

Amazon's been in the news a lot this year — and the news hasn't been good. With its near-monopoly of the online book market, the company has been characterized as a thug. Amazon is like an invasive species — “the purple loosestrife of our literary riparian zones,” as TWUC member David Greer says. It's up to us to set the standard by supporting our indigenous species.

Otherwise, when Amazon becomes the world's only publisher, printer, and distributor, we'll have no one but ourselves to blame. The bottom line is that we need to be supporting independent bookstores and online sites if we want to foster book culture instead of handing it over to a single giant corporation.

ABOUT THE CHART

The chart below lists sites in alphabetical order, and includes only those bookstores and online sites that sell primarily books (Alibris also sells music and movies). As it happens, the first four in the chart are exclusively online sites, while the last five are bookstores that also offer an online service. I haven't included Chapters Indigo because, like Amazon, it sells a lot of other stuff, and also because it's well known. A TWUC member recommended the U.K. site The Book Depository, but unfortunately it was acquired by Amazon in 2011, so it's not included.

Please note: This is not a comprehensive list of independent bookstores across Canada. I've included four Canadian independents because they have large inventories and a strong online presence, and/or were recommended. Please let me know your favourites so I can add them to a future edition of this chart. Keep in mind that your own local independent will certainly order books for you and ship them to your address if you can't pick them up in person.

Indie Bound (included below) links to hundreds of independent bookstore websites all across the U.S. Can we please have something similar in Canada?

WHERE CAN I BUY A BOOK?							
NAME	ABOUT	LOCATION	WEBSITE	DELIVERY TIMES	SHIPPING COSTS	COMMENTS	OWNED BY
Alibris	Independent booksellers worldwide	Online (U.S.-based)	www.alibris.com	7-14 days	\$12.90 on first book \$7.62 for each additional book	Individuals can list books for sale (for a fee)	Monsoon Commerce, an eCommerce software company
Better World Books	New and used books (over 8 million)	Online (plus stores in two locations in Indiana)	www.betterworldbooks.com	10-21 days	FREE shipping worldwide (for standard delivery). No minimum purchase.	A "social enterprise" that generates funding for literacy initiatives worldwide	Founded in 2002 by three friends from Notre Dame University, Indiana.
Indie Bound	Umbrella site for hundreds of U.S. independent bookstores	Online	www.indiebound.org	Varies by bookstore	Varies by bookstore	Not an e-commerce site, but links to hundreds of independent bookstore websites all across the U.S.	Made up of independent bookstore members of the American Booksellers Association.
AllLitUp	New books and ebooks by independent Canadian publishers	Online	www.alllitup.ca	Aims for one week	\$4.00 one book \$7.00 two books \$10.00 three or more	Now live	Literary Press Group, Nonprofit membership association of 58 indie Canadian literary publishers.
McNally Robinson Booksellers	New books	Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Online	www.mcnallyrobinson.com 1-800-561-1833	Not specified	Not specified	Hugely writer- and reader-friendly	Family-owned
Munro's Books	New books	Victoria, B.C.	www.munrobooks.com 1-888-243-2464	Not specified	Not Specified	"Canada's most magnificent bookstore"	Owned by four employees
Powell's	New, used, out of print books. Ships worldwide	Portland, Oregon (six branches & online)	www.powells.com 1-800-878-7323	7-15 business days	\$4.50 per item plus \$2.50 per shipment	Consistently reliable delivery, great selection Sponsor author readings, publish newsletter, etc	Family owned
Re: Reading	Used books	Toronto, ON, & Online	www.rereading.ca	Not specified	Ships by UPS		Individually owned
Russell Books	Used, new, antiquarian	Victoria, B.C., & online	www.russellbooks.com	Not specified	Free shipping for orders of \$50 or more via surface mail anywhere in U.S. and Canada (but not territories)	Great physical bookstore	Family owned
Small Press Distribution	New poetry, fiction, literary nonfiction	Berkeley, CA & online	http://www.spdbooks.org	5-9 business days using FedEx	First book \$19, each additional book \$6 (FedEx), or ask for UPS @ \$4/book less.	Represents 450+ indie presses in U.S., U.K., Canada, Europe.	Non-profit founded in 1969 by two indie booksellers in San Francisco.

