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From Infogalactic: the planetary knowledge core

**Amazon.com** (/ˈæməzɒn/ or /ˈæməzən/), also called **Amazon**, is an American **electronic commerce** and **cloud computing** company that was founded on July 5, 1994, by **Jeff Bezos** and is based in **Seattle, Washington**. It is the largest Internet-based retailer in the world by total sales and market capitalization.<sup>[15]</sup> Amazon.com started as an online **bookstore**, later diversifying to sell **DVDs**, **Blu-rays**, **CDs**, **video** downloads/streaming, **MP3** downloads/streaming, **audiobook** downloads/streaming, **software**, **video games**, **electronics**, apparel, furniture, food, toys, and jewelry. The company also produces **consumer electronics**—notably, **Kindle e-readers**, **Fire tablets**, **Fire TV**, and **Echo**—and is the world's largest provider of **cloud infrastructure** services (IaaS and PaaS).<sup>[16]</sup> Amazon also sells certain low-end products like USB cables under its in-house brand AmazonBasics.

Amazon has separate retail websites for the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland, France, Canada, Germany, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Australia, Brazil, Japan, China, India, and Mexico. Amazon also offers international shipping to certain other countries for some of its products.<sup>[17]</sup> In 2016, Dutch, Polish, and Turkish language versions of the German Amazon website were launched.<sup>[18][19][20]</sup>

In 2015, Amazon surpassed **Walmart** as the most valuable retailer in the United States by **market capitalization**,<sup>[21]</sup> and was in the third quarter of 2016 the **fourth most valuable public company**.<sup>[22]</sup>

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## History

*Further information: Timeline of Amazon.com*

The company was founded in 1994, spurred by what Amazon founder **Jeff Bezos** called his "regret minimization framework," which described his efforts to fend off any regrets for not participating sooner in the **Internet business boom** during that time.<sup>[23]</sup> In 1994, Bezos left his employment as vice-president of **D. E. Shaw & Co.**, a Wall Street firm and moved to Seattle. He began to work on a business plan for what would eventually become Amazon.com.

Bezos incorporated the company as "Cadabra" on July 5, 1994.<sup>[14]</sup> Bezos changed the name to Amazon a year later after a lawyer misheard its original name as "cadaver".<sup>[24]</sup> In September 1994, Bezos purchased the URL **Relentless.com** and briefly considered naming his online store Relentless, but friends told him the name sounded a bit sinister. The domain is still owned by Bezos and still redirects to the retailer.<sup>[25][26]</sup> The company went online as Amazon.com in 1995.<sup>[27]</sup>

Bezos selected the name Amazon by looking through the dictionary and settled on "Amazon" because it was a place that was "exotic and different" just as he envisioned for his Internet enterprise; the **Amazon river**, he noted was by far the "biggest" river in the world and he planned to make his store the biggest in the world.<sup>[27]</sup> Bezos placed a premium on his head start in building a brand, telling a reporter, "There's nothing about our model that can't be copied over time. But you know, **McDonald's** got copied. And it still built a huge, multibillion-dollar company. A lot of it comes down to the brand name. Brand names are more important online than they are in the physical world."<sup>[28]</sup> Additionally, a name beginning with "A" was preferential due to the probability it would occur at the top of any list that was alphabetized.

Since June 19, 2000, Amazon's logotype has featured a curved arrow leading from A to Z, representing that the company carries every product from A to Z, with the arrow shaped like a smile.<sup>[29]</sup>

After reading a report about the future of the Internet that projected annual Web commerce growth at 2,300%, Bezos created a list of 20 products that could be marketed online. He narrowed the list to what he felt were the five most promising products, which included: compact discs, computer hardware, computer software, videos and books. Bezos finally decided that his new business would sell books online, due to the large worldwide demand for literature, the low price points for books, along with the huge number of titles available in print.<sup>[30]</sup> Amazon<sup>[31]</sup> was founded in the garage of Bezos' home in Bellevue, Washington.<sup>[32]</sup>

The company began as an online **bookstore**, an idea spurred off with discussion with **John Ingram** of Ingram Book (now called **Ingram Content Group**), along with Keyur Patel who still holds a stake in Amazon.<sup>[33]</sup> Amazon was able to access books at wholesale from Ingram. In the first two months of business, Amazon sold to all 50 states and over 45 countries. Within two months, Amazon's sales were up to \$20,000/week.<sup>[34]</sup> While the largest **brick and mortar** bookstores and **mail order** catalogs might offer 200,000 titles, an online bookstore could "carry" several times more, since it would have a practically unlimited virtual (not actual) warehouse: those of the actual product makers/suppliers.

