
Optimizing Your Metadata: A Quick Guide

In this Guide

-What is metadata?

-Why is metadata important?

-How do others get my metadata and how is it used?

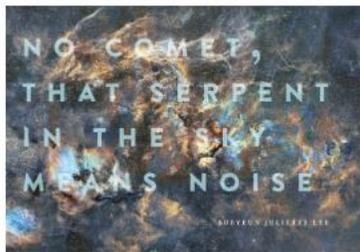
-How do I create effective metadata?

-Important Links

What is Metadata?

Metadata is the information that describes your book and includes:

- ISBN (International Standard Book Number)
- Title
- Author
- Publication Date
- Keywords
- Headline, description, blurbs, review pull quotes (copy)
- BISAC codes (Book Industry Standards and Communications)
- Page numbers
- Price
- Format



[Zoom](#)

No Comet, That Serpent in the Sky Means Noise

Sueyeun Juliette Lee

Pub Date: 5/5/2017
Publisher: **Kore Press**
Product Number: 9781888553840
ISBN 1888553847
SKU #: J02A

Binding: PAPERBACK
Pages: 96
Weight 0 lbs.6 oz.
Quantity Available: 14

Price:

\$ 16.95

Description

Links & Reviews

Author Bio

Poetry. A meditation on light, human displacement, and longing, *NO COMET, THAT SERPENT IN THE SKY MEANS NOISE* centers on a single conjecture: If light is a language sent forth from distant bodies and stars, what are we likewise saying into those black distances? Through hardship and loss, these poems invoke a hopeful solace in the subtle light that races onwards from all beings with its enduring message. Lee invites us to admit the soft stellar calling of life, to listen to its missive of peace.

"Sueyeun Juliette Lee's poetry sets out to make the interplay between page and reader one of convergence, a meeting of mind and matter that teaches us 'how to speak after a different daylight emerges.' Her work deciphers the unseen—not simply our secret selves, but the inner departure from the mundane ordinariness of an existence left un-interrogated. She sets out to challenge centeredness, to reveal our hidden organs, and so grounds the collection in the essential, winnowing the world to shadow before casting light on every corner. Smart poetry does great work in that it values the work the reader brings with her. This collection leaves us catechizing the account we make of our senses and counts individuated breath in a perpetual inventory of language and being."
—Ruth Ellen Kocher

"Throughout human history, we have looked to the stars for meaning and order amidst chaos. Sueyeun Juliette Lee's *NO COMET, THAT SERPENT IN THE SKY MEANS NOISE* reads the heavens while remaining acutely aware of the flaws in astromancy. Peninsular and paratactic, these poems know that, even so far displaced from it, and displaced from one another, the heat of the sun is the heat of the poem is the heat between us—and heat is also loss. If in fact we come from the stars, and seek solace from the terrestrial world's chatter among them, then these poems are a corrective to 'the lack of a word that functions for an ancestral home.' Any of us can find that word here."
—James Meetze

"The artist Stacy Elaine Dacheux says: 'We need our abstractions for grief, for absurdity.' In her fourth (?) book *NO COMET, THAT SERPENT IN THE SKY MEANS NOISE*, Lee exhibits this truth in poems that transmit a keen particulate attention to the world, showing the delicate energies of tiny lives and the sun's energy alike. The poems speculate something beyond folklore or experience—a paradox of certainty and subjectivity—charting what happens in the giving of attention, the bodily assimilation of experience. Together, observed life and empirical laws refract gorgeously from Lee's diamond mind."
—Cynthia Arrieu-King

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Author Bio

Sueyeun Juliette Lee grew up three miles from the CIA. Her interests include light, human displacements, and imaginations of the future. Her books include *That Gorgeous Feeling*, *Underground National*, *SOLAR MAXIMUM*, and *NO COMET, THAT SERPENT IN THE SKY MEANS NOISE*, as well as numerous chapbooks. A former Pew Fellow in the Arts for Literature, she's held international residencies in dance, poetry, and video art. She formerly edited Corollary Press, a chapbook series dedicated to innovative multi-ethnic writing, and has published numerous essays and reviews on conceptual writing and contemporary poetry.

