‘There is a lot of noise out there’: Self-publishing trends in New Zealand

by

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‘There is a lot of noise out there’: Self-publishing trends in New Zealand

Abstract:
As self-publishing gains a stronger foothold both inside and out of the publishing industry (Dawson, 2008; Poynter), as well as gaining prominence in the public mind (Spenser, 2012), there is an increasing need for more research and understanding of this rapidly growing area. However, so far there has been, as Dilevko & Dali (2006) say, an “awkward silence from libraries about how to deal with self-published books”. This research project aimed to shed some light onto what was really happening with self-publishing in New Zealand.

This research project collected data from the National Library of New Zealand’s OPAC from a twenty year period: every second year from 1991 to 2009. A total of 3,625 titles from the National Library’s catalogue were sampled.

Once the data was collected it was analysed, and produced some rather surprising results. The total percentage of books being self-published has not significantly increased over the twenty year period sampled. The percentage difference between 1991 and 2009 was only 2.29%.

Because self-publishing is such an unknown entity this research project was working with very little background knowledge for guidance. All the information points towards self-publishing increasing even more in the future as technology, in particular e-books and e-readers, grows and changes. Libraries need to know about self-publishing and how it is affecting the material that they purchase for their collections. More research needs to be done in this area to get a clearer understanding of self-publishing in New Zealand and this research project is only the first step.
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Introduction:

“There is a lot of noise out there, and some of it is music” (Donadio, 2008)

Self-publishing has been around for centuries and the list of authors who have self-published is graced by names such as William Blake, James Joyce and Walt Whitman (Milliot & Coffey, 2010, p.1). With the development of vanity presses, where the author would pay to have their manuscript published, arose the suspicion that self-published books were inferior. Self-published books were seen as being published in this way because no traditional publishing house would accept them, a “last resort of a rejected author” (Shum, 2000). However, with the development of the Internet and other technologies, self-publishing has been revived and is now seen as a perfectly acceptable way to publish a book. There are now hundreds of sites online offering publishing services and, according to one source, titles published by small or self-publishers made up 78% of the books published in America in 2006 (DiVita, 2007).

Despite unanimous agreement that the amount of self-published titles has grown incredibly over the past twenty or so years, no one seems to be able to quantify this growth. Dawson (2008, p.44) points out that “there’s no breakdown in statistics that will tell us how many books are self-published and in which subject areas”. While researching for the literature review, I found that there is a definite scarcity of statistics relating to the number of self-published titles. And what little data there was is American. There is a need for research into the statistics related to self-published titles in New Zealand.
The National Library of New Zealand is the national repository and two copies of every book published in New Zealand, or by a New Zealander, must be put into the collection under the legal deposit law. Legal deposit has two main purposes: firstly to ensure that New Zealand’s cultural heritage is accessible to the public; and to ensure New Zealand’s cultural heritage is preserved (www.natlib.govt.nz, 2011). This national bibliography includes self-published titles.

How has self-publishing changed in New Zealand from 1991-2010? What percentage of books in the National Library’s database from this period are self-published? How have the yearly percentages changed over this period? What is the genre breakdown for these twenty years and what is it for each year? What form of self-publishing (vanity/subsidy press, self-publishing services or true self-publishing) is the most common?

By attempting to answer these questions a noticeable gap in Library and Information Science literature in New Zealand will be filled. We know that the self-publishing business is booming but we do not know by how much. National Library librarians know that a lot of family histories are published but we do not know what percentage of self-published titles are family histories, or any other genre. And children’s literature? Is that going through the same self-publishing boom? This research is not going to look at the reasons behind, and the issues surrounding, self-publishing. It is simply going to offer a statistical look at self-published titles in the National Library of New Zealand’s database.
Literature Review:

Self-publishing is not a new phenomenon, although it has had a tainted reputation, a reputation gained through the stigma of the vanity press. The view was that if no one wants to pay you for your book it cannot be very good. However, self-publishing has come back into vogue and the with development and ease of print-on-demand technology, and the rise of the Internet and e-books, self-publishing has lost its taint of the desperate author and become a viable and respectable way to get one’s book into print. However, as Dawson (2008) says, “Currently, there’s no breakdown in statistics that will tell us how many books are self-published and in which subject areas.” This statement sums up the focus of this research project. There is a need for statistics about self-publishing because there is so little that has been published about them. The lack of literature about self-publishing is reflected in this literature review. Much of the literature that has been quoted hails from blog posts or other informal websites as there is a distinct lack of information in academic Library and Information Studies literature. This is remarkable considering how ubiquitous and common self-publishing is. What little literature there is tends to be American-based and focuses more on how libraries deal with the reality of self-published books, indicating that most librarians have noticed the increase in self-published titles. This literature review shall first look at the various different types of self-publishing: true self-publishing, vanity/subsidy press publishing, and outfits that offer self-publishing services. These will be compared to the traditional model of publishing. These definitions need to be clarified fully because they can be very similar and possibly confusing. This literature review will then look at some statistics related to self-publishing from mostly non-academic sources that confirm the rise in self-publishing. Even though these resources are American-based they still provided a useful idea
of the constituents that could potentially make up the statistics of self-published books in New Zealand.

