

# WELCOME!!!



# WHAT WE'LL TALK ABOUT TODAY

- 1. 10 Trends Shaping Future of Publishing**
- 2. Secrets to Ebook Publishing Success**



**Smashwords™**  
your ebook. your way.

# TOP 10 TRENDS IMPACTING THE FUTURE OF PUBLISHING



**ROCK  
AND  
ROLL!!!**

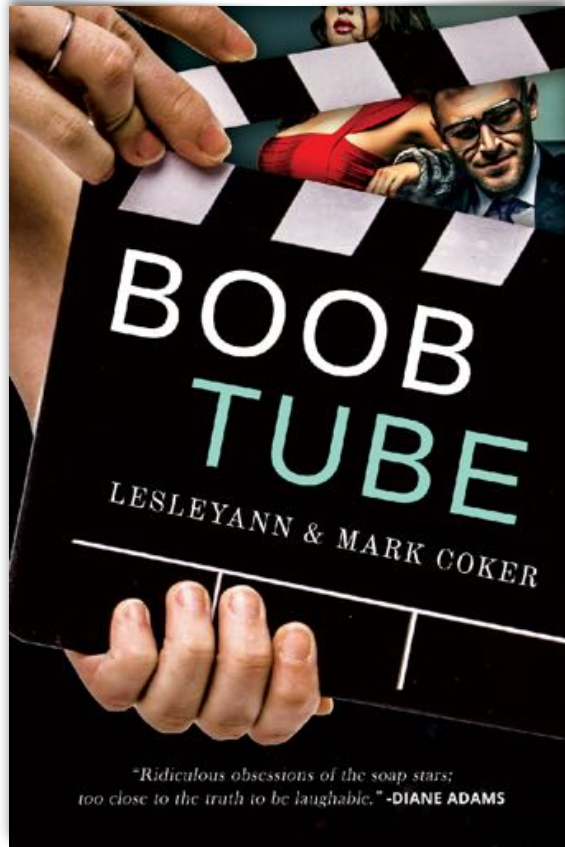


**THAT WASN'T ME**





**REJECTED**



**REJECTED**



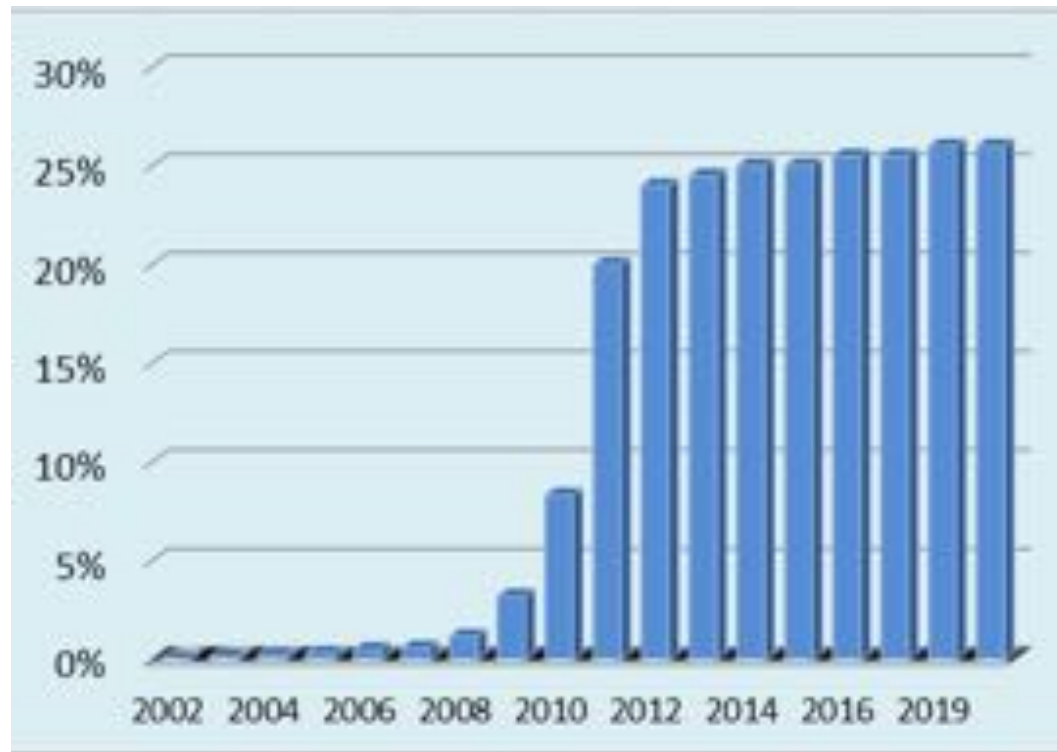
TREND 1

# THE RISE OF EBOOKS





# CONSUMER EBOOK SALES U.S.



- Chart represents dollar sales.
- Unit volume tells a different story

Source: Association of American Publishers, publishers.org through 2011.  
2012-2019 Smashwords estimate



# WHY EBOOKS ARE HOT

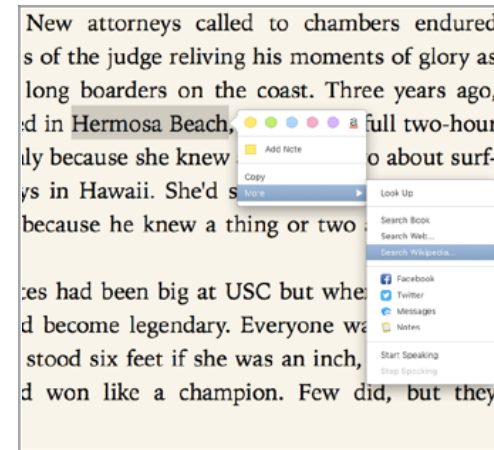
- **Screens offer a better reader experience than paper**

- Changeable font size
- Portable and compact
- Screens getting better
- Dictionary/Wikipedia/Hyperlinks

- **Better consumer experience**

- ▶ Price
- ▶ Convenience
- ▶ Selection

A B C D E F G



TREND 2

**EBOOKS ARE  
GOING GLOBAL**



# THE GLOBAL EBOOK OPPORTUNITY

- **Logistics**
- **Markets outside US are growing**
- **Retail expansion**
  - ▶ Amazon, Apple Books, Kobo, Scribd, Smashwords



TREND 3

# PUBLISHING IS DEMOCRATIZED



# PUBLISHING IS DEMOCRATIZED

## **12 Years Ago Publishers Controlled...**

- Printing Press
- Distribution
- Knowledge

**The Power Center in Publishing is Shifting**



TREND 4

# THE RISE OF INDIE AUTHORS



# THE RISE OF INDIE AUTHORS

- Global cultural phenomenon
- All authors are “indie”
- Traditional vs. Indie? — Silly debate.
- Benefits of indie ebook publishing





# ADVANTAGES

**Of indie ebook authors...**



FASTER



# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION



NEVER GO OUT OF PRINT



CONTROL



**LOWER EXPENSES**



**SET LOWER PRICES**



EARN MORE PER BOOK





QUADRUPLE +



# INDIE EBOOK AUTHORS EARN HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF LIST PRICE

**Indie**  
**60-80%**

**Traditional**  
**12-17%**

★ At \$2.99, indies earn about \$2. Traditional author would have to price at \$10-\$15.

