

**Christine Hoff Kraemer**  
**Author**  
**Seeking the Mystery: An Introduction to Pagan Theologies**  
**(2013)**

**Full Comment**

There are actually at least three choices here: self-publish, publish with a print on demand press, or traditionally publish.

I've gone with traditional publishers for two of my books: *Graven Images: Religion in Comic Books and Graphic Novels* (2010), which I edited with my colleague A. David Lewis, and *Eros and Touch from a Pagan Perspective: Divided for Love's Sake*, which is coming out this fall. Both of these are academic books, and I placed them with academic publishers. If you're at all interested in your books ending up in university libraries, this is the only way to go. I'd say, in general, if you want libraries of any kind to buy your book, or you want to see it in brick-and-mortar bookstores, you need a traditional publisher. The royalty percentage is very small under this model, but you're more likely to have good editors, and traditional publishers can help with a book's credibility: being under a known imprint functions as an endorsement. Some publishers still do limited marketing for you, although this is becoming more rare.

I published *Seeking the Mystery: An Introduction to Pagan Theologies* with a press that does e-books and print on demand. I preferred this to self-publishing because I was able to work with an experienced editor who gave me good advice on shaping the manuscript. I also had access to the services of a graphic artist for the cover, and I didn't have to format the manuscript myself. My press also provided some marketing. In addition to these professional services, the royalty percentage was also much higher than with a traditional press. The drawback, of course, is that the book is really only available to buy online, and my press doesn't have any strong established relationships with public library systems or bookstores. That means that anyone who doesn't do their book shopping online is unlikely to come across it.

Self-publishing is great for niche books that appeal to a very small audience. Many of these books will never sell enough copies to pay for the professional services even a print-on-demand publisher can provide. If you're self-publishing, though, you have to do all the editing, cover design, and formatting yourself, or hire a professional to do it for you -- which can mean some substantial out-of-pocket costs. (I advise self-publishers against editing their own work, though; frankly, there are a lot of badly edited self-published books out there, some of them so full of mistakes that they're hard to read.) Additionally, if you're self-publishing, you'll have to do every bit of marketing yourself, which can be time-consuming to do well.

Christine's Other Books:

[Graven Images: Religion in Comic Books and Graphic Novels](#) (2010)

[Eros and Touch from a Pagan Perspective: Divided for Love's Sake](#) (2013)