Nink November 2017
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Happy November!

First, thank you all so much for voting in this year’s elections. It is my pleasure to welcome Wayne Stinnett as incoming president-elect, and to welcome back both Sue Phillips as secretary as well as Mindy Neff as treasurer.

NINC members also voted in a five-person 2018 nominating committee consisting of the following: Pam McCutcheon, CJ Carmichael, Laura Phillips, Steena Holmes, and Tawdra Kandle. Thank you for volunteering to serve.

Secondly, for those who attended NINC: Discovery—thank you for a wonderful conference! From workshops to Night Owls, sharing meals, drinks, or simply a heart-to-heart with speakers, industry guests, and each other, the week was so full of activity that I often wished I could be in multiple places at once.

Luckily for me (and all of you!) NINC’s newsletter committee and conference reporters have done a wonderful job of capturing the insights of each workshop to share within the pages of the next few issues of Nink.

Our team made every effort to prioritize the articles based on your requests from the post-conference survey, and next year’s conference team is already hard at work on 2018’s conference.

Your honest feedback plays an important role in helping us shape the conference—and NINC itself. If you have additional comments about the conference or any aspect of how our organization can grow and become even more relevant to you, please don’t hesitate to let me know your suggestions.

Finally, registration is open for the next conference!

NINC 2018 Craft Your Perfect Career:

- **When:** September 26 – 30, 2018
- **Where:** TradeWinds Island Resorts, St. Pete Beach, FL
- **Registration:** [https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/](https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/)
**Bonus**: Know your way around Facebook and/or Twitter? We would love to have you on the Social Media Committee! Help Ninc grow by signing up here: [https://ninc.com/members-only/open-positions/](https://ninc.com/members-only/open-positions/)

**NINC Member Benefits**

Don’t forget to sign up for the [email loop](https://ninc.com/), [critique/brainstorming group](https://ninc.com/), and the members-only [Facebook group](https://ninc.com/) if you haven’t already. The [Pro Services Directory](https://ninc.com/), member [discount page](https://ninc.com/), and [sample letters](https://ninc.com/) are also great resources.

Missing a newsletter? Past issues can be found [here](https://ninc.com/). You can also [propose an article](https://ninc.com/), submit a [letter to the editor](https://ninc.com/), or volunteer to be a [conference reporter](https://ninc.com/) and become part of the 2018 team. You can also [buy a paperback copy](https://ninc.com/) of the 2016 Best of Nink!

**Accessing the NINC Website**

Not sure how to log in? Visit the login page here: [https://ninc.com/login-to-ninc](https://ninc.com/login-to-ninc)

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*Erica Ridley is a New York Times and USA Today best-selling author of historical romance novels. Her latest series, The Dukes of War, features roguish peers and dashing war heroes who return from battle only to be thrust into the splendor and madness of Regency England. When not reading or writing romances, Erica can be found riding camels in Africa, zip-lining through rain forests in Costa Rica, or getting hopelessly lost in the middle of Budapest.*
Join us for **NINC 2018: Craft Your Perfect Career** to discover the latest strategies and insights, from marketing innovations to high-level craft to running your business as smoothly and effectively as possible.

As the publishing world continues to evolve, so must the careers of successful novelists. Whether your business model is being hands-on with all aspects of your career or partnering with a team to allow you to focus on writing, authors have more options than ever.

In September 2018, come discover the latest tools, maximize your publishing relationships, hone effective strategies, exploit opportunities, and rocket your career to the next level!

**Registration is open now:** [https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/2018-member-registration/](https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/2018-member-registration/)
From the Editor

By Michele Dunaway

Dear Reader,

This issue begins the first of two issues filled with reports from NINC: Discovery. Not only do you have articles from Denise Agnew and Laura Resnick, along with Victoria Thompson’s second part of her traditional publishing series, and Jaqueline Diamond’s second part of her series on reissues, but you have the most requested conference reports as well.

I must admit that I hadn’t attended NINC’s conference in years because of timing and the day job, and the only thing I could think was “Wow! Look at all I’ve been missing.”

From lunches to dinners to sessions, everyone was warm and welcoming. I have to admit, a conference on the beach? Seriously, the venue was perfect. My room came complete with kitchenette, and I roomed with someone I’d never met face-to-face and we left good friends. I sat in on board meetings, membership meetings, First Word, general presentation sessions and Night Owls, and I can assure you that your board really works hard behind the scenes, as did everyone involved in being a conference organizer, moderator and reporter. Yet at the same time, the tone was something I hadn’t experienced before.

Groups would gather outside in the lobby, or better, the Tiki bar, and there was nothing more relaxing than sitting on a couch watching the sunset, sipping something tropical, while next to a fire pit. Dealing with resort transportation was easy and smooth. I’ve been to many conferences for both my teaching and my writing careers, and normally I leave drained and needing time to decompress. I left NINC relaxed and energized and cannot wait to return.

That brings me to people I must thank who helped make this issue (and the next) possible. First, my reporters (in no particular order minus putting my awesome roommate first): Barbara Meyers, Laura Marie Altom, Jenna Kernan, Trish Milburn, Christa Allen, Jenny Gardiner, Cidney Swanson, Jennifer Stevenson, Rochelle Page, Delaney Diamond, Margaret Daley, and Sandra McDonald. Next, Laura Resnick and Cynthia Moyer who helped produce and proofread this issue, including making
sure all the hyperlinks went somewhere (if they don’t, apologies in advance), and also my awesome assistant editors: Susan Anderson and Heather C. Leigh. Both are invaluable to this process. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn’t thank my cat Toby, who sat on my laptop (see picture) at all strategic times because he too believes he has something to say, which is most likely “You were gone forever, so I need attention.”

To find conference handouts, please go here:
https://ninc.com/member-benefits/articles-and-links/

To purchase the 2016 Best of Nink (limited number of copies left), please go here:
https://ninc.com/member-benefits/best-of-nink/

Please note, because all newsletter issues are now archived in the members’ area, we will not be putting together a 2017 Best of Nink.

Michele

You can contact Nink editor Michele Dunaway at newsletter@ninc.com.
How to Have a Long Career in Traditional Publishing
Part 2: How to handle setbacks

By Victoria Thompson

Last month in Part 1, we explored the advantages and disadvantages of traditional publishing. Part 2 focuses on the setbacks and crisis situations traditionally published authors have faced and how they dealt with them. The publishing crises our authors told us about tended to fall into categories, so I’ve organized them that way.

Vanishing Publishers/Lines/Editors

In the past 10+ years, I’ve seen dozens of publishers merge or vanish completely. Sometimes publishers discontinue particular lines or imprints that aren’t doing well, and sometimes editors leave for a variety of reasons, orphaning their authors to other editors who sometimes aren’t willing to nurture them properly.

“I call myself a publishing Jonah,” Laurie Alice Eakes said. “Five publishers and/or lines for which I have written have ceased acquiring fiction, or merged with another line, and fired or laid off my acquiring editor, so I became the redheaded stepchild no one knew or wanted, but had to work with because of the contract. Five! To survive I got a new agent and just kept writing and submitting. One series will have to be indie published to finish it, and I’m better equipped to do that now.”

“When the Zebra Heartfire line was cancelled, I was dropped for low sales and had my three-book contract cancelled/paid out,” Charlotte Hubbard said. “My editor invited me to write for the Second Chance at Love line then, and that book was cancelled when they closed the line. I then sold four books to Virgin Books and was dropped because historical erotica was going out of vogue. I eventually landed another agent and sold five books to Dorchester, which then went bankrupt. The key to my survival has been reinventing myself. After my first ‘crash’ and lack of contract for [a] 6-year wander in the wilderness, I sold again by going into the emerging erotica market and taking a pseudonym. When that genre was no longer viable for me, my agent got me into the emerging Amish/inspirational romance market with Kensington, where I still am. I also got a contract with a second publisher for Amish stories and took a new pseudonym at their request, but after four books with an editor who insisted on massive rewrites for each book, I didn’t go for another contract with her. I also landed a contract to write Amish books for Harlequin, and I discovered that I cannot write
to their romance formula, [so I] paid them back my advance and resold that series to my editor at Kensington."

"I was dropped by one publisher in the early days. They were stopping that line. Since then I’ve tried always to have two publishers at least," Anna Jacobs said. “I’ve had three for a while, one just to reprint my ebooks that I’d self-published. They head-hunted me via my agent and seem to be living up to their promises. And that’s taking more tedious work off my shoulders with more money coming in.”

“I published four historical novels for ages 8-12 with Simon & Schuster’s prestigious Margaret K. McElderry line; then S&S children’s switched from literary fiction to contemporary adventures. My editor was laid off and I was dropped. During the same period I’d had four mysteries published with Scribner/Pocket Books. When my editor retired, my series was dropped. Both of those endings were within one year,” Lea Wait said. “I kept writing, but went six years without having another book published and then went with small publishers (one regional). Now I have two new mystery series, one mass market originals. Still not the big five, but Kensington is serious and does a lot of marketing. But advances are half or less what I got when I started writing.”

“I’ve had one line close under me, a publisher close, and another cut so much of their author list that only a handful remain. My agent has always been 1000 percent behind whatever choices I make, so we put our heads together, decided that hybrid offered the best of both worlds, and made a game plan that included getting rights back whenever possible to self-publish, and selling front list to a new publisher,” Katie MacAlister said.

**Poor Sales**

Authors are sometimes let go because of low sales that can stall or end a career.

“My constant battle is having low sales. I didn’t do well with Kensington Aphrodisia or Berkley Heat, because my books weren’t ‘erotic’ enough for the target readership. Kensington then moved me to Zebra, and I’ve written an eight-book series for them and have started a new series,” Susan Lyons said. “How have I survived the low sales issue, when many authors are essentially fired by traditional publishers for low sales? Well, Berkley did stop buying a series, so I didn’t survive with them. But I’ve been lucky with Kensington. With them, I’ve survived because I’ve had editors who believe in my writing. I turn in very clean manuscripts, and I’m professional to work with (e.g., I have never missed a deadline—not for a manuscript or for edits, input on promo material, guest blog copy, etc.). I also don’t demand high advances, so they’re not risking a big investment. And I have an agent who negotiates and communicates effectively with Kensington.”

“I don’t think anyone could publish for a decade without having publishing crises,” Jenna Black said. “I’ve had several of them: losing my editor; being dropped by a publisher mid-series (more than once); having an editor with whom I had severe differences of opinion; having a contract canceled. I’ve also suffered a decline in sales, which is even now causing me to launch my next series under a new pen name. I just kept plugging. Kept writing new material. And I also leaned heavily on my agent.”

**Publisher Issues**

Crazy things happen in publishing and our authors have experienced a lot of that craziness.

“As horror stories go, I’ve been lucky,” Emilie Richards said. “I did sell my first single title to a
very enthusiastic senior editor who was then fired. The publishing house told me a variety of stories about what would happen next, none of which were true or accurate, and I finally bought it back when it was clear no one had yet touched it. My agent continued to send out the book because we believed in it. Eventually it found an enthusiastic editor who wanted it even though it was about a thousand manuscript pages. In the meantime, when it was clear the length was going to be a problem, I found a way to split the story into two books, and both were published.”

Linda Goodnight said, “I had a serious issue occur with a book that was ready to go to print. ARCs were printed, the date was set, publicity had begun, and then a major kink occurred. The incident rocked me, causing me to take a step back to reevaluate what I wanted at this point in my career. Prayer helped me refocus and avoid bitterness. Beyond dealing with my emotions and reluctantly doing what I was asked by my publisher, I turned down a new contract and started thinking seriously about self-publishing. I also took time to consider my strengths and where I wanted to go at this stage of life and career. One thing I’ve learned about this business—ride the wave, whatever it might be. Keep your head up and keep paddling. Whether good or bad, this too shall pass.”

**Health/Family Crises**

Sometimes real life just interferes.

“My career was at what I would call a ‘high point’ when my husband’s cancer came out of remission while I was writing my 11th novel,” Deb Stover said. “By the time I was contracted for the 12th, he was terminal and my health was in the toilet as well with an undiagnosed adrenal insufficiency. Publishing had nothing to do with it. Life and death did. My health has required a very long, slow climb since my husband’s death in 2005, and I am still climbing. I finally finished that book under contract when he was deemed terminal, but for an author who had never missed a deadline prior to that, I blew that one out of the water. Fortunately, my agent and editor were by my side. I finally delivered that book, and it is still in print. Prior to my husband’s death, I wrote two to three 100,000 + word books a year without batting an eye. Now I am slow and hindered with severe arthritis and other health issues. I am gradually climbing out of the quagmire I found myself in after his death and learning to deal with the health issues—voice-activated software, etc.—but it takes time. I write very slowly now. Fortunately, my agent is still at my side. I remain hopeful that the long-awaited third book in a trilogy will be well-received by publishers.”

**Agents**

Sometimes the agent is the problem, and sometimes the agent is the solution. Looking back on my own career, I realize I had three agents for the first nine years and one (really good) agent for the past 23 years.

“My biggest ‘setback’ was poor agents,” Diane Chamberlain said. “I have had four agents and it wasn’t until I hooked up with my current incredible agent that I truly realized what an agent was supposed to do. I feel as though my career would have been much more successful from the start if I’d had her by my side. If I’d known back then what I know now, I would have changed agents far earlier than I did. I just kept writing, but I admit there was a period of a couple of years when I regretted letting my clinical social work license lapse! This is when I found a new agent who helped me turn things around.”
“My first agent didn’t work out for me,” Lyons said. “She thought I was too controlling, and I got frustrated because she wouldn’t tell me what she was doing. It caused a lot of stress. I was nervous about firing her, because she was a friend of a good friend of mine. So I asked her to provide me with a complete accounting of all books she’d submitted and the responses she received. Her reaction to my request was to fire me. I bought champagne! And found another agent. I was better prepared to know what I was looking for in the agent, agency, and relationship. My second agent and I have been together for 10 years now.”

“When my first agent died I had trouble finding another (even though I had ongoing contracts my agent’s estate was handing over!), partly because I live in Australia and am published in the UK, and partly because some were lackadaisical and slow to respond, and I wanted a communicative, efficient agent. It was worth the wait because my second agent is as wonderful as my first one was,” Jacobs said.

So Final Advice?

The consensus seems to be that the keys to surviving in traditional publishing and having a long career are finding a great agent who will support you, behaving professionally, and simply not giving up. A few last words:

“To survive, I kept plugging and writing new material. I never would have gotten through the difficult relationship with one of my editors if my agent hadn’t been there for me and helped mediate,” Black said. “She also helped massively with the publisher who wanted to cancel my contract. Having someone who is passionate about your work but also has enough distance to negotiate calmly on your behalf is invaluable.”

Jacobs said, “I’ve always concentrated most on two things, the quality of my stories and ‘attaching’ readers. No story leaves home till I can’t see any way to improve even the tiniest detail.”

And finally, Lyons advises, “In general terms, I survive by focusing on my writing, persisting, being professional, consulting with colleagues, and trying not to blow things out of proportion.”

In Part 3, our authors will talk about whether or not they have considered indie publishing, and give their advice for achieving success in traditional publishing.

Victoria Thompson is the bestselling author of the Edgar ® and Agatha Award-nominated Gaslight Mystery Series and the new Counterfeit Lady Series. Her latest books are Murder in the Bowery and City of Lies. She has published 21 mysteries and 20 historical romances and contributed to the award-winning textbook Many Genres, One Craft. She currently teaches in the master’s degree program for writing popular fiction at Seton Hill University. Victoria is a founding member and past president of Novelists, Inc., Pennwriters, and New Jersey Romance Writers. She lives in Illinois with her husband and a very spoiled little dog.

Jenna Black graduated from Duke University with a degree in physical anthropology and French. Once upon a time, she dreamed she would be the next Jane Goodall, camping in the bush making fascinating discoveries about primate behavior. Then, during her senior year at Duke, she did some actual research in the field, and her fascinating discovery was this: primates spend most of their time doing such exciting things as sleeping and eating. Concluding that this discovery was her life’s work in the field of primatology, she then moved on to
such varied pastimes as grooming dogs and writing technical documentation. She now is a full-time writer of fantasy, romance, and young adult fiction.

**Diane Chamberlain** is a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of 25 novels. Her latest, *The Stolen Marriage*, will be released October 3, 2017. Her 2018 novel will involve time travel, assuming she ever finishes it. She lives in North Carolina with her significant other, John, and a pup, Cole.

**Laurie Alice Eakes** is the bestselling author of more than two dozen books. Accolades for her work include winning the National Readers Choice Award and RITA® finalist status. She has recently relocated to a cold climate because she is weird enough to like snow and icy lake water. When she isn’t basking in the glory of being cold, she likes to read, visit museums, and take long walks, preferably with her husband, though the cats make her feel guilty every time she leaves the house.

**Linda Goodnight**, *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestseller, has authored fifty sweet and Christian romance novels. Among her numerous awards are the RITA® and the CAROL. Like many of the characters in her books, Linda is a small town girl with a penchant for home cooking, local festivals, family, kids, and lovable mutts. She loves playing matchmaker between her honorable (if badly broken) heroes and the strong, smart women who help them heal. You can contact Linda at [www.lindagoodnight.com](http://www.lindagoodnight.com), Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Her latest release is *The Innkeeper’s Sister* from HQN.

**Charlotte Hubbard** is the acclaimed author of Amish romance and fiction that evokes simpler times and draws upon her experiences in Jamesport, the largest Old Order Amish community west of the Mississippi. Faith and family, farming, and food preservation are hallmarks of her lifestyle—and the foundation of all her novels. A deacon, dedicated church musician and choir member, she loves to travel, read, try new recipes, and crochet. A longtime Missourian, Charlotte now lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, with her husband Neal and their border collie, Vera.

**Anna Jacobs** has had eighty novels published and is addicted to storytelling. She was born in England and emigrated to Perth, Western Australia in the 1970s. She is currently the fourth most borrowed author of adult fiction in the UK and similarly popular in Australia, but is less well known in the USA. She writes both historical and modern novels for two UK publishers, complex tales of families and relationships set in both countries. Her website contains a lot of information, including list of books and which series each belongs to, plus first chapters to read: [www.annajacobs.com](http://www.annajacobs.com).

International bestselling author **Susan Fox**, who also writes as Susan Lyons and Savanna Fox, “knows what women want in contemporary romance” (*Publishers Weekly*). Her books have won numerous awards and *Love Somebody Like You: A Caribou Crossing Romance* was a RITA® finalist. Her latest series is Blue Moon Harbor, from Kensington Zebra. A resident of both Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia, Susan has degrees in law and psychology, but would far rather be writing fiction than living in the real world. Visit her at [susanlyons.ca](http://susanlyons.ca) (where you can subscribe to her newsletter) and on Facebook.com/SusanLyonsFox.

**Katie MacAlister** is the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Publishers Weekly* bestselling author of a whole lot of books. Like, more than sixty, which makes her feel incredibly old. Her books have won awards, been translated into umpteen languages, and have been optioned (although she’s still waiting for someone in Hollywood to notice that fact). She spends way too much time playing video games and watching black & white British mystery movies, and lives with three furry kids in the Pacific Northwest.
**Emilie Richards** began her publishing career in 1985 and all these years and 70 something books later, she’s delighted she did. She’s been published in romance, mystery and single title women’s fiction, which she concentrates on today with the same publisher with whom she began her career. In addition she’s planning to pursue original indie fiction, but for now she’s busily trying to republish her backlist and enjoy her family.

After declaring her candidacy for president at age four, **Deb Stover** veered off course to play Lois Lane. Later, when she refused to blow Clark Kent’s cover, she turned her attention to her own real American hero and married him. Considering her experience with heroes, redirecting her passion for writing to romance novels seemed natural. Since publication of *Shades of Rose* in 1995, Stover has received dozens of awards for her work, which includes over twenty titles in a variety of languages and formats. For more information visit [www.debstover.com](http://www.debstover.com).

**USA Today** bestselling author **Lea Wait** ([www.leawait.com](http://www.leawait.com)) lives on the coast of Maine and writes two mystery series (and a third beginning in 2018) and historical novels for ages eight and up. She has recently indie-published her first fiction, *Pizza To Die For*, a mystery with a 14-year-old protagonist, but she prefers traditional publishing.

**Carolyn Woolston**, w/a Lynna Banning, combines a lifelong love of history and literature into a satisfying career as a writer. Born in Oregon, she graduated from Scripps College and embarked on a career as an editor and technical writer and later as a high school English teacher. She is also a musician, performing on harp, psaltery, dulcimer, and recorders in a medieval music ensemble; in addition she plays harpsichord and classical music on the piano.
The Second Time Around: Reissuing Backlist
Part 2: Rebranding and Marketing

By Jacqueline Diamond

Regaining rights to backlist books—perhaps after months or years of demanding their return from the original publisher—inspires many authors to spring for a bottle of champagne. Warning: it might be wise to keep that bottle the low-cost variety.

“It has taken me three years to revise and reissue former Ellora’s Cave titles, a feat that may not have been worth all the time involved in ‘fixing’ them,” said Ann Jacobs, author of the Dystopian Chronicles. “I doubt I will ever recoup the costs of cover art, editing, and formatting that I put into the project before deciding to economize on some of these items. I still have two series and a couple of straggler titles to reissue, but at the moment I’m concentrating on creating new material.”

Novelist T S Paul had more encouraging results when he re-edited and replaced the covers of his Athena Lee science fiction series.

“The refresh has helped sales and helped to bring the SF series more in line with my paranormal one,” he said. “So far, it’s worked for sales and for new readers.”

Rebranding for fun and profit

When it comes to marketing strategies for reverted books, many authors cite the need for rebranding. This includes re-grouping books either as a series or to emphasize a theme, tone or genre, as well as updating keywords and blurbs.

