

Self-Publishing and On-Demand Printing

Jim Hamilton
Saturday June 22, 1 pm

Museum of Printing
15 Thornton Avenue
Haverhill, MA 01832

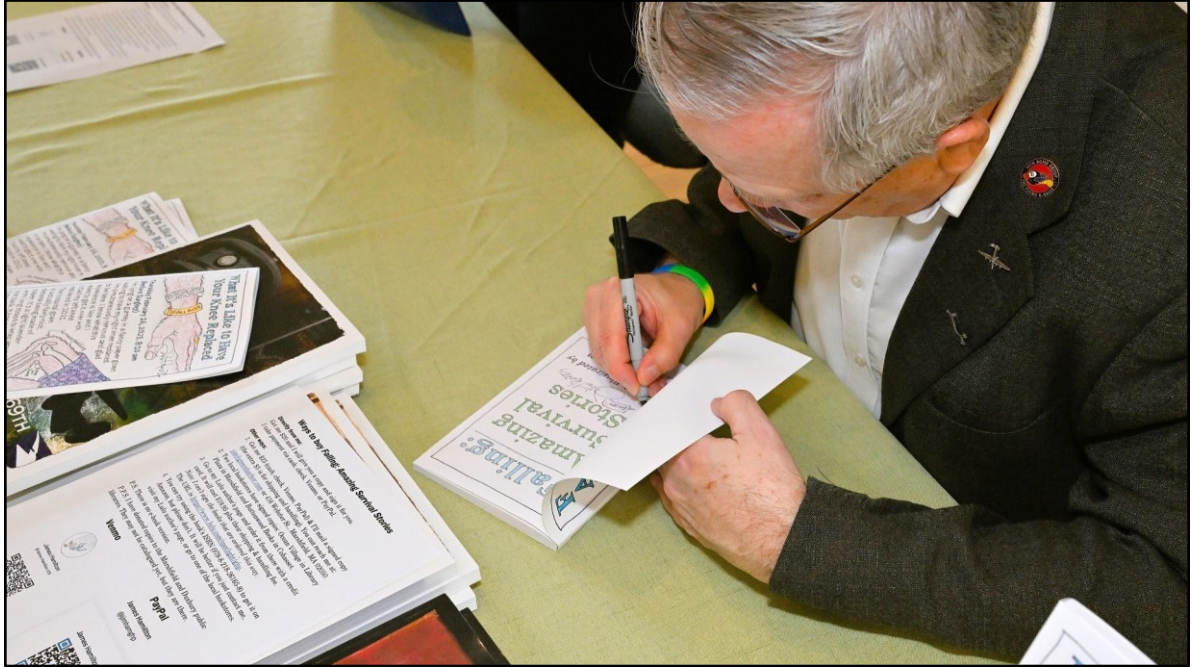
Topics to be covered:

- Introduction
- Print on demand
- Working with an on-demand publishing service
- Formatting using Word
- Cover intricacies
- Making your book official
- Costs, revenue, and profit
- How I work on a book
- Page count and blank pages
- Q&A

Jim Hamilton, author/illustrator of the recently published book, “Falling: Amazing Survival Stories,” spoke on the topic, “Self-Publishing and On-Demand Printing,” at the Museum of Printing (15 Thornton Avenue in Haverhill, MA) on Saturday June 22nd.

Author bio:

Jim Hamilton has self-published numerous books and is a long-time proponent of the power of self-publishing and on-demand printing. He was the editor of the CAP Ventures’ book, “The Print On Demand Opportunity” in 1996. He is the author and self-publisher of non-fiction works such as “The Writing 69th” (1999) and “The Black Cats of Amherst” (2018). He also transcribed and annotated the book “We Unite to Serve: The Wartime Diaries of Reverend Stoddard Lane” (2021). His most recent book, which he wrote and illustrated, is “Falling: Amazing Survival Stories” (2024). Hamilton is a graduate of Amherst College and holds a master's degree in Printing Technology from the Rochester Institute of Technology. For more on his work see www.greenharbor.com.



Good afternoon! My name is Jim Hamilton, and for the next forty-five minutes or so I'd like to share with you some of my experiences in writing and self-publishing my own work. I have a background in graphic design, having worked in the 1980s as a paste-up artist for Boston-area book publishers. That was when there were still paste-up artists working with Xacto knives and hot wax or rubber cement. That job title no longer exists. All of what I was doing then has been replaced by computer tools like Adobe InDesign. Yet what I plan on talking to you about today does not need any sophisticated software. In fact, I have laid out all of my books using Microsoft Word, which has everything I need to produce a single-column book (hold up a copy of *The Writing 69th*) with a table of contents, headers and footers, and an index.

But before I start on that, I'd like to hear a little bit from each of you about why you are here. I assume that it's because you might want to self-publish one of your own books, but let's find out. Tell me your name and what kind of book you might self-publish.

- What are you working on?
- Who is your audience?
- How will you define success?



What do I mean when I say, “print on demand”? The short definition is printing what you want, when you want it, and in the desired quantities. On-demand printing is made possible by devices like the one shown here: high speed digital printers and copier/printers.



