publishing-savvy reader will have no difficulty following along with. Straightforward and easy to digest, this is one how-to that every new author or publisher should have in their arsenal!”

—*Brooke Warner, Publisher of She Writes Press and author of Green-Light Your Book: How Writers Can Succeed in the New Era of Publishing*

“In a highly competitive marketplace discoverability is key. David Wogahn has written a thorough and deceptively simple guide for independent authors and publishers to ensure they maximize the ability for their book to be discovered in the fire hose of new books published every year. I’ve no doubt it will become a required resource for every aspiring author and publisher.”

—*Kim Anderson, Founder and CEO, The Reading Room*

“An essential guide to publishing identifiers, their benefits and uses, and (most importantly) what NOT to do. Required reading for every new entrant into book publishing – and for those who have been here a while, it’s never too late to go back to the sound fundamentals that David Wogahn provides here.”

—*Laura Dawson, Numerical Gurus*

“David Wogahn’s book offers newly published authors and independent publishers a concise and clear guide to the prepublication process. Anyone looking for information on ISBNs, copyright, and a host of other details for independent publishing needs this book.”

—*Rachelle Yousuf, President, Women’s National Book Association-Los Angeles Chapter*

“Where was David Wogahn when I was starting out in book publishing? The learning curve is so steep in this business. Not only do you need to know how to design, produce, promote and distribute a book; you must also be an expert at what I’ll call the “minutia” of publishing. Sure, you could spend—and waste—dozens of hours figuring out how all this works. But why wouldn’t you just read Wogahn’s book?”

—*Wendy Thomas Russell, Publisher and Co-Founder,
Brown Paper Press*

“It is true that almost anybody today can publish a book in whatever slap-dash fashion they wish. To my mind the test is in the quality of the details, language and production. A book’s public life begins with an ISBN. Wogahn’s *Register Your Book*, starts you off on the right road.”

—*Mike Sager, Editor & Publisher, The Sager Group LLC*

“Does your head hurt from hunting for answers for all of those pesky little questions you have about ISBNs, bar codes, copyright and library registration? David Wogahn has been my go-to guy for answers on this topic for years now, and I’m thrilled that he’s provided this information in one concise guide. Keep it close and proceed with confidence in spending your time and dollars to get it done right, the first time.”

—*Carla King, Self-Pub Boot Camp*

“This book is a must-have for any author who is considering the self-publishing route. *Register Your Book* demystifies the confusing labyrinth of copyright registration, ISBN selection, and marketing your book to libraries. Highly recommended.”

—*Christine Pinheiro, President of Defiant Press*

Visit RegisterYourBook.com to learn where to buy a full version of this book.

REGISTER YOUR BOOK

**The Essential Guide to ISBNs,
Barcodes, Copyright, and LCCNs**



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Contents

Preface i

Acknowledgments iii

1 What Book Registration Is, and Why It Matters 1

Who this book is for 3

It doesn't matter, until it matters 5

How to use this book..... 6

Website links..... 7

Book or eBook?..... 8

2 The International Standard Book Number9

Ten ISBN fundamentals 11

Protecting Book Reviews 17

Twenty-three frequently asked questions . 18

Different eBooks Need Different ISBNs 26

CreateSpace and ISBNs..... 27

IngramSpark and ISBNs..... 34

*CreateSpace and IngramSpark
for the Same Book* 36

Buying and assigning your ISBN 37

*Same Book: One in Color,
the Other Black and White* 43

Bulk Upload ISBN Metadata 48

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 3 Barcodes | 49 |
| When you do not need a barcode | 50 |
| When you do need a barcode | 51 |
| CreateSpace and barcodes | 52 |
| IngramSpark and barcodes | 53 |
| How to produce a barcode | 53 |
| Where to place the barcode | 54 |
| <i>Book Cover Templates</i> | 55 |
| 4 Copyright | 57 |
| Why filing for a copyright is important | 58 |
| Preparing to register a copyright | 61 |
| <i>Should You Preregister a Copyright on Your Book?</i> | 63 |
| How to format your copyright page | 64 |
| Sample copyright legal notices | 70 |
| 5 Library of Congress | 77 |
| Understanding the two programs: CIP and PCN | 78 |
| Is it worth the effort and potential expense? | 81 |
| <i>Marketing to Libraries</i> | 82 |
| Applying for and using an LCCN: a two-step process | 83 |
| <i>A Note about Permanent Paper</i> | 87 |
| An Optional Step 3: Why, when and how to get a P-CIP data block | 88 |
| <i>MARC Records, OCLC WorldCat, SkyRiver</i> | 91 |

