Understanding Third Party Uploads

Overview

Many vendors such as Amazon and ABE allow their subscribers to upload books and other inventory to their websites to be sold on line. Anthology supports this function through Third Party Uploads. That is, Anthology allows you to generate a file that you can upload to the respective vendor for processing. You should be aware that Anthology does not transfer the file and you should be prepared to ask the vendor for assistance on how and where this file should be uploaded.

You should also be aware that the criteria expected in the upload file may differ from vendor to vendor and therefore special considerations must be kept in mind when using this tool. *For example*: If you are uploading to Amazon, you are required to use one of five descriptors to describe the condition of your books (Like New, Very Good, Good, etc). These must match Amazon's definition exactly or the record will be rejected. Conversely, ABE and Allibris will generally accept any descriptor you choose to define the condition of your books (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, etc). As we discuss these formats and vendors below you should keep this in mind as we'll be referring back to this concept when deciding how to setup your inventory for uploading to these vendors.

The Formats

Understanding these formats will be a valuable troubleshooting tool for determining why an inventory record may have been rejected by the vendor.

There are two basic formats that may be used to upload to third party. The UIEE format may be used with any vendor but requires the special naming convention, mentioned above, when sending to Amazon. This is why the "Amazon TAB Delimited" format is provided (See below). Descriptions of these two formats are listed below.

UIEE Formats:

When used with vendors other than Amazon, this is a more relaxed format that allows free form descriptors to be used when describing the Condition, Edition and Dustcover of your inventory items. Amazon requires you to follow a strict naming convention when describing this information. All vendors

Anthology currently supports accept the UIEE format for uploads.

The UIEE format retrieves data from several places within the Anthology system to create the upload file. UIEE is a commonly accepted format for this type of upload file and is widely used in the industry. When using the UIEE format these fields MUST be filled in on the Inventory screen or that information will NOT be included in the upload file – this could cause the item to be rejected (not displayed) by vendor.

- **UserDefinedField1:** This value is used to identify the "Condition" of the item. **Troubleshooting Tip:** *This field must match Amazon's criteria exactly when using the UIEE format for Amazon uploads.*

- **UserDefinedField2:** This value is used to identify the "Edition" of the item. This field may be blank in the upload.

- **UserDefinedField3:** This value is used to identify the "Jacket" or dustcover of the item. This field may be blank in the upload.

  - It is recommended that you change the labels of these fields to represent this information. This can be done from the Options > UDF screen.

- **SKU/ISBN:** This is a unique identifier for the record being uploaded. Typically booksellers will enter the ISBN of the book here when creating inventory records. Since ISBNs are unique and Anthology does not allow duplicates in this field by default – it is generally safe to assume that this will meet the vendor's criteria for uploading. **Troubleshooting Tip***: Amazon will discard the uploaded title and insert theirs in its place, based on the ISBN you provided.*

- **ITEM/UPC:** This field represents the actual ISBN of the book being uploaded. In recent versions of Anthology this field is automatically populated with the value of SKU/ISBN (typically the ISBN already) when new items are added to your inventory. Older versions only populated this field when an item was being serialized and left blank otherwise. **Troubleshooting Tip***: Determine that this field contains the ISBN that represents this book. Amazon uses this field to populate (flesh out) your record. The information you provide for other vendors, such as Title, Author, Publisher, etc will be replaced by Amazon with the information they have on hand based on the ISBN listed here. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THIS FIELD BE AN ACTUAL ISBN.*

- **TITLE:** This is the title of the book as it exists in your inventory record.
  Troubleshooting Tip*: Amazon will discard the uploaded title and insert theirs in its place, based on the ISBN you provided.*

- **NOTES:** This field represents the information you what to display to potential buyers. It may be any information you want but is typically contains a brief overview of the book. **Troubleshooting Tip***: Amazon will discard this information and insert their own based on the ISBN you provided above. All other vendors will upload your comments if provided. Anthology populates this field with information automatically and it may be necessary clean this field on records being uploaded.*

- **ONHAND:** This represents the number of books you have on hand at the time of upload. **Troubleshooting Tip***: Only books that have an OnHand quantity of greater that zero will be included in the upload file. Items with zero or negative on hand quantities will not be included.*

- **AUTHOR:** This field represents the Author of the book as defined in your inventory records.

