GUIDE FOR EBOOK SELLERS · 2027

How to stop eBook piracy on Shopify in 2027

SHORT ANSWER

No protection stops a determined person. What works on Shopify is a **personal copy for every buyer**: their name and order number inside the file, plus a hidden identifier. Few buyers share a file with their own name in it, and if a copy turns up online, it **leads back to the order** so you can block it.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Why eBooks sold on Shopify get shared

Shopify sells the product. What happens to the file afterwards depends on the app that delivers it.

One file for everyone

A normal download is the same file for every buyer. Once it is passed on, nobody knows where it came from.

Shared in one click

A file without a name in it costs nothing to forward, upload or post. There is no reason to think twice.

Shopify ships no file protection

Shopify does not deliver files on its own. You need an app, and free apps send the same file to everyone.

BE HONEST ABOUT IT

Piracy-proof files do not exist

No protection stops a determined person. What social DRM changes is the motive: few buyers share a file with their own name in it.

Pageseal, Social DRM explained

TWO WAYS TO PROTECT AN EBOOK

Encryption DRM or social DRM?

Encryption DRM (Adobe, LCP, Kindle)

- Opens only in apps that support the DRM
- Buyers often need an account, a reader app or an activation
- Makes copying harder; tools to remove it exist
- Higher support work: activation and device questions

Social DRM (watermark)

- Opens in any app or e-reader for the format
- Buyers need nothing extra: no login, no special app
- Does not lock the file; makes sharing traceable
- Low support work, common for direct sales

HOW A PERSONAL COPY WORKS

Sealed twice: a visible note and a hidden identifier

When someone buys, a new copy of the file is made for that order. Pageseal does this for eBooks, PDFs and audiobooks.

Layer 1 · visible

A note page with the buyer's name and order number, for example “This copy was made for Alex Sample, Order #1001”. Everyone who opens the file sees whose copy it is.

Layer 2 · invisible

A hidden identifier that stays in the file, even if someone deletes the note page. The copy stays traceable.

Every format you sell

EPUB (reflowable and fixed layout), PDF and audiobooks as MP3, M4B, M4A or a ZIP of MP3s. One sale covers all formats of a book.

BEFORE YOU CHOOSE AN APP

What a good eBook watermark should do

Protection that annoys honest readers or breaks the book costs you more than it saves.

- Keep the book **intact on every reader**, including fixed-layout picture books
- Carry a **hidden identifier** that survives if the note page is deleted
- Work for **every format you sell**: EPUB, PDF and audiobooks
- Show the buyer's name **calmly and respectfully**, no shouting banners
- Let you **look up a found file yourself**, without emailing a support team

SET UP ONCE

Protect your eBooks on Shopify in six steps

After this, every sale is sealed and delivered by itself.

01 **Install a protection app**
Install Pageseal in your Shopify store, on any Shopify plan, and open it from Apps.

02 **Upload your book**
Drop in your EPUB, PDF or audiobook. One book can hold all three formats.

03 **Read the check report**
Green means clean, yellow looks worse on a device, red means buyers would get a broken book.

04 **Create the product**
Title, cover, price, and untick “This is a physical product”, so checkout asks for no address.

05 **Assign the book**
Pick the Shopify product or variant that sells this book. Every sale now gets a personal copy.

06 **Go live and test**
Switch the book live and place a Shopify test order; test orders are free.

DELIVERY SETTINGS

Delivery settings that close the easy leaks

Protection inside the file works best with a delivery that buyers do not need to work around.

- **Download limit** per buyer, for example five or ten
- **Blocked after a refund**: the link stops working
- **Delivery email** in your shop's name, logo and colours
- **Release day** for pre-orders: no download before it (from Starter)
- **Link expiry**: choose how long the link is valid
- **Download button** on the thank-you and order status page
- **No account for buyers**: no login, no extra app

PROTECTION MUST NOT BREAK THE BOOK

Check every device before the first sale

An EPUB that looks fine on your computer can break on a Kindle or a phone. Broken books annoy exactly the buyers who paid.

Standard validators

Pageseal checks every EPUB with EPUBCheck, the standard validator, and DAISY Ace, which checks accessibility.

Real page pictures

You see your pages as Apple Books (iPhone and iPad), an Android reader, Readium and Kindle via Send to Kindle show them.

Fixes in plain words

Instead of error codes, each finding says what to change in your export, before buyers see it.

WHEN A COPY TURNS UP ONLINE

Found your eBook on a file-sharing site? Do this

A personal copy turns an anonymous leak into an order you can act on.

