



Publishers Association of Los Angeles
EDUCATION • NETWORKING • RESOURCES

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Meeting Transcript



UPCOMING MEETING:

MAKING YOUR BOOK LOOK GREAT: HOW TO MAKE THE BEST DESIGN DECISIONS

Monday, June 18, 2012 - 7:00 pm

What kind of design will make your book look great? Did you make design mistakes with your last book? Are you looking to avoid these pitfalls with your next one? This meeting will help you tune up your approach to book publishing--specifically in design matters. Attend this month's meeting where we'll discuss good cover and interior design and our experts will offer on-the-spot critiques of your book covers.

COST: \$5.00 for PALA members; \$15.00 for nonmembers. Advance admission can be purchased until the day before the program with PayPal on our website: <http://www.pa-la.org>.

QUESTIONS: Sharon Goldinger, Program Chair, pplspeak@att.net, 949-581-6190.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: PALA ELECTION AND NEW BOARD POSITIONS

PALA has an election coming up, and David Evans, Gemini Adams, Sharon Goldinger, and Gary Young are all willing to serve our organization again.

In addition, we would like to add two "at-large" board positions from our membership. These positions will be finite in scope because we are all volunteers and we all understand the time pressures of our busy schedules.

I would like to concentrate on outreach, especially regarding our presence in the social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Meetup, Eventbrite, Pinterest, Scribd, and possibly others. We hope to include a blog in the future as well.

Each at-large board member will hopefully take on one or two social

PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES (PALA) <http://www.pa-la.org>

President: Gary Young (artsy12@earthlink.net)

Vice-President: Sharon Goldinger (pplspeak@att.net)

Secretary: Gemini Adams (gemini@liveconsciouslynow.com)

Treasurer: David Evans (teddytravelerbear@earthlink.net)

FACEBOOK: [360829964913@groups.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/groups/360829964913)

TWITTER: @PALAPUB

Elections, Board additions (cont'd from page 1)

By the way, the board members share certain board privileges, which we will be happy to discuss by e-mail, if you are interested.

You must be a current member of PALA to be considered for this election.

Don't be shy. We need you, and you'll benefit!

Send your expression of interest and/or any questions to Gary Young, president@pa-la.org, and we will get things started.

Gary Young
PALA President



A REPORT FROM IBPA UNIVERSITY 2012 *by Sanjay Nambiar, CEO, Umiva Publishing*

If you didn't have a chance to attend the IBPA University this year, go next year. Go. Go. Go.

The University, which was held March 9 and 10 in San Francisco, was tremendous. In two session-packed days, I discovered multiple industry insights, marketing and operational strategies, and key contacts that will have a significant impact on my publishing business.

For independent publishers, the University can be a pivotal event. We can learn so many details as well as overarching marketing trends, from experts and peers. From panels addressing eBooks and digital distribution to sessions about foreign

rights, library sales, and working with wholesalers, the University is a crash course in publishing for industry newcomers and a primer on emerging strategies for industry veterans.

I have a simple barometer for conference sessions: can I learn what was discussed by doing a few basic Google searches on my own? If I can, my time is probably better spent not at the session. At IBPA University, almost every panel I attended conveyed meaningful information that would have been very difficult to find online. These were critical insights shared by industry insiders. In this light, the University passed my little litmus test spectacularly.

For example, one of the most compelling sessions was the opening keynote, by Steve Piersanti, President of Berrett-Koehler Publishers. A legend in the industry, Piersanti discussed what he called the "10 Awful Truths About Book Publishing."

1. The number of books in the market is exploding. 215,777 new titles in 2002 compared to 316,480 in 2010.

2. But sales are declining sales, despite the book explosion. Bookstore sales peaked in 2007.

3. eBooks are up, but overall sales still are shrinking. In 2011, a 17.1% decline in print sales outweighed a 117.3% increase in eBook sales.

4. Average book sales are small, and falling fast. The average non-fiction title sells less than 250 copies per year and just 3,000 books over its lifetime. Only 62 out of 1,000 business books released in 2009 sold

more than 5,000 copies.

5. A book has less than a 1% chance of being stocked in an average bookstore.

6. It's getting harder every year to sell books.

7. Most books today are selling only to the author's and publisher's communities.

8. Most book marketing done by authors, not publishers.

9. No other industry has so many new product introductions.

10. The book publishing industry is in a never-ending state of turmoil.

So how do independent publishers overcome these obstacles? It isn't easy, but Piersanti provided some guidance. He explained our opportunities in seven themes:

1. The game is now pass-along sales. For example, managers will buy books for their staff members, and CEOs will buy books for their employees. It's about one person buying multiple books and passing them along to others.

2. Events and immersion experiences are replacing traditional publicity. This is about connecting with your audience in powerful and meaningful ways.

3. Leverage the author's and publisher's communities. These fans will become evangelists and help spread the word. They also will account for the bulk of initial sales.

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PUBLISHING UNIVERSITY RECAP

(cont'd from page 2)

4. In a crowded market, brand stands out. Stronger brands also have longer staying power.

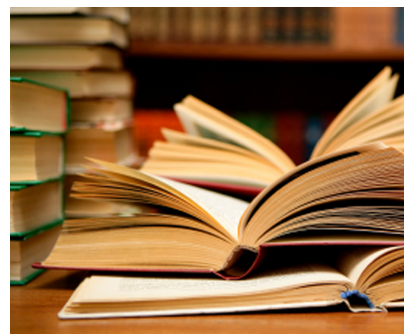
5. Master new digital channels for sales, marketing, and community building. We need to leverage social media (Facebook, Twitter, Blogging, etc.) to connect with our fan base, build community, and support sales.

6. Build books around a big new idea. See if you can convey the gist of your book in one simple sentence.

7. Front load the main ideas in books and keep books short. With so much content out there, attention spans are getting shorter. If you don't hook someone upfront, they may not continue reading.

By keeping these insights in mind, independent publishers can become savvier and develop better products and marketing plans. In our tumultuous industry, forward-thinking strategies such as these can make the difference between faltering and thriving.

Here's to smart, innovating, and profitable publishing.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Do you have news to share about your company? We're all ears! Let your PALA colleagues know if you have a new book, made a rights sale, signed up with a distributor, won an award or have any other good news. Post it on the PALA Listserv, or e-mail it to info@pa-la.org for inclusion in a future newsletter.