6 The Bare Minimum 93

Appendix A: Timing and Timelines..... 95

Appendix B: Maximizing SEO Benefits 99

**Appendix C: The Seven Habits of Smart
Metadata Managers..... 107**

Resources 111

Where to buy ISBNs 111

Converting ISBNs 112

How to create short links to your book or
eBook..... 112

eBook ISBN requirements by distributor
and store 116

Deciphering an ISBN 117

Further reading about ISBNs 118

Glossary 119

Optimizing eBook Metadata Offer..... 125

Notes 127

Index..... 129

About the Author 145

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“It’s the little details that are vital.
Little things make big things happen.”

— John Wooden,
Legendary UCLA basketball coach

1

What Book Registration Is, and Why It Matters

Book registration in the United States is not a formal requirement, nor a defined procedure for every book. Anyone can print a book or produce an eBook and distribute it. You do not need to complete any paperwork or online forms or spend any money. However, if you wish to distribute, sell, and protect your book, there are three separate registrations that all books have in common:

1. ISBN (International Standard Book Number) Registration
2. U.S. Copyright Registration
3. U.S. Library of Congress Registration

Who might be able to ignore these registrations? Perhaps the fiction writer publishing

exclusively in eBook format who doesn't care about copyright. But for the vast majority of us who don't fit that description, one or more of these registrations is important, if not mandatory, to publish a book.

Following the advice in this book, no one will be able to tell the difference between your book and a book produced by one of the "big New York" publishers. Besides simply *appearing* professional, your book can be:

- Listed in the same industry databases
- Sold in any store that wishes to sell your book
- More easily (and less expensively) be defended in the event of a copyright violation

Your book will also be more *discoverable* by those looking for books like yours: stores, libraries and most importantly, readers. No matter how you describe it, in Internet marketing-speak, no book or author stands a chance at success without being visible and discoverable to readers searching online. And let's face it, with more and more brick-and-mortar stores closing, book shoppers are making more and more of their purchases online.

Never before has there been a more compelling reason for making sure a book and its author are properly represented in as many online databases as possible. A thorough book registration process ensures that. Proper book registration will greatly reduce the chance of problems for many years to come.

Who this book is for

The ease of publishing and the potential for income from it have brought literally thousands of new books to the virtual shelves of online bookstores. According to R.R. Bowker, the exclusive seller of ISBNs in the United States, ISBNs for self-published print and eBook titles have grown from 85,468 in 2008 to 458,564 in 2013, the most recent year reported.¹ That's a 537% increase! And the actual numbers are even greater because Bowker doesn't count eBooks published without an ISBN.

As you may know, the big eBook retailers like Amazon do not require publishers to use an ISBN. And because none of the large online self-publishing portals report the number of new eBooks published, no one knows just how many new eBooks are published each year

without an ISBN. Suffice to say, it has to be thousands.

Numbers and growth aside, what's obvious is that we have a highly competitive marketplace. This makes it especially important for new publishers to utilize every industry program and procedure available.

RegisterYour Book aims to assist the range of people seeking to navigate the complicated world of self-publishing:

- **Self-publishers** who want to avoid having their book look “self-published” and get it into the same catalogs and databases as the large publishers use.
- **Authors** who want to understand their options even if they are not the one designing and producing their book.
- **Publishing services firms** who want to help their clients look even more professional and guide them through these important steps.
- **New publishers** who need to establish best practices that will serve their publishing firm for years to come.

It doesn't matter, until it matters

We publish with the goal of being successful, whether that means selling books, touching lives, recording family histories, or enhancing our reputations. But all of that is put at risk when we take shortcuts or miss important details.

Publishing a book is a journey culminating in an event. Once released into the world, your book is on its own. Do-overs and corrections are expensive, if not impossible.

