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How To Sell Your Content on Amazon



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Introduction

Whether you've been online for a while, or you're just getting started with a new business venture, you've undoubtedly heard the adage "Content is King." It's true. Everything you do online to build your business revolves around providing valuable content to your customers. Content is what Internet users log on for, whether they head straight for their favorite search engine or log into YouTube to see the latest viral video.

In this report, we're going to talk about using the Internet's largest retailer to earn cash, build a following, and grow your business into a profitable and sustainable money-making venture you'll be thrilled to call your own.

But first, let's talk about what constitutes content.

When you think of content, you probably think of blog posts, articles, and eBooks. All those things are content, to be sure, but there's more to it than that. There's also podcasts, interviews, software, audio books, videos, music CDs, MP3s, and the holy grail of content – the printed book.

It's not likely that one business will produce all those kinds of content, but you might be using several of them even now, with the possibility for a few more. The point is, don't limit yourself to thinking that content is only typed into a word processor. There are many kinds that have many different uses.

And they can all be produced and distributed through Amazon. That's what we're going to learn in this special report.

We'll cover the reasons why you'd want to partner with Amazon to produce and sell content, what makes Amazon the best choice among the self-publishing options (and there are dozens!), what formats are available and what the pros and cons are for each, and how partnering with Amazon automatically puts you in partnership with millions of other entrepreneurs. You'll have a sales army ready to sell your product, all without making a single JV pitch or calculating a single affiliate commission.

We'll go through all the steps you need to take to get your content ready to sell through the most trusted name in online sales. We'll walk through the process step by step to make sure you don't miss any important details that could cause a publishing delay – or worse – and we'll talk about the pitfalls many marketers run into, including what you absolutely must spend money on, and where you can save.

Finally, we'll answer the most frequently asked questions about publishing with Amazon, and define all those crazy, industry-specific terms about self-publishing. It's hard to make a decision about using a service if you don't understand the language, so don't skip that part!

Are you ready to get published? Let's get started!

The World of Self-Publishing

When most people think of publishing a book or CD, they think in terms of big publishing houses and multi-million-dollar advances the likes of which have made J.K. Rowling and Stephen King famous. Fiction writers dream of a multi-book deal, musicians fantasize about being "discovered" and signed by a big record label, and software developers pound the pavement trying to get Microsoft or Apple to even glance their way.

Meanwhile, information marketers and non-fiction writers are quietly working away, publishing books and getting paid. No hype, no huge advances, no book launch parties, and no 17-city tours - just a quiet little business that earns long-term, consistent money.

Welcome to the world of self-publishing.

This is a world inhabited by public speakers, indie bands, and specialists in every field from psychology to zoology. And now it's available to Internet marketers for a fraction of the cost of those old time self-publishing models, thanks to the power of the Internet, and the vast marketing empire of Amazon.

Years ago, before technological advances made it possible to print a single book, self-publishing required that you spend thousands of dollars having your book professionally typeset, buying a minimum run of several hundred (or more) copies, and shipping a truckload of your book to your home where they would most likely end up cluttering your garage for years to come. Digital products didn't exist, and whether you wanted printed books, flyers, CDs, or video tapes (remember those?), you had to sink a lot of money into creating your product.

If you didn't have a great marketing plan, you were sunk.

Today, advances in technology make it possible to print a single book, press a single CD or DVD, or even produce high-quality information products in electronic formats designed to be read on a computer or eBook reader. That means there's no huge upfront investment, and no excuse for you – the savvy business person you are – not to be taking advantage of this fantastic opportunity to get your content out there in front of a whole new market.

The Power of Amazon

Online business owners are used to being able to reach an Internet savvy audience. Their customers know what blogs are and they read them. They aren't afraid to buy an eBook or download a video or enter their email address in exchange for a tip-sheet or other incentive.

Online marketers understand how to get in front of their target audience and connect with them where they live – on their own blogs and in their own online homes.

But what a lot of online marketers are missing is the connection with those who aren't so comfortable doing business online. Those for whom email is a challenge, and for whom the thought of entering a credit card number on a website makes them break out in a cold sweat.

Now, behold the power of Amazon.

Reach New Markets

Amazon has made it their business to make even the most skittish Internet user comfortable buying online. They've been doing business online since 1995, so it's safe to say they are a trusted site. Where your small online presence might only attract a handful of savvy shoppers, Amazon brings millions of buyers through their virtual doors every day, and every one of them has their credit card out and is ready to spend. Don't you want to get a piece of that action?

By selling your content on Amazon, you can potentially reach thousands of new customers who would not otherwise ever be aware of you or what you have to offer.

Rather than settling for merely creating an eBook and selling it through a long sales page – and let's face it, those do turn a lot of customers off – you can now be listed on the world's premier Internet sales site. While ClickBank remains a mystery to many, a short product description and an "Add to Cart" button on Amazon is all that's needed to convince them to buy.

