

# The Author's ADVOCATE



## Special Newsletter

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Infinity Publishing and Buy Books on the web.com

### Do You Really Need a Penname???

Some authors write under a penname for a variety of good reasons. Once upon a time, authors who were under contract with one publishing house for a series of books in a particular genre would assume an alias in order to write in an entirely different genre for publication by another publishing house. A common belief was that an author would use a pseudonym for work they weren't all that eager to have associated with their major body of serious writing.

**Ben Franklin** made creative use of several *nom de plumes*. Under the guise of "a concerned reader", he would write letters to various editors, commenting on the very editorials that *he* had written in order to present another point-of-view. One of his more frequent pen-names was **Silence Dogood**. He assumed the convincing writing persona of a respectable widow to express *her concerns* on various issues of the day. **Anne Rice** used a penname to write some explicit erotica that was in a different style than her popular vampire stories.

Authors may use a penname for the anonymous platform it provides for their writing. I wrote *Enjoy Often!!!* and *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About POD But Didn't Know Who to Ask* under my legal name, **John F. Harnish**. *Enjoy Often!!!* is a collection of odes, essays, ramblings and short stories; and *Everything...About POD...* enhances my professional stature as an acknowledged expert on this evolving method of author-originated book publishing. It was in my best interest to have my legal name shown as the author of these books to capitalize on my name recognition and reputation in the publishing industry.

However, when I wrote my political satire about the 2000 presidential election as an adult fairytale, *Blue Moon Over Miami*, I cloaked myself as **John Franklin**, my legal first and middle names, to show my family's direct connection to **Ben Franklin**. The rawness of my style and depicting the rank foulness in politics needed

a wee bit of assumed protection that the association with my famous ancestor might provide for me.

You can publish your book with Infinity Publishing under a penname, but it's important for you to keep a consistency with the name you use on your books and its promotional material. Branding your written work with your name is vital in creating your writing persona. I always use my full name on non-fiction efforts written for publication. My "John Franklin" pseudonym is reserved for my frankly-fun-fiction stuff that's not necessarily written for publication at this time.

The problem publishers have with pseudonyms is keeping straight which name goes with which author. That's why we make royalty checks payable in the author's legal name. Many banks won't negotiate checks with double endorsements without a lot of hassle. When you write or email us with inquiries regarding your book, *please* include both your legal name and your penname along with the title of your book.

Infinity Publishing will not release any contact information about our authors to the general public. We hold all information regarding the author and the number of books sold in the strictest confidence. When it's possible and applicable, we will forward fan letters and inquiries from readers to our authors. Unless instructed otherwise, we will provide agents, producers and the media with your email or phone number so they can contact you directly since they are often on a deadline.

Pennames provide no protection from being sued for libel. The author is responsible for what they have written, regardless of what name it was published under. Infinity's *Just-In-Time* book publishing system clearly limits the extent of possible damages to the actual number of books produced and distributed.

## Virtual Bookstore Inventories Really Don't Virtually Exist

The internet has created a virtual reality where things are not always as they appear. Books listed by online booksellers as being in their inventory really aren't. What is most disturbing is when virtual bookstores show several copies of an author's books – both new and used – available for sale on the internet at deeply discounted prices from online vendors and more recently – since this issue was addressed in the August 2005 *Author's Advocate* – via **eBay**. This is especially troublesome when the seller is claiming to have 50 copies of your book in stock available for immediate shipment, but those 50 copies aren't showing on your monthly royalty statement.

The reason for this accounting discrepancy is because many online stores have never actually purchased the books shown in their virtual inventory. Showing a bogus number of books for sale is very different than having them physically on-shelf. When they receive an order for a book, they order a single copy from **Ingram**, and then **Lightning Source** prints the book. It's then shipped to the online bookstore, and they, in turn, send it on to the customer. The customer pays the online bookstore when the order is placed via the internet, the bookstore pays Ingram, Ingram pays Lightning Source, Lightning Source pays Infinity for the right to produce the book, and then we pay the royalty on the selling price of the book to the author.

Many of the online bookstores only have a *virtual inventory* of books. This greatly reduces their overhead. Their lack of a capital investment in an on-shelf inventory allows them to offer titles at discounted prices with a narrow profit margin. The bulk of their listed inventory is virtually available from Ingram and produced by Lightning Source *after* a customer orders the book.

The used books offered for sale aren't really used. They're often new books that have been discounted as an enticement to order. These *virtual inventories* differ greatly from Infinity's on-shelf inventory that we maintain for all of our titles in our unique *Just-in-Time* book publishing system to replenish the stock as needed. We literally have printed books on the shelves at our West Conshohocken facility ready to ship. We regularly ship to major on-line bookstores such as **Amazon.com**. We have no way of controlling when or if an author's book is added to any of these online bookstores. Infinity authors are strongly encouraged to direct customers to our official online bookstore at **www.buybooksontheweb.com**.

## 2006 San Diego Wine & Cheese



Over 40 Infinity authors and publishing professionals enjoyed our wine & cheese gathering on Thursday evening, January 26<sup>th</sup> at the San Diego DoubleTree.

## March 25<sup>th</sup> Publisher's Day Virginia Festival of the Book

Infinity Publishing will be participating in the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Virginia Festival of the Book that will be held on March 22 – 26, 2006 at the Omni Hotel in Charlottesville, VA. The program includes scheduled readings by authors and seminars on writing and book publishing. If you're going to be in the Charlottesville area on Publisher's Day, Saturday, March 25, please visit our hospitality room at the Omni. We will also have a table in the vendors' area displaying books by our Virginia-based authors. If you're able to join us for lunch on Saturday, please RSVP on or before March 22 by calling Michelle or Amanda at 877-BUY-BOOK. We'll treat you to lunch and you'll have an excellent opportunity to network with other authors!!!

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Take care and enjoy often...John