

NINK

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Choosing the Right E-Reader for You

BY LAURA PHILLIPS

E-readers are hitting the mainstream with at least a dozen different models available in major retail stores and even more options available to online shoppers. Pricing on budget models is expected to hover around the \$100 mark in the United States this holiday shopping season, and there are several with more advanced features available for under \$200.

For those with larger budgets, the choices are even more exciting — and more confusing. The variety and variables can be overwhelming. (Prices are a bit higher outside the United States, but still lower than even six months ago in most countries.) This year's price wars drove costs down for consumers, but also drove several promising new devices out of the market because their manufacturers couldn't compete at the new lower price points.

Still, the lower prices are good news for readers. The bad news is that with so many to choose from, the process of picking the right e-reader can be overwhelming. Comparing the Kindle to the iPad to the Kobo, Nook, or Cruz is a lot like comparing apples, cabbage, and cornflakes. There's no best choice for everyone or every situation, and it's hard to sort the devices into neat categories of basic, middle-class, and feature-rich luxury class. The best you can do is shop around, handle as many demo devices as you can, and pick the one that fits well in your hands and your lifestyle.

Here are some pointers to help you decide which e-reader might be right for you.

Start with a wish list

Before you shop, take the time to consider how and when you'd likely use an e-reader. Make a list of features that are essential, the deal-breakers, and make another list of those that would be nice but aren't as important.

Are your needs simple? Would you prefer a compact, lightweight e-reader that you can stick in a pocket or purse, one that will hold your favorite 50 books plus 75 more from your to-be-read list? Do you need a multi-function device that will do it all — display e-books, play music, let you surf the web, take notes, edit manuscripts, write, check email, and update your Twitter stream and Facebook page? Or do your needs fall somewhere in the middle?

Consider when and where you're most likely to read, whether indoors or out, whether you want a device that comes with earbuds and an MP3 player built in. Consider where you'll purchase your e-books and how much they cost, and feel free to window-shop through the various e-bookstores to see what they have to offer. Despite the agency pricing system imposed by many publishers, there are still bargains and big price differences on books that aren't distributed under the agency pricing system.

Consider, too, whether you want the freedom to purchase books from many sources or the simplicity of purchasing from a single store that delivers directly to your e-reader without any extra steps. Do you live or work in an area with good Wi-Fi, or 3G service so you can take advantage of those easy e-book delivery options? Or will you have to download your

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Introducing...

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

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Recommend membership to *your* colleagues.
Prospective members may apply online at

<http://www.ninc.com>.

Refer members at ninc.com. Go to Members Only,
"Member Services" and click
"Refer a New Member to NINC."

Take NINC brochures to conferences.
Email Pari Taichert with your mailing address and
requested number of booklets.
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NINC Statement of Principle

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

One on the Run

No matter what you're thinking about the title of this month's column, the simple truth is that it means I'm getting ready to leave for our *Brainstorming on the Beach* conference and, as usual, I've left too much for the last minute.

So this month's column is going to be short.

Just one more column after this one, during which I'll probably get as mushy as a Scorpio can, because I'll be wrapping up my year as your President. But never mind that now.

I'll make this a more businesslike column because it needs to be. It's that time again, folks – the beginning of dues renewals season and the yearly ACA surveys we beg you to fill out. You'll save your hardworking board a great deal of time and possible misery if you take care of this business as soon as you possibly can. You can go online to renew and fill out your ACA survey and just get it done and over with, one less thing you have to think about as the holidays (!!!) bear down on us.

A reminder: The Authors' Coalition survey is very, very, very important to NINC, because it determines our share of the monies collected by the Authors' Coalition. It is a huge deal because it means we don't have to depend on dues collected from members to pay for special deals like revamping our website and extras like "The Future of Publishing Day" at our conference.

It also helps keep our dues obscenely low.

Please, renew your membership in NINC as early as you possibly can. And please fill out the ACA survey. Check as many fields as you qualify for, because that also makes a huge difference.

NINC is the single organization I've stuck with since joining, and I don't expect that to change. Because the business of publishing is changing with every minute that passes, and I firmly believe NINC is one of the best resources out there to keep me alert and aware of those changes and what they mean to me as a career novelist.

I expect some fascinating reports to come out of the conference this year and they'll be duly reported here in Nink for those of you who just couldn't make the conference. I expect there'll also be some lively discussions on the Ninlink (not that there's anything so different in that).

Anyway, remember to renew your membership (we've made it easy for you online) and fill out your ACA survey.

For some of you, I'll see you in Florida. And for the rest, I'll be back here, undoubtedly more knowledgeable and just as likely to be filled with new questions to ponder, around mid-October.

I might even have a little bit of a tan.

— Kay Hooper

NINC is exploring the possibility of publishing back issues of the newsletter on the public page of the NINC website.

If you have contributed to our newsletter in the past and do *not* wish your material used in this way, please contact the *Nink* Editor.

Choosing the Right E-Reader



Kindle



Nook



Kobo

purchases via your regular Internet connection anyway?

Do you need to take notes or highlight text? How many notes, how often, and do you prefer a keypad or stylus? Is an on-board dictionary or translator important?

And the biggest question of all — how much are you willing to spend? Prices range from just under \$100 for a bare bones e-reader model to over \$800 for a multi-function tablet with Wi-Fi and 64 GB of memory.

Once you have your list, you can shop with less stress and start crossing off devices that aren't a good match.

When and where will you use it?

Still not sure about your options? Here are some tips to help match your needs with some key e-reader features.

If you read outdoors — at the beach, at your kids' soccer practice, in the park, or wherever, you'll be happier with an e-ink device. With strong contrast and crisp letters, the text is easy to read in bright light, even outdoors, but you'll need a book light to read in bed because e-ink screens aren't backlit. E-ink screens are most like paper in appearance and are ideal for readers who plan to use their devices primarily for reading novels or other texts that don't rely heavily on illustrations.

If you prefer a color screen, then take a look at Apple's iPad, the Velocity Micro Cruz, the Pandigital Novel, or any of the new Android-powered tablets. The iPad and Cruz use TFT color technology, which is a variant of LCD (liquid crystal display). LCD is commonly used for computer monitors, televisions, PDAs, phones, and a wide variety of other electronic devices. LCD uses more power than e-ink and requires more frequent recharging, but the screens are readable in the dark without supplemental lighting. What you can't do with an LCD screen is read on the beach or in any other bright outdoor spot.

Larger screens are preferable for textbooks, e-subscriptions to newspapers and magazines, and other situations where it's helpful to have both text and illustrations together on the page. Larger e-ink devices targeted at newspaper readers include the Sony Daily Edition and the Amazon Kindle DX. The iPad or eTourage eDGe are better choices for texts using color graphs and photos.

Until recently, devices with e-ink screens were significantly more expensive than those with black-and-white LCD screens. Prices have dropped enough that the difference won't break most budgets. The basic-black and-white LCD e-readers generally cost less, all things being equal, but they also require more power than e-ink devices, so more frequent recharging is necessary.

E-ink technology requires less power than other screen types, so the internal batteries last much longer. Battery life is listed in terms of days or weeks instead of hours. Newer e-ink screens with 16-level grayscale do a better job of displaying charts, graphs, and even photographs than earlier models with fewer grayscale levels. Also, the appearance of the text is sharper.

Content

Dozens of e-book stores live on the Internet now, and many publishers also have their own e-book stores. Your best bet, if you want to buy from multiple sources, is to choose an e-reader that accepts e-pub or PDF format. (Most e-book retailers now offer one or both formats.) Or choose a tablet-type device that can run e-reader applications from the big e-book retailers.

Conversely, if you want to keep it as simple as possible, choose a device with a good system for browsing and buying directly from the e-reader, for example, a Nook, Kindle, or iPad with 3G service.