★ Lower price = Reach more readers = More sales at higher profit per sale



TREND 5

# INDIES HITTING BESTSELLER LISTS



# INDIES HITTING BESTSELLERS LISTS

- High quality + Low prices
- Genre specific @ retailers, mainstream media
- Indies taking marketshare



**BARNES  
& NOBLE**

amazon



The  
New York  
Times



WSJ

TREND 6

# SELF-PUBLISHING STIGMA EVAPORATING



# SELF PUBLISHING STIGMA EVAPORATING

- **12 years ago**

- ▶ Self-pub option of last resort

- ▶ Publishing was print centric

- ▶ Stigma: Self-published author = Failed writer



# SELF PUBLISHING STIGMA EVAPORATING

## •Today

- ▶Self-publishing option of first resort (viable, often more lucrative)
- ▶Can't argue with the success and opportunity
- ▶Indies pioneering best practices
- ▶Indies inspiring next generation of authors



TREND 7

# THE EBOOK GLUT





TREND 7

# THE EBOOK GLUT



# EBOOK GLUT

- Retailers accept all ebooks
- Anyone can publish
- Ebooks never go out of print
- Supply outstripping demand
  - ▶ Less sales for all
  - ▶ Price competition
- Traditional ebook authors suffer from higher prices



TREND 8

# AMAZON EXPLOITS THE EBOOK GLUT



# AMAZON EXPLOITS THE EBOOK GLUT

- **Brilliant company. *Scary* smart.**
- **Started with books. Authors lifeblood of industry**
- **Helped spark democratization of publishing**
  - Indie author revolution
  - Power center shift
  - Indies taking marketshare
  - Indies are the future



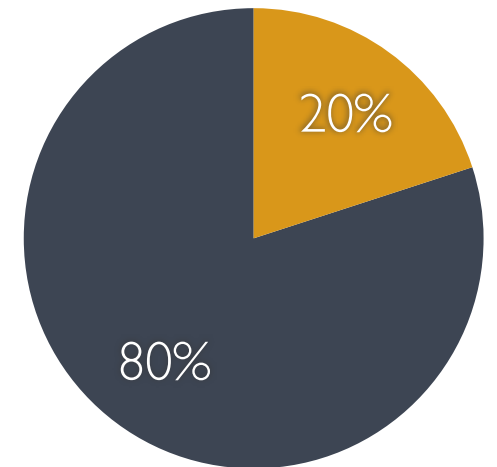
# AMAZON'S BUSINESS MODEL (THE BASICS)

- Lowest prices
- Biggest inventory
- Commodity driven
- Operate at break even



# AMAZON EBOOK SELF-PUBLISHING

- **KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing)**
- **KDP Select**
  - ▶ Preferential access to readers
  - ▶ ~1.5 million titles enrolled



# INDIE AUTHOR'S DILEMMA

1. Go exclusive and gain preferential treatment?
2. Go wide and get buried?



# THINK ABOUT IT



- **1.5 million books exclusive to single retailer**
  - ▶ 1.5 million = critical mass
- **Readers force to leave favorite retailer**
  - ▶ More retail closures
  - ▶ Dependence on fewer retailers





**TREND 9**

**KINDLE UNLIMITED UNDERMINES  
MARKET FOR SINGLE COPY  
SALES**



# WHAT IS KU?

- **Monthly ebook subscription service**
  - ▶ Powered by KDP Select
- **Authors paid from a shared pool**
  - ▶ Author royalty divorced from list price
- **Readers trained to consume for “free”**
  - ▶ \$0.99 starts to feel expensive



# WHY BUY A BOOK?

(EVEN FOR \$0.99)

The screenshot shows the Amazon product page for 'A Shade of Vampire (New & Lengthened 2015 Edition) Kindle Edition' by Bella Forrest. The page features a search bar with the query 'A shade of vampire', a navigation menu, and a promotional banner for 'Blood City'. The product details include a 5-star rating from 9,693 reviews and a 'Best Seller' badge. The pricing section shows the Kindle price at \$0.99 (marked as 'kindleunlimited'), with arrows pointing from this price to the 'Read for Free' button on the right. Other format options like Hardcover (\$19.99), Paperback (\$8.99), and Audiobook (\$0.00) are also visible. The right sidebar contains a 'Read for Free' button, a 'Buy now with 1-Click' button, and a subscription option for Kindle Daily Deals.

SEE SOMETHING NEW, EVERY DAY. TAKE A LOOK

amazon  Prime Video Stream movies & TV show

Deliver to: Jim San Jose 95127

Departments Your Pickup Location Browsing History Jim's Amazon.com Today's Deals Gift Cards

Books Advanced Search New Releases Amazon Charts Best Sellers & More The New York Times Best Sellers Children's Books Textbooks Textbook Rentals Set Up Your Books Best Books of the Month Kindle eBooks

**BLOOD CITY** The Star Wars galaxy delivered to your door. Get 3-6 collectibles, including exclusive vinyl Pop!

Back to search results for "A shade of vampire"

**A Shade of Vampire (New & Lengthened 2015 Edition) Kindle Edition**

by Bella Forrest (Author)

★★★★★ 9,693 customer reviews

#1 Best Seller in Teen & Young Adult Paranormal Romance

See all 6 formats and editions

<b>Hardcover</b> \$19.99	<b>Paperback</b> \$8.99	<b>Kindle</b> \$0.99 <small>kindleunlimited</small>	<b>Audiobook</b> \$0.00
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9 Used from \$16.39 | 14 New from \$18.84 | 42 Used from \$4.34 | 11 New from \$2.79 | 1 Collectible from \$139.50

Read with Kindle Unlimited to also enjoy access to over 1 million more titles. \$0.99 to buy

Free with your Audible trial

With over 7 million copies sold in the series and more than 169,500 worldwide 5-star reviews, *A Shade of Vampire* will transport fans of *Twilight*, *The Mortal Instruments* and *The Vampire Diaries* to a world unlike any other...

Print List Price: \$9.99  
Kindle Price: **\$0.99** Save \$9.00 (90%)

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Unlimited reading. Over 1 million titles. [Learn more](#)

**Read for Free**

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**Buy now with 1-Click**

Subscribe to Kindle Daily Deals and receive emails featuring books up to 80% off and occasional recommendations for you.

Deliver to: Kindle Cloud Reader



# WHY BUY A BOOK?

(EVEN FOR \$0.99)

**A Shade Of Vampire** Paperback – December 17, 2012  
by Bella Forrest (Author)  
★★★★☆ (5,658 customer reviews)  
Book 1 of 64 in the A Shade of Vampire series

See all 6 formats and editions

Hardcover  
\$19.99

9 Used from \$16.41  
14 New from \$18.86

With over 7 million downloads, the A Shade of Vampire Diaries to a world where vampires and werewolves coexist.

On the evening of a full moon, Bella Forrest is awakened by a creature she cannot wake. A quiet evening walk along a beach brings her face to face with a dangerous pale creature that craves much more than her blood.

Read more

Read this book for free with Kindle Unlimited



**kindleunlimited**

Read this title for free and explore over 1 million titles, thousands of audiobooks, and current magazines with Kindle Unlimited.

Read now with the free Kindle app available on iOS, Android, Mac & PC.

