



How to Use Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP)

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Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) platform has changed how authors bring their stories to readers worldwide. The platform allows authors to self-publish their work, bypassing the traditional publishing process.

You can publish eBooks, paperbacks, and even hardcover books with ease with KDP. Whether you're looking to retain more control over your work, a new writer eager to share your first novel, or a professional seeking to publish specialized content, KDP provides the tools and resources to make your publishing journey smooth and successful.

This article walks you through the entire process of using KDP, from setting up your account and [preparing your manuscript](#), to uploading your book and marketing it to readers. You'll learn how to navigate the KDP platform, make informed decisions about pricing and royalties, and learn about Amazon's powerful marketing tools to maximize your book's visibility.

What Is Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP)?

Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) is Amazon's platform that allows authors to [self-publish](#) their print (paperback and hardcover) and eBooks for free. This platform also gives you the option to expand your book's availability on a global scale. You can even keep 100% of your rights to your book, which traditional publishing houses typically don't offer.

You won't have to pay any upfront costs or keep an inventory of books to fulfill orders. This is because of KDP's Print-on-Demand feature.

However, your book is not guaranteed to be available in brick-and-mortar bookstores and libraries. KDP also doesn't provide editing, marketing, and publicity support unless you pay for these services separately through their [Amazon Book Publishing Center](#).

How Does Print-on-Demand Work?

Print-on-demand is an order fulfillment method. You design a product and your Print-on-demand partner company, in this case KDP, prints and ships the goods to your customers. KDP subtracts your printing costs from your royalties, so you don't have to pay any upfront costs or carry any inventory.

You can use KDP's [Printing Cost & Royalty Calculator](#) to estimate your printing costs.

If My Book Has Been Published Elsewhere, Can I Use KDP?

Yes, you can use KDP if you own the rights to your book and if it has been published elsewhere. You will need to use the existing [ISBN](#) from the previous publisher. You'll also have to use the same title, author name, and binding type to continue using that ISBN. Any changes to the details of your book will require another ISBN and a new edition.

To confirm your rights, send KDP a reversion letter showing that the previous publisher's rights have reverted back to you or expired. Or send a signed copy of the agreement between yourself and your publisher indicating that they do not hold the publishing rights in the format you're trying to publish through KDP.

If you previously published your book on a different website, provide KDP with screenshots showing that your book was removed from the website. Or provide documentation proving that you own the website. The ownership information should match your KDP account information.

Once your book is approved, allow up to 48 hours for the detail page to appear on Amazon.

But, you can't sell your book on another platform even if you own the ISBN and enroll your eBook in [KDP Select](#); this makes it exclusive only to Amazon.

If you choose to use the **free** ISBN from KDP you can only use KDP for distribution to Amazon and its distributors. You also won't be able to use another publisher or self-publishing service, such as IngramSpark, BookBaby, and Draft2Digital.

[How to Create an Amazon KDP Account](#)



If you already have an Amazon account, head to the [KDP Login](#) page and click the "Sign In" button to enter your email address and password. Once you've successfully logged in, you'll be taken to your KDP Bookshelf.

Follow these steps if you don't already have an Amazon account:

1. Go to the KDP Login page and click the "Sign Up" button.
2. Click "Create Your KDP Account."
3. Enter your name, email address, and a secure password.

Once you've created your account, you'll need to enter your author information:

- Author Name
- Tax Info
- Payment Info

Your KDP account is connected to your Amazon account, they use the same credentials. To learn how to manage your account visit the "[Manage Your KDP Account](#)" page.

How to Prepare Your Manuscript Per KDP's Guidelines

After your manuscript has been [professionally edited](#), the [book's interior pages](#) need to be formatted to your book's trim size and per KDP's guidelines.

Formatting Your Manuscript

When uploading your manuscript to KDP, you'll need to upload two types of files: your manuscript file and your cover file. Your manuscript file will contain the interior pages of your book (front matter, body, and back matter). If you're uploading a file for a print book (paperback or hardcopy), the file will include the front, back, and spine. If you're uploading an eBook cover file, it will be just the front.

