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Hello and welcome to Talking Book Publishing. I'm Kathleen Kaiser along with my co-host Adana Moriarty. And today we have a very special guest who is going to talk on a topic that is so important to everyone who has books out now for sale on Amazon. And that is considering putting our books up there. It's called About Your Categories. And Dave Chasen from Kindle Panure, who, if you're not signed up for his newsletter, get it because it's full of great information, is going to talk to us about ghosting. So, Dave, welcome. Thanks

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for having me again.

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All right, so explain or define ghosting as in terms of Amazon. Yeah. So before I get

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into that, one of the things I want to do is kind of explain what Amazon used to do and now what they're doing in terms of categories. And this will kind of help set the stage, I think, for understanding what ghosting is, right? So back in the day when authors would choose their categories, they would go into Kindle Direct Publishing or KDP and they would click on the button to choose their categories. And this pop-up box would show up and they would select two and go to publish. Now, the problem is, is that those categories that Amazon listed back then weren't actually Amazon categories. They were called BISACs. And those are like International Standardization Codes. It was, I won't go into detail on it, but it was basically a logistics thing. It helped publishers choose certain accepted categories that markets could understand. So Amazon did the same thing. But what's crazy about this back then was is that 4,800 BISACs exist, but Amazon had over 11,000 Amazon categories. So authors who didn't understand the system, what would happen is they would choose BISACs. They get placed in the most competitive, hard to get in categories. And then Amazon had this form that you could fill out if you knew about it to either add more categories or to change your categories. Now that system was a little confusing, right? If you didn't know that information, you would have been stuck choosing two BISACs and getting into the most competitive categories. And that kind of sucked. And Amazon, a little bit ago, decided to change the whole system. And so now the new category system is there when you go into KDP, Kindle Direct Publishing, and you go to select your categories, Amazon shows you Amazon categories. So they actually show you all of their categories and you can choose three of them. And that's it. There's no more form. So for most authors, that sounds amazing and super simple. The problem is, is that Amazon has a bunch of minefields. I mean, this new system has a lot of problems, and one of them is called ghosting or ghost categories. And what this is, is that when you go to select one of these new categories, right, one of these Amazon categories

that Amazon shows you, 27% of them are categories where if you select it, it doesn't matter how many sales you make, you cannot get bestseller for that category. You can't rank in that category. And since the category page doesn't exist, shoppers can't find your book on it. That's one out of every four categories is a ghost category. And this really sucks. So if you went through and you happen to pick three ghost categories as your categories, none of those you can get a bestseller tag for. And none of them can anybody find through the category system, which is just absolutely incredible. Now there's other pitfalls, but I got a feeling there's going to be a couple of questions

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on this. Why would they even do that?

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That is a great question. And so I don't have an exact answer. The person who used to work on this system got fired. So I don't have a direct connect or somebody to talk to. But I have a guess. And again, I'm going to stress to all the listeners that what I'm about to say is my own personal thoughts. And I don't have data to fully back this up. But I do have a historical background to kind of explain this. So Over the past six or so years, the requests for new categories and changing of categories has dramatically increased, right? Authors are constantly contacting Amazon saying, Hey, Amazon, get with the times, you know, litter PG is a huge thing, or, oh my goodness, you know, in certain political realms, there's new terms and new definitions. And so, What's happening is that a lot of authors and publishers keep asking for new categories. New categories is okay. However, though, when Amazon adds a new category, they have to create a new category page, and they have to create a new link structure, and they have to create a new site map, and there's all these other technical things that happen to the store itself. So that can be really labor-intensive and could cause problems on the Amazon.com store. So my belief is that Amazon got real lazy, And what they do is that when they add these new categories, they will say, OK, great, there's a new category. Go ahead and select it. Yay, we did our due diligence. And you have categories to select from. And this way, they don't have to build that page. They don't have to do the sitemap. They don't have to do the linking structure. It's just there. That's my belief, is that this was more of a, shall we say, a lazy way of handling it. And the reason why I think Amazon's being really lazy about this is because I also believe that the real intention behind bringing this new category system is two things. Number one is that this should help stop books being put into categories they shouldn't be in. So authors used to have the ability to tell Amazon where they wanted to go. Amazon's taken that away. You select your three, and by the way, we'll get into this later, but Amazon can select where you go. So it's helped to clean up. But the second thing is, is that Amazon no longer had to pay all those people that would receive the form from the authors and then, you know,

manually put us into the categories. And let's face it, Amazon's been trying to cut costs as much as possible and increase their profit margins. So wouldn't it surprise me if they have set up this system to create ghost categories where they can add them on their KDP dashboard, but they don't have to do all the technical work to build out the pages and link the things correctly. So that's my thought.

