

HOW SALES AND MARKETING WORK

Once you've finished writing your book, the next phase of the project begins: promoting, marketing, and selling it. We hope that this document provides you with a solid understanding of how this process works and how you can help make your book a success. If you have ideas or questions, please contact us. Your suggestions and participation can help make or break your book, so we welcome your involvement.

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Distribution

As you may know, O'Reilly Media is our distributor in the United States. This means that O'Reilly sells our books to a wide range of bookstores, including Barnes & Noble, Borders, regional chain stores, and key independent book stores, as well as online bookstores like Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble.com, and bookpool.com. We also have an extensive network of international distributors who sell our books in Canada, the UK, Europe, Australia, Southeast Asia, India, and South Africa.

Translations

No Starch Press books have been translated into 20 different languages, and we work with many international publishers to license these translations. We will present your book to publishers via email and at book fairs and encourage them to translate it. If we sign a contract to translate your book, we will let you know. If you hear from a foreign publisher who is interested in your book, or if you know that interest in your book's topic is especially strong in certain countries, please tell Leigh.

Special Sales

We are constantly looking to expand the number of places that sell our books. These special sales opportunities may include catalogs, resellers that don't specialize in books, or partnerships with software or hardware companies. If you have an idea for a place to sell your book, please let Leigh know.

Digital Books

We also work to increase the profile of our books online by enrolling them in the Google Print and Amazon.com Search Inside! Programs, and by sending the book files to our electronic book partners—including Safari, Books24x7, ebrary, and OSoft—for sale or licensing as e-books. We may also sell your book as a PDF on our website. If you do *not* want your book to be sold as a digital book, please let us know.

Publicity

Many authors ask us how the review process typically works. Do we solicit reviews from newspapers, magazines, and websites, or do they come to us asking for the privilege? The answer is yes, on both counts.

What happens is that we put out a press release a few months to a few weeks before your book is available for purchase. This press release is blasted to our media contacts, plus everyone in O'Reilly's database—literally thousands of reviewers and reporters. As a result, we will receive a varying number of requests to receive sample copies to consider for possible review. At this point, we may also come up with a list of folks to follow up with—publications and websites that *should* cover a book like yours but from whom we haven't received a review request.

A few weeks later—allowing enough time for the books to ship and for the reviewers to read them—we start following up with those who requested books in response to the press release. We ask about their plans to do a review, see if they want to interview you, and offer to provide more information. Whenever a review runs, we will let you know and send you the URL, where available. We also post them in the reviews section of your book's page on our website.

How You Can Help

You can do a lot to help promote your No Starch Press book! Here are a few suggestions. (See “Frequently Asked Questions” below for additional information.)

- Work your contacts. If you know someone who can help promote the book—by writing a review, linking to the book’s Amazon.com listing or No Starch Press page from a website, running a book giveaway contest, and so on—don’t be shy about asking them for help!
- Maintain a blog or website and keep it fresh. This is an excellent way to demonstrate your expertise and passion for your subject to media and potential book buyers.
- Identify well-known industry figures, associations, and so on that can champion your book and influence its target audience. We may be able to explore promotional opportunities with these individuals and groups.
- Sign up for Amazon Connect, a program that enables authors to provide information about themselves, interact with readers, and maintain a blog. Amazon.com is a key channel for selling books, so it never hurts to raise your visibility there.
- Write a contributed article, become active in a user group, and establish your voice in the community. Any channels you can exploit for raising your own visibility will be helpful in increasing awareness of your book.
- Go to conferences or events. No Starch Press has limited resources for pursuing speaking events on your behalf, but you shouldn’t be deterred from attending conferences where you can network and let people know about your book, whether or not you’ve secured a speaking engagement.
- Read and act on the suggestions found at <http://tinyurl.com/yusxwt>.

To summarize, please keep us informed, be available and responsive when we send you emails or call, and don’t be afraid to talk up your book to everyone you know!

Frequently Asked Questions

When will my book be in stores?

Once your book is bound and ships from the printer, it takes 2–3 weeks for it to be in stock on Amazon.com and 3–4 weeks for it to appear on shelves in Borders and Barnes & Noble stores. We will begin selling your book on our website about a week after the book is bound, and you should receive your complimentary copies at that time as well.

There's an error on Amazon.com or another website! What can I do?

