



# SPD

Small Press  
Distribution  
**Publisher  
Handbook**

Version 17, September 2018



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# Introduction

## WHO WE ARE

Small Press Distribution (SPD), a nonprofit arts organization founded in Berkeley, CA in 1969, connects readers with writers by providing access to independently published literature. SPD allows essential but underrepresented literary communities to participate fully in the marketplace and in the culture at large through book distribution, information services and public advocacy programs. SPD nurtures an environment in which the literary arts are valued and sustained.

## WHAT WE DO

SPD distributes independently published literary titles to all of the channels normally served by a distributor. These include independent book stores, chain stores, other wholesalers, jobbers (who sell to libraries), libraries and online booksellers. SPD also sells books directly to individuals from our warehouse and through [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org). We furnish marketing support to our publishers through a variety of methods, chief of which is making the bibliographic book record (metadata) present and discoverable in the vast digital environment of the general book industry. To do this we send out monthly ONIX-compliant data feeds to the largest book retailers and data vendors in the industry as well as listing all books on our own website. Our more content-specific marketing includes supplying print marketing collateral as well as a variety of updates to the trade, to individuals, and to libraries via email and/or social media. Our bestseller lists are a particularly popular form of content-specific marketing. We also regularly attend tradeshow and other events, conduct direct phone sales with select bookstores and bookstore chains, and supply new titles on standing order to select university library collections. See page 8, Marketing, for more detail on the above.

## WHAT WE CARRY

Our emphasis is on contemporary poetry, innovative fiction, literary translations, literary or arts-oriented criticism and cultural writing. We do not carry genre publishers—thrillers, sci-fi, romance; self-help or inspirational books; technical or academic specialty publications; or monthly or weekly ad-driven glossy magazines. As a rule we also do not carry children's books, self-published books or single author presses.

We still distribute a limited number of literary magazines/journals published in perfect bound book format but, going forward, we are no longer accepting them for inclusion in our catalog. We do not carry staple-bound or newspaper format periodicals.

## WHO OUR PUBLISHERS ARE

SPD publishers share a commitment to publishing works of poetry, innovative fiction and cultural writing that are important to the communities they serve. They come from all over the U.S and from Latin America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Ideally, publishers distributed by SPD publish at least two (or more) books per year by a variety of authors, though we may pick up a press on the basis of an exceptionally strong first publication. SPD is committed to carrying independent publishers of high-quality literary writing, whose publications are well-produced and supported by the publisher through promotional and marketing efforts.

# How to Use This Handbook

This handbook is intended for prospective SPD publishers, new SPD publishers, and publishers who have been with SPD for many years. We encourage all SPD publishers to read through the handbook.

Basic information about who to contact with any questions can be found in the SPD Directory on the following page.

*Note on Pricing:* We draw your attention especially to the **Pricing section** on page 13. Given the realities of the current book business, books carried by SPD should be sold at market prices. Publishers are strongly encouraged to look through the levels in the chart provided in this section and price their titles accordingly.

This handbook also contains recommendations about how best to get information to SPD concerning new titles. See **How To Get Your New Books to SPD** on page 5. You will also find advice about marketing, inventory management, accounting and keeping in touch with SPD.

A **Frequently Asked Questions** section can be found at the end of this guide on page 16.

## SPD Directory

SPD/Small Press Distribution  
 1341 Seventh Street  
 Berkeley, CA 94710-1409  
 Business hours: 9am-5pm (PST), M-F  
 Phone: 510-524-1668  
 Fax: 510-524-0852  
 Toll-free: 800-869-7553  
 EDI orders via PUBNET.org  
 (SAN #106-6617)  
 E-mail: [orders@spdbooks.org](mailto:orders@spdbooks.org)  
 Website: [www.spdbooks.org](http://www.spdbooks.org)

*Executive Director*  
 Jeffrey Lependorf  
 510-524-1668 x306  
**[jeffrey@spdbooks.org](mailto:jeffrey@spdbooks.org)**

*Managing Director*  
 Brent Cunningham  
 510-524-1668 x308  
**[brent@spdbooks.org](mailto:brent@spdbooks.org)**

*Finance Director*  
 Andrew Pai  
 510-524-1668 ex 302  
**[andrew@spdbooks.org](mailto:andrew@spdbooks.org)**

*Assistant to the Directors*  
 Jane Gregory  
 510-524-1668 x306  
**[jane@spdbooks.org](mailto:jane@spdbooks.org)**

*Data Manager*  
 Janice Worthen  
 Remote / Email only  
**[janice@spdbooks.org](mailto:janice@spdbooks.org)**

*Publicity Manager*  
 Trisha Low  
 510-524-1668 X303  
**[trisha@spdbooks.org](mailto:trisha@spdbooks.org)**

*Customer Service Coordinator*  
 Johnny Hernandez  
 510-524-1668 x300  
**[johnny@spdbooks.org](mailto:johnny@spdbooks.org)**

*Warehouse Manager*  
 John Sakkis  
 510-524-1668 x310  
**[john@spdbooks.org](mailto:john@spdbooks.org)**

*Shipping Coordinator*  
 Liam Curley  
 510-524-1668 x307  
**[liam@spdbooks.org](mailto:liam@spdbooks.org)**

*Warehouse Associates*  
 Shiloh Jines, Scott Whitney  
**[shiloh@spdbooks.org](mailto:shiloh@spdbooks.org)**  
**[scott@spdbooks.org](mailto:scott@spdbooks.org)**