Builds Credibility

You've probably seen those sites with graphics that say "As seen on CNN" or something similar. There's a reason people do that – it builds credibility. The same can be said of publishing via Amazon. When potential buyers stop by your site and see that your product is for sale through Amazon, there is a level of trust established that would otherwise take years to build.

Let's face it, for many people, a self-published book – at first glance – may give the impression of being of lesser quality than a traditionally published book. That's where publishing and selling your book through Amazon can help. Your book will look to the casual buyer exactly the same as any book published by Viking, Simon and Schuster, or any of the other big, mainstream publishing houses.

Not only that, but shoppers know that their purchase is backed by Amazon's guarantee. If your product doesn't meet their expectations, if they don't receive it, or if they simply aren't happy, they know Amazon will back them up. No questions asked. You, as a small business owner, just don't have that kind of pull. But you can, if you sell through Amazon.

Customers also perceive products sold via a large retailer to be somehow better than those sold independently. If you were to produce an eBook and offer it for sale via your own sales page, and offer the same eBook for sale on Amazon, you'd find your sales on Amazon far outweigh the sales through your own page (assuming similar amounts of traffic, of course). Why is that? Because products sold through an established retailer have a higher perceived value than those sold independently. After all, what track record does an anonymous sales page have?

Drives More Sales

Not only will potential customers have more trust in a product that sells through Amazon, but the potential traffic volume is huge. Rather than spending all your time building backlinks and commenting on forums to try to drive targeted traffic to your site, you'll have Amazon's search engine to do the work for you. Whenever someone searches their database for your topic, they'll find your product.

Not only that, but through Amazon, you can easily produce and sell content in a multitude of different formats, so no matter what your customer prefers, it will be available. No extra charges for you to produce CDs and downloadable audios, or an eBook and a printed book. Amazon handles all the details. All you have to do is upload your content once, and they do the rest. Regardless of what format your customers want or need, you'll be able to offer it to them easily and quickly.

You can see why Amazon's powerful publishing tools make it easy for you to expand your customer base, delve into new, untapped markets, and turn more browsers into buyers. But there are lots of companies online that offer similar services. Why choose Amazon?

Why Choose Amazon over Other Providers?

Ease of Use

There are a lot of options when it comes to self-publication. Lulu, Café Press, Xlibris, and dozens of other companies will help you get your content out to the masses. But these sites all pale in comparison to Amazon. Here's why.

Amazon's system is easier, less expensive, and is backed up not only by Amazon's own extensive help files, but by an active and helpful community of publishers who can answer just about any question you might have at any point in the process.

In addition, Amazon's system allows for publication of a broad range of formats, from books to CDs to downloadable movies and MP3s.

They've even opened up the Kindle format so you can push your blog posts to Kindle users in much the same way iTunes sends out podcasts to iPod users. None of the other self-publishing options have as many available options as Amazon, so even if right now you're focused on only one thing – say a printed book – keep in mind that if you decide to market your content in another format later – as a video course maybe – Lulu (for example) won't be able to help you. You'll have to start all over again.

Massive Market Share

Amazon offers two tiers of self-publication: standard and pro. With standard publication, your content will be available for sale through your own site via an Amazon eStore, and also on Amazon's own website. With their Pro option, Amazon offers expanded distribution options, which can potentially put your content on the shelves at brick and mortar book, music, and specialty stores around the country.

We'll talk more about expanded distribution channels in a minute, but for now what you need to realize is the massive reach Amazon has, not only in their own marketplace, but on the streets in your very neighborhood – or across the globe. No other publishing method has the potential to get your content in front of so many buyers as Amazon does.

Recognized Name Buyers Trust

As we said earlier, when you sell your content on Amazon, your customers instantly recognize you have a quality product backed by a huge retail chain. Any concerns they have about buying from you are immediately alleviated thanks to Amazon's fantastic reputation. Unlike some other content marketplaces, Amazon shoppers remain loyal, and prefer to buy through them.

Understanding Sales Channels

In the previous section we talked about the two types of self-publishing programs available through Amazon, standard and pro. The primary difference between the two models is the availability of different sales channels.

A sales channel can be thought of like a distribution network. With a standard publishing account, your sales channels are limited to your own sites and Amazon.com. On your sites you'll set up an Amazon eStore to feature your content, and when your customers check out, they'll be taken to Amazon to complete the transaction.

Your content will also appear for sale on Amazon.com, just as any other book, CD, or other content does. As far as the public is aware, your product is exactly the same as any other product offered for sale, and order fulfillment, shipping, returns, and customer service are all handled through Amazon.

With a pro account, your content can also be distributed through other retail venues, such as Barnes and Noble, Borders, your local small bookstore, music stores, or anywhere books and other content is sold. Not only do you have the power of Amazon behind you, but now you've got the whole book-selling universe working for you!

