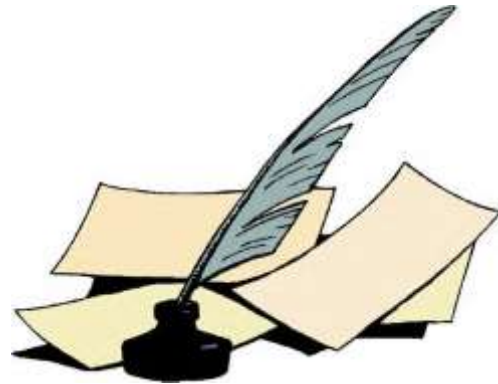


**The Author's 2020
Guide to Career Survival**

Robert Bidinotto

An opening caveat:

There is absolutely *nothing* wrong in writing solely for yourself...



...or in self-publishing your books with no expectation of selling a lot of copies, or of building a career as a full-time author.

So, then, who is this talk for?

- **You simply want to earn more money from your writing — maybe just a few hundred dollars each month.**

AND / OR:

- * **You have tried a lot of marketing tactics, including paid advertising, but have failed to gain sales traction — or even lost money.**

AND / OR:

- * **You would love to build — incrementally — a full-time career as an author.**

I have tried many things to market my books.



Some worked.

Some didn't.

Some *used to* work, but no longer do.

I want to tell you what works in today's market.

I can't tell you from personal experience how to become a millionaire doing this gig.

But I *can* tell you what many authors are doing to make decent money at it.

So, let me begin with *my* story.

ABOUT ME



www.Bidinotto.com

- Five decades as award-winning nonfiction writer
- Wrote high-profile investigative journalism for *Reader's Digest*
- Hundreds of articles, essays, columns, book and film reviews, editorials, interviews, etc.
- Wrote two nonfiction books about the criminal justice system
- Award-winning magazine editor
- Now a freelance book editor...
- ...and a bestselling thriller author.

To date, I have published three novels in my bestselling Dylan Hunter vigilante thriller series



Wiki.ezvid.com
The World's Video Wiki

TEXTBOOKS TECH WIKIS MAKE A WIKI ABOUT

10 ADDICTIVE MYSTERY SERIES THAT FOLLOW COMPELLING PROTAGONISTS

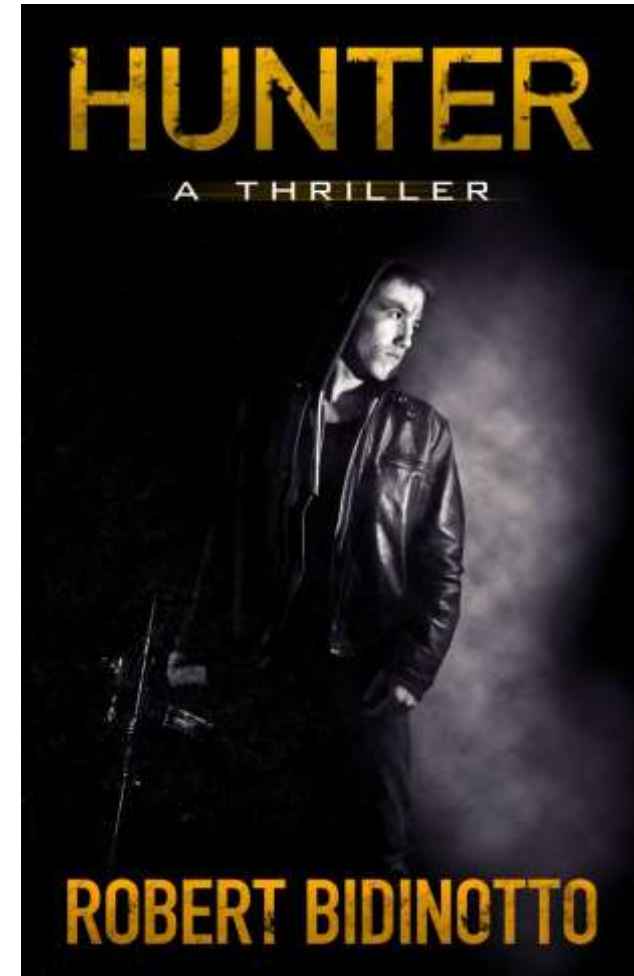
Text Validated by Ezvid Wiki Editorial on 18 Jun 2019

Mysteries are often best remembered for their main characters, from Sherlock Holmes to Hercule Poirot. In order to keep readers coming back for multiple books, these protagonists should be more than just clever; they need to be dynamic and compelling as well. The ten series listed here star cunning and intriguing sleuths who will keep you coming back for more. This video was made with Ezvid Wikimaker.

Three book covers are displayed in a row. The first cover is a portrait of a man with a beard and a brown jacket. The second cover is titled 'HUNTER' and features a man in a dark jacket holding a gun. The third cover is titled 'BAD DEEDS' and features a man in a dark jacket standing in front of a large fire. The fourth cover is titled 'WINNER TAKES ALL' and features a man in a dark jacket holding a gun. All covers have the author's name 'ROBERT BIDINOTTO' at the bottom.

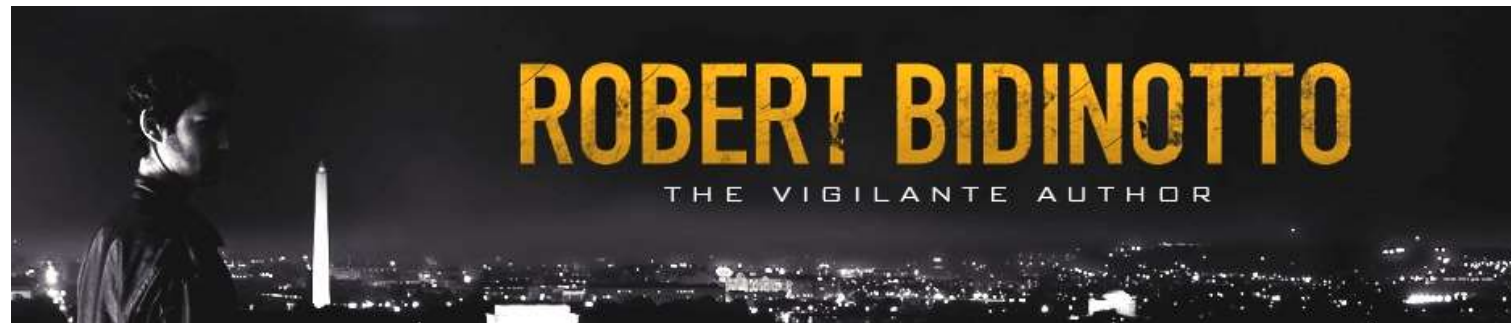
I self-published ***HUNTER***, a crime thriller I'd been toying with for years, on June 21, 2011.

Promoted by “organic” marketing efforts and great reviews, over the next five months ***HUNTER*** sold 4,000 copies.



“Organic” promotion means *ongoing marketing efforts other than paid advertising*. Such activities include:

- * **social media (Facebook, blog guest posts, interviews, etc.)**
- * **talks, personal appearances, book signings, business cards**
- * **participation in online forums & groups, such as Goodreads**
- * **news releases that generated print-media stories, TV and radio**
- * **email list mailings**
- * **my fiction website and blog . . .**



Longtime journalist Bidinotto writes first novel



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SCOTT

Grasonville author Robert Bidinotto recently published his first novel, "Hunter: A Thriller," a story centered around a wave of vigilante killings in Washington, D.C. He is pictured with his cat, Luna, who plays a supporting role in the book.



By JACK SHAUM Staff Writer

GRASONVILLE Robert Bidinotto has been writing for a living for a long time, all of it nonfiction.

But there was one kind of writing he had never tried, and now he's done something about it.

Bidinotto, 62, has written his first novel and has received rave notices on Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com from readers and critics alike.

"I always wanted to write fiction, and I had a long list and said I'm not going to die a happy man without this a try," said Bidinotto, a Grasonville resident.

The book is titled "Hunter: A Thriller," and is set in a wave of vigilante killings in Washington, D.C. The main character is Dylan Hunter, a crusading journalist with a mysterious past who is trying to expose the criminal justice system.

Bidinotto said the idea for the novel came to him last year and he vowed to finish it before his 62nd birthday, which was this past June 5. He met his own deadline with only an hour to spare before the day changed from June 4 to 5.

"Dylan Hunter is who I'd be if I could get away with it," Bidinotto said with a chuckle.

A career journalist who has written about crime and the criminal justice system, Bidinotto was able to draw on his own knowledge of the subject in writing the book, which came out in June and is available as a trade paperback and an e-book.

A native of western Pennsylvania who has worked in Boston, Pennsylvania, New York and Maryland, he was a writer and editor at several nonprofit think tanks, but he soon "found that I worked better alone" and became a freelance journalist.