No, thanks Yes, I want to read for free with Kindle Unlimited



## KU UNDERMINES SINGLE COPY SALES

- Industry depends on single copy sales
- Thousands of reasons not to purchase single copies
- \$0.99 looks expensive

**~ You are running a business! ~**

- Can't put food on the table with readership alone
- Dominant retailer says your books cost too much



TREND 10

# EBOOK PUBLISHING IN A COVID-19 WORLD





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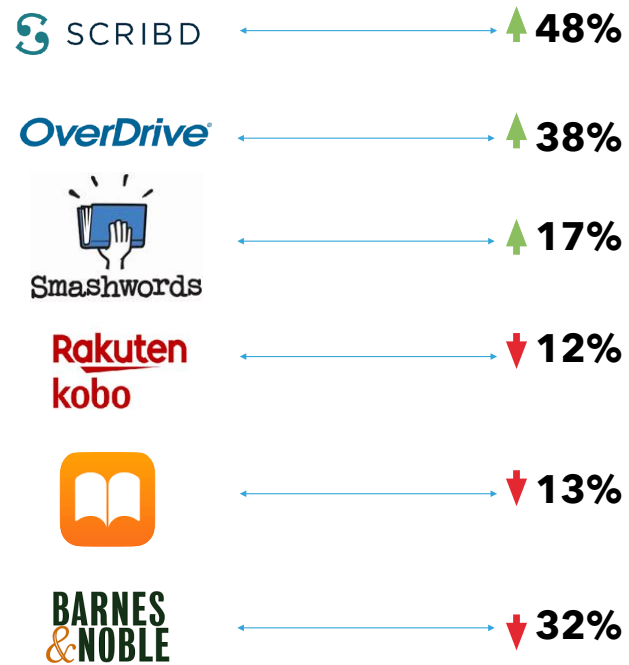


Image copyright World Economic Forum





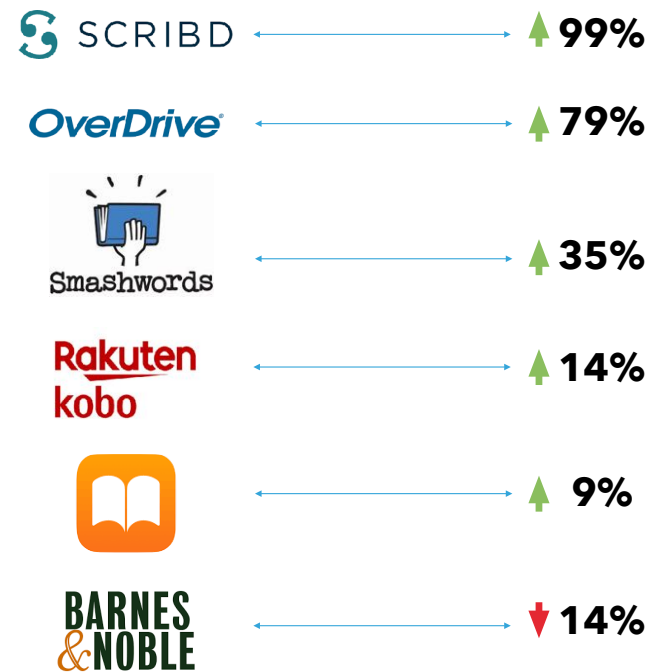
# MARCH 2020 VS. MARCH 2019



Figures are from top 6 retail channels March 2020. 475,000+ titles distributed.

# APRIL 2020 VS. APRIL 2019

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# MAY 2020 VS. MAY 2019

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 SCRIBD   **67%**

  
Smashwords   **42%**

*OverDrive*   **31%**

**Rakuten**  
**kobo**   **24%**

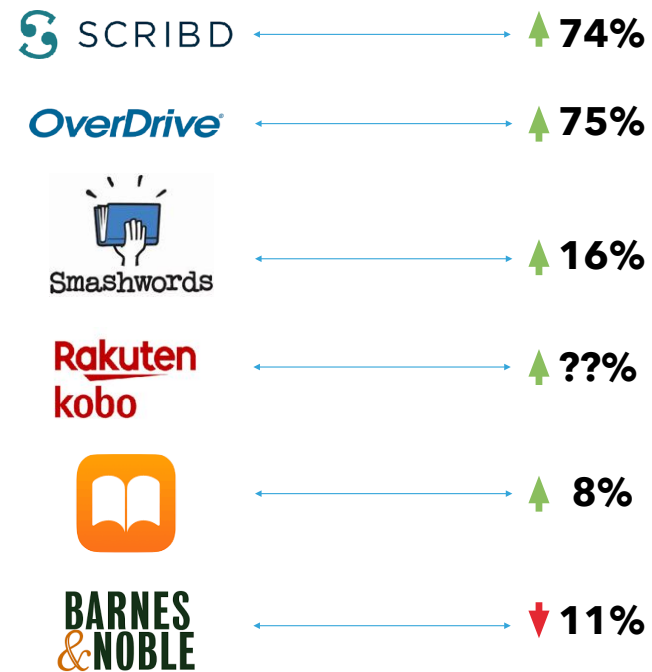
   **20%**

**BARNES**  
**& NOBLE**   **15%**



# JUNE 2020 VS. JUNE 2019

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## **3 THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW**

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1. Put your books everywhere
2. Price lower
3. Build a platform you can control

# IN SUMMARY

- 12 years ago - Publishers called the shots
- Today - Power center shifted to YOU
- Authors are the lifeblood of this industry
- Never been a better time to be an author
- Great power and great responsibility
- Make wise choices...



**THE DECISIONS YOU  
MAKE TODAY WILL  
SHAPE A GENERATION**





THE FUTURE OF THE  
PUBLISHING INDUSTRY  
IS IN YOUR HANDS



**YOU**

**ARE THE FUTURE OF PUBLISHING**



# Q & A





**Smashwords™**  
your ebook. your way.

# THE SECRETS OF THE BESTSELLING EBOOK AUTHORS



**PLATFORMS LIKE SMASHWORDS  
MAKE E-PUBLISHING AND  
DISTRIBUTION EASY**



BUT...