*Sales Associate*  
 Nich Malone  
 510-524-1668 x305  
**[nich@spdbooks.org](mailto:nich@spdbooks.org)**

*Special Accounts Associate*  
 e Conner  
 510-524-1668 x309  
**[e@spdbooks.org](mailto:e@spdbooks.org)**

*Customer Service Associates*  
 Ari Banias  
**[ari@spdbooks.org](mailto:ari@spdbooks.org)**  
 Jacq Greyja  
**[jacq@spdbooks.org](mailto:jacq@spdbooks.org)**

### SPD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Juliana Spahr  
 Jonathan Fernandez  
 David Rothenberg  
 Alan Bernheimer  
 Cecil S. Giscombe  
 Ethan Nosowsky  
 Michael Morgan  
 Rena Rosenwasser  
 Lorraine Lupo  
 Roberto Bedoya  
 Estee Schwartz

## SPD Calendar/Deadlines

WINTER: Modern Language Association (MLA) meeting, Winter Institute meeting (ABA). Sign-ups for Associated Writing Programs conference coming up in late winter/early spring. *SPD Recommends* emails go out every two weeks throughout the year. SPD Huddle goes out quarterly to SPD Publishers--if you don't see it you may not be on the publisher email list: go to [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org), click on Sign up for SPD e-newsletters, and make sure! Ongoingly please enter bibliographic data for all new books online (via the new titles form) as soon as that data is fixed and complete.

SPRING: AWP trade show, usually between February and March. SPD's Annual Fundraiser generally takes place around late April or early May.

SUMMER: Oakland Book Festival and Bay Area Book Festival take place May/June. Inventory reduction projects to keep inventory levels reasonable are common this time of year. Check your stock as orders will be coming in for fall classes in August.

FALL: NCIBA in Oakland, Litquake in San Francisco, Zine festival in San Francisco, SPD helps supply Dodge Poetry Festival, SPD fall outreach event/s generally take place. Additional SPD outreach events in Berkeley are common this time of year. Check your stock as orders will be coming in for spring classes in December/January.

## SPD Services to Publishers

SPD provides warehousing and distribution services to 400+ publishers who together produce approximately 1,000 new books per year. We provide a range of marketing and financial services, as well. See below for details.

- I. How To Get Your New Books To SPD
- II. Inventory Management
- III. Marketing Your Books
- IV. Accounting/Terms
- V. Communication

### I. HOW TO GET YOUR NEW BOOKS TO SPD:

SPD publishers should let us know about your new titles as soon as you have all the information about the title and a firm publication date! Do this by entering book information online through the **New Title Form** in the footer of [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org). **No login is required to submit the new title form.**

Only books from publishers carried by SPD should be entered into the form. If you are not an SPD publisher, see **Become an SPD Publisher** in the footer of SPD's site.

#### NEW TITLE FORM

Use the **New Title Form** linked at the bottom of [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org) to send us the information we will need about your new title. **Again, the New Title Form is not only the best way to supply us with the info—it's required!**

Catalog copy should include a brief description of the book, quotes from reviewers or blurbs and brief information about the author that might not appear in the bio. Try to consider the librarians, teachers and others who might be doing keyword searches trying to find your book. Any distinct categories you can comfortably put the book into (Asian American Studies; Gay, Lesbian & Transgender Studies; etc.) can improve the chances for the book to be found by a prospective buyer. **Take the time to select relevant keywords as well — they really do help sell books!**

Back List / Changes to Title Info: Do NOT use the **New Title Form** to augment or change information connected to books that are already in the SPD database. Instead, email additions (notably, new review links) & changes to the SPD Data Manager or the Publicity Manager.

#### ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO SEND SPD

**Cover image:** Cover scans should be JPG, minimum 1000 pixels longest side, 150 DPI recommended, max of 300 DPI, RGB mode, file name ISBN.jpg. Send to Janice Worthen, Data Manager, at [janice@spdbooks.org](mailto:janice@spdbooks.org). In addition, we strongly urge you to submit your cover images to Bowker via your [myidentifiers.com](http://myidentifiers.com) account. Under Bowker's rules, SPD cannot do this for you.

**Peek Inside:** We strongly encourage you to send a "peek inside" pdf (3-10 pp. excerpt or selection) to [peekinside@spdbooks.org](mailto:peekinside@spdbooks.org), named with the 13-digit ISBN. We are also able to add links to reviews and recordings of authors, so please send them to Janice.

**Bowker Identifier Services (formerly BowkerLINK):** Please make sure you have an online username and password with [www.myidentifiers.com](http://www.myidentifiers.com). Make sure SPD is listed as the distributor in all your ISBN records. Also, make sure the data Bowker has matches the data given to SPD. Again, under Bowker's rules, SPD cannot do this for you. **DO NOT BUY YOUR ISBN STRING FROM ANYONE EXCEPT DIRECTLY FROM BOWKER.**

#### PURCHASE ORDERS

Once we receive information about your book, a book record will be created and we will send an order for a specific quantity of books with a purchase order number. This is a suggested quantity which you can modify slightly to fit your own case quantity as needed. Our default starting point is often around 40 copies. If you think our suggestion is significantly off base please let us know why you think there should be an order for more or less. We are usually flexible and will respond to your input.

Send books to:

Small Press Distribution  
Attn: RECEIVING  
1341 7th Street  
Berkeley, CA 94710

The PO (purchase order) number and book title(s) must appear on the outside of the box of shipped books, as well as on the packing list. Please do not send books to SPD at any time without contacting us first and providing the information mentioned above.

