



# Approach to Publishing a Scientific (Radiology) Book

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Indian J Radiol Imaging 2025;35(Suppl S1):S163–S170.

## Abstract

In the modern landscape of information technology, the role of books remains pivotal in education and research, especially in scientific fields such as radiology. This article outlines a comprehensive approach to publishing a scientific book in radiology, from the initial concept to distribution and ongoing updates. The process is influenced by factors such as the author's motivation, expertise, and target audience. Key prerequisites include a clear understanding of the subject, proficiency in writing and layout planning, and adherence to publication ethics. The book's content should be tailored to the intended readership, with considerations for content depth and presentation style. Decisions regarding book size, color versus black-and-white printing, and publication format (print vs. online) are crucial. Factors such as cost, physical characteristics, and the choice between paperback and hardcover affect both the book's accessibility and its durability. The online version offers interactive features and updatable content, while print versions provide a tactile reading experience. Authors are responsible for content creation, including illustrations, and chapter structure. Editors play a crucial role in maintaining uniformity, overseeing content quality, and ensuring technical accuracy. Collaboration with section editors and coauthors is often necessary for comprehensive coverage. Effective distribution and marketing strategies are essential for reaching the target audience. Options include direct retail distribution or using aggregators. Regular updates are vital to keep the book relevant amidst the fast-growing field of radiology. This guide serves as a practical roadmap for aspiring authors and editors in the field of radiology.

## Keywords

- ▶ medical books
- ▶ publisher
- ▶ book chapter
- ▶ ebook
- ▶ book education
- ▶ textbook

## Introduction

In this ever-evolving era of modern information technology, there are innumerable sources of knowledge for a given subject or topic of interest.<sup>1</sup> While there are audio recordings, videos, PowerPoint presentations, and live lectures available to learn something new, one cannot deny the fact that books are an irreplaceable part of education and re-

search. They present information in a more formatted and structured way, all in a single place, which is now more important than ever. In today's world, where many sources have questionable credibility, books are a trustworthy option.<sup>2</sup> For the above reasons and perhaps just the unexplainable "feel good" factor of reading a book, many people prefer it, although it is in the author's hands to make their book more captivating, more digestible, and more retainable.

DOI <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0044-1792043>.  
ISSN 0971-3026.

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However, it cannot be denied that integrating online resources into the learning process can be helpful.<sup>3</sup>

Broadly, medical books can be of two types: textbooks and reference books. Textbooks cover the existing knowledge on various topics in a systematic manner, and often discuss large topics (e.g., diagnostic neuroradiology and pediatric radiology) or even the entire subject itself.

Reference books usually deal with niche subjects (e.g., imaging in chest infections) which are best read as a companion to the textbook. It discusses a small subject in detail, incorporating all recent advances in that category. The third type is the examination preparation books, discussion of which is beyond the scope of this article.

Constant innovation by publishers has also made books accessible and readable for Kindle readers. Although a visual-based branch of medical science, radiology books are as popular as ever even in the presence of innumerable online resources.<sup>4</sup> Having said that, writing a book is not an easy task but it is certainly a worthwhile experience. Through this article, we attempt to explain the various steps involved in writing and publishing a book, with emphasis on prerequisites, and editors' and authors' roles (→Fig. 1, →Table 1).

### Prerequisites

There are certain prerequisites required for writing and publishing any radiology book: motivation, expertise, knowing the target audience, and deciding on physical characteristics and publication formats.<sup>5</sup>

### Motivation

In the quest to write a book, what keeps an author involved to the best of their ability and leads to the creation of an educative and immersive literary work is often the motivation behind it.<sup>6</sup> It also influences the content of the book largely. Often, financial gain serves as the primary motivator; however, in certain instances, the desire to earn respect and prestige within an educated community can be equally compelling. When a book is published through a well-established publishing house, especially those focused on examination preparation, the author often faces restrictions in presenting the content. Modifications are made to align with the publishing house's requirements and to tailor the material for examination readiness. In contrast, self-publishing, particularly when aimed at reaching an elite audience often with the intent of enhancing self-reputation and