- **PUBLISHER:** This represents the Publisher of the book. This information is found on the details page of the Inventory screen in the "Publisher/Mfg" field. Anthology allows you to populate this field with either Distributor or Publisher names but should only contain the names of those entities that are actually publishers. **Troubleshooting Tip***: This information is supplied by Amazon and will not be used in your Amazon listings. However, other vendors will use this information in your listings and may have a problem with misinformation. You should insure that the names listed in this field of your inventory are of actual Publishers and those of distributors such as B&T or Ingram.*

- **PUBLISHED DATE:** This represents the "pubdate" of the book being listed. This information is also derived from your inventory records and as such must have a value listed in your inventory records in order to be included in the upload file.
  Troubleshooting Tip*: Insure that you inventory records are complete. If this field is blank in your inventory records – it will be blank in your upload as well.*

- **PRICE:** This field is typically populated with the WebPrice listed in your inventory but may come from either Retail or WebPrice depend on the format you choose to upload with. There is also a special format that takes an addition 15% off the WebPrice when uploading to third-party vendors.

Amazon TAB Delimited Formats

This is a very rigid format that Amazon strictly enforces. The column headers are pre-defined and the contents of those fields are also strictly enforced.

This is a very easy format to use since there are so few pieces of information that are required to have a record accepted. The balance of the information is provided by Amazon.

1. You must provide a unique identifier for the book.

   a. This is handled by the ISBN/SKU field on the inventory screen. Anthology will not allow duplicate numbers here so you don't have to worry about this one – only know that it is required.

2. You must provide an ISBN for the book.

   a. This information is stored in your Anthology Inventory and displayed on the Details screen in the ITEM/UPC field. **Troubleshooting Tip***: This field is populated with the value of the ISBN/SKU field whenever a new title is added to your inventory. The problem is in the "pre-version 5" data. Prior to the later versions of Anthology 4 and now in all version 5's this field was only populated when a record was serialized through the Used Books module. This means that in your current data; the field may be blank or contain UPC codes. You should ensure that this field contains a valid ISBN for those books you wish to upload.*

3. You must provide a condition for the book.

   a. In the Amazon TAB Delimited (ATD) format a number is used to represent the condition. This condition identifier for this format is located on the UOM/Prices tab of the Inventory screen. This value is NOT automatically assigned when new inventory records are created and must be populated manually for each inventory record you wish to upload. Using the ATD format will allow you keep the conditions you have defined for UIEE and still provide an upload file for Amazon that meets their criteria.
   Troubleshooting Tip*: The biggest reason for having a record rejected by Amazon is the failure to assign this condition code.*

      Note: This format DOES NOT use the UDF fields that are used in the UIEE formats.

4. You must provide a price.

   a. This price is contained in the Webprice field of your inventory record.

5. You must provide a quantity.

   a. This is handled by your OnHand field of the inventory screen. Remember, items with zero or negative on hand quantities will NOT be included in the upload.

Amazon will populate the balance of the listing with their information based on the ISBN that you uploaded as part of the record.

ABE New Format

ABE's upload process and format are slightly different than that of Amazon. Shown below is a sample of the file generated by the ABE New format:

listingid	title	author	illustrator	price	quantity	booktype	description
1931725047	Copper Dreams	Barbara O'Reilly Ralph, J		14.95	1	Book	Binding:Paperback,;;Vendor: Cowboy Miner Productions
1416586296	Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel	Jeannette Walls		16	1	Book	Binding:Paperback (Reprint);Vendor: Scribner
743270754	Team of Rivals The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln	Doris Kearns Goodwin		21	1	Book	Binding:Paperback;Vendor: Simon & Schuster

Once the file has been generated the upload process starts from "Your Account" page on the ABEBooks.com site.