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Is that because there's so many self-published people that don't sell many books, so they just figure they'll never figure out how to read and see if there are even any charting or ranking?

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Well, I think I wouldn't be surprised if Amazon was a little mad that we made this public. You know, in truth, the system has been around for a long time. And and by a long time, I mean, from the time of this recording, it's been around at least for four or five months. The new process. And I've seen a lot of authors really frustrated over the fact that they were like, I don't get it. The book is selling incredibly well. Why am I not getting the bestseller tag for this? And it come to find out it's because they were in a ghost category. You know, and so I've seen a lot of frustration and luckily our database and publisher rocket has been recording it. And all of a sudden we realized, wait a second, these category pages don't exist. Wait a second. This explains why nobody's getting these bestseller ranks. And so I don't think it's so much about those particular books. I just think it's really Amazon just being very lazy and thinking that this is a way that they can serve without having to expend extra resources.

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Wow. So, I mean,

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if you're self-published and you're not, or even if you're like a small indie house or whatever, or, you know, like, like an organization like you, what can people do to, I guess, educate themselves or combat this so they don't end up in some category that isn't actually a category? What does that research look like?

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Well, I mean, listening to podcasts like this is definitely a great way to

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do that. I agree with that.

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Yeah. I mean, this is how, you know, my team and I are constantly monitoring Amazon. We are testing, we're always looking for what they're doing. We try to explain the weird. Honestly, Amazon keeps us

on our feet. And when we discover something about what they're doing, you know, we work to try to make sure to get that information out to authors. And so for authors, being able to subscribe to podcasts like yours and listen to, you know, or join or spend some of their time always keeping up to date because Amazon changes. And it's important for us as author entrepreneurs to be able to understand the market that we live in so that we can make these kind of decisions. So that's that I think is one of the most important parts to that question.

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Well, I agree with that. I mean, your newsletter, things like that, or, you know, just ways to help our podcast, your newsletter. I mean, there's so much of those kind of informative things out there that people can gather. I just feel like, I mean, the publishing world is already hard when you're trying to do it on your own especially. This sounds like it adds an extra kink into that individual navigating publishing their own book especially. I think it's a bummer.

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Personally, you know, you know, the silver lining on that, though, is that for all the people listening here, they're going to have that advantage because they'll know, you know, and what I've learned is that while on the whole, so publishing can feel really hard or it can look really hard. The ones that are learning and really applying it as a skill are the ones that that understand these things like. existence of ghost categories, or how to best navigate, or how to best choose categories and keywords, or all these things. And while you may think that everybody knows that, everybody doesn't. I've been a consultant to major publishing companies, some of the biggest actually out there, and medium and small. And it still blows my mind how little they even know. And that's not because they're not smart or anything, and any of them listening, hey, I'm not saying that. What it is is that they are just so set in their old ways that they have systems in place that they don't spend that looking. So for all the self-published authors out there, don't worry. Matter of fact, this is the kind of information where it actually gets me psyched because knowing this is a huge difference. You might have really great authors that don't understand this and their books are doing incredibly well, and yet they can't bestseller, you know, and it's because of that one little thing. So for everyone listening, hey, high five to all of us.

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Well, how do you find out what's a ghost category?