“Series can be branded as such, which might not have happened in their original editions,” said Deborah Cooke, who also writes as Claire Delacroix. “I have several linked series that grew organically, rather than being planned from the outset, and their original covers make them look like standalone. When you have a series and the series name is not identical for each book (as I do), then the portals won’t list the books as all being in the same series. It seems like a small thing but can have huge implications for visibility and sales.”
Meddling with metadata

“Metadata is how readers find your book,” said Shirley Hailstock, whose *More Than Gold* is part of the Capitol Chronicles series. “Make sure you put pertinent data in there. Use the major book sites as databases and check some of the words you use to see how often those words are searched. Metadata is not static. It needs to be changed and updated to keep your book fresh and within the ever-changing algorithms of the online retailers.”

“The one improvement all the backlist books need is stronger metadata,” agreed Cooke/Delacroix.


Covering the basics

Fresh covers play a major role in rebranding. Authors offered a range of suggestions.

“When I was about to release *The CEO Buys In*, the first book in a new series with a traditional publisher, I realized that one of my standalone backlist books, *A Bridge To Love*, had a similar premise and setting,” said Nancy Herkness. “So I had a new cover designed for *A Bridge To Love* that tied into the visual branding my publisher had used on *The CEO Buys In*. When the new book hit big, the repackaged backlist book took off, too. That was a nice bonus check! In fact, I ended up putting new covers on all my backlist books to pick up the new series branding, which turned out to be a very profitable investment.”

Shelley Adina, author of *Call For Me* in her Moonshell Bay series, faced a different challenge.

“My rights reverted from Harlequin on a number of books that were always meant to be a series, but were never released that way,” she explained. “I put branded covers on them that conveyed ‘sexual tension with emotion’ but not explicit love scenes, as well as lettering and imagery that were consistent across all the books. Three featured darker colors and more intense storylines, and three are lighter, more romantic comedy. But with all six, readers can instantly see that the books belong together.”

Selecting covers can also be tricky when a publisher reverts rights to some but not all of the books in a series. This happened when Harlequin returned the rights to eight of my 17 Safe Harbor
Medical romances. To complicate matters, my frontlist includes a self-published spin-off series, the Safe Harbor Medical mysteries.

I designed new covers for the former Harlequins to capture the series romance feel, but reflect my brand rather than the publisher’s. For the mysteries, I chose a slightly darker tone to reflect that it’s a different genre, while maintaining some elements such as the font and positioning for my name.

![Cover images]

**Reviewing the options**

Over the years, older books often accumulate reviews. These can be valuable or a drawback, and when reissuing backlist, authors choose to respond to the situation differently.

“I reissued a trilogy and expanded it into five books (soon to be six),” said Jennifer Stevenson, author of the funny paranormal Coed Demon Sluts series. “To shake off an insane number of one-star reviews from trolls on the publisher’s editions, I changed the titles slightly and branded them under a series name, which the publisher had not done. This shook off the icky reviews and allowed me to market the expanded series to my own preferences.”

T S Paul decided to keep his titles and simply live with any bad reviews. “I’m not a big believer in reviews and they sell regardless,” he said.

For those who want old reviews to flow to the reissued books, Amazon will cooperate if the titles are the same. On Amazon Central, click on the book you want to link. At the bottom of the page, click Contact Us. Under issue, choose Update Something Else. When presented with another list of options, choose to link one edition with another edition, and fill in the ISBNs or ASINs as requested. Usually the linking, including sharing reviews with the new edition, is completed within a day or two.

**Making the most of marketing**

Regaining rights provides authors with additional opportunities for marketing, such as setting the first book in a series free, bundling books at a discount, or participating in group anthologies and promotions.

“Before I wrote romance (my primary genre), I started out 24 years ago in SF/F. Now I treat them as a side business, and I’ve had surprisingly good luck side-promoting these old, ‘off genre’ titles (and some thrillers) through bundles,” reported M.L. (Matt) Buchman.

“I’ve targeted getting them into bundles (particularly through StoryBundle.com and
BundleRabbit.com),” he said. “I freshen up an old title (fixing voice, lack of setting, overlong paragraphs, back matter marketing material, etc.), give it a new cover (similarly redo any sequels I might have) and find a bundle with authors who still specialize in those genres. It breathes a real burst of air into those titles.”

Other options include re-selling backlist titles to new (or new-to-you) publishers, adding the first chapter of a frontlist book at the end of a reissue to encourage additional sales, and bundling three or four of your own books on a theme such as romantic suspense or urban chick lit, even though they don’t form a series.

Whether you have a champagne budget, or merely the price of some sparkling grape juice, reverting rights is cause to celebrate.

USA Today bestselling author Jacqueline Diamond is known for her mysteries, romantic comedies, medical romances and Regency romances—102 titles as of 2017. A former Associated Press reporter and recipient of a Romantic Times Career Achievement Award, Jackie currently writes and self-publishes the Safe Harbor Medical Mysteries. These stories share a setting and secondary characters with her 17-book Safe Harbor Medical romance series, originally published by Harlequin. Jackie (www.jacquelindiamond.com) has reissued more than 40 reverted backlist titles.
Grow Your Creativity
Or: How to forget the rules

By Denise A. Agnew

“There are no laws for the novel. There never have been, nor can there ever be.”
—Doris Lessing

Remember when writing was something you couldn’t wait to do? Something that brought pure fun to your life? Many of you began writing with starry-eyed joy. Then something happened. You choked. Coughed. You couldn’t be at ease with your writing. All of the love you put into your stories, which might have seemed almost effortless, disappeared. Oh, you keep telling yourself you’ll turn the words into real gold. Yet everything you produce now feels like pyrite. You’re getting words onto the page, but you’re not having any fun. You’ve listened to well-meaning people telling you if you just keep your butt in the chair, that’s all that matters. But if you aren’t having any fun, there’s a problem.

Why is it that fresh-eyed, rose-colored-glasses writers start off with a bang and then suddenly discover the juice isn’t there anymore? It boils down, sometimes, to rules.

And we are taught to follow the rules.

I was fourteen when I wrote my first story and started my lifelong obsession. During my teens, I wrote reams of poetry and dozens of gothic novels using college-ruled notebook paper. I spent hours creating. By 1990, I was taking Writer’s Digest fiction classes. That’s when things morphed and the fun fled. It felt harder to write within the rules I learned in classes and through the writer’s organization I belonged to at the time. When I published my first book in 1999, the challenge to keep creativity flowing grew. It wasn’t until I analyzed my writing style, and what kept my creativity going, that I understood why so many people choke. I needed to jettison some rules to keep creativity alive.

For instance, I’m a pantser who finds outlining a creativity drain, which is why I can’t write a synopsis and then write the book. It has to happen in reverse. As a newbie writer, though, I was caught up in the rules. Following those rules meant my creativity went repeatedly straight down the toilet.

While the rules are necessary in learning how to become a good writer, that’s only true up to a point. When the rules become more important than remaining in balance and allowing creativity to peek through, the rules must be loosened.
What are some of these unspoken rules that can cripple your creativity, and how do you find balance?

1. **Famous writer is always right syndrome.** If Stephen King says leave out adverbs all the time, it must be gospel, right? Nope. Listen to what famous writers say because there could be solid advice, and there could be something in their message that resonates. However, you’re going to find dozens upon dozens of excellent writers who use adverbs. There are plenty of examples of writers who don’t follow anything Stephen King says and they do perfectly well. Take advice in balance, not as an absolute. (Don’t hate me. I love Stephen King.)

2. **Absolutes.** If the message is, “Do it this way because it’s right” … run like the wind. If someone says, “I do it this way because it works for me, but your mileage may vary,” stay longer and listen.

3. **Workshops are like too many cooks in the kitchen.** Workshops are great, until they aren’t. Taking dozens of workshops before you actually do any writing is a surefire path to confusion and writer’s block. In my creativity coaching, I’ve run into numerous authors who have put off creating for months, if not years, because they think just one more workshop or how-to book will provide the key to writing a bestseller. Don’t get me wrong, if a workshop interests you, take it. Don’t use workshops to procrastinate or push you into anxiety and self-doubt.

4. **Listening heavily/catering to a reader base.** Writers want to sell books, so many cater to a reader base that is clamoring for more of the same. I see authors asking their readers for opinions on everything from what they should name a character to if their readers will hate them if said writer does XYZ. This approach can eventually cripple a writer’s creativity. It establishes a too-many-cooks-in-the-kitchen situation where the writer is no longer creating from inside themselves or paying attention to their own instincts. I’m not saying never ask a reader base for their opinion. Do it a lot less often. Chances are your creativity will thank you.

5. **Writing a series that never ends.** I have to admire any writer who can write a series until eternity comes. If a writer can write 10, 16, or 30 books in a series and has found a way to stay creative and happy in their writing life, more power to them. Many people cannot. Writers who choke sometimes don’t understand that when they reach book five or 15 in a series, it could be the series itself that is sucking creativity dry. It may be imperative to start something new, especially if you’ve been dying to start a different series or a completely new genre.

These five rules aren't the only ones that can trip up your creativity, but they are some of the biggest. Give yourself the freedom to explore that creativity, and keep reminding yourself that creativity isn’t tab A into slot B.

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*Denise A. Agnew is the award-winning author of over 67 novels. Denise’s novels Love From the Ashes and Blackout were optioned for film/TV by Where’s Lucy? Productions. Denise is a writer/producer (Happy Catastrophe Productions/ Bright Frontier Films/Where’s Lucy? Productions), a paranormal investigator, Reiki Master, Certified Creativity Coach, and RT Academy Mentor. As a creativity coach, Denise assists anyone in the arts to maintain lifelong creativity. You can find her at [www.deniseagnew.com](http://www.deniseagnew.com) and [www.creativepencoaching.com](http://www.creativepencoaching.com).*
NINC Advice Column

This is a monthly feature that crowdsources writer-to-writer advice. Questions are posted on NINCl ink by the end of each month. Answers of 100-words-or-less are due to the editor by the 10th of the following month.

QUESTION: What is the best advice for handling critics or criticism of your work, besides simply ignoring it?

Here’s my take on what to do about bad reviews. When I get a bad review (after the initial cursing) I will read the bad reviews on books I love. This makes me realize (again) that every book won’t suit every reader. Often what I think is great about the book, someone will gripe about that very thing in their one-star review. I think the writing is great; they think it’s terrible. I love the hero; they hate him. You get the idea. Obviously, those people who trash my book have no taste.

—Eve Gaddy

The first response is to determine whether you’re getting polite, constructive criticism—or if it’s ranting and rude. If it’s rude, I always say, “I’m sorry you feel that way, and thank you for taking the time to read my book.” If it’s polite and meant to be helpful, I read criticism objectively and determine if the critic has merit, I say, “Thank you for taking the time to read my book. I will take that under consideration, and I hope you’ll continue to read my books!”

—Kit Frazier

It depends on how the criticism is directed. Criticism from my readers gets a sincere reply because these are people who buy my books, and they deserve the respect of a response, if only a thank you. An insane criticism on Amazon either gets ignored, or it can be diminished if you ask your readers/friends to mark as not useful. Readers are smart and will usually do this on their own, so I have never deployed that tactic. A bad review on a blog or Goodreads—I just ignore. Everyone is entitled to their opinion and not everyone gets what they want from my books. And of course, it also depends on how comfortable you are with your own books—I tend to ignore reviews because I’ve
been around a long time and bad reviews haven’t killed me yet. Newer authors might have a different perspective.

—Pat Rice

Consider the source of the criticism and any underlying motives/rationale. Once you eliminate criticism born out of ignorance (boy that’s subjective!) or professional jealousy, look for a pattern of commonality in the comments. If reasonable readers or seasoned writers find fault with your work, their complaints may have some validity and you should take a second look at the material.

—Laura Hayden

Want to contribute to the column? Send your answers of not more than 100 words to newsletter@ninc.com by Nov. 10 to this question: **How do you stay sane and balance writing time with family over the holidays?**
The Mad Scribbler
Everyone's a critic

By Laura Resnick

“The best thing you can do about critics is never say a word. In the end you have the last say, and they know it.”
—Tennessee Williams

The Internet era has brought a cacophony of public opinion into the writer’s private space, and learning how to filter it productively is a challenge that confronts us all.

It didn’t used to be this way.

When I was a new novelist back in 1989, the same year NINC was founded, readers had few opportunities to share their opinions about a book (or its author) with the world or with the writer herself. In those days, only a few professional publications printed reader letters that commented on books. A small percentage of people participated in amateur fanzines and newsletters that published reader reviews. A writer who was mentioned in such venues might never even know it, and those were the only public platforms available for most readers to air their views about the books they read. For a reader to communicate directly with a writer, she had to show up at a public appearance, or else the reader wrote and mailed a letter, usually by addressing it in care of the publisher.

Those were primitive times, but in its way, it was also a quieter and more peaceful era than this one. Pre-internet, writers expended far less energy on noise filtering.

Now everyone is a critic because everyone has a public platform. Readers post reviews on bookseller websites, reader forums, and social media. They review books on their own blogs, and they set up and promote blogs devoted specifically to reading and discussing books. Readers have direct access to writers via author websites, blogs, and email links.

Total strangers regularly “tag” me in social media with their reviews of my books or their reactions to my writing.

The harassment and sabotage that occurs in these various venues has become a common horror story. Some readers post abusive reviews and offensive comments for a wide variety of reasons that have nothing whatsoever to do with a rational evaluation of the book they’re reviewing. (It is entirely possible to explain why you hate a novel, after all, without publicly speculating about the author’s private life or personal hygiene.) Some internet trolls have a following, while others have a knack for
inciting mob frenzy. They can convince dozens of people to post scathing reviews and one-star ratings of your books (even if they haven’t read your work) everywhere the novels are discussed or sold online.

Such “opinion leaders” can also convince readers to boycott your books. For example, a romance writer I know one day re-tweeted an article about the publishing industry that she thought looked interesting. A popular reader-review blog criticized her for this (no, I still don’t understand why), and over the next few days, hundreds of people posted enraged comments about her on that blog and declared they’d never buy her books.

Several years ago, booksellers mistakenly released the print edition of one of Seanan McGuire’s popular urban fantasy novels a few weeks before the ebook edition was released. It was a distribution error, completely beyond the control of McGuire or her publisher. Within days, online review pages for the book, various reader forums, and McGuire’s inbox all filled up with reader comments declaring that McGuire was a “bitch” and a “whore” who was trying to “force” them to buy the print book rather than the ebook version. Some vowed they’d never read McGuire’s work again because of this; others wrote to her expressing a wish that she’d be raped and murdered... All because a print edition of her novel was released early, while the ebook edition would not be available until its official release date.

These things are more than a little distracting. It’s noisier, more constant, and in-your-face than it ever used to be, thanks to the 24/7 instant connectivity of the internet era. While crazy things happened pre-internet, they didn’t go viral.

I have seen some jaw-droppingly vicious, insulting, and inaccurate comments, suppositions, and speculation about myself posted on blogs, review sites, and chat boards by people who’ve read my books—as well as by people who declare they’ll never pollute their minds with my undoubtedly inferior writing.

I’ve also seen disturbing comments which I spend hand-wringing hours wondering whether or not to address, such as some posts that crossed my Twitter feed one night suggesting that my then-upcoming new release looked like it might be racist; a scathing blog review claiming that I was so afraid of appearing racist (in a different book) that I made my characters totally unrealistic; or an enraged reader review accusing me (also in a different book) of exhibiting grotesque insensitivity toward the disabled.

For years, my policy about online reader reviews, blogs, and comments was: Do not read. Okay, yes, a certain self-flagellating curiosity sometimes led me to violate that rule; nonetheless, it was my guideline for how to function sanely, and I honored it most of the time. On a number of occasions, I urged other writers to adopt the same guideline. I saw so many authors drive themselves into a spiraling frenzy by reading every online reader review or comment about their work (or themselves) that they could find. They fretted anxiously about whether the criticisms were accurate, gnashed their teeth over the unfair comments, and endlessly chased their tails over whether to respond to the insults and accusations. I would see friends go through that, or I would go through it myself, and I’d think: “How is this productive? What good does this do? Just ignore.”

The rise of social media, though, where people keep oh-so-thoughtfully sending you direct links to comments about yourself and reviews (including their own) of your work, makes it ever harder to shut out that sort of noise.

Also, my longtime guideline may be old-fashioned and out-of-step with the times. In the age of
self-publishing, disintermediation, and direct writer-to-reader marketing, I’ve encountered many readers and, more to the point, many writers who believe that authors should pay attention to readers’ criticism of our work.

The question that’s often posed in recent years is usually some variation of: How can you know whether your work is effective, and how can you improve it, unless you accept feedback from the people reading it?

The flaw in this question is that it supposes everyone’s opinion is useful.

I don’t care what everyone thinks; I care what a few specific people think. I care whether my friend Karen thinks my hair looks good because she’s fashionable; I don’t care whether my dad thinks my hair looks good because his taste got stuck in 1965. I care whether personal friends whose values I respect think I’m acting with integrity; I’ve learned not to care whether a total stranger speculating about me on the internet thinks I’m acting with integrity.

Similarly, I care whether my current editor thinks my delivered book is good because I respect her. I worked on a few books with an editor, whom I considered incompetent, and I didn’t care at all what he thought—I just cared whether I got paid and published. When working with him, I asked people whose opinions I did value to read the manuscripts I delivered to him, so I would get the feedback I needed to make improvements to those books.

That said, I can think of examples where I learned something useful from readers criticizing my work. Once I read a long and very favorable review of several of my books—which concluded by pointing out a habitual flaw in my writing. I recognized that this was someone who not only liked my work, but who really “got” my writing, so I thought her comment was worth considering. After thinking it over for a while, I embraced the criticism and decided to work on that flaw.

So, yeah, sometimes we should listen to readers’ criticism. Similarly, sometimes a total stranger can accurately point out that you’re being rude or unreasonable or your hair doesn’t look good. But we should make conscious, intelligent decisions about whose opinions we consider seriously, not scramble around trying to accommodate the views of every person who has internet access.

I have also embraced some advice about handling criticism that recently came from a most unusual source: my dad. (I think the last time he gave me good advice was the 1980s.) When you see a blog or reader forum where there’s a negative review of one of your books, try writing a post there in which you say you’re sorry they didn’t like the book, but you thank them for taking the time to read and review it, and you hope one day they’ll give another of your books a chance. I seldom do this, but when I do, I have so far found that, as Pop promised, it opens the door to positive interaction—and even motivates some blog followers to try the book despite seeing the negative review.

Finally, I always try to keep in mind that everyone who reads a book is entitled to think it’s garbage—and to say so publicly without being pestered by the eavesdropping author.

Columnist Laura Resnick is the author of 11 fantasy novels—some of which have been dismissed as garbage by some readers.
Conference Reports
How to Grow an Effective Newsletter
Presenter: Erica Ridley
Reported by Margaret Daley

One of the most effective tools a writer can use to sell books is a newsletter. In a 2013 Nielsen study, the main reasons readers buy a book are because they like the author and/or have enjoyed reading a story in the writer’s series. A newsletter can help you connect with your readers on a more personal level and share information about your books.

Email Service Providers
There are many email service providers you can choose from (AWeber, ActiveCampaign, Constant Contact, CovertKit, Mad Mimi, MailChimp, MailerLite and Vertical Response). Check them out and see which is the best fit for what you want to do with your newsletter. Besides the cost of the service, there are many features you need to consider. The ease of using a provider is important from how to import newsletter sign-ups from a CSV file; website integration; audience segmentation so you can send out a newsletter to a certain portion of your list (example: people who live in a certain location); email templates/designs; how your newsletter will appear in a reader’s inbox or on a cell phone; the ability to integrate with other services on the internet (example: Facebook, BookFunnel); how to send secure emails and assimilate data you’ve collected from your readers (example: birth date); being able to personalize the newsletter (example: reader’s name at the beginning); the type of informational reports you have access to concerning your newsletter (example: statistics like open and click rates), and information you can gather and use concerning your subscriber.

It is also important for writers to consider how easy it is for you to be able to send out a series of automated emails. In a drip campaign, when a reader signs up for your newsletter, you can send a welcome message or a series of emails to introduce yourself and hook your reader to stay on your newsletter.

Getting Sign-ups for Your Newsletter
Once you have a newsletter provider, you want to have your sign-up information everywhere (example: your website, Facebook and other social media pages, BookBub, Amazon through your Author Central account, and in your email signature line). The sign-up needs to be easy to find and fill out. Use an evergreen link so you won’t lose your subscribers if you change your newsletter provider. An evergreen link lets you alter the link’s destination. Some places you can get free evergreen links are Smarturl.it, WordPress and Blogger plugins, YOURLS software and Htaccess redirects.

When you create your sign-up form, you can decide which fields you want the reader to fill out (example: location or birthday). This is a good time to give them an opportunity to fill out a reader survey. At the end, you can even send them a bonus for participating in the survey. The best practice
to have is a double option where the reader will get an email to opt in. Make that clear to the
subscriber and encourage them to click the message when it was received. It needs to be obvious
what you want a reader to do and why. Make the readers feel like they are important to you. An
author can offer a new subscriber something free like a short story or a book, but not every bonus has
to be free. You can offer a percentage off a book or box set. Make your call to action clear (example:
“Join Now” or “Get Free Book”).

From your readers who open and click a high percentage of the time on your newsletter, you can
build a select group of readers (VIP list or whatever you want to call it) by offering them a chance to
belong to this special club. If you choose to have such a group, you need to tell readers what you
want them to do and why. Let them know what they will get in return. Make the list a value to you
and the subscriber. You can use this special list as a review group or a street team.

Readers sign up for your newsletter for various reasons: being a super fan, enjoying one of your
books, being intrigued by a new release, or they’re a friend with you on social media. But the one way
you can persuade your potential sign-ups to respond is by the value (reader magnet) you use to draw
them in.

What are some reasons readers aren’t signing up? If the sign-up page isn’t easy to find with clear
instructions for a call to action, you will lose potential subscribers. Asking for too much information,
no assurances of frequency of the delivery of the newsletters (the spam factor), too many distractions
on the landing page, and the sign-up page isn’t mobile-device friendly are other reasons you could
lose readers for your newsletter.

