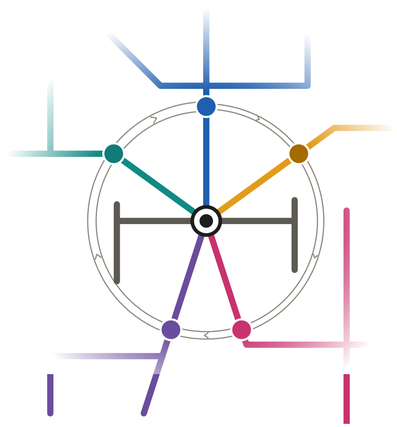
Book Marketing Tools for Indie Authors

2027 EDITION

Mapping a clear path through the tools that matter, and when to use them.

DIGITAL MAP + ARTICLE



A PROJECT BY

booklinker

Free universal and smart book links
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WHY THIS MAP EXISTS

Walk any author conference and you'll pass dozens of tables of tools promising to help you sell more books. What's missing is a clear picture of which ones matter, and when.

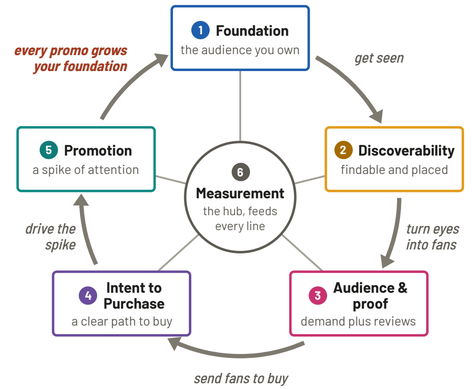
A few years ago I built a map like this for the Amazon affiliate world. It wasn't the biggest or the most complete, but it was legible, and it started some genuinely good conversations. So I'm doing it again for book marketing, building it in the open with the indie author community to get input from the people using these tools every day. **Jesse Lakes, Booklinker**

HOW TO THINK ABOUT IT

This maps tools, not craft: a book readers want comes first.

1. **Own what you can.** Your email list and your website are the one audience nobody can take from you: a retailer sale hands you a royalty, not a reader. Owned channels let you reach readers again at no cost, so they compound.
2. **Rent with intent.** Ads, promos, and retailer placement spike and fade, and you pay again every time. Rented attention is fuel, not a foundation: judge each push by how much Foundation it leaves behind.
3. **Earn trust over time.** Reviews, endorsements, and awards are given by others, not bought. They convert better than any claim you make, but they live on platforms you don't own.
4. **You don't need all 80 tools.** Pick one or two per line that fit your book. Try those before adding more. This is a map, not a checklist.

IT'S A FLYWHEEL, NOT A FUNNEL



Measurement points you back at your weakest line, and every reader who buys can land back in your Foundation (your list, your profiles), which makes the next launch more efficient than the last. The test of each lap: how much owned audience it leaves behind. Measurement is a hub, not a report card. The same loop runs at three scales: one launch, the life of a book, and a whole career. **The wheel spins faster each lap.**

Tools and the companies behind them change. **ALLi** (the Alliance of Independent Authors) keeps a free, always-updated watchdog list of author services. Always worth a double-check before you commit.

ALLi WATCHDOG

STATION INDEX

F free · $ paid · F/$ freemium (free tier, pay to scale)

Listed by line, then branch, A to Z. Grid refs point to the map side.

1 Foundation

What The owned channels you control: email list, website, author profiles.
Why The only audience nobody can take from you. Everything else compounds off it.
Nuance "Profiles" (Amazon, Goodreads, Apple) feel owned but are rented; claim them, don't rely on them.

EMAIL / ESP · ● OWNED
- Beehiiv F/$ C5
- EmailOctopus F/$ B5
- Flodesk $ B5
- Kit (formerly ConvertKit) F/$ B6
- Mailchimp F/$ B5
- MailerLite F/$ B5
- SendFox F/$ B5
- Substack F A5

WEBSITE / AUTHOR PLATFORM · ● OWNED
- Author Websites by BookBub F/$ B5
- Carrd F/$ B5
- Squarespace $ B5
- StoryOrigin 3 · 4 · 5 F/$ B4
- Tertulia for Authors $ B4
- The Bookshelf $ B4
- Wix F/$ A4
- WordPress F A4

PROFILE PAGES · ○ RENTED
- Amazon Author Central F C6
- Apple Books author page F B6
- BookBub author profile F B6
- Goodreads author profile F B6
- Google Books Partner Program F B6

2 Discoverability

What Getting found where readers look: retailer algorithms, web search, and AI.
Why A book nobody can find doesn't sell; placement is a skill, not luck.
Nuance All rented turf: you optimize systems you don't control, and AI search is brand new.