Consider ISBNs. Numbers cannot be transferred, so if you got a free one and later want to show your name as the publisher, you will have to re-publish your book using a new ISBN. And that usually means starting over to accumulate reader reviews.

You might discover a book very similar to yours selling in the U.S. or another country, but now the cost to protect your copyright has ballooned from \$35 to thousands of dollars.

Or—surprise—a chance media mention generates interest in your book, but libraries and schools can't easily find it. Because it is already published, your book is ineligible to receive a Library of Congress Control Number.

My point is that as publishers, we need to plan for success. Publishing a book is like baking a loaf of bread. Once out of the oven, the ingredients are baked in, and it's off to the shelf for sale. Your book's registration information never changes.

How to use this book

Register Your Book seeks to address both the why, as well as the how questions that new or occasional publishers have. If you are new to publishing, I recommend that you read the book but skim the how-to sections on your first time through. Don't get bogged down trying to complete each step of the process as you read it. Registering your book requires a good deal of thinking and decision-making, so it's best to understand the big picture before you get started.

After your initial read, turn to **Appendix A, Timing and Timelines**, where I summarize how long a process takes as well as the general order of each registration step. Each step references the appropriate chapter, which you can reread as you complete that step in the process.

Website links

Each step of the registration process is completed online, and that is where you will find all of the additional website resources referenced in this book. To make accessing these resources easier for both printed book and eBook readers, I replaced each of the specific links with an easy-to-read short link that takes you to the same place.

Each link begins with the domain name **breve.link** (*breve* meaning *short* in Italian). For example, when you type or click <http://breve.link/ryb1>, you will be taken to the Bowker website page for title submissions: <http://www.bowker.com/tools-resources/Title-Submissions.html>.

Not only does this make a long website address easier to read and type (especially helpful for print book readers), but, in the event an address changes, we can easily update the link which keeps your book accurate and up-to-date. Please email the publisher if a link is broken or goes to what you think is the wrong location. That way it can be quickly fixed for all readers.

Book or eBook?

As you read on, keep in mind that I use the term *book* to describe all forms of a book—paper, digital, audio—unless referring specifically to the eBooks sold by major online book retailers. And by eBooks, I mean Kindle and EPUB formats, not PDF or any of the other dozen or so eBook formats.²

My personal opinion is that we as publishers are doing our readers and profession a disservice if we treat eBooks as a second-class format. An eBook can and should be as professionally produced a work as any other type of book. We need to be careful that we don't create a lesser product in the minds of today's readers.

To this last point, if you are publishing books—whether the “p,” the “e” or the “a” (audio) variety—and assigning them an ISBN, do it right. An ISBN is inherently helpful for sales, but only if you take advantage of everything it offers.

Let's begin with the most important registration step, the International Standard Book Number, or ISBN.



4

Copyright

Assuming you have the right to file a copyright on your book, this chapter explains how to do it, why you would want to do so as soon as possible, and the consequences if you don't. This chapter also goes into detail about the required and optional contents for a copyright page.

The United States Copyright Office implemented new processing and pricing in May of 2014. A key element of this change was to make the cost and process for registering an author's copyright as simple and inexpensive as possible. If you are the sole author of a single work, the process is simple and costs \$35. If your book has more than one author or incorporates content that you cannot copyright, you will need to file a standard application, which costs \$55. Both



of these assume the registration is filed online; paper filings are \$85. (<http://breve.link/ryb6>)

The author that includes material that is copyrighted by others should consult with a lawyer familiar with copyright. Things like extensive quotes, song lyrics, and photographs may need to be cleared with the owners of those copyrights. At a minimum you need to acknowledge their rights, and an attorney can clarify this for you.

The following information is provided as a general guide and not as a substitute for legal advice or counsel.