KINDLE BOOK REVIEW
GREAT AUTHORS • GREAT BOOKS • GREAT REVIEWS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2011

Hunter (A Dillon Hunter Thriller) by Robert Bidinotto

WELCOME TO THE KINDLE BOOK REVIEW

I highlight great books and great authors with great reviews. All books will have no less than 20 reviews with a rating of 4.0 or higher!

Does your book make the grade? If so, see our Contact page.

Follow Me!

FOLLOW BY EMAIL

Enter address: Submit

FOLLOWERS

Join this site with Google Friend Connect

Members: (45) [More](#)

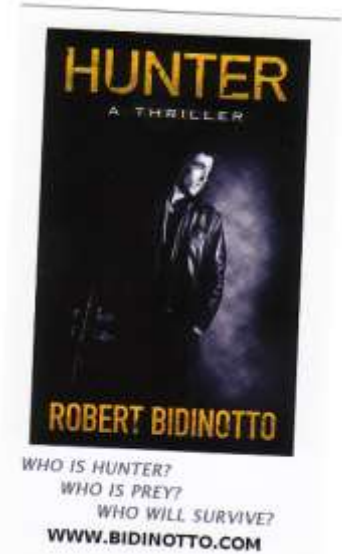
Sometimes I'm absolutely floored by the reviews I find. When I see a well known author with 3-4 stars, I'm not surprised because they often sell lots of books because they have already established their name/brand. But nothing gets me more excited than when I see an indie author with 5+ reviews and 5.0 stars! That is extremely impressive.

I hope you're impressed too.

Robert Bidinotto has written #Hunter, the first in the Dillon Hunter series and the reviews are out of the park. He has FORTY-NINE 5-star reviews and two 4-star reviews.

If you are a thriller lover, as I am, Hunter should be on the top of your list. The reviews are great, the price is right and it has a cool cover!

Posted by Jeff Bennington at 6:07 PM 0 comments

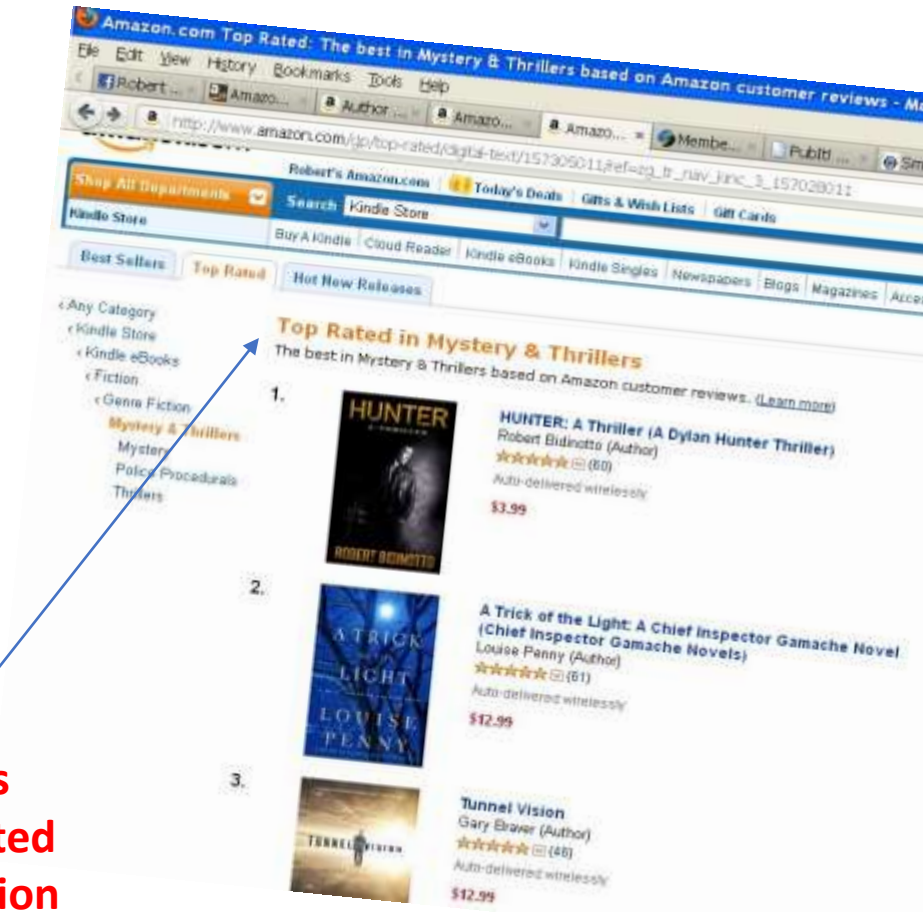


Robert Bidinotto
Author

www.bidinotto.com
twitter: @RobertBidinotto
RobertTheWriter@gmail.com

AVENGER





These ratings attracted attention



These ratings attracted attention

“Organic” promos also include Amazon’s own recommendation system (e.g., “also-boughts,” email notifications, category bestseller lists, customer ratings, and reader reviews)

Noticing the strong, organically driven sales, ratings, and reviews, in November 2011 the Amazon editors invited me to enter *HUNTER* into a post-Thanksgiving sales promotion, along with several hundred other titles.

Unknown to me at the time, they also selected it as their featured “Editors’ Pick.”

**Then they promoted
the book like crazy...**

Examples of Amazon's incredible promotion



**The Kindle Ebook Home Page:
Listed as the main "Editors' Pick"**



**The Kindle Ebook Home Page:
Top Title Under "Mysteries & Thrillers"**

Amazon's publicity for *HUNTER* was everywhere on its site and emails



***HUNTER* occupied the #1 position on Amazon's "Editors Pick" page**



An Amazon Facebook Promotion Featured *HUNTER*

**How powerful was Amazon's
free marketing publicity?**

***HUNTER* went on promotion on November 27, 2011**

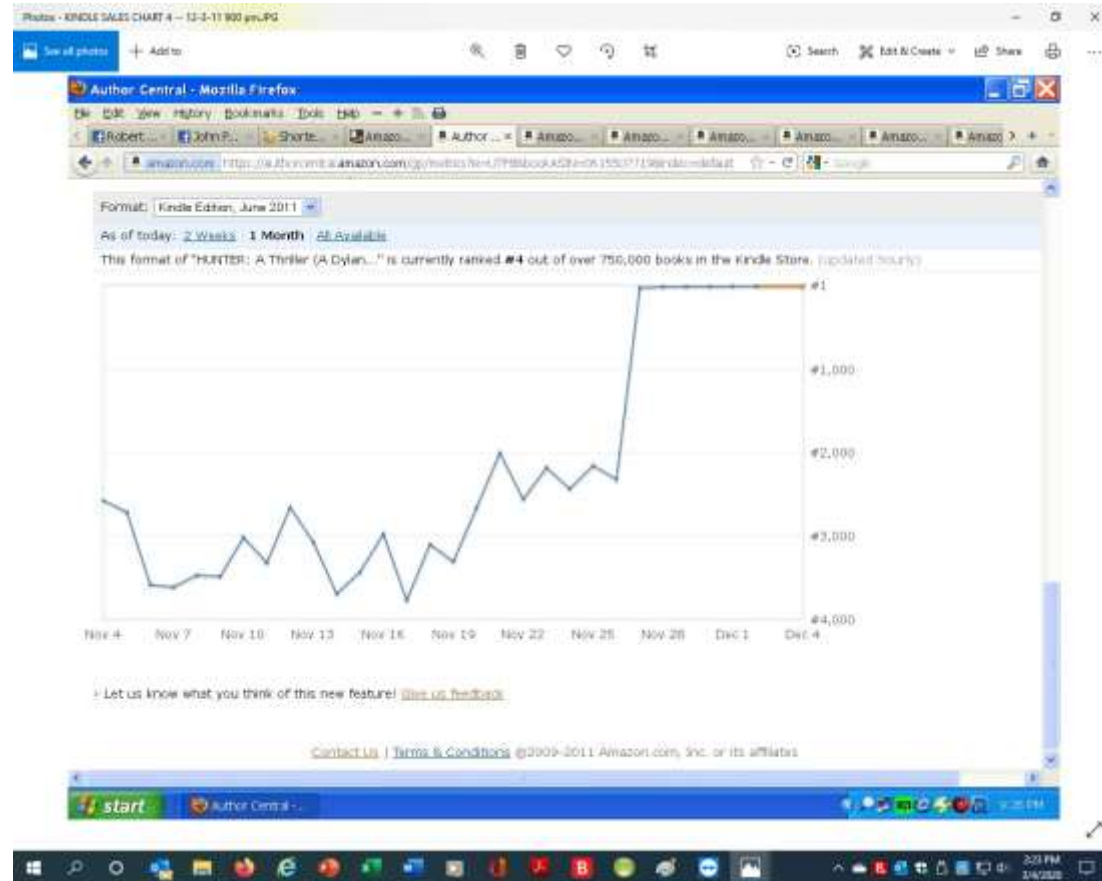
Seven days later, it reached #4 on the Kindle bestseller list

It hit #1 among all Kindle “Mysteries & Thrillers”

It hit #2 among all Kindle “Romance” titles

It became a *Wall Street Journal* “Top 10 Fiction Ebook”

Note the sales spike starting November 27th



HITTING #4 ON THE KINDLE LIST

For days, I was the alpha-male author on Kindle



(Hey, Jack Reacher ... eat Dylan Hunter's dust!)