Definitions of the variations on self-publishing are a necessary aspect to cover in this literature review because of the relevance to the physical research project. It is necessary to understand all the variations in order to interpret the data correctly, and because these definitions came up a lot over the course of the research. If it was possible to identify what type of self-publishing is being used, this will be recorded in the coding of the collected data. There are four main types of self-publishing: true self-publishing, vanity or subsidy press publishing, and self-publishing services. These are all very different to the traditional model of publishing where the publisher pays the writer (May, 2009), purchasing the right to publish the manuscript (Strauss, 2011). Traditional publishers (also known as trade or commercial publishers) handle every aspect of the publishing process (Strauss, 2011) and they are very selective in what manuscripts they choose to publish (Dilevko & Dali, 2006). This selectivity has led to many people turning to self-publishing because no traditional publishing house will publish their manuscript (Shum, 2000).

Traditionally, self-publishing meant published by a vanity or subsidy press. A vanity press (also known as a subsidy press) can be distinguished from other forms of self-publishing in several ways. Firstly, they charge a fee but still “present themselves as a publisher” (Strauss, 2011). This fee covers all the costs associated with printing and binding the book (Vanity/subsidy tips, 2011). They are usually not selective (Strauss, 2011) and as they “make their money off of writers, not books sales” (May, 2009) they generally have nothing to do with the marketing and promotion side of publishing, thus making them potentially very costly. Often the vanity press also owns the ISBN for the book and so sets the price (May,
2009; Vanity/subsidy tips, 2011). Frequently, the name of the vanity press is put in the book as the name of the publisher, making it possibly quite difficult to tell by looking at the MARC record on the OPAC whether it is self-published or not. There is a strong possibility that some vanity press publications will be missed in this way in this research project.

True self-publishing is very different to the other two types of self-publishing in that there is no intermediary involved in the publishing process at all: it is all done by the author. As in vanity press publishing and self-publishing services, the author still bears the cost of publication but they do not pay a ‘publisher’. Instead, the author puts together the various services needed for publishing a book (Strauss, 2011). The author retains full control of the book, owns all the rights (Strauss, 2011) and the ISBN (R, 2011). This type of self-publishing should be relatively easy to pick in the OPAC MARC record as the publisher’s name will be the same as the author’s name and in the record will be present in the very specific form of initial followed by surname.

Self-publishing services are a hybrid between vanity press and true self-publishing. Self-publishing services do not generally present themselves as publishers, they are clear that they are offering services to help an aspiring author get their manuscript into print. They usually offer printing and binding services but there are sometimes a limited amount of packages they offer (Strauss, 2011). Strauss (2011) also explains that most self-publishing service outfits are digitally-based, meaning the up-front costs can be very low. However, they often “heavily promote often-costly extras, such as marketing options, and take a hefty cut of sales proceeds in order to recoup their production costs” (Strauss, 2011). In terms of this research project, most books published through a self-publishing service will have the same publisher and statement of responsibility name, making them easy to pick up. However, sometimes the
The publisher is printed as the self-publishing service rather than the author, leading to it possibly not being picked up in the course of research.

Self-publishing, and publishing in general, are booming industries at the moment. According to the Publishers’ Marketing Association, 78% of titles are published by either a small press or a self-publisher (Dawson, 2008; Poynter). Statistics related to publishing from a scholarly source are difficult to find, and statistics from a scholarly source relating to self-publishing appear to be non-existent. However, several websites for the aspiring self-publisher have statistics from which a picture of the extent of self-publishing can be established.

Unfortunately, all of these sources are American. No New Zealand sources related to self-publishing statistics were found, even though the main Library and Information Studies publications for New Zealand were consulted. The news website Stuff published an article on self-publishing in March 2012 (Spenser, 2012), so it is something that people are becoming aware of in New Zealand. However, New Zealand libraries are silent on the issue of self-publishing. Whether this means that self-publishing has not become a noticeable issue in New Zealand, or whether it has but no one has done the research yet, is hard to tell at this point.

The first point to consider when discussing self-publishing, is that the amount of books published in general is increasing; in America the figure went from 300,000 in 2006 to 400,000 in 2007 (Donadio, 2008). The amount of publishers has increased as well. In 1947 in America there were 357 publishers, in 1975 3000 publishers, in 1980 12,000, in 1994 52,847, and in 2003 there were about 73,000 publishers (DiVita, 2007). These are enormous changes and can possibly be explained by a rise in self-publishing. Donadio (2008) also states that 175,000 new blogs are created every day and that 7% of American adults say that they write for pleasure. Another statistic quoted by Ross (2011) from the *New York Times* is that “81 percent of people feel that they have a book in them…and should write it”. Ross does the
maths and works out that that means that there are over 200 million people in America who want to write a book. Possibly a lot of them will not but there is still a lot of writing going on. This also helps to explain the rise in self-publishing. Another explanation for the rise in self-publishing is that publishing a book is seen as a help to a business (Building a business? Publish a book, 2009). Part of this is possibly the feeling that writing a book on a subject reassures your customers that you know what you are talking about (Building a business? Publish a book, 2009).

Advances in technology have also contributed to the ease of self-publishing (King, 2010). With the new technology that is constantly evolving authors can easily print books on demand, meaning they do not have to pay for a huge amount of books to be printed, only to find that there is no want for them. Also, their books take an extremely short time to go from manuscript to print, as little as ten days (Heilager, 2011). And they can also convert it quickly and easily into a format suitable for an e-reader. “Authors are in luck because self-publishing on Kindle is extremely easy for even an inexperienced computer user” (Heilager, 2011). As the popularity of e-readers rises (Heilager, 2011), publishing in e-format becomes an attraction of self-publishing (King, 2010) as authors no longer have to “court the elusive approval of literary agents or publishers” (Spenser, 2012). E-books also have the added attraction of being much cheaper than printed books, so readers are “more likely to take a chance on an untried author” (Spenser, 2012), an appealing prospect to new authors.

