

Guide to Amazon Author Central

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This report has been written to provide information to help you create better product descriptions and book listing pages for your Kindle Direct Publishing books. Every effort has been made to make this report as complete and accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes in typography or content. Also, this report contains information on Internet marketing and technology only up to the publishing date. Therefore, this report should be used as a guide – not as the ultimate source of Internet marketing information.

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What is Author Central?

Author Central is a free service from Amazon that allows you to reach more readers, promote your books, and help build a better bookstore.

Author Central is a way for you to track and manage all of your books at Amazon, whether they are physical books, Kindle Books, CDs or any other format of product that you can sell through Amazon.

Author Central allows you to share up-to-date information about yourself (or up to 3 of your pen names) by adding a biography, photos, blog and twitter feeds, videos and tour events.

Author Central allows you to update the information for your books and make sure that each edition is properly mapped one to another by allowing you to specify which books belong to you, updating the editorial reviews and book descriptions, and adding information to your Shelfari account.

Author Central also allows you to track your sales. You can see timely sales data and trends based on when, where and how many of your books sell across the US.

Author Central also provides to help and support directly at Amazon, both by email or over the phone.

Your Author Central account is free to set up, and is worth it just for the free sales data and ease of updating your listings.

How to Create Your Author Central Account

Creating an Author Central account is simple; you just need to log in with your existing Amazon account. You *will* need to sign up for each International Amazon website where your book is distributed, however, as they are all separate entities even if they do share login accounts across services.

Here's a list of the Author Central pages for each Amazon location:

- USA: <https://authorcentral.amazon.com>
- France: <https://authorcentral.amazon.fr>
- Japan: <https://authorcentral.amazon.co.jp>
- Germany: <https://authorcentral.amazon.de>
- United Kingdom: <https://authorcentral.amazon.co.uk>

Currently, Author Central has not made its way to the international sites for Austria, Canada, Spain, China or Italy.

If you sell books in the United States, I recommend starting there and learning your way around Author Central before visiting the other sites where you currently have your books for sale unless that is your primary sales domain as this guide will be using the US version of the site.

Once there, you can log in using your existing Amazon credentials and pressing the Join Now button. You will be asked to agree to the Author Central Terms of Service, which I recommend reading through so you know what is and isn't allowed with your account.

After that, Amazon will automatically try to find your books for you by matching the name on your account to the name of books sold in their store. Once you have verified who you are, the last step to setting up your account is to verify your email address by clicking on a link that they will send you.

Step 1: Setup Your Author Central Profile

Once you have verified your email address and logged into your account, you'll be able to set up your Author Central Profile. Creating this profile will cause your name to become linked to an author page on every Amazon product you sell, and you can use it to promote not only the books you sell at Amazon but also your other webproperties and yourself.

Click on the Profile tab at the top of the screen, and you'll be presented with the available options for setting up your Author page:

