

MARKETING GUIDE

Welcome to the University of Pennsylvania Press!

The University of Pennsylvania Press was originally incorporated with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on March 26, 1890—among the earliest such imprints in America. One of the Press’s first books, published in 1899, was a landmark, as well as an example of the Press’s close ties to its home city: [The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study](#) by renowned reformer, scholar, and social critic W.E.B. Du Bois, a book that remains on the Press’s list to this day. Beginning in the mid-1960s, Penn Press began to focus its editorial program on American and European historical and cultural studies and the social sciences, and resources for practitioners in health-care, human rights, and public policy.

Your book is the latest to join Penn Press’s distinguished list.

It’s never too soon to start thinking about Marketing! From review outlets to social media, this guide is a primer for what you can expect from us in the months to come and beyond. We hope you’ll also find it to be a valuable resource for what you can do to help promote your book.

It All Starts With Metadata

Metadata is the information that describes your book and gives a bookseller, library, or reader an accurate preview of your title’s content. Readers are increasingly adopting a search online first approach, even for in-store purchases or library borrowing. Browsing a list of search results or a book’s web page mimics a reader walking up and down the rows of shelves in a bookstore or library, picking up a book, scanning the pages, seeking out their favorite contributors, eyeing the art, and selecting the book that interests them the most. When a reader encounters a book’s page on a bookseller’s website or a library portal, they expect to be able to get a clear idea of what they would be buying or borrowing almost instantly.

Your book’s metadata is used by algorithms to understand what the book is about. Typically, online booksellers and book websites, including Penn Press’s website, return search results based on the following key metadata elements:

- title
- author
- ISBN
- keywords
- series
- subtitle
- subject
- format (e.g. hardcover or ebook)
- descriptive copy

A Note on Descriptive Copy

Descriptive copy—the text that introduces your book to potential readers, media and review outlets, faculty members, bookstore buyers, sales representatives, and library purchasers—is both an essential part of metadata and an important marketing tool. Copy is included in the metadata distributed by the ONIX feed (see below) and featured in promotional materials such as catalogs and flyers. The descriptive copy also serves as the basis for the text that appears on your book’s cover or jacket.

How Does Metadata Travel From Penn Press to the Wider World?

Penn Press uses an ONIX feed to make your book’s metadata public and available for online searching in advance of your book’s publication date. ONIX is an industry standard protocol that everyone in the book industry agrees to use to distribute and display information about books: from publishers to wholesalers to bookstores to Amazon. Your book’s basic bibliographic information, including title, subtitle, author, publication date, ISBN, and price, is exported and formatted by Penn Press according to this protocol so that industry partners can accept and reformat that same data to meet their needs.

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Book Sales

Penn Press books are distributed around the world to wholesalers, libraries, and bookstores. Depending on the location of the customer, our books are shipped from warehouses in the United States or England. We have agents who visit bookshops in the United Kingdom, Europe, Canada, the Middle East, Asia, and North and South America.

Penn Press ebooks are widely distributed to academic audiences through multiple channels, making them an essential part of scholarly publishing. In addition to being sold directly through online retailers such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Apple (as well as our own website, pennpress.org), Penn Press ebooks are also made available through major library aggregators such as JSTOR, ProQuest, and Paradigm. These partners make books accessible to libraries worldwide, allowing students, faculty, and researchers to read them online or download them through their institution's subscription.

Licensing

Penn Press actively licenses subsidiary rights to our books to make books available in additional languages and formats, such as audiobooks. Penn Press titles have been translated into over 30 languages, and the list of Penn Press books available in audio format has grown to almost 200 audiobooks.

Books are regularly announced to our list of foreign publisher contacts and audio publisher contacts via email. We have established relationships with many publishers, so if you are approached directly about subrights licensing, please bring that to the attention of the Intellectual Property Manager at pressrts@pobox.upenn.edu.

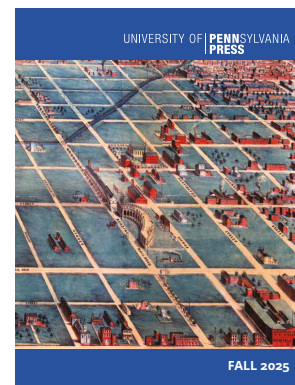
Course Adoption

Electronic copies of Penn Press titles are available, free-of-charge, to academics by way of the [Digital Comps](#) platform. Instructors, reviewers, and researchers may access up to three titles simultaneously for up to 60 days, with the possibility of renewal. In addition, many of our books are available on the [Ingram Academic](#) website. More than 300 publishers' titles can be found there, making it a robust source for instructors to find texts for their courses. Exam and desk copies are easily acquired from the Ingram Academic site.