The information that is available on self-publishing also shows that self-published books cover a wide range of topics and genres. Publishers’ Weekly publishes a list of self-published titles quarterly and the one example I looked at showed this wide range of topics perfectly. The three biggest sections in this article were “Biography and autobiography”, “Fiction” and
“Juvenile fiction” (A wide world of publishing, 2011). This corresponds with Poynter’s statistic that 55% of books bought are fiction. However, Poynter also states that four times as many non-fiction as fiction titles are published.

There is not a lot of academic literature that concentrates on self-publishing statistics. As Dilevko & Dali (2006) say, there is “awkward silence from libraries about how to deal with self-published books”. This illuminates the need for research into this area, especially as self-publishing is a growing phenomenon, and will probably continue to grow as technology changes and people adapt their practices to fit the technology. Most the literature that was discovered in the course of this research were websites that focused on helping writers self-publish, and most of them were American-based. The statistics on these websites were also American, but they will give some insight into what the New Zealand statistics could possibly be. One of the big things also discovered in the course of this literature review was the focus on the different types of self-publishing. Vanity or subsidy press publishing, self-publishing services, and true self-publishing are the different types, and understanding the differences between them is an important part of this research project. Even though there has been a lack of previous academic research into the area of self-publishing and how many books are actually being self-published, hopefully this research project will inspire others to research this developing area of publishing, books, and ultimately libraries.
**Research Design:**

This research will take a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis. A quantitative approach suits this study because the desired results are firmly based in statistical analysis. Records from the National Library of New Zealand database shall be retrieved and data shall be extracted from these records. The data shall be used to investigate self-publishing trends in New Zealand by looking at the percentage of books that were self-published in the sample for each year. This analysis could provide a potentially useful basis for research into self-publishing in New Zealand and abroad because of the distinct lack of Library and Information Science literature about self-publishing trends.
**Methodology:**

**Population and Sample:**

The sample for the data will be taken from the National Library database. The National Library’s database has been chosen for this research project because it provides access to the most comprehensive collection of New Zealand titles through its position as New Zealand’s national bibliography. A sample will be taken from books published from 1991 to 2009. Every second year will be sampled, so 1991, 1993, 1995 etc. Before data collection commenced I planned to sample every year but collecting the data proved to take more time than originally thought, so in order to fit the research into the time constraints of the project length, the decision was made to only sample every second year. This was considered to be a better option than simply cutting the sample sizes because that would compromise the accuracy of the sample results. 1991 has been chosen as the starting year for sampling because it was around this time that computers were becoming more commonplace. The decision to not sample 2011 was based on the fact that titles published in 2011 are still being regularly added to the database and this would affect the sampling process, especially if it was carried out over several days.

The sample shall be worked out using the sample size calculator on www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html. This sample will take into account a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. For example, when ‘1991’ is put into a search for publication date into the National Library’s OPAC search engine, it retrieves more than 10,000 results, with the first 10,000 available for display. This is far too big a number to sample within the scope of this research project so limits shall be applied. Once the initial search results have
been pulled up limits can be put on the results. These will be limiting the results to books published only in the required year (this effectively removes serials titles), and limiting the place of publication to New Zealand, ensuring only National Bibliography titles are in the results. After placing these limits the number of results for 1991 changes to 4,069. The recommended sample size for a population of 4,069 is 352. This process will be repeated for each of the ten years being sampled. The sample size will be worked out for each year (see Appendix 2). This ensures that the number of books sampled remains constant and is not affected by the overall number of books that were published in any one year.

The population for sampling shall also be restricted to monographs, multi-part works and monographs-in-series. Serials, sound recordings, scores, heritage material, maps, children’s literature, electronic resources, and works not published in New Zealand shall not be sampled. This is because the scope of this research project is severely limited by time constraints. However, by not sampling these materials the possibility of further research into this area is left open.

**Data Collection and Procedures:**

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs a sample of titles from every second year from 1991 to 2010 shall be taken. This sample shall be taken from the OPAC of the National Library of New Zealand. Data shall be collected by putting the appropriate year into the catalogue search of the National Library’s OPAC. Once the results have been pulled up, every tenth title shall be looked at and analysed. Originally every twenty-fifth title was going to be sampled but this decision proved flawed when after sampling every twenty-fifth record in 1991 the end of the results was soon reached. The order for the results when searched for by
publication date is ordered by relevance, every tenth result shall be analysed to ensure true randomness and avoid bias by avoiding the relevance the results are arranged in. If a result to be analysed is any of the types of material that is being excluded from the study (serials, sound recordings, scores, heritage material, maps, children’s literature, electronic resources and overseas titles) it shall be skipped and the next result shall be used. Then back onto the tenth result and so on. The data shall be taken from the ‘MARC view’ of the record, accessible through the OPAC, because the MARC record has the most complete data and it will be easier to ascertain whether it is self-published by looking at this view.

There are several different variations of self-published books (subsidy and vanity press publications, self-publishing services publications, and true self-published publications) and if they can be identified, all will be used for this project. The easiest way to tell whether a book is self-published is by looking at the ‘b subfield’ in the 260 MARC field. This is where the publisher’s name is entered. If the publisher’s name is the same as the name in the statement of responsibility, this title shall be counted as self-published. Also, if the publisher’s name is the name of a self-publishing service, for example, Lulu, LightingSource, Xlibris, First Edition, or any other similar outfit, this shall also be counted as self-published because the author is still paying for the manuscript to make it into print. There is the possibility that some self-published material will be missed because the author gives a name to their ‘publishing house’ which is indistinguishable from a traditional publishing house. Unless this name is known to be the name of a self-publisher (for example F.W. Nielsen Wright self-publishes under the name Cultural and Political Booklets), these titles will just be missed.