# REACHING READERS IS DIFFICULT\*

**\*Most books don't sell well**



# THE POWER CURVE





**SECRET ONE**



# #1 A GOOD BOOK IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

- **A great book is your best marketing**

- ▶ Emotionally satisfying extremes
- ▶ Superfans = mini marketing teams



- **You are a publisher! Act like one.**

- **Be fanatical about quality**

- ▶ Beta readers
- ▶ Pro editing



**SECRET TWO**



# #2 READERS PREFER LONGER EBOOKS

- **Six years of Smashwords Survey**  
**Data leaves no doubt:**

- ▶ Longer Books sell better

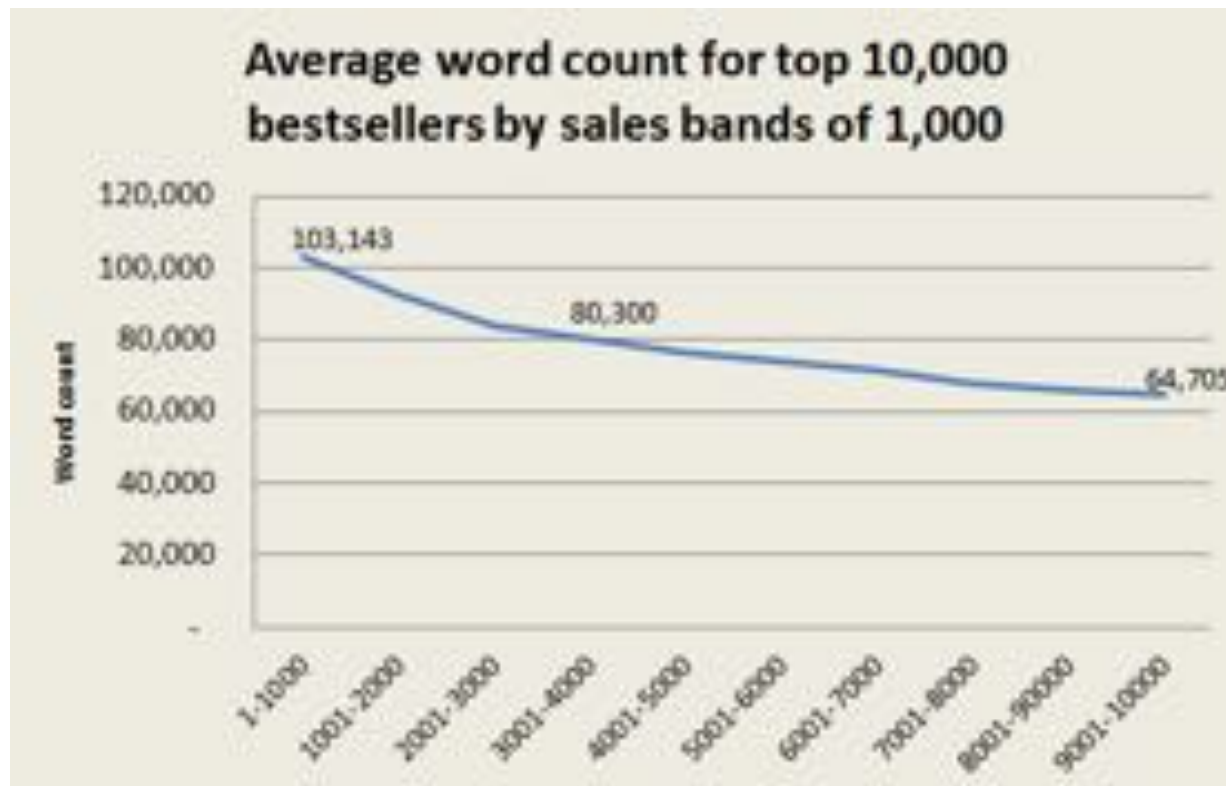
- **But why do longer books sell better?**

- ▶ Value for the money

- ▶ Readers are gluttons for pleasure



# AVERAGE WORD COUNT TOP 10,000 BESTSELLERS



# SECRET THREE



# #3 CREATE A SUPERB COVER

- **Covers are important**

- ▶ First impression

- **Covers must be**

- ▶ Matched to target audience

- ▶ Professional

- ▶ Arresting as a thumbnail

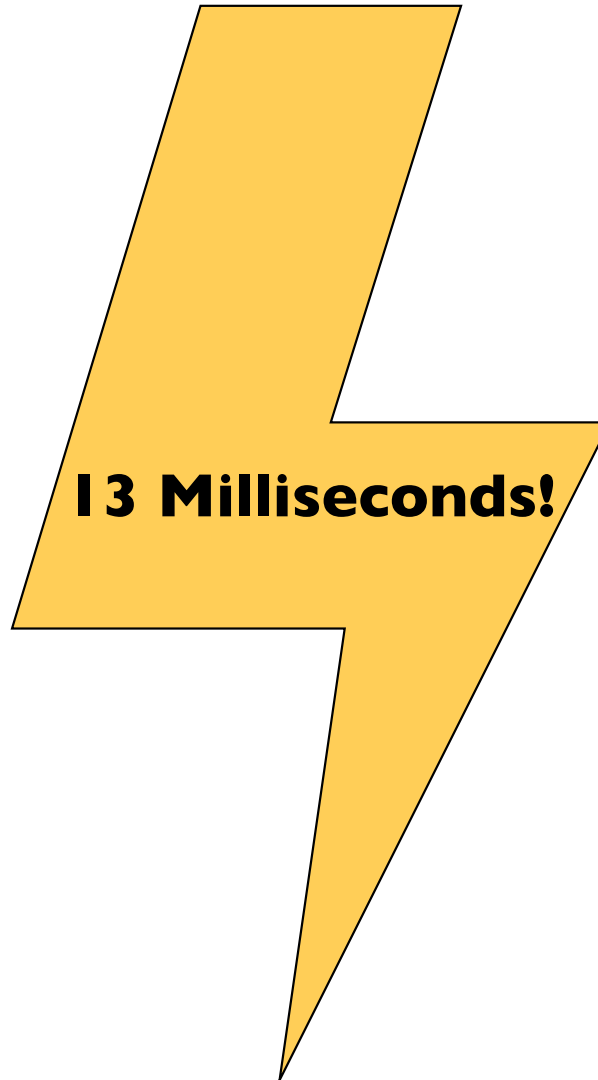
- **Great covers make a promise**

- **Consider hiring a pro because...**



“...**high speed** indicates  
to us that what **vision**  
does is **finds concepts.**”

—Mary Potter  
Professor, Brain & Cognitive Sciences  
MIT



“**Emotion is** the  
**fastest** path to the brain.”

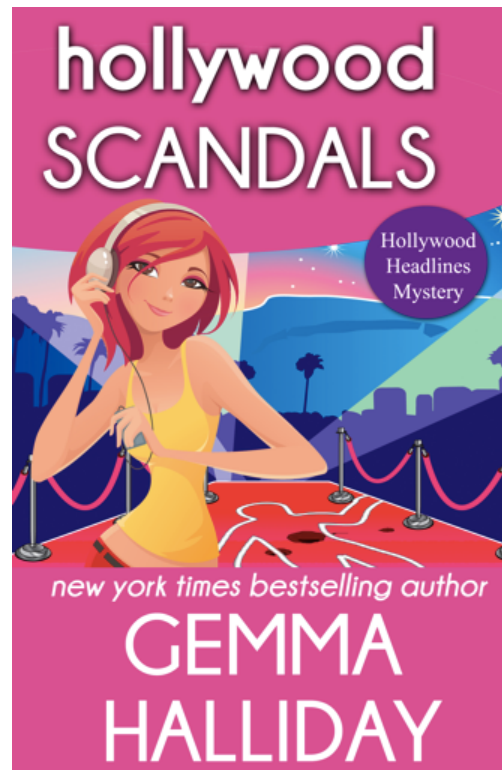
—Carmine Gallo  
*Five Stars: Communication Secrets to Get  
From Good to Great*