Amazon led the way in wireless-content delivery with its Whispersnet delivery system for the Kindle. If you're a Kindle owner, it's easy to buy e-books and load them onto the Kindle. Amazon also has some 14,000 free e-books available via that system, and other free book sources have recently begun offering Kindle format files.

A large percentage Amazon's free books are out of copyright and available elsewhere, too, but many others are Kindle-only releases. Amazon has Kindle applications for PCs, Macs, the iPad, and various smartphones so you can read your Kindle books on those devices, too. You can't read them on a Sony, Kobo, Nook or most other dedicated readers, though, because the Kindle format is proprietary and not compatible with the formats most other dedicated e-readers use. There are third-party conversion programs, but the process is imperfect and can be complicated by DRM issues. So if you expect you'll want to buy mostly from Amazon, pick a device that plays nicely with Amazon's format options.

The Kobo and Barnes & Noble's Nook also have models with Wi-Fi content delivery options, and various other e-readers come pre-loaded with direct bookstore purchase systems. Apple's iPad uses the iBookStore, but other large retailers now have applications for iPad users who want to shop their e-book stores. Both the Kobo and Barnes & Noble websites also offer e-book software for PCs and many tablets and smartphones. Some retailers also have software that allows e-book buyers to lend their books to friends.

A lot of pre-1923 classics are available free as e-books from OpenLibrary.org, Google Books, the Guttenberg project, and others. Loading those onto your reader can be exceptionally easy or quite a challenge, depending on how well your free e-book source works with the e-reader in your hand. E-books only available in PDF format can be difficult to read on devices that don't manage large PDFs well.

I learned this the hard way when I downloaded and tried to read from a 1000-plus page Missouri history volume originally published in 1885. The full-page text was too tiny, and resizing and navigation were too slow and cumbersome. The file size and format weren't a good match for my old, slow Sony 700. Performance was better, but still cumbersome, on my husband's new Kindle 3. I can read that history volume on my PC, but I still think it would be terrific to pull it out and browse at my convenience while I'm waiting for my turn in the dentist's office or sunning on the porch. An e-ink reader that could handle a book like that with ease would rate high on my list, but until I find one, I'll keep reading those research books on my desktop PC.

Navigation

The cheapest e-readers are operated with buttons or keypads. Complaints about button placement and size on earlier models have led to design improvements, but it's still best to find a store with a demo model you can test drive before you buy. A button placement that's handy and comfortable for one person to use might be problematic for someone with larger or smaller hands, a persistently aching thumb or other issues.

Touchscreen models often have navigational buttons as well, for example, the Sony Touch Edition. The dual navigation methods can be helpful for people with arthritic joints or other conditions that might be aggravated by the repetitive motion for page turns. Trust me on this, I've had "e-book thumb" and hand cramps from too many hours spent with a good e-book and have had to train ▶



Pandigital



iPad



Cruz

myself to change hand positions and alternate between tapping the page turn button and swiping the upper right corner to turn the page.

Both the Nook and Spring Design's Alex take a different approach to navigation with an e-ink upper reading pane, navigation buttons for page turns at the sides, and a color touchscreen navigation pane below the reading pane for shopping, browsing, and games. The Nook also has a setting that permits page turns by swipes on the color touchscreen pane.

Tablet style e-readers often rely entirely on touch navigation and may have either resistive or capacitive touchscreens. The difference is in the style of movements and the amount of pressure necessary to operate the device.

Those with resistive touchscreen displays require more pressure and are stylus-friendly. This type of touchscreen is composed of multiple layers separated by very thin spaces. Pressure applied to the surface by a finger or stylus causes the layers to touch, which completes electrical circuits that operate the device and execute instructions. Resistive touchscreens require much more pressure to operate than capacitive touchscreens.

Capacitive touchscreens rely on very light touches of the finger and rely on the body's natural electrical properties. They generally don't work well with a stylus or gloved finger.

Other considerations

Most e-readers come with enough memory to hold a couple hundred e-books. Some accept storage cards, and some models offer the option of purchasing more internal memory capacity. Memory capacity is less of an issue for basic models whose only function is that of an e-reader. Those with music, games, and browsing capabilities need more memory, and most experts advise adding as much memory as you can afford to assure optimal performance.

Most e-readers don't come with a case, so you should include an extra \$15-50 in your budget for some sort of protective case or padded bag. Some retailers offer deals that include a case or cover.

Consider, too, whether you'll need additional cables or adaptors for charging your e-reader. Some come only with a USB cable, and some offer car kits and adapters for charging via standard household electrical outlets. Charging accessories may be available from the manufacturer or through third-party vendors that specialize in power accessories.

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Ask the Lawyer...

Q: According to the news being passed around NINC, there's a new clause in HarperCollins contracts (I don't THINK they've shown up elsewhere) which seems to be designed basically so that HC could cancel a contract and demand all monies paid be returned if the author in any way violated some arbitrary set of "morals" in their personal or professional behavior. My question is: Can you explain the difference between a "moral rights" clause and a "morals" clause in a publishing contract – and offer your opinion as to whether the latter clause is legal and binding AND provides the publisher with an excuse to cancel a contract and demand the return of monies paid should the author, in their judgment, do something "immoral?"

For what is being called the HarperCollins morals clause, please see 8 (iv) below:

8. PUBLISHER'S RIGHTS OF TERMINATION

If (i) Publisher determines that any of the representations of Author set forth in Section 6(a) is false, or (ii) Author breaches the covenants set forth in Sections 1(f), 1(g), 2(c), or 2(d), or (iii) Author commits a breach of any covenant contained in the Special Provisions section of Part I above for which Publisher is given a right of termination, or (iv) Author's conduct evidences a lack of due regard for public conventions and morals, or Author commits a crime or any other act that will tend to bring Author into serious contempt, and such behavior would materially damage the Work's reputation or sales, Publisher may terminate this Agreement and, in addition to Publisher's other legal remedies, Author will promptly repay the portion of the Advance previously paid to Author, or, if such breach occurred following publication of the Work, Author will promptly repay the portion of the Advance which has not yet been recouped by Publisher.

A: A “moral rights” clause would be very, very different than a “morals” clause.

“Moral rights” is a concept from European law, which posits that an author has certain inalienable rights, such as the right to control any modifications of his or her work, to ensure that the “integrity” of the work is not compromised, and the right to have all display or publications of the work attributed to the name of the actual author (or not, if the author is concerned that changes made to the work will damage his or her reputation). These rights have not been fully integrated into American jurisprudence. I would be astonished to find a “moral rights” clause in an American publisher’s contract, unless it read, “Author hereby waives all moral rights...”

A “morals” clause, such as the one set forth below and attributed to HarperCollins (I have not yet come across this clause in my own practice), is intended to protect the publisher against misbehavior of the author which might endanger the publisher’s investment in the book. I saw similar clauses in the mid-1970s when I worked in broadcasting. Every news anchor’s contract contained such a clause, entitling the broadcast station or network to fire the anchorperson in the event a breach of the clause jeopardized the anchorperson’s reputation.

I strongly suspect that HarperCollins could care less about their authors’ morals...unless and until a moral indiscretion threatens to reduce the value of the author’s book. Example: imagine if former New York Governor Elliot Spitzer had, during his term in office, contracted with HarperCollins to write a book entitled, *I Choose to Be Purer Than Caesar’s Wife*. Once Spitzer’s dalliances with multiple prostitutes became public, the potential audience for that book would likely have dropped precipitously, and HarperCollins’ ability to recoup its advance would have been seriously compromised.

I further suspect that the morals clause will have little impact on novelists (as opposed to writers of non-fiction) published by HarperCollins, except in the case of moral transgressions so severe that no reader would ever want to be seen with a copy of the book in hand... such as a novel by an author who is arrested for kidnapping, molesting, and murdering little children.