The analysis of the data shall be entered into an Excel spreadsheet for later analysis.
Analysis Technique:

The data collected in this research project shall be analysed using straight percentages. Because the research is looking at how the percentage of self-published material has changed over time, a percentage analysis is the most useful and the most relevant to the research questions. Also, because the number of titles being sampled in a year is dependent on the total number of titles in the database published in that year, a percentage analysis is the best way to ensure that the amount from one can be compared to another year’s accurately. The genre breakdown shall also be analysed in terms of percentages for the same reasons. Percentages are also a good way of analysing the data because they are easy to understand, easy to calculate and easy to create graphs around.

As mentioned in previous paragraphs the data shall be entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analysed from there. The percentage calculations shall be done using Excel formulae.
**Ethical Considerations:**

Because this research project is working purely with bibliographic data and not with human subjects, the ethics of this project are not easily discernible. I considered whether there were any issues surrounding the use of the National Library’s catalogue. This issue was resolved because the information on the catalogue is publicly available through the OPAC and so can be used without causing any ethical concerns. However, some catalogue records contain the addresses and email addresses of the authors or publisher for purchasing reasons. These addresses will not be recorded in any way and will not form any part of the data analysis.

**Publication Venues:**

The first place I would look to publish, or at least present my research findings would be the bi-monthly National Library meetings. These meetings involve the whole library and always include a speaker, either from the National Library or a guest speaker. My research uses data from the National Library database and self-published books affect most of the librarians so it would be an ideal place to initially present my research. There is also the opportunity for INFO580 students to present their research at the LIANZA this year, so this also may be a potential way to present my research.
Results:

Data was collected on several different variables: place of publication, genre, binding, and gender of the publisher. No clear trends were observed in the data. There were a few increases over several variables but nothing significant. The inconclusiveness of the data highlights the need for more to be done in the area of self-publishing in order to gain a clearer understanding of the self-publishing industry in New Zealand.

Number of Self-Published Titles:

The results from this research project were unexpected and very different to the result that was predicted. The results showed minimal change in the percentage of material that was self-published from the years 1991 to 2009. All of the evidence from the literature review indicates an explosion in self-publishing, especially in self-publishing through a service like Lulu or iUniverse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% self-published</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>9.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>10.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>8.84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>7.44%</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>11.02%</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>12.67%</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>10.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>12.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentage of material that was self-published for 1991 was 9.94% and the result for 2009 was 12.23%. Admittedly this is an increase but it is not a considerable increase. The results in the intervening years meander around the ten percent mark, with an average over the entire span of years of 10.45%.

Genre:

The genre breakdown for this research project was quite extensive and many different genre groups were created. A list of genres was created before starting the research (see Appendix 3); however, this list proved to be not extensive enough to incorporate all the genres that were encountered in the course of the research. As books that were sampled that could not fit into the established genre list, a new genre heading was created and subsequently added to the genre list. The Dewey Decimal number for each self-published book was also recorded. This was added as another way of confirming the genre that the book should be placed in. It was also useful when some of the genres were consolidated into larger groups in order to provide a more meaningful analysis.
As so many genre groups were created in the initial data collection stage, they were consolidated into groups based on the Dewey Decimal Classification system as a means of enabling an easier analysis of the data. The Dewey Decimal Classification system was chosen as a way of merging data because it is a logical way of organising topics, and it is a system of classification that the researcher is familiar with. In addition, the Dewey numbers could be used to categorise genres that were hard to classify. All of the main Dewey Decimal classes were covered in the consolidated genre data, the 000s to the 900s.

The 000s class included the genres broadcasting, bibliography and computers. The 100s was psychology, the 200s religion, the 400s language, and 500s science. The 300s included politics, law, education, sociology, business, transport and environmental topics. The 600s included cookbooks, health, agriculture, animals and buildings. The 700s included art, lifestyle topics, music, outdoors and antiques. The 800s included poetry, fiction, essays, public speaking, quotations, comics, humour and other literature-related topics, and the 900s included family history, genealogy, history, biographies and autobiographies, and travel (see Appendix 3).

The assumption for what genre would be represented the most in self-published titles was that family histories would be the most common. This hypothesis turned out to be correct for the first few years of the research. Poetry was hypothesised to be the next most common genre and this also transpired to be correct. Poetry was the second most common genre in the first years of the research sample but it overtook family history to become the most common in the later years.
This trend of family history being overtaken by poetry as the most well-represented genre is also reflected in the analysis of the consolidated genre data. The 900s, which included the narrower topic of family history, were the largest genre group until and including 2005. The 800s group, which included the narrower genre of poetry, was the largest group in 2007. In the final year of the research sample the 900s and the 800s both had the total of 35.56% of the overall total. The number of titles in the 800s group increased throughout the sample period, peaking at 48.72% in 2007. The 900s and the 800s were also the only two genre groups that were present in every year that was sampled. After the 800s and the 900s the next biggest genre group was the 700s. Because this group was not present in three of the years sampled this pulled its average down to 4.82%. In 1995 the 700s had a larger proportion of the percentage total than the 800s, with a total of 15.38%. The 400s was the smallest group represented, appearing only in 2003 and at only 2.17% of the total.

