



Newsletter

Issue 12 - December 2017

Three Years of Newsletters

Welcome to the last newsletter for the year, marking three years of operation from the Incas. It really seems like only thirty-six months since we started sending out our quarterly update, and we have had many successes during that period.

As is typical with an end-of-series communication, we are including a summary of our major events. When we first started the Inca Project, it was to share the combined knowledge of delivering outstanding works to a market saturated with self-published dross. I think we have done that, and here are a few stats:

Inca authors in print: 36

Books published with input from the project: 76

Book deals obtained: 3

Prizes won: 6

Don't be downhearted at our 8% hit rate. Compare this with 0.000000013% for winning the lottery. It will be interesting to revisit results at the end of next year, as we are now really starting to make our mark in the literary world.

The Newsletter

Apart from a few of our dedicated Incas, we haven't had much feedback from previous newsletters. Please let us know if you wish to continue receiving communications from us. We will take a non-reply as indication that you are not interested, and remove you from the mailing list. You will still be able to access them from the Newsletters page under the Project tab on the website, of course. <http://www.incaproject.co.uk/index.html>

Please also let us know if you do not wish to continue to have your work included on the Inca book pages. <http://www.incaproject.co.uk/portfolio.html>

On the other hand, if you have any ideas and/or want to contribute to the next newsletter, please contact us with your ideas.

Best regards

Bridget

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Publishing

Amazon KDP Select Fund

You've probably had this monthly email: "The KDP Select Global Fund for August is \$19.4 million.

We will again award "KDP Select All-Stars" for August to the most-read authors and most-read titles in the U.S., U.K. and Germany. All bonuses will be awarded based on total Kindle Edition Normalized Pages read during the month. We will also award bonuses for illustrated kids' books – the top 100 most read titles in the U.S. and top 25 in the U.K. will receive such bonuses."

We sent them a mail...

I'm struggling to see how the KDP Select Global Fund is of benefit to the majority of authors on KDP. The people who have the most sales by definition are earning the most in royalties. Why then reward them further by giving them extra cash through the fund?

What I would suggest is that KDP Select is changed Each month, you get a few of your people to pick a book at random and read the first chapter. If it grabs them, read on and put in for the award, if not, move swiftly on to the next one, and so on until a new brilliant author is discovered - and believe me there are plenty out there, alas hidden in a mire of dross.

This way, the whole system is fairer, struggling writers get a chance to be recognised, and Amazon get some kudos for helping the underdog. As probably underpaid and unrecognised geni yourself, you must appreciate the unfairness in modern society. Can we do anything to change this by awarding struggling authors rather than those who have already made it?

KDP Select responded very quickly, and here is their reply:

"Currently, we base the KDP Select All-Star bonuses on what KDP Select (KDPS) books customers read the most in a given month. We determine "most-read" by counting the total number of pages Kindle Unlimited (KU) and Kindle Owners' Lending Library (KOLL) customers read for the first time.

Calculations only include pages read while books are enrolled in KDPS during the month. These bonuses are accessible to everyone with titles in KDPS—even a debut author with a single book can qualify if their work becomes a customer favourite.

I do understand that you want us to change the strategy of awarding the authors in such a way by selecting a book at random and read the first chapter and if it grabs them, read on and put in for the award, if not, move swiftly on to the next one, and so on until a new brilliant author was discovered for the award. I'll take your concern as feature request and communicate the same to our business team for consideration as we plan future improvements.

I'm unable to promise a time frame at this time, however, we are still evolving and feedback like yours motivate us to dive deep and unearth ways and means which helps us in making publishing on KDP a happy experience.

Please be sure to check our forums periodically for updates: <https://kdp.amazon.com/community>

A Christmas Competition

Closing date 15 December.

All you need is 1500 words in any genre with a Christmas theme. The 15 best entries will get highlighted and may appear in an anthology from Fiery Seas.

<https://www.fieryseaspublishing.com/single-post/2017/11/10/Fiery-Seas-Short-Story-Writing-Competition>

A B.R.A.G. Medallion

Congratulations to Jeanette Taylor-Ford for winning a medallion from this outlet for 'Aunt Bea's Legacy'. This is given for quality, independently published e-books.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Aunt-Beas-Legacy-River-View-ebook/dp/B073JB7JFT>

<https://www.bragmedallion.com/about/>

Artwork – Simon Walpole – a reminder

Don't forget if you are looking for illustrations, to have a word with Simon Walpole who specialises in book interior illustrations and maps, but could also be given commissions for artwork for greetings cards and those unique presents you are looking for. His creativity is wonderful. He can be contacted via the web site or through the Incas, the latter route resulting in a small discount.