I believe that a properly drafted morals clause is indeed enforceable against an author.

For that reason, it is important for every author, rather than accepting the HarperCollins clause as written, to attempt to negotiate some changes in the clause:

1. “If Publisher determines that any of the representations of Author set forth in Section 6(a) is false,” – This should not be a matter of Publisher’s determination. This should instead say, “If a court of final jurisdiction determines that any of the representations of Author set forth in Section 6(a) is false, or that Author committed a material breach of the covenants set forth in Sections 1(f), 1(g), 2(c), or of any covenant contained in the Special Provisions section of Part I above for which Publisher is given a right of termination...”

2. I would try to insert language such as “due to an obvious and extreme conflict between Author’s behavior and the particular subject matter of the Work” before “such behavior would materially damage the Work’s reputation or sales.”

On balance, I cannot fault the publisher for attempting to protect itself against damage to its investment arising from authorial misbehavior. The author should nevertheless attempt to refine and narrow the language of the morals clause so as to exclude behaviors which, while obviously immoral (e.g. an extramarital affair), are unlikely to damage sales of the author’s book.

— **Bob Stein**

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BeachCon Recap: Of Author Promotion and Showerheads

Brainstorming: The Future of Publishing Panel Report #1, Promotional Teamwork
Time: 8:45 a.m., Location: The Island Grand at the Tradewinds Resort in gorgeous St. Petersburg, Florida.

BY MEREDITH EFKEN

I have not had more than a passing glance at a palm tree since I arrived late last night. The name tents are set, the water glasses filled, and people are filtering into the room. Kelly McClymer shoves a paper into my hands.

“Kasey says one of us has to introduce Peter Novins. I pick you because you look nice and have make-up on.”

I glance down at the handwritten bio. “Uh...”

“You’re okay with that, right?”

“Yeah.” Lucky for her I don’t have speaking anxiety. The room is filling up, and our panelists are at their seats in front: Eileen Fallon, Brian O’Leary, Joan Schulhafer, Kay Hooper, Carolyn Pittis, Linda Parks, and Loirana Sacilotto. Finally, after months of looking at their names, I now am seeing them in person. It feels good.

But there’s an empty seat. “Where’s Shannon Aviles?” I ask Kasey. She looks at the vacant chair, frowning. I am suddenly glad I am not that chair. She shakes her head and shrugs. Tells me to go ahead and get started.

Despite our mysteriously missing panelist, I bring the morning to order and introduce Peter. I even get a laugh from everyone when I explain that his incredibly impressive, biz-speak job title basically means he keeps CEOs from doing interesting but stupid stuff. So far, so good.

Here are some Panel I highlights:

Things we know, but are good reminders...

- ▶ The publisher is not the enemy. We need to have a cooperative relationship, not an adversarial one.
- ▶ One of the best things we can do with marketing as authors is to get the manuscript turned in **on time**.
- ▶ We also need to consistently deliver a quality story — do what we do best.
- ▶ Pick our battles — use our agents as a buffer when necessary.
- ▶ Reputation matters — we need to be pleasant, professional, and helpful at booksignings or bookstore events. No divas. First impressions count.
- ▶ Be a good partner — don’t pester our publishers.
- ▶ Independent bookstores are an author’s best friend. They will promote us if we connect with them.
- ▶ Don’t expect the publisher to teach us marketing 101 — they’re still trying to figure things out too, especially as everything changes. We have to all work together and try new things.

Things we maybe didn’t know:

- ▶ Sometimes publishers don’t share marketing and production information about our books with us because they aren’t sure if they’ll reach the print run goals and would rather not raise our expectations. In order to position the book as best as possible, the details are inflated to create positive impressions. (Thank you, Joan Schulhafer, for that insight!)
- ▶ Loriana Sacilotto from Harlequin adds that sometimes the information we want is actually not readily available, but that her company does try to get it for the author if possible. She says that it’s important to them to build authors into brands and that means working closely with the author on promotion.
- ▶ Brian O’Leary, founder of Magellan Media Partners, points out that many publishers are not good at looking at what is working or not when it comes to marketing. They just repeat what they did last time. For example, ads in *Publisher’s Weekly* and newspapers don’t sell books, and everyone knows it. But those ads keep happening.
- ▶ For the publisher, marketing is event-driven. It’s short-term for the first few weeks the book is out, and then

they move on to the next book. For the author, promotion has to be ongoing. This is one reason why social media is such a good opportunity for the author. It has a cumulative effect over time, and, as such, should be the responsibility of the author.

- ▶ Google Editions will enable independent bookstores to sell e-books competitively using the agency model. This means that a customer will no longer have an incentive to look at a book at the store and then buy it off of Amazon. Great news for indies, not so hot for the chain retailers.
- ▶ A whopping 89% of searches for book piracy are outside the US. Countries that don't have a legal channel for distribution of English-language books are hungry for books and willing to download them illegally. The global market for English-language books is bigger than the North American market, and it's growing rapidly.
- ▶ Most of what works in the North American market for promotion also works globally. It's important, though, to not delay the release of digital formats and to have the book available in as many places and in as many formats as possible.
- ▶ Anecdotally, it may be that people are getting tired of Walmart and starting to support local businesses again.

Carolyn Pittis, from HarperCollins, becomes NINC's new head-over-heels crush within about 30 seconds of opening her mouth. The woman is crazy-smart and pro-author, and I find myself wishing I could write for HarperCollins just to be near such genius. But I can't indulge that fantasy for long because I'm trying desperately to keep up with her in my note-taking. She is overflowing with information. No — not just overflowing. She's more like a fire hydrant at full blast.

She says that even though there is a lot of data that can and should be passed on to authors, the thing in short supply is context. What does all the data mean? At HarperCollins, she has built an internal toolset for the editorial team so they can see all the information they may need to answer questions from authors. When questions come in, the editor pulls from the internal and external data they've collected to see what drives book sales.

What she has found is that what sold books 50 years ago mostly still sells books today — with some small adjustments. For example, bloggers are the new reviewers, but reviews are still very integral to the bookselling system. They are trying to amass data to show the author everything that they and the author have done for the book. They also try to measure social currency on social media and measure it across authors to see what the larger cultural themes are.

She does admit that some things that used to work don't work so well anymore, and that authors don't always ask for things that make sense. I wish she could elaborate, but the moment flies by. She says that the data they are collecting is very "noisy" — meaning it's hard to tell what is significant and what is not. According to her, the publisher's job is definitely to market books, educate editorial teams, and help authors understand what is happening. She likes to see publishers set "stretch goals" as well as finding more realistic ways to promote.

She later explains that the important thing to consider in our marketing efforts is cost per thousand (CPM). We can always ask pubs what the CPM for marketing efforts is. Everything we do in marketing can be translated into CPM. For example, ads in the *New York Times* have very high CPM. On the other hand, social media has low CPM. As authors, we have to know what our time is worth, and what is the cost in terms of CPM of our various efforts. This framework will help us understand what we're doing. It also helps us take the emotion out of it and just look at the numbers. This will appeal to the business people at the publisher, and the financial people will listen better if we can frame our marketing efforts in terms of CPM.

Wow. Is it any wonder we're all crushing on her?

Toward the end of the panel, a woman makes her way to the front of the room and takes her seat in the empty chair on the platform. It's our missing panelist, Shannon Aviles. She finds a break in the discussion to apologize for her absence.

She was caught in a back-up due to an accident on the Interstate, she explains. Because there were fatalities, the police held up traffic to question people, and she was forced to sleep in her car. She arrived at the Tradewinds around six in the morning and decided to take a shower.

The showerhead fell. It struck her head and knocked her out.