Amazon was incorporated in 1994, in the state of **Washington**. In July 1995, the company began service and sold its first book on Amazon.com: **Douglas Hofstadter's *Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies: Computer Models of the Fundamental Mechanisms of Thought***.<sup>[35]</sup> In October 1995, the company announced itself to the public.<sup>[36]</sup> In 1996, it was reincorporated in **Delaware**. Amazon issued its **initial public offering** of stock on May 15, 1997, trading under the **NASDAQ** stock exchange symbol **AMZN**, at a price of **US\$18.00** per share (\$1.50 after three **stock splits** in the late 1990s).

Amazon's initial **business plan** was unusual; it did not expect to make a profit for four to five years. This "slow" growth caused stockholders to complain about the company not reaching profitability fast enough to justify investing in, or to even survive in the long-term. When the **dot-com bubble** burst at the start of the 21st century, destroying many e-companies in the process, Amazon survived and grew on past the bubble burst to become a huge player in online sales. It finally turned its first profit in the fourth quarter of 2001: \$5 million (i.e., 1¢ per share), on revenues of more than \$1 billion. This profit margin, though extremely modest, proved to skeptics that Bezos' unconventional **business model** could succeed.<sup>[37]</sup> In 1999, *Time* magazine named Bezos the **Person of the Year**, recognizing the company's success in popularizing **online shopping**.

**Barnes & Noble** sued Amazon on May 12, 1997, alleging that Amazon's claim to be "the world's largest bookstore" was false because it "... isn't a bookstore at all. It's a book broker." The suit was later settled out of court and Amazon continued to make the same claim.<sup>[38]</sup> **Walmart** sued Amazon on October 16, 1998, alleging that Amazon had stolen Walmart's trade secrets by hiring former Walmart executives. Although this suit was also settled out of court, it caused Amazon to implement internal restrictions and the reassignment of the former Walmart executives.<sup>[38]</sup>

On October 11, 2016, Amazon announced plans to build convenience stores and develop curbside pickup locations for food.<sup>[39]</sup> In December 2016, the Amazon Go store was opened to Amazon employees in Seattle.<sup>[40]</sup> The store uses a variety of sensors and automatically charges a shopper's Amazon account as they walk out of the store, therefore there are no checkout lines.<sup>[41][42]</sup> The store is planned to open for the general public in early 2017.<sup>[43][44]</sup>

In 2011, Amazon had 30,000 full-time employees in the USA and by the end of 2016, it had 180,000 employees. The company employs 306,800 people worldwide in full and part-time jobs.<sup>[45]</sup>

## Mergers and acquisitions

*Main article: List of mergers and acquisitions by Amazon.com*

## Investment

- 2008: **Engine Yard**, a Ruby-on-Rails **platform as a service** (PaaS) company.<sup>[46]</sup>

**Amazon.com, Inc.**



**Screenshot**

<b>Type</b>	Public
<b>Traded as</b>	NASDAQ: <span>AMZN</span> <span>↗</span> NASDAQ-100 Component S&P 100 Component S&P 500 Component
<b>Founded</b>	July 5, 1994; 24 years ago (as Cadabra) Seattle, Washington, U.S.
<b>Headquarters</b>	Seattle, Washington, U.S. <sup>[1][2][3]</sup>
<b>Area served</b>	Worldwide
<b>Founder(s)</b>	Jeff Bezos
<b>Key people</b>	Jeff Bezos (Chairman, President and CEO) Werner Vogels (CTO) Andrew Jassy (CEO, AWS) Jeff Wilke (CEO, Consumer)
<b>Industry</b>	Internet
<b>Products</b>	Appstore, AWS, The Book Depository, comiXology, Game Studios, Video, Instant Video UK, Instant Video German, Audible, Kindle, Fire, Lab126, Studios, Twitch.tv, Woot, Echo, MyHabit.com(closed), <sup>[4]</sup> Shopbop, <sup>[5]</sup> Askville <sup>[6]</sup>
<b>Services</b>	Online shopping Cloud computing content distribution
<b>Revenue</b>	<span>▲</span> <span>US\$</span> 135.98 billion (2016) <sup>[7]</sup>
<b>Operating income</b>	<span>▲</span> <span>US\$</span> 4.186 billion (2016) <sup>[7]</sup>
<b>Net income</b>	<span>▲</span> <span>US\$</span> 2.371 billion (2016) <sup>[7]</sup>
<b>Total assets</b>	<span>▲</span> <span>US\$</span> 83.402 billion (2016) <sup>[7]</sup>
<b>Total equity</b>	<span>▲</span> <span>US\$</span> 19.285 billion (2016) <sup>[7]</sup>
<b>Owner</b>	Jeff Bezos (17%) <sup>[8][9]</sup>
<b>Employees</b>	<span>▲</span> 341,000 (2017) <sup>[10][11]</sup>
<b>Subsidiaries</b>	A9.com, Amazon Web Services, Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud, Alexa Internet, Audible.com, comiXology, Digital Photography Review, Goodreads, Internet Movie Database, Jungle.com, Twitch.tv, Zappos, Souq.com
<b>Slogan(s)</b>	Work hard, have fun, make history
<b>Website</b>	amazon.com <span>↗</span> (original U.S. site) Various national sites
<b>Written in</b>	C++ and Java <sup>[12]</sup>
<b>Alexa rank</b>	<span>▼</span> 13 <span>↗</span> (Global, April 2017) <sup>[13]</sup>
<b>Type of site</b>	E-commerce
<b>Advertising</b>	Web banners, videos
<b>Available in</b>	English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Brazilian Portuguese, Dutch, Polish, Turkish
<b>Launched</b>	July 5, 1994 <sup>[14]</sup>