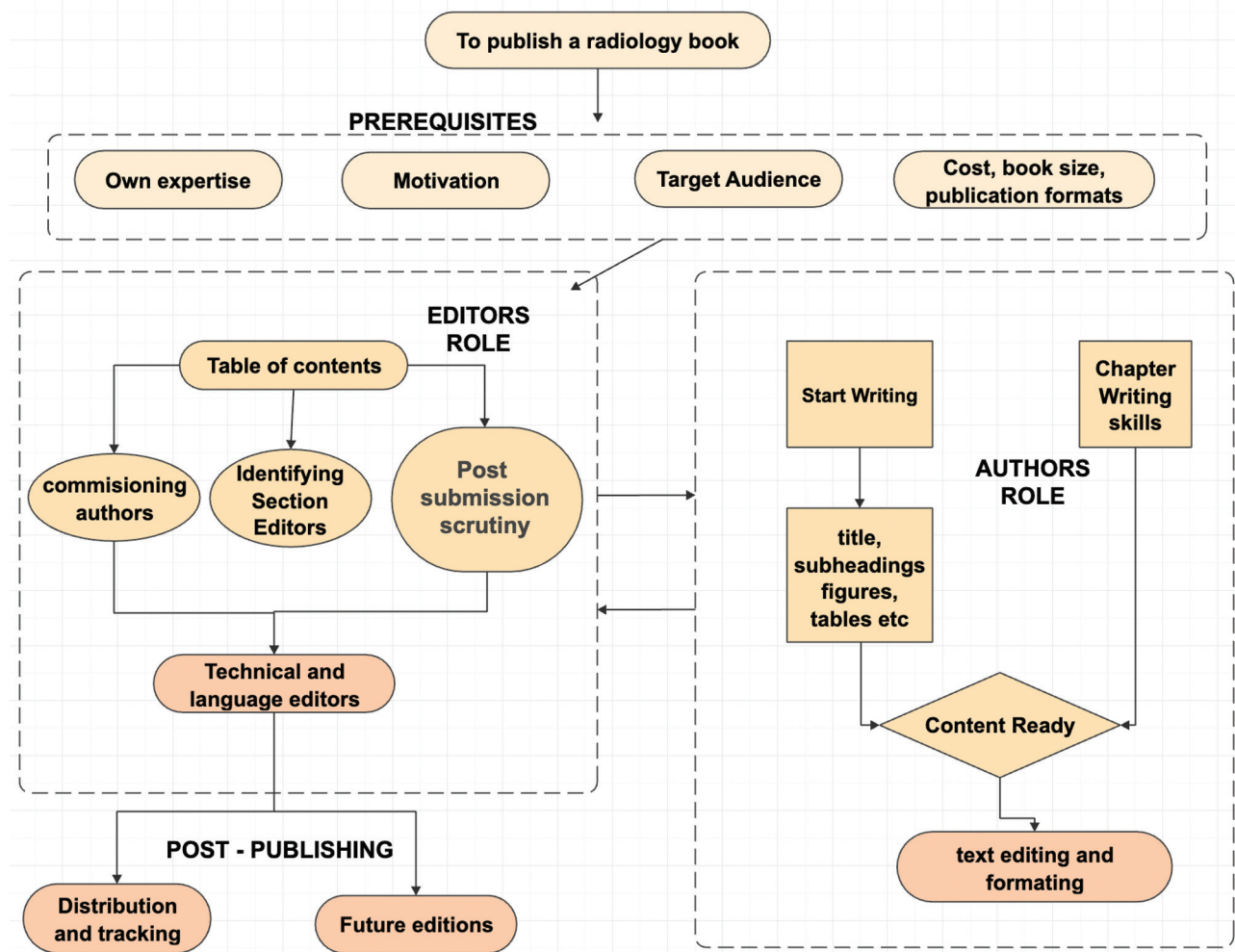


Fig. 1 Flowchart depicting the basic steps involved in writing and publishing a book.