Do you know of an event, seminar, panel discussion, festival or other gathering that would interest PALA members? Please share it here. E-mail it to pplspeak@att.net for inclusion in a future newsletter.

**OPTIMIZE YOUR SALES
POTENTIAL: AMAZON FOR
SMALL AND MIDSIZE
PUBLISHERS--TRANSCRIPT OF
10/17/11 MEETING**

We're very pleased to have Jon Fine here. He's the director of Author and Publisher Relations for Amazon.com. Jon joined Amazon in 2006 as an associate general counsel for Media and Copyright and led Business Development for Brilliance Audio following its acquisition by Amazon in 2007. Prior to Amazon, Jon was associate general counsel for Random House. He's also worked at NBC and King World Productions. Jon will be talking to us tonight about the resources and programs available for enhancing your sales opportunities through Amazon.

Thank you so much for coming out. Yes, I've been at Amazon now for about six years, and I've really been amazed at the way we have grown and had an impact. Some would say for good, and some would say not so good—but we have been disruptive, no doubt. Part of my job is to explain who we are and what we do. Just a little bit more color about my background—I was essentially general counsel for the Knopf Publishing Group before I went to Amazon. Some would say that means I know a lot about traditional publishing. Really what that means is, I know a lot about the way that Knopf does traditional publishing, bless their hearts.

I tend to be sort of passionate about this stuff. First of all, we want to find a way to help you distribute, publish, and sell your books on Amazon. And we think we bring to the equation a number of benefits: fast to market, unmatched distribution, unparalleled royalties, and tools and services. This

is the big one, right? It is the destination for readers around the globe. There are some things we do very well, and not saying we do everything well. For better or for worse, you might have a screening website as a publisher; you might have your own awesome website as an author. Frankly, your home page on the Internet for your book, at least these days, is the detail page (and if you're not sure what that is, I'll explain in a minute). It's the destination for readers around the globe, and it just underscores the importance of taking advantage of the tools that we offer whenever possible. There are also lots of other tools out there too, and I don't mean to suggest that ours are necessarily the best. We're constantly working to make them better, and feedback is key to us succeeding. But in terms of capturing an audience, there are very few places that are going to be able to sell more books.

Our goal has always been (and this is not true for every product category) to make any work available that has ever been published, in as many formats as possible, at the best possible price, and as quickly as possible. If you think about it from a customer or reader perspective, the idea is to make it really easy for people to access books, wherever they are, whatever they're doing—whether they are in line at the supermarket reading on the iPhone or at home reading a hardcover. The idea is just to make it so easy for people to find books they're looking for and to help the books find them—sort of the new version of hand selling, for those who have been in the business for a while. So we're constantly throwing resources at making this possible, and the Kindles do reflect that, as do a number of the other programs and services that I'm

going to talk about. Essentially, if you own it, we want it.

If you have a book, we want to sell it. If you have the rights to it, we want to be one of the places you're selling. We're going to make it easy for you to reach as many as eight million readers, probably more than that. Eighty million? Thank you. And it's worked. Everyone can be an author or a publisher, which is great, except that means there are over 40,000 publishers selling on our site—millions of authors and illustrators and translators, and millions of titles. It is a tidal wave of content. And the means of production have been democratized, which means anyone can be a publisher and an author, and that's great, but that also means that anyone can be a publisher and an author, and that makes it harder for your book to spring to the top.

These are the things we try to deliver to publishers and authors: quick to market, always available, as many formats and languages as possible, and value-added resources throughout the writing and publishing process if you want to make use of them but also the ability to ignore them if you don't. I love the communities of folks that have built up around our sites and many other self-publishing sites. It's an amazingly passionate group. I've seen marriage proposals. I'm not sure how it worked out. Obviously, you want to get your royalties, you want payment processes that are efficient and reliable, and you want tools that will help you reach your audience on and off our platform on our site. And we're pretty good at selling books.

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Amazon (cont'd from page 4)

But the brass tacks in terms of what I'm going to talk about today: using CreateSpace, which is our print on demand entity to make your works available in print, and using Kindle Direct Publishing to make your works available electronically, digitally. Once you've made your work available, as more and more books get published, as more and more books get written, the post-publication process becomes more and more important, and the effort that authors and publishers have to put into it grows every day. A couple of tools that help you surf that tidal wave I was talking about: Author Central, Search Inside the Book, the joys of virtual hand selling, getting those very simple obvious sales with an Associates program. (And by the way, I would use them all, not just Amazon's.)

So, obviously, a lot has changed. When I started at Knopf 10 years ago, you did not hear about self-publishing, and you did not hear about indie publishing. You heard about vanity publishing. And with the technological advancements, the ability to do so much of this stuff on your own, independent publishing has arrived in a spectacular fashion. The whole means of production being democratized means, yes, it's easier to get up there, but it's also easier to find an audience, right? There will be more books out there. But if you wrote a book 10 years ago on crocheting, finding that audience by yourself would have taken a good bit of work. Now you can probably find a ton of crocheters who are focused on just crocheting by yourself using the Internet in a pretty straightforward fashion.

The POD technology itself has just

dramatically improved. Ten years ago, Vintage, which is one of the paperback imprints at Knopf, would never have considered POD. I would say every publisher these days is using some form of print on demand, and if you're a reader, you really can't tell the difference. In fact, I gave a talk at BEA, and we passed around a couple of samples, and people had a hard time telling which was which. That improves the economics, clearly, and the beauty about both POD and digital publishing is, to borrow the phrase, no money down. In the sense that the economics don't require the investment of resources upfront, whether it's printing, warehouses, shipping—they used to be such a core part of getting started as a publisher. And the technology has made it much easier to get to market quickly. The benefits of working on a no-inventory platform, again both print and digital, is that you have no inventory. That's great. Up-front risk is really combined. Everyone can make it to the platforms and offer their books, royalties are higher because there are fewer middlemen, and then direct distribution to us makes things a lot easier.

Q: What are your protections about piracy? We're having a lot of piracy on websites like Scribd.com. If we gave you the digital or the POD, what the customer prints out, are they able to take that somewhere then?

A: That's a great question. I think piracy has been a concern. First of all, anybody can go to a library and Xerox a book and scan it and put it online. That has nothing to do with digital formats and certainly not with print on demand. So I just wanted to narrow your question down a bit. You're worried about whether Kindle

editions will get hacked so that people can make them available for free?

Q: Or are they printable in multiple copies?

A: They're not printable at all.

