



Maximize Your Earnings with PublishDrive's Subscription Pricing Option

A Case Study Featuring Bestselling Self-Published Author

Rachel Morgan

Introduction:

When making the decision to go wide, self-published authors have many factors to consider. There are typically two main avenues for going wide: using an aggregator that distributes to multiple sales channels or going direct to stores. Each has its drawbacks and benefits.

Aggregators allow authors to manage ebook distribution to multiple sales channels on one platform, but they take an average 10% of the royalties. Going direct provides authors with the maximum amount of royalties, but individually uploading books at every ebook retailer is time consuming.

[PublishDrive](#), a self-publishing platform that distributes ebooks globally to over 400 stores, developed a [subscription pricing](#) option that aims to combine the best of both worlds. For a flat fee of \$100 per month, authors enrolled in subscription pricing get to keep all of their royalties (no matter how high sales go) and manage global ebook distribution using a single platform.

PublishDrive also offers a royalty share option that takes 10% of sales, but this is best for authors selling \$1,000 or less in monthly sales. For those selling more than \$1,000 monthly, it's much more beneficial to pay the flat fee of \$100, since a 10% cut of their royalties can be significant.

When this breakthrough pricing option was launched, authors felt it was too good to be true. To illustrate the benefit of subscription pricing, we created the following case study based on information and sales data provided by author Rachel Morgan after she enrolled in PublishDrive's subscription pricing.

- ◆ While royalty share pricing is a suitable option for some authors, at higher earning levels, the average 10% cut in royalties becomes significant.
- ◆ With an increase of 16.44% in net earnings, Rachel Morgan's experience demonstrates that PublishDrive's subscription pricing is the smarter option for authors selling at least \$1,000 monthly.
- ◆ Distributing through PublishDrive (rather than multiple stores or aggregators) can also save time spent on administrative tasks. Authors can manage global ebook distribution, marketing, and sales analytics in a single platform.



“PublishDrive has, in all honesty, been the channel I’ve had the most positive support experience with.”

About Rachel Morgan:

Rachel Morgan is the bestselling, self-published author of the YA fantasy series Creepy Hollow. She also writes contemporary romance under the pen name Rochelle Morgan.

Timeline:

This case study covers a period of two months.

Follow-up case studies will be performed after six months and after one year.

The Goals:

Compare net earnings from royalty share and subscription pricing options.

The Approach:

Interviewed author Rachel Morgan and analyzed the sales data she provided after enrolling in PublishDrive’s subscription pricing option.

The Results:

Increase of 16.44% in net earnings received from ebook sales.



Q&A with Rachel Morgan

Before enrolling in PublishDrive's Subscription Pricing,
please tell us...

Where did you distribute your ebooks?



How long have you been distributing
to those channels?

2012

2014

2016

2017

Amazon: since March 2012 (the start of my indie publishing career)

Apple Books: since December 2014

Kobo: since February 2016

Draft2Digital: since August 2016

PublishDrive: since November 2017

How would you describe the support service of those channels?

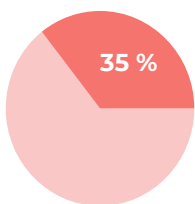
The length of time it takes for a support person to get back to me is generally between 1 and 3 days on those channels. Amazon often replies within a day or less, but their understanding of whatever issue I have isn't always accurate.

The quality of Apple Books' service is good, but they generally don't reply quickly. Kobo has been good with trying to get me merchandising opportunities when I've requested it.

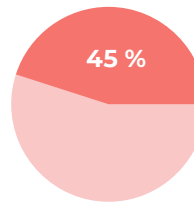
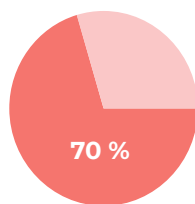
Draft2Digital has been able to resolve some issues for me, whereas with others, I've never heard back from them.

PublishDrive has, in all honesty (and I'm not just saying this because it's your questionnaire!) been the channel I've had the most positive support experience with.