**Table 1** Major steps in publishing a radiology book

Steps	Prerequisites	Editor's role	Author's role	Postpublishing
Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Own expertise</li> <li>• Know your target audience</li> <li>• Costing</li> <li>• Book size</li> <li>• Publication format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning table of contents</li> <li>• Identifying sections editors</li> <li>• Identifying and commissioning authors</li> <li>• Postsubmission scrutiny and layout planning</li> <li>• Technical and language editors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamentals of writing chapters</li> <li>• Parts of a chapter</li> <li>• Figures</li> <li>• Tables and diagrams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Distribution and tracking</li> <li>• Future editions</li> </ul>

prestige, grants the author complete freedom to craft the content, allowing them to share their knowledge and expertise without compromise. It is not uncommon for accomplished authors to write a book simply to leave a lasting legacy for the community.<sup>7</sup> They often aim to create something that will be remembered and cherished long after they are gone.

**Own Expertise**

Once you have the intention and will, what dictates your book writing journey is the expertise you hold, be it the domain expertise or the linguistic and publication expertise such as writing style, layout planning, proofreading, and awareness about publication ethics (→ Fig. 2).

An author can deliver their best in the book being written if they have been involved in the area of interest through teaching or practical research. This not only makes it easy for the author to make the readers acquainted with the basics efficiently but also makes it easier for the author to introduce them to newer possibilities and also offer their personal insights and share personal experiences, especially in those fields of science where there are no established standard set of guidelines. That is to say, having domain expertise leads to more authoritative content and adequate clarity, in compar-

ison to an author who is relatively new to the field in question.

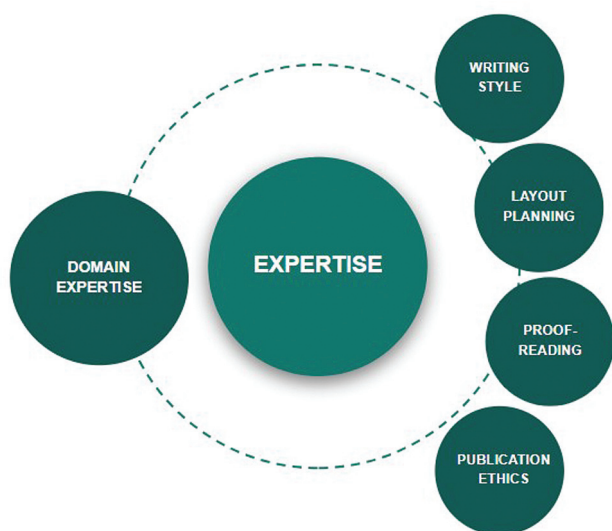
Being an expert in your field is one thing; writing a book to help readers understand and appreciate your work is another. For it requires not only your subject knowledge but also how well can you write to make the readers stay glued to your books. The content should be framed to capture readers' attention, introduce them to a topic, and then slowly build on it until you deliver the intended information to the fullest. A book should not only be a storehouse of data or facts but also be a learning medium for the same or may be even capable of inciting among the readers' further ideas and at best, promote further research.

After content accumulation and writing it down in a consumable manner, it is now the job of the author to further present it in a systematic way maintaining uniformity and with sound grammar. Various aspects of layout planning such as font style, size, image presentation, margins, columns, orientation, and formatting tables are to be kept in mind. Finally, you have to find weaknesses in your own work: search for grammatical errors, nonuniformity in font style and size, errors in referencing, etc. Although you can always entrust this with technical and language editors, it is always best to scrutinize your work by yourself to preserve the originality and the author's touch perhaps.

Releasing a scientific book entails ethical consideration similar to those of any research publication.<sup>8</sup> The writer has complete academic freedom, as to publish their research conclusions, work experience, and personal insight without undue influence from government/agencies/sponsors/colleagues/supervisors/administrators. Any work received from an author during content curation of the book should be given proper authorship of the chapter.<sup>9</sup> Besides, if there are some corrections to match with the norms of the book, the editor communicates the same with the authors and receives an edited version so as to maintain the originality of content with respect to that author while still complying with the standards of the book. The role of any individual contributing to the book should be duly acknowledged.