Q: But can they be replicated on multiple Kindles?

A: Yes, but according to the terms of service—in other words, if I buy a Kindle, if I buy a Kindle edition, if I can read it on my Kindle or my iPad or my Fire or my iPhone or my blackberry. Or if my wife is part of the three or four units I'm allowed to have, she can look at it too. But, no, I don't know of any Kindle edition being hacked. But in 2000, NBC had the Olympics, they're in Australia, and in a lovely bit of counterintuitiveness, it said it was going to delay everything a day so that people can see it. NBC was not going to let anyone see this video before it broadcast it on a tape-delayed basis, which was an invitation for piracy, right? The events were happening 12 or 13 hours earlier, and then NBC is showing them on TV. So I was responsible for the operation where we tried to seek out and destroy all pirates. We hired this expensive firm to do that, and they were wonderful. NBC has these pages (if you watch *30 Rock*, one of them is featured), and I got 10 of them and put them in a conference room for two weeks and gave them pizza, and they came up with about the same as the expensive service.

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Amazon (cont'd from page 5)

But what was most interesting about all of it was how hard they had to look to find this. And two years later, when I was at Knopf, I was part of the AAP's digital piracy subcommittee, and we concluded that, particularly in terms of trade books, you should be so lucky as to have your book pirated. I don't mean in your case in particular, just in general. Most of the time, it is so hard to find the book even if it has been pirated. If it has been pirated, people are really talking about the book and interested in it. J. K. Rowling is probably the most pirated author, not because people were not buying the books but because people wanted to find out sooner. They wanted to be the first to know what happened. So I think it's a great question and an important one, and it's one you should ask every time you give your manuscript or your author's manuscript to someone. To my knowledge, we haven't had a problem with hacking. And not only that (many of you may have experienced this), we have a rather intense process of copyright review before we let books go up on Kindle. And that's because we made some mistakes. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* slipped through, and other people were publishing that, and that's a violation of copyright. So we really had to beef up that area.

It's amazing how quickly CreateSpace, just on the POD front, has grown. And you can see this in the total number of books published each year. Again, this is all about democratizing the means of production. We think that we are the best solution to easily create and make these books available in print form around the world, inventory free. We print and distribute, we can

give you help when you need it, with Amazon you can reach a bigger audience, and we think you earn higher royalties with fewer fees. Let me talk a little bit about the economics of POD because that's the question I most often get. I doubt seriously on a per-unit basis whether you will ever find a POD offering that is less than or even equal to the per-unit cost of an offset printing job. But that's not really the right way to think about it, if I may be so bold, because *offset* means a lot of different things, a lot of different costs that aren't part of the POD. One, you need up-front investment in inventories. The reason offset may cost less per unit than POD is that you're printing 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000 or 4,000—or 500. You need someplace to put them. You need a warehouse, you need a garage, and you need space. You need to be able to ship them. You need to be able to take them back.

So there are a lot of costs around traditional publishing that you should factor into your analysis of whether POD makes sense. So that's just to lay it out for you. I'm here to offer a bird's eye view, and then you guys can find your way, too. I'll lay out where to go and give you my e-mail address. It's jfine@Amazon.com. If you write to me, I will respond. It may take a little while, but I will. But the first thing I'll ask you is, have you gone through any of the systems we have set up to help you get your question answered? If you haven't, I'm going to drive you to those because they really are the most efficient way to get help. It's very easy to upload a book. You can start with the title for free; you can explore the page services. But essentially, you're just uploading a title. You can create your own free cover designs; you can upload your

own. We keep increasing the number of layouts. We have professional services, some of which are fantastic, some of which I really have no familiarity with—everything from publishing whole solutions to layout design, marketing. It's unfortunate, the contraction in the publishing industry, in many ways. A lot of my friends are no longer working for publishers; they're working for themselves. And so there's this incredible booming economy of creative editors. There are some great ones out there. We use them ourselves for our own Amazon publishing program.

Q: What is the website address for that?

A: Yes, thank you, CreateSpace.com. You walk right through the process; it's very straightforward. You set your list price, you choose your distribution alternatives. You can distribute on Amazon, you can distribute through a CreateSpace website-type store that you can build as an adjunct to your own website. There's also expanded distribution through Ingram and Baker & Taylor. The thing about expanded distribution through Ingram and Baker & Taylor is this: if the bookstore doesn't order, it doesn't matter that Ingram and Baker & Taylor are distributing it. So just to be clear, if somebody tells you, "Oh yeah, your book will be available at all bookstores," understand what that means. It's really available *to* all bookstores. So that's important. And I can't make a better promise than that either. I can't promise you that Housmans is going to pick up a title that you publish through CreateSpace.

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Amazon (cont'd from page 6)

But you can make it available to them, and if you're local and you go in and talk to those folks, they might decide to carry it. I've seen that happen a lot, particularly up in Seattle.

Q: I know a couple of people who created books on CreateSpace, and they say their dilemma is that nobody knows to go to CreateSpace, and as a matter of fact, you don't have Amazon and CreateSpace connected to each other. Is that false?

A: Yeah, that's false. Absolutely. Every book that's published by CreateSpace gets a detail page. The detail page is a page—when you're shopping on our site, it could be a book, it could be a television, clothing at this point, anything. It's a page where you see the cover, you see the author, you have a button where you can buy it, you see the reviews, you have a synopsis, you have books that other people have bought like this one that you might like. That's sort of the virtual hand selling. Every book published by CreateSpace gets the detail page just like that. Actually, it's not published by CreateSpace, it's published by you. It's a distribution service, a platform. So, automatically, these books become available on Amazon. And these detail pages for the print on demand books, as long as you have sent along the information, will look just like a Vintage or Bantam or Dell detail page. If you're a customer, a reader, looking for books, you really have no way of knowing that it's print on demand or even whether you're a small publisher or a large publisher unless they know about publishing.

Q: I have a button on my website now that goes straight to CreateSpace.

A: That's another option. That's sort of like the Associates program. If you sell, I think the cut you get if the book is bought on CreateSpace is a little higher than the cut you get if the book is bought on Amazon. So that might be why you would drive traffic to CreateSpace. The flip side of that is that the velocity, the number of people who are traipsing through Amazon versus CreateSpace, browsing and shopping and looking for books, is dramatically different.

Q: Are there foreign equivalents, Amazon Canada, CreateSpace Canada, CreateSpace UK?