And still she showed up, with several minutes left in the panel. That's dedication. We are very impressed and very glad she appears to be all right. She gets a well-deserved round of applause, and I hear Kasey slip out with a whispered explanation of looking for a doctor for her.

There's a dentist convention going on. I don't suppose they're much help with concussions, but I'm sure, though, that they would have been happy to pull her teeth while she was unconscious.

With such a dramatic end to the first panel, it's been a solid beginning to the day, loose showerheads aside. I'm looking forward to the next panel — Contracts and Copyrights. ▲



BeachCon Recap: Beyond Just Money — Negotiating for Results

Peter Novins and Attorney Alan Kaufman

BY BARBARA MEYERS

I think we were all a bit confused about what to expect from a workshop entitled “Beyond Just Money – Negotiating for Results.”

Peter Novins began the discussion by saying that people think negotiating is just about dividing up the money. If you believe this, unless you’re a huge name, bestselling author, you lose. Don’t make a negotiation only about the money. Know your bottom line. Do your homework. Discover what’s cheap to you but valuable to a publisher and vice versa. As much as you can, leave emotion out of the negotiation.

A few ideas were tossed around, things your publisher might have that they’d share with you, like access to their tax accountants or using their corporate travel discounts. These are not things that will be put in the fine print of your contract, however, and they might be things you’d be embarrassed to ask for.

After a few minutes we got to the nitty-gritty of what non-contractual results we might negotiate for. One author used her own experience with an example of offering to write a free short story featuring the characters in her book in exchange for her publisher giving her book more prominent placement on its web site, mailing list, and blog. Those are the kinds of “think outside the box” ideas we should all be considering.

Could you offer your personal presence at a publisher-sponsored event or at a personal/private event like a party, tea, or luncheon? Does your publisher subscribe to Web X? Perhaps you can use their facilities to create your own podcasts. It saves you money, gives you something of value, and costs them virtually nothing. You might be able to put something like that in your contract.

Peter encouraged us to think strategically, like a chess player. Three moves out, where do you want the pieces to be? Think where *you* want to be positioned three years from now and how this negotiation can get you there. What can you offer *now* to help get you there?

So what if they say “we’re not interested?” You’ve lost nothing by thinking creatively about your negotiation and asking.

Peter stressed, “Anything you can do to save them work is of value to them. Think of it as relationship negotiation.”

Attorney Alan Kaufman stepped in to discuss things you *should* negotiate and have spelled out in your contract. Pay close attention to the following three:

1) Grant of rights. Due to publisher fears, they now try to grab all e-book rights and make it non-negotiable. (But everything is negotiable.) Even granting right of first refusal for enhanced e-book rights can be problematic. Grant only “unenhanced e-book rights.”

(Enhanced allows the publisher to change the work and use all or part of it as they wish, even create derivative works from it.)

Often a publisher won’t use these rights; they just want to tie them up.

2) Non-compete clause. VERY IMPORTANT! One of the most important clauses in the contract. Pay attention to the wording. Every word in your contract is loaded with meaning. If you retain certain rights, but they conflict with your non-compete clause, what have you gained?

3) Out-of-print clause. This clause is often unfair but negotiable. First of all, the publisher must have the work available in commercially feasible quantities. The best way to state when a work is considered out of print is in units not in dollars. For example, if fewer than 300 copies are sold in any format over two consecutive royalty periods the rights revert.

A few other tidbits:

- ▶ A bad economy is no excuse for a low advance. An advance should be based on that book and that author.

- ▶ Ask for escalators for electronic rights.
- ▶ Know in advance what you can't accept in a deal and still live with yourself. You need to know the answer to this question before you start negotiating: "At what point do I walk away?"
- ▶ Know what your next-best alternative is. It might be sticking the book under the bed and waiting for an other opportunity. Or self-publishing it.

Finally these words of wisdom from Peter Novins regarding negotiation:

"It's okay to be emotional; it's not okay to be irrational."

It's Dues Renewal Time...

Renew easily online at the NINC website: <http://www.ninc.com>
Remember to fill in the Authors' Coalition form, also, for additional NINC funding.

Conference, *Nink* every month, a wealth of online features at the website and blog.

You need NINC. And NINC needs you. Renew now!

Print renewal forms are in the mail, but c'mon...it's easier to renew online and you'll know it's done. Renew today, so you'll be in on the conversation and information about the fast-moving publishing world.

Publisher closing down an imprint? What does that announcement breaking at presstime mean for working novelists? Contract changes? New technologies and platforms? Encouragement, information, shared interest...there's no better place for the multi-published novelist than NINC.

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

Canadian Publisher Cut Backs

Key Porter Books is downsizing, closing the Toronto office and cutting 11 staff off the payroll. The remaining staff will move to Bolton, Ontario. The fall list will go forward with PR support, but only approximately 70% of the planned 20-title spring list will be published.

Fireside Dropped from Trade Titles

Touchstone Fireside is Touchstone as of September 2010. The fall list will carry the new name and icon.

iCandymobile

Ricoh Innovations is presenting an app for smart phones and iPad that will enable a reader to buy a print book and still get the multimedia selections offered with e-book formats. The visual capability of iCandy will hunt and replay multimedia content from bar codes, known as "hot spots." Matt Stewart's *The French Revolution* is one of Ricoh's beta-tests. The book has embedded extras such as music, maps, tours, etc. to complement the story.

People

Ruth Reichl, new Random House editor-at-large, will be both editor and author. She has two books launching her RH entrance. Her experience in her former job at *Gourmet's* editor-in-chief will highlight both her non-fiction book, *The Tao of Ruth*, and her novel *Delicious!* She will also work with new projects that involve digital components.

E-Book Sales

August reports are indicating great strides for digital books. According to AAP's monthly reports, which include figures from 14 publishers, sales were up 172.4%. Year-to-date sales figures are up 192.9%.



BeachCon Recap: **AUTOPSY OF A THRILLER**

Presented by Dr. D. P. Lyle

BY SYLVIE KURTZ

A good story happens when a writer can make the reader worry. A writer puts a character out of balance in the beginning, and the character spends the rest of the story trying to get back into balance. In a thriller, the personal stakes must be high — life and death. In most thrillers, the reader has superior knowledge compared to the main character, creating suspense. As the story evolves, the protagonist runs out of options. At the end, the good guy and the bad guy must fight directly.

Two good stories to take apart to understand the structure of a thriller that hooks and doesn't let go: *Red Dragon* by Thomas Harris (1997) and the movie *The Terminator* (1984).

Robin Cook, an ophthalmologist, took 20 bestsellers apart and analyzed them to understand what made them work. He found that all of these successful novels had the same pattern. He used what he learned to create a new genre: medical thrillers. The rest is history.

The basic pattern is to drive the hero up a tree during the first act set-up. Throw rocks at him during Act 2 to amplify the problem. Then make him find a way to get down from that tree — with a twist — in Act 3.

There are two types of stories: someone or something comes into the main character's world and changes it; or something or somebody forces the main character into a different world. How the character reacts comes from who he is.

The movie *The Terminator* ramps up tension and leaves no room for a sagging middle. How? Every scene has a plus (things are good for the hero), minus (things are worse for the hero), or neutral value (things are neither good nor bad for the hero). The movie allowed for few scenes with plus or neutral values and loaded the story with scenes with minus values.

In the beginning, the Terminator appears out of a ball of light. He meets a punk and demands his clothes. When the punk laughs at him, the Terminator rips the heart out of the punk and takes the clothes. This short scene establishes the genre and the toughness of the character. *The Terminator* is a bad guy after a good girl story. You have to show just how bad he is to foreshadow the fierceness of the end battle.