Another way of looking at the consolidated genre data is to look at which year had the most variation in the genres that were present in that year. 1991 had the least variation in the genres, with only four genre groups present: the 900s, 800s, 600s, and 300s (see Appendix 4).
Gender:

Men overwhelmingly and consistently self-published more books over the twenty year span of this research project. Some years (1991, 1993, and 2003) had a significant number of books published by people whose gender was recorded as unknown. Some of these ‘unknowns’ were because the name recorded on the MARC record was gender neutral or an unfamiliar name that was not readily identifiable as either male or female. Sometimes the author and publisher were referred to only by their initial so could possibly be of either sex. The other reason for ‘unknown’ being recorded as the gender of the author was if more than one person was responsible for the book. In order to avoid making judgments about which one of the responsible parties was the most ‘responsible’, their gender was recorded as unknown.

In 1991 the gap between male and female publishers was twenty percent; males accounting for 42.86% of the total and females accounting for 22.86% of the total. However, by the final year of the sample, males were making up 66.67% of the total and the percentage of female publishers had had only risen slightly to 28.89%. In three of the years sampled males compose of over seventy percent of the overall total. The year with the biggest number of unknown gender publishers was 1991, with 34.29%. The average for unknowns was 12.06% over the twenty year period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% M</th>
<th>% F</th>
<th>% unknown</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42.86%</td>
<td>22.86%</td>
<td>34.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>28.95%</td>
<td>21.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.85%</td>
<td>35.90%</td>
<td>10.26%</td>
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Because there seemed to be a very clear trend towards men self-publishing more, additional statistical analysis was done on the raw data. Firstly, the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) was calculated for the gender data. The results with an unknown gender were not included in this analysis as the relationship between gender and self-publishing was being explored further. The CAGR calculation showed a result of 9.05% for men and 6.26% for women. From this calculation we can see that men have had almost a three percent larger growth rate than women.

The other statistical analysis that was carried out on the gender data was a chi-square test. This test was done to ascertain whether there was a statistical relationship between gender and the number of books being self-published. The chi-square score came out at 6.408185. The degrees of freedom for this data was 9, so the critical values were 16.92 and 21.67 for significant levels of 0.05 and 0.01 respectively. The chi-square result for this data was not above the critical values, indicating no relationship between gender and number of books self-published (see Appendix 6).
Location of Publication:

The publication locations for the self-published books were grouped into five main groups. Four of these groups were the four main cities of New Zealand: Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, and Christchurch. The fifth group was recorded as ‘other’ in the results analysis and included every other location in New Zealand. In the results the specific location that was documented in the MARC record was put on the results. However, this would mean dozens of locations, some that only appear once, in the analysis, making the analysis almost meaningless. For this reason all the smaller locations were grouped into the one group of ‘other’. The decision was also made not to split this ‘other’ group into North Island and South Island groups because, again, this may lead to too many groups being created, and so an almost meaningless analysis.

Analysing the results for the publication location led to some surprising results and showed some definite self-publishing trends that will be covered more fully in the discussion. The ‘other’ group for publication location was the most frequent for the first three years sampled, with ‘other’ in all those years accounting for more than fifty percent of the total. ‘Other’ then meandered around just under fifty percent for the next five years sampled before falling sharply in 2007, and back up to just fifty percent in 2009. This does not sound too remarkable but when all the analysed results are plotted next to each other in a graph the trends become clearer.
Looking closer at the main centres as place of publications, Dunedin is the location with the smallest percentage of the place of publication total. Auckland started off as the main centre that had the greatest percentage but was overtaken by Wellington in 1997, which was the main centre that commanded the greatest percentage of the main centres for the rest of the sampled years, with the exception of 2003 when both Christchurch and Auckland had bigger totals than Wellington (see Appendix 4).

However, once all the variations between the different publication locations are smoothed out ‘other’ remains the largest group with an average of 48.35%, followed by Wellington with 25.57%, Auckland with 17.92%, Christchurch with 4.88%, and finally Dunedin with an average of 3.28%.

**Binding:**

Unsurprisingly, paperback was the most common binding for self-published books in the twenty year span sampled. Spiral binding and hardback binding were the other two types of binding that were recorded and they each had a similar percentage of the total. In the last years of the sample the number of books with spiral binding increased and the number of
hardback books decreased, and eventually in 2007 and 2009, no hardback books were recorded. The other two binding varieties that were recorded were unknown and unbound. As binding is usually recorded in the MARC 020 field after the ISBN number, books with no ISBN recorded in the MARC record will consequently have no binding recorded. This was the usual reason for a book’s binding being recorded as unknown. Books recorded as unbound were very rare, so their percentage is not considered as being significant. Books with unknown binding never reached above ten percent of the total and there were two years when no books were recorded as unknown, so their results are also not considered to be significant (see Appendix 4 and 5).
**Discussion:**

**Research Questions:**

Answering the research questions posed in the proposal is difficult as the data collected and analysed was so inconclusive.

One of the research questions that could not be answered from the data gathered for this research project was the question regarding what form of self-publishing was most prevalent over the period sampled. The type of self-publishing was collected in the initial data but was made impractical by several factors. It was initially thought that it would be possible to ascertain the type of self-publishing that was utilised, and the research question was formed around this assumption. However, it proved difficult to tell what type of self-publishing was used, and whether it was true self-publishing, vanity press, or a self-publishing service. When the initials of the author were used for the publisher’s name they were recorded as being an example of true self-publishing. However, when the name in the publisher subfield was a corporate name it became rather more difficult. If a publisher name came up that was not instantly recognisable as a traditional publisher, their name was entered into a search engine. If they had a website it was generally possible to tell whether they were a slightly more obscure traditional publishing house, or a self-publisher of some description. However, if information could not be discovered in an Internet search they were recorded as not being self-published. This means that some self-published material that was published under a personal imprint was recorded as not being self-published. As a consequence the amount of self-published material may be slightly under-represented. But as this problem was consistent throughout the entire sample period, the overall percentages will not have been greatly
affected. The difficulty with recording the type of self-publishing also means all the data recorded for this is essentially meaningless as almost every self-published book was recorded as being an example of true self-publishing, aside from the occasional time where a vanity press was immediately obvious.