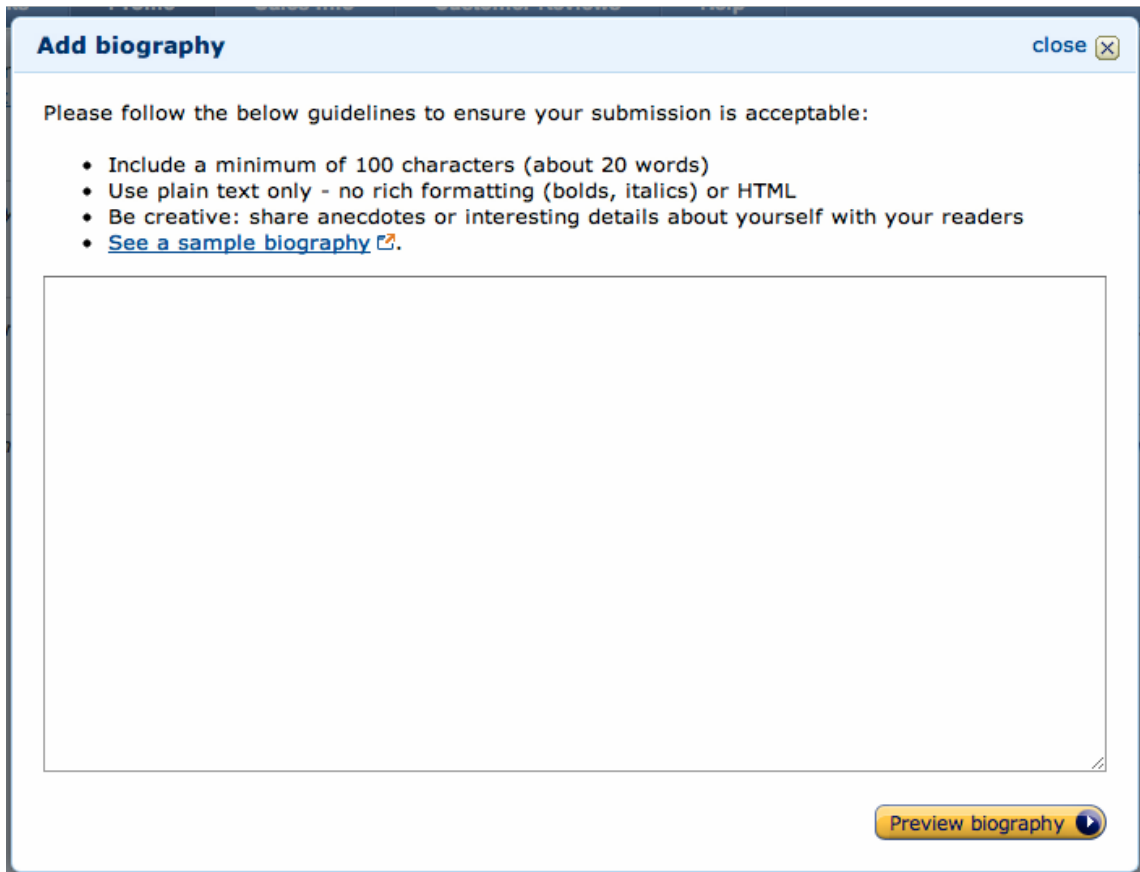


The screenshot shows the Amazon Author Central interface. At the top left is the Amazon Author Central logo. On the top right, it says "Hello, J.B. O'Neil" with a dropdown arrow and a "Sign out" link. Below this is a navigation bar with tabs for Home, Books, Profile (which is selected), Sales Info, Customer Reviews, and Help. The main content area features a "Author Pages" icon and a message: "Content you provide will appear on Amazon's J.B. O'Neil Page after a short delay." with a link to "Visit Amazon's J.B. O'Neil Page". The page is divided into two columns of options, each with a title, a description, and an "add" link.

Option	Description	Action Link
Biography	Tell readers who you are, what you enjoy writing, and more.	add biography
Author Page URL	Create an easy to share link to your Author Page.	add link learn more
Blogs	Display your recent blog posts on the Author Page. Don't have a blog?	add blog
Photos	Share up to eight photos of yourself.	add photo
Events	Share your upcoming speaking engagements, bookstore appearances, and other events.	add event
Videos	Share video interviews, book trailers, or book signing videos.	add video
Twitter	Display your latest tweet on the Author Page.	add account

Creating an Author Biography

The first thing to do is click on the *add biography* link. You'll be presented with a text box where you can type up your author bio to appear on your author page at Amazon. It doesn't have to be long (a minimum of 100 characters or about 20 words) but you can feel free to expand and go on if you want.



The screenshot shows a window titled "Add biography" with a "close" button in the top right corner. Below the title bar, there is a heading: "Please follow the below guidelines to ensure your submission is acceptable:". This is followed by a bulleted list of instructions: "• Include a minimum of 100 characters (about 20 words)", "• Use plain text only - no rich formatting (bolds, italics) or HTML", "• Be creative: share anecdotes or interesting details about yourself with your readers", and "• [See a sample biography](#)". Below the list is a large, empty text input area. At the bottom right of the form, there is a yellow button labeled "Preview biography" with a downward-pointing arrow.

