



NINC  
WORLD

# THE CONFERENCE ISSUE

## FIRST WORD: *Going Global Part One, Overview*

REPORTED BY ANN CHRISTOPHER

**Participating Panelists:** Porter Anderson, journalist/consultant; Richard Nash, entrepreneur/advisor; Orna Ross, founder/director, Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi); and Judith Curr, president/publisher, Atria Books

Journalist Porter Anderson began by noting that we don't have our heads around "Going Global" yet; no one really knows what it means. What's the panel's goal? To highlight the questions authors should ask. The rest of the world looks to the United States for answers. It's easy to self-publish, but hard to self-sell, especially overseas.

Richard Nash shared his opinions about some of the interesting qualities of the English language.

Orna Ross presented "Going Global: Some Questions and Answers," and noted that her organization, ALLi, fosters ethics and excellence in self-publishing via education and information, cooperation and collaboration, and advocacy and representation. They've started a Going Global campaign with Ingram support.

Other highlights:

- ▶ Look at the status of the indie author journey. Don't use "hybrid." Indie is a state of mind.
- ▶ Indie publishing is initially about production of the book. There's a big learning

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## **Novelists, Inc.**

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Address changes may be made on the website.

Members without Internet access may send changes to the Central Coordinator.

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## **Introducing...**

The following authors have applied for membership in NINC and are now presented by the Membership Committee to the members. If no legitimate objections are lodged with the Membership Committee within 15 days of this Nink issue, these authors shall be accepted as members of NINC. For further information or to recommend eligible writers, contact:

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## **NINC has room to grow...**

Recommend membership to your colleagues. Prospective members may apply online at <http://www.ninc.com>. Refer members at ninc.com. Go to Members Only, "Member Services," and click "Refer a New Member to NINC." Take NINC brochures to conferences.

# President's VOICE

## Announcements You Need to Know



Julie Leto

As my year as President is winding down, here are several exciting announcements for members of NINC.

First, have you heard about our new member benefit, the **PRO SERVICES DIRECTORY**? Before the switch to the new website, NINC had an extensive “agent list” members could utilize when searching for literary representation. In the migration to the new site, the list was inadvertently left behind. Retrieving it would have been expensive, so we opted instead to start over with something new and more relevant to today’s publishing climate.

Now, members can list any industry professionals they would like to recommend to other NINC members: agents, editors (both freelance and traditional), cover designers, photographers, publicists, and more. The process is very simple. Go in, click “Add a Listing” and fill in the information. Once you submit, the listing will go to our Central Coordinator for approval, and then it will be part of the directory. To access the directory, you just click on the service you are interested in and the listings will show.

The **PRO SERVICES DIRECTORY** is only as strong as the listings ... and the listings come from YOU, the members. *Please go to the website and check it out.* Add a listing if you have one. The more people add, the more valuable the list will be. You can access it by signing in to the website and clicking the RESOURCES menu. The Pro Services Directory is at the bottom.

Right above the Pro Services Directory is a link to the **NINC GUIDE**. This collection of articles started out as the “NINC Binder,” which was a self-publishing guide that accompanied one of our first conferences at the Tradewinds. Chock-full of information, the binder was presented to all attendees. It was also put online as a download for all NINC members and guests.

A special thank-you to Kasey Michaels, who created the binder, and Kelly McClymer and Sylvie Kurtz who transitioned it into a guide that is now a living document and clearinghouse of critical information for our members and any novelist who wants to access it. The articles will continue to be updated and changed out, so keep an eye out for announcements about new material!

One of this board’s final concerns has been the **NEWSLETTER**. It is our main mode of communication with all members, and it is our most valuable member resource. As a result, it is also one of our biggest expenses. In our goal to be responsible stewards of NINC’s budget, changes are in the works. For one, after January, the option to have a print version of *Nink* will no longer be available. We had less than 20 members subscribing to *Nink* and they were “grandfathered” in.

The design of the newsletter has been geared toward the old print version and with the advent of digital publishing, which NINC was one of the first to embrace, it seems counter-intuitive for us to have a publication designed for print (and therefore, expensive to produce), even though our members receive it digitally. Thanks to the hard work of our outgoing newsletter editor, Laura Phillips, and our incoming editor, Heidi Joy Tretheway, changes are in the works so that publishing expenses will go down, allowing us to channel more funds into content.

To gauge the membership’s opinions about the newsletter, Heidi Joy has set up a **SURVEY** that we’d like you to take. It is quick and painless ... please let your opinions be heard by following this link: <http://bit.ly/NinkSurvey2015>. There will also be a conference survey very much like this one coming up VERY soon.

Lastly, November 15 marks the beginning of **DUES RENEWAL**. A NINC Blast message will go out to remind you. Not only will we be asking you (as always) to fill out/verify your ACA survey as part of renewals, we’ll also have our proposed Bylaws changes listed. Please renew and vote!

Until next month,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# FIRST WORD: Going Global Part One, Overview

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curve. Then a wall of marketing, promotion, discoverability. Then, after you reach readers, authors begin to think about selling rights.

- ▶ Pertinent questions:
  1. How to make our global association more meaningful online and in real life?
  2. How to harness the growing pool of authors?
  3. How to help members sell more in other territories/formats/platforms?
- ▶ Know your author rights. (What rights? What will happen to them?)
- ▶ Intellectual Property Rights License Survey bottom line: many authors don't know what their rights are.
- ▶ How do authors sell rights?
  1. English language e-books in international online stores.
    - A. Pricing books at “free” helps them break out and is a very useful promotional tool.
    - B. Targeted Facebook ads in relevant territories also help.
  2. Get an agent to sell to foreign publishers who will translate.
    - A. Commission is typically 20 percent plus.
    - B. Most authors only ever see the advance.
    - C. Get an overseas agent. You'll need a significant sales record—e.g., 50K books sold in the last two years. Author John Penberthy has been successful in the overseas market.
  3. Sell directly to overseas publishers—they may approach you when your books do well.
  4. Sell directly to publishers via foreign book fairs—this is hard and expensive.
  5. Sell via online rights market.
  6. Commission a translator and sell direct (Babelcube, Fiberead).
- ▶ Thinking “globle” (global mobile). In Africa and Asia, for example, they've skipped reading devices and gone to phones. China and India are huge markets hungry for content.
- ▶ Never give world rights as standard!
- ▶ Ask the publisher for full details of their plans to exploit rights in a particular territory. If the answer is vague—keep your rights.
- ▶ Ask for your rights back where possible.

Porter Anderson noted Hugh Howey, for example, has many foreign publishers, then asked whether indie authors become something else once foreign publishers are involved? Ross replied that it's about the author journey. She'd hold off before selling directly to foreign trade publishers. There's so much complexity in this area.

She said traditional marketing works poorly for indies. Indies need to look at what's effective. Control pricing. Understand the reader. Make the reader God. Give the reader lots of content, often. Keep barriers between you and the reader low. Then you'll do well.

Transitioning to Judith Curr's presentation, Anderson suggested looking at what the Big Five publishers know and use it as a touchstone for indies to decide what they want/need in their careers.

Judith Curr's presentation highlights:

- ▶ The English as a Second Language market is a good entry point for indies to begin making their books available overseas. It's very easy to make sure your books are available in all English-speaking territories worldwide.
- ▶ There are cultural nuances that must be understood. Self-help titles are very popular in China, but Christian books aren't. In India, it's hard to get around, so phones are very important in terms of getting info to travel quickly.
- ▶ She's a big proponent of world rights and coordination across markets.
- ▶ For example, she bought world rights for *The Secret* and brought it out in 52 languages with the same cover and content for all versions because they wanted one big global brand. They hired a brand manag-

er (who, among other things, handled quality control and managed author appearances worldwide) to work with all foreign markets. They made sure that all the translations were correct. The individual licenses were sold for a term, which was often seven years. When the licenses are up for renewal, Atria may sometimes change their foreign publishers. Some contracts are for the term of the copyright. Atria tried to create a suite of assets for foreign publishers to make sure the book resonated in other markets. It's rare for nonfiction to resonate in so many languages. They didn't do a Farsi version, however, because there's no trade agreement with Iran.

- ▶ Colleen Hoover has emotional elements that resonate with readers. With her books, it's all about the heart. Make readers cry, then they buy.
- ▶ With U.S. thrillers, the presidency is always at stake. Readers in other countries don't find that a compelling/scary read.
- ▶ What's changed with the digital era? Speed to market, including speed of marketing. Getting files to overseas markets in time.
- ▶ Keywords Press—a new Simon & Schuster imprint featuring YouTube celebrities.
- ▶ Timing is crucial. Holland wants to get their translations when the English version is available. They tend to read English and Dutch.
- ▶ What to do with backlist overseas? This is an issue because overseas publishers want to know there's a body of work available for readers.
- ▶ Representation of their authors at book fairs must be managed carefully.
- ▶ Simultaneous e-book and print release overseas is best. But it's sometimes hard to manage physical copies overseas.
- ▶ Atria prefers to buy world rights but will buy fewer rights for less money. It's always a negotiation. She never gets everything she wants in these deals.

A recovering lawyer, **Ann Christopher** is an award-winning contemporary romance author. Her series include *Journey's End* (small-town contemporary romance), *The Davies Legacy* (Harlequin contemporary romance) and *Warner Family Secrets & Lies* (Harlequin contemporary romance). Ann has also written five novellas, one young adult novel, *Monstrum*, first in her *Bella Monstrum* horror trilogy, and a tragically bad starter novel that will forever remain under her bed, where it belongs.

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### NINC Statement of Principle:

Novelists, Inc., in acknowledgment of the crucial creative contributions novelists make to society, asserts the right of novelists to be treated with dignity and in good faith; to be recognized as the sole owners of their literary creations; to be fairly compensated for their creations when other entities are profiting from those creations; and to be accorded the respect and support of the society they serve.

# GOING GLOBAL *Part Two: World Markets Focus*

REPORTED BY JENNIFER STEVENSON

Five years ago Matthias Matting was a tech journalist. Then Amazon tested their store in .de, the top internet domain code for Germany. Since then he has written 50 books that are available in .de and print. Two years ago, a German traditional publisher hired him to help them understand the German market.

**Specifics to the German Market**—Every book in a bookstore has the same price. You don't "go shopping," because every book costs the same. All the players in the industry are in the same association: chain stores, distributors, publishers, everyone except Amazon. You may not use a title someone else has already used in Germany.

**The German Readership**—Germany is home to the Gutenberg press and many venerable names in literature like Goethe, Schiller, and Heine. Yet TV is still the No. 1 activity. Reading is the No. 11 activity. One in five people love reading for entertainment. Forty-five percent don't read at all.

The total size of the market is a bit less than five billion Euros, stabilized. This is about 40 percent of the U.S. book market. When comparing, consider that 80 million Germans make up 40 percent of the U.S. market size, compared with 350 million Americans. Other statistics:

More female readers than male.

- ▶ 2/3 of German women bought at least one book in the last year.
- ▶ 45 percent of those women actually read books every day.
- ▶ 52 percent of German men have bought at least one book.
- ▶ 30 percent of men read books every day.
- ▶ 80 percent of Germans with an advanced degree buy books.
- ▶ 41 percent with basic education buy books.
- ▶ 21 percent of girls read daily but only 7 percent of boys.

**The German Book Business**—Print prices are quite high due to price fixing by the government:

- ▶ General average price—25.63 EUR or \$34.66 USD
- ▶ Fiction average—13.29 EUR or \$17.97 USD
- ▶ Paperbacks—11.89 EUR or \$16.08 USD

Most fiction is sold in paper. General publishers have an e-book sales share of more than 10 percent, the largest of the European market; expected for 2020: 25 percent. There's a growing mobile market, but most e-book readers are reading on e-readers. Half of German people will never read an e-book in English. The German e-book market is the third largest globally. France is 30 percent behind Germany, Spain 40 percent, Italy 50 percent.

The book in Germany is seen as a source of cultural value. E-books cost 20 percent less than printed books. Ten percent of titles are only available as e-books, from publishers as well as from indies. Amazon is clearly the market leader because of Select. Twenty-five percent of titles in Amazon's top 100 are only available from Amazon.de, not from other bookstores. This is especially important in Germany, because price cannot be a draw in Germany, so they're using content to attract the market. Leading fiction genres are romance, mystery, thriller, fantasy, new adult, and erotica.

**Other genre considerations**—Nonfiction is the solid midlist. Most parents prefer to buy print for kids. Childrens' books in e-book format are especially problematic. Germany is particularly friendly to erotica, especially in romance.

**Amazon in Germany**—

- ▶ Amazon is Germany's first major self-publishing program. Their market share is 50-60 percent depending on who you ask.

- ▶ Kindles are available only online and in electronics stores.
- ▶ An Amazon KDP Select award will be given away during the Frankfurt Book Fair.
- ▶ Amazon is rewarding .de authors more than elsewhere for going Select.
- ▶ Sales tax is automatically deducted: 19 percent in Germany, 20 percent in Austria
- ▶ The category system is different on Amazon.de. Check your categories after the e-book has been published!
- ▶ Don't forget Austria and Switzerland. There are 10 million plus German speakers in those countries.
- ▶ KDP Select has only 45 percent of the whole market, so it's not as good a deal in .de.
- ▶ There are no count-down deals in Germany.
- ▶ You can't use advertising in .de for German-language books.
- ▶ CreateSpace is available for printed books. The German books are printed in Leipzig, one-day delivery, paperbacks especially.

**Amazon statistics for German sales**—If you are a No. 1 seller, you are selling 2,000 books a day. To hit No. 20, you need to sell 700 a day. No. 100 must sell 100 books for several days. No. 1000 must sell about 20 per day. See <http://www.selfpublisherbibel.de> for charts with sales numbers.

### **Tolino in Germany—**

- ▶ The major competitor to Amazon in Germany is Tolino, which doesn't have a brick and mortar store. Tolino is a joint venture of several major chains like Thalia, Weltbild, Hugenduble, Libri, Bertelsmann, Mayersche, Osiander. Tolino has a large presence in local bookstores that sell their epub-based readers and tablets (Tolino Vision being the most successful).
- ▶ Tolino has a share of 40 percent or more of the market (less for indies).
- ▶ Tolino started self-publishing only in April 2015 at Tolino-media.de; this is pretty late. Tolino started selling self-published printed books in the stores of the collective. Amazon can't do it. Tolino will put a selection of printed books from self-publishers into their stores for Christmas 2015.
- ▶ Tolino offers 70 percent of net price (19 percent VAT) to the author. This royalty is only guaranteed until early 2016. Publishers are complaining. It's pretty easy to use their self-publish interface even if you don't read German. Tolino is actively looking for authors.