There is also the question of whether the National Library is catching all of titles by New Zealand authors who publish with a foreign self-publishing service. If they apply for a New Zealand ISBN they will be reminded to deposit two copies in the National Library, or if they are aware of the requirements of legal deposit they will put two copies in the library. However, if they do not get a New Zealand ISBN or know about legal deposit it is very likely that their books will not end up in the National Library. This could also explain why the proportion of self-published titles, especially from self-publishing services like Lulu, remained so low.

The first research question was “how has self-publishing changed over the twenty year period sampled?” There was a slight increase in the proportion of books being self-published, but the change is very small. The 900s genre group was initially the biggest genre group but this changed in later years with 800s becoming the biggest group. The 800s group being the biggest genre group is consistent with the statistics published in Publishers’ Weekly (A wide world of publishing, 2011). Poynter states that that four times as many non-fiction as fiction titles are published which is only consistent for the first sixteen years of the study, after which fiction (i.e. the 800s genre group) becomes the most common.

Another research question was “how have the yearly percentages changed over this period?” The change from 1991 to 2009 is less than 3%. The percentage for 1991 is 9.94% and the
percentage for 2009 is 12.23%, so the percentage change is 2.29%. This percentage change is far less than expected. This goes against all of the evidence presented in the literature review and all the statistics related to self-publishing. However, there are some possible reasons for this unexpected result. Firstly, many of the statistics and articles collected in the course were American-based. Because of the lack of evidence surrounding self-publishing in New Zealand the American statistics were used as a basis for assuming that because self-publishing was growing exponentially in America, this trend would be reflected in New Zealand. The results of this research project are too inconclusive to support this. It would be interesting to do a similar study using the American or British national bibliography to see whether the self-publishing trend is in evidence there.

If the self-publishing industry in New Zealand is increasing it is increasing at the same rate as the whole publishing industry. Every year sampled in this research project had a larger base to sample from than the previous year sampled. For example, the amount of material in the National Library database with a publication year of 1991 was 4,069. By 2001 this number had increased to 6,375, and in 2009 to 8,619. So the total amount of material being published is increasing. This, coupled with the rising rate of e-publishing (King, 2010), has possibly neutralised any effect that a rising rate of self-publishing may have had.

Genre:

The strong representation of family histories in the genre breakdown can probably be attributed to the resurgence of interest in genealogy. The National Library has a dedicated Family History Collection (http://www.natlib.govt.nz/collections/areas-of-focus/family-history/a-z-of-all-collections/family-history-collection), reflecting the public interest in self-
publishing. The list of self-published titles in *Publishers’ Weekly* showed that “Biography and autobiography” was the largest genre. In this research project, autobiographies and biographies were certainly well-represented but it was only when they were combined with family history in the broader 900s group that they became the largest genre group. However, as the article in *Publisher’s Weekly* is American there is the possibility that there is not such a strong interest surrounding genealogy and family histories in America as there is in New Zealand.

The second-largest genre group in the *Publishers’ Weekly* article was fiction. In this research project it was poetry that was the second-largest group. Only three self-published poetry books were in the *Publishers’ Weekly* article. Again, possibly the American self-publishing market is slightly different to the New Zealand market. There is definitely scope for more research in this area to understand why these differences are occurring.

**Gender:**

Although from first glance it appears that there is a relationship between gender and the tendency to self-publish, further statistical analysis using a CAGR test and a chi-square test shows that there is no apparent statistical relationship between the two variables. From this the conclusion that men or women are equally likely to self-publish can be reached. This statistical conclusion also indicates that the presence of a male prolific author has not significantly influenced the gender data. Men had a slightly higher self-publishing growth rate, so removing his data would only serve to equalise the men and women data even further.
Location of Publication:

The fact that Wellington was the main centre with the highest average of the percentage total is somewhat surprising. Logically, the centre with the highest population, i.e. Auckland, would be expected to have the highest number of self-publishers, with Christchurch as the second highest. Wellington became the main centre with the highest average total in 1997, taking over from Auckland. So, there must be cultural and societal reasons causing people to self-publish, rather than straight population figures being the sole reason. However, those reasons are beyond the scope of this research project and there is certainly the opportunity for more research into this area.

Another reason why it was somewhat surprising that Auckland did not have the highest percentage of self-published books is that most of the big publishing houses in New Zealand are based in Auckland. This possibly means that publishing is a more visible industry in Auckland, so more people would be aware of publishing and its difficulties and more likely to choose self-publishing. However, this argument could also go the other way. Because many big publishing houses are based in Auckland, people in Auckland are more likely to try to publish with one of them, leaving self-publishing to people not living in the centre of New Zealand’s traditional publishing industry.