***HUNTER* went on to sell
50,000 copies in 35 days**

THE GOOD NEWS:

***HUNTER* achieved its huge bestseller status after Amazon initiated extraordinary marketing efforts and publicity during that fall 2011 promotion and afterward.**

Their “organic” marketing cost me *nothing*.

THE BAD NEWS:

Such success — for a relatively unknown writer, self-publishing his first novel, at age 62 — could *never* be duplicated in today's marketplace.

That's because Amazon — and other online platforms — have been replacing their organic promotion tactics **with paid advertising.**

**Today's book marketplace has changed radically.
To succeed in achieving visibility today,
authors must adapt.**

The New Reality Of Today's Book Marketplace

Competition for reader eyeballs is intense, and getting tougher every day

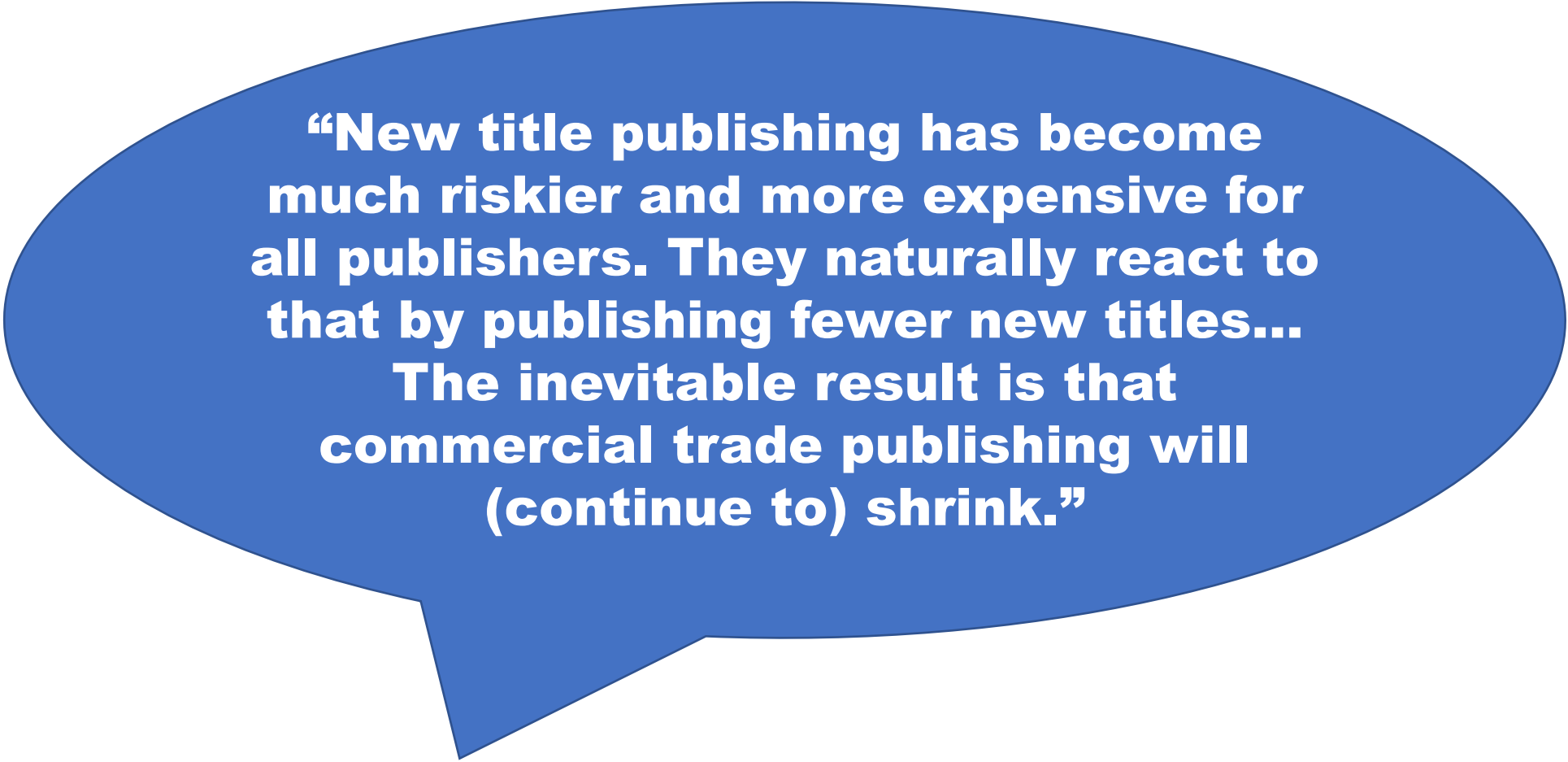
1990: “Books in Print” listed around 500,000 unique titles in print

2020: Ingram lists over *15 million* titles available as print-on-demand

That’s a 30-fold increase in 30 years!

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

- * Chain bookstores vanishing. Remaining few, like Barnes & Noble, cutting outlets and shelf space, and struggling to survive**
- * Print publishers continue to be squeezed by competition from ebooks, self-publishing, and online retailers (mainly Amazon)**
- * Budgets tightening, publishers merging: “Big 6” now “Big 5”**
- * Just this week, ViacomCBS announced it is looking to sell its subsidiary publisher, Simon & Schuster**



“New title publishing has become much riskier and more expensive for all publishers. They naturally react to that by publishing fewer new titles... The inevitable result is that commercial trade publishing will (continue to) shrink.”

Mike Shatzkin, publishing industry consultant

This puts pressure on authors

Author incomes fell 42% from 2009 through 2017

(Authors Guild 2018 Author Income Survey)

Sales of adult fiction titles fell 16% from 2013 to 2017

(Association of American Publishers)

No fiction title topped one million copies sold in either 2016 or 2017; a multitude of titles did a decade earlier

(BookScan)

**Fewer titles + smaller press runs →
fewer authors getting contracts**

And if you *do* get a publishing contract, you face...

- * smaller advances**
- * more “rights grabs,” including your backlist — now a cash cow for struggling publishers**
- * less marketing support from your publisher**
- * “Authors are expected to do what publishers once did — market their own books.”**

—Authors Guild, March 6, 2020

Even bestselling authors are feeling the squeeze



Author John Grisham still sits atop the bestseller lists.

But in 2018, Grisham admitted to the *New York Times* that his novels sell *half* of what they sold in 2007 — which was also less than they sold in 1997.

Says author and book industry expert Kristine Katherine Rusch:

“His books now sell in one month what they used to sell in one week. Sometimes in one day.”

“My career could not exist if I was starting today.”

**— Lee Child,
Thrillerfest 2017**

His first print run was 18,000 copies

It took 5-6 books for him to break out

Most publishers won't invest in a new author for that long anymore



**Worsening deals for
traditionally published authors
helped drive the growth of...**

SELF-PUBLISHING

The launch of Kindles, ebook self-publishing, + online sales → a classic “Gold Rush Cycle”

To build KDP, Amazon fueled the indie Gold Rush with lots of free, “organic” promotion & visibility

2009-2014: abundant organic visibility allowed early indie authors, like me, to do very well



But then came the end of the indie Gold Rush Cycle

**The ease and low cost of self-publishing generated
a proliferation of ebook titles and competing authors**

**The rising ebook supply relative to reader demand →
declining visibility → falling sales, prices & profits per title**

Authors are back to their old competitive battle to survive

It's now “pay to play” on Amazon

**“Organic” promotion and visibility on the site itself
is becoming more and more limited**

**Via email blasts, Amazon still suggests your books to those who
like similar titles, and promotes your new releases to past buyers**

Amazon also still posts “also bought” titles (though erratically)

**But increasingly Amazon is auctioning off
every pixel of space on its site via “pay-per-click” ads**

On your own book's page, Amazon offers customers a host of **other authors' books**, which can distract them away from buying **your** book.