**Target Audience**

While writing a book, the single most important point to consider is the target reader. The content has to be tailored according to the reader, to experience a wider acceptance. For example, a book targeting postgraduate students should cover all subspecialties of radiology, though it may not



**Fig. 2** Various aspects of expertise needed in book writing and publishing.

provide an in-depth discussion of each one. A book targeted for the DM/fellowship students should discuss that subspecialty in great detail. Additionally, subject-specific (not necessarily subspecialty wise) books can be used as reference books by both the postgraduate/DM students, and practicing radiologists as well. If the aim is to benefit a small group of specialists (e.g., pediatric neuroradiological interventions) by enhancing their knowledge regarding rarer case scenarios or “difficult-to-perform” procedures, then the book should be comprehensive, covering the basics and also in-depth analysis of each aspect of the subject. Most of the time, an author who is involved in the subject or work being written about can share personal experiences regarding practical aspects or their views on the topic. If the target audience is a radiology trainee, then the content is usually crisp and with multiple layouts, detailed illustrations and legends, division into multiple suitable chapters, and usually ending a topic/chapter with “summary” or “take home points.” If the target audience were a group of researchers, then the content would usually involve more statistical data and references to previous studies/research along with combined analysis of their results.

### Cost

The next step is to determine the expected cost of the book.<sup>10</sup> The pricing of a book is decided by the publishers; however, designing the content is the responsibility of the editor to ensure that a high-quality, content-rich book is delivered to the readers. For example, if a handbook/book priced below 1,000 INR is contemplated, the content has to be crisp and the page count has to be limited.

### Physical Characteristics of the Book

Considering the number of pages of a book is important for various reasons. First, the number is directly proportional to the cost. A thicker book is generally more expensive, which can limit its sales and reach. Second, a thin book is easier to carry along and therefore can be useful to practicing radiologists for handy use at their workplaces. Third, bulk sale of topic-driven small size books at various conferences/continuing medical education (CME) can enhance its penetration into a larger reader subset.

Other than the number of pages, another factor determining the size of a book is the page quality. Since radiology books are heavily dependent on good-quality images, printing paper quality is of paramount importance. In an era of widely available digital study material, a radiology book can stand the test of time only if it has good content, both in text as well as images, which in turn, need to be printed on paper of adequate thickness. The resulting increase in cost also has to be kept in mind.

It is pretty much standard to use white pages with black text especially in scientific books where there is a lot of text which is preferable to reduce eyestrain. Illustrations and images however offer the options of “black and white” or color. Considering that, printing pages with colorful images will cost more and require thicker paper; the necessity of its addition to the book can be decided. Choosing “black and white” printing for images would not adequately depict color

Doppler images, shear wave elastography images, positron emission tomography (PET) images, or volume-rendered computed tomography (CT) (VRT) images. These types of images are essential in a radiology book, unless the book primarily focuses on textual content, radiographs, and basic CT images. To avoid excessive pricing, an affordable solution is to have a separate booklet of color pages given along with the main book or can even be attached at the end of the book with proper in-text citations. Some prefer adding such color pages at the end of chapter or section. This would allow different pricing for the book with and without color pages.

### Publication Format

Once your book is complete virtually, you need to make a decision regarding the mode of publishing, whether online or printed or both.<sup>5</sup>

Although scientific books generally present the same content in both print and online versions, there are certain differences. Online versions provide the additional advantage of adding supplementary material usually in the form of links to various references, Web sites, or even different chapters of the same books for lucid understanding.<sup>11</sup> There may be additional images, especially if they are interactive, three-dimensional images/VRT, or videos, which are possible only in online versions. A feature unique to radiology is the “scrollable” scan images, which is not fathomable in print media. To those who enjoy learning via quizzes and want to test their understanding of the subject, this additional content is indispensable. It also allows additional media, which may not always be possible in print media owing to the limited space/size/page count of books. The cost of the book is another aspect to be considered when adding content to the print version.<sup>12</sup> It is very important to recognize that not all readers are keen on supplementary material, especially when the book is examination driven, and readers are more interested in assimilating the content within the available time. On the other hand, this supplementary material may quench the need of readers who are looking for in-depth knowledge of the subject. The most undebatable advantage of the online book is that it can be updated and re-released as needed with minimal time and investment. Despite all these differences, it is a known fact that some of us would like the good old feel of reading a printed book. It may be attributed to the fact that printed books involve fewer distractions, while some prefer it for the simple reason that it is better retained. Although “reader comprehension” varies for each individual, most prefer printed books, as suggested by a few studies.<sup>13</sup>

With the growing digital technology, more readers are shifting to online learning. It saves investment on shipping and distribution; moreover, a reader can purchase a book online with simple clicks on screen and immediately have access to the book needed. It could be in the form of EPUB, PDF, or Kindle.<sup>14</sup> EPUB offers reflowable text, interactive elements, multimedia, and adjustable reader experiences. PDF is a fixed layout format, which appears the same in various devices with no reflowable text and limited interactive elements.<sup>15</sup> Kindle also offers reflowable text and

synchronized reading positions in various devices, but it is restricted to the amazon ecosystem.