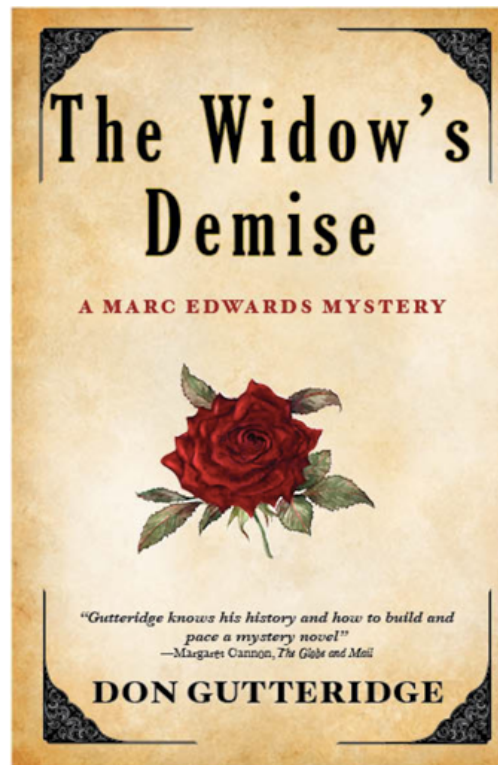
# GREAT COVERS MAKE A PROMISE



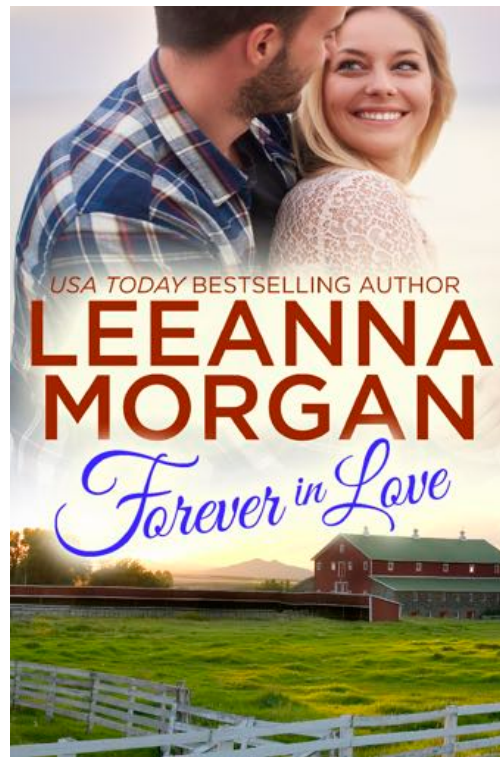
# GREAT COVERS MAKE A PROMISE



# GREAT COVERS MAKE A PROMISE



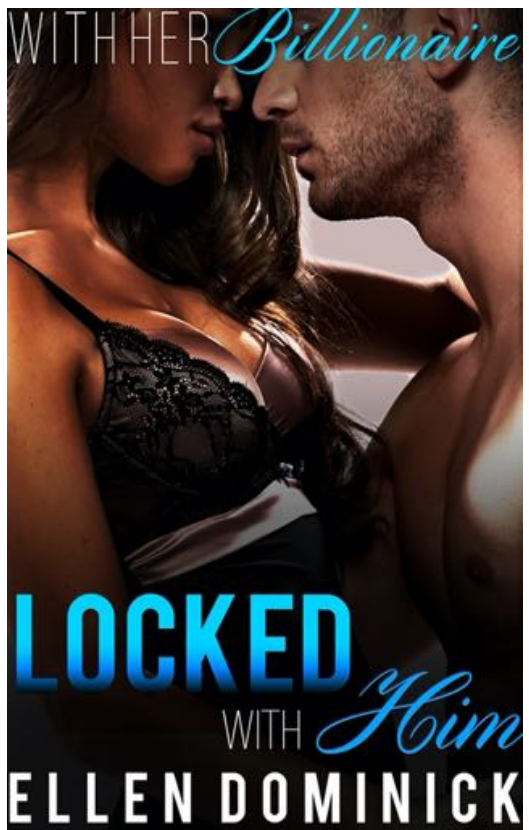
# GREAT COVERS MAKE A PROMISE



# GREAT COVERS MAKE A PROMISE



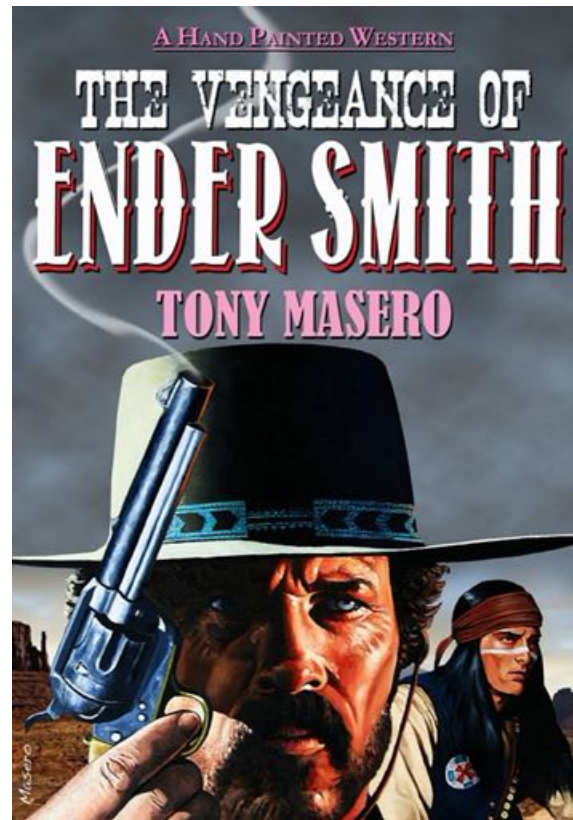
# GREAT COVERS MAKE A PROMISE



# GREAT COVERS MAKE A PROMISE

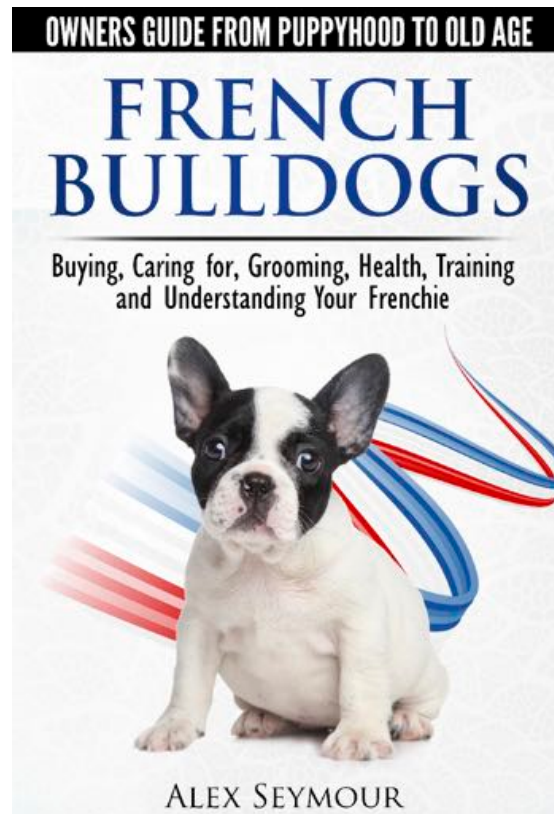


# GREAT COVERS MAKE A PROMISE





# GREAT COVERS MAKE A PROMISE



Chrome File Edit View History Bookmarks Window Help

www.amazon.com/r/ref=lp\_283151\_or\_a\_231%3Fpf\_rd\_p%3D15527C483A27100082C483A2788b%3D1000&pf\_rd\_p%3D15527C483A27100082C483A2788b%3D1000&pf\_rd\_p%3D15527C483A27100082C483A2788b%3D1000

**Condition:** New (21% off)  
**Availability:** In Stock

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**Witty Sexes (Book Two of the...)**  
 by E. L. James  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.77

**Witty Sexes (Book Two of the...)**  
 by E. L. James  
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**Sally Hagen**  
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 Mass Market Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.25

**The Night Circus**  
 by Erin Morgenstern  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.49

**Reverencing Love**  
 by Patricia Reilly  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.49

**The Art of Hearing Heartbeats**  
 by Jan-Philipp Sendler, Jan-Philipp Sendler  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.79