HUNTER
ROBERT BIDINOTTO

By Robert Bidinotto (Author)
4.5 out of 5 stars (73 ratings)
Book 1 of 1 in Hunter (Series)

Kindle \$3.99
Hardcover \$22.00
Paperback \$15.99

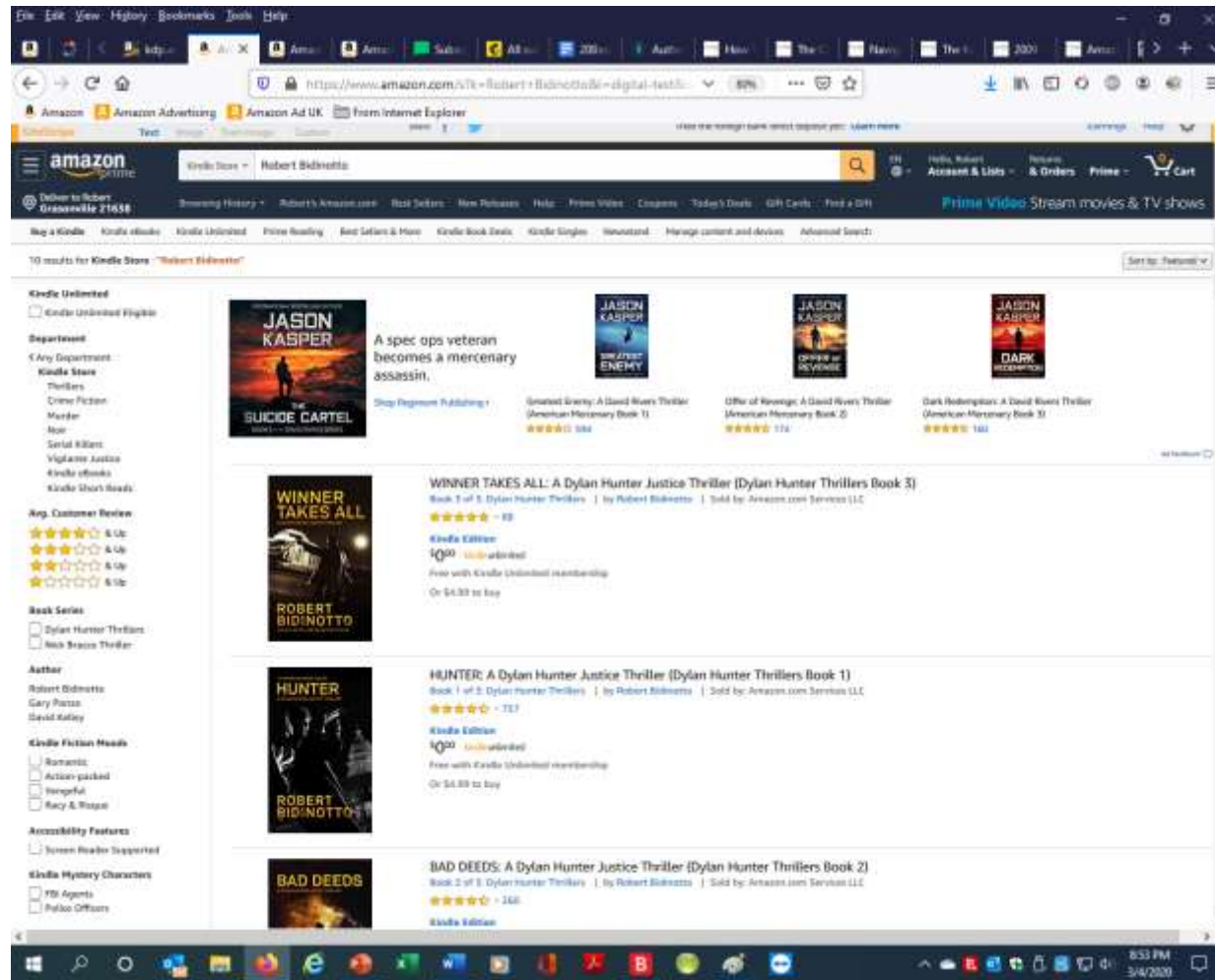
"A masterpiece of facts and suspense." —New York Times bestselling author of The Assassin

WHY YOU SHOULD READ "HUNTER" BY ROBERT BIDINOTTO

Books in This Series (3 Books)

Customers who bought this item also bought

Sponsored products related to this item



Even when customers search directly for *your own name*, Amazon sells ads there for *other authors' books*

Look what appeared atop the page when I searched for "Robert Bidinotto"

The Gold Rush Cycle also happened in book advertising

**To offset declining organic visibility, many authors began
buying ads on Amazon, Facebook, and Google**

Ad space is auctioned off through competitive bidding

**2017: a large supply of ad space + relatively low demand from
competing advertisers meant you could bid low, but still buy a
lot of visibility, and get a high return on investment (ROI)**

I know: I was one of those advertisers

But then the advertising Gold Rush went bust

How-to books and courses, hyped by the usual “get rich quick” tales, touted the virtues, even the *necessity* of running ads.

Thousands of authors jumped in, competitively bidding for “clicks” on keywords. Software was sold to help pick the most fertile keywords.

**Late 2018: The explosion of competing advertisers and ads +
Amazon policy changes → soaring ad costs and plunging ROI**

Here is what the gurus *now* admit about ads

“To really scale up, you need to compete with the folks spending five figures a month on ads. That makes things rather pricey if you want to get more than a handful of clicks.”

— Nick Stephenson, *Your First 10,000 Readers*

“The biggest surprise for me is the amount of time it takes to stay current on what works and what doesn’t, and how many authors Amazon ads simply won’t work for, beyond a \$10 or \$20 a day spend.”

— bestselling indie author Russell Blake

“Be careful with ads. It’s easy to blow through a lot of money very quickly unless you’re cautious. Set low budgets when you are experimenting. I’m up to \$1000 a day at the moment, but that is only after a lot of testing and constant supervision.”

— bestselling indie author Mark Dawson,
creator of the “Ads for Authors” course

You also need a *deep series* of books – six or more – to recoup the high cost of ads

“My little publishing gig currently spends **\$50,000 monthly to move my books, a catalog of about 26 books. It's going to be a great year on Amazon if you have a series of 3+ books or more, and if you have a war chest with which to advertise.”**

— bestselling indie author John Ellsworth

“Unless you're willing to be happy with brand building, readership building, and a small or no ROI, then *I need more than three books to work with*. Otherwise you're not going to be able to generate enough sales volume to justify the fees and ad costs involved.”

— Michael Beverly, CEO of Adwerks,
who estimates \$5,000 per month in costs

To succeed with book ads today...

You need to have a *series* of *at least six or more books*

**You must spend *hours* each day monitoring your ads for profitability
— or hire experts, like Adwerks, to do it for you**

To “scale up” and compete, you must be able *to invest* up to

\$1000 or more per DAY !

\$10,000 to \$50,000 per MONTH !

**Does that sound like you?
Me, neither.**

**(Alas, the gurus told me the truth
only *after* I lost my shirt on ads)**



**So, is building a career as an author
a hopeless dream these days?**

**The gurus say it is — unless you can afford to compete with
millionaire authors and big publishers in an ever-costlier
bidding war for ads to grab reader eyeballs.**

But I say they're wrong.

**There are *many* things authors like us can do to generate
substantial income and build a career, besides advertising.**

**Recently, I cancelled all my Amazon ads,
which cost me many thousands of dollars.**

I decided to “go back to the basics” of marketing.

**I reviewed methods of book promotion to find those
that are both time- and cost-effective,
but that *don't* depend on expensive advertising.**

And I began to build a new marketing plan on them.

I sort these methods into two categories: strategic and tactical

First, there are *strategic* things that are *always* valid and vital for you to do to maximize your visibility and sales. They apply whether you are independently or traditionally published.

Second, there are *tactical* things you can do—things that are working well today, but which may not work as well in the future, based on changing circumstances in an ever-evolving marketplace.

Now, let's explore both...

1. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

1. Identify Your Target Readers

- A. *Determine who your audience is.***
They should be people like you—
who like and value what you do,
who believe what you believe.

- B. *Build your marketing strategy upon a narrow focus on appealing to them.***

- C. *Cultivate an email list of your superfans,***
to befriend and notify about new releases.



Homework assignment:

**Watch *“Start With Why”*
by Simon Sinek**

(TED talk on YouTube)



2. Positioning: Getting Noticed by Your Target Readers



- A. Distinguish yourself and your work. Find and focus upon things that make your work unique. Carve out a fresh niche in some subgenre where your work will stand out.***
- B. The best distinctions are either those that nobody else *can* copy — or *want* to.***
- C. Broadcast your distinction in your product descriptions, covers and web images, taglines, author biography — everywhere.***
- D. Use marketing tactics to *link your work with that liked by your target readers.****
- E. Tweak your metadata to improve search results in online stores for your titles.***

3. Branding: *Getting Liked by Your Target Readers*

- **Meet your target readers' expectations, such as genre tropes. Discover what those are, then give them what they expect — but add value with your own *uniquely* fresh twists and *distinctive* elements.**
- **Deliver the highest quality content. To build a career, you need to build a fan following. That means you need to establish a reputation for delivering *value*.**
The one factor you can always control is the appeal of your writing. Constantly learn and refine your craft, and write the best, most interesting books you can.
- **Act like a pro.** You're competing with the best for your target readers' eyeballs. Invest in professional covers, interior design, editing, website, marketing.

