

NINC

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Celebrating the
Best of NINC

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October 22-26, 2014

Not in My Name: A Reminder About What's Important

REPORTED BY MINDY KLASKY

The final workshop session was presented by Porter Anderson, who started by asking the stark question: “Where Are You?” He noted that publishing has been a disrupted business since 2007, when both the Kindle and the iPhone were introduced. The most dangerous element for disrupted businesses is *incoherence*.

Anderson encouraged NINC members to foster “sociohistorical awareness.” He believes that after seven hard years, we lack a memory of what we’re trying to accomplish. Using <http://www.thoughtcatalog.com> as an example, Anderson posited that millennials are more likely to view the world through lenses of romance and sex, and that publishers must apply those lenses to reach their broadest audience.

Our disrupted industry is summarized by Amazon’s Jon Fine who stated: “The good news is that everybody can publish a book. The bad news is that everybody can publish a book.” While publishing has stood still for decades, we’re now in a position to provoke thought. To that end, Anderson identified several challenging myths:

- ▶ Major publishers are dinosaurs. No! Some publishers are looking forward, using services like BookBridgr, which distributes 550 copies of published volumes to book bloggers to garner notice and reviews.
- ▶ Bricks-and-mortar bookstores are dying. No! The American Booksellers Association notes a resurgence in independent stores. (There are, however, bookstores closing on college campuses, because some students now rent books.)
- ▶ Subscription models (such as Kindle Unlimited) are great. No! Authors are giving up 30 percent of their income on sold books to receive 13 percent of their income on loaned books.
- ▶ Authors’ competition is all the other books on the market. No! Competition is video games, etc. that take readers’ time and attention.
- ▶ A publisher’s job is to find readers. No! Traditionally published authors continue to struggle to build audience.
- ▶ Retailers are killing publishers. No! Some publishers, like Simon and Schuster and Sweden’s Bonnier, have readily agreed to work with Amazon.
- ▶ Publishers must take charge to guide the publishing industry to success. No! The industry may already be beyond their control.

Our industry has already undergone tremendous change.

- ▶ In 1998, Bowker listed 900,000 active titles.
- ▶ In 2012, Bowker listed 28 million active titles.
- ▶ In 2013, Bowker issued 458,564 ISBNs for self-published titles (with untold millions of titles published without ISBNs.)

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Novelists, Inc.

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Introducing...

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

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NINC 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.

2014 Conference Reporters:

Susan Anderson is director of fundraising communications at St. Bonaventure University. Writing as Lindsay Randall, she is the national bestselling author of the *To Woo an Heiress* series and the award-winning *Phantom*. Her articles have appeared in *Pennsylvania Sportsman*, *Buffalo Magazine*, and *CURRENTS*.

Cheryl Bolen, a former journalist, is the *New York Times* bestselling author of more than 20 novels, most of them set in Regency England. Her newest release is *A Christmas in Bath*. More information about her writing is available at www.CherylBolen.com.

USA TODAY best-selling author **Terri Brisbin** has had more than 34 historical and paranormal romance novels, novellas, and short stories published since 1998 by Berkley, Harlequin, Kensington and soon NAL—in 25 languages and 20 countries! When not living the glamorous life of a romance author, she lives in southern New Jersey and is a wife, mother (about to be grammie), and dental hygienist. You can find out more than you need to know about Terri on her website www.terribrisbin.com. Her upcoming release, *RISING FIRE: A Novel of the Stone Circles*, will be published in March 2015 by Signet Eclipse.

A recovering lawyer turned contemporary romance author, **Ann Christopher** was traditionally published for years before going indie this year. She has also branched out—her first YA horror novel, *Monstrum*, is available now. Contact Ann via her site, www.AnnChristopher.com.

Mindy Klasky learned to read when her parents shoved a book in her hands and told her she could travel anywhere through stories. As a writer, Mindy has traveled through various genres, including hot contemporary romance. In her spare time, Mindy knits, quilts, and tries to tame her to-be-read shelf. Her most recent novel is *Always Right*, the final volume of the *Diamond Brides* series about players on the (imaginary) *Raleigh Rockets* baseball team and the women who love them. You can reach Mindy through her website: <http://www.mindyklasky.com>.

An Amazon Top Ten bestselling historical romance author, **Tracey Lyons** sold her first book on 9/9/99! Tracey's books have been translated into several languages. She has appeared on the award winning *Cox Cable Television* show, *Page One*, and at the famous *Lady Jane's Salon* in New York City. She holds membership in *Romance Writers of America*, *American Christian Fiction Writers*, and *Novelists, Inc.* Tracey writes historical and contemporary romances.

Ashley McConnell has published 17 novels and several short stories, including one in the first *NINC* anthology, *Cast of Characters*. In addition to her fiction work, Ashley has written nonfiction about writing, science, and the culture of large companies. Her first novel was nominated for the *Bram Stoker Award*. She was the Registrar for the 2011 *NINC* conference and has served as Treasurer since April 2013.

Pam McCutcheon is the author of romance novels and how-to books for writers under her own name, fantasy short stories under the name *Pamela Luzier*, and the *Demon Underground* YA urban fantasy series under the name *Parker Blue*. Her latest release is an updated e-book version of her popular *Writing the Fiction Synopsis*, and she can be found on the 'net at pammc.com or parkerblue.net.

Barbara Meyers writes contemporary romance and screwball fantasy. Her latest release is *Nobody's Fool*. Visit her at www.barbarameyers.com.

Janis Susan May Patterson is a seventh-generation Texan and a third-generation wordsmith who writes mystery, romance, horror, children's fiction, and scholarly nonfiction. Janis and her husband live in Texas with an assortment of rescued furbabies.

Abracadaver, the seventh novel in **Laura Resnick's** traditionally published urban fantasy series, was released in November, and she self-publishes her backlist. <http://lauraresnick.com>

Pat Roy is author of the *Adventure Journals*. *Be the One* will be released in January 2015. For more about Pat, go to www.PatRoy.net or www.GottaReadThat.com.

Jennifer Stevenson writes about sex demons. She also types really fast. That's the only way she was able to follow these amazing presentations. <http://jenniferstevenson.com>.

Dianne Venetta lives in central Florida with her husband, two children and part-time *Yellow Lab*—Cody-body! When not whacking away at her keyboard crafting her next novel you'll find her in the family's organic garden chasing grasshoppers and plucking hornworms. Dianne contributes garden advice to various websites in addition to volunteering for school gardens. *Not Without You* is Book One in Dianne's latest series, *Silver Creek*.

Future of Publishing: Take One

REPORTED BY ANN CHRISTOPHER

Panelists: Lou Aronica, author/publisher; Liliana Hart, author; Hugh Howey, author; Erika Tsang, Editorial Director, Morrow/Avon; Carolyn Pittis, Managing Director, Welman Digital LLC, NYC; Daniel Slater, Author and Vendor Relations, Amazon Indie Publishing; F. Robert Stein, literary attorney, Pryor Cashman; Jon Fine, Director, Author & Publishing Relations, Amazon.com; Elaine English, attorney and literary agent; **Moderator:** Porter Anderson, journalist, Porter Anderson Media

Porter Anderson mentioned Barbara Freethy's new worldwide print partnership with Ingram, which he believes will be a game changer.

Anderson: who're the author's most important partners?

F. Robert Stein: *Mutuality* is key, but TP isn't mutual. TP should be more willing to let authors go, but current out-of-print clauses are the definition of slavery. Savvy negotiators can get around this. TP shouldn't keep books unless the author is making real money. When a book has ended its run, publishers should say, "You're free."

Elaine English: Anything that lets authors retain rights is crucial. Make well-informed decisions. Short-term trials are also useful.

Jon Fine: Agreed. But commitment and long-standing relationships also help. Who are the distributors and partners that can help you reach readers? Maybe go indie in the US and traditional publishing (TP) in Taiwan. Building an audience *with the reader* is critical.

Dan Slater: The most important partnership is between author and reader. How does the industry (publishers/distributors/retailers, etc.) help to maximize that relationship?

Fine: NINC has a great and important community amongst authors.

Anderson: True, but authors should *get out of the ghetto*. Don't spend all day on social media talking to other authors.

Carolyn Pittis: A partnership is a power relationship. The key is in where the power lies in each transaction. The need for new skills and scale drives change. Example? Barbara Freethy's Ingram deal. Ingram is worldwide and has scale; Barbara Freethy has skill. What're the skills and scale required to reach a goal? Ask: what're my core skills? Which skills do I want to personally develop? Which financially stable partners can I work with on others? Read widely. Recommendation: *The Information Diet*.

Erika Tsang: An author's most important relationship is with readers. If they don't connect with what you write, publishers can do little. Write the books consistently.

Liliana Hart: We should focus on the reader relationship. She focuses on her books and readers and doesn't like the term "partnership." "Relationship" is better. She's grateful for her collaborative relationships, but this is the business *she's* created, with *her* books and readers. Therefore, things must benefit *her*. She wants her books in every available retailer and format. She does some foreign translations on her own and is open to new opportunities.

Hugh Howey: Only the writer and reader matter; all else is superfluous. Maybe others can add value, but maybe not. Howey can foresee a future where Amazon isn't so dominant. Publishing is supply and demand. Right now, there's a huge glut of books, so we should get the demand up. We can grow the pie by partnering with schools. We should get kids reading and writing.

Fine: Everyone now has the same opportunity to indie publish. We should find ways to cull through the supply.

Lou Aronica: We should find sustained ways to differentiate our books and grow our output. Bring back the midlist with digital publishing. We need partners who help do new things and build a sustainable career for us. How do we create valuable partnerships? Look at how others can help sell our books for a long time.

Howey: Trying to publish a blockbuster is unrealistic. You can now make a living without being a ▶

household name. That's what Howey's aiming for: more people making a living.

Fine: There are many business models/relationships. There's no one answer. Being a writer has never been a fast track to riches. Amazing indie opportunities force uncomfortable new changes in TP.

Howey: New developments like publishing dashboards are good.

Pittis: Read *The Innovator's Dilemma*. Incumbents (publishers) are the least likely innovators. New entrants will innovate. Recent innovations? Oyster. Monthly subscriptions. Book Lamp, an Apple startup. Algorithms will help connect these dots in the future, so ask for hard data from your partners.

Anderson: Producing more books faster is the best way to grow a market and solidify your niche.

Hart: It all feeds off each other. Hart has 35 titles and was never traditionally published. She published her backlist, putting five titles up at once and the next one 30 days later while working on the one after that. Everything rises with each book; this is the power of the backlist.

Howey: He doesn't like the quality/quantity issue; they're not linked. Howey writes best when he writes quickly. Many people write quickly when they're very excited about the book.

Audience: Future competitors with Amazon?

Hart: iBooks is Hart's #1 retailer.

Stein: Walden, Borders, and B&N were once irreplaceable. Ten years from now, Stein doubts Amazon will be irreplaceable.

