

Indie Publishing Lecture #2

Niche Your Book on Amazon

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Like it or not, Amazon is the 800 pound gorilla in the room of book sales. If you want your self-publishing business to take off, you must write books that people buy — on Amazon. (And other places too 😊). This lecture covers how to find the topics you love to write AND that people love to read.

Social Media Isn't Everything

There are at least two good reasons you should look beyond social media to sell your book:

- With social media the people who buy your book probably have varied reading interests — the unifying thread is they know YOU! This makes it hard for Amazon and other algorithms to profile your “typical reader.”
- No matter how many followers you have, you don't have as many as Amazon. Amazon wants to sell books. If you can convince Amazon that your book is worth showing to readers, you will automatically generate views and sales.

There are many things to do to get your book noticed by Amazon — but you must start by writing a high-quality book on a topic that is of interest to many paying customers so that you will rank high on Amazon.

In this talk you'll learn how to niche your book so Amazon starts to take notice. I'm putting this lecture up front because many selling self-publishers find the categories they can do well in first, and THEN write the book(s) to fit.

CATEGORIES

How are Books Classified?

Categories describe your book's subject matter for easier identification and precise placement in libraries and bookstores.

BISAC subject codes (Book Industry Standards and Communications) are the standardized classification system. There are about 600 BISAC codes that describe topic/subtopic. When listing your book on Amazon you normally get two BISAC codes to describe it.

Amazon has also created its own system of over 12,000 categories describing topic/subtopic/niche that give much higher resolution for your book genre. Normally Amazon will choose Amazon categories for your book based on your BISAC codes and other information. However it's much better to choose your Amazon categories yourself since you can select those for which you can get #1 ranking and thus an *Amazon Bestseller* label that shows on your listing.

Secret Marketing Trick

When listing your book Amazon normally gives you two categories. However there is a secret way to put your book into ten! This multiplies your chances to reach bestseller status. We'll cover this trick in *Handout #5: Marketing*.

Your Secret Weapon: KDSPY

KDSPY (www.kdsPY.com) is your secret weapon. It analyzes individual categories/subcategories/niches (as well as rankings and keywords) to give you invaluable information for helping you position your book to sell.

The KDSPY software works on PC, Mac, Chromebook, and Linux machines and can be installed on two devices. This is a one-time purchase for \$59 at the time of this writing. It is truly an amazing tool.

How Do I Use KDSPY to Find Good Categories?

Keep a list of your results.

Go to Amazon and click on “Bestsellers” at the top and then scroll down to “Books” and/or “Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks.” Select reasonable broad categories and start narrowing down to find niches. Test them by running KDSPY.

KDSPY tells you if your category has enough buyers to be profitable and if it’s difficult to join in. For the top twenty books it shows average sales rank, average monthly revenue, and average number of reviews. It also analyzes the number of sales in 24 hours you’d need to make #1 and #20 in the category — useful to see if you might be able to place in this category.

How Can I Find More Category Ideas?

Finding niched categories takes some time because you want to choose good ones. Do more research by looking for comparable books to yours.

Find the comparable books’ categories by inputting the (10 digit) ISBN or ASIN (Amazon Standard Identification Number) into the tool at Nerdy Book Girl: <https://nerdybookgirl.com/book-category-hunter>.

Don’t forget to write these categories down.

What Do I Record?

Remember that you can choose ten categories so you're going to have to analyze as many as possible to find the best ones. If you're stuck get some ideas by looking at categories of comparable books.

KDSPY analyzes the top twenty books in a category.

Create a spreadsheet to record the following variables:

Category Trail

Write down the complete category trail. This will look like: *Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Reference > Writing, Reference, & Publishing Guides > Fiction*

Top Book Stats

Write down the top book's ABSR (Amazon Best-Selling Rank) and the number of sales in 24 hours it would take to reach that level. You can find sales info by running your mouse over the orange "i" in the left-hand top corner.

#20 Book Stats

Write down the #20 book's ABSR and the number of sales in 24 hours it would take to reach that level.

How Do I Choose?

Make sure your categories are applicable to your book. For example if you've written a SF novel you don't want to put it in the plumbing section even if you can rank there.

Choose a few big categories but also many that you think you can do well in. To place in a category 159 sales in a day is steep; three in a day is doable.

KEYWORDS

Keywords are the words or phrases searched for on Amazon and other search engines. Just like categories, you want to choose keywords that you are likely to rank well in so that Amazon pulls your book up when the keyword is searched for.

On Amazon you can enter up to seven keywords, and keywords can also be used in your title and back cover copy (but don't overuse them there or you might get flagged).

Where Can I Find Keyword Ideas?

Don't forget to write down your keyword ideas.

Word Cloud

KDSPY has a word cloud function that shows you the top keywords used in different categories.

Amazon Autofill

Start typing in your keyword on Amazon's search bar and see the words it auto-fills for you.

Also try this trick: write a word related to your book, space, and "A." (for example, "writing A"). Repeat with "B" and so forth. You can sometimes get great ideas from the autofill function.

How Do I Choose Good Keywords?

KDSPY does a great analysis and ranking of keywords to help you choose the ones that are searched for and yet you still are likely to rank well in. List in order of priority at least seven. You can use different keywords for print and ebook to increase your traffic even more.