Well, it's not quite that easy. The fact is, your product will be available for bookstores to order. That doesn't mean they will, just that they can. Actually getting a bookstore giant like Borders to stock your book will take a massive marketing effort and without the power of a big publisher, that's unlikely to happen. However, it is nice to be able to tell potential customers they can order your book or CD right from their local Borders or Barnes and Noble.

Additionally, if you're writing on an academic subject, signing up for the pro plan will allow your content to be distributed to libraries and academic institutions, potentially getting your name in front of millions more viewers. This option requires you to have a CreateSpace ISBN, which we'll discuss a little later.

A standard publishing account is free, while a pro account will cost you \$39 initially, and \$5 annually to maintain. But before you dismiss the opportunity, you should also know about one last sales channel: direct sales.

If you ever conduct live events, have offline customers, or attend networking meetings like Affiliate Summit, NAMS, or BlogHer, having a physical copy of your content – whether it's a book, a CD, or a DVD can be a tremendous boost to your credibility. Public speakers can sell their content following a presentation, marketers who work in offline markets can give their books or CDs away as an incentive or to show proof of their subject knowledge (books make fantastic resumes), and everyone can benefit from the goodwill you'll receive by donating your book as a prize in a drawing or other contest.

What does this have to do with a pro account? Cost.

It's true that you'll pay a fee to have a pro account, but if you intend to purchase your content yourself in large quantity, you should consider it. Pro account holders can purchase their own books and CDs at a significantly reduced price over that of a standard account holder. Neither author will pay full retail when buying his or her own content, but the pro plan member does enjoy a deeper discount.

Amazon's CreateSpace Publishing Formats

Now that you have a better understanding of how Amazon's system works, let's take a look at the many formatting options available for use, and the pros and cons of each.

DVD/CD

CDs and DVDs are a great choice when your content is of a tutorial nature, such as teaching the steps involved in making soap or using faux painting techniques to spice up your boring walls. They're also a good choice if your customers like to be able to learn on the go, either in the car, at the gym, or if they simply prefer having a physical item shipped to them rather than a downloadable file.

Pros: Physical products have a higher perceived value than a downloadable product, and can command a higher price tag. They also offer a higher royalty (money in your pocket) per sale than downloadable items do.

Cons: Physical CDs and DVDs require more work to set up (complicated artwork is required for both), take longer to ship to your customer, and your royalties are lower.

Print

Paperback books are by far the most popular of the self-publishing options available at Amazon. Virtually any content you produce can be adapted to a book format, from a series of blog posts, to an eBook, to podcasts or even how-to videos. Books make fantastic giveaways to new clients and prizes for blog commenters. Public speakers often sell their books and CDs after a speech, so having a selection on hand is a vital part of their marketing plan.

Pros: Paperback books have a much higher perceived value than does an eBook. Customers who would not dream of downloading an eBook will not hesitate to get out their credit card and purchase your book from Amazon.

Cons: Production and shipping time means your reader will not have access to the material for at least several days. For some, that's not a problem, but for others who need an immediate solution to a problem it can be.

Video and Audio Downloads

Video and audio downloads are perfect for those customers who want immediate access to your content. The instant they pay, they can be watching your how-to video, learning a great new way to bake bread, train a puppy, or make an unusual and memorable scrapbook. They can add your content to their favorite portable player for access anywhere.

Pros: Video on demand is instant, so there's no waiting for shipping. The price is lower than a physical DVD, so you'll potentially have more viewers. Downloadable video is also available on a rental basis, at an even lower cost.

Cons: Video is only viewable on a computer or other device (as opposed to a television set), and some customers prefer a physical product they can see and touch over a digital download.

Kindle

Kindle is Amazon's own hugely popular eBook reader. Kindle owners can download thousands of books on virtually any topic without ever touching a computer.

Pros: Content formatted for the Kindle isn't limited for use on a Kindle. Many free readers are available that can read books meant for the Kindle, including readers for iPhones, iPods, BlackBerries, iPads, PCs, and the Motorola Droid.

Cons: While the Kindle itself is not a low-cost item, many eBook buyers expect the books they buy to be lower cost – after all, there's no printing involved. While you might sell an eBook online for \$27 or more, a Kindle-formatted version of the same book will probably sell for no more than \$10.

CreateSpace's Easy 6-Step Process

CreateSpace Sign-up

Your first step is setting up a free account with CreateSpace, Amazon's publishing arm. All that's required is a name, location (country), and a valid email address. And of course, you must agree to the terms of service. Nothing surprising here, just the usual points:

- You agree to abide by the content guidelines, which forbid pornography, illegal items, stolen property, unauthorized copies of anything, and any material that is produced strictly for promotion.
- You agree that while you determine the "list price" for your content, Amazon has the right to sell the content at any price they choose. This means they have the right to offer it at a discount, or as part of a promotion. This does not affect your royalties. Any discounts offered by Amazon are subtracted from their portion of the sale, not yours.
- You agree that Amazon will handle all returns and refund requests, and will determine the outcome of each.
- You agree to Amazon's payment terms (see below).