Slater: Innovation comes from all sides. How can we ensure authors keep making money?

Fine: We all need the most diverse content delivery scheme.

Anderson: Every possible sales point is good. Including car trunks!

Fine: Amazon may still be viable in 10 years, but it'll need to address its issues.

Aronica: No one else has the share that Amazon has now. But Amazon is way better at what it does. It's not about Amazon stealing customers—the customers have chosen.

Howey: Saying Amazon is bad for books is like saying Vegas is bad for gambling. Publishers' margins are going up on e-books. Authors should demand a bigger cut.

Pittis: What do international readers want? This has all been about the U.S. audience. For all other exports, the growth potential is in Asia. Film is already there. Asia's markets and consumer tastes are different, but there's potential. What do we know about it?

Fine: Opportunities abroad is a huge area.

Howey: Overseas contracts are much fairer. They're three to four pages and run for the term of license rather than the life of the copyright. There's more mutual trust.

Fine: Technology is helping. ACX matches authors with producers. Finding good translators is still an issue. But there are new and untapped audiences.

Howey: But if you haven't broken out in the U.S., it's very difficult to get foreign interest.

Hart: Hart's street team helps with foreign markets. She sends them free books and they spread word of mouth.

Fine: Readership and customer demographics are proprietary, but over time Amazon has provided more information to authors. This will probably continue. It's important for them to come to conferences and hear what authors want.

Slater: Author Central provides demographic info, so authors can make more informed decisions.

Pittis: It's about scale. Collectively, the author community has more power than you think. You should understand more about the data that's out there and ask more pointed questions.

Fine: Authors have a bigger voice. It's an amazing time to be a storyteller in terms of new opportunities.

Audience: Can the author find out the total sales picture—as hybrid and indie authors?

Fine: Not yet.

Howey: We can't even get total KDP numbers.

Fine: Yeah, but now Amazon realizes this is an important issue to authors. Amazon has to research future moves. He sees improvements in the clarity of reporting. ▲

It's Dues Renewal Time ... Don't Miss Out on the Best Resource in the Fast Changing Publishing World ... Novelists, Inc. Renew Online Today!

Marketing Platforms for Novelists Who Hate Marketing

REPORTED BY PAM MCCUTCHEON

Speakers: John Olson and Randy Ingermanson, DitDat.com

The primary message from DitDat (the designer of the forthcoming new and improved NINC website) is that if you don't like to do marketing, embrace your "brokenality" and 1) Figure out what you hate doing, then 2) Don't do it again. Do something else instead, like pay someone to do it for you, build something to do it for you, or use existing software. They provided some very practical suggestions for doing that:

Rule #1: Use social media—don't let it use you. Facebook is essentially a publisher with really lousy royalty rates to you, the author of your posts. By using it, you're building their presence, not yours. So, the trick is to do what Facebook does, but do it on your own website to bring traffic there.

Rule #2: Control your marketing platform by driving readers to your website. How? By focusing on content, by being yourself, and showcasing your interests. But the best way to draw people in is to help them. For that reason, text is more important than graphics. Ask yourself how you can get more readers (discoverability) and don't give up control of your website to a webmaster. Use a web technology you're comfortable with and update it yourself.

Rule #3: Put Google to work for you. What do people want? What are they searching for on Google? What can you help them with? Create "honey pot" pages on your site using that potential search phrase for the page name and title. This will bring readers to your site and give them a reason to send other people your way. Then talk to Google like a four-year-old—repeat the article title, page name, and your name at least three times (you should also do this when blogging) so they'll find it.

Once the reader is on your site, what do you want them to do? Sign up for your newsletter? Write a review? Send other people your way? Buy your book? Ask them for it.

Consider creating fan pages, and put your fans to work creating content for you, giving them the ability to update and manage the pages. Give them responsibility, visibility, trust, and ownership. In other words, give people warm fuzzies so they will promote for you. (Though DitDat didn't push it, their software can help with this.)

The formula for marketing is: $\text{Success} = \text{Audience} \times \text{Quality} \times \text{Production} \times \text{Discoverability}$. You can increase discoverability by knowing your audience. To get a customer to buy your book, you must first attract, then engage, then convert. You can't skip steps, and you must do them in this order. This should be your mantra from now on.

Rule #4. Best practices.

- ▶ Offer something free, preferably electronic, to attract lots of people; some will be in your target audience. Examples are an article, a free e-book from an online retailer, or an e-book they can download from your site.
- ▶ Give away great stuff. Engage people with great content by publishing your best work in web articles that relate to your target audience. Delight them, then ask them to sign up for your newsletter. Ask yourself: what are you in the top five percent of? Focus on that.
- ▶ Nothing converts like e-mail. A list of 10,000 true fans is better than a BookBub ad. Ensure you have an email signup on every page of your site, ask visitors to sign up, and give them an incentive to do so with freebies and discounts.
- ▶ Use the Dear Reader letter in your back matter to put in a blurb about your next book, ask for a review, and invited them to join your email list—with links to all of them (using a different version for each retailer).
- ▶ Form a super tribe (with a group website) of others who write in your same genre to coordinate promotions, and share resources and fan bases.

Remember, what works for others may not work for you. Trust your instincts, be creative, use automation, and find a super tribe. ▲

Expanding Your Global Horizon with Kobo Writing Life

REPORTED BY PAM MCCUTCHEON

Speaker: Mark Leslie Lefebvre, Director, Self-Publishing and Author Relations

Kobo's underlying philosophy: write locally and publish globally. Though there's a proliferation of distributors for self-publishers out there today, Lefebvre recommends self-publishers upload directly to as many platforms as they can to maximize control and income.

Reasons to publish on Kobo:

- ▶ They have 19 million active customers, and a huge share of the Canadian audience.
- ▶ They sell in 190 countries in 68 languages, with a much deeper reader penetration in Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand.
- ▶ Royalties are 70 percent if priced at \$2.99 and up; 45 percent if priced at \$1.98 or lower.
- ▶ They provide payment in your choice of currency.
- ▶ They provide a customizable dashboard with analytics that allow you to track sales in real time, by territory, with a global map showing where your sales were made.
- ▶ Their WYSIWYG editor makes it easy to update back matter.
- ▶ They have 16 localized bestseller lists ("bestselling" means "best read"—the highest completion rate of those books actually read).

Kobo Features

One of Kobo's newest features is the ability to preschedule start and ending times for price promotions to accompany targeted ads. If you use this feature, the sale pricing will happen automatically and you will be assured it will start on time (scheduling the day of or the day before may take up to 20 hours if they are glutted with huge uploads from traditional publishers). They will send reminders of your promotion times in advance.

Pre-orders are available to indie publishers—just choose the date you want to go live. You can also choose whether a pre-order is visible or not. For example, if you're in Amazon's KDP Select, you may want to ensure it's not visible until your KDP Select agreement is terminated.

The Kobo Next program allows readers to discover lesser-known authors, and is designed with the indie author in mind. They send out two weekly emails, with randomly selected books that feature deals such as \$.99 bundles, etc.

Some new features Kobo is working on are giving authors info on how many books were downloaded, opened, and read; a plan to provide more data to enable authors to better understand their customers; a DIY coupon code generator; and the return of customer and industry reviews.

Kobo has partnered with the American Booksellers Association to support independent bookstores so they can share in the proceeds of each Kobo book purchased in the bookstore (brick and mortar, or online).

Pricing Strategies

Think of price as a verb, not a noun, and be willing to change. Take a look at Nathan Maharaj's blog on power pricing (<http://kobowritinglife.com/2012/12/11/power-pricing-how-should-i-price-my-ebooks/>) for indie authors. His main points are:

- ▶ Price deliberately—have a plan
- ▶ Price responsively—react to market changes
- ▶ Price often—experiment

Lefebvre provided some interesting information on author Deborah Cooke's price experimentation. She

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How to Sell Successfully at iBooks

REPORTED BY MINDY KLASKY

This session was led by NINC members Jana DeLeon, Liliana Hart, and Julie Ortolon. It was conducted primarily as a question-and-answer session.

Hart began, noting that 800 million Apple reading devices are in use. With the most recent update to the operating system for phones and tablets, the iBooks store is live on every one of those devices.

The speakers uniformly advised authors to place their materials directly in the iBooks store (rather than work through aggregators such as Smashwords or Draft2Digital). Direct placement allows authors to collect timely valuable data on who is buying which books where. If an author switches from an aggregator to direct posting, she will lose the original URL and reviews for her work; therefore, switching earlier is better than switching later. It takes approximately three days for a switch to be completed.

Loading materials direct to the iBooks store requires specialized software, iTunes Connect, which only runs on an Apple computer (not an iPhone or an iPad). DeLeon suggested authors might want to purchase an Apple computer; in addition to facilitating uploads, the machine can run LegendMaker software, which creates clean e-book files that pass iBooks verification. Word files can easily be transferred between Windows machines and Apple machines.

Authors who choose not to purchase an Apple computer can upload their files through third-party services, including MacInCloud, Formatting Fairies, and AuthorEMS. Authors can also go to any bricks-and-mortar Apple store to use a computer. Even if an author does not have his own Apple computer, he can access the valuable data about his account through a Windows machine.

Apple treats all uploaded files equally, regardless of whether they come from a traditional publisher, a self-publisher working direct, or an aggregator. The company does not accept co-op money from traditional publishers; rather, they boost authors who are selling well to customers.

Ortolon gave a brief primer on capturing “Buy” links from the iBooks store (which proves challenging for some users). She described a down arrow located next to the phrase “Buy Book” beneath the image of a book’s cover. Clicking that arrow opens a drop-down box that includes the option “Copy Link.” On an iPhone or iPad, access is through an icon that looks like a square with an arrow coming out of it. In the alternative, authors can build links at <http://linkmaker.itunes.apple.com/>. Links that do not include a country designation (e.g., /us) will automatically resolve to the country corresponding to the IP address of the accessing device.

All of the panelists advocated making the first book in a series free to boost sales on other books in that series. iBooks readers are more likely than other vendors’ readers actually to read free books they acquire. Hart leaves the first book in all her series free, and she gives away between 40,000 and 50,000 copies each month. Ortolon “toggles” hers, alternating which series has a first book free.

DeLeon promoted the use of pre-orders to build book sales on iBooks. Pre-orders count twice for ranking purposes—once at the time of purchase and once on the day of release. iBooks was recently added to the USA Today list, and pre-orders can be instrumental in making that list. Pre-orders can be combined with cover reveals to provide two promotion boosts for a book.