Penn Press titles are also made available for licensing for course use (unless prohibited by the author's publishing contract) through the Copyright Clearance Center, which arranges the licensing for document delivery services, course packs, and other uses of texts for pedagogical purposes.

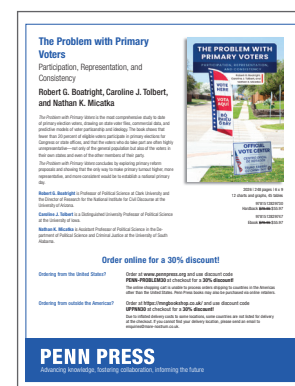
Seasonal Catalogs

We will announce your book in one of our two seasonal catalogs—either in January for spring books (publication dates January through June) or in June for fall books (publication dates from July through December). The seasonal catalog is an essential tool for our sales representatives, who call on independent bookstores throughout the United States and around the world. Seasonal catalogs are also distributed as a PDF to faculty members in relevant disciplines, major media contacts, scholarly journal review editors, and our proprietary mailing lists.



Author Discount Flyers

Screen-friendly flyers are created and delivered to authors for their personal use. We encourage you to share your discount flyer—which includes a 30% discount code and instructions on how to order your book from pennpress.org—with colleagues, family, and friends, and you are also encouraged to share the code with attendees for any events you organize to promote the book. This flyer can be shared beginning 120 days before your book's publication date, as this is when preorders open on pennpress.org, and you are free to continue to share the flyer and the code from that point on—the code does not have an expiration date. There is also a discount code provided for international customers.



Awards

Every year the Press nominates books for several hundred awards. Please contact your editor and/or editorial assistant with questions about the awards nomination process.

When a book wins an award, we update the book's page on the website to mention the award and we also share the news on social media.

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Email Campaigns

Around the time of its publication, your book will be featured in an email announcing new titles to Penn Press's email subscribers. Our list includes those who have elected to hear about all new Penn Press books as well as subject-specific lists of subscribers, and your book will be included in announcements to the subject lists most appropriate for its topic. These announcements include the book's cover image, short descriptive copy, and a link to the Penn Press website to order the book. The announcements also typically include a discount for our email subscribers to encourage them to purchase.

Stay up-to-date on Penn Press announcements, news, events, and more! [Sign up for the mailing list!](#)

Penn Press Website

By the start of the season in which it is released, your book will have a page on our website that includes a cover image, descriptive copy, a brief author biography, series information, and prices, as well as potentially the book's table of contents, review blurbs, and other available metadata. The Penn Press website is updated frequently with metadata that is distributed by the ONIX feed. Your book will be available to preorder from the Penn Press website beginning 120 days before its publication date.

The Penn Press Log

We also have a blog, the [Penn Press Log](#), where we post Penn Press news and announcements, guest posts from authors, occasional special features and promotions, and assorted other types of posts. All authors have the opportunity to write a blog post about their book as a part of its promotion, if they are interested. Blog posts tend to be similar in length, in the range of 600 to 1200 words, but vary significantly in approach. We have had authors write summaries of their book's major insights and arguments; analyses of current events or pop culture through the lens of their book's topic; personal accounts of their writing or research process and/or "how-to" guides for different types of research; and many more other creative pieces of writing. We look forward to discussing your interest in contributing to the blog and, if you do want to write an entry, we'll be happy to brainstorm potential topics with you.

Social Media

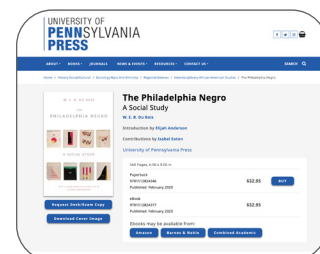
Penn Press maintains public profiles on Bluesky, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook—follow us if you are active on social media! We frequently promote links to authors' events, op-eds, profiles, blog posts, book reviews, and more, so please tag us and keep us informed of any of the above!

