

The Storytelling Business

John D. Brown

Limerick: Lynn

There was a young lady of Lynn,
Who was so uncommonly thin,
That when she assayed
To drink lemonade
She slipped through the straw and fell in.

Limerick: Ferris

There once was a lady named Ferris
Whom nothing could ever embarrass.
'Til the bath salts one day,
in the tub where she lay,
turned out to be Plaster of Paris.

Limerick: Max

An amoeba, named Max, and his brother
Were sharing a drink with each other;
In the midst of their quaffing,
They split themselves laughing,
And each of them now is a mother.

Limerick: Natchez

There was a young belle of old Natchez
Whose garments were always in patchez.
When comments arose
On the state of her clothes,
She replied, "When Ah itchez, Ah scratchez."

Limerick: Painter

A painter, who lived in Great Britain,
Interrupted two girls with their knittin'
He said, with a sigh,
"That park bench--well I
Just painted it, right where you're sittin.'"

Limerick: Dwight

There once was a runner named Dwight
Who could speed much faster than light.
He set out one day
In a relative way
And returned on the previous night.

Business

**Creating something that somebody
desires or needs**

Part 1: Meeting a Desire or Need

**Biggest risk in business is creating
something nobody wants**

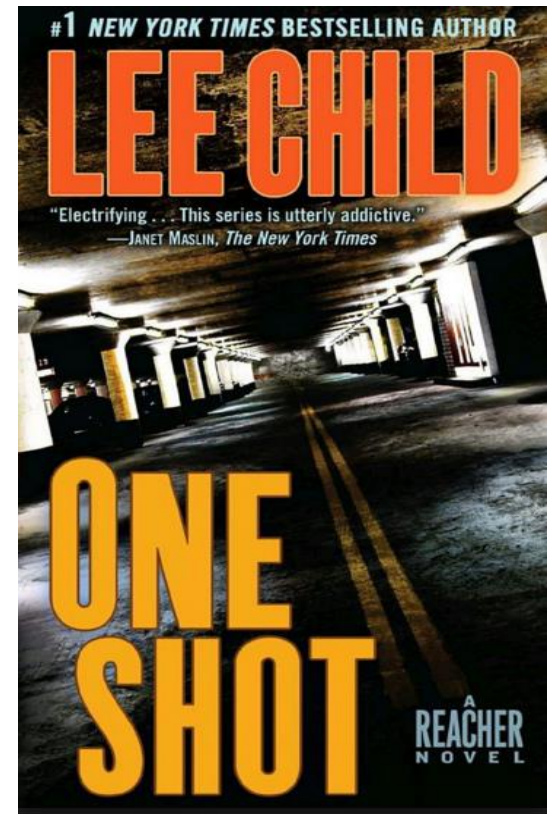
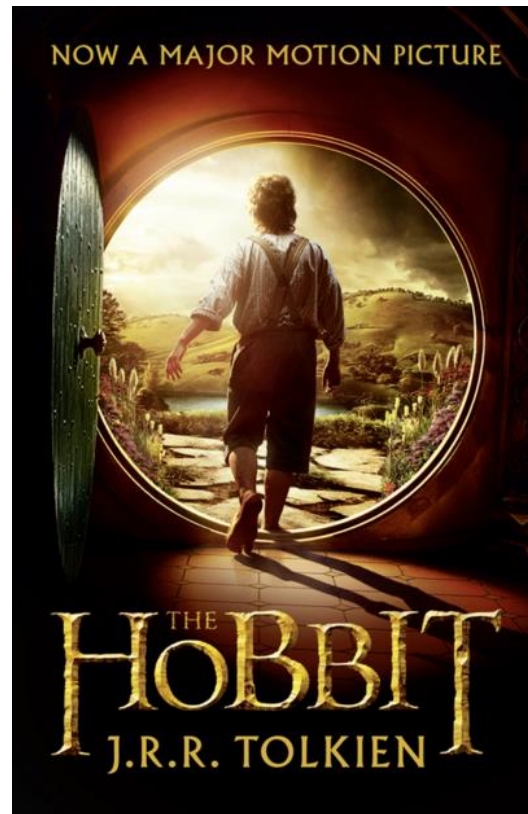
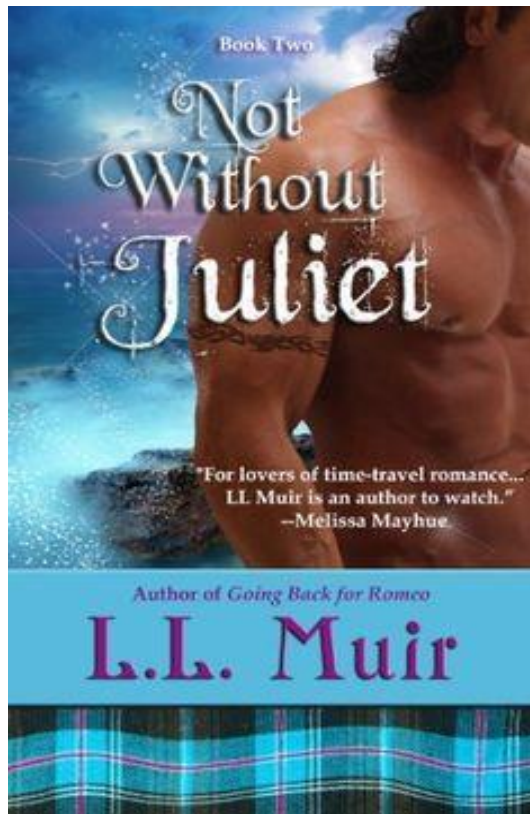
What do they want?



