

SPD

Small Press
Distribution
**Publisher
Handbook**

Version 22

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PLEASE NOTE: This handbook is not a contractual document and is not to be mistaken for the terms of our agreement.

Introduction

WHO WE ARE

In an increasingly corporatized book industry, Small Press Distribution (SPD) brings readers independently published literature, emphasizing small press values—equity, experimentation and access. We connect underrepresented literary communities to the marketplace and to each other via book distribution, events, and public advocacy. Prioritizing artistic and activist visions, SPD’s nearly 400 presses publish a full diversity of writers who rely on us to reach readers nationwide.

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, libraries, and online booksellers. SPD also sells books directly to individuals from our warehouse and through 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 9, 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 creative nonfiction. 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 do not carry staple-bound or newspaper format periodicals.

SPD reserves the right to decline distribution to any title that runs afoul of protected parties as identified by Federal hate crime laws. These include violations based on that party’s perceived or actual race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.

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 North and 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 with a diverse author list, 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 14. Given the realities of the current book business, books carried by SPD should be sold at market prices.

This handbook also contains recommendations about how best to get information to SPD concerning new titles. You will also find advice about marketing, inventory management, accounting, and keeping in touch with SPD.

A **Frequently Asked Questions** section can be found on page 17.

Important Tip for Publishers!

Please See Appendix B (Suggested Publication Schedule) for ideas on how to build your own calendar on page 24.

SPD Directory

SPD/Small Press Distribution
1341 Seventh Street
Berkeley, CA 94710-1409

Business hours: 9am-5pm (PT), 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
Website: www.spdbooks.org

Executive Director
Kent Watson
kent@spdbooks.org

Finance Director
Andrew Pai
andrew@spdbooks.org

Operations Director
David Isaacson
david@spdbooks.org

Sales & Data Manager
Sara Dumanske
sara@spdbooks.org

Publicity & Marketing Manager
Grant Kerber
grant@spdbooks.org

Customer Service Coordinator
Johnny Hernandez
johnny@spdbooks.org

Warehouse Coordinators
Anthony Sebastian, Shawn El
anthony@spdbooks.org
shawn@spdbooks.org

Data Associate
Shelby Hinte
shelby@spdbooks.org

***Please note: most SPD staff work remotely. Phone numbers have been removed to prevent confusion. To reach SPD staff, it's best to use email.**

Contacts By Areas of Responsibility

Cover Scans and questions about book records: **newtitles@spdbooks.org**

Publisher Purchase Orders and Restocking Requests: **po@spdbooks.org**

Other questions about bibliographic data: **metadata@spdbooks.org**

Questions related to shipping, warehouse, or sales: **operations@spdbooks.org**

Questions related to grants and individual donations: **development@spdbooks.org**

Publisher reports, account questions, and financial matters: **accounts@spdbooks.org**

General publicity and marketing questions: **publicity@spdbooks.org**

Orders and customer service: **orders@spdbooks.org**

Prospective Publishers: **acquisitions@spdbooks.org**

Inventory, Publisher Returns, and Receiving: **warehouse@spdbooks.org**

SPD Calendar/Deadlines

YEAR-ROUND: *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, 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.

WINTER: Winter Institute meeting (ABA).

SPRING: AWP trade show, usually between February and March.

SUMMER: Bay Area Book Festival takes place May/June. Inventory reduction projects to keep inventory levels reasonable are common this time of year. Check stock as orders come in for fall classes in August.

FALL: NCIBA in Oakland, Litquake in San Francisco, Pacific Northwest Bookseller Association (PNBA), Zine festival in San Francisco, SPD helps supply Dodge Poetry Festival, California Independent Booksellers Alliance (CALIBA), and other events 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. **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 **Publisher Resources** in the footer of SPD's site.

NEW TITLE FORM

Use the **New Title Form** linked in the Publisher Resources section of 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; LGBTQIA+ 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!** Be sure to read our [guide to metadata](#) to ensure your title gets the attention it deserves!

Backlist/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 changes to metadata@spdbooks.org and additions (notably, new review links) to publicity@spdbooks.org.

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 our data team at newtitles@spdbooks.org. In addition, we strongly urge you to submit your cover images to Bowker via your 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, named with the 13-digit ISBN. We are also able to add links to reviews and recordings of authors; please email those to publicity@spdbooks.org.

Bowker Identifier Services (formerly BowkerLINK): Please make sure you have an online username and password with 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.** (Note: For UK Publishers, buying your ISBN from Nielsen is acceptable.)

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 generally 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 U.S. 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 our warehouse at warehouse@spdbooks.org.

Once a book arrives at SPD, it may 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 to po@spdbooks.org 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 our book records team at newtitles@spdbooks.org.

SPD's Initial Purchase Order: To assure timely distribution, publishers must ship new titles according to SPD's initial purchase order in a timely manner upon publication. SPD's Purchase Order number must appear on the box and packing slip.

