

## HOW TO MAKE A BOOK FREE ... FOREVER – EVEN ON AMAZON

Making your book free on Amazon is easy... for a few days... because Amazon have this thing called the KDP Program. Basically, this means you can have a few Free Days every so often, as long as you make your book exclusive to Amazon (*aka: you don't sell it on Barnes & Noble and other such sites*).

This is fine, but doesn't quite achieve a forever free status, does it?

Hell no, which is why I had to jump through a few loop holes in order to get both [I Unlove You](#) and [The Letters of Aus & B](#) Free... on Amazon... Forever.

Overall this is rather easy to achieve, but can take a little time. As such, if you wish to do this for a book of your own, be sure to give yourself lots of it. If you try and do this last minute, you may find yourself disappointed. Okay, let's begin...

### STEP 1: UPLOAD THE BOOK TO SMASH WORDS

Your first step is to create a [Smashwords](#) Account (you can also use [Digital 2 Digital](#)), and upload your book. This involves pressing the 'Publish Tab' in the top menu, which takes you to a screen like this:

The screenshot shows a web form titled "1 Title and synopsis". It contains several sections:

- Title:** A text input field with the placeholder "The title of your book (up to 250 characters)." and a character count indicator "0/250".
- Release date:** A section with a blue header. Below it, there is a link "Smashwords is shipping preorders to Apple, Barnes & Noble, and Kobo. [Learn the benefits of preorders.](#)". There are two radio button options: "For immediate release (will publish to the Smashwords store in minutes)." (which is selected) and "Make it a preorder: schedule release date in the future. (Visit our preorder help page before you select this option!)"
- Synopsis:** A section with a blue header. Below it, there is a text input field with the placeholder "The long description of your book appears on your Smashwords book page, and is distributed to most retailers." and a character count indicator "0/4000".
- Instructions:** A block of text: "Instructions: Your long description will be used to market your book on your Smashwords book page and shared with most retailers. Do not use all capital letters and do not enter e-mail addresses, hyperlinks, book prices, or promotions. Limited to 4,000 characters."
- Short description of your book (required):** A section with a blue header and an empty text input field.

This is where you upload your file, your cover, add your book description, and a few keywords/categories. This is the easy bit and only takes a few minutes, but the key here is to ensure you do two things:

1. Make your book FREE
2. Upload a .doc file of your book (*not .docx or PDF or even ePub – you can upload an ePub, but I don't recommend it*).

## Price

Make my book free  
 Let my readers determine the price  
 Charge a specific amount for my book:

(minimum: \$0.99 USD)

## Sampling:

Sampling allows readers to read part of your book for free. Choose what percent of the book people will be allowed to read, starting from word one, before they are asked to purchase it. Smashwords recommends at least 15% for full-length books and 30% for short stories. Sampling is a requirement if you want your book distributed in major mob app catalogs such as Aldiko, which collectively have over 5 million users.

Enable Sampling

Make the first  % of my book free.

Making your book free here means the forever free process on Amazon can soon begin, and once everything is uploaded and all details are filled in, it's as simple as clicking the '*Publish Immediately*' button.

Okay... so all this is super simple, right? Sure, but this only begins the process.

The book is now on Smashwords, and people can begin downloading it immediately. But you don't upload your book to [Smashwords](#) only to sell your book on Smashwords, oh no. The reason you upload said book on to Smashwords is because these guys add your book to lots of other online stores, including:

- Barnes & Noble
- Apple
- Sony
- Kobo
- And lots of others...

This is what makes Smashwords so amazing, because not only does it save time and hassle (*meaning you don't have to individually upload each time*), but lets you sell your book for free on these sites (*so long as you make your book free on Smashwords!*)

Okay, so you may be wondering why this is important. Why do you have to make your book free on Smashwords first and foremost?

You see, you can't make your book free on Amazon indefinitely, but they do take part in something called **Price Matching**. They don't Price Match everywhere, but if your book appears for free on [Barnes & Noble](#) (*sometimes Apple, too*), Amazon matches it because they want to provide the cheapest option.

When it comes to sharing a Forever Free Novel... this is HUUUUUGEEEEEE.

So... although [I Unlove You](#) appeared on Smashwords at this point, it didn't appear anywhere else. In order to be sent to Barnes & Noble et al, the book had to get accepted into Smashwords's **Premium Program**.