## II. INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

### RECEIVING

Shipments are received directly into our inventory **regardless of pubdate**. If you need SPD to delay the release of the book you **MUST** be in direct contact with us, otherwise the book will appear and be announced through all channels as soon as we get copies. Publishers should supply an itemized packing slip with each shipment, retaining a copy for their own records. The packing list must include a price for each title in the shipment. Foreign publishers are required to provide US prices. SPD will send notification of discrepancies between the packing slip and the actual receipt. Note that acknowledgment of receipt will not be made unless a request is made by email to the warehouse manager John Sakkis ([john@spdbooks.org](mailto:john@spdbooks.org)).

Once a book arrives at SPD, it can take up to a few weeks to appear online. If there is a time-sensitive situation please let us know. You will soon see the book online with a quantity attached to it. It greatly helps us if you can monitor the quantities of your own books and send an email when the stock of the book is getting low.

If no quantity shows up online beyond a couple of weeks after you know books have arrived your contact is Data Manager Janice Worthen ([janice@spdbooks.org](mailto:janice@spdbooks.org)) if you sent a new title and John Sakkis ([john@spdbooks.org](mailto:john@spdbooks.org)) if you sent restock.

### SHIPPING BOOKS TO SPD

**SPD's Initial Purchase Order:** Publishers should ship new titles according to SPD's initial purchase order in a timely manner upon publication to assure timely distribution. SPD's Purchase Order number should be on the box and packing slip.

**Carriers:** Domestic shipments may be made via freight companies, the U.S. Postal Service, United Parcel Service, Fed Ex, etc. All shipments must be prepaid.

**Packing:** Books received in unsaleable condition due to insufficient packaging will not be accepted. Therefore, small parcels should be packed in several layers of cardboard. Larger cartons should be padded and reinforced. It is recommended that books be wrapped (no newsprint) to minimize the possibility of damage in transit.

**Warehousing:** Publishers are provided with insured warehouse space for stock held on consignment by SPD. There are no warehousing fees.

**Drop Shipping:** SPD does not generally fulfill book orders without the books physically passing through SPD's warehouse (i.e. no drop-shipping). However, if a publisher has

collected an order and the only available inventory is at SPD's warehouse contact Brent Cunningham to discuss exceptions. SPD charges \$20 per carton handling for any drop ship service. Again, drop shipping should in no way be used as either a regular fulfillment solution for your customers or a method for getting books to authors.

**Publisher Returns:** For return shipments of stock made at the request of the publisher or due to the termination of the relationship, the publisher will be billed for postage plus 50 cents per pound handling.

#### RESTOCKING

SPD runs regular reports to identify books that are low in stock. However, given the size of our inventory, we need our publishers' help in monitoring inventory levels (see Checking Inventory, below, for how to do this). For restocking issues, your contact is John Sakkis at [john@spdbooks.org](mailto:john@spdbooks.org).

#### CHECKING INVENTORY

SPD publishers can and should regularly check their inventory at [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org) by going to Advanced Search, entering the publisher name into the publisher search field, and looking at the "Add to Cart" column. You may also go to any of your online book records and click on your publisher name in that record. If you think a book should be restocked your contact is John Sakkis ([john@spdbooks.org](mailto:john@spdbooks.org)). Some titles should not be restocked even with 5 or less copies on hand while other (often new) books getting a lot of publicity might need to be restocked when they fall below 50. Therefore, **there is no fixed trigger point** where SPD will contact you to ask for more (unless and until the book hits zero). You must monitor your own inventory levels and be proactive to avoid stretches where the book is out of stock.

#### INVENTORY REDUCTION

SPD reserves the right to reduce inventory levels deemed excessive. SPD does not warehouse books in excess of the quantity that SPD has requested.

### III. MARKETING

You the publisher have primary responsibility for marketing your books. However, SPD offers various supplemental marketing services and opportunities. See below for the range of marketing activities SPD offers for each new title.

SPD Recommends: *SPD Recommends*, our twice-monthly email, is sent to a large list of bookstores, libraries and individuals and is the centerpiece of our direct marketing efforts. There are over 15,000 email addresses that receive SPD Recommends.

**SPD Handpicked:** SPD Handpicked is SPD's flagship marketing effort. For details of the program and how to nominate a title for it, go to the Publisher Portal in the footer on the website and look for Tools For Publishers.

#### Other Marketing Options:

**Trade Shows:** SPD exhibits at the Associated Writing Program conference, the Northern California Independent Booksellers Association and at numerous other trade shows and conventions. We have historically gone to the MLA but are currently replacing that with participation in the ABA's Winter Institute. Contact Brent Cunningham at [brent@spdbooks.org](mailto:brent@spdbooks.org) for information about these shows.

**NetRead:** SPD utilizes a service called JacketCaster, a NetRead product, to send out our book data on a monthly basis. Jacketcaster feeds ONIX-compliant bibliographic data for our titles to dozens of clients, including nearly all the major booksellers, jobbers and middlepeople in the book business, in precisely the format they need. ONIX stands for Online Information Exchange and is the standardized format in which the book trade receives bibliographic data. Clients of Netread/Jacketcaster include Amazon, Ingram, Baker & Taylor, Barnes & Noble, Bowker, and a host of smaller entities. Although data feeds are not traditionally considered "marketing" the data we send is searchable by keywords. Many books are purchased simply because their data is complete, in the right database, and can be searched for keywords that are important to the potential buyer.