Amazon founder Jeff Bezos

- 2010: [LivingSocial](#), a local deal site.<sup>[47]</sup>
- 2014: Acquired the '.buy' domain in an auction for \$4,588,888<sup>[48][49]</sup>
- 2014: Amazon Announces Additional US \$2 Billion Investment in India in June 2014<sup>[50]</sup>
- 2016: Amazon Announces Additional US \$3 Billion Investment in India in June 2016

## Subsidiaries

- 2003: [A9.com](#), a company focused on researching and building innovative [technology](#).<sup>[51]</sup>
- 2004: [Lab126](#), developers of integrated consumer electronics such as the Kindle.
- 2007: [Endless.com](#), an e-commerce brand focusing on shoes.<sup>[52]</sup>
- 2007: [Brilliance Audio](#), the largest independent audiobook producer in the US.<sup>[53]</sup>
- 2009: [CreateSpace](#), self-publishing services for independent content creators, publishers, film studios and music labels; created by internal merger of [CustomFlix](#) (on-demand DVDs for independent filmmakers) and [BookSurge](#) (self-publishing, on-demand printing, online distribution), both originally acquired 2005.<sup>[54][55]</sup>

Amazon owns over 40 subsidiaries, including [Zappos](#), [Shopbop](#), [Diapers.com](#), [Kiva Systems](#), [Goodreads](#), [Teachstreet](#) and [IMDb](#).<sup>[56]</sup>

## Board of directors

As of February 2016, the board of directors is:<sup>[57]</sup>

- [Jeff Bezos](#), President, CEO and Chairman
- [Tom Alberg](#), Managing partner, [Madrona Venture Group](#)
- [John Seely Brown](#), Visiting Scholar and Advisor to the Provost at [University of Southern California](#)
- [Bing Gordon](#), partner, [Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers](#)
- [Jamie Gorelick](#), partner, [Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr](#)
- [Judy McGrath](#), former CEO, [MTV Networks](#)
- [Alain Monié](#), CEO, [Ingram Micro](#)
- [Jon Rubinstein](#), former Chairman and CEO, [Palm, Inc.](#)
- [Thomas O. Ryder](#), former Chairman and CEO, [Reader's Digest Association](#)
- [Patty Stonesifer](#), President and CEO, [Martha's Table](#)
- [Wendell P. Weeks](#), Chairman, President and CEO, [Corning Inc.](#)

## Merchant partnerships

Until June 30, 2006, typing [ToysRUs.com](#) into a browser would bring up Amazon.com's "Toys & Games" tab; however, this relationship was terminated due to a lawsuit.<sup>[58]</sup> Amazon also hosted and managed the website for [Borders bookstores](#) but this ceased in 2008.<sup>[59]</sup> From 2001 until August 2011, Amazon hosted the retail website for [Target](#).<sup>[60]</sup>

Amazon.com operates retail websites for [Sears Canada](#), [bebe Stores](#), [Marks & Spencer](#), [Mothercare](#) and [Lacoste](#). For a growing number of [enterprise](#) clients, including the UK merchants [Marks & Spencer](#), [Benefit Cosmetics](#)' UK entity, [edels.com](#) and [Mothercare](#), Amazon provides a unified multichannel platform where a customer can interact with the retail website, standalone in-store terminals, or phone-based customer service agents. [Amazon Web Services](#) also powers [AOL's Shop@AOL](#).

On October 18, 2011, Amazon.com announced a partnership with [DC Comics](#) for the exclusive digital rights to many popular comics, including *[Superman](#)*, *[Batman](#)*, *[Green Lantern](#)*, *[The Sandman](#)* and *[Watchmen](#)*. The partnership has caused well-known bookstores like [Barnes & Noble](#) to remove these titles from their shelves.<sup>[61]</sup>

On November 2013, Amazon.com announced a partnership with the [United States Postal Service](#) to begin delivering orders on Sundays. The service, included in Amazon's standard shipping rates, initiated in metropolitan areas of [Los Angeles](#) and [New York](#) due to the high-volume and inability to deliver timely, with plans to expand into [Dallas](#), [Houston](#), [New Orleans](#) and [Phoenix](#) by 2014.<sup>[62]</sup>

On July 2016, Amazon.com announced a partnership with the [U.K. Civil Aviation Authority](#) to test some of the technologies and may use delivery service via prime air drone in the future.<sup>[63]</sup>

## Products and services

*Main article: [List of Amazon.com products and services](#)*

Amazon.com's product lines available at its website include several media ([books](#), DVDs, music CDs, [videotapes](#) and software), apparel, baby products, [consumer electronics](#), [beauty products](#), gourmet food, groceries, health and personal-care items, industrial & scientific supplies, kitchen items, [jewelry](#), watches, lawn and garden items, musical instruments, [sporting goods](#), tools, automotive items and toys & games.