Why filing for a copyright is important

The important things to know about copyright are why it is necessary and how to secure it. Technically your book is “protected” as soon as it is in a “fixed medium of expression” or otherwise published, but initiating legal action is easier if your book has been registered. Timing is also important. Here is what *Circular 1, Copyright Basics* from Copyright.gov has to say:

- Registration is necessary for works of U.S. origin *before* an infringement suit may be filed in court. (However, note that copyright



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rules are often subject to court/judicial interpretation.¹¹⁾

- If registration is made within three months after publication of the work or prior to an infringement of the work, statutory damages and attorney's fees will be available to the copyright owner in court actions. Otherwise, only an award of actual damages and profits is available to the copyright owner.
- Registration allows the owner of the copyright to record the registration with the U.S. Customs Service for protection against the importation of infringing copies. (For additional information, visit the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website at cbp.gov.)
- If made before or within five years of publication, registration will establish *prima facie* evidence in court of the validity of the copyright and of the facts stated in the certificate. (Simply put, if you assert your right to copyright, the other party will need to prove you wrong—a far better position for you because this is easier than you having to prove you are right.)

As of this writing it is taking eight months to process electronic applications and 13 months to process written applications. The processing



time varies—these are estimates and indeed at one point not long ago it was three months for electronic filings and 10 months for paper forms. But regardless of the processing time, the effective date of registration is the date the Copyright Office received the completed application, correct payment, and copy(ies) of the work being registered in acceptable form. You do not need to wait for a certificate to proceed with publication.

If you were to wait and register after discovering an infringement, the minimum cost to expedite processing (necessary if you are taking legal action; see the first bullet in the preceding list) is \$550, and other fees may apply.

A second compelling reason to register immediately is that you can collect statutory damages and attorney's fees if there is a court action. While your case may never get to this point, the fact that you can collect these damages and fees is a powerful deterrent to infringing parties.

By the way, there is no provision in copyright law supporting what is sometimes called “the poor man's copyright”—the practice of mailing yourself a copy of your book. This is not a substitute for registration.

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61



For answers to frequently asked questions about copyright, please visit <http://breve.link/ryb7>.

Preparing to register a copyright

The current cost to register a copyright electronically begins at \$35. This is for a *Single Application*, which is defined as a single author submitting a single work on their own behalf with no other authors or rights holders involved. You fill out the form online and include your book in one of these formats:

- .doc (Microsoft Word Document 2003 or earlier)
- .docx (Microsoft Word Open XML Document)
- .htm, .html (HyperText Markup Language)
- .pdf (Portable Document Format)
- .rtf (Rich Text Document)
- .txt (Text File)
- .wpd (WordPerfect Document)
- .wps (Microsoft Works Word Processor Document, version 9 or earlier)

(For a complete list of acceptable formats, please visit <http://breve.link/ryb8>. Maximum upload file size is 500MB. In the unlikely event that your book exceeds this size, you will have to



follow the instructions for submitting files via mail.)

You also have the option of adding additional contacts, such as an attorney, or you can list your name as the sole contact for each role. Here are the roles from Copyright.gov in case you want to prepare this ahead of time:

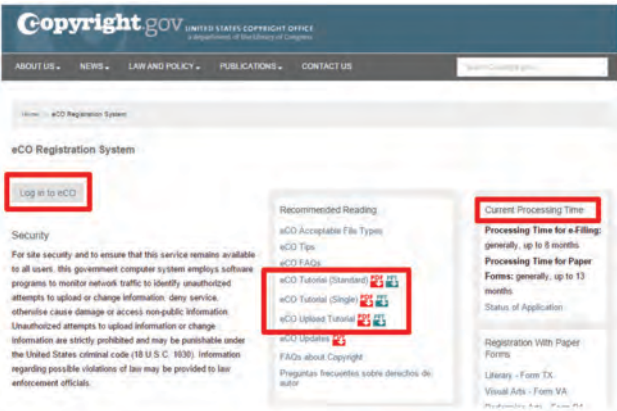
- **Claimants:** The copyright claimant(s) in this work. The author is the original copyright claimant. The claimant may also be a person or organization to whom copyright has been transferred.
- **Rights & Permissions:** Contact information for a person and/or organization to be contacted regarding copyright management information or permission to use this work. If you prefer not to provide personally identifying information, you may list a third party agent or a post office box.
- **Correspondent:** The person the Copyright Office will contact if it has questions about this application. Completion of the name, email address and correspondence address is mandatory.
- **Mail Certificate:** The name and address to which the registration certificate should be mailed. Completion of Individual and/



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or Organization Information, and Address is mandatory.