- You grant Amazon a non-exclusive license to publish your content, meaning you are free to publish the same content elsewhere.
- You agree that you are the legal copyright owner for the content.
- Either party may terminate your agreement at any time.

Once you've provided all the required information and agreed to the terms of use, you'll be taken to your "dashboard" where you'll find a welcome message and an invitation to create your first title. You'll also find a note explaining that Amazon is required to report your earnings to the IRS, even if you're not a US citizen or don't live in the US. Click "start fixing this issue" to enter the required information.

That's all there is to setting up an account. It should only take you about 10 minutes, and you'll be ready to begin publishing.

A Few Words About Your Book's Title

It's important to write a unique title. Amazon lists hundreds of thousands of available titles, and many of them are duplicates or very close matches. The trouble is, when someone heads over to Amazon's marketplace to buy your latest book and they type your title into the search bar, Amazon automatically lists titles by relevance. And for them, relevance can mean the biggest sellers. If your book isn't on their bestseller list, the only way to get your title to the top of the search results is to make sure it has a unique, descriptive title. Think of this as SEO for Amazon.

Using your keywords, brainstorm a list of possible titles, and play around with a theme until you hit on a few that really describe your book well, are memorable, and that you like. Then plug them all into Amazon and see what comes up. Can you compete against the titles at the top of the list? If so, you've chosen a great title. If not, head back to the drawing board until you find one you can compete with.

Getting an ISBN

One important aspect of publishing a book with Amazon is obtaining an ISBN. ISBN stands for International Book Standard Number and every book published anywhere must have one. You have two choices for obtaining an ISBN: using one provided by CreateSpace, or buying your own.

Amazon will provide you with a free ISBN for use on your book, but then your books imprint, or publisher of record, will be "CreateSpace". If you want your company or a different company listed as the publisher you'll need to get your own ISBN.

There are two advantages to having a CreateSpace ISBN: automatic inclusion in the "Books in Print," the master catalogue of all currently available titles, and the ability to sell your content through Amazon's Expanded Distribution Channel. Bookstores, libraries, and academic institutions use Books in Print to determine which books to stock, however, you can include your own book in this catalogue, it's just another application process for you to manage.

The disadvantage of buying your own ISBN is the cost. ISBNs are obtained through the Bowker Agency at <http://www.isbn.org>, and are purchased in blocks of ten at a cost of around \$250.

The major advantage of buying your own ISBN, as we already covered, is in having your company name listed as the publisher on your book. Having a CreateSpace imprint on your title may stand out as a red flag to some buyers that your title is self-published. Putting your own company name on your title page may lend credibility and establish a more professional appearance.

In the end, the choice is yours. If you intend to publish only one book, it's probably not worth it to spend the money on a block of ten ISBNs, and it probably won't matter who the publisher of record is. If you intend to publish many books, however, it may be worth it to you to establish a brand, and the best way to start is with your own company's name on the title page.

Formatting Your Content

Text

CreateSpace requires your book to be uploaded as a PDF file. They have specific instructions for creating the PDF in their FAQ section. They recommend using Adobe Acrobat to create the PDF. Specifically, you cannot use a creator that leaves a watermark on the file.

Some other common formatting problems to watch for include

- Author name and/or title do not match the cover art
- Page numbers are not consecutive
- Text with margins outside the acceptable limit
- ISBN or Imprint doesn't match the cover art
- Unreadable text
- Blank pages (if you need to leave blank pages for the reader to use for notes, including lines or a simple title of "Notes" will solve this problem)

- Inconsistent header placement

CreateSpace offers extensive help files to guide you through the process of formatting your book for print, or they will format it for you for a fee.

Audio

If you're submitting audio files for a downloadable or physical product, you'll want to be sure to follow CreateSpace's submission requirements for audio files. CreateSpace accepts two formats for audio files: uncompressed AIFF and MP3. Both formats must be 44.1 KHz, 16-bit, 2-channel stereo recordings. For MP3 files, Amazon recommends selecting 320KBps and constant bitrate when recording your content.

If all that is confusing to you, Amazon also accepts audio submissions in physical form. What this means is you can burn a CD using your favorite recording software, and mail it to Amazon. They will do the rest. However, you must make sure your CD will play in a variety of players, not just your own computer. Test your new CD in your car, in a friend's stereo, and in other brand computer players before shipping it off.

Video

Downloadable video content must be submitted in NTSC format, while DVD on demand can be in either NTSC or PAL format. Downloadable titles must be at least 20 minutes long. All video content must be submitted to Amazon on a physical disc (it can't be uploaded via the Internet like an audio file can). Your source disc must be single sided and single layer, and your product cannot contain any executable files such as software or documents.