The above examples of why readers aren’t signing up for your newsletters should also be taken
into consideration when making a landing page (also called a squeeze or lead-generation page). Make
your landing page clear and obvious with bold text about the call to action and what value the reader
will be getting. The call to action should have urgency to it and stir up the reader’s interest. Don’t
have external links that take a reader away from your landing page.

It’s important to get a confirmation email to your opt-in message by using a domain email
address (example: margaret@margaretdaley.com) and verifying your domain with your email
provider. Check to see if your email server is on a blacklist that might send your emails to the spam
guard. The message in your verification email needs to be straightforward. To help you get a
confirmation email back from your subscriber, don’t use words that could flag your message as spam.
(Certain words, too many exclamation points and capital letters might send your email to spam.)
Don’t send your reader bonus until the reader has confirmed the newsletter subscription. Send the
new subscriber a verification email that you’ve received the confirmation. Request the subscriber to
add your newsletter address to her contacts.

On your confirmation landing page, you have another chance to offer potential subscribers more
reader magnets to get them to act. You can offer a discounted book, a list of box sets and the savings
they would get from buying a set rather than the individual books in it, and links to permafree books.
Request them to follow you wherever you are on the internet such as Facebook, Amazon, BookBub, blogs,
and other social media and retail sites.

Sending out a Newsletter

Once you have successfully added newsletter subscribers, you have to decide what you will send
them and how often. There are many options out there, and you may want to test what works best.
Readers’ surveys have indicated they like newsletters once a month to twice a week. Your newsletters
should be in your voice and convey your personality. It’s your chance to let your readers get to know you.

Once subscribers have signed up for your newsletter, it’s important to send them a welcome email. This is a chance for you to hook them as a fan and familiarize them with the type of books you write. You might introduce them to your characters and series worlds. The welcome email must include whatever bonus you promised them. If your website has goodies for the readers who visit, let them know about it. Ask them to like you on your social media sites.

Besides the welcome letter, you might send a couple of emails (an automated drip campaign) and spread this information over a series of emails. The reasons you do this is to get your subscribers used to your emails so they see they have a value for them, and the readers feel they have connected with you on a personal level.

How do you get your subscribers to stay on your newsletter? There are many aspects to consider, but above all, make your newsletter readable, valuable, and interesting and professional. It should arrive with your stated frequency: 61 percent of consumers like to receive promotional emails, and 38 percent want to receive them more frequently.

Free Content for Readers

A free book isn’t the only kind of reader magnet you can offer a future or new subscriber. You can send them free content in the form of character interviews, cut scenes from a book, an epilogue or prologue to a story, a different ending to a story, a special place on your website with content for your subscribers, why you wrote a story, sneak previews, recipes, author interview, and anything you think your readers would like. Spread the word of these bonuses for your readers everywhere (Amazon, Goodreads, BookLikes and LibraryThing giveaways, and Wattpad for stories and excerpts).

There are two sites you can use to build your newsletter subscriptions by giving away an excerpt, short story, or book. Check out Instafreebie and BookFunnel and decide if you think one or both is worth it. Instafreebie has a free level and BookFunnel has a $20-a-year level. One of Instafreebie’s benefits is a newsletter they send out to their subscribers, promoting different free offers on their site. One of BookFunnel’s benefits is a delivery system that is easy, but if a reader is having trouble, there’s a support desk to help a person. Co-ops are groups that have a theme tying the books together (example: romantic suspense, a certain holiday). Instafreebie has co-ops on places like Kboards, Facebook groups, and Freebie Friday on Instafreebie. BookFunnel’s co-ops are found on Kboards and Facebook groups.

Group Giveaways

There are pros and cons for using group giveaways to grow your newsletter subscribers.

Some pros are you paid someone else to manage the giveaway, and there are usually more shares of the giveaway because more authors are involved. If paid promoters use FB ads to appeal to targeted readers, you will have a new pool of subscribers, and splitting the cost of the prizes can be cheaper in a group. The cons are not all promoters do what they say nor have they obtained their promised reach. A single subscriber list for all the authors isn’t best practice (readers should opt-in on newsletters of individual authors), and if you send a welcome to a bad list of subscribers, you’ll get a lot of unsubscribes and your newsletter will be marked as spam. There can be consequences if that happens too much from your newsletter account being deleted to fines from the U.S. government.
**Newsletter Open Rate**

Now that you have the subscribers, you want to get them to open your newsletter. Some things affect that. The **subject line** is very important. It is what grabs your subscribers’ attention. Have a clear hook. Tease your subscribers with the fear of missing out on something you have, like the last chance for a free book. Keep it short and sweet. Another aspect that affects your open rate is the newsletter’s relevancy. If you are only showcasing contemporaries, readers of historical books wouldn’t be interested. Have an idea of why you’re sending a newsletter, especially between book releases. Avoid using emojis for words and phrases that trigger the spam filter.

There are many factors that affect your open rate. Most of them you can control such as time of day you send it, frequency of interaction, a good subject line, mistakes in your newsletter, lack of urgency, value of your last newsletter, and list size. There are some you can’t control such as a reader’s age and location, whether a subscriber reads the newsletter in plain text or in a preview screen, and tough spam filters.

Less than 1 percent is the industry norm for unsubscribes. Having people unsubscribe from your newsletter list isn’t totally a bad thing. If you paid for each email going out, you want to get rid of the subscribers who aren’t opening your newsletter. Why do people unsubscribe? The list needs to be curated occasionally so the list isn’t stale. Others unsubscribe because something is distasteful or inappropriate to that particular reader, or there are too many demands like “buy my book,” or you aren’t interacting with your readers (example: asking them for their opinion on two choices for a cover), or you sent too many newsletters or not enough. Other reasons include mistakes in the text, hard to read on a cell phone, too wide so subscribers have to scroll to the left to see it all, too much text, not enough whitespace, or images not the right resolution, slowing downloading or its legibility.

**Segmentation of Your Newsletter List**

Segmentation can be another tool you use to make your newsletter effective. One of the reasons readers unsubscribe is failure to meet their interests. If a reader only listens to audiobooks, she might unsubscribe because the newsletter doesn’t have much to do with audiobooks. That is where putting your large subscriber list into various smaller lists can help you to send the right information to the right reader. Some reasons to consider doing this are that personalized emails get six times more interaction and your open rates can improve by 203 percent. E-marketer Study found 38 percent of the email marketers experienced a better open rate and 28 percent had better deliverability and made more revenue when they targeted their emails to specific groups.

Some of the categories you can have for smaller segmented lists are location, language, age, gender, interests, and the types of book the subscriber reads. Figure out what information you would like to know and use this to put your readers into different categories. When you look for a newsletter provider, check out its ease of audience segmentation and whether it can be done automatically or manually. For example, if you send out a survey to your subscribers and ask them various questions, you can use that information to put them into smaller groups on your list. Or you can look at the statistics your newsletter provider has collected after you sent out your emails to determine the readers who open your email 90 percent, 75 percent and under 50 percent of the time. You might want to tailor newsletters to those three different groups.

Newsletters can be highly effective as a marketing tool. An author has control over her newsletter
while other types of marketing tools don’t give you much control. A newsletter can be an author’s best advertising strategy.

Erica Ridley, the presenter of the Newsletter Masterclass, has a 36-page handout in the Members-Only section of the NINC website, which expands on the information in this article.

Margaret Daley, a USA Today’s Bestselling author of over 105 books (five million plus sold worldwide), has been married for over forty-seven years and is a firm believer in romance and love. When she isn’t traveling or being with her two granddaughters, she’s writing love stories, often with a suspense/mystery thread and corralling her cats that think they rule her household.
From Midlist to Mad Money
Presented by Roxanne St. Claire and Kristen Painter

Reported by Jenny Gardiner

From Midlist to Mad Money Creates a Framework to Succeed as an Indie
Roxanne St. Claire and Kristen Painter succeeded beyond their wildest dreams when they became indie authors, and in the workshop “From Midlist to Mad Money” they shared how they devised and implemented a plan to take control of their professional careers and set out to earn a handsome living as authors untethered to the traditional publishing machine.

A Strategic Plan for Self-Publishing Success in an Ever-Changing Market
St. Claire said that after experiencing the frustration of an endless cycle of publishing without seeing much of a return on investment while with traditional houses, she evaluated what she needed to do in order to succeed if she went indie. Eventually, she persuaded her friend Painter to follow suit, and together they drew up a point-by-point plan for success.

St. Claire said despite being a New York Times and USA Today bestselling author with 35 novels under her belt, she was not making a living wage and was barely scraping by, living off savings. She had a six-figure contract with a large house but was disgusted to see how accounting manipulations meant that she was seeing very little money. She said she was finally fed up enough that she decided to take control of her career.

“I knew how long it took me to write a book, I knew the process of production and could talk to plenty who could help me get it done, and I conquered my tech fear,” she said. “In the first year I doubled my income, the next year more than doubled it, and by year three had gone way past tripling my income.”

Painter had similar frustrations with traditional publishing, and at the behest of St. Claire, she took her unwanted backlist, and with a little bit of promo made $3000 in a month. While she had decent advances with New York houses, she was sick of lack of control and the ridiculously overpriced e-book pricing they insisted on, so she turned down her next contract. She had been writing urban fantasy with a no-compete clause, so she changed to paranormal romance.

“I did market research and figured out where there was a gap in the market with funny, light paranormal, and I found my readers this way,” she said. In the first six months of indie publishing, she doubled what she would have gotten with her New York contract. Last year was her first full-time indie year and second of being really dedicated to it, and she made $700,000 more than she did the first year.

This Workshop is not for Everyone
St. Claire said their workshop would not work for newbie authors that have never written a book before. “You need to know how long it takes you to write a book and you need to know the process of
publishing,” she said. “You’re the publisher and need to know the beginning-to-end steps you must take, including revisions, content edits, copy edits, cover design, formatting and proofing.”

They both qualified that their plan was not the only way to self-publishing success, and said it was not about hitting lists (which St. Claire said has never made her money anyhow). “This is not for hobbyists, dabblers and toe-dippers,” St. Claire said. And it is not foolproof, they added.

“This is a full-time job,” St. Claire said. “This is not for the hybrid audience. And it has to be done with a series.”

The Series Vision

Essential to the success of this plan is that you must write to market and write what you love. “Don’t write to trends, but focus on long-term career-type goal-setting. You must love what you’re doing because you need to want to keep writing it,” Painter said. “You need to start this project with a fresh series, and you need to have “brandability,” i.e., you need to have a distinct voice, know your brand, and how you represent that voice on social media. Painter’s voice, for instance, is light, funny and snarky, so she said she posts a lot about coffee and cats and donuts.

Contractual obligations restricted what St. Claire was able to write when she first went indie. Because she wasn’t allowed to publish a full-length contemporary romance according to her contract, she launched her indie career with three 40,000-word novellas set in her popular Barefoot Bay series with secondary characters. Once those were out and she was once again able to publish long contemporary, she spun the series off with the Barefoot Brides, then romantic suspense with Barefoot Bay Undercover, then Barefoot Bay Timeless. She pointed out if you are spinning off a traditionally published series, understand that you cannot control how those titles will be handled—you can’t put them on sale, or first-free in series.

St. Claire said the covers must look branded, so you’ll need to create a template with your covers, being consistent with fonts, placement of fonts and image.

Other things to consider are trends versus longevity because you don’t want your series to falter because a trend has died, and also how you could work around an existing New York contract when going indie. And determine the potential for multiple books, series spin-offs, and multiple points of entry.

“Readers fall in love with characters and want to see them again,” St. Claire said. She has characters crossing over from various spin-offs her series, thus giving many points of entry into the series.

The Strategic Production Plan

Before beginning this one-year production plan, St. Claire said the most important thing is to know how long it takes you to write a book of a certain length. Next you develop a launch strategy, which could be a simultaneous release of all books at once, like Liliana Hart famously succeeded with, or back-to-back releases, which St. Claire does, which can keep algorithms high over a 90-day period. Or you can release as written, if you really need that income to continue as quickly as possible. Painter said she released her Nocturne Falls series back-to-back, though she wrote them all to a reasonable draft stage, then went back and developed them more fully before the release. She said she had done a lot to hype her readers on her Facebook page and build what had been a miniscule newsletter list. She earned $15,000 her first month.
The One-Year Calendar

The two authors have created a proprietary one-year calendar that helps in tracking progress by stated deadlines.

On a large At-A-Glance wipe-board yearly calendar, they enter the following information:

1. First draft done
2. Second draft done
3. Third draft done
4. Cover design
5. Editorial input
6. Revisions
7. Copyediting
8. Proofreading
9. Formatting
10. Release dates
11. Pre-release marketing

They then color-code the calendar:

- Blue—action item
- Green—need from a vendor
- Purple—marketing
Neither author does their own covers or formatting, and they said chances are if you’re in this kind of compressed production schedule you’ll likely not do that either. “Farm stuff out and buy writing time when you can,” Painter said.

Calendar Tips
St. Claire said to **create deadlines** for every step of the way, and **check your progress daily**, right down to the word count required each day. They said be certain to **staff accordingly and hire editors, formatters and artists well in advance** as the good ones get booked. St. Claire recommended **doing all covers in advance** because it helps in writing the book, you can do promo teasers with the newer covers, and they’re branded and well connected this way. Plus you can often get a discounted price. They said to **make an income chart** with worst, best and likely projections, using traditional publishing sales if you have them. Lastly, **start building a mailing list**.

“Treat this like a profession, not a hobby,” St. Claire said. “Be professional enough not to miss your deadline. Check your progress daily.”

The Rules
The authors said you cannot stray from the following rules:

- **Do not miss your deadline.** “If you miss one, your calendar collapses, so build in time,” Painter said. “The first year is not fun. You have to have a lot of stern talks with yourself about time management; it’s not easy.”
- **Do not say yes to anything that doesn’t fit into your timeline.** St. Claire said she turned down several offers to write shorts for box sets because it didn’t fit into her plan. “Don’t succumb to FOMO,” Painter said. “If you launch well then make a name for yourself, then lots of people will want you to do those things so you won’t be missing out!”
- **Book your team (editors, proofers, formatter) ahead of time.** Test them out and give them a dry run.
- **Check progress daily.**
- **Treat this as a business and guard your time.**
- **Plan on an investment:** St. Claire said she spends at least $2,000 per book, depending on the cover, length of editing and the extent to which she might need a content editing. Painter spends about $1500 per book.

“It’s a business, and you’ll have to say no to some family stuff, or things with friends. The first one or two years involves a lot of sacrifice,” Painter said. She said she wanted her husband to be able to retire from his corporate job and finally, after successfully implementing this plan, he was able to do so.

Marketing Techniques—the Sure Things
1. **Five and Free** (Bookbub deal with stacking)—this is the method they suggest works best. Get to the fifth book in the series and then go free with the first, try to get a Bookbub ad, and then stack ads on either end. Painter said in January 2016, she put out the fifth book in her Nocturne Falls series, got a Bookbub ad a week or two later, and that was the first month she hit almost six figures
that month.

2. Facebook ads/AMS ads—These used to be great, but not anymore, they said, as return on investment and click-through rates are pretty dismal. Painter does some boosted posts on Facebook and an occasional ad, but she doesn’t spend much now. They said the Bookbub ads at the bottom of the daily newsletter don’t seem to do much either. St. Claire said she’s resurrected doing Facebook ads with her latest series with a video in it, spending about $500 per month.

3. Building a mailing list—This is the only thing you own, they said. You need a mailing list because those people who sign up for it are your core readers. They recommend cleaning out a stale mailing list periodically by sending out an email asking if readers want to remain on the mailing list. You can look at the open rate and separate out those who did and didn’t open, then send out a “great news” email and save the list of whoever opens that, keep sorting through the list to be sure it is a vibrant one.

4. Social media presence and platform—Match your voice and tone with what you put on your Facebook author page. And make it tie into your brand. Painter said her assistant helps with her Facebook author page, managing giveaways, which get a lot of views. Types of swag she said her readers like include bookbags, baseball caps with her logo and website on them and beer can coozies that are from the imaginary bar in one of her series. She does a big swag purchase once a year.

5. Review team—You need reviews for the new release, St. Claire said. Her last book had 55 reviews up upon release. She runs boosted posts. Painter said she runs her review team of about 60 readers in a mercenary way—it’s a business, she said, and she has her assistant kick people out of the review team within 10 days of release and replaces them if they’ve not posted a review. Painter said she chooses them from her newsletter—she asks those interested in becoming an advance reader to fill out a form, provide links to previous books of hers they’ve reviewed, and they have to have an Amazon account. Painter’s assistant handles sending out the ARCs to her team.

Both authors write shorts for their series in between releases and they said readers want them to be numbered accordingly. Painter keeps a list on her website with all of the books and shorts in the right order since Amazon only lets you number them with whole numbers, therefore you can’t squeeze in a book 3.5 between books three and four in a series. On the calendar they showed the audience, St. Claire would release a book every other month or every third month.

Passive Income and Ancillary Opportunities

1. Kindle Worlds—St. Claire has been able to grow her Barefoot Bay world with this fan fiction-style series with over 100 books. She said the U.S.-based Amazon Kindle World keeps the series alive and enables her to work with authors she’s wanted to work with. Painter has created her own “universe” because she didn’t want hers to be only on Amazon. She has many overseas readers and didn’t want to alienate them. Her husband manages the financial end of it, it’s by invitation only to authors she chooses who are recommended by her friends. This has sold over 61,000 books and is now going into audio. St. Claire says she has a cover template for this World in which anyone can write, but not any can be in a launch. She maintains a detailed series bible, her writers have to have read the books in the canon, and she maintains a tight Facebook group for this.

2. Coloring book—Painter hired a comic book studio to create a coloring book just for fun for her fans. It cost her about $7,000.
3. **Audio books**—Painter has sold over 99,000 audio books. She said she loves this, as do her readers. She listened to 55 narrators before choosing one she liked. She said she doesn’t write sex on the page in her books and that works with her readers who don’t want that in audio book while listening in the car with their kids.

4. **Translations**—St. Claire sold her rights to a German publishing house, but she said she doesn’t recommend it, as there was a lot of complicated math involved and it’s been a hassle to deal with.

5. **Box sets**—Painter did a box set of four short stories into print. She said teaming on box sets with other authors who are in your genre and share a similar tone is a great way to get cross promotion with various readerships.

**Challenges**

The authors pointed out the career-inhibiting “great fears and myths of self-publishing”:

1. **I don’t have time, I just want to write**—“This is a big job, a lot of work, 10-12 hour days, six days a week, but it can pay off,” Painter said. “If you can’t write that fast or to the speed of this calendar, then make a new one and extend it out longer to your speed.”

2. **It’s too complicated**—St. Claire said she knew nothing about the technology and if she could learn it, anyone could. They both said they like nothing better than to not have to work hard, but this has been worth it.

3. **It costs too much, I won’t make back my investment**—Painter said her father always told her “scared money never wins.” “You have to be willing to take risks in order to get the reward,” she said. “And it can be a very large reward.” They said to set aside money before embarking on the plan if that helps.

4. **Discoverability, no one knows who I am, the market is too crowded**—St. Claire said that their method works well when you come out rapidly with a bang and the numbers and algorithms go up, but you have to put out consistently high-quality books that are packaged well and written to the market.

5. **Speed, don’t write fast enough**—then tailor the program to your speed.

6. **This only works for people who’ve been traditionally published and have readers**—they both said this is not true.

**Answers to Audience Questions**

- They both recommend keeping your name even if you change genres
- They said there is not consensus on best/worst release months though often December or back-to-school often aren’t as good.
- They both go wide rather than just with KU since they have readers who use all platforms. They also have many readers loyal to print-only.
- They both love ACX for audio, but added there’s a bit of a learning curve. They get audio reviews with their review crew.
- Merchandising for iBooks—St. Claire does pre-orders for iBooks
- They both use author assistants
- St. Claire said she does not blog anymore. Rather she’ll occasionally post heartfelt
Facebook posts, something personal, but she replaced her blog with newsletters and Facebook posts. She said it took too much time. She does occasional Facebook videos.

Jenny Gardiner is an award-winning novelist and #1 Kindle bestselling author who has published 25 books. Her work has been found in Ladies Home Journal, the Washington Post, Marie-Claire.com and on National Public Radio. She’s a former columnist for Charlottesville’s Daily Progress and is volunteer coordinator for the Virginia Film Festival. When not writing, she’s probably cooking, playing with her grandpuppies or traveling to exotic locales.
How to Capture, Compel, & Cultivate Reader Connection
Presented by Michelle Spiva

Reported by Rochelle Paige

Michelle Spiva kicked off her “How to Capture, Compel, & Cultivate Reader Connection” workshop with an explanation of what she called The Myth of Achievement. Often, authors believe that once they get readers, their job is done. But this isn’t the case. As Spiva explained, “What you do to get your readers, you must do to keep them. Choose wisely. Achievement is the start of your journey, not the end.” She promised to show attendees how to hoodoo their readers by becoming a storyteller, not a story pimp.

Storytellers seek to entertain instead of promote. Storytellers inform their readers, but they do not impose upon them. They intrigue so they don’t have to insert themselves into conversations. And they seek to transform their readers and not just transact with them. Ultimately, the main difference is that a storyteller is more concerned about the relationship between “you & me” than the relationship between “you & read my book.”

Spiva provided three steps to change your writing career trajectory: capture, compel, and cultivate. The end goal, as she put it, is “when you put out a book, you want them to be like the people at the Apple store standing in the rain.”