A Boat Isn't A Boat



A Story Isn't A Story



Focus on Genre

Product-Market Fit



Your Task

- **Identify**
 - Your customers
 - What they want
 - The solution that hits the spot
- **Learn how to develop it**

Testing on real readers

Comparison: Meet Want

Indie

- Quicker feedback loop

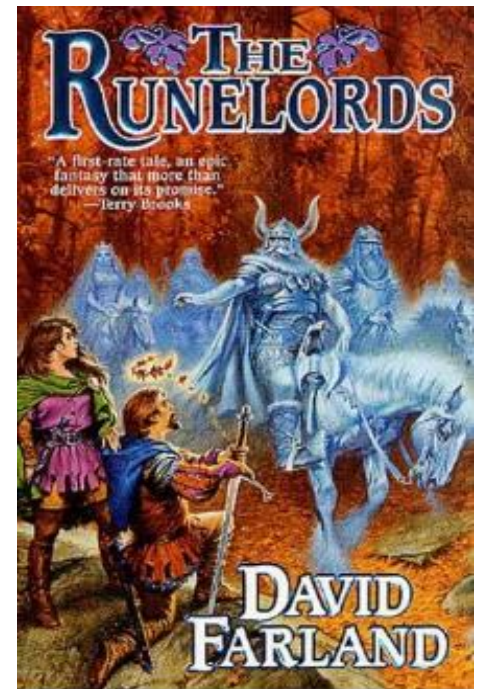
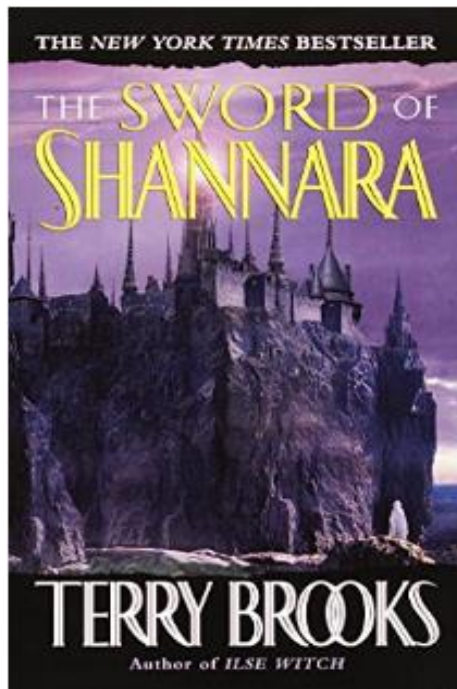
Publisher

- Wider test, sometimes
- Seasoned beta reader

3 Things You Must Learn to Write Killer Stories

- 1. The type of experiences readers of that genre want to have (the end)**
- 2. The conditions that trigger those experiences (the means)**
- 3. Effective techniques to develop and tell the story**