Cover

Book cover artwork must be one flat file that includes your front and back cover and the spine. It must be uploaded to Amazon as a PDF file, and must adhere to CreateSpace's specific guidelines as far as size, bleed (how far beyond the trim size your artwork must extend), trim size (final size of your book), and spine width.

You must also leave adequate space for a bar code to appear on your cover. Detailed instructions can be found in CreateSpace's help files.

CD covers consist of five parts: Booklet Outside, Booklet Inside, Tray Card Back, Tray Card Front and Disc Face. Each piece has specific requirements, so CreateSpace provides publishers with easy-to-use downloadable templates which contain detailed instructions in addition to the template files. You will need Adobe Acrobat or some other PDF editing software to use the templates, and the final artwork must be submitted to Amazon in PDF format.

DVD covers consist of three parts, and can be formatted using a downloadable template similar to that used for CD covers.

If you don't have access to a PDF editor, Amazon will help you with formatting for a small fee.

Downloadable audio artwork must be in jpeg format, 1448 x 1448 pixels, and cannot look like a physical CD, nor can it include a CD logo. There must not be any confusion between a downloadable file and a physical product. Downloadable movie artwork must be 1200 x 1600 pixels.

Uploading Your Content

Once you've created your account and taken care of the details about getting paid, it's time to finally upload your content and prepare it for publication. The first step is to choose which format you'll be publishing. You can choose from DVD on demand, video download, audio CD, audio download, or paperback book. Click on the appropriate link to make your choice.

The following pages are where you'll enter the details of your content. Some of the required information is

- Title
- Description
- ISBN (for books)
- Author's name
- Duration (for DVDs, CDs, audio and video)
- Record label (for CDs and audio)

Make sure you check each entry carefully. Once you click "save" and move on to the next section, you cannot go back and make changes.

The next step is to upload your files to Amazon for review. Please note, they are not reviewing your book or audio files for anything other than compliance to their content guidelines. They won't tell you if your grammar is bad or if you've misspelled words. It is your responsibility to make sure you're providing them with edited, readable copy. Of course, for an additional fee, they will provide these services to you. More on that later.

Setting Your Price

Regardless of the format you publish in, it is your job to determine the list price for your item. List price is equivalent to the "manufacturer's suggested retail" price you sometimes see on products you buy. But keep in mind, just because the manufacturer suggests it, doesn't mean that's what the item sells for.

The same is true for the list price on Amazon. Amazon – or another bookseller, if you've chosen that option (see the section on Sales Channels) – may choose to discount your title. If that happens, it's important to note that your royalties will not be effected. Royalties (the portion of the sale price that goes in your pocket) are calculated based on list price and remain the same regardless of the final sale price of the item. Any discount is taken from Amazon's portion of the cost.

When you're deciding on a price, it's a good idea to look at other, similar items. Find books on similar topics, in the same size and length of yours and set your price to be in line with these. Setting your price too high will discourage buyers who are browsing, while setting your price too low may cause buyers to wonder if your book is not of good quality.

Once you've got a price range in mind, use Amazon's price calculator (<https://www.createspace.com/Products/Book/>) to find a price that makes sense for you. You can adjust the size, number of pages, whether you want your book printed in color or black and white, and even see what price breaks are available for quantity purchases. By spending a few minutes making changes to these options, you should be able to determine the ideal trim size and list price for your book.

Keep in mind that you cannot set your list price to be lower than the fees required by Amazon to publish your content. If the payment to Amazon for your book is \$5.70, you must set your list price higher than that. The difference between the list price and the publish-at rate is your royalty.

Getting Paid

Payment time frame depends on the format. For physical products, payment is made within 31 days after the end of the month in which the product was sold. For digital downloads, payment is made within 60 days after the end of the month in which the product was downloaded.

Payments are made via electronic funds transfer directly into a US bank account, or via check. If you choose to receive a check, Amazon charges a fee. If you don't reside in the US and don't have a US bank account, a check will be sent at no additional cost to you.

Additional Services

Not everyone is a writer, even though they have valuable information to provide. That's why proofreaders and copyeditors get paid. If you're not confident about your abilities to produce a clean, readable book that will make you look good, you have a couple of choices.

You can hire a ghostwriter to write your book for you, or you can hire a professional editor to go through your manuscript and fix all those little errors that make you look like an amateur.

Or you can let Amazon handle the details for you.

For a fee, Amazon will provide you with all the tools you need to produce a professional-quality book, CD, or DVD. You can choose the exact level of help you need from a variety of services, including editing, proofreading, cover design, interior page design, and even professional marketing. Amazon's ala carte selection method makes it easy for you to pick and choose which services you need.

CreateSpace even makes it easy for your book to be reviewed by one of the premier book publications: Kirkus Reviews. Kirkus Reviews was founded in 1933, and is the publication bookstore owners, librarians, and even booklovers turn to when they want an unbiased opinion of an upcoming book.