**SPD Website:** SPD maintains an extensive website to help market your books. The site—[spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org)—includes a complete catalog of new and backlist titles and secure online ordering. Note: when you submit your new title information through the New Title Form, your book will automatically appear online and can be immediately pre-ordered by many of our retail/resale customers. As long as there is inventory, the book can be purchased in a secure environment online. Some key features of the site include:

- *Book Details:* Catalog descriptions, author bios, links to reviews, cover scans, and much more gets added to the book detail page as such information becomes available.
- *Search Features:* Our site features robust search tools that allow users to search and cross-search for books by Title, Keyword, Author, ISBN, Publisher, Pub Date, Price Range, and even by the author's state or city.

- *Your Secure E-commerce Solution:* SPD publishers are allowed and encouraged to link directly to SPD's site from their own site to take advantage of our secure e-commerce shopping cart system. This is called the SPD Affiliate Program. By sending customers from your site (or from social media) to a special URL, you receive an extra \$1 per book sold. Contact for this program is e Conner at e@spdbooks.org.
- *Other Online Resources:* Information for publishers, librarians and booksellers is available in special sections on the site.

**Social Media:** SPD maintains a robust Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram and Twitter presence, using them to market and promote our titles, publishers, events and mission. Email new publicity to trisha@spdbooks.org and/or post it on your own social media, tagging SPD.

**Contacting Stores:** Mailing lists of up to 300 bookstores are available to SPD publishers for no cost (physical addresses, not emails). Where possible we will customize these lists to publisher needs. Contact Brent Cunningham at brent@spdbooks.org for more information.

**Co-op Advertising:** SPD offers co-operative advertising to publishers when possible. Journals included in the past have been *Library Journal*, *Poets & Writers*, *Art Forum*, *Black Issues Book Review*, *Publishers Weekly*, the *New Yorker* and others. Co-op opportunities will be announced via email to the SPD publisher list.

**Promotional Copies:** Publishers supply SPD with up to 10 copies of each new title as free promotional copies. Included in this category are display, desk, review and catalog copies. SPD provides desk copies to teachers who have ordered books through their local or college bookstore. Instructors must request desk copies by fax on school letterhead, providing the name and enrollment of the class.

#### IV. ACCOUNTING/TERMS

**Exclusivity:** SPD operates as the exclusive US distributor to the trade for its publishers, including all sales into Baker & Taylor, Ingram, Amazon US, etc.

**Service fees:** A twice-annual \$135 service fee per publisher and a one-time \$25 fee per new title will be charged. The twice-annual fee is charged in January and July. These fees will be deducted from payment to the publisher. If a press does not earn enough to pay the publisher fee an invoice will be issued at the end of each quarter.

**Statements:** Payment is accompanied by a Sales Report itemizing the number of books sold during the quarter(s) for which the publisher is being paid and by a current inventory. These statements should be retained for the publisher's cumulative inventory and sales records.

**Discount/Payment:** SPD books are sold to customers at varying discounts. Publishers are paid a percent of the NET price received for each book sold regardless of discount. Initially, the publisher is paid 50% of the net. Publishers earning more than \$5,000 in a given fiscal year are paid 55% the following year. Publishers earning more than \$10,000 are paid 60% of net in the following year. SPD Publishers should check their Distribution Agreement for more details regarding payment.

**Paid Returns:** Returns to SPD of books for which the publisher has already been paid will be deducted from the next payment. Be sure to notice, in your sales reports, that we generally report NET sales (i.e. gross sales minus returns).

**Agreement Termination:** The SPD Distribution Agreement may be terminated by either party with a notice period of 60 days. SPD publishers should check their SPD Distribution Agreement for more information about agreement termination.

**General Questions:** Brent Cunningham ([brent@spdbooks.org](mailto:brent@spdbooks.org)) is a good contact when it comes to financial questions, sales reports, other general questions about sales, the publisher-SPD relationship, and other issues. Jane Gregory ([jane@spdbooks.org](mailto:jane@spdbooks.org)) can also answer questions about the publisher-distributor relationship and other issues and is the first contact for presses applying to join SPD. Andrew Pai, the finance director, is also available for financial matters at [andrew@spdbooks.org](mailto:andrew@spdbooks.org). Janice Worthen ([janice@spdbooks.org](mailto:janice@spdbooks.org)) is the best person to go to with questions about new books and bibliographic data. John Sakkis ([john@spdbooks.org](mailto:john@spdbooks.org)) is your contact for restock. Trisha Low ([trisha@spdbooks.org](mailto:trisha@spdbooks.org)) is a great contact for publicity matters. Jeffrey Lependorf ([jeffrey@spdbooks.org](mailto:jeffrey@spdbooks.org)) welcomes comments or suggestions about SPD in general and how we might best serve our constituents.

## V. COMMUNICATION

Contact information: *Make sure SPD has your email.* Sign up from the “Sign Up for SPD Newsletters” link at the bottom of any page on the website. We encourage you to have others in your project join the group called “SPD Publisher Info (I am an SPD publisher).” That group will receive all the more public communications directed towards SPD publishers and potential publishers. More private communications may go only to the SINGLE email on file for each active publisher. Publishers should be receiving regular email newsletters and communication. Please make sure that we are updated with your current email, phone, fax and address. Contact info for SPD staff is in the Directory on page 3 above.

*SPD Huddle:* SPD sends publishers an occasional newsletter with news about publishers, deadlines, marketing opportunities and other information.