The number of books published outside of the main centres fell sharply during the twenty year span sampled. This indicates a trend of self-publishing becoming a venture undertaken more often in the bigger cities of New Zealand rather than the smaller towns.
Binding:

Possibly the most important indicator of a change in self-publishing to arise from the binding data was the rise of books with spiral binding and the decrease in the number of hardback books. Hardback books are traditionally associated with better quality books (although not necessarily better quality writing). It could therefore be argued that books published more recently are of a lesser quality. This argument could also be validated by the rise of self-published books with spiral binding. Spiral binding could be considered the opposite of hardback binding as it is often indicative of a lower quality of publication, although, again, this is not necessarily reflected in the quality of the writing. No evidence in the course of the literature review for this research project was discovered regarding the binding of self-published books, so this is conjecture based solely on the evidence of this research project. A possible reason for the decline of self-published hardback books is a decrease in the use of vanity presses and an increase in the use of self-publishing services, as well as an increase in the prevalence of home technology, like computers and good-quality printers.
Limitations and Directions for Future Research:

Over the course of the data collection period several limitations to this method became apparent. Firstly, was how many items had to be recorded as not self-published even though if the actual physical item was examined they would probably be classed as self-published. These were the items that were published by a committee or group of people. Items that fell into this category were generally school histories or jubilees, books published for fundraising purposes, or books published by a corporate body like councils or government agencies. I was reluctant to count these books as self-published, because although they were written and published by the same entity, there was no guarantee that the same person who wrote the book was also involved in the publishing process. So, for this reason these books were not counted as self-published, even though under different circumstances they may have been.

Another limitation was the observed tendency of some authors to self-publish under the name of their own ‘publishing house’. When it was thought that this phenomenon was occurring, a quick Google search was done on the name of the ‘publishing house’. Sometimes a legitimate publishing operation was discovered and so the book was recorded as being, rightly, not self-published. However, when no evidence was found about this ‘publishing house’, the book was assumed to have been not self-published. Because it was not possible to determine what type of publishing it was, a traditional publishing house was.

Time was a significant factor in limiting the scope of this research project. Consequently, the project was limited to collecting data from only every second year during a twenty year period in order to gather all the data within a reasonable space of time. A direction for future research would be to sample every year within this, or a larger time frame in order to get a
more complete picture of self-publishing in New Zealand. Also, several types of material were excluded from the study, including all forms of music and electronic material, and children’s material. It would be interesting to see how these formats fitted into the publishing and self-publishing picture.

Also, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex and multifarious publishing and self-publishing industries a similar study across several countries would be exceptionally illuminating. Obviously, this sort of study would require a huge commitment of time, resources and dedication to carry out but it could have the potential to deliver a wealth of data and information on self-publishing. Some qualitative data regarding self-publishing would be another possibility for future research that could shed more light on the self-publishing industry.

Because there is such a distinct lack of research in the area of self-publishing there are many directions future research could go to from this research project and the ideas indicated here are a mere sample of the possibilities.
**Prolific Authors:**

One aspect that may have skewed the results slightly, especially the results for poetry, is the presence of one particularly prolific author. Although several other authors had published more than once, no other author in this research project stood out in the same way as this one author did. As this author was not approached with regards to this study, no name will be used in order to protect his privacy. He will simply be ‘this author’. This one Wellington author has over one thousand titles in the National Library. He was first published in the Sixties and is continuing to publish to this day. He has published mainly poetry, with some forays into essays and literary criticism, and his work came up in the samples for this research project very often. There were a few occasions in the 1995 sample when several of his works were sampled one after the other. There was an initial fear that this author would skew the results as he is such an outlier. And possibly this is the case. As previously mentioned, the prevalence of his work was most obvious in the samples of the early Nineties. There is the possibility that he gave an unnatural result for those years, giving them an overall higher percentage than they would have otherwise received. It is impossible to fully judge the effect that this author had on the overall percentages as no record was made of the titles that this author published. So, there is the definite possibility that the results have been exaggerated by including this author in the samples. However, it was decided to keep him in the sample because this author is a self-publisher and by sampling him the results are showing a true picture of the self-publishing scene in New Zealand. However, he does not seem to have made a significant effect on the genre percentages. This conclusion is reached because most of his published work is poetry, but family history is still the largest group in the early years of the samples, so including him in the sample has not given poetry a false standing as the most common self-published genre in the first years of the sample. He also
would have contributed significantly to Wellington in the place of publication data. There are
good and bad points for including this author in the research project but as he is significant to
New Zealand’s self-publishing industry, including him was the best thing to do in order to
provide the most accurate picture of self-publishing in New Zealand.
Implications for libraries:

At first, the results from this research project do not seem to say much and do not seem to imply anything for libraries at all. While the results are not conclusive of self-publishing changing exceptionally rapidly, they do give an indication of what the implications for libraries are. Self-publishing, despite all literature to the contrary, is not increasing at a significantly higher rate than the publishing industry in general, so libraries do not need to rush out policies and plans to cope with the influx of self-published material. However, libraries still need to be aware of what changes are happening within the self-publishing business. This awareness is necessary so that if the New Zealand self-publishing industry catches up with the booming American self-publishing industry, libraries will be well prepared to nimbly adapt.

Self-publishing has possibly the most impact on Collection Development policies. Self-published books are often not available through traditional purchasing routes, so it is vital that librarians in this area know where they can source self-published books from. Self-publishing services are a very good place to start. Because so many self-published books are on esoteric or niche topics, they can very often neatly fill in a gap in a library’s collection. Also, many books on local and family history are self-published, so extremely relevant to their local library’s collection, providing a mine of information for historians and genealogists.

This leads onto another implication for libraries. Librarians need to know about their self-published resources so that they can indicate them to enquiring patrons. This relates again to
self-published books often filling a niche. Patrons who are interested in this niche area may need to consult a self-published book.