Kirkus reviews up to 5,000 books annually, which is a small selection of the books published on a yearly basis. Because of that, it's difficult to get a review by Kirkus without a big publisher backing you up. For a self-published title, it's nearly impossible. However, when you publish with CreateSpace, the option is available to you.

Publishing for Kindle

Publishing your content for Amazon's Kindle Reader is not handled through CreateSpace. Instead, all eBooks are published through another arm of the Amazon empire: Digital Text Platform, or DTP.

Digital Text Platform requires a sign-up process similar to CreateSpace, and is completely separate. This means that if you intend to publish both physical books and eBooks you will need to enter all your information regarding taxes and royalties twice. It's not a big deal, as it only takes a few minutes, but it's worth pointing out. If you have a current Amazon account, you can use this information to log into DTP. You do not have to set up a new account to use DTP.

There is no charge to you to publish your content for Kindle readers. Unlike CreateSpace, you will not require an ISBN, nor will you be required to purchase a proof copy of your title before it's made available for purchase on Amazon.com. For this reason alone it makes sense to publish all of your content for the Kindle, don't you think?

Uploading your content for sale in Kindle format is similar to that of CreateSpace. Once you've created a DTP account, you click on Bookshelf, and Add a new Title to start publishing. You'll be asked the same basic questions about your book as you were when you published via CreateSpace, with one notable exception: the ISBN. For eBooks, an ISBN is not required (though you can use one if you like).

We should also note here that if you have an ISBN for a physical book, you cannot use the same ISBN for your eBook of the same title. ISBNs must be unique for each title, edition, and format of your book. Even a hardcover and paperback of the same title have two different ISBNs. DTP does not provide ISBNs. If you choose to use an ISBN, you must purchase your own.

If you're publishing content for the Kindle that you've already published as a physical book through CreateSpace where you provided your own ISBN, you probably have an extra number you can use. Otherwise, don't worry about it.

Kindle Royalty Options

There are two royalty choices when it comes to Amazon Kindle: 35% or 70%. The choice you make here will have some bearing on the price of your eBook, so you need to be aware of the differences.

The 35% option is the simplest and the most flexible option. When you choose this option, you can set your list price anywhere between \$0.99 and \$200.00. You will always receive a 35% royalty on the list price regardless of the price the final product is sold for. You will be required to adjust your list price if it is set lower than the cost to produce the item plus applicable taxes. In other words, Amazon will not agree to lose money so you can set your list price low.

The 70% option is less flexible, but – obviously – gives you a greater share of the price. When you choose this option, you must set your list price between \$2.99 and \$9.99. Your royalty will be equal to 70% of the list price minus the delivery cost. Delivery cost is calculated to be \$0.15 per MB of download. So for a 1MB eBook, the delivery cost is \$0.15. If you set your list price at \$9.99, your royalty on each sale will be 70% of \$9.99 - \$0.15, or \$6.89.

At first glance, you might think that the 70% royalty option is always better. However, depending on the size of the download, the 35% option may be a better choice for you. Take some time and do the calculations before settling on a price and royalty amount. You can change your royalty option at any time, should you find you've made a bad decision.

Remember, too, that your list price is only a *suggested retail price*. Amazon is under no obligation to sell your product at list, nor is any other seller. However, any changes in the sale price will not affect your royalties, as royalties are calculated based on list price, not retail.

Kindle Content Formatting

Content submitted for the Kindle can be uploaded in a number of different formats; however, the best choice is to upload your content as a single .html file. This will ensure your final product looks exactly as you expect it to look. DTP will convert other formats, such as Word documents, PDF files, and plain text files, but the results might not be what you expect or require.

Your artwork – the graphics that appear on the Kindle content sales page – should be high quality jpeg or tiff files, and not less than 1200 pixels on the longest side. Larger files are better here, so don't be afraid to use a high-resolution image for your cover art. Amazon's system will automatically scale your image to the appropriate size.

There are some formatting problems you need to watch out for when publishing for the Kindle.

- Frames within HTML are not supported
- Tables within any format are not supported
- Word 2007 documents are not supported – save your file as Word 2003 before uploading
- PDF files are supported, but will frequently result in a poor quality final product.
- Lists in Microsoft Word do not convert will to Kindle
- Tables of Contents will not update the page numbers properly (a Kindle page does not always equal a Word page)
- CSS is supported, but XML is not

To get the best results, Amazon recommends uploading HTML files only. If you created your eBook in Word, you can output your file as .html directly. If you created your eBook in a text editor, you can easily open the file in Word and then output it to HTML.

If you're using images in your Kindle eBook, it's important to use high-quality pictures with small file sizes. For practical purposes, the best choice is .png files. They offer the best quality with a small footprint. Second choice is .jpeg. You can also use .gif and .bmp files, though each is very large, and may have other information embedded in them that can make them not convert properly to the Kindle format.