The Same, But Different



Part 2: Production

Text

- Edit
- Format
 - Ebook
 - Paper
- Produce

Audio

- Narrate
- Edit and master
- Format
 - Electronic
 - CD
- Produce

Comparison: Production

Indie

- Control
- Reduced costs
- Speed

Publisher

- Upfront money
- Expertise

Part 3: Find, Offer, Satisfy, More

1. Find them

2. Make offer

- a) Get them to notice you
- b) Make enticing offer
- c) Let them try it

3. Keep them coming back for more

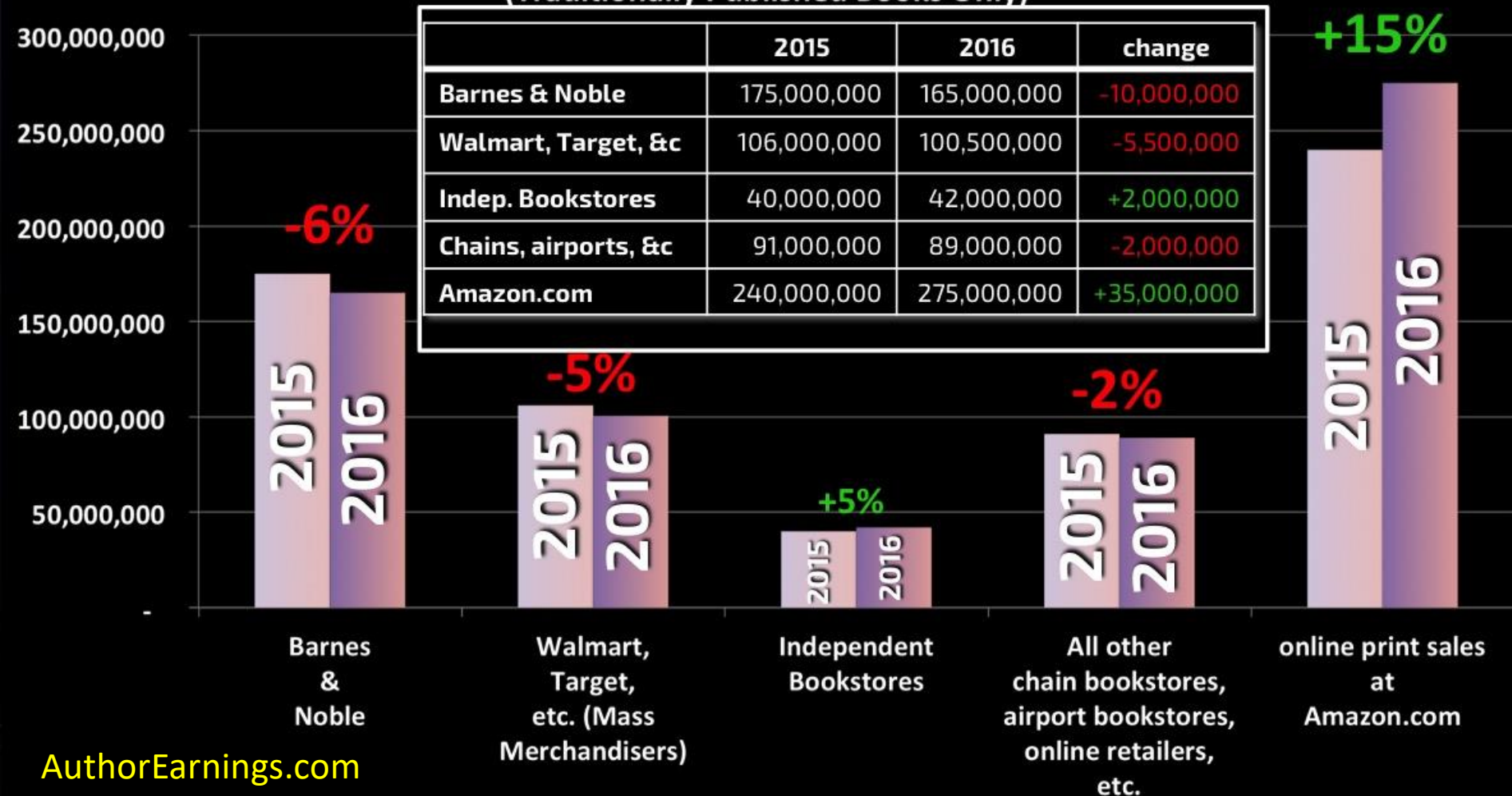
Find Them

Who and where are they?

- Bookstores
- Other stores (with book displays)
- Goodreads
- Libraries
- Schools
- Ad services (Bookbub)
- Other (Will Hertling, Larry Correia)
- Amazon analytics, Jellybooks

Traditionally published US trade print book units by channel

2016 vs 2015 US Trade Print Book Unit Sales by Retail Channel
(Traditionally Published Books Only)



2016 US Trade Book Unit Sales By Format (Traditionally Published Books Only)

Traditionally Published
Juvenile Non-Fiction

41%

bought online

Audio

Ebooks

Online Print Sales

Brick & Mortar Print Sales

Juvenile Nonfiction

(463,000)

(3,381,000)

(20,284,000)

(35,172,000)

Traditionally Published
Juvenile Fiction

40%

bought online

Audio

Ebooks

Online Print Sales

Brick & Mortar Print Sales

Juvenile Fiction

(2,442,000)

(21,091,000)

(53,807,000)

(117,798,000)

Traditionally Published
Adult Non-Fiction

69%

bought online

Audio

Ebooks

Online Print Sales

Brick & Mortar Print Sales

Adult Nonfiction

(15,082,000)

(73,478,000)

(161,209,000)

(112,380,000)

Traditionally Published
Adult Fiction

63%

bought online

Audio

Ebooks

Online Print Sales

Brick & Mortar Print Sales

Adult Fiction

(12,996,000)