There is less visibility in Tolino's e-bookstores because of store managers' short-term thinking. Just recently Tolino started a bestseller list for all stores. Only the top 20 appear on [tolino.de](http://tolino.de). A difficulty is that you need to reach No. 1 in several different stores (different retailers) to get numbers comparable to Amazon. To hit these lists: No. 1 is about 500 sales/day, No. 20 is 100/day, and there is a pretty linear progression from there.

Tolino has about the same market share as Amazon, but they're not as good at doing some things. They're getting big in Italy and in other parts of Europe. Tolino is open to English-speaking authors.

**Apple in Germany**—Apple is in Germany, but has less than 10 percent of market share and is not growing. It's good exposure for self-published e-books. To hit No. 1, you must sell 50 to 80 books a day. Apple e-books work only on Apple devices, and iPhones and iPads are as popular there as here. Apple is accessible from your account at iTunesConnect or via Smashwords for authors who self-publish.

**Kobo & GooglePlay in Germany**—Kobo is very open to self-publishers but has less than 5 percent market share. Kobo does not have a German partner. Google is only interesting for low price (99 cents) or erotica titles. Google's market share is below 5 percent (but Android share is above 70 percent).

The slides for Mr. Matting's presentation are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/publish-in-Germany-for-NINC>.

### **Markets Beyond Germany**

Now is a very exciting time in publishing, especially for authors, according to Gareth Cuddy, founder and CEO of Vearsa, an award-winning enterprise software company and one of the leading experts on e-books and digital publishing. Vearsa (<https://www.vearsa.com>) is the second biggest e-book distrib-



utor in the world; it distributes for about 480 publishers, and a few indies, to about 1,000 retailers.

Prior to starting Vearsa, Gareth launched one of the first e-book stores outside the U.S., Directebooks.com. Quickly realizing that publishers needed more help on a basic level in order to be able to get their e-books to market, he spent all of 2010 building ePubDirect—an online e-book distribution platform that would allow publishers to distribute their e-books effortlessly. ePubDirect relaunched as Vearsa in April 2015 with an expanded range of products and currently works with over 350 publishers worldwide to grow their e-book sales. Gareth splits his time between Cork, Ireland and New York.

Vearsa's e-book customers are book publishers. The company doesn't deal directly with authors. Publishers pay them to track 7 million titles in print and digital around the world; for most publishers, 20 percent of their catalog isn't available for one reason or another. Publishers are in the process of identifying which self-published authors are doing well, so they can headhunt. Vearsa provides daily and monthly numbers to publishers, and three out of five publishers in the world work with Vearsa.

Some statistics provided by Cuddy:

- ▶ Publishers had 3 percent growth over last year.
- ▶ Indies had 16 percent growth over last year.
- ▶ Retailers dropped in earnings, but subscriptions are on the rise.
- ▶ Library sales are up and aggregator sales are down.

There is real growth in 180 countries, especially in erotica.

- ▶ Germany: classics, computers, general fiction, 11 percent.
- ▶ Australia: military history, fiction, sagas, 50 percent.
- ▶ New Zealand: sports & recreation, 31 percent.
- ▶ France: fiction, wide range of history subgenres, 76 percent.
- ▶ Italy: many history subgenres, sports & recreation, 117 percent.
- ▶ Income per sale internationally jumped about 20 percent in 2015.

**Pricing considerations**—There are huge variations in prices country to country. From a consumer perspective, readers don't know who they're buying the book from. Publishers offer very deep discounts and higher list price. Cuddy recommends that indie authors consider having a higher title price and deeper discount that leaves a competitive but similar actual price to titles offered by traditional publishers. Sales rank and price have a correlation but it's consistent, not dramatically varied. The position of a book in the rankings compares well to sales across indies and publishers.

### **Cuddy's recommendations**

- ▶ Make sure your titles are available widely—go wide! Exclusivity doesn't pay. Reduce your dependency on Amazon. Publishers are consistently selling less through Amazon and more are going wide.
- ▶ Experiment with pricing constantly. Example: changing price on a book every 48 hours drove a book up higher in the ranks. They'd priced the book too low and through experimenting they discovered they could drive the book higher in sales and rank by raising the price.
- ▶ Focus on metadata—enhance it! You can experience a 78 percent increase in sales if you have better metadata.

Vearsa does consult with individual authors, selectively. They're experimenting with indie authors. They're worried about whether they'll be able to support indie customers because they don't have the infrastructure to talk constantly with them one-on-one.

Contact information for Gareth Cuddy: [gareth@vearsa.com](mailto:gareth@vearsa.com)

### **Trajectory and China**

It's early days for the English language market in China, but China is the world's second largest publishing market, soon to be No. 1. And new sales channels are opening all the time, according to Scott M. Beatty, Chief Content Officer and co-founder of Trajectory, Inc. Trajectory is a global digital platform. Their two



key goals are distribution and discoverability. They facilitate global trade and distribute e-books to every point of distribution everywhere on the planet to every kind of outlet. They use natural language processing to enrich metadata to help sell more books. Trajectory has been working in China over 20 years.

## THE CHINESE MARKET

- ▶ China has 294 million readers. The value of China's annual book market is \$6 billion.
- ▶ Online literature is an established model in China and has been around since 1990. The majority of Chinese read on big phones, which is perfect for e-books. They skipped the e-reader market entirely. The Chinese self-published market is serialized, released chapter by chapter, and completely mobile driven. Book prices are cheap, about \$1.30. Intellectual property drives the entire entertainment market in China. The gaming component is huge.
- ▶ China has 1.4 billion consumers and a huge emerging middle class. Schools teach English from age five. It is estimated there are two million new English readers in China annually.
- ▶ There are new sales channels opening all the time in China for English e-books.

### Chinese e-tailers:

- ▶ Duokan
- ▶ Xiaomi.com—elegant hardware, pirate tech
- ▶ Dangdang.com—does \$1 billion book sales/year
- ▶ Amazon.cn
- ▶ Tencent—online literature platform exporting 200K books. Tencent has 800 million monthly average users across all its networks. Their WeChat social medium is “Twitter on steroids.”
- ▶ JD.com—could be the Amazon of China if Amazon wasn't there already; it sells lots of different goods and services.
- ▶ CNPIEC (China National Publications Import & Export (Group) Corporation)

### Things to know about the Chinese market:

- ▶ It takes tenacity to get in there.
- ▶ They have 300 million English speakers.
- ▶ An example of No. 1 foreign language seller in China is Susan Page's *If I'm So Wonderful, Why Am I Still Single?* published in 1988. This book is flirting with No. 1 in all stores over Chinese language books.
- ▶ Every title must be imported and approved by a censoring body, the Ministry of Culture—even new formats of an already approved book have to be reapproved. Censors' concerns:
  - ▷ Must be PG- or G-rated
  - ▷ Any word with the 3 Ts (Tibet, Tienamen, and Taiwan). You cannot put any book into China with those words.
- ▶ The new generation of the middle class are completely fascinated with western culture.
- ▶ The going-out policy has helped the going-in policy.
- ▶ Most publishers are in Beijing.
- ▶ The Chinese government is getting overwhelmed by the self-publishing universe. The size of it is loosening up the censors.

**Online literature in China**—Think Wattpad, but you get paid. Online literature emerged in China in the 1990s and operates outside of traditional publishing. Long-form serialized fiction is read on smartphones. The largest platform has over three million serialized self-pubbed books. Top writers earn up to \$4 million annually. Entrepreneurial authors are rock stars there.

Business models include pay per 1,000 characters, micropayments, monthly/yearly subscriptions, downloads by chapter, and bundles with books and games given off the books.

**How it works**—A serialized story is released chapter by chapter. The audience helps develop it, as with fan fiction, and there's a lot of audience contact and involvement. Readers pay as you write, they pay as they download. This system is the foundation of the Chinese entertainment industry. Popular



genres are fantasy, superhero, romance, folk story mashups “kimchi cornbread”—they love that. The Chinese love to bring historical characters into this century. A really popular series may have 200 million readers.

## The Spanish Market & Global Statistics

Thad McIlroy of Author Audit then focused on the Spanish-speaking market and global language statistics. McIlroy is an electronic publishing analyst and author based in San Francisco and Vancouver. A well-established expert in the technology and marketing issues surrounding electronic publishing, color imaging, and the internet, he has authored a dozen books and over 400 articles on these subjects. He writes at [www.thefutureofpublishing.com](http://www.thefutureofpublishing.com), and his latest book is *Mobile Strategies for Digital Publishing: A Practical Guide to the Evolving Landscape*.

English books sell globally, he said. English Kindle book sales to non-English-speaking countries are soaring, and Spanish is the most accessible non-English foreign language. There are 470 million native Spanish speakers and 300 million internet users in Latin America. The U.S. has 52 million Hispanics (1 in 6), and 38 million speak Spanish at home in the United States.

For perspective, the most commonly spoken languages worldwide, native speakers and non-native speakers, combined in the millions:

- ▶ English 275m native, 1,300m non-native
- ▶ Chinese 982m native, 1,100m non-native
- ▶ Hindi 460m native

One in five people in the world speak English, either native or as a second or foreign language.

Sweden and Finland are the highest in proficiency in English, then Malaysia, Singapore, Portugal, then India, Hong Kong, on down. India has 125 million English as Second Language (ESL) speakers. India may be more accessible than China right now. Censorship is not an issue in India. The top three languages on the internet are English, Chinese, and Spanish. Arabic is about 1/6 the size of the English market.

**General comments from the panel**—Following McIlroy’s presentation was some Q&A and general discussion among some of the First Word speakers. The highlights:

Cuddy: We have translated metadata into native languages to increase metadata reach. We found a translator for this purpose at UpWorks.com.

Anderson: The multicultural kids’ book market is huge and the acculturated Hispanic market is leading the rest of the public on buying books for their kids.

Nash: What we’re seeing is the urbanization of the world markets, such as we saw in the 1930s. New neighborhood communities are forming in urban settings and reading (books) as cultural glue for helping to support people who are adapting to urban life.

McIlroy: Will the types of books these people are reading acculturate them to their own city, or to the U.S.?

Nash: An Indian publisher was bringing North American diet books into their market, and sought a local diet book writer to write about local foods, not Western foods. So there are going to be some efforts to scale things to local cultures, but who knows.

Cuddy: Among the emerging signs of the middle class in China is the fact that people come from living in one room to living in several rooms. Now there is room for a bookshelf, which the one-room home never had. People are buying books in tremendous volume, sometimes elaborately constructed books.

Nash: In 1929, a number of U.S. publishers hired the original PR guy (Edward Bernays), the man who invented PR. One of his strategies was to encourage interior decorators to install bookshelves in people’s apartments, because then they would buy books to fill them up.

Anderson: My mother used to talk about ordering 30 inches of red books from Sears.

Bryant: It’s all about self-help, business, practical applications. Childrens’ books are huge in China. They’ve never taken off in China before, but that’s now our fastest growing genre in e-books in China. Publishers are asking more and more: Can you get us a book that has, say, Chinese words on page one, and the same image with English words on page two?

Cuddy: Chinese culture is very interested in what Americans think, how we think.

Nash: Koreans are interested especially in the one child per family rule and in inter-generational conflict.

ME: A novelist can mine this from self-help angles: adjusting to the disruption of urbanization, kids moving out of village. Side with the urban family member but seek harmony with the older generation.

Bryant: Here's an anecdote of an author who was moving only a few books in Russia. A couple of pirate sites took his books. Then his sales leaped. It was discovered that the author was pirating his own books to the Russians in order to raise demand.

**Question:** What does your frequent assertion that "IP is king in China" mean?

Beatty: They realized they had to have more respect for content creators and less piracy. Then their game creators got a ton more respect, and that spilled over onto all other content creators.

*Jennifer Stevenson writes sexy, funny romantic fantasy, paranormal romance, and contemporary romcom. She is a founding member of Book View Café.*

## FIRST WORD: Part Three, Routes, Rights, and Realities on the Ground

REPORTED BY LAURA RESNICK

The afternoon sessions began with a presentation by Jane Friedman, a *Publishers Weekly* columnist and publishing consultant in digital media strategy for authors and publishers. Friedman spoke about Wattpad.com, an online writing-and-reading community where all written content is posted for free and readers engage with the author and with each other. (Elizabeth Spann Craig presented a detailed workshop about Wattpad later in the week.)

Wattpad has 40 million users, only about 35 percent of whom are in North America, and over 75 percent of the content is in English. Wattpad primarily attracts a young market (age 30 and under), most of whom read on their mobile devices. So it's a platform worth considering if you're trying to attract younger readers. Content on Wattpad is typically serialized, and readers follow the story as it develops, giving feedback along the way. Romance is very popular on Wattpad, as is fan fiction and teen fiction.

Wattpad has relationships with some traditional publishers wherein editors monitor popular works on the site and make traditional deals with those authors. In the most famous instance, a woman named Anna Todd started writing fan fiction on Wattpad inspired by One Direction (an English-Irish pop music "boy band"). She developed such a huge following on Wattpad (an estimated 1 billion hits) that she got a multi-book deal with Simon & Schuster, became a bestselling author, and has a film deal with Paramount Pictures. (Gareth Cuddy of Vearsa added that a number of the top new Japanese authors started out on Wattpad.)

Friedman suggests that building enthusiastic readership on Wattpad can translate into sales of your commercial fiction. If you'd rather not post new content for free, Friedman recommends that you experiment with the site by serializing one of your backlist titles there, or perhaps writing spin-off tales about characters and storylines from your published work.

**The next speaker** in this afternoon session was Jim Bryant of Trajectory, Inc., a company that deals with international distribution of digital content. He says Amazon's prominence is being whittled away by hundreds of retailers and new markets worldwide, wherein new platforms are helping authors and publishers reach new markets. Opportunities keep emerging and growing. The enormous worldwide proliferation of available e-books makes discoverability the writer's biggest challenge in the international market.