In India, Amazon is now gearing up to play a role in the grocery retail sector aimed at delivering customer needs.<sup>[64]</sup>

Amazon.com has a number of products and services available, including but not limited to:

- [AmazonFresh](#)
- [Amazon Prime](#)
- [Amazon Web Services](#)
- [Alexa](#)
- [Appstore](#)
- [Amazon Drive](#)
- [Echo](#)
- [Kindle](#)
- [Fire tablets](#)
- [Fire TV](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Kindle Store](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Music Unlimited](#)
- [Amazon Digital Game Store](#)
- [Amazon Studios](#)
- [AmazonWireless](#)

## Subsidiaries

*See also: [List of Amazon.com locations](#)*

### Amazon Maritime, Inc.

Amazon Maritime, Inc. holds a [Federal Maritime Commission](#) licence to operate as a [non-vessel owning common carrier](#) (NVOCC), which enables the company to manage its own shipments from China into the United States.<sup>[65]</sup>

### Audible.com

[Audible.com](#) is a seller and producer of spoken audio entertainment, information and educational programming on the Internet. Audible sells digital [audiobooks](#), radio and TV programs and audio versions of magazines and newspapers. Through its production arm, [Audible Studios](#), Audible has also become the world's largest producer of downloadable audiobooks. On January 31, 2008, Amazon announced it would buy Audible for about \$300 million. The deal closed in March 2008 and Audible became a subsidiary of Amazon.<sup>[66]</sup>

### Brilliance Audio

Brilliance Audio is an audiobook publisher founded in 1984 by Michael Snodgrass in [Grand Haven, Michigan](#).<sup>[67]</sup> The company produced its first 8 audio titles in 1985.<sup>[67]</sup> The company was purchased by Amazon in 2007 for an undisclosed amount.<sup>[68][69]</sup> At the time of the acquisition Brilliance was producing 12–15 new titles a month.<sup>[69]</sup> It operates as an independent company within Amazon.

In 1984, Brilliance Audio invented a technique for recording twice as much on the same cassette.<sup>[70]</sup> The technique involved recording on each of the two channels of each stereo track.<sup>[70]</sup> It has been credited with revolutionizing the burgeoning audiobook market in the mid-1980s since it made unabridged books affordable.<sup>[70]</sup>

### ComiXology

[ComiXology](#) is a cloud-based digital comics platform with over 200 million comic downloads as of September 2013. It offers a selection of more than 40,000 comic books and graphic novels across Android, iOS, Fire OS and Windows 8 devices and over a web browser. Amazon bought the company in April 2014.<sup>[71]</sup>

### Goodreads

[Goodreads](#) is a "social cataloging" website founded in December 2006 and launched in January 2007 by [Otis Chandler](#), a software engineer and entrepreneur and [Elizabeth Chandler](#). The website allows individuals to freely search [Goodreads'](#) extensive user-populated database of books, annotations and reviews. Users can sign up and register books to generate library catalogs and reading lists. They can also create their own groups of book suggestions and discussions. In December 2007, the site had over 650,000 members and over 10,000,000 books had been added. Amazon bought the company in March 2013.<sup>[72]</sup>



Audible headquarters

## Shelfari

**Shelfari** is a *social cataloging* website for books. Shelfari users build virtual bookshelves of the titles which they own or have read and they can rate, review, *tag* and discuss their books. Users can also create groups that other members may join, create discussions and talk about books, or other topics. Recommendations can be sent to friends on the site for what books to read. Amazon bought the company in August 2008.<sup>[72]</sup> Shelfari continued to function as an independent book social network within the Amazon until January 2016, when Amazon announced that it would be merging Shelfari with Goodreads and closing down Shelfari.<sup>[73][74]</sup>

## Beijing Century Joyo Courier Services

Beijing Century Joyo Courier Services is a subsidiary of Amazon and it applied for a *Freight forwarding* license with the *US Maritime Commission*. Amazon is also building out its logistics in *trucking* and *air freight* to potentially compete with *UPS* and *FedEx*.<sup>[75][76]</sup>