Remember that you can't use any sort of formatting here, so only type in plain text and don't try to include any HTML or it will appear on the website as you type it and will not apply any special formatting. Don't include links as they won't be clickable and may get your biography removed by Amazon.

Creating an Author URL

The next step is to assign yourself an easy-to-remember URL. Instead of having a long URL that nobody would recognize goes to your name, you can create a shorter pretty link by clicking on the *add link* button next to the Author Page URL section.

A popup window will appear allowing you to choose and showing you what your new URL will be:



Amazon will suggest a URL based on your name, but you can choose whatever you want as long as it falls within the following guidelines:

- It is not already in use by another author
- It is between 1 and 30 characters long
- Contains only letters, numbers, dashes, periods and underscores
- Does not contains paces or any special characters not listed above
- Does not contain any profanity

Once you hit save, your new link will begin to work within about 30 minutes.

While you could try to game the search engines with a keyword rich word, I recommend using your actual name (or pen name, whatever the books are written under) or a specific nickname that you would be known by.

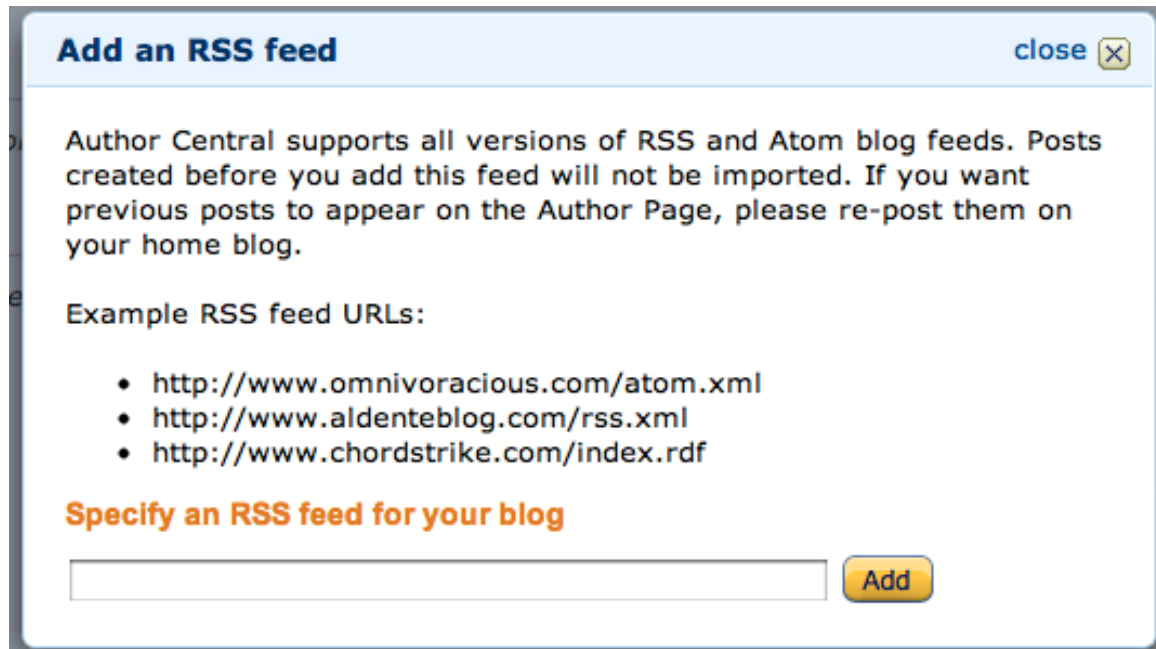
This page is better for branding yourself and your books than just for trying to be found in the search engines; Amazon will take care of that for you so it is better to use a form that will be most helpful to their customers so that they will *want* to promote your author page for you.