Opportunities: SPD lets publishers know of marketing opportunities, such as trade show representation, online advertising opportunities, co-op advertising and other projects, through email. Again, publishers should make sure that we have the best email contact for them.

Feedback: We would very much appreciate your contacting us with any feedback. We will be happy to hear from you and will try to address any issues as soon as possible.

# Book Basics

- I. Printing
- II. Pricing
- III. Book Covers
- IV. ISBN Numbers and Bar Codes

## I. PRINTING

How you print your book, and with whom, is up to you. However, you may find it useful to know that there are six printers SPD considers “preferred printers” (and who, collectively, print the majority of SPD books). They are: Bookmobile, Thomson-Shore, Spencer Printing, McNaughton & Gunn, Publishers’ Graphics and BR Printers. We encourage you to get samples from these printers and explore a relationship.

As a rule of thumb, if you believe you will ultimately sell 500 or more copies of a book, offset printing may be the most cost effective choice. Less than 500, look into digital printing (also known as POD—“print on demand”—or “short run” printing). All six of the publishers mentioned above offer POD.

When shopping for digital printers do be aware that many POD companies, including Lightning Source, also offer distribution/retail services (including retail e-commerce) and that they will bundle the cost of those services into the pricing for your book. Because SPD provides those services as part of its distribution you could end up paying for such services twice. In addition, distribution services that sell into the trade may contradict the exclusive relationship required by SPD. Even some of our preferred printers offer those services which must be “turned off” when you become an SPD press. Since Createspace cannot turn off their flow into Amazon (being an Amazon company) SPD publishers are not allowed to use Createspace to print their books unless it is by direct arrangement.

Ideally, then, as an SPD publisher you should make use of a printer who will only charge you for printing and not other services. **In addition, note that you cannot use ISBNs supplied by your printer while also using SPD (see ISBNs, below).**

## II. PRICING

Publishers are encouraged to price books at market levels. Frequent price changing is discouraged, but do be aware that prices can be changed. Price changes will be made at the beginning of the month following notification date. For books bearing printed price information, stickers must be provided along with notification of price changes, and all subsequent shipments of the title should be pre-stickered before delivery.

Use the chart below to help determine market price for specific titles:

	Consortium Publishers (BOA, Copper Canyon, Coffee House, etc.)	New Directions	U of Illinois	U of Iowa	Graywolf
Poetry, under 85 pages	\$16.50	\$16.00	\$16.00	\$17.00	\$17.00
Poetry, 85-125 pages	\$17.00	\$16.00	\$17.00	\$18.00	\$17.50
Poetry 126-250	\$18.50	\$18.00	\$19.00	\$22.00	\$19.00
Fiction 126-250	\$18.00	\$17.50	\$19.00	\$20.00	\$17.00

Certain items **MUST** be included on the book cover—including an ISBN number and bar code—to ensure ease in sales, maintenance of the SPD electronic inventory and warehousing.

## III. BOOK COVER / JACKET

- **Front Cover:** Display the title, the author’s name, the translator’s name (if applicable) and any artwork/design being used.
- **Spine:** From top to bottom, display the author’s last name, translator’s name (if applicable), the title, and publisher name.
- **Back Cover:** It is best to include a brief synopsis of the book, pertinent reviewers’ blurbs, and a brief bio of the author. We do not necessarily recommend printing the price on the book. The book **MUST** display the ISBN number and bar code, normally in the lower right corner of the back cover.

#### IV. ISBN NUMBERS AND BARCODES

**ISBN Numbers:** As you probably know, one of the most important ways books are classified is through the numbers R.R. Bowker assigns to them: International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs). These numbers are used for Books in Print, as well as any bookstore database inventory. Some entities (chain bookstores, jobbers and other) require that information be presented in a standardized format. An ISBN is central to this information.

Most of SPD's customers refuse to consider books that don't have ISBNs and SPD does not send books without ISBNs through our data broadcasting services. We strongly urge you to assign ISBNs to all of your titles. To obtain ISBNs go to R.R. Bowker at [www.isbn.org](http://www.isbn.org).

**When assigning an ISBN to your book, printing it on the book, or submitting it to SPD, it is CRUCIAL to get it right!** Mistakes in ISBNs (i.e. assigning an ISBN you already used on a different book) are extremely, extremely difficult to fix and will significantly lower sales.

**Bar Codes:** Along with ISBNs many SPD customers refuse to carry books without bar codes. For online information regarding bar codes, we recommend beginning with the Book Industry Study Group at [www.bisg.org](http://www.bisg.org). Note that bar codes only need to embed the 13 digit ISBN number; they do not need to embed the price and probably should not.

**Fees for ISBN/Barcode Problems:** In order to be considerate of our staff's labor SPD has implemented a new policy. If the warehouse receives books that have NO ISBN BARCODE, the WRONG BARCODE, or the WRONG ISBN printed on the back cover, **we will need to charge you a \$50 fee** to sticker the books we have on hand. SPD's expectation would be that any restock will arrive corrected (either reprinted correctly, or stickered over by the publisher).

**ISSN numbers (International Standard Serial Number):** ISSNs are assigned to serials published in the United States by the National Serials Data Program (NSDP), of the Library of Congress. A book with an ISBN does not need an ISSN. In general SPD does not carry serials/journals/magazines but in cases where we do we recommend assigning the item an ISBN instead of an ISSN.