To capture readers, authors must set the snare, create attention, and bag the reader. One technique is to ask for a favor. Spiva told the story of a copy machine experiment which was conducted to see how people interacted with each other in a relationship of strangers. They had a person who had five pieces of paper to copy ask to cut in front of someone in line. The answer was no. But when she asked if she could cut because she was in a hurry, the result was different. People said yes. She took it another step further and said it was because she wants to make these copies, without giving a specific reason. People still said yes. Authors can implement this easily by asking readers for a favor. It can be as simple as asking them to donate to the hurricane relief fund because you’d like them to do so. Or please leave a review because a certain book could use more. Be sure to include the because, even without a specific reason, to improve the odds of getting a positive response.

When you’re setting the snare for new readers, be mindful of what kind of reader they are. Go for readers who will love the kind of books you write. Interested readers love to read books, and these readers can be gained with freebies and cost-conscious books to read. They bring some of the curiosity factor that will help a book to generate attention. But committed readers are the ones where the majority of focus should go. They specifically love your books. Authors should be sure to give committed readers a special experience, like exclusive access to the author or the VIP treatment at events. These readers are your Word of Mouth Marketers (WOMM) who will bring you more loyal readers because like attracts like.

Established authors on the hunt for committed readers should create snares for readers with the budget to afford their books. Marketing dollars should be spent on them rather than those who collect free books. Exclusivity can be key, and it’s okay to make them work for those special perks since it
increases the perceived value to the reader. People only appreciate the stuff they have to work for.

It’s necessary to learn how to compel readers because it means that other authors won’t be able to out-market or outspend you—you’re readers will be committed to you, and they’ll keep coming back for more. So play to people’s fantasies! Be the most interesting version of yourself on social media and at events. Give readers an amazing experience before asking them for something. Be the author they adore. As Spiva explained, “People love to follow confidence, success, heroes, truth, and fun.” Also, utilize the psychology of fandom by including families in your stories and creating universes that readers hate to leave.

Authors should also be aware of marketing strategy before implementing tactics. Push marketing should be along the lines of branding and giveaways since it’s done to cold markets. Push is like when you drop into a group you don’t interact with and post book links. Push marketing is for branding, not selling. Too many authors are trying to pull in the push places. Pull marketing to a warm audience is where the sale happens. It’s less expensive and easier to measure return on investment.

After you pull readers in, give those committed readers the world. Put an author note in the back of your books giving readers the option to fill out an application to be part of a super-secret reader group reserved for those who love all your books. Use Zoom to do virtual-meet ups with members of the super-secret group where they can ask anything. Get a Patreon account for the exclusive use of your super fans and create an enviable experience there. If you can’t stand social media, pick one or two platforms to master and post amazing stuff monthly. Just stay focused on the reader and their experience because that’s what’s most important.

Hoodoo your readers by creating an initiation process. Train them to share your stories by making them amazing, and then ask them to share with like-minded readers. In her slides, Spiva provided a 5E Reader Emotion Creation Matrix to attract, connect, and retain loyal readers.

This matrix can be used in advertising, how you set up your books, branding initiatives, and direct interaction with readers. The first step is to choose an emotion, and make sure it’s one you connect with personally. In the second step, think of ways to get the reader to empathize with you through your story. After that, select the emotional outcome you want the reader to experience at the end of your story. Then explore the emotional arc of the story by developing situations based on your emotional expertise to get the reader from point A to point Z. Lastly, make sure to utilize your experiences to connect emotionally and evoke empathy in your reader.
Rochelle Paige writes romance in a variety of sub-genres: contemporary, new adult, paranormal and romantic suspense. Although she holds a BA in Economics, her career was mainly spent as a marketing professional. She lives in West Palm Beach, Florida, with her two sons. Contact her at me@rochellepaige.com.
From Strangers to Superfans: Targeting the Right Readers
Presented by David Gaughran

Reported by Cidney Swanson

In the past 10 years, internet marketing has changed direction greatly, and David Gaughran contends that much of the change can be useful to authors wanting to reach readers. With the advent of e-reading, authors looking to shift books enjoy unprecedented opportunities. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, readers spend $125 billion on books annually, a figure that puts books behind television but ahead of games in terms of consumer spending.

Current internet marketing has shifted away from a focus on funnels, where the consumer is progressively “squeezed” from a lack of awareness toward purchase and finally evangelism of a product. Instead marketing today focuses on the consumer, considering what is known as “The Buyer’s Journey.” The shift is subtle, as there is still a set of steps, and these steps are still designed to move a consumer from non-awareness to evangelism of a product, but the POV has shifted from the seller to the customer. Smart marketers are now working to (1) understand the buyer persona of their ideal customer, (2) optimize conversion at all points, and (3) identify failure points along the buyer’s journey.

Gaughran translates this series of steps into what he calls “The Reader’s Journey.” In utilizing the reader’s journey, the wise author will shift their POV to that of their ideal reader. Gaughran encourages authors to put time and effort into defining their ideal reader: that reader who will fall in love with what an author has on offer. Gaughran further recommends viewing each step of the journey from the reader’s perspective. While an author who markets is still seeking to “close the sale” at each stage of the journey, the smart money is on those who consider this process from the perspective of the customer.

Gaughran identifies five stages to the Reader’s Journey:

1. Discovery
2. Visibility
3. Consideration
4. Purchase
5. Advocacy

In the DISCOVERY stage, your ideal reader has yet to encounter you (or your books.) In the VISIBILITY stage, a reader is vaguely aware of your books, having seen them in places such as BookBub, the “customers also bought” lists on retailers, or a targeted email blast from a retailer. During the CONSIDERATION stage, the ideal reader might visit your book’s page but does not make a purchase. At the PURCHASE stage, a reader has decided to add your book to their collection—and might even read it. At the ADVOCACY stage, the ideal reader is so in love with your book that they recommend it to others.

Gaughran points out that while authors typically focus on discoverability, the barriers in the next
four stages actually escalate; the farther you go down the chain, the harder the problems become to solve.

**Discovery** problems might be the least of an author’s worries, but there are significant barriers to discovery, thanks to what Gaughran (with a nod to Jon Fine) calls the tsunami of content. There are over 140 million books out there, with over 6 million available as e-books.

**Visibility** problems are more significant. There are only so many places for your book to strut its stuff. For writers of historical fiction, BookBub only has two feature deal spots available, and these aren’t even sent out to readers every day. There are only 100 spots on any given Amazon bestseller category. There are only so many Kindle Daily Deal spots, and so on. Because of visibility issues, things tend to bottleneck for authors at this stage.

**Conversion** problems can be even more challenging, as anyone who has popped an affiliate tag on a title can attest. It’s exciting to see readers clicking on your links, but it can be downright depressing to note how few actually go on to make a purchase. (Gaughran provided these guesstimates for conversion from click to purchase: Your own email list: up to 60 percent; BookBub features: up to 50 percent; BookBub ppc ads: up to 25 percent; Facebook ads: up to 20 percent; and Amazon Marketing Services ppc ads: up to 15 percent.)

Gaughran also argued that multiple distractions are killing conversions on any given book’s page, most notably on Amazon. While some retailers have cleaner pages, an Amazon book page can have 30 or more other invitations to take an action—none of which are buying your book.

Speaking to the **purchase** stage, Gaughran dished this discouraging statistic: 40 percent (and possibly less) of those who start reading your book will actually make it to the end. This means that even if you have taken the time to optimize your book’s back matter, over half of your readers will never see it.

Addressing the challenges of the **advocacy** stage, Gaughran suggested asking yourself this eye-opening question: *How many books have I recommended to others this year?*

So what’s an author to do to lessen the obstacles at each point? Gaughran suggest three things, specifically addressing the first two, which spill over to the third:

1. Locate the failure points for your book during the reader’s five-stage journey.
2. Optimize and manage your backlist.
3. Launch better.

Locating failure points becomes a sort of if/then exercise. *If* your books have bestseller rankings in the millions, *then* you probably have a **discovery** problem, and the solution is to start promoting your title through paid advertising or sending to your own email list. (No email list? Then build one.) Gaughran points out that while this problem is easy to solve, it’s also easy to screw up. When he decided his blog followers, who are primarily writers, might like his historical fiction, he advertised a historical fiction title on his blog, which resulted in mismatched also-boughts on Amazon, leading Amazon’s algorithms to decide his book was a loser. (See the process documented here: [https://davidgaughran.wordpress.com/2017/05/04/please-dont-buy-my-book/](https://davidgaughran.wordpress.com/2017/05/04/please-dont-buy-my-book/))

A **visibility** problem is likely if you are running paid promotion and sending to your email list but *not* seeing a nice halo effect of sales afterward. The solution? Optimize your metadata. Readers discover books that bubble to the top of the page on Amazon’s “new and popular” lists, so be sure to maximize your browse categories.
If you have lots of clicks but no sales, you probably have a failure at the **consideration** stage. Check your price, cover, and description. All of these must be in line with what readers in your genre are searching for. Mixed messages are confusing, and a confused reader will move on.

If you are seeing a lot of sales of a first-in-series with no sell-through to other books in the series, you have **purchase** stage failure. Again, check your price, cover, and description. You may be making promises with your cover, your price point, or your description that didn’t pay off for the reader. A disappointed reader will move on.

Do you have problems getting sign-ups for your mailing list or reviews for your book? You have **advocacy** stage failures to address. Few readers (less than half, remember) will make it to the end of your book. For those who do, you must close the emotional sale. Optimize your back matter to encourage sales, reviews, and mailing list sign ups.

For authors who want to fix problems in all five stages, Gaughran recommends working backwards. Address problems in reverse:

1. Fix the product: write a great, error-free book, and provide end matter with clear calls-to-action. This solves for **purchase** and **advocacy** issues.
2. Fix the presentation: optimize your cover, blurb, price, and metadata. This solves for **visibility** and **consideration** issues.
3. Fix the promotion: do an email blast, book discount ads, advertise on Facebook, and so on. This solves for **discovery**.

On average, NINC members have published 24 books each, so the average member has a lot of work in front of them if they want to address all the issues cluttering the path of the reader’s journey. But for authors willing to put in the work, there’s a nice slice of $125 billion out there.

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*Cidney Swanson* is an award-winning author of young adult sci-fi and fantasy, including the Ripple series, the Saving Mars series, the Thief in Time series, and more. Cidney lives in Oregon’s Willamette Valley with her family and entirely too much rain.
Pretend your book is a sweet Southern belle in a room filled with suitors. Is it going to stand out or will it wilt in the corner waiting for a dance?

Fantasy author Damon Courtney, (also software developer and creator of BookFunnel) uses this analogy to express BookFunnel’s mission to make readers “feel special, important, and to wow them with our stories.” An online platform that costs a small subscription fee, BookFunnel allows authors to easily upload and share their books via a web link. Readers will be then taken to a page with multiple options (mobi, epub, pdf) for how they want to download. “We handle all the reader support you don’t want,” Courtney said, adding that the platform delivers over 1.5 million books monthly and over forty thousand emails daily to readers.

So … all that being said, when does the dating begin?

Courtney explained, “Data didn’t answer the question that we get from authors all the time: ‘What do I do?’ The answer is to formulate data into actionable things that writers can take home and do something with.”

How do authors date their readers, get their attention? “Making fans is a long-term relationship. Getting a list is good advice, but it’s just a phone number written on a sweaty palm in a nightclub. Potential, but no guarantee.”

Building a relationship with readers

For authors to get readers’ attention long enough to turn them into someone who will buy books, specifically our books, Courtney suggested:

- Build a mailing list where you can speak directly to readers. “Social media still gives someone else the relationship. They will and have changed the rules and cut off your ability to engage with your tribe.”
- Gather data (for example in newsletters or mailing lists): What do readers want from me? Are they the kind of reader I want? Buyer or freebie seeker? “We try to convince them we’re the author they’ve been waiting for their whole life.”
- Use your own voice in your newsletters/emails. Courtney gave the example of one author whose subject line in a welcome email was “What the actual f...?” He said that worked because it’s the author’s voice—bold. “Be who you are so readers can see what they’re getting.”
- Courtney said that people who feel valued stick around because they want what no one else has. “Make readers feel special because it’s easier to keep an existing one than get a new one. Readers will stay for the extra stuff.”

Keeping readers interested

“When we saw a book that got 10,000 downloads a day, we researched the author promo to see what was working.” He said that a romance author had taken a standalone novel and put it up for free only on her website. “She had a call to action in all her other books and ended up with 40,000 downloads.”
sign-ups.”

- Write content. Readers came to you because they liked what you wrote. Courtney said that it doesn’t have to be weekly or deeply personal. “Social media can do it … a blog post, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, email. If that scares you, they always want content. Write a short story. No one will be disappointed.”
- You don’t have to give away a full novel or a free one. Hold something back for a fan club:
  - Short stories and novellas: quick to write, don’t have to be free, real fans will buy your book, can be in your world or with existing characters and then reader won’t need backstory, can write a short to a stand-alone novel.
  - Let a short story lead into an upcoming release. He gave the example of an author who, between books two and three had a cold list of readers. She sent an announcement about book three to the list, introduced a short story, prepping them for the new release rather than just asking for the buy.
- “Prequels and novellas are extremely powerful because they lead into an existing series and are great for readers who may have not heard of you. Entice them with another entry book rather than book one,” Courtney said. He suggested that these can be used as reader magnets or exclusives to readers giving them more compelling reasons to sign up.
- Serials. “Take something big, split it and dole it out in small chunks and send the episodes every few weeks to your existing list.” These can be boxed as sets or as single novels. He said authors can serialize existing works or have a bonus epilogue for the series that’s exclusive to the list. “A stand-alone romance novel used the wedding that happened a year later as a call to action. She crushed it.” Courtney said that epilogues that reward true fans are generally of no interest for freebie seekers who won’t care about what happens in epilogue.
- Extended scenes. “Readers always want more story, so give them what they already love from books they’ve read. Or use deleted scenes or even chapters you cut.” Another idea he suggested was to add extra steamy scenes. “Explicit scenes may not work in what you’re trying to write, but you can please both types of readers by offering them separately.”

Ultimately, Courtney said that authors have to decide what works for them individually: “There’s only two things you have to do: write more content and engage with readers on your own terms.”

Since she couldn’t sing, paint, dance, play sports or the piano, Christa Allan decided she’d become a writer. She’s the author of five women’s fiction titles, one historical novel, and one rom-com novella. Her latest novel, Since You’ve Been Gone, has been an Amazon best seller. Christa grew up in New Orleans and lived there until a year ago when she and her husband moved to Houston to be closer to her five children.
How a Final Letter Can Benefit Your Heirs
Presenter: M.L. Buchman

Reported by Delaney Diamond

Author M.L. Buchman presented a practical session on the importance of a “final letter” in estate planning and why every author should have one. After a disclaimer that the guidelines presented did not represent legal advice, he went on to explain the core of the session: write a final letter so that your heirs would know what to do with your intellectual property (IP) upon your death.

Why should you care?
You may be thinking, “I already have a will, so do I need a final letter?” A will says who gets what, while the final letter tells what heirs can do with assets once they have them. Since your will explains how to disburse your intellectual property, make sure it’s valid. Have you moved from one state to another since you wrote it? Ensure your current will meets the requirement of the state you live in.

Buchman shared several examples of why it’s important to have a final letter and how it affects your estate after your death. For instance, Elvis Presley left $1 million to Lisa Marie and his ex-wife, Priscilla, but his estate incurred over $500,000 per year in expenses. After a very public legal battle, Priscilla was able to gain control over the mismanaged estate, and now it’s worth over $400 million.

Every family does not have a Priscilla, so leave a final letter that will benefit your heirs and guide them in managing your estate.

What to include in the final letter
Here are some of the things you can include in your final letter:

- Reversion of rights. Copyright law allows for authors to terminate assignment of copyright or licenses after 35 years if certain conditions are met. You or your heirs may find this to be a viable option for your own IP.
- The location of your passwords to your accounts. That includes online retailers (Amazon, Nook, etc.), bookkeeping software such as QuickBooks, your website, and email accounts.
- The location of the book files and other copyrighted information. Organize your computer files and hard copy files so everything is easy to find: contracts, short stories, covers, full-length books, etc. Include a spreadsheet with data such as ISBNs, dates of publication, and where the books are sold.
- Bank accounts.
- Business contacts, such as book designers, formatters, accountants, lawyers, translators, advertisers, and assistants.
- Options for managing the estate. Do your heirs have the skill sets to manage the estate themselves? They might want to sell off the intellectual property, the way George Lucas sold the Star
Wars franchise. They might choose a fee-based management company. Or, you could will the estate to a company that manages your IP and pays your heirs an income.

NOTE: Bankruptcy courts view intellectual property as an asset of an estate. Therefore, you cannot shift your rights to another person and then declare bankruptcy. The courts can still take those assets and all that potential income will be lost.

Final Thoughts

The final letter should not contradict your will and should be written in plain English. If it’s too complicated, your heirs won’t follow through. At the same time, don’t expect them to be as knowledgeable about publishing as you are, but leave enough information so they can make informed choices—whether it’s to administer your estate themselves, hire someone and collect an income, or some other option. For more detailed information, check out M.L. Buchman’s book, Estate Planning for Authors.

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Delaney Diamond is a USA Today Bestselling Author of contemporary romance, and is the owner of Garden Avenue Press, where she publishes romance and women’s fiction that includes protagonists of color. When she’s not busy reading or writing, she’s in the kitchen trying out new recipes, dining at one of her favorite restaurants, or traveling to an interesting locale.
Cracking the Code at iBooks
Panelists: Diane Capri, Chris Taylor, Kylie Gilmore, Julia Kent, Bethany Claire, and Cristin Harber
Reported by Cidney Swanson

For an author publishing independently, Apple’s iBooks Store is a sales partner offering a readership worth cultivating. In late 2016, iBooks became the default bookstore and e-reader on over one billion iPhones and iPads worldwide. While other e-book retailers are shrinking, iBooks’s market share is growing—and its consumers are engaged customers—which has made iBooks a solid number two in sales of e-books. Furthermore, consumers increasingly read more on phones as opposed to dedicated e-readers.

As a bookseller, the panelist said Apple is committed to providing readers with an unparalleled experience. The company’s philosophy is that good books equal happy readers. Panelists indicated that Apple believes in supporting artists (as opposed to publishers) and that it has created a level playing field where authors are treated equally regardless of how they publish. iBooks does not take advertising money from authors or publishers, meaning their ecosystem is 100 percent editorial.

While the rumors abound about some authors’ experience with iBooks, the panel agreed that if an author is able to move units on the store platform, those authors’ books will have the same promo opportunities as books that are traditionally published.

Addressing rumors, the panelists identified and quashed at least five.

1. **Rumor:** Pre-orders don’t work on iBooks.
   **Reality:** They work better on iBooks than on many retailers, especially when you take advantage of certain biases built into the platform. (More below.)

2. **Rumor:** To get promo on iBooks, you must upload directly.
   **Reality:** By uploading through the Draft2Digital platform, books can get the same promo as books going direct.

3. **Rumor:** You have to have an iBooks rep to do well.
   **Reality:** Cristen Harber, who is killing it on iBooks, began receiving unexpected promo as soon as her books began doing well. Other panelists report identical experiences.

4. **Rumor:** It’s hard to upload to iBooks, and it’s impossible without a Mac.
   **Reality:** PC owners can easily upload using the Draft2Digital platform.

5. **Rumor:** Royalty varies depending on a book’s price point.
   **Reality:** Royalty is at 70 percent for books uploaded directly, regardless of price point and regardless of the size of the file, making iBooks an ideal retailer for longer works such as box sets.

When it comes to selling at iBooks, the panelists offered several action steps:

1. Experiment with making a book free. Free first-in-series books do well, often creating a spike in sales. This is especially valuable at iBooks because series sell-through is excellent on iBooks.
2. Join the iBooks affiliate program, which rewards authors with 7 percent on sales of everything sold on iBooks, iTunes, and the App Store. iBooks allows authors to place affiliate codes anywhere, including on websites and within advertising.

3. Do a search online for “iBooks Marketing” to get resources on successfully marketing your books to iBooks readers.

4. iBooks will give you 250 promo codes which allow your fans to download your book for free. Do not pass up this opportunity! The codes are “live” for 30 days after distribution, so only request 10 at a time, pass those out, and then request more. To request codes, open iTunes and click the books icon (upper left). Then click the title you want codes for. Next, in the upper right corner, just below “rights and pricing,” you’ll find a button for “promo codes.” One panelist suggested that using Woobox makes it easier to deal with distributing codes to readers or winners.

5. At iBooks, preorders count twice, and you should set up preorders as far in advance as possible (up to a year), updating frequently during the preorder period.

6. Upload exclusive sneak peeks ahead of release. You can do them exclusively on iBooks or simply drive readers there to look at the sneak peak.

After these tips, the panelists covered preorders in more depth, providing a suggested ideal iBooks campaign, with steps done serially. By spacing out these steps, readers return to your book’s preorder page several times, providing “multiple touches,” which make books attractive to the iBooks ecosystem. This is in marked contrast to the Amazon ecosystem where, when you bring in non-buyers, your book’s failure to convert a visit into a sale incurs suppression.

Suggested Steps for an Ideal iBooks Campaign:

1. Using only metadata if that’s all you have, set up preorders one year in advance.
2. Make your preorder exclusive to iBooks, or at least set the preorder up earlier on iBooks than you do elsewhere.
3. If you have a series, set the first-in-series free.
4. A month or two after uploading, do the cover reveal on iBooks, letting readers know they can only see the new cover by visiting iBooks.
5. A month or two later, make a sample that is exclusive to iBooks. (Diane Capri noted that less lead-time is needed for non-romance books.) With box sets, panelists should create box sets including samples from each author’s books.
6. On release, pass out promo codes. (See above.)
7. In conclusion, it’s important to constantly drive clicks to your book. Repeated visits for different things make your book look like a rising superstar.

(If you run into issues loading items to your book’s package, call iBooks Customer Service at 877-206-2092. The support team is available to all authors selling directly.)

