



Marketing FAQs

What does my Amazon sales ranking mean?

Amazon sales rankings are fun to watch but hard to interpret. Rankings are highly dependent on what's happening with competing books, and they can also depend on traffic to the book's page on the Amazon site rather than actual book sales. A bump in rankings doesn't usually correlate to a large jump in sales.

What determines my book's subject categories on Amazon?

We provide subject categories (called BISAC codes) as well as keywords to Amazon to help with categorization. That said, Amazon categorizes books according to their own algorithms, and we have little control over how they ultimately categorize your book. Amazon's subject categories are more of a marketing tool rather than an accurate reflection of a book's content. Different bindings (print, e-book) of the same book can have different categories.

My friend preordered my book and their copy arrived before my book's publication date. Is something wrong?

We generally have books in our warehouse approximately four weeks before the publication date (this date isn't firm), and preorders and orders to vendors often ship out early. Your publication date is calculated to ensure there's enough time for all retailers to get their stock before the official launch. If a few customers get their books early, that can help generate helpful pre-publication buzz.

Why isn't my local Barnes & Noble carrying my book?

Barnes & Noble has changed its buying model significantly, especially for nonfiction, in their brick-and-mortar stores. This is something publishers across the industry are navigating. Our national team of sales reps actively pitches our seasonal catalog to B&N in addition to a wide range of independent stores, regional chains, and wholesalers. One way to encourage bookstores to stock your book is to ask your friends to go to their local bookstore and special-order your book. Stores often respond to local demand and if customers request your book they might stock additional copies. All of that said, most people buy books online and we expect most of your book sales to be via online vendors.

I want to do an event at a bookstore? Where should I start?

Bookstore events can be tricky to pull off. Most stores rely on authors to rally their friends and colleagues for a good turnout and even if an event is well-attended (40+ attendees), events are generally not significant drivers of book sales. If you want to do a launch event, consider whether there are other organizations that have a built-in audience targeted to your book's subject. Also consider whether you can help guarantee a large audience by getting your friends and colleagues to attend. Bonus if the organization will buy books to give away to attendees or include a book in the event ticket price.

Will there be books at my event?

If you're invited to give a talk about your book it's up to the hosting organization to arrange for your book to be available for attendees. Some organizations will buy books to give away (see the info on Bulk Buys) while others might work with a local bookstore to have books for sale. Please give our publicity team several months' notice about events you schedule so we can flag them for our sales team. We can advise organizations that need help ordering books. If the hosting organization is unable to order books, you could also consider buying books with your author's discount and selling them yourself.

Is my book available in other countries?

If Hopkins Press holds World Rights for your book, we have distribution and sales representation in Canada, Europe and the UK, and Australia and New Zealand, and can often make books available to other markets, though the publication dates are generally later than your US publication date. Be sure to let our publicity team know several months in advance if you have events planned outside the United States so we can advise on the availability of books.

Will the Press pitch my book to international media and journals?

Our publicity team is primarily focused on outreach to US media, and we reach out to select Canadian outlets when appropriate. We have publicity representation in the UK via Oxford Publicity Partnership. If you have contacts at UK or European media outlets or journals, please include them on your Marketing Questionnaire and we will share them with OPP.

Why hasn't my book received reviews?

The media landscape has changed drastically over the past couple of decades and there are only a few book-reviewing newspapers and outlets left. For some types of books there are more opportunities for off-the-books-page coverage such as writing an essay or op-ed adapted from your book, being interviewed on a podcast, or having your book talked up on social media. It is common for a book to have a successful publicity campaign without any reviews.

Can I use a portion of my book's text for promotional purposes?

You can use up to 10% of your own original text from your book for promotional purposes, such as sharing a portion at a lecture you give. If a publication (magazine, journal, website, etc.) is interested in publishing an excerpt from your book, please contact our publicity team. Hopkins Press reserves the right to license excerpts (called first serial or second serial), and we will need to be in touch with the publication directly to negotiate an agreement.

I was contacted by a company or individual I don't recognize offering to help me promote my book. What should I do?

While authors sometimes receive legitimate outreach from companies or groups about promotional opportunities or services, you should be cautious when considering and vetting these queries. With the rise of generative AI, we've seen an increase in phishing and scams targeting authors. We recommend consulting the resources at Writer Beware (<https://writerbeware.blog/>) for help.