This is free and easy to join, so long as the book you upload ticks all of Smashwords' boxes. Oh yes, when it comes to uploading a book, it needs to abide by Smashwords rather loooooonnnnnngggggg **Style Guide**. When I first attempted to upload a book to Smashwords it drove me insane.

It took me a few attempts to get this right, but the good thing is that when you make a wrong turn, Smashwords highlights what needs to be fixed so you can get back to work.

*\*\* also, they're support staff are pretty good. I've found myself stuck a few times, but a quick emails tends to get things sorted out rather quickly \*\**



# Smashwords Style Guide

Series: [Smashwords Guides](#), Book 1

Series: [Smashwords Style Guide Translations](#)

By [Mark Coker](#)



Rated 4.70/5 based on 345 reviews

The Smashwords Style Guide has helped thousands of authors produce and publish high-quality ebooks. This free guide offers simple step-by-step instructions to create, format and publish an ebook. It's required reading for any author who wants to distribute their book via Smashwords to major ebook retailers such as Apple iBooks, Barnes & Noble, Scribd, Oyster & Kobo. Revised September 24, 2014. [More](#)

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## About Mark Coker

I'm Mark, founder of Smashwords. Our mission is simple: we want to create the world's single best ebook publishing and distribution platform for our indie authors, publishers, literary agents and retailers.

I'm co-author with my wife of Boob Tube, a novel that explores the wild and wacky world of Hollywood celebrity. I also wrote the Smashwords Book Marketing Guide (how to market any book for free), the Smashwords Style Guide (how to format, produce and publish an ebook) and The 10-Minute PR Checklist (helps entrepreneurs

This part of the process (*getting accepted into the Premium Catalog*) can take anywhere from a day to a week. On this occasion, [I Unlove You](#) got accepted first time around, so was sent out to Barnes & Noble et al within a few hours. This is the first time I've ever uploaded a correct file first time, which leads me to consider two trains of thought:

1. I'm getting better at this uploading thing (*doubtful*)
2. Smashwords have made it easier on their end

Personally, I suspect the latter, which is good news for authors like me.

Anyway, once accepted into the '*Premium Catalog*', it's time to head over to the '*Channel Manager*' section, which looks a little like this:

**I Unlove You**  
By Matthew Turner  
Published: 2015-11-03

Barnes & Noble	Kobo	Amazon	Apple	Inktera (formerly Page Foundry)	Baker & Taylor Blio	txtr	Library Direct	Baker-Taylor Axis360
2015-11-03 revision shipped on 2015-11-05.	2015-11-03 revision shipped on 2015-11-04.	<b>Limited Distribution</b>	2015-11-03 revision shipped on 2015-11-04.	2015-11-03 revision shipped on 2015-11-04.	2015-11-03 revision shipped on 2015-11-05.	2015-11-03 revision shipped on 2015-11-04.	This title is available for purchase by libraries directly via Smashwords	Not currently shipped.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Distribute <input type="radio"/> Opt out	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Distribute <input type="radio"/> Opt out	Opt-out requested on 2015-11-04. Will not ship.  <input type="radio"/> Distribute <input checked="" type="radio"/> Opt out	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Distribute <input type="radio"/> Opt out	Will be shipped. <input checked="" type="radio"/> Distribute <input type="radio"/> Opt out				

Smashwords automatically distributes the book to all its partners (*including Amazon*), but because I wanted to upload **I Unlove You** to Amazon separately (*and fine tune the book description and categories*), I ticked the 'Opt Out' option.

I leave everything else the same, which begins **Step 2: The Waiting Game**.

## STEP 2: THE WAITING GAME

Okay, so the book's in Smashwords' Premium Catalog and on route to places like Barnes & Noble and Apple... What next... ?

Not much, to be honest.

It's a case of waiting for the book to appear on these sites (*appearing for free on Barnes & Noble is usually all you need*), and checking them each day until it does. There isn't a set pattern or definitive timeframe for this, but it takes a great deal less today than it did a couple of years ago.

For instance, when I did this for **Tales From a Tiny Thai Table** in 2013, it took over a week to appear. For **I Unlove You** and **The Letters of Aus & B...** **3 days**.

**I Unlove You**  
by Matthew Turner

☆☆☆☆☆ 0 Reviews

My name is Ausdylan Elvis Ashford, a twenty-two-year-old who leads a rather perfect life. With a steady job straight out of university, a charismatic best friend I'm in a band with, and a girlfriend I've loved since the moment I first gazed upon, I couldn't ask for more. Until my perfect girlfriend, B, changed both of our lives forever.