Print on demand

- Personalized printing
 - For transactional and direct mail
- Digital document repositories
 - Books never go out of print
- Book of one
 - Sell a book only after you have received an order
- Just-in-time manufacturing
 - Order only the number of books you need at any given moment
 - No warehousing required

These devices allow for very short runs of print in a way that is not possible with offset presses. Would anyone consider printing a single copy of a book (or any other document) on an offset press? No. But with digital printers you can.

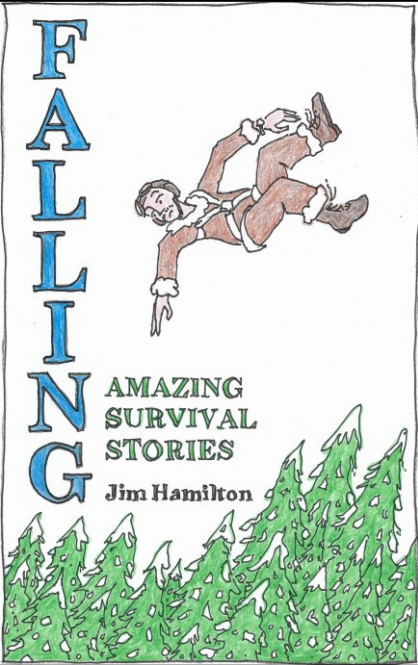
This allows for personalized variable data printing like the statements that you get from banks or the advertising mail that appears in your mailbox. It gives publishers the ability to create digital document repositories so that no book ever goes out of print (if that's what they want). And it allows two key things that make it possible, in fact extremely easy, to be a self-publisher. Those two things are runs of one and just-in-time manufacturing. I will get to a couple of examples in a few minutes.

DISTRIBUTION ELIGIBLE Yes	
BOOK SIZE US Letter	PAGE COUNT 206
BINDING TYPE Paperback Perfect Bound	INTERIOR COLOR Standard Black & White
PAPER TYPE 60# White — Uncoated	COVER FINISH Glossy

[↓ Book Templates](#)
[↓ Custom Cover Template](#)

9.20 USD per Print Book

Let me take a step back to show you what this means to me as a self-publisher. This is my book, The Black Cats of Amherst. Its size is US letter (8.5 by 11 inches). It is black-only inside and has a page count of a little over 200 pages. It has a color cover. Before doing anything, I know from typing this basic information into Lulu.com that each book will cost \$9.20 to print. This helps me determine what price I will choose for this book. I want to keep the selling price at around \$20, so I know I will clear somewhere around \$10 per book if I sell books at that price.



DISTRIBUTION ELIGIBLE  Yes	
BOOK SIZE Digest	PAGE COUNT 144
BINDING TYPE Paperback Perfect Bound	INTERIOR COLOR Standard Color
PAPER TYPE 60# White — Uncoated	COVER FINISH Glossy

[↓ Book Templates](#)

[↓ Custom Cover Template](#)

7.66 USD per Print Book

Another example. Here's my book, *Falling: Amazing Survival Stories*. You can see that it's much smaller than *The Black Cats of Amherst*. Its size is called Digest (5.5 by 8.5 inches). I made this book smaller because I wanted to make it in color, yet affordable, and fit at the \$20 price point. With color inside and a page count of 144 pages, each book costs \$7.66 to print, which allows me to keep the selling price at \$20 (well, \$19.95 to be exact).

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Falling: Amazing Survival Stories

By Jim Hamilton

Paperback USD 19.95 [Add to Cart](#)

Share [f](#) [x](#) [p](#)

Usually printed in 3 - 5 business days

The price is \$19.95.

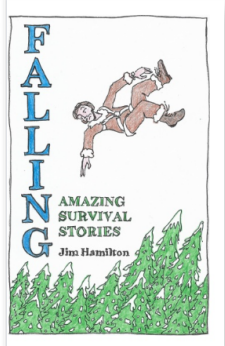
Imagine falling from thousands of feet in the air without a working parachute. Could you survive? Your chances are small, but a surprising number of individuals have lived to tell the tale. Author Jim Hamilton has been collecting these stories since 2001 on his website, The Free Fall Research Page. In this 144-page book with extensive color illustrations, Hamilton combines text and images to bring these remarkable stories to life.

How do these numbers work out in practice? Let's start with a look at the Lulu.com storefront page for *Falling: Amazing Survival Stories*.

If anyone wants to order my book, “*Falling: Amazing Survival Stories*,” they can go to the Lulu.com web site and purchase a copy that will be printed on demand and sent to the buyer. That person pays Lulu for the book, which they then print and mail to the customer. This is an example of printing a book of one, in other words, there is no stockpile of books waiting to be sent out. The book is not printed until a copy is purchased.

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Falling: Amazing Survival Stories

By Jim Hamilton

Paperback
USD 19.95

[Add to Cart](#)

Share [f](#) [x](#) [p](#)

Usually printed in 3 - 5 business days

Book of One

- The buyer goes to Lulu.com.
- Lulu sells it at \$19.95.
- Lulu sends me \$9.83.*
 - This accounts for the cost to print the book and Lulu's fee for handling the printing and the shipping.
 - The buyer pays for the shipping.