Carriers: Domestic shipments may be made via freight companies, United Parcel Service, Fed Ex, etc. SPD strongly discourages using USPS but will accept packages from them. 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.

Drop-Shipping: SPD does not generally fulfill book orders without the orders being made through SPD (i.e. no drop-shipping). However, if a publisher has collected an order and the only available inventory is at SPD's warehouse, contact our warehouse team at warehouse@spdbooks.org

spdbooks.org, to discuss exceptions. SPD charges \$20 per carton handling for any drop-ship service. Again, drop-shipping should in no way be used as a regular fulfillment solution for customers.

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. More details on publisher returns are available [here](#).

Promotional Copies: Per the Distribution Agreement, SPD publishers agree to supply SPD with up to 10 copies of each new title as free promotional copies. There is a \$100 fee for each additional set of ten copies to cover shipping and handling charges. 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.

Damaged Inventory: Per the Distribution Agreement, returned inventory damaged by SPD customers through no fault of SPD, where specific fault cannot be determined, and where SPD is under contractual obligation to accept such returns and issue credit, will be deducted from publisher inventory ongoingly. Due to the nature of the book business and the lack of care often demonstrated by wholesalers and retailers towards returned inventory, publishers should expect some level of loss of inventory over time and price/plan accordingly. SPD is not responsible for POs that arrive damaged at our warehouse. Publishers will be notified of any damages upon receiving and SPD will provide any available information and photos to help the publishers file a claim with their shipper.

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, contact our purchase order team at po@spdbooks.org.

CHECKING INVENTORY

SPD publishers can and should regularly check their inventory at 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. 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 and will from time to time request that publishers reduce stock. Note that SPD also does not warehouse books in excess of the quantities that SPD has requested and in those cases may require that publishers take back books in excess of requested numbers with shipping at the publisher's expense.

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 more than 13,000 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 Resources in the footer on the website and look for Tools For Publishers. SPD Handpicked requires additional co-op financial participation from the publisher.

Other Marketing Options: SPD Indie Update. This list of 8 titles goes out each spring and fall. Deadlines for and cost of participating are provided in the *SPD Huddle*. The program includes a placard on our home page, a mailer that goes out to many of our clients, an ad, and social media promotions. Interested participants can contact publicity@spdbooks.org.

Trade Shows: SPD exhibits at the Associated Writing Program conference, Winter Institute, California Independent Booksellers Alliance (CALIBA), Pacific Northwest Bookseller's Association (PNBA), American Library Association, and at numerous other trade shows and conventions. Contact publicity@spdbooks.org for information about these shows. Displaying at shows often requires additional co-op financial participation, but SPD tries to keep such fees as low as possible.

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 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, Baker & Taylor, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org, Bowker, Ingram, 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—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 encouraged to take advantage of our secure e-commerce shopping cart system by utilizing our SPD Affiliate Program. By sending customers from your site (or from social media) to a special URL that we can provide you for each book title, you will receive an extra \$1 per book sold. The contact for this program is publicity@spdbooks.org.
- *Other Online Resources:* Information for publishers, librarians, teachers, and booksellers is available in special sections on the site.

Social Media: SPD maintains a robust [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) presence, using them to market and promote our titles, publishers, events, and mission. Email new publicity to our publicity team at publicity@spdbooks.org and/or post it on your own social media, tagging SPD.

Contacting Stores: Mailing lists (physical addresses, not emails) of some 300 bookstores are available to SPD publishers at no cost. Where possible we will customize these lists to publisher needs. Contact publicity@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.

IV. ACCOUNTING/TERMS

Exclusivity: SPD operates as the exclusive distributor to the U.S. trade for its publishers, including all sales into Amazon U.S., Baker & Taylor, Bookshop.org, Ingram, etc. Sales direct from the publisher's website as well as sales at events are allowed and even encouraged.

Service fees: "Publisher Account Dues" are what an SPD publisher will be charged for our services. SPD bills Publisher Account Dues on a quarterly basis so that the charges are not front-loaded for our publishers. See your agreement for current rates, and note that these Dues may rise in subsequent years. If a press does not earn enough to pay their Account Dues 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. More detailed sales information can be generated by request. For a detailed sales report, along with copies of reports in digital format, please contact accounts@spdbooks.org.

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. (The net price is what remains after any and all discounts have been applied.) Initially, the publisher is paid 50% of the net. Starting in 2020, publishers earning more than \$6,000 in a given fiscal year will be paid 55% the following year. Publishers earning more than \$12,000 will be paid 60% of net in the following year. If, during a subsequent fiscal year, the publisher's sales fall below the minimum level for the tier they are in, their royalty split during the following fiscal year may be reduced back to the lower percentage. Sales are calculated quarterly and payments are posted/due a full quarter later. An example being sales for 1Q (Jan-Mar) will not be posted onto the account for payment until the beginning of 3Q (July).

