PUBLISHING TOOLKIT

Self-Publishing Comparison Workbook

The right route for your book.

Compare KDP and IngramSpark against your publishing goals, your book's economics and the control you need.



COMPARE · CALCULATE · DECIDE

01 Name your priorities before choosing.

02 Compare like-for-like print economics.

03 Record a deliberate publishing decision.

For independent authors and publishers comparing one print title across two services.

KDP + INGRAMSPARK · 6 DECISION STEPS · REUSABLE WORKSHEETS

01 / YOUR PUBLISHING GOAL

Begin with the book

Write down what you need before choosing a platform. Use one title and edition for each comparison.

BOOK TITLE / EDITION

FORMAT / SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

- ☐ Paperback
- ☐ Hardcover
- ☐ Ebook
- ☐ Multiple formats

MY BIGGEST PRIORITIES

- ☐ Amazon-direct sales
- ☐ Wider print distribution
- ☐ Bookstore / library availability
- ☐ Higher per-copy compensation
- ☐ Wholesale-setting control
- ☐ Returnability options
- ☐ Simpler setup
- ☐ Using both platforms
- ☐ Other: _____

WHERE I EXPECT MOST SALES

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO ME

KEEP THE COMPARISON LIKE FOR LIKE

The calculations in this workbook cover print sales. If ebooks are part of your plan, check their separate royalty, distribution and exclusivity terms. Match format, edition, market and currency before comparing print figures.

02 / THE COMPENSATION MODELS

Understand what you keep

KDP royalties and IngramSpark publisher compensation use different structures. A shared “keep rate” would hide important differences.

KDP / PRINT ROYALTY

Royalty = applicable rate × tax-exclusive list price − print cost

For Amazon.com standard print sales, the published tier is 50% at $9.98 or below and 60% from $9.99. Minimum prices and format eligibility still apply. Eligible paperback Expanded Distribution uses 40%, less printing cost. Verify the rate for your actual marketplace and channel.

INGRAMSPARK / WHOLESALE COMPENSATION

Wholesale price = list price × (1 − wholesale discount)
Base planning compensation = wholesale price − print cost
Comparison estimate = base compensation − applicable fees / deductions

Use the current compensation shown for your title and market as the final comparison figure. Check any market access fee and other deductions; do not subtract a fee twice if it is already included in the platform’s displayed result.

ILLUSTRATIVE $20 PAPERBACK	CALCULATION
KDP / assumed print cost $5	60% × $20 − $5 = $7.00
IngramSpark / assumed 55% discount and $5 print cost	$20 × 45% − $5 = $4.00 before additional fees

The $5 print cost is an illustration, not a quote. Obtain separate costs for your page count, trim size, ink and format from each platform. These per-copy figures exclude editing, design, promotion, taxes and return exposure.

ASSUMPTIONS OR QUESTIONS TO VERIFY

03 / DISTRIBUTION AND CONTROL

Compare the publishing routes

Confirm the current options for your title. Availability through a network does not guarantee that a shop or library will order or stock the book.

AREA	KDP	INGRAMSPARK
Amazon-direct selling	Direct KDP setup for supported Amazon retail markets.	Distribution network includes Amazon among other outlets.
Wholesale discount	No publisher-set wholesale discount for Amazon retail; the royalty model applies.	Choose a permitted discount for each market. Check current minimums in title setup.
Returnability	Retail return rules apply; check the current terms for your format and channel.	Choose No, Yes – Destroy, or Yes – Deliver where available.
Wider trade availability	Optional Expanded Distribution for eligible paperbacks; not hardcovers.	Wholesale availability through its distribution network.
Print cost	Varies by title specification and marketplace.	Varies by title specification and market.
Title setup / metadata	Manage files and metadata in KDP.	Manage files and metadata in IngramSpark; account and title setup are currently free.
ISBN / imprint	Use your own eligible ISBN, or a KDP-only free ISBN where available.	Your own ISBN supports a coordinated setup; a free IngramSpark ISBN is platform-restricted.

COORDINATE ONE PRINT PRODUCT

Use a publisher-owned ISBN for the same print product across both services and align its title, author, imprint and edition. Different formats need different ISBNs. See page 6 for Expanded Distribution eligibility.

MY DISTRIBUTION OR CONTROL NOTES

04 / YOUR CURRENT NUMBERS

Compare one book, one market

Enter figures from each service for the same print specification. Use decimal rates in calculations: 60% = 0.60; 55% = 0.55.

