

From the brains behind the Full-Time FBA blog

ONLINE ARBITRAGE TIPS



Strategies for Maximizing
Online Sourcing for Your
Amazon FBA Business

Stephen & Rebecca Smotherman

Online Arbitrage Tips: Strategies for Maximizing Online Sourcing for Your Amazon FBA Business

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Introduction

Are you ready to learn some solid tips for using online arbitrage (or OA for short) in your Amazon FBA sourcing? Then you're in the right place!

The fancy definition of arbitrage is the purchase and sale of an asset in order to make a profit from a difference in the price. It is **a trade that is profitable** because of the price differences of assets in different markets.

That's a lot of words to give a fancy definition of a concept that can be described more simply this way:

Arbitrage is the process of buying low in order to sell high for a profit.

Online arbitrage is the name Amazon sellers have given to the process of buying items online in order to resell them via Amazon.

Some FBA sellers do not like to go out and drive around to retail stores to source for items, or they have a time or scheduling constraint preventing them from driving around for retail arbitrage. Others live in areas of the country (or the world!) that don't have lots of retail stores within driving distance. For those sellers, **online stores provide a great source of items to buy low and sell high on Amazon.** Online stores are similar to brick-and-mortar stores in that you can find items at clearance prices, sale prices, and full retail prices that are priced higher on Amazon. You can often buy multiples of items online and have them shipped to your house so you can inspect them and ship them to Amazon for resale.

Being able to buy multiples of good selling items is an important component of growing the profits of your Amazon FBA business. OA gives you the possibility of "going deep" on items by buying multiples that you can sell either quickly or over a period of time and make more profits with less work than going to many garage sales and thrift stores to find the same number of items. The profit margin and ROI (return on investment) are often higher on an individual item you can find at a garage sale or thrift store, though, so there is a bit of a trade-off when it comes to choosing your sources for arbitrage.

A little about us

My name is Stephen Smotherman, and I'm honored that you've chosen to read this book. I've been selling online for about 20 years. Back in 1998, I discovered selling on eBay and got hooked. Selling on eBay was a fun hobby for me for over a decade, and it helped pay some of the bills. I became an eBay PowerSeller with Top Rated Seller Status



and held those honors for many years.

In 2011, I found myself desperately looking for a good paying job. I was a single dad trying to find a way to raise my 4 young boys without having to put them all in daycare or after-school care. I needed a way to work from home and make a full-time income. In late 2011, I discovered selling on Amazon via FBA. My whole e-commerce business began to transition from selling on eBay to selling on Amazon. I still sell on eBay every now and then, but Amazon gets the bulk of my business. In fact, Amazon has recognized me as a Top Holiday Seller. That means out of all sellers on Amazon, my sales were in the top 25% as well as having an A+ customer satisfaction rating. Amazon no longer awards sellers for being Top Holiday Sellers, but it was a fun honor to receive that award.

Selling on Amazon helped move my e-commerce business from a hobby to the way I now earn a full-time income. I've made a full-time income as an online reseller since 2012, and I absolutely love it. I enjoy being my own boss, working from home, and setting my own hours. I love being able to go treasure hunting and get paid for it. The freedom FBA provides is awesome.



In my personal life, my story changed forever for the good in 2013 when I married Rebecca. She began working part-time with me on my Amazon business shortly before the wedding, and we have loved being partners in life and in business. Rebecca has increasingly taken on more responsibility in our Amazon business, and since 2015 she has been in charge of all of our online arbitrage (OA), while I am responsible for our retail arbitrage (RA) and wholesale sourcing.

Since we are able to earn a full-time income by selling online and spending only part-time hours, we decided to blog about it. If you're ever curious how we are able to sell on Amazon via FBA and earn a full-time income, then come join Rebecca and me over at www.fulltimefba.com. You can subscribe to updates, get a bunch of freebies, and hear our stories. We offer tons of free tips and tricks on how to best manage a full-time FBA business. We update the blog often and are always offering fresh content.

Basic understanding of Amazon FBA

I don't want to assume everyone reading this book is familiar with the ins and outs of online reselling. To make the most out of the knowledge in this book, you need to

know the basics about buying/selling on Amazon via FBA. If you don't have a foundational knowledge of selling on Amazon via FBA, check out these resources:

[Arbitrage](#) by Chris Green - In my opinion, the best book for understanding the basics about how buying and reselling online works.

[**JumpStart Amazon: Build a Successful Amazon FBA Business**](#) by Stephen

Smotherman – *JumpStart Amazon*, the definitive course about selling via Amazon FBA, is a combination ebook (200+ pages) and video course (10+ hours) that walks you through, step-by-step, how to set up and run a successful Amazon business. The content in the ebook and videos are the same, so you can



choose how you would most like to consume the content (read or watch). From creating your Amazon account and structuring your home-based business to finding profitable products and maximizing your profits, this course will show you how to not just start your Amazon business but also set yourself up for long-term success.

Disclaimers

While the purpose of this book is to show you tips and strategies for using online sourcing for your Amazon FBA business, I know that each person reading this book will have results that are his or her own. The contents of this book are based on my opinions and experiences and are not a guarantee that the reader will be able to replicate the results from the formulas contained in this book. Amazon's rules and procedures are often updated, so be sure to familiarize yourself with the Amazon guidelines for the most recent information.

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Moving forward

Our hope is that you can use the tips and strategies from this ebook either to add online sourcing to your Amazon FBA business or to grow the online arbitrage component of your business to great success. If you implement the strategies we discuss here, you should be well on your way to finding more profitable inventory to send to the FBA warehouse so that your sales and profits can increase!

Looking forward to seeing you on the blog,

Stephen & Rebecca Smotherman

www.fulltimefba.com

Chapter 1:

How Online Arbitrage Can Help Your Amazon FBA Business

In this chapter we will cover the basics of why you should consider using OA as a sourcing strategy for your Amazon FBA business. In our own business, we started out slowly adding OA as a strategy, but we have reached a level now where our online arbitrage sourcing equals or surpasses our retail arbitrage (RA) and wholesale sourcing.

Now that we've seen the benefits of doing OA, we want to share with you a summary of our thoughts on the strategy. Don't worry, a future chapter will cover the ways we've learned to deal with the setbacks you might encounter while doing OA. As with most things in life and business, OA has its pros and cons, and we want to equip you to enjoy the positives and correctly handle the negatives.