If you find an error, please send an email to Leigh, and she will submit corrections to the relevant website. Please be patient, though. In a best-case scenario, changes will take 3–5 business days to appear; often they take longer. Amazon.com has a massive database and it can be very difficult to get changes to take effect. It also receives data from many sources, so it can take time to locate and correct all of the inaccuracies.

I want to sell my book at events or online. How do I get more books?

You are more than welcome to sell your book wherever and however you can. We do ask, however, that you try to avoid undercutting or directly competing with our other vendors. Please contact Leigh to order additional books. Your author discount is 60 percent off of the cover price of the book. We will send you an invoice for the books plus shipping costs. The invoice will be due in 30 days, and we accept payment by check, credit card, or PayPal.

I need additional books for my mom, my grandpa, and my next-door neighbor. How do I get more books?

You will receive a number of free books when your book is published (usually 20 but the exact number is specified in your publishing agreement). If you need additional copies for personal use, you can buy them from us at your 60 percent author discount.

When will I get my royalty statement? My check?

Our royalty periods are January 1–June 30 and July 1–December 31. We mail royalty statements 60 days after the close of the period and checks 90 days after the close of the period. You can expect to receive your statements in early March and early September and checks in early April and early October.

Do I earn anything on translations?

Yes! You will receive half of all income that we receive from translations, less any direct expenses such as taxes, commissions, and mailing costs. Depending on the license agreement we sign with the foreign publisher, this will range from a several hundred dollars to a few thousand dollars. You will see this revenue reported on your royalty statements.

How is my book selling?

Your royalty statement will tell you how your book has been selling. But if you can't wait for your statement (we don't blame you!) please contact Leigh for a sales update. We can generally tell you how many books we've sold to our

accounts and how fast those copies are selling. Since it takes 2–4 weeks for your book to make its way onto store shelves after it's been printed, we will only have significant sales data for you starting 2 months or so after the book comes out.

What does the Amazon.com sales rank mean?

Not much, frankly. These ranks indicate relative sales volume and they generally fluctuate pretty widely. A rank that is below 10,000 means that the book is selling pretty well by our standards, but the difference between a rank of 10,000 and a rank of 100,000 is usually no more than 10 books a week. The book's Amazon.com ranking is just one indicator of sales, and not a particularly reliable one at that. If you have specific questions about how many books have been sold by Amazon.com or by our other accounts, Leigh can give you sales data periodically. Just ask.

I have an idea for a great place to sell my book! How can I make that happen?

Please let us know! Email Leigh with your idea and she will pursue it. If you have contacts and would like to approach them yourself, go for it. Just let us know when it's time to send a sample copy or when the company is ready to place an order, and we'll take it from there.

I have an idea for a great place to review my book! How can I make that happen?

We encourage all authors to work their personal contacts to secure media coverage. We are happy to get in touch with these people on your behalf, and we recommend that you send Camille a list (with email addresses and URLs) of all the potential reviewers you know personally or by reputation so that we can pitch them and send them each a press release. Alternatively, if you already have relationships and would like to contact those people yourself, that's fine too. You can let us know the outcome and we will send books to reviewers who request them. It is very important that you keep us posted on any interactions you have with the media or reviewers, however, so we can avoid duplicating efforts by contacting the same people or others at the same publication. We also watch for coverage and follow up with the writer to make sure the review runs as expected, and we don't want to bother them with the same questions about the same book twice.

How can I get my book reviewed on Slashdot?

Unfortunately, we have no control over the Slashdot process. We can—and do—pitch individuals whose reviews have been posted on Slashdot in the past, but all they can do is submit a review once they've written it and wait to see if it's chosen for the site. This can take a week or a month or more.

I know a couple of people who could review the book on their websites or blogs. How can I make sure they receive copies?

We're happy to provide free reviewer copies of your book to people who can review or otherwise promote the book. If the person's website or blog is not widely read, please encourage them to post their review to Amazon.com and submit it to Slashdot and other relevant larger sites. Please send any review copy requests to Camille.

Someone just contacted me about reviewing my book or interviewing me. What do I do?

The critical thing is to keep No Starch Press in the loop, whether you want to handle the inquiry yourself or hand it over to us to respond.

Summary

In closing, we're going to work hard to promote and sell your book. You also have an important role in making your book a success. We welcome any and all suggestions that you have for media to pitch, sales leads to pursue, and creative marketing strategies to implement, and we encourage you to talk up your book to the world.