RETAILER ALGORITHM & KEYWORDS · ○ RENTED
- BookBeam 6 $ C8
- KDSPY $ C8
- Kindle Ranker F/$ C8
- Publisher Rocket $ B8
- Self Publishing Titans F/$ B8

RESEARCH & TESTING · ○ RENTED
- K-lytics $ C8
- PickFu $ C8

WEB & AI · ● OWNED

AEO · AI ANSWERS
- AuthorLaunchKit $ B7
- Otterly.ai $ B7
- Profound $ B7

SEO · SEARCH
- Ahrefs F/$ C7
- Google Search Console F C7
- Semrush F/$ C7

3 Audience, Reviews & Social Proof

What ARCs, reviews, giveaways, and awards that build credibility and a launch crowd.
Why Readers trust other readers; proof you earn converts better than claims you make.
Nuance Mostly earned, not bought. Paid reviews and awards vary widely in value, so check before you spend.

ARC / REVIEW COPIES · ■ EARNED
- BookFunnel 4 · 5 $ E8
- BookSirens $ E8
- Booksprout $ E8
- Hidden Gems $ E8
- NetGalley $ D8
- StoryOrigin 1 · 4 · 5 F/$ D8
- Voracious Readers Only F/$ D8

GIVEAWAYS · ○ RENTED
- BookSweeps $ E7
- CraveBooks 5 F/$ E7
- Goodreads Giveaways $ E7
- LibraryThing Member Giveaways F E7
- Prolific Works (formerly Instafreebie) F/$ D7

AWARDS · ■ EARNED
- BookLife Prize $ E7
- Foreword Reviews (INDIES) $ F7
- IPPY $ F7
- Readers' Favorite F/$ F7

EDITORIAL REVIEWS · ■ EARNED
- BlueInk Review $ E8
- Foreword Clarion $ F8
- Kirkus Indie $ F8

READER MAGNETS / LIST-BUILDING · ● OWNED
- BookFunnel 4 · 5 $ F8
- StoryOrigin 1 · 4 · 5 F/$ F8

4 From Intent to Purchase

What Universal / smart buy links that route a ready reader to the right store, plus link-in-bio hubs that gather their options in one place.
Why Friction at the buy moment is lost sales; the click should always land where they can buy.
Nuance Small category, big leverage: one broken or generic link leaks the demand every other line created.

UNIVERSAL BUY LINKS · ○ RENTED
- Author Helper Suite (ReaderLinks) 6 $ E4
- BookFunnel 3 · 5 $ F4
- Booklinker 6 F F4
- Books2Read F F4
- Boook.link F F4
- Geniuslink 6 $ F4
- StoryOrigin 1 · 3 · 5 F/$ F3

LINK-IN-BIO · ○ RENTED
- 1Link F/$ F5
- Linktree F/$ F5

5 Promotion

What Bursts of visibility: deal newsletters, paid ads, cross-promo swaps, and audiobook promo.
Why Spikes feed the flywheel: rank, reviews, and list growth compound off a well-timed push.
Nuance All rented and pay-to-play; a promo with no foundation to catch readers rents attention you don't keep.

DEAL / NEWSLETTER · ○ RENTED
- Bargain Booksy $ D3
- Book Barbarian $ D3
- BookBub Featured Deals $ D3
- BookBub New Releases for Less $ D2
- BookDoggy $ D3
- BookSends $ D3
- CraveBooks 3 F/$ D3
- eReader News Today $ D2
- Freebooksy $ D3
- Fussy Librarian $ E3
- Hello Books $ E3
- LitNuts $ E3
- ManyBooks $ E3
- Robin Reads $ E3
- Written Word Media $ E3

PAID ADS · ○ RENTED
- Amazon Ads $ C2
- BookBub Ads $ C2
- Meta Ads $ C2

CROSS-PROMO / SWAPS · ○ RENTED
- BookFunnel (Promotions) 3 · 4 $ B4
- StoryOrigin 1 · 3 · 4 F/$ B4

AUDIOBOOK PROMO · ○ RENTED
- AudioThicket $ C3
- Chirp $ C3
- Libro.fm (ALC) F C3

6 Measurement

What What's actually working: sales and rank dashboards, read-through, and attribution.
Why You can't compound what you can't see; measurement turns activity into learning.
Nuance It sits at the center because every line reports into it. Native dashboards are thin, though, so most authors stitch several tools together.