(123,518,000)

(36,838,000)

(103,383,000)

50,000

100,000

150,000

200,000

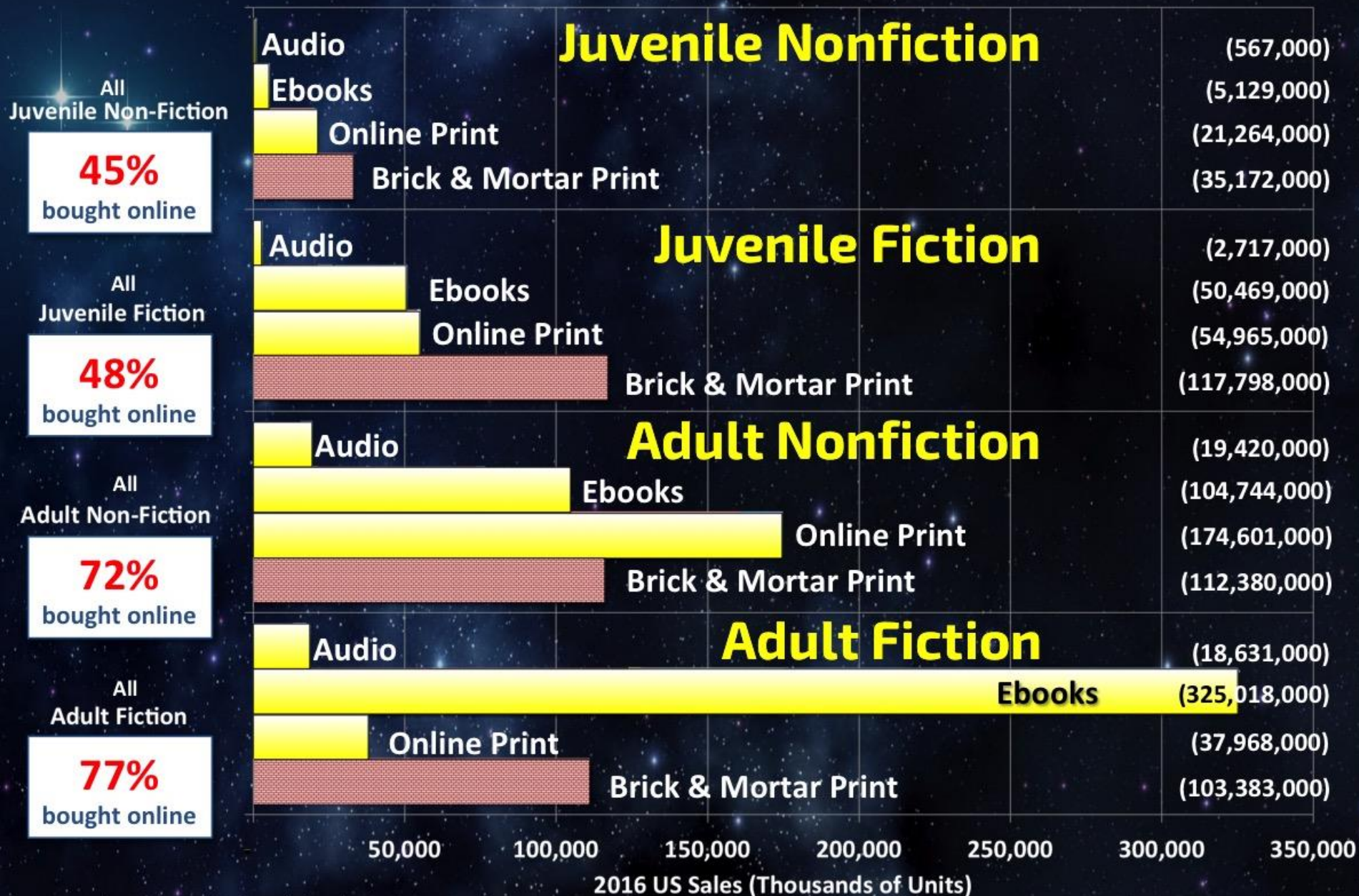
250,000

300,000

350,000

2016 US Sales (Thousands of Units)