In the next scene, Reese appears out of a similar ball of light, takes a vagrant's clothes, steals a shotgun from a police car, and finds three Sarah Connors in a phone book. The viewer doesn't know who Sarah Connor is, but already he's worried about her.

The next scene shows Sarah at work at a diner. She's ditzy and clumsy, but seems well liked. This shows her incompetence and makes the viewer worry a bit more.

When the Terminator kills Sarah Connor #1, the viewer's worry level cranks up. Sarah's date stands her up — a neutral scene — and Sarah heads out still clueless. When the police learn of a second Sarah Connor's murder, the viewer's worry really ramps up.

When Reese follows Sarah, the viewer worries because he has no idea if Reese is a good guy or a bad guy. When Sarah sees the news on TV about a second dead Sarah Connor, she starts to worry and tries to

call the police, but the phone is out of order. This worry amplifies when she senses she's being followed. Her world starts to quiver. She ducks into a disco and calls the police, but can't get through.

The Terminator goes to Sarah's apartment, kills her roommate and the boyfriend. He overhears a call from Sarah who leaves a message about where she is. He sees a photo ID of Sarah and for the first time knows exactly who he's looking for. This hikes up the worry for the viewer, because this guy is bad news.

The Inciting Incident happens when the police, Reese, and the Terminator all converge onto the disco. Bullets hit the Terminator multiple times, but he gets up. This shows the reader that he's a powerful enemy and ramps up the worry another notch.

Sarah and Reese escape, which provides a small relief from the tension. But then the Terminator steals a police car and chases them, which cranks up the worry once again.

Reese explains who he is and what his goal is, but Sarah has a hard time believing anything he says — it sounds too much like science fiction. The viewer worries about Sarah, because now he understands that the Terminator, who he's seen in action, won't stop until Sarah is dead.

The chase resumes with a series of twists and reversals that rev up adrenaline until the viewer sees the Terminator repair his injured forearm and remove his damaged eye, revealing that he's a cyborg. Now the viewer is really worried, because a cyborg can't be killed.

When a psychiatrist gives Sarah a logical explanation for what she's witnessed, she calms down, providing another moment of respite for the viewer. But again, this pause doesn't last long, because the Terminator attacks the police station, mowing down cops in his quest to reach Sarah (first turning point).

What Reese told her is the truth. He's an ally and, if she wants to live, she has no choice but to go with him.

The second act turns Sarah's world around. She's now completely terrified. She asks Reese if he can kill the Terminator and he says he's not sure he can with the weapons available. This once again cranks up the tension, because the Terminator's win seems a sure thing. Her skills grow as she faces obstacles. Interlaced are a few scenes brief scenes with plus values — like when Sarah and Reese make love. These little victories have a way of making things worse for Sarah. Options run out and things get worse and worse until Sarah and the Terminator end up face-to-face in a rundown industrial building.

A good thriller is like a trash compactor — it crushes choices until the hero runs out of time and space.

Sarah starts as the perfect victim and ends as a warrior. As she survives each obstacle, the viewer sees her change and start to take charge. At the end, she has to outthink the Terminator and crawl through the jaws of death to lead him to his crushing end. The pregnant Sarah who leaves the country to prepare for a coming war is a completely different Sarah than at the beginning.

If you find you're having trouble with a scene, write a one-sentence blurb and assign it a plus, minus, or neutral value. If you have too many plusses or neutrals, create more minuses — things that will make things worse for your main character.

Make a reader ask himself questions and make him worry about what's going to happen next.

Series characters don't necessarily change, but in each of the stories something about his belief system is challenged, creating a dilemma.

By creating a story with a great number of scenes with negative results, a writer can create tension and suspense and keep the reader worrying until the last page. ▲

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***Coming in December Nink:
Brainstorming at the Beach Recaps
continue in the December issue of Nink.***

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



This Brave New World

“There’s definitely a very slim chance we’ll survive..”

— Egon in *Ghostbusters*

There are days when I wish that electronic publishing, Kindle, the iPad, ePub, print-on-demand technology, the Nook, the battles over e-royalties, the conflicts over reversion clauses in a digital world, and all the other developments sweeping through our industry with dizzying speed, changing everything and nullifying much of what I have spent the past 23 years learning... would just *go away*.

However, that won’t happen, so one must adjust. One must also learn to shut out a lot of counter-productive and distracting noise — and if you’ve been reading this column all year, then you know I feel about *noise*.

One example of distracting cacophony that I hear constantly these days is that we’re seeing the death throes of professional publishing (or, in the disappointingly bland slang of the initiated, “trad pubs,” i.e. traditional publishers).

Okay, considering how many major companies, industries, and governments have collapsed since the international economic meltdown began in earnest a couple of years ago, I find it easy to imagine various publishing programs disappearing (indeed, some already have), and certainly not impossible to believe that a big umbrella corporation in our industry, comprising dozens of imprints, could go under. Nonetheless, I think it’s naïve to suppose that, overall, major corporations with huge resources and with decades of experience at getting novels into the hands of readers will simply vanish as a feature of the publishing industry.

The lately oft-repeated sentiment that “you don’t need a publisher anymore” would be more accurate with the addition of the words “for everything that you used to need a publisher for.” For example, you can now easily make your out-of-print backlist, your uncommercial short fiction reprint collection, or the third book of a canceled trilogy available to your die-hard fans, thanks to new technologies. You no longer need a professional publisher for these things — and that’s excellent news, because it has become extremely difficult to find one for such projects.

However, people saying that we don’t need publishers anymore, period, full stop... are saying that because they don’t really understand what a publisher does. Or what an editor does. Or what designers, art departments, and top cover artists do. Or what publishing PR, sales, and marketing departments do. And so on.

The traditional publishing system is certainly very flawed (even arcane, archaic, and bizarre in various ways). But there’s a lot involved in getting from a writer’s draft of a manuscript to a professionally edited, packaged, produced, marketed, and positioned novel that tens (or hundreds) of thousands of total strangers spend their hard-earned money and hard-won free time to buy and read.

Meanwhile, one of the great attractions of the new technologies and distribution venues for many people is that uploading a book to Kindle or Lightning Source and declaring oneself now “published” has all the self-explanatory allure of instant gratification that professional publishing typically lacks.

And a very common attitude that I have always encountered at conferences and workshops, and among writing groups and classes that invite me to speak, and (above all) on the Internet is that most aspiring writers want this profession to be easy. They’re unwilling to compete in slushpiles, wait for responses, receive rejections, overcome setbacks, and spend years working toward ambitious professional goals. They want the fulfillment of their writing aspirations to be **easy, fast, and immediately gratifying**.

Which very rarely occurs in a profession as highly competitive and demanding as this one. And now that there is

indeed an easy, fast, and immediately gratifying way to exercise their writing aspirations, some of them declare that professional publishing is in its death spiral or that “trad pubs” are merely an obsolete “alternative” to “indy publishing” (“independent” publishing, by which they mean uploading their books to e-publishing and POD formats).

“Being a writer” is one of the careers most commonly aspired to in our society (along with “being a film actor”); meanwhile, very few consumers buy or read books. Thus, opportunities and profit margins are narrow in this longed-for profession. Consequently, it’s very challenging to sell a book — and much *more* challenging to keep selling books for decades.

A long-term professional writing career requires will and perseverance, drive and commitment, and getting up off the mat over and over again. It also requires, in addition to talent (and, indeed, perhaps more so than talent) a level of writing mechanics that most people don’t have and don’t do the work to learn. The bottom line is, as it has always been, that most people who claim they want a writing career won’t do the hard work or pony up the true grit that it takes to have one.

The new pressures on the old publishing model will force changes in it (and perhaps even force *improvements...* but let’s not get wacky with wild-eyed optimism here). As we’re already seeing, those pressures will also force some companies out of business. But people who declare that “trad pubs” are on the verge of obsolescence are drastically underestimating what’s involved in taking someone from being a complete unknown with a MS and turning that person into an author whose next book 100,000 people are looking for.