**Three Sisters (Secretary Island)**  
 Susan Warrick  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.49

**286,000**

**Guilt Pleasure Romances**

**Secret for You: A Christmas Novel**  
 by Sylvia Day  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.74

**RUSH**  
 by Sara Bareilles  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.99

**Until the End of Time: A Novel**  
 by Danielle Steel  
 Hardcover  
 \$14.99 \$17.97

**Beautiful Secret**  
 by Christina Lauren  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.99

**Notorious Nineteen**  
 by Janet Evanovich  
 Hardcover  
 \$14.99 \$19.99

**Nothing Cheaper: A Novel**  
 by James Wallace  
 Paperback  
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**The Heat: A Novel**  
 by Stephanie Meyer  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.79

**Reverence: A Novel**  
 by Julia Kemmer  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$9.29

**Reverence**  
 by S.G. Stephens  
 Paperback  
 \$14.99 \$10.29

**Starting Over: A Season Street Novel**  
 by Debra Debrecen  
 Hardcover  
 \$14.99 \$19.29

**286,000**

**Vampire Romance Hot New Releases**

**Immense Power: After the Apocalypse Novel**  
 by Lindsay Searles  
 Kindle Edition  
 \$9.99

**Edge of Dawn: A Midnight Street Novel**  
 by Lara Adrian  
 Kindle Edition  
 \$12.99

**Orange: The Hunter Vampire Legend**  
 by Savannah Sanders  
 Kindle Edition  
 \$9.99

**GET YOUR BAND OUT OF THE GARAGE**  
 by J.R. Rasmussen  
 Kindle Edition  
 \$9.99

**Love at Last: A Novel of the Black...**  
 by J.R. Rasmussen  
 Hardcover  
 \$19.99

**Black City (A BLACK WINGS NOVEL)**  
 by Christine Marty  
 Kindle Edition  
 \$7.99

**Legends of Blood**  
 by J.R. Rasmussen, Virginia Carroll  
 Kindle Edition  
 \$9.99

**286,000**

Page 1 of 2



# SECRET FOUR



# #4 HAVE MULTIPLE BOOKS IN THE PUBLISHING PIPELINE

- **Bestselling authors offer deep backlists or series**
- **Queue multiple books for newer authors**
- **Every new published book is an opportunity**
  - ▶ Cross-promote other titles (series, backlist)
  - ▶ Build your brand, fanbase & reader trust



# SECRET FIVE



# #5 ADD THESE SECTIONS TO BACK MATTER

## **1. About the author**

- ▶ Short bio

## **2. Other books by Your Name**

- ▶ Existing
- ▶ Upcoming (preorders!)

## **3. Excerpts/Sample**

## **4. Connect with the author**



# SECRET SIX



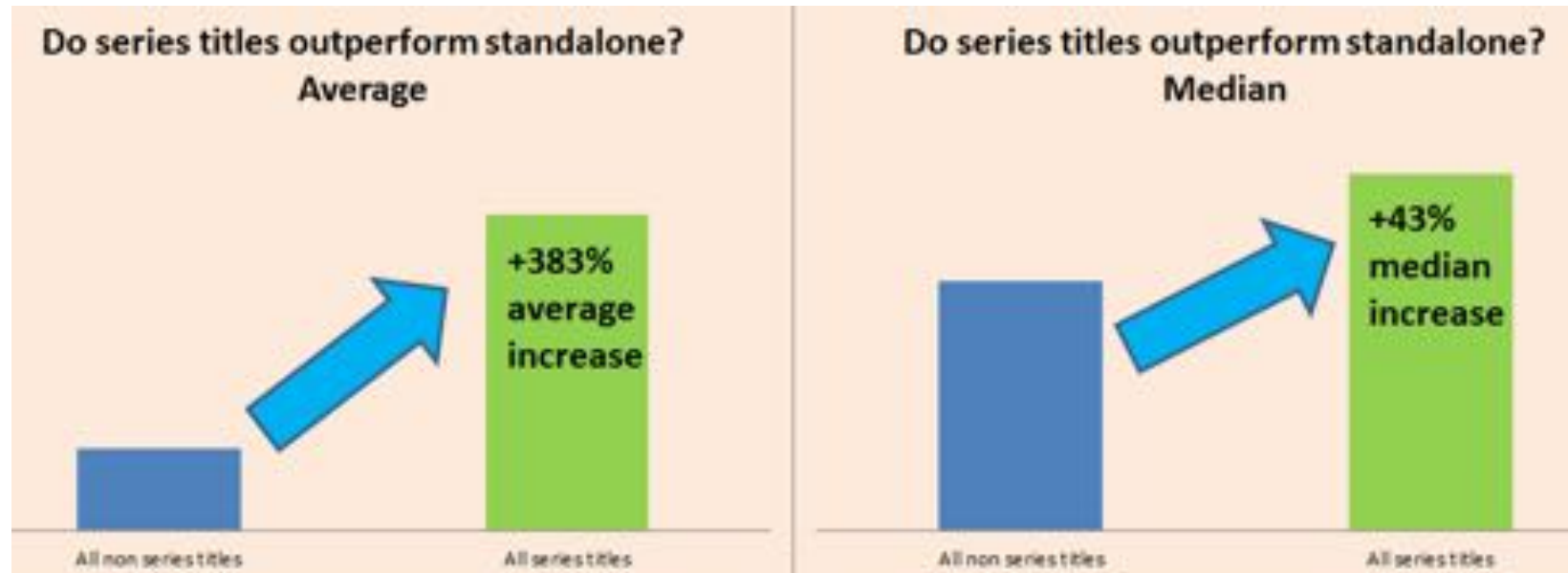
# #6 PUBLISH SERIES

- **Series books sell better than standalone books**
- **Series books give readers more time to become emotionally invested**
  - And more opportunity to enjoy dividends off that investment
- **Series help readers stay on your train**





# SERIES BOOKS SELL MORE THAN STANDALONE



# SECRET SEVEN



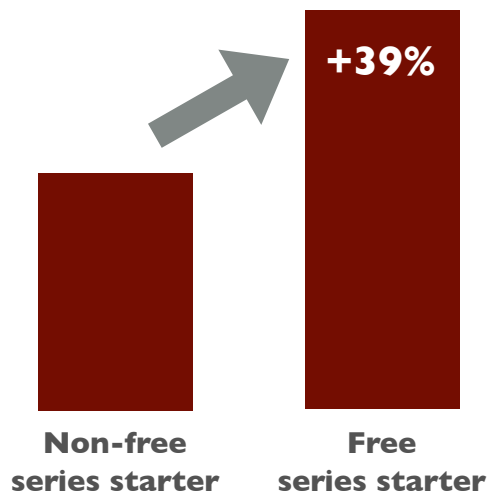
# #7 EXPERIMENT WITH FREE SERIES STARTERS

- **Highest grossing Smashwords authors offer at least one free book**
- **Power of Free**
  - ▶ Drives awareness to backlist
  - ▶ Eliminates financial risk
  - ▶ ~28x more downloads
  - ▶ Turbocharges a series