In addition to U.S. sales opportunities, opportunities in Australia are booming, as Amazon is not the biggest e-book retailer in Australia. Apple devices, however, are popular and used by consumers of all ages, and tech-savvy Aussies are prepared to spend more on books than U.S. readers. Authors should go higher than the recommended price iTunes Producer suggests. When running Facebook ads targeted to Australia, add New Zealand as well.

When it comes to grabbing iBooks’s attention, the panel offered one simple piece of advice: put as
much effort in as you are expecting out of them. Jumping in and out of KU is not a behavior iBooks appreciates.

The panel recommends several practices, agreeing these will be noticed by the iBooks team, who are always checking authors’ websites and social media.

1. On your website, use iBooks specific links, widgets, and buy buttons.
2. Promote iBooks on social media campaigns and giveaways.
3. Target iBooks readers specifically in promotion and advertising. (i.e., on Facebook ads, you would target iOS as a behavior or interest.) Put “iBooks” in the text on ads.
4. Instagram can be a great place to warm up your readers. Here as above, include “iBooks” in your verbiage.

In addition to things an author can do to increase sales and visibility, several other opportunities exist. On iBooks’s page (which authors must familiarize themselves with) iBooks has several rectangular “bricks” promoting such things as first-in-series, new releases, sneak peaks, seasonal series, and genre promos. Off-page, iBooks also sends out targeted email to readers.

Should you discuss promo with the iBooks team, tell them how you will be marketing to promote the sales of your books on their platform. However, an author who wants inclusion in iBooks promos does not need a rep at Apple. There’s no need to request these promos: when iBooks sees a book that is selling well in combination with an author who promotes iBooks online, that author’s books will get promo.

Contact iBooks at: apple.co/booksmarketing or itunes.com/affiliates.

Cidney Swanson is an award-winning author of young adult sci-fi and fantasy, including the Ripple series, the Saving Mars series, the Thief in Time series, and more. Cidney lives in Oregon’s Willamette Valley with her family and entirely too much rain.
Wide or Exclusive? How to Effectively Promote a Series
Presenter: David Gaughran

Reported by Jenna Kernan

“Books do not get magically discovered.”
~David Gaughran~

David Gaughran, author of historical fiction and writer’s books, *Let’s Get Digital* and *Let’s Get Visible* once worked for Google. During his workshop, he laid out best practices for promoting a series with either wide distribution or exclusive with Amazon Kindle Unlimited (KU). There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Gaughran stated that KU has changed everything, making more churn in the Top 100 charts, making rankings extremely slippery but the rewards for winners are greater than ever before.

Regarding churn, Gaughran mentioned that readers will go to the Top 100 in the category of interest and use it to find new authors. Because of this KU churns the charts to get more people visible to more readers. Unfortunately, this means authors more rapidly get kicked off the charts. Authors with higher rankings cannibalize the sales of other authors.

Gaughran said he sees a clear bifurcation of marketing models: "I like to put in a word like bifurcation and watch the horror spread around the room. Two people just left." Bifurcation, or a split, causes two groups of authors, those going with wide distribution and those in KU. Some KU authors are “killing it.” Authors with wide distribution are doing well, but not so well on Amazon as KU authors who have the advantage of KU, a higher royalty rate and promotions like the sale function.

This leads to the question: Wide or KU?

Gaughran believes that, after gaining a better understanding of the consequences of their decision, authors must decide for themselves. He also advocates experimentation. Try each approach and see what works. “But the key is you must have a plan,” he said. “Books do not get magically discovered. I don’t believe in sleeper hits.”

Apple and Kobo are not a level playing field, Gaughran said. Things are tough in all directions. The forking of marketing approaches by winning authors indicates to him that authors are doing well going wide or on Amazon, but not both. This leads to "A Tale of Two Marketing Approaches," which he admits is the better workshop title that he came up with too late. He likens these two approaches to the story of “The Tortoise and The Hare,” with the important difference being that both the tortoise and the hare are winners. The tortoise is the wide author who has many streams of income (Kobo, Amazon, iBooks) and knows “that many streams make a mighty river.” The hare makes a big blast and does lots of promotion at the launch. Blast approaches work better on KU. The KU author works to win against algorithms and the wide author strives to build relationships with humans in the form of loyal readers. Since both paths are so different, two different approaches are needed.
Below is an example marketing approach plan for the KU Hare

**Book 1: Launch**
- Free Runs are gold for discount sites like BookBub
- Facebook Static Image Ad Campaign which points at book 1 using approximately 1/3 of budget and a frictionless entry point
- BookBub PPC + Facebook Carousel add with all books in the series for five days only spending approximately 2/3 budget

PPC (Pay Per Click ad) like BookBub and Robin’s Reads cost money to keep momentum moving on a release. Carousel Ads on Facebook pushes all the deals that are running on a series release at the same time and gets more attention. Ad text is key and should include text that tells readers to “swipe across to see all the deals in the series.” Doing this makes a big difference in people who engage with the ad.

**Book 2 Launch**
- 99 cents Countdown Deal for $100 or $200 to get some more attention to the series.
- This causes free spillover because lowering the price on book 2 gives a better chance of readers moving from book 1 to 2 than if book 2 is priced at $4.99.
- FB Carousel plus maybe a BookBub PPC (Gaughran mentioned that it is harder to get a BookBub ad if you are in KU).
- Add an email blast to your mailing list thanking them for a great launch on day 5 of your five-day campaign that also reminds them of the promotion on book 2 that ends that day, giving a longer tail on sales and more chance to remain higher in the ranking on Amazon for a longer period of time.

**Book 3 Launch**
- Mailing list blast about just book 3, because your core reader will have read books 1 & 2 but still tell them about it anyway and send your emails over several days to previously created segments of your list to prevent tripping Amazon algorithms which suppress your results. They look for a large spike in sales followed by a fast fall in the rankings so a more gradual rise will help with ranking and visibility. Did you know that Amazon charts change every hour?
- FB Carousel

**Book 4: Arrives later**
- $2.99 pricing for book 4 and now book 3 is priced at $4.99
- *Popularity list* on Amazon do count Freebies and recommendations. They occur four days later. Amazon then recommends your release to readers based on *popularity* and this helps sales.
- *Visibility lists* come from the pages read in KU and is part of multi-pronged campaigns that includes going big but reacting to the data.

More opportunities for the KU Hare include a flexible template that may include any of the following:
• BookBub features
• Amazon promo (KDD/KMD)—Kindle Daily Deal and Kindle Monthly deals
• Lower/Higher budget
• Newsletter swaps where the author can get other similar authors to promo their release in exchange for promoting their releases to your lists.
• Organic Facebook action means including content that your audience enjoys and that is not a direct sales marketing approach. Gaughran suggests authors also boost this content for $10 to your core readers on FB.

**Key Points for the KU Hare**

This model includes aggressive pricing. Authors should additionally seek not to rise in the ranks too quickly by using strategies such as staggering newsletter mailings announcing the release, staggering the price reductions and their Facebook ads. For example, after the five-day countdown deal, lower the price to 99 cents or $1.99 or $2.99 but not free and not full price. Use a multi-pronged campaign and go big, but react to data. The authors successfully targeting their potential audience is key to his approach and strong images help insure good click-through rates. The KU Hare has both focus and targeting on their core genre audience. *Do not be tempted to include audiences slightly outside your genre target audience* because it will undercut your results. "I get the best results with ads with the cover in the ad and images need to be strong." Gaughran suggests that authors get their cover designers to create ad copy at the same time they create the cover. Image should echo or use the book cover.

**The Wide–Tortoise Campaign**

Gaughran told the audience that he was not going to show us an example of a wide campaign, but would rather highlight some techniques. He related that the problem with going wide is that the KU killer deal method does not work very well because there is no 70 percent royalty on their books, no easy free run, a very rough return on investment (ROI) for ads and no money coming from borrowers.

The tortoise finds success more slowly and more steadily. They do not have the blast of ranking and success and returns, but they also see fewer troughs in their income stream. They have returns from many retailers and focus much more attention of curating a healthy mailing list and creating a compelling website with lead magnets to encourage sign-ups for mailing lists. A wide author might expect only fifty percent of their income to come from Amazon.

**What Works on Wide**

• Gaining merch spots—for example: Kobo Spring Reads, iTunes Beach Reads, Amazon Best Books in October
• BookBub Feature Deals
• Facebook and BookBub micro campaigns
• Permafree reader magnets (Free book, usually the lead or first book in a series)
• Everything super optimized with slick website landing pages with nothing to click but the free button, branded emails and website
• Aggressive mailing list strategy
• Facebook Lead Generation Ads

It takes time to get this sort of marketing right. Wide authors might create micro campaigns on Facebook of no more than $5 per day. They may target more specifically to build readership. For example: $5 a day for Australia Kobo readers, $5 on Canada iTunes users and $5 on Apple owners in USA.

This author is not in a race with every other release on Amazon KU to get most clicks and buys in the shortest time. They are not competing for top spots in each category and pressured to put a high budget to win clicks. They are quite happy to have their ad run after the KU Hare has finished their launch or at two in the morning when clicks are less expensive. The KU Hare uses a fire hose and the wide author prefers trickle campaigns. The Wide author doesn’t care what time of day or what day of the week their ad runs, because they get a lower price on clicks by waiting until KU have runs out of money.

Wide authors use permafree to great effect as these titles are always out there leading new readers to their series. KU authors get borrows, reads and 70 percent royalties, while Wide authors to do not.

During the question and answer period, Gaughran said that it is best to lower prices before the day of sale on Amazon so that you are certain the price is correct before any BookBub ad runs. Since it is hard to get a BookBub ad, getting one at any time for any book is beneficial. It is better to get it at the end of a campaign to show a strong finish rather than a strong, spiking start. When asked if an author can do some books wide and others with KU, he recommended that authors pick a method because the strategies are completely different. He also added that the KU program is not good for reference or non-fiction books as readers tend to want to own these sorts of books rather than borrow them.

Publishers Weekly bestselling author, Jenna Kernan, writes stories that combine heart-stopping adventures with heart-racing romance. RT BookClub called her new romantic suspense series “Flat-out good.” Kernan was twice nominated for the RITA® award for her Western historical romances and received the Book Buyers Best award for her debut paranormal romance. Find Jenna on Facebook, Twitter, Amazon, and BookBub.
Working with BookFunnel
Presenter: Damon Courtney

Reported by Cidney Swanson

BookFunnel is a content delivery platform that enables authors to manage and automate the distribution of ARCs, e-books used as reader magnets, exclusive content promotions, and more.

BookFunnel’s design and implementation are user-friendly to both authors using the platform and the consumers receiving content from authors. There are several features that make BookFunnel unique among providers of delivery services. Notable standouts include:

1. A real person, who is knowledgeable and has hands-on experience with the platform, handles every email sent to BookFunnel.
2. For readers with questions, BookFunnel has a handy and obvious “Need Help?” button so that authors don’t have to tell readers how to download content. However, if a reader ignores this button and contacts the author, Courtney had a great suggestion: cc help@BookFunnel.com saying something like, “I’m sorry you’re having trouble. I’m sending this to BookFunnel, who will be able to help you.” When BookFunnel replies to your customer, they copy you so that you know the request has been handled.
3. BookFunnel has no public facing pages for readers or web crawlers to grab content. In fact, BookFunnel actively blocks search engine sites from crawling their pages, keeping an author’s content firmly in that author’s control.
4. All changes an author makes to BookFunnel pages are instantly pushed out to all links that an author has out in cyberspace.

At his talk, Courtney demonstrated various features an author might wish to take advantage of, including providing step-by-step demonstrations. While it would be impossible to recreate these in an article, there are several items that will be helpful to an author wishing to use the platform.

In order to upload content, an author needs two assets: a cover image and an epub version. The platform is able to convert epub versions to reader-ready mobi versions with the click of a button.

Armed with cover and epub, an author can choose what kind of website landing page to create. The platform allows an author to create both “download” and “giveaway” pages. A download page is for times when an author wishes to have content sent to a reader without requiring an email address. Authors wishing to collect emails should set up giveaway pages.

When creating a download or giveaway page, BookFunnel provides clear language asking which one you want. The pages themselves are largely pre-populated with language choices reflecting current best marketing practices. For example, by default the call-to-action button customers will see is pre-loaded with “Get your free copy of _____” (your book’s title fills in the blank). You can change the verbiage, but you don’t have to; BookFunnel likes to make things easy and quick for authors. If you are more of a do-it-yourselfer, you can format things such as headings, book descriptions, and call-to-action buttons. BookFunnel gives you the power to present your book to readers in whatever
fashion you believe will convert best.

While BookFunnel provides pre-fills for many items, Courtney strongly recommends an author put effort into crafting a unique tagline. Short taglines are more effective as taglines are intended to inspire readers to click the “Get My Free Copy” button, and thus receive prominent top billing when your reader clicks your link.

So where do these links come from? Once an author creates a page, BookFunnel creates a “link for readers” which is what an author or assistant will copy/paste and place in the back of a book when asking for email sign-ups, on a Facebook ad when creating reader magnets, or in a newsletter when creating giveaways.

A great reader benefit is that, depending on what device a reader is using when they click the link, they will get a tailored set of buttons matching their device. Courtney mentioned that BookFunnel sees downloads happening on iPhones and iPads over 60 percent of the time. Keeping taglines and other items short and sweet is important for mobile devices.

While BookFunnel automatically optimizes for mobile, there is a point at which taglines and other author-generated headers can become too big, pushing the call to action off-screen. Courtney says it’s important to preview the download or giveaway you have created. BookFunnel has clickable icons that let you do this.

Another feature of the BookFunnel platform is allowing you to create as many download or giveaway pages as needed. For example, you could create a different page for each back matter link in your books to see if email sign-ups are coming from early or later books in a series.

To this end, every giveaway or download page you create on BookFunnel has a label you choose that is invisible to the readers. You could call a giveaway “My Book One Link,” or “For My Facebook Group Only,” and so on. This could be useful for a/b testing to see which of two covers performs better.

BookFunnel also has optional ways to customize your giveaway or downloads. You can input an automatic expiration or set things up so that only 12 copies are delivered if you run a “12 copies to first 12 people” giveaway. Under advanced settings, there’s an option to set a message saying the offer has expired.

BookFunnel’s Certified Mail option will deliver a message saying the offer has already been redeemed. With this option, you can customize a message to say something like, “It appears you already redeemed this coupon, but you can purchase my other titles HERE,” complete with a clickable link. This is useful for keeping people who aren’t on your ARC list from getting books they shouldn’t. Also noteworthy: BookFunnel places hidden watermarks on every file they distribute to prevent anonymous piracy.

Here are just a few popular BookFunnel options:

1. If you are sending content to reviewers, there is a fill-in paragraph with instructions to reviewers on how and when to review.
2. There is a “Gift a Book” option popular with authors who write non-fiction and present at conferences. This option allows for sending a single download link to a single person.
3. If you are gifting “Starter Libraries” containing several first-in-series books, your readers will have the option to download whichever book they want first.
4. Speaking of bundling, BookFunnel has created a place on their website for authors to (a) connect with other authors writing in their genre and (b) create box sets with those authors.
When setting up a box set, many options are available such as social media share buttons and the ability to randomize the order in which the books are shown to readers, making it fair for multiple authors, none of whom wants their book at the bottom of the list. Every author in a bundle can see which author did or did not share with their mailing list (if they promised to do this). And if a reader didn’t click your book, you do not get that reader’s information, which can help prevent reader email fatigue.

5. Finally, in a move some longtime users of BookFunnel will welcome, BookFunnel is adding sales as an additional service for authors who want to sell directly without the hassle of delivering content.

The number of potential options may feel staggering, so BookFunnel works to save an author’s valuable time, and the platform is optimized for those who only want a quick solution for content distribution.

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_Cidney Swanson_ is an award-winning author of young adult sci-fi and fantasy, including the Ripple series, the Saving Mars series, the Thief in Time series, and more. Cidney lives in Oregon’s Willamette Valley with her family and entirely too much rain.
Relaunch Your Novel—Breathe Life into Your Backlist
Presenter: Chris Fox

Reported by Trish Milburn

A lot of time, energy and money go into launching a new book in the hopes that the initial sales will put a good chunk of change into our bank accounts and perhaps propel us onto a bestseller list. But when the excitement of a new book fades and we look ahead to the next new release, those older titles often sit there in our backlist, getting no love from us or our readers. But what if we could relaunch those titles with the same type of excitement as a new book and get an accompanying bump in their visibility and revenue generation? According to Chris Fox, the Amazon bestselling author of the Writer Smarter, Writer Faster series, including the book with the same title as this session, relaunching backlist titles is a great strategy for giving those books momentum again.

He noted that data science is what Amazon uses to sell our books and that the aim of this session was to show attendees how they can also use data to sell more books through managing backlists and relaunches.

Fox shared that between October 2015 and September 2017, he made $217,723.91, about evenly split between sales and Kindle Unlimited income. “The churn at KU is intense,” Fox said. “Sixty days and then your book starts to fade.”

Because of this falloff in sales for new releases, it becomes increasingly important to rejuvenate backlists so that they can continue to bring in good revenue. Deciding which books to relaunch and what kind of relaunch you want to undertake, in terms of time and expense, requires you taking a serious look at various aspects of the book in question, its sales, how it impacts sales of your other books, etc., and what you can expect your return on investment to be with each level of relaunch. You might want to just tweak some things like keywords and your blurb, which will cost you nothing. In other situations, you may decide to relaunch an entire series, requiring an investment of time to do substantial edits and money to get all new covers and buy ads to get the word out.

In order to tell where he can advertise profitably, Fox calculates sell-through as number of sales of a sequel book divided by number of book 1 sales. This tells you how much you can expect to earn off the sale of each book because, with a series, readers who read and like book 1 will then likely go on to buy book 2 and so on. “Ideally, you want to track a 30-day period where you ran no discounted promotions,” Fox said.

This is so you get a more accurate picture of the flow of sales from one book to the next without having to consider that some of the people purchasing a book did so just because it was on sale at a cheap price point. It’s more difficult to track stand-alone books, and thus he advertises less.

Relaunching a Novel

There are a number of things to consider changing before relaunching a title. Topping that list is making sure you have the book in the right genre. If not, none of the other elements matter. Once
you’re sure you have the book in the correct genre, the cover is next in order of importance. Does it feel dated? Does it convey the wrong genre? Does it have clean and well-branded topography? “Your cover is 90 percent of your ability to sell a book, easily,” Fox said. “It’s very, very important to have a good cover.”

Compare your cover with those of the top-selling authors in your genre. Also look closely at your title, tagline and blurb. The title should convey the correct emotion in the reader as well as the right tone. Your blurb should start with a sentence that really grabs the reader and, again, is appropriate for your genre and tone of the book. For branding and reviews, look at them holistically. Fox said the data he gets from examining his reviews tells him what he is doing right and wrong with his writing.

Fox showed attendees what a failed launch looked like, using his book *No Such Thing as Werewolves*. He put the cover up on the screen and asked what genre it evoked. The majority said horror while a few said urban fantasy, although it is, in fact, a thriller. His tagline was also wrong, telegraphing to the reader that the tone was comedic when it wasn’t. “The blurb was the only thing that I got right,” he said. “It had bad sell-through because I broke the reader expectation.”

So, conversely, what does a perfect launch look like? Fox broke the Top 100 at Amazon with *Tech Mage*. With this release, the cover elements fit the book and the title is appropriate. He ran 150 Facebook ads with variations of the tagline, blurb, etc. The book has been in the top 300 since its launch. Between Sept. 7 and Oct. 6 of this year, it earned Fox $7,539.02.

Exposure is key when all the other elements of the book and its presentation are the best they can be. Ways to get noticed and generate more sales are to be part of Amazon update emails that go to people who follow your author page and who follow certain categories. Fox has used keywords to get into particular sub-categories. The also-bought effect also helped at no cost to him.

Fox said the quality of writing is the least important element to sales, but if you want readers to tell others about your book it needs to be quality work. He said to remember that the more things you get wrong, the fewer books you’ll sell. Another way to get the word out to more readers is to go to other authors in your genre, ask them to share their readers with you, and reciprocate with yours.

With the ads you run, check and see what is converting. Create a Product Family Map, which is a flow chart that shows which books lead readers to which other books. If you go to YASIV.com, you’ll be able to see strong and weak connections between your various books. Weak connections might produce only a few occasional sales, while strong connections generate much higher sell-through. It makes sense to advertise ones with the strongest links to other books because once the reader buys and reads the initial book, they are more likely to follow those strong links to buy others.

When you do finally relaunch a book, ask Amazon to push out an update email to those who bought the original version, telling them there is a new edition.

There isn’t a universal right way to approach relaunching a book or series. That depends on a variety of factors—the time and money the author is willing to put into a relaunch, how likely a relaunch will generate a positive return on investment, etc. Only you as the author will know the right answer for you, and it may take some experimentation to find that answer. But when you find the right avenue for breathing life into your backlist, your bank account will thank you for it.

For more information
Learn more about Fox and his books, as well as check out the articles and videos in his section for writers, at www.chrisfoxwrites.com.
Trish Milburn is the author of nearly 40 romance and young adult titles for Harlequin, Razorbill/Penguin, Bell Bridge Books and via indie publishing. Visit her website to sign up for her author newsletter and find links to her various social media accounts.
Pronoun: Leveraging Big Data to Boost Discoverability
Presenter: Renita Barua

Reported by Jennifer Stevenson

Renita Barua senior marketing associate at Pronoun began the workshop by describing Pronoun and what it does. Pronoun is an independent publishing platform created for authors. It distributes to all major retailers including Google Play, and library distribution through Overdrive and Biblioteca. Pronoun can also help you convert your manuscript into ebooks, create covers, or find someone who will help you create a book cover. Most importantly, they give you access to data-driven marketing tools. Pronoun launched in 2015 and joined McMillan Publishers in May 2016. They have the resources of a publishing house but still operate as a small company helping indie authors.