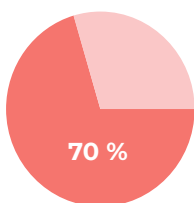
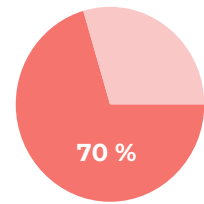
What percentage of the "cover price" did you earn on those channels from your sales?



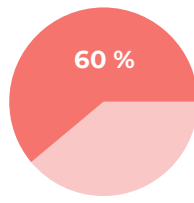
Amazon: either 35% or 70%



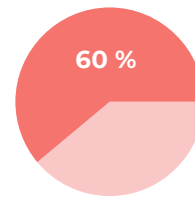
Kobo: either 45% or 70%



Apple Books: 70%

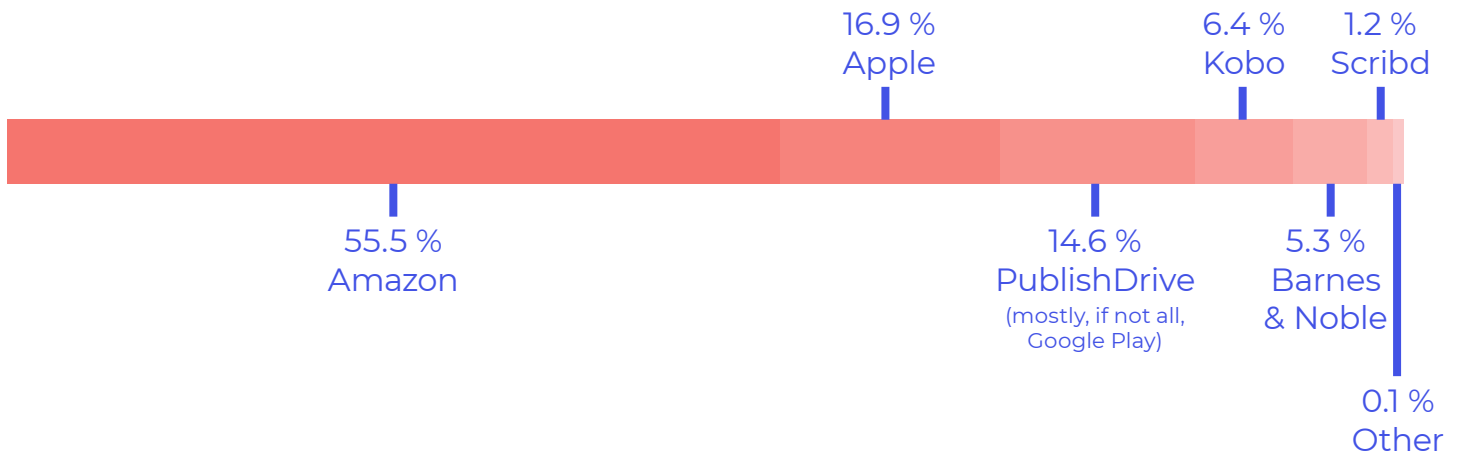


Draft2Digital: 60%



PublishDrive: up to 60%

Can you share roughly your sales numbers for the different channels?



How much time did you spend uploading individual books to those channels?

10 min/
channel

Uploading a new book (i.e. ebook file, cover file, and all related metadata) probably takes at least ten minutes per channel.

How did you keep track of the financial aspect of utilizing those channels?

I download my bank statement each month and add the data to an ongoing spreadsheet to keep track of total royalties and royalties per channel.

Did those channels pay you royalties when they promised to?

Yes

Did those channels offer analytics on the sales of your ebooks? And if so, what is your opinion of those analytics?

Yes, each channel has its own graphs that display the sales data for each month. Amazon has improved theirs, so I'm mostly happy with it, though I'd like it if they included an estimated total royalty amount for any given period.

Both Apple and PublishDrive graphs have many filtering options, which I appreciate. So does Kobo, but not quite to the same extent. Draft2Digital definitely has the most limiting display of data of all the channels I've used.

Note from PublishDrive:

PublishDrive's graphs also show the estimated royalties for any given time.



Did those channels offer any kind of marketing options? If so, were they incentive-based (free) or fee-based?