## Website

The domain *amazon.com* attracted at least 615 million visitors annually by 2008.<sup>[77]</sup> Amazon attracts over 130 million customers to its US website per month by the start of 2016.<sup>[78]</sup> The company has also invested heavily on a massive amount of server capacity for its website, especially to handle the excessive traffic during the December *Christmas holiday season*.<sup>[79]</sup>

Results generated by Amazon's search engine are partly determined by promotional fees.<sup>[80]</sup>

Amazon's *localized* storefronts, which differ in selection and prices, are differentiated by *top-level domain* and *country code*:

Region	Sovereignty	Domain name
Asia	 China	amazon.cn
	 India	amazon.in
	 Japan	amazon.co.jp
Europe	 France	amazon.fr
	 Germany	amazon.de
	 Italy	amazon.it
	 Netherlands	amazon.nl
	 Spain	amazon.es
	 United Kingdom	amazon.co.uk
North America	 Canada	amazon.ca
	 Mexico	amazon.com.mx
	 United States	amazon.com
Oceania	 Australia	amazon.com.au
South America	 Brazil	amazon.com.br

## Reviews

See also: *Amazon.com controversies § Amazon reviews*

Amazon allows users to submit reviews to the web page of each product. Reviewers must rate the product on a *rating scale* from one to five stars. Amazon provides a badging option for reviewers which indicate the real name of the reviewer (based on confirmation of a credit card account) or which indicate that the reviewer is one of the top reviewers by popularity. Customers may comment or vote on the reviews, indicating whether they found a review helpful to them. If a review is given enough "helpful" hits, it appears on the front page of the product. In 2010, Amazon was reported as being the largest single source of Internet consumer reviews.<sup>[81]</sup>

When publishers asked Bezos why Amazon would publish negative reviews, he defended the practice by claiming that Amazon.com was "taking a different approach ... we want to make every book available—the good, the bad and the ugly ... to let truth loose".<sup>[82]</sup>

Although reviews are attributed to the credit card name of the reviewer, there have been cases of positive reviews being written and posted by a public relations company on behalf of its clients,<sup>[83]</sup> and instances of writers using pseudonyms to leave negative reviews of their rivals' works.<sup>[84]</sup>

Following the listing of *Untouchable: The Strange Life and Tragic Death of Michael Jackson*, a disparaging biography of *Michael Jackson* by Randall Sullivan, his fans, organized via *social media* as "Michael Jackson's Rapid Response Team to Media Attacks", bombarded Amazon with negative reviews and negative ratings of positive reviews.<sup>[85]</sup>

## Content search

"Search Inside the Book" is a feature which allows customers to search for keywords in the full text of many books in the catalog.<sup>[86][87]</sup> The feature started with 120,000 titles (or 33 million pages of text) on October 23, 2003.<sup>[88]</sup> There are about 300,000 books in the program. Amazon has cooperated with around 130 *publishers* to allow users to perform these searches.

To avoid copyright violations, Amazon does not return the computer-readable text of the book. Instead, it returns a picture of the matching page, instructs the web browser to disable printing and puts limits on the number of pages in a book a single user can access. Additionally, customers can purchase online access to some of the same books via the "Amazon Upgrade" program.

## Third-party sellers

Amazon derives many of its sales from third-party sellers who sell products on Amazon (around 40% in 2008).<sup>[89]</sup> Associates receive a commission for referring customers to Amazon by placing links to Amazon on their websites if the referral results in a sale. Worldwide, Amazon has "over 900,000 members" in its affiliate programs.<sup>[90]</sup> In the middle of 2014, the Amazon Affiliate Program is used by 1.2% of all websites and it is the second most popular advertising network after Google Ads.<sup>[91]</sup> It is frequently used by websites and non-profits to provide a way for supporters to earn them commission.<sup>[92]</sup> Amazon reported over 1.3 million sellers sold products through Amazon's websites in 2007. Unlike *eBay*, Amazon sellers do not have to maintain separate payment accounts; all payments are handled by Amazon.

Associates can access the Amazon catalog directly on their websites by using the Amazon Web Services (AWS) *XML* service. A new affiliate product, *aStore*, allows Associates to embed a subset of Amazon products within another website, or linked to another website. In June 2010, Amazon Seller Product Suggestions was launched (rumored to be internally called "Project Genesis") to provide more transparency to sellers by recommending specific products to third-party sellers to sell on Amazon. Products suggested are based on customers' browsing history.<sup>[93]</sup>