1. Select the "Upload a Book or Picture File"
2. Next choose the Browse button and select the upload file (the default location for these files is the Anthology directory).
3. Choose the Send File button.
4. You will see a message at the top of the page indicating if it was successful and well as the conformation email shown below

Your Conformation

Hello "Your Registration Name",

This is an automated confirmation from AbeBooks that we've received your files.

The following files have been successfully added to our current queue of books and wants, and should be processed within 6 to 24 hours.

- ABE_NEW.TXT – This is the file name that you uploaded to them

Thank you for keeping your inventory up to date. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

AbeBooks Customer Support

UPLOADING

Note: You cannot mix uploads. That is to say you cannot send UIEE one day and TAB the next. You may, for example choose to send TAB to Amazon and UIEE to everyone else if you wish.

Selecting Records to upload

Creating the file is done the same way whether you create a UIEE or TAB file.

- Go to inventory and select the items you want to upload using multi-select or another method.

- Go to the ACTION menu and choose flag these files for upload.

    o If you select an item that is already flagged for upload you will get the message asking if you want to clear the selected items.

    o If you answer yes, those items will be un-flagged.

    o If you select items that are a mix of both flagged and un-flagged; the system will un-flag these items BUT it will not flag the others. NONE of the selected records will be flagged.

    o If you select ONLY un-flagged items; the system will ask if you want to flag the selected items.

    o Choose Yes.

NOTE: Remember that if you select multiple items any action you perform happens to all records. Selecting a single record – actions apply to only that record.

Selecting Upload Options

Now that you have the items selected go to the ACTION menu again and choose Prepare Upload for non-AWS sites. There are several sections to this screen and each is defined below.
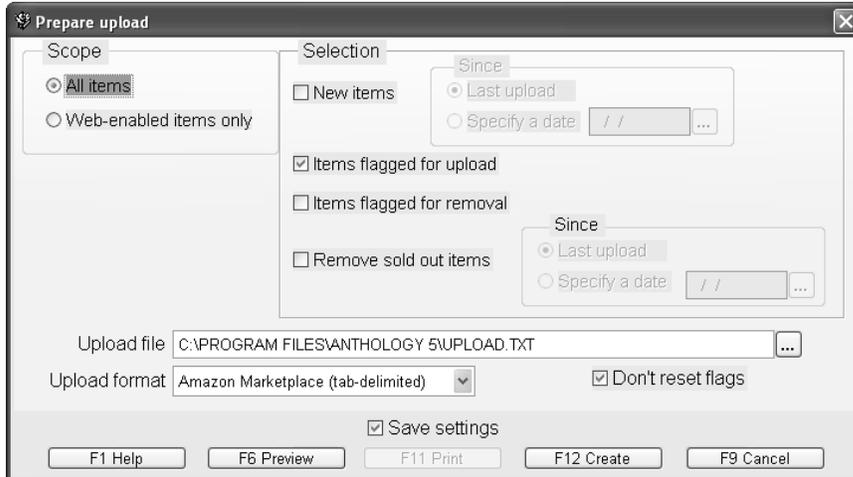
- *Scope*: determines what the system will look at:

    o All Inventory Items

    o Only those NOT marked as "Exclude from web"

        ▪ The default behavior for this is found in the TOOLS | Options screen under the used books tab. "Enable new books for web upload by default" > All books – Used books only.

        ▪ New in this context does NOT mean New ("never before owned book") it means "new addition" to inventory whether it is a used book or brand new.

        ▪ People who are doing AWS will have all books selected here if the majority of their inventory acquisitions will be available for upload to AWS. This means that if an AWS customer wants to put only "non-used" books on AWS and "used" inventory on third party sites they cannot use this option on the "prepare upload for non-aws sites" screen.