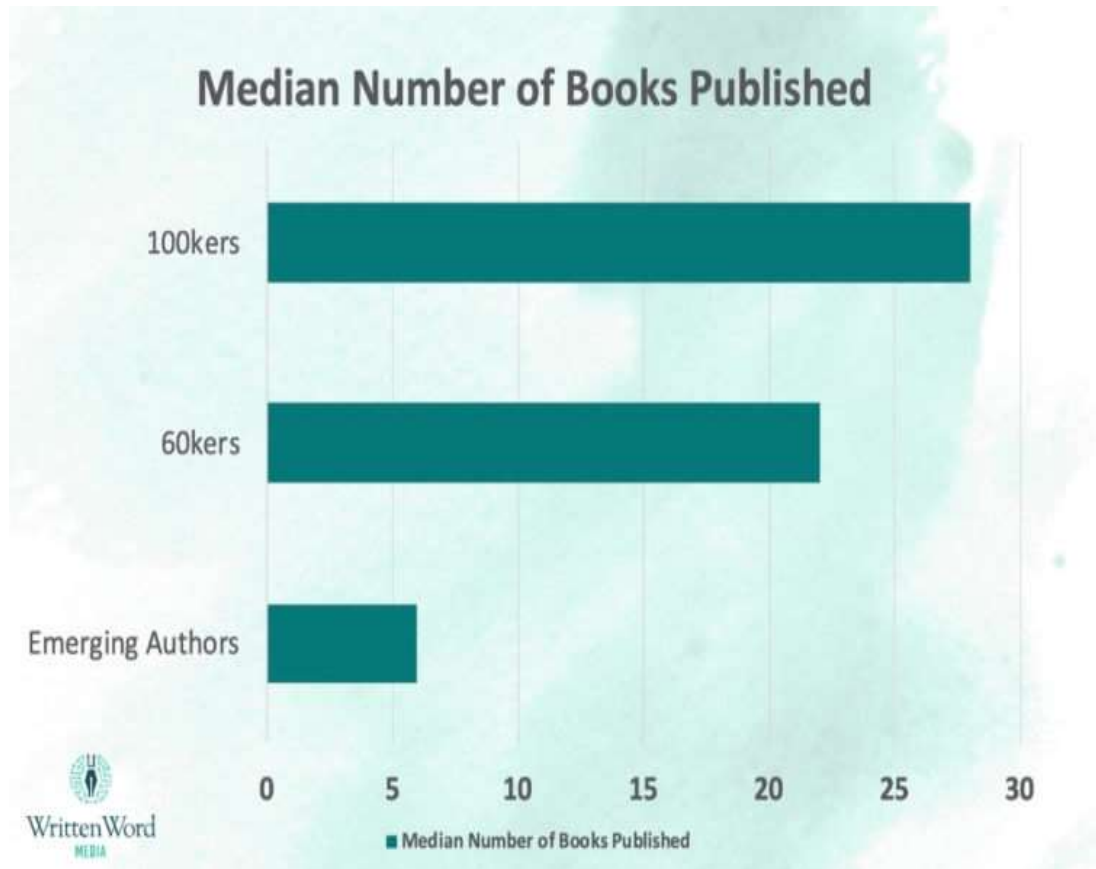


4. Write a Lot of Books



“Backlist” is *the* key to making a living as a writer. The more books you have out there, the more money you will make. Each new title will generate income.

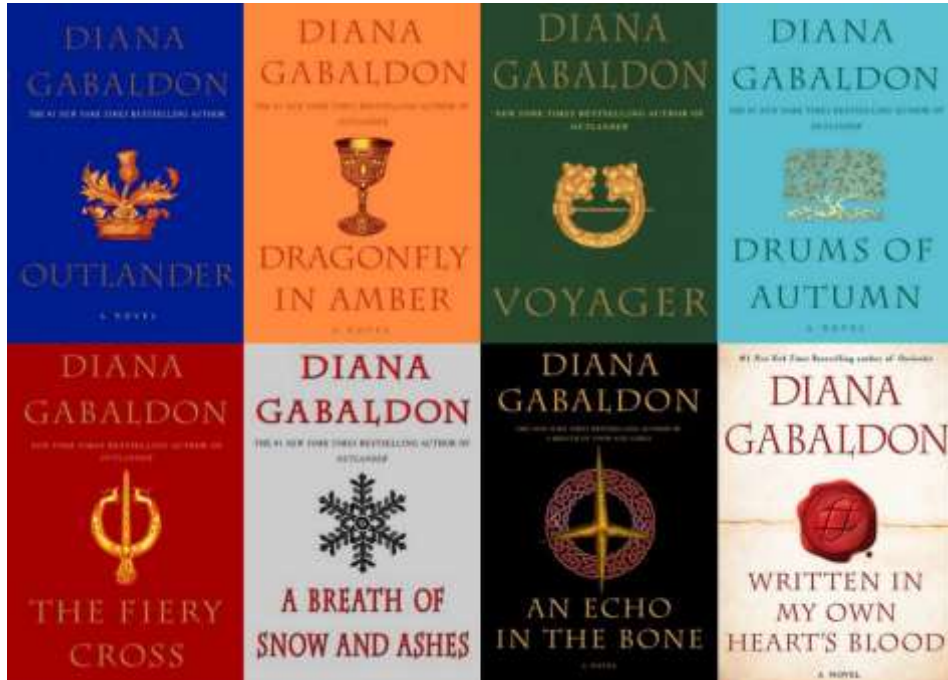
Most bestselling authors don't start to make serious money until they've written more than six or seven books.



Written Word Media surveyed over 1,000 authors in 2019. They grouped the writers into *Emerging Authors* (80% earned under \$6,000 per year), authors earning at least \$60,000, and those earning over \$100,000:

“Looking at the medians, *Emerging Authors* have 6 books in their catalog, *60kers* have 22 books in their catalog, and *100kers* have 28 books in their catalog. **The more books you publish, the more money you make.”**

5. Write in a Series

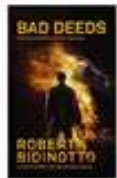


The vast majority of the most successful fiction authors have developed popular **series, usually built around unique, memorable characters.**

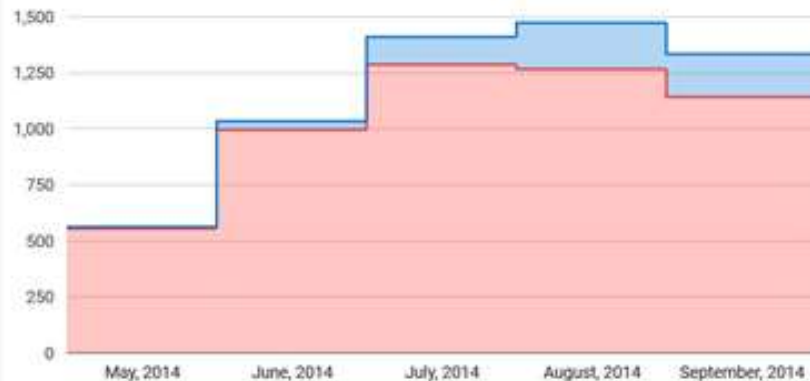
This is also true for nonfiction authors of multi-volume biographies, self-help series, etc. (“Mars and Venus...”)

Each “binge reader” who likes one of your series titles will buy more, perhaps all the rest. **That means you can make a lot of money from that single fan.**

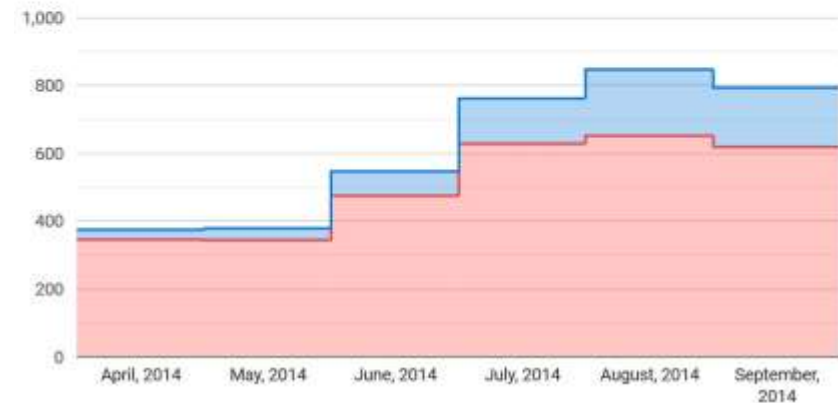
Here is what happened to sales of my first book, *HUNTER*, in the months after I released its sequel, *BAD DEEDS*, in late May 2014



Earnings- per Month



Earnings- per Month



Many readers will sample your sequel titles as “standalones” and not read other books in the series. But income from one-time readers will still add to your total revenues.