## Amazon sales rank

The Amazon sales rank (ASR) provides an indication of the popularity of a product sold on any Amazon locale. It is a relative indicator of popularity that is updated hourly. Effectively, it is a "best sellers list" for the millions of products stocked by Amazon.<sup>[94]</sup> While the ASR has no direct effect on the sales of a product, it is used by Amazon to determine which products to include in its best-sellers lists. <sup>[94]</sup> Products that appear in these lists enjoy additional exposure on the Amazon website and this may lead to an increase in sales. In particular, products that experience large jumps (up or down) in their sales ranks may be included within Amazon's lists of "movers and shakers"; such a listing provides additional exposure that might lead to an increase in sales.<sup>[95]</sup> For competitive reasons, Amazon does not release actual sales figures to the public. However, Amazon has now begun to release *point of sale* data via the *Nielsen BookScan* service to verified authors.<sup>[96]</sup> While the ASR has been the source of much speculation by publishers, manufacturers and marketers, Amazon itself does not release the details of its sales rank calculation algorithm. Some companies have analyzed Amazon sales data to generate sales estimates based on the ASR,<sup>[97]</sup> though Amazon states:

Please keep in mind that our sales rank figures are simply meant to be a guide of general interest for the customer and not definitive sales information for publishers—we assume you have this information regularly from your distribution sources

— Amazon.com Help<sup>[98]</sup>

## Amazon's technology

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Information Management (IM) support Amazon's business strategy. The core technology that keeps Amazon running is Linux-based. As of 2005 , Amazon had the world's three largest Linux databases, with capacities of 7.8 TB, 18.5 TB and 24.7 TB. The central data warehouse of Amazon is made of 28 *Hewlett Packard Enterprise* servers with four CPUs per node running Oracle database software. Amazon's technology architecture handles millions of back-end operations every day, as well as queries from more than half a million third-party sellers. With hundreds of thousands of people sending their credit card numbers to Amazon's servers every day, security becomes a major concern. Amazon employs Netscape Secure Commerce Server using the Secure Socket Layer protocol which stores all credit card details in a separate database. The company also records data on customer buyer behavior which enables them to offer or recommend to an individual specific item, or bundles of items based upon preferences demonstrated through purchases or items visited.<sup>[99]</sup> Amazon runs *data centers* for its online services and owns generators or purchases *electricity* corresponding to its consumption, mostly *renewable energy*.<sup>[100]</sup> The *US Navy* has stated that its *Relocatable Radar* remains operable regardless of an Amazon *wind farm*.<sup>[101]</sup>

On January 31, 2013 Amazon experienced an outage that lasted approximately 49 minutes, leaving its site inaccessible to some customers.<sup>[102]</sup>

On May 5, 2014 Amazon unveiled a partnership with *Twitter*. Twitter users can link their accounts to an Amazon account and automatically add items to their shopping carts by responding to any tweet with an Amazon product link bearing the hashtag #AmazonCart. This allows customers to never leave their Twitter feed and the product is waiting for them when they go to the Amazon website.<sup>[103]</sup>

## Multi-level sales strategy

Amazon employs a multi-level e-commerce strategy. Amazon started off by focusing on Business-to-Consumer relationships between itself and its customers and Business-to-Business relationships between itself and its suppliers but it then moved to incorporate Customer-to-Business transactions as it realized the value of customer reviews as part of the product descriptions. It now also facilitates customer to customer with the provision of the Amazon marketplace which act as an intermediary to facilitate consumer to consumer transactions. The company lets almost anyone sell almost anything using its platform. In addition to an affiliate program that lets anybody post Amazon links and earn a commission on click-through sales, there is now a program which lets those affiliates build entire websites based on Amazon's platform.<sup>[104]</sup>

File:Amazon container trucks.jpeg  
Amazon 40' container turnpike double, a Long Combination Vehicle

In the World

Some other large e-commerce sellers use Amazon to sell their products in addition to selling them through their own websites. The sales are processed through Amazon.com and end up at individual sellers for processing and order fulfillment and Amazon leases space for these retailers. Small sellers of used and new goods go to Amazon Marketplace to offer goods at a fixed price.<sup>[105]</sup> Amazon also employs the use of **drop shippers** or meta sellers. These are members or entities that advertise goods on Amazon who order these goods direct from other competing websites but usually from other Amazon members. These meta sellers may have millions of products listed, have large transaction numbers and are grouped alongside other less prolific members giving them credibility as just someone who has been in business for a long time. Markup is anywhere from 50% to 100% and sometimes more, these sellers maintain that items are in stock when the opposite is true. As Amazon increases their dominance in the marketplace these drop shippers have become more and more commonplace in recent years.<sup>[*citation needed*]</sup>

On 2 February 2016, **General Growth Properties'** CEO, Sandeep Mathrani, during a year-end conference call with investors, analysts and reporters mentioned that Amazon plans to roll out 300 to 400 bookstores around the country. This was an unconfirmed comment, however, due to the source, a media frenzy ensued.<sup>[106]</sup> In November 2015, Amazon opened its first physical bookstore location. It is aptly named, Amazon Books and is located in University Village in Seattle. The store is 5,500 square feet and prices for all products match those on its website.<sup>[106]</sup>