SPD Publishers should check their Distribution Agreement for more details regarding payment. Payments are sent as paper checks. For electronic payments and other options, please contact accounts@spdbooks.org.

Direct Deposit: Direct deposit is available for publishers in lieu of paper checks. To set up direct deposit, contact accounts@spdbooks.org.

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: accounts@spdbooks.org is a good contact when it comes to financial questions, sales reports, and other general questions about sales, the publisher-SPD relationship, and other issues. acquisitions@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. operations@spdbooks.org and sales@spdbooks.org are the best contacts for questions about new books, bibliographic data, POs, and restocking. publicity@spdbooks.org is the best contact for publicity and marketing matters.

V. COMMUNICATION

Contact Information: *Make sure SPD has your most current information on file. If the email, address or phone you gave us originally when you opened your account changes it is vital to let us know.* Additionally, we expect all publishers to sign up for the "[Sign Up for SPD Newsletters](#)" via link at the bottom of any page on the website. Please also join the group called "SPD Publisher Info (I am an SPD publisher)." That group receives the 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. Again, please make sure that we are updated with your current email, phone, fax and address should that info change. 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. SPD has [a list of printers on our website](#). We invite you to check out the list and contact the printers to seek samples and bids.

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).

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 KDP (formerly Createspace) cannot turn off their flow into Amazon (being an Amazon company), SPD publishers are not allowed to use KDP (formerly 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).**

Information on printing services changes regularly. For the latest information, please contact operations@spdbooks.org.

II. PRICING

Publishers are strongly encouraged to price books at market levels.

SPD (as well as our retail and wholesale customers) operates on margins. While we understand and appreciate the thinking common among many small publishers that a lower list price will mean people will be able to better access their wonderful material, the way to provide such access to price-sensitive readers is through discounts on direct purchases on your own website. When you price a book too low SPD and all our customers downstream prior to the individual buyer are less likely, not more likely, to purchase it. Again, keep in mind we are working on percentages/margins while our labor and overhead costs remain fixed, so that a book priced too low may actually be losing money for us each time it sells.

SPD currently recommends pricing all new books at \$18 or higher. \$16 to \$18 is discouraged but will be accepted if the page count is low. Below \$16 may be rejected outright, or if accepted SPD reserves the right to attach an additional fee to that title.

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.

SPD does not recommend printing the price on the book or embedding the price in the bar code. Stores and wholesale customers tell us it is unnecessary, and makes it harder to raise prices down the line.

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. Again, 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 (Amazon, chain bookstores, independent bookstores, and others) 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.

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. We strongly encourage publishers to send at least two BISAC codes with each new title to increase publicity. [A complete list of BISAC codes is available here.](#) 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, 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, email, the internet, and by EDI through PubNet. SPD also sells books internationally, although we charge appropriate shipping charges from the U.S. and such orders are subject to any applicable custom duties.

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 by emailing operations@spdbooks.org.

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.

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.

Bookshop.org: Bookshop.org is a digital storefront that ships books from their wholesaler's warehouse (Ingram) directly to customers. Bookshop.org handles the customer service and overhead in this process, passing some profit along to bookstores. Because it is reliant on Ingram for its inventory, most questions regarding inventory on Bookshop.org will actually be Ingram questions. SPD has a close relationship with Bookshop.org and we regularly recommend SPD titles to them.

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. Note that BN College is a separate entity, and does buy returnably from SPD.

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

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](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#)) or contact us for information about SPD events.

Ingram: SPD has a relationship with Ingram, the nation's largest wholesaler. 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 more modest but they do buy from SPD regularly. You can discuss offering a deeper discount and/or returnability from the reseller back to Ingram by emailing operations@spdbooks.org.

Textbook stores: Textbook sales (or course adoptions) are a key customer segment for SPD. We have seen consistent sales increases in this area. They order returnably at a 20% discount. (due to their high return rate), non-returnable at 40%.

FAQs

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 Resources at the foot of spdbooks.org and click on [Become An SPD Publisher](#). Response time is usually within 6 weeks. If you haven't heard from us about your application you may contact acquisitions@spdbooks.org after 8 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 Resources 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. 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. Please contact our data team (metadata@spdbooks.org) 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 link. 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. For information on this program, contact publicity@spdbooks.org. For more details on the affiliate program, 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 our data team at newtitles@spdbooks.org.

7. WHO SHOULD I TALK TO ABOUT MY ACCOUNT?

accounts@spdbooks.org is a good contact when it comes to financial questions, sales reports, and other general questions about sales or the publisher-SPD relationship. operations@spdbooks.org may also assist on financial matters, our customer base, and logistical matters. acquisitions@spdbooks.org can 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 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 dues.