- **OA saves time.**

When we do online arbitrage as opposed to retail arbitrage, we don't have to spend time driving from location to location looking for inventory to purchase, nor do we have to spend time standing in line to check out. Plus OA can be done with the help of time-saving Google Chrome extensions that make the process go even more smoothly. Time is the one resource we can never get back once it's spent, so we do what we can to save it whenever possible.

- **OA saves wear and tear on our vehicles.**

We don't know about you, but we have put tens of thousands of miles on our vehicles in a couple of years' time from doing RA. Of course, those miles are deductible when it comes to filing our taxes, but we still would rather not have to replace our vehicles so quickly. Once Rebecca started doing mostly OA, the number of miles she was putting on her car for business purposes dwindled down to almost nothing.



- **OA saves wear and tear on our relationships.**

Because OA saves so much time compared to RA, we're left with more time to spend with our family. When I (Stephen) am gone from 7 am to 7 pm to pick up a big RA haul, I just don't have as much time to spend with my wife and kids. Rebecca and I still enjoy an occasional RA adventure, and we always love to do some baseball travelage. But on a regular basis, I would much rather be at home to have lunch with my wife and see my kids after school.

- **Online stores are open for business 24/7.**

Some brick-and-mortar stores don't open until 10am and then close at 7pm. Some aren't open on Sunday mornings. This can be a huge limitation for folks trying to do RA when they're not at their full-time job. With OA, any time of the day or night that we feel like shopping, we can work at sourcing for FBA.



- **OA allows us to source at stores not located in our geographic area.**

We don't have a Kmart in the Fort Worth area, but we can shop online at Kmart if we choose. Same goes for many other retail stores across the U.S. In RA we're limited by the number of stores within a certain radius from our home.

- **OA provides free shipping boxes for our Amazon FBA shipments.**

When we receive an OA shipment from a retail store, we're often able to ship the items out to the Amazon warehouse in the same box. We can save time and money by not having to make trips to Home Depot or Lowe's to buy shipping boxes.

- **OA provides free dunnage for our Amazon FBA shipments.**

Dunnage is the stuff that goes in the empty spaces of a shipping box you're sending to the FBA warehouse. We can reuse the air pillows, paper, and even small cardboard boxes that come in OA shipments as dunnage in our Amazon shipments, saving time and money from having to get that dunnage elsewhere.

- **OA allows you to save money by shopping through cash back websites.**

We typically shop through [Rakuten](#) (formerly Ebates) and [Swagbucks](#) to get cash back on our online purchases, but there are other sites that have similar programs. Your purchases cost the same amount by going through their links to shop, but you get a percentage back on every purchase. The percentage varies by store and can change from time to time, so do your due diligence to figure out how to get the best percentage. Another bonus with Rakuten and Swagbucks is they both have a Google Chrome extension you can activate with one click after you've already started shopping, rather than having to navigate to the cash back website before you start filling up your online cart.

We hope we've been able to show you some reasons why OA can be a great strategy to implement in your Amazon FBA business. We know it's not for everyone — some people much prefer the thrill of the hunt in thrifting or RA, and we get that. But OA can be an excellent way to boost your profits while spending less time away from home.

Chapter 2:

Getting Started with Online Arbitrage

My name is Rebecca, and I'm a recovering online arbitrage skeptic.

A few years ago Stephen and I started hearing a lot of buzz about people switching to doing more OA and less RA. At the time we had so much going on with our business that we just tucked away the idea of OA in the back of our minds.



Fast forward a few months, and Chris Green released his book, [Online Arbitrage](#), amid much fanfare in the reseller community. Again, Stephen and I questioned, is OA really all that great? Do we really need to try it out? I took one look at the book's price tag (whoa, that thing's pricey!), another look at the calendar (it was a few weeks from Q4, do we really want to invest in learning a new skill?), and I convinced Stephen not to buy the book right away.

Fast forward another several months (I promise this story is going somewhere). The adrenaline of Q4 subsided, and we were deciding where to focus in the new year. We love setting goals and learning new skills, and we tossed around the idea (again!) of becoming serious about OA. The idea of sourcing from home was definitely appealing, but I was still struggling to overcome my biggest hang-up with the concept of OA: hours and hours of clicking on websites, with one or two purchases? No, thanks. Spending the time and effort to find and train a virtual assistant? Huh-uh, don't want to do that either. We weren't wanting to dedicate a massive portion of our sourcing capital towards OA, just enough to experiment — it didn't seem like there was an easy way to get our feet wet without investing a lot of time and money.

Until we started using deal lists like Cyber Monkey Deals, [Gated List](#), [Rabbit Hole Riches](#), and others. The concept of using deal lists was a huge game changer for us. **So, we took the plunge, read Chris Green's *Online Arbitrage*, and got some list subscriptions to see how OA would go for us.**

Remember how I said I'm a recovering OA skeptic? Seriously, I've been the one all along who has told Stephen I didn't want to do OA, I didn't want to spend money on a pricey book, I wasn't interested in getting another monthly subscription, blah blah blah.


It didn't take long after starting to dabble in OA that I got hooked. At this point in our business, I do all of my sourcing 100% through OA, while Stephen does our RA and wholesale sourcing. I can't say enough about how this combo of resources —

Online Arbitrage Tips

subscription deal lists combined with my Kindle copy of *Online Arbitrage* — gave us a boost in the direction of doing solid OA sourcing.

Note: At this point in my OA sourcing, I don't rely as heavily on deal lists as I did in the beginning, but I don't think I personally would have found success at OA if I had skipped straight to using online scanning tools like OAXray or Tactical Arbitrage first.