For book pages containing images, KDP needs to know if they bleed to the edges of your pages. If they extend beyond the page, this is called a "Bleed." If they don't extend past the page this is called a "No Bleed." eBook interior images are treated as print books (bleed vs. no bleed). Visit KDP's help page for more details on how to [set your trim size, bleed, and margins](#).

Print books with a bleed must be uploaded as a PDF of your manuscript. Print books without a bleed can be uploaded as a PDF, DOC, RTF, HTML, or TXT file. KDP will automatically convert these file types to PDF before publishing.

KDP supports several file formats for eBooks. The most common formats are DOC, DOCX, KPF, EPUB, MOBI, and PDF. Additional accepted formats include HTML, RTF, and TXT. Upload an EPUB, DOCX, or KPF file for reflowable eBooks.

To double-check your eBook files before uploading, KDP recommends using Kindle Previewer. [Kindle Previewer](#) is a free desktop application that shows you how your book will look in its current layout. You can also use KDP's Online Previewer after you've uploaded the file before you publish.

Creating a Cover

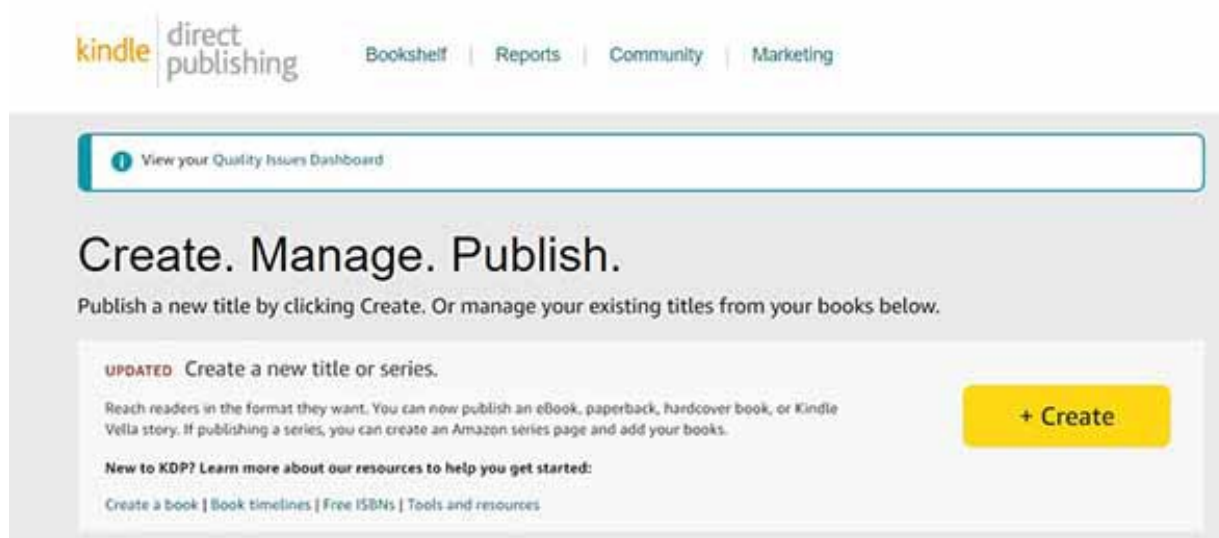
There are several options for you to create your book's cover. You can use KDP's Cover Creator tool, Photoshop, or Canva.

The Cover Creator tool can help you customize your eBook, paperback, or hardcover with several layouts and fonts. It uses the book details you entered during the title setup and adds your ISBN to the barcode on the back cover. You can choose an image from the image gallery or upload your own. Cover Creator accepts JPG, PNG, and TIF/TIFF files.

To create your book cover using another platform, use the [KDP Cover Calculator](#) and download the provided template. You also have the option to provide your own barcode (mark the check box) or allow KDP to do it for you.

If creating your book cover sounds too hard, you can always hire a professional book cover designer.

