Twitter Thread by Andrew John Rainnie ■■■■■■■ #amwriting



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A short thread about being a self-published author while I wait for something to render. A lot of people hate Amazon, and they do have some business practices that they really should change, but for me, their book publishing service allowed me to be an author (1)

Without Amazon's services, we would still be stuck in the old publishing dichotomy of traditional publishing (where an author has an agent and a publisher) and vanity press (where an author pays a publisher to print their book). (2)

Does it mean I'll never get my book sold in @Waterstones? Sure. Does that bother me? Not really. Waterstones and other traditional book stores carried my first novel for two years when I was signed by a small publisher in Edinburgh. I got zero sales. (3)

It was the worst mistake of my life, as the publisher marked the book up significantly, pricing it out of the market. In hindsight, I should have never signed the agreement, and thankfully was released from it in 2019. (4)

I recently got in touch with @Bookshop_Org on the back of an article I read about them. In theory, it sounds great, and I wish them every success in allowing small indie bookstores a better chance against corporate giants (5)

But (and here's the rub) indie bookstores cannot resell Amazon books, even if I sell them directly. I believe its to do with the ISBN assigned, so while Bookshop's idea is noble, it would eventually lead to the dichotomy of the past when it comes to authors (6)

Because in order to get a book sold by an indie book shop, you would need to buy an ISBN and have your book printed by a vanity press (such as Ingram Spark or Lulu). To be fair to Ingram Spark, their prices are very reasonable. But what about ISBNs? (7)

Here's the prices for ISBNs. With most things in life, the more you spend, the more you save. An author looking to publish a paperback and ebook would need two ISBNs - one for each variant. Add a hardcover and audiobook, and that's four ISBNs for a single project (8)

So one (ONE) ISBN costs £89, but 1000 ISBNs cost £949 = 95p per ISBN. So do you buy 1000 with the forethought of writing 250 books? Or buy a block of 10 at £164? Either way, that initial cost for the barcode alone puts Amazon at a distinct advantage (9)

That allows me to put the money that would have went into those barcodes into editing, proofreading and maybe even a marketing service. I guess the point I am getting at is this (10).

If someone wanted to take on Amazon in the publishing game, they should set up a book publishing company that is free to authors, and link up with @Bookshop_Org to distribute the stores local to that author. If the author wants to pay for a UK wide rollout, make it extra (11)

I would rather a series of bookstores in Glasgow were selling my novel, than Amazon. It would still be available online to a global market, but also allow regular signings and events and more interaction with a readership (maybe not at the moment but hey - COVID) (12)

However, as it stands, no other service provides what Amazon does (also @Smashwords for eBooks other than Kindle). Same with their audiobook service. It allows me to not only be an author and tell my stories but reach a wide audience (13)

There will be those that say if it wasn't good enough for traditional press, then the rejected books must be terrible. That's not the case. Traditional publishers are limited by release windows and margins. Think of it as Hollywood vs Netflix (14)

Hollywood studios make X number of films per year. Of those, they expect 1, possible 2 to make money, 3 to break even, and 5 to come in at a loss. Are the 5 films awful? Likely not, but maybe had a smaller audience or a bad weekend etc (15)

Netflix gets rid of launch windows. It releases tons of content each week, some original, some exclusive. It can take risks on buying films and making shows other stations or channels cannot. It gives filmmakers another avenue to make their content (16)

And that's what Amazon created. A path that authors can walk instead of the traditional model which only allows for a certain number of books and therefore a certain number of authors. And I'll use it until something better appears

Anyway, thanks for coming to my TED Talk (17)

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