Let me give you a few reasons why I'm glad I finally got around to reading *Online Arbitrage*:

- *Online Arbitrage* spells out exactly how to set up your browser to maximize your time doing OA sourcing. Seriously...exactly. Which browser works best, which extensions to use, what order to look at things each day. Time is precious, and if you follow his instructions and just practice on a regular basis, you will pick up speed and keep from wasting hours on needless tasks.
- 
- If you aren't well versed in how to read graphs for sales rank and price, he's got a lot of great tips for making sense of those numbers. This is crucial not just in doing OA, but in any type of sourcing for FBA. The skills I've honed while practicing what I've learned in OA can carry over if I'm ever out doing retail arbitrage, and I'm able to make sourcing decisions more quickly and confidently when I'm out scanning in stores. To me, that was a huge boost.
 - If you get the Kindle version of *Online Arbitrage*, you're getting a multimedia OA course, not just a book. Some days you feel like reading, some days you feel like watching and listening — the Kindle version has both (you'll want to read/watch on a Kindle tablet or on a Kindle app on your phone, tablet, or computer). The paperback version is great, too, but you'll have to use the links to watch the extras on a device.
 - Like other books I've read by Chris Green, *Online Arbitrage* has more than just skills outlined in it. You also get a look into the mindset of a business expert — and when you spend time getting to know how someone else thinks, you learn more than just skills. You learn the root of what makes people successful at their work, which is priceless. It's not just knowledge; it's wisdom.

Now, with that knowledge base, using deal lists became one of my favorite ways to source each day. Because we weren't wanting to invest a ton of money or time in OA

to begin with, I found that the deals on Cyber Monkey Deals or Gated List are just perfect for us, for the following reasons:

- **Ten deals a day is a good amount for me to look through.** Getting a virtual assistant to send me a whole spreadsheet of deals would be overwhelming. When you're working on a limited budget for OA, you don't need to get bogged down in dozens of potential deals a day.
- **Using deal lists is a great way to learn about the parameters of what constitutes a good deal.** If you find a quality deal list, those parameters should be constantly fine-tuned by the admin. Now, ten deals a day on a list doesn't mean we'll get ten deals that we *buy* each day. Some days we may get five deals worth taking action on, and other days none. But it evens out over the course of a week or so, and using a solid deal list can produce a constant flow of inventory showing up on your doorstep.
- Again, by using the Keepa graphs linked to each deal in a list **I've been able to get faster and more confident at making good buying decisions**, which has greatly impacted my sourcing in all areas of our business.
- **Over time using deal lists has helped me develop discipline and hone my sourcing skills to a greater degree than when I wasn't receiving daily lists.** Consistency of practice is key in improving any skills, and that includes scanning and sourcing. I've been working with Stephen at our FBA business for several years, but I have a lot of other work responsibilities and endless work around the house — never have I sourced as much and as regularly as I have since getting started with daily deal list subscriptions. Now I look at items and practice making buying decisions EVERY. SINGLE. DAY. Without leaving the house!

I could gush on and on about how exciting it has been for me as an online reseller since learning the world of OA. Stephen is, by background and gifting, the serious business person in our relationship — I'm the one who has come into doing business more reluctantly and timidly, having to take steps out of my comfort zone all along the way. Reading [Online Arbitrage](#) and looking through deal lists each day have given me the perfect online arbitrage starter kit.

Note: Chris Green's book, *Online Arbitrage* is available in full color, black and white, and even a 3-chapter preview mini-book. It's also been updated with all new information.

Chapter 3:

Using Online Arbitrage Subscriptions

I (Rebecca) want to follow up on the previous chapter and dive a bit deeper into using OA subscriptions to boost your Amazon FBA profits. There are a few main types of subscriptions you can use to do your online sourcing:

- Daily deal lists ([Gated List](#), [Rabbit Hole Riches](#), [Cyber Monkey Deals](#), etc)
- Scanning tools ([OAXray](#) and [Tactical Arbitrage](#))
- Tools to help with making buying decisions ([Keepa](#), [How Many](#), [Scanalyze](#), etc)

When I first got started with OA, I had some reservations about paying money to get daily deal lists, scanning software, or Chrome extensions. These are the types of questions I asked myself:

- *Is it really worth the money?*
- *Will I really find enough items to purchase from these subscriptions?*
- *Will these lists be sent to so many Amazon sellers that anything I buy from them will increase in competition and decrease in selling price?*

As I gained experience in using deal lists and extensions, I developed a way to decide whether or not an OA tool works for me as a reseller. Stephen and I have tried out more lists and more paid Chrome extensions than the ones mentioned here, but the products mentioned in this chapter are the ones we have stuck with and received the most benefit from.



Each time I try a new OA tool, I follow the same set of guidelines so that I can make an objective decision about whether it is good for our Amazon FBA business. I'll share my steps with you below, but know that your own guidelines may vary. The great thing about selling on Amazon is that you can conduct your own experiments – you're your own boss, so decide what you want to try and how you want to try it, play around, and have fun!

Here are the ways that I get the most out of my OA subscriptions:

1. Use free trials when they are offered.

Most subscription services offer a 3-day or 7-day trial or a money back guarantee period. If they don't offer one, ask for one. If they still don't give it to you, that's a red flag for that service.

The great thing about a free trial period for a service that provides you with leads on items to resell is you can use the money you make from those items to buy more months of the subscription. If you can't find enough during the free trial period to pay for your next subscription plus plenty of profit, then you know that particular service isn't for you.

2. Subscribe for a month to test the tool even further.

Free trials are great, but 3 days or 7 days still isn't that long. If you subscribe for one month, you'll get a better sense of what the product offers on a regular basis. This isn't like signing up for a cell phone contract — you won't be committed to subscribe for two years. Just try a month, see how it goes, and make your decision on whether you want to keep subscribing. Don't forget to set a reminder in your calendar to assess the situation when it gets close to time for the month to end.



3. Set strict buying parameters for yourself.

Every good list service has different parameters for the deals they provide: the minimum net payout, ROI, sales rank, etc. Find a list that most closely resembles your buying parameters, but then don't get caught up in the excitement of buying off the list and throw your own guidelines out the window. I keep a piece of paper with my minimum ROI, net payout, sales rank, favorite shoe sizes, maximum number of color variations, etc, near my computer while I'm sourcing for OA shoes, so that I remember to stick with it. A deal list is only helpful if YOU already know what types of deals you're looking for.