How to Upload Book Files to KDP



When you are ready to upload your book's files to KDP, log in to your KDP account, go to your Bookshelf tab, and click the "+Create" button. The "Title Setup" page will appear. This is where you need to enter the book's details:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Language | • Book Description | • Digital Rights Management | • Trim Size |
| • Book Title | • Publishing Rights | • * ISBN | • Territoires |
| • Subtitle | • Keywords | • * Imprint (Publisher Name) | • Pricing |
| • Edition Number | • Categories | • Ink and Paper Type | • Royalty Rate |
| • Author(s) | • Reading Age | | • Expanded Distribution |
| • Other Contributors | | | |

Amazon uses this information to create the book's listing detail page.

To publish your book in multiple formats (eBook, paperback, hardcover), you must complete the Title Setup by entering the same information for each (except for the ISBN).

Note: Adding the ISBN and Imprint for eBooks is optional. However, if you include them in your eBook's setup, you won't be able to complete updates after publishing or deleting the title.

eBook details can be updated for pre-orders until the submission deadline. For more information, visit KDP's [eBook pre-orders page](#).

To learn more about the difference between “Schedule a Release” (print books only) and “Pre-Order” (eBooks only) review KDP’s [Release Date Options](#) page.

Keywords and Categories

Use keywords and categories that accurately portray your book’s content to make your book easier to find. In other words, enter the words customers use when using Amazon’s search feature.

Keywords

Before uploading files, search for keywords on Amazon by looking at the suggestions in the “Search” field drop-down menu. Think like a reader and imagine how you’d search if you were a customer. Using relevant keywords can help raise your book’s placement on the search results page.

In the seven keyword boxes, enter keywords and phrases by combining them in the most logical order and keep an eye on the character limit in the text field.

Some useful keyword types include:

- Character Types (single mom, teacher)
- Character Roles (hero, lover, explorer)
- Setting (outer space, the ocean, a city)
- Plot Theme (love, revenge)
- Story Tone (feel-good, humorous, nostalgic)

Keywords to avoid include terms used in the book’s title, description, category, spelling errors, brand names, and HTML tags.

You can change your keywords and book description as often as you like. However, if your book is available in different formats, keep your keywords and descriptions consistent across all formats.

Categories

Categories are the genres (mystery, romance, science-fiction) customers search for on Amazon to locate your book.

Each category has three sections:

- **Category:** This is typically the broad classification, for example, Romance.
- **Subcategory:** This is a more descriptive classification of the main category, for example, Young Adult.
- **Placement:** This is where the book is placed in the Amazon Store, for example, 21st Century.

The category path for the above example would look like this:

Romance > Young Adult > 21st Century

Amazon allows you to choose up to three categories based on your primary marketplace (for example, Amazon.com, Amazon.ca) for each title during setup. Each format needs at least one category chosen.

Categories may differ for each format type. For instance, a category available in the Book Store may not be available in the Kindle Store.

Since you can choose your own categories, KDP is no longer accepting requests to add or update categories. KDP may also change the book's categories, or add categories, to ensure a positive customer experience.

Book Rights, Pricing & Royalties

The final page of the Title Setup is where you'll enter the book's rights, distribution, and pricing information.

Publication Rights

A copyright protects original works such as a book, eBook, etc. If you are the author of an original work, you typically own the copyright.

You will also be asked to choose the territories where you hold the publishing rights. If you have all rights to make your book available worldwide choose "All Territories." This option allows customers from around the world to buy your book.

If you don't hold worldwide rights to sell and distribute your title choose "Individual Territories." This will limit sales of your publication to only the selected territories.

Pricing

After you've uploaded your manuscript and cover files you can set your print and eBook prices. The price must fall within the KDP minimum and maximum list prices. You can change the book's price (print and eBook) after it goes live.

To determine a price, compare other books in the same genre, similar trim sizes, and similar page lengths. You can also base your price on the royalties you'll get.

Amazon determines the printing cost for paperback and hardcover books. The printing costs will vary depending on the trim size, page count, and ink type (black vs. color). Bleed settings and cover finish don't affect the printing cost.

The printing cost also depends on which Amazon marketplace the customer ordered your book. KDP will display your printing cost in the Rights & Pricing section of the Title Setup.