Bluesky <https://bsky.app/profile/pennpress.bsky.social>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/pennpress/>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/penn-press/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/PennPress/>



Penn Press no longer actively posts to Twitter/X (<https://twitter.com/PennPress>) but we will retweet if requested by an author or journal editor, or if we are mentioned in a tweet.

Publicity

Review Copies

When the full shipment of your book arrives in our warehouse, we will create a customized list of academic journals and other media outlets where applicable for your consideration. All contacts on the approved list will receive an email announcement regarding the availability of print and digital review copies. We will then accommodate requests for review copies in either format. Additionally, we will supply review copies upon media and author request (separate from the list and at the Press's discretion). Please note that we allocate a limited amount of gratis copies for review purposes, so our goal is to ensure that we put them to the best possible use!

Reviews

Reviews in academic journals can often take more than one to two years to publish. When we receive reviews, we will post positive excerpts on the book's webpage and upload them to Amazon and Barnes & Noble. We will also archive all reviews and send them to you on a periodic basis. If you come across a review of your book, please share it with us. It is common for authors to see a review in a scholarly journal before the journal sends tearsheets to publishers.

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Exhibits

In past years, we have had a dedicated booth or table at approximately twenty-five major academic and association conferences. At these Penn Press book exhibits, conference-goers are directed to purchase their copies at a discount via a dedicated virtual exhibit page, which we will build to highlight a selection of Penn Press titles relevant to each conference and available for sale via that conference's discount code.

For meetings that Penn Press does not attend, either in person or virtually, nor create a devoted virtual exhibit page for, we continue to have contracts with cooperative book services, such as Scholar's Choice and Ingram Academic Services, that display our books on a fee-per-title basis. For small, often region-specific meetings that are not on the regular schedules of the book cooperatives, we will contact the conference chairpersons directly to ask about the options for book displays.

The exhibit plan we put together for your book is based upon your suggestions, discussions we have had with your Acquisitions Editor, and our experience presenting our books at conferences in past years. If you're attending a conference and would like to discuss promotional opportunities, please contact Publicity and Exhibits Coordinator Malai Escamilla at least two months before the conference, so that we have time to explore options.

Events

Let us know if you are planning events in support of your book! Events may be hosted by a campus department, historical or related organization, or bookstore, and should only be planned for dates after your book's confirmed publication date. Throughout the event-planning process, we recommend that you check in regularly with your managing editor to confirm your book's publication date. Once an event is confirmed, please let us know.

As early as possible, remember to ask your event organizer about book sales. If they need assistance with an order, you may put your contact in touch with us, and if you need to sell your own books—which many of our authors do—you can order copies via the Penn Press website using your 40% author discount (PAUT). If your event is virtual, we can provide a discount code that can be shared with event attendees for purchasing books via the Penn Press website.

Additionally, if you provide all event details, no later than two weeks before the event, we will promote it on our website and social media.

Sample Timeline for Planning an Event

6 Months Prior to Confirmed Publication Date

It's time to start planning! Reach out to bookstores, campus departments, and/or associations/institutes/groups related to your book's subject where you might like to speak and sell books. Events may be in-person or virtual, but please remember to confirm your publication date with your managing editor and make sure any events you plan fall after your confirmed publication date to ensure your book's availability.

As Soon as Your Event is Confirmed

Let the Publicity Manager know and provide as many details as possible for promotion (date, time, hosting organization, venue address, phone number for public queries, event URL or flyer, and any ticketing/admissions information).

2 Months Prior to Event

Be sure that you've asked your event host/organizer how book sales will be arranged and discuss with the Publicity Manager.

1 Month Prior to Event

Confirm with event organizer and the Publicity Manager that book sales arrangements have been finalized.

Don't forget to invite your contacts to the event!

You'd be surprised how often we're asked if authors should invite people they know to their book events. The answer is always . . . YES! Please invite your friends and family, alert your institutions and public relations departments, and let your students and colleagues know. Usually, your event hosts will prepare a flyer or event web page which should provide you with something to post and distribute. Whether it's via email, a phone call, or a social media post, an invitation from you will always be welcome.

2 Weeks Prior to Event

If you haven't already done so, this is your last chance to provide us with full event details to ensure that we can promote it online.