Author City: Denver, CO USA

*****Not all Metadata is visible to the customer, but that doesn't mean it's not important!*****

Why is Metadata Important?

Metadata helps people find your book and decide whether or not to buy it.

Metadata comprises many pieces of information. Some pieces of information are vital, while other pieces are recommended:

Vital Metadata

- ISBN
- Title/Author
- Page numbers
- Price
- Format
- Pub Date
- BISAC Code

Recommended Metadata

- Keywords
- Headline
- Description
- Blurbs
- Reviews

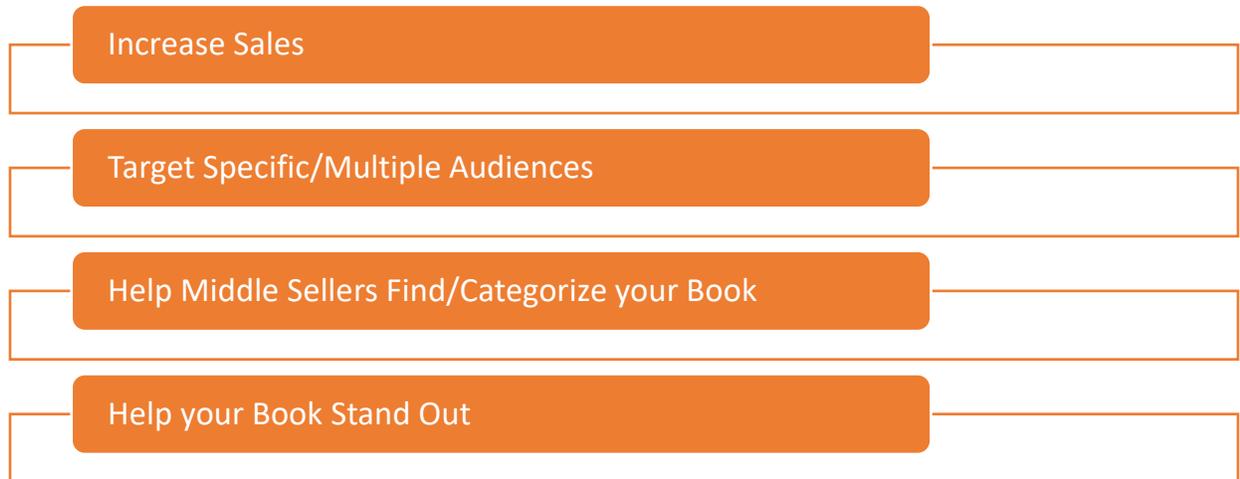
Some pieces of Metadata are easy to fix if mistakes are made, while others are not:

Hard to Fix: Double and Triple Check

- ISBN
- Pub Date
- Format

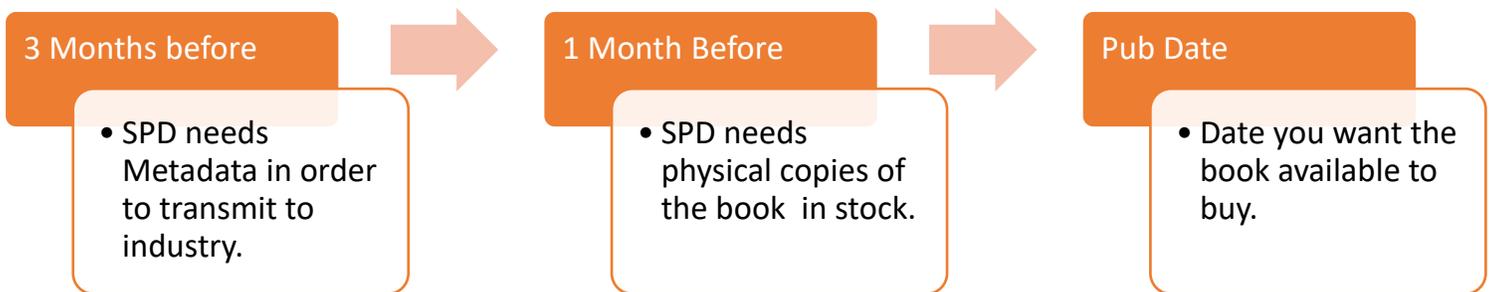
Metadata helps people find your book and decide whether or not to buy it. It also helps librarians and retailers know how to shelve and categorize your book.