<http://swalpole6.wix.com/handdrawnheroes>

The full guide to producing books from end to end

We would like to again remind you of this useful link to Andy Thomas' blog, but do see the next section by James Court as to how it worked out in real life. We think you'll be impressed.

<http://truthagenda.org/2016/08/21/to-publish-or-self-publish-producing-books-in-the-alternative-sphere/>

James also wrote a piece on formatting your manuscript for the last newsletter. It is still available on the Inca site, and will help you laying out your work for the following facilities.

Short Run Printing – Our Recent Experience

By James Court

Recently we used my latest humorous novel, *Percy's Predicament*, to test the use of an on-line print firm called **Booksfactory**. The result was both economic and of excellent quality. Elsewhere on the Inca website we have described the technical aspects of preparing your work for this route to publication, and this article describes our experience of using this firm.

Booksfactory has a minimum order price of £50, and an on-line quotes system where you can try out different page sizes and paper types before committing yourself. We opted for the following characteristics, and juggled the number of books until we marginally exceed that figure. At a basis price of £1.78 for a 228 page book I ended up with an order for 28 copies. See the chart below for other sizes. The books are printed in Poland, and the unit price might fluctuate with changes in exchange rate. The order we placed had the following specification, and the chart beside it shows the different costs for more lengthy volumes in 80 gram/Mtr² and 90 gram/Mtr² paper weights.

Inside block printing type technology:

Toner print

Paper, B/W pages: Uncoated 90g/m²

Paper, colour pages: Uncoated 80g/m²

Cover type: printed paper cover

Cover print: one side 4+0

Finish: gloss finish

Parameters:

width: 148 mm

height: 210 mm

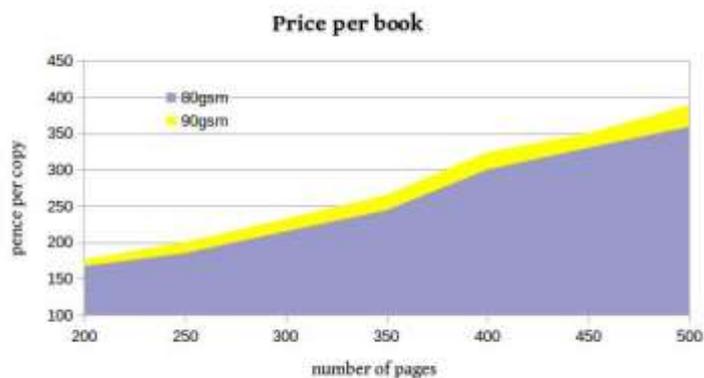
No. of colour pages: 0

No. of B/W pages: 228

Quantity: 28

Title: Percy's Predicament

Identifier: Percy_2



As a first order you need to create a user account at <https://booksfactory.co.uk>. You can play about with their quote system before creating the account, but have to create the account and log in before your first order can be placed.

To place an order, you first load your files up to their server. Each customer gets a user space of 2Gb total, and you can either drag and drop from your PC's file manager, or else FTP them across (see us for details of the latter if in any confusion). Then you re-enter the quotes system, fill in your requirements, and select your files from a drop-down box to complete. It's as simple as that if you have the formatting correct, and you will have if you use the Inca template, and followed our technical note on preparing the files for printing on commercial printers.

Once the order is placed, you will get a series of emails triggered as the book is printed and sent out for delivery. It would appear that there is usually a 2 or 3 day queue to get verified as printable, another day or so queued to print and assemble, and then finally dispatch. Your books are sent via UPS, and mine took 5 days to get to me, with a tracking number supplied so I could watch my masterpieces enjoying a quiet weekend break at a German port en route, and a brief stop-over in

sunny Dartford before scurrying to me in one of UPS's distinctive dark brown vans, driven by a cheerful dark brown driver, in dark brown shorts and shirt.

End to end the whole process took almost 2 weeks, as I just missed the weekly dispatch from Poland to the UK. Booksfactory's UK salesman, Guy Green, tells me that 7-8 days is more typical. There is obviously a special deal with UPS, as the cost of delivery is only £9 for up to 30Kg. My books weigh about 340g each, so allowing a kilogram or two for packaging I still could have ordered 60 or more for the same delivery cost.