4. Use filters within the list to help your decision-making process.

Another way to help you stick to your buying parameters is to use the filters provided by the maker of the subscription list, if it comes in the form of a spreadsheet. The very first thing I do when I start looking at a list each day is filter out items below my minimum ROI requirement. I also filter out items from certain stores I've had trouble with in the past. If I can eliminate a few items right off the bat, I can save myself time in not having to look at them and keep myself from being tempted to buy something that doesn't fit my guidelines. The same goes with scanning software — you can set your filters right within the software and filter out anything that doesn't match your parameters. You know how you're tempted to buy something, anything, just to keep from walking out of a store empty-handed when you're doing retail arbitrage? The same phenomenon happens with OA, but you can prevent it by using your filters well.

5. Keep detailed notes about your free trials or test months.

You won't be able to make an objective decision at the end of a free trial or a test month of a subscription if you don't pay attention to what you're actually doing with that subscription during the trial. Keep a notebook or spreadsheet with notes about how many items you purchase, how much money you spend, how many items sell, how quickly they sell, and how much the selling price differs from the time you sent it in.

6. Follow rabbit trails.

The great thing about deal lists and scanning software is that they set you off in the direction of deals...but then you're on your own! You have the freedom to buy the exact item on the list, or you can buy other items similar to it. If you're only buying the exact items on the list, you're limiting yourself as a reseller. Spend the extra time to do some research on the rabbit trails, and you may find even better deals that no one else knows about.

7. Don't get lazy about going through your deals each day.

The worst thing to do with an online subscription list is ignore it. Set aside a specific time each day to work through your list or play around with your scanning software. If you don't put it on your calendar, you're much more likely to forget it or slough it off. Be consistent and you will develop a habit of doing solid OA each day. Most lists are released at around the same time each day, so figure out when it will be in your inbox and set a reminder on your phone to look at it as soon as possible after it's released.

I hope these tips can empower you to try a new online arbitrage service and find success in this aspect of your Amazon FBA business.

Chapter 4:

Chrome Extensions for Online Arbitrage

If you're going to do OA in your Amazon FBA business, you want to have the right tools to make the process as efficient as possible. We've spent a lot of time discussing subscription lists for OA deals in the past couple of chapters, and now we want to spend some time sharing with you another type of tool that's helped us build up the OA side of our FBA business: extensions for the Google Chrome web browser.

It may be possible to use a web browser other than Chrome to do efficient OA purchasing, but I'm not aware of it. When I (Rebecca) first read Chris Green's comprehensive book [Online Arbitrage](#), I hadn't even downloaded Chrome on my MacBook Pro yet. I was a Safari girl all the way. But now, I use Chrome on a daily basis for my OA purchases, and I get annoyed if I find myself trying to shop efficiently from Safari. It's just not as easy to do without my favorite Chrome extensions.

So without further ado, here is my list of my eight favorite Google Chrome extensions for Online Arbitrage:

1. Keepa – Amazon Price Tracker

Hands down, my most used Chrome extension. I look at the data from my [Keepa](#) extension first thing every time I pull up a potential OA buy. The

extension puts price tracking data right on the Amazon product page, below the product title and picture, and lets me see at a glance whether Amazon is in or out of stock on an item, as well as sales rank and price history for Amazon and third party sellers. I seriously get annoyed now when I pull up a product page on another browser and don't immediately see my Keepa data. I'm completely spoiled by this extension. Note: Some Keepa data is available for free, but I highly recommend using the paid subscription version of Keepa to get their full range of data and make the best buying decisions.



2. Amazon Assistant

A great way to save steps opening tabs on your browser is by using the Amazon Assistant. When you're looking at a product on a retail store's website, click on the Amazon Assistant extension to bring up potential matches for the product on the Amazon website. Easy peasy. (Notice I said potential matches. As always, do your due diligence to make sure items are a true match.)

3. Rakuten Cash Back

Cash back for online shopping is one of the huge perks of doing OA. The [Rakuten](#) (formerly Ebates) extension makes it super easy to remember to get cash back on your OA purchases. When I first got started doing OA, I tried to be rebellious and just do it without all the extensions. Why, why, why? I was always forgetting to go through my cash back websites first, and I was leaving money on the table by not getting a percentage back. With the Rakuten extension, when I first start my shopping session on a retail store website, I click the button at the top of the browser to activate my Rakuten account and get cash back without having to navigate to a separate website first. So helpful for forgetful old me. Sign up through [this link](#) to get a \$10 bonus for signing up.

4. SwagButton

This one works the same way as the Rakuten extension, but for cash back in the form of [Swagbucks](#). Some retail stores tend to give a higher percentage back if you go through Swagbucks than if you go through Rakuten for your purchase. The percentages can change from day to day, so check the information that pops up at the top of your browser window before you choose which one to activate for your purchase.



5. Honey

The [Honey](#) extension works by automating the process of applying promotional codes and coupons to your online purchases. You could Google to find those codes and manually input them to see if they'll apply to your purchase...or you could click the Honey extension before you check out and let Honey do the work for you. I've saved tons of money and tons of time by letting Honey search and try codes for me.

6. PriceBlink

Whether you're on an Amazon product page or a retail store website, PriceBlink will attempt to find a better price on the item you're looking at. It's a good practice to always glance at PriceBlink and see if you could be making your OA purchase for less money at another website.

7. OAXray

[OAXray](#) is a paid Chrome extension that allows you to scan a retail store website and find potential OA deals to resell on Amazon. If you're just getting started, by all means learn the ropes of OA with the free extensions and build up enough sales to justify paying for a monthly subscription to an extension like OAXray. But once you're ready to start spending more of your sourcing budget per month on OA, you might find that a scanning extension like OAXray is indispensable. I know it has

saved me countless hours of my valuable time clicking and comparing products on Amazon and retail websites. We'll go into more detail about OAXray in the next chapter

8. Scanalyze

The [Scanalyze](#) extension is another paid subscription that I have found to be extremely helpful in my OA sourcing. When I am looking at an Amazon product page, Scanalyze adds a box below the product title with the sales rank and sub-sales rank, saving time from scrolling down to the bottom of the page to find this information. Every second of time counts when you're clicking through dozens of products every day, and I've really come to depend on having this information more easily accessible. Additionally, within that same sales rank box I can click "Scanalyze" to go to a separate page where I can see the lowest prices in FBA, new, used, and collectible; the Keepa graph; and (probably my favorite) a clickable FBA calculator to easily refigure my potential ROI based on the various prices listed. Scanalyze comes to you from the folks at Cyber Monkey Deals for \$9/month, and it's well worth it.