## SPD Customers

SPD supports the U.S. literary ecosystem by selling your books into the major channels traditionally served by book wholesalers and distributors. These include independent stores, chain stores, college stores, libraries, jobbers, and other wholesalers. We also sell to individuals by phone, from our website, and directly from our location in Berkeley. In general, SPD takes orders by phone, fax, email, the internet and by EDI through PubNet. SPD also sells books internationally, although we charge appropriate shipping charges from the US and such orders are subject to any applicable custom duties.

**Independent bookstores:** Independent bookstore owners were the founders of SPD and currently represent about 15% of SPD's customer base.

**Baker & Taylor:** Baker & Taylor is one of SPD's largest customers. B&T traditionally resells our books to libraries, hence they are thought of as a "jobber," but they also resell our titles to many bookstores and other bookselling entities the same as a wholesaler like Ingram does. They have strong reach into Canada as well.

**Amazon:** Amazon has become SPD's largest single customer. We have multiple employees working to maintain the many complexities of a well-functioning Amazon relationship. For questions about Amazon start with Brent Cunningham at [brent@spdbooks.org](mailto:brent@spdbooks.org).

**Ingram:** In 2016 SPD began a relationship with Ingram, the nation's largest wholesalers. Most SPD books are sold at a 40% discount to Ingram, who in turn must therefore put them on a "short" discount compared to what their bookseller customers are used to. SPD titles at Ingram default to being nonreturnable from the reseller back to Ingram. Both these factors keep Ingram sales modest but they do buy from SPD regularly. You can discuss offering a deeper discount and/or returnability from the reseller back to Ingram with Brent Cunningham.

**Chain bookstores:** SPD serves Barnes & Noble as well as some smaller chain bookstores. Note that Barnes & Noble is on a non-returnable basis with SPD. This means they may be reluctant to order your books in quantity or for what they call "in-store placement," i.e. stocking on the shelves in the brick-and-mortar stores (or for readings/events). However most SPD titles are available for special order and on [bn.com](http://bn.com). Note that BN College is a separate entity, and does buy returnably from SPD.

**Approval Plan Libraries:** SPD currently has many approval plans—a plan in which a library selects a criteria that we apply to all new titles. Books fitting the library's criteria are sent

automatically each month. Libraries return unwanted texts. Approval plan sales, as well as some sales going direct to libraries, represent approximately a tenth of SPD's total sales.

**Textbook stores:** Textbook sales (or course adoptions) are a key customer segment for SPD. We have seen consistent sales increases in this area.

**Individuals:** SPD sells direct to individuals, mostly from our secure site. We also sell to individuals from our location in Berkeley, especially during on-site events. Please see SPD's social media (facebook, twitter, etc) or contact us for information about SPD events.

## FAQ's

### 1. HOW DO I APPLY FOR DISTRIBUTION BY SPD?

Before applying for distribution by Small Press Distribution, please be aware that SPD carries only literary titles. We do not carry publishers who specialize in self-help, spiritual, cookbooks, children's books or genre titles. Once you have determined that your books are appropriate for SPD, go to the Publisher Portal at the foot of [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org) and click on **Become An SPD Publisher**. Response time can vary considerably. Please contact Jane Gregory to check the status of your application if you have not heard back in 4-6 weeks.

### 2. I AM AN SPD PUBLISHER WITH A NEW TITLE, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Click on the **New Title Form** link on our site in the Publisher Portal list in the footer.

### 3. HOW CAN I CHECK THE STOCK OF MY TITLES AT SPD?

Simply enter the publisher name in Advanced Search at [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org). Look in the far right column to see stock levels.

### 4. WHY ISN'T MY BOOK ON THE WEBSITE?

A technical glitch in entering the book record can occasionally result in a book not appearing on the site. There are also other possible reasons the book may not be appearing on [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org). Please contact Janice Worthen (Data Manager) to help solve any issue in this area.

## 5. I AM AN SPD PUBLISHER. HOW CAN I LINK MY SITE WITH SPD?

To link directly to a book on the SPD website, find the book on the site and cut-and-paste the URL out of the browser's address bar and use it as your hotlink. SPD has a new "affiliate" program that provides publishers with an extra \$1 per book sold when they drive a customer to a specific, special URL on SPD's site and the customer purchases your title. See FAQ #16.

## 6. HOW DO I GET A SCAN OF THE COVERS OF MY BOOKS ON SPD'S SITE?

Cover scans should be JPG, minimum 1000 pixels longest side, 150 DPI recommended, max of 300 DPI, RGB mode, file name ISBN.jpg. Send to Janice Worthen, Data Manager, at [janice@spdbooks.org](mailto:janice@spdbooks.org).

## 7. WHO SHOULD I TALK TO ABOUT MY ACCOUNT?

Brent Cunningham is a good contact when it comes to financial questions, sales reports and other general questions about sales or the publisher-SPD relationship. Andrew Pai, the finance director, is also available for financial matters at [andrew@spdbooks.org](mailto:andrew@spdbooks.org). Jane Gregory can also answer questions about the publisher-distributor relationship.

## 8. WILL SPD CARRY MY LITERARY JOURNAL?

Though we are enthusiastic supporters of literary journals, SPD does not offer distribution to publishers of literary journals unless the press also publishes individual authors. Sales of journals alone can rarely support their distribution by SPD. SPD does not offer subscription sales of any kind.

## 9. I AM AN SPD AUTHOR (OR PUBLISHER) PREPARING FOR A READING, HOW CAN I BE SURE MY BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE EVENT?