Whatever you choose, you will be stuck with. You can only choose one author urlso make your choice a good one. If you do need it changed, you will have to contact

Amazon support and request that it be updated, but there is no guarantee that they will allow you to.

Add Your Author Blog

Do you keep an author blog, or a blog related to your books? If so, then I recommend that you add your blog's RSS feed to your author central account. Next to "Blogs" click on the *add blog* link where you'll be presented with this box:



You need the feed to your blog, and *not* the address of your blog. If you use Wordpress as your blog software, then you can probably include /feed/ to the end of your blog's domain name to get your feed; if in doubt, most blogs will list their feed name in the header of the document if you right click and choose "View Source." If you aren't sure how to find your RSS feed URL, then look on the site for the RSS icon which should link directly to it. It will look like this:



Right click on that icon and choose "Copy Link Address" or text that is similarly worded to that depending on which browser you use.

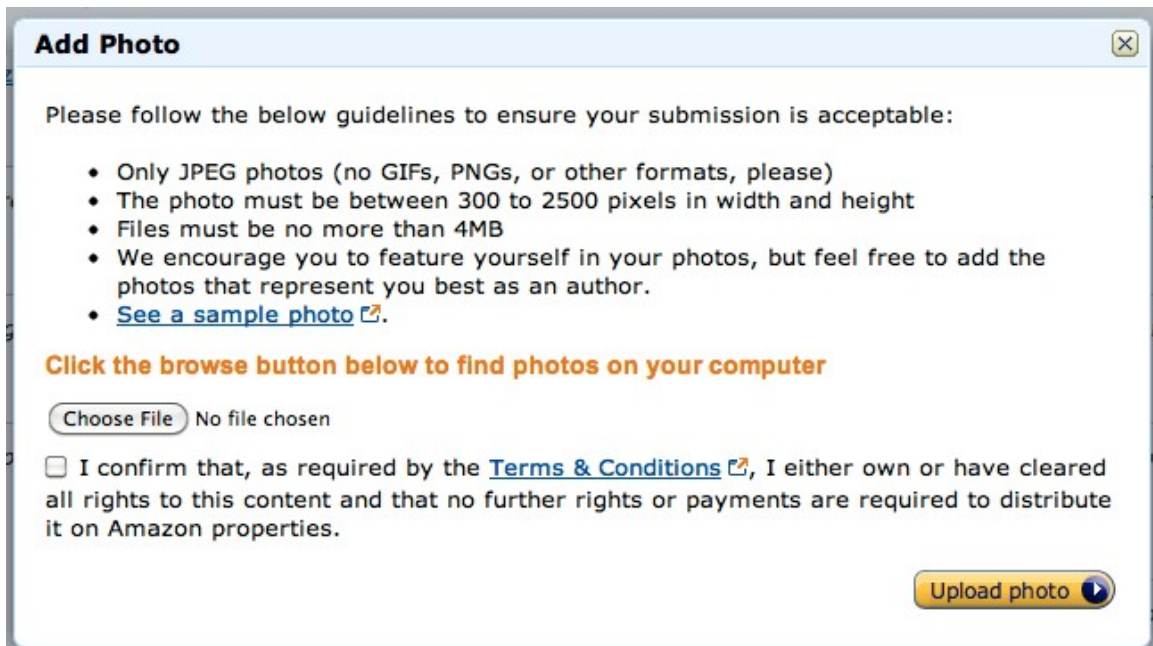
Once you've added the RSS feed to your Author Central profile, Amazon will add a link every time you add a new post to your blog onto your author page. It will not show previous posts that were published before you added the link to your account, so if you want an older post to appear you will have to republish it to your site.

This is a great way to take some of your customers off of Amazon's website and bring them to yours, where you can present them with an opt-in to your mailing list or sell them products directly.

Add a Photo

The next step is to add at least 1 photo to your profile. You are allowed to add up to 8 photos, and you should *definitely* add 1. Your readers will relate to you much easier if they can see what you look like, and this is a great way to engage with them.