It

... See more details below

LendMe™ Learn More

**NOOK Book**  
(eBook)

**FREE**

Add to Bag

or

Sign In to Complete Instant Purchase

Available on compatible NOOK Devices and the free NOOK Apps +

Want a NOOK? Explore Now

Get Free NOOK Book Sample

Add to Wishlist+

There's nothing to do during this stage other than to wait and prepare the rest of the book for launch: *book description, keyword research, meta data, etc...*

Oh, and I should note here that the book I uploaded was not complete. You see, you can always upload a new version (*to both Smashwords and Amazon*), so it isn't imperative to have everything finalised at this point. Sure, the book needs to be almost done, but on this occasion I hadn't quite finished the acknowledgement section and a few others bits and pieces.

Keen to get the book up and the process started, I uploaded a not-quite-ready version, replacing this a week before the big day.

### STEP 3: ADD THE BOOK TO AMAZON

Once the book appears on [Barnes & Noble](#), it's time to upload everything to amazon via the [KDP Direct Publishing Page](#). Again, as with Smashwords, uploading a book to Amazon is both quick and simple. It involves adding a book description, uploading the book file (*.mobi on this occasion, not .doc*), and all the other bits and pieces like book cover, categories, and keywords.

Amazon are also rather speedy, so within a few hours it appears live on their site:

**I Unlove You** Kindle Edition  
 by Matthew Turner (Author)  
 Be the first to review this item

> See all formats and editions

Kindle  
~~\$6.99~~

Read with Our **Free App**

My name is Ausdylan Elvis Ashford, a twenty-two-year-old who leads a rather perfect life. With a steady job straight out of university, a charismatic best friend I'm in a band with, and a girlfriend I've loved since the moment I first gazed upon, I couldn't ask for more. Until my perfect girlfriend, B, changed both of our lives forever.

It began with the words, "I'm pregnant," and the realisation I'd soon guide a new life into this world.  
 > Read more

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READ ON ANY DEVICE  
 > Get free Kindle app

But you may notice the above screenshot has **I Unlove You** priced at \$6.99... rather expensive for a free book... hmmm.

I did this because it'll make the book seem more valuable when it does appear for free. You may have seen this online before, a product showing its true value crossed out in red (~~\$6.99~~), replaced by the store's particular price (*free*). If I'd have only priced the book on Amazon at \$.99, future readers would presume they're saving a mere \$.99.

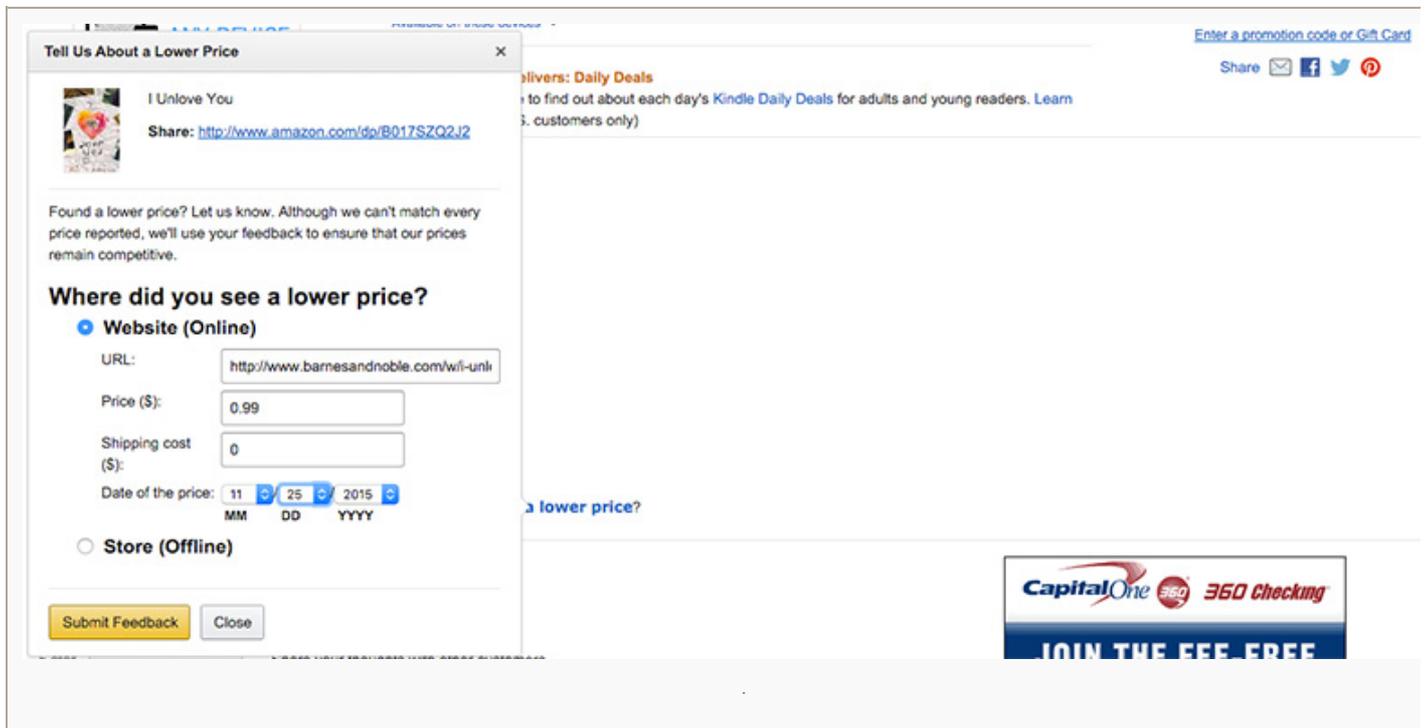
This way, it looks like they're saving nearly seven dollars.