Note: iBooks has agreed to a special arrangement for NINC members: We can upload pre-orders without assets (a book cover and content file). To arrange for this special deal, NINC members should send email to bookseditorial@apple.com.

iBooks supports authors who support iBooks. Therefore, authors should add iBooks buy links to their websites and other promotional materials. iBooks will often retweet interesting tweets if @iBooks is mentioned directly. While it can take time for iBooks to become aware of authors, patience and consistency of promotion will ultimately prevail. (That patience is warranted because over 90 percent of the authors promoted on iBooks’ romance page are indie authors. iBooks also includes indies frequently on its “Breakout” and “Best First Book in Series” pages.) ▶

Authors should also participate in Apple's affiliate program, which awards a seven percent rebate on all purchases a buyer makes after clicking through a buy link that includes an affiliate code. Hart makes between \$2500 and \$3000 each month on her affiliate links. (Some states, though, do not permit residents to participate in affiliate programs.)

iBooks does not have author representatives (as Amazon does for some authors); rather, a team curates content, selecting which books to feature. Those decisions are typically based on what has sold well in the past.

iBooks operates in 51 territories. For authors considering translations, German rights are most valuable, followed by Italian, French, and Brazilian Portuguese. Spanish-language translations are not currently selling well. Translations cost approximately \$1000 for 10,000 words, but prices and terms vary for each translator. Good translators are difficult to find; they must be "auditioned" like narrators for audiobooks. Translations should be uploaded to all territories to increase possibilities for sale.

iBooks has recently announced that it is completing reviews for 95 percent of all uploaded books within 24 hours. They are also increasing promotional codes (to give free copies of a book to a reviewer) from 50 to 250 for each book. The platform continues to evolve and more changes are likely to be announced in the coming year. ▲

Expanding Your Global Horizon

Continued from page 8 ▶ started with \$5.99 on one of her series, then increased the price to \$6.99 on her latest release, and watched to see what would happen. At iBooks and Nook, she showed a weekly increase in unit sales. There was no change in sales at Kobo, and sales at Amazon went down initially, but went back up after a week and a half to where they were before. The lesson learned here is to be willing to experiment, have a strategy, and don't panic.

You should also localize foreign prices. If a book is priced at \$5.99 US, it will default to \$6.24 Canadian. He recommended changing the price to roll it up to \$6.99 Canadian, because a customer can't see the difference between them. Do this across all territories.

The \$1.99 price point isn't good for novels—you're better off at \$.99 or \$2.99. A \$2.99 book is twice as likely to sell as well as a \$1.99 book because customers often associate lower prices with lower quality . . . except for romance buyers. They buy in such bulk that they like lower prices.

Don't underestimate the power of free for the first book in a series. In one author's example, 12,000 people downloaded the book, 350 opened it, and 160 bought more books from that author. The overall conversion rate was 1.4 percent, which seems low, until you realize that 51 percent of those who read it went on to buy more. Email Kobo if you have a "first free in series" book so they can add you to that promotion page.

Kobo and Nook operate more like brick and mortar stores in that they manually place books for merchandising. In order to get a merchandiser's attention, think about it from their perspective. If there are two great books, one at \$.99 and one at \$9.99, Kobo may lose money on the \$.99 one and make money on the \$9.99 one, so they'll choose the higher priced book to merchandise.

Fun facts:

- ▶ The Japanese company Rakuten owns both Canadian-based Kobo and Pinterest.
- ▶ Kobo is an anagram for "book."
- ▶ Sony customers were all transferred to Kobo.
- ▶ The new waterproof Kobo Aura H20 is now available for \$179.
- ▶ The bestselling genres at Kobo are romance, erotica, thrillers/mysteries, fantasy, and science fiction.

Follow Mark Lefebvre on his blog at www.kobowritinglife.com. Email him at writinglife@kobo.com or markl@kobo.com. ▲

The Publishing World is Changing. How Can You Keep Up?

REPORTED BY PAT ROY

Hugh Howey described himself as an optimistic guy who writes about the end of the world. He published his first book with a small traditional press in 2009. Since then he has published numerous novels and novellas but is best known for his *New York Times* bestselling science fiction series *WOOL*, published through Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing. In 2012, he contracted with Simon & Schuster for print distribution of *WOOL*, turning down a seven figure offer in order to retain his digital rights.

Successful writers study their industry—*The Campfire Goes Global*

Around 800 BC, scribes start the shift from an oral to a written tradition. You can be dead and still telling stories. Crazy, huh? “We are storytelling animals, so addicted that even while asleep we don’t stop,” Howey said.

Moveable type and the Gutenberg Bible appear around 440 AD. While less time-consuming than scribes, still terribly expensive. In 1826, Thomas Jefferson goes to his grave in huge debt because of his addiction to books. 1875 brings offset printing which gradually lowers the cost of books until the 1970s when B&N begins discounting bestsellers by 40 percent. The 1980s and 1990s are the glory years with massive discounting and expansion. Big box brick and mortars crush independents with price and selection. Amazon goes live in 1995. Their price and selection crush the big box brick and mortar bookstores. By 2007, we are reading on PDAs and the first Kindles. Digital storytelling has arrived, and the cost of production and distribution drops to practically zero.

As chain bookstores struggle (Borders goes under in 2011), independent bookstores are on the rise. Howey cited a 20 percent increase in independent bookstores over the last seven years and an eight to 10 percent increase in year-on-year revenues over the same period. It seems there are readers who value community, location, and thoughtful curation. Who knew Amazon would be the force that saved independents?

Not only is it a myth that independent bookstores are going under, the demise of publishers has been greatly exaggerated as well, he said. Royalty rates may be down, but except for Hachette, publishers’ profit margins are up. Digital is subsidizing print and keeping publishers alive. He illustrated this with data from the October 2014 Author Earnings Report at www.AuthorEarnings.com, a website by and for authors to (1) share information so that writers can make informed decisions and (2) call for a change within the publishing community for better pay and fairer contract terms for writers.

The report focused on e-books on Amazon. Spiders crawled the data from over 120,000 top selling e-books from Amazon’s product pages. Using known rank-to-sales rates, they estimated the daily share of earnings via five publishing paths. The report is a treasure trove of pie charts and bar graphs. The Big Five publishers receive a sizable share of Amazon e-book revenue. But when known royalty rates are factored in, the calculations flip in favor of writers. More money is flowing to writers than ever before.

All the conversations he’s had and all the stories he’s heard confirm this. Over the last few years, authors making a living with their writing has gone up between 10-fold and 50-fold. People he’s never heard of are doing better than household names. *The Long Tail* (Chris Anderson, NINC 2007 conference, remember?) is alive and well. Look at the data rather than merely listening to the myths.

When the stigma of self-publishing was at its thickest, romance writers said, “We eat stigma for breakfast,” and embraced indie publishing, Howey said. These days writers can go either route and find success. Audio is going crazy. Audiobooks combined with e-books. POD included with digital. Getting in early on emerging trends is always better.

Discoverability is the key, using BookBub, metadata algorithms, and tools yet to be discovered.

The publishing empire is moving from East Coast to West Coast. Amazon, Google, and Apple are in a battle for devices. Subscriptions services—Kindle Unlimited, Scribd, Oyster—how will

Continued on page 14 ▶

What's Next for Publishers?

REPORTED BY ANN CHRISTOPHER

Panelists: Daniel Slater, Author and Vendor Relations, Amazon Indie Publishing; David Symonds, General Manager, CreateSpace; Lael Telles, Author Relations Manager, KDP

Overview: Daniel Slater

Amazon continues to see global growth in print and e-books, particularly in Germany and Japan. For the last three years, they've heavily invested in creating new Kindle stores worldwide, including in Brazil, China, Canada, Mexico, Australia, and Spanish-speaking countries. They've also seen huge growth in digital connectivity. Consumers compare books to other media, and books must compete in this climate. The digital age creates discovery. Kindle owners buy four times more books of all formats, including print, than they did before they owned the Kindle.

Old books are new again in digital. Digital sales drive print sales of the same books because it can create more word of mouth, reviews, higher sales rank, and more recommendations.

Daily Deals can generate huge spikes in sales, and the effects can sometimes linger for a month.

What's next? They're considering innovations with the entire ecosystem, including reading apps, driving discovery (e.g. Author Central; Goodreads; Kindle Direct Publishing aka KDP), and improving the author experience with KDP, CreateSpace, Audible, and other features, programs, and data. They'd also like to provide better tools for pricing and the creation of children's books, re-imagine content, and support the author life cycle via programs like Kindle Scout (reader-powered publishing for new, never-before-published books) and WriteOn (a reading and writing community from Kindle; in beta now).

Finally, they hope to improve the customer experience via Kindle Unlimited and wider functionality. For instance, with #AmazonCart, readers will be able to put books in their cart from Twitter.

Kindle Direct Publishing: Lael Telles

After outlining the benefits of KDP (e.g. ease and speed of use), Telles mentioned several new tools. First, the reporting dashboard provides granular and real-time sales, promotional and royalty data. Second, the pricing tool (now in beta), can help take the guesswork out of e-book pricing by considering sales rank, units, and author earnings before suggesting a price. Finally, she discussed the new preorder option, which allows books to be made available for sale up to 90 days before release.

Series promotion is crucial. Customers love series, so it's important to have good metadata. New Amazon products include series landing pages, detailed page information that includes book order for ease of search and discoverability, and a "Next in Series" buy button on the device.

What about the KDP Select program? It's optional, short-term (90 days), produces higher royalties, has access to special promotions (e.g. Lending Library; five free promo days/90-day period; Countdown Deals; Kindle Unlimited subscription service), and has boosted more than 500 books to top 100 lists worldwide.

CreateSpace: David Symonds

The print-on-demand arm of KDP provides several benefits (free, fast, high quality), and several free tools, such as an interior reviewer; a cover creator, including images; a digital proof; and distribution here and across Europe.

Maximizing Success: Lael Telles

Telles emphasized the consistent and strategic use of tools such as keywords and the updated Author Central Author Page, and information such as sales data and rank over time. She also highlighted the importance of Goodreads, reviews, and developing your own platform.

Miscellaneous

While they don't have an actual translation service, they know indie authors are looking for one. Meanwhile, they recommend AmazonCrossing for translated works.

They're trying to standardize Author Pages across all marketplaces/countries.

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The Naked Truth About Self-Publishing

REPORTED BY LAURA RESNICK

Panelists: authors Liliana Hart, Jana DeLeon, Colleen Gleason, Debra Holland, Jasinda Wilder.
Moderator: Ruth Glick.

Several NINC members met at a previous NINC conference and decided to form a group to cross-promote their books. After inviting some additional authors who'd be a good match for the group to join them, they gathered in Cancun for their early brainstorming, at which time they agreed to "go big or go home."

The result was a 10-author LLC known as The Indie Voice which has its own Facebook page, website (<http://theindievoice.com/>), and Twitter account. The Indie Voice also has a bank account and publisher accounts with major vendors. Each author contributed equity to the company to get it started. Earnings from group projects, such as fiction boxsets and the group's joint books, continue funding the company.