“Our tools are free and easy to use,” Barua said. “We’re a small team of people who come from all sorts of backgrounds. But first and foremost we’re a tech company which means that everything we do considers the author’s experience. You get a beautiful, easy-to-use platform, and if you don’t think so, we’ll fix it.”

When you contact Pronoun’s help desk, you talk to either Elissa or Kate, their “author-happiness” agents. Elissa and Kate are experts who put author comments through to the team.

Pronoun is data powered. They track over seven million titles every day. The company was started in 2011 and has six years of data tracking. They track prices, reviews, sales ranks, and more. They help you select your metadata.

What does metadata selection drive?

Pronoun’s tools pull from big data to show authors how to choose keywords based on real reader searches, categories that could help get you in the top 100 lists, titles, and prices. For example, when you enter a word search for category, a box pops up showing you categories on Amazon that might be a match for your book.

Some key pricing questions that Pronoun’s pricing tool can answer for you are: How are similar books priced? What are readers used to paying? Has the market changed since my last book? Pronoun provides a pricing chart that gives you a broad view of big data about book prices in your category. They suggest choosing a price consistent with indie bestsellers in that category, but you can choose your own price. Library-specific and territory-specific pricing are also available. Pronoun will also allow you to price a book at free, even at Amazon. You can pick and choose which tools you like. Don’t price too low, or too high, and be aware of pricing policies at each retailer.

In order to get category alerts, you can track a book using Pronoun’s tools without publishing it at Pronoun. The keyword, category, and pricing tools are all steps within the platform that you use as you set up a book to be published. So those tools work even before you hit publish. But if you don’t use Pronoun to publish your book, then you can’t automatically make any changes that Pronoun
recommends via their interface, and you don’t get our special royalty deal: books we publish at Amazon get 70 percent royalty down to the 99 cent price point. She said authors also have no trouble pricing a book free at Amazon when they publish through us.

**Search term ratings**

Authors frequently ask themselves: How do readers actually search? What search terms are more popular than others? How can authors find searches where their books can actually be found? Most things that are bought online are bought through a search. Real readers actually do search! They use the most popular language.

The two most important measures that affect your search terms are *Popularity* and *Attainability*. Each search term has a popularity score and an attainability score. Attainability means the probability that your book would be one of the first results. Your goal is to find a balance between popularity and attainability. Pronoun advises that you experiment a lot!

Examples:

- Space opera: attainability 1, popularity 97. If you pick this category, you won’t end up on the first page of searches. Narrow the search term.
- Gothic space opera: attainability 100, popularity 41. This category is friendlier. You get a middling-popular category with a guaranteed spot in the top 100 in the category.

Tips for using the search keyword tool successfully:

- Use common phrasing, put yourself in the reader’s shoes, and learn from similar books.
- You can’t use the Pronoun search keyword tool for book titles or author names.

**Amazon categories**

There are over 4,000 Amazon categories for books. A single book could be in dozens of categories. Getting your book into a desired category can be tricky! If you can figure out Amazon categories, you can figure out other retailer categories. Amazon’s ebook categories are different from print book categories. The hierarchy of categories, as you drill down through categories and subcategories, is different between ebook and print. Based on your choices, Amazon will put you into additional categories. You can see some of these additional categories at the bottom of your book page.

**Amazon Top 100s**

Each category has a list of 100 top sellers. These are determined by sales rank. Getting into a top 100 helps your book get discovered. You can try to memorize all 4,000 Amazon categories, keep a log of sales ranks of every book on Amazon (they update hourly), and when the 100th best book in a category has a sales rank worse than yours, switch to that category…or you can just get Pronoun’s emails.

Pronoun will email you when there’s a category that you can “win.” They may for example suggest you get out of Space Opera and drill down to Gothic Space Opera, where your Attainability and Popularity scores are better balanced…and you have a 100 percent chance of getting into the top 100. You can balance attainability and popularity to get a happy medium.

Keep playing with this with your backlist, because it can revive sales for those books.

Wherever you are in your publishing process, Barua said Pronoun can help. They invite authors to sign up and play around. Email them about things you like or dislike, or to ask for things you want.
more of on the site. Pronoun’s tool set should not be your only marketing plan. They can help you with your metadata, but you still have to figure out social media and promotion. Sign up at Pronoun.com. Visit their blog at theverbs.com.

Questions

So Amazon is really not pulling keywords out of the book description or indexing the book description?

No, they’re not.

I can explain what Pronoun does. One of my books is there. Say your book is in these two categories, but if it were in this other category, you could hit the top 100.

Pronoun sends emails to the authors suggesting changes in category.

If we put our books through Pronoun, do you put them on Amazon or do we put it in Amazon?

We put it on Amazon for you. The one challenge is, you can’t run AMS ads for books on Pronoun and Pronoun can’t set up Author Central pages for you at Amazon.

Say I have 14 books wide now. Will I have to pull them and then put them through Pronoun?

Yes. You then have to contact Author Central to get those books put back on your Author Page. We suggest that you let us know ahead of time that you want to switch everything, or take a look at our support page, so that you know all of the steps to ensure a seamless transition.

What if the new titles enter Pronoun’s system and then they take off slowly. Does that affect the numbers?

Yes. Even using our category-optimizing tool, it can be hard to catch up to a trend. By the time a book can be released in a category, the trend may be past, if it’s a brief trend.

Do I need a different account for each book?

No.

Each vendor requires a unique version of the ebook for their platform. Do I have to upload all the versions?

No, we do that.

What about backmatter updates?

You change that, upload new version, and we can make it so that your book goes to directly to the preferred retailer.

One of your competitors allows me to keep my Amazon account, but I do the rest of distribution to other retailers through them. Can I do that at Pronoun? Because Google and iBooks are a pain. I’d rather do Amazon myself. Will you do just Google Play?

Yes.

What does this cost?

Our tools are completely free; we don’t charge you to use our service.
How do you get paid?
We are paid through MacMillan.

How do you get this big data?
It’s publicly available. It’s “scraped.” We use a tool for that. From there we analyze it.

Since it’s free for us, I infer you’re gaining by using the data you get about our stuff.
We’re not reselling the data.

Even if your book is not listed, you can still get the suggestive emails?
Yes. You can skip to the keyword part if you sign up for an account and just start typing stuff in,
without adding a book. You can test it without committing. But unless you publish through us, you
won’t get our royalty rates or the ability to make the changes to your books, immediately.

Jennifer Stevenson writes humorous fiction for women: contemporary romcom, urban fantasy, paranormal
romance, and women’s fiction. She has four novels out from print publishers and has indie published 16 novels
and 20 short stories with Book View Cafe, the world’s oldest, largest, and most prestigious author-owned
publishing collective, where she is a founding member.
5000 Words Per Hour
Presenter: Chris Fox

Reported by Trish Milburn

Chris Fox admitted right off the bat that the title of this session—which is also the title of one of the six books in his Write Faster, Writer Smarter series—was totally click bait. But despite that fact, writing 5,000 words per hour is indeed possible for some writers. And even if it’s not, there is definite benefit to be had by pushing ourselves to our uppermost limit.

“This is really about getting to the best speed you can reach while maintaining quality,” Fox said.

Fox shared that his goal was not to be a full-time author when he started writing. At the time, he was working very long days as a coder at a San Francisco-area start-up. By the time he went to the gym, got ready for work, rode the bus to work, coded for 12 hours, rode the bus home, ate and slept, needless to say there wasn’t much time or mental energy left for writing. It took him four years to complete his first book.

After the release of that first book in 2014, he earned $4,000 in the first month, although he doesn’t know how. But that figure made him sit up and take notice. He soon made a goal of getting his second book out within six months. But how to do that when he had long, tiring workdays plus a commute?

While listening to Joanna Penn’s The Creative Penn podcast, he heard Mark Dawson talking about writing on the train. Fox set about trying to figure out how he could write effectively on a noisy, bumpy bus full of distractions on his way to and from work, especially when he knew his best work came while in flow state, or when he was “in the zone.” This flow state is the intersection between the analytic and creative states. To create a tortoise enclosure with no interruptions, he bought noise-cancelling headphones, sat in a certain seat at the back of the bus with no seat next to it, and trained himself to get into flow state within 15 seconds. Soon he was writing 2,500 words an hour. He discovered that the commute to work was way more productive than the commute home. Production dropped 30 percent on the afternoon commute because he was so exhausted.

Fox said that his fast writing is helped by the fact that he transformed from a pantser to a heavy plotter. He plays scenes he’s going to write on a certain day in his head while he’s at the gym in the morning. “I tell my brain what I want to do and do it,” he said.

He said the mental conditioning to write fast can come through writing sprints during which you use a timer and don’t allow yourself to edit. It’s imperative you have no interruptions during these sprints. Start out sprinting for five minutes and work your way up. Most people fall into an effective sprinting time of 20-30 minutes.

Fox suggested the Pomodoro Technique, in which you work without interruption for 25 minutes, followed by a five-minute break. You do this four times in a row and then take a longer break of 15-30 minutes before starting over with another four 25-minute sessions with five-minute breaks.

Having a writing sanctuary where all you do is write—whether that is a room in your home or Fox’s headphones and certain chair on the bus—will really help increase your productivity. “Your
words per hour will skyrocket,” he said. “And it’s a myth that anything written quickly is crap.”

Fox also suggested that a way to increase your word count is to actually dictate. Granted, training a program such as Dragon Naturally Speaking to recognize your voice and training yourself in the ins and outs of the program can take two to three weeks, but humans can typically speak faster than type. Fox said he could get 5,400 words per hour using dictation. This is a great method for those who want to get in some exercise while writing or for those who struggle with physical issues such as carpal tunnel syndrome or shoulder problems exacerbated by typing.

Fox said he does one-pass editing, in that he first re-reads a finished manuscript in one day and only takes notes about things to change during this read-through. “You can look at the story as a whole and understand all the moving pieces,” he said. After this read-through, then he edits all the way through.

While he’s a practitioner of writing fast, Fox said he’s constantly striving to improve his craft as well. “I’m always reading a craft book and watching videos,” he said. “It’s a constant, deliberate practice to get better. It takes 10,000 hours to master something. I choose to do that fast, and it’s worked really well for me. The sooner we get through the bad words, the sooner we get to the good ones.”

He mentioned that writers must master both prose and story, but that it is story that sells books. Also, he believes that writing to market is just identifying a market.

Fox suggested a few more tools writers might find useful:
- Rachel Aaron’s book 2,000 to 10,000
- Dan Harmon’s Story Circle storytelling framework
- Creating playlists at brain.fm to listen to while writing.

For more information
Learn more about Fox and his books, as well as check out the articles and videos in his section for writers, at www.chrisfoxwrites.com.

Trish Milburn is the author of nearly 40 romance and young adult titles for Harlequin, Razorbill/Penguin, Bell Bridge Books and via indie publishing. Visit her website to sign up for her author newsletter and find links to her various social media accounts.
Listen Up Audio
Presenter: Diane Lasek, Director of Self-Publishing

Reported by Barbara Meyers

Diane Lasek is the director of Self-Publishing Audio Book Production for Listen Up Audio. Listen Up built their top-of-the line studio in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2009. Listen Up works with the top five traditional New York publishers as well as Audible productions and they have a built-in audio book library.

Since audio books sales make up for the massive decline in ebook units, it’s certainly something for self-published authors to consider as an income generator. The highest percentages of audiobooks are sold to users in the 23-43 age group. Forty-eight percent of listeners are under 35 and 56 percent are male.

Listen Up Audio’s bestsellers are erotica, true crime/mystery/thriller and romance. In romance, shifter stories are number one in sales. ACX bestsellers are true crime, especially Southern gothic murder stories, mystery/thriller and American history. The number one reason Diane gave for authors to use Listen Up for audio production is the level of quality they provide. This is why the top traditional publishers use them.

Listen Up pays close attention to your narrator requests in order to find the right one for your project. Communication begins with a telephone discussion with Diane, who will then share your needs with the casting director to find an appropriate narrator. They will begin with three possibilities and will audition more until the right one is found. Multiple point of view narrations can be done and requests for celebrity narrators are possible, though celebrities generally command a higher rate.

Nine thousand words equates to one hour of audio. The sweet spot length of an audio book is between seven and nine hours. Listen Up’s normal rate is $450/hour, but for NINC members, the price drops to $350/hour. Half is paid up front and half is due when the author signs off on the project. The process takes approximately 4-5 weeks.

Once Listen Up finishes the product, it takes about a week to upload to all distributors, something Listen Up does for you. There is no added cost for worldwide distribution, including retail, library and K-12, with a one-year contract. The author decides where to distribute. Listen Up also offers a seven-year non-exclusive with ACX. The royalty split is 80/20. Authors may choose a production only or a production and distribution agreement. Payments and reports are generated quarterly. Payment is through direct deposit or check.

Authors can use their own ISBN or Listen Up will assign one. Authors retain all rights. Completed audio files are delivered to authors in MP3 format. In addition, 25 free codes from Audible will be provided.

It’s possible for an author to make back the initial investment in the first year. Listen Up sets the retail price and most audiobooks sold through Listen Up’s site are priced at $14.99. However, Listen Up also negotiates with individual distributors to stay in the correct price range based on the length of the book.

Diane and her team are working hard at building and marketing the self-publishing arm of
Listen Up. She encourages authors to contact her via email with any questions they may have or to set up an appointment for discussing an audiobook project.

Barista by day, romance novelist by night: When not writing, Barbara Meyers disguises herself behind a green apron and works part-time for a world-wide coffee company. Her novels mix comedy, suspense and spice and often feature a displaced child. Her new adult novel, White Roses in Winter, is a November 2017 release.
**BookBub: “We are Super Nice and Want to Help”**

Presenters: Katie Donelan, Carlyn Robertson, Julianne LaBrecque

*Reported by Sandra McDonald*

For writers new to BookBub, or for those hoping to break through a wall of BookBub rejections, Head of Partner Relations Katie Donelan wants you to know that help is only an email away (partners@bookbub.com). She said her team works with authors and publishers every day to ensure BookBub subscribers receive the best possible content not just in the United States but in expanding international markets such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.

The first and most well-known BookBub product, the curated Featured Deals email, helps partners drive sales and revenue for discounted books. From a strategic perspective, a Featured Deal can also be used to hit a bestseller list, to grow BookBub followers, and to sell other books via backmatter links. Although competition can be fierce, the rewards are often high. According to the BookBub Support Center, the biggest boost in sales usually occurs within the first 24-48 hours and falls off four days later. The “Featured Deals Pricing and Statistics” page offers invaluable information about subscribers, price points, downloads (numbered in thousands), and categories.

According to Account Coordinator Carlyn Robertson, BookBub receives 200-300 submissions per day for a limited number of Featured Deal slots. Reader tastes change, as do submissions flow and requirements. She offers the following submission tips:

- Be flexible with the calendar dates
- Submit at different price points
- Add as many retailers and regions as possible
- Continue to submit

Robertson also suggests authors follow the [BookBub blog](https://www.bookbub.com/blog), which offers case studies and other valuable information such as download statistics. Data shows that a free deal is the best way to gain exposure or funnel readers to other books, and will move 10x more books than a 99 cents deal. The next best price point, 99 cents, is good for hitting bestseller lists. If an author is seeking revenue, the recommended pricing is for $1.99 or $2.99.

Account Coordinator Julianne LaBrecque adds that competition for slots varies across genres and that timing is the biggest consideration. Sometimes fantasy is completely full, for instance, and at other times not so much. When BookBub receives a submission, they carefully consider what category it fits best, and may make alternative suggestions to the partner. They know their categories and readers very well and want a book to be well positioned.

Speaking of categories, Robertson adds that new ones can and do get implemented. Large genres might be split; based on high volume, mystery is now segmented into crime, historical, and cozies. Subgenres that are over performing or under performing are scrutinized, and changes to the new reader sign-up forms help pinpoint potential. As always, changes depend on what serves readers best. If readers don’t show interest in a category, BookBub doesn’t want to promote partners there.
Some final words of advice are for partners to keep an eye on scheduling and requests. Sometimes it’s better to wait longer between Featured Deals in order to build a readership. A book can be featured every six months, and because books are scheduled 30 days in advance a partner can submit at the five-month mark. A deal that is rejected at 99 cents can be resubmitted immediately with a different price point. The BookBub site offers substantial information on this.

Although the Featured Deals are perhaps the most popular feature, BookBub offers other products and services including Author Profiles, Preorder Alerts, and New Release Alerts. Author Profiles make discoverability easier on the reader end while also allowing partners to grow followers and awareness. Once an author has reached 1,000 followers, preorder alerts are enabled. These alerts offer several key advantages:

- They are highly targeted (US only)
- They are cost effective, at $20 per 1,000 followers (2 cents per follower)
- ROI positive - these readers often buy full-priced books
- Preorder alerts are flexible and easy to set up in the partner dashboard
- Author picks date of email alert

A New Release Alert is a free service for authors with eligible books that are added to Author Profiles before release date or up to seven days after it. There is no editorial selection, so readers will receive the information directly. A book is eligible if it meets page and date requirements as listed in the BookBub Frequently Asked Questions. Re-releases and newly created box sets of previous releases are not eligible.

Another popular feature is BookBub Ads, which allows an author or publisher to buy space at the bottom of the Featured Deal email. Although an Ads campaign requires more work to set up and there is currently a waiting list, there are no minimum requirements for format (box sets, audio, novellas). The benefits include:

- Reach millions of readers,
- Administered through a self-serve auction platform similar to Facebook ads,
- Campaign can be targeted by retailers, subscriptions, authors they are interested in, and regions,
- Authors who ran a Featured Deal can target those readers who clicked on it,
- Complete control over the timing and pricing,
- Budget for ads can be customized and fine-tuned, and
- Results can easily be monitored.

Donelan says that BookBub does limit the amount of times a subscriber will see a particular ad (currently capped at four). Its own testing a year ago indicates that 3D ad images work very well in campaigns. The “creative” is also very effective when it contains a call to action such as “Buy now” or “Read now” and price point (“Free”). Robertson pointed out that a torso and “Buy Now” is not nearly as helpful in letting the reader know what they are getting. BookBub does include a creative builder feature that works well, but partners can bring their own.

Partners interested in running Ad Campaigns are advised to test with small campaigns before plunging in. With $10 or $20 budgets, different ads can be deployed to different audiences. Based on
results, partners might tweak their campaigns and then ramp up the budget.

In addition to all these features, BookBub is always looking for new and innovate ways to help readers find stories to love. One of their newest areas is Reviews, which they hope will increase engagement. They retain helpful data about clicks, downloads, and demographics that partners can request through the email partners@bookbub.com. Donelan promises, “We are super nice and want to help,” and look forward to working with their partners for years to come.

Sandra McDonald is an award-winning writer and instructor with several novels and several dozen short stories in print. Her first collection, Diana Comet and Other Improbable Stories, won a Lambda Literary Award and was a Booklist Editor’s Choice. Her Florida Keys novel Mystery of the Tempest won a Silver Moonbeam award for children’s literature. She served eight years in the US Navy and currently lives in Florida, writing about ghosts, spaceships, Navy SEALs and romantic adventures.
Deep Dive with Draft 2 Digital
Presenters: Dan Wood, Director of Operations and Author Relations
& Kevin Tumlinson, Draft2Digital Director of Marketing

Reported by Sandra McDonald

Oklahoma City might not be a “hotbed of publishing,” Dan Wood said, but Draft2Digital (D2D) is a company currently helping more than 36,000 authors distribute their books to international audiences. As director of operations and author relations, Wood maintains enormous amounts of data that authors can use to increase their sales and reach, and is excited by the new features D2D has been implementing.

With five years worth of numbers, Wood is most thrilled by the growth in global distribution over the last year, from 90,000 to 120,000 books. Through partners such as Kobo (195 countries) and Tolino (the German booksellers conglomerate), D2D sold books in 212 countries in the last year. The strongest markets are the United States, Canada and Australia, and the United Kingdom.

The top-selling language is English, followed by German. Wood suggests authors thinking about translations seriously consider German for the Tolino marketplace. He broke down the top-selling categories as well:

1. Romance
   a. Contemporary
   b. Paranormal
   c. Erotica (or as Mark from Kobo calls it, “active romance”)
2. Mystery and thrillers
   a. Action adventure
   b. Cozy
3. Fantasy and Science Fiction
   a. Paranormal urban fantasy
   b. Science fiction
   c. Epic fantasy

For Apple iBooks and BN.com, top-selling categories fall along the same lines: romance, mystery, and fantasy. Kobo’s breakdown varies slightly: there, romance is still the top seller, followed by erotica and then mystery. Paranormal shape-shifters are an exceptionally popular subgenre.

Pricing is always an important decision, and Wood said there is not one right price point. Each genre works differently and each country behaves differently. A fantasy novel the size of Game of Thrones vs. a romance novella at 45K words need to be treated differently. Because of big influencers such as BookBub, 99 cents is a popular price. Currently, the most popular price points are (most sales/second most sales):
• Romance: 3.99 and 2.99
• Mystery: 4.99 and .99
• Thriller: .99 and 3.99
• Fantasy: .99 and 3.99
• Science Fiction .99 and 4.99
• Young Adult 3.99 and .99

Effective pricing by country fluctuates. Nearly 12 percent of D2D users choose their own pricing for territories instead of letting the price convert automatically, and those authors account for 32.5 percent of sales outside the United States. One of the worst things that can happen is if a book shows up as weird price in a foreign country. Some markets, such as Australia, can support higher price points because readers are accustomed to them. Currently, the most popular price points are (most sales/second most sales, in local currency):

• Australia 3.99 and 5.99
• Canadian 3.99 and .99
• United Kingdom 2.49 and 3.49
• New Zealand 4.99 and 5.99
• Europe (combined) 2.99 and 1.99
• Overdrive (libraries) 3.99 and 9.99

Free is still a very effective strategy, with D2D’s analysis showing that series with a free first book (permafree) generates over three times the revenue of those without. Wood suggests adopting a long-term business mentality to use the first free as a loss leader and bring readers into a storyline. Avoid using a free first for every series, however, and keep an eye out on the services that detect price drops in ebooks and notify readers.