At this stage, I also fine tuned the entire Amazon Page, ensuring it had keywords and a complete description, and everything else that helps the book sparkle and stand out. But the big aspect of Step 3 is to make the book FREE... so how do you do this, exactly... ?

**Product Details**

**File Size:** 2400 KB  
**Print Length:** 277 pages  
**Simultaneous Device Usage:** Unlimited  
**Publisher:** Turndog Publishing (November 9, 2015)  
**Publication Date:** November 9, 2015  
**Sold by:** Amazon Digital Services, Inc.  
**Language:** English  
**ASIN:** B017SZQ2J2  
**Text-to-Speech:** Enabled   
**X-Ray:** Not Enabled   
**Word Wise:** Not Enabled  
**Lending:** Enabled  
**Enhanced Typesetting:** Not Enabled

Would you like to [give feedback on images](#) or [tell us about a lower price?](#)

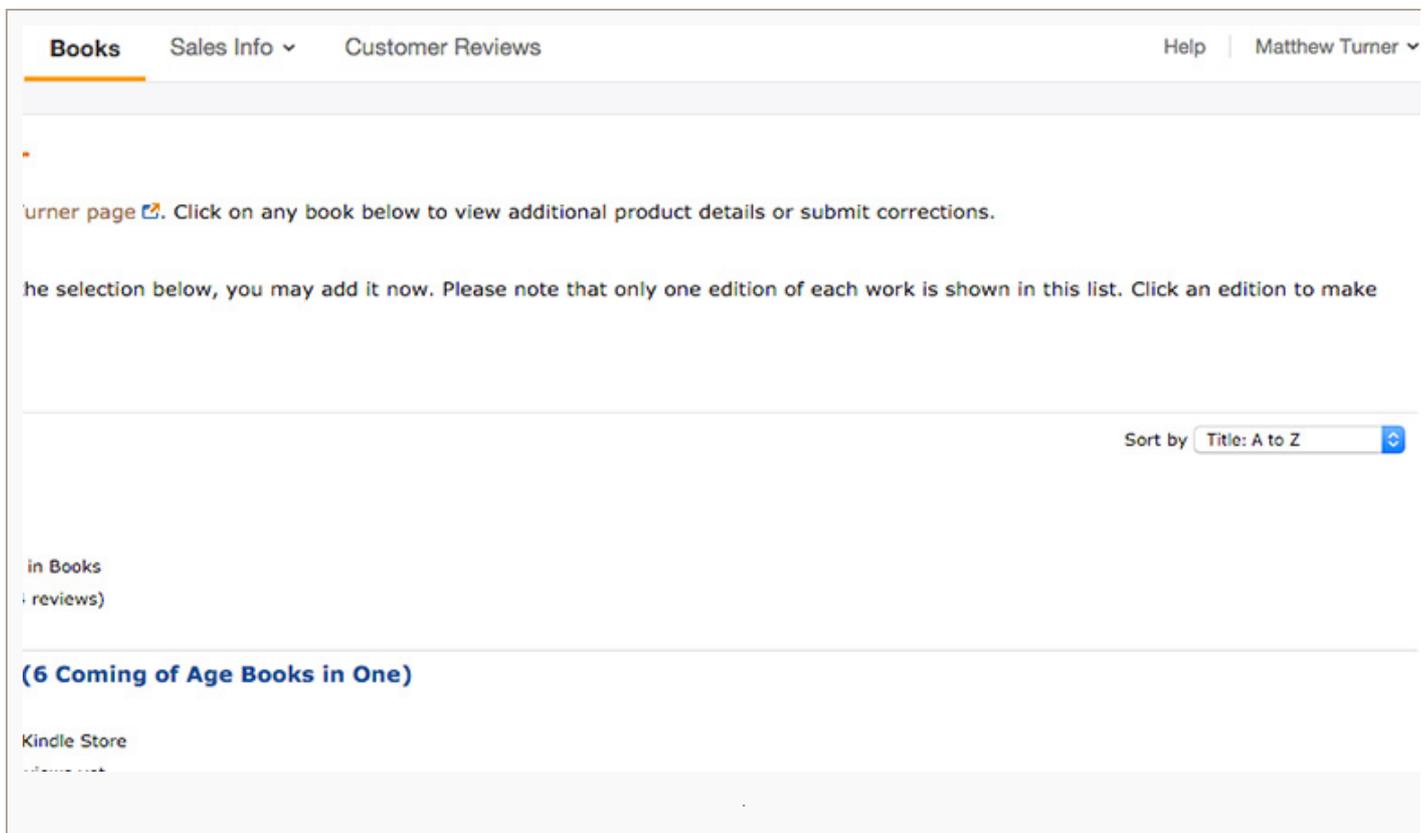


Under the 'Product Details' section, there's a blue link that says, "**tell us about a lower price**"

This is the stage you call in a few favours with friends and family. You see, I reached out to some people I know from America, asking them to notify Amazon that they found this book cheaper on Barnes & Noble. This is where Amazon's Price Match scheme comes into play, because before long they realise they're not the cheapest kid in town and lower your book's price to zero.

**BUT** I don't only ask a few friends to help me out, oh no.

This takes too long. It might take Amazon weeks before they sort things out, so I take matters into my own hands by heading over to [Amazon Author Central](#).



In the top right hand corner sits a 'Help' Button. Because I'm impatient, I one day pressed this and sent Amazon an

email saying something along the lines of:

*"Hi there, just letting you know my book, I Unlove You appears on Barnes & Noble for Free (link to B&N page). I'm hoping to make it free on Amazon too (link to Amazon page). Could you Price Match this, please?"*