01 **Download the file**
Save the shared copy exactly as you found it.

02 **Upload it in Leak search**
Pageseal reads the hidden identifier and names the order, even if the note page was deleted.

03 **Block that copy**
The leak search result has a Block copy button. One click, and that copy is blocked.

04 **Ask for a takedown**
From Starter you see the buyer's name and get drafts for a takedown notice and a letter to the buyer. You decide whether to send them.

COMMON MISTAKES

Four mistakes that make eBook piracy easy

Same file for every buyer

Without buyer details inside, a shared copy cannot be traced to anyone, so there is no reason to hold back.

Only a visible note

A note page can be deleted. Without a hidden identifier, the trace is gone with it.

Links that never close

No download limit, no expiry, no block after a refund: a forwarded link keeps working for anyone who has it.

Locking out honest readers

When buyers need an account, a reader app or an activation, support work grows.

TELL BUYERS, STAY GDPR-CLEAN

Be open about the watermark

Personalising a copy uses the buyer's name, which is personal data. Saying so sets expectations and is part of being open about buyer data.

Say it on the product page

For example: “Your copy is personalised with your name and order number.” Mention it in your privacy policy, too.

Processor with a DPA

Pageseal processes buyer data as your processor under a data processing agreement (Article 28 GDPR), in force from installation.

Stored in Germany

Databases and files on a Hetzner server in Nuremberg. Buyer data encrypted field by field, no AI, no tracking cookies.

IN NUMBERS

Pageseal at a glance

2
protection layers in every copy: a visible note and a hidden identifier

3
formats in one sale: EPUB, PDF and audiobook

5
copies free once on the Free plan, no monthly fee

14
days free on every paid plan

Source: pageseal.app, plans and features, as of November 2026.

WHAT IT COSTS

Start free, pay as you sell

Monthly plans on your Shopify invoice, in US dollars, plus VAT where applicable. One copy is one sale of a book, with all its formats.

Free · $0 a month

First 5 copies free once, then $0.75 per copy. 2 titles, protection, checks and leak search.

Starter · $15 a month

40 copies included, then $0.69. 10 titles, unlimited checks, buyer contact and takedown help.

Pro · $79 a month

200 copies included, then $0.59. Unlimited titles, your own email text, no Pageseal note.

Scale · $299 a month

1,500 copies included, then $0.49. Unlimited titles, your own email text, no Pageseal note.

FAQ

eBook piracy on Shopify: questions sellers ask

Can I stop eBook piracy completely?

No. Nothing stops sharing completely. A personal copy with the buyer's name makes sharing less likely, and the hidden identifier lets you trace a shared file to its order.

Does the buyer need an account?

No. The buyer downloads a normal file from the thank-you page or the email. No login, no extra app.

Can a watermark be removed?

A visible note page can be deleted. That is why Pageseal also adds a hidden identifier that stays in the file, so the leak search still finds the order.

Can I sell eBooks on Shopify without an app?

Not automatically. Shopify has no built-in file delivery, so you need an app. Protection apps also personalise the file.

FAQ

More questions about protected eBooks

Does a watermarked eBook work on Kindle?

Yes. Kindle buyers do not need a MOBI file any more: a personalised EPUB can be sent to a Kindle with Amazon's Send to Kindle, like any EPUB.

Is social DRM legal in the EU?

Personalising a copy uses the buyer's name, which is personal data. Tell buyers about it and process it under a data processing agreement; Pageseal provides one.

Which apps open the personal copy?

Any app or e-reader that opens EPUB, for example Apple Books, Google Play Books, Kobo, Tolino, PocketBook and Thorium. PDFs open in any PDF reader.

Can I protect audiobooks the same way?

Yes. Pageseal personalises MP3, M4B and M4A files and ZIPs of MP3s and delivers them with the eBook in one order.

NEXT STEP

Sell your next eBook as a personal copy

Pageseal is in final testing for the Shopify App Store. Write to us and you are among the first to install it.

Get early access to Pageseal

Social DRM and eBook watermarks explained

How to sell eBooks on Shopify

Best Shopify eBook apps 2027

Security and GDPR

Sources

1. Pageseal: the Shopify app for eBooks (features and plans)
2. Pageseal: Social DRM explained
3. Pageseal: How to sell eBooks on Shopify
4. Pageseal: Help (setup, leak search, plans)
5. Pageseal: Security and GDPR
6. W3C: EPUBCheck
7. DAISY Consortium: Ace accessibility checker
8. Amazon: Send to Kindle