Solutions that Bryant proposed include:

1. Engage and interact with readers through social media and perhaps also during or via story creation, as writers do on a platform like Wattpad.
2. Make your e-book available everywhere, worldwide, through every forum, vendor, and platform you can reach.



3. Make your book stand out. One way to do so is through enhanced metadata, including enriched descriptions, keywords, and author bios. (Several workshops this week discussed metadata in detail.)

Trajectory uses algorithms to analyze book contents. With their Natural Language Processing Tools, they can develop statistical information about a book, such as: the number of unique words used, the complexity level, and the “grade level” needed to understand the book. These tools can also analyze which books would be good reading material for someone learning English (based on a book’s level of difficulty) or preparing for exams. Does your book have the 300 words that Chinese students of English are told they need to learn? Trajectory can find out.

These tools can also plot a trajectory of a story’s emotional flow and impact. So, for example, instead of a “social behavior” algorithm based on what other readers “also bought” or liked, you can seek recommendations from this system based on the contents of books, searching for those with the algorithmically charted emotional flow or impact that you look for in a novel. And authors can use these tools to analyze their own works.

Jane Friedman returned to the podium to discuss **self-publishing and marketing translations of your work**. When is it worth the time and expense to pursue an endeavor like this? After, she said, you’re already successful in the U.S. and English language market.

If you choose a translation market based on overall e-book sales, you might look at Germany, followed by France. Friedman advises entering one market at a time; choose one language or territory and focus on it. Allow plenty of time (three to six months) to produce and release the book. Don’t try for simultaneous release with a new U.S. book—that way lies madness (and much hair-tearing)!

After mentioning some translation services such as Elance, Babelcube, and Fiberead, she advised caution, since a lot can go wrong with translations. A better route might be to use referrals from writers or publishers you know. Or, she suggested, hire literarytranslations.us. They’re expensive (\$0.12/word), but high quality and will work on finding a translator who’s a good match for your material.

A translation of your novel will take about three months to produce, followed by a proofreading process. Along the way, the translator will have questions and may make adjustments for the story to work well for an overseas audience. A good company or translator can also work with you on cover design, title, back cover copy, metadata, and marketing materials for the foreign market.

Also, “translation is only the first half of the job.” The second half is discoverability. How do you make people in that target market aware of the work? You may need a multi-language author website or Facebook page, as well as a service to provide support for foreign language email. You may also need to pursue traditional marketing tools in another language, such as getting reviews for the book. Building an audience in a foreign language can take time and needs patience. (Note: Matthias Matting’s subsequent workshop on self-publishing in Germany went into detail on these subjects.)

*Laura Resnick, a founding member of NINC, is the author of 25 novels and 70 short stories, as well as a couple of nonfiction books and many articles.*

## **FIRST WORD: Part Four, Platforms: Launching Promise & Potential**

REPORTED BY LAURA RESNICK

Robin Cutler, senior manager of IngramSpark, noted that Ingram, one of the world’s largest book distributors, is a leader in on-demand technology. Their print-on-demand (POD) program, Lightning Source (now 20 years old) is a global endeavor, with facilities all over the world, as well as all over the United States. They have a distribution network of more than 30,000 retailers and libraries, and they can produce POD books in both hardcover and paperback. Their e-book division, CoreSource, distributes to 70 online retailers.

12 November 2015

IngramSpark, which launched in 2013, is specifically designed to serve the needs of indie authors, providing the global distribution capabilities mentioned above with bundled on-demand production technology. It's easy (and free) for an indie author to set up an IngramSpark account, and it costs only \$49 to set up an individual title for production. You can produce both e-book and POD editions of your book, with flexible formatting options.

According to Cutler, IngramSpark's services have been ranked No. 1 by the *Independent Publishing Magazine*, above its various competitors (CreateSpace, KDP, Smashwords, Matador, Kobo Writing Life, Draft2Digital, etc.).

In terms of print formats, POD makes sense for indies because it's inexpensive to set up a book on Ingram's platform, you can test the market for demand without investing in inventory, there are no orders to pack, your book can be available globally, and it's easy to make revisions to the source files.

To use the system, you upload your file, review the proof, then turn on the distribution channel to get the book into the Ingram catalogue. The work is not tagged as a POD book and looks like any other book in the inventory. Ingram receives orders, prints and delivers the book, and pays you for the sale. You can also take POD orders that Ingram will ship for you.

Large publishers are also moving to the POD model, Cutler says, making more titles available with less inventory to warehouse. Ingram is also expanding the types of books that can be published as PODs, such as comic books and magazines. A POD edition is more expensive per unit than a traditional print run, but it eliminates overspending and wasted investment.

Cutler concluded by advising NINC members to invest in editing, cover design, and marketing when self-publishing; to use the POD format to test the market demand for a print edition of your book; to use your own ISBN; to offer your title in multiple formats; to use social media to build your platform; and to support your local bookseller and library. She also recommends *The IngramSpark Guide to Independent Publishing* by Brendan Clark (print: \$7.99; e-book: \$5.99). This book is free to IngramSpark customers.

Next, Orna Ross of the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) presented an award to **Draft2Digital**, one which ALLi gives to services they think do a great job. In connection with this, Ross mentioned that ALLi produces a book that is updated annually, *Choosing A Self-Publishing Service*.

Dan Wood of Draft2Digital gave a brief presentation in this session (but a very detailed one on Saturday) about the company's latest developments. D2D now distributes 65,000 e-book titles for 17,000 writers, and its newest relationship is with Tolino, a major German market. In 2016, D2D will focus on discoverability.

Like others in the First Word sessions, Wood emphasized how much the international reader market relies on mobile devices (i.e. phones), and he encouraged writers to distribute their work to as many markets as possible, pointing out that the opportunity exists for your book to be read anywhere in the world now.

Christine Munroe, the U.S. manager for **Kobo Writing Life** (Kobo's self-publishing platform) emphasized Kobo's extensive international reach, describing it as the most-global e-book platform available, with customers in 156 countries and 77 languages. Kobo sells only e-books (no print), retails only online (no stores), and partners with 17,500 retailers around the globe. Kobo is now the e-book partner with the biggest bookstore chain in Mexico.

Munroe also noted (as did several other speakers during the week) that various international markets are used to paying higher prices for e-books than U.S. customers do.

Kobo's parent company recently bought Overdrive (which supplies e-books to libraries), and Kobo anticipates a fruitful relationship with Overdrive.

**Dan Slater of Amazon**—the world's biggest bookstore, which has customized stores in other countries that use the local language and currency—said that Amazon is seeing continued growth, both in print and digital, both in the U.S. and globally. Amazon continues attracting new customers and new readers.

Translation services at Amazon are approached through Amazon's publishing division. Amazon Crossing focuses on finding great foreign books to bring to the English language market, and vice versa. Amazon Crossing is now the largest translation publisher in U.S., and it's approaching being the biggest globally.

When it comes to pricing books in foreign markets, Slater recommends (as other people also recommended all week) examining and emulating the pricing strategies of similar books



experiencing sales success in the target market.

Hannah Wall from ACX (the indie division of Audible, which is owned by Amazon) said that this is the time to get into audiobooks, a format whose sales are growing worldwide (she quoted a figure of \$1.43 billion dollars in sales). Audio fans listen to an average of 17 audiobooks per year. Audiobooks created on the ACX platform can be distributed globally. And, as with e-reading, smartphones are an increasingly popular device for consuming audiobooks.



## ***REGISTRATION IS OPEN!***

**DATE: September 21 thru 25, 2016**

**PLACE: Tradewinds, St. Pete Beach, Florida**

In NINC, our experience in the publishing business ranges from two books per author to probably 200. Varied and diverse, NINC members have one thing in common—we all want to kick things up to the next level, whatever that level may be.

That will be the focus of NINC 2016: Master Class. From business to craft to creativity to marketing and sales, we will present speakers to guide us to a higher level of knowledge and achievement.

Registration is open and filling up fast! If you're interested in attending, sign up now to secure your spot and your room at our amazing destination resort hotel. Member and assistant registrations are both open, with multiple ways to pay, including our three-part EZ pay.

# 10 THINGS You Probably Didn't Know You Can Do with BookTrakr

REPORTED BY JODI ANDERSON

Speaker Jack Royal-Gordon created BookTrakr software after a request from his wife (author Lauren Royal), who is “allergic” to spreadsheets. Their tagline “To Chart Your Success” appears most appropriate after attending this informative workshop, researching this tool for self-publishing writers, and speaking with writers already using BookTrakr.

BookTrakr is a software tool that can help self-published authors track their sales, how much money each book makes, which countries are selling best, if any new reviews have been posted, their book ratings at the different venues, and much more. BookTrakr’s unique dashboard puts this information, literally, at the writer’s fingertips.

One of the main reasons BookTrakr was developed was to help authors gain more time to write. By tracking many aspects of the business side of your self-publishing business, BookTrakr frees up more time to do the thing most of us enjoy the most—writing.

This unique software allows the BookTrakr servers to visit all of your stores, book pages (rankings, ratings, reviews), in all of the countries where your books sell. This information is then compiled into a summary email sent to you daily. The daily email is sufficient for some authors, but you can drill deeper via the website to get a bigger picture of your books’ performance.

BookTrakr not only tells you how your books performed yesterday, but how they have done since release. If you visit the website as a BookTrakr user, you will be able to look at sales data in comparison charts, stacked bar charts, etc. Using the dot/line graph, an author can visually track a book’s ranking over time. This is a great tool for the visual learners out there. Also, by choosing from different drop-downs, an author can look at statistics on a particular book, store, country, event, or time window.

A concern for many authors is password security when allowing software access to their store sites to gather and compile the information needed. BookTrakr has taken this aspect very seriously and uses several encryption methods. (Technical details are available in the FAQs on their website.)

BookTrakr was specifically designed to track indie authors publishing on Amazon Kindle via KDP, B&N via Nook Press, Kobo via Kobo Writing Life, iBookstores via iTunes Connect, and Smashwords. They shared during the workshop that more stores are on the way, including Draft2Digital and ACX. BookTrakr wants to serve indie author needs and is open to new uses and suggestions. Based on the workshop demonstration and presentation, BookTrakr appears to be user friendly, allowing authors to control the information they receive and how BookTrakr presents it to them. BookTrakr also prides itself on a quick response time to concerns or questions.

## 10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW

Royal-Gordon also shared the top 10 things that even most current users might not know about the software. They are:

1. Filtering the sales report—an author can look at a single book or series within BookTrakr, a single store or country, or you can mix and match. The information shows the currency a store uses and converts to the currency you prefer (which isn’t locked in at a specific conversion rate until your payment date).
2. Bookshelves—organize your books in a way that’s meaningful to you. Break it down by series, backlist, etc. Also, books can belong to more than one bookshelf. Under settings, add a shelf, then check the appropriate books. You can choose a shelf to research sets, etc.
3. Events—correlate sales/rankings/reviews by things you did or that happened to you. ▶ ▶ ▶

Easily see what you did that might have changed sales. An author can add an event after it has happened by inputting proper information.

4. Sorting books—you can determine the order in which your books are presented.

5. Sharing your daily update email—add recipients (accountant, assistant, etc.).

6. Updating your book cover—if you update a cover, or other important information, it is simple via the website to help BookTrakr “discover” it on the next night’s information gathering.

7. Do your rankings seem “out of whack” in your daily email? BookTrakr gathers your ratings during one particular window of time. If your book is not No. 1 at that particular time, the information in the daily email might not include that.

8. Do your sales seem “out of whack”? BookTrakr investigates this immediately for authors. It is a top priority.

9. “Drilling” down into the dashboard—if an author or client visits the website and clicks the “More” button or book cover, it will drill down and show more information and a variety of additional categories.

10. The information that BookTrakr compiles can help authors respond to surveys or future interview questions.

Visit [www.BookTrakr.com](http://www.BookTrakr.com) to explore the many aspects of BookTrakr that can simplify your writing business.

*Jodi Anderson is the author of romance novels under her real name, as well as her pseudonym, Jodi Dawson, for Harlequin Romance and Bell Bridge Books. Hooked on happily-ever-after, Jodi is committed to giving her readers a feel good read that will leave them believing in every possibility. When not writing, Jodi enjoys teaching workshops for writers and gaining control of a microphone in front of a captive audience. You can reach Jodi through her website at [www.JodiAnderson.net](http://www.JodiAnderson.net).*

## **ALLI, THE ALLIANCE of Independent Authors and Founder Orna Ross**

REPORTED BY JODI ANDERSON

NINC was honored to have Orna Ross, who was named one of the 100 most influential people in publishing by *The Bookseller*, at the 2015 conference to share in depth about the group she formed—the Alliance of Independent Authors. ALLi is a professional association for authors who self-publish, and their partners and advisors. Ross made it clear that this group is also in existence for those new to self-publishing, as well as those who have been traditionally published or are pursuing both avenues for their career journey.

During a relaxed workshop that she arranged in an informal question and answer format, Ross described herself as a conscious creativist, her definition being that she and other writers bring the creative prospect to all areas of their lives. After being print published, Ross heard about self-publishing and started with a small poetry book to test the waters. Looking around for a group to join to learn about this new area, Ross found none. Knowing it would be a lot of work but feeling it was the right time, she founded ALLi and launched it at the London Book Fair in 2012.

The group is global and comprised, at this time, of 40 percent North American, 40 percent European, and 20 percent from the rest of the world. There are several levels of membership: author, professional, partner, and associate. You can find the eligibility requirements and cost on their website. Membership includes online education opportunities, podcasts, a blog, and advocacy.

The ALLi blog comes out nearly daily and offers a monthly condensed version for those who don’t want a daily blog. It is filled with industry news and thoughtful information. ALLi makes the blog available to everyone



in order to fulfill the mission of their nonprofit organization to educate the world about the self-publishing arena. One can follow the blog at <http://www.selfpublishingadvice.org/>.

An audience member and ALLi member pointed out the added benefit of the twice monthly podcasts as a great way to learn. ALLi Insights takes place on the second Tuesday of the month, and Q&A from Members takes place on the last Tuesday of the month. During the Q&A sessions, there are all levels of questions from beginner to advanced. They do occur on London time, but you can find them afterward via the link in the member zone on the ALLi website. Or search for Indie ALLi on YouTube. The sessions are also made into an audio afterward, as well as summarized on the blog. They are considering transcribing future shows.