        ▪ People who are not using AWS can choose either option. If they have a mix of used and non-used inventory and want to keep the non-used stuff off the web – choose "used books only" and then use this option on the prepare upload screen.

- *Selection*: determines which books qualify. The options in this section have an implied OR between them and should be read as "option 1 OR option 2" etc.

    - New Items: This DOES NOT mean changed items. It means "new additions" since last upload or date specified.

    - Flagged for upload: These are the items you manually flagged – see above.

    - Flagged for removal: These are the items you manually flagged for removal – see above only choose remove.

    - Remove sold out items: None of the major vendors will post items with a zero on hand. Also, they remove them automatically when an item is sold out. This function is almost never needed.

        - ABE, Alibiris treat each item as a quantity of ONE.

        - Amazon expects to see an on hand quantity and will track the number sold.

- *Upload File*: This is the path and name of the file that will be built. You should make note of this path as you will need to be able to locate your file later when sending it to the vendor. Click on the […] button to change the path where the file is stored. This is overwritten every time you create one with the same name. If you want to archive the previously built files, you should consider adopting a naming convention where you change the filename each time you build an upload. For example, you could include the date as part of the name as in: 61006upload.txt.

- *Upload File Format*: Which format you choose depends largely on which price you want to use. You should create a dummy record in inventory for testing purposes. Use different information in the price fields and note which one is present in the upload file.

- *Don't reset flags*: Once you have records selected you can choose NOT to reset them. Because, obviously – if this is not checked, it will reset them.

        - The problem here is the vendor. They get pissy if you send your entire inventory every day (Ask Symposium).

        - Remember these options are OR so it kind of makes "new items" useless if check the "Items flagged for upload".

- *Save Settings*: If you'll be using the same settings each time you upload check this option. Understand that in the long run the user is responsible for knowing what upload options chosen. Visual Anthology tech support does not keep this information for you nor can they reset this

screen. Consider noting down your most common settings and keeping it with your store policy paperwork.

Once you've set the options you desire, just click F12 Create to begin building the file.

Troubleshooting

General Troubleshooting Tips: Typically troubleshooting the Third Party Upload is easy. In most cases it is a simple oversight that has caused the problem. Here are some the most typical issues that arise and what to look for.

- When setting up a new account or troubleshooting an existing one - Only work with one inventory record at a time. Once you are able to upload this record and you are satisfied with appearance on the vendor's site; then be sure that all the inventory records you wish to upload are fleshed out in the same fashion.
  - o If an item is not being listed at all – compare it to an item that is and see if there is key information missing. **Remember that key information can vary from vendor to vendor so it's always best to work directly with their support staff.**
- Remember that Amazon fleshes out your records for you based on the ISBN of the book. Other vendors do not.
  - o You may see information on your Amazon listing that is different or non-existent on your other listings. This is especially true for annotations.
  - o Amazon may reject records because of an invalid ISBN where other vendors may not.
  - o Amazon will use a partial ISBN and attempt a match. This may cause a title to be displayed that you don't have. Anthology has taken steps to insure that only valid ISBNs are used. In the current versions of Anthology this is not the case. You should insure that the ITEM/UPC field in your Anthology Inventory only contains a valid ISBN for those books you wish to upload.
- Books with 0 (zero) or negative on hand quantities are not included in the upload file. Check the on hands.
- The only "automatic" flagging in Anthology for Third Party Uploads refers to new inventory records that have never been uploaded before. This is explained below but to state it bluntly here – if you want it to upload, you have to select it.
- If you plan to use both the UIEE and TAB delimited format it is far less complicated to adapt your UIEE naming convention for condition to the one used by Amazon for the TAB format. That is, you should go to the UOM/Prices page of your inventory and view the pull down list named "Condition". Omit the word "Used;" and prepare a short list of these condition definitions. Use or replace your current conditions with "Like New", etc.