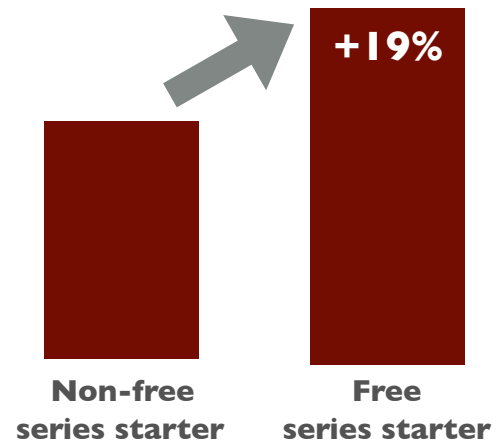


# FREE SERIES STARTERS BOOST SERIES SALES

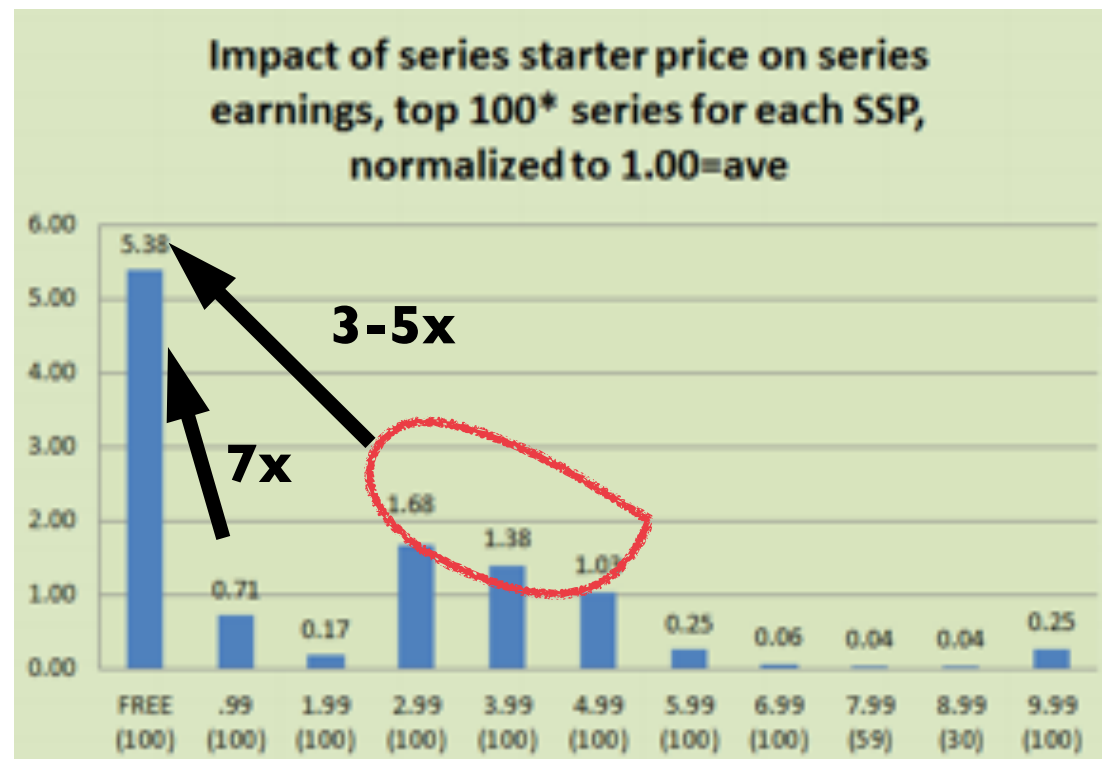
**Among top 100 bestselling series w/free starters (avg)**



**Among top 100 bestselling series w/free starters (median)**



# IMPACT OF SERIES STARTER PRICE ON OVERALL SERIES EARNINGS, TOP 100\*



Normalized relative sales for each SSP group.  
Top 100 except where noted



# SECRET EIGHT



# #8 OCCUPY MULTIPLE PRICE POINTS

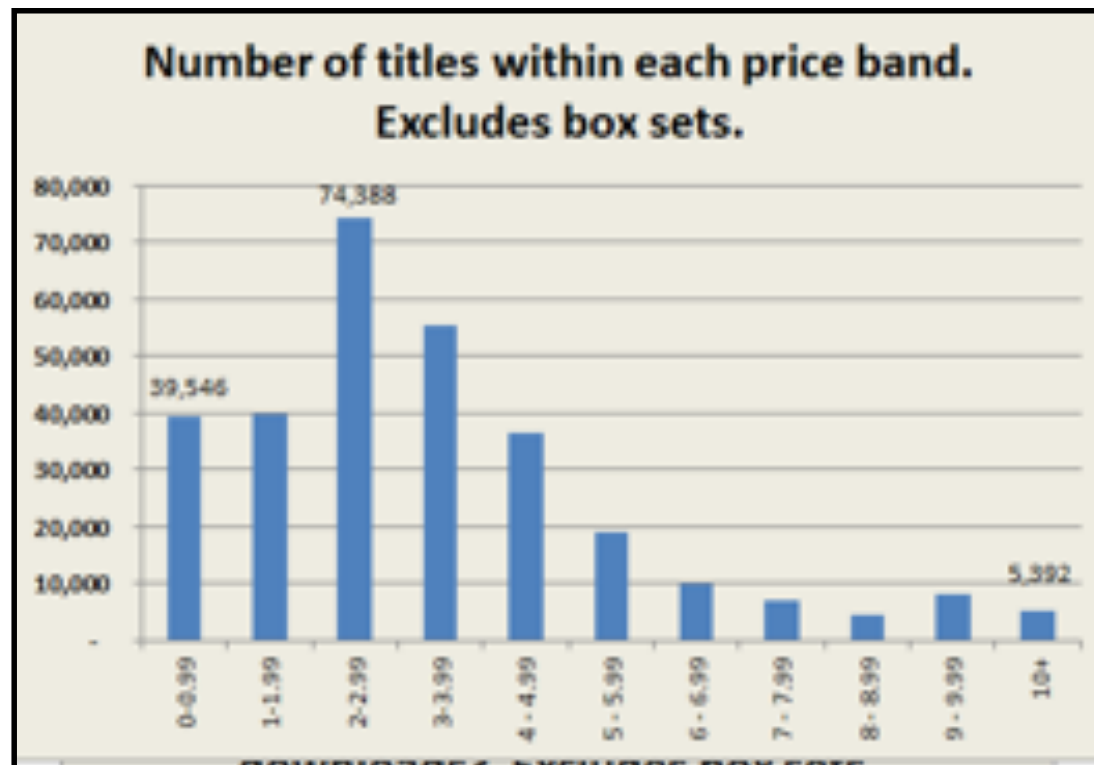
- **Readers harbor pricing bias**

1. No two readers react the same to the same price
2. Some flock to lower prices, some avoid low prices, some prefer higher-priced books

- **By offering multiple price points, your books are more accessible and more desirable to more readers.**

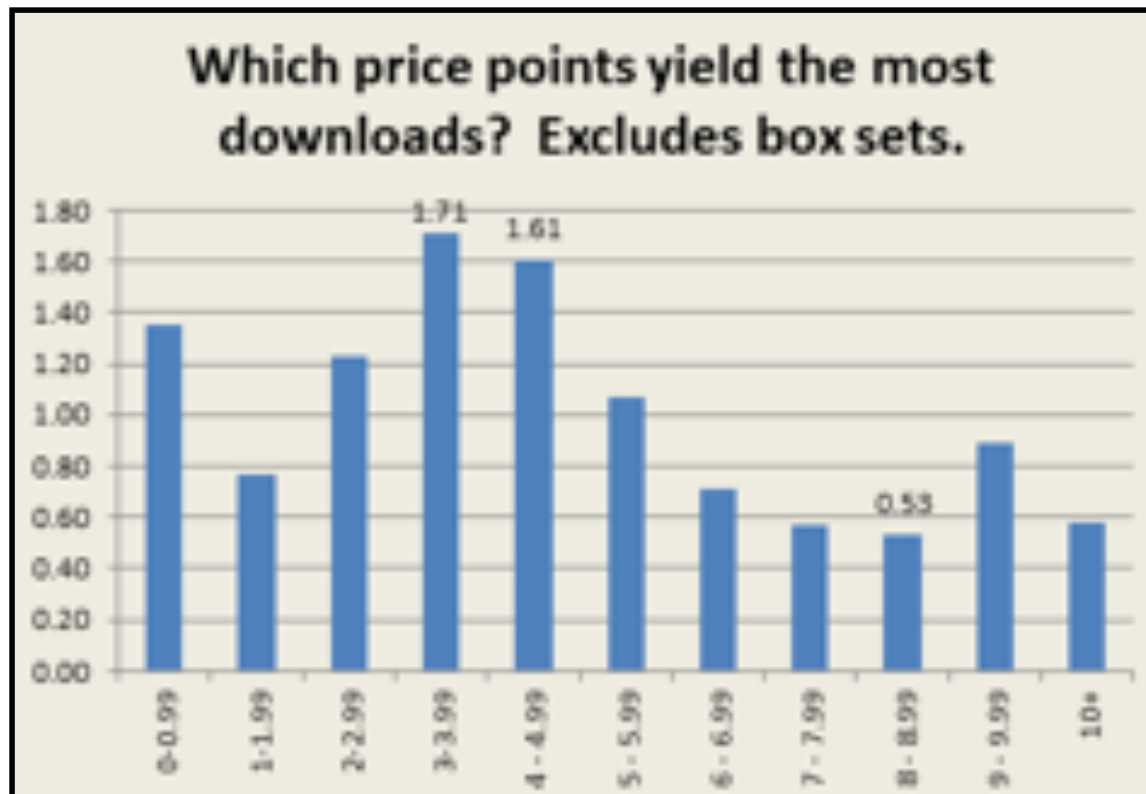


# COMMON PRICE POINTS

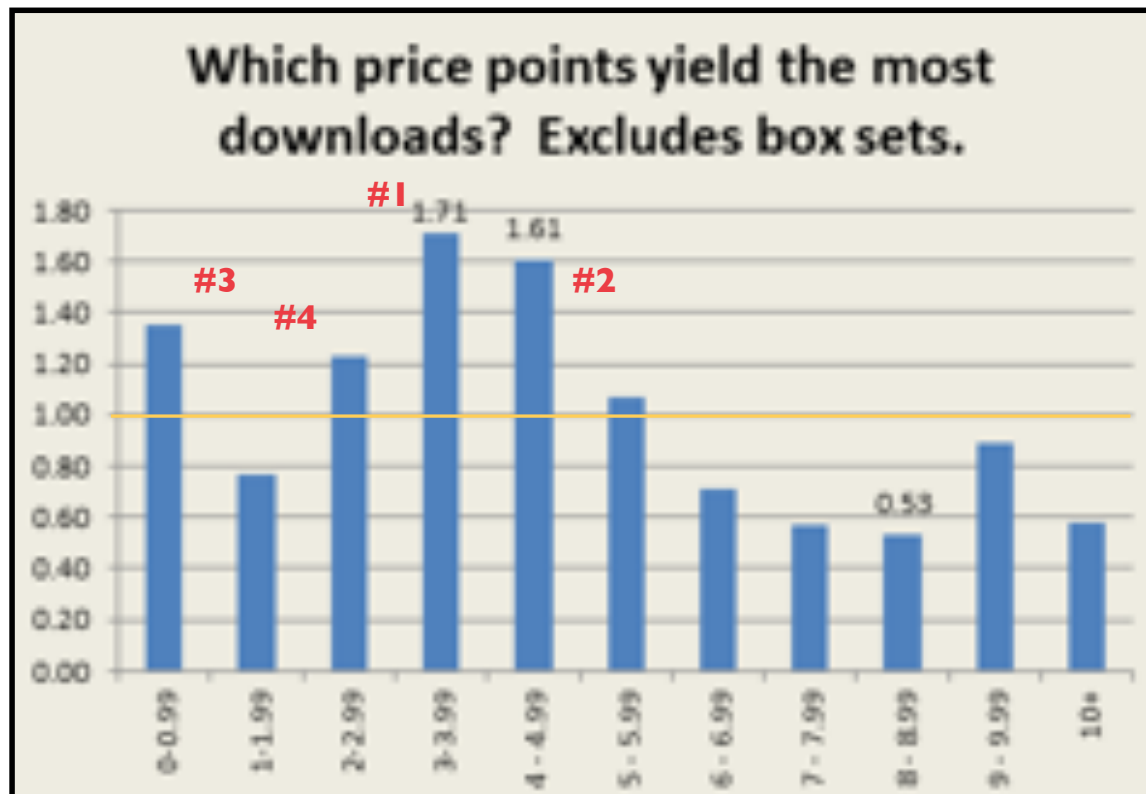




# WHAT PRICE GETS THE MOST DOWNLOADS?



# WHAT PRICE GETS THE MOST DOWNLOADS?



# WHICH PRICE POINTS YIELD HIGHEST EARNINGS



# PRICING IMPLICATIONS

- **Lower priced books sell more**
- **Price fiction at \$4.99 or \$9.99?**
  - ▶ \$4.99 earns about as much as higher priced books
  - ▶ \$3.99 and \$4.99 reach 3-4x as many readers

**More readers = Greater long-term success**



# SECRET NINE



# #9 MAXIMIZE AVAILABILITY, AVOID EXCLUSIVITY



# #9 MAXIMIZE AVAILABILITY AND AVOID EXCLUSIVITY

- **If you're not everywhere, you're not discoverable or purchasable**

- **Exclusivity**

- ▶ Annoys fans
- ▶ Increases dependence on single retailer
- ▶ Limits global audience



SECRET TEN





# #10 RELEASE YOUR NEXT EBOOK AS A PREORDER



# #10 WHAT'S AN EBOOK PREORDER?

- Advanced listing at major retailers
- Readers reserve copy ahead of release date
- Fast track to bestseller lists/higher sales rank



PREORDERS ARE ONE OF THE MOST  
EFFECTIVE, YET UNDERUTILIZED  
BOOK LAUNCH TOOLS



# PREORDERS CAPTURING OUTSIZE SHARE

<b>Second level category</b>	<b>% Preorder Adoption</b>	<b>% Category sales to preorder books</b>
<b>Romance</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Erotica</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Fantasy</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Mystery &amp; Detective</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>YA &amp; Teen Fiction</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Gay &amp; Lesbian</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Science Fiction</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Thriller &amp; Suspense</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Nonfic: Biography</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Historical Fiction</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>53</b>

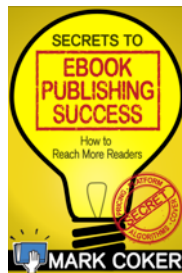


# #10.5 SMASHWORDS PRESALES (NEW!)

- Fans buy now, read now - before public
- Author/Publisher can create multiple release events
- Author/Publisher can capture reader emails
  - ▶ Turbocharges author newsletter subscriptions
- Compatible with KDP-S/KU, direct publishing



# FREE EBOOK PUBLISHING RESOURCES



1. **Smart Author Podcast**
2. **Secrets to Ebook Publishing Success**
3. **Smashwords Book Marketing Guide**
4. **Smashwords Style Guide**



# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

**Email:** [jim@smashwords.com](mailto:jim@smashwords.com)

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