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decide to get around to it, as an e-book.

"If publishers were smart, they'd use e-books as a cheap

help wanna-be writers get their books published with a company that was based on four cornerstones: Good content, all digital, something for everybody and affordability,"

Rhoades said from his Grinnell Street porch this week, a near-

started simmering – and with the statistic that Amazon now sells more ebooks than hard copies, Rhoades recalled many of the manuscripts he had been asked to read.

He partnered with local attorney Al Kelley, and then hired

formats each manuscript into an ebook for Kindle and Nook.

No title costs more than \$3.99.

"We believe ebooks are priced too high on the mainstream websites," Rhodes said. "I think readers get turned off because they know the publishers don't have the same costs of production."

Absolutely Amazing eBooks authors pay nothing if Rhoades accepts their manuscript – unless he and Rohrschneider have to design a cover for it. Cover design costs about \$200.

Other than that, the writers hand over their manuscript, Newman turns it into an ebook and it ends up on the company's website, which is divided into the same genres one would find on Amazon.

The website also features the same book descriptions and author bios.

Rhoades' authors receive a 30 percent royalty on sales.

"I'm right in the middle," he said. "Random House authors get 10 percent and all the company's marketing efforts. Amazon authors get 70 percent, but they won't do a damn thing to help promote it. With our 30 percent, I also do all the marketing, create

the web page, etc."

And Rhoades' list of public relations contacts is impressive. So when he sends out a mass email about a new book he has published, the announcement reaches a massive number of people.

"I don't see this as a Key West business," he said. "I see it as an international business."

And it's one that was growing even as Rhoades sat on his porch in shorts and a Tommy Bahama shirt with his chocolate lab Champ lying at his sandaled feet.

He may dress the part of a Key West retiree, but the Marvel mind will likely never stop working.

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The Absolutely Amazing E Books website currently features more than 50 titles along with information on the authors and samplings of each book.

literary testing ground," said the businessman whose resume includes titles like publisher, editor, chief marketing officer and executive vice president of companies such as Harper's, Marvel Comics and Reader's Digest. Rhodes is also the film critic for Cooke Communications, which owns The Citizen.

In launching Absolutely Amazing eBooks about three months ago, Rhoades has given birth to an ever-growing collection of literature, releasing manuscripts from their usual confines of a nightstand drawer, and turned them into real books – with real readers.

The third-party professional publishing company now represents about 50 titles and their authors with plans to increase that number to 200 titles by year's end – and then add another 200 titles per year.

"I started out wanting to

by laptop and Kindle Fire the only required tools of his newest venture.

"We're not a vanity press," he emphasized. "No one pays us to publish their book. We select, we choose – but I already knew where to find good content."

Since moving to Key West permanently with his wife about 12 years ago, Rhoades was constantly approached by people with at least one of those ubiquitous manuscripts tucked in a drawer all over the island.

"They wanted to know how they could get a publisher for their book, and sadly I would tell them that the chances were slim and that 99 percent would never get published, because the mainstream companies wouldn't touch new authors – and some of them were really good," he said.

So when the idea for Absolutely Amazing eBooks

Jane Rohrschneider as the webmaster and Chuck Newman as the digital conversion guy who