Publishing Your Blog on Kindle

In addition to eBook formats, Amazon's Kindle can also act like an RSS reader, allowing Kindle users to read your blog on their handheld device. The Kindle downloads the content to the device, so the user does not need an active Internet connection to enjoy your blog. Since Amazon charges users a fee for this service, you will earn royalties from blog subscribers.

To get started publishing your blog to Kindle, create an account at <http://kindlepublishing.amazon.com>. You cannot use any other Amazon account to publish with Kindle, so you'll need a new password (you can use the same email you use for your Amazon account). You will also need to provide payment information for your royalties earned from blog subscriptions.

Once you've completed your account set-up, you'll need to provide some information about your blog. You'll need to provide the URL of your feed (usually <http://yourblog.com/feed>), what your blog's title and tagline are a description of your blog, the category, and a header and screenshot graphic. The header should be no more than 430 x 50 pixels to fit nicely on a Kindle reader, and the screenshot should be at least 800 x 600 pixels for presentation on Amazon's product page.

After you've filled in all the appropriate information, click "publish blog to Kindle" and your information will be forwarded to Amazon for review. Amazon will decide on the price they will charge subscribers (you have no input here, and you cannot offer your blog for free) and in about 48 hours your blog will become available to Kindle users everywhere. One thing to note: you cannot publish your blog to Kindle if you live outside the United States.

Marketing Your Content

Marketing your content through Amazon isn't that much different than marketing anything online. Drive targeted traffic to your listing via blog posting, article marketing, your newsletter, or whatever other method you're comfortable with. Your listing might be the Amazon page you appear on, a product listing on another online marketplace, your own website or blog, or even via Craig's List or other advertising venue.

Some methods of marketing your content, whether it's published on the Kindle platform or through CreateSpace are:

- Forum marketing. Offer your expertise in niche forums, with a discreet link to your Amazon or CreateSpace page in your signature file.
- Blog about it – either on your own blog, or better yet, on different blogs. After all, your readers already know and love you, but getting in front of another blogger's audience can really boost your sales.
- Email marketing – again, either to your own list or to that of another blogger or site owner. Offer to write an article for her to use exclusively in her newsletter in exchange for a link to your Amazon page. A large list can easily convert into dozens or even hundreds of sales from a single mailing

- Press Releases. Whenever you release a new book, CD, or DVD, the absolute minimum you must do is create and distribute a press release. If you're not comfortable doing your own promotion (may aren't) then hire a reputable freelancer to write and distribute your release for you. Getting your book announcement in front of millions of qualified and interested readers is important enough to spend a couple hundred dollars, don't you think?
- Tweet about it. You wrote a book! Tell the world! Same goes for Facebook and any other social media platform you use. Don't miss the opportunity to point interested readers to your new book, CD, or video.
- Article Marketing. Publishing articles on the top directories is a fantastic way to get exposure. Use your author resource box to link to a page on your own site that promotes your book – a landing page of sorts – and from their guide interested readers to the Amazon page, your CreateSpace eStore, or to the Kindle Store to purchase. In fact, you can even use a part of your book as the article itself. Just take an excerpt from your book, make sure it can stand alone as a complete article, and add a resource box.
- YouTube Video. If your content is a video, this is a no-brainer. Just like using an excerpt of a book for article marketing, try using a short clip from your video on YouTube. If you've published a book, you can easily turn a chapter into a video using PowerPoint and upload it to YouTube with a link to the book.
- Video Book Trailer. For a really high-profile launch, consider producing a video book trailer such as you see on television commercials. CreateSpace will do this for you starting at \$1200, or you can contract with a freelance video producer.
- Web 2.0 properties like Squidoo and HubPages are a great place to advertise your new book or video. Use the articles you're posting to directories, or write new ones, then link back to either your main webpage or Amazon's marketplace.

- If you're publishing your blog on the Kindle, make sure you include a Kindle chicklet next to your RSS icon to encourage Kindle users to sign up via their preferred device. Since the chicklet is served via Amazon's affiliate program, you'll receive a commission for every Kindle purchased.

Setting up an eStore

You can sell your content on your own website through CreateSpaces's eStore widget, which makes it easy to pull all the information from their database right into your own website. Best of all, eStores are highly customizable, so they look just like a part of your site. When your customers click to check out, they'll be taken to Amazon's site and will either enter their credit card information into Amazon's system, or if they're already an Amazon shopper, they can use one-click checkout.

That means you don't have to have a merchant account to accept credit cards, fiddle around with integrating PayPal or any other payment processor, or install and maintain a shopping cart on your site. Amazon handles all the technical details for you, at the click of a mouse.

Setting up an eStore is a simple process that takes no more than a few minutes. Just log-in to your account, and when you're done entering all the title information and uploading your content, follow the steps for building and formatting your eStore.