According to Wood and D2D Director of Marketing Kevin Tumlinson, librarians often shy away from .99 books, considering them “junk.” Libraries can support higher prices because they are buying and loaning out a limited number of copies for extended periods of time. As always, if your books are selling at a high price, consider moving even higher. D2D President Aaron Pogue prices his library books at $25 and they sell.

Regardless of price, the best day for sales is usually Sunday. The first half of the week, Sunday-Monday-Tuesday, is a good release time. Thursdays and Fridays are often the worst. The best month is January, followed by December. Black Friday is not especially a big mover, but the week between Christmas and New Year’s has proven successful. September, however, is not usually a good month.

D2D’s easy-to-use free conversion software unleashes authors from tedious rules and style guides that other distributors might use, and is open to all authors regardless of whether you use them for final distribution. Currently more than 66 percent of the books they distribute came through the converter, which can convert from Word or from an epub produced by another program.

The conversion process has been made even better with templates, drop caps, and other features.

To date, more than 41,307 users have provided epubs, and Draft2Digital automatically fixed 82 percent of bad epubs they received. Because Draft2Digital does not distribute to Amazon, many of their authors upload there as well.
In addition to the converter, the ability to set flexible preorders is popular at D2D. Unlike Amazon, which is fiesty about dates, D2D’s partner retailers are much more accommodating if you finish earlier than expected or miss a deadline. Although only 16.4 percent of D2D books start as preorders, these account for more than 40 percent of sales revenue. Wood highly recommended preorders as a best practice. The average preorder window is 111 days, and the median is 28 days. D2D has emailed more than 90,000 preorder notifications, and 35.8 percent were opened by readers.

Another popular D2D feature is New Release Notifications, which readers can opt into through a sign-up page in the back of your book. Nearly 20 percent of authors take advantage of these. Readers who click on the link are taken to Books2Read.com, where they can enter their unique preferences. For legal reasons, D2D does not share email list info with you, but the New Release Notifications will automatically notify your followers as soon as your new book goes live on the store of their choice.

Not to be left out of the data analysis is D2D’s customer support, which received more than 2,633 calls, with an average call length of 6 ½ minutes. More than 15,000 emails have been answered.

Another D2D feature is the Also By Pages, which D2D can generate for any book with backlist links. Nearly 25 percent of users have D2D generate that content for an existing work. When an author publishes a new book, they get a pop-up option to update previous ones and don’t have to manually do that. Because all retailers want backlist links specific to them (Kobo wants Kobo links, iBooks wants iBook links, etc), D2D makes the links retailer specific.

With all of that data and all of those existing features, Wood and Tumlinson shared their passion about 2017’s new features, which they said promised to make independent publishing even more dynamic and successful:

- Kobo Plus, non-exclusive fund similar to KDP that distributes to the Netherlands and Belgium,
- Distribution through Playster, a Netflix-like subscription model for books and audiobooks,
- Payoneer, a better and highly requested payment method for authors outside the United States,
- Improved print layout: free print-ready PDFs to use with print-on-demand,
- Improved email announcements,
- Profession ebook-style templates—free and beautiful, built into ebook conversion,
- Overdrive—ebook distribution to 38,000 libraries in 70 countries,
- Refer a friend and receive 10 percent of D2D’s cut of royalties for every book that author sells for one year, and
- Findaway Voices—indie audiobooks that are an ACX alternative.

In summary, Draft2Digital is working to enhance the publishing experience with hard data and analysis that captures the ever-changing flux in the marketplace. With new features and a commitment to innovative services and customer support, they hope to be your lifelong publishing partner.
Sandra McDonald is an award-winning writer and instructor with several novels and several dozen short stories in print. Her first collection, Diana Comet and Other Improbable Stories, won a Lambda Literary Award and was a Booklist Editor’s Choice. Her Florida Keys novel Mystery of the Tempest won a Silver Moonbeam award for children’s literature. She served eight years in the US Navy and currently lives in Florida, writing about ghosts, spaceships, Navy SEALs and romantic adventures.
Graphic Tips for the Graphic Challenged
Presented by Julie Ortolon

Reported by Rochelle Paige

Between covers, social media, newsletters, and promotions, authors need almost an endless supply of graphics. The cost quickly adds up, and sometimes there isn’t enough time to hire out when you’re on a tight deadline. Doing some of it on your own can be intimidating, but Julie Ortolon, graphic designer, provided tons of tips and tricks to the graphic-challenged.

Size is important when it comes to graphics, and it’s important to understand the relationship between resolution and file size. Ortolon said, “Resolution is the same as dpi, which stands for dots per inch. A dot is also called a pixel. The file size is determined by two things: dpi, which is resolution, and the number of pixels, which determines inches.”

The files provided to an author by a designer will either be 300 dpi or 72 dpi but with big dimensions. An ebook cover is around 1600 pixels x 2400 pixels. If the image is 300 dpi, that would be 5.33 inches x 8 inches. Or if it was only 72 dpi, then it would need to be 22.22 inches by 33.33 inches. But a file that big isn’t usable in a newsletter because it’s massive and either won’t deliver at all or won’t load once it hits subscriber’s inboxes. The image would need to be resized in order to work better for subscribers.

Using the ebook example, the size should be closer to 600 pixels x 900 pixels in 72 dpi.

For Windows users, Photoscape is easy for resizing. Mac users can utilize the Preview app for this purpose. It’s important to keep in mind that it’s better to create images in a large resolution and then downsize them so the final image is crisper when resizing later. It’s also best to get organized with the graphics by creating a folder for each book or series. Then, save the cover in three sizes:

- Full resolution, for uploading to retailers or print promo.
- Medium resolution, 72 dpi around 360x576 pixels or 5x8 inches.
- Smaller resolution, 72 dpi around 200x320 pixels or 2.78x4.44 inches

There are a lot of options for creating graphics, depending on your needs, comfort level, and budget. Canva.com has templates that are easy to use to make social media graphics, but it’s very basic. They do offer a free option, though. Beyond that, there’s a $12.95 a month version that adds some extra bells and whistles. Picmonkey.com is another online photo editor used by several attendees. It also offers a free option, and their paid level is only $7.99 a month, or $3.99 if billed annually. Ortolon recommended Photoshop Elements since it is less expensive at a $70 one-time purchase and offers everything that a professional graphic designer would need. It doesn’t offer templates, but she provided a cheat sheet at http://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-business/2017-social-media-image-size-cheat-sheet-infographic. Another good resource for Photoshop are free tutorials on YouTube.

Ortolon provided a list of tips to keep in mind when creating graphics:
• Keep social media post graphics simple and readable. Readers can get more detailed information after they click.
• Two to three fonts work best, mixing sans serif with serif. Sans serif fonts do not have a serif, like Helvetica. Serif fonts are more like typewriter text. Fancy fonts should be big and bold with a minimum of words. Sans serif works best for smaller text because it’s more readable.
• For dark images, white or light text is best. Conversely, dark text should be used on light images. Additionally, drop shadows or transparent blocks of color can help text pop.
• Facebook and Twitter banners can utilize multiple images since viewers linger on those pages, but minimal images should be used on social media posts because they scroll by more quickly.

Authors and assistants need to be mindful of copyright when selecting images to use. There are a lot of places where images can be purchased for a reasonable price. Images should never be used from other websites or Pinterest because it could lead to a copyright violation. Some recommended places included bigstock.com, dreamstime.com, getty.com, and depositphotos.com.

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Rochelle Paige writes romance in a variety of sub-genres: contemporary, new adult, paranormal and romantic suspense. Although she holds a BA in Economics, her career was mainly spent as a marketing professional. She lives in West Palm Beach, Florida, with her two sons. Contact her at e@rochellepaige.com.
Book marketing can be capricious. What works for one author may not work for you. Or what once worked for you may stop performing for you. Marketing can be aggravating and time consuming. Maria Connor, author of *Do Less. Write More: The Author’s Guide to Finding, Hiring and Keeping an Excellent Author Assistant* and the founder/owner of My Author Concierge, shared her expertise on where authors should focus. Connor said, “Effective book marketing is a combination of educated decisions, creativity, a willingness to fail and authors who know their readers.”

Before you start marketing, you should have a firm foundation in place. You should have an up-to-date website with your information, your books with buy links, where to find you on social media sites, and a way to sign up for your newsletter. More than advertising, marketing is about making a connection with readers. One way you can do that is on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. Some other parts of a firm foundation include a newsletter, creating enticing book blurbs of various lengths, keeping current profiles on retailers and Goodreads, and having high-resolution book covers in various sizes. You need to review your foundation several times a year to keep it current.

Next, you need to come up with a marketing goal. What do you want to accomplish? After you come up with your goal, then you can set up strategies to reach it. Some examples of marketing goals are growing your newsletter list, advertising a new release, or increasing your BookBub followers. Some factors to consider are:

- What you want to promote (examples: a box set, a new release, a backlist book),
- Your targeted audience (examples: new readers, male readers, bloggers, etc.),
- The time of year (example: during the Christmas season—November and December—the competition is stiffer),
- What might interfere with your marketing (examples: big events like a hurricane or a national election),
- Lead time needed to schedule promotion because some websites require a longer lead time,
- Your budget, and
- Whether you are a new or long-time author.

Author assistants should know and be clear on what your author goals are. It makes it easier to help the author they work with. Assistants are there to help with your plan, but they aren’t there to guarantee results. Once you have a goal and plans, you need a way to keep track of what you’re doing. A spreadsheet is a good way to do that.
Promotional Sites

Some of the promotional sites that offer a nice return on authors’ money are BookBub, Bargain Booksy, Book Sends, Free Kindle Book & Tips, Book Gorilla, and Ereader News Today.

Some places to look for a list of promotional sites are https://blog.reedsy.com/book-promotion-services/, https://www.readersintheknow.com/list-of-book-promotion-sites, and https://kindlepreneur.com/list-sites-promote-free-amazon-books/. You can make a spreadsheet of these sites with how much they are, URL, eligibility and any other information you want to know about the promotional site for planning your marketing strategy.

When doing ads at numerous promotional sites, it can take a lot of your time. The information you must give these sites is often the same. Write the information down on a document to use when you want to purchase an ad. Develop a sheet on each book for reference when applying for an ad.

Your marketing plan should involve ads at promotional sites for these type of situations: pre-orders, a new release, a limited-time sale, a permafree, and backlist books. Not only are there the promotional sites listed above, but you can use Amazon, Twitter, Facebook and BookBub to book ads to promote your list. I want to note the BookBub ads at the bottom of the email sent to its subscribers are different from the ads within the text of the email that you must apply for and be accepted.

Basic Graphic Design

Images in an advertisement are important because these catch a reader’s attention, and on Twitter images help increase retweets by 150 percent, and on Facebook images help increase 2-3 times more interaction. Visual content comes in many forms such as drawings, photos, videos, and memes. When picking visual graphics, make sure they are appealing. You want to draw your readers to your graphic. Facebook prefers little to no text on the graphics. When doing ads at Facebook, Twitter, Amazon or BookBub, you might want to test a couple of different images and text to see what works the best. Some things to consider when you are picking visual graphics are using high-resolution images, making your graphics clean and polished, double checking the text on a graphics, and choosing ones that emphasize your brand and produce a good reaction from your readers.

There are programs to help you create appealing graphics (examples, Adobe Photoshop, Canva and PicMonkey). Be sure your images are royalty free or that you have the right to use them (a standard license). You can get images at places like Depositphotos, Shutterstock, iStock and Getty. These are some of the sites that offer free images, but make sure that the image is truly free:

- https://www.nappy.co/
- https://videos.pexels.com/
- http://makerbook.net/
- https://unsplash.com/
- https://www.pexels.com/
- http://deathtothestockphoto.com/
- http://covrrr.co/
- http://mazwai.com/#/
- https://morguefile.com
- https://pixabay.com/
- https://freerangestock.com/
- https://www.stockphotosforfree.com/
Creating Ads

Most of Connor’s authors use Facebook, AMS and BookBub ads. There are other sites that have advertising options on them (example: Goodreads). So far Connor’s clients haven’t had that much success with those sites.

Facebook ads are more expensive now and the competition to get one can be fierce, especially around the holidays. Authors are spending in the thousands per month to get a return. If you are interested in learning about Facebook ads, check out one of the programs below:

- Help! My Facebook Ads Suck (Michael Cooper)
- Ads for Authors (Mark Dawson)
  https://selfpublishingformula.com/courses/
- Mastering Facebook Ads for Authors (Mark Dawson, Kerry Gardiner) FREE ON AMAZON!
  https://www.amazon.com/Mastering-Simple-Facebook-Ads-Authors-ebook/dp/B073PD757C/

Amazon Marketing Services ads are in two categories: Product Display ads and Sponsored ads. These ads aren’t hard to set up, but the problems with AMS ads are getting the right keywords and writing good, short copy for the ad to get attention.

Zana Keane in Tips for AMS ads says:
- Test different keywords,
- Have an attention-getting phrase about the book,
- Target popular authors in your category,
- Targeting genre and keyword strings is less successful,
- Competition is growing,
- Let an ad run a few days before fully evaluating its success,
- The competitive keywords deliver at a higher bid,
- Product Display ads may not be as successful in a niche genre,
- Target midlist authors rather than top authors to avoid competing with top ones, and
- Compared to Facebook ads, AMS ads are simpler to set up.

Sources to learn about AMS ads:
- Kindlepreneur offers a free course on AMS ads for authors:
- Mastering Amazon Ads (Brian D. Meeks)
  https://www.amazon.com/Mastering-Amazon-Ads-Authors-Guide-ebook/dp/B072SNXYMY/

BookBub is the third site that has paid ads that Connor’s authors use. You can find a tutorial on setting up BookBub ads here: https://insights.bookbub.com/tutorial-how-to-use-bookbub-ads-to-promote-any-book/.

For data management, spreadsheets are invaluable. Have one with any information that you or
your assistant need in one place. You can have spreadsheets for different information you need such as for a marketing plan, advertising sites you use, social media data, monthly payments from retailers or information concerning each book including reviews, excerpts and quotes—whatever helps you run your business easier whether an author or an assistant.

**Evaluating ROI and Ad Effectiveness**

The best ways you can track the effectiveness of an ad and therefore calculate its return on investment (ROI) is by booking one ad per day, or every other day, using affiliate and trackable links, looking at the tangible and intangible aspects of the ad (example: sales of other books in a series), and tracking what you need to make the ROI evaluation.

Connor’s favorite networking group is Freelancers for Authors: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/550268018433548/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/550268018433548/). It’s a private group on Facebook, managed by Mel Jolly. She has an informational newsletter with tips and ideas for author and assistants. Visit her website at [http://authorrx.com/](http://authorrx.com/).

**Marketing Tips:**

- When looking at promotional services, the ones with a newsletter to readers, a social media presence and a website are the best.
- Remember the 80/20 ratio: 80 percent reader-value content to 20 percent sales/promotion for social media and newsletter content.
- Don’t neglect your marketing and promotional needs—even a month. It will affect your sales.
- Monitor your comments on social media and everywhere comments can be left. There are trolls and you should hide the comment where you can.

Connor quoted Jay Baer, saying, “Marketing is more competitive than ever, and that genie is not going back in the bottle no matter how hard you push. The real reason most marketing fails is that most marketing is not relevant enough. Relevancy is a value exchange. Customers and prospects are trading their attention for your information. If they refuse to do so, it’s because your information does not matter to them enough sufficiently for them to trade attention for that information.”

**Additional resources/materials:**

- Reedsy Book Review Blog Database
- Book Marketing Checklist
- The Perfect Year, a free marketing course from JA Huss
- The BookBub Partners Blog
  [https://insights.bookbub.com/](https://insights.bookbub.com/)
- SMART Marketing (Chris Syme)
  [https://cksyme.com](https://cksyme.com)
*Margaret Daley*, a USA Today’s Bestselling author of over 105 books (five million plus sold worldwide), has been married for over forty-seven years and is a firm believer in romance and love. When she isn’t traveling or being with her two granddaughters, she’s writing love stories, often with a suspense/mystery thread and corralling her cats that think they rule her household.
"Revisions are about re-visioning," author Cheryl Klein began. "It’s about what you want to accomplish. Wine and chocolate may be necessary." Revisions, Klein said, fall into three large categories: Vision, Examination, and Action.

**Vision**

Steps 1-5 fall under the Vision header. What do you want? What are your goals?

1. Step 1 is to know how you work best. Do you outline? Storyboard? How do you think about your scenes? Don’t try to do all of these things, for that’s just procrastinating.
2. Step 2 is to take some time off from your work so you can come to it with a fresh mind. Take a week or switch to something else so you can approach the story as a reader.
3. Step 3 is to write a letter to a sympathetic friend, describing following six things (and the letter doesn’t need to be distributed or given):
   a. What is the core of your book? For instance, from the YA *Shiver*, the author wanted to capture that feeling. Tell your friend why you wrote it, what drove you through the writing of it, and what about it is sacred to you. Is it something to change or something sacred to you no matter what anyone says.
   b. What you wanted to do with the book, or wanted to the book to do
   c. What the story is briefly. Parts B & C are to help you integrate your vision.
   d. Tell your friend what the book is about in a larger scene. What is the deeper thing you are going for?
   e. What are all the things you love about your book? It’s easy to forget why you love it—the thing you want to preserve.
   f. What you may need to change. What needs to go? Character name? Subplot?
4. Next, compress 3C and write the story in one sentence, or a log line/key note.
5. Now expand from #4 and write the flap copy or a 250 words summary that gives away the ending. Introduce your characters and inciting incident. What are the character’s desires and goals? What two kinds of actions come from that? End your summary/flap with a question that ask what is this all building towards? Or how will it end? This technique should help you figure out what the book is, its hopes/dreams/what it can be.

**Examination**

6. Step 6 is to change the font and read the entire manuscript on the page before making any revision and make notes as you go. This is a different experience on page versus the screen. When on the page it’s a physical experience. Write notes. Use stickers when it’s good. Do what you need.
7. List the first five things each significant character says or does (including internal narration for POV characters). This will help you externalize who the character is and the first impression they make on the reader. Focus on discovering the inner truth. Ask questions like, what is the character’s joy? What is the character’s pain? What does the character want? What will she do to get it?

8. Step 8 is to run the plot checklist. What is the central action? A mystery where they look for something? A conflict or fight? A lack—what emotions do they want fulfilled. What are the stakes? What does the character want? Also consider the following: the experiential point (the experience the reader is to have, the emotional point (point of emotional plot, such as what the characters learn) and thematic point (which extends from the emotional point. What is the big message?). Look over to see the holes, such as if there’s to be romance and there’s none, or mystery and there’s none. Also focus on the following:
   a. Is your inciting incident actual action? How close can you get it to page 1? Rule of thumb is that it should happen in the first three chapters.
   b. Where are the turning points in the story? This is where the action begins.
   c. Work backwards from the climax. Do at least three plot developments support it? Have you resolved the subplot but not the main plot? Have you set things up? Is the character where he needs to be and acting to advance the plot?

9. Novelists should book map (outline) the action of the book scene by scene. Cheryl said a good resource was www.anitanolan.com/theend.html. For each scene ask:
   a. What do the characters in each scene want? Each scene should be its own little mini plot with an inciting incident with a desire and/or conflict.
   b. What is the conflict in this scene?
   c. Where is the climax of the scene? Emotionally, how does it build? Once character gives and changes on the journey.
   d. What change takes place in this scene? How does it advance a plot, deepen the characters or both? There needs to be a change that either advances the plot or deepens the characters, or both. Maybe the scene could be expanded into a bigger moment or maybe it needs to be cut. Remember people love characters, so check for respect and dignity.

10. Mini-Map. For each scene provide a one or two sentence summary of the action for quick reference. This is good for a long outline of a book.

11. Compare the vision you articulated in #3-5 to the results of 7-10 and compile a “To Do” list of things you want to accomplish. This list is how you get from A to B. Do you revise the character? Delete another one? Switch voices? Etc. Don’t be afraid to THINK BIG. If mystery needs to become a fantasy, do it. But also, LISTEN SMALL. Listen to your gut, the small voice nudging you. Focus on the Four Ds: Drama, Dimensions, Distinction and Depth.

   **Drama of Action:** create strong action that maximizes readers’ emotional reactions. In a romance this could be the first date or first kiss.

   **Dimensions of Characters:** Do we see multiple sides to and nuances in your principal characters?

   **Distinction of Prose:** Is your prose as elegant and efficient as possible? Does it sound like only you? This is your author voice.

   **Depth of Themes & Reality:** What are you saying through your novel? Is it believable as reality? Is it an incredible experience?
Action

This is when you actually go back to the book to fix it, and encompasses steps 12-17:

12. Set a deadline for completing each stage of revision and reward for each one. This means an actual time schedule and a reward for goal completion.

13. Work large to small. Overall plot first, then down to scene level, then polish prose—make sure you have tight banter. If you fix the banter and later cut the scene it’s wasted time.

14. Once your reasonably satisfied you have the big stuff where it needs to be:

   a. Highlight action, exposition, internal monologue and dialogue each in a different color, and check that one isn’t overwhelming the others. In the example Cheryl showed she used yellow for action, blue for internal thought, green for dialogue and pink for description/exposition.

   b. Highlight each character’s dialogue in a different color and then read through each color in turn to check for consistency and individuality of voice. Do they sound like self or other people?

   c. Cut adverbs, telling uses of the word “feel” or “felt,” non-“said” dialogue tags, excessive passive voice and unhelpful babies. Said carries you 80 percent of the time and disappears. Non-said dialogue tags can be problematic. Unhelpful babies are things that are not helpful to your larger end. Cut them.