And there will continue to be a place in this brave new world for companies — including big ones, such as current major houses in the industry — that do that.

Obviously, the major houses have lost their monopoly on the market; and it’s likely that their dominance will continue to decrease for a while, before finding its new water level. But major houses won’t disappear from the industry.

We’ve seen this pattern in related scenarios, after all. With the advent of cable, major networks lost their long-time stranglehold over what gets seen on TV; and their dominance decreased further with the widespread use of satellite dishes, DVD purchases and rentals, streaming video, digital downloads, etc. But the major broadcast networks still exist; and various cable and subscription networks have risen in prominence and become television powerhouses, too, as some small and mid-size presses have done in publishing and will continue to do.

As Chris Anderson, author of *The Long Tail*, explained in his keynote speech at NINC’s 2007 conference, long tail distribution doesn’t mean that major corporations disappear, or that all content-producers and distribution methods become equal. It means that opportunities become available to content-producers and consumers in the long-tail of the beast that weren’t/aren’t available from the beast’s head. The dimensions of the beast change, but its head doesn’t *vanish*; it just becomes less dominant.

There are still many record companies, including major ones. It’s just that no one *has to* sign with a record company anymore to make their recordings available to the public. Yet there is still more money in signing a good deal with Capitol Records than there is in marketing your music yourself as an unknown artist. I think that getting a book well-positioned by a major corporation is going to be better for a writer than personally uploading that book to electronic venues and then trying to convince the nation to buy it.

But, obviously, for someone who’s *not* being well-positioned by a major publisher (which description has included me and my manuscripts on many occasions) there are now many more options to make some money, to reach readers, and even to aim for success than there were ten years ago — or even five years ago.

And *that* (rather than erroneous predictions that professional publishing will vanish like the dinosaurs) is the great benefit to writers of the long tail distribution model which is made possible by new technologies and the changing marketplace.

Laura Resnick, who releases some of her books via professional publishers, is also uploading some of her out-of-print backlist to brave new self-publishing technologies.

It’s Dues Renewal Time...

Renew easily online at the NINC website: <http://www.ninc.com>

Remember to fill in the Authors’ Coalition form, also, for additional NINC funding. Conference, Nink every month, a wealth of online features at the website and blog.

You need NINC. And NINC needs you. Renew now!

NINC Bulletin Board

COMPILED BY SUSAN LYONS

Got news or information
for the Bulletin Board?

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susan@susanlyons.ca

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NINC Blog

To maintain the great content on NINC's blog, we need you. Sign up to blog yourself, and help us find industry professionals who'll share their expertise. Pass along suggestions and email addresses, or invite your own agent, editor, publicist, website designer — or be creative and surprise us
Patricia Rosemoor

& Facebook

Don't forget that NINC is also on Facebook! You're needed there too, to help us show the world what a great organization NINC is.

What's Going On with Other Writers' Organizations

Note: The following is provided for member information and does not constitute an endorsement by NINC of the organizations or activities.

The Backspace Agent-Author Seminar, November 11-12 in NYC, features panel discussions and small-group query letter and opening pages workshop critiques with over 25 literary agents:
<http://www.backspacewritersconference.com>.

At the New York Writers Workshop Perfect Pitch Fiction Conference, November 12-14, participants meet with and pitch novels to three different editors from major New York publishing houses. http://www.newyorkwritersworkshop.com/pitch_fiction.html.

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America will host its annual reception for the publishing industry at Planet Hollywood the evening of November 22:
<http://www.sfwaw.org/2010/09/invitation-2010-new-york-reception>.

Florida Romance Writers Fun in the Sun 2011 Conference will be held on a cruise ship January 20-24, 2011:
<http://www.frwriters.org/conferences.html>.

The San Francisco Writers Conference: Building Bridges to Better Tomorrows, February 18-20, 2011 will feature nearly 100 agents, authors, editors and book industry professionals:
<http://www.sfwriters.org/pages.cfm?ID=1>.

Want a deal on classy promo items?

Published authors recommend Ninth Moon for creative, high quality promo items (<http://www.ninthmoon.com>). Did you know NINC members get 20% more of any printed item? It's one of the many great deals negotiated for NINC. Look under the Member Services tab.

Adventures at the NINC Website

How often have you sent a mistext?

Hopefully, not often. A mistext is a text message (usually not a nice one!) about person A that you intend to send to person B, but instead send to person A instead. Oops! Where did I learn this nifty new bit of slang? From <http://www.urbandictionary.com>, one of several slang dictionaries in the Reference section. Learn a new expression every day.

Help make the Reference section even more fabulous by sending your favorite online resources to susan@susanlyons.ca.

Not Your Usual Writing Advice — Productive Procrastination

BY JOANN GROTE

“*Inspiration enters through the window of irrelevance.*”

— M. C. Richards



Writers tend to be workaholics – at least periodic workaholics. Eighteen-hour days and seven-day weeks aren’t unusual when a deadline looms. When not working seven days a week, we tend to feel we should work more hours than we do. We long to de-stress, and to find energy to stay productive and creative. In an attempt to stay sane, we sometimes walk away from the computer – and feel guilty for it.

Gaelen Foley encourages creativity and fights stress with "downtime or rest, more do-nothing zone time and...interesting activities, variety in life, fun, whatever, especially the non-verbal kinds of activities that draw on areas of the brain other than writing. These kinds of occasional pursuits seem to be as crucial to creativity as actually getting the pages done.”

I agree. Often these pursuits are crucial *to* getting the pages done. And yet, we frequently call these pursuits procrastination – a term with negative connotations. Contrary to popular opinion, procrastination can be positive. Sometimes what we think is procrastination is really our inner self finding a way to keep the water in the creative well filled and fresh.

“Oh, it’s so tempting to just *play!*” Charlotte Hubbard wrote in her March 11, 2010 NINC blog, *Conjuring*. “And I’m doing that, from what any normal observer could tell...but then, we writers are sly! Who knew that crocheting could be a great way to get my mind out of gear enough to hatch plot premises as my fingers fly? Who knew that gazing raptly at the moving surface of the pool would show me a key image that feeds into my series proposal?”

Barbara Keiler, aka Judith Arnold, jogs. “Jogging is good for the mind, and the soul. And for my creativity. I plot out my stories as I jog.”

Jogging isn’t for me, nor do I crochet. The procrastination method that works best for me is cleaning and straightening up the house.

I follow the same pattern with every book I write. I start out with my house, desk, and writing area in order. As I get further into the manuscript, the notes, research books, and my manuscript pile up around me. House cleaning goes by the wayside. By the time I’m to the last couple chapters, I can barely walk in my writing area, and the rest of the house is not in acceptable shape for anyone else to view. It’s at this point, when I’m almost done with the first draft and the deadline is beginning to loom, that I cannot stand the chaos one moment longer. Even though I feel I need every waking moment to work on the book, I clean the house. I berate myself almost the entire time for not writing instead.