Every member contributes skills and work to the company. For example, one member is an attorney who handles the legal paperwork, while another is an accountant who deals with the fiscal work, and another manages much of the marketing. Some members had prior experience in traditional publishing while others had an indie background. The group's plan was to set goals and use their combined social media presence to achieve them. Like any company, their internal discussions and future plans involve confidentiality.

The group's initial goals were to increase their sales and hit the *New York Times* bestseller list; they achieved that goal with their boxset, which was the first multi-author boxset to make The List. They ran a Bookbub ad for it, and they used the combined social reach of all ten members to get the word out about the boxset.

Other early goals for the group included writing a joint anthology (*Summer On Seeker's Island*) and establishing a newsletter. They got a booth at BookExpo America (BEA) to raise awareness in the industry of the substantial indie market and of the writers in their company. They also raised their profile by hosting a meet-and-greet at the *Romantic Times* convention.

The two main functions of the group are cross-promoting their books and sharing information with each other (and, through Indie Voice's social media, with other writers) about strategies for success in indie publishing. However, as became apparent during the Q&A, they aren't in lockstep on their individual strategies, and what works for one of them doesn't necessarily work for another. They urge writers to take the information they share and use it to figure out what works best for themselves.

Debra Holland noted that not everyone writes at the same pace, not everyone wants the same level of presence on social media, and not every writer has identical goals.

Liliana Hart urged writers to keep putting out new content. It doesn't have to be a full-length book, just "a title"—short fiction, novellas, boxsets. Create a well-fed machine and an appetite for your content in the marketplace.

Jasinda Wilder suggested that one way to maintain a strong market presence, if you're not able to generate new content as fast as you'd like, is to keep refreshing old content: change the covers, revise the book descriptions, run a free-book promo on different books within a series, create a boxset of novellas and then later release those novellas individually, etc.

Colleen Gleason advised writing short pieces that supplement and support the books in your traditional career. She also advocated independently exploiting the unlicensed and unused rights in your intellectual property.

Jana DeLeon talked about having taken a deal with Harlequin specifically to get her name and some books into foreign markets where Harlequin has a strong presence and she had none; this opened the door for her indie work to break through in those markets.

Amidst a lot of detailed discussion about strategies for building sales, managing social media, and

maximizing release-day numbers, all of the authors agreed firmly on one thing: The writing must always come first.

To learn more about The Indie Voice and the advice and experiences of its bestselling members, they recommend reading their joint nonfiction book, *The Naked Truth About Self-Publishing*. ▲

The Publishing World Is Changing

Continued from page 11 ▶ they affect sales? Will they bring in more readers?

Amazon controls 40 percent of print sales and over 60 percent of the e-book market. Amazon needs to drop exclusivity, he said, and additionally noted that we can learn a lot by watching the music industry. We seem to lag behind them a few years. Let's learn from their mistakes instead of repeating them.

Howey hates seeing people robbed of power and would like to see us develop better partnerships with publishers and negotiate better terms, such as reversion of rights clauses set at a defined period of time such as five years, for example. "No one will ever care for my books like I do. What I love is that I own the rights to my work."

Getting titles out on a regular basis is where it's at. Writers don't have to sacrifice quality for quantity. Many produce their best work while immersed in the story, writing under the pressure of a deadline.

He worries about people making decisions based on limited information and later regretting it. *Passive Voice* and *Publishers' Lunch* are essential reading. The best ideas are floating around somewhere, which is why community is so important.

So how do you keep up with a publishing world that is changing at a whirlwind pace? Bookmark <http://www.hughhowey.com> and <http://authorearnings.com> and get yourself down to Florida next fall for NINC 2015. ▲

What's Next for Publishers

Continued from page 12 ▶ Slater wanted to hear more from an author who'd had reviews removed because she'd given the book to the reviewer.

The Kindle Daily Deal selection process is highly competitive. Authors can't apply for it.

When you're editing a book, the old version is still available for sale unless you select UNPUBLISH. The new version is usually available in 24 hours.

Policy on digital returns? They allow them for up to seven days and actively monitor serial abusers. The vast majority are un-buy cases that don't read the entire book.

Authors can mention linked books in the product descriptions.

They're very excited about Kindle Unlimited and are pleased with customer engagement in the United States and Germany.

With KDP, the price floor is \$.99, and they're not keen on perma-free books. While they do look at the marketplace, match prices, and believe free has its place, they're not sure how effective it is over time. Books have some value, so they'll continue this stance.

The series landing page is still being rolled out, so make sure your information/metadata is correct.

They get great value from listening to authors and would like to see better resources/experiences for readers and authors in the next year. Amazon resources are limited, but they consider a wide list of possibilities.

How can erotic romance get rid of the dreaded "adult" label? Follow the appeal process. ▲

Literary Trusts/Estates: What You Need to Know Now

REPORTED BY TERRI BRISBIN

Disclaimer: *Elaine English, who is both an attorney and a literary agent, was very clear that all of the information presented during her workshop was NOT legal advice but was to be considered information-only. She suggested that authors should work with an attorney who is experienced in handling wills/estate planning/properties in their state and, if possible, someone with knowledge of intellectual property/copyrights.*

Authors need to think about many things when it comes to estate planning—their intellectual property includes not only their published works, but also their unpublished manuscripts, drawings, charts, letters, and anything connected to their works. Since copyright lasts for the author's life plus 70 years, our works will be considered assets for a long time. Additionally, there are now digital assets to consider—arrangements for legal transfer of websites and social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) must be made. Ms. English mentioned that those social accounts cannot simply be turned over by sharing a password and that there is federal legislation pending about these issues.

As authors begin to set up their arrangements, they need to remember that although copyright is covered by federal laws, wills and trusts are covered by state laws.

Why do this?

If an author (or person) becomes unable to handle their affairs or dies, planning ahead gives them the ability to determine who can step in and manage everything they own. If an author (or person) dies intestate, without a will, the state controls all of it and its dispersal.

What are the basic ways of distributing your property?

There are three main ways: gifts, corporate entities, and trusts.

- ▶ **Gifts:** Property and assets can be given directly to someone(s) while the author is alive or accomplished in their will. If given while author is alive, the author loses control over the assets. If given in a will, the assets and gift are subject to probate under state law.
- ▶ **Corporate entities:** Corporations are a perpetual structure and there are several types that authors can use—after discussing it with their tax professional/advisor. Using this structure puts control of the assets in the hands of shareholders and can affect the future of copyrights. There are also some tax issues that must be considered if a corporation is planned.
- ▶ **Trusts:** Trusts can be beneficial because an author/person can split control and management of the assets from the revenues created by those assets.

Trusts give assets and decisions about those assets to a trustee. Decisions can be about ongoing and reverted contracts, unpublished works and whether or not to publish them, and about digital assets and whether they should be continued. The trustee appointed may or may not be the beneficiary of the trust, but there are tax implications if they do benefit. Trustees can be compensated for their work/services.

English suggested that the most important first step an author should take is to create an inventory of their assets and other important information. It is critical to keep this inventory current and not to place it in your will. Included in this inventory should be a complete list of an author's titles and dates of publication, copies of contracts (along with which ones are open, terminated, reverted, and the dates), agent info, any joint works and agreements, self-publishing agreements, and contracts. Also, make sure that someone knows where this inventory is!

English shared a sample form that can be used as a guide in setting up a trust with those in ▶

attendance. She suggested that existing wills and/or trusts should be evaluated to see if the language is broad enough to cover IP (intellectual property), or if it needs to be updated.

In the Q&A portion of the presentation, English gave more information:

- ▶ Because of the length of copyright, only so many successive trustees need be named. Authors should set up a process for selecting successive trustees or designate that the courts could appoint them.
- ▶ Since agents play a part in an author's estate, Ms. English suggested not having your agent as your trustee. And minors are not allowed to be appointed as trustees (or future trustee).
- ▶ Most publishers *and* online retailers will freeze revenue payments when they are notified or find out about an author's death. In most states, after the death, the will is executed in the state of residence or location of property and executor can then get payments to estate. Wills can take weeks to months to go through this process.
- ▶ Publishers will continue to pay into living trusts, though the trustee may have to prove the existence of that trust during the author's lifetime.
- ▶ In a new twist, even court-approved executors may not be able to get into Amazon, Facebook, and other digital accounts. Only nine states allow exceptions but there is a national proposal to deal with this issue. Trusts usually can access those accounts.
- ▶ Since copyright lasts for the length of the author's life plus 70 years (barring any changes to those laws), trusts can last that long, too. Then the work falls into public domain.
- ▶ With the inclusion of a contract clause granting rights "in perpetuity," revenue could continue after that 70-year period. Attorney Bob Stein commented that after "life plus 70 years," the contract could be in breach because of warranties in the contract. Again, informational, not legal advice!
- ▶ Make sure your trustee knows your planned strategies—finish unfinished works? Publish unpublished works? Donate personal papers? To where? (and be sure to check if the recipient of your donation actually *wants* it!)
- ▶ Some attorneys do offer their services as trustees. Authors are urged to make certain that the trustee knows the publishing industry.
- ▶ Authors were urged to have a power of attorney set up in case of disability or inability to manage assets/accounts/estate.

Overall, this session by Ms. English was incredibly informative, and the information she presented is very beneficial for authors trying to get their estates/writing assets in order. As a reminder, especially to anyone attending who received or downloaded a copy of Ms. English's handout, this was only for informational purposes and not intended to be used as legal advice. ▲

Business Briefs

Amazon and Hachette Agree on Terms

Full details of the agreement on e-book pricing reached in mid-November between Amazon and Hachette Book Group weren't released. Hachette CEO Michael Pietsch said in a letter to authors and agents that the new e-book terms include agency pricing and will take effect in 2015. A return to "normal availability" for Hachette books sold through Amazon is expected.

PW Daily

Why, Hollywood? Why?

REPORTED BY SUSAN ANDERSON

Kam Miller, an accomplished television writer, talked about the business side of Hollywood, highlighted two projects she found during the 2013 NINC conference, and shared a few tips and trends.

The Business Side

One question Miller is frequently asked is why Hollywood continues to focus on sequels and remakes. The answer, she said, is fear.

Fear motivates many decisions in Hollywood. When an executive champions a project, he or she puts their career on the line. It is safer to back a project that has presold brand and international marketability, Miller said. She cited “Transformers: Age of Extinction” as one such project. Part of the wildly popular Transformers franchise, the movie pulled in more than a billion dollars worldwide. Of that amount, more than \$300 million came from China’s box office.

Miller said that we can’t ignore the rest of the world. International marketability matters—and character movies heavy with dialogue don’t travel well.

Another question that often comes her way is why a studio doesn’t take the \$100 million poured into one movie and make 10 small movies. Miller said the reason is the high cost to market those movies. Ten small movies become \$500 million of expenditure without earning a penny, she explained. That’s why studios take a bet on a \$100 million movie: They can focus their creative energy on one big movie and not split their marketing department between numerous small movies.