Check stock of your book(s) by looking them up on [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org) at least a month before your reading. Let SPD know the date of your reading and if you think we should order more books. It is best to contact a bookstore to order books from SPD for your reading. Arts organizations can also order. Orders from individuals are not returnable. If a store or organization has not ordered previously we require them to fill out a credit application. Again, contact us early to avoid delays.

## 10. AS AN SPD AUTHOR, CAN I FIND OUT HOW WELL MY BOOK IS SELLING?

It is best to contact your publisher directly with this question. We only provide this information to authors if the publisher has sent us an email stating that we can release the information. It is important to remember that bookstore sales through SPD, as in the book industry in general, allow returns for up to a year.

## 11. WHY IS MY SPD PUBLISHER ACCOUNT IN THE NEGATIVE?

Returns of books where SPD has already paid the publisher as well as accumulation of fees can sometimes send an account into the negative. Note that SPD's business structure generally relies on a publisher periodically bringing out new titles. A lack of new titles can adversely affect sales to the point where positive sales no longer outweigh returns and fees.

## 12. CAN SPD HELP ME MAKE AND SELL EBOOKS?

At this time SPD is not directly providing conversion or distribution of ebooks; we are instead focused on promoting our print books. Our pilot program to provide distribution and conversions services (partnering with Bookmobile) is no longer operating, but the knowledge we gathered has proved invaluable. Some of that knowledge can be found in the FAQs on [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org), and you are welcome to ask us your ebook questions!

## 13. HOW CAN I SELL MORE BOOKS?

A publisher can effectively market their titles in the following ways:

- *Advertising*—pay to display titles at SPD trade shows, sign up for SPD Handpicked or other optional SPD marketing programs (talk to Trisha Low at [trisha@spdbooks.org](mailto:trisha@spdbooks.org)), take advantage of co-op advertising, etc. Outside of SPD, look for publisher-specific or title-specific advertising in print and online media. Narrower is usually better (i.e. cheaper per each reader you actually reach).
- *Reviews*—Reviews help sell books, even reviews on Facebook, Twitter, Amazon, Goodreads, and on blogs! Send links to Trisha Low at [trisha@spdbooks.org](mailto:trisha@spdbooks.org) or Janice Worthen at [janice@spdbooks.org](mailto:janice@spdbooks.org)
- *Author appearances/readings*—let us know your schedule!
- *Course Adoptions*—let SPD know if you are expecting course adoptions. Reach out directly to teachers encouraging them to teach your title, or encourage your author/s to do the same. Consider making reading guides for books with course-adoption potential; this can be as easy as ten questions about the book, created by you or the author, made into a downloadable PDF to be featured on your site.

#### 14. HOW CAN I HELP SPD?

If you are an SPD publisher, getting us your information on a timely basis is incredibly helpful, and will also give your books the best chance to sell well. Forwarding scans, reviews, reading information or other news about your press is also very useful. Such information can be sent to Brent Cunningham, Janice Worthen, or Trisha Low. Many SPD publishers are also Friends of SPD (individual entities who make donations to SPD). SPD operates as a nonprofit organization and relies on contributions and grants to fulfill its mission of serving our publishers and the authors they publish. Benefits of becoming a Friend of SPD include discounts that can be added to your regular publisher discount of 10%.

#### 15. THE NEW TITLE FORM WON'T WORK/SUBMIT. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

First, check your browser. While the SPD site supports a range of browsers, the new titles form is probably going to work best on the most common browsers. If you are on one of the popular browsers consider trying a different one, probably Chrome. Next, review the form carefully, looking for the required fields (with asterisks). Check formatting dates, length of copy, etc. Next, feel free to contact Data Manager Janice Worthen at [janice@spdbooks.org](mailto:janice@spdbooks.org) to try to solve the problem.

#### 16. CAN I SEND BUYERS FROM MY SITE TO SPDBOOKS.ORG TO FULFILL THEIR ORDERS?

Yes! As of 2017 SPD has an "Affiliate Publisher program" which is for SPD publishers who would like to use SPD as their e-commerce solution. It offers an easy and affordable alternative to collecting payment on your website and doing all the picking, packing and shipping for individual orders yourself. The program relies on unique URLs which, when used by a customer to purchase a title on [spdbooks.org](http://spdbooks.org), will pay the publisher an extra \$1 per book sold. Participating publishers can also send these special URLs around online (through email or social media) and can ask their authors and supporters to do the same. Every time those special URLs are used the publisher receives an additional \$1 per book sold. To sign up or for more information email [brent@spdbooks.org](mailto:brent@spdbooks.org). You will be sent a special code as well as instructions for how to use that code to construct and use your unique URLs.

books with the correct ISBN/barcode. This is a time consuming process. Again, all books have to have the correct ISBN and barcode printed on the back cover in order to be sold through SPD.

17. WHAT IF I PRINTED THE WRONG ISBN ON MY BOOK, FORGOT TO PRINT A BARCODE, OR MADE SOME MISTAKE WITH THE ISBN/BARCODE?

First, let us know! Contact Janice Worthen at [janice@spdbooks.org](mailto:janice@spdbooks.org) or another SPD staffer a.s.a.p. In order to be considerate of our staff's labor SPD has implemented a new policy. If the warehouse receives books that have NO ISBN BARCODE, the WRONG BARCODE, or the WRONG ISBN printed on the back cover, **we will need to charge you a \$50 fee** to sticker the books we have on hand. SPD's expectation would be that any restock will arrive corrected (either reprinted correctly, or stickered over by the publisher).