Effective Metadata can:



Scheduling Metadata is Important:

If you do not properly plan and schedule, you may lose any advantages complete and targeted metadata will give you. See Appendix B of our [Publisher Handbook](#).



***** The more complete and accurate your Metadata, the better chance a book has! *****

How do others get my metadata and how is it used?

Middle sellers and retailers get your metadata from a distributor, a printer that offers distribution services, or directly from you.

Different parts of your metadata are important to different customers. Examples: Headlines are meant to capture the attention of an individual casually browsing on an online shop. BISAC codes help middle sellers & librarians shelve your book.

Middle sellers (bookstores, wholesalers, retailers, online retailers etc.) can get your data from several sources, such as a distributor, a printer that offers distribution services, or from you directly.

In the case of Small Press Distribution, our publishers submit their metadata to us, and then we transmit it to the industry (Amazon, Ingram, Baker & Taylor, & more).



Different pieces of your metadata are important to different customers.

- A headline, for example (bold sentence or two at the top of your description) is geared toward individuals and is meant to capture the attention of a casual browser.
- A BISAC code, on the other hand, is geared toward middle sellers and librarians, who may use them to grow a particular section in their bookstore or library or simply to shelve the book.

***** SPD must receive your Metadata at least 3 MONTHS before the pub date to have adequate time to transmit this data to the industry! *****

How do I create effective metadata?

ISBN

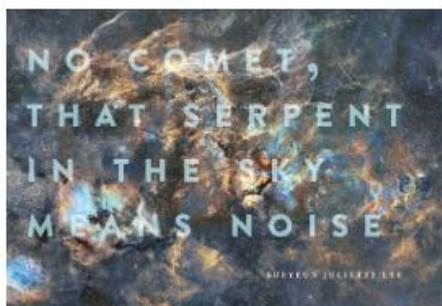
- Must be purchased from Bowker (the official ISBN Agency for the United States)
 - The registered owner of the ISBN (at Bowker) must be the publisher listed in your metadata
 - If the incorrect or wrong ISBN is transmitted to the industry, it's hard to fix and will hurt the sales of your book.
-

An **ISBN** is an International Standard Book Number. ISBNs were 10 digits in length prior to 2007. They now always consist of 13 digits.

The **ISBN EQUALS your book**, so this is one of the most important pieces of metadata to get right.

- Check and double check before sending the ISBN to your distributor.
- Just as the registered owner of the ISBN must be the publisher, there is a section for the distributor as well. Make sure Small Press Distribution is listed as the distributor.

Small Press Distribution displays the 13 digit ISBN as the Product Number and the 10 digit ISBN as the ISBN on our website (the data that's transmitted is formatted differently).