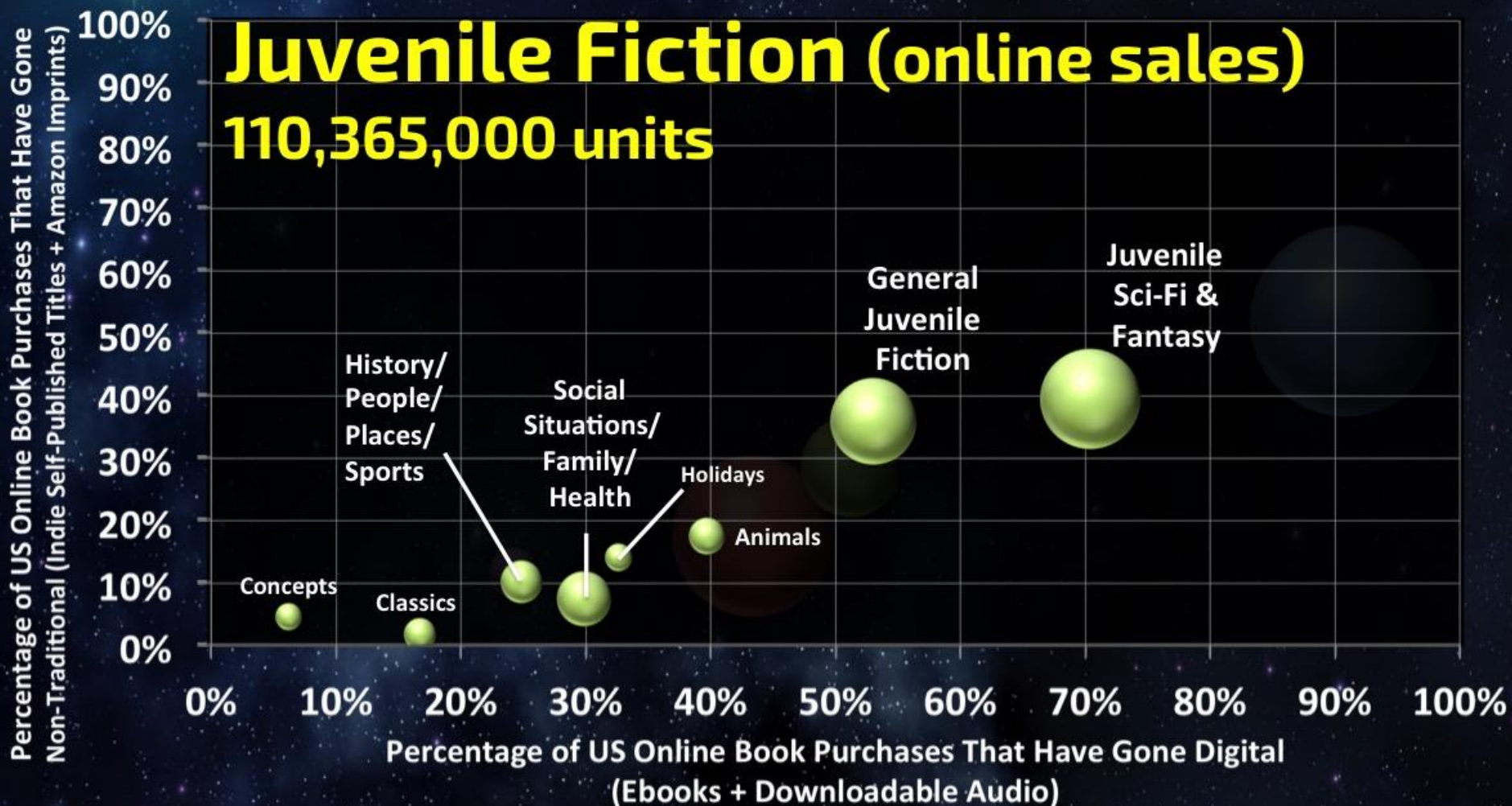
2016 US Trade Book Unit Sales By Format (Traditionally Published, Amazon-Imprint Published, and Indie Self-Published)