A: In some countries, yes. We have it in the UK and Germany. And also, I believe, in Japan. Canada is soon to follow. Certainly, folks in Canada have been using CreateSpace to make their books available on .com, and people can order books on .com if they are not available on .ca.

Q: Can your books be translated?

A: For translating, you need a translator. You are the publisher.

Q: I was just wondering if there's a service that basically Amazon has to administer those services.

A: Let me answer it this way. I'm going to answer this indirectly because I can't talk about our future plans, but I will say you can draw an analogy. Audible, which we also own, has just launched something called ACX, which is essentially a marketplace where authors and narrators and studio professionals can meet and bid on projects to create audio books and then make

them available on Audible. That is an interesting model to think about for translations as well. I will also say that from my standpoint, though usually I think about it the other way, I'm really focused on translations and very active on that part of the marketplace. Particularly, there's something called a 3 percent problem, which essentially defines the dearth of works originally published in other languages that get translated into English, whereas more than half the books originally published in English end up getting translated into other languages. But that's a different direction than you're talking about.

Q: Tell me the distinction between CreateSpace and Amazon. I thought that they were going to be the same, and then someone said he had a "buy here" button that went to CreateSpace.

A: It can go to both. CreateSpace is a service company. It's a subsidiary based in Charleston that started as a company called BookSurge many years ago. And we combined it with a California company called CustomFlix, which does the same thing for music and movies that I'm talking about doing for books. It essentially makes movies available on demand, so you don't have the up-front inventory costs, if you're still into little shiny disks. So you're working with Amazon, with CreateSpace, when you're publishing a book. And then CreateSpace is making sure that it is available for sale on Amazon.

Q: So it sounds like it can appear in two different places?

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Amazon (cont'd from page 7)

A: Oh yeah, CreateSpace doesn't mean that you are stuck just selling through CreateSpace and Amazon. You can make your books available through as many different services as you want. In Europe, that's not the case. If you sign up with a print on demand company in Europe, you've done an exclusive deal. When you do a deal with us on CreateSpace for print on demand, you're essentially just signing a nonexclusive distribution agreement. And that means that, first of all, you can make it available on Hulu or whatever else is out there that you might want to try. It also means that if Simon & Schuster comes looking for your book and wants to publish it themselves, which for many people is still the goal, you can pull it down, and they can publish it. Smart publishers have been using our detail pages and our CreateSpace and Kindle publishing services as farm teams for many years now. If a book's been available for a little while, it's like an annotated slush pile.

Q: You mentioned Amazon in other countries, the UK and Canada. My book has reviews on Amazon US, UK, and Canada. What other countries have that available on them?

A: Any place your book is available, people can review it.

Q: What other countries have that feature?

A: Every country that we have a site at. So China, Japan, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, UK, Canada.

Q: And this is in the local language?

A: Yes, and there are local reviews, too. You'll notice that your UK reviews won't show up on .com or .ca. I don't think they do.

Q: They show up on Canada.

A: Amazon UK and Canada? Sure, that's possible. In general, we won't take UK reviews and put them on the US site. I've run into this very recently.

Q: I'm a children's book author, and some of the price points for children's books are really low, especially chapter books and things like that. I wasn't able to figure out a way to make POD work. Is there any solution for, like, the \$4.99 price point?

A: I'd have to sit and work on it because the cost of a book is directly dependent upon its length, format, are you going for color, that sort of stuff. Coffee-table books are probably not a great choice for POD — some children's books, too. There are many children's books that come through our print on demand process. I'll say the same thing about the Kindle too. With coffee-table books, at least on the Kindle itself, you lose some of the magic.

Q: From what you said, I'm inferring that I can get my book or books, which are sold on Amazon, and go to CreateSpace, and they can print them and have them available on Amazon in China, Spain, and other countries.

A: No, not necessarily. There are only a couple of countries that CreateSpace is making books available to directly right now. I'm confused, how are your books available on our site?

Q: You go to Amazon.com and you can buy a book.

A: Yes, but are you publishing the book?

Q: Publisher and author.

A: Yes, but you could also take your stock and send it on Amazon UK, Amazon in China, Amazon Japan. You don't need to go to CreateSpace to do that. That's why I wasn't sure where you were coming from.

Q: If you want to publish a book on Amazon, if you do that creation through CreateSpace as opposed to the dependent person, aren't those two books treated equally, or is the CreateSpace book given preference?

A: No, if you bring a fully vetted manuscript and you just upload it versus working with our editorial teams, no. There's no difference in treatment.

Q: What is the technology that you print out from CreateSpace? Is it just basically like a high-quality laser printer?

A: Send me an e-mail and I'll answer that question; they probably can get that answered on the site. They're very impressive printing machines. I don't want to misquote what the technology is.

So, taking a sample book. It's about 200 pages, black and white only, six by nine, basic paperback. Depending upon which program you're in, your per-book cost, all things being equal, is \$5.50.

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Amazon (cont'd from page 8)

If you're part of the Pro Plan, which costs \$35 a year per title, your cost is \$3.25. There are benefits to going with the Pro Plan. And that's basically how the pricing works. If the manufacturing is not up to snuff, send it back, and we'll fix it. There are no quantity restrictions. Obviously, to the extent you're buying these, you're not going to get a royalty on them. But you can do whatever you want with them—resell them. Many people make their books available through us on CreateSpace and order a bunch for readings and the like, and they go to bookstores in their neighborhoods or wherever they may go.

Q: If you're going to do a picture book with color, would we have to send a PDF file or is that developed from the manuscript itself at your end?

A: We have to have some sort of digital file. There are lots of different formats.

Q: I have two books on CreateSpace, and I just couldn't be more thrilled. The quality is incredible; they sell well.

A: Thank you. Anyway, I don't want to dive too deeply into the weeds here because your mileage will vary, depending upon what you're publishing and how you're going about doing it. Here's how the royalties work. Again, this is 200 pages, black and white interior. Let's say the list price is \$18. So these are the two different plans. There's the Standard Plan, which has no setup fees. You can upload your book, pick a cover, make it available for sale on Amazon, and you will not have paid a single penny—until we sell a copy.