Miller then recapped the highest grossing romantic comedies (romcoms) in 2002 and ten years later in 2012. The results show that romcoms are underperforming in theaters. Miller believes they have migrated to television. She thinks romance is still alive on the big screen; it’s just not comedic but resides in the melodrama. Miller noted that romantic melodramas do well internationally in such places as Australia, the U.K., Germany, Spain, and France.

Television, she said, is a great place for character pieces. Television can also deliver larger audiences than even a blockbuster movie. Miller pointed to the successful fifth-season opener of “The Walking Dead,” which pulled in 17 million viewers in just one hour, in one night. That’s power, she said.

Miller stated that if you as a writer can point to strong sales and convince a studio an audience exists for your work, you can trump any fear Hollywood has. On the flip side, she noted that sometimes a great novel doesn’t find an audience—but it may still hold an adaptable story. In that case, you might need an ambassador for your story.

Two Vastly Different Projects, Ambassador to Both

The 2013 NINC conference brought two projects to Miller’s attention: “Gentleman Poet” by veteran author Kathryn Johnson and “Brimstone” by new author M. Ryan Seaver. The former is a period piece about a real-life event that inspired William Shakespeare (Miller pitched it as a miniseries). The latter is about a private investigator in hell (a project Miller was set to pitch within a week).

Miller explained that while the infrastructure of these projects differed greatly, she as a television writer adapts to what each project is and becomes a strong ambassador for each. It is Miller’s track record that gets a project to the pitch point, which can involve a soft pitch—just a sentence or two shared during a meeting—and then a more formal pitch. Miller said that part of her role is to allay any fears, explain the projects, and illustrate how well-thought-out they are.

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It’s Dues Renewal Time ... Don’t Miss Out on the Best Resource in the Fast Changing Publishing World ... Novelists, Inc. Renew Online Today!

The Book in Transformation: A Publisher Vision for the Future.

REPORTED BY DIANE VENETTA

Dominique Raccah, publisher and CEO of Sourcebooks, Inc., gave an informative presentation geared toward helping authors understand the publishing landscape and how we can best position ourselves to optimize success going forward. Whether we're talking e-book or print, traditional or indie, there are several ways in which authors can make strides towards greater success.

For starters, authors must understand online retailing. Amazon specializes in online retail. They sell books, but their value is in the customer relationship. They want to sell products, not necessarily books. Barnes & Noble sells books, and values the relationship with the reader and the reading experience. These are two very different perspectives. Barnes & Noble uses table displays, end caps, etc. through co-op dollars to drive discovery and boost sales. Amazon is about price, access, and availability. For the brick and mortar stores to compete, they must focus on the relationship with the reader. Book clubs, coffee houses, author signings are ways they connect with their customer as opposed to price point. Authors must do the same.

With the onset of e-books and the constant push for lower pricing and free books, one would think selling e-books is all about online retailing, yet the data suggests that e-book sales are driven more by device technology than e-commerce. A voracious reader of fiction will buy a device because it allows them to carry and consume a high number of books with relative ease. From reading books via their smart phones to listening to audio books as they jog, today's society wants fast, easy, and accessible—kind of like a Big Mac or a Starbucks to go. These readers are predominantly fans of romance, SFF, and mystery, and the main reason mass market fiction books have taken a hit.

But not all books are going digital. Nonfiction, biography, history, cooking books, and the like don't convert as well, likely because these readers have different expectations, different habits. Libraries and schools are entering the e-book arena, delivering digital content to students and digital access to library patrons, and this shift is helping to drive e-book sales in genres like children's books. Subscription services have learned from companies like Netflix and now offer readers the freedom to choose from a variety of books for one low monthly price. Enhanced e-books are combining a multitude of media formats for a more complete reading experience. It's all about "change is here. Change is here, change is coming."

How do authors tap into these growing markets? Content, metadata, and marketing. If we've heard it once, we've heard it a thousand times: content is king. Write a good book and the readers will follow. But reaching those readers is crucial. Good metadata will help them find you, but how about checking with your readers?

Check out your reviews. Readers will reveal a host of "keywords" with regard to your book, letting you know exactly how they found you and what they think of you. Which brings us to categories. A book categorized incorrectly will sit on the shelf and wither away. However, authors who knows their readers will target them specifically. For example, how do you market a historical paranormal with strong romantic elements? Ask your readers. What do they consider it? If paranormal is the repeated response—or appears repeatedly in your reviews—consider it a paranormal and market accordingly. Because in the end, selling books is about marketing. We can write a good book, but if no one knows it's there, it might as well be invisible.

One effective way to get the word out is through cross-marketing. Don't limit your marketing to your website or a first book free campaign. Instead, create a strategy that stretches from book one to book 10 and beyond. Utilize several platforms—author website, blog, book clubs, online retailers—and think forward, like a ball in motion. Raccah submits that it takes three to four books for an author to build a career, so think

ahead. Know where you're going with that next book and formulate your marketing plan for today's book, as well as tomorrow's.

When it comes to marketing, innovation is king. From personalized books to interactive reading experiences, tapping various forms of media can increase your revenue. In this digital age of multimedia, you're no longer competing with other books, but movies, videos, audio recordings, live streams of entertainment, and news ... People are inundated with content via their devices and authors have to understand how they play into that mix. Raccach advises us to get creative. Experiment. Test the market. That's the future of publishing.

Raccach also recommends that authors create partnerships, because she understands that the more energy behind your book, the better. This can be a traditional publishing house, review sites, libraries, schools—it will vary from author to author, genre to genre, but empowering others who want to help you succeed is critical. Think outside the bookstore. Challenge traditional channels of distribution. Ask questions. Understand your audience's needs and concerns, and find partners who will work with you toward the same goal: getting your book into the hands of readers.

And while some might say the print book is dying, it's not. People enjoy their books. Whether it's an illustrated coffee table book that reminds them of special travels, or a photographic essay that captures animals in their natural habitat, print books have not gone the way of the dinosaur—and likely will not. They have their place. It's the author's job to know which medium best suits their work, and what their readers want.

As authors struggle to navigate the changing tides, Raccach suggests they research the market, shop the competition, test ideas, and experiment. From content to metadata, from delivery mechanism to reader experience, authors must push the limits and explore new directions if they hope to achieve success going forward. In today's publishing world, you are not only author but entrepreneur!

Embrace the change and have fun. That's the bottom line. ▲

Why, Hollywood? Why?

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TIPS & TRENDS

Tips:

- ▶ Be open to possibilities. Your genre might have migrated to a different platform.
- ▶ Understand that Hollywood isn't looking for something exactly like something else. They are looking for something different.
- ▶ Boil your novel down to one sentence.
- ▶ Resist using "this meets that" to describe your work.
- ▶ Be open about casting. Often what gets pitched is the "tone" of a character.

Trends:

- ▶ Hollywood is making more features for international audiences.
- ▶ There is a market for romantic melodrama in features.
- ▶ African-American romantic comedies/ensemble comedies are finding audiences.
- ▶ Multiple couples who are friends and who have comedic interactions are finding an audience.
- ▶ Christian films are finding an audience.
- ▶ Traditional romantic comedies are migrating to television.
- ▶ Television is a great outlet for character-driven stories.
- ▶ Television can (and does) deliver bigger audiences than features.

Learn more about Kam Miller at www.kammiller.com.

Effectively Getting an Author to Market Can Be a Group Effort

REPORTED BY CHERYL BOLEN

If I see Liliana Hart's name on a panel, any panel, count me in. This super savvy, phenomenally successful indie author shared this panel with agents Steven Axelrod and Kristin Nelson, both of whom work with her in different capacities.

Why does an indie author need an agent? Hart admits that she did extremely well with no agent. She put up her first five indie titles under her pseudonym in June of 2011. By January of 2013, she had sold one million e-books worldwide. She is currently closing in on three million books sold and has her books available in print, audio, and some in foreign translations.

Because of her success, she's been approached by agents, publishers, and other publishing interests but stresses that, "I am a big believer of controlling all aspects of my career." So why is she using agents? Nelson stresses that she is not serving as Hart's agent. Her firm, NLA Digital, is handling some distribution otherwise unavailable to indie authors. (More on this later.)

Axelrod is representing Hart for some of her foreign rights and some of her audio rights. "Steve lets me do what I want to do," she said. She keeps all her digital rights. Axelrod is also exploring print-only options to get Hart's books into bricks-and-mortar stores, much as Bella Andre and other megastars of indie publishing have done.

"It's a new model of agenting," Axelrod said.

Before Hart ever adopted her pen name and started self publishing, she was an active member of Romance Writers of America who had written about a dozen books. She was able to attract an agent. That agent, though, was unable to sell her projects because they were so cross-genre that prospective publishers did not know how to sell them.

After her indie successes and after being courted by many agents, Hart said there were only two agents she wanted to work with, "and both of them are sitting right here with me."

She advises other authors to research agencies before entering into agreements with them.

"My goal as an author is to reach as many platforms and as many readers as possible," she said.

To that end, she began her association with Nelson's invitation-only NLA Digital, a company that successfully distributes books to libraries via platforms such as Overdrive, 3M Cloud Library, Baker & Taylor, and Ingram.

Hart said she uses Nelson's company "to get in places I can't get into."

NLA Digital only handles works by indie authors who are earning well into six figures. She cited one of her authors "who no one's ever heard of" as earning \$100,000 in October alone. That was indie author Kristin Harper. NAL Digital also handles works by Courtney Milan, Ava Miles, Roxanne St. Claire, and Carly Phillips.

An author would have to be making from \$3,000 to \$10,000 on a title to qualify for the library market, Nelson said. She is currently exploring getting her authors into Canadian libraries. "The agent's role is changing—for obvious reasons," Nelson said.

NLA Digital was formed in August, 2011 to assist Dorchester authors who were in the process of getting back their rights from the defunct publisher. Nelson said she had only sold one project to Dorchester, but she had authors who were struggling with rights to former Dorchester books. She wanted "to provide a supportive environment for the authors who were receiving full rights."

The firm handles other facets of indie publishing, such as cover design and editing.

Indie publishing, Hart says, "is a machine you keep feeding." In August—slightly over three years after she launched her career—Hart's 35th book was published. She had nine releases last year.

No wonder this phenom can use a helping hand with a few aspects of her publishing career. ▲

Selling in Today's Market—It's All In How You Look at It

BY JANIS SUSAN MAY PATTERSON

Panelists :

Erika Tsang – Editorial Director, Morrow/Avon

LeeAnn Lessard – Publisher and CEO, Lachesis Publishing, Inc.

Eileen Fallon – President, Fallon Literary Agency

Deb Werksman – Editorial Director, Sourcebooks/Casablanca

Steve Axelrod – President, Axelrod Literary Agency

Kristin Nelson – President, Nelson Literary Agency, LLC

The panelists started out by each giving examples of what they think is hot and/or exciting. However, as in all panels, the conversation wandered, so I have reproduced their comments as they were said.