So that's my list of must-have Chrome extensions. In the next chapter we'll take a closer look at a couple of scanning programs I have come to depend on in my OA sourcing.

Chapter 5:

OAXray and Tactical Arbitrage

I (Rebecca) want to spend some time in this chapter talking about two products we use for finding profitable inventory from online stores to resell on Amazon: OAXray and Tactical Arbitrage. This chapter will include reviews of both products and a summary of who should consider each product (and when they should consider it), so it might be lengthier than other chapters in this book. But I wanted to put the information here all in one spot, rather than breaking it out into multiple chapters. Also, both products offer Full-Time FBA readers an extended free trial, so be sure to read thoroughly to make sure you're getting the correct link for your extended trial period.

About once a month in our Facebook group someone will ask a variation of these questions: *"Has anyone used Tactical Arbitrage or OAXray? Are they worth the price? Which one is better?"* My short answer to these questions: I've used both; they are both more than worth it; and it depends.

When I first started doing OA, I depended on deal lists to streamline my sourcing process and help me efficiently find great deals worth reselling. Eventually I wanted to buy more than I could find on my daily list subscriptions, so I started using OAXray. About a year or so after that I decided to try out Tactical Arbitrage. Today, Stephen and I maintain subscriptions to both OAXray and Tactical Arbitrage, mostly for the purpose of staying on top of how both products work. (Please do not hear me say that I think all sellers should subscribe to both. We blog about selling on Amazon and sourcing for products – we subscribe to both products so that you don't have to!)

Since I started out using OAXray first, we'll discuss it first in this post, and then we'll dive into Tactical Arbitrage.

OAXray

[OAXray](#) is a Google Chrome extension that allows you to go to an online store's website and scan a page of items to find matches in the Amazon catalog. OAXray has a long list of websites compatible with their software, some with UPC searches and some with title searches. From your Chrome browser, you can navigate to a page within an online store, click the OAXray extension, and scan the page to turn it into a spreadsheet of items with links to the Amazon product page, links to Keepa data, and columns of info on pricing, sales rank, profit, and ROI, among other things. OAXray also shows you if the item is selling on other websites, where you might get a better buying price. If you want to check out an extended free trial of OAXray, be sure to go



through the link www.fulltimefba.com/oaxray. Using the OAXray extension saves literally hours each day of matching items from online stores to the Amazon catalog.

- **Training available?** OAXray has an excellent YouTube channel with tutorials to get you started using the Chrome extension, or you can see a list of available videos on their website.
- **Features and functionality?** OAXray lists many uses on their website for how you can use their program for sourcing items for Amazon. In addition to OA sourcing, OAXray allows you to upload a spreadsheet of UPCs and prices to check against the Amazon catalog; Stephen uses this feature on a regular basis in his wholesale sourcing.
- **Learning curve?** Relatively low. The concept can seem intimidating at first, but if you watch the tutorials beforehand you should be scanning pages and finding profitable inventory in no time.
- **Time required for a scan?** OAXray scans pages on online stores one page at a time; the length of time for the scan depends on how many items are on the page. You can set it up to search several pages simultaneously. I tend to use OAXray when I want to scan a smaller amount of items and produce a smaller amount of data in one sitting.
- **Can you use with a virtual assistant (VA)?** Yes; you can save even more time in your OA sourcing by hiring a VA to do your scanning for you.
- **Who should use this product?** I recommend OAXray for Amazon sellers who are new to OA, who want a less steep learning curve for an OA sourcing product, or who want a simple tool for scanning wholesale catalog spreadsheets.

Tactical Arbitrage

[Tactical Arbitrage](#) is online software that allows you to scan an entire category of a store's website to find

matches in the Amazon catalog, either by UPC or by product title. Tactical Arbitrage allows you to set up bulk scans of multiple pages and multiple websites to scan at one time, so that you can start a scan and come back to it later after it has finished. The results of a Tactical Arbitrage scan show you links to product pages on the online store's site and Amazon, links to Keepa, and columns of info on pricing, sales rank, profit, and ROI, among other things. Tactical Arbitrage has other features and methods for doing reverse scans, Amazon flips, and more. The time you can save using Tactical Arbitrage adds up to hours per day. If you want to check out an



extended free trial of Tactical Arbitrage, be sure to use the code **FULLTIME10** when signing up at www.fulltimefba.com/TA.

- **Training available?** Tactical Arbitrage has a great YouTube channel with tutorials to get you started using the program. Plus, for even more advanced training, you can invest in a video-based course called Tactical Arbitrage Academy. This advanced course opened up our eyes to even more ways you can use Tactical Arbitrage to find even more profitable inventory. Totally worth the investment.
- **Features and functionality?** Tactical Arbitrage is an (almost overwhelmingly) powerful tool, allowing you to search entire categories on a website in one scan. You can also upload a bulk list of categories from multiple websites to run in one scan, producing hundreds or thousands of potential buys at a time. Tactical Arbitrage also includes tools for wholesale spreadsheets scans, Amazon flips, reverse lookup, and library search for books. I'll be real honest – I haven't used half of the features of Tactical Arbitrage, but I still find it worth the price for the features I do use.
- **Learning curve?** Much steeper than OAXray. Tactical Arbitrage is an extremely powerful tool, and it isn't super intuitive at times to learn it. Watching the YouTube tutorials helped me a great deal; so did just getting in there and playing around with it and fiddling with the filters.
- **Time required for a scan?** Depends on how many items are in the category you are scanning and whether you are scanning a bulk list. Tactical Arbitrage is designed for you to set up a scan, walk away from it, and come back when it's finished so you can analyze the data. That might be a half hour later or the next morning, depending on how much you included in your scan. I love that I can have the program send me a text when my scan is finished, so I don't have to continually check the progress.
- **Can you use with a virtual assistant (VA)?** Yes; you can save even more time in your OA sourcing by hiring a VA to do your scanning for you.
- **Who should use this product?** I recommend Tactical Arbitrage as a more advanced tool for OA sourcing. The learning curve is steep, and the results can be overwhelming. I personally would not have wanted to use Tactical Arbitrage when I first got started in OA (in fact, I might have given up on OA if I started out with it), but I love it at this point in my OA journey.