There was an unexpected 23% Polish vat added to the cost – unexpected as books are vat exempt in the UK. This reduces to 5% if you quote an ISBN number for the book, and zero if you quote an EU vat number. Guy Green suggests that we order through Book factory's UK office <https://printguy.co.uk/contact/> then there is no vat but there is a 5% handling charge. No mention of that on the site, but Guy Green was very helpful in the numerous emails I sent him during the process of determining the preferred print format and order processing.

Guy's proposal is that we use the on-line quote system to determine the parameters for the book and quantity wanted, then email him at ggreen@booksfactory.co.uk the details in the form I've shown above. He would then place the order and monitor progress. Alternatively if you have an ISBN number for your book then you can do the whole thing on their web-site, simply by putting the number in the text box provided, and qualify for 5% vat.

Is it worth it?

The quality of the finished product is excellent. Those of you who have had printing carried out by Createspace in the USA would find that Booksfactory's new machinery is printing blacker, sharper text, and, with the above specification, a somewhat stiffer cover. I was also pleased to see that the cover colour rendering was very close to my original artwork, as seen on the computer screen; certainly closer than my HP inkjet got with my test prints.

The overall cost per book, including delivery and a handling charge worked out at £2.20. If I find myself in demand, and order 60 at a time, then that reduces to £2.05 per copy. If I sold at a typical £4.95 that gives a very respectable return, compared to the pittance offered by Amazon. It also opens up a novel unique selling point (or USP as TLA aficionados call it)... books by post inscribed by the author with a custom dedication. A worthy alternative to Interflora for the intellectual hay fever sufferer.

Anybody wanting to sample the quality of the product can contact me. I have a dozen or so copies available at £5.50, including UK postage, and an inscription of your choice – provided it meets the strict rules of censorship imposed by the Inca committee for modesty and decorum. I think Percy's Predicament, which is a humorous romantic crime mystery, would be the ideal vehicle for a proposal of marriage; provided the inscription made it clear that the proposal came from the purchaser and not the author of the book.

James Court – October 2017

James is also the author of the wonderful Peckham Novels, as well as historical works.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Mulligans-Revenge-Peckham-Novel-Novels/dp/1523262532>

Advertising, Amazon on the Cheap

One of our comedy writers, **Corben Duke**, has completed a successful advertising campaign using the Amazon tools. We asked him to do a write-up on his findings for us:

Fellow INCA warriors,

I bring you the results of my Amazon Sponsored Product Ad campaign.

Sponsored adverts are a cheap way for authors to advertise Kindle e-books on Amazon. The aim is to compile a list of keywords that will get your advert to pop up on the same page as the bestsellers in your specific genre.

To be eligible you must have an e-book for sale on Amazon.com, and the cover mustn't be too risqué. What's a risqué book cover? It turns out the guys at Amazon HQ are quite puritanical when it comes to the books they're willing to advertise, so it's worth checking this webpage out before you go too far: <https://advertising.amazon.com/ad-specs/en/policy/book-ads> [That's most of my books out then: Ed.]

My co-author (Mark Roman) and I tried our luck at advertising our book 'The Worst Man on Mars' [see the Inca Portfolio page for the link]. It's a ridiculous Sci-Fi Comedy, loved and hated in equal measures. We ran the ad campaign for six months (May to November) and here are the results:

665 people clicked the advert from a total of 785,000 impressions (number times the ad was displayed) and 68 went on to buy the book.

Each time someone clicked the ad, it cost us an average of 7 cents. In total we spent \$45 and sold \$202 worth of books.

Broadly speaking, 1% of people who potentially viewed the advert clicked it and 10% of those people bought it. If that sounds good enough for you to have a go then you'll find this article very useful - <https://www.janefriedman.com/using-amazon-kdp-ads-sell-ebook-amazon/>

It will guide you through the process of setting up a campaign.

My advice is to create a good keyword list that targets books similar to your own. This nifty tool will give you a good start: <http://www.yasiv.com>

Enter the titles of the bestsellers in your genre in the 'Kindle' or 'Books' categories and you'll discover a network of connected titles. Using the titles/authors, compile a keyword list of 1,000 words or short phrases and manually enter your list in the Sponsored Ad keyword box. As if by magic your book cover should appear under the noses of your target audience as they browse their favourite books.