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What You Can Do to Publicize Your Book

There is no substitute for author involvement! The more active you are as an author, editor, or contributor, the more we can amplify your efforts, especially post-publication. Please note there is no minimum requirement that authors must adhere to and that the ideas that follow are not a comprehensive list! We encourage you to explore the suggestions listed below in accordance with your comfort level, time commitments, and personal inclinations.

Keep abreast of current events and write.

Pay attention to news that can serve as a publicity hook. Writing an op-ed that connects current events to your book, maintaining a blog, and offering to write as a guest blogger on a blog that you read are all great ways to promote you as an author and, by extension, your book. We have op-ed guidelines that we can provide upon request.

Let your university know about your book.

Reach out to your university's communications department. They will want to support you in whatever way they can and often have very good relationships with the local and national media. They can spread the word to your local community, perhaps through a feature or review of your book in a university newsletter or magazine. They can also be extremely helpful in placing op-eds.

Tell your campus and local bookstores about your book's publication.

This gives them an opportunity to carry a faculty member's/ local author's work.

Remind your campus library to buy a copy of your book.

Encourage colleagues at other universities to request that their libraries order a copy as well.

Update your email signature.

Paste a link to your book's web page in your email signature. This is a great way to get word of your book's availability out to members of academic listservs that often don't accept promotional news.

Use your email "away message" to promote your book.

In those times when you may not be answering your email, your auto-reply message can be an opportunity to promote your book in a casual, friendly way. For example, consider including a line like "I will be returning emails when I return on Date. In the meantime, why not check out my book, *Title: Subtitle*, and ask your library to carry it."

Mention your book in your bio.

Whenever you have the opportunity to share a brief biography—from conference panels to op-ed articles—be sure to include your book.

If you're active on social media, mention your book in your biography, profile, or "about" section.

It's never too soon to begin promoting your book and getting involved with online conversations about topics related to your research. If you would like to become (more) active on social media, you can download our [Social Media Guide](#) from our website.

Put information about your book on your departmental website.

Include a link to the book's web page and a cover image (when available), and consider setting up a website for your book if you're able and interested.

Distribute your discount flyer.

Not only does the PDF of your discount flyer attach easily to email, it also prints well, whether in color or black-and-white. The printer-friendly version makes it easy to share with people who might wish to learn about your book at conferences, talks, and events on campus.

Contact your graduate and undergraduate alumni magazines.

Most of these publications will list books by former students.

Encourage your friends and colleagues to post online reviews of your book.

Many bookseller and consumer websites offer the opportunity for readers to post reviews and/or comments about books. The most heavily trafficked sites are [amazon.com](#), [barnesandnoble.com](#), [goodreads.com](#), and [librarything.com](#), but there are also opportunities for reviewing and commenting on sites run by independent bookstores, historical societies, and other book-focused organizations.

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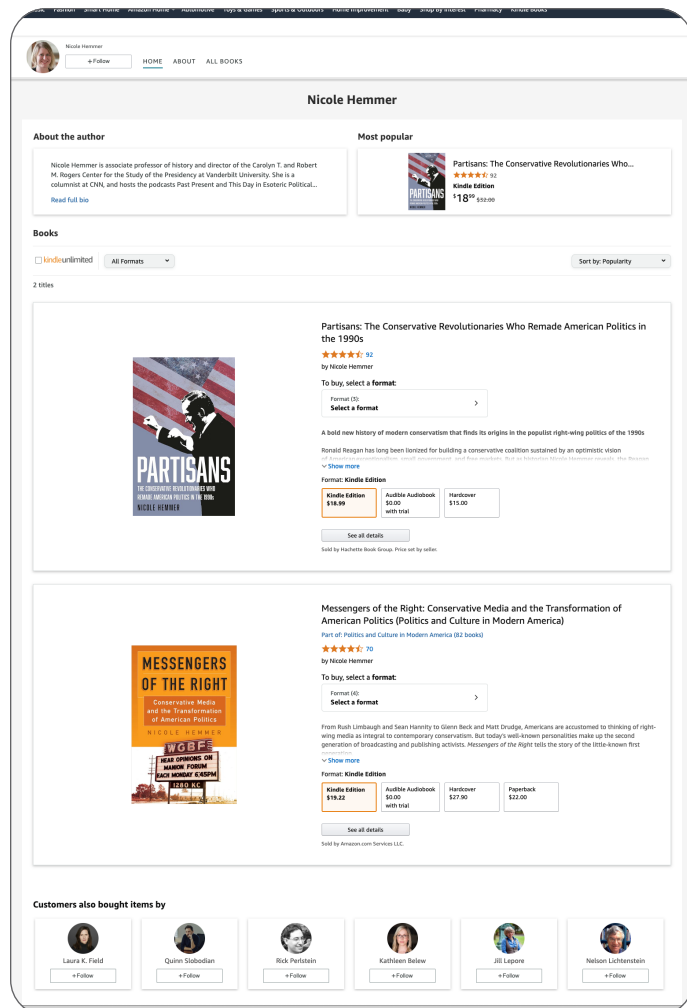
What You Can Do to Publicize Your Book, Continued