*Eventually...

Imagine falling from thousands of feet in the air without a working parachute. Could you survive? Your chances are small, but a surprising number of individuals have lived to tell the tale. Author Jim Hamilton has been collecting these stories since 2001 on his website, The Free Fall Research Page. In this 144-page book with extensive color illustrations, Hamilton combines text and images to bring these remarkable stories to life.

In instances where the buyer goes to Lulu to buy a copy of my book, Lulu charges them \$19.95 plus shipping. They send me \$9.83. I don't have to do anything except wait for the check.

This is the Book of One example. The same basic structure holds true if the buyer purchases through Amazon or some other online source, but I would get a little less because Amazon takes a cut of the profit.

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Falling: Amazing Survival Stories

By Jim Hamilton

Paperback
USD 19.95

[Add to Cart](#)

Share [f](#) [x](#) [p](#)

Usually printed in 3 - 5 business days

Just-in-Time Manufacturing


- I buy the number of books that I need from Lulu for **\$7.66 plus shipping**
- I sell them for **\$20.**
- I make about **\$12 per book sold.**

Imagine falling from thousands of feet in the air without a working parachute. Could you survive? Your chances are small, but a surprising number of individuals have lived to tell the tale. Author Jim Hamilton has been collecting these stories since 2001 on his website, The Free Fall Research Page. In this 144-page book with extensive color illustrations, Hamilton combines text and images to bring these remarkable stories to life.


So now let's imagine a scenario in which I buy copies of my book through Lulu for events like this one. They sell me the books at the printing cost we saw a few slides back: \$7.66. They charge me for shipping, so I have to consider that as part of the cost of the books that I sell. As an example, when I buy thirty or so books, the cost of shipping adds about 20 cents per book.

It is true that I could probably get a better price per book if I bought a larger quantity, for example, hundreds of books, directly from a printer. But for me, the convenience of working with Lulu, and the fact that my house is not full of unsold books, means that I am unlikely to go elsewhere. On top of that, I think that Lulu's pricing is quite competitive.

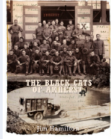
Publications by Jim Hamilton Sort by Newest to Oldest ▾




Falling: Amazing Survival Stories
By Jim Hamilton
Published 11/12/2022
Paperback
19.95 USD



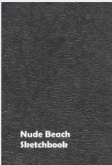
We Unite to Serve
By Stoddard Lane, Jim Hamilton
Published 1/4/2021
Paperback
24.95 USD




The Black Cats of Amherst
By Jim Hamilton
Published 5/11/2018
Paperback
19.95 USD




Blue Skies
By Jim Hamilton
Published 7/12/2015
Ebook
0.99 USD




Nude Beach Sketchbook



The Haiku Year
A correspondence



The Haiku Year
A Correspondence



Haiku, My Gosh! Say, Let's Talk
How to Write and Read Haiku

If someone searches for books by me on Lulu.com, this is what appears. I have to say that I am in awe of what you can get for no money down through an on-demand service like Lulu. If you are savvy enough to be able to create PDFs of your book's cover and book block, you can sell copies of your book through their web interface without paying any upfront costs. You receive money for every copy sold. If you want copies of your own for talks or other events, you can order them for a reasonable amount. You don't have to stockpile printed copies. You can just order what you need, as you need them. Lulu takes a cut of the profit when one of your books is sold online, but I think that is very fair for the service they provide.



The power of on-demand printing and self-publishing hinges on your ability to create functional files for the cover and the book block, so let's talk a little about that. Each of my books has a single-column format, a table of contents, an index, and, of course, page numbers. I used Microsoft Word to lay out each of these books, even the covers. Tools like Adobe InDesign are much more flexible for complicated layouts, but I didn't need those kinds of sophisticated features. If your book has similar needs, let me show you a few tricks that will help you succeed.

This is the Heading 1 style

This is the Normal style.

If you want more or less space before or after a paragraph, make that change in the style.

This is the Heading 2 style

Here's a sentence. Here's another sentence.

That thing at the end of the previous sentence is a manual carriage return.