MARKET / CURRENCY / DATE CHECKED

FORMAT / PAGES / TRIM / INK

INPUT OR RESULT	KDP	INGRAMSPARK
Tax-exclusive list price / $		
Applicable royalty rate / %		Not applicable
Wholesale discount / %	Not applicable	
Wholesale price / $	Not applicable	
Current print cost / $		
Estimated royalty / $		Not applicable
Base planning compensation / $	Not applicable	
Applicable market access / other fees / $		
After-fee comparison estimate / $		
Current compensation shown by platform / $		

KDP estimate: rate × list price − print cost. IngramSpark base: list price × (1 − discount) − print cost. Reconcile fees with the displayed platform amount before subtracting anything again.

INGRAMSPARK RETURNABILITY / DECIDE SEPARATELY

☐ No ☐ Yes – Destroy ☐ Yes – Deliver

WHICH FIGURE FITS MY GOALS BETTER, AND WHY?

05 / ONE SERVICE OR BOTH

Choose a deliberate setup

Tick the statements that fit this title. Using both services is a workflow decision; it is not automatically the better option.

KDP MAY FIT WHEN

- [ ] Amazon-direct selling is central to my plan.
- [ ] Its current pricing and royalty structure fit.
- [ ] I want the KDP-specific publishing workflow.

INGRAMSPARK MAY FIT WHEN

- [ ] Wider print-distribution availability matters.
- [ ] I need wholesale and return-setting control.
- [ ] Its current compensation structure fits.

BOTH MAY BE WORTH REVIEWING WHEN

- [ ] I know which service handles each distribution role.
- [ ] I have checked KDP Expanded Distribution.
- [ ] My ISBN, files and metadata are coordinated.

CHECK EXPANDED DISTRIBUTION ELIGIBILITY

KDP requires that a paperback ISBN has not already been submitted for distribution through another service. An ISBN submitted through IngramSpark distribution therefore does not meet that condition. IngramSpark advises publishers also using KDP to leave KDP Expanded Distribution unselected. KDP hardcovers are ineligible.

Check the other format and content requirements too: KDP Expanded Distribution currently excludes coloring books and many books with frequent blank or lined pages. KDP retail availability is a separate question.

MY INTENDED DISTRIBUTION ROLES / REMAINING QUESTIONS

06 / YOUR DECISION MATRIX

Let your priorities lead

Rate importance from 1–5, then each platform's fit from 1–5. Use the notes to explain trade-offs; the table supports your judgment.

PRIORITY	IMPORTANCE	KDP FIT	INGRAM FIT	NOTES
Amazon-direct sales				
Wider print availability				
Per-copy economics				
Wholesale control				
Return settings				
Setup simplicity				
Format needs				
ISBN / imprint preference				
Using both platforms				
Other: _____				

MY CURRENT CHOICE

☐ KDP ☐ IngramSpark ☐ Both ☐ Not decided yet

WHY THIS CHOICE FITS MY BOOK

UNRESOLVED ITEM

DECISION REVIEW DATE

BEFORE PUBLISHING / VERIFY

Check the details that matter



Finish these checks before acting on your comparison. A per-copy estimate does not promise sales, stocking or total business profit.

- [ ] I checked current platform settings.
- [ ] I used current print costs for each platform.
- [ ] I confirmed the applicable KDP royalty tier.
- [ ] I checked the current wholesale setting.
- [ ] I reconciled additional fees and deductions.
- [ ] I considered returnability separately.
- [ ] I reviewed Expanded Distribution if using both.
- [ ] I know availability does not guarantee stocking.
- [ ] I understand these are planning estimates.

PLAN FOR RETURNS

IngramSpark returnable sales can create a charge at the current wholesale cost. Yes – Deliver can add handling and shipping; availability depends on the market. A later return can exceed the compensation originally received on that copy. Choose returnability separately from the wholesale discount.

MY RETURNS RESERVE / EXPOSURE NOTES

NEXT ACTION

DUE DATE

REFERENCE / CURRENT PLATFORM GUIDANCE

Keep the source close

Check these official pages when you update the worksheet. Terms were reviewed on 13 November 2026; your title setup and current agreement govern the applicable figures.

AMAZON KDP

Paperback royalty and marketplace tiers

Hardcover royalty and marketplace tiers

Expanded Distribution requirements

ISBN options and use with other services

INGRAMSPARK

Pricing and compensation tools

Publisher compensation calculator

Distribution, title setup and ISBN FAQs

Wholesale discount and market access fee explanation

Return options and financial exposure

Free ISBN terms and publisher imprint

REFRESH THE NUMBERS EACH TIME

Do not reuse an old print-cost table or assume that a published fee from an earlier year still applies. Record the current platform amount and date on page 5. If an estimate differs from the displayed compensation, identify the reason before using it.

WHAT I WILL VERIFY BEFORE MY NEXT COMPARISON

Educational planning workbook. Fields are for handwriting or PDF annotation and do not calculate automatically. No platform is selected for you; the decision remains tied to your title and priorities.