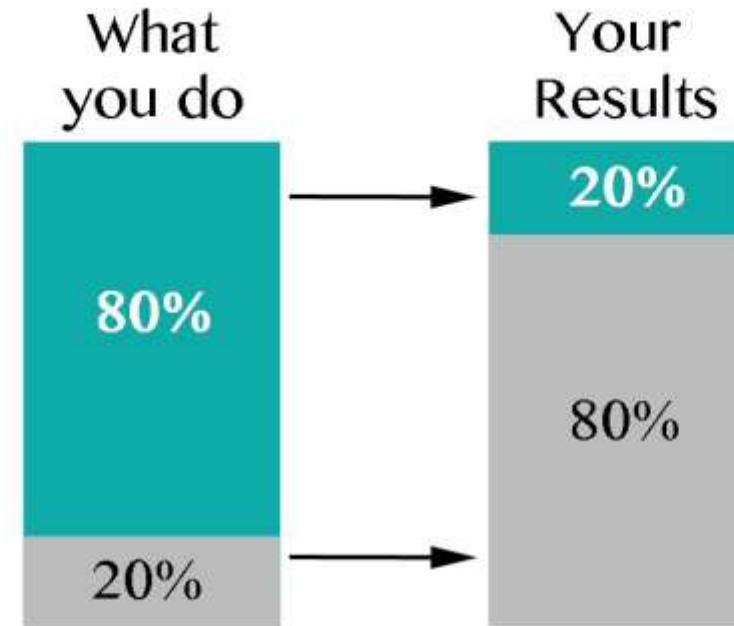
Add income from other *editions* of each new title: develop ebooks, print, audiobooks, foreign sales.

A buyer of any ebook or audiobook might become a superfan who will also buy a print editions — for herself or as gifts.

All this output from each new series release, combined, can generate significant income.

6. Use the 80/20 Rule to Determine Where to Invest Your Marketing Efforts

Whether it's time, effort, or money, evaluate which marketing methods are generating the best return on your investment (ROI). You'll find about 20% of your marketing activities are generating about 80% of your income — so, in logic, you should invest 80% of your time, effort, or money on that 20%, and largely ignore the rest.



20% of what you do leads to 80% of your results.
Do the 20% that matters and forget the rest.

**To learn how to apply the
80/20 rule to your work,**

BUY AND READ

THE ONE THING

By Gary W. Keller



SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

(These will never change)

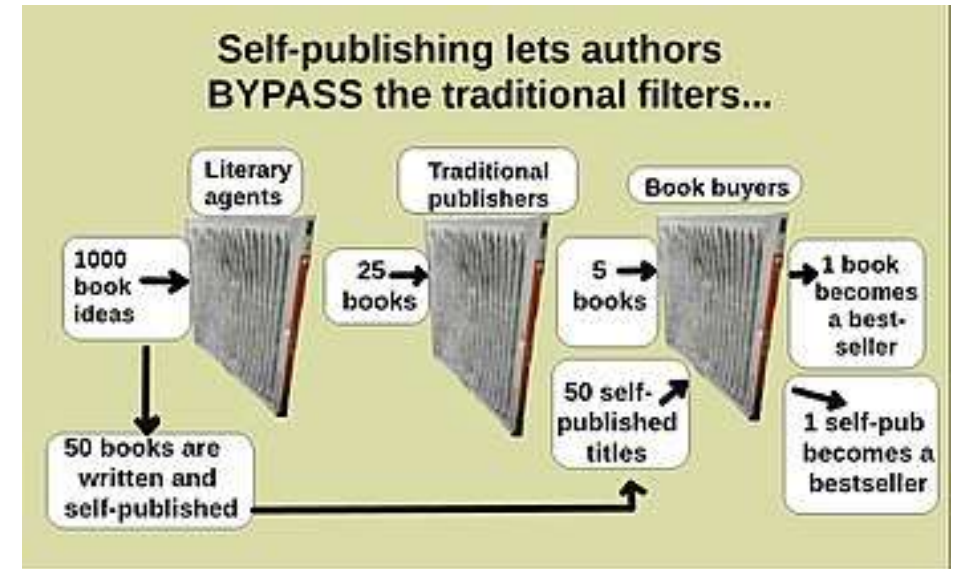
- 1. Identify your target readers**
- 2. Position your work to get it noticed by your target readers**
- 3. Brand your work so that it will be liked by your target readers**
- 4. Write a lot of books**
- 5. Write them in a series**
- 6. Always use the 80/20 Rule to maximize your effectiveness**

2. TACTICS THAT ARE WORKING NOW

1. Consider Self-Publishing

In the Written Word Media survey, 74% of authors earning at least \$100,000 were exclusively self-published. In a 2012 article, I identified these advantages:

- * **Guaranteed publication: no “gatekeepers”**
- * **Complete creative freedom**
- * **You’ll likely make a lot more money**
- * **You’ll get paid much faster.**
- * **You’ll keep all rights to your work**
- * **You can publish your book incredibly fast**
- * **You can publish at your own pace**
- * **You’ll have total control**
- * **You’ll have unlimited time to find your audience**



Self-publishing requires a lot of work and time investment, but the comparative rewards are many. If you do choose to self-publish, you’ll be able to employ many additional marketing tactics. **Here are some of those options:**

2. Consider Participating in Kindle Select for Kindle Unlimited (KU) Ebook Borrowing

In the Written Word Media survey, over 90% of authors, including the most successful, said they were making most of their money from Amazon sales.

This fact weighs on whether an author should participate in KDP Select — the program that allows Kindle Unlimited (KU) subscribers to borrow Kindle ebooks. To enroll in KDP Select, your ebook title must be made available *exclusively* on Kindle only.

So, will the income you'll get from KU *borrowing* exceed potential income from *selling* your ebooks “wide” via other distributors like Kobo, Nook, and Google Play?

In my experience, and that of many fellow authors, the answer is usually “yes”: Royalty income from KU borrowing often significantly exceeds what an author will make from all other ebook distributors *combined*.



In 2019, only 38% of my entire combined ebook and print income came from book purchases. A whopping 58% of my income came from KU ebook *borrowing*.



As a participating author, you are paid for every *page* a KU borrower reads on a Kindle-enabled device.

KU borrowers number in the tens of millions, and they are *binge readers*.

In the Written Word Media survey, 38% of *100kers* participate exclusively in KDP Select. Another 33% have some titles in, some titles out and available “wide.” Only 29% of the highest-income authors stay completely out of the program.

Some have experimented both ways and are blunt about their findings. Superstar author John Ellsworth says, “I’m 100% KU. I’ve tried wide and have suffered lost sales because of it. Lost sales on Amazon.”

3. Choose Prudently from Among Various Marketing Channels and Tactics

Deals on Promo Sites, including BookBub, were ranked as the top two options, because they are time-efficient *and* effective.

