



Do It Yourself!: Self-Publishing from Letterpress to LaserJet

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do

SELF

it

PUBLISHING

FROM

*Letter
press*

*your
self?*

TO

*Laser
Jet*

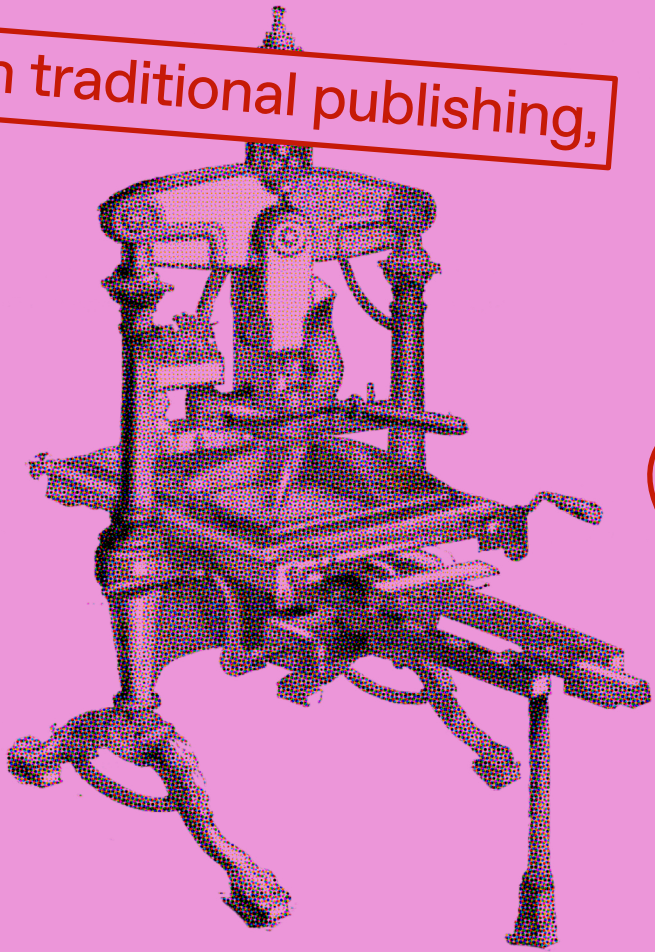
In traditional publishing,

writers

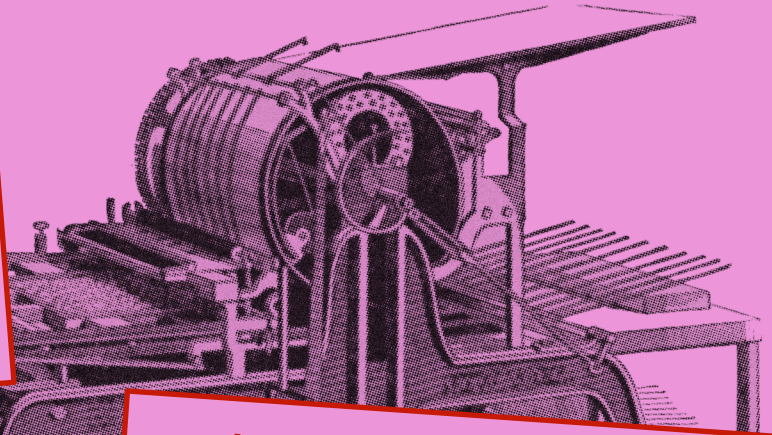
and

artists

entrust editors, designers, printers, and many others with making decisions about how to produce and distribute their work.

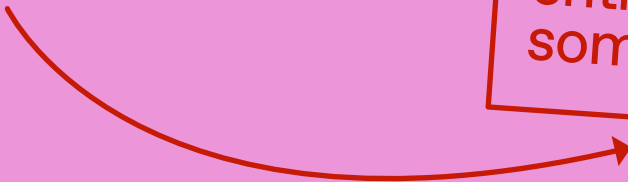


In exchange for financing the process and applying their expertise, publishers assume most of the risks and rewards.



Self-publishing

puts more control in the creators' hands, whether they're paying to have their work printed, producing it entirely themselves, or something in between.