To calculate your paperback and hardcover printing costs, use this formula:

$$\text{Fixed cost} + (\text{page count} * \text{per page cost}) = \text{printing cost}$$

To calculate the printing cost of a 500-page regular trim size **paperback book** printed in black ink and sold on the U.S. marketplace:

$$\text{\$1 (fixed cost)} + (500 [\text{page count}] * \text{\$0.012} [\text{per page cost}]) = \text{\$7 (printing cost)}$$

To calculate the printing cost of a 500-page regular trim size **hardcover book** printed in black ink and sold on the U.S. marketplace:

$$\text{\$5.65 (fixed cost)} + (500 [\text{page count}] * \text{\$0.012} [\text{per page cost}]) = \text{\$11.65 (printing cost)}$$

To find the fixed and per page costs review KDP's [paperback](#) and [hardcover](#) charts.

Your book's minimum list price is calculated based on printing cost. This ensures that your royalties earned cover the printing cost of your book.

Paperback Royalties (60% vs. 40%)

Paperback Royalty

When someone buys your paperback through Amazon or an [Expanded Distribution](#) channel and a new copy is manufactured to fulfill that order, you receive a royalty.

How we calculate paperback royalties

Amazon distribution channels	Expanded Distribution channels
KDP offers a fixed 60% royalty rate on paperbacks sold on Amazon marketplaces where KDP supports paperback distribution. Your royalty is 60% of your list price. We then subtract printing costs, which depend on trim size, page count, ink type, and the Amazon marketplace your paperback was ordered from. Learn how printing costs are calculated	If you enable Expanded Distribution , the royalty is 40% of the book's list price effective in the distribution channel at the time of purchase minus printing costs .
$(\text{Royalty rate} \times \text{list price}) - \text{printing costs} = \text{royalty}$	$(\text{Royalty rate} \times \text{list price}) - \text{printing costs} = \text{royalty}$
For example, your list price is \$15. Your book is a 333-page regular trim size paperback with black ink sold on the US marketplace:	For example, your list price is \$15. Your book is a 333-page regular trim size paperback with black ink sold through Expanded Distribution channels:
$(0.60 \times \$15) - \$5.00 = \$4.00$	$(0.40 \times \$15) - \$5.00 = \$1.00$

KDP offers a fixed 60% royalty rate on paperbacks sold on Amazon. The royalty amount is 60% of your book's list price minus the printing cost. The royalty rate is 40% of the book's list price shown in the Expanded Distribution channel at the time of purchase, minus the printing cost.

eBook Royalty options (35% vs. 70%)

eBook Royalties

You can choose between two royalty options for each of your eBooks: the 35% royalty option and the 70% royalty option.

How we calculate eBook royalties

35% Royalty Option	70% Royalty Option
If you select the 35% royalty option, your royalty will be 35% of your list price without VAT for each unit sold Royalty Rate x (List Price – applicable VAT) = Royalty Example: • U.S. Dollar VAT Inclusive List Price = \$0.99 • We aren't matching a free promotion on another sales channel Your Royalty per sale to a customer whose applicable VAT rate is 0%: $0.35 \times (\\$0.99 - \\$0.00) = \\$0.35$ Your Royalty per sale to a customer whose applicable VAT rate is 20%: $0.35 \times (\\$0.99 - \\$0.165) = \\$0.29$ Applicable VAT calculation: $20\% \times \\$0.825 = \\$0.165$. $\\$0.825 + \\$0.165 = \\$0.99$	If you select the 70% royalty option, your royalty will be 70% of your list price without VAT, less delivery costs (average delivery costs are \$0.06 per unit sold, and vary by file size), for each eligible book sold to customers in the 70% territories, and 35% of the list price without VAT for each unit sold to customers residing outside the 70% territories. Royalty Rate x (List Price – applicable VAT) = Royalty Example: • UK Pounds VAT Inclusive List Price = £1.99 • UK Delivery Costs = £0.10/MB • Book's file size is 1 MB • Applicable VAT in UK is 20% • We don't price-match your book Your Royalty per sale to a UK customer from Amazon.co.uk is: $0.70 \times (£1.99 - £0.33 - £0.10) = £1.09$ Royalty Rate x (List Price – applicable VAT – Delivery Costs) = Royalty Applicable VAT calculation: $20\% \times £1.66 = £0.33$. $£1.66 + £0.33 = £1.99$

You can choose between 35% and 70% royalty for eBooks. The 70% royalty option is only for in-copyright works. The customer will also have to pay a download delivery cost. Public domain works are only eligible for the 35% royalty option.