2016 US **Online** Unit Sales by Genre:

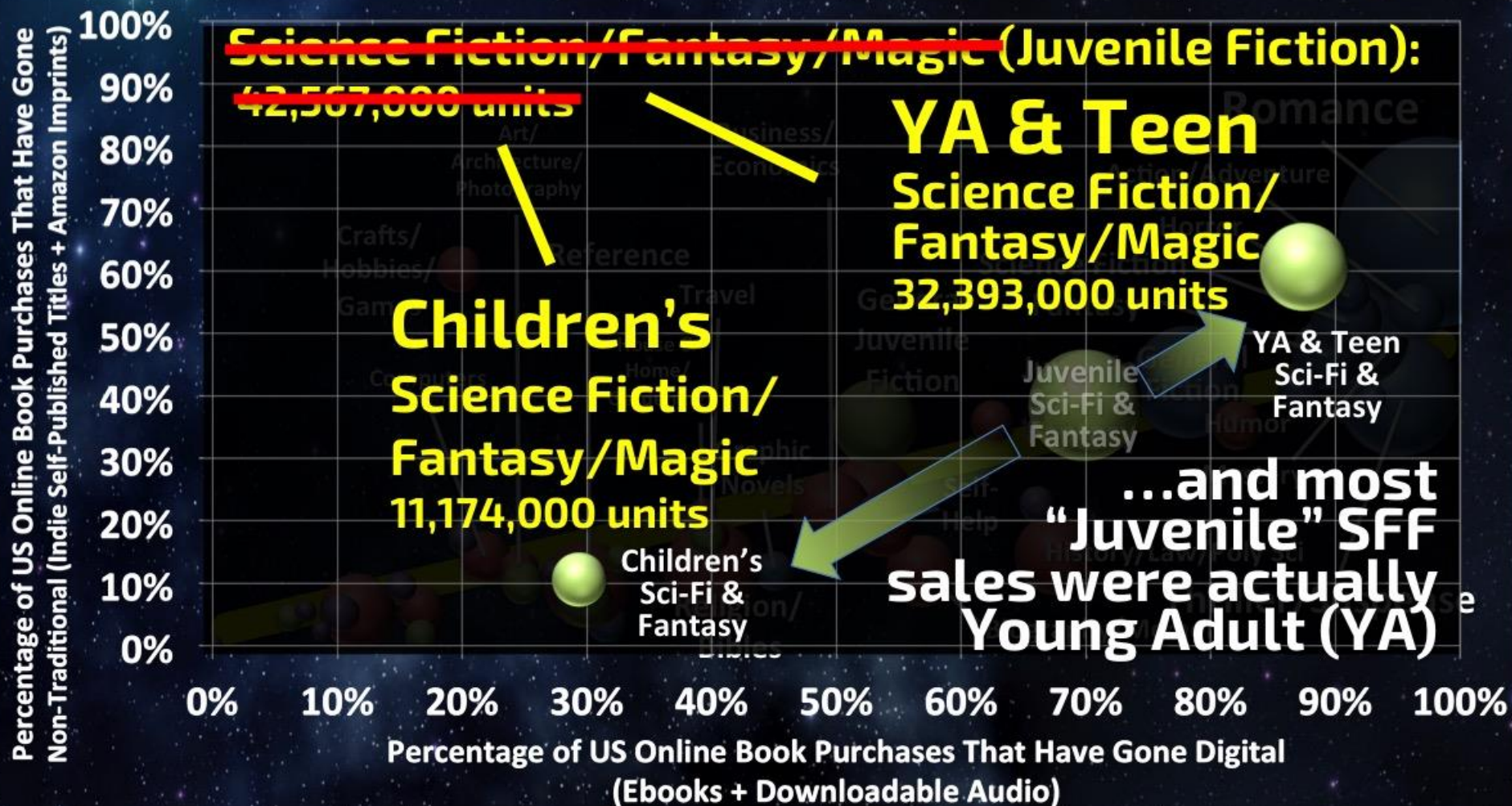
% Digital vs % Non-Traditional

Percentages by Genre of 2016 US Online Book Purchases of All Formats (Print + Ebook + Audio)
That Have Gone Digital and Non-Traditional (Indie Self-Published Titles + Amazon Imprints)