SALES & RANK TRACKING · ○ RENTED
- Book Report F/$ D6
- BookBeam 2 $ D6
- ScribeCount F/$ D6

READ-THROUGH & SERIES ANALYTICS · ○ RENTED
- Book Report F/$ D6
- KDP reports F D6
- ScribeCount F/$ D6

ATTRIBUTION · ○ RENTED
- Author Helper Suite (ReaderLinks) 4 $ D5
- AuthorBase $ D5
- Booklinker 4 F D5
- Geniuslink 4 $ E5
- Publisher Champ $ E5

80 tools, six lines, one map.

Every tool is sorted by the job it does for your book, and the station index gives each one a pricing tier and a grid ref.

Co-created with Kerrie Flanagan. WITH THANKS to the contributors who shared their insight into this project: Adam Garcia, Amanda Ridings, Amanda Stickel, Ben Zackheim, Benas Leonavicius, Bob Beers, Bruce Landay, Cary Bergeron, Christopher Matson, Cortney Cino, Dale Roberts, Dave Chesson, Diego Pineda, Faith Luke, Gillian Whitney, Holly Lynn Payne, Hula Betty, Irene Sauman, Jacob Bronstein, Jenna Coleman, Jennifer Simpson, Jerry Potter, Joanna A. McKethan, Joe Solari, John Brubaker, Jonas Vanpaeschen, KJ Waters, Lee Elwell, Linda Secondari, Lynda Hammes, María Porcayo, Marlena Cloerec, Matt Briel, Nim Stant, O.N. Stefan, Paola M, Rachel Thompson, Ray Cao, Russell Nohelty, Sarah Stephens Bean, Sarina Bowen, Shaziya Khan, Waris Gbolagade.

MISSING A TOOL?

Missing a tool, or disagree with a placement? Help shape the Second Edition:

geni.us/bmtm-feedback

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Tools here were suggested by our author community. Listed, not endorsed, by Booklinker (which sponsors this map and is one of its tools, on Line 4). Tags reflect community review as of 11/2.

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FIRST EDITION

WHO OWNS THE AUDIENCE?

- ● **Owned**: assets you control and keep, like your email list and your site. You can reach these readers again at no cost.
- ○ **Rented**: attention on platforms you don't control, like ads, promos, retailer algorithms, and profile pages. It spikes and fades, and the platform keeps the relationship.
- ■ **Earned**: credibility others give you, like reviews, endorsements, and awards. It accrues, but lives on platforms you don't own.

THE SIX LINES

1. **Foundation**: the audience you own
2. **Discoverability**: findable and placed
3. **Audience & proof**: demand plus reviews
4. **From Intent to Purchase**: a clear path to buy
5. **Promotion**: a spike of attention
6. **Measurement**: the hub, feeds every line

HOW TO READ THE MAP

Read it like a subway map: each colored line is one job in book marketing, and each station is a tool.

- **Line**: one job in book marketing, and the tools that do it.
- **Branch**: a sub-category. Its plate names it, then who owns the audience.
- **Station**: each one is a tool used for book marketing.
- **Interchange**: one tool used across multiple lines. The numbers after its name point to the other lines it's on.
- **Hub** (Grand Central Hub): Measurement sits at the center. Every line feeds data in (sales, rank, clicks, signups), and the learning feeds back out to every line. It's where you find out what's actually working, so you can do more of it.
- **Flywheel**: the lines form a loop, not a funnel. Every lap grows the audience you own, so the next spins easier and sells more books.
- **Under construction**: not yet surveyed.
- **Fades out**: a sampling; more tools exist than shown.

WHEN IS EACH LINE ACTIVE?