Erika Tsang wants romance across all genres. She loves paranormal, but is looking for game changers. Currently they are doing a twelve-part erotica serial.

LeeAnn Lessard agrees that romance is strong. She likes series. She also likes horror. She stated that Lachesis wants long term relationships with their authors.

Deb Werksman said Sourcebooks' strategy is to publish 300-350 titles a year, half of which are fiction. Her imprint, Casablanca, publishes 8-10 romances a month. She said that she doesn't like or even remember a one-book contract, which drew a sound of approval from the audience. She asked "Where do you want to focus?" and reminded us that what readers say and what they do are two different things. The overall career is what is important—that they "publish authors, not books."

Eileen Fallon asked if writing was a hobby or something that could launch into a career. She added that it was important that various personalities meshed.

Steve Axelrod quoted Jayne Ann Krentz to say "Romantic suspense is a way to break in" and then Bella Andre, who said her books were "sexy Nora Roberts."

Kristin Nelson reminded us that what is hot/trending in the United States is not necessarily what is hot in the rest of the world. She doesn't take on something just because it is a hot or trendy subject; she makes the decision on the book itself. She wants to fall in love with a story and particularly loves historical romance.

Axelrod went on to say that authors must write the best book possible—they must love the story and know the market. He added that historical romance is not big in the trade market, and that mass market "is a melting ice cube." The largest rack jobber (the one who puts books in the racks in non-book stores) went out of business and the next biggest took perhaps 20 percent of their volume. The rest simply went away. He advised that writers should look where publishers see growth, and not to where the story of your heart is. He has seen only limited success in writers changing genres.

To which Tsang replied that success in changing genres depends on the writer and how the writer can adapt.

Werksman added that writers have to anticipate that changing genres will not guarantee crossover readers. She also said New Adult doesn't exist in bookstores; it's either romance or Young Adult.

What about Young Adult?

Nelson and Axelrod said they represent it. Werksman said she published it. Nelson said issue driven, contemporary Young Adult is good and the story has to be yours. "We need diversity." There were no other comments.

An audience member said that indie publishing gives us freedom and asked if the editors had loosened up. Werksman said " ... if the hook is there, you can sell anything. Without a hook it won't sell."

Axelrod said editors need metadata, which is part of the hook. Nelson said it all

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Data, Tools, and Questions: Becoming a More Successful Author

REPORTED BY MINDY KLASKY

(This session was originally scheduled to feature Phil Sexton, who had a family emergency and was unable to attend. Dominique Raccah, CEO and Publisher of Sourcebooks, conducted the session instead.)

Raccah began with a summary of Sourcebooks' business, noting its reputation for innovation in the print market. She divided the rest of her comments into three sections: 1) How book retailing is changing, 2) How the bookselling process works, and 3) Understanding metadata.

As an initial matter in her discussion of changes in retail sales, Raccah noted that *how* buyers make purchases (online or in person) is not synonymous with *what* buyers purchase (print books or e-books.) Bricks-and-mortar stores are under assault because buyers can obtain print books online, enjoying convenience and long-tail inventory.

More than 3,500 books are published every day; therefore, authors are under pressure to create the best possible book they can. *Forbes* recently surveyed readers and found that while a majority still prefer print, e-books have cannibalized the least expensive print format, mass-market paperbacks. Recent reports that e-book sales have stagnated may or may not reflect the market reality accurately. Hardcover and trade paperback sales have remained relatively steady. Perhaps the value of discovery (the "browse-ability") of bricks-and-mortar stores will keep those stores viable.

Raccah elaborated on the bookselling process by presenting several questions authors should ask their traditional publishers as a book approaches publication:

- ▶ What do the front cover, back cover, and spine of the book look like?
- ▶ How does the book catalog listing appear? (Raccah noted that traditionally, a catalog presentation of less than a quarter page was a warning sign that a book might not be well-positioned; however, with online catalogs that real estate is less important.)
- ▶ How is the book categorized? (Raccah noted that categories—genres and sub-genres—can be vital with regard to retailers, marketing, and awards. She recommends reading reviews of books in prospective categories to determine compatibility.)
- ▶ Does this book have co-op (co-operative advertising dollars, money spent by the publisher on bookstore placement, endcaps, author appearances, etc.)? Raccah noted that even if a book has co-op money attached, the bookseller still has to *choose* to include the book in store displays. Co-op has rigid timing; for example, Christmas books must be placed on sale the last week in September, not one week later.
- ▶ How will the publisher handle lay-ins (the number of books placed in stores)? Raccah noted that some publishers prefer big lay-ins, such as 6,000 books in Barnes & Noble stores nationwide; others prefer to "grow" smaller lay-ins over time.
- ▶ How will the publisher support the book after publication? This question is related to "backlist"; however, Raccah does not like that term because the book is new to each buyer encountering it for the first time.
- ▶ How can you partner with the publisher, building alignment and avoiding conflict?

The last section of Raccah's presentation involved metadata. Her slides were taken from Kristen McLean's slide deck posted at <http://www.slideshare.net> and can be retrieved with the search "advanced meta-data" AND "Kristen McLean."

Metadata is a set of data describing other data; there are 31 elements of metadata that describe a book. Metadata are most important for authors of fiction, compared to nonfiction. Key metadata for fiction include BISAC codes, standardized classifications of genres and sub-genres developed by the Book Industry Study

Group. Keywords are also important; authors can sometimes glean pertinent keywords by studying reviews of their work and selecting terms that appear most often.

Raccach encouraged authors to “be in action” to create success. Action includes:

- ▶ Asking questions,
- ▶ Working to better understand the industry, and
- ▶ Empowering people and creating partnerships with people who want authors to succeed.

Raccach concluded: “If you’re trying to sell more books, *everything* is mandatory.” Authors should not ask what is the least they can do to succeed; they should attempt to do everything to maximize their potential. ▲

Selling in Today’s Market

Continued from page 21 ▶ depends if someone falls in love with your story. Werksman added it’s not so much the editors being adventurous but will the reader be? Publishers have an editing/marketing/pr engine, but the story must be irresistible. Fallon said yes, editors are looking for gamechangers, something out of the box and different. Lessard said they are getting subs about older heroines.

What about serials?

Tsang is looking for Impulse (the digital only line). They have different marketing for e-books and print. She said erotica works more in serials, but Avon is not limited to it. Nelson said Hugh Howey did *WOOL* originally as a serial. The same formula will work in other genres—five parts, each with a cliffhanger and an overarching story arc.

What about marketing?

Tsang said they do marketing specific to each author, as they must play to each of their strengths. They do not have a big marketing plan for everyone. Lessard said each title has a budget, and series are different from single title. They try to maximize sales for each genre and try to be on top of what’s coming. What works today might not work tomorrow.

Werksman agreed with all of that, but Sourcebooks does a “couple of hundred” ARCs to “big mouth list” reviewers and libraries, and arranges blog tours. They do co-op advertising, online retailers do promotions, promo backlist to direct sales, market to libraries, and promote everything in an individualized but concentrated way.

What are your numbers?

Werksman said a number of debut authors in Casablanca’s seven-year history are looking at six figures for their career. As for books sold, one has had one million sales for 30 books—20,000 is a successful run.

Fallon asked whether sales expectations are tied to an advance, to which Werksman answered that advances and returns are hobbling publishing. It is not true that higher advances equal a higher push, she said. Tsang said it’s about the book and what’s happening in the market.

Has other media influenced what is hot, and how so?

Tsang said not necessarily; “remember how those super hero books didn’t sell.” Werksman disagreed, saying “some.” *Downton Abbey* allowed historical romance to push forward to the time between the World Wars. She also said to remember that other media are your competition. Lessing said that *Castle* started a trend towards lots of mysteries coming in.

Who in your house has ultimate veto?

Axelrod said “I do.” Werksman did not give a definite answer, instead saying she will fight for a project, and some projects she has taken in six times. Lessing said she has one partner, and while they discuss it, both of them have a say. Tsang said acceptance is an ongoing discussion, but she has said no. ▲

What Business Does an Author Have on Twitter?

REPORTED BY TRACEY LYONS @TRACEYJLYONS

Presenter: Porter Anderson, PorterAndersonMedia.com, @Porter_Anderson

What is Twitter? Twitter is a place of connection, using 140 characters or less. This is not for marketing and if you (just) write about your book they won't come to you, you have to raise an audience. A writer has no business on Twitter. In other words, don't conduct business or sell or market on Twitter. Twitter is the place where you engage your audience. The original idea of Twitter was that a tweet was a status update, forget that! Twitter has moved beyond this now. A tweet is a message, a thought, a reference to an article, an observation on a theme, a plug for an upcoming event. Twitter is a very serious platform.

How to use Twitter

Make your tweets short and relevant. Chat with people about your subject, your topic, your theme. Don't talk about the book or the fact that you wrote the book.

It is your job to find existing communities, ready gatherings, those who would be interested in your subject, topic, or theme. How do you go about doing this? Learn to love the search feature on Twitter. Look up every company and organization's name that would fit your platform. Make sure they have a Twitter handle, because if they don't, you've wasted Twitter. "A tweet is a terrible thing to waste." Twitter makes things light up. Tweets attract the people you're talking about—consider this an amplified audience.

Hashtags are a way to track your tweets. You can have as many as you want in your tweet. Then every time someone retweets or responds to your tweet you can look up your hashtag and track the tweet. Example-#ninc14. You can make up your own or use existing ones. You can follow Porter Anderson at #futurechat at 11 a.m. EST every Friday. This is a Twitter chat relevant to publishing, and anyone can join in by using that hashtag.

The next place you should spend your time on Twitter is not actually on Twitter but on a dashboard. These are places where you can track your Twitter activity and reach. Hootsuite.com, Tweetdeck, and Socialbro.com are just some of the sites that can give you a sense of what your reach is on Twitter. Klout.com tracks your impact in social media. You can compare other authors against your score to see if you need to make improvements and what you can do to get more attention from your following. The more hard data you can get, the better. This gives you a touchstone as to your reach.

How to create your Twitter account

Your bio: use as many handles as possible in the bio, anything you're connected to. Examples from Anderson's bio include @futurebook, @thebookseller, and @thoughtcatalog. When choosing your name always use the closest thing to your actual name you can get. Make sure to put an active link to your website address. If you're an author say you're an author. Make it easy for people to find you. Put your picture up, not your book cover. You are a person on Twitter. Put your mind into reader mode and think about what they would use to find you. If you are going into a campaign, put your hashtag in the bio at the top. There is no limit on hashtags in the Twitter bio. You can #booktitle #author #publisher's name #series name—use as many as you can. And always put your Twitter handle on every promotional item you put out there. A hot-link to your Twitter account or website makes it easier for people to find you.

Tweet etiquette

Keep it informational, quote from the piece, then link to article.