More Points to Note about Both Products

You may have noticed I don't talk about price on either of these products. My reason is that currently both products are comparably priced, and I want to have this chapter remain relevant if either product decides to change their price in the future. Be sure to do your due diligence and check out the pricing of both products and the available free trial.

Also, many sellers who are just starting out in OA get frustrated with a seeming lack of results from using a program to scan entire pages of online stores. Many sellers will say, "I scanned thousands of items and didn't find anything to resell. These programs aren't worth it." Almost without fail, these sellers have their filters set to only find items with 100% ROI or higher. OA is different from thrifting and garage saling (and even RA to an extent) in that you need to be looking for items with a lower ROI. If your business isn't at a point where you have the financial capital to source items with a lower ROI, it probably isn't the time yet for you to invest in these OA tools.

If you do decide to do a free trial of either OAXray or Tactical Arbitrage, I highly encourage you to make sure you are prepared to spend a significant amount of time during that trial learning the software and scanning websites. You don't want to sign up right when you are going out of town on vacation or right when you have a busy week of doing some other task. Make sure you can spend several hours going through tutorial videos and practicing what you are learning. If you dedicate the time to learning the software during the trial, you should be able to find enough items to resell that you can pay for at least a month of subscription for the service.

Also, don't forget that both products offer an extended trial period to Full-Time FBA readers. For an extended trial of OAXray, be sure to [go through this link](#). For an extended trial of [Tactical Arbitrage](#), be sure to use the code **FULLTIME10** when you sign up.

Chapter 6:

Tactical Arbitrage Academy

Raise your hand if you've ever paid for a gym membership, used it once or twice, and then stopped going because it was a lot of effort for not a lot of results (at least not a lot of results *right away*). It's ok to admit it; we've all been there.

The people who get the most out of their gym membership are those who go on a consistent basis over an extended period of time. They put in the hard work, week in and week out, and over time they see amazing results. Sometimes folks can see awesome gains or losses (depending on what they're aiming for) in the first week or two, but typically it takes a bit longer to see the pay off.

In several ways, using a complicated software like Tactical Arbitrage can be similar to using a gym membership. Tactical Arbitrage (TA) is online arbitrage software that allows you to scan an entire category of an online store's website to find matches in the Amazon catalog, either by UPC or by product title. In short, if you know how to use it, TA can save you hours of time each day in online arbitrage sourcing, and it can help you find profitable leads for your Amazon FBA business at hundreds of online stores. Save time, make money, good deal.

So how is using Tactical Arbitrage similar to a gym membership? You would be surprised how many people sign up for TA, use it once or twice, and then give up. Sometimes people keep their TA subscription for months without ever really figuring out how to use it; rather than try to learn, they just pay their monthly fee and let TA sit idle. Or they attempt to use it but don't ever really take the time to learn the finer details of how it works, and they end up missing out on so much of TA's potential. It's like a complete novice walking into the gym and deciding to lift weights, without bothering to read up or ask questions about the right ways to lift.

I (Rebecca) had been using TA for over a year when I decided to go through [Tactical Arbitrage Academy](#), a video-



driven training course designed to cut the learning curve of TA dramatically. As I've discussed in a previous chapter, I'm always looking for ways to get more out of my online arbitrage subscriptions. To my great delight, with Tactical Arbitrage Academy I found myself learning things about TA that I never picked up on my own...even after using it daily for a year! More than once I heard myself say out loud, "I wish I had gone through this training before now."

As I was going through Tactical Arbitrage Academy, I made some notes about what I liked the most so that I could share my thoughts with you.

1. Video-driven training

Tactical Arbitrage Academy has over 8 hours of video content showing walk-throughs of how to use TA in screen-capture videos. You will see the instructors' (Chris Grant and Nate McCallister) computer screen demonstrating step-by-step how to set up scans of products, how to filter the results, and how to begin analyzing potential buys. It's a valuable peek into the work process of expert users.

2. Organized

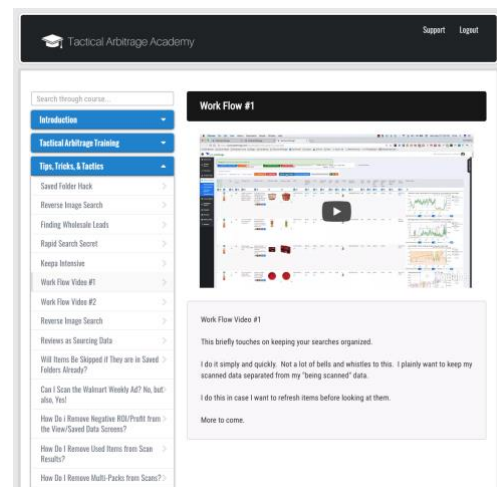
Stephen and I both say it over and over again on our blog and in our Facebook group – paid training is more than worth the investment if it is organized well and helps you cut out time spent sorting through free content. You could end up watching hours and hours of free videos without finding the exact nugget of info you need, while with Tactical Arbitrage Academy you can go directly to the module you're looking for. Time is money, and I love saving time by being able to cut straight to the chase in a well-organized training program.

3. Thorough

The modules in Tactical Arbitrage Academy cover everything from the basics of how to navigate the dashboard and set up a product search, to viewing your data and adjusting your settings (and with software as powerful as TA, adjusting your settings can be more complicated than it sounds!). The training goes in-depth through each type of search available through TA, including regular searches, Amazon flips, reverse search, library search, and wholesale search. Once you've gone through these basic modules, you can get into the meat of the training program: "Tips, Tricks, & Tactics." You can also check out modules that are added to the training when TA releases new features.

4. Not just for beginners

Like I mentioned before, I had already been using TA for over a year when I went through Tactical Arbitrage Academy. At that time, I felt like I was very experienced with online arbitrage in general and somewhat experienced with TA in particular. I mean, I had been using TA daily, but I'm by no means a technology expert. The modules for the training helped me see and understand TA features that were hiding from me in plain sight. Honestly, TA is so powerful that it can be overwhelming – the number of features is tremendous, and it's growing all the time. With Tactical Arbitrage Academy I was able to learn more about features I had been ignoring, as well as benefit from glimpsing the work flow of an expert user and



refining my own processes. I found myself cutting out even more time and finding even more leads on profitable deals.