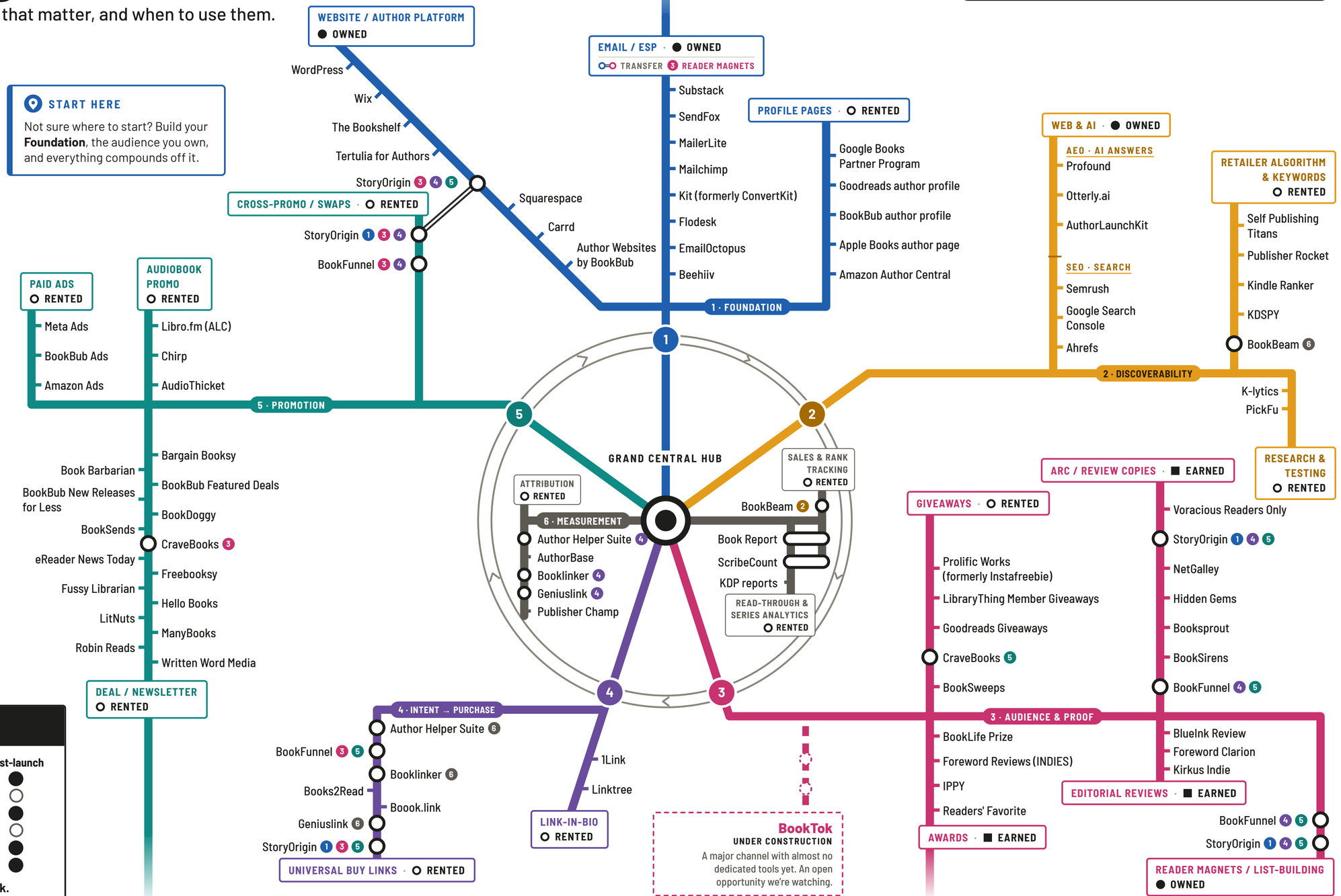
● sustained ○ lighter

	Pre-launch	Launch	Post-launch
1 Foundation	●	●	●
2 Discoverability	●	○	○
3 Audience & proof	●	●	●
4 Intent to Purchase	●	○	○
5 Promotion	○	●	●
6 Measurement	○	●	●

Lines aren't phases: most recur for the life of the book.

START HERE

Not sure where to start? Build your **Foundation**, the audience you own, and everything compounds off it.



Tools here were suggested by our author community. Listed, not endorsed, by Booklinker.

As of 11/2 · station index on sheet 2

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