



Book shop | Photo source natasha ong on Unsplash

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IN LONDON, ONE-HOUR BOOK DELIVERY FROM LOCAL, INDEPENDENT STORES

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

Near St is a searchable database that shows inventory from local bookstores, enabling customers to collect instantly or opt for same day delivery.

Talk to any book lover and they will be able to boast with affinity the great offerings at their favorite independent bookstores, listing off special havens in the hidden nooks of the city in which they live. But as giants like Amazon engulf the industry with their difficult-to-refuse convenience and lower-than-anyone price, these beloved, local small businesses are facing very real pressures. We have already seen a browser plugin that [hijacks Amazon's site](#) to tell customers the best book price from their local store, and now offering even more convenience is [NearSt](#). The searchable database enables Londoners to enter in their post code and the book or author they're looking for, then order an item for instant collection, or — get this — one-hour delivery.

Almost 40 stores are already participating in NearSt's program; the platform even comes with a smartphone app that lets bookworms browse local establishments around them. When a book is selected, the site gives customers two options — walk for however many minutes and collect it from a local store, or have it delivered within an hour. Delivery is done by a range of bike and scooter messengers, and the site takes 6 percent of the final sale price of the book. There are no fees for stores to join, and the sign up process can be done in less than 10 minutes. In the stores, once an order comes in, an automated phone call asks store clerks to check that they have the item in stock, then all they have to do is press a button to answer.

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Email: support@nearst.co

Website: [nearst](http://nearst.co)

Takeaway:

NearSt aims to challenge Amazon by making bookshops' inventory visible to shoppers' smartphones. Since 2015, the company has extended its services to other local shops across the UK, enabling them to list live in-store inventory and boost footfall. How else can smart tech divert customers to local, independent businesses?