5. Includes advanced training for Storefront Stalker Pro and for using VAs

Along with the Tactical Arbitrage Academy comes valuable training for folks who wish to use the Storefront Stalker Pro add-on to TA. Tactical Arbitrage Academy also includes an excellent set of modules for hiring and working with virtual assistants (VAs) to expand and streamline your online arbitrage sourcing. Once folks learn how to effectively use TA for profitable sourcing, often the next question they ask is “how can I hire a VA to help me do this even more effectively?” Having this VA training included with Tactical Arbitrage Academy is a huge plus.

Back to my gym membership analogy...

Can you go to the gym and work out and see results without a personal trainer or without reading up on proper techniques beforehand? Probably. Maybe. Some people can. But it could lead to injuries at the worst or a wasted gym membership at the least.

Not taking the time to educate yourself before using TA can also be costly. Sure, some folks can pick up TA intuitively and not need to take any training. But if you’re not one of those lucky few, [Tactical Arbitrage Academy](#) is an excellent way to prepare yourself for great success with online arbitrage through TA. I highly recommend using Tactical Arbitrage Academy as the most efficient way to get the most out of your monthly investment in TA – you will see huge returns on the time and money you spend up front learning the right way to use this powerful tool for making online arbitrage profits in your Amazon FBA business.

Chapter 7:

Online Arbitrage Troubleshooting

By now you should know how much we love using online arbitrage as a sourcing strategy for our Amazon FBA business. In this chapter we want to talk with you about the flip side of all the wonderful benefits we've seen from using OA in our business.

If we only told you that doing OA can lead to big profits for your business, but we didn't tell you about the potential drawbacks, we wouldn't be teaching you thoroughly. We want to keep it real. OA can be awesome, but there are also some headaches associated with it.

We have found that taking a few simple troubleshooting measures can help alleviate some of the difficulties. Rather than just listing out the drawbacks to doing OA, we want to give you strategies for dealing with the problems that can arise from OA.

Problem #1: Receiving damaged goods — It's super disappointing to receive an OA shipment, open the box, and find that the goods inside have been crushed or damaged during shipping. For example, with buying shoes online sometimes the shoes may have made it to you just fine, but the shoebox was crushed during shipment.



Solution: First, it's key to have a good mindset when you receive damaged OA goods. UPS isn't perfect, nor is the person who packed the shipment perfect. Getting angry at other people isn't a good use of mental energy. Just know that there will be times that shipments are damaged and you'll need to return them or get a refund; it's unavoidable.

As such, you must be responsible to know an online store's return policy before you place an order with them. Some stores won't do returns or exchanges on clearance items. Some stores will only do returns or exchanges if you bring the item in to a brick-and-mortar store. Some stores will only do returns or exchanges if you pay for return shipping. For our OA business, we keep a running list of stores we've had bad return experiences with, and we avoid shopping with them again.

Problem #2: Receiving the wrong items — Again, the people packing your shipments aren't perfect, and sometimes you will receive the wrong items in your OA shipment. You may receive a completely different item (like the time we ordered baseball equipment and received a hockey goal), or you may receive a slightly different item (like the times we've received a different edition of a board game than the one we ordered).

Solution: Again, make sure you're familiar with the store's return policy and you know how to report the wrong items. Most stores are extremely apologetic and helpful when it comes to replacing or refunding wrong items received. We've even had some stores give us gift cards or free shipping and a discount code for future purchases as a way of making up for the trouble.

Before you rush to return or exchange a wrong item received, however, you should consider whether it's even worth your time to deal with the problem. Can you resell the wrong item you received and at least break even? Would it be easier for you just to sell the wrong item and recoup your capital, rather than messing with a return?

Problem #3: Time lag to send inventory to Amazon FBA — The great thing about retail arbitrage is that if you buy inventory today, you could theoretically send it to Amazon today, if you hustle to prep and ship it. With OA, it can take a few days or over a week for your purchases to reach you. By far the top complaint we hear from Amazon sellers who don't like OA is that by the time their inventory goes live on Amazon.com, there's more competition and the price has "tanked."



Solution: We don't deny this problem of increasing competition and lowering prices on some OA inventory. But the way to overcome this problem is to make a better buying decision in the first place. Before you click "confirm my order," double-check the [Keepa](#) price and sales rank history. Check the Keepa graph to see if Amazon is only temporarily out of stock on this item. You can't always make a perfect decision, but if you're making informed decisions with the help of price tracking graphs, you can lower your buying risk. Look for items that have a consistent price and sales rank history, not just ones that are temporarily inflated. You cannot make good buying decisions based on only today's price and sales rank; you have to look at the history.

Problem #4: I don't know how to find good OA inventory — The number of BOLO lists and OA services is growing every day. How do I know which ones are the best?

Solution: We've covered in a previous chapter some strategies you can use to get free trials or pay for a test month of a service and collect information on whether it will work well with your business. You can search in Facebook groups for Amazon FBA sellers to see if people have posted reviews of services. Sometimes, though, it just takes good old trial-and-error to find out if an OA list or service is a good fit for you. Don't be afraid to experiment.

Problem #5: I'm afraid an online store might ban me as a reseller — You may hear other Amazon sellers talking about stores blocking their accounts because of their OA purchases, and you don't want to risk it.

Solution: We've been doing OA for several years now, and we have not once had an order cancelled, much less had our buying account blocked for being a reseller. We think there is one main factor contributing to our success thus far: We break up our purchases into smaller chunks. We will buy enough to get free shipping or meet a discount code requirement, but if we want to buy more, we make a separate purchase. If you spend upwards of a thousand dollars at a time, yes, there's a big red flag for that online store.

Note: While we haven't had OA orders cancelled due to our being resellers, we have had orders cancelled because the store suspected credit card fraud. In those instances I was able to make a quick phone call to the store and resubmit my order after verifying my identity. Having to make a phone call may seem like a hassle, but I'm thankful stores are putting that protective measure in place.

Hopefully we've been able to calm some of your concerns about using OA as a sourcing strategy by troubleshooting some of the main issues resellers face with online purchases. You may encounter other difficulties along the way, but our hope is that you can learn to problem-solve these issues just as you would any other aspect of your FBA business — all so that you can find great success and great profits through Amazon FBA!