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 conversion services is no longer operating, but the knowledge we gathered has proved invaluable. Contact operations@spdbooks.org to talk ebooks!

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 publicity@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 our publicity team at publicity@spdbooks.org.
- **Author appearances/readings**—let us know your schedule! Send publicity for readings/appearances/interviews to publicity@spdbooks.org
- **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 or SPD's 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 should be sent to publicity@spdbooks.org. 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%. To donate to SPD go to spdbooks.org/support.

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 our data team at newtitles@spdbooks.org to try to solve the problem.

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

Yes! 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, 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. To sign up or for more information, email publicity@spdbooks.org.

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 our data team at newtitles@spdbooks.org 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

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. Our orders team (po@spdbooks.org) would be your contact for these issues.

The above refers to the 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.

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 po@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, po@spdbooks.org is your contact. Just ask and she'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.

KEEPING BOOKS IN STOCK AT AMAZON (Continued)

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 can 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!

(Updated: August 2021)

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

You got your book data submitted to SPD and the files are at the printer—what's next? It's time to think about getting your book out into the world.

Even if you're a small press you should have a sense of a marketing budget—how much would you like to spend—even if it's no money at all.

As a distributor SPD has 1000 books come through every year, so we can't give each book specialised publicity treatment, but we do try to give every book its moment at no cost to you.

The good news is that we can teach you some tips and tricks to help you make full use of the resources you do have to get your books into the hands of readers.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

You might think that publicity and marketing for your book is all about what's visible, what gets into the news etc., but actually the most important thing in marketing your book is the transmission of DATA—in other words, how you let libraries, retailers, and people know that the book is available to purchase. So we've compiled this handy timeline to help you make sure you can create DEMAND and EXPECTATION so your book will get some sizeable orders around its publication date.

12 WEEKS/THREE MONTHS before publication date:

SUBMIT your new title form to SPD. This will contain all the information (e.g. isbn, page number, etc.) we will need to send to major retailers and libraries.

The sooner we can do this, the sooner bookstores, libraries, wholesalers, and retailers will be aware of the book and anticipate placing orders once it's out.

Solicit list of friends and/or close writers from author.

Send an email letting them know that PDF galleys are available and that you can send a physical copy of the book if they can commit to a review.

HOT TIP: Please make sure crucial information e.g. ISBN number is correct, since it's not always possible to correct these errors once the data is out! And while we're at it—please make sure you have an ISBN barcode printed on the back (not inside) of your SPD book, or you'll be fined \$50.

8 WEEKS before publication date:

Reviews and press are the best way to maximize visibility for your book. 8 WEEKS before publication date, remember to send galley, or advance reader copies to potential reviewers and publications. Follow up with author's list, try to secure at least one review you can place.

HOT TIP: advance copies are expensive, so offer a PDF galley and mail review copies only if reviewers can commit to working on a piece. Good news—Publishers Weekly, your most important trade magazine, uses galleytracker, a PDF upload platform. PW wants a galley 4 months in advance and the NYT 6 months in advance.

USE YOUR AUTHORS, THEY ARE YOUR BEST RESOURCE to get attention for the book—ask them to compile lists of friends, colleagues, literary people they have connections to. Send an email to these author lists, as well as your marketing lists to let them know about the forthcoming book—offer to send PDF galley, and only send physical copies if someone has committed to writing a review.

Doing all this work about 8 weeks before publication means any resulting reviews can be timed to be published around the pub date of the book—creating a WAVE OF PUBLICITY that will increase sales.

4 WEEKS before publication date:

Once the data for your books has been transmitted, all we need are the books themselves—please plan for them to arrive at SPD AT LEAST one month before publication date.

Having the book at SPD this early means you won't miss the boat on our FREE publicity programs—most of which require books to be in good stock at least 2 weeks before publication date.

SPD Recommends is sent to 13,000+ people / libraries every 2 weeks, and can only feature titles that are IN STOCK with a publication date within 2 weeks of the newsletter.

SPD also has a few tried and tested ad share programs that require you have books in stock this early—we are not interested in selling you ad placements that we don't think are worth your money or attention. Our programs are all fairly priced and a bang for your buck.

HOT TIP: Details on our ad share programs are above in the "Marketing" section along with lots of other helpful information—give it a good read.

AFTER PUBLICATION:

Please use SPD as a resource! Social Media: email publicity@spdbooks.org at any time with events, reviews, features etc that we can amplify to our social media followers—we have more than 15,000 of them. We can also set up meetings to talk through a plan—even though we can't do a lot of the work for you we're happy to help embolden your efforts.

Keeping up a strong social media presence is also a good way to make your posts more visible to the public—it's just one more step to what's already happening in your day—e.g. when you read an article, you can take the extra step to post it.

HOT TIP: Images in social media attract way more attention than just text, so when in doubt, slap a cute puppy or a kitten on it.