15. Check the first line of the book for its hook, and the last lines of every scene and chapter for your intended emotional resonance. Last lines are fermatas—when a musician comes to a symbol and holds the note. Make the feeling resonate in the reader’s mind—make it hold. Cliffhangers or
emotional promises draw the reader and give a last burst of feeling.

16. Read the book aloud or into a recorder if you’d like or have the book read to you. You do this to feel the ups and downs. A suggestion from the audience was to read it aloud.

17. Don’t let perfect be the enemy of the good. You will do multiple revisions, so keep calm and revise on.


Michele Dunaway is the author of 26+ books for major New York publishers. A self-described woman who does too much and doesn’t want to stop, she’s a full time, award-winning high school English and journalism teacher, a mother of two, and your Nink editor.
Plot Checklist
17 Revision Techniques (Handout)

*Courtesy of Cheryl B. Klein*

Title: __________________________
Draft # ________
Date: ________________

Central Action Plot: Conflict Mystery Lack

**Stakes** (beginning and end):

Central Emotional Plot: Conflict Mystery Lack

**Stakes** (beginning and end):

**Desire/Compulsion**: What does the protagonist want? (List all & prioritize.)

**Overarching obstacles**: What keeps him/her from getting it? (List all & prioritize.)

**Exposition**: The situation at the beginning

**Inciting Incident**: The status quo changes when:

**Escalating or Complicating Events or Phrases:**
Subplots / Relationships:

**Climax:** Everything comes together when:

**Resolution:** The reader can tell things have changed because:

**Experiential Point:**

**Emotional Point:**

**Thematic Point:**

Adapted from The Magic Words: Writing Great Books for Children and Young Adults by Cheryl B. Klein * [http://www.cherylklein.com](http://www.cherylklein.com).
Adapting Your Fiction for Film
Presenters: Sean Platt & Johnny B. Truant

Reported by Jennifer Stevenson

Sean Platt and Johnny B. Truant educated and amused the audience by sharing their early steps into the television and film market. They frequently interrupted one another and finished one another’s sentences, illustrating their collaboration in real time. They think of getting into Hollywood or Netflix as an ultimate, not immediate, goal. They convert their books to screenplays in order to become better and more efficient storytellers. They attended Robert McKee’s STORY Seminar in Los Angeles, although they recommend that authors don’t need to attend McKee’s conference twice because “it’s verbatim” and identical to the audiobook, which Platt urged the audience to get. Other resources they recommended were James Patterson and Aaron Sorkin. The following is an abbreviated recap of their conversation:

TRUANT: “When writing a screenplay, you’re not writing something meant to be read, but performed. In a book, you take the ball all the way. In a script, you have to stop halfway. You can’t micromanage the director or the actors. Beginning scriptwriters want to tell the director how to shoot—shots and fades and so on.”

PLATT: “The script should be really spare.”

TRUANT: “You want to allow the director and actors room to do the character exploration and decide how the character will present the emotion implied in what you wrote. If you have a character say something and put something in parentheses (sarcastically), the only time you’re supposed to use this is when the actor might not notice that it’s sarcasm. Resist the urge to explain.”

PLATT: “Every book, whether 300 pages or 600 pages, adapts into a 130-page script. Every one. No one will read a longer one.”

TRUANT: “There’s a paradigm shift in the mind of the creator. We as novelists want to control what is going on: scene, subtext, all that. But the version of a script that is sold, in most cases, will change, and you might not get credit.”

PLATT: “The only way you can make sure you get credit for the script, no matter what, is if it’s a play, not a screenplay. The reason Tyler Perry is a billionaire is that he makes every screenplay into a play first, copyrights it, then sells the screenplay version. It’s way cheaper to have one little play produced for one night and own that IP forever.”

TRUANT: “If you’re Perry, yes, you have end control. But most people hand off a script and it may change very dramatically until it’s unrecognizable. You have to tell your vision, and they’ll tell it the way they interpret it.”
QUESTION: “If someone wanted to film your book, and the writer said, ‘I want creative control’…”

ANSWER FROM AUDIENCE: “You retain visionary rights, like Rowling.”

PLATT: “Yeah, but Rowling is Rowling. We sold a script and I didn’t even bother asking for creative control because the filmmaker knows more than I do. Until I really know how to do that, they know more. After we’ve worked with a director of photography and watched production for a while, we’ll know how to do our own films. But know your ‘Why.’ Know why you want that creative control.”

QUESTION: “Elon Musk’s sister and two other people opened up a Netflix channel for romance readers called Passionflix, turning romance novels into movies. It’s super new, started just a month ago. Authors are invited onto the set to be part of the production, but what I’ve heard it’s not that lucrative for the author. You have to bring them subscribers to get paid. They put up the funding.”

PLATT: “That’s a great way to do it—I may not make any money on this project, but I’ll get some experience under my belt. Investing in Elon Musk’s sister has strategy behind it. Years one, two, even three will probably suck, but they probably have a 10-year plan. YouTube Red is actively looking for content. It’s all gonna be streaming and cable.”

QUESTION: “How do you even get your script in front of those guys? Do you need an agent?”

PLATT: “It is more of an agent biz than publishing. It’s both easier and harder. We have a semi-open door to Netflix, and it’s not something we went aggressively after, but we aren’t ready to open that door.”

QUESTION: “Let’s talk about you wanting to produce your own stuff. Some of us are farther along than others. You get lots of ‘we’re so interested’ a hundred times and no results. Selena Gomez got all the pieces put together and then Netflix wanted it, because it was a package.”

PLATT: “If you get a deal with HBO, they produce it, and there’s a long digestion period, a crazy long time from idea to movie. Netflix says, ‘You’ve got an idea? How fast can you get that to us?’ Pay attention to how the industry is changing. The first big project that came to Netflix was House of Cards, with David Fincher as director. He and Kevin Spacey brought everything, the stars, script, the whole thing, and said, ‘Netflix, wouldn’t it be better if you just gave us a shit ton of money and we’ll go away and make it?’ In TV, they do a million pilots before they say yes. There’s lots of waste.”

TRUANT: “Let’s talk about adaptation. Sean has done our adaptation so far. Talk about differences fundamentally between prose and screenwriting.”

PLATT: “Script is present tense 100 percent of the time, third person.”

TRUANT: “You are not talking to the consumer, you are talking to the director. Short sentences, very to the point. Shortest possible. You can buy scripts or get them free from ScriptLab and get the scripts for your favorite movies, see how they differ from the actual movie. Read the script then watch the movie, or do them concurrently to see the differences. Pick movies you really like and know well. Then pick really good scripts. The ones you find online are shooting scripts with onset details. You want to study the selling script.”
[Scripts they threw out to read: Jerry Maguire, Shane Black’s Lethal Weapon, American Beauty, Casablanca, Kill Bill, and Reservoir Dogs as it follows all the rules. It’s only 90 pages. They said to focus on the core story that you are telling because you want to avoid people saying, “The book was so much better.”]

TRUANT: “An adaptation can be very faithful to the book, but a lot of times you have to modify the story you are telling, because it doesn’t equate. When we adapted a book we wanted to show how to differentiate between two states of awareness. In film you can show a wedding ring when you want the viewer to know that the character is in X mental state. In a novel you can’t.”

Platt: “We look at the heart of the story and ask, how do we say that visually? When you’re starting, go ahead and overwrite a literal translation of your book to script. Now you understand. ‘I’ve taken this literature and made it a script. Now I must cut it back.’ Hack at it. Shave down everything where the reader doesn’t need to know. You learn so much about this story and about writing stories.”

TRUANT: “It’s not hard, but it takes a lot of time. It makes you a better storyteller.”

PLATT: “We sold our screenplay because we met someone who knew some people who wanted to try to sell it. We were fine with that. The most important reason to sell a script is to sell a script, because the first question you are asked is, ‘What have you optioned before?’ If the answer is none, the selling price is much, much lower.”

TRUANT: “Consider the movie you’re asking someone to make. One reason Crash sold is because it has only a few actors and it wouldn’t take elaborate CGI. If we were trying to shop Dead City, we’d need abandoned cities, a shipwreck, expensive stuff. One of the things that make romcom easy to sell is that it could basically be a play—two people in a bunch of amusing situations, and no elaborate set design. You have a much better chance of selling it.”

PLATT: “Romantic suspense is way harder and more expensive, because you have to have so much stuff around the story, you have to put the characters in peril, and peril is expensive.”

TRUANT: “Someone will vet your script. That person has a ton of scripts on their desk. This person is not a decision-maker, they’re some film school student. In a script, description spans the whole width of the page. They’ll see and ignore all that description. Dialogue has more white space around it. White space is your friend.”

PLATT: “If your script is five pages over, they’ll know when they pick it up. They may not even read it if it’s way over page count.”

TRUANT: “Your script also needs to be entertaining to be read, as well as economical. You don’t want a dry, stale blueprint. It should be fun. You can still feel an author’s personality in a good script. Answer this question first: What does the property deserve? According to Sorkin’s description, if you can see an ending to your story, it’s a movie. It’s not TV.”

PLATT said scripts should be: “For streaming TV, 60 pages, network TV, 40 pages. TV scripts are allowed to run a bit longer for some reason, more than 1 minute per page.”
PLATT: You should try to sell to streaming TV, not network. Anything’s better than network. We want to adapt for TV, and for limited-run series, you want to do just one script for the pilot and then a treatment (paragraph) for everything else. Cable is fine, but with the regular networks, I wouldn’t invest the time. You need an in to get into YouTube or Netflix. Go to a watering hole in LA and hang out, have some good conversations, and don’t try to sell. Find someone who is piped in. Befriend them. Be cool. Don’t be an ass. People want to discover stuff.”

For a sample, go to Sterlingandstone.net/exclusives (password: INPERSONVIP).

Jennifer Stevenson writes humorous fiction for women: contemporary romcom, urban fantasy, paranormal romance, and women’s fiction. She has four novels out from print publishers and has indie published 16 novels and 20 short stories with Book View Cafe, the world’s oldest, largest, and most prestigious author-owned publishing collective, where she is a founding member.
**Alternate Revenue Streams for Authors**  
*Presenters: Chris Fox, Simone Elkeles & Jillian Dodd*  
*Reported by Trish Milburn*

While the main goal of most novelists is to make money off their novels, the fact is that many authors either depend on, or at least benefit from, alternate sources of income that are related to their work as novelists. That income can help fill in the pay gaps between releases, give us the extra cushion we need to take more time with a writing project, allow us to pay off debt more quickly or jet off on a dream vacation.

Panelists Chris Fox, Simone Elkeles and Jillian Dodd shared how they generate ancillary income in a wide variety of ways.

In addition to Fox’s fiction, he publishes a popular series of writing books called the Write Faster, Write Smarter series, with titles such as *5,000 Words Per Hour* and *Six-Figure Author*. He said he wanted to give writers shorter books with more useful information instead of the books where you have to read through a hundred pages of not-so-useful text before you get to the good stuff. His six nonfiction titles generate about $30,000 a year for him. These books and his public speaking engagements, which he improved by going to Toastmasters, led unexpectedly to consulting work. He admitted that people pay him “ridiculous” amounts to help them maximize the benefits of their backlists.

Like many authors, Fox derives income from affiliate programs. He says that his Amazon affiliate payments come in at four figures a month, but he did have a word of warning: “Make sure you read Amazon’s terms of service for affiliate links.”

Audiobooks of his work have also been very beneficial, bringing about $4,000 a month into his coffers. “I have sold a boatload of audiobooks,” he said.

To continually spread the word about his work and help other writers in the process, he does a couple of podcast interviews a week and puts up regular videos on his YouTube channel, which has 10,000 subscribers. “If you help people, it’s amazing how many people come out of the woodwork to help you,” he said.

Simone Elkeles, who writes young adult fiction, has created a very lucrative alternate stream of revenue from speaking engagements at libraries, schools and juvenile detention centers. Grants allow schools to afford to bring in outside speakers, though at the beginning, Elkeles offered to speak for free in the hope of amassing an impressive collection of testimonials.

“I Googled and sent letters to school librarians introducing myself and offering to speak to schools,” she said. “Librarians are powerful for book sales.”

Elkeles has gone from speaking for free to charging $2,500 for a school-speaking engagement. Even when she doesn’t charge full price, she can make a good bit of money, such as when she ran a contest where the winner would receive a free visit for his or her school and dinner for them and a friend with Elkeles. She was surprised when only 15 people entered and decided to award all 15 entrants the same prize. That meant she had to travel to 15 different destinations, pay for 15 dinners and do 15 free presentations. However, when she started contacting the librarians at the schools
where she’d be doing the free presentations, they would tell her how envious the neighboring schools were. That’s when she made the offer to give those other schools a discounted rate of $1,000 since she’d already be in the area. She ended up making several thousand dollars on those free-to-winner trips. “People ask me what I teach the kids,” she said. “I don’t teach them. I’m there to entertain and inspire.”

To illustrate, Elkeles went through a super-fast, truncated version of her presentation, which showed how she was able to be relatable to the kids, turning students who were bored by the idea of listening to an author into superfans.

Jillian Dodd has had a lot of success with her online store, which sells a variety of merchandise but mainly signed copies of her books. She uses Shopify and employs her daughter as her full-time assistant to handle the store. Dodd said that her fans will buy multiple complete sets of her signed books so they will have all the variant covers she’s used. “Fans love personalization,” she said.

She said that a good way to get author copies is to turn off all the distribution on CreateSpace so you can just order your own stock. Her online store generated $11,000 for her last year.

On the topic of online stores, none of the panelists were real fans of CafePress. Audience member Wayne Stinnett offered that he gets the items for the Ship’s Store on his site, such as the T-shirts sporting the logo for his fictional bar, from Print Aura.

One other potential source of income, according to Dodd, is through WattPad. She said that if you’re popular there, sometimes companies will come to you about putting their brands in your stories.

*To learn more about the panelists, visit their sites at:*
  *Chris Fox: https://www.chrisfoxwrites.com/*
  *Simone Elkeles: http://simoneelkeles.com/*
  *Jillian Dodd: http://jilliandodd.net/*

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*Trish Milburn is the author of nearly 40 romance and young adult titles for Harlequin, Razorbill/Penguin, Bell Bridge Books and via indie publishing. Visit her website to sign up for her author newsletter and find links to her various social media accounts.*
The Do-It-Yourself Audiobook Market Just Got a New Player
Presenter: Kelly Lytle

Reported by Delaney Diamond

The audiobook market is the fastest growing segment of publishing today, and Findaway Voices offers an easy and affordable way to tap into that growth. According to Kelly Lytle, who heads up Findaway Voices, growth was at 40 percent last year and is expected to be approximately the same this year, thus presenting an opportunity for authors to have an additional revenue stream. While Findaway the company has been in business for years, distributing audiobooks and providing the network through which their partners provide them, Findaway Voices is a new service launched in 2017 that offers a do-it-yourself platform for authors. By using their service, authors benefit from the company’s pre-established relationships to expand distribution of their books beyond the top three dominating 80 to 85 percent of the market—Amazon, Audible, and iTunes.

How it works
The first step is to set up your account. Then let Findaway Voices know what kind of narration you’re interested in. Give as much information as possible about what you’re looking for, and they’ll pull together 5-10 narrators to audition for you. You should be able to pull your narrator from that pool, but should you not be satisfied, they’ll pull together more choices for you to listen to.

Next, the narrator will record the manuscript, and once they’ve submitted the entire book, it’s up to you, the author, to do the quality check. This means listening to the book in its entirety to check for skipped words, mispronounced names, or other errors. Lytle was asked about dual narration—such as using a male and female narrator. That capability is not yet available but is expected to be available by the end of the year.

“Will Whispersync work if the book is produced through Findaway Voices?” another author asked. Amazon’s Whispersync feature syncs the ebook and audiobook versions of a title, allowing readers to seamlessly alternate between reading and listening without losing their place in the story. Lytle was hesitant to say yes definitively, and indicated that they could ask.

Distribution
After your narration is complete, you may take the files anywhere and upload them as you wish. There is no agreement obligating authors to distribute through the Findaway Voices platform. Pick and choose from the almost two dozen options currently available. Choose them all, or only pick the ones you won’t be uploading to directly.

If you already have audio files created, and/or you have a non-exclusive agreement with Amazon’s ACX platform, you’ll probably want to access the many distribution channels Findaway Voices offers. NOTE: If you have an exclusive seven-year agreement with Amazon ACX (which restricts distribution to Amazon, Audible, and iTunes), you might want to take advantage of the
termination clause in the contract. After one year, you’re allowed to revise the agreement to non-exclusive, allowing you to distribute to other platforms. At that point, your royalty share drops from 40 percent to 25 percent.

**Costs**

The cost associated with producing an audiobook varies, but Lytle did indicate they can work within your budget through the pool of narrators you have to choose from. Cost runs as little $100 per finished hour (PFH), or as much as $400 PFH. To get an idea of how much it costs to produce an audiobook, figure one finished hour per 9,000-10,000 words. A 50,000-word novel would cost a minimum of $500 at $100 PFH and a minimum of $2,000 at $400 PFH. You’ll also need to have an audiobook-ready version of your book cover.

**Revenue**

Authors receive 80 percent of net royalties earned from each channel, and Findaway Voices receives 20 percent.

**Advantages of using Findaway Voices to create audiobooks**

- Unlike with ACX, there are no exclusivity agreements.
- Global distribution includes an ever-expanding list of partners. Current partners include Apple, Amazon, audiobooks.com, Overdrive, and bibliotheca. One partner, tunein.com, offers podcasts to a listening base of tens of millions of male listeners. Their interests tend toward mysteries and thrillers.
- Deezer is a France-based subscription plan service. Subscribers pay $9.99 per month, but unlike other subscription models, whenever the subscriber listens to an author’s book, the author earns the full retail price.
- Findaway Voices is working on offering translation services for those who’d like to record their book in a foreign language. There would also be a quality control component since the book would be read in a foreign language.
- You can set your own price. Distributing to Amazon, Audible, and iTunes, you’re subject to their price-setting restrictions whether or not you use Findaway Voices. However, you will be able to set your own prices on the other platforms.

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_Delaney Diamond is a USA Today Bestselling Author of contemporary romance, and is the owner of Garden Avenue Press, where she publishes romance and women’s fiction that includes protagonists of color. When she’s not busy reading or writing, she’s in the kitchen trying out new recipes, dining at one of her favorite restaurants, or traveling to an interesting locale. Find her at www.delaneydiamond.com._
Membership Benefits
Need industry intel, software, or legal help? We’ve got you covered.

Are you taking advantage of all your member benefits?
As a NINC member, your benefits include industry discounts, newsletter and website articles, professional services directory, networking opportunities, and more.
We’ve compiled all of these—which you can also find on our website—into this list as a helpful reminder.

Networking
Join our Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/NovelistsInc/
We offer a critique/brainstorming group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NINKcritique

Conference 2018: Craft Your Perfect Career
Conference information: https://ninc.com/conferences/about-the-ninc-conference/
Registration: https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/2018-member-registration/
Conference Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/Ninc2018/
Yahoo e-loop: https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/BeachNINC2018/info

Newsletter
Propose an article: https://ninc.com/newsletter/propose-an-article/
Submit a letter to the editor: https://ninc.com/newsletter/submit-letter-to-editor/
Best of Nink in paperback: https://ninc.com/member-benefits/best-of-nink/

Website (you must be logged in to access these services)
Legal Fund: https://ninc.com/member-benefits/legal-fund/
Pro Services Directory: https://ninc.com/member-benefits/pro-services-directory/
Sample Letters: https://ninc.com/member-benefits/sample-letters/
Articles & Links: https://ninc.com/member-benefits/articles-and-links/

Member discounts
NINC members are eligible for certain professional discounts.
Find them in the members section of our website, and check often for updates: https://ninc.com/member-benefits/member-freebies-discounts/
Volunteer

One of the greatest benefits of NINC is the opportunity to volunteer your talents to benefit other members—which pays incredible and unexpected dividends in networking and knowledge. Learn more about volunteer opportunities here: https://ninc.com/members-only/open-positions/

Open positions include:

- Social Media Committee
- Tweet Team
- Recruiting New Members
- 2018 Conference Promoter
- 2018 Conference Reporter
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.

Founders
- Rebecca Brandewyne
- Janice Young Brooks
- Jasmine Cresswell
- Maggie Osborne
- Marianne Shock

2017 Board of Directors
If you have questions regarding Novelists, Inc., please contact a member of the Board of Directors.
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- President-Elect: Julie Ortolon
- Secretary: Gillian Doyle
- Treasurer: Mindy Neff
- Newsletter Editor: Michele Dunaway
- Advisory Council Representative: Victoria Thompson

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- Brenda Hiatt Barber
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• Diana Peterfreund
• Pat Rice
• Marianne Shock
• Vicki Lewis Thompson
• Victoria Thompson
• Steven Womack

2017 Committees
• Complete committee member listings are available on the website. Many committee positions are open and looking for new volunteers.
• 2018 Conference Committee:
  ◦ Conference Director: Laura Hayden
  ◦ Program Director: Julie Ortolon
  ◦ Sponsorship Chair: Rochelle Paige
  ◦ Hotel Liaison: Karen Fox
  ◦ Registrar: Pam McCutcheon
  ◦ Onsite Coordinator: Hannah McBride
• Authors Coalition Reps: Pat Roy & Laura Phillips
• Social Media Coordinator:
  ◦ Dianne Drake
  ◦ Laura Hayden (conference communications)
  ◦ Sue Phillips
• Membership Committee
  ◦ Chair: Sarah Woodbury
  ◦ Boyd Craven
• Nink Newsletter
  ◦ Editor: Michele Dunaway
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  ◦ Assistant Editor: Heather C. Leigh
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  ◦ Steena Holmes
  ◦ Tawdra Kandle
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  ◦ Laura Phillips
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  ◦ Elizabeth Ann West
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  ◦ Erica Ridley
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• Volunteer Jobs (Just One Thing) Coordinator: Lois Lavrisa