After the line you quote, put in the writer's handle, @porter_anderson etc. or the person you quoted from. If we don't credit each other as writers, who's going to? Think of it as a service to your Twitter reader, because it might lead to other followers.

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Yo, Here I Am! Buy Me!

REPORTED BY MINDY KLASKY

This First Word session was moderated by Porter Anderson, who wrangled ten panelists: Julia Coblenz (Nook Press), Katie Donelan (Bookbub), Jeff Gunhus (author), Mark Lefebvre (Kobo), Kristin Nelson (agent), John Olson (DitDat), Nicole Op den Bosch (ACX), Joan Schulhafer (publishing and media consultant), David Symonds (CreateSpace), and Dan Wood (Draft2Digital). The discussion focused on successful marketing strategies in light of current industry trends.

Initial discussion covered book pricing schemes, with Anderson questioning whether downward pressure on prices was a trend or a death knell. Lefebvre stated that he is opposed to 99-cent books; not only do they fail to make a lot of money for booksellers, but they lead to customers not being invested in the books they purchase. Olson noted there is always pressure on authors to modify prices—both up *and* down, and that customers exist for books at all price points. Symonds opined that the limitation for many customers isn't price; rather, it is time—people don't have time to read.

Several panelists examined the specific effect of Bookbub on the current market. Donelan described her company's product as a "discovery tool," a method for readers to discover new-to-them authors after accepting a first low-cost or free taste, and she noted that Bookbub's surveyed subscribers continue to express a belief in the value of books. Gunhus amusingly compared Bookbub to a first date—a chance to meet up for low-risk "coffee" before committing to the higher expectation of a "steak dinner."

Wood introduced the notion that "books" can't be considered as a monolith; readers of different genres have different expectations. Likewise, readers in different countries expect different price points.

Nelson stressed that *readers* determine the value of a book, rather than publishers or authors. She hinted that she has worked out experimental pricing plans with traditional publishers, but she couldn't share them publicly. She stressed authors' need for a *strategy*, rather than panicked experiments with pricing, and she asserted that fans will value writers they like, paying more because they're pleased by authors' success.

Discussion turned to increasing the sale of books through venues other than Amazon. Wood noted discovery tools—Kobo's "First Free in Series" program and iBooks' curated website pages. Lefebvre elaborated on Kobo's program, noting that its curated First Free program is easier to break in with some genres (e.g., horror) than others (e.g., romance).

Schulhafer noted non-traditional print book sales venues such as Target, WalMart, and grocery stores, and Lefebvre (who is an author as well as Kobo's Director) entertained with his account of a hugely successful signing at Costco after disappointing appearances at independent bookstores.

In response to an audience question, the discussion turned to books written in series and alternatives for authors who do not write in series. Wood responded that some genres are less influenced by series, but the odds are against authors not working in series. Nelson proposed alternative ways of viewing "series"—emphasizing similar styles and themes in an author's work, even if each book is a stand-alone. Coblenz noted that non-series books can be grouped to have a series-like impact if their covers have a similar look and feel. Gunhus pointed out that back matter in a book can add to creative branding; he includes a letter to his readers thanking them for reading his book and pointing them toward other similar books of his. Later, Wood mentioned groups of authors uniting to promote their books in series-like ways, such as Invitation to Eden and iBooks' recent boxed set sales promotion.

Another audience question focused on subscription services. Op den Bosch said that with Audible's subscription model each member has a certain number of credits to spend each month, leading members to discuss which books are "credit-worthy." With regard to e-book subscriptions, Wood proposed that subscription-service-readers are different from traditional audiences; they're more willing to experiment with new-to-them authors.



An audience member asked Symonds if CreateSpace was likely to adopt price-suggestion tools similar to KDP's. Symonds said such a service was not likely, because print on demand books are sold at greatly different price points, depending on genre. In particular, educational books tend to be sold for very high prices.

An audience member stated that price was *not* the main factor for her purchases; she buys based on whether a book looks interesting and whether she knows the author. Lefebvre urged authors to build rapport with readers so the authors become "auto-buys"; he suggested using a newsletter to inform readers of new books and including a sign-up link for the newsletter at the end of every book. He also advocated for each author to have a street team.

When an audience member asked if the vendors on the panel would share information about readers—including the percentage of the book read—Lefebvre said Kobo intends to implement that sharing once it completes programming to protect readers' anonymity. (Nelson noted that traditional publishers may not be receiving similar data from vendors.)

An audience member asked about the library market, drawing comparisons to subscription services. Wood said Draft2Digital is considering library partners, but progress is slow. He noted that Overdrive is not friendly to independent authors, and he holds higher hopes for services like BiblioBoard and Hoopla. Nelson reminded audience members that each library company uses a different model; the services are not monolithic. An audience member noted the existence of Book View Café, an author-run publishing cooperative that has gained library contracts for its members, even with services that are not yet open to individual independent authors. (Shulhafer noted that the current relatively low sales to libraries might be an artifact of library budgets being cut during the recession.)

Finally, Nelson commented briefly on agency-assisted publishing, including the broad range of services some agents are now providing to their independent clients. Anderson concluded by noting those relationships are more common in England, but additional change is likely to come to the U.S. market. ▲

What Business Does An Author Have on Twitter?

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Put in anything that's clickable.

A person's hashtag should come ahead of business in tweets.

Quote, credit, link. Use a site like tinyurl, ow.ly, or bitly to shorten your links.

Porter's Priorities:

#credit writers

Use all handles, hashtags, links.

Be cordial, grateful, helpful—sarcasm doesn't play well on Twitter, don't ever tweet something you don't want to see again.

Do not engage with jackasses!

Be consistent—tweet at the same time of the day, use Socialbro to find out when your followers are online.

You can kill a tweet by clicking on the three little dots you see on the bottom of tweets. From here you can also use the mute function so you won't see undesirable tweets, and those people don't know you can't see their tweets. When you use the block function, they are informed you've blocked their account.

Put yourself in your dashboard so you can see how your tweets look.

Try not to use the auto tweets that are connected to articles or blog posts because they usually don't credit writers.

Use linkable material as often and as much as you can to attract attention back to you

Don't use auto-follow programs. Follow quality people. Think about what you can learn from following them. You can always put them on a list without following them. It takes time to build good relationships on Twitter. Consistency is important; keep showing up and keep being important. ▲

Perks, Perils, and Pitfalls—Why Collaborating Authors Need Agreements

REPORTED BY ASHLEY MCCONNELL

Presenters: F. Robert Stein and Mindy Klasky

Bob Stein is a consulting attorney specializing in intellectual property (IP) and literary rights. He worked for 13 years at Random House, Simon & Shuster, and Warner Books (what is now Grand Central); his experience is in traditional publishing, not indie.

Stein began by discussing “author bundles”—that is, a single book (package), with contributions by two or more authors, of novels, novellas, or short stories. Bundles can be very effective promotions to attract new readers by using a better known author linked to a less well known author; it can also be a cost effective way to present shorter works.

It is essential that participants in bundles have a detailed, legally binding agreement with respect to contingencies, including sharing of proceeds, and how those proceeds are distributed (e.g. pro rata, or based on how well known the author is) and it should be agreed upon *in advance* of the production of the bundle.

Some of the questions the agreement should also address include:

- ▶ Production costs—where does the money come from?
- ▶ How will the books be published—who decides—are decisions delegated?
- ▶ Which channels of distribution? Who decides?
- ▶ What is the exit strategy—term of duration—what if an author wants to leave or withdraw her contribution?
- ▶ Who administers publisher accounts at points of distribution? (Ideally, each writer should have password access.)
- ▶ Can a participating author sell his or her contribution outside the bundle?
- ▶ Who decides promotion, publicity, advertising for the bundle?
- ▶ Who controls the bank account? Is that person sending out 1099s? Who is responsible for records of distribution? Should the group hire an accountant? If the primary author can't handle the job, is there a backup person? The bank account must be accessible by more than one person, in case something happens to that person.
- ▶ Will the group accept assurance of the treasurer on costs, or do they demand receipts?
- ▶ Who gets vendor specific reports—every author-participant should.
- ▶ What constraints, if any, are there on publishing new work?
- ▶ Who handles the logistical work of creating the bundle, the cover, registering copyright, the website, etc. Who owns the copyright in compilation (each element of the bundle is separately copyrighted to the author, but is the bundle as a whole also copyrighted)? Note that if the authors form an LLC, the LLC can own the compilation copyright.
- ▶ Who owns and can use the cover art? Again, the LLC can.
- ▶ If there are disputes, how can they be handled? Mediation, arbitration? in what state? in accordance with the laws of what state?
- ▶ What if the book is pirated? Who handles that? Or do all participants ignore the piracy?

All these issues should be addressed and resolved *before* the book is published. It is unlikely any group of authors can address *all* contingencies ahead of time, but *try*.

Incorporation, LLC, or errors and omissions insurance will help provide protection against lawsuits. An insurance company may require a lawyer's review of the work.

After Stein enumerated the potential problems that collaborative author efforts might encounter, he invited NINC member Mindy Klasky to tell us how a successful collaboration is working now. Klasky has ▶

worked as an attorney in the District of Columbia and Maryland and as a director of a legal library. For the last six years she has been writing full time. She has done two boxed sets, one with six authors and the other with 12, and is planning another. In addition, she is an active member of *Book View Cafe*, the writers' co-op with 52 participants at this writing.

Klasky's advice was to cover as much of your legal liability as you possibly can, but her agreements for her boxed sets were done on one-page-letter agreements, outlining the general terms and the specific goals for each set (for the six-author set, publicity and promotion; for the 12-author set, to hit the *New York Times* bestseller list). These agreements were not intended to cover every contingency; the participants were willing to accept risk to attain their goal. Everyone agreed to remain in for a specified period (60 days); pullouts would be required to reformat the bundle.

As coordinator, Mindy reported sales back to the group daily for first two weeks, then weekly, then monthly. They trusted her to put together the spreadsheet. They made \$18K over expenses on the six-author set. They held private discussions about buying ads and spent about \$600 for ads, with each person buying ads in their own venue. They used the same model for the 12-person set, which was disbanded after 45 days on market, having achieved their goal of reaching the bestseller list.

Book View Cafe is a different, ongoing proposition (it began over five years ago and has grown steadily since its inception).

The participants are volunteers and trade their expertise in areas like proofing, editing, creating cover art, testing files by mobi and epub, etc. Each book published by the co-op must be beta-read and proofread before it can be published. In addition to providing services, members pay an annual membership fee of \$35.00. Sales are made directly through the BVC website, or through online vendors such as Amazon, B&N, and Kobo. Five percent of the proceeds from sales on the BVC website are paid into the co-op; all the rest goes to the author. BVC is incorporated under the laws of the state of New Mexico, which has a particularly advantageous law for co-ops. The books are published by the Book View Cafe Publishing Cooperative; the copyright is held by the author. The ISBN is recorded in the name of either the Book View Cafe Publishing Cooperative or, sometimes, the individual author's imprint, depending on who bought the ISBN.