Then comes that moment. You know the one: the *aha* moment. Something regarding the manuscript clicks. A plot point I hadn’t even realized was missing shows up. The perfect, absolutely-necessary-to-the-story scene appears full-blown in my mind. A minor character takes an unexpected action and suddenly has a major effect on the hero’s and heroine’s lives. It never fails; the manuscript is always better because I took time to clean house, yet I’ve gone through the argument with myself on whether to clean or write at

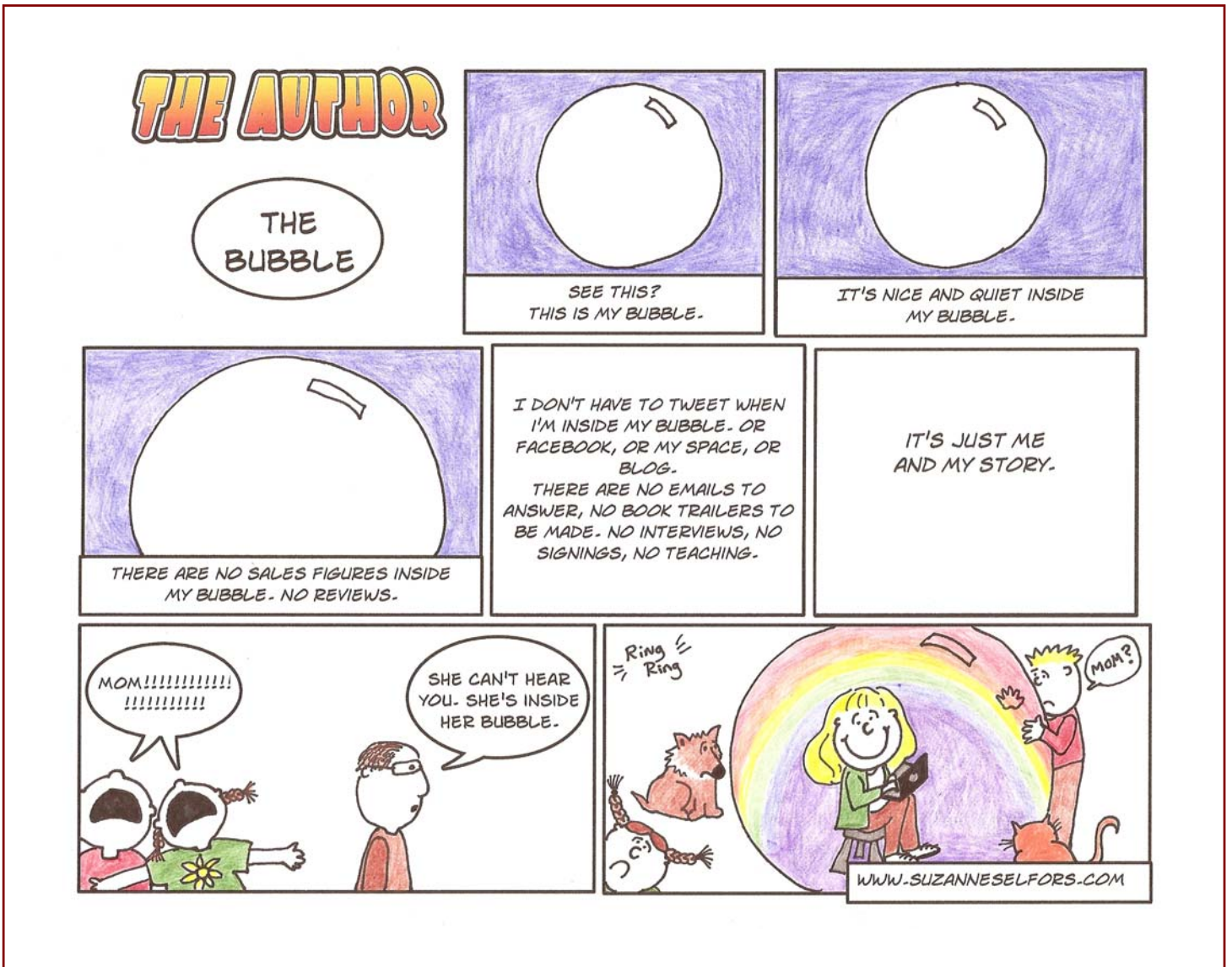
the same stage on every one of my 38 books.

Agatha Christie said, "The best time for planning a book is while doing the dishes."

Apparently that stimulates Sarah McCarty's imagination, too. She states, "I usually dictate chapters into a recorder when I'm gardening, scooping the yard, doing dishes, or going for walks. I had to train my mind to do it. At first I'd only get a sentence or two out, but now just putting on the head set drops me into the zone." She claims a person can dictate four times faster than they can type. Transcribing? She has a program that takes care of that for her. Sarah definitely wins the award for productive procrastination.

Joan Wolf, whose 46th book is due out next summer, keeps productive without long hours on the computer. "I only ever wrote for two hours a day, producing (at most) five pages a day. I could continue on, but I'm not fresh any more. Usually by the following day, I'm raring to go and it flows pretty easily. A good book has to have time to simmer in your brain – away from that computer."

Maybe staring at a blank screen all day isn't always virtuous. A little procrastination might be just what your story needs. ▲





WRITING is TAXING

By Diane O'Brien Kelly

ESTIMATE, GUESSTIMATE

A common question from self-employed clients is “How much do I have to pay in estimated taxes and when?”

The answer is easy: It depends.

Why so wishy-washy? Because people have different philosophies about taxes, and how much they pay and when varies depending on their approach.

There are four types of taxpayers:

Type #1: These conservative taxpayers would rather overpay Uncle Sam so long as they won't owe at tax time. Rather than trying to nail their expected tax liability down to the penny, these people are happy to be in the ballpark. If you're this type, make an estimated tax payment on or before the next estimated tax due date following receipt of any payment. To figure out how much to pay in, add 15.3% (the combined social security and Medicare tax rates) to your income tax rate and multiply the total by the amount of money received. You can find the income tax brackets in the instructions for Form 1040-ES at www.irs.gov.

As an example, assume Nick Novelist, who is married and files jointly with his wife, receives a \$40,000 advance on a new book plus \$10,000 in royalties on previously published books in October. He expects to have total taxable income of \$175,000 for the year, including the \$50,000 received in October. Per the tax rates for married joint filers in the Form 1040-ES instructions, \$175,000 of taxable income puts him in the 28% tax bracket. 15.3% plus 28% = 43.3%. Thus, if he pays \$21,650 ($\$50,000 \times .433$) when his next estimated tax payment is due on January 15th, he will have paid in more than enough to cover his taxes on the October income and will likely receive a refund.

To ensure enough is paid in, of course, his annual taxable income estimate must be reasonably accurate, and the taxes withheld from other income, such as wages, must be enough to cover taxes on that other income.

Type #2: These people don't want to owe tax with their returns, but also don't want to make an interest-free loan of their money to the government. If you're Type #2, you'll have to do more math. The Form 1040-ES contains a worksheet (page 7 of the 2010 form) that will take you through a detailed computation to determine how much to pay in throughout the year. Although the form is designed to compute the amount you must pay merely to avoid a penalty (which may be less than the full amount of tax you will owe) it is helpful when used with modifications.

Note that although line 13c of the worksheet uses the term “Total estimated tax,” what the IRS really means is “total expected tax on all your income for the year.” To make sure you pay in enough, take the total expected tax from line 13c and subtract the amount of tax withholding you expect to be withheld from other payments, such as your wages or retirement distributions and those of your spouse. You should pay the remaining amount in as estimated taxes by remitting one-quarter of the balance on each estimated tax due date.

It's sometimes hard to know what your earnings will be for a given year. You will need to make adjustments to your expected adjusted gross income on line 1 of the worksheet if your income expectations change throughout the year, and you'll need to take these revised expectations into account when computing your subsequent estimated payments.

As an example, assume line 13c shows \$15,000 in total expected tax for the year. You expect to have \$5,000 tax withheld from wages paid on your day job. You should make estimated tax payments of \$10,000 during the year to avoid both owing at year end and overpaying your taxes. Pay \$2,500 on each estimated tax due date.

