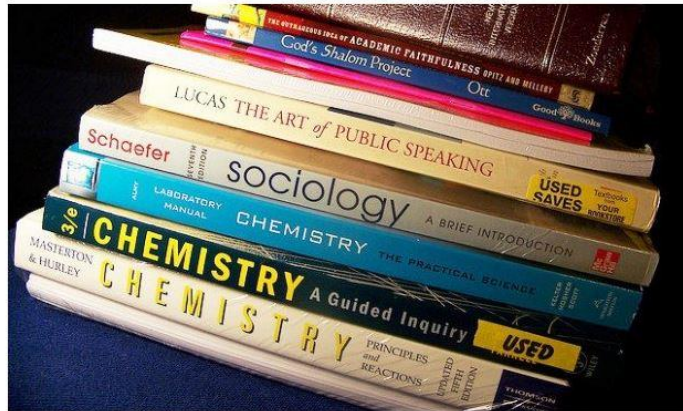




## How One Utah Entrepreneur Survived a Fight With Amazon

*“Anything that extends life for a used book is bad for publishers because they don’t play in used books.”*



By Kenneth Lee Sands on September 4, 2014



Utah entrepreneur Alan Martin got the idea to start [CampusBookRentals.com](http://CampusBookRentals.com) back in 2007 when he realized (first hand) exactly how much inefficiencies drove up the costs of textbook prices. His solution? Start a company that rented the textbooks instead.

The story of how the company got started, and how it pivoted when it was cut off from being supplied by Amazon, was featured in a recent *New York Times* [article](#).

Martin also explained that his company was built on a “just-in-time” model where they would wait until a customer rented the book before actually buying it from the supplier (Amazon or Half.com).

This worked well enough for them until Amazon cut them off. Even though they were able to work out contracts later, Martin decided to transition away from that model.

The transition resulted in two new products, [Sidewalk](#) which (through a partnership with the bookstores) brought textbook rental to the campus itself. “We brought in touch-screen kiosks. Students could pick up a book, check out and then walk away with a rented book in hand. Which made the stores dramatically more competitive. Their prices were less than buying a used book online,” Martin explained.

We’ll save you from repeating the accolades the company has received. The concept has been extremely successful.

When asked by the Times, “Who hates you now?” Martin responded, “Anything that extends life for a used book is bad for publishers because they don’t play in used books. Also, folks like Amazon, because we’re making the campus bookstore far more viable than it was.”

You can read more about Martin and his story in the *New York Times* article [here](#).



### Kenneth Lee Sands

[Google+](#) [Facebook](#)

Kenneth Lee Sands is a writer and entrepreneur with a passionate interest in computer programming, music, and politics. Born and raised North Florida, Sands has lived in Alaska, Brazil, Vermont, and now Utah.

Story Details

#### FURTHER READING

### From One Beehive Startup To Another

August 26, 2014

#### WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



Subscribe