 Zoom

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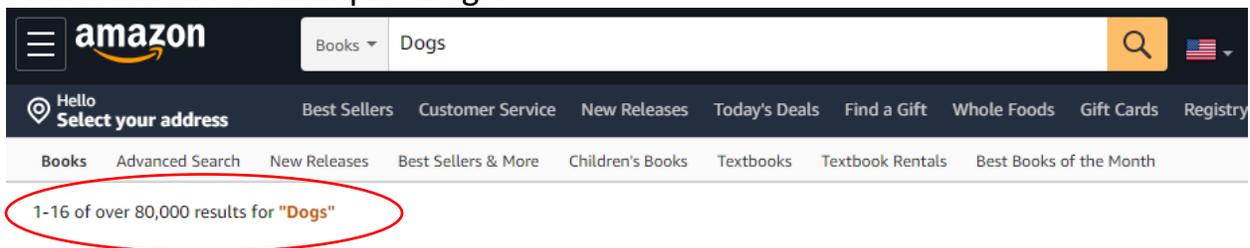
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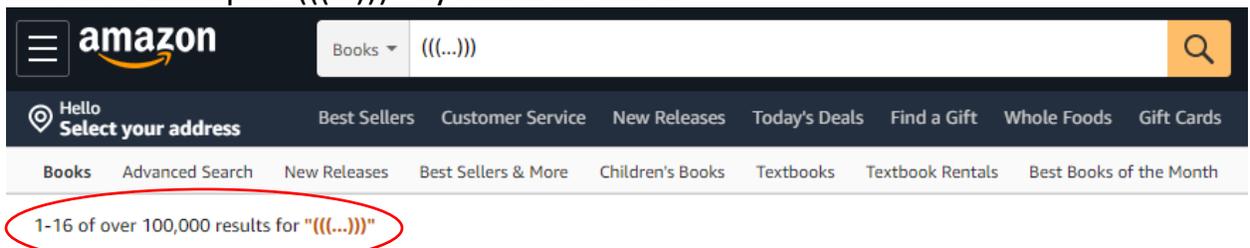
Title

- Try to avoid something that's too generic. For example, "Dogs."
- Try to avoid a title with all numbers or symbols.

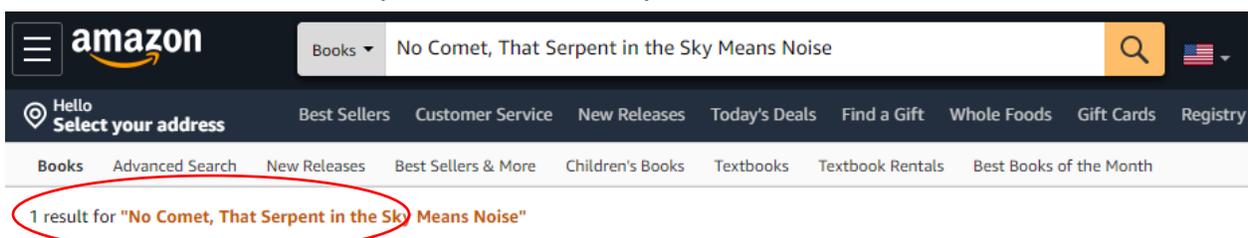
If your title is too generic, your book may be hard to impossible to find via a search engine unless the reader/buyer has the author's name or some other piece of metadata. For example "Dogs."



Similarly, a title composed of all numbers or all symbols can be impossible to search for and find, both on retail sites and in databases. So this should be avoided. Example "(((...)))" by Maxwell Clark.



An effective title can help customers find your book!



Author

- Author bios should be short and include the following: other books by the author, awards, social media handles, and an interesting fact or two.

An author bio does not mean a long, complete history of the author. Keep it short.

Author bios should include:

Other Books
by the Author

Significant
Awards

An Interesting
Fact or Two

Social Media
Handles

For the interesting fact, mention things that might speak to potential readers. For example, what communities is the author a part of?