Just click the *add photo* button to get the upload screen:



Add Photo [X]

Please follow the below guidelines to ensure your submission is acceptable:

- Only JPEG photos (no GIFs, PNGs, or other formats, please)
- The photo must be between 300 to 2500 pixels in width and height
- Files must be no more than 4MB
- We encourage you to feature yourself in your photos, but feel free to add the photos that represent you best as an author.
- [See a sample photo](#).

Click the browse button below to find photos on your computer

No file chosen

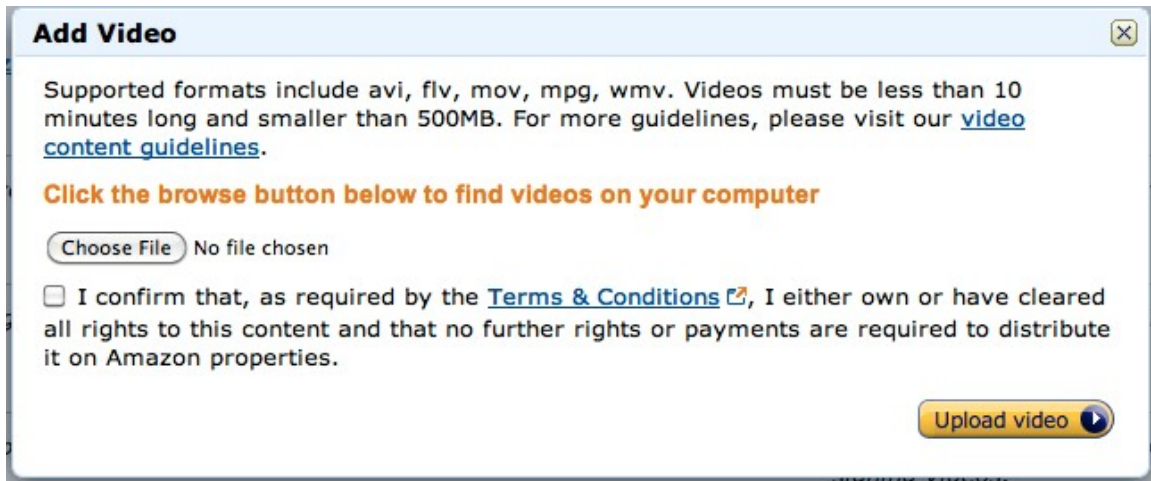
I confirm that, as required by the [Terms & Conditions](#), I either own or have cleared all rights to this content and that no further rights or payments are required to distribute it on Amazon properties.

You must own the rights to the photos that you upload, and they must be relevant to you as an author, preferably by actually containing you in the picture.

Photos need to be a JPEG file that is less than 4 megabytes and has to have a minimum width and height of 300x300 pixels and can be no more than 2500x2500 pixels.

Add Videos

Similar to your author photo, you can also upload videos to your page. I recommend that at a minimum, you upload a video of yourself talking about something relevant to your books. That could be what it means to you to write books about your topic, or discuss why you decided to become a writer of that type of book, or something similar. Make it easy for your audience to relate to you and want to learn more.



Add Video ✕

Supported formats include avi, flv, mov, mpg, wmv. Videos must be less than 10 minutes long and smaller than 500MB. For more guidelines, please visit our [video content guidelines](#).

Click the browse button below to find videos on your computer

No file chosen

I confirm that, as required by the [Terms & Conditions](#), I either own or have cleared all rights to this content and that no further rights or payments are required to distribute it on Amazon properties.

I also recommend that you upload a book trailer for every book you put out. It doesn't need to be a long video, or a fancy one; a 30 second screen capture video of a powerpoint presentation describing the back cover matter of your book set to music is fine. You can get some really cool animations with your book's title at Fiverr and could probably find somebody to produce the video there or at one of the other outsourcing sites as well.