For the 35% option, your royalty amount is the percentage of your list price without VAT for each unit sold.

With the 70% royalty option, the amount will be the percentage of your list price minus the **delivery cost** to download the file. eBooks sold to customers outside the 70% territories, you'll receive 35% of the list price without VAT.

To find out more about royalties visit KDP's [Digital Book Pricing](#) page.

Expanded Distribution

Reach more readers through bookstores, online retailers, libraries, and academic institutions with Expanded Distribution. Hardcover books, however, are not eligible for Expanded Distribution.

If you enroll your book in Expanded Distribution, your book will be available to distributors so booksellers and libraries can find and buy your book. This allows your book to be available outside of Amazon. However, it doesn't guarantee it will be accepted by distributors or ordered by booksellers and libraries.

To enroll your paperback book, it must be available on Amazon.com or Amazon.co.uk and meet the distributors' following requirements:

- **ISBN:** The book can have an ISBN you bought or use one from KDP. However, the book's ISBN must not have been submitted for distribution through another service.

- **Content:** Books containing recurrent lined pages or blank pages (such as journals, notebooks, planners, etc.), belonging to the public domain, adult coloring books, and poorly translated books, are not accepted.
- **Language:** Books published in Hebrew, Yiddish, and Japanese are not eligible.
- **Territories:** You must have distribution rights in the U.S. and the U.K.
- **Trim Size:** The trim size requirements depend on the paper type. For a list of combinations of trim size, ink, and paper type, please go to KDP's [Expanded Distribution page](#) and view the chart.

KDP Select Program

The KDP Select program is only available for eBooks. This is a free 90-day program that allows you to reach more readers through Kindle promotions.

For eBooks to be eligible for enrollment in the KDP Select Program, you must have exclusive rights and the content can't be from the public domain. ***During the enrollment period, your eBook must also be exclusive to the Kindle Store.*** This means the eBook can only be distributed through KDP during the 90-day enrollment. However, you can continue distributing print and audio formats of your title elsewhere.

When you enroll your eBook, it is automatically included in Kindle Unlimited (KU). It is also eligible for Free Book Promotion (offer your book for free for up to 5 days) and Kindle Countdown Deals (limited-time discounts for eBooks on Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk).

Customers who subscribe to KU will have access to the eBook as part of their subscription. You can earn money based on the pages read. However, you're only paid for the number of pages read the first time the customer reads them. This is true even if your KDP Select enrollment period expired, and you choose not to re-enroll.

Your eBook will also be eligible to be selected for the KDP Select All Stars bonus. This is a bonus in addition to KU earnings from royalties.

You can enroll in KDP Select during the eBook's Title Setup or after it's published by going to your Bookshelf and clicking the ellipsis button ("..."). A drop-down menu will appear with the option "Enroll in KDP Select." In the pop-up window, click "Enroll."

Publishing Your Book on KDP

Once you've entered your book's details and uploaded the files in the Title Setup, it's time to review your book to see if it meets KDP's formatting and content guidelines. You can review your eBook by using KDP's Online Previewer.

To review your print book, you can request a book proof (a physical copy of the book) and launch the Print Previewer (this step is required). Both Previewer tools check for errors that need to be fixed before submitting for publication.

If errors are found, update your file in its original program, then re-upload the corrected file before proceeding. For more information about fixing formatting issues go to KDP's [Formatting Issues](#) page.

If you choose to receive a proof copy, you can select "Save as Draft" and return to it later to approve. Or you can make changes and then complete the publishing process.

When all of the corrections have been made, you can click the “Approve” button which submits your book for publication.

Once you click “Publish Your Book” the review process begins. You won’t be able to make any changes while your book is “In Review.” KDP will manually check your interior and cover files. If they find any issues, you’ll receive an email with instructions on what to fix.