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Yeah, so it's actually really complicated. But there's a solution. Okay. So first off, the only way that you can figure out if a category is a ghost category is to see if you can find its category page. And if you find and now, by the way, a real category page, OK, will have all the categories on the left side of the page. OK, and that's like

it's kind of like a link chain. It tells you, you know, like you went from books to, you know, science fiction and fantasy and then fantasy. And then, you know, you can see the chain of all of them. So that's that's one thing you'll see. The other thing about a real category page is that it will actually say the name of the category and bestseller. So in this case, it's like lit RPG bestsellers. Now, if so, you can find real categories by doing through that link chain on Amazon. If somehow you discover one of the ghost category pages, OK, now it's it's like and by the way, you can't really discover it. You have to find I'm going to get really technical here, but just to illustrate the point. You have to find the seven-digit serialization number for that thing, and you got to put in a special link and then hit enter. And you can actually land on this page, but a shopper can never find this. And when you land on this page, it will only say the word bestseller. It won't even say the name of the category. And on the left side, there will be nothing. And that is a prime example of a ghost category page. So seeing the difference between the two will tell you. Now, right now, as it stands, the only real way that people can figure out if it is a category, if it's a ghost category is through Publisher Rocket. We had our system go through and we found, we crawled through all 14,000 categories and we verified exactly which ones are real and which ones are ghost categories. And right now for anybody who has that, if you go to our category feature and you click and you start looking at the categories, you'll notice we have these tags and the tags will say whether it's a duplicate category, whether it's a ghost category and whether it's selectable, and you can use that information. So as it stands, without trying to do that crazy technical thing that is thus, only Publisher Rocket users

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can can figure that out at this time. So everybody go download Publisher

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make it a lifesaver.

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I mean, it will make your life easier anyway. It's a great program. But for this especially, I mean, trying to find ghost page ghost category pages on your own, it sounds wickedly complicated. So why not use something that's already figured that out? Yeah. And the cool

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thing about the category feature, too, by the way, isn't just that you'll know which ones are ghosts and which ones aren't. The category feature will also tell you how many sales that day you would need to make in order to be a bestseller. And you can click to see the history of that category. You could see its sales trends. Also, it has insights on exactly what you should think about and look at. And my favorite thing is something we just came out with, which is there's a

button that you can click next to that category to see some of the top keywords that books use when they're in that category. And that right there is really important because one of the other weird things that this new category system does is, as I said earlier, Amazon specifically says publicly that they reserve the right to add you to any category they want and take you out of any category they want as well. And why this is, is that when you go to select your three categories, Amazon then decides if they like it or not. And what they're doing is they're using their algorithm to crawl through your book's information and decide if, okay, yeah, this book really does belong there. Well, the number one thing they're using for that decision is your keywords. So you have your seven Kindle keyword boxes. And if they don't see enough keywords that help to justify you being in that category, they remove you. And so a lot of authors are finding that their books aren't even in three categories, even though they selected three. Or other authors are finding out that they're in three completely different categories that they did not ask for, nor do they think work for their book. Now, this really sucks for authors because when Amazon does that, there's no form you can fill out to say, hey, Amazon knuckleheads, come on, fix this. You know, this isn't right. They just don't care. So what authors need to do is that you have your seven Kindle keyword boxes, and when you have selected your three categories and you love them, go to that button on Rocket to find a couple of the keywords that are really good for that category and put them into the boxes. And I recommend only using two of the seven boxes just for words that are category specific. By doing this, you dramatically increase your chance of Amazon leaving you alone and putting you in those categories that you asked and keeping you there. So this is a very important step. Otherwise, you can make your request and one week later, find out Amazon didn't care. They just did their own thing.

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Um, can we go back to that part? So you only use two of the boxes or only two of the boxes have one word in it, opposed to like a phrase or whatever. Yeah. So the boxes, each

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one of those seven boxes allows for 50 characters. Okay. And a character for those who don't, don't know is a letter, a space, right? Those are characters. And so what I do is that you can put a cup, you can put like four or five words or so, depending on the size of the words. into each box. So when I go, let's say I have the three categories. I will go to Publisher Rocket. I'll find my three categories I really like. I'll click that keyword button. I will find three to four keyword or keyword phrases that I really like that fit my book that are in that selection. And I'll put the four keywords in one box. And then I'll put two of the keywords from another in one, you know. And so in the end, I might have a grand total of, say, 12 keywords put into the two boxes. So I've designated two out of the

seven boxes just for category specific keywords. And if you only select three to four keywords per category, you can do it in two boxes.

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Okay. And so if you have more, like if you had more categories and you would do the same for like the other, you know, the, like the next two boxes, the next two

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boxes. No, because you only get three categories that you can choose

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from. But you get seven

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keywords. You get seven keyword

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boxes, right?