While the

digital era

the practice is a much broader and more enduring phenomenon.

has brought an

explosion

of new avenues for

self-publishing,



This companion
zine to the

Self-Publishing
from

Do

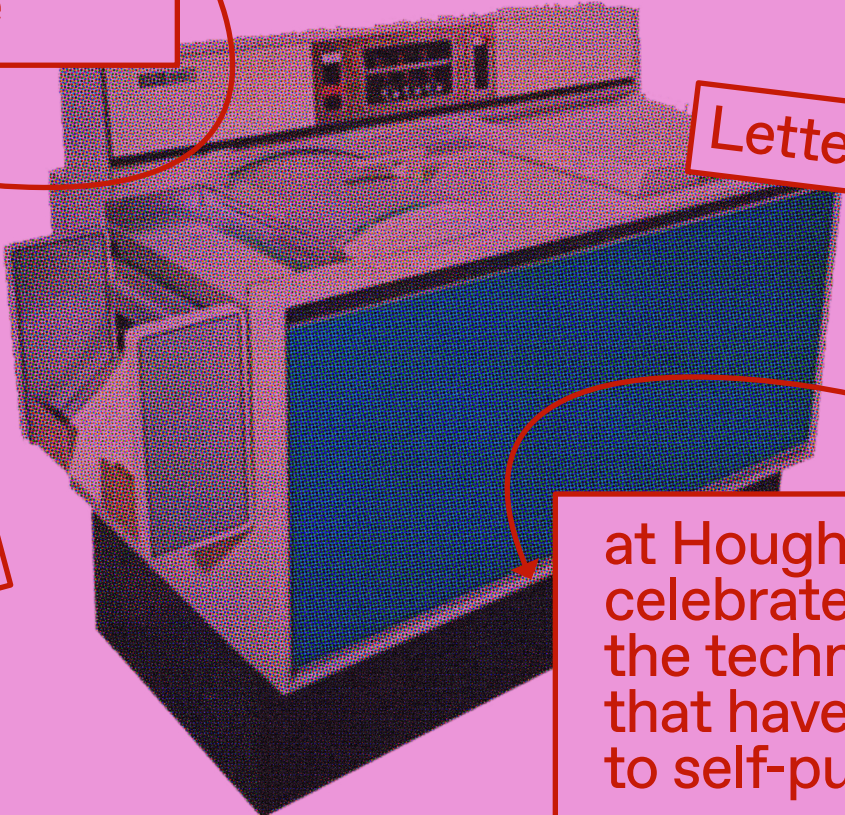
Letterpress

It

to

Yourself!

LaserJet



at Houghton Library
celebrates some of
the technologies
that have been used
to self-publish.

Some of these technologies are now household names,

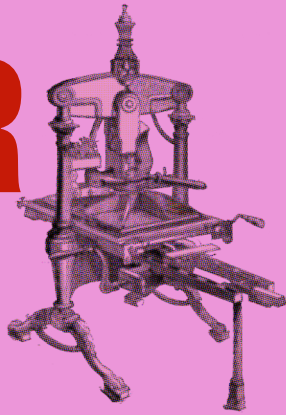
while others have been long forgotten,

but all have played a crucial role in creators taking control of their work.



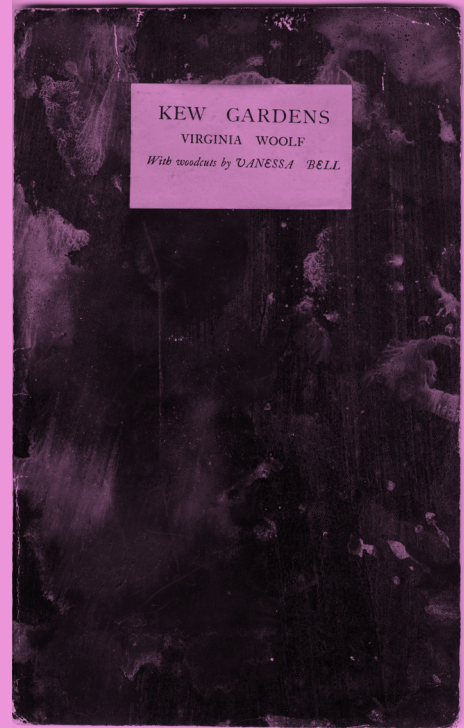
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LETTER PRESS 1450



Letterpress printing uses a press to transfer ink from a raised surface to paper. For most of letterpress's history, that raised surface was composed of movable type: individual pieces of metal for each letter, space, and punctuation mark. This allows letters to be rearranged repeatedly to print new texts. Movable type itself originated in China in the eleventh century, but it kicked off a printing revolution hundreds of years later when mechanical printing presses and an efficient way to cast metal type were developed in Europe. Letterpress was the dominant means of printing books until well into the 20th century.

