

# KU VS WIDE

## A Calm Decision Guide for Genre Fiction Authors

Choose your publishing lane for the next 90 days—  
without panic, and without guesswork.

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### **First: what this decision actually means**

Deciding whether to enroll in KDP Select (KU) or choose wide distribution isn't a moral referendum or a popularity contest. It's a strategic choice about distribution, about how you will get your book into readers' hands. *This affects your ebook only. Whichever route you choose, print and audio can still be published wide.*

- **KU (KDP Select):** This choice means your ebook is exclusive to Amazon for 90-day terms, which are renewable. In return, you can earn from Kindle Unlimited page reads and use Amazon's promo tools.
- **Wide:** Choosing wide makes your ebook available beyond Amazon (Kobo, Apple Books, Google Play, libraries, subscription services, etc.).

### **The simplest, sanest way to choose**

- Pick a lane for 90 days. Treat it as a focused experiment.
- At the end of the 90 days, reassess using real data (sales, reads, ad performance, newsletter growth, etc.).

If you're new to indie publishing and writing genre fiction, this alone is a huge advantage: it replaces indecision with an action that gives you the ability to measure success.

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## Start with KU for 90 days if most of these are true:

- You're writing in a **KU-friendly genre** (romance is one of the strongest)
- You're **building a series** and want read-through to drive momentum
- You don't yet have a strong direct-to-reader audience (**newsletter, community**, etc.)
- You want **fewer moving parts** while you learn (one retailer, one dashboard)
- You're open to **occasional promos/ads** and making small adjustments based on results
- Your goal right now is **discoverability + traction**, not "everywhere presence"

KU gives you the simplest path to traction on one platform.

What KU rewards:

- series, **binge reading**, consistent release, smart presentation.

Watch out for:

- going KU and then treating the book like a standalone with **no plan for follow-up**.

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## Start wide for 90 days if most of these are true:

- You already have a **non-Amazon audience** or plan to build one intentionally
- You care about **libraries, subscription ecosystems,** and non-Amazon discovery
- You're **strong in audio** or plan to be (wide strategy often pairs well with audio)
- You write in a niche where **Amazon/KU isn't the natural home**
- You prefer **steadier, distributed sales** over Amazon-centered spikes
- You're willing to learn **retailer-specific basics** (even gradually)

Choose wide when you want breadth and long-tail reach across multiple ecosystems.

What wide rewards:

- **patience**, consistency, and retailer-savvy positioning.

Watch out for:

- going wide and then **trying to market "everywhere"** without any focus.

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## Tie-breakers (when you're still not sure)

**If you're stuck, use these rules:**

- 1. If indecision is delaying publication:** choose a lane for 90 days and proceed. The only truly bad choice is not publishing at all.
- 2. If this is Book 1 of a planned series:** KU is often a practical accelerator if you plan to publish the next book(s). (Series presentation and read-through matter more than almost anything.)
- 3. If you have one standalone and no follow-up soon:** wide can be a steadier fit. Standalone books often benefit from multiple storefronts and long-tail visibility.
- 4. If you want a "wide-lite" option:** publish wide, but choose one primary retailer to focus on for 90 days (often Kobo). Focus beats scatter.

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### Common mistakes that create unnecessary pain

- Switching lanes too quickly (no time for meaningful data)
- Choosing KU without thinking about series order, back matter, and read-through
- Going wide without a plan for discoverability beyond "it's available everywhere"
- Letting ideology make the decision instead of goals and constraints
- Expecting any lane to work without ongoing small improvements (cover/blurbs/metadata)

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## Your 90-day experiment (simple tracking)

At the end of 90 days, ask:

- Did I **gain readers** (sales + reads + reviews + newsletter growth)?
- Did the book become **more discoverable** over time?
- Did my **efforts feel manageable** and repeatable?
- What **one tweak** improved results most?

That's the data that tells you whether to renew your lane—or switch with intention.

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### **If you want the full framework...**

If you'd like step-by-step guidance on distribution, formats, positioning, metadata, pricing, and launch strategy—plus reusable resources you can use for every book in your series—Publishing Without Panic is designed to walk you through it, calmly and thoroughly.

***Get the full framework (with templates) →***  
***Publishing Without Panic***