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Yes. So the other keyword boxes I use for keywords that will drive traffic to my book.

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Oh, OK. I see. I see what you're saying.

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So I'm using five of the seven for the keywords I researched and I found, oh, these are going to be perfect. These are what my shoppers are typing in when they're looking for my book. And I use two of those boxes just for telling Amazon, hey, Amazon, make sure I'm in this category and keep me

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there. Gotcha. That's really smart. That's good advice. I like that. That's

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very helpful. Actually very, very helpful because if you, you know, ranking means so much. And like you said, someone said, I'm selling like crazy and I'm not getting any ranking. I mean, you're not a bestseller.

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Absolutely. Yeah. And what's also, I mean, there are a lot of authors that might say, well, you know, getting a bestseller isn't that big of a deal. And I'm going to say, actually, there are. And this is not from a prideful point. This is from a marketing point. When you hit a

bestseller on Amazon, which, by the way, for those who don't know, in order to get a bestseller tag, you just have to be the bestselling book that day for that particular Amazon category. There's 14,000 categories. There are a lot of categories that might require only two or three sales a day in order to be bestseller. And there are some that require thousands. So knowing the difference between those is very important. But when you do hit a bestseller tag, OK, there's a couple of things that happen. Number one, wherever your book is on Amazon, it gets that big orange tag that says bestseller. OK. This is great because when I search on something on Amazon and Amazon presents me with a list of books, your book sticks out because it has that big bestseller tag. So as I'm scrolling and all of a sudden I see the bestseller tag, my eyes are drawn to it. So more people will notice your book on the Amazon store than before. The second thing is people who land on your Amazon sales page. So whether that's because they search for something and they clicked on your book, or maybe you sent out a mass email and people landed on your Amazon sales page. Whatever the case is, whoever ends up on your Amazon's book page, or as I call it, your book sales page, they're going to see that bestseller tag on the top. And we found that when people see that, it's like social proof. For that shopper, it's like, oh man, people must be loving this book. This must be a really good book because it says bestseller on it. Now for us authors, we kind of know what really happens, but shoppers don't. And so when shoppers see that, they're more likely to purchase, which means your conversion rates are that much better. So those are two really big parts. And the third thing is, is that we found that especially in fiction, there are a lot of categories that people go to in order to shop for their next fix. Okay, so romance readers, I mean, they know exactly what kind of romance and a lot of readers will go to their favorite category on Amazon and look for the best sellers as well as the hot new. I'm a diehard lit RPG fan. I will go to the lit RPG category to see what's my next fantasy read and as well as who's hot new. And so if you, you know, when you hit bestseller, you're showing up in front of that hungry crowd. And that's also why it's really important that it not be a ghost category because that page doesn't exist. So just a heads up on that.

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Oh boy. Well, that sure answers some questions. It just makes it more confusing. I find like when Amazon finally gave up the ghost on Mobi and went to EPUB, you know, I mean, they fought with that stupid format for how many decades it seems like?

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Yeah. Everybody else got rid of Mobi, but Amazon's like, no. But finally, they did it. So so I understand that all of that might be overwhelming to some people listening. It might be confusing. So my best recommendation is here's here's how you select categories in today's day. OK, the first thing you need to do is that when you go to publish your book on KDP, you'll want to take a look at what Amazon

offers. OK, go through their list and look for categories that really fit your book. One tip I tell people is don't, like on the main categories, like say fantasy and science fiction, don't just stick in that one main category. Look for the other main categories, like genre fiction, or is yours a young adult? Then go there as well. There's a lot of main ones that still can pertain to you, okay? So, step one, look for categories that really fit your book. That's the healthiest thing you can do, no matter what. Step two, when you have found a list of categories, go and look to see how many sales you would need to make in order to be number one bestseller. That really helps, like we talked about. And so, if you're using Rocket, that's super easy. You can just look on the column and see it. If you don't have Rocket, you can go, I have this Kindle calculator. and go to that category page. Okay. Select the first book, go to its Amazon bestseller rank, take that bestseller rank, and then go to my Kindle calculator, which you can either find on by Googling Kindle calculator, or we can put in the show notes as well, link to it. And that way, you put in there and it tells you how many sales you need to make that day. Now, this is really important because one category may require 200 sales a day and another category might only require 17. And those really do exist, especially, you know, in a 14,000 category system. So to repeat, go find the categories that fit. Next, go check out to see how many sales you need to make in order to be number one bestseller. Then the step three is make sure none of them are ghost categories. And if you just can't, like, I'm sorry, but this category is so perfect for my book, I just need to, and you know it's a ghost category, select it, that's fine. But definitely make sure that your second and third selection is not a ghost category. Otherwise, you're really shooting yourself in the foot there, okay? The next thing is that once you've done that and you've identified your core categories, the ones you care about most, go ahead and click the button for best keywords for that category. And like we talked about, choose maybe three keywords from that list for each of the categories and put it in two of your seven boxes for the Kindle keywords. So that once you've now published your book, You're in the three categories you wanted. You will absolutely stay there and you'll be able to benefit from them. And that's it. And that's honestly, that right there is advanced category selection in those easy steps right there. And you will be, if you do that, you will be steps ahead of all the authors out there that aren't

