

AEJMC 2018 WASHINGTON, D.C., CONFERENCE
RESEARCH SESSION SPOTLIGHT: "Getting Published"
Tuesday, August 7, 1 pm

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Top 10 Do's and Don'ts for Prospective Authors:

Securing a Contract

- 1. Do remember that spelling, grammar, and punctuation count!**
We do read every single proposal, so making a good first impression is key. It gives us a preview of work (including syntax, tone, and style), and will let us know you take pride in your research and that we want to publish your material.
- 2. Do your market research.** I often get 2 or 3 or more proposals on the same subject. Sometimes that subject is something which I have either already published or will be soon. Check publisher's websites for "upcoming" titles, as well as previously published titles. If your title is markedly different than the one I've already published, tell me WHY. And feel free to give me all the specifics. It's the specifics, after all, that make the book. Keep your target audience in mind. Is this book intended for course work? If so, for graduate or undergraduate courses? For researchers? For libraries? This will help you select the correct publisher for your project.
- 3. Don't try to be trendy with your subject matter.** Timeliness is very important, but trendy work rarely sells very well over time. It's far more important to pitch a manuscript that centers around a subject about which you're passionate. Something that gets YOU excited. Keep in mind that you'll probably be working on this project for 1-3 years, so you want it to be something that you love, and something that has the potential for growth. This is far more likely to get you a book contract than being trendy will be.

Producing a Book:

- 4. Do be patient with us.** Know that you are not the only person on our radar, but that you ARE on our radar. If you haven't heard something from us in about a week or two, feel free to send a gentle reminder. But please don't before that.
- 5. Do remember that DEADLINES ARE IMPORTANT.** I can't stress this enough. Don't keep your editor in the dark. If you aren't going to make your deadline, tell them... and make sure it's a darn good reason. We create schedules for production, marketing, conferences, promotion, etc. around the due date for your manuscript. And while it might not be a big deal to you if you're a few weeks late, it is for us. And while we're on the subject of deadlines: please, *please*, PLEASE stick to it. Don't send an email to your editor after your manuscript is already due (or, worse yet, wait for them to reach out to you), and say "it's going to be late." You KNOW when it's going to be late. Reach out to them then, tell them why and when they can expect it. Editors don't want to set anyone up to fail, so they try to set realistic deadlines for everyone. If, when a contract is offered, you think the due date isn't possible, say so right then. You wouldn't grant multiple extensions to your students; don't expect any differently from your editor.

6. **Don't expect someone else to "fix" your work.**

We simply can't read every single manuscript. Please don't ask us what we thought about that cheeky thing you wrote in Chapter 7, paragraph 12. We haven't read it. We wish we could have, so that makes us feel bad.

In academic publishing, there's very little line editing or content editing. Yes, everything is peer reviewed, and everything gets a round of technical copyediting. But this will not catch everything. Please review your own manuscript before you send it to your editor. Again: spelling, grammar, and punctuation are important!

7. **Don't be concerned if the scope of your book changes over time.** This happens regularly. Just talk to your editor about it. Most likely s/he will be absolutely fine with your changes.

8. **Do understand that at a certain point, changing things is a big deal.** We understand it's your book, but if copyright has already been registered (by the publisher), or it's already into production, some things simply can't be changed. This includes prices. They are set based on a very specific amount of math that takes into account things like cost of production, materials, etc. This also includes title language, images, and acknowledgements/dedication. In fact, try to have everything as finalized as possible before a book goes into production.

9. **Do bear in mind that permissions are very important.** For everything. Permission to reproduce artwork, to quote an individual, to utilize a table/chart. Don't assume just because you found it on Wikimedia commons that it is public domain. "Fair Use" isn't as all-encompassing as you may think it is. Bear this in mind as you compile your manuscript. How many of the images you're using are really necessary? Is that epigraph truly public domain? Does quoting that poem really make your point stronger? I highly recommend considering all of this before sending these sorts of things in your manuscript package. I also suggest starting to make inquiries about gaining written permission from sources ASAP. These things can take a while, and you don't want to be waiting on permissions when the rest of the manuscript is ready to go.

After your book is published:

10. **Do be proactive about marketing your book.** You've done the hard work. The book is written, and it's out there in the world. While we market the book to the best of our ability, you know your audience best. Always think of new ways to get the word out about your book & ways that you can market it to a new crowd. Think about local radio stations or campus events in your home town. Plug your book if you're interviewed for a television segment or a podcast. Don't be shy about letting everyone in your professional network know that you've published a book. Shout it from the rooftops (of Twitter) and be proud of all your hard work!