In lawsuits, the author and the publisher can be sued. BVC is sheltered by its corporate shell. BVC's share of the money may go into loan programs, expansion of the audience, etc. Klasky said that the co-op has decided virtually none of the questions that Stein raised, although proceeds of sales through the website go to a bank account in the name of the corporation. There is also a Paypal account in the name of the corporation. Royalties are distributed on a quarterly basis.

Stein asked, "To what extent are sales outside of the co-op more lucrative than sales within the co-op?" He noted that the fact that BVC doesn't seek to restrict members activity outside of the co-op lessens the chance of conflict. But what happens if the person who promised to do stuff doesn't do it?

Klasky responded that members can ask someone else to pick up the ball. Everything must be proofread. The "Speaker to Less Actives" contacts non-contributing members to see what they can do. No one has been placed on hiatus. Book View Cafe publishes over 100 books a year (DAW publishes 60 a year). A further, more detailed article on how they do business is on the website, <http://bookviewcafe.com/bookstore/> and Mindy Klasky's website, <http://www.mindyklasky.com/>.

In response to questions from the audience: There are other varieties of collaborative publishers, such as shared universe, or several authors publishing under one name (e.g. Jane Doe). Potential problems in that scenario are that a lawsuit for Jane Doe might affect all the authors who wrote under that name.

When you close a corporation, you need to know how to handle copyrights held by that corporation. Copyright should be assigned and recorded in the Copyright Office *before* the corporation is dissolved.

Collaboration agreements need to lay out methodology (who writes what) in advance, so that if one person doesn't do the work they can't claim a share of proceeds. Agreements can be amended.

Giving 1099s does not make you an employer; the 1099 protects the person issuing it. Where there is no corporation, an individual could die or run away and contributors might not get the money. In Mindy's examples of boxed sets, the goal was not to make money; their approach might have been different if it were. One of the sets included a Canadian author; non-US participants do not use 1099s and you need to know what tax forms to use.

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14 Uncomfortable Questions to Ask Your Publisher Right Now

REPORTED BY JENNIFER STEVENSON

Carolyn Pittis, managing director of Welman Digital LLC, NYC, delivered a tour de force presentation on changing the publishing industry with teams, cramming three Ted Talks into an hour and exploding our heads with 14 Uncomfortable Questions To Ask Your Partners Right Now, as she retitled it.

The barrage of ideas that followed came in meditation-worthy sets. The ideas broke down, as far as this reporter can tell, into Change, Teams, and Scale.

Change

The agricultural revolution was a roughly 3,000-year transition. The Industrial Revolution lasted 300 years. The tech-led global revolution will take only 30 years. No single generation has witnessed so much change.

The market we're in rewards groups and networks. Your issues might be personal, or they might be symptomatic of a large group problem set. How can individuals and groups work more effectively together? The challenge we're facing is, how can we be unique in a world of ubiquitous uniqueness? How can we help each other? How can we help ourselves?

What is change? It comes in stages:

- ▶ I don't think anything's happening
- ▶ Wait, I see it happening
- ▶ Is it still happening?

You may not know the moment when it starts to happen at scale, nor see it immediately, unless there are measures to see it. Implicit in change is rebellion, not gradual but violent or sudden.

Almost any change has an S-curve. It's slow at the beginning, then there's an acceleration point where change goes vertical. Then change slows down again.

In a time of great change, we are torn between excuses and incentives. "There's gotta be a better way" leads to "but that's not really my job, I need somebody else to do that so I can succeed." That may be true. So where are we going, how will we get there, and who will lead us?

Teams

In order to change things we have to change the things we do as teams and organizations, with a conscious unwinding of habitual patterns. Older publishers have cultural habits. Newer publishers have different DNA and different cultures. All publishers are unique. Habits are practice.

From *The Triple Package: How Three Unlikely Traits Explain the Rise and Fall of Cultural Groups in America*, by Amy Chua & Jed Rubenfeld, comes this list of drivers that motivate successful groups.

1. Insecurity — economic, financial, cultural
2. Superiority — intellectual, cultural
3. Impulse control — discipline, hard work, focus

So a people with an inferiority complex, a sense of insecurity, will also feel superior, smarter, love their culture; their superiority comes from their sense of culture and their sense of identity as a group. Add impulse control, hard work, discipline, and focus. This explains success in many different groups in the United States. Groups that do not feel insecure, who have a more egalitarian sense of their place in society, who don't feel a need to control impulses or self control themselves ... don't succeed.

The pivot of Pittis's presentation, in my opinion, came here: A well-assembled team with the right drivers can help us change successfully. Tech and information empower the hives. How do tech and information empower us collectively? What things haven't we done as a group that are now possible, given the amount of communication and networking (and big data) available? ▶

“I haven’t seen the full power of the author community exercised in this country. Is there an organizing structure that’s missing? What’s the glue that will make that happen? Do you want to make that happen?” Pittis asked.

British psychologist Dr. Meredith Belbin posits that every team needs nine roles. Each individual has preferred roles on the team. Each role has allowable weaknesses. Teams work best when they work with individuals’ core strengths and work around their allowable weaknesses. Teams need to be balanced and these roles must be performed so they can change productively.

Belbin identifies three key roles: social, thinking, and action. See www.Belbin.com to take a self-test and determine which of these is yours. Some key points:

- ▶ The Plant, social. Strength: great ideas. Weakness: often gets nothing done. Must be paired with the Shaper.
- ▶ The Shaper, thinking. Strengths: action role, makes stuff happen. Driven, thrives on pressure, passionate, ego is aligned with the task. Weaknesses: difficult to work with, too driven to see big picture or other team members’ points.
- ▶ Completer-Finisher, action. Strengths: really good at tying everything together, finishing all steps, remembering that all the details have to come together. Perfectionist. Anxious about error. Weaknesses: worries too much, won’t delegate.

We seldom have a way to know what we’re really good at. What are you good at, and what are you capable of being good at? Have goals, know what you can do, know what you can’t do, and get that help. With Belbin’s system, you may be able to find partners for yourself.

Scale

<p>Patron (traditional publishing) model: GATEKEEPING approve fund publish</p>	<p>Business services model: AMPLIFYING buy edit format design package market distribute sell</p>	<p>Network model: SCALING what if? experiment combine risk learn ask listen team</p>
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The network model is the new one, it’s about doing it in groups. Have an idea, follow through on an experiment, then scale up on the results.

Fourteen uncomfortable questions to ask your group partners right now:

VALUES

- What defines success for my partners?
- What does my partner find important about me?

SKILLS

- What does my partner do better than anyone else? Ask them to show me.
- What does my partner think I do well?

SCALE

- What does my partner want me to focus on doing the most?
- What capabilities does my partner have?
- How does my partner use those skills at great volume?

INFORMATION

What market intelligence does my partner have that we can use together?
What do I have or know that my partner needs, for what purpose?

RISK

What are my partner's biggest failures?
What is my partner most concerned about in working with me?

IMPACT

What measures of success do you use?
What's the best way we can add value for each other now?
How can we make money together?

Ask questions and know more about your partners than you used to know, before you sign up. Your partners and your team are important; their capabilities matter.

An incomplete list of books and authors referenced:

The Power of Habit, by Charles Duhigg

The Triple Package: How Three Unlikely Traits Explain the Rise and Fall of Cultural Groups in America, by Amy Chua & Jed Rubenfeld

Simon Anderson, CEO, Dreamhost. Quoted in "The Boss Stops Here," *New York Magazine*, June 24, 2013

The Economic Dilemma, by Clayton Christensen

www.belbin.com, Meredith Belbin's Team Role Theory and self-test

Oliver Broadbent, Director, thinkup.org

What To Do When It's Your Turn, by Seth Godin



Perks, Perils, and Pitfalls

Continued from page 28 ▶ In an example of a linked novel and study guide, there were cautions about possible authorial sensitivities about the study guide—what approvals would the novelist have? How would proceeds be shared? They need a collaboration agreement, including who owns the copyright, how royalties will be shared, how the two items are published and exploited, and who's in charge. Again, authors need to work it all out beforehand.

For negotiation of standard publishing agreements, Stein recommended contacting Paula Breen at 631-284-3193 or pmbreen@hotmail.com. Breen is not an attorney—she was a contracts administrator at Random House—but Stein recommends her very highly and points out that "Paula charges less and is very nice and very competent." ▲

It's Dues Renewal Time ... Don't Miss Out on the Best Resource in the Fast Changing Publishing World ... Novelists, Inc. Renew Online Today!

Street Teams 101

REPORTED BY BARB MEYERS

Panel: Cami Tsang, Donna Grant, Steena Holmes, Rene DeLeon, Margaret Daley, Kristen Painter

Ask five authors about how to organize and maintain a street team, and you're likely to receive five different answers.

The first question might be "What is a Street Team?" On that there is likely to be agreement. A street team is made up of dedicated fans of a particular author. They volunteer to do things such as write glowing reviews on various sites and also "like" and "share" author announcements on Facebook and other social media. They'll hand out bookmarks, show up at signings, and bring three friends. Some of them take over as street team captains, freeing the author up to write more books faster.

How do you find these individuals? How do you organize them?

Finding them might be the easiest part. Authors often use a Facebook fan page or create a street team private page to send out street team invitations. Fans who post frequent blog comments or those on a newsletter list are another resource. Consider creating a form invitation accessed through your web site for a potential street team member to complete. Make sure to get the handles s/he will use to post reviews and other activities in order to track who's doing what.

Although it might be a good idea to start small, with a team that's easy to manage, Jana DeLeon's street team grew from zero to 100 members in just a couple of days and currently numbers around 190. But Jana's husband, Rene, spends a significant amount of his time keeping the members motivated and rewarded. He's created a family-like atmosphere, remembering birthdays and sending cards for other occasions. There are also free t-shirts with the team name and contests to keep interest high and the team active.

The most important thing about forming a street team is to determine your goal. What do you want your street team to do for you? Remember that all of them won't do everything and it's important to appreciate their strengths as individuals.

There is nothing wrong with being selective. Beware giving out a lot of "swag" because there are those who will join only for the free books and t-shirts and will do nothing in return. Swag can be expensive, so set a budget and stick to it. Many authors send out an initial welcome package, but anything further is based on a team member's performance. Contest prizes and rewards for posting reviews can be free books, gift cards, or bookmarks. Members love hats, t-shirts, buttons, and even book bags with the team's logo.

Do you have to have a logo and a special name for your team? No, but there might be a certain cachet for your members if they can say they belong to "The House of Pain" or "Steenas's Secret Society."

An important thing to consider is how much time managing a street team will require. For some authors it's as much as two hours a day. For others, or those who have assistants, it might be