Conclusion

We really hope you've enjoyed these tips about online arbitrage and have found them useful!

For more great info on Amazon FBA sourcing and other aspects of running an Amazon FBA business, be sure to check out the [Full-Time FBA blog](#), where we regularly share tips and tricks for turning part-time hours into a full-time income via Amazon FBA. You can also join our [Facebook community](#) with 8000+ resellers in the Full-Time FBA group, where you can ask questions and learn from the archives.

Be sure to keep reading for a bonus chapter related to online arbitrage on Black Friday and a few more great resources to help you with your Amazon FBA business!

Bonus Chapter:

Online Arbitrage Tips for Black Friday

Not everybody wants to go out and bust the doors and brave the crowds on Black Friday or any of the other big shopping days of the season. Actually, you count me (Rebecca) in that number – I am not a huge fan of the big Black Friday crowds and just don't want to have to deal with them. But I also don't want to miss out on the amazing opportunities to find great items for resale, and I've come up with a few ways to take advantage of Black Friday deals without leaving my house.

We all know Black Friday is the biggest shopping day of the year, and there is great money to be made buying up deals on Black Friday and flipping them on Amazon. What some people forget is that stores also have awesome sales the week before Black Friday and the week after. The stores want to keep the money flowing all throughout the Q4 season, and they are eager to have enticing sales over the course of a few weeks, not just on one particular day. When it comes to online arbitrage, you can find amazing sales at dozens of online stores for weeks around the time of Black Friday – but you want to be sure and **maximize your time and efforts** at OA sourcing during this time period, as well as **maximize your profits**.

In the rest of this chapter I want to give you my top three tips for OA on and around Black Friday. Here we go!

1. Stay informed on all the Black Friday deals.

This first point might seem obvious, but if you miss this one, you are missing out on a ton of potential profits. You have to stay informed about upcoming sales or spur-of-the-moment sales on all your favorite online stores.



I recommend using a dedicated email address (in other words, not your personal email address) in order to subscribe to the updates from any stores you like to frequent for OA shopping. Big stores, little stores, whoever you might find – if they have an email list, sign up. You want all of these stores to send you notifications of their sales – and you want them to send you coupon codes!

The reason I recommend using a dedicated email address is that signing up for all these store updates becomes annoying very quickly if you have 20 or more store emails landing in your personal inbox every day. If you use a different email than your normal address, you won't feel overwhelmed with store spam.

Bonus tip: If you work with a virtual assistant (VA), you can have them check that dedicated email address for you and stay on top of which stores have sales or coupon codes. No need for you to even deal with all the extra email!

2. Increase your ROI by finding more discounts.

One of the best ways to get an edge on your competition is to increase your ROI by buying your product at a lower price. OA sourcing has some great methods built into the process for finding bigger discounts on the products you find to resell on Amazon.

The first way you can increase your ROI is by getting cash back on your online purchases with cash back sites like [Rakuten](#) and [Swagbucks](#). As discussed in a previous chapter, both of these cash back sites have a Google Chrome extension and a pop-up at the top of the browser to let you know if an online store offers cash back by going through their link to do your shopping. I highly recommend signing up for both Rakuten and Swagbucks and keeping their Chrome extensions active so you never miss out on an opportunity to earn cash back on your OA purchases. Both Rakuten and Swagbucks offer increased cash back percentages on and around Black Friday and Cyber Monday, so make sure you do your due diligence and figure out which site offers the best deal before completing your OA purchases. It's not uncommon to see Rakuten offering 12% or even 15% cash back at this time of year — talk about a deal!

3. Consider upgrading your shipping.

Typically when I'm making OA purchases, I want to buy the minimum amount to get free shipping. The money saved on free shipping is money that can increase my ROI and help me buy more inventory. But when I'm shopping for Black Friday deals online, the time it takes to get my inventory shipped to me for prep and shipment to Amazon is crucial. Sometimes it can be worth it to pay \$5 or \$10 for expedited shipping on an OA order on Black Friday so that I can get my inventory in to the FBA warehouse faster. Always check to see if online stores are offering discounts on expedited shipping on Black Friday, and take advantage of those discounts when possible.



If you put these three tips (four if you count the bonus tip from the first tip!) into practice this Black Friday, you will be well on your way to maximizing your profits and increasing your success in your Black Friday OA sourcing.

How We Made FBA Our Full-Time Job

We invite you to join in the conversation at www.fulltimefba.com. If you haven't already, be sure to subscribe to our email newsletter. We promise to only send you emails with engaging articles, helpful resources, and all the tips and tricks we use to make FBA profitable and fun.

You can also join the [Full-Time FBA Facebook group](#) for more conversation about making Amazon FBA into a full-time income. We also have an active [Facebook page](#) where we post links to articles and videos every day, as well as a robust [YouTube channel](#) for Full-Time FBA with our latest videos with how-tos for your Amazon FBA business.

We love running a business from home selling on Amazon. Seriously, selling on Amazon is one of the best ways to build up an income that can help you reach your long-term goals like supporting your family, paying off your debts, and saving for retirement! In about 6 to 7 months after I (Stephen) started selling on Amazon, I was already making a full-time income to support myself and my family, and my sales have grown every year since.

But growing a successful Amazon FBA business doesn't happen by accident. It takes a plan *and* a solid foundation to build upon. If you want to take your Amazon FBA business to the next level for long-term success, then I encourage you to check out [Next Level Amazon: Make a Full-Time Income with Only Part-Time Hours via Amazon FBA](#). In this course I outline everything you need to know in order to work less, but make more take-home pay. It's a strategy that has helped so many people go from working 60 hour weeks just to make ends meet... to truly only working 20 or so hours each week, while still bringing home a full-time paycheck.

The [Next Level Amazon](#) course includes an ebook with over 160 pages of results-oriented content and a video component with 12 content-packed modules featuring a total of 18 videos adding up to over 5 and a half hours of video training. If you are ready to take your Amazon FBA business to the next level, you can use the code **NEXT20** to save \$20 off the [Next Level Amazon](#) course today.



We hope this ebook has been able to help you in your FBA business. We'd love to hear from you just how much you've been able to use online arbitrage in your sourcing thanks to the tips in this ebook.

See you online and on the blog!

Stephen and Rebecca Smotherman