As a further example, assume that after you've made your first estimated tax payment, you receive a surprisingly large royalty check and now expect to owe a total of \$25,000 in taxes. When you take the revised total tax of ▶

\$25,000 and subtract your expected withholding of \$5,000 plus the \$2,500 in estimated tax payments already made, you end up with remaining tax owed of \$17,500. Divide this equally among your next three estimated tax payments, and pay \$5,833 on each subsequent estimated tax due date.

Type #3: These taxpayers would like to postpone payment of tax as long as possible, so long as no penalty is assessed. Under current tax law, regardless of your total tax for a given year, you can avoid penalties if you make estimated tax payments equal to the lesser of:

90% of the total current year's tax, or

100% of the total preceding year's tax or 110% of the total preceding year's tax if your adjusted gross income for the preceding year was \$150,000 or more.

The worksheet in the estimated tax form is designed to compute the estimated tax payments you should make to avoid a penalty. Complete the entire worksheet to determine how much you should pay in through the year, and pay in one-quarter on each of the four estimated tax due dates. Even if you've paid in the 90% or 100%/110% required, the IRS will impose a penalty if you don't pay one-quarter of the amount on each due date. Also, if you don't pay any remaining amount by April 15, you will owe interest and penalties on the delinquent balance owed. Obtaining an extension of time to file your return does not give you an extension of time to pay.

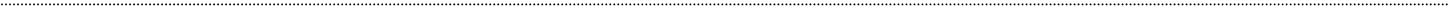
Type #4: These taxpayers live in the moment and simply ante up come tax time even if they're assessed a penalty. Don't be this type. These taxpayers break the rules, cost themselves unnecessary penalties, and risk the wrath of the IRS. But, if you're this type, you're not going to listen to my advice, anyway. *Carpe diem*, but don't expect sympathy when you're hit with a big tax bill and penalties.

For further tax tips, check out the "Tax Tidbits" page on Diane's website, <http://www.dianeobrienkelly.com>. Got a tax question for Diane? Email her at Diane@dianeobrienkelly.com. Your question might be addressed in an upcoming issue.



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PW Select: Opportunity or Exploitation?

POSTED BY VICTORIA STRAUSS FOR [WRITER BEWARE](#)

Print-on-demand technology has done a lot over the past 10 or 12 years to change the publishing landscape. Among other things, it has created an explosion of fee-based publishing options, small publishers, and micropresses. These ventures in turn have driven an intense proliferation of services targeted to writers, all of them intended (theoretically, at least) to offset the minimal marketing and limited distribution that's typical of POD publishing services and small presses.

Among these new writers' services (or "services," depending on how incompetent or unscrupulous the providers are) are book review services that review for a fee. Many are independent, and often run by not-necessarily-highly-qualified people — for instance, Reader's Choice, which offers an [Express Review Upgrade](#) for \$45 (you can pay more if you want a marketing package as well), or IP Book Reviewers, which charges [between \\$50 and \\$90](#) depending on length.

Other paid-review services are associated with a review publication that mainly does non-paid reviews. The "sponsored reviews programs" from [San Francisco Book Review](#) and the [Sacramento Book Review](#) cost \$99 to \$299, depending on how fast you want your review (if you're a writer, you may have been spammed by one or both of these magazines). *ForeWord Magazine* offers [Digital Reviews](#) for "worthy" books that can't be covered in the magazine (\$99), and [Clarion Reviews](#) for authors "experiencing trouble getting your titles reviewed through traditional outlets" (\$305). And of course there's [Kirkus Discoveries](#) (\$425 to \$575, depending on turnaround time). To preserve the appearance of impartiality, none of these services promises a positive review (and indeed I've seen some pretty negative ones from Discoveries) — and all of them segregate the paid reviews from the rest, publishing them only online or burying them in a special newsletter.

Is it ever worthwhile to buy a review? Not in my opinion. With independent paid-review services, quality can be a problem; plus, there are plenty of non-professional book review venues out there that will review for free. With services like Discoveries, you may actually get a professional-quality review — but it will be a second-class review, stuck in some backwater on the service's website. Plus, no matter what altruistic motive the service offers to justify its fees, paid reviews are less an effort to expand review coverage to worthy books than an opportunity to make some extra cash by exploiting self- and small press-published authors' hunger for credibility and exposure.

Now there's a new entrant in the fee-for-review arena: *Publishers Weekly*. This coming December, [PW will launch PW Select](#), a quarterly supplement that will focus on...

...announcing self-published titles and reviewing those we believe are most deserving of a critical assessment...Each quarterly will include a complete announcement issue of all self-published books submitted during that period. The listings will include author, title, subtitle, price, pagination and format, ISBN, a brief description, and ordering information provided by the authors, who will be required to pay a processing fee for their listing. At least 25 of the submitted titles will be selected for a published review. There will also be an overview of the publishing trends that can be identified from among the titles from that reading period. We will also focus on the opportunities that the self-pub world offers. A resource directory will accompany the section offering names of companies providing services in the DIY space.

The entire PW editorial staff will participate in a review of the titles being considered for review, and we'll likely invite a few agent friends and distributors to have a look at what we've chosen. No promises there, just letting some publishing friends take advantage of the opportunity to see the collection.

The reading period for the December supplement will be September 1 through October 31. The processing fee is \$149 (plus the cost of a book and postage), and includes a six-month subscription to PW's digital edition (much of PW's digital content is available for free, so this is less generous than it appears). Finished books or bound galley's ►

only; no ebooks or manuscripts.

So, let's recap:

PW, probably the best-known of the professional review venues, is opening its doors to self-published authors for the first time...

For a fee of \$149...

Which *will* buy:

- ▶ a listing in a supplement (not the main magazine) that includes advertising from publishing services and fee-based publishers...

Which *may* buy:

- ▶ a review, but no guarantees...
- ▶ a look-see from an agent or editor or distributor, though no promises.

Fees notwithstanding, those are powerful lures for exposure-starved writers. I suspect a perfect storm of books is about to head PW's way.

PW Select is not quite like other paid review services. You aren't paying for a review — just for a listing and the possibility of a review. This may seem like splitting hairs, but I think it's a meaningful distinction, because it allows PW to, [in its words](#), "maintain our right to review what we deemed worthy." Precisely because authors *aren't* buying a review, a review, if they get one, may have more credibility — assuming of course that it's a real review, not a couple of lines of summary, which we won't know for sure until the first issue comes out. And whether or not PW follows through on its non-promise to involve agents, etc. in the selection process, I think it's not a stretch to imagine that at least some industry people may be watching PW Select with interest — at least to start.

For a self- or small press-pubbed author with a quality book, therefore, PW Select could — just possibly — be an opportunity. Problem is, most writers believe their books are quality, whether or not that's so. Many, if not most, of the writers who pay the \$149 won't have a prayer of getting a review. All they'll receive for their money is a listing — and while the reviews may attract attention, who will look at the listings? It's hard for me to imagine that anyone beyond the authors themselves will care.

Plus, there will be that "resource directory" of fee-based services and publishers — great for PW, which gets advertising income, not so great for anyone else, given how saturated we are already with these kinds of ads (and will PW vet them to exclude scammers?). Bottom line: as much as Kirkus Discoveries or any other paid-review service, PW Select is a moneymaking venture that feeds on self- and small press-pubbed authors' hunger for exposure, in full knowledge that the majority of the writers who buy the service will not benefit from it.

Opportunity or exploitation? A little of the first. A lot of the second.

Possibly to PW's surprise, PW Select has [generated some criticism](#) from the self-pub community. And Lee Goldberg points out that [there are conflict of interest concerns](#) for PW review staff.

Victoria Strauss is the author of seven fantasy novels, and co-founder of Writer Beware, a publishing industry watchdog group sponsored by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. She maintains the popular Writer Beware website (www.writerbeware.org) and blog (www.accrispin.blogspot.com). Learn more about Victoria at her website: www.victoriastrauss.com.



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