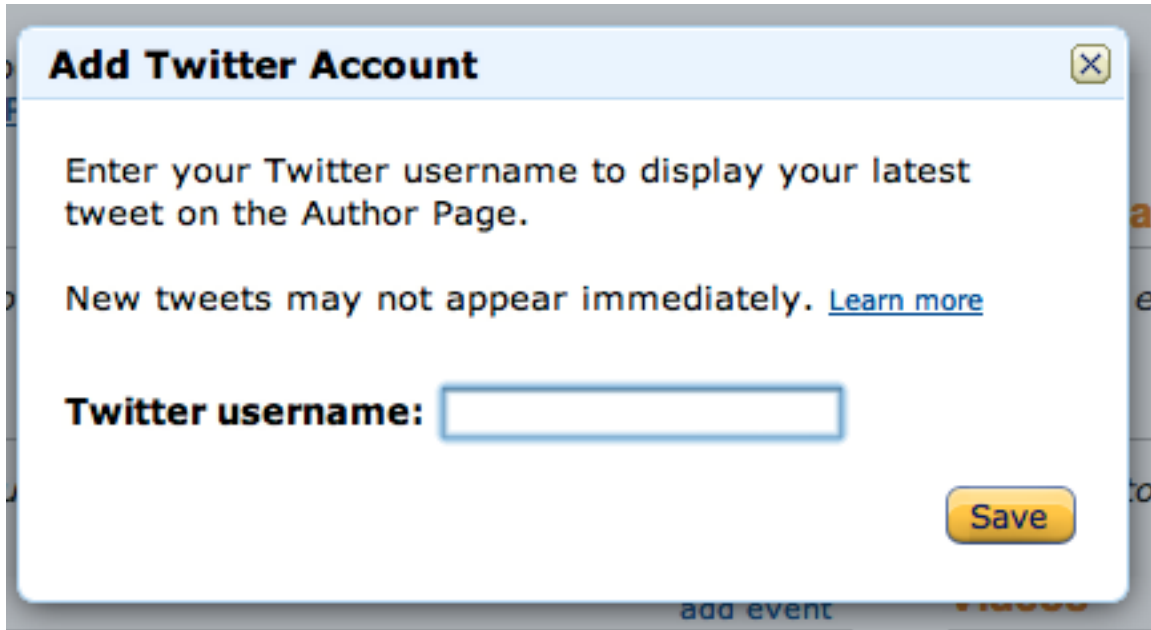
Most of the popular formats are accepted and Amazon occasionally adds in a new one, and the files must be less than 10 minutes in duration and smaller than 500 megabytes.

As with photos, you must own the rights to distribute everything that appears in your video, which includes any recordings, photos, graphics or music.

John or Jay: This is a good spot to add links to your favorite royalty free sites

Add Your Twitter Feed

Do you use Twitter? It's a simple matter to have your latest tweet appear on your author page. Just click on the *add account* button next to the Twitter settings and add your account name in the box:



The image shows a dialog box titled "Add Twitter Account" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The text inside the dialog box reads: "Enter your Twitter username to display your latest tweet on the Author Page." Below this, it says "New tweets may not appear immediately. [Learn more](#)". At the bottom left, there is a label "Twitter username:" followed by an empty text input field. At the bottom right, there is a yellow "Save" button. The dialog box is overlaid on a blurred background of a website interface.

Your latest tweet will update within a few minutes on your author page and will sync with your twitter account. This is another great way to get some sort of engagement with your audience outside of Amazon.

Add Events to your Profile

The last piece of your author profile is to add your upcoming speaking engagements, bookstore appearances, or other events to your page. This doesn't have to be limited to physical events either; you can also promote webinars or teleseminars or even dedicated chat times on facebook or twitter. Just click on the *add event* button:

Create Event close

Description

Venue

Begin typing the venue name or address in the boxes below to find your venue. If your venue does not appear, fill out all the boxes and we'll create this new venue when you save your event.

