

Los Angeles Times
FESTIVAL OF BOOKS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

It has come to our attention that vanity press/author services companies contact many authors and exhibitors, or potential exhibitors, about participation in the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books.

Several authors have asked if a particular company is “legitimate.” There are many companies that provide a variety of services for independent authors – including shelf space and author marketing services – that have secured exhibitor booths at the festival. However, the LA Times Festival of Books has not “partnered” with any such organization, so it would be inaccurate for any company to represent itself that way.

Unfortunately, the festival cannot determine which companies are right for individual authors or exhibitors. We can only confirm if a specific company has signed up as an exhibitor.

Thus, if you are contacted by an author services company, we encourage you to do some research before you make your decision. Here is an excerpt and a link to an article we found that may help.

From Reedsy.com: [“Authors Beware: Scams and Publishing Companies to Avoid,”](#) March 1, 2018.

“What’s the best way for an author to stay safe?”

Research is the answer. With the internet, you can find out if 99% of companies or services are reputable within a few minutes. Here are some specifics to help you spot which publishing companies to avoid:

Google it. *A quick search will at least show you the company’s website and examples of the previous work. If you’re unable to find anything, or if something smells fishy, then you might want to stay away.*

Check with fellow authors. *Author forums are a great place to find critique partners, tips on cover designers, and to vent about anything and everything. They’re also where you want to go if you have any questions about a service. Head to a forum that’s large enough and at least one author will have encountered the company in question.*

Be wary of unsolicited offers. *If a company or service contacts you out of the blue by email or phone, the chances are that they bought your number. Reputable companies with a track record and positive word-of-mouth don’t tend to cold-call.*

Ask questions. *As we've mentioned, some reputable companies will require authors to pay money up-front for services. But before you commit to anything, make sure you know exactly what you'll be getting for your money, what isn't included, and what their provable track record looks like.*

Yes, there are a lot of predators working in the publishing field, but they're nothing to lose sleep over. So long as you're careful and approach opportunities with a critical eye, you will find no problem navigating around the sharks in this business."

Here are a few additional articles that may help:

<https://www.tckpublishing.com/what-is-a-vanity-press/>

<https://blog.reedsy.com/guide/publishing-companies-to-avoid/vanity-press/>

<https://www.tiffanyhawk.com/blog/self-publishing-vs-hybrid-publishing-vs-vanity-publishing>

Thank you for your participation and interest in the festival.

Los Angeles Times Festival of Books Staff