Printed books offer tactile and immersive joy, while online versions offer adjustability, portability, and quick access to vast digital sources. Combining few benefits of both versions is the Kindle reader, which provides these benefits along with the feel of reading physical pages. Online Kindle versions provide the same benefit in various digital devices.

Once the decision to publish in printed mode is made, further questions await as to whether to make it a paperback or a hardcover one.<sup>16</sup> While paperbacks offer the advantage of being lightweight and costing less, their durability is limited. Another minor disadvantage is that they do not lie flat while reading. Hardcover are usually used for large books and are more durable, but they are relatively heavy and require extra investment. Hardcover also offer options for cloth-covered/leather-covered/dusk jacketed variants. Libraries usually have hardcover books because they are meant to last a long time. Paperbacks are best for pocket-sized/examination-oriented/books that require revisions and updates at short intervals.

After all the prerequisites are decided, the actual work of the editor starts, as discussed later.

## Editor's Role

Editor plays a pivotal role in the making of a book by deciding many important prospects, which decide the timeline from inception to publication and even beyond. The editor's role includes, but is not limited to, deciding the table of contents, identifying section editors, commissioning authors, scrutinizing the received chapters, co-ordinate with publishers in layout planning, and ensuring optimal technical accuracy and language through technical and language editors.<sup>17</sup>

### Planning the Table of Contents

The editor outlines the table of contents, dividing the book into sections and further into relevant chapters, providing suitable titles for each. The purpose of the "Table of Contents" is to give a bird's-eye view of the book's contents, as well as to enable readers to locate specific chapters by indicating the page numbers.<sup>18</sup> It is usually the very first thing the reader looks for within the book, which engages them and highlights the editor's role.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, it helps readers determine whether the book covers topics of interest and, if so, in what sequence. It also aids in deciding the approach to completing the book.

### Identifying Section Editors

As an editor you may be providing good quality content for your readers when you have the subject expertise, but it is more realistic than being humble to agree that having coeditors who are experts on other topics which are usually not your forte, is beneficial. It could be someone you work with or someone from a different organization who has similar or related work interests. Identifying section editors is crucial because it is otherwise going to be a humongous task to validate the content of all topics/chapters, keeping up

with recent trends of all topics. A book may contain various such sections, which are then gathered and scrutinized according to the prerequisites by the main editors.

### Identifying and Commissioning Authors

Before starting this endeavor, choosing the coauthors carries significant importance, as it is nearly impossible to curate content for a whole book by a single author, especially when the book covers topics, which are not the usual area of expertise of the main author.<sup>20</sup> The coauthors need not always be radiologists; they can be clinicians who provide data regarding the epidemiology, symptomatology of the pathology whose imaging is being discussed. Including pathologists as contributors may provide additional information regarding laboratory tests and histopathology, especially when a particular type of pathology has different subtypes, such as various types of Renal Cell Carcinoma (RCC). Adding your colleague or senior, who can proofread or provide useful insights or fresh perspective to the topics, as coauthors is acceptable. Sometimes if the chapter being discussed is actually the specialty of a coauthor, then he or she can be considered as the primary author of that chapter. Providing coauthorship at such instances makes the compilation of content easier.<sup>21</sup> When the language of the book is not your mother tongue, it is always a good choice to choose a coauthor who is expert in that language.

### Postsubmission Scrutiny and Layout Planning

The role of editors is not only to commission the articles but also to vet the content of all submissions.<sup>22</sup> This is also one of the reasons that section editors are essential in bigger books. As an editor goes through the entire content, they can ensure adherence to a relatively uniform format of writing, and ensure minimal overlap. Toward these goals, the editor can ask for modifications from the authors. In books where the editors do not play this role actively, the cohesiveness of content may be compromised.