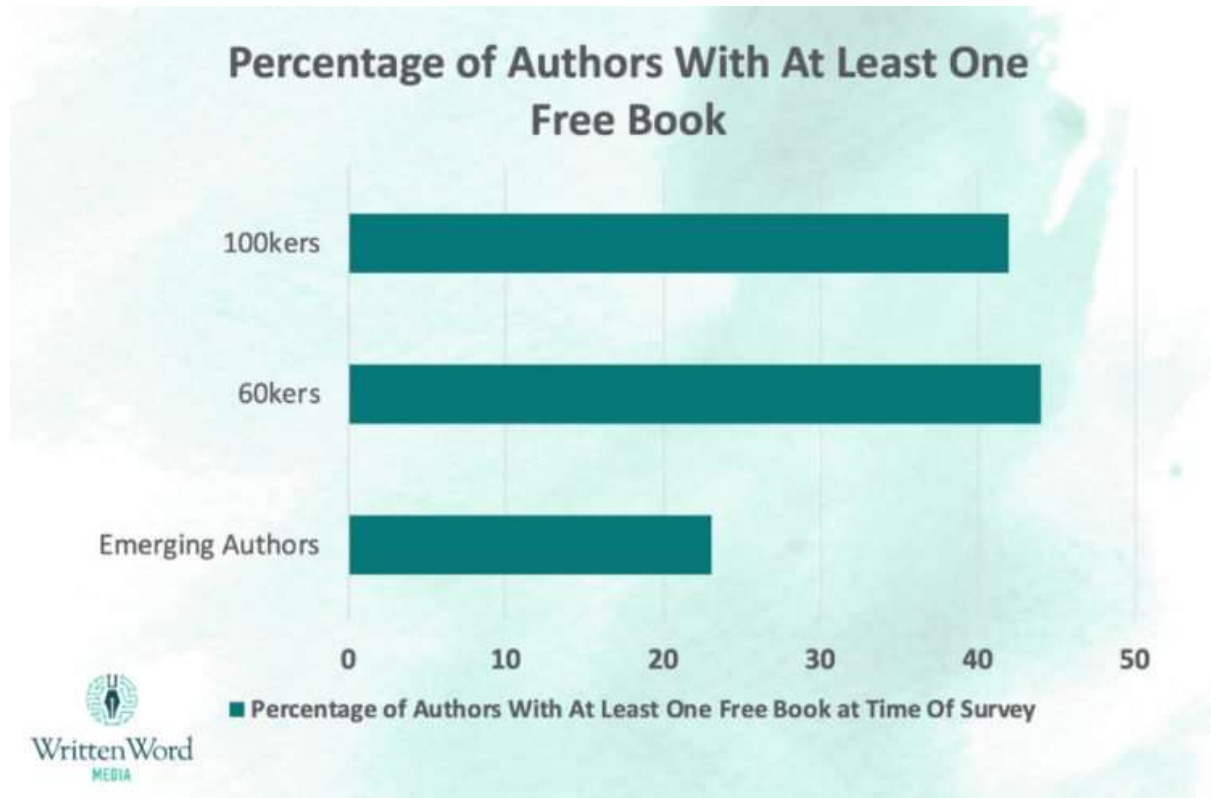
Paid advertising (Facebook ads, Amazon ads, Bookbub ads) is highly time-intensive. Learning how to use the platforms, setting up ads, then monitoring results each day takes hours away from writing. And effectiveness of ads is low to mediocre.



Rules to follow in selecting a marketing channel or tactic

- **Start with the most effective marketing channels first**
- **Identify which marketing approach you have the skill and desire to learn**
- **Pick one to focus upon**
- **Set a specific number of hours you will spend marketing**

4. Create Free “Funnel” Titles as Lead-ins to Your Series

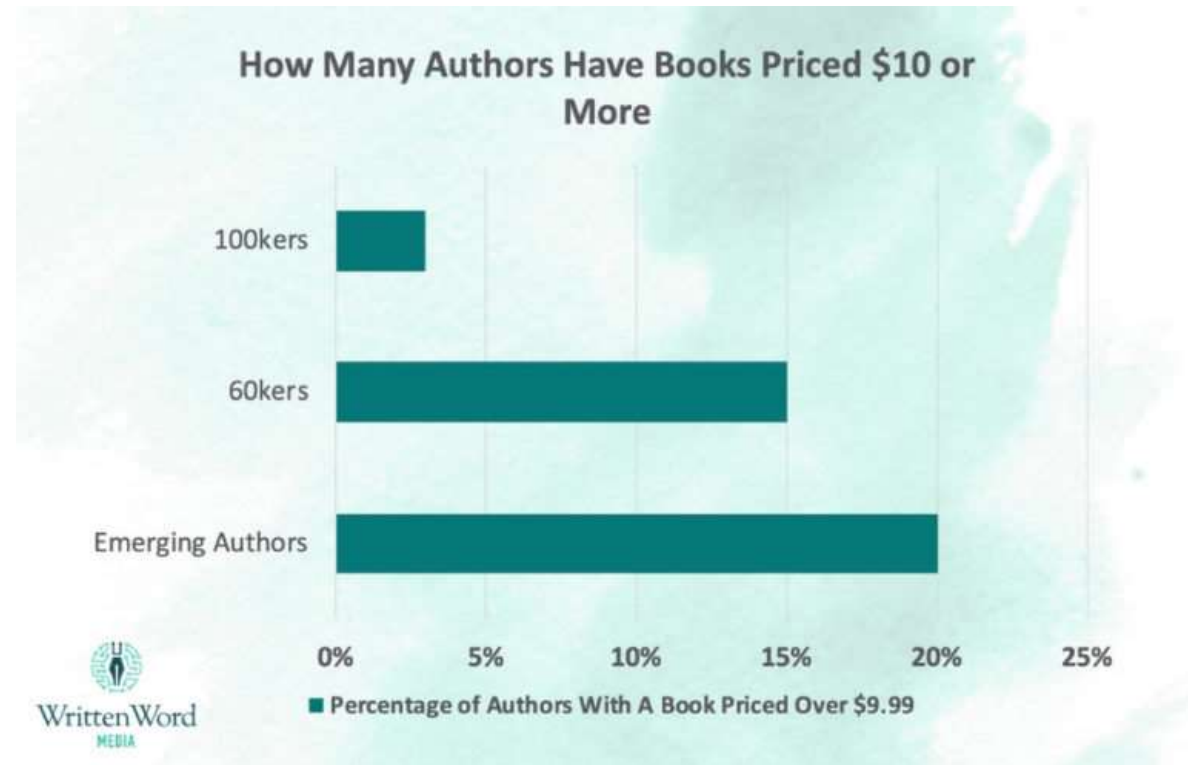


Unlike most *Emerging Authors*, the high-income indie authors use “free” titles to entice new readers into their series. Written Word Media reports, “This gap between *Emerging Authors* and the [high-income] groups is one of the starkest differences we found in our data.”

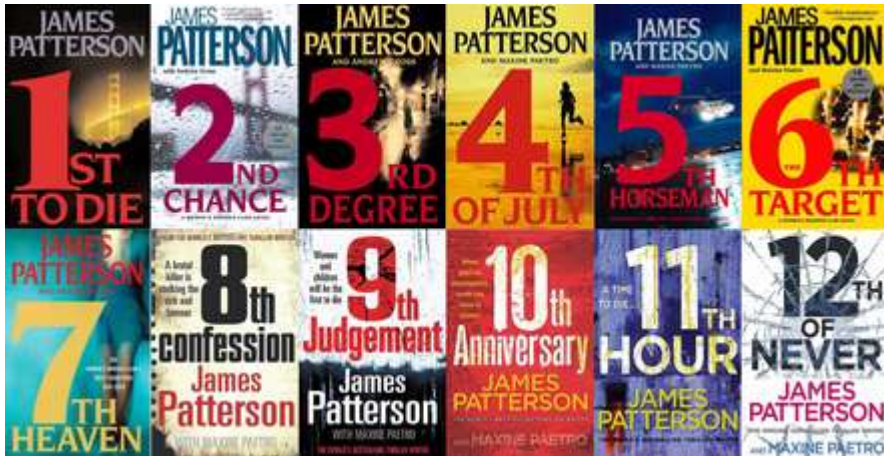
5. Price to the Market: Set Modest Ebook Prices

A significant number of *Emerging Authors* have at least one title priced above \$10.

By contrast, 68% of *100kers* list their most expensive book at or between \$3.99 and \$5.99. Many also have free or 99-cent titles, often serving as series lead-ins, i.e., “funnel” titles.



6. Publish Frequently



To maximize visibility and brand recognition, you should stay in the eyes of your target readers with regular new releases, so that they don't forget about you and your work.

The most successful authors write daily and publish new books regularly, even frequently. This keeps up fan excitement.

(This has been one of my biggest shortcomings as an author: It has taken me too long between books, and *that slow pace has cost me dearly.*)

7. Build and Cultivate an Email List of Your Fans



BULLET POINTS from... **ROBERT BIDINOTTO**
THE VIGILANTE AUTHOR

I'm Back -- With Big News!

Okay, life got very complicated for me this past year.
(Frankly, you don't want to know the details.)

But I'm back -- with some big news about the next *Dylan Hunter* stories (that's "stories," plural).

Before I get to that, **FIRST, I WANT TO SEND YOU A FREE GIFT, AS A REWARD FOR YOUR PATIENCE!**



I want to send you this special document:

[Friend on Facebook](#)

[Follow on Twitter](#)

[Forward to a Friend](#)



Coming in 2020:
CHOKER
(Dylan Hunter #4)

A STORY DRAWN FROM TODAY'S HEADLINE S...

One of the most powerful men in the entertainment

With organic reach declining, ads becoming prohibitively expensive, and Amazon policies constantly changing, an author's email list becomes an incredibly valuable asset.

Your email list is the one marketing channel to your target readers you actually own. Readers who give you their email addresses are opting in. They *want* you to notify them about your new releases; otherwise, they wouldn't sign up.

Your email list is also a valuable way to attract partner authors for joint promotions. The bigger your list, the more authors will want to partner with you.