Venue Name:

Street Address:

City:

State/Province: Zip/Postal:

Country: United States

Book

-- Books --

Date

Event date:

Start time: -- : -- --

Save event

Describe the event, where it is happening, which book your event is promoting, and when it starts. You can list events on an ongoing basis, so any time you are doing

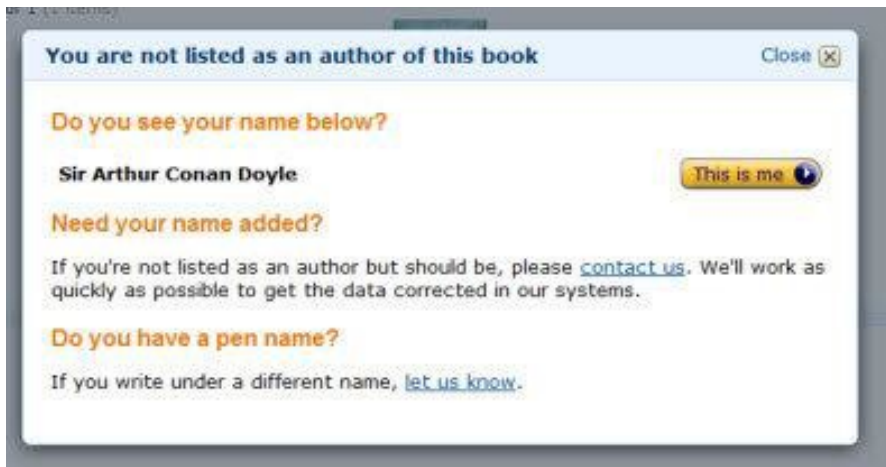
anything public related to your books be sure to come in and get it into Amazon's system so that they can pick it up and promote it for you.

Step 2: Add Your Books and Pen Names

Any books that you add through Author Central will appear on your author page. Just click the *Add more Books* button and search for your book. You can search based on title, author or ISBN.

When your book comes up, click on the *This is my Book* button. If the author name matches your name, it will go right into your book listings. If your name appears under a different spelling, it may take a little while to appear but it should still be automatic.

If you are not listed as an author on the book, then you can still press the button but you'll need to provide some details and Amazon will verify those details with the publisher before adding the book to your page.



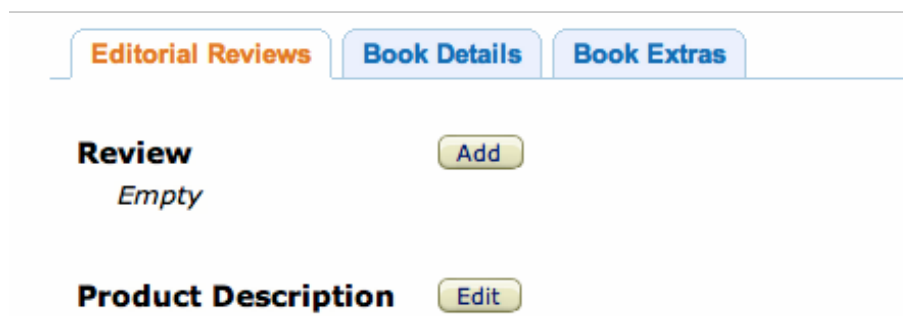
And if you wrote under a pen name? Well, you can have up to 3 of them associated with a single Amazon account! Just add the book, and let Amazon know that it is a pen name. Again, they'll verify information with the publisher, and then will create a special "Pen Name" account beneath your account. Just click on your name in the top right corner and you'll see a list of your available pen names. (If you haven't added any pen names then obviously that feature will not work.)

Once your pen name has been added, be sure to go back to the profile section of this guide and fill out a profile for your pen name. It will be completely separate from your normal author's page.

When you are adding your books, be sure to remember to add each edition of the book, if you have multiple editions or sell it in multiple formats such as print and on Kindle.

