

## Authors' Frequently Asked Questions

### **I want you to carry my book. What should I do?**

First, please email us and let us know a bit about you and your book. Please send emails to either [books@learnedowl.com](mailto:books@learnedowl.com) or [marym@learnedowl.com](mailto:marym@learnedowl.com). A brief synopsis is all that's necessary. We'd also like to know if you are local, or if you have a local connection – if you grew up here, or have family in the area, or if you taught in the local schools or something like that.

If it seems as though your book would suit our shop, we will ask you to drop off a sample copy with us. In about 2 – 4 weeks, we will let you know if we can carry it.

### **What books suit your shop?**

The Learned Owl Book Shop is committed to helping our local writing community in every way possible. As a general book shop, we carry just about everything. But not absolutely every book is for us. Very occasionally, we find that we cannot carry a title. Sometimes this is because we do not maintain a significant collection in the genre (reincarnation studies and New Age, for example), or because the author has no particular connection to the Northeast Ohio area. In very rare cases we must turn people down due to the extremely graphic nature of their work, or because of bad spelling. These decisions are made entirely at our discretion and are final.

### **What's the Learned Owl Book Shop like?**

The Learned Owl is an independent, community bookstore located in Hudson, Ohio, about halfway between Cleveland and Akron. We have three floors of books for all ages and interests, from classic picture books to travel guides to the latest New York Times bestsellers. If we don't have a certain book in stock, we can usually order it; we also offer an out-of-print search service.

We pride ourselves on our cozy, welcoming atmosphere and personal service. The Learned Owl has been in business for over 40 years and has been owned by Elizabeth Murphy since 1983.

### **What if I don't have email?**

Sigh... Of course, you can telephone us. Please keep in mind though, that since we are (we hope) busy selling books to people most of the time, it may not be convenient for us to have a discussion about your book over the phone during the workday. And when it's not the workday, we do try not to work. Of course, you can do things the old fashioned way and mail us a letter to tell us about your book. That's fine. **But:**

If you are serious about promoting your book, with us or with most other book stores, you need to be able to send and receive email. You just do. It's only businesslike.

You don't need a computer. Most public libraries offer computers for

public use. That's where I get my email when I'm not at the shop. You don't need to pay for an email account either. gmail and hotmail both offer good, basic, free services (go to [www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com) or [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com) ). Some colleges and universities offer their alumni a free email address as well.

Please, please don't choose an email address that is wildly cutesy or weird.

I tend to view with suspicion things which come from [fuschiadragonspittle@yahoo.com](mailto:fuschiadragonspittle@yahoo.com).

### **You didn't email/call me back. Does that mean you hate my book?**

Not at all! Because we wear many hats here at the Learned Owl, sometimes things can fall off our radar. We keep very busy waiting on customers, ordering stock, checking special orders, hunting down hard-to-find titles, making our displays look tempting and just generally making the world of the book shop continue to turn. Feel free to follow up with us.

### **Where will you get my book from?**

Probably from you. If you are a self-published author, or are published by a small house with which we or our distributors do not have a relationship, we offer to carry books that you provide us on consignment. See our consignment sheet for terms. If you are with a conventional publisher, we will likely purchase directly from them.

### **Do you report to the New York Times Bestseller List?**

Yes.

### **Should I blog?**

Maybe.

Blogging can be a valuable way to hone your writing skills. If your blog acquires followers, their expectation of being able to read something new on a regular basis can help you commit to keeping on keeping on even when you might not feel like it.

On the other hand, if you're trying to get other sorts of writing work done, well, there are only so many hours in the day. And you'll have to decide what content to devote to your blog and what to reserve for other projects. If you want to take the plunge, wordpress and blogger will both host your blog for free.

### **Will you read my blog?**

Maybe (see: hours-in-the-day, above). Blogging can be a good way to assess the writing skills of an author quickly and easily. So, really, maybe.

## **I'm doing a book signing at your shop. When should I get there?**

Punctuality is important, but you only need to arrive at the Learned Owl Book Shop ten or fifteen minutes before your signing. Any earlier and the potential for nervousness increases by the minute. If you aren't sure how long it will take you to get to the shop, feel free to arrive early and enjoy all the rest of what Hudson has to offer – we have a charming and very walkable downtown, as well as a number of cute places to relax with a cup of coffee or tea before your signing.

## **Should I bring snacks?**

If you are a cookbook author, bringing one of the goodies featured in your book is *outstanding*. If not, refreshments for your audience are our responsibility, so no worries. We will also provide you with water, hot tea or whatever you need to keep you going while you chat with customers.

## **What should I wear?**

The best thing to wear to your book signing is something comfortable. You already knew that, didn't you? Of course you will want to look nice, neat and presentable too. Keep the season in mind – even if you plan on wearing a suit to speak about that memoir chronicling your time at the Fed, know that you may grow uncomfortably warm in a shop heated or cooled for the comfort of customers who are not similarly clad. Make sure you are as pleased with how you look in your shirtsleeves as with your jacket on. By the same token, it's always good to bring a sweater if you think you may get chilly. In the winter, customers often keep their coats on to shop and we don't want them to roast. In the summer, the A/C can get a little cool. It's always good to have an extra layer to hand.

In some special cases, you may want to gear your look to the sort of book you have written. For instance, hiking boots and shorts are perfectly acceptable if your book is a guide to local trails. A track suit makes sense if you are an athletic coach who has written a book about sports. But don't get too cute – a deerstalker on a mystery writer just looks odd.

As an extremely anecdotal aside, I find that writers of erotic fiction must look extremely carefully put together in order to make a good impression. Historians can get away with a fair amount of disorder when it comes to appearance.

## **Where will you put me?**

During the summer months, we find authors enjoy the foot traffic they get sitting at a table just outside the shop's front door. If this is something you would *not* like (say, you burn terribly or are particularly sensitive to warm weather) just let us know. If it is not nice weather, we may set up a table for you just inside the door or elsewhere in the shop. If you have a complex presentation or very big audience we may host you in our large lower level.

More questions? Email us at: [marym@learnedowl.com](mailto:marym@learnedowl.com)