When asked what ALLi does for writers, Ross said the association provided information and education. Some of the areas they help with are production, formatting, distribution, and links to good author services. They work with organizations to introduce indies, including library and literary groups. As a member of the International Author Federation, they are non-confrontational but campaign strongly to find out where the self-publishers are and what is being done for them. They advocate strongly for excellence and ethics in self-publishing.

Another question was whether ALLi was focused more on European or North American self-publishing. Orna's response was quick and clear. ALLi is global. The U.S. is ahead in self-publishing which means their market is becoming glutted. Global is the new frontier and ALLi plans to have ambassadors in various territories.

For the professional level author, ALLi is planning more offerings. They are polling their professional members, as well as those professional writers considering joining ALLi in order to understand what they want and how they would like to receive information. They would love to hear from NINC members with suggestions and recommendations.

Another important consideration for authors is the cost. ALLi has plans that begin at \$99 per year. This includes all benefits, including the online conferences. They are transitioning to one-day events throughout the year, which will be called Indie Author Fringe. These will be more focused on those writers already at the professional level.

It has come to the attention of ALLi that many self-publishing author members are looking for in-person meet-ups with other members. To facilitate this, ALLi is looking for people to coordinate meet-ups in their areas. The only requirement to join in on one of these sessions is that you be an ALLi member. Email Ross via the ALLi website if interested in this.

For more information visit the website, <http://allianceindependentauthors.org>.

## **WHAT'S NEXT for BookBub and What Works for Discount Pricing**

REPORTED BY LISA VERGE HIGGINS

The BookBub presentation was so packed that the area below the display screen looked like a kindergarten story circle. The speakers were Katie Donelan, a Harvard graduate and the director of the business development team at BookBub, and Carlyn Robertson, an account coordinator.

### **What Is New and What Is Next**

BookBub's business strategy is to help authors increase sales and expand their audience. Building on their U.S. success, BookBub wants to be *the* place where readers find their next favorite book worldwide. They intend to expand their methods beyond price promotion strategies to tackle the greater discoverability issue.

BookBub is currently in a stage of intense growth. In April, they raised seven million dollars from their initial group of investors. They have doubled the number of employees from 25 to 54 in one year. Many of the new hires have been engineers who are building the email platform and developing new



projects. The speakers encouraged everyone to sign up for the BookBub Partners Blog found at <http://insights.BookBub.com/>. This redesigned blog now has a dedicated writer, and announcements for the rollout of new features are posted there first.

BookBub has launched subscription services in the United Kingdom, Canada, and India. They're currently testing Australia and New Zealand as new markets and will invite authors to submit for promotion once there is a critical mass of subscribers. They're also hoping to delve into foreign language markets next year.

These expanded English-language markets allow authors to do promotions outside the United States. One of the common concerns at BookBub is the stiff competition for U.S. promotion slots. Now an author can specifically request a promotion in the UK, Canada, and/or India, where the competition is less stiff and ad prices are significantly lower to reflect the smaller markets. Furthermore, an ad placed in a foreign market does not put the burden of a six-month wait on an author before she can request an ad in other territories, such as the United States. The number of sales will be less overseas, but BookBub will now be able to work with more authors.

BookBub is also working to optimize targeting. In the last year, they have added nine new categories: cozy mysteries, business, crime fiction, true crime, parenting, dark erotica, historical mysteries, middle grade, and history. Cozy mysteries were once included under the general mysteries tab. All subscribers who subscribed to mysteries will now also be subscribed to cozy mysteries unless they manually change their preferences. Similarly, the middle grade books category was broken out of the more general children's category. The dark erotica category is smaller than general erotica, but for folks who subscribe to this sub-category, the ROI is much higher. Pinpoint targeting increases the flow of sales.

BookBub is now beta-testing "Author Profiles." Some authors already have this feature. Over time the option will be rolled out to all authors worldwide (even ones who haven't run an ad). Only authors can claim their profiles. Keep an eye out for a button on your partner dashboard where you can claim your identity, upload a photo, a bio, and put up your book list. The Author Profile feature will allow users to search the BookBub website for either a book or an author. Wrangling the immense amounts of data involved in this project is difficult, which is why the system is still in beta. BookBub hopes this feature will increase traffic to their website to open up a new venue for sales.

For now, authors with multiple pseudonyms will have to set up a separate partner account and associated author profile for each pseudonym.

BookBub will also be adding a "Follow" option to the Author Profile. Users who go to your author profile and press the "follow" button will receive email alerts for your future ad promos. Down the road, BookBub hopes to use this button to alert readers to an author's new releases as well.

### **What Works for Discount Pricing**

Ms. Donelan emphasized that when considering a BookBub promotion, it's important to set your goals. Do you want to give a push to a new release? Gather more exposure? Hit a bestseller list? Or double your income for the month?

Sixty-three percent of BookBub readers have purchased other books by an author who was discovered during a price promotion. So if you want to give a push to a new release, consider running a promotion on one of your best backlist books soon *after* your new release is available. Be sure to include in the backlist book a one-click link to buy the new release.

If you want more exposure, run a free promotion. Free books spur 10 times more downloads than books priced at 99 cents. Permafree books perform better than five-day-freebies because they're available across all vendors for a longer period of time. When the first book in a series is discounted, there is a five-fold increase in the sales of other books in the series. When it's *free*, there is an eight-fold increase.

If your goal is to hit a bestseller list, price your discount at 99 cents. Free book "sales" don't count for bestseller lists. Also, concentrate all of your marketing for this discounted book in a single week for maximum velocity of sales.

If your goal is to drive revenue, don't offer a book free unless you have other backlist books to sell. In that case, discount your one book instead. Note that an author receives 142 percent higher revenue for books priced at \$2.99 rather than 99 cents. However, discounting books at \$1.99-\$2.99 price points means a

lower engagement rate, so the book should be a “big” book or a high-production, high-value book like a cookbook, nonfiction, or boxed sets.

Most sales happen in the first four days, so the partner dashboard reports sales only for that period of time. They are striving to add more tools and features to better help authors in assessing deal results, but they currently can’t measure the “halo” effect from a promotion because those numbers occur outside their purview.

During the question-and-answer session, BookBub confirmed that they promote single-author book sets, but they don’t do multiple-author book sets anymore. Anthologies and short stories with multiple authors can be promoted as long as they are over 150 pages and have a 2-D cover. They also addressed why authors can’t write BookBub ad blurbs: The folks at BookBub run extensive a/b tests for copy, so editors use that data to craft blurbs that sell.

*Lisa Verge Higgins is the RITA-nominated author of 17 novels, including historical and contemporary romance and women’s fiction. Her 2015 novel is Senseless Acts of Beauty.*

## **EVERYTHING YOU NEED to Know about Succeeding with Kobo from Metadata to Global**

REPORTED BY SASHA WHITE

### **Speaker: Christine Munroe**

Kobo Writing Life is Kobo’s free self-publishing platform. They offer a 70-percent royalty on books priced \$2.99 and over, and 45-percent royalty on books under \$2.99. They also allow those who upload directly the ability to make any of their titles free at any time, for as long as they want. They make no request and offer no incentives for exclusivity.

“Exclusivity is bad for publishing and is a risky move for your business. You will lose your loyalty from other retailers and readers, and every retailer presents new opportunities,” said Christine Munroe, Kobo Writing Life U.S. Manager.

She was *not* the first speaker at the conference to warn that retailers do pay attention to who we, as authors, promote. Meaning, if you want to be featured at Kobo, and they check your social media and see that all your promos and book links go to one specific vendor that’s not them, the chances of you getting picked as a feature on their site are slim.

KWL offers a newsletter and blog with tons of information for authors/publishers to help increase their sales, including podcasts of author and industry expert interviews every other week. (Authors can apply for inclusion.) They also have an internal piracy scanning system. When a book is scanned, if a certain percentage of words match any other book in their system, a **real person** will check for copyright/piracy infringement.

Moving forward, we got into some of the nitty gritty details, tips on how to get the most out of your titles at Kobo.

They encourage you to do pre-orders (and allow them up to a year in advance). Customers can see the first 5 percent of whatever file you upload, so use that, and make that upload something readers will enjoy, like the first chapter or a Dear Reader letter. However, be sure to upload the final file 48 hours before release date to be sure the proper file is released on the release day. All sales are processed on the day of release, which gives you a nice sales boost. They do report to *USA Today* and the *New York Times*, and yes, they report all U.S. sales.

“FREE E-books” is the most common search query on Kobo, and it automatically directs people to the “Free First In Series” page. ▶ ▶ ▶

Monroe showed us some charts showing which price ranges sold the most in which genre, and the take-away from it all ... Kobo has a diverse customer base, ideal for price experimenting. Many of their biggest authors are pricing between \$4.99 and \$6.99. Kobo does not believe in devaluing e-books by only promoting cheap or free titles. A higher price can open more doors for merchandising and limited-time discounts because the deal is more exciting. Example: Daily Deal ideally offers a steep discount, \$7.99 regular goes to \$0.99 or \$12.99 to \$2.99.

They just did a promotion for Lauren Royal's eight-book Big Box Set, priced at \$19.99, which was hugely successful. Kobo did an email push that landed this set at No. 1 on Kobo against the release of Grey and Harper Lee's *Go Set A Watchman*. The great thing for authors about this? Kobo has no price cap on the 70 percent royalty, so the author made \$14 on every unit sale.

So what is Kobo looking for in books it promotes? An eye-catching and professional cover, clean metadata, and a decent price.

If you're doing a new release or something special and want them to help promote it, they would like some lead time (as much as you can give). And they want you to help spread the word when you're featured in a promo. Partners make it a success for all involved.

Various promos available with Kobo are monthly 30 percent off promo spots, Buy More Save More, and email blasts. Kobo has partnered with VIBER, a free messaging app and public chat room. They started a brand new author chat and plan to do one per month with an e-book giveaway—a great way to reach new readers. The newly launched Kobo Book Club public chat had been open for three days at the time of the presentation and had 65,000 followers.

Other new programs at Kobo that can benefit authors are the new Kobo Southwest In-flight program, the Super Points loyalty program, and #EReadLocal (all things you can learn about on the KWL Dashboard). Kobo currently offers EGift Cards, but no book gifting. They are looking for ways to solve the fraud problem with that, though, so keep an eye out.

The Overdrive acquisition is still very early, but the goal is easy opt-in through your KWL dashboard by early 2016.

Soon you will see a Promotions tool on the dashboard. There will be a small fee for purchasing some promotions because while they are the best way for authors to gain traction, it does cut into Kobo's margins drastically. (Example fees show \$5 for a promotion.)

As the session ended, Munroe encouraged everyone to keep in touch. She loves to hear from authors and truly feels we are partners. This report is pretty bare bones, so be sure to check out the complete presentation on the NINC website: [http://ninc.com/conferences/ninc\\_world\\_2015/presentations](http://ninc.com/conferences/ninc_world_2015/presentations).

*Bestselling author **Sasha White** writes modern erotic fiction with an edge of kink with the occasional foray into paranormal and science fiction. White has published over 30 stories with publishers such as Kensington Aphrodisia, Berkley Heat, Avon, Black Lace, and Samhain Publishing, and is recognized as one the top authors of the genre. Learn more about Sasha and her books at [www.sashawhite.net](http://www.sashawhite.net).*

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[http://ninc.com/conferences/ninc\\_world\\_2015/presentations](http://ninc.com/conferences/ninc_world_2015/presentations)

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# TRAJECTORY: Discoverability for a New Age— Be in on the Ground Floor!

REPORTERED BY SASHA WHITE

Trajectory is a relatively new company, founded in 2012 in Marblehead, Massachusetts. It's run by veterans of the publishing industry who all share a passion for problem-solving. Every week they're discovering something new that keeps them constantly evolving, which makes them both awesome and hard to define.

The Trajectory website states that they “tirelessly seek to create more relevant, useful, and improved offers for the publishing community.” And Trajectory co-founders Jim Bryant and Scott Beatty did just that. After speaking with some NINC members, they reworked their presentation overnight for us.

Trajectory mines data from books and uses that data to offer publishers unique insights and opportunities for discoverability and distribution and to help retailers market the books they provide or recommend. Trajectory is all about deep learning algorithms that are used to analyze and recommend books. You (or your publisher) upload your book to their database, they scan it and apply all their neat little techie things, and then it shows up on their website. Recommendations are generated by comparing unique characteristics of one book to the other—writing style, words, subjects. Basically, it's Moneyball for books.

Example: A library in the Midwest is looking for books that deal with specific crops. The data Trajectory provides helps them find those books quickly instead of having to read/scan the books to see if the topics were mentioned.

Below is a very basic rundown of some of the data Trajectory mines and ways it can be used.

Trajectory's Index—the index appears on the right side of the page when you select a title. It shows a wide variety of signals and stats that include number of words, number of unique words, parts of speech, nouns dominant, certain use of adjectives, average reading time, and so on. It also shows the Goodreads rating and number of Goodreads reviews. Some reviews do show on the site as well.

Another interesting statistic is how many SAT words are in the title. These things might sound useless, but think of it this way. If you want your book to look good to foreign language libraries/sites for their readers who want to use them to learn/better their English, they'll be more likely to use books with a high rating of things like SAT and TOEFL words. (TOEFL=Test of English as a Foreign Language. When you are on the site and you click on a subject in this area, there is a brief explanation.)

While the Index shows you the above stats in a percentage form, Trajectory's Interesting Facts and Data Visualizations section, which is beneath the title, shows it to you in word clouds and graphs. This is where comparing books gets very interesting.

They have this thing called a Sentiment Graph (also the Intensity one works this way, too). What they do is divide the book into 100 equal parts and compare them. They assign each part a sentiment (or intensity) value between +5 and -5 according to what happens in that part (+5 being something spectacular, -5 being something tragic). Then they chart the path of the book using these values.

This is just one signal that can be looked at when evaluating books, particularly fiction.

When evaluating words, extreme happiness is +5. Catastrophic is -5. Then there's a graph that shows the ups and downs in a clear, easy to understand way. One of the most interesting things is that once a book is up on the site, you can compare it to another simply by selecting the Compare function in the top left hand corner of the Interesting Facts and Data Visualization area.

Kinda cool, hmm? Imagine comparing the ups and downs of your books intensity and sentiment to classics and blockbusters. Never mind that you can compare the words in a book to the SAT database, TOEFL words, and the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) words.