Because traditional industry book categories lump YA in with Juvenile

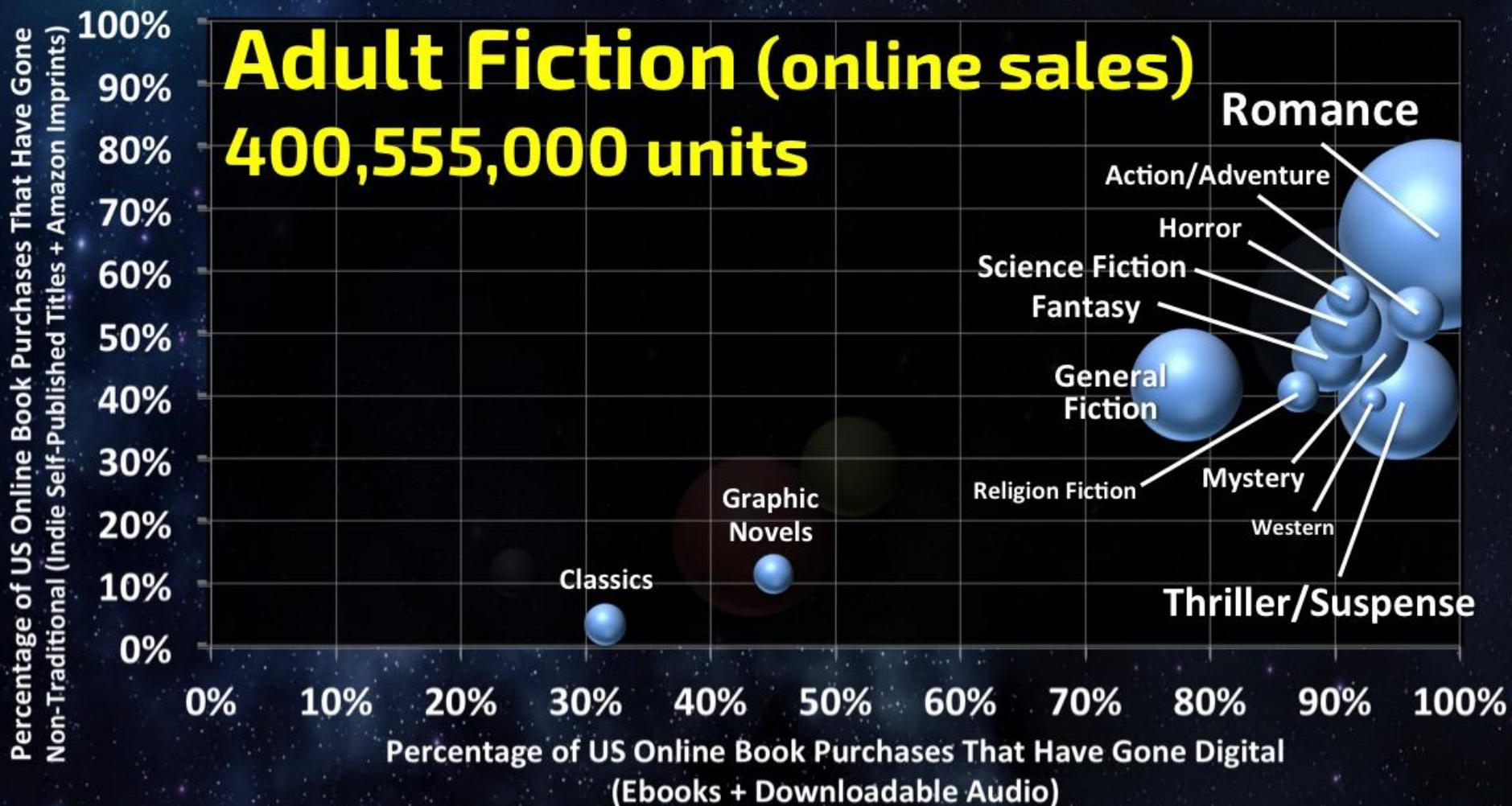
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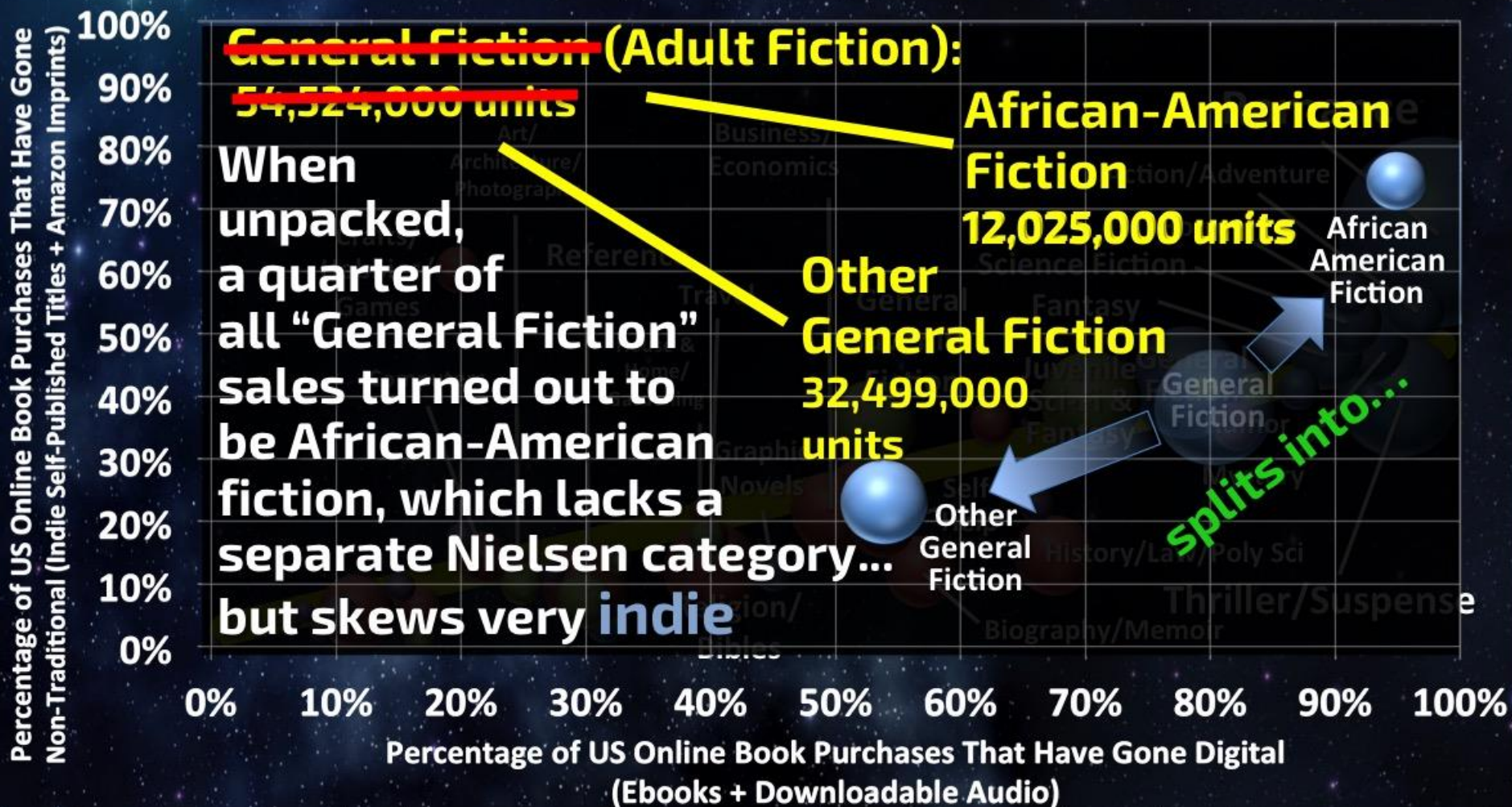
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Comparison: Find

