Online and Desktop Publishing: pros and cons

Pros

❖ Creative Control

Like self-publishing, online and desktop publishing allow you total creative control. Once you begin to feel comfortable with the software, you will be amazed at what you can produce. For your patrons, electronic publishing is a window to employment. Involve teens in making a website for the library and you will be giving them opportunities to develop their skills and showcase their creativity.

❖ Low Cost

Compared to print publishing, the long-term costs are fairly low. Many library facilities already have the hardware to develop a publishing program. Upgrades may be necessary to support some of the more sophisticated software.

❖ Editing

Every attempt should be made to produce a professional website, or blog, or zine. But mistakes happen. One of the best things about online publishing is that you can edit your work *after* you publish. You can also update your content whenever you wish.

Cons

❖ Time

Not only will it take time to learn the skills for online publishing, but you may be overwhelmed by the amount of upkeep your site requires. Links need to be tested and updated. Editing could turn into an on-going chore. And regular updating of content could get tiresome over the long term. You may feel like you are not publishing once, but regularly – with no end in sight!

❖ Reaching an audience

If your goal is to reach as wide an audience as possible, then online publishing may leave you disappointed. There are no distributors or sales representatives to make sure your work is displayed in every bookstore across the country. You could include a hit counter on your webpage to see how

many people have visited your site. Also, you could design a feedback form or provide an e-mail address so that you can hear from your audience. But ultimately, you will still need to promote your site if you want anyone to see it. Provide a link on the library's home page to your teen site. Get creative! Run a prize draw where people register on your site. Hand out flyers. Spread the word.