What Trajectory offers is hard numbers and data that can help us to see how one book can compare to another. What they do is help facilitate the global book supply chain where the publisher would be paying to supply their own books or retailers using them to find books for their clientele.



They want to help everyone sell more books, and they see us—publishers, authors, and readers—as their partners. They need our help to help them evolve and they are very open and eager for feedback, so feel free to contact them.

They encourage us to see Trajectory as a tool to be used in conjunction with other tools. The data they provide has many uses. Retailers today are using keywords you provide to them. Their scan will show you which words are showing up the most in your books. This will help identify popular keywords in your stories and help with discoverability. It can also be useful to an author who is unsure how to categorize or market a book. You can use the data to help your web designer use keywords to drive traffic to your website. Also—boughts in online stores are social driven, the secret sauce that each place has, that we have no access to. However, with Trajectory, people can use these comparisons to find books that really do compare to the ones they love.

Trajectory has mainly worked with large publishers to get their books into new markets. The original intention was not for the public. Supply chain was the goal. NINC has helped them to see that authors are not just writers anymore. We are publishers, and suppliers as well, and they are completely open to working with individuals. If you would like to work with them on distribution, they ask that you be patient as it takes as much time for them to set up an account for one person as it does for a large company. They like to work with other organizations' systems and connected networks. This brought up the appealing idea that if some were interested in distribution with them, it might be a thought for some NINC authors banding together to submit books for distribution as a group.

NOTE: Trajectory invites NINC members to submit e-books, and they will process them for FREE! It won't be free forever, probably until the end of this year. They will do their best to get the books up as quickly as possible. Only NINC members qualify, not friends of NINC members. This offer is open to indie and traditionally published titles, but if it is a traditionally published book, you must have your editor/publisher submit it.

To submit, go to <http://trajectory.com/ninc/> and click to get instructions and a metadata template. Fill it out. Send in a standard ePub and cover image.

If you simply want to upload your book and get the information for yourself, then have the title taken off their site, you can notify them *at any time* to take it down. Also, if you don't like what you see about your title, do not ask them to change it. You can, however, ask them to remove it.

They will not distribute or pass your book along anywhere. It will simply go into their database. This is strictly information and discoverability oriented.

## **LISTEN UP! An In-Depth Guide to Audiobook Production**

REPORTED BY DELANEY DIAMOND

In 2014, audiobook sales were estimated at \$1.47 billion! That staggering statistic alone is enough to make any author sit up and pay attention to the audiobook market as a viable way to diversify income. But in case you're still not sure, Hannah Wall, Marketing Manager at ACX—the online marketplace where authors, agents, publishers, and other rights holders can get together to produce audiobooks—provided a wealth of information about how to produce and market them. ([www.acx.com](http://www.acx.com))

There are 28,000 voice actors on ACX. The best of the best are the 400 Audible-approved actors who have been vetted and have a proven track record of producing top-notch narrations. Voice actors serve as producers and narrators, thereby making the entire process of producing your own book a lot less expen-

sive. From start to finish, the schedule is negotiable, but expect to spend approximately six weeks getting your book retail ready.

**How does an author take advantage of this additional revenue stream?** First, make sure you have the audio rights to your work. If you're a self-published author, you can skip this part. If not, review your publisher contracts. In the event your publisher owns the audio rights, encourage them to produce audio versions. Or, get those rights reverted so you can move forward with production yourself.

Once you receive or confirm that you do have the rights, you can produce your books on ACX or sell them to Audible Studios ([www.audiblestudios.com](http://www.audiblestudios.com)). Audible Studios is a full-service publisher, capable of handling all your audio publishing needs, the way a traditional publisher handles publishing your books.

**Now that you're ready to produce your book, set up a free account at [www.acx.com](http://www.acx.com).**

1. Claim your book on Amazon to pull in all the metadata.
2. Add the cover art, a perfect square at 2400 X 2400.
3. Upload an audition file. This should be no more than three pages, and feel free to pull from multiple passages. Provide lots of information to get the best auditions possible, such as the age of the characters. Do you need a specific accent? Provide the names of actors your characters sound like. In general, the more information you provide, the better your chances of getting exactly what you're looking for.

**How much does producing an audiobook cost?** It varies and authors have several options. First, let's talk about the rights you wish to grant to ACX. You can choose to have them act as the exclusive distributor of your work, which gets your book distributed to Amazon, Audible, and iTunes. (By the way, ACX is the exclusive audiobook distributor to iTunes.) By going exclusive, you'll receive a 40 percent royalty. Should you choose the non-exclusive distribution, they offer a 25 percent royalty, but you can sell your audiobook wherever you want.

Expect to pay between \$100–\$400 per finished hour (PFH), and every 9300 words averages out to one finished hour. Here's how this works if you have a novel that's 93,000 words and you're paying \$200 per finished hour.

$93,000 \text{ words} / 9300 = 10 \text{ hours}$

$10 \text{ hours} \times \$200 \text{ PFH} = \$2000 \text{ to produce the audiobook}$

An alternative to paying all the upfront costs is to enter into a royalty-split with the narrator. That means you'll split the 40 percent royalty 50-50 for a seven-year period. You can also hope to receive a stipend from ACX, which means they pay the narrator on your behalf. Currently, ACX offers a stipend of \$100 PFH, but keep in mind this is not guaranteed. It's offered to authors whose books meet a certain criteria in sales and high reviews, and by going this route, expect to receive a 20 percent royalty instead of 40 percent.

### **What about marketing?**

Good news—there are so many creative ways to market your audiobook! For one, ACX sends you 25 promo codes after the book is completed and accepted. You can give those out to review sites, offer them to fans in giveaways, and provide them in newsletter distribution. And guess what? When you run out, contact them and they'll send you 25 more.

Then there's the 30-day free trial program, which encourages listeners to try Audible risk-free. Using the ACX ASIN, send readers to a specially "created" landing page where they can take advantage of the free trial and listen to your book. You'll earn a \$50 bounty for every new listener who remains on Audible for more than 60 days.

We all know excerpts work. Wall recommended uploading at least an excerpt of 5 percent or chapter one to SoundCloud, and share the link on your website. Don't forget to provide that link to the free trial page when you do.

Leverage your narrator's followers. This is particularly powerful if you've done the royalty share option. Engage them with Twitter Chats or cross promote on each other's blogs.

Other ideas include using Google to find audiobook reviewers. Offer them a free



promo code to review your book. Whispersync technology allows readers to seamlessly switch between reading and listening. To employ this option, your audiobook must have a 97 percent sync rate with the e-book. Finally, use bonus content at the end of the book, such as author commentary, teaser chapters for future books in the series, and exclusive content. These are all proven ways to increase sales and interest in your books.

### **Recommendations:**

- ▶ If possible, use the same narrator for all the books in your series. That voice becomes the voice of your brand.
- ▶ It's not necessary to have two narrators (male and female). A good narrator should be able to effectively capture all the characters by using different voice inflections and altering speaking speed.
- ▶ Listen to other books in your genre to see what others have done.
- ▶ Promote your audiobook on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) the way you do your other books.

*Delaney Diamond is the USA Today-bestselling author of sweet, sensual, and passionate romance novels. You'll find free reads and the first chapter of all her novels at [www.delaneydiamond.com](http://www.delaneydiamond.com). Her latest novel is The Rules, Book 4 of a contemporary romance series set in Seattle and centered around the Johnson Family and their multi-billion-dollar beer and restaurant businesses.*

## **BACKLIST, FRONTLIST, Everything in Between: How Libraries Buy, Lend, and Promote Your Books**

REPORTED BY PAM MCCUTCHEON

**Speakers: Alene Moroni and Brenna Shanks, King County Library System, Seattle, WA**

Speakers Alene Moroni and Brenna Shanks of the King County Library System in Seattle WA, started out by sharing five myths about libraries:

1. Libraries cannibalize book sales.
2. Library borrowers don't buy books.
3. Libraries don't develop authors.
4. Libraries are unfriendly to commerce.
5. Libraries aren't widely used.

On the contrary, an article on "The Case For Libraries" (from *Publishers Weekly*, 4 April 2015) pointed out that libraries are the most trusted institution in America, librarians are book experts and make effective recommendations, library readers often buy more expensive books, and merchandising in libraries works. In addition, they spend more on frontlist and don't send books back.

### **HOW LIBRARIES BUY BOOKS**

There are about 9,000 systems and 16,000 library buildings in the United States (more libraries than McDonald's!), but library sizes and budgets vary widely. Though some figures estimate the total library market as low as 1.2 percent to 5 percent of trade publishing, library sales are difficult to track because they buy from diverse sources such as wholesalers, publishers, online venues like Amazon, and even local bookstores. Some interesting data was presented at BEA 2015, speculating that the library market for adult books might



be equal to independent bookstores, perhaps as much as 30 percent of midlist sales and 50 percent of genre sales.

The problem lies in tracking sales. Most sources authors use don't reflect library sales. If you want to see how many libraries own your book, go to OCLD WorldCat ([worldcat.org](http://worldcat.org)), but be aware that some libraries don't catalog mass market paperbacks.

Most libraries have criteria by which they select materials. These may include:

- ▶ Current anticipated needs and interests of the public
- ▶ Reviews
- ▶ Accuracy and timeliness of content (non-fiction)
- ▶ Author's or publisher's quality and/or reputation
- ▶ Whether it adds diversity or breadth to the collection
- ▶ Unique or controversial points of view
- ▶ Prize winners/nominations
- ▶ Quality of production (They don't like spiral-bound.)
- ▶ Patron demand (For every X holds placed on a book, they will purchase one copy.)
- ▶ Local authors

Libraries will purchase **self-published works**, subject to the criteria above. If no mainstream reviews exist, they will look at Goodreads and Amazon. However, availability of self-published works can be an issue. Don't assume that libraries can purchase your self-published book easily. Check with library e-book vendors such as OverDrive (you need a minimum of 15 titles to join), 3M, Hoopla, Baker & Taylor, Axis360, Freeding, and others to ensure your book is available. They mentioned that libraries will purchase novellas in e-book form, but suggest combining several together for print.

There are some challenges in **digital content purchasing**. Libraries can't buy e-books or audiobooks through Amazon if they're exclusive to Amazon (KDP Select, Montlake, etc.). Also, some publishers stagger sales, making e-books available to libraries only after the title has debuted on the retail market (the librarians recommended against this). Some audio publishers make their content available only on exclusive platforms. Smashwords can make your e-book available to libraries through OverDrive, and Draft2Digital is working on doing the same.

**Digital purchasing models** vary widely. For example, HarperCollins licenses 26 circulations of each copy of a title, some offer limited-time licensing (such as Penguin which licenses for a year), and others offer outright purchase. Books often cost more for libraries than they do elsewhere, but pricing varies widely (Random House charges roughly three times the retail hardcover price while Harlequin charges the regular retail price). Downloadable audiobooks are usually purchased outright at physical edition prices. If the publisher uses a pay-per-use pricing model, most libraries will control their budget by limiting the number of uses available to patrons.

## LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

**Print collections** can include hardcover, paperback, large print, audiobooks on CD, DVDs, and music CDs. They strive to provide both current and backlist titles, but weed out items that become dated or worn to make room for new items.

**Digital collections** include e-books and audiobooks. Most are single use/single copy sales. One copy provides multiple e-formats (though only OverDrive has Kindle compatibility), and some audiobooks are now available through MP3 or streaming.

**Circulation platforms** like OverDrive are the electronic interface that checks materials in and out for libraries, though some are building and maintaining their own platforms, which requires them to negotiate their own deals directly with publishers.

## HOW LIBRARIES PROMOTE BOOKS

Libraries can be seen as discovery tools for readers, using tools such as:

- ▶ Reader advisory services such as verbal recommendations and "hand-selling."



- ▶ Community programs such as hosting author visits, book clubs, and community reads, or visiting schools and other groups to talk about books.
- ▶ Book lists by genre, best of year, “read-alikes,” local interests, etc.
- ▶ Displays such as the new book shelves, genre, and theme displays.
- ▶ Website services like BiblioCommons or NoveList, which provide book recommendations.
- ▶ Social media—some also have email or chat services to interface directly with readers.

### Library and book industry sites of interest:

LibraryReads ([libraryreads.org](http://libraryreads.org))  
 American Library Association lists and awards ([ala.org](http://ala.org))  
 Early Word Blog for library news ([earlyword.com](http://earlyword.com))  
 Shelf Awareness ([shelf-awareness.com](http://shelf-awareness.com))  
 Library Journal ([lj.libraryjournal.com](http://lj.libraryjournal.com))

Find a copy of the presenters’ slides at <https://www.slideshare.net/secret/KIsYx493XlwUia>

*Pam McCutcheon writes romantic comedy, paranormal romance, and books for writers under her own name, and pens the YA urban fantasy Demon Underground series under the name Parker Blue.*

## **SELF-E—New Library Discovery Platform for your E-books**

REPORTED BY LAURA RESNICK

The dashing Porter Anderson—journalist, consultant, and friend-of-NINC—presented this session about a new program designed to get self-published e-books into U.S. public libraries on a curated basis.

This new discovery platform for your indie books is called SELF-e, a joint project of *Library Journal* and Biblioboard. *Library Journal*, of course, is the magazine whose news and reviews libraries traditionally rely on. Biblioboard provides the digital infrastructure and tools that libraries use for the e-book services they offer to their patrons. So these are two companies that libraries know and trust.

Libraries are the primary discovery spot for reading new authors and books. Many people only spend money on an unfamiliar writer after first sampling (and liking) her work at their local library. Many kids and young people also first become readers via their library, and this is what turns them into book buyers. There are reputedly 9,700 library systems in United States, 17,000 library buildings (or branches), spending more than \$1 billion per year on books. Porter notes that library patrons read an estimated 29 books per year, and roughly 75 percent of library patrons bought a book within the past six months.

So it’s extremely frustrating that libraries, like brick-and-mortar bookstores, have been largely inaccessible to indie authors.

The situation has also been frustrating for librarians. In addition to wanting to include popular and relevant books in their digital collections, librarians also have a strong interest in local authors. But with so many indie books available, librarians have no time to wade through the enormous selection. Porter quoted a figure of 600,000 indie titles per year being published. Librarians don’t have a system or guidelines for evaluating titles within this “wall of books.” They also have no mechanism for getting indie e-books into their systems.