Apple Books offers free merchandising opportunities, both by author request and by sending out a mass email to the relevant authors when they have a genre-specific promotion coming up. Kobo offers promotions, some of which are free (if it's a 40% off promo, for example, then my royalty is 40% lower than it would otherwise be, which I consider to be free as I'm not charged any specific fee for it) while other promotions have a fee – either a set amount, or a percentage of the royalty earned during the time of the promo.

Note from PublishDrive:

PublishDrive also offers these free marketing options and more directly through the platform



Overall, how would you describe your experience with each of those channels?

I have had issues on all the channels, and all of them have been resolved, with the exception of a recent issue at Draft2Digital. So overall, I've had a positive experience with all these channels.



Now that you have enrolled in PublishDrive's Subscription Pricing, please tell us...

What was your preconception of PublishDrive's subscription option before enrolling?

It sounded like a fantastic option to me – as long as I'm selling over \$1000.

Why did you decide to change from your previous distribution channels to PublishDrive's channels and subscription pricing option?

I was utilizing two distribution platforms – Draft2Digital and PublishDrive – for the simple reason that I discovered Draft2Digital before I discovered PublishDrive, and then I began using PublishDrive to get to Google Play. It didn't make sense to use both these distributors if I could save both time and royalties by taking all my Draft2Digital channels and switching them to PublishDrive.

How long have you been using PublishDrive's subscription pricing option?

Since
November
2018

How much money did you save during this time with the subscription pricing option?

I saved
nearly
\$500

During the two months I tried out the subscription option, I received almost \$500 more in royalties than I would have received if I remained on the royalty share option. So, a saving of nearly \$500.



What channels are you distributing to through PublishDrive?

24symbols

BARNES & NOBLE

 bibliotheca
transforming libraries

 Bookmate

 ciando
eBooks

 Reading | 易闻通

 dangdang
.com

 Gardner's Books

 Google Play
Books

 Playster

 SCRIBD

tolino 

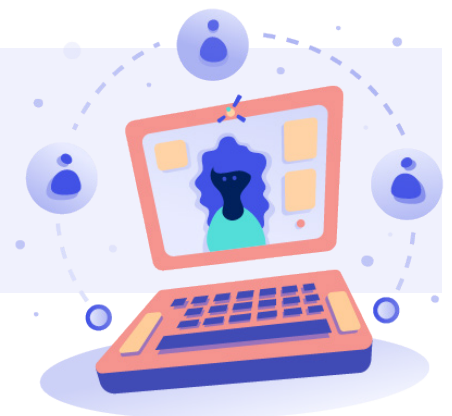
 TookBook.com
— KNJIŽNICA NA DLANU —

Of the channels you are using at PublishDrive, are you using any marketing options? If so, what is your impression of the marketing type and its effectiveness? Would you continue to utilize the marketing options?

I haven't yet used any of PublishDrive's marketing options, but when I next have a new release, I'll definitely submit it to possibly be featured, as well as the social media sharing option. I see now that I can submit free books for possible feature on some of the retailers, so I will do that too.

Note from PublishDrive:

PublishDrive also offers distribution of free review copies to readers through Apple Books, Google Play Books, and Kobo



Going forward, how much time will you save by uploading ebooks to PublishDrive versus uploading directly to individual channels?

At least 10-15 m/
new e-book

For uploading a brand new ebook, it will save at least ten to fifteen minutes to cut out one of the platforms I was previously using (Draft2Digital). Every time I need to make an update to any ebook, I will save a few minutes by having one less channel.

Note from PublishDrive:

Rachel mentioned she was not tracking her sales thoroughly last year due to lack of sufficient tracking software for all channels. By managing most of her distribution through PublishDrive, she will also save valuable time by being able to track sales and see “the big picture” on a single platform



How much did your average monthly gross sales increase on PublishDrive's channels?

My average monthly gross sales on PublishDrive's channels have grown by 150% during the two months after I enrolled in the Subscription pricing option. Also, my monthly average royalty has doubled at this time. One of the reasons is that I'm distributing to more stores through PublishDrive.

What did you pay PublishDrive as a fee for service?

100 USD/
month

I'm currently using a free trial, but once the free trial expires, I will pay a flat fee of \$100 USD per month.