Sometimes it takes a few days to get an answer, and it's taken me up to a week to see the price change, but I've yet to fail once I've reached out to Amazon directly. It still helps to get a few friends to contact Amazon, but in my experience it needs **YOU**... the author... to tell them as well.

They're usually pretty quick, and even though Amazon is a massive machine these days, their customer service is stellar.

That's it. That's how I made I Unlove You Free... Forever... even on Amazon.

It takes a little time and a little playing around, but it tends to work. **HOWEVER** there are a couple of things to note here:

1. Sometimes the book reverts back to its full price (*which means you have to contact Amazon again and ask them to change it*)
2. You have to repeat this process for each country you wish your book to appear free in

That's right, you have to repeat this process for Amazon UK, Amazon Canada, etc...

It's a pain, and although in my experience your book does tend to appear free in most countries once it does in America, the larger markets (*Canada, UK, Germany*) tend to require an individual approach. You also have to show Amazon that the book appears for free in that particular country.

For example, when contacting Amazon UK about I Unlove You, I didn't link to the Barnes and Noble USA page, rather [Unlove You's Nook Page](#). This is rather annoying and inconvenient, but it only took me about thirty minutes to sort everything out.

From here, it's a case of monitoring things and making sure the book stays free on Amazon for the considerable future. Like I say, the price can revert back at any time (*and for no particular reason*), but once you notify Amazon and show them the book is free elsewhere, they're pretty good at sorting things out.

And how long does this all take from step 1 to step 3? Assuming you upload a correct file to Smashwords straight away, it doesn't take long. In fact, for [I Unlove You](#), the whole process took around one week 😊

**[DOWNLOAD YOUR COPY OF I UNLOVE YOU FOR FREE — NOW!](#)**