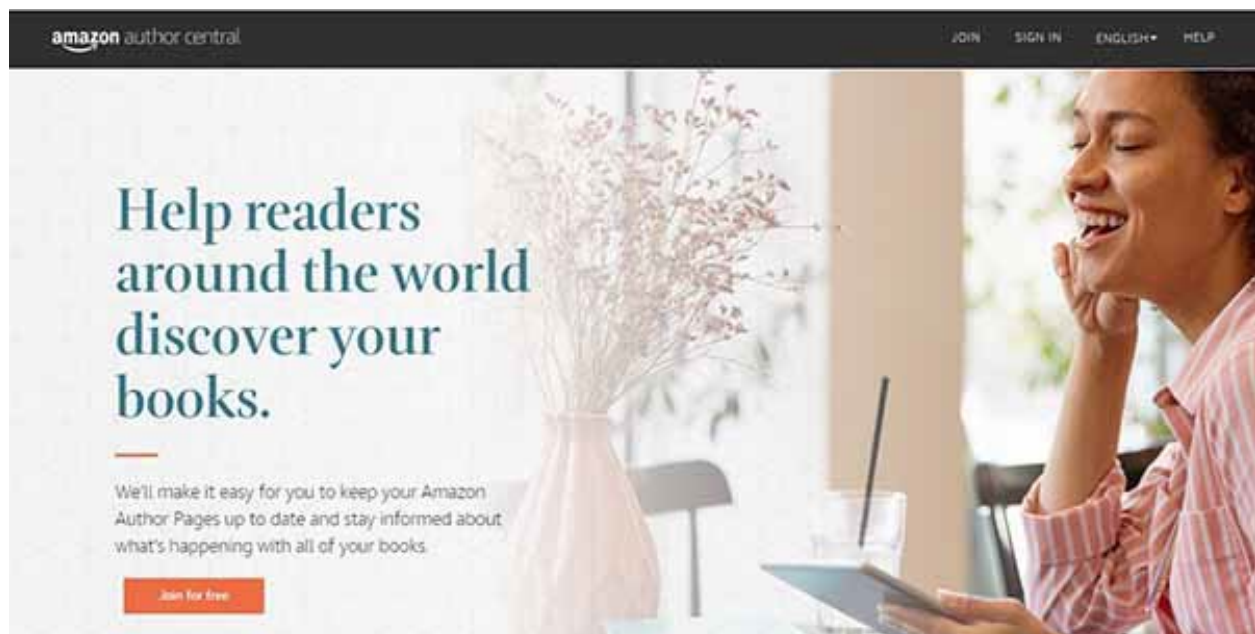
It can take 3-10 business days for KDP to complete the reviewing process. Once your book is available for purchase it can take up to 72 hours to appear in Amazon’s search results. If you need to update your book, you can do so once your book goes “Live.”

When your book goes Live, you can purchase proofs or author copies. Visit [Proof and Author Copies](#) to learn more.

[How to Market Your Book with Amazon Marketing Tools](#)

You can use Amazon Marketing tools to help promote your book to readers. The two most common tools authors use are Author Central and Amazon Ads.

Amazon Author Central



[Author Central](#) lets you create an Author Page where readers can choose to follow you and view all of your book titles. You can add books, audiobooks, eBooks, an author biography, check Amazon’s Best Seller Rank, and more with Author Central.

Author Page followers will be notified of your book’s release or availability for pre-order on Amazon. You can even send them marketing emails from Amazon.

Create your Author Central account to get started.



Capture reader's attention when you use [Amazon Ads](#) while they browse books on Amazon. You can set your own budget, and choose between Sponsored Products ads or Sponsored Brands.

Sponsored Products ads appear in shopping results and product detail pages. Sponsored Brands ads let you show a selection of your books and help readers discover you as an author.

You can create ads for traditionally published and self-published books on KDP, co-authored books, and books published outside the KDP platform. For traditionally published titles, they must meet the book [advertising guidelines](#). You must also have an Author Central account and the books added to your Author Page.