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listening to this podcast. That's a large number. I mean, with a million books going up each year, you know,

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Yeah, there's a lot of publishing companies that have no idea about this. Boy, when they find out, they're probably

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going to get mad. Or change the way they do things, hopefully. I mean,

you know, the publishing world is such a weird environment because you have, like, these kind of old school establishments that are like, this is how we do stuff. And then you have, you know, kind of the indie world who's like, ooh, let's do things differently. And then you have the self-published who are like, I don't know. I mean, I've seen all flavors of self-published where they go from publishing their first draft to soaking up every bit of information so they can do it like they were a publishing house and everything in between. I mean, it's kind of amazing the difference of the entire publishing world.

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Yeah, absolutely. You know, it's the publishing community has been interesting in the fact that, like I said earlier, is they're not really they have their way of doing things, and they're not always on the cusp of something new. And it might take them years before they turn that ship. You know, to me, it's like moving a publishing company is like moving a giant oil tanker. You know, it's going to take you like hours just to turn 15 degrees right. You know, whereas, you know, a speedboat like a self-publisher can just go, you know, so it really works to our advantage. Sometimes when when when Amazon throws us, you know, lemons, we sell publishers can easily make lemonade real quick publishing companies. I mean, they're like, Well, we got to put in a request and we got to do this. And then maybe two years later, they finally make

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lemonade. Yeah. And they at least have five meetings.

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Yes. Yep. And then there's orders and people needing to sign off on the new equipment for. Yeah.

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And somebody has to do the research and, you know, implement it and see if it works for them. And I mean, do you think that it's one of the reasons that I hear the most complaints about Amazon is that because it's always changing and sometimes it just changes overnight. Like they're not sending out information to sellers, you know, people who have book pages or product pages saying like, Hey, you know, we're going to implement a change midnight tomorrow night. Good luck. It just, you wake up the next day and it's different. And it's frustrating for people who are trying to sell stuff on Amazon. Like I totally get that. And I think that like what you guys do at Kindlepreneur, um, definitely like you guys bear so much of the weight of that, of figuring it out. And then you give information. a lot of times, really freely. It's just like, this is what we learned. Here it is in our newsletter.

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Yeah, it's, I mean, Amazon has literally been operating for months

with 27% of their categories, not allowing people to be a bestseller. Like, and they didn't even announce it. They didn't tell anybody. They're still, even after now that this is, this information has gotten out, they're still not, they're not going to even address it. Like they won't even bring it up and they'll probably never say anything. I mean, that's just, that's the fun of living with Amazon. But like I said earlier, this is one of the, it's, It's almost like the thing that really gives me the most hope and the most excitement about what we do is because the people listening to this podcast who are reading or doing these things, they're going to understand this, and this gives such a leg up to those that really care. The people that are just scammy, that are just cranking out books, they're not going to do this. They're not going to know this. And so sometimes when Amazon throws us challenges, this is what really separates authors. And so it gives me hope that The real authors are really going to shine and they're going to understand this because they're paying attention and they care. So it's in on the one hand, Amazon is difficult. They are. And on the other hand, sometimes that really helps

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helps us out. So from what you said in the beginning, what was what did you say that categories were called?

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The ghost categories.