The editor plays a crucial role in planning the book layout in collaboration with the publishing team. They assess various factors, such as word count, paragraph size, and the inclusion of images and illustrations, to determine the best way to display content effectively. The editor ensures consistency in font style and size while also considering margin specifications for readability. By working together, they finalize the trim size and orientation, ensuring that the layout meets the needs of the target audience, whether research-oriented or examination-focused. This collaborative effort results in a visually appealing and accessible book.

### Role of Technical and Language Editors

Technical editors are those who ensure that the complex scientific information narrated by an author is correct and up-to-date with the industry standards by going through similar works or comparing them with other specialist works.<sup>23</sup> Although the main editor is able to do this job, it would not be feasible when the book involves multiple sections and authors. Language editors on the other hand are the experts in reader preferences who dwell mostly on

grammar, syntax, flow, and coherence of the text written. Their scrutiny ensures precision and error-free content in your book.

## Author's Role

When an author receives an invitation for writing a chapter, it may be accepted considering the topic, type of book, etc. with due consideration to the deadline. Once committed, the author is expected to deliver the content entailing recent updates, illustrations and proper formatting. The author must also ensure the lack of errors to the best of their ability.<sup>24</sup>

## Fundamentals of Writing Chapters

The best advice to anyone who is new to the publishing game is to start with simple topics with adequate references, which may contribute to the content. When you start writing/typing the book, jot down all the possible topics/subtopics/questions related to the topic.<sup>25</sup> Further, these points are refined to write a meaningful coherent text content (► **Table 2**).<sup>26</sup>

Although the editor assigns a chapter to an author, the author has the freedom to rename it as they see fit. It is the author's responsibility to organize the chapter into appropriate subheadings and present them in a sequence that best serves the content and the readers. Below is a detailed guide on how to write an effective chapter with suitable headings.

- **Introduction:** Few introductory lines, which introduce the chapter to the reader and set up the stage.<sup>27</sup>
- It can be followed up by the "expected to learn" or "points to be discussed" which is usually listed in bullets.
- **Principles/basics/fundamentals:** Before diving into the main content, present the underlying basic principles or what is already known about the topic.
- **Subheadings:** Content of the chapter is structured into paragraphs and given subheadings when needed and

possible. For instance, if imaging findings of pathology are being explained, its epidemiology, symptoms, pathology, and then arriving at the imaging which can be further broken down into acquisition protocol, choice of investigation, radiographs, ultrasound, CT, magnetic resonance imaging, fluorodeoxyglucose-PET findings, imaging follow-up protocol, recent advances, etc. Images and tables are added when necessary.

- **Conclusion/results/summary:** Whole chapter is boiled down to fit into a paragraph with all the important points laid down here, along with the author usually adding their answers to the very motivation/purpose of writing the chapter.
- **Take home points:** Here the author delivers, what is to be remembered by the reader at the end of the chapter, which may be devoid of all the complex content so far discussed in the chapter.
- **References:** List all sources that support or inspire your content in the order they appear in the text, with appropriate in-text citations

It is always prudent to add as many images/illustrations as possible, which is the core of any radiology book. With the advent of more advanced imaging capabilities, a simple and attractive depiction of a much-reviewed pathology along with rarer or poorly reviewed pathologies is also a valuable addition to the book. Although going through the literature available for a certain topic helps curtail exhaustive explanation of much known or understood concepts, its mindful portrayal is of paramount importance be it through images, diagrams, or text especially when the target audience is a radiology trainee looking for a concise source for examination preparation.

## Figures

"A picture speaks more than a thousand words." Images are an indispensable part of any radiology book, which greatly enhances reader comprehension. They should be used wisely and treated not merely as supporting content but as stand-alone elements that can convey the page's key points independently. This is very much a need when your readers are radiology trainees/residents, which helps them grasp the content in a quick and retainable manner. With improved hardware and software capabilities in both acquisition cum archiving, high-quality images can be used to deliver captivating content. With various reconstruction software available, various images such as angiography/volume rendering (VR)/maximum intensity projection (MIP)/minimum intensity projection (minIP) can be portrayed efficiently.<sup>28</sup> The basic approach of depicting a pathology in various phases/windows is very much needed. With high-quality images in vogue, it is essential to plan the layout accordingly to accommodate adequate images with appropriate legends to support them. They can be placed strategically within the paragraph, such as at the beginning to introduce the explanation or at the end to summarize the content. It is at the author's discretion to plan the portrayal suiting the printing needs or modify the content to suit the layout later on. Although it is desirable to place the images just above,