FROM LETTERPRESS TO LASER JET



Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell, *Kew Gardens* (1919).
EC9 W8827 919k, Houghton Library.

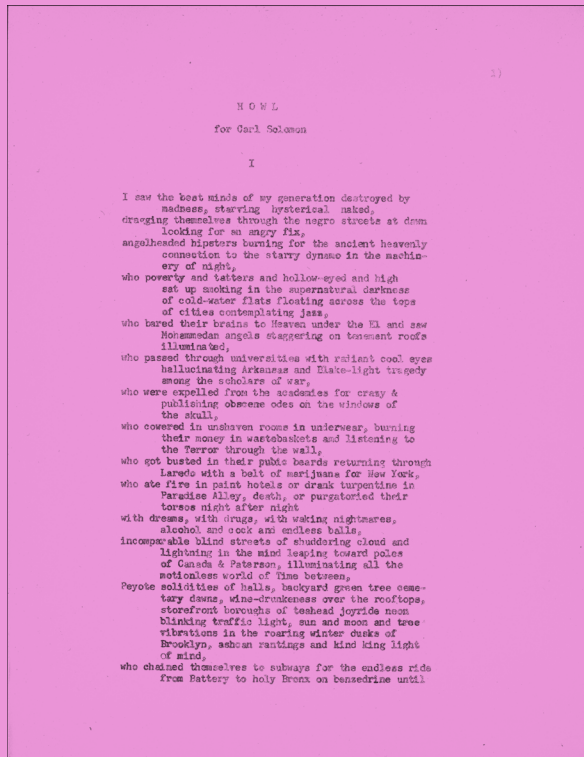
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TYPE WRITER 1874



A mainstay in offices by the 1880s, the typewriter is a mechanical (and later, electrical) machine that allows typists to produce text on a page through keystrokes: when pressed, each character key causes a corresponding piece of metal type to strike the machine's inked ribbon, transferring ink to the page. With the introduction of carbon paper—coated paper placed behind the original—typists gained the ability to create multiple copies without any extra labor.

FROM LETTERPRESS TO LASER JET



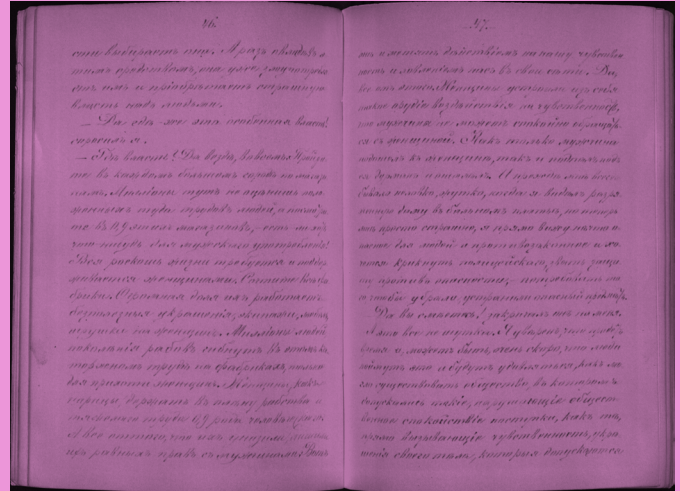
Allen Ginsberg, "Howl: for Carl Solomon"
(1956). PS3513.174 H6 1956b, Houghton Library.