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No, before the, what they were, the

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buy. Oh, buy

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sacks. Buy sacks, right. So there, there, there were like 4,700 of those, but Amazon had 11,000 categories that weren't those. And none of those were ghost categories before this change. Nope. So then they added 3000 more categories. And those are all and they

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changed the whole bunch to to ghost categories. Yeah. So Amazon, Amazon on this new system has dropped the ball on a lot of stuff. One of my favorite things and no joke, it still exists is there's a category for turtles. Okay. And if you find it, you can still find it on KDP. I don't remember the full category chain to get to it, but if you have published a rocket, just type in turtles into the search and it'll bring up every category that has the word turtles. My favorite is that when you go into KDP to select that category, it says TURTLES and then in parentheses, in all caps, it says RENAME. As in R-E-N-A-M-E. There's seven categories that are exactly that way. No Joke

literally reads as if the programmers on the new system said, oh, we need to rename this category. And so they put a note that went live that literally says RENAME. And four months later, it's still there. That's a simple coding thing. That's not crazy. The fact that they left that note public and Amazon itself hasn't done anything about it tells me that this system that exists is what we're going to get. And you know, they're not going to change that. The ghost categories aren't going away. And this is not a glitch. This is just them being Amazon half doing something. And we probably won't hear from them for another four or five years. That's

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wild. Yeah. So in your opinion, in

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your opinion,

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for what you do, I mean, do you think this kind of stuff and the long game hurts Amazon? I mean, I see in the indie world, a lot of people who have been like, you know, pulling their ebooks and stuff like that from Amazon completely and not wanting to publish there and using other services. Do you think that doing something like this affects Amazon going down the road?

00:29:48 SPEAKER_00
It does. And I'm very supportive of authors who want to try to stick it to Amazon. That's not because I'm mean or jerk faced or anything like that. But what I do love is, you know, I love free markets and I love the idea that there are more markets that will benefit from this. What's really happening is a lot of authors, they're not so much pulling it off of a mass majority or a mass number, a large number, significant number of authors aren't pulling their books off of Amazon, but what they're doing is they're making sure they're not exclusive to Amazon. So they're not doing like KDP Select or, you know, Kindle Unlimited, which forces you to only sell your ebook on Amazon. They're taking themselves out of that and they're working hard to sell on Barnes and Noble, iTunes, Kobo, et cetera. And I'm going to tell the listeners right now that if you choose to do that, You need to work hard on the other markets. Don't do what a lot of authors do, which is they then put them on the other markets. They just sit back and they're like, Oh, I hope they sell. And then they get mad when they don't sell. The key to success on wide market selling is giving those other markets as much attention as you gave Amazon. Work that, and there's a lot of great groups out there, like Wide for the Wind, as well as a couple of others, where you can see authors have started to really redistribute their earnings into other markets, and that is a wonderful opportunity. Just don't pull it fully out of Amazon, and definitely don't just throw it into the markets and let it sit. So I love the idea of authors expanding. The only thing is, is that I was

actually paid consultant for Barnes & Noble a couple years ago. And I was brought in to help them to basically raise or improve their systems to make self-publishers not only want to self-publish on Barnes & Noble, but also drive, make authors want to send their readers to Barnes & Noble instead of Amazon. Because right now when an author does an email blast, most of them will put a whole bunch of links to the other stores oh you're gonna hear here but to get an author to send us an email to their entire list that tries to incentivize the buyer to go to Barnes and Noble how do you do that? We came up with this amazing plan and I really think it would have changed the entire industry. And their team loved it and we designed it. And then we sent it all the way up. And then I learned all about the bureaucracy of ridiculousness because it went all the way to the top of their board. And their board was like, that just seems like too much work. I'm like, guys, you're dying. Matter of fact, later on, by the way, they sold to an international company, right? But I'm like, you guys are dying. Your stores aren't doing as great as they used to. And your digital presence really sucks. If you guys implement this, authors will send shoppers to you. You will regain your footing. And authors will want to operate in your ecosystem. And we've spelled out how you can do it. It's easy. It's not even that time resource. It's not that resource intensive. None of them. Like they said, that's a great idea. We love it. Next. And they never did it. And by the way, what my suggestion and design for them was that all they had to do was give authors more information. So right now, when you publish on Amazon, when you go to your KDP report, all you find is how many sales you had. Wouldn't it be amazing though if Barnes & Noble actually told you, Hey, you've made 78 sales today. And this is where people came from. They came from this keyword. They came because of this email that they did all these like, and this is the percentage of people who converted on your page. And oh, by the way, that's pretty low. That's a low conversion. And so we recommend you look at improving your book description. And all of a sudden we create a dashboard where the author can actually have control of their own information and they can learn from. Now imagine this, if we did this, And I'm an author and I'm launching a book. Oh, man, I want all of my people to go to Barnes and Noble. And I want to really push that so I can learn all about the market and I can apply it to the other markets if I so choose. I mean, think about it. Test it with the Barnes and Noble people and you find out exactly where people are coming from and what's working for your book. That would be amazing. And that would drive authors who want to send people to you. And we designed it, we laid it out, the information was there. I wasn't, we weren't making a new background system. We weren't making some giant database. It was all there. And they wouldn't lift a finger. It drove me nuts. It broke my heart. So I say all that because they had the key to success right in front of them. The work was done and they didn't do it. So I don't have a lot of faith in the companies out there. And I know we ragged on Amazon pretty hard here and they kind of deserve it to an extent. But Barnes and Noble, come on. And iTunes, don't get me started on them either.