Putting the Power of Millions of Affiliates to Work for You

You're probably an Amazon affiliate yourself. Most online marketers are, or have been at some point in the past. Amazon's affiliate program is one of the easiest out there. They do all the work for you, so you don't have to worry about tracking sales, making payments to your affiliates, or even monitoring their sites for compliance.

It's important when publishing a book or other content through CreateSpace that you choose Amazon retail as one of your sales channels. Failing to do this will mean that your content will only be available directly from CreateSpace. While that's not necessarily a bad thing, it can turn off some customers who are not familiar with CreateSpace and don't realize it's a branch of the much larger – and much more well-known – Amazon brand.

CreateSpace Publishing FAQs

Do I Keep My Copyright?

Yes. You continue to hold the copyright to your work. In fact, one of the only real rules about publishing via Amazon is that you **must** be the copyright holder for the work. That means you cannot publish PLR content, or a compilation of content you've collected from article distribution sites. You must have created the work yourself.

What if I Don't Sell Any Books?

With Amazon, there's never a minimum order. You don't have to worry that they'll stop carrying your content or force you to buy a certain number in order to keep the title active. The beauty of print on demand technology is that no one – Amazon included – must hold inventory. Your book or CD is literally printed at the time of the order.

And, since you still maintain a presence on Amazon whether you've sold one copy or one million, you still have that powerful marketing giant behind you, building your credibility one viewer at a time.

How Long Does it Take to Publish with CreateSpace

From initial account sign-up until you see your proof copy is two to three weeks. For digital downloads, it can be a bit quicker since there is no shipping involved.

Will My Content be Proofed or Edited?

CreateSpace offers a variety of paid editing and proofing options. Unless you choose one of these from Amazon's "ala carte" services selection, your content will be published exactly as submitted.

Can I Sell on Amazon if I Live Outside the United States?

Yes. Amazon does not require its content sellers to be US residents, though Amazon's country-specific properties (such as Amazon.co.uk) may have differing terms of use.

Regardless of where you live or your citizenship, Amazon is required to report your earnings to the Internal Revenue Service. Certain countries have tax treaties with the US, so the percentage will vary depending on your country of residence. For a complete explanation, see the CreateSpace help page here:

<https://www.createspace.com/International>.

Where Can I Get Help?

CreateSpace offers extensive help files to walk you through each step of the process. If you need further information, CreateSpace also has a vibrant and helpful community of users who are quick to answer questions and provide support for all your publishing needs.

Publishing Glossary

Books in Print: A comprehensive database that includes all currently available books in all formats. Inclusion in this catalog makes your title available for booksellers and other retailers to purchase. There is no charge to be included; however, there is a short application process. Publishing your book with an ISBN from CreateSpace means your book will automatically be included in Books in Print.

DRM: DRM stands for Digital Rights Management, and is the process by which digital content can be protected from unauthorized use. CreateSpace does not offer DRM for its CD and MP3 publishing formats, but it is available for Kindle formatted eBooks. There is no added cost to include DRM with your content.

ISBN: International Standard Book Number. This unique, 13-digit number identifies every title published. It is unique not only to the title, but to the format (hard or soft cover) and edition. An ISBN is not required to publish a book, though it is required if you intent to sell your book through retail establishments. CreateSpace requires each title have an ISBN. DTP does not.

Kirkus Review: The publishing world's best known unbiased review of newly published books. Having your book reviewed by Kirkus greatly increases your odds of being picked up for sale in retail stores. Paid Kirkus reviews are available through CreateSpace starting at \$399.

Royalty: Royalties are the portion of each sale that is given to the author or producer of the book or video. CreateSpace's royalties are calculated based on a number of factors including the publish-at cost, which is what it costs CreateSpace to produce your final product. Kindle's royalties are a flat percentage of the list price, since there are virtually no production costs involved in eBook sales.

Trim Size: Trim size refers to the final size of your book. Trade paperbacks typically have a trim size of six by nine inches, but depending on the desired effect or other special considerations, your book may have a trim size as large as eight by ten or as small as five by eight.

Final Thoughts

You can see that there is a lot more to publishing with Amazon than just books. Your content can be made available as an eBook, other digital products like MP3s and video, and in a variety of paperback sizes. No matter which format serves your audience better, you'll be able to provide what they're looking for quickly and easily just by using Amazon's CreateSpace, Kindle Publishing, or Digital Text Platform.

In fact, the biggest problem might be in deciding which format to use! Luckily, the cost is so low – often there's no cost at all – that it makes sense to provide as many formats as possible. Book lovers might enjoy having your book in electronic format for on-the-go reading, or in audiobook format on CD or MP3 for true portability.

Whichever model you choose, it's good to know that Amazon's outstanding customer service is there to back you and to treat your customers as their own. And of course, that help extends to your publishing needs as well. Amazon's massive help files and vibrant community are there to guide you in every step of your publishing adventure.

So what are you waiting for? Don't let another day go by that you're not taking advantage of this fantastic opportunity to get your content out there in front of millions of potential customers!