Indie

- Quicker feedback loop
- Most sales online

Publisher

- Brick and mortar
- Libraries
- Schools
- Analytics?

Offer: Get Them to Notice

What makes someone look?

– Word of mouth

- Someone known to buyer (end customer, distributor)
- Influencers
- Reviews
- Bestseller list

– Ads

– Retail visibility

- Brick and mortar
- Online

– Cover

Comparison: Get Noticed

Indie

- Control over ad flow
- Most sales online

Publisher

- Money for ads
- Brick and mortar buyers & visibility
- Library buyers

Offer: Make the Offer

How to make the offer?

— Promised experience (raise anticipation)

- Cover
- Title
- Blurbs
- Ratings
- Description
- Brand markers

— Price

Comparison: Make Offer

Indie

- Pricing and promo flexibility

Publisher

- Money for cover

Offer: Let Them Try

Methods

- Preview
- Sampler first book
- Library
- Friend lending
- Website

Comparison: Let them try

Indie

- Control of sampler and flow

Publisher

- Library

Keep Them Coming Back for More

Methods

- More books!!!!
- Newsletter
- Website
- Other social presence online or in person
- Relationship and fun engagement

Comparison: Back for More

Indie

- You do it anyway

Publisher

- ?

Part 4: Making it Worth Your Time

1. Revenue
2. Expenses

Contracts

Kristine Rusch

<http://kriswrites.com/business-musings/contracts-and-dealbreakers/>

- Grant of rights
- Royalties
- Reversion clause
- Termination clause
- Option clause
- Non-compete clause
- Agent clause

Comparison: Worth Your Time

Indie

- Much higher revenue per unit
- Freedom
- Reduced costs
- Speed

Publisher

- Advance
- They pay production costs
- Wider distribution, sometimes

Suggested path

Learn how to...

1. Finish

- Stop writing and start telling stories
- Expect “Hot Cross Buns”
- Get in the water, now, and finish

2. Write something somebody wants

- Readers want the same, but different
- Don’t label self when performance flops—learn, then write and test another

3. Find ‘em, entice ‘em, and keep ‘em coming back

- It’s hard enough—focus on one business
- Follow the business model that’s helped a majority who are successful: (1) select genre, (2) build tree of related books, (3) publish frequently

Thomas McCormack

Former CEO and editorial director of St. Martin's Press

No matter who the writer, his ideal intended audience is only a small fraction of all the living readers. Name the most widely read authors you can think of—from Shakespeare, Austen, and Dickens to Robert Waller, Stephen King, and J.K. Rowling—and the immense majority of book-buyers out there actively decline to read them.”

(The Fiction Editor, The Novel, and the Novelist, p8)

Dwight V. Swain

The thing Character wants, the danger that threatens fulfillment of this desire, and the decision he makes, determine what specific readers will enjoy the story. One likes sex and violence, another tenderness and love, another the competitive striving for success, another intellectual stimulation. Relatively few college professors are Tarzan fans—and even fewer sharecroppers succumb to Finnegans Wake. The trick, for the writer, is merely to pinpoint audience taste...then to refrain from attempting to inflect his copy on the wrong people.” (Techniques of the Selling Writer, p137)

Limerick: Kent

There was a young lady of Kent,
Whose nose was most awfully bent.
She followed her nose
One day, I suppose --
And no one knows which way she went.