In terms of cataloguing self-published books, they do not make a big enough contribution to the overall total of books to warrant a policy statement or similar. The number of self-published books did increase, but so did the total amount of publications. Their effect on cataloguing, regarding numbers, is minimal. However, self-published books do bring their own problems to the cataloguing table. Because they have not been published by a traditional publisher their format can confuse descriptive cataloguing, and because their subjects are so often unusual, subject cataloguing can also be time-consuming. This means that they take up a bigger chunk of cataloguing time than more traditional books. However, until self-publishing has a significantly higher percentage there does not seem to be any need for libraries to allocate more time to cataloguing self-published books.
Conclusion:

So, how has self-publishing changed in New Zealand from 1991-2010? In terms of the overall percentage of the number of books published, self-publishing has grown a statistically insignificant amount over the twenty-year period sampled—only 2.29%. However, because the amount of published material has also increased over this period, self-publishing could simply be increasing at similar rate. Throughout the twenty-year period has the biggest genres remained poetry and family history, with poetry becoming stronger than family history towards the end of the sample period. This trend was also represented in the collated genre data, with the 900s and 800s genre groups consistently being the largest. Unsurprisingly, paperback binding was the most common binding. Male self-publishers grew more over the twenty-year period than female self-publishers. However, when this was investigated more fully, there proved to be no relationship between gender and number of self-published titles. Wellington became the most common main centre for place of publication in 1997, overtaking Auckland. However, ‘other’ places of publication remained as the most common for the whole twenty-year period.

Despite all these little trends and fluctuations within the data, self-publishing has not drastically changed since 1991. This conflicts with all the literature discovered during research; however, it is certainly illuminating of the state of self-publishing in New Zealand. Self-publishing has by all accounts taken off in the United States and this trend will probably be mirrored in New Zealand at some point in the future. This research project is just the first step towards a greater understanding of self-publishing. There is so much more research waiting to be done in this area, but hopefully this research project will provide a useful starting point. The whole publishing industry is changing rapidly, keeping up with technology.
and society, and the self-publishing industry is a reflection of this. It is just one facet of all publishing, but it is an important one. Libraries need to understand it and where it is going. Libraries are needing to adapt more quickly than ever before and if self-publishing is going to remain the important feature of publishing that it currently is, libraries need to be able to adapt to self-publishing and all the challenges that it holds.
Bibliography


DiVita, Y. (2007). And the winner is…*Beneath the cover.*


www.electronicbook-readers.com

www.pbs.org/mediashift


Retrieved from Library and Information Science Fulltext.


Appendix 1: Research Time Frame:

21st November 2011 – First meeting with supervisor.
- Start researching for literature review.

6th December 2011 – Meeting with supervisor.

12th December 2011 – Start writing research proposal and literature review.

19th December 2011 – Meeting with supervisor.

22nd December -10th January 2012 – Christmas/New Year break.

31st December – Finish research proposal and start writing literature review.

11th January 2012 – Meeting with supervisor.

14th January 2012 – Proof-read research proposal.

15th January 2012 – Proof-read literature review.

16th January – Research proposal and literature review due.

1st February 2012 – Start collecting initial data from National Library OPAC.


1st March 2012 – Start analysing collected data.


1st April-9th April 2012 – Adjust methodology in proposal to fit actual method of data analysis.

9th April – Finish data analysis.

10th April 2012 – Start writing up results and discussion.

20th May 2012- Finish writing discussion and results.

26th May 2012 – Add graphs and tables to report.

27th May 2012 – Put together appendices.
28th May – 3rd June 2012 – Edit and format report.

4th June – 7th June – Time for additional changes, edits, etc.

8th June 2012 – Final research report due.
**Appendix 2: Sample Sizes:**

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Appendix 3: Genres:

- Family history/genealogy
- Biography/autobiography
- Fiction (includes novels, short stories and drama)
- Poetry
- Religion
- Science
- Cookbooks
- Humour
- Health (including homeopathy, First Aid, living with a disease)
- Outdoors (including tramping, hunting, fishing, camping)
- History (includes local history, history of a specific society or association, school histories, military history)
- Agriculture (includes all topics related to farming)
- Politics
- Comics
- Law
- Environmental
- Transport (includes titles about buses, trains, etc.)
- Art (includes exhibition catalogues and pictorial works, photography)
- Quotations
- Broadcasting
- Education
- Lifestyle (includes gardening, sport)
- Music
- Public speaking
- Bibliography
- Essays
- Sociology (includes topics about groups of people, e.g. Maori and youth)
- Business (includes banking)
- Psychology (includes self-help, astrology, parenting)
- Animals
- Language
- Antiques
- Travel
- Buildings
- Computers
Consolidated Genres:

000s - Broadcasting
  - Bibliography
  - Computers

100s – Psychology

200s – Religion

300s – Politics
  - Law
  - Education
  - Sociology
  - Business
  - Transport
  - Environmental

400s – Language

500s – Science

600s – Cookbooks
  - Health
  - Agriculture
  - Animals
  - Buildings

700s – Art
  - Lifestyle
  - Music
  - Outdoors
  - Antiques

800s – Poetry
  - Fiction
  - Essays
  - Public speaking
  - Quotations
  - Comics
  - Humour
900s – Family history
- Genealogy
- History
- Biography
- Autobiography
- Travel
## Appendix 4: Tables:

### No. of self-published material:

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### Location:

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Appendix 5: Graphs

Percentage of self-published material:

Gender:

Binding:
Consolidated Genres:

Location:
### Appendix 6: Chi-Square Data:

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>#F</th>
<th>Expected # M</th>
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6.408185