Once you have gathered your files and the contact information you plan to use, visit the Copyright.gov website at <http://breve.link/ryb9> and register for an account. You can also access tutorials and check current processing time. By the way, you can pause the process at any time and return to complete your application.



Should You Preregister a Copyright on Your Book?

The copyright office actually discourages preregistration of copyrights and in fact backs that up with a few disincentives such as a \$140 filing fee. This is in addition to the formal registration process and fee, which must still be completed once the book is finalized.



Copyright preregistration is only really necessary for subject matter or authors who have had a history of prerelease infringement. This does not typically apply to the average independent publisher or self-published author but it's been a problem in the past for copyright holders of film and music compositions, as well as authors working through an agent to shop a book proposal to traditional publishers. Learn more here: <http://breve.link/ryb10>.

How to format your copyright page

The copyright page is part of what is called the “front matter” of your book and it is one of the few mandatory pages of any book. The appropriate location is the back of the title page, which means it is a left-facing (“verso”) page.

It's also specific to the contents of the book in which it is placed (sort of like a food label). There may be past editions or different formats of the book, but *this* copyright page is specific to *this* specific version or edition of the book. So, for example, while “Printed in the U.S.A.” can be entirely appropriate on the printed book's copyright page, it is irrelevant and should not be part of an eBook's copyright page.



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I have divided the information that can appear on this page into three groups: mandatory, typical, and additional (if applicable).

Mandatory copyright page content

This is your copyright notice. Yes, this is the only required information for this page. In the words of the U.S. Copyright office, the following must be included:

1. The symbol © (the letter C in a circle), or the word “Copyright,” or the abbreviation “Copr.”
2. The year of first publication of the work.
3. The name of the owner of copyright in the work, an abbreviation by which the name can be recognized, or a generally known alternative designation of the owner.

Example: © 2016 David Wogahn

(This notice would look slightly different if you incorporate someone else’s copyrighted information, or if your book incorporates U.S. Government works, which are not eligible for copyright protection. In these cases you should contact an attorney or refer to the publication Copyright Basics available from the U.S. Copyright Office: <http://breve.link/ryb11>.)



Do you need to include “All Rights Reserved”?

The short answer: no, but it removes any ambiguity as to rights when you do add it. In other words, it doesn't hurt to add it.

Each country specifies the appropriate language to use when declaring copyright and defers to international treaties and agreements to inform those requirements. Until August 23, 2000, the United States was a party to an agreement (Buenos Aires Convention, 1910) which required all 17 national signatories to use the phrase *All Rights Reserved*.¹² U.S. copyright law now conforms to the Berne Convention, which makes copyright automatic (as noted above).

Typical copyright page content

1. The copyright notice as discussed above.
2. Legal notices. (Included in the next section are 12 sample notices.)
3. ISBN information. As discussed in the chapter on ISBNs, I recommend listing all numbers assigned to the various formats of your book: print, eBook, audio, etc.
4. Contact information for the publisher.

This last piece of information—publisher contact information—is something I see many indie publishers struggle with. Should it be your



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name? The name of your imprint or publishing company? How much contact information should you provide? After all, including it is optional.

The information to include is entirely up to you and depends on your objectives. Chances are, you have an *About the Author* section in the back of your book, along with contact information such as your website or email address. So the information you place here is how you wish to be contacted if someone has a question about the book. For example, someone may wish to sell it in their store, purchase copies directly from the publisher...or maybe even offer you a licensing or publishing arrangement.

Another objective for many independent publishers is to distance themselves from their dual role of author and publisher. Many media and public relations professionals still have an aversion to promoting self-published books (not to mention that some readers feel the same way, although this is changing).

I could probably write a whole chapter on this topic, but for purposes here, I suggest that you (at a minimum) include an email that is not your name. If you have a name for your publishing



company, list it along with whatever contact information you wish to share.

Additional copyright page content

These remaining elements may or may not apply to you. But if they do, be sure to include them.