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HECTOGRAPH 1874



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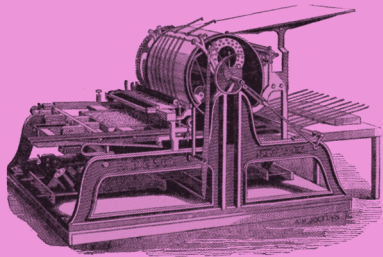


A hectograph is a gelatin pad that can be used to transfer images or writing. Master sheets containing aniline dye, a chemical dye made from coal tar, can be written or typed on to compose a text. Laying the master sheet on the gelatin surface transfers the text to the hectograph pad, and laying blank paper on the pad lifts the dye off the gelatin and onto the paper. While they can only make a small number of copies, hectographs filled a niche for those without access to a press.

Leo Tolstoy, *Kreutzer Sonata* [Kreutzer Sonata] (1890).

RC8.T5885.890k, Houghton Library.

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1904 OFFSET

Offset printing takes advantage of the scientific principle that oil and water do not mix. Ink rollers apply ink to a plate cylinder moistened with water so that the ink sticks only to the image rendered in oil or wax. A third offset cylinder transfers the inked image to the page. The use of high-speed cylinders allows printers to run thousands of copies per hour. Since the 1960s, most commercial books and magazines have been printed offset.

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OAKLAND 1968

FASCISM

CHICAGO 1969

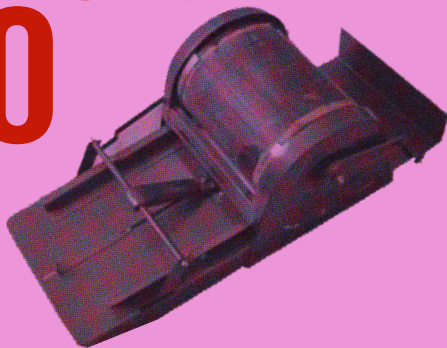


Emory Douglas and others, *The Black Panther Community News Service* (1969).
AP95.B5665 (B), Houghton Library.

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MIMEO & DITTO

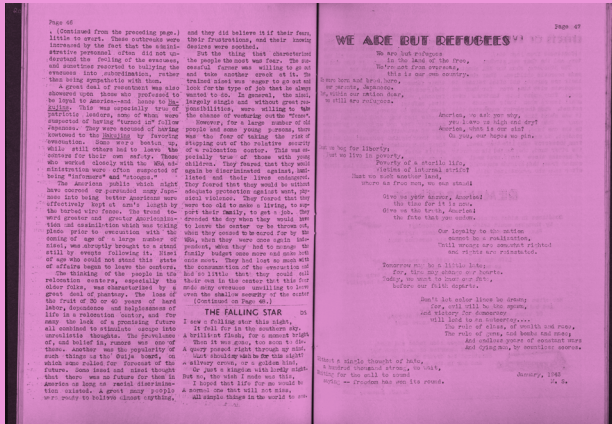
1884; 1923



Used widely in offices, schools, and churches in the first half of the 20th century, mimeograph ("mimeo") and ditto machines were inexpensive and easy solutions to the tedious work of copy making. Both technologies rely on a rotating drum. Mimeographs make copies using a stencil that wraps around the drum and forces ink through the stencil's openings onto the page. Dittos use masters that transfer purple wax to the back of your typed page. The wax is ultimately dissolved with isopropyl alcohol

FROM LETTERPRESS TO LASER JET

and methanol, leaving behind the words and a characteristic Ditto scent. As Xerox machines began to replace dittos and mimeos in the 1960s, poets and writers purchased machines second-hand to create and share their work, kicking off the "mimeo revolution."



Barry Saiki, editor, *The Pen* (1943).
2021-185, Houghton Library.

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DIGITAL 1980s



Office, home, and commercial printers have all gotten new digital updates in recent decades. Laser printers slowly replaced photocopiers, using digital image-making instead of photography. Inkjet printing, a process where ink droplets are sprayed from a nozzle, has become popular for home printing. Both technologies allow you to design a publication on a computer and send it directly to the printer. Commercial digital printing—essentially a scaled-up version of office printing—is faster and cheaper than offset printing for smaller

print runs. Zine creators and small press publishers often use these options, plus digital spins on old technologies like the Risograph, which puts a Mimeograph-like drum inside a copier body.

tng-khi 回去 ㄅㄛˋ ㄑㄩˋ go back, to return (home or where one came from)