18. I HAVE AN IDEA FOR THE SPD PUBLISHERS HANDBOOK. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Please contact us with suggestions, complaints or questions. We want to hear from you!

## APPENDIX A

## Amazon Availability Primer

(Sent as publisher email December 2016; still relevant as of August 2018)

## INTRO

A number of you have asked about how books flow from SPD to and through Amazon and what you can do to make sure that your books show up on Amazon.com in a timely fashion, remain in stock, etc. The fact is: it's complicated! But the below attempts to answer those questions broadly and provides some advice and an overview. Please read at your leisure or as the need arises, and apologies for the length.

## NEW TITLE "TIMING" FOR AMAZON

For new titles, submitting the bibliographic data early is key to ensuring that your books will appear as soon as possible. Here's what happens on our end: we gather all new book data in a given month toward the end of the month, generally between the 25th - 28th. We then clean the data so that it meets the specific requirements for our data feeds to Amazon and other major customers, and push it out to all of them. The data we've provided generally appears in the form of visible book records on Amazon.com by the 2nd or 3rd. At that point, we go to work making sure that Amazon, in the back end of their system, is pointing to SPD as the source for buying the books we just transmitted to them. While this part of the process generally works as it should, it is often the case that that, for reasons SPD can only guess at, Amazon does not put the book into the list of books sourced to SPD. The process for us to try to fix that is, unfortunately, a somewhat labyrinthine one, and can take a number of days or weeks. We have quite limited control over correcting any errors made by Amazon, but we do always act on your behalf swiftly. The Sales Manager or Sales Associate at SPD would be your contact for these issues.

The above refers to flow of data and the problem of sourcing the book to us. The next step is availability.

## AVAILABILITY

To help your books show up actually physically \*stocked\* on Amazon.com in a timely way you should plan to get your books here in advance of the pub date just a bit. For example, let's say that a book is coming out in March of 2017. If you were to send SPD the bibliographic data before, say, December 25th, we could have the bibliographic data transmitted to Amazon for January (or send it by Jan 25th to have it there in February, etc.). Giving us that length of lead period gives us time to work on the problem if Amazon is not pointing to us correctly as the source. Then you might send us the physical books before, say, Feb 25. When the books got here, we would transmit the books as actually availability to Amazon, so they would be aware we have books on hand around approximately March 2nd or 3rd. At that point there will hopefully be enough building demand evident in their algorithm for Amazon to place an order the following week. It will then take another week to arrive there and show up as actually available for purchase (shipping in 24 to 48 hours) through Amazon.com. In this example, assuming everything works as expected, if you wanted the books available at Amazon on the pub date, your pub date could be set as, say, March 15th.

**IMPORTANT:** If the books arrive here on, say, March 1, SPD won't transmit the availability of the book until the NEXT monthly feed, which will leave here around April 1. So timing this can be crucial!

Again, please note that we see problems getting the books sourced to SPD about 10% - 15% of the time. We spend considerable time managing this and will continue to do so, but you will give your books the best possible chance of making their way through the Amazon process smoothly by planning your book's schedule as described above.

## KEEPING BOOKS IN STOCK AT AMAZON

The program through which SPD participates with Amazon (called Vendor Central) does not guarantee that Amazon will stock even a single copy of every title we have. Amazon relies on internal algorithms--which they do not share with us or anyone else--to determine demand, which in turn determines their decision to buy/stock or not stock a book. So if you see your book listed on Amazon as "not in stock but available in 4-6 weeks" it is POSSIBLE that it isn't demonstrating sufficient demand according to the Amazon algorithm.

## KEEPING BOOKS IN STOCK AT AMAZON (Continued)

But there are a few other possibilities you should rule out first! The first and easiest thing that you can do is to confirm that the book is pointing to SPD as the source, since that could also keep the book from being ordered/stocked. If you've seen sales from SPD for that title through Amazon in the past, that's probably not the problem, but you can email [nich@spdbooks.org](mailto:nich@spdbooks.org) to check. The next thing to check is whether Amazon has indeed ordered your book, with perhaps the stock still being in transit. This is often the problem with very popular books, which blink in and out of stock on Amazon.com regularly. Again, Nich Malone is your contact. Just ask and he'll be able to tell you if books are in transit, and give you a rough estimate of when the books will likely reach Amazon if this is the case. Do keep in mind that we can't control how fast Amazon gets the books from their loading dock to wherever they need to be to show up as "in stock." We have experienced wildly different timings for this process.

So, in sum: if the book IS pointing to SPD as the source, and stock ALSO isn't in transit, and the title is STILL showing a status of "out of stock / 4 to 6 weeks" then it is probably the case that the Amazon algorithm is not being triggered by a minimum level of demand. You can manufacture some demand by having people place orders for the books at the 4-6 week rate. SPD no longer even open a ticket in Vendor Central customer service suggesting a buy--the ONLY way to get them to stock the book is to trigger their algorithms. Working with SPD you'll need to work on generating reviews, creating attention in social media, getting course adoptions orders, prizes, setting up events, etc. to send readers who buy books from Amazon there to order your book.

We wish we could report to you absolutely reliable methods for guaranteeing that your books remain in stock at Amazon and appear there as available by their pub dates, but we do hope that by following the above best practices in this regard that we can do all that we can to make things work as they should.

Thanks again for being a part of the SPD family of publishers!

(December 2016)