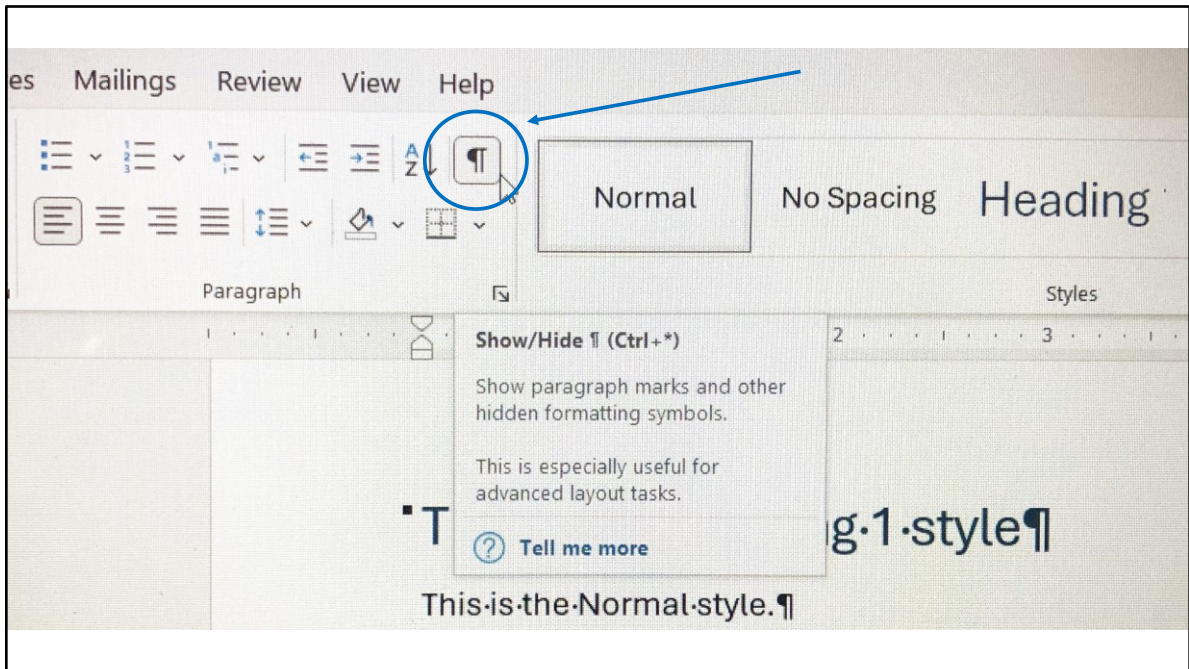
Note how the spacing is different after a regular carriage return.

One other thing to remember. Please don't put two spaces after a period.

Please use Tabs correctly.

When you tag items for the index, it looks like this.

If you have ever worked in Microsoft Word, you have seen documents that look a lot like this, but there is a mode in Word that allows you to see things like spaces, tabs, and carriage returns.



All by clicking on this little button.

▪ This is the Heading 1 style ¶

This is the Normal style. ¶

If you want more or less space before or after a paragraph, make that change in the style. ¶

▪ This is the Heading 2 style ¶

Here's a sentence. Here's another sentence. ↵

That thing at the end of the previous sentence is a manual carriage return. ¶

Note how the spacing is different after a regular carriage return. ¶

One other thing to remember. Please don't put two spaces after a period. ¶

→ → → Please use Tabs correctly. ¶

When you tag items for the index, it looks like this {XE:"this"}. ¶

When you click on that button, here is what you see.

Indicates a header

▪ This is the Heading 1 style ¶ A carriage return

This is the Normal style ¶

If you want more or less space before or after a paragraph, make that change in the style ¶

▪ This is the Heading 2 style ¶

Here's a sentence. Here's another sentence. ¶ A manual carriage return

That thing at the end of the previous sentence is a manual carriage return. ¶

Note how the spacing is different after a regular carriage return. ¶

Two spaces. Please don't.

One other thing to remember. ¶ Please don't put two spaces after a period. ¶

→ → → Please use Tabs correctly. ¶ Tagged for the index

Multiple tabs when one would do...

When you tag items for the index, it looks like this: {XE "this"} ¶

So here's what you are seeing:

- The little dot there indicates that this is a header. These set up hierarchically as Header 1, Header 2, Header 3, or as many levels as you want. By using styles instead of just marking something, let's say, 16 point bold Helvetica, if you mark it as a Level 1 header you can go back and change every Level 1 header in whatever way you want. If you don't use styles you would have to change every single instance individually, which would be tedious.
- Using headers also makes it possible to automatically create a table of contents.
- That funny looking backwards 'P' is a carriage return.
- The left-facing arrow is a manual carriage return. You use this if you want to break a line, but don't want to add extra space.
- Please don't put two spaces after a period. It is not necessary, and it just looks goofy.
- The right-facing arrows are tabs. You don't need to use multiples if you set them correctly, which you can do when you create a style like a heading
- If you want to have an index, you need to tag each index entry. These will appear in curly brackets.

..