1. Library of Congress information. If you secured this information, you must include it on the copyright page. This is covered in detail in a following chapter.
2. If this is not the first edition of the book, you will want to include the edition number.
3. Printer's Key. You may have noticed that some books have rows of numbers like this:

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Or with two digit years included, like this:

22 21 20 19 18 17 16 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This practice originated in the early days of using physical plates to print books and is still in fact in use today by publishers to keep track of print runs, and sometimes the years in which they occur. As new print runs are ordered, the lowest number is removed and the two digit year, when present, represents the year that printing took place. If you were using printing plates, the printer could simply



scratch off a number rather than produce new plates. Digital printing and POD has rendered this practice irrelevant. However, some POD publishers use the Printer's Key to keep track of minor edition changes. You can learn more here: <http://breve.link/ryb12>.

4. Contributors. Like other creative projects, a book is often the result of the production efforts of several contributors, such as an editor, proofreader, designer, and/or indexer. A publisher is not necessarily required to list their names and roles, but it is not uncommon to acknowledge those who made a significant creative contribution to the book. This is entirely up to the publisher.

(This should not be confused with an acknowledgments page, which is where the author has a chance to acknowledge and thank people. The copyright page is for the publisher's use—an important distinction if you are performing both roles.)

5. Environmental notices. Many enlightened publishers make a point of using recycled paper or following environmentally-friendly best practices. The non-profit trade group Green Press Initiative (greenpressinitiative.org) is an example of an



organization that publishers join to demonstrate their support of these practices. Include this information, if applicable.

Bottom line: this is your official business page. Review the copyright page of this book and the copyright page of other professionally produced books to see all these elements at work.

Sample copyright legal notices

The use of copyright notices and disclaimers on the copyright page is entirely up to you, the publisher. They can be non-existent, brief, or quite detailed—something you need to decide in consultation with your legal advisor.

I am not an attorney, nor am I providing legal advice, but anyone can pick up a book and copy the notices and disclaimers used by another publisher.

Each of these 12 examples is from a book with content intended for a specific audience. Feel free to mix and match, edit and remix, and then add it to your copyright page.

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Example 2: General

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Example 3: General

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Example 4: General

While the author has made every effort to provide accurate telephone numbers and Internet addresses at the time of publication, neither the publisher nor the author assumes any responsibility for errors or for changes that occur after publication. Further, the publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

Example 5: General

All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Screen shots are used for illustrative purposes only.



Example 6: Books that reference trademarks

Many of the designations used by manufacturers and sellers to distinguish their products are claimed as trademarks. Where those designations appear in this book and the publisher was aware of a trademark claim, the designations have been printed in caps or initial caps.

Example 7: Legal, Financial, General

Although the publisher and author have used reasonable care in preparing this book, the information it contains is distributed “as is” and without warranties of any kind. This book is not intended as legal or financial advice, and not all of the recommendations may be suitable for your situation. Professional legal and financial advisors should be consulted as needed. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for any costs, expenses, or damages resulting from use of or reliance on the information contained in this book.

Example 8: Legal, Medical, Professional

This book is written and published to provide accurate and authoritative information relevant to the subject matter presented. It is published and sold with the understanding that the author and publisher are not engaged in rendering



legal, medical, or other professional services by reason of their authorship or publication of this work. If medical, legal or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

Example 9: Fiction

This is a work of fiction. The events and characters described herein are fictitious and otherwise imaginary and are not intended to refer to specific places or living persons. The opinions expressed in this book are solely the opinions of the author and do not represent the opinions or thoughts of the publisher. The author has represented and warranted full ownership and/or legal right to publish all the materials contained in this book.

Example 10: Fiction

This is a work of fiction. The events and persons are imagined. Any resemblance to actual events, or to persons, live or dead, is purely coincidental.

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75



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David Wogahn is president of Sellbox Inc., the parent of AuthorImprints.com, an award-winning independent publishing services company that helps authors, independent publishers and other businesses publish books and metadata. Author Imprints has launched over a hundred professional imprints, enabling the successful publication of 250 books...and counting. Prior to founding Sellbox in 2002, Wogahn was vice president of multimedia publishing at Times Mirror, a media holding company that included the *Los Angeles Times*. He also worked for the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee and co-founded the first online publisher of sports team branded websites, known today as the CBS College Sports Network. He is the author of two books and two video courses, including *Distributing and Marketing eBooks* for Lynda.com, a LinkedIn Company.

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