

Upstart Co-Lab backs Bindery Books to bring overlooked authors to bigger audiences

impactalpha.com/upstart-co-lab-backs-bindery-books-to-bring-overlooked-authors-to-bigger-audiences/

Roodgally Senatus

April 16, 2026



Tastemakers, bloggers, reviewers and other influencers are an under-tapped channel for promoting books. San Francisco-based Bindery Books is looking to help them monetize their online audiences to disrupt traditional book publishing and get overlooked and under-resourced authors in front of larger audiences.

“Discovering and empowering new, diverse voices and serving highly-engaged, passionate online reader communities is an enormous business opportunity that also addresses many inequities and inefficiencies in the current publishing landscape,” said **Ward Wolff** of Upstart Co-Lab, which invested in Bindery Books. Wolff says the startup’s mission to create a publishing industry that is more creative, independent and equitable aligns with Upstart’s impact thesis (see, [“Upstart Co-Lab’s pipeline of creative economy deals is now an investable impact strategy.”](#)).

Creative economy

Bindery Books allows book influencers to build online reader communities and even become acquiring editors and book publishers. Bindery offers advances on book sales and handles production and distribution. Authors receive half of net royalties, the online creators who acquire their books receive 25%, and Bindery retains the rest.

Hundreds of thousands of readers currently are buying books such as **Deena ElGenaidi's** novel, "Dust Settles North," which follows two young Egyptian-American siblings after their mother's passing.

"Tastemakers and their audiences have become the center of gravity in the book world, propelling books onto bestseller lists and the big screen," said Bindery's **Matt Kaye**. He says the company is aiming to help "overlooked and marginalized authors break through on the power of their stories, not the size of their platform."

Upstart Co-Lab says it is the first impact investor in Bindery. The company is backed by angel investors, including **Markus Dohle**, former CEO of Penguin Random House, the world's largest trade book publisher.