That's when we take our cut. And that's how the Standard Plan works. For the Pro Plan, you pay \$40 a title, and you get better royalties and the opportunity for expanded distribution. So, for example, if you're selling off CreateSpace, through a CreateSpace e-store, we charge 20 percent for the channel fee, which is not unlike a distribution fee. The manufacturing is \$5.50. And so for an \$18 book, your royalties are \$8.90. On Amazon, the channel fee is higher; it's 40 percent. And again, that reflects what we think is the value of being on Amazon. And so, correspondingly, your royalty is \$5.30. You can't get expanded distribution—Baker and Taylor, Ingram, independent bookstores, and Barnes & Noble—which is sad. I think the more competition, the better. For \$39 per title, you get essentially your manufacturing fees reduced. And so your royalties are correspondingly higher. Again, your mileage will vary. I'm just sort of using this to give you ballpark numbers of what you can expect.

The great thing about print on demand is, it's there. I cannot stress this enough. If your book is not available or if it says "will ship in three to five days or two weeks, we're not sure," people are going to go look for another book. They just will. Because they know they can get one more quickly. If your book is available through POD on CreateSpace, that "in stock" means it's going to ship within 24 hours, which is unbelievable to me. But that's how it works; it's incredible. So if Glenn Beck mentions your author's book in passing, or any other number of media hits happen, if you get mentioned in the *Springfield, Massachusetts Times*, people are going to immediately go to Amazon to see if it's got that book, and you've

got it through CreateSpace available for print on demand, so it's going to be available. No inventory management and a nonexclusive agreement—you maintain flexibility. So for authors who are familiar with traditional publishing and publishers who also do the same thing, the term of copyright is a long time. In fact, it seems to be getting longer. This is not a term of copyright agreement. This is a distribution deal. We're providing tools, and you're making your book available yourself. You're publishing it yourself. And you print and distribute on your terms—no inventory, very strong royalty structure. As I said, you can use PDF or TIFF files. You upload metadata on the list price. If you have a complete book, we do have low-cost scanning services—very quick time to market. When I was at Knopf, we'd sign a deal, and delivery would be in two years. And that's great for many books but also not great for many books, particularly those that are highly topical.

Q: A lot of things are going electronic, and I'd like to believe there's always going to be a place for print books, but we have a shrinking market. Is it shrinking faster than people expect?

A: Clearly, eBooks had, what, a 100 percent increase last month? We still are selling increasingly more eBooks than print books, but we continue to increase our sales of print books. By making books so easily accessible, people are buying more books. As anecdotal evidence, my mom has 25 books on her Kindle. It used to be two years before she'd go through 25 books. And now she's going through 25 books in two months.

(continued on page 10)

Amazon (cont'd from page 9)

Again, to me, you could read cereal boxes, as long as you're reading. I say that somewhat in jest and somewhat not. The print-digital divide is just going to hurt us. The competition should not be between print and digital. We've got other eyeball-grabbing culture out there, like movies, games, music. I guess that's not eyeball, but there are other things people can do with their time. No smart author that I know of is going to say, "Wow, I really don't want my book available in eBook form." If you don't want it, that's great, and I think that's fine, but you're missing out potentially on an audience. As an author, you have that right. I just don't necessarily think it's the right way to go.

So, again, think of this not so much POD versus digital. Think about this as sort of inventory-free publishing. There's no money down. I've never done either. But to me, writing a book is probably akin to giving birth. I do not in any way mean to minimize how difficult it is to write a book. I have great respect; in fact, I don't consider myself a creative person. I consider my role as helping people who are much more creative than I am realize their dreams or facilitate their ideas. Both of the solutions mean two things. With Kindle Direct, you are not paying anything up front unless you go with the Pro Plan or you need added services. If you have a book that's ready to go, you can just put it up there. And the book will always be available. People will always be able to get it.

So, Kindle—it's quick, it's easy, it's free, and you can get up to 70 percent royalty. Publish once, and you can sell everywhere globally—not on

every website yet, but at least through .com and some of the other websites. For example, Kindle is not available in China yet. It is available in Germany and the UK. We just launched it in France. I hope China will come soon. This is really the other important thing: you don't need to own a Kindle to read Kindle books. People don't realize that. This means you can give an eBook to anybody who has a smartphone or a laptop or practically any device whatsoever.

Q: Nobody knows this.

A: People are starting to know this. But you're right; we've got to make it clear. It's an ecosystem. It sounds like a press release. And these apps are free. And it's all synced. So say I'm reading on my iPad at home, I go to work, I've got five minutes, and I want to finish the chapter I was reading on my PC. I go to my PC, I turn on my Kindle app, and I'm right where I was on my book I was just reading on my iPad. And that's true across devices.

Q: I'm not technologically sophisticated, but somehow when I wanted to buy a book on Kindle (and I don't have a Kindle), I downloaded the app on my PC, I thought, "Gee, I wonder if I can do this on a smartphone," I did it, and now it doesn't matter where am, I can read the book. So obviously, I don't really know what I'm doing.

A: I'm living proof you don't have to know what you're doing. Thank you, it's really awesome in that sense.

Q: If you already have a book that's published, and it sells (because we don't sell it to anybody, we just sell it online), could we sell the book independently?

A: Sure.

Q: It's already published—could we do it as a hard copy and then just turn that into an eBook as well?

A: So when you say hard copy, I assume you mean print copy, not necessarily hardcover. Hardcover, by the way, is tough for print on demand. I don't want to mislead folks. Yes, you absolutely can, but that's one of the things that is most frustrating to me, and we're working on it. If you want to make your book available on Kindle and POD right now, you have to go through both processes separately. It's not hard, but it has to do with tax issues. But yes, absolutely, you can. It's just a little bit cumbersome right now. But I think it's worth the effort to do it both ways because it really is such a great platform for selling books.

Q: What format is it saved in on the Kindle if you downloaded it to your PC?

A: MOBI format.

Q: When you submit to each of the different partitioned areas, can you price—we are already on Amazon. But say on a Kindle, could we price our book at the same price or can you give it a different selling price?

A: You can give it a different selling price. It will affect your royalties, potentially. Some people think lower prices are bringing down the publishing industry. I'm not so sure. I think it increases the number of people who are willing to sample and read books. I will entertain arguments on all sides of that issue. I don't think there's an answer.

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Amazon (cont'd from page 10)

Q: Do you down-price for Kindle, generally?

A: If we're talking about just normal trade books, you get added convenience with an eBook, no question about it. You can read anywhere. But you're not actually buying the book, right? It's a license. You can lend it; we're working on that. And now, frankly, I'm so happy that we're in libraries. That's great too. But you don't get to put it on your shelf. And you don't necessarily, though Margaret Atwood is coming up with ways to do this, get to have an author sign it. How many people can you have sign a Kindle?