To start your first ad campaign, create an Amazon Ads account and learn more by visiting [Advertising for KDP books](#).

External Marketing Strategies

Promote your book with social media by sharing an Amazon link of your book to sites like Facebook and Twitter (X). You can also create a website for your books, post on message boards, join reader community groups, and promote your book on other websites readers find and search for books.

Another option is to create book trailers to advertise your books. These can be similar to movie trailers and shared on social media, YouTube, and websites.

Or you can do interviews on a podcast, vlog, TV show, or a local news channel.

Tracking Sales with KDP Reports

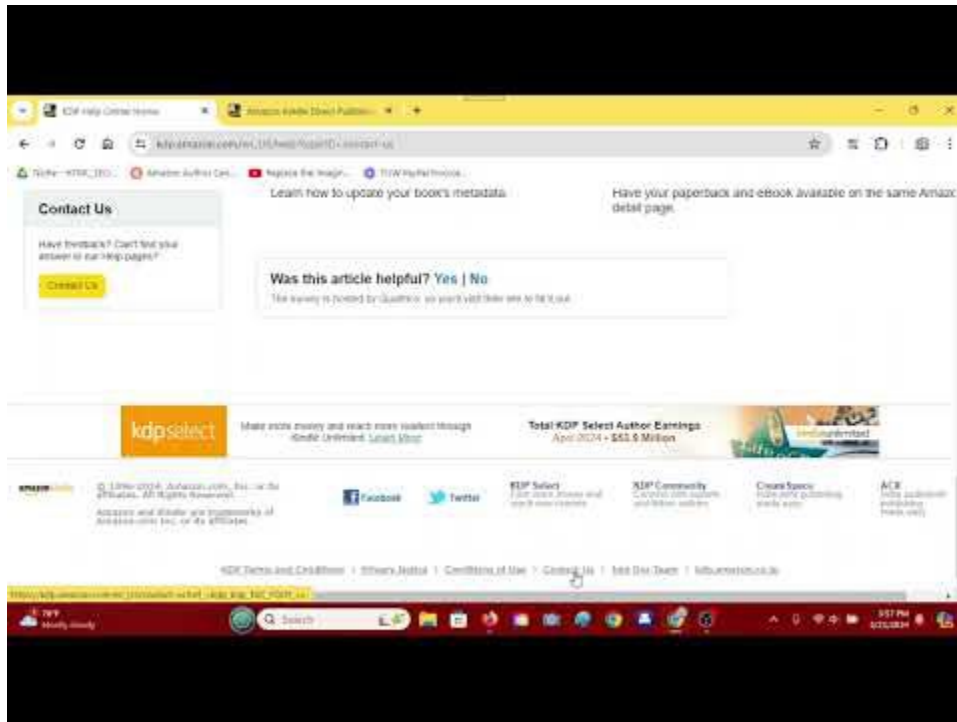
To review and track book sales, go to the Reports tab at the top of the KDP Dashboard page. This is where you'll get a snapshot of your estimated royalties, sales, and Kindle Unlimited read pages.

Use KDP reports to make informative marketing and pricing strategies.

Learn more about KDP Report options by watching the [How To Use The KDP Orders Report](#) video.

How to Contact KDP

Contact KDP Video: https://youtu.be/M-RT20_uFr8



If you run into any issues using the KDP platform, here's how to get in touch with Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP):

1. Go to the [KDP Help Center](#), scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click the “[Contact Us](#)” link.
2. On the “How can we help?” page, choose a topic that matches your issue from the provided list. For example, “Format Requirements & Book Status.” Then choose your next option, for example, “Book Status.”
3. If you still need help, you can click the “Ask the Community” button. Or click the “Contact Us” button and then choose either “Call Us” or “Start Chat.”

How KDP Helps Authors Publish Books

New and established authors can self-publish eBooks, paperback, and hardcover books without upfront costs by using Kindle Direct Publishing's user-friendly platform.

Whether you aim to retain full rights to your work, want to reach a broader audience, or take advantage of Amazon's extensive marketing capabilities to maximize your book's potential, give KDP a try.

If you need help in any part of the process, [contact](#) NEK Editing.