Description

Links & Reviews

Author Bio

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Author City: Denver, CO USA

That Gorgeous Feeling,
Underground National,
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Comet, That Serpent in
the Sky Means Noise

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Social Media Handles:
Not Listed

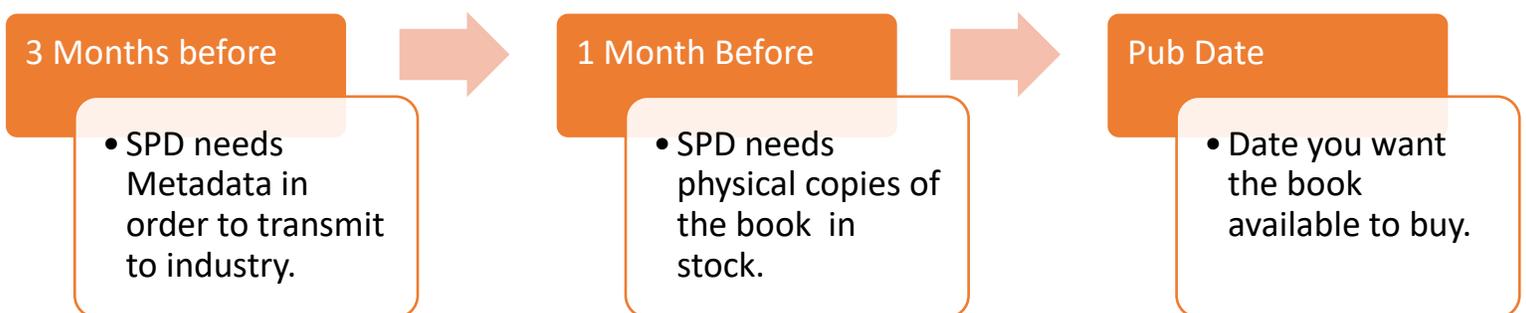
Publication Date

- The publication date is the date you tell the industry the book should be available to buy.
 - SPD must have your metadata at least a few months before the publication date in order to transmit the data and make sure sales channels are open before the book is in stock in our warehouse.
-

This date is complicated in the small press world because we do not really operate by the strict-on-sale process that large publishing houses follow.

As a distributor, we expect to have a new title in stock AT LEAST two weeks but preferably a month before the pub date so we have time to get copies to middle sellers and retailers before the pub date. So the book is technically available before the pub date. SPD will sell your book as soon as it is in inventory regardless of the pub date unless you tell us otherwise.

Additionally, SPD must have your metadata at least three months before the publication date in order to transmit the data and make sure sales channels are open before the book is in stock in our warehouse.



The pub date should not be moved around if you need to move your launch for the book. Once the pub date is transmitted, changing it can make your data seem unreliable or might make customers worry there are problems or delays with the book (which can affect events and event decisions).

Keywords

- Choose up to ten.
 - Ask yourself, what terms might a general reader type into a search engine to find your book?
 - You can include phrases, but only do so if it's something someone would enter into a search engine.
 - Include genres, topics, time periods, and what's most relevant to your book.
-

Keywords make the book more discoverable and give the reader a better idea of what the book is about.

Choose up to ten.

Use terms a reader might type into a search engine to find your book. For example, LGBT or Asian American or essays.

Include genres, topics, time periods, and what is most relevant to your book.

You are the best person to create keywords for your book because you know your book. It is hard for someone who has not read or seen your book to create keywords for it.

Examples of Keywords:

- *Letters to the Future: Black Women/Radical Writing:*
 - Experimental, Black, Women, Justice, Hybrid, Innovative, LGBT, Poetry, Essays, Art.

Description Links & Reviews

Poetry. African & African American Studies. LGBTQIA Studies. Women's Studies. Art. Edited by Erica Hunt and Dawn Lundy Martin. A collection of poems, essays, elder conversations, and visual works, *LETTERS TO THE FUTURE: BLACK WOMEN / RADICAL WRITING*, celebrates temporal, spatial, formal, and linguistically innovative literature. The anthology collects late-modern and contemporary work by Black women from the United States, England, Canada, and the Caribbean—work that challenges readers to participate in meaning making. Because one contextual framework for the collection is "art as a form of epistemology," the writing in the anthology is the kind of work driven by the writer's desire to radically present, uncovering what she knows and does not know, as well as critically addressing the future.