- * **Use a service like MailerLite.com to create an email mailing list**, a dedicated “landing page” for signups, and response forms.
- * To harvest names and email addresses of happy buyers of your books, **post the email signup link to your mailing list** on your website, inside your current books, on your social media and business cards, and in the signature block of your emails.
- * **Create an *incentive* for readers to sign up to your list.** These “reader magnets” are *free items* of value *only* to your fans and target readers, and available *only* to those people who sign up to your email list.





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Directorate of Operations
Office of the Deputy Director
Grant Garrett, DD/DD

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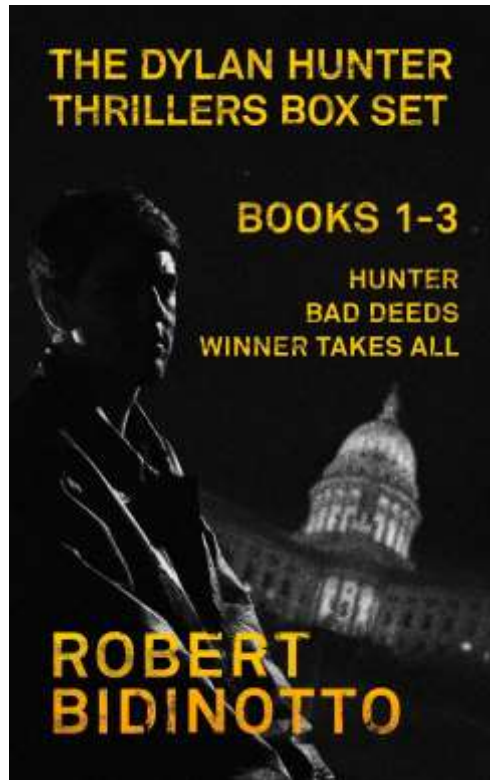
THE DYLAN HUNTER DOSSIER

Here's the "Reader Magnet" I created to entice fans of my thrillers to sign up on my email notification list.

It's an official-looking, "secret background dossier" about my series hero, Dylan Hunter, compiled by his old CIA boss.

Series fans especially love this sort of "background" stuff – and it's available *only* to those who sign up on the *email list*.

8. Once You Have Several Series Titles, Publish an Ebook “Box Set” Collection



This is one of the easiest, least expensive, and most remunerative things a series author can do.

In April 2018, I compiled my first three ebooks in a collection, called a “box set.” I set the price at only \$9.99 — a one-third discount off the cost of buying all three ebooks individually. The results?

Revenue to date is approaching \$7,000 — extra income drawn from three *already-existing* titles.

In addition, sales of the *existing* books spiked in May 2018, the month after I released the box set



Earnings- per Month



Earnings- per Month



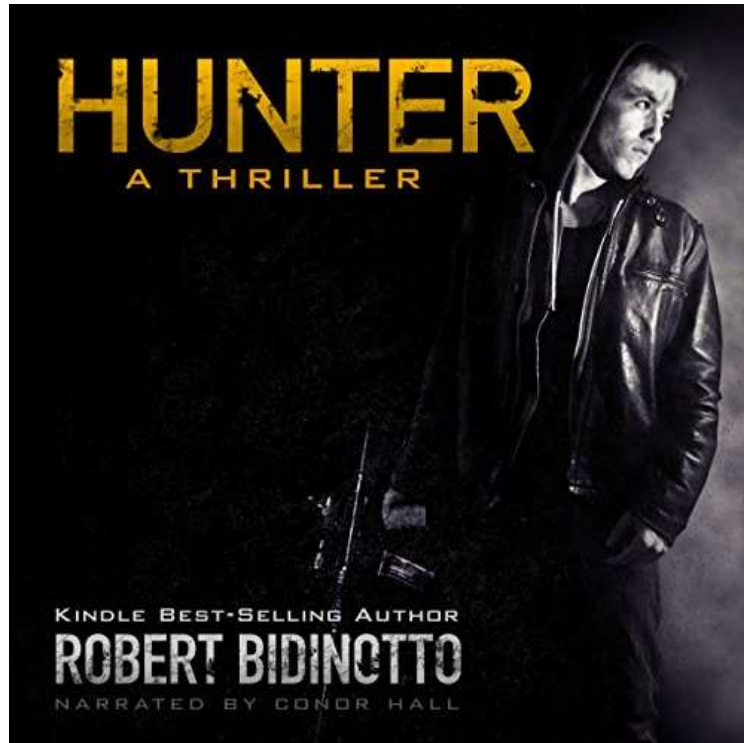
Earnings- per Month



Far from “cannibalizing” the sales of existing books, all indications are that a box set encourages purchases by bargain-hunters who otherwise wouldn’t buy.

Box sets also generate *a lot* of borrowing by KU members, who like to binge-read through an entire series. **70% of my box set revenue is from *borrowers*.**

9. If You Have Strong Ebook Sales, Consider Issuing Audiobooks



- * **Audio is the fastest-growing segment of publishing**
- * **You have traditional publishing options via Audible, Brilliance, Podium, Books On Tape, Blackstone, etc. You may need a literary agent to secure a deal.**
- * **Self-publishing options were pioneered by ACX.com, an Amazon company. A fine competitor is Findaway Voices. Check out these options.**
- * **Audiobooks can be lucrative. I've sold 8,500 audiobook copies of *HUNTER* alone, self-published through ACX—plus many more of my other two books, both traditionally published by Audible.**

10. Engage in Joint Promotions with Authors in Your Narrowly Targeted Subcategory



These are low- or no-cost ways to...

- * increase your sales quickly, and**
- * build your email list**

You share other authors' readers via...

- * Joint Giveaways of a prize they want**
- * Cross Promotions of each other's books**
- * Group Promotions of each other's books**
- * Box Sets & Anthologies**

11. If You Decide to Advertise, Do It on the Ebook Promotion Sites



These sites offer your ebook to targeted readers either for free, or at a substantial discount.

They maintain large lists of thousands of avid readers who subscribe to their service to find free or bargain books.

Subscribers list their interests in specific categories or fiction genres, so you can target which readers you want to reach during your paid promotion.

These services announce your promotion on their websites and also by daily emails to the targeted subscribers. They vary in cost and in effectiveness.

Ideally, you need at least a 4-book series to benefit.

12. Focus on Improving Your Conversion Rates

“Conversion rate” is the percentage of those people who see, read, or hear your book mentioned, promoted, or advertised that will ultimately “convert” into a sale. The major factors that generate high conversion rates:

- 1. Whether or not the person is a true “target reader”**
- 2. The book cover appeals to that reader by genre, category, or topic**
- 3. The author’s reputation (if any) with the target reader**
- 4. The book’s title and any subtitle arouse curiosity**
- 5. Word of mouth or the promotion intensifies interest**
- 6. The book’s price is attractive to the target reader**
- 7. Reviews and endorsement blurbs that make it sound appealing**
- 8. Early pages/samples of the book are compelling to browsing readers**
- 9. The product description arouses enough interest to “close the sale”**

In summary...

- **Don't conclude you can no longer build a viable career as an author**
- **Don't think the *only* way to do that is through expensive advertising**
- **“Organic promotion” still works, if you're smart about it**
- **First, take care of all the basic “strategic” elements**
- **Then, pursue “tactics” thoughtfully, knowing they'll evolve over time**

Above all, focus on delivering quality and value to readers

No marketing plan or gimmicks can “sell” poor writing

And finally, remember...
your writing goals are yours alone.

**Define “career success” to suit
yourself — and then enjoy the
unprecedented opportunities we
writers now have to express ourselves.**

THANK YOU!



FOR MORE INFORMATION . . .

On all aspects of writing, publishing, and marketing books, visit Joanna Penn's website:

www.TheCreativePenn.com

Joanna Penn's extensive archive about book marketing: <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/marketing/>

Nick Stephenson's great videos on writing, publishing, and marketing books: <https://bit.ly/2vzLAAJ>

On Joint Promotions, see Nick Stephenson's article: <https://bit.ly/2VRdbI6>

Written Word Media 2019 Author Survey: <https://bit.ly/2InmsQh>

Simon Sinek's TED talk, "Start With Why?," on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4ZoJKF_VuA

***The ONE Thing*, book by Gary Keller: <https://amzn.to/3auQLAy>**

My 2018 BTO PowerPoint Presentation on "Author Branding and Positioning": <https://bit.ly/39zr1De>

MailerLite email list-building service: <https://www.mailerlite.com/>



About Robert Bidinotto

Reach me by email at: Robert@Bidinotto.com



Need a Book Editor?
Check out my
editing services here:

<https://bit.ly/2OAZbgz>



My Fiction Website, "The Vigilante Author":
www.Bidinotto.com

My Amazon Author Page: <https://amzn.to/2TpAEOZ>

My Facebook Author Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/RobertBidinottoAuthor/>