

The Problem of Fake Books on Amazon

Eliza Green | 0 Comments | May 9, 2012

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Last week, I posted about Copyright and ways to protect your writing. I had also mentioned that Amazon recently clamped down on several fake authors who were plagiarising others' work by changing the title and selling the work on as their own

What does Amazon do for authors?

It has a section called KDP or Kindle Direct Publishing where self publishing authors can upload their work for free to their website, and the author receives a royalty from Amazon for every ebook sold.

What are some people using Amazon KDP for?

Copycat writers are plagiarising genuine authors' work and selling it as their own. As recently as January 2012, Amazon were dealing with this problem in the erotic section of their store.

Amazon is dealing with a bit of a plagiarism problem with their erotica section of ebooks, with several self-published authors being caught with copyright infringement.

Sharazade, a prolific author who has had 20 of her stories published with mainstream publishing houses, has discovered something quite sinister about the erotica section of Amazon's ebooks: a large majority of the self-published authors are plagiarizing content and selling it off as their own.

Source: [Digital Journal](#)

In another article, they complain that Amazon isn't doing enough to prevent these Copycat writers from uploading the content in the first place.

One of the more popular knock-offs was a Steve Jobs biography written by Isaac Worthington which was based on exclusive interviews with Jevve Stobs. Now removed from the store, it featured huge print that was similar to the language used on the Wikipedia page about the former Apple CEO. The back cover of the book also provided the exact same text. The copycats don't stop there. Other fake books found on the Kindle store included Thirty-Five Shades of Grey by J. D. Lyte, I Am The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo, Twilight New Moon, Fast and Slow Thinking by Karl Daniels and more.

Source: Barking Rain Press

Karen Peebles, who is the author of *I am the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, says she has self-published around 10,000 books though CreateSpace, not all of which are in her own name. "I am a single mother who home schools her children," says Peebles, who says she sells "thousands and thousands" of books a month. "Self-publishing is a great way for me to make income. I receive a pretty nice royalty every month."

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Clearly, Kindle Spam is a lucrative way for spammers to make money. There is even a DVD boxset called 'Auto Pilot Kindle Cash' that claims to teach people how to publish several Kindle books without writing a word. Its aimed at the Kindle market but what the hell is Amazon actually doing about it?

What is Amazon doing about it?

Not enough it seems. At the moment, they are helping these fake authors to create the books in the first place.

Spam books are a growing problem for consumers and the book industry. Mark Coker, who is the founder of a Smashwords, a distributor of self-published books, says he regularly receives books that are exact copies of other books, or a compilation of stuff that is readily available on the Internet. He says his company refuses to distribute these books. Coker says odd formatting is an easy tip-off that a book is copied from elsewhere. Nonetheless, he says he often sees books that his company has rejected show up on Amazon and elsewhere. "I'm surprised Amazon lets books like these go through," says Coker. "Whoever created these books are obviously trying to confuse consumers."

Source: Tech Fortune/CNN

If enough people complain about the title, then Amazon will step in. Previously plagiarised books have been removed because enough customers complained about it. It's nice to know that people power still stands for something.

How quick will Amazon resolve the problem?

Not fast enough, it seems. Any resolution can take weeks and how many copies of a copied work could be sold in that timeframe? What happens then is that the same author re-releases the book again under a new title.

Other solutions?

The recommendation coming from other sources is to charge for any uploads of content, which should weed out those who are looking to make money for no money down.

Make all authors register a credit card. If a copyright is infringed, the card is charged and the copycat author is banned from selling again.

Amazon could also run content through one of the many plagiarism detectors such as Turnitin or iThenticate before an e-book is put on sale.

What we can do

The only reason spammers make money from Amazon is because people continue to buy their fake product.

Don't buy work that looks cheap or what you are sure is someone else's work. These copycats don't care about the product nor the quality, so why should you line their pockets?

If you spot a book that you know is fake, then report it to Amazon.

And don't forget to tell the author. They will thank you for it.

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Author of the Exilon 5 series. Destroyer of fictional lives. Tea drinker. Likes dark, gritty stories and witty humour.

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May 9, 2012

Speaking of copyright, did you see this post by Betsy over at Tiny Cat Pants?
<http://tinycatpants.wordpress.com/2012/05/08/google-scares-the-crap-out-of-me/>



Eliza Green [Log in to Reply](#)

May 10, 2012

That's an interesting article, Meagan. It just goes to show that copyright is a hot topic for writers.

Copyright belongs to the author but from what I understand, you can transfer copyright to a publisher to make copies of your work for selling purposes. That doesn't mean they can put their name on the front cover and call themselves the author. I also don't think they can change the content without the author's permission, I could be wrong. My post from last week talks about how copyright works. Anyone else have any thoughts on this?



Henry Cooper [Log in to Reply](#)

March 8, 2015

There is another kind of fraud going on on Amazon. People simply photocopying an existing book, and selling it as "Used - Like New." All they need is a color photocopy machine and a binder. I have a private practice teaching guitar, and I have recommended books for my students to buy, and several times now they have bought the book on Amazon, but it was clearly just a photocopied book, spiral bound just like the original, and you can barely tell it from the original, but it is clearly a photocopied book. This is largely done with spiral bound books, of which there are plenty - most music books, and music instruction books, and no end of "How-To" books are spiral bound. Not much of an investment for the thieves.



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March 8, 2015

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