

## Self-publishing flips a new page via social media

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*New breed of writers capitalising on digital boom and e-books*

Mumbai, December 2:

IITians Saransh Garg and Sankalp Kelshikar wanted to capture their learnings on landing plush consulting jobs in a book, which they decided to self-publish.

And the decision is paying off. Their book, *Case Interviews Cracked*, launched on Facebook received 50 downloads in the first two hours. They have since got about 900 unique downloads and many more readers have shared the book on social networking sites. This, then, is the world of self-publishing that does away with the need to deal with the traditional, sceptical, and mighty publishers.

Increasingly, a new breed of writers is taking the self-publishing route, capitalising on the digital boom and spread of e-books.

### Amazon's platform

E-commerce giant Amazon is very excited by the response that the company is seeing from authors based in India. For instance, in 2013, Amazon's self-publishing platform, Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) had over 20 KDP titles in the top 100 Kindle list.

Rasana Atreya, one of those who published on KDP, decided to decline a traditional publishing contract when her manuscript *Tell A Thousand Lies* was short-listed for the 2012 Tibor Jones South Asia prize.

Explaining her decision, Atreya said, "Self-publishing enables you to take charge of your own marketing and promotion. Since I control the price of my own books, I was able to quickly reduce the price and take part in the promotion."

She has since published many books on this platform. Incidentally, self-publishers can make up to 70 per cent from royalties as opposed to 5-20 per cent from traditional publishing.

### Global reader base

Garg and Kelshikar feel the Amazon KDP platform has helped them in getting a potentially global reader base. Their book has been downloaded by students from the IIMs, NITs, VIT and also those studying in Ivy League schools in the US.

Sandeep Sengupta, Co-founder of eBooksutra.com which plans to launch next year, said the company has been getting

at least 15 books a month from budding writers just through its social media presence.

### **Catching up in India**

Sengupta feels that while in China some of the best-selling authors are found in self-publishing sites, India is bound to catch up in the next five years with more people buying smartphones and tablets.

Naheed Hassan, Founder of Indireads.com, digital-first publisher of South Asian books feels that the biggest challenge to self-publishing is quality with a large number of books flooding the market.

Hassan feels that if self-publishing is to continue to play a role in publishing, the quality of books being self-published will have to go up considerably.

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