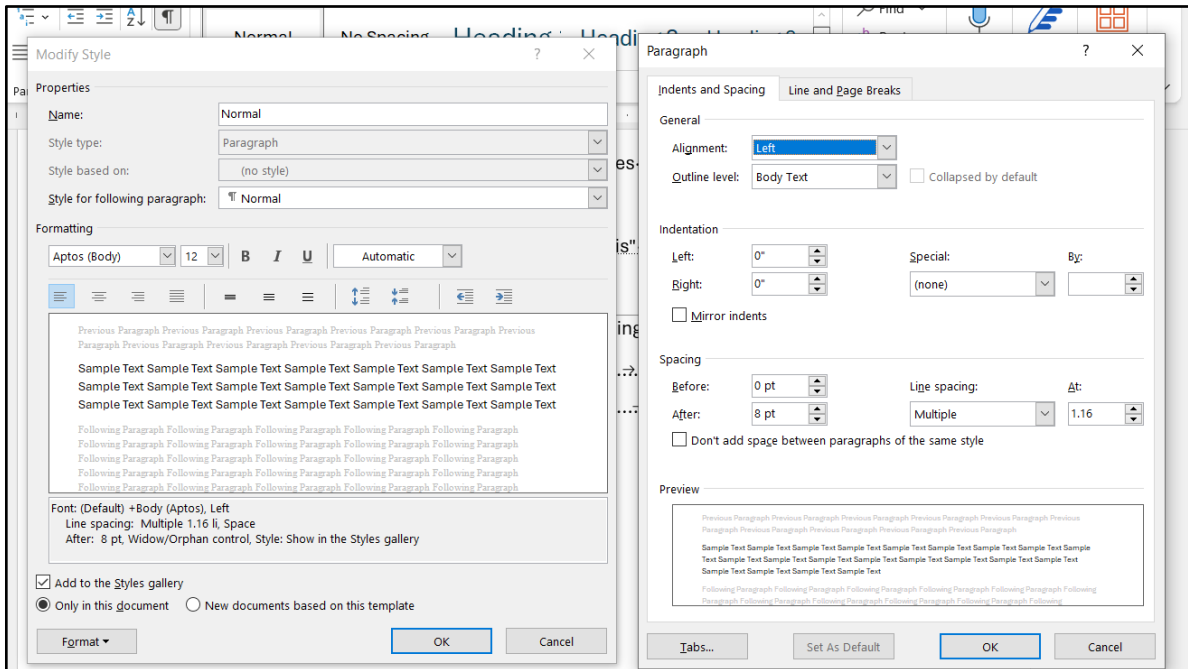
- Contents (when you insert a TOC, it picks up on the heading styles.)¶

This is the Heading 1 style	1¶
This is the Heading 2 style	1¶

¶

It won't pick up on anything that isn't a heading...¶

As I was saying before, when you use headings, it becomes automatic to create a table of contents (TOC). You can determine how many levels a table of contents will display.

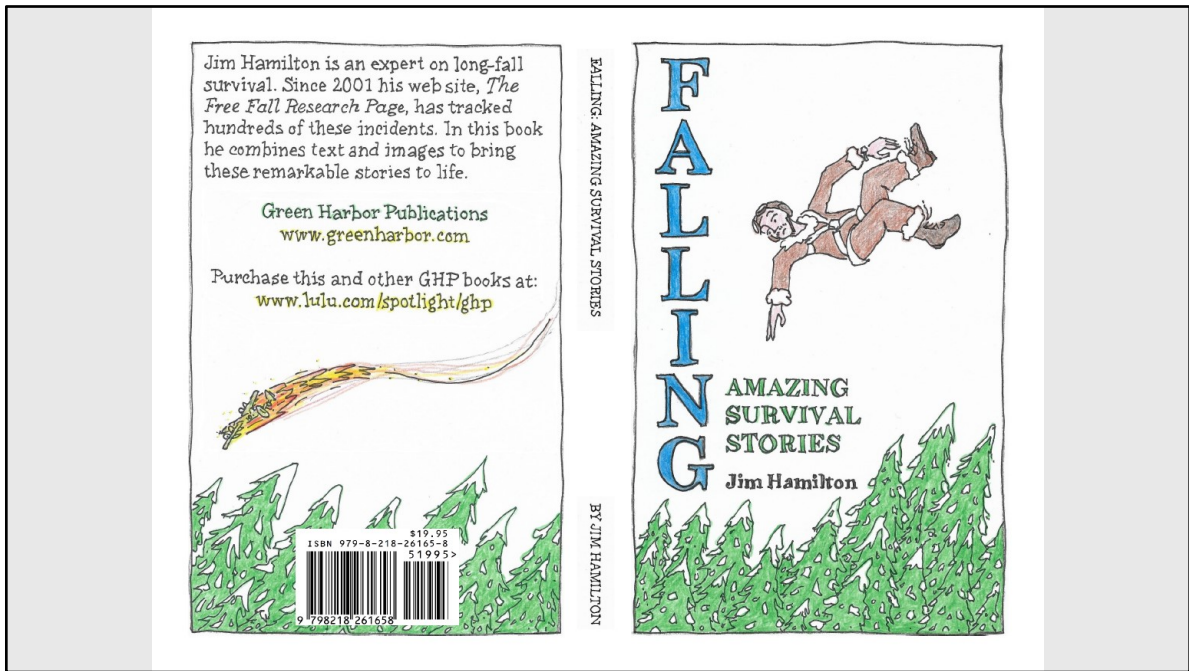


I won't linger any longer on Styles but just know that this is a powerful feature that allows you to adjust characteristics like font, size, format, alignment, color, spacing, indents, and tabs. Most importantly, it allows you to make changes globally. If you want to use Microsoft Word to format your book, you need to understand the impact of Styles. Even if you use some other program you will still need to know how to format correctly so that tables of contents and indices can be formatted automatically.