Bīn-ná-chài m-chai ē hó-thi^a bē? 不知明天會晴天嗎? I wonder if it will be fair tomorrow?

chhēng-sio 穿 ㄅㄛˋ ㄑㄩˋ wear warm clothes!

aunt, father's elder brother's wife a-m̄ 伯母
aunt, father's eldest sister toa-ko 大姑媽
aunt, father's sisters a-ko 姑母, 姑媽
aunt, father's younger brother's wife a-chim 孀孀
aunt, mother's brother's wife a-kim 舅媽
aunt, mother's sisters a-i 阿姨, 姨媽

iū-iū 油 ㄅㄛˋ ㄑㄩˋ greasy, oily

Chhàu-tau-hū góa chhih m-kòan (m-kòan-si). 臭豆腐我不吃, 不習慣。 I am not accustomed to eat stinky bean curd.

DO IT YOURSELF!

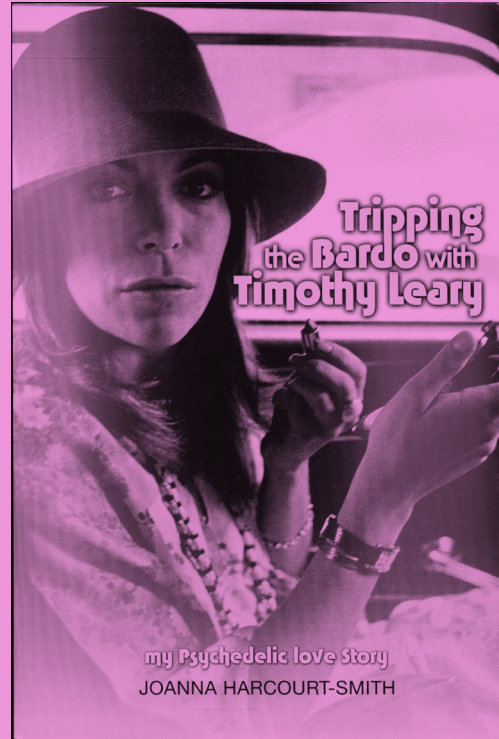
FROM LETTERPRESS TO LASER JET

ONLINE 1990s

Four years older than I, the 1 was his son, large and
tall for his age, with a dandy and sophisticated
style. Thick eyebrows in a permanent frown, heavy
eyelids and large nostrils. He grew without the
usual slenderness, which made his features, and gave
him a dim and blurred eye and heavy eyelids. It
ought even to have been a school, but his name had
often been known for a month or two. He seemed of
his delicate build. "I'd like, the more, afford
that he would do very well if he had been called
and, eventually, even from home, but he had
not a love toward those on whom he had been
called rather to the more relief that that which
was being to more application, and
perhaps to living after home.

John had not much affection for his mother and
sister, and an antipathy to me. He looked and
acted not only as those come to be the work, but
once or twice in the day, but continually every
night I had found him, and every month of them I
my books almost when he came over. There were

Self-publishing has never been more accessible thanks to the advent of the internet. The rise of e-commerce coupled with digital print technologies has allowed authors to self-publish through "print on demand," a service model which prints books only once they are ordered and avoids the initial investment of a large print run. Creators can also publish their work without printing at all, though eBooks, online publishing platforms, or even social media accounts.



Joanna Harcourt-Smith, *Tripping the Bardo with Timothy Leary: My Psychedelic Love Story* (2013). PS3608.A73 T75 2013, Houghton Library.

CREATED BY:
CHRISTINE JACOBSON AND KRISTINE GREIVE, TEXT
ZOË PULLEY, DESIGN

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*your
self?*

IMAGE CREDITS
ALBION IRON HAND PRINTING PRESS, 19TH CENTURY STOCK
ILLUSTRATION BY GETTY IMAGES
HECTOGRAPH BY SHUTTERSTOCK
OLD TYPEWRITER AND A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER INSERTED.
ISOLATED ON WHITE BACKGROUND BY SHUTTERSTOCK
MIMEOGRAPH- SCREEN PRINTING MACHINE. 1909 BY ADOBE STOCK
EBOOK BY ADOBE STOCK



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