What percentage of your book's "cover price" did you earn from your sales on PublishDrive's channels?

**Up to
70%**

How did you keep track of the financial aspect of utilizing PublishDrive's channels?

I keep track daily by checking the estimated proceeds on the graph in PublishDrive's sales dashboard. I do a quick calculation based on the average daily proceeds so far for that month to see if I can expect to sell over \$1000 for the month (which is the level at which it makes sense to remain on the subscription option).

Did PublishDrive pay you royalties when they promised to?

Yes

**Did you turn on more sales channels with the subscription option in PublishDrive?
Why? How was the experience?
How long did it take?**

Yes, I turned on Barnes & Noble, Scribd, 24Symbols, Tolino, and Playster. I turned on more channels because if I can pay a once-off fee and then keep all royalties, I'd like to have ALL channels that I can't directly distribute to going through PublishDrive, rather than having some of them going through a different distributor. This will result in me keeping more royalties overall.

It is very straightforward to turn on more channels (stores) in PublishDrive. I appreciate being able to switch on channels in one place and having it apply to ALL titles, instead of having to turn on channels individually for every single title. That definitely saves time compared to my experience with some other distributors.

Could you keep your old reviews after turning on a channel in PublishDrive where you have previously distributed your books? How was the experience?

Yes, my titles kept their existing reviews on Barnes & Noble and (as far as I can tell) on Scribd and Playster. I haven't paid close enough attention to the other stores to know whether I had reviews there or not. The experience was smooth and straightforward for me, since it was PublishDrive (not me) who liaised with Barnes & Noble to make sure my books didn't lose their reviews.

Did PublishDrive offer analytics on the sales of your ebooks? And if so, what is your opinion of the analytics offered by PublishDrive?

Yes, the PublishDrive platform displays graphs based on unit sales and estimated royalties, as well as a map showing the distribution of sales amongst different countries. There are numerous filtering options (by store, by country, by series, etc.) allowing me to customize exactly what data I want to view, which I find very helpful in determining the effectiveness of ad campaigns and deciding how to adjust these campaigns going forward.



How would you describe the support service you received from PublishDrive?

I have received excellent support service from PublishDrive. In almost every case, I think someone has responded to me within the same day, and everyone I've dealt with has been helpful and friendly. There will, of course, be issues that crop up with every platform, but so far, PublishDrive is the only one that has gone above and beyond when it comes to not only fixing a problem, but offering more to make up for it.

Overall, how would you describe your experience with PublishDrive's platform and the subscription pricing option?

I've had a very positive experience using the PublishDrive platform, and the addition of the subscription pricing option has only made this platform more appealing to me. I'm the type of author who wants to have control and publish directly to stores wherever I can. However, there will always be many, MANY stores I can't reach directly. For all those stores, it makes sense from a royalty-saving perspective to use PublishDrive for distribution. The reason is simple: Why would I say no to taking home more royalties at the end of the day?! Couple that with the time-saving aspect (since I can now manage all my 'non-direct' stores in one place), and I am very happy to continue using PublishDrive.



Key Takeaways from this Case Study

- ◆ While royalty share pricing is a suitable option for some authors, at higher earning levels, the average 10% cut in royalties becomes significant.
- ◆ With an increase of 16.44% in net earnings, Rachel Morgan's experience demonstrates that PublishDrive's subscription pricing is the smarter option for authors selling at least \$1,000 monthly.
- ◆ Distributing through PublishDrive (rather than multiple stores or aggregators) can also save time spent on administrative tasks. Authors can manage global ebook distribution, marketing, and sales analytics in a single platform.

Did you like what you've read? Sign up for a **FREE trial of subscription** pricing and reach global sales channels through PublishDrive.

About PublishDrive:

PublishDrive is a self-publishing platform that distributes ebooks to over 400 stores worldwide, including Amazon, Google Play Books, Barnes & Noble, and more. We make it easy to manage global ebook distribution and marketing on a single platform. Our author-friendly pricing options fit authors at every stage of their publishing journey. With free ebook conversion, marketing tools, and flexible pricing options, authors can spend less time worrying and more time writing.