Or books or whatever they're called today. So I have some faith in Kobo to an extent, maybe, kind of. Man, it just sucks. Sometimes I wish I could just like buy one of those companies and just fix them. But anyways, that's neither here nor there. Yeah. Sorry for my little rant there. It's just, you hit a nerve on it and it just, it kills me. It

00:34:59 SPEAKER_02
kills me. Well, and all of that information would be amazing because it would empower, it would empower big houses, small houses, self-published. And

00:35:08 SPEAKER_00
it doesn't cost them anything to

00:35:10 SPEAKER_02
do. Yeah. And to be able to gather that kind of data, I mean, something that... It makes it so much harder to sell a book when you have to guess. You have to guess, you have to guess, you have to hope. You have to hope that you... Even if you use something like Publisher Rocket, that even that information is the information that's gonna hit. Or you use ChatGPT to help you find categories or whatever, right? You're trying to do it right and you're still sort of like,

00:35:40 SPEAKER_00
What you know and it's it's kind of interesting you brought up that way because honestly that's exactly what publisher rocket is. It's it's providing a lot of that it can't give you the specific data data to your book but it can give you a lot more data than just guessing and and it's funny is that when i was talking with that board they're like is this gonna put you out of business i'm like. Okay this is great my book sales will go through the roof okay you know. So you're absolutely right. It's it would be very powerful to have that information. Like that's been my driving force to building Publisher Rocket is trying to make that information as public as possible. And so I really had high hopes that Barnes & Noble was going to do it. Maybe one day they'll get a new CEO or somebody.

00:36:23 SPEAKER_02
I don't know. I also kind

00:36:25 SPEAKER_00
of learn to cast and be like, yeah, right. Like, wait, we had Dave working with

00:36:29 SPEAKER_01
us. By the way,

00:36:30 SPEAKER_00
hilarious when Kindlepreneur showed up to work with Barnes & Noble

Press. It was just a thing I did a long time ago, you know. Don't

00:36:40 SPEAKER_02
they have a new CEO

00:36:41 SPEAKER_01
that started having it so that the stores would have a section for
local authors? I mean, they've been doing that here in Southern
California. But that still doesn't mean

00:36:51 SPEAKER_00
they have a love for their digital system. Their BNN press is really
the big the big one that they need to overhaul and improve. That's the
one that will really go toe to toe with Amazon. They went to war on
physical stores. Luckily, Barnes & Noble beat Amazon on the physical
stores. And where Barnes & Noble really needs to take it to Amazon so
as to counterbalance the entire market as if they were to improve
their BNN press. I just feels like is out of all the multi headed
hydras of Barnes and Noble, right? You know, so all that has, uh, the
BNN press head is like the tiniest one on the bottom. No, it's gets,
gets the scraps and it's a sad thing. I wish them luck though.

00:37:33 SPEAKER_01
I really do. Yeah. Because that information is everything. Like I've
been a marketer my entire life. That is the information I need.

