

Online Bookshops

Most online bookshops automatically and regularly source their information straight from Nielsen BookData, which provides the entire book trade with a comprehensive database containing relevant information about all the books in the UK that have an ISBN. By downloading this bibliographic data automatically, online bookshops are able to make every book ever published available for sale through their websites. Because of this, your book will automatically appear on most of the big online bookshop sites, such as amazon.co.uk and waterstones.com. It may also be advertised by third parties, again through their access to Nielsen, on sites such as eBay and Amazon Marketplace. These shops don't necessarily hold physical copies of your book in stock, but will order them as required through normal book trade channels.

Matador only has an input into the information that is provided to Nielsen. We have no influence over the way in which the information is displayed by others. Because of the sheer volume of information handled by the Nielsen BookData system, it can take a while for information to filter through to retailers once it has been uploaded or updated by us. It may, for example, take up to three weeks for your cover to appear on online bookshops once it has been uploaded.

Why are online bookshops offering my book at such a large discount?

We have no say over what price any retailer sells a book for. In the UK there used to be a Net Book Agreement (NBA) – which meant that the price on the back of the book was the price that retailers had to sell it at. This agreement was scrapped some years ago, and has led to something of a free-for-all in bookselling (for example, supermarkets selling *Harry Potter* for a loss). The publisher now can only suggest a RRP (Recommended Retail Price) – but what the consumer finally pays is beyond the publisher's control. You, however, always receive a percentage of the cover price on a sale, rather than of the price at which a book is actually sold at; therefore, whatever the retailer prices the book at will not affect your royalty receipt.

Online bookshops, like traditional stores, will source your book at a discount, either direct from us or through a wholesaler. They then sell the book for more than they paid for it – which is how they make their profit. Discounts generally range from 35–57%. Amazon has a fixed discount of 60%, which it applies across the board to all the books it sells through its Advantage programme – which is why it is able to sell most of its books at such low prices. This discount is not negotiable.

Although this discount is obviously very high, it's important to remember that only a percentage of your total sales will be made through Amazon. The costs involved in their high discount are balanced by, for example, any sales you make direct, for which you will receive 100% of the cover price, or any sales made on our webshop, for which you receive 85% of the cover price. It makes sense to try and encourage people to buy direct from you or us where possible, rather than pointing them to online bookshops that take a higher discount.

That said, if you remove your book from sale through Amazon altogether (which you can choose to do if you want), you will limit your sales. Your book is likely to be listed as 'delivered in 3-4 weeks', 'unavailable' or similar, and they may also add a 'hard to source' fee because they will no longer hold the title in stock.

Can I take my book off Amazon?

It is not possible to remove bibliographic data from any single retailer. Once the bibliographic data on a book has been released into the public domain, it cannot then be removed. If we do not ask Amazon to stock a title, then it will not be available from them overnight to customers; they will, however, still be able to source it from a wholesaler. The only way to ensure that no retailer can source a title is by making it Out Of Print (OOP); in that case, it will become unavailable to any retailers, and only available to buy from you or us direct.

How does Amazon Marketplace work?

Amazon Marketplace sells both new and used books and is made up of a variety of traders – from individuals who are selling copies of books they have read and no longer want (and who are not necessarily looking to make a profit from the sale of the book), to bookshops who are selling overstocks (again, they are not necessarily looking to make a profit, they just want to get rid of the stock). However (just like on eBay), there are also companies who exist only as Marketplace traders (i.e. they do all their trade via selling on Amazon Marketplace). Amazon is happy for this to happen – even if the prices being offered by marketplace sellers are lower – for the following reason.

Amazon will know what it can afford to sell a book for and still make a profit; it will not discount below this. However, a Marketplace trader may well sell a book at a cost that puts pressure on their margins. This is the Marketplace trader's lookout (as it is them and not Amazon who have advertised the book at that price), but it works to Amazon's advantage – as anyone doing a price comparison for that title will be drawn to Amazon.

The bulk of Marketplace sellers are such 'resellers'. The heartening thing for an author is that virtually none of these firms will have copies of your book in stock (despite what they say) – they will need to source them via a wholesaler (at 55% discount) before they can supply anyone that orders your book from them. This means that for every sale that these firms make, you will receive the same royalty that you would usually expect, although the seller will probably make a loss. As an author, your royalties are dependent only on what the trader pays for the book, and not what they sell it for. Your books are only available through traditional book trade channels, or direct from us, so your books will only ever be sold to traders at our usual agreed negotiated discounts. If someone else chooses to sell your book for an unprofitably low price, it is them and not you who will lose out.

You can, of course, also set yourself up as a Marketplace seller. You can set your own price and will make more money for each book you sell direct, although you'll need to also deal with any orders. For more information, see Amazon.co.uk.

Amazon is showing my book as out of stock. What can I do?

The majority of our books are placed directly with Amazon.co.uk. This means that once your book has been printed, Amazon will endeavour to hold at least one copy of your book in stock and make it available as 24-hour delivery.

The 'out of stock' message appears on Amazon when the stock they hold has been sold (or sometimes when a book has been pre-ordered in advance of the publication date). Amazon will then re-order automatically – but they work on automatic algorithms and tend to order conservatively until they can see patterns in sales. For your book this can mean that all copies ordered have already been allocated to purchasers by the time they arrive at Amazon, which will result in a continued 'out of stock' notice. They will still take orders, despite it being listed as out of stock, because they know that more will be on the way.

We cannot make Amazon order more stock, nor supply stock without an order from them. We supply Amazon with stock direct from our warehouse at least twice a week, and we have a 97% compliance rating with Amazon for supplying stock on time on their orders.