Q: If I want to give an eBook to somebody, is there a mechanism by which I can either print something out or is there a code?

A: Yes, on every detail page. On Kindle detail pages, you have an opportunity to send a book as a gift. All you need is a person's e-mail address.

All right, as you can see, many authors have found a lot of success. And some of these folks have been picked up by more traditional publishers. Again, it's akin to CreateSpace. You enter your book details, you upload and preview your book to make sure it looks good, you confirm you have the rights (that's something we'll ask you for confirmation of), and then you price and publish. And people have done it in five minutes. Seriously, I've seen many people do it in five minutes. We had a booth set up at the BEA, and people were publishing books from our booth. It was awesome.

Q: Do you have to load a MOBI version of the file? Can you upload a PDF?

A: PDF is really tough. The beauty of the Kindle, particularly for folks like my mom and for me as I hit my upper forties, is being able to resize the type. If I'm in a place that is darker or my eyes are truly going and I don't have my glasses, PDFs make that really hard in terms of flowing. You can upload a PDF, and we can scan it and make it work, but it's not ideal. HTML is the ideal. Just a side point: there's a big controversy about poetry and eBooks because the integrity of the line is so important to the poet, not just the line but the page. And so there are a couple of publishing houses, with some help from us, who are working out that issue.

So you enter your book details, you upload your cover (you can create your cover using the free cover creator service on CreateSpace), you upload your book file. And then you have real-time ability to track your sales and royalties. The community forums—Amazon is about scale. And publishing is a relationship-oriented business. And sometimes those things don't go together. We're successful because we can get so many people to do this. We're successful because 40,000 publishers who otherwise would have no place to put their book cover out can sell on our site and have an audience, potentially, for that book. The community forums both on Kindle and on CreateSpace are just incredible. Even if you don't publish through Kindle or CreateSpace, as an indie publisher or indie author, they're worth checking out. Amanda Hocking is exceedingly happy. I think she's scored something like \$2.3 million from St. Martin's Press.

Both B. B. Larson and John Locke have also done incredibly well just selling on their own.

The community forum is meant to help people through a process—from people who've gone through the process, which is truly useful. It means your book is always available, it means earning up to 70 percent, millions of customers. It's just more ways for people to read your book. You tend to sell more books. We have a lot of work to do in terms of figuring out good programs to help you merchandise and help your books reach new audiences. We've been doing this for about a year and a half now. We recognize that we still have work to do and invite the feedback that makes that work useful to you.

Q: The only thing I find really frustrating about Kindle is the fact that it's a MOBI format. Everything else is on a different eBook format. That means every time I want to publish a book on Kindle and put a book in eBook form—I do my encoding, so I have to go in and do two completely different files.

A: We think it's a better experience. I understand your frustration, and it's sort of like Betamax and VHS.

Q: We have about 1,000 of our titles on Kindle right now. With the Kindle Fire, if the titles are in color, will we need to send two files or will it be the same?

A: They'll be the same file.

Q: If I have several books as eBooks on Amazon now, does that mean that it's also available on the Kindle?

(continued on page 12)

Amazon (cont'd from page 11)

A: Yes. If we're selling it in eBook form, it's for the Kindle. Yes.

Q: Of the six major retailers, how big is Amazon's share?

A: Well, we don't talk about that stuff. People have put it anywhere between 20 and 80 percent. We've created a pretty good solution, and we already have a big audience, so we're doing all right.

Q: I ask that question because I have some books out now on Kindle Direct, and I'm now looking for distribution from other retailers. I start to wonder, if Amazon has the lion's share, why even bother with the rest?

A: I think those are the sorts of things you should investigate through the communities. We're pretty closemouthed on that stuff.

Both CreateSpace and Kindle Direct mean your books are getting to market very quickly; you're not missing a sale. And it's green, too, by the way. The whole returns issue is truly a mess, and one that doesn't seem to be going away. POD and Kindle and digital publishing in general mean you don't have to have a problem. We also still have traditional availability programs like Advantage and FBA. I don't have those facts at my fingertips, but if you go to Amazon.com/advantage and Amazon.com/FBA, you can see how we do that. Essentially, they're consignment programs. There are some differences in the terms between the two. But essentially, we're selling for you.

Q: What is FBA?

A: Fulfillment by Amazon. Hopefully, you're always in stock with these because we keep the books coming wherever they go out. So again, everyone can be a publisher. Everyone can be an author.

Q: Do they have children's books on the Kindle?

A: Oh yes, we do have children's books, and let me just say, the guy in the yellow hat in Curious George doesn't look so good in gray scale. But if you read Curious George on the iPad or the Fire or the iPhone or your Blackberry or any other color-based device, it really looks great.

Q: Usually, a lot of children's books are in PDF.

A: Well, there are all kinds of conversion services available. We offer some of them as well.

Q: Do they sell well?

A: They do. And it's only getting better.

Q: If I have a book that needs to be downloaded as a PDF, it has forms or something. Does Amazon offer anything that works for that?

A: I wouldn't advise it. I think it's cumbersome and challenging for readers. I just don't think it's very popular with readers. That's the only reason why. If you have a dedicated group of folks who want it that way and will continue to buy it that way, then more power to you. But I think there's a PDF-selling service.

Q: Do the different platforms require different ISBN numbers—from Kindle to CreateSpace to your hard copy?

A: If you think about it, every format carries its own ISBN.

Q: I'm right now selling on Advantage. If I went to the other formats, would I assign my books a new ISBN?

A: You could, or you wouldn't even need an ISBN for Kindle because it's only being sold on our site. We would assign it an ASIN—Amazon Stock Identification Number.

All right, back to that point—40,000 publishers, millions of authors, and translators, and titles. You have to make sure your work is discoverable. This is the nut that has not yet been cracked across the board in publishing, as we see this huge growth in people expressing themselves. The larger thing here is helping readers find your book and your book find its readers. There are people who come to our site looking for a book, or they'll put it into Google and look at our link, and they'll buy it. And they know that's the title they want. And there are people who are looking for a book, but they don't know what they want yet. And that's the difference. You have to be able to find both of those. I already talked about availability. If we don't have it, we can't sell it. And people will look for something else.