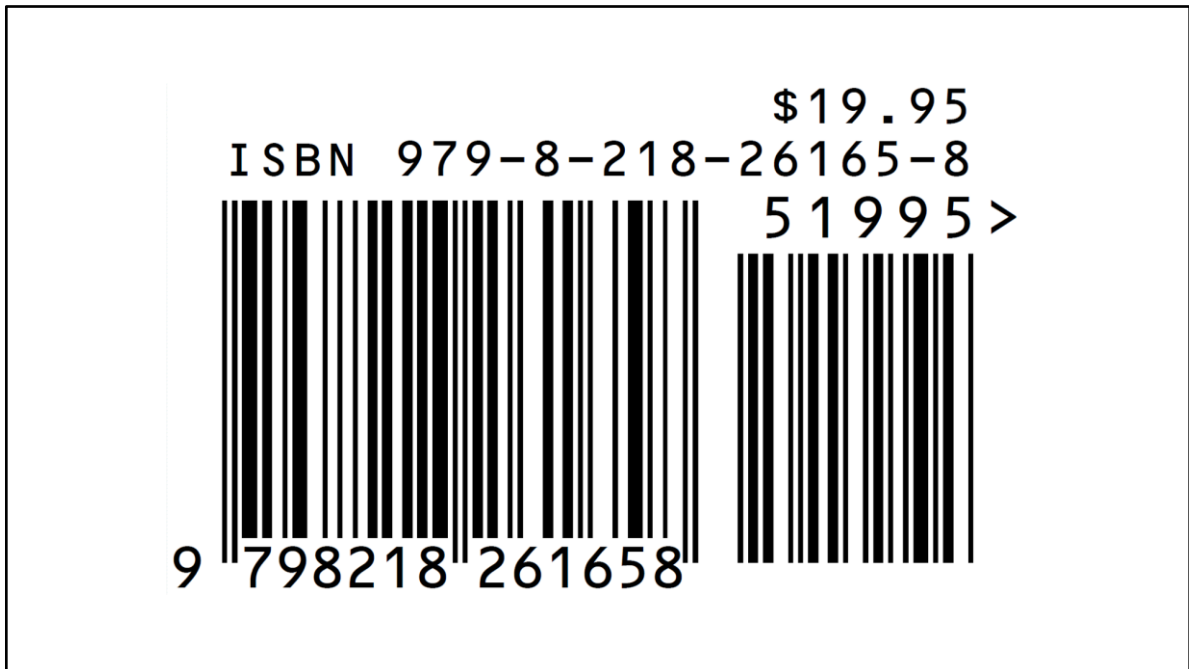
In addition, the use of Styles forces you to think in a hierarchical fashion that can be very helpful as you organize your thoughts and turn them into your final text.



So, let's talk a little about the cover. When you submit your job for printing, there will be two components: the inside (aka, the book block) and the cover. What you are looking at here is the template that Lulu provided to me based on the specifications of my book, *Falling: Amazing Survival Stories*. I knew that the front and back covers would be 5.5 by 8.5 inches, but I didn't know what the width of the spine would be. The size of the spine depends on the number of pages and the nature of the paper. Once you know the number of pages in your book and choose a paper type, the spine width can be calculated.



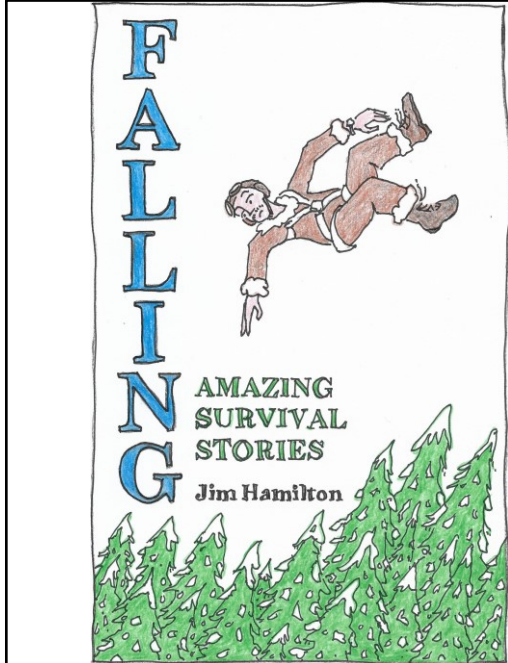
I formatted my book's cover in Word and, much the same as I did with the book block, I created a PDF to submit to Lulu for their final checks to assure that everything was print-ready.



You will have noticed a sizeable bar code on the back cover of my book, “Falling: Amazing Survival Stories.: That’s the ISBN, the International Standard Book Number. If you want your book to be sold widely and listed in book directories, then you need an ISBN. I haven't always used ISBNs for my books. Whether a book could be ordered through Amazon or other booksellers didn't matter to me. This time, for Falling: Amazing Survival Stories, I chose to include one. I think this book could draw enough interest that it could be worth it. The ISBN and the accompanying barcode cost me \$150. You order these through a company called Bowker.



Another aspect of making the book official was registering it with the U.S. Copyright Office. This involves sending them a copy. The application process costs \$65.