Step 3: Update Your Book Listings

Once your books appear in your account, you can click on them to update the listings. Each book has 3 tabs of data you can update, but you'll spend most of your time with the first tab:



Editorial Reviews is where you can add reviews, update your product description, add a note from the author, and include the text from the inside flap, back cover, and from the about the author page in your book.

One suggestion you might want to bear in mind is to put your editorial reviews into the product description area rather than in the reviews...once you've utilized the reviews section, your listing will require approval for making future updates, and most people won't notice if you have the reviews there or in the "proper" section.

Customer reviews that Amazon users enter will still appear in their own area below your listing and shouldn't be confused with editorial reviews. Those are reviews supplied by you as a publisher, and could come from multiple sources such as from other websites and blogs, magazines or newspapers, or told to you in person.

Whether you put the reviews into the product description or under the reviews section, only add real reviews. You should never make up a review and claim that it's real; that's not only dishonest but illegal, at least in the United States.

When you click the *add* button, you'll be presented with a popup box that includes guidelines and an editor box. Be sure to read the guidelines about what is and what isn't acceptable for each section the first time you enter that information, because if you include information that isn't relevant to what they suggest or that appears in what they prohibit, then Amazon may delist your book.

You are given the option to type in "compose" mode or "html" mode. Compose mode just means that you get a few basic formatting options and it will try to create the HTML for you. HTML mode lets you exactly specify how your listing will look, but you'll need to know the code to create that formatting and avoid having one big ugly block of text. Be aware that only a few HTML tags are allowed, and if you try to use ones that aren't

allowed you'll get an invalid html error and won't be able to save your work. How to write HTML is outside the scope of this report.

Once you've saved your work, you'll be presented with a preview and it will take up to 24 hours for your changes to appear live on Amazon's website, although sometimes it can happen in as little as a few hours.

Step 4: Tracking Sales Info

Editing your information and creating your profile is important, but having access to sales info is gold and is one of the main reasons that it is important to set up your Author Central account as soon as possible.

You only have access to data from the day that you add your book into your account.

There are 3 reports available. The first two reports are from Nielsen BookScan, which aggregates data for print books only. You can track your weekly sales across all channels (brick & mortar bookstores or online) as well as the sales by geography so that you know what markets your books are popular in.

The third report is your Amazon Sales Rank over time.



This report shows you how well your book is doing; the higher on the graph that your sales rank appears the better, meaning that you have a lower overall sales rank compared to all of the other books that Amazon sells.

You can use this data to decide when you need to do free promotions (for books enrolled in KDP Select) or when to raise the price to take advantage of higher visibility. You can actually maximize both exposure and profit pretty well if you keep close track of your sales rank and raise and lower your price accordingly.

Step 5: Tracking Customer Reviews

From within your Amazon Author Central account, you can see all of your reviews in one place. Rather than visiting each book individually, you can just bring up a list of reviews on any of your books, or even all of them at once.

You can also sort those reviews by both date and ratings. Ratings are how helpful other Amazon users have found a particular review, so hopefully the reviews that are more stars are the ones that customers find more helpful and rate higher so that they will be the ones that are more likely to be displayed on your books summary information when a customer is considering buying.

Reviews are delayed 1-2 days in Author Central, and other than tracking them there isn't much else that you can do. If monitoring your reviews is part of your strategy, then it is much easier and much more convenient than visiting each book and scrolling down to find them, especially if you have a lot of books.

Final Section: Getting Help

The final section of Author Central is the support area, which you can reach at anytime by pressing the *Help* button or visiting the numerous links to help topics sprinkled throughout the interface.

The help area is actually quite comprehensive, and goes into even more detail on every topic in this guide. You can search for topics or browse, and any time that you can't find an answer to your question or need to speak with somebody directly, there is a *Contact Us* button which will bring you to a wizard that will help you define what help you need and get you to the appropriate department by either email or phone.

The phones are not manned around the clock, but they *are* available 12 hours per day each business day which is very reasonable. The support staff that will get in touch with you is also quite helpful and will be able to solve problems with your listings much faster than trying to go through support at Amazon's main website.