Here is a really good example. You got a Nikon camera, and you go online to buy a manual. And you see that your manual is shipping in three to five business days. You're going to look for another manual that's available immediately. And that's what I mean by making sure your books are available. Cover images always used to sell books, and they still do if they're good cover images.

(continued on page 13)

Amazon (cont'd from page 12)

But online selling requires information because people are searching. Metadata is the new cover image, at least when you're selling books online. So you want to maximize the information about your authors and your titles available on our site, on any site, so that if people are searching for books about Kuala Lumpur, your book may surface even if it doesn't have Kuala Lumpur in the title or the synopsis. That means making sure your cover's up there, author photo, reviews. You can have events on your author page on our site, so if you're reading at Barnes & Noble, you can publicize that on our site. If you have a blog, it can automatically be fed to your author page. If you have a Twitter feed, it can automatically be fed to your author page. You can add videos; you can change your biography every day. And we're adding new stuff every day. The point is, the more new stuff that's up there, the more likely somebody will stumble upon your book or find it directly.

So, the detail page. There's the buy button, editorial reviews, the different editions for sale, the cover. If you click on the name of the author and they have an author page, you'll see their picture pop up, and you can then go to their author page and see the other books they have. And the key thing here is just make sure all this information is accurate and complete. Make sure your synopsis is up there. Make sure your editorial reviews are up there. There are different ways, depending on how you're selling through us. If you're selling through a distributor, you work through the distributor to make sure we have that information. If you're selling through Vendor Central or Advantage portals, use those. But

you want to keep that content complete and up to date. So that's the detail page.

Q: How much can the author change it if it were to get published by a publisher?

A: There are certain fields you can change. You can change editorial reviews. There are a number of things you can do as an author. We realize that many people don't search for books by title. They search by author. Just think about the ways bookstores are set up. So we came up with what is basically a home page for authors. Every author has a detail page, except it's about the author and the author's works. For publishers and authors, it's another way for readers to discover and buy your books. And it helps with the searching by author. For readers, it's one-stop shopping. Your blog, Twitter feed—all that stuff is there. It also boosts discoverability off the site as well as on the site because every author page uses the author's name as part of the URL. So from a search engine optimization standpoint, we see more and more that when people search for authors on Google and other sites, they are coming up with the Amazon author page.

Q: Amazon's author pages available through what website? Amazon.com?

A: Yes. If you're a reader and you're searching on our site, you'll find the author pages. If you're an author and you're searching on our site, you'll find it too. If you're shopping for books, you'll find the author page. We're creating new author pages all the time.

Q: I have worked on several books that are on Amazon. One of them was

a diet book of sorts. It got great reviews. A new edition or a new title came out. It has a lot of the same old material, and it has a lot of new material—completely reorganized. None of the great reviews for the first book are showing up under the new title. So do I have to start all over again?

A: Are you selling eBooks on the site, through a distributor?

Q: Through several distributors, actually.

A: You have to work with your distributor. And if it's close enough, we might have "here are the older edition reviews."

Q: I'm in the process of tagging an eBook, and I don't understand metadata. What is advisable and are there limits to how many characters?

A: Yes. Metadata is not like tagging. I would say those are different things.

Q: In terms of search ability for information, you're either looking by a title or you're looking by author or you're looking by certain keywords. So it's the keyword section, call it tagging, call it whatever—am I using the correct term?

A: Yeah, those are keywords, but there's a much better solution, which is to make sure your book's in Search Inside the Book. Then your book can be searched when somebody does a search. If your book has a big section about Kuala Lumpur, but your synopsis doesn't mention it and it's not part of the title, the book will never pop up when people search under Kuala Lumpur.

(continued on page 14)

Amazon (cont'd from page 13)

If your full text is part of our search engine—and again we're not showing the full text, we're just using it to identify hits—that will show up.

Q: I have that for my print book, but is that true also for eBooks?

A: Yes.

Let me talk about Author Central because I think it's key. I was talking about author pages. Anybody who's shopping on our site can see them. Author Central is a distinct community within Amazon. The website address is www.amazon.com/authors. And essentially, anybody who has a book as an author available for sale upon our site, whether it's self-published or independently published or published by Knopf, can join Author Central for free and take advantage of some of the things I'm about to talk about. If you're not an author, you won't be able to get into the site. And if you're not an author with your own login, you won't be able to get into your section of the site.

So what is it? It's a free service; it's a way to ensure accurate and up-to-date information both for your authors and for parts of your detail pages—again, getting as much information up there as you can about the title and the author. It's also, for an author, a great one-stop service center for questions and information about selling books, both on and off Amazon. There are great communities, but we're also adding to the resources that we offer. It really is about helping you and your author sell more books. We feel it's a great tool to help your book rise a little bit higher than the rest of the tidal wave.

Q: OK, so you load your information and it automatically goes into the author page?

A: Yes, you can add Twitter feeds off your blog, events, appearances. You can track historic sales and bestseller rankings. You can keep your bibliography up-to-date. You can keep your titles current. All your books show up faceup. And people can just see them with thumbnail images. You also can keep your titles engaging. And once you set it up, you don't have to look at it again—particularly Twitter feeds and blogs. Your blog postings will just come through as you post them on your own blog.

All right, sales numbers. We have a deal with BookScan where we make available historical book numbers. BookScan is print right now, and it covers—depending on what your book is about—about 75 percent of the market. For example, Costco is not included in BookScan sales. We take that information and make it available to you, and you alone, on the Author Central site. Only you can see your author information. What this is, is a heat map. So I can see specifically how many copies were sold in any number of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. It's sort of interesting. Let's say you were in Green Bay a month ago. You want to see how you did after you made a visit to the city. You sold four copies, you spent a week there. Something went wrong. Or maybe it's just not the right place for you. The point is, there are lots of different ways you can slice and dice this data up, and it's available for free, not only by geographical area but also by week.

Q: Do you have information on Kindle sales?

A: The reason that we don't offer it is, frankly, we think at this point, given our success, too proprietary. By giving that number away, we feel that we're giving our competitors more information than we should.

Q: What justifies an author page? I provide book editing services, I've edited about 90 published works, I have maybe three dozen books on Amazon, and maybe 10 of them say "by so and so" with my name.

A: You'll have to try it out. Try it out, see what happens. There are coauthors too. We've somehow figured out a way to manage that issue—if you're listed as an editor or a contributor in the metadata, you should be able to join.

Q: I was able to join. I was a coauthor on a rock-and-roll singer's book. I was able to get my own profile on Author Central, which means I can look at the book stats and see how it's doing.