SELF-e provides the sifting method and the infrastructure for enrolling indie e-books into a library collection.

SELF-e is also free for authors; you don't pay anything. Which is appropriate, since it's also revenue-free; you don't earn income from SELF-e. It functions strictly as a discovery platform.

To participate, you submit your ePub file to the site (<http://self-e.libraryjournal.com/>) and enter your metadata. (ISBNs are not required.) Then choose your U.S. state. You're automatically included in your state's SELF-e anthology (or in the international group, if you're not a U.S. writer). This anthology provides a way for librarians to identify and work with local writers, and to access their e-books for the library system.

In your submission, indicate that you want to be considered for the SELF-e Select Collection, which is the national curated collection ("the best of the best"). A reader/reviewer associated with *Library Journal* will evaluate your book and make a decision about whether to enter it into the Select Collection. The reviewer is looking for a strong story, good writing, good editing, material that's distinctive and suits its genre—in other words, a good read.

The best works will be entered into the collection, which will contain information and reviews for about 200 books. Once a collection is full, a new one is started, so indie e-books are being curated and collected perpetually, not on a fixed annual or quarterly cycle.

Libraries that subscribe to the service will use the Select Collection to choose indie e-books from SELF-e's catalog. Thus libraries can expand their digital collections to include quality e-books that are being released through indie channels rather than traditional ones.

Your agreement with SELF-e, if you participate in the program, licenses them to present and distribute your e-book to libraries. You can also opt out of the system at any time. It will take a few months to remove your title(s) from all libraries.

Although SELF-e is a new program, it has been expanding rapidly, and currently every state in the U.S. has submissions. The number of libraries subscribing to SELF-e is also growing. Porter recommends that you check your local library system to find out if they're featuring SELF-e yet—and, if they're not, urge them to do so.

Finally, please note that Amazon evidently views this program as being in conflict with the exclusivity requirements of KDP Select.

## **WATTPAD and the Writer**

REPORTED BY LISA VERGE HIGGINS

Speaker Elizabeth S. Craig was pulled out of the audience during NINC's First Word session to discuss her success using Wattpad to expand her readership and increase sales, which may be why she faced a packed room at her break-out session. Elizabeth doesn't work for Wattpad, but she's an enthusiastic user as well as the author of three series that feature cozy mysteries with senior sleuths.

As a writer of fiction that features older protagonists, Elizabeth was seeking a way to expand her audience when she met Ashleigh Gardner, the Head of Content at Wattpad, at a conference.

Wattpad is a free, interactive, story-sharing site. Users post stories in a serialized way and solicit comments from the community. About 85 percent of users read these installments on their mobile devices and add in-line comments. Currently there are about 40 million users, and Wattpad is aiming to gather a billion. The demographics skew young: About 40 percent of the users are between 13 and 18 years old; 45 percent are 18 to 30; and 15 percent are over 30. It's a strongly international website. In the Philippines, it's bigger than Google.

Because Wattpad is a free site, there is no direct compensation for sharing your stories, although you can include a hyperlink to a vendor to entice readers who can't wait for the next installment.



Mainly it's a visibility platform, a way to expand your demographics, your international reach, and get new readers. Elizabeth has seen spikes in her India English-language sales because of her involvement.

Although Wattpad is advertised as a site where new writers upload chapters of organically developing stories, the platform welcomes published authors. Elizabeth serialized her own material one chapter at a time, once a week. At the end of each chapter she put a call to action to encourage interaction.

Elizabeth addressed several worries that arise when a published author considers putting free content on Wattpad:

**Will Wattpad grab my rights?** Wattpad does not ask for the rights to your story—your book is yours to do with what you wish and you may remove it from the site at any time. She advises warning your community first so that an avid reader isn't left high and dry.

**What about bullies?** Trolls exist everywhere but, in her experience, this community is supportive and encouraging.

**Why would I give away my work?** Elizabeth compared this method of promotion to having a permafrost book. If you hook the readers, some will buy the book or future installments in the series.

**Is it a time suck?** It takes time to build any community. But Elizabeth has found that with push notifications she can selectively respond to comments. She limits her involvement to a few hours a week.

She mentioned a pitfall for authors who have chosen KDP Select: Technically, putting your book up at Wattpad violates the terms of service. She realized this only after an Amazon bot found one of her books, and she had to pull it down.

For authors who write erotica, your work will be confined to a section of Wattpad called After Dark which is only accessible to users over 18 years of age. Because of the younger demographics, Wattpad is mostly PG, but some muted sensual stories may pass muster.

#### **Best practices include:**

Upload your book in small chunks, preferably ten pages or less.

Commit to consistency. Many of the writers on the site are new writers who run into the sagging middle and leave their readers hanging. The community appreciates consistent uploads once a week, every week, on the same day of the week.

Include calls to action at the end of every installment, such as "if you liked this chapter, please vote on it!" Multiple votes raise the book's visibility on the site. Although hyperlinks are not allowed in the text, the sidebar allows one hyperlink, which Elizabeth uses to connect to her book page on Amazon.

Include author notes at the end of each installment, such as where you got your inspiration or an inside look at the character, to encourage community involvement.

Interact with readers by setting up notifications about new comments and queries so you can respond to the ones directly addressed to you. You can also build a social community faster by reading and commenting on other people's work or joining one or more of the many Wattpad clubs.

Request to be included on the Featured Books page of the Wattpad app to encourage more readers to read your chapters. It's free and requires no more than an email request, but they do ask you to commit to leaving the book up for six months. Wattpad prefers to feature you when you already have three or four chapters uploaded. New readers who find you will then receive a push notification when you upload a new chapter.

Respect the marketing funnel: It's wise to feature the first book in a series and talk about the others, rather than throwing up all of your books.

Wattpad also comes with data about your growing Wattpad readership. A demographics tab shows where your readers are coming from, how old they are, and what gender. Graphs illustrate how many votes, comments, and completions you've received per installment. To encourage audience engagement, you can link to videos where you discuss the book, or add images to cast your characters.

At the end there was some discussion as to how Wattpad monetizes their free site. Considering the demographics of the site, the movie industry is sitting up and taking notice. Wattpad reached out to Elizabeth to do a cross-promotion with M. Night Shyamalan's new movie, *The Visit*. Wattpad also solicits authors to do product placement in their works.

# REEDSY Gets it Right

REPORTED BY JENNA KERNAN

Ricardo Fayet is a Spanish born Frenchman now living in London, and if that isn't reason enough to get up at 8 a.m. for the first workshop of the day, Fayet is also the co-founder of Reedsy, an online "curated publishing service marketplace" that helps authors find designers, editors, and publicists. Think *Match.com* for book publishing. This site is a place where writers can find the specific kinds of professional help they need to produce high-quality books.

Fayet gave attendees a live run-through of Reedsy's interface, showing the various features, options, and professionals currently vetted by Reedsy. Developmental editors, book cover designers, illustrators, copy editors, and publicists flashed by on the conference screen.

*Why should you care?* Well, if you are interested in having vetted, high-quality experts in the field of publishing available at your fingertips, read on.

Need editorial support? Need help with that rejected query letter? Want a proposal to get the attention of that special agent? Or, maybe you're assembling your publishing "dream team," but you are short a cover artist.

*What they do:* When you enter the Reedsy site, you can search in one of three services: *Editing, Design, or Publicity*. There are drop-down menus to help authors refine their hunt. For example, the editing search allows you to choose the services you require, the language of your work, and whether it is fiction or non-fiction.

*Here is how it works:* Reedsy charges writers a 10 percent commission on services rendered through their site. The service provider also pays 10 percent. Payment goes to Reedsy, and Reedsy pays the freelancers directly. The client can browse around and search with numerous parameters for matches to the services they require. Reedsy's search engine churns out five to 10 hits to match the parameters you have designated. The number is intentionally limited so as not to overwhelm potential professionals. Your search will provide you with freelancers' contact information, resumes, examples of their work (Fayet recommends exploring the illustrators, who are amazing), examples of projects on which they have worked, and so forth. Authors make initial contact through the Reedsy platform. When you query, Mr. Fayet warns that rarely will all five freelancers answer you with a quote because, he believes, they have to love the project and be free to take on the task in order to accept.

Once you have narrowed your search, the Reedsy site allows you to share documents and communicate directly with the service providers. You can receive sample editorials from each responding freelancer. If the collaboration seems a good match, then the process moves forward.

You don't have to be indie to use Reedsy. This might be a really wonderful way to get that manuscript ready before your agent shops it or before you submit to that dream editor at a traditional publishing house.

For indie writers, Reedsy becomes a one-stop shop to assemble your team or a place to find that missing piece. For indie authors of a certain level, Fayet suggests they explore the newest addition to their interface, the publicity professionals.

You also don't need to be a writer. Mr. Fayet said it is their intention "to capture the pool of talent who are leaving traditional publishing." I saw more than a few editors speaking to Fayet after the presentation, as if to prove his point. These publishing professionals seem to welcome the interface that will allow them to connect with serious writers in need of professional services.

On one of the live workshop examples, Fayet searched for a freelance content editor and got 162 hits of professionals with expertise from memoir writing to young adult. One of the freelancers said they have Skype chats with clients before working with them.

And if that isn't enough, they are preparing to launch an author-friendly e-book editor to be used in collaborating with your independent editor and to make the creation/formatting of e-books simple.

Reedsy has been in business for about a year. They offer a money back guarantee. Reedsy



has a blog (<http://blog.reedsy.com/>) where they often choose a query letter to review for free if authors would care to submit an example.

Other links include:

- ▶ Reedsy's [newsletter](https://reedsy.com/about) (<https://reedsy.com/about>).
- ▶ Query Boot Camp initiative (<http://blog.reedsy.com/launching-query-boot-camp>)
- ▶ Sign up for NINC attendees to get \$50 discount (with whomever you work with on Reedsy) at: <http://reedsy.com/loves/ninc>.

Jenna Kernan writes romantic suspense for Harlequin Intrigue. Her *Apache Protector* series releases in December 2015 with *Shadow Wolf* (#1). Other titles include: *Hunter Moon* (#2), *Tribal Law* (#3), and *Native Born* (#4). Follow Jenna [@jennakernan](#), on [facebook/AuthorJennaKernan](#) or at [www.jennakernan.com](http://www.jennakernan.com).

## THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE: How Authors Decide Between Traditional and Self Publishing

REPORTED BY TRACEY LYONS

Presenter Judith Curr, president and publisher of Simon & Schuster's Atria imprint, started out with this statement, "It's important how you frame the question to get the answers you are looking for in your career choices."

She then gave a brief overview of Atria Books imprints: Washington Trade Press, Atria Indies, Keywords Press (YouTube personalities), Enliven (spirituality), 37 Ink—African American, pop culture, and Emily Bestler Books. Atria values are to nourish authors, enlighten, entertain, innovate, empower, and inspire people. Some of the authors who were self-published and then became part of their author list are M.J. Rose, Zane, Linda Cobb, Tosha Silver, and Vince Flynn. Examples of books on the Atria list are *Black Iris* by Leah Raeder, who gives a very different take on erotica; *Black Girl*—here the author was found on a very popular YouTube channel; and *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrick Backman.

When deciding on who to put in the Atria program, Judith asks why this book? Why is your book going to exist? What is unique about this book more than any other book out there? Who will read this book? What is the core audience? Who will people read if they aren't reading you? How will you tell your readers about your book? Paid media vs. earned media (no cost only time) TV ad, print, outdoor-targeted billboard locations based on your books theme, location etc., mobile, online.

**Ways to attract your readership.** E-newsletters, sign up for newsletters of people you admire to see what they use to attract readers. Do tours/book signings, social media, blog tours, and giveaways. Never stop promoting your books because books never disappear. Remember, if you give something, you should get something; i.e., a giveaway if readers sign up for your newsletter.

**Marketing is not just for Facebook anymore.** She recommends a look at marketing spend vs. pre-sales, charting and responding to online chatter, weekly pre-sales before publication, effectiveness of Twitter after appearances at BEA, TV shows, etc. Maybe a TV ad didn't drive sales, but it did drive conversation that led to sales. It's not a fine science, but you can track your marketing efforts yourself to see what leads to sales. Is there a time you should stop pre-promoting before publication? Is there a relationship between mentions and sales? Activity online leads to activity offline, which leads to activity online, book signings, conferences, Atria tours, and marriage proposals. Make your promotion unique to your book. Shane Dawson, author of *I Hate Myselfie*, used crowdsourcing to get illustrations for the book. Dawson used selfies taken at his book signing.

**Cross pollination.** "We create the news, you break the news." Breaking news, Goodreads, bloggers, what can you provide them that they can use to help you promote your book? What about posting consecu-

tive chapters on blog tours? How many books will you sell? What is your expectation for your book? How do you measure your cornerstone of success so you know when you reach your goals? What formats will you sell them in—mobi, e-books, print books, phones, laptops, tablets? Where will you sell your books? Where are your fans?

**The publishing landscape.** Focus on the areas you know. Think about selling the book at various price points. Selling solely based on price does not work anymore—99 cents may not indicate quality. We need to be constantly looking at innovations that will bring you readers.

**We are all intellectual property.** It's not the answers you have, but the questions you ask. From the traditional side of publishing, key questions include which books have a larger potential than has been realized? Has the book gotten all of its audience, or do you need mass distribution? What value can Atria add to an author's career? Atria manages the printing process, manages sales accounts. Is the story good? Can the author tell it well? Does the author have an authentic voice? What does the author want? Can the publisher help by providing a service the author can't get on their own?

**Questions to ask from the self-publishing side.** Do you want to write? Be a publisher? What are your skills? What activities can you assign to others? What publishing model is best for you? What gives you pleasure? Do you like working with other people? Do you enjoy collaboration? What are your financial expectations? What is your financial plan for you and your book? Do you need money upfront or over time? Is this a hobby, a career, somewhere in between, or a legacy, a marketing tool for other business (nonfiction)? Do you still want to do your day job and write on the side, or do you want to be a full-time author? Is your career nice and neat, or a puddle of melting ice cream cake?

**Q and A.** How is Atria different from any other publisher? They went out and searched for indie authors. They only take on as many authors as they can handle while thinking about how they will perform in the future. They stay with authors for the long haul. Curr believes it's all about communication.

