

# Save Your Manuscript From Fraudulent Publishers

## How can you tell if a publisher is genuine?

### Warning Signs

Signs that you might want to scrutinise a publisher more closely. None of these things alone mean that the publisher isn't genuine, but they should be a trigger to tread carefully and do some research before you part with any part of your manuscript.

**If you are suspicious do not sign or agree to anything, send any part of your manuscript, send money.**

- **They approached you.**
- The turnaround time for reading your partial/full manuscript is faster than usual. (Less than 5 days to view the partial, or less than 2 weeks to view the full manuscript.)
- Different people email you each time.
- They say they want to publish you, but **ask for money**. (No traditional publishing house do this.)
- They are happy to publish a book that has previously been available online.
- There is no selection process.
- They have a name that is very similar to a well-known publishing house.
- They tell you you've won a competition or grant that you didn't apply for.

### Research

Take a few hours to surf the internet and find out as much as you possibly can about them. Any legitimate business is going to have a decent online footprint with all sorts of material.

Look at their website:

- Are there a lot of errors, or poor grammar?
- Do they display a street address and phone number, or just a PO box?
- Do they have a privacy policy and/or terms and conditions?
- Is there a legitimate payment method for sales, e.g. PayPal or Stripe?
- Are there photos of the founder/staff, and when you search them do they mention their association with this publisher?
- Do they make claims that sound unrealistic, e.g. the volume of books they've published in a short time, their association with well-known authors or large publishing houses.

Dig a little deeper:

- Google the contact names/authors/books that are on their website and see if you can verify they are legitimate, e.g. professional, selling well, published, mentioned by other sites.
- Google something like "scam alert [insert business name]" and see what comes up in online conversations.

### Free Searches

Type the company name into:

- Predators and Editors <http://pred-ed.com/>
- Writer Beware: <http://www.sfw.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-beware/>
- Better Business Bureau <https://www.bbb.org/ask/research-a-business>
- Federal Trade Commission scam alerts <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts>
- FBI scams and safety site <https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-fraud-schemes>
- Ripoff Report <https://www.ripoffreport.com/>
- Blastly <https://www.blasty.co/> If you find a pirated version using a free account, you can contact Google and Yahoo to hide the results, or a paid account will do that for you.

## What can you do if you've been scammed?

### Take Action

Signs that you might want to scrutinise a publisher more closely. None of these things alone mean that the publisher isn't genuine, but they should be a trigger to tread carefully and do some research before you part with any part of your manuscript.

Remember that if someone isn't genuine, it's a reflection of them, not you.

Actions you can take:

- Contact the publisher in writing to document your grievance, including your name, dates of correspondence, any agreements you entered into, illegal activities or shortfalls. Be clear about the action you want them to take, e.g. refund your money, take down a pirated book, cease using your name without your permission.
- Contact the consumer representative in your country, e.g. [ACCC](#) in Australia or [FCC](#) in America.
- Seek legal counsel.

Not recommended:

- Air your grievance in public forums.