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# London Book Fair 2013: Self-Publishing Surges in Digital Zone

By Andrew Albanese | Apr 16, 2013



From its beginnings in 2009 as a sleepy corridor of Earls Court, the London Book Fair's Digital Zone is quickly becoming the pounding heartbeat of the fair, driven by two major trends in the industry: the steady march of technology, and the rise of self-publishing such technology has enabled.

What started five years ago with just a handful of exhibitors and a cramped, 23-seat theater on the show floor, is now one of the most crowded areas of the fair, with nearly 70 exhibitors, two theaters and three days of programming, a networking bar, and perhaps the Zone's most popular new attraction, a revamped Authors Lounge sponsored by publishing consultancy Authoright, which has attracted steady, overflowing crowds.

*Article continues below.*

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"I've just recently finished my book, and I'm trying to feel out the environment," says Ian House, a first-time author mingling outside a packed session featuring Smashwords' Mark Coker. "And the information I've gotten has been cool." House, who is putting together a children's book called *Crockery Farm*, says

he is looking to do his own thing, and hoping to use local suppliers, and came to the fair to get a sense of what's out there.

Another author, Dee Alimi, says he has already published a book of poems, *Sleeping with the Secret Burden*, with Amazon's CreateSpace, and says he has three more books planned, including a children's book about a vegetarian tiger. "I came today to gather what's going on," he says, "and to see if I've missed anything. And, I don't think I have. I think I'm on top of what I'm doing. What I need to do is keep marketing my book."

Over the course of the fair's first two days, the Authors Lounge has hosted packed sessions with representatives from Amazon, GoodReads, and Smashwords, as well as chats with authors new to self-publishing, and with well-known successful traditionally published authors, including Will Self, and William Boyd.

Crowds are also jamming into the Digital Zone's two theaters, and milling outside of them, to hear presentations on a range of nuts and bolts topics, from self-publishing, to HTML5, selling direct to customers, apps, platform-building, e-book lending, metadata, and semantic-tagging. All of which is likely to have an impact on coming London Book Fairs, organizers concede, both in terms of who attends (with more would-be authors surely looking to swell the attendance) and for who comes to exhibit. And while it is too early to announce plans for next year while this year's fair is only midway through, chances are good the Digital Zone will expand once again in 2014--especially considering that this week we learned that, for the second time this year, a self-published book, *The Bet* by Rachel Van Dyken, has topped the e-book bestseller in the U.S.

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Good news, and an indication the industry is finally catching up with the reading public about books.

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And perhaps with all those overflowing crowds at the AuthorLounge over the past couple of days, it is time to properly expand the space allocated to it for LBF 2014.

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**Mags Cullingford**

As a first-time, self-published author, still reeling from the encouraging experience of attending yesterday - the 16th. Fantastic buzz. Looking forward to LBF 2014.

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**Rose Saliba** · Works at Freelance Work

Enjoyed the LBF 2013. Found the Digital Zone helpful and more user friendly this year and agree - more space needed for the AuthorLounge in 2014.

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**Mark Leslie Lefebvre** · Director at Kobo

I was delighted that Kobo was a part of this amazing author-centric hub at the London Book Fair - me and my Kobo Writing Life team had a fantastic opportunity to connect with so many wonderful writers!

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**Dee Alimi** · Burgess Hill

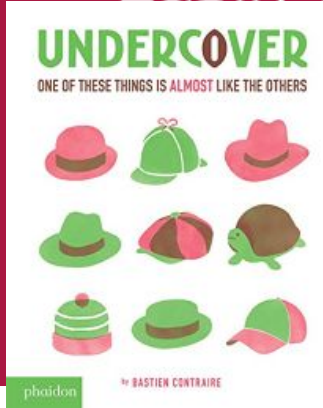
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