Set up a free account through Amazon Author Central before or when your book is released.

Using this account, you can create an author page which is useful for promotion, but you'll also be able to file help tickets with Amazon if any issues arise with your book's Amazon page.

An author page with a bio and headshot, as well as a list of all of the author's titles, can boost the rate of conversion from a page visit to a sale up to 30%. In addition, AI models use author pages to surface comparable authors and titles in users' search results. Only authors can create and maintain author pages on Amazon.

Get started here: <https://authorcentral.amazon.com/>.



Podcasts, Radio Shows, and Book Clubs

Book club member and podcast and radio show listeners are an extremely engaged audience who often become book buyers. Consider reaching out to clubs, podcasts, and shows that feature content that relates to your scholarship. You may be able to obtain questions in advance of your appearance, visit, or interview, but be prepared to talk about your research in a casual manner.

But, Writer Beware!

If you are contacted by a representative for a club, podcast, or show that you do not recognize or are unfamiliar with, we advised authors to verify the organization as a reputable outlet before responding. Writers are being targeted by scammers, usually claiming to be a representative for a book club or TV show with a broad audience potentially interested in your book's topic. Although the initial request may be merely for contact (setting up a meeting) or for simple information or assets (a bio, a cover image, etc.), eventually they will proceed to ask for some kind of fee in exchange for featuring your book, or (more likely) they might send you some type of fake login page (for Zoom or other platforms) to steal your passwords and credentials. So please ignore these requests and any others like it that come in! You can always reach out to us at Penn Press if you receive a dubious email or phone call and would like to verify it.

There are also several websites that you can also consult about the various scams targeted at writers:

<https://writerbeware.blog/2025/09/19/return-of-the-nigerian-prince-redux-beware-book-club-and-book-review-scams/>

<https://medium.com/@andygrogan/writers-are-being-scammed-e9961a6ff308>

<https://chrispavone.substack.com/p/the-royal-scam>

Including websites from other university presses:

<https://www.upress.state.ms.us/Frequently-Asked-Questions/Author-Guide/How-do-I-spot-a-scam>

<https://www.unmpress.com/be-wary-of-ai-powered-scams-in-your-inbox/>

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Still Unsure How to Start?

We have put together a sample timeline, below, that shows how you might spread out promotional activities, both leading up to and after your book's publication.

As early as possible

If you don't use social media and would like to join the online communities in your field(s), consider making accounts now to allow ample time to learn the tricks of the trade and build an audience before your book is released. If you already use social media, now could be an opportune time to make your first announcement about your upcoming book.

9 months prior to publication date

If they don't already know, inform your department and university about your upcoming book, as well as any other groups you belong to. If your department has a student-run magazine in your field, or your university has a student-run book review magazine, contacting them at this time, early in their print schedule, might allow you to place an ad for or review of your book.

6 months prior to publication date

Create your Amazon Author Central now so that it's finished in advance of your book's release. Gather your author biography, headshot, and any blurbs or reviews you may already have, and set up your account at: <https://authorcentral.amazon.com/>. Remember this is the perfect time to start planning events such as author talks and book signings!

4 months prior to publication date

Your book will be available for preorder from pennpress.org beginning 120 days before its publication date—be sure to share the news with friends, colleagues, followers, and any other contacts who you think will be interested!

3 months prior to publication date

Now could be a good time to add the link to your book's webpage or your discount flyer to your email signature. If you use social media, you can also add it to your bio on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, as well as continue to share posts containing the links. This is also an opportune time to start distributing your discount flyer to friends, family, colleagues, and followers so they can preorder your book at a discount.

Keep us in the loop!

Notify us of awards your book has won, reviews your book has received, op-eds you have placed, and events you may have planned!

