

Summary Report on MiPA General Meeting—September 14, 2021 27 Participating on Zoom

IngramSpark presentation and Q&A

Speaker: Josh Floyd



Josh Floyd is manager of business development for IngramSpark. Josh promotes the growth, sales, and brand of the IngramSpark platform to independent authors and publishers along with providing education to the industry on how best to utilize Ingram’s Publish-On-Demand services. Josh received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Engineering Technology and Industrial Studies and a minor in Business Administration from Middle Tennessee State University. Follow on Twitter @ingramspark

Overview:

Josh’s talk covered these topics:

- Using the IngramSpark platform for print-on-demand and distribution through Ingram Book Company
- Considerations for preparing your book for market
- Advice for pricing your books for specific markets
- Best practices for success with bookstore and library sales

Ingram Company Overview:

Ingram has been a family-owned business in Tennessee for more than 60 years. Ingram is a wholesaler for 40,000 traditional publishers and over 100,000 indie authors and publishers (16 million titles). It supplies all types of retailers—bookstores (major and indies), universities, internet, gift stores, museums, and libraries. It supplies eBooks to about 28 distribution partners like Amazon, B&N Nook, and Apple.

IngramSpark is a one-stop platform for print & eBook distribution. An account from them is free, they do print-on-demand, have wide global reach, and are non-exclusive. The author/publisher sets the book price, discounts, and returnable options. [Lightning Source](#) is their print-on-demand (POD) service division. POD allows book changes to be made available on any new sales.

Using IngramSpark:

- Set up free account (will need to send credit card and checking acct info)
- Upload print or eBook digital files (ISBN) required
- Set your book for Preorders, Global Pricing (you can’t do preorders with KDP)
- Turn on printing but not distribution and buy a few copies for final proofing

- Turn on distribution (it then appears in the Ingram catalog)
- Ingram sends metadata to retail and online sites
- POD is used to manufacture print titles
- They deliver print and eBook versions to retailers
- Ingram pays you for the sale

Why POD Makes Sense



- No inventory to manage
- No warehousing costs
- No guesswork regarding potential demand
- No orders to pack and ship
- Access to global distribution/retailer markets
- Can revise at any time
- Fast turnaround times

IngramSpark

- You still have to do the marketing. Tell your buyers to use whatever source they prefer. If you are talking to libraries or book stores tell them it is at Ingram.

Pre-distribution Advice for Authors:

- Work with professionals to make a quality book—editors, covers, back cover, copy edit, etc.
- Go standard on binding and trim size. Use something appropriate for your genre.
- Use social media to build readership. See how successful authors do it.
- Don't use Amazon/KDP-only contract. This affects discounts and makes book non-returnable. Use both Amazon and IngramSpark, just don't make your book exclusive to Amazon.
- Network professionally, writer groups, industry communities, etc.

Metadata:

- Title, author bio, BISAC codes (at least 3), short description, why readers should buy this, keywords outside the BISAC codes, reviews, endorsements
- Audience (adult, YA, JUV—age, grade)
- ISBNs
- Pricing in global markets—because you never know who might be looking for your content
- Print attributes (size, # of pages, paper color)
- Retail Discount
 - Print—30-55%
 - eBook—60% of list price
 - Put in lower values if you are new
 - Use 53% if you are targeting bookstores. This is called the “trade discount.”

- Returnable or Non-returnable
 - If you are targeting online markets, go non-returnable, go with lower discount like 40%). 30% to 52% is called the “short discount.”
 - If you are targeting book stores, then they want the full discount (53%) and it is returnable. These terms can be updated on the Ingram account if a book is selling well.
 - Return/destroy means it will be sent back to Ingram and destroyed there. Return/ship means the book will be shipped back to publisher at about \$2 per book.
- Publication Date, On-Sale Date, Preorders
 - Make sure the pub date and on-sale date are the same so that preorder will trigger on that date.

Ingram’s iPage makes all of this information easily visible to a retailer.

- IngramSpark has a book called *The IngramSpark Guide to Independent Publishing* and the information is also available on their website.

Calculator Tools:

- To get to calculators go to site, resources, and then calculator
- There is a printing and shipping calculator, which will determine the cost to you
- A second valuable calculator is the compensation calculator
- You can get books printed in the US, UK, or Australia which might lower the cost for books sold there.

Compensation Calculator Tool:

Calculating Your Publisher Compensation

Know the print cost for your book. You will also need this information when deciding on the retail price. Use the online **Publisher Compensation Calculator** located under **TOOLS** at www.ingramspark.com

For Example:	
\$20	Retail price
<u>-53%</u>	wholesale discount
\$9.40	wholesale price (what the distribution partner pays us for the book)
<u>-\$4.81</u>	Print cost for 300 page 6x9 paperback
\$4.59	Compensation paid to you approximately 90 days later

Pre-Sales:

- Be clear about the on-sale date
- Be retailer agnostic!
- Send out advance reader copies to readers and retailers, you can make changes
- Get reviews and put great ones to the back cover
- Send reader into stores to order your book

Notes for Retail Success:

- Check comparable titles for size and price range.
- Make your paperback your “Retail Edition” with full trade discount and returnable status.
- Don’t brag about your Amazon sales at bookstores, they don’t care.
- Send customers to order at bookstores that have put it on the shelf.
- Professional marketing materials—ARC/Shelf Talkers/Sell Sheet

Notes for Library Success:

- Libraries can purchase with lower discount
- Make hardcover your “library edition”
- Make sure they are cataloged properly (A MARC record is a MACHine-Readable Cataloging record).
- It is important to have professional reviews from trusted sources: Library Journal, Kirkus, Publisher Weekly, Industry Leaders, etc.
- Attending ALA State Shows and networking are important.

Tips For Success:

- B&N requires price on the barcode
- Think of writing as a way to earn a living
- Market yourself, website, social sites, reader platforms, etc.
- Get onto local news if possible
- Support the bookselling community
- Pursue reviews and awards
- Don’t get discouraged
- Consider podcasts
- IngramSpark has an academy and blog

Question and Answer Session:

- Q1: Explain the difference between IngramSpark and Lightning Source
A1: IngramSpark is division of Lightning Source which is more focused on businesses and contracts and not easy for small publishers or author-publishers. IngramSpark is an easy access point for indie-authors and small press publishers.
- Q2: When would I need to send in my file to get paperbacks back by October 16?
A2: Today! The fourth quarter is a really busy time. Paper supply is a problem. He recommends using groundwood paper which is more available, and traditional publishers are moving to it. It’s a thicker but lighter paper with a nice color. Hardcover production has a fiber shortage. Be willing to pay extra to upgrade your shipping speed. Bookstore orders are prioritized, so buy your books faster by going there.
- Q3: Is there a cost each time a change is made?
A3: Yes it is \$49 for initial upload of a print book and \$25 for an eBook. The revision fee is \$25.
- Q4: Do you have any links for service providers?
A4: Not really. Ask the author to let you use their log in numbers.
- Q5: Would it make sense to POD a 30 pages color picture book?
A5: There are three color quality options. At 30 pages or more it becomes more expensive, so the standard 70 color might be best. The highest quality is more expensive.
- Q6: Groundwood paper—tell us more.

A6: It is a lighter weight paper, lowering shipping cost. It looks good but is not as thick. It works well for low-page count books. It may not last as well over long times.

Our next MiPA meeting will involve a talk about offset printing on October 12