Expenses:

- \$1,200 (for 150 books ordered)
- \$185 (mailing costs)
- \$380 (kick-off event)
- \$30 (proof copies)
- \$150 (ISBN)
- \$65 (copyright application)
- *Total: \$2,010*

Revenue

- \$2,060 (109 books sold*)
 - 89 in-person/20 through Lulu

Profit

- \$50

Potential Revenue

- \$680 (34 books remaining to sell)

* I have given away 30 comp copies.

So, here's a summary of my expenses and revenue as of mid-June 2024. I spent about \$1,200 on purchasing 150 books from Lulu. I mailed a number of books to folks. Typically, I charge \$25 to mail a book to someone. The book costs \$20 or so and I charge \$5 for shipping & handling.

I splurged on a book launch event. The biggest cost there was about \$250 to get a one-day insurance policy since I wanted to serve beer and wine. Expensive, but worth it. Fifty people came and it was a marvelous event. Other expenses like proof copies, ISBN, and copyright mean that I spent a little more than \$2,000. I should mention that proofing is another amazing advantage of on-demand printing. Want to be 100% sure that everything is right? Have a proof printed. It's not expensive.

My revenue exceeds my expenses so far by about fifty bucks. It's interesting to note that most of the books I have sold have been purchased directly from me.

It is also worth noting that since I have 34 books on hand, which I fully expect to sell at some point, and so that means another \$680 in potential revenue could come out of this. Also, my profit would be higher if I hadn't been so generous in giving books away to family, friends, libraries, and review copies.



I make very little money from these books. Over the decades I have made enough money each year to go out for dinner with my wife a couple of times. The money is not why I do this. I simply want to complete these projects. Usually it's because I find the topics interesting, or in the case of my book, "The Black Cats of Amherst," it's because I have a personal connection. My grandfather served as an ambulance driver in World War I in a U.S. Army unit called SSU 539 (aka, the Black Cats of Amherst).

Though money is not the reason I publish these books, it does come into play as I describe earlier. I don't want to lose money. Breaking even is a good result.

That's my granddaughter in the picture. She's now two and a half. She thinks I am the falling man on the cover of "Falling: Amazing Survival Stories."

Juliane Koepcke
WRECKAGE RIDER

On Christmas Eve 1971, 17-year-old Juliane Koepcke and her mother, Maria, were standing in line at the airport in Lima, Peru waiting to board a short flight over the mountains to Pucullpa to celebrate Christmas with Juliane's father, Hans-Wilhelm.

Against his wishes, they had secured tickets on LANSÁ, (Lineas Aerias Nacionales, S.A.), an airline with a very shaky safety record. Two LANSÁ planes had been lost in fatal crashes not long before, resulting in nearly 200 deaths. Peruvians joked that "LANSÁ se lanza de panza" (LANSÁ lands on its belly).

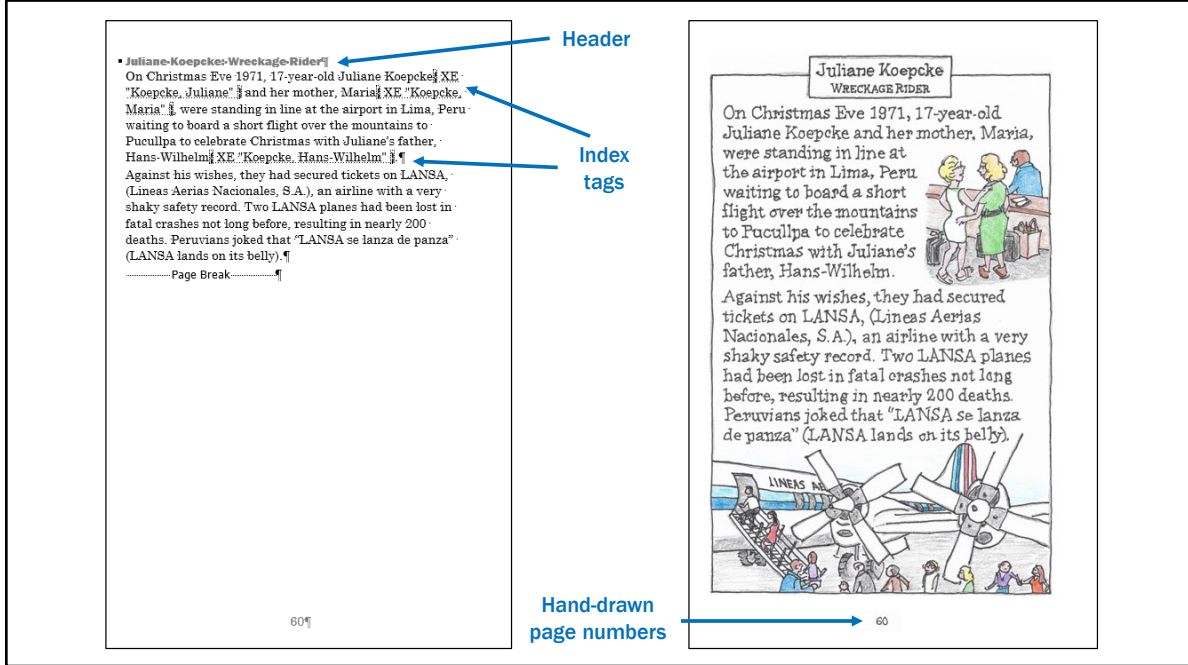
Juliane Koepcke
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Folks who look at my book often wonder whether I created a font of my handwriting. I didn't. I laid out a document in Word and then used a light table to trace over it. The font for the body text is 22-point Century Schoolbook. I added the illustrations later and pasted them over the text that I had laid out.