00:37:41 SPEAKER_00
Right. Let me ask you guys this. If you if that information absolutely
existed, not only would you guys put your book on being in a Barnes
and Noble, but you would probably do more to push them sales than you
do. Right. Right.

00:37:57 SPEAKER_02
And our

00:37:57 SPEAKER_00
clients immediately have a surge of more money. They'd be printing
money for Pete's sake. Like, sorry, I know I'm about to go on a rant
again. It was just so stupid. So

00:38:08 SPEAKER_02
stupid. I'm

00:38:09 SPEAKER_00
sorry. I don't want to sound pretentious. That's mean it just didn't
make sense. Well,

00:38:15 SPEAKER_01
especially when they already had all that data, they just had to link
it. It's not like they're having to build some huge system from the

ground up.

00:38:24 SPEAKER_00
I'd have had my programming team do it for free if they would just
would have said, still mad. Sorry. Okay. You guys

00:38:32 SPEAKER_01
me in a bad way. This is a lot of what a lot of people need to do.
Cause I remember back in the, when I was working in technology,
emerging technologies in the late eighties and all through the
nineties in that. These companies, I was actually at a meeting, it was
a retreat for big printers, you know, printing like Heidelberg and all
of those Mitsubishi. We were sitting there and Guy Kawasaki gave a
talk on the digital revolution that I'd heard him do 10 years
beforehand, okay, when he was still with Apple. But we're sitting
there and the two guys next to me said, I hope I can retire before I
go digital. I just went back to my room and climbed under the covers.
You know, it was like, Oh my

00:39:16 SPEAKER_00
God, you

00:39:17 SPEAKER_01
have, you know, these are dinosaurs. I'm sitting with dinosaurs. Yeah.

00:39:21 SPEAKER_00
And, and there, there's a lot, there are a lot companies that, that
operate in that way as well. Not just the marketplace, but also a lot
of publishing companies as well. I mean, look at how many were kicking
and screaming about actually using Amazon for the longest time. Oh,
yeah. So, I mean, we come back to it, guys, everyone listening. You
guys have a major competitive advantage. You're agile. You're
listening to this. You're learning. You're learning something that
only maybe 0.1% of self-published authors know about. Like, enjoy.

00:39:54 SPEAKER_01
Yeah, I think

00:39:55 SPEAKER_02
what you said, you're like, Oh, like now you guys got me in like a bad
place, you know, but I think it's important to know that these, these
guys have also been offered solutions. That would be solutions for
authors to have other game other than Amazon, and the companies turn
them down and having that knowledge. And being armed with that also
makes them better at being able to sell their books because they're
like, OK, like, you know, this place or this place or whatever. But
you could do the same thing. You could fine tune it on Amazon and use
what you find tuned on Amazon and

00:40:33 SPEAKER_00

use it for the other

00:40:34 SPEAKER_01
platforms. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Well, well, I think this is a good place to wrap this up because this is a huge change and We use Publisher Rocket in our author marketing business because it's such a great help. And as I said, Kindlepreneur.com. Everybody go sign up for Dave's newsletter because you'll get more information that really helps you. And he's not putting out 10,000 emails a day like some of these newsletters. But when he sends something out, read it, because you'll find out like he came up with ghosting. And I went, what's this about? We need to talk about this. We need to know about this. And I wanted to know for my myself what was going on. But also, all of you need to know, too, because if you were if you're an author or a small publisher and you're getting your books out there, you need to go and check if those categories you have them in are ghosts.

00:41:37 SPEAKER_00
Yeah, stay away from

00:41:39 SPEAKER_02
Yeah. I feel like we should have Dave on more often than once

00:41:44 SPEAKER_01
every two years. I think so, too. You

00:41:47 SPEAKER_00
go right down the companies and I'll grab about

00:41:52 SPEAKER_02
one. Hey, we love it. That's what we're looking

00:41:55 SPEAKER_00
for. Well, I appreciate you guys having me. It's always a blast.

00:42:01 SPEAKER_02
Thanks for joining us today.

00:42:03 SPEAKER_01
Yes. Thank you, Dave. And Again, kindlepreneur.com sign up for the newsletter. It's free. Okay. Anyway, thank you, Dave. And that's

00:42:17 SPEAKER_02
it for today.

00:42:18 SPEAKER_00
Bye. Okay.