My campaign for 'The Worst Man on Mars' did well for the first 3 months but went stale after that. I gather the idea is to keep refreshing the keyword list. but I'm afraid I lost interest in the world of

books and my ad campaign went the same way. You see, my co-author had promised riches beyond imagination from the royalties generated by 'The Worst Man'. Indeed, I was so convinced by his patter, I'd set my heart on buying a Kawasaki Jet Ski. It was my intention to ride it up and down Torquay seafront because I'd heard that film directors hang out on the English Riviera. I was hoping I might get 'spotted'. After recent revelations in the movie business I'm pleased I didn't make it in the book world and I never got to buy that Jet Ski. By way of compensation Mark has promised me a ride on his inflatable raft but I can't say I'm very keen.

Anyway, should you decide to dive in with a Sponsored Ad then I wish you luck. I'm pretty sure you guys will do better than we did.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Worst-Man-Mars-Mark-Roman-ebook/dp/B01LDRSEQU>

Corben Duke - November 2017

Writing Tips

James Patterson Writing Masterclass

There are many writing classes out there on the internet but I wanted to move my writing on to a higher level so I signed up for 'James Patterson Teaches Writing' with Masterclass at a cost of \$60: <https://www.masterclass.com/classes/james-patterson-teaches-writing>)

The course consists of 22 webinars where JP shares his writing process and uses this to delve into some of the tricks of the trade (actually, he'd edit this line out, as it's a cliché).

The usual suspects are there, characterisation, plot, dialogue, etc., but JP uses examples and his own experience to show his method of dealing with these. He also covers deeper issues like creating raw ideas, researching and developing the plot with outlines (for me this was the most enlightening module as it included a copy of JP's outline for his novel "Honeymoon"), dealing with writer's block, building a chapter and more.

The course is backed up with a downloadable workbook, online exercises, lifetime access to both the course (and hence updates) and a closed writers group. Though James can't possibly report back on everything personally, he uses a few of the submissions to demonstrate the good, the bad, and the ugly. There is also an occasional competition to win the opportunity to co-write with JP!

As well as the writing process, he also covers editing and looks at publishing and marketing.

For me this was great value for a little under £50 (depends on the exchange rate) as it gave me confidence seeing that JP's process doesn't differ greatly from our own—he just does it better and shows you how.

If you don't like JP's fast-paced style then children's writer, Judy Blume, is starting a Masterclass in 2018. <https://www.masterclass.com/classes/judy-blume-teaches-writing>

Kevin Chilvers – November 2017

Kevin is the author of 'Inca Poison', a thriller set in the South American jungles, and 'An Evil Trade', another thriller featuring the same key characters and based in Africa this time. (Ed.)

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Inca-Poison-Adventure-Kevin-Chilvers-ebook/dp/B000A2C3QI>

Finding the Font

Ever wondered what that nice font is that someone else has used for book title or content? Scan in the font (or do a screenshot and trim it with Paint or Office Picture Manager), and upload it here:

<https://www.myfonts.com/WhatTheFont/>

Loading New Fonts into Windows

There are a good number of sites offering free fonts. You could try these

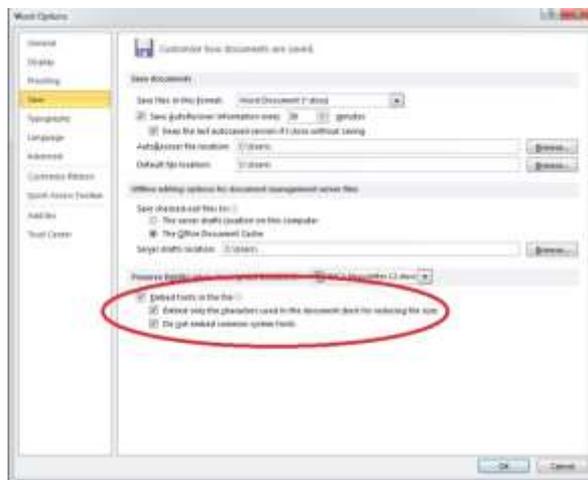
<https://www.1001freefonts.com/> or <http://www.fontspace.com/>

- Once you've chosen one, you will have downloaded a little ZIP file
- Open your downloads directory and right-click on the file. Select **Extract All**.
- This will make a folder of the same name. Explore into that for the file with the .TTF (True-type Font) extension.
- Right click on it and do **Copy**.
- Then open **Control Panel** and choose the **Fonts** option
- Right-click in that window and do **Paste**.