Erica Hunt, in her introduction to the collection, says, "The future is a slippery project. What can it hold? We asked writers to write about it, imagining the future as the present conjugated—conjoining the past, the present with some other time...One dimension that drew our curiosity was to know how this particular group of Black women writers would respond to the question of tomorrow. The Black women in this edition were writers we'd known or been introduced to who had been insistent makers of poems and prose that set up radical encounters between language, person, community and the political. We discussed these letters as we received them, marveling at the range of strategies to refract, forecast or expand the penumbra of the present into the shifting and dim lit future."



Headline

- **Headlines are a short statement (think of them as a highlight) at the top of a book's description and should be in bold. Their purpose is to grab a casual browser's attention.**
 - **Example: Winner of the 2019 National Book Award for Nonfiction.**
-

Here is a headline from *Cruel Futures* on City Lights' website:

A Latina feminist State of the Union address at the intersection of pop culture and interiority. ←

Cruel Futures is a witchy confessional and wildly imagistic volume that examines subjects as divergent as Alzheimers, Medusa, mumblecore, and mental illness in sharp-witted, taut poems dense with song. Chronicling life on an endangered planet, in a country on the precipice of profound change compelled by a media machine that produces our realities, the book is a high-energy analysis of popular culture, as well as an exploration of the many social roles that women occupy as mother, daughter, lover, and the resulting struggle to maintain personhood—all in a late capitalist America.

And here is a headline from the listing of *Wild Milk* on Amazon:

A genre-expanding collection of stories that *Publishers Weekly* calls "perplexingly captivating" and "astonishing." ←

Fiction. Jewish Studies. Women's Studies. WILD MILK is like Borscht Belt meets Leonora Carrington; it's like Donald Barthelme meets Pony Head; it's like the Brothers Grimm meet Beckett in his swim trunks at the beach. In other words, this remarkable collection of stories is unlike anything you've read.

Although SPD currently does not display headlines on our site at this time, we can transmit them with our data so that places like Amazon can display them on their sites. We strongly encourage publishers to include a headline when submitting a New Title Form. The headline field can be found directly under the "Catalog Copy" field. Please do not include HTML tags. We will do that on our end.

Below are instructions on how to create an effective headline. If you would like SPD to create one for you, we can do so for a small fee. Please contact Grant Kerber, Publicity & Marketing Manager (grant@spdbooks.org), if you are interested in this service.

How to create an effective headline:

1. Length: Headlines should ideally be one sentence with no more than 200 words.
2. Content: What makes this book unique? What are its key features? Here are examples of what the headline should focus on:

- a. Awards or nominations:

Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award.

- b. Praise from an excellent review or blurb:

An adventure that Publishers Weekly calls “magical, thrilling, with just the right amount of salt.”

- c. A description of what the book is about:

A comprehensive guide to the lyric essay, including interviews with writers and writing prompts.

- d. An appeal to the book’s primary audience:

Perfect for both professional and at-home chefs seeking to refine their dessert menu.

If you are stuck, a good place to start is with the book’s keywords. You should include these in your headline if possible. For example, in the headline above for *Cruel Futures*, keywords for the title may include “Latina,” “feminism,” and “pop culture.”

Copy: Description, Blurbs, Reviews

- The description should be longer than 200 words, but longer doesn't necessarily mean better. General guideline: a paragraph of description and two blurbs or review pull quotes.
 - Keywords should be incorporated into the description and can also be used as a guide in creating one.
-

Sales pitch for the book. Why should someone read it? What is it about? Why is it important?