Why is my book not available on the US site Amazon.com?

The UK and overseas book trades work independently of each other. Your book is registered by us in the UK and has a UK ISBN. We don't market our books abroad, and concentrate our sales and distribution efforts within the UK. As a result, your book will be available to order through any bookshop in the UK and Ireland. We are happy to fulfil orders from bookshops overseas (although we only supply overseas on a firm sale basis).

As a publisher, we also have arrangements with suppliers in other countries so that we can make our titles available to customers in those countries. This usually means that a UK title is listed by many of a certain country's retailers as being available locally, rather than having to be imported from overseas. For most of our self-publishing authors, this is usually a case of making their book available in the United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil and South Africa. We are able to set a title up with our suppliers in those territories so that it is printed locally 'on demand' and supplied at local postage rates.

There is a one-off fee of £100+VAT to set up a title with overseas suppliers, but from then on there are no further costs to the author. The cost of printing the book is borne by the customer who has ordered the book; as the author, you receive a royalty on each book sold. If you would like to take up this option, please let the marketing team know. For more details, please check **Factsheet 6**.

My cover has been approved but is still missing from online bookshops

Once a book cover has been approved, we send it to Nielsen BookData. It is then disseminated through them to the retailers, which take automatic information feeds. It can take a while for the information to filter through – and in some cases two or three weeks (up to two weeks to be disseminated by Nielsen, then a further week to be uploaded correctly by the receiving system). Once the cover has been sent by us to Nielsen, we have no influence over when and where the cover may appear.

I don't like the way my book has been displayed on an online bookshop

We have no say over how online bookshops choose to display the information that we provide through Nielsen BookData. We also have no influence over the price they choose to sell your book for, or whether or not they choose to show it as a stock item. You will have as much of a chance of getting a retailer to alter the information displayed, so your first port of call is to contact the retailer direct – most have a 'Contact' link.

Can I change the information about my book on Amazon?

The information that Amazon automatically uploads from Nielsen is provided to Nielsen by us. This information is, in most cases, taken from the Advance Information sheet once it has been approved by you. For an author not having marketing, and thus no Advance Information sheet, this information will be taken from your author questionnaire and uploaded to your author webpage and central data listing (which in turn feeds Nielsen). However, the data has to conform to the restrictions placed on us by Nielsen, and online bookshops may also alter or shorten the information to suit their own purposes. We have no influence over these external factors. If you want us to change your 'blurb' on Amazon, we can do this only once your book has been published. Pre-publication, the only way to change your Amazon description is to change the description listed in your central data listing – which affects the information on all retailer websites.

Can I add any information about myself to my Amazon listing?

Yes – as the author, you can upload biographical information to your Amazon profile, an author picture and much more. To do this, you need to visit Amazon Author Central (<https://authorcentral.amazon.co.uk/>) and click 'Join Author Central'. You will then have to log in (you can use the details for your personal customer account) and find your book by searching for your author name. This will then bring up a list of search results for your author name. Select the correct one and click 'Yes, this is me'.

Amazon will then send you a verification email. Click on the link in the email to complete the verification process. You will then be taken through to your Author Central page, to the 'Home' tab along the top of the blue menu. On this tab, you have options to do the following, under **Update your Author Page**:

Add multimedia, a twitter feed, or events to an Author Central Profile

You can upload your biography, up to 8 photos of yourself, and share any video files – of interviews, book trailers or signings. You can also add event listings, and link in your Twitter feed.

View and edit our list of your books

Under this tab will be a complete list of your books (according to Amazon). If a book you have published is not listed here, you can click 'Add more books', which will prompt you to search for one by title, author name or ISBN. You can also do this by clicking *Add a book to your bibliography* under the **Update your Author Page** header.

Other tabs on the blue menu include 'Sales Info', which will show the ranking of all of your books (updated hourly). 'Customer Reviews' show reviews posted for all of the books in your bibliography and 'Help' will provide assistance.

Amazon Look Inside and Google Preview

Amazon's *Look Inside* and Google's *Preview* features both allow visitors to their websites to view a selection of pages from a book, rather than just the cover, title, author details, etc., therefore giving them the opportunity to find out more about the book before they buy it – just like they could if they picked up a book to browse in a traditional bookshop. The Google *Preview* facility is also available through other online bookshops such as the Book Depository.

There are safeguards in place on each site which prevent buyers from being able to look at every page of a book. Copy and print functions have also been disabled to prevent browsers from being able to obtain the book without buying it.

We think that such programs are a really useful addition to online book selling and therefore encourage all our authors to make the most of such facilities. There is no charge for registering and you are not required to do anything because Matador will deal with the administration for you. If, however, you wish to opt out of the programme, please let us know. Otherwise, your book will be automatically included once it has been printed.

Why isn't my book available to Look Inside?

All of our books are made available to *Look Inside* on Amazon, unless the author has chosen to opt out. The relevant files for your book are uploaded by us as soon as your book is printed, but it can take up to four weeks for Amazon to process the information.

How much of my book can you see?

On both Amazon *Look Inside* and Google *Preview*, we have set our browsing limit to the lowest level of 20%. This means that someone viewing your book using either of these functions will only be able to see one fifth of the content at most. We have no say over which 20% is available, because it is generated automatically by Amazon and Google. The cut, copy, paste and drag facilities have been disabled on both sites so that your book cannot simply be downloaded or copied by the viewer.

Please note that these online preview functions are also activated automatically for ebooks unless you tell us otherwise. If you choose to opt out of these functions, we cannot guarantee that we can still sell your book through these sites. This may therefore inhibit your sales if you choose to opt out of them.

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