Next time you open Word or most other applications, you will find that extra font available from the dropdown font list. If you have a version of Windows pre Windows 7, you may have to reboot.

Or if you want the complicated way - <http://www.solveyourtech.com/how-to-install-a-new-font-for-word-2010/>

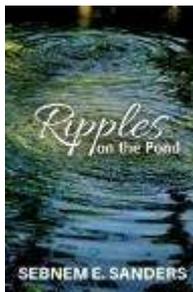
When you have chosen your new font, and we suggest you use no more than two different ones in your document, go to **File, Options, Save**, and then tick all boxes for **Embed Fonts in the File**.



New Books

We rely on you to tell us when you have published if you don't involve us in the editing. Please submit the first few chapters and a brief summary if you would like your work included on the Inca recommended books page – <http://www.incaproject.co.uk/portfolio.html>

Ripples on the Pond – Sebnem E Sanders



A man infatuated with ivy. A woman pining for lost love. In a Turkish square, ancient buildings lament a devastating explosion. An unlikely friendship struck up with a homeless person. A journey to a magical place that once visited can never be found again. The camaraderie between the patients in a cancer ward. A writer who has lost his muse. A tragedy that leads to dementia.

These are just a few of seventy individual tales set in locations, straddling continents, portraying war, love, hate, hope, greed, revenge, despair, humour, mystical happenings, fantasy and so much more. Like ripples expanding on the surface of a pond to reach its banks, they converge in this anthology of flash fiction and short stories by Sebnem E. Sanders in her debut release, just published.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Ripples-Pond-Sebnem-E-Sanders/dp/1981383115>

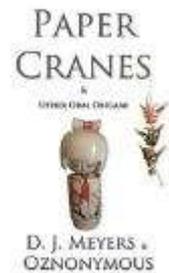
Paper Cranes – DJ Meyers

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Death. Not what you expected, I'm sure. I never am. Denial is an interesting thing. I'll give you a moment to consider the concept.

While you do, I'll tell you a tale of clouds, and rain, and a little girl I met on my journey. Desperately ill, she refused to lose hope. Her paper cranes are a symbol of pain, loss, and devotion to life. Something close to my heart, despite what you think of me. Without life, without hope, there is no death, and no stories to tell by the hearth in my lounge.

Paper Cranes is the first of eight stories in this collection, which touch on gun control, green energy, psychosis, loneliness, political correctness and a lonely gargoyle perched up high on Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Paper Cranes is to be published later this month.



Percy's Predicament – James Court



Percy deliberately chose a career as an accountant, because it offered him years of study to replace his empty social life. It had been 15 years since he had lost the love of his life, and he had not had a romantic interlude since. But when an old friend died unexpectedly Percy's quiet orderly life was about to be turned upside down.

Strange goings on occur at his firm of accountants in the 1960s, and when Percy meets a new love and catches glimpses of his old flame he lost contact with 15 years before, and she hasn't changed a bit, his life goes into turmoil. Why is this new woman so interested in him, why is his boss doing everything he can to take Percy off a lucrative new contract, and what colour is the hippy secretary's nail varnish going to be this week? Add to this the deaths of more than the average number of the company's clients, and a dodgy box of chocolates consumed by the cleaning lady, and you have a comedic mystery worthy of Tom Sharpe.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Percys-Predicament-tale-between-balance-sheets/dp/1549774786>

This Deceitful Light – Jemahl Evans

In a time of civil war and betrayal, one drunken fop could be the difference between victory and defeat.

Sir Blandford Candy is an irascible old drunk with a love of hats, a dislike of poets, and an idiot for a nephew. Resting after blackmailing an old acquaintance, he looks back on his life and adventures during the English Civil War...

Young Blandford returns to London after the First Battle of Newbury. He finds a new Lord Mayor in the Guildhall, and a murdered actor in his theatre. Blandford tries to foil a Royalist plot to smuggle gold to Oxford, find a sailor's lost treasure, and hunt for a book that could change the course of the war. His search takes him from the dark streets of London and Southampton to the bloody battlefield of Marston Moor, but only one man can help. A man Blandford has sworn to kill.

The second book in the Blandford Candy series.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/This-Deceitful-Light-Jemahl-Evans/dp/1910688339>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Last-Roundhead-Jemahl-Evans-ebook/dp/B0120S7AL6>