Additional Resources

Social Media

You can download the Penn Press Social Media Guide from our website here:

https://www.pennpress.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Penn-Press_SocialMediaGuide.pdf

You can find some basic tips on building a professional social media here:

<https://www.waldenu.edu/programs/resource/how-to-use-social-media-professionally>

And if you want to take it to the next level, you can find some tips on further developing your online presence through social media here:

<https://buffer.com/resources/social-media-strategy-personal-branding-tips/>

Amazon Author Central Account

For advice on setting up your page and making it the best it can be, try this guide:

<https://kindlepreneur.com/amazon-author-central-page/>

Tips for Guest-Starring on a Podcast

Love the idea of being a guest on a podcast but not exactly sure how to approach it? Then these links may be helpful for you:

<https://www.writersdigest.com/getting-published/8-steps-to-prepare-for-podcasts-and-radio-interviews-to-promote-your-forthcoming-book>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/sarahrheawerner/2017/01/22/15-tips-for-an-on-point-podcast-guest-appearance/#701aca585508>

Us!

Marketing a book is a collaborative process. If you have additional suggestions or questions over the course of the publication process, please contact us. We are here to work with you!

Our contact information can be found on the last page of this guide and on our website at:

<https://www.pennpress.org/contact-us/marketing-department/>

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Frequently Asked Questions

Will I get to see my book's cover?

If you have questions about your book's cover design, please contact your editor.

Should I send an author photo?

Please feel free to send a professional headshot (or at least a professional-looking, high-resolution phone selfie, and if you don't know what that is, get a professional headshot). Author photos do not typically appear on book covers or jackets, but they can appear on your author's page on our website and it never hurts to have one on file.

Will my book have blurbs on its cover?

If you have questions about your book's pre-publication blurbs, please contact your editor.

My book has already been published, and I received a very complimentary note from a scholar in the field. Can I add it to my promotional copy as a blurb?

If you received permission from the writer of the endorsement for Penn Press to distribute the quote publicly, then please feel free to send it to the Publicity and Exhibits Coordinator. We can add it to the Penn Press website and to the data feed that updates external sites. Please note that blurbs may be supplanted in our publicity materials by quotes from reviews published in journals.

I plan to attend a conference before my book is released. Are there ways that I can still promote it?

Yes! We encourage you to distribute your discount flyer if your book is not yet available for display. Please contact the Publicity and Exhibits Coordinator if you have not already received it.

Can I get copies of my book for conference panel participants who are discussing it?

If your book will be the topic of a panel discussion at a conference or campus roundtable and you would like copies for participants, our policy is as follows: If your book will be for sale at the conference or event, either at a Penn Press booth or via another vendor, we will send up to 5 gratis copies of your book to participants. If your book will not be available for sale, you may purchase books to distribute using your 40% author discount, or participants may purchase the book at a 40% discount using a code we will provide upon request.

What do I need to know about scheduling events outside the United States?

If you have scheduled events outside of the U.S., please contact the Publicity and Exhibits Coordinator so we can connect you with our sales representatives in the country where your event will take place. These reps will then contact you directly and assist with sales arrangements.

When will my book come out? What is my book's publication date?

Please contact your editor with questions about your book's publication date and availability.

Where are my free author copies?

Gratis contractual copies are sent to authors from our Acquisitions Department. Please contact your acquiring editor if you have not received your author comps.

I received copies of my book before the publication date and/or everyone I told about the book who pre-ordered has their copies. Does that mean my publication date has changed?

Unless you have heard from your editor that your book's publication date has changed, then it has not, regardless of when stock of your book has been received in our warehouse. It is not uncommon for books to arrive in the warehouse well before a publication date and our distributor will begin to release pre-orders once stock has been received into their system. But on our website and retail sites (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.), the publication date will remain the same and that date is what we will continue to use to execute our marketing plans and activities.

How do I order copies of my book?

If you wish to place a pre-order, you may do so up to 120 days before your book's publication date via the Penn Press website. After the publication date, you may order copies of your book at any time via the Penn Press website. To use your 40% author discount, simply enter the code PAUT during checkout.

When will I receive royalties?

If, by contract, you are eligible for royalties, you will receive a royalty and sales statement mailed out on October 1 every year. Questions should be directed to our Business office by email at royalties@pobox.upenn.edu.

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"I really, really enjoyed your hype."