THE AUTHOR'S ROADMAP · PART 8

KDP or IngramSpark? A Platform Comparison

The two platforms side by side, a "use both?" checklist, and the settings that decide what you earn.

Side by side

	Amazon KDP	IngramSpark
Where your print book sells	Amazon stores	Ingram's network of more than 45,000 retailers, libraries, schools, and other outlets, including Amazon
Cost to upload	Free	Free
Revisions	Free	Free since February 1, 2026
What you earn on a print sale	60% of list price at $9.99 and up on Amazon.com, or 50% at $9.98 and below, minus printing	List price minus your wholesale discount, minus printing, minus a 1.875% market access fee
Sample paperback at $15.99	$4.99 a copy	$2.09 at a 55% discount, or $4.48 at 40% (estimated $4.81 print cost)
Discount you set	Set by KDP	40% to 55% in the U.S.
Returns	Handled by Amazon	Your choice: No, Yes-Deliver, or Yes-Destroy, charged at the wholesale price
ISBN	KDP's free ISBN (usable only on KDP) or your own	Your own
Proofs	Proof copies marked "Not for Resale," up to five per order	A copy of your own book at print cost
Cover file	KDP's cover calculator and template	IngramSpark's cover template generator, which needs your ISBN
Bookstore ordering	Expanded Distribution, at a 40% royalty	Standard for bookstores at 53% to 55% with returns

Should you use both?

- [ ] You want bookstores or libraries to be able to order your paperback.
- [ ] You own the ISBN for the print edition, rather than using KDP's free one.
- [ ] You will use the same ISBN on both platforms.
- [ ] KDP's Expanded Distribution is off, or you have unenrolled and asked IngramSpark support to help with the ISBN.
- [ ] Your paper and ink choices are available on both platforms and in the markets you want.
- [ ] You have chosen an IngramSpark discount and returns setting.

- [ ] You have built a separate cover file from each platform's template.
- [ ] You know which platform goes live first. IngramSpark first suits a print pre-order.
- [ ] You will order a proof from each printer.

If the first box stays empty, KDP alone may serve you well for now. If you can tick every box, using both is a sound plan.

Choosing the discount and returns

Your plan	Discount	Returns
Online sales only, first book	40%	No
Bookstore events, local stores, or library pitches	55%	Yes-Destroy, with cash set aside for returns
You want returned copies back for events	55%	Yes-Deliver (U.S. only; you pay shipping and handling)

Return cost check: copies returned × wholesale price = the amount charged to you. For example, ten copies of a $15.99 book at a 55% discount come to 10 × $7.20, or $71.95.

What each setting allows, and what it blocks

Setting	Covers	Allows	Blocks	How to undo it
KDP Select	Kindle ebook only	Kindle Unlimited page reads, plus Countdown Deals or Free Book Promotions	Selling or giving away the ebook anywhere else in digital form, including your website, during each 90-day term	Turn off auto-renewal; the book leaves when the term ends (or cancel within three days of enrolling)
KDP Expanded Distribution	KDP paperback	Listing with KDP's distributors at a 40% royalty	Publishing the same ISBN on IngramSpark	Unenroll on the paperback's pricing screen, then ask IngramSpark support to help with the ISBN
Going wide	Ebook	Selling through many stores at once	KDP Select and Kindle Unlimited	Remove the ebook from other stores before enrolling in Select

KDP Select never restricts your print editions.

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- Draft2Digital keeps about 10% of the list price, and you keep about 60% on most stores. A $4.99 ebook earns about $2.99 a sale.

> *Rates and rules checked October 2026. IngramSpark figures use an estimated print cost; run your own book through IngramSpark's publisher compensation calculator.*