What is more attractive, staying with print or going indie? Is anything happening to make print authors want to stay in print? Better conditions for rights reversions? You have to be able to feel that you will sell more, and that you will sell more via overseas sales. Can the publisher put your book in areas you can't do on your own? If you can't get this, then you may be better off staying on your own. There are some changes being made to contracts. Can we add value to our authors? A traditional publisher might be better at getting the word out earlier on your book release.

How did you find your previously self-published authors? Are you keeping an eye out for them? Atria is constantly looking at who is doing well, every two weeks they have a team that looks at indie authors, and they look at the quality of their reviews. Has that writer touched something in the reader? Is there a strong reaction to their work? Look for authors they can add something to. Look at the indie bestseller lists and YouTube, making sure they haven't completely peaked so they are like a rising star.

What is the submission process?

Email Curr and tell her you saw her at NINC: [judith.curr@simonandschuster.com](mailto:judith.curr@simonandschuster.com).

*An Amazon Top Ten-bestselling historical romance author, Tracey sold her first book on 9/9/99! Tracey's books have been translated into several languages. She has appeared on the award-winning Cox Cable Television show, Page One and at the famous Lady Jane's Salon in NYC. She holds membership in Romance Writers of America, American Christian Fiction Writers, and Novelists, Inc. Tracey writes small town, sweet historical, and sassy contemporary romances. You can learn more about Tracey and her books by visiting her website at [www.traceylyons.com](http://www.traceylyons.com).*

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## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME IS COMING ....

With all that NINC offers you, you won't want to miss out. When your notice arrives, reply and renew ... NINC values you.

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# 5 WAYS TO BEAT Publishers at Their Own Game, aka Think Like A Startup

REPORTED BY LAURA RESNICK

Guest speaker Gareth Cuddy is the CEO and founder of the Irish technology company Vearsa (Gaelic for “verse,” reflecting Ireland’s long history of storytelling), which distributes e-books globally, tracks sales, and analyzes a variety of related data. Cuddy urges NINC members to think like start-up companies that have to compete against bigger, more established companies (such as publishers), and to do so with fewer resources, less money, and less manpower (such as, oh, indie writers). A small start-up company (or writer) needs to think differently, be more resourceful, work smarter, and take advantage of tools and opportunities.

The first thing about selling a product, such as your book or your name, is that “it’s all about the brand.” A great brand must be authentic (come from *you*), consistent (reliable), and adaptable. Know what you stand for, what you’re about as an author. A smart start-up company leverages and promotes its brand by accessing a variety of useful tools. Cuddy recommended a lot of specific stuff, some of which I or other NINC members I know already use, and some of which I’d never heard of before.

Datahero (<https://datahero.com/>) is a free website that reconfigures your uploaded data in intuitive and analytical ways. Domo (<https://www.domo.com/>) is another free online data tool. In terms of data that’s more specific to writers, CamelCamelCamel (<http://camelcamelcamel.com/>) scans prices on Amazon every day and has a number of tools for customizing the prices you want to monitor.

Bitly (<https://bitly.com/>) allows you to shorten your hotlinks and include information that helps you analyze where your traffic and buyers are coming from.

Zopim (<https://www.zopim.com/>) is a free live-chat tool. Mail Chimp (<http://mailchimp.com/>) is a free online service for communicating effectively with your readers via newsletters and mass mailings.

Zoho (<https://www.zoho.com/>) offers a dizzying array of apps and software tools for managing information and communication. Slack’s “Be Less Busy” (<https://slack.com/is>) is a free communication tool that organizes all your separate communications apps in one place.

Survey Monkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>) is a free tool for writing and administering online surveys and questionnaires.

Upwork (<https://www.upwork.com/>) is a general purpose freelancers’ market for outsourcing work. Reedsy (another NINC guest) is a service for outsourcing work specific to the writing business; they’re at <https://reedsy.com/>.

Find My Audience is a new company (you can sign up for the beta program at <http://findmyaudience.com/>) that’s working on helping writers find their readers.

Cuddy also talked about metadata, urging authors to be engaged and to experiment, changing their metadata and pricing periodically to figure out what increases sales.

If you google phrases like “webmaster tools” and “keyword tools,” you land on pages that help you access free information about what sort of search words people use most. If you’re a romance writer, then looking for the top-10 most-searched terms around the word “romance” helps you learn what people are looking for, and you can incorporate those terms (as appropriate) into your blurbs, keywords, and metadata to help people find *your* book when they’re looking for a romance novel.

Cuddy also recommended always using the most specific metadata terms and BISAC categories. In other words, when selecting categories to describe your book, choose (for example) “romance->historical->medieval->Arthurian” first, rather than “romance,” which you shouldn’t choose at all, since it’s so general as to be useless. (BISAC is the Book Industry Study Group.)

And be sure to put serious thought into pricing, he says. One method might be to take the top 20-100 titles in your category, record the prices, find the median pricing, and proceed from there. Be proactive and engaged, change your prices regularly, rinse, and repeat!

Another suggestion that arose, though not emphatically, is that if you’ve got a lot of titles, you might con-



sider registering with Amazon as a publisher rather than an author to gain access to Amazon Vendor Central. Your royalty rate would be lower, but you'd have more tools and flexibility.

Cuddy says he believes that the e-book marketplace will get more fragmented as readers look for curated book sites, social reading experiences, and trusted sources. He recommends selling direct to consumers (readers) from your own website as part of your overall distribution strategy. If you do this, some things you'll need to think about are the costs of setting up and maintaining your own webstore, whether or not you'll include DRM on your books, the formats you'll offer, and any sales tax you'll have to pay.

Aerbook (<https://aerbook.com/site/index.html>) offers free and low-cost plans that set up an instant store on your website; they also offer "Social DRM," which is more like a watermark than the DRM that publishers use (and which readers find frustrating). Payhip (<https://payhip.com/>) will host all your e-books, handle payments through Paypal and Stripe and securely deliver your files automatically to your customers. GumRoad (<https://gumroad.com/sell/books>), which charges a transaction fee, is an e-book selling site that will manage all taxes and fees. And Avalara (<http://www.avalara.com/>) is "software for automated sales tax compliance;" it calculates and remits sales tax for you.

When it comes to promotion, Cuddy says that hustle, hard work, and experimentation are essential. Figure out what works for you and double-down on those tactics. Some examples of things he has seen work for writers are countdown deals, BookBub promotions, and making the first book in a series permafrost (then perhaps making the second book cheap, and the third book less cheap).

He urges writers to "market to the top of the pyramid, not the bottom," try to find the readers who are your audience and aim for a higher "conversion rate" (which I took to mean effort-to-results ratio). Promote globally; global revenue is projected to rise to \$8 billion by 2019. "English-speaking markets are low-hanging fruit" and a smart way to diversify your revenue streams. Cuddy believes in the amplification benefits of getting your books into more markets, more stores, more countries, and more vendors.

## COLLABORATION: When Two (or More) Minds Are Better than One

REPORTED BY JENNIFER STEVENSON

Speaker J.T. Ellison is the *New York Times*-bestselling author of 14 critically acclaimed novels, including *When Shadows Fall*, *Edge of Black*, and *A Deeper Darkness*, and is the co-author of the Nicholas Drummond series with No. 1 *New York Times*-bestselling author Catherine Coulter. Her work has been published in over 20 countries. Her novel *The Cold Room* won the ITW Thriller Award for Best Paperback Original and *Where All The Dead Lie* was a RITA Nominee for Best Romantic Suspense. She lives in Nashville with her husband. Scheduled speaker Catherine Coulter sent her regrets. She had a family emergency and had to go home. Erica Spindler took her place in the workshop.

*New York Times* and international-bestselling author Erica Spindler's novel *Bone Cold* won the prestigious Daphne du Maurier Award for excellence. She received a Kiss of Death Award for *Forbidden Fruit* and *Dead Run* and was a three-time RITA Award finalist. *Publishers Weekly* awarded the audio version of her novel *Shocking Pink* a Listen Up Award, naming it one of the best audio mystery books of 1998. Erica lives just outside New Orleans, Louisiana, with her husband and two sons, and is busy at work on her next thriller.

Some collaborating arrangements include:

- ▶ work for hire
- ▶ sharing royalties equally
- ▶ ghost writing—where your name doesn't go on the book

Ellison's first collaboration was with Catherine Coulter. Then Ellison and Spindler collaborated on two novels, together with Alex Kava. Ellison wasn't interested in collaborating at first, until she realized she'd be working with Coulter, who is one of her heroes. The experience has had no downsides.

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About the Ellison-Coulter collaboration:

- ▶ Ellison is under work-for-hire contract with the usual deliverables.
- ▶ The series idea was Coulter's.
- ▶ Agent suggested a coauthor.
- ▶ Coulter's husband discovered Ellison's work.
- ▶ Coulter flew Ellison to California to discuss the project.
- ▶ Coulter's characters & ideas changed with the collaboration.
- ▶ Coulter's process is normally one perfect draft.
- ▶ Ellison "vomits out a draft" and reworks it.
- ▶ Both have a "hair-on-fire" approach to drafting that didn't work for complex international thrillers.
- ▶ It helped them to have a photograph of main characters and share private Pinterest boards.

The process:

- ▶ They meet and work out an outline in four days.
- ▶ Ellison drafts the first draft.
- ▶ Coulter redrafts it to put the manuscript in her voice.
- ▶ Ellison edits that draft.
- ▶ Coulter edits a final time.
- ▶ They do one round of edits with the editor.

Spindler: How do you write in someone else's voice? How well do you deal with your words being changed?

Ellison: You have to check your ego at the door. It's Coulter's brand, her name on the cover, not my book.

- ▶ My writing has gotten stronger, more concrete.
- ▶ My voice was more navel-gazing, introspective.
- ▶ Coulter's voice is dialogue-heavy, plot-light.
- ▶ Two different generations, two different vocabularies.
- ▶ I'm tech savvy.
- ▶ She's brilliant with historical.
- ▶ You have to find someone who will complement your strengths.
- ▶ It'll still be a meld of the two voices.

Next, Ellison and Spindler got together with Alex Kava, who worked with the same publisher and was represented by the same literary agency.

- ▶ Collaboration was a marketing-based plan to grow their readerships.
- ▶ Their chemistry was strong, trust was strong, friendship was strong.
- ▶ They chose a project with three linked stories to be given away to their readers.
- ▶ They brainstormed via phone and Skype.
- ▶ They created two joint projects: a serial killer storyline, *Slices of Night*, and superstorm storyline, *Storm Seasons*. Each author used her own recurring characters from other books. Spindler started with a serial killer in New Orleans. Ellison wrote the Omaha episode. Kava wrote the DC episode. Each author put touches of the others' stories into her own story.
- ▶ The project was a success in terms of cross-pollination. Ellison's readership jumped the most.
- ▶ Sold rights to Poland and the UK.
- ▶ All of them enjoyed the process, decided to do it again.

JT: We were like writer *Witches of Eastwick*. Just after *Slices of Night*, the book was in the system and we heard in the news that someone in California was killing homeless people with a stiletto just like our guy was doing. We thought, should we pull the book? Nope. We'll just mention how we're really sorry about this. Just before *Storm Season* came out, Superstorm Sandy was exactly the same scenario, but it didn't bring the massive cold front all the way down to the south.

Things you want to look for in a collaborator:

- ▶ You share an audience of readers who would like your collaborative work.
- ▶ You feel the project would add value for your readers and for you.
- ▶ You have respect and a trust relationship, not just a random meet.
- ▶ Someone you can have drinks with is not necessarily someone you can work with.
- ▶ Basic requirements: show up on time, deliver on time, be flexible.
- ▶ Yield to one another's expertise, compromise.
- ▶ Settle a payment schedule and decide how money will be handled.
- ▶ Put it in writing.

JT: We don't have a contract, Erica and Alex and I. We are pretty flexible about when and how the money comes. We split it equally between the three of us. Catherine [Coulter] and I are in a much different setup. There's a contract, certain deliverables get certain payouts, just like a normal contract. It's always important to talk about who gets what, when, how, and where, up front.

- ▶ A collaboration product offers flexibility:
- ▶ Boost sales by cutting it into three separate e-books so readers have to buy all three installments.
- ▶ Give the stories away.
- ▶ Do price reduction promotions.
- ▶ Box the collections.

Ellison: Not everybody who collaborates has done it like this. John Connelly had a mystery, *Talisman*, with a little monkey or a ring that went through generations of history and everybody was affected negatively by the talisman. How does Catherine benefit? She's got more ideas than she can handle, just like all of us. In another couple of books, maybe I can reach down the ladder and pull somebody up with me. Pay it forward. Because I've got [too many] ideas, too!

Q: If you could have done anything differently, what would you say?

Spindler: I wish we'd known more about the process and hired a better editor up front. I wish I'd been less flexible and had Trident take on the whole self-publishing thing for us. But creatively there's nothing I would have done differently.

Ellison: I agree. We did all the right things and learned together and grew together and became better friends.

Q: The first collaboration I ever read was a James Michener. As you read through it, I could see it really jump. I could see all these story lines, a different writer for each story line. I read it decades ago. I can tell. It's like I picked up a different book. The voice changes, etc. James Patterson has talked about how he does the first outline, but he's never gotten into how he worked with people.

Ellison: Patterson gets a bad rap, but look at what he's done for so many people. Patterson writes the outline. Then he hands it over to his cowriter, gets the draft from them, edits it, and it's done.

## **BEST PRACTICES for Your Website: Tips from Jane Friedman and J.T. Ellison**

REPORTED BY MARGARET DALEY

The key elements and housekeeping duties for a website are:

1) Make your brand or identity clear on your website through your tagline and banner. Barbara Freethy has a good one on her website. What do you want to convey to your readers about your genre or your accolades on your home page?

2) Craft a professional bio or about page. The first line is the most important one. A ▶ ▶ ▶

good example is: Bella Andre is the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Publishers Weekly* bestselling author of “The Sullivans” and “The Morrisons” series.

3) Make readers aware of your book. Using a slide show for your books can be confusing on your main page, so choose wisely what you put on that page. Some people don’t like pop up boxes when they visit a website. Consider the pros and cons of the widgets or programs you utilize.

