



Self-Published Books Account for Close to Half of the “Traditional” Titles Bowker Tracks

by Michael Cader on October 24, 2012 in Industry Statistics

Bowker has released a special analysis of title counts in the fast-growing self-published books segment. The new tabulations follow data from the company earlier in the year showing self-published print books comprising a substantial portion of the “traditional” annual output. (“Traditional” books does not count the over one million titles from POD factories.)

When first reported in June, Bowker said self-published print books accounted for 36 percent of the “traditional” production in 2011; now the new report puts the total of 148,424 printed self-published books last year at 43 percent of the “traditional” output.

While Bowker’s main year-to-year stats still do not count ebooks at all, the new self-publishing analysis does incorporate those ebooks that carry an ISBN. (That still omits titles with only an ASIN or other type of store-specific identifier.) They counted 87,201 self-published ebooks in 2011--which is probably well below the real total once you factor in KDP exclusives and other sources that still don’t use ISBN numbers.

They still don’t know how many individual works those two sets of numbers--for print and ebooks--covers, since the count was based entirely on ISBNs. (So if a CreateSpace POD book was also made into an ebook with an ISBN, it would be included in both counts. The total number of works, therefore, is something below 235,000, but we don’t know the actual number.)

The biggest producers were:

CreateSpace 58,412

Author Solutions 47,094

Smashwords 40,608

Lulu 38,005

The self-published title counts also include what Bowker defines as “small presses,” or publishers who have produced 10 or fewer books. That segment accounted for 21,256 self-published print books and 12,851 ebooks in 2011.