## Revenue

Over the 2000–2010 decade, Amazon has developed a customer base of around 30 million people. Amazon.com is primarily a retail site with a sales revenue model. Amazon makes its money by taking a small percentage of the sale price of each item that is sold through its website. Amazon also allows companies to advertise their products by paying to be listed as featured products.<sup>[107]</sup>

## Controversies

*Main article: Amazon.com controversies*

Since its founding, the company has attracted criticism and controversy from multiple sources over its actions. These include: luring customers away from the site's brick and mortar competitors,<sup>[108]</sup> poor warehouse conditions for workers; anti-**unionization** efforts; Amazon Kindle remote content removal; taking public subsidies; its " **1-Click** patent" claims; anti-competitive actions;<sup>[109]</sup> **price discrimination**; various decisions over whether to censor or publish content such as the **WikiLeaks** website; **LGBT** book sales rank;<sup>[110][111]</sup> and works containing **libel**, facilitating **dogfight**, **cockfight**, or **pedophile** activities. In December 2011, Amazon faced backlash from small businesses for running a one-day deal to promote its new Price Check app. Shoppers who used the app to check prices in a brick-and-mortar store were offered a 5% discount to purchase the same item from Amazon.<sup>[112]</sup> Companies like Groupon, eBay and Taap.it countered Amazon's promotion by offering \$10 off from their products.<sup>[113][114]</sup> The company has also faced accusations of putting undue pressure on suppliers to maintain and extend its profitability. One effort to squeeze the most vulnerable book publishers was known within the company as the Gazelle Project, after Bezos suggested, according to **Brad Stone**, "that Amazon should approach these small publishers the way a cheetah would pursue a sickly gazelle."<sup>[80]</sup> In July 2014 the **Federal Trade Commission** launched a lawsuit against the company alleging it was promoting in-app purchases to children, which were being transacted without parental consent.<sup>[115][116]</sup>

### Sales and use taxes

*Main article: Amazon tax*

Amazon state sales tax collection policy has changed over the years, since in the company's beginning it did not collect any sale taxes. In the U.S., **state and local sales taxes** are levied by state and local governments, not at the federal level. In most countries where Amazon operates, a sales tax or **value added tax** is uniform throughout the country, and Amazon is obliged to collect it from all customers. Proponents of forcing Amazon.com to collect sales tax—at least in states where it maintains a physical presence—argue the corporation wields an anti-competitive advantage over storefront businesses forced to collect sales tax.<sup>[117]</sup>

Many U.S. states in the 21st century have passed **online shopping** sales tax laws designed to compel Amazon.com and other **e-commerce** retailers to collect state and local sales taxes from its customers. Amazon.com originally collected sales tax only from five states as of 2011, but as of April 2017 collects sales taxes from customers in all 45 states that have a state sales tax and in **Washington, D.C.**<sup>[118]</sup>

Amazon does not collect sales taxes from **Alaska**, **Delaware**, **Montana**, **New Hampshire** and **Oregon**, since those states do not have state sales taxes.

### Poor working conditions

Amazon has attracted widespread criticism by both current employees, which refer to themselves as Amazonians, <sup>[119]</sup> and former employees,<sup>[120][121]</sup> as well as the media and politicians for poor working conditions. In 2011 it was publicized that at the Breingsville, Pennsylvania warehouse, workers had to carry out work in 100 °F (38 °C) heat, resulting in employees becoming extremely uncomfortable and suffering from dehydration and **collapse**. Loading-bay doors were not opened to allow in fresh air as "managers were worried about theft". Amazon's initial response was to pay for an ambulance to sit outside on call to cart away overheated employees.

Some workers, "pickers", who travel the building with a trolley and a handheld scanner "picking" customer orders can walk up to 15 miles during their workday and if they fall behind on their targets, they can be reprimanded. The handheld scanners feedback to the employee real-time information on how fast or slowly they are doing; the scanners also serve to allow Team Leads and Area Managers to track the specific locations of employees and how much "idle time" they gain when not working.<sup>[122][123]</sup> In a German television report broadcast in February 2013, journalists Diana Löbl and Peter Onneken conducted a covert investigation at the distribution center of Amazon in the town of **Bad Hersfeld** in the German state of **Hessen**. The report highlights the behavior of some of the security guards, themselves being employed by a third party company, who apparently either had a **Neo-nazi** background or deliberately dressed in Neo-Nazi apparel and who were intimidating foreign and temporary female workers at its distribution centers. The third party security company involved was delisted by Amazon as a business contact shortly after that report.<sup>[124][125][126][127][128]</sup>

In March 2015, it was reported in *The Verge* that Amazon will be removing 18 months long **non-compete clauses** from its US employment contracts for hourly-paid workers, after criticism that it was acting unreasonably in preventing such employees from finding other work. Even short-term temporary workers have to sign contracts that prohibit them from working at any company where they would "directly or indirectly" support any good or service that competes with those they helped support at Amazon, for 18 months after leaving Amazon, even if they are fired or made redundant.<sup>[129][130]</sup>