4) Make your navigation through your website pages easy and clear for your visitors. Check out Barbara Freethy’s website for a good example of how to do it. She lists each series then each individual book with a blurb, links to each retailer for e-book, audio, and print. Very intuitive. Pay particular attention to your page descriptions in the navigation bar.

5) Pay attention to the site-wide widget areas on your pages. They usually appear in the same place on each page (example the right side bar). What information you put there will be seen more than once. What do you want to convey to your readers the most?

6) Language matters. Instead of newsletter sign up, you might consider something like, “Stay informed about ...” Also have the email box right there for a visitor to fill out (not take them to another page).

7) Your website isn’t the time for you to be modest. Don’t forget social proof like reviews, awards, and endorsements. Give your readers good reasons to follow you. Let readers know where you’re active online. Some people who visit your website won’t return to it, so grab their attention immediately.

When updating your website, use words to describe who you are and what content is on your site. Be keyword minded with your website titles and subtitles. Using style headings increases your site’s visibility on a Google search (or any search engine).

What keyword phrases should you be using? Some suggestions are the name you publish under, your book titles, series names, character names, specific themes to your work, and similar authors and titles in your genre. Remember Google doesn’t understand a picture without text.

The following are some suggestions to help you with optimizing your website. Meta descriptions appear in lots of places. You might want to use a WordPress SEO plugin from Yoast if you use WordPress for your website. With Google Search Console you can sign up free and discover how you are being found. Use Library Thing tags to describe your work. Use Pingdom Website Speed Test to see if your website is slow. The speed it loads affects the traffic to your site. Visitors can get impatient. Is your website mobile friendly? Google has a mobile friendly test if you aren’t sure.

Some more suggestions to make your website attractive to readers are making your brand clear, having social proof that your books are worth purchasing, posting links to your social media, and having clear navigation through your website. Make sure you mention your new books above the fold where visitors don’t have to scroll. Many won’t scroll down or won’t go far, if they do. Make the first part of your bio professional and about your business. Have a printable book list for your readers. If you have a bookshelf on your website, make sure book covers are clickable links to a book descriptions and buy links. Also, make sure your newsletter sign-up is prominent. Full-width modular design is better than a boxed one. Check out J.T. Ellison’s website and Jane’s suggestions on tweaking it (link to slides at the bottom of the article).

On your website, you need a media kit. Have a high resolution author picture with the photo credit clearly stated. Also have high resolution covers and your contact information. Consider using book-specific media kits, especially when you launch a new book. Link to recent and best interviews, as well as any media mentions.

What call to action do you want people to take when they come to your website? Have one call to action (two at the most). Install Google Analytics and use the information you find on it concerning your website and the traffic that comes to it. What social media sites push traffic the best? Google Analytics will show you that. It can help you decide where to advertise by analyzing where your traffic comes from and a description of who visits your website.

You can visit <http://bit.ly/ninc15-site> to view the slides for this presentation.

*Margaret Daley, a USA Today-bestselling author of over 95 books (five million plus sold worldwide), has been married for over 40 years and is a firm believer in romance and love. When she isn’t traveling, she’s writing love stories, often with a suspense thread and corralling her three cats that think they rule her household.*

# A SECOND BITE at the Apple: Reclaiming Book Rights in the Digital Age

REPORTED BY THAD MCLROY

The century-old Authors Guild is the largest professional organization for writers in the United States. The group is best known for its defense of writers' copyright and so was a perfect participant on the important topic of reclaiming book rights. No less than the Guild's executive director, Mary Rasenberger, led the presentation, volleying with Ryan Rox, the editorial director for the Guild.

The session might be described as schizophrenic, uncertain whether to look backward at unhappy contracts already signed or whether to look forward, advising authors on how to avoid signing contracts that might lead to the same buyer's (seller's?) remorse.

The session description addressed the likelihood that NINC members will "need to reclaim the rights you granted your original publisher." But the description continued that the presenters would walk us through "how to protect yourself contractually so that you're in the best possible position to reclaim your book rights when the time comes."

The dilemma played out with the presenters focusing on the Guild's [Fair Contract Initiative](#), announced this past May. The effort is laudable in every respect and promises to make lives easier for authors in many aspects of their contractual dealings with publishers. Some of the key points discussed in the session:

▶ A publishing contract should not be forever: The Guild recommends that "contracts should provide clear language stating that if a specific royalty minimum is not paid within a certain period of time, then the book is defined as 'out-of-print.'"

▶ Advances must remain advances: This position advocates that publishers issue advances earlier in the life of the work's creation so that the money can "enable authors to devote themselves to completing their books without having to take on other work to make ends meet."

▶ Half of net proceeds is the fair royalty rate for e-books: This would be a substantial improvement over current practice usually at 25 percent of net.

But many of the Fair Contract issues are beyond the day-to-day concerns of NINC members, such as questions about definitions of "accessibility" and "non-compete" as well as the sharing of legal risks.

The presenters did consider the issue of rights reversion, but only with recommendations moving forward. Far better coverage of the topic is available from the Authors Alliance. Its excellent *Understanding Rights Reversion* (<http://www.authorsalliance.org/2015/04/09/keeping-your-books-available/>) covers "When, Why, & How to Regain Copyright and Make Your Book More Available."

By coincidence, Ken Liu at the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America calls his post *A Second Bite at the Apple* (<http://www.sfwaworld.com/2013/08/second-bite-apple-termination-rights-writers-introduction/>) when he provides "An Introduction to Termination Rights for Writers."

As NINC members increasingly become their own publishers, the issues surrounding author contracts more often affect members who are trying to reclaim what was lost rather than avoid potholes moving forward. There was discussion during the break of many NINC members' need to focus on the nitty gritty of reclaiming rights already granted.

Thad McIlroy is an electronic publishing analyst and author based in San Francisco and Vancouver, BC. His site, *The Future of Publishing*, provides in-depth coverage on the publishing industry. ([thad@thefutureofpublishing.com](mailto:thad@thefutureofpublishing.com))



# THE AUTHOR AUDIT (*No, Not That Kind*)

BY JODI ANDERSON

As Thad McIlroy shares on his website, “Writing and publishing are in my blood.” With his roots grounded firmly in the early stages of the desktop publishing industry, McIlroy has morphed along with the ever evolving publishing transitions. Now an electronic publishing analyst, consultant, and author, much of his career has been spent exploring “the technology and marketing issues surrounding electronic publishing, e-books and digital magazines, metadata, XML, PDF, and publishing automation.”

So, with this impressive background and knowledge field what can The Author Audit, presented at the 2015 NINC conference, offer NINC authors? First, let’s explore the purpose of doing an Author Audit. Two of the most important reasons to the audience in attendance were more sales and a more professional online presence. Most of us can agree, these are both things that are of vital importance to authors.

Next, for those of you not in attendance, what does an Author Audit look like? As you’d expect, there is a spreadsheet involved, but not the intimidating kind. With separate tabs for different books, genres, series, etc., this tool can and will help you track where each of your titles is in the process, its activity level, and current status. All of these things can help an author to determine next steps, possible reversion of rights, marketing, and many other professional aspects of an author’s career.

Author Karen Tintori graciously became McIlroy’s test study for presentation purposes to offer a real life scenario using her books and stats. Tintori has also written using pseudonyms and collaborating with Jill Gregory, so we were able to see that while writing under various names or with another author can offer a career auditing challenge, it is not impossible.

Through screen shot slides, McIlroy showed us that Amazon search results can show too much; i.e., every edition, foreign, out of print, etc. Barnes & Noble showed too little information to be useful for Karen’s audit. And Kobo showed mostly irrelevant information that couldn’t be used for this particular Author Audit.

The Audit helps you know what your assets are as an author and can help you to see where problems might lie. Another main focus of having an audit done is finding out next steps you can take to increase the value of your assets. These can range from strange classification problems to generic title problems. We can’t fix or tweak problems we aren’t aware of in our backlist or current list.

While it does take time to pull all of your data into a spreadsheet, once gathered, it is then a one-click on your spreadsheet to find detail on any aspect of your publication journey.

Some categories or tabs used in the examples shown were Name Variations, Publisher Information, ISBNs, different editions (paper, cloth, e-book), BISAC, Library of Congress, Amazon Kindle Headings, and many more depending on your needs.

Using an Inscribe agreement (INstore) that offers a main control screen to check for the book in question, an author can then determine what market a book may not be available in and rectify the situation to increase sales and presence. It can also show territorial information and ratings, among other categories.

An important issue in today’s publishing climate is knowing when your rights might be reverting back to you and whether or not something is happening with your books. Claiming those reverted rights and getting the ball rolling on stagnant works affects your bottom line and profitability.

What does all of this achieve? Ultimately, the goal is for you to learn all the information you can for every book. Know how each book appears online, know where your books are on sale, and know how your books are selling, which then helps you, the author, know what to do next in your career journey.

Another good aspect pointed out by McIlroy and several of the workshop attendees was for heirs, family, estate planning, etc. So, there are short-term benefits and long-term benefits that can protect our works, our estates, and our families. The Author Audit can give easy access for the people who will need to know about your literary/publishing assets. Having all of this information together in one place makes it less vexing and more manageable. Even scanning and attaching contracts to the document can reduce the paper we keep or that others may need to access.

Although starting sooner rather than later in a career can make the construction of this information easier, even if an author has dozens or hundreds of books, it is not impossible to make use of this tool.

The Author Audit is designed to be an “active” document. It can change and grow as new books are added or as things happen with a past work. Taking the big picture of our careers and organizing it into manageable chunks can help us to focus our valuable time on our writing, where it belongs. The Author Audit is a reasonable first step in keeping track of your career.

As Tintori shared during the presentation, “(The Author Audit was) extremely helpful in pinpointing. Helps to decide best use of these assets.”

That is something all authors can understand.

To learn more about The Author Audit and Thad McIlroy, visit [www.thefutureofpublishing.com](http://www.thefutureofpublishing.com). On his blog, McIlroy shares the presentation slides and sample spreadsheets on his blog from the NINC conference.

## **GETTING AND STAYING CREATIVE *in Writing, in Publishing, and in Life***

REPORTED BY TRACEY LYONS

In this hands-on workshop, Orna Ross, founder of the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) and author of the Go Creative! series of books, discussed how we are all creators and put creativity at the heart of what we do. We don’t always realize that what creates one thing creates another. The most important thing about the creative process is to experience it.

Free writing is the core exercise. Free writing, as in putting pen to paper, gives you a different experience than computer writing. She started out by asking us to think about what our weather was like at this very moment. In order to know this you must look inside, settle yourself. Observe where you are at this moment. All of your thinking and learning uses only one part of the brain. Close your eyes, settle on your chair, feel yourself coming into your body. Think of a word or two that describes how your weather feels at this moment. Write that down on your paper. This is a grounding exercise. All weather is welcome, cloudy, sunny, stormy, and clear.

### **Seven stages of creative process**

Whenever you create, you are using the seven stages of the creative process. You might not realize you’re doing it. You also do this in other parts of your life, such as when you plan a meal. It’s there underlining everything you do. The first three stages are internal. These stages work for relationships, money, and publishing. The stages are:

- ▶ Intention—what you want to create.
- ▶ Incubation—idea that’s been in your mind.
- ▶ Investigation—research, memory, imagination.
- ▶ Drafting stage—give it a go.
- ▶ Deepening—getting closer to the intention.
- ▶ Correction stage—editing phase, if you stay in this stage it could keep you from moving forward with your work.
- ▶ Publication—putting it out there, making it public.

### **FREE writing**

Ross recommends an exercise using the FREE writing method: F=fast—write as fast as you can on a certain topic, R=raw—don’t edit as you write, EE=exact plus easy—use details from your own



life, sensory detail, etc.

Preparing to free write, settle yourself, close your eyes, turn your closed eyes to the left. On the blank screen of your mind, think of your first name. Let it sound in your mind seven times. Then bring your eyes to the right, see your family name, your last name, and repeat it seven times. Bring your attention to the center to the space between the two words. See and feel the space. Stare into the space and breath. Open your eyes.

Write a letter to money. Tell money what you think of it. Free write for five minutes. Set a timer. Don't think about what you're going to write. Just write it down unedited using the FREE analogy. After five minutes put down your pen and shake out your wrist! Now think about the actual process of using pen to paper writing. How did you feel? Do you love money? How does it affect your life? Did you gender the money in your letter-male/female? How would you describe your tone toward your money letter? Angry, happy, indifferent?

Next FREE writing exercise—First center yourself, close your eyes, settle yourself in the chair, observe your weather. Think about what it's like. Prepare to free write. Relax your muscles, your face, and the space between your eyebrows. Let your shoulders fall away from your ears, just be in the moment. Prepare to write fast and raw. Open your eyes. Now you be the money and write to yourself. What's money got to say for itself? Set your timer for five minutes and free write. Don't think. Just write. When the timer goes off, set down your pen. Look at how money talked to you.

Try free writing for your work in progress. Set yourself a time or specific amount of pages and keep to that timetable.

### **Thoughts on creativity**

Certain parts of your life work really well and are easy to work into creativity. Other parts you may feel are inadequate. We all share the fact that we still want something. As long as we live, we will continue to want something. That want is a hint or a clue ... we all have the creative capacity to create what we truly want, and we know how to ignite it and how to make it happen. It's inside of us. The want is a hint that will take us on a journey that connects to our own creative spirit.

Consider your writing pace on a computer, how you think while typing. What's the best pace to actually get to the core of what you want to say? Something about the pace of handwriting and certain activities attract certain brain waves. Handwriting your draft could help you to go deeper into the heart of your story.

You need to understand what you want to and need to create. There's a gap between what you want to be here in the real world and what you want to have here in the real world. It is the space between words that we experience when we create. That's where the spirit lives and what we tap into when we write. When you are writing as the story takes off, that's when you are in this space and the space flows. The gap between what you want and what is there is where creativity happens. You experience this all the time when writing, the sense that the creative capacity you have can be used and applied in anything you do in your life.

### **About marketing your creative works**

A question to ask: what kind of marketing and promotion would you like to create for your work? How would this work with your life and your creativity? Think about why you wrote the book in the first place and take that out to the people with your marketing. Don't force this. Attractor marketing is putting yourself out there consciously and creatively to attract your readers.

For more about Ross and her works, go to [www.ornaross.com](http://www.ornaross.com).

**NINC WORLD CONFERENCE ARTICLES CONTINUE  
IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF *NINK*.**