In the final draft of the book, I included the text for each page behind the illustration that I pasted in. I did this for a couple of reasons. First, I wanted to automatically create a table of contents and an index, but I also liked the idea that the PDF of my book would include machine-readable, though not visible text. I do not plan on creating an e-book version of this, but if I do it would make the text accessible.

Please note the header, the index tags, and the fact that I placed hand-drawn numbers over the page numbers that Word created.

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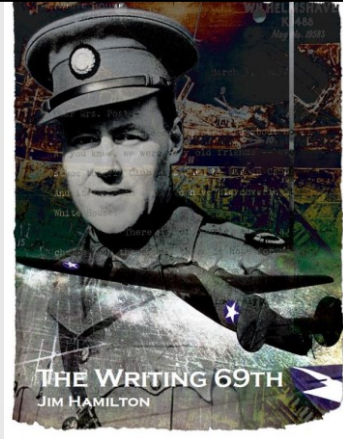
Using headers allowed me to automatically create a table of contents, which I then hand-redrew to get the effect I was looking for. I used the same technique to create the index.



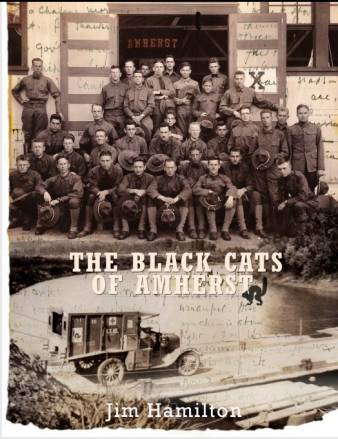
I learned an interesting thing about book production and blank pages by self-publishing. I worked on my book, "Falling: Amazing Survival Stories," over a period of about three years. After about two years, I had a fairly complete version of the book, so I had a proof printed. When it came back, I was surprised to see a couple of blank pages at the end. This annoyed me. I didn't want any blank pages, and I didn't want to pay for blank pages. If I was going to have extra pages, I wanted to put something on them.

I talked to the folks at Lulu and they basically said that if your book has a number of pages that is not a multiple of 4 and 6 you may end up with undesired blank pages at the end of the book.

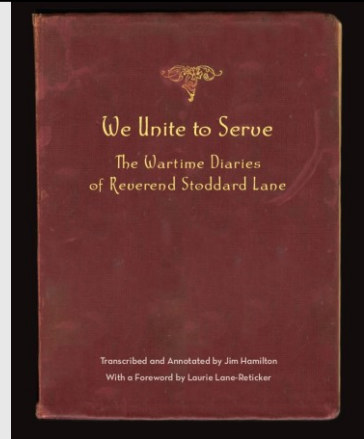
So I had a couple of choices, I could have cut back the number of pages to 120, which is divisible by both 4 and 6, but I didn't want to do that. I knew that I could create more content, so in the end I chose to make my book 144 pages, another number that is divisible by 4 and 6.



The Writing 69th



*The Black Cats
of Amherst*

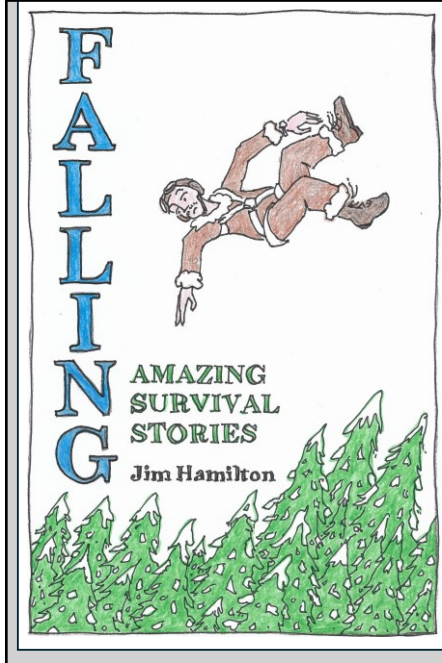


*We Unite to Serve:
The Wartime Diaries
of Reverend Stoddard Lane*

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Now keep in mind that this oddity may be different for different book sizes. In this case I am talking about a 5.5 by 8.5 inch book, but the problem can occur at other book sizes as well. I have experience with three books in 8.5 by 11 inch format:

- My book, "The Writing 69th," has 172 pages (divisible by 4, but not by 6). Luckily, it has no blank pages at the end.
- I didn't even notice that my book, "The Black Cats of Amherst," has a single blank page at the end. It is 206 pages (not divisible by either 4 or 6).
- "The Wartime Diaries of Stoddard Lane" has 306 pages (divisible by 4 and 6). There are no blank pages at the end.



Questions?

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Well, that's it! I'd be happy to take any questions now.