A: This used to be the bane of everyone's existence. You also can get your historical bestseller rankings. Now remember, the rankings are an index. I have no idea if you moved five spots, how many more books you sold. It depends on the day, it depends on the time. They are constantly being updated. Because this shows where your bestseller ranking has been, let's say over the last year, you can break it down into weeks, months—you can do it by format.

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Amazon (cont'd from page 14)

This doesn't tell you how many copies you sold, but it gives you a relative gauge of when your book was selling well and when it wasn't. If you have more than one book, there's a way in Author Central for you to see all of your customer reviews for all of those books in one place. And you can sort by newest to oldest, you can do it by individual titles, or you can see just everything that you've had reviewed on the site. So it's a nice way to gather all together so you don't have to hop from page to page. And finally, there's lots of help and lots of information about Amazon and about Author Central. And this is key. We are, we were, a technology company. A lot of this is automated. And it has to be. We couldn't do what we do if it wasn't. I also know that this sort of runs counter to the way publishing has run for a lot of years, and I agree—I was part of it. We do have an incredibly strong, dedicated service team for authors who are coming through Author Central. If you send us an e-mail, you will get somebody who is really up to speed, hopefully, on what your question is. It's not a perfect service, but we really are trying. But it's also a great way to give us feedback about other things we could offer to make it more valuable.

OK, Search Inside the Book—also free. Most people know it because you can sort of see the book. It replicates the browsing experience. I think that's great. And we do see that books in SITB sell more. When your book is in Search Inside the Book, your full text is available when people are searching. Not that people can see it—there are very strong limits on how much they can see, but we can use your text to match

keywords and surface your book in the results. I think it is absolutely a no-brainer to make your book available for Search Inside the Book. It's free. Go to Amazon.com/sitb or talk to your distributor or your publisher.

Q: Does it work as well if your file is a PDF or do you recommend HTML?

A: Gosh, I have no idea. Some people send files, some people send in the actual book, and we scan it. I think it actually is one of the most flexible submission processes because we're not thinking about formatting or anything; we're just using it for the words. But that's a great question. Again, free. And they're easy to find.

It also powers what I call virtual hand selling, what everyone at Amazon calls automated and personalized merchandising. I like virtual hand selling. It's the tool that tells you, if you buy a garden book for a friend, you want all these other garden books. It can be annoying at times, but most of the time, it's not. For someone like me, it's really helped me find great new authors whom other people have liked. And it's all anonymous. But it also powers Search Inside the Book. For example, if you do a search for a particular term, like *triple convergence*, the next time you come back to the site, you might see all the books featuring that term pop up as a hand selling. "You searched for this. You might be interested in these other titles." That's only one example of what I would call hundreds of promotions around the site. You can't escape them in many ways. When you're browsing or just shopping, you'll see on each detail page some recommendations. When you put something in your cart, you'll see "People who bought

this also bought this." Virtually every book that's in our catalog is benefiting from this. As long as it's got a cover image and a title—it's free, it's automatic, it's working 24-7, and that's what I call automated or virtual hand selling.

Q: I have a new author, and she has nice little publicity blurbs from other well-known authors. How can I link it so that if somebody else was looking at this one author, that they might—

A: You can't. It's the sort of the wisdom of the crowd. The key thing there is that hopefully those blurbs and those comments are up on the detail page. Eventually, people will naturally gravitate between these two because of that, and then it will start to recommend them.

Q: Any idea if Amazon is going to use that as an advertising medium, where you can pay to have more promotions?

A: There are certain co-op availabilities that the largest publishers take advantage of in the same way they do at Barnes & Noble.

Q: But they're only available for the largest publishers?

A: Generally speaking, yes. We haven't figured out yet quite how to sell co-op on an author-by-author basis. One of our concerns is, who knows if it will be successful?

This is just a no-brainer. You have a website, people find your website, and they're going to be the most likely people to buy your book. Make it easy.

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Amazon (cont'd from page 15)

We have 15 different programs you can do. Links and banners are really easy to add to your site. They click on the link, they come to the detail page for your book, and they buy it. In addition to whatever royalties you would've gotten anyway, you get, like, four pennies more. Here's the thing about Associates. It's not about making money; it's about capturing your obvious sales. Here's the other thing about Associates. Barnes & Noble does it. Indie Next does it. There are lots of booksellers that offer associates programs. You didn't hear it from me, but it's in your interest to have every single one of them up there because some people would prefer to buy from an indie and would click on that link instead of ours.

Q: Weren't all the California associates booted off?

A: We're back!

Q: If you sell your book on your own website, why would you want to do that?

A: Well, do you want to sell it on your own website? Do you want to fulfill? You may not want to, then. But if you're an author or smaller publisher that doesn't do its own fulfillment, that's a great way to drive traffic. Do people want to buy the book? I'm not saying it's ideal for everyone—absolutely not. You have to make your choices there.

So, we've gone through a lot—print quickly, lots of distribution, unparalleled royalties, tools and services. The whole idea is to help you create and sell your books, though, and we all benefit from that.

Q: If you link your website to Amazon and someone comes to your website and clicks through to buy it on the Amazon website, is there any mechanism where you can get an e-mail address for your records?

A: No. It serves our interest, but it's also one of the reasons that we're trusted, I think, by customers.

So just briefly: KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing)—KDP.amazon.com. Createspace.com—that's POD. Amazon.com/author or /authors—either one should work. Search Inside the Book (for Author Central)—amazon.com/sitb. And then there's amazon.com/associates. And you don't have to do anything to enjoy the benefits of virtual hand selling.

Q: I read about six months or a year ago that Amazon was encouraging short books—30 pages or something like that?

A: No, we have a program called Kindle Singles, which are essentially ideas expressed at their natural length. The idea was to fill the gap in two ways—the dearth of investigative reporting and long-form journalism that is now going on. There used to be lots of magazines like the *Atlantic* and the *New Yorker*, and there aren't anymore. And so it's another outlet for authors who have shorter works to make them available. You might call them interstitial works—an author, in between books, puts out something short. And so Kindle Singles are sort of longer than a magazine article and shorter than a book. And you can check the site for information about that.

Q: Does all that apply to all the things you talked about today?

A: Yes. Kindle Singles is a curated program, so not everybody will make it in. It's dependent upon whether our editor likes it.

Thank you. A very entertaining crowd, I have to say.



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