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Links & Reviews

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BISAC Codes

- These are codes provided by BISG (Book Industry Study Group) that the book industry uses to categorize, shelve, and market your book.
 - These codes tell database owners, librarians, and retailers what genres your book fits in.
 - If possible and appropriate, you should use more than one.
-

How to choose effective BISAC Codes:

- First, what is the book's major genre or category?
 - Poetry. POE000000.
 - Fiction. FIC000000.
 - Literary Nonfiction. LIT000000.
- Then what is it specifically about?
 - Include the BISAC codes for that.

SPD can accommodate three BISAC codes. Like keywords, you are the best person to categorize your book and choose its BISAC codes because you know what it is about, who your audience is, and what communities you belong to.

BISAC codes are more important than you may think. For example, you may think the general poetry BISAC code is sufficient for your poetry book. However, a librarian might want to expand their poetry section to include more titles by Black poets. That librarian might overlook your book because you failed to provide the additional BISAC code that indicates this is a book by a Black poet (POE005050 POETRY / American / African American). Additionally places like Amazon may not connect your poetry book to additional relevant categories because you only provided one BISAC code, and that might mean fewer eyes looking at your book.

We do understand that finding three BISAC codes might be impractical for some books, so include as many as is feasible.

Price

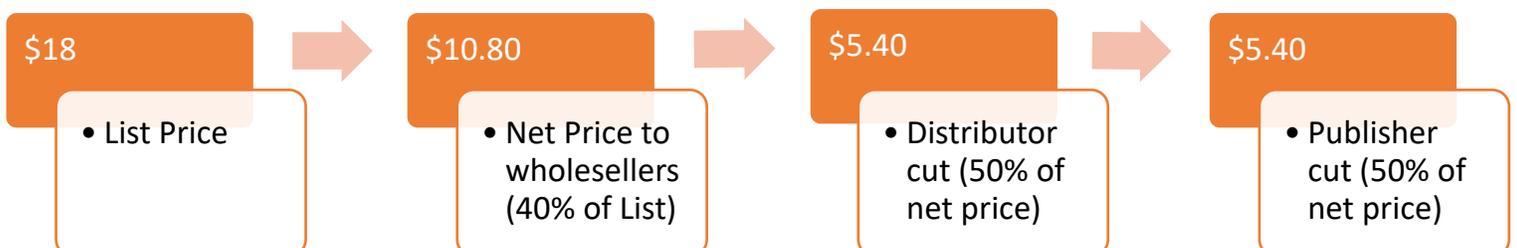
- Your price should at least cover your costs for producing a single copy, but you should aim for a return that will help your publishing project be sustainable.
- Reminder: most books are sold for less than their list price, so the price you settle on should take that into account.

First, determine how much your book will cost to print per copy. Then factor in other costs, such as marketing, distribution, shipping, etc. What margin do you need to survive? To thrive?

SPD strongly encourages pricing full-length books at \$18 or above. Large publishing houses can afford pricing lower than cost because of the volume they sell. In the small press world, you can't do that. A higher price does not necessarily mean you are limiting the amount of people who can access your book. It is better to have a higher list price and then offer a discount if readers order directly from your site (which SPD allows and even encourages, since you get the largest cut from direct sales).

Break down the math: \$18

- A standard discount for wholesalers and middle sellers is 40%. And a standard cut from your distributor is usually 50% and is applied to the net sales (what the book is sold for, not the list price).
- For more information on SPD royalty tiers, see "Discount/Payment" on page 11 in the SPD publisher handbook.
- Does \$5.40 per book cover your printing/shipping costs, distribution fees, author payments, etc? If not, consider raising the price, finding a cheaper means of printing, crowdfunding portions of the book's production or marketing costs, or some combination of all three.



Links

1. [BISAC codes](#)
2. [Bowker](#)
3. [SPD Publisher Handbook](#)

Here are some links that will help you accomplish the task of creating effective metadata.

[BISAC codes](#) to help you categorize your book. This website offers an easily searchable list of all available codes.

[BOWKER](#), where you can purchase ISBNs.

[SPD Publisher Handbook](#) that gives you specific information that is needed as an SPD publisher.