A substantial *New York Times* article published on August 16, 2015, described evidence of an intimidating and confrontational working culture for the company's office workers.<sup>[21]</sup>

In an effort to boost employee morale, on November 2, 2015, Amazon announced that it would be extending 6 weeks of paid leave for new mothers and fathers. This change includes birth parents and adoptive parents and can be applied in conjunction with existing maternity leave and medical leave for new mothers.<sup>[131]</sup>

## Lobbying

Amazon lobbies the United States federal government and state governments on issues such as the enforcement of sales taxes on online sales, transportation safety, privacy and data protection and intellectual property. According to regulatory filings, Amazon.com focuses its lobbying on the US Congress, the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Reserve. Amazon.com spent roughly \$3.5 million, \$5 million and \$9.5 million on lobbying, in 2013, 2014 and 2015, respectively.<sup>[132]</sup>

Amazon.com was a corporate member of the **American Legislative Exchange Council** (ALEC) until it dropped membership following protests at its shareholders' meeting May 24, 2012.<sup>[133]</sup>

The initiative **Choice in eCommerce** was founded on May 8, 2013 by several online retailers in Berlin, Germany. <sup>[134][135][136][137][138][139][140][141][142]</sup> The cause was, in the view of the initiative, sales bans and online restrictions by individual manufacturers. The dealers felt cut off from their main sales channel and thus deprived them the opportunity to use online platforms like Amazon, **eBay** or **Rakuten** in a competitive market for the benefit of their customers.

In 2014, Amazon expanded its lobbying practices as it prepared to lobby the **Federal Aviation Administration** to approve its drone delivery program, hiring the Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld lobbying firm in June.<sup>[143]</sup> Amazon and its lobbyists have visited with Federal Aviation Administration officials and aviation committees in Washington, D.C. to explain its plans to deliver packages.<sup>[144]</sup>

## Notable businesses founded by former employees

A number of companies have been started and founded by former Amazon employees.<sup>[145]</sup>

- Findory** was founded by Greg Linden
- Flipkart** was founded by **Sachin Bansal** and **Binny Bansal**<sup>[146]</sup>
- Foodista.com** was founded by **Barnaby Dorfman**
- Hulu** was led by **Jason Kilar**, a former SVP
- Infibeam** was founded by Vishal Mehta
- Instacart** was founded by Apporva Mehta
- Jambool** and **SocialGold** were co-founded by **Vikas Gupta** and Reza Hussein
- Jet.com** was founded by **Marc Lore**
- Nimbula** was co-founded by Chris Pinkham, a former VP and **Willem Van Blijon**, a former Product Manager
- Opencode** was co-founded by **Jesse Robbins**, a former engineer and manager
- Pelago** was co-founded by Jeff Holden, a former SVP and Darren Vengroff, a former Principal Engineer
- Pro.com** was founded by **Matt Williams**, former longtime Amazon executive and 'shadow' to Jeff Bezos<sup>[147]</sup>
- Quora** was co-founded by engineer **Charlie Cheever**
- TeachStreet** was founded by Dave Schappell, an early product manager
- The Book Depository** was founded by **Andrew Crawford**; acquired by Amazon in 2011.
- Trusera** was founded by Keith Schorsch, an early Amazonian
- Twilio** was founded by Jeff Lawson, a former Technical Product Manager
- Vittana** was founded by Kushal Chakrabarti and Brett Witt
- Wikinvest** was founded by Michael Sha

## See also

- Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award**
- Amazon Flexible Payments Service**
- Amazon Marketplace**
- Amazon Standard Identification Number** (ASIN)
- List of book distributors
- Statistically improbable phrases** – Amazon.com's phrase extraction technique for indexing books



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A leading critic of Amazon.com Inc.'s proposal to develop a 1.5-million- square-foot campus in Queens was nominated Monday to a seat on the state's Public Authorities Control Board, where he could ultimately veto state actions on the project. Sen. Mike Gianaris, a Democrat who represents Long Island City, Queens, was picked by the Senate Democrats to join the five-member PACB. The board must approve financing for projects run by Empire State Development and several other state authorities. CNBC•3 hours ago. Amazon.com, Inc., doing business as Amazon (/ˈæmə.zɒn/), is an American electronic commerce and cloud computing company that was founded on July 5, 1994, by Jeff Bezos and is based in Seattle, Washington. It is the largest Internet-based retailer in the world by total sales and market capitalization. Amazon.com started as an online bookstore, later diversifying to sell DVDs, Blu-rays, CDs, video downloads/streaming, MP3 downloads/streaming, audiobook downloads/streaming, software, video games