**Table 2** Chapter writing

1.	Research about what is already known and make a list of references
2.	Analyze what else can you add, how can it be applied, why is your book important, etc.
3.	Bring it down to the paper—no stress on sentence formation, coherence, choice of words at this stage
4.	Once you have the possible keywords/questions—elaborate
5.	At this stage you can group the content, e.g., introduction, fundamentals, main content subdivided into subheadings, conclusion/summary, take home points, references
6.	Add images, illustrations, tables, flowcharts
7.	Setting the layout, formatting, and editing the text maintaining uniformity and satisfying common reader preferences

middle or at the end of the related paragraph, it may not always be feasible. Hence, the reference to the figures is to be added in the text accurately and in chronological fashion, maintaining the uniformity, so that the readers look at the relevant image as they read the corresponding paragraph.

### Diagrams/Tables/Boxes

Adding diagrams and tables is an essential part of any good book, whether explaining a concept or presenting study results.<sup>29</sup> They should be referenced separately and, as expected, consistently. Tables are better off displayed on a single page without splitting into parts in two pages; if inevitable, it is better to start with a fresh row on the next page. Spacing and font sizes of text in the tables should be tailored to fit into a single page while still fit to read.

Finally, it is a basic recommendation to have a uniform format or pattern for all the chapters or subtopics that is well retained by the reader and is more easily understandable. With the ever-evolving technology, it is easy to have a digital backup of your work at all stages, especially when you are using digital devices, as they are prone to technical glitches, breakdown, or even theft. Using an online word formatting service comes usually with the added benefit of automatic backups.

### Postpublishing

After a book is written and manifested in print, the practical hustle remains.

### Marketing and Distribution

After going through the tedious process of writing a book and formatting it to fit into the required taste, the process is half done. However, informative, educational, and interactive the book may be, reaching the target reader is as important as writing the book. A book is only as good as its popularity, and marketing and distribution, especially in the initial stages, are crucial tasks. This can be achieved in two ways: you can either distribute the book directly with the retailers or use an aggregator or distribution service. With self-publishing, you have full control over content and formatting without the need for crosschecks by other publishing houses, thus saving time in reaching readers. It also provides higher financial returns but at the cost of taking over the marketing and distribution responsibilities. In addition, it may require a thorough understanding of the current trends and reader requirements. Although taking external services for marketing and distribution reduces the financial returns, it has its advantages. Some publishing houses provide formatting services, which saves time.<sup>30</sup> With the already established network of retailers, and experience with current and widely accepted book styles, your work stands a chance to reach a wider audience. However, not all books are accepted or may require some editing before it is accepted, which may curb your creative content. With a lot of books and authors in the market, it is an accepted practice to try publishing through an established printing/publishing house, which in itself adds an extra validation to your work.

### Scope of Future Editions

An important concept to remember is that, unlike an article, a book is not a one-time exercise. It will truly fulfill its purpose only if it is revised regularly. With the recent exponential increase in published scientific literature, the need for frequent revisions has also increased. The typical interval for a revision should be between 3 and 5 years. Leading scientific textbooks such as Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine are currently at its 21st edition published in 2022, with its 20th edition published in 2018. If a book is not frequently revised, it soon becomes redundant and hence irrelevant to the target reader.

### Conclusion

Publishing a scientific book in radiology involves careful planning and execution. Authors must balance their expertise with an understanding of the target audience to create valuable content. Choosing the right publication format and other physical characteristics affect accessibility and usability. Collaboration with skilled editors ensures accuracy and clarity. Radiology image quality, layout planning, figures, and tables are to be given due importance. Effective marketing and distribution are vital for reaching the intended readers, while regular updates keep the content relevant. By addressing these key factors, editors/authors can produce a meaningful and impactful resource for the radiology community.

#### Note

The content of this article is not presented or published in part or whole.

#### Funding

None.

#### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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