

## Making the Most from iBooks

An overview of **why** and **how** to distribute your indie books via the iTunes Connect publisher dashboard.

### The case for WHY you should have your books on iBooks:

- iBooks is considered the #2 retailer of ebooks (in gross \$ sales) and can represent much more than 12% of an author's income.
- iBooks retails ebooks in 51 countries across the globe.
- The iBooks app (*for reading iBooks*) is the default bookstore and reading app on all Apple devices.
- In Q4 of 2016, Apple sold over 40 million iPhones, over 9 million iPads, and over 4.5 million Mac computers. 3 months' sales = 50+ million new devices out there that run iBooks.
- Worldwide, Apple has sold over 1 billion reading devices, much more than all of their competitors.
- iBooks fully supports ePub 3 format, which allows for multi-functional books containing embedded audio and video.

### Should you go direct to iBooks or use an aggregator, such as Smashwords or Draft2Digital?

- Going direct in itself doesn't give an immediate sales advantage. For authors who want more direct control of their distribution, pricing and contact with iBooks, it *can* mean an increase in earnings.
- Aggregators are far simpler, but give you less direct control.
- You must use a Mac computer to upload new books or updates to the "asset" files (book epub file, cover jpg file) and certain metadata fields, or hire someone to upload for you

### Why going direct to iBooks is considered "scary" (it's really just different):

- iBooks is a "closed" environment, meaning that their store isn't housed on a public website.
- Creating an iTunes Connect publisher account is a multi-step process that can be confusing if you've never used Macs, iPhones, iPads, iTunes or iBooks before.
- iBooks will list the legal name associated with your account as The Seller. To keep your legal name private, you may use a DBA or list your account as your LLC if you have one.
- iBooks treats indie authors as true publisher entities. Book sale proceeds are earned by you and iBooks deducts their commission, rather than paying you a royalty. They do not issue 1099s to publishers.
- iBooks only accepts a valid, Apple-compliant epub file for the book.

## Pros of Going Direct:

- Apple retains 30% commission, so you get 70% of the proceeds of ALL book sales at ALL price points. *This is bonus income for books priced 0.99-\$1.99, or over \$9.99.*
- You can upload *asset-less* pre-orders up to one year in advance of release date.
- Pre-orders count when order is placed and count again on the release date. Two opportunities to build visibility, and you get the advantage of the release day bump in tallied sales.
- Apple automatically generates a free downloadable sample from your book file with a Buy button at the end of the sample to make purchasing the complete book easy. By going direct, you can upload a Custom Sample—great for pre-orders and collections or mutli-author anthologies
- Also for anthologies, iBooks recognizes up to 10 Primary Authors, meaning that anthology can be linked to up to 10 author searches in iBooks.
- Easy to apply for series recognition and linking. This is a manual process, and aggregators may or may not get your books properly linked.
- You can choose specific Apple categories to ensure your book is sorted to the right "department" in iBooks
- Easy to set foreign currency pricing using Price Tiers
- Can set distribution and promotional pricing and dates *by territory*. Each store is its own entity. *(if you have rights in some, but not all, countries to publish your ebook)*
- iBooks gives you 250 Promotion Codes per book to give away free copies of your books. You may start distributing promo codes as soon as the book file has been delivered. These codes are unique (can only be used once) and expire four weeks after you generate them.
- iBooks accepts ePub2 and ePub3 file formats and can support Multi-Touch books, embedded audio, video; other retailers still want ePub2 format.
- iBooks supports "versioning", which means that when you upload an updated version of your ebook file, buyers who've already downloaded your book will get an automated alert that they can update the book content.
- You can upload an Apple-specific epub with links to your other books, or perhaps to a playlist associated with your book. Use affiliate links to increase earnings.

## Factors for Consideration / Myths of Going Direct:

- New accounts are approved by Apple and tax information verified. Account setup typically takes a business week.
- While you need a Mac computer for initial upload of a new book, once uploaded, you can *manage* your book pricing and most metadata via the iTunes Connect dashboard, which you can access from any computer or tablet .
- Changing distribution from Smashwords or Draft2Digital to your own publisher account will result in those books losing any ranking or reviews.

- iBooks employs real human beings who review the content and may ticket your book for a host of reasons. But you also know that all book content on their store has been vetted. No "junk" books uploaded to try to make easy money.
- Unlike other retailers, you can have two publisher dashboards at iBooks.

### **Tools to Gain Advantage when selling on iBooks**

- iTunes Link Maker: <https://linkmaker.itunes.apple.com/en-us/>
- Affiliate Program: <https://itunesaffiliate.phgsupport.com/hc/en-us>
- Widgets, Buttons, Banners: <https://widgets.itunes.apple.com/builder/>
- Apple categories for merchandising

### **Top Ten Reasons your book fails to upload or gets ticketed by iBooks**

1. Your epub file is not valid.
2. Your epub file is valid, but uses certain HTML syntax that's not supported by iBooks.
3. Your ePub3 file is valid, but you didn't include versioning information
4. An image embedded inside the ePub file is too large.
5. You mention or have links to other retailer within the epub file.
6. You use improper iBooks branding, such as mentions of Apple or iTunes
7. Your ePub file has no NCX navigation, or has only a Start tag.
8. You listed non-title information in the title field of your metadata: *Title of Book: a Contemporary Romantic Comedy*
9. You mention a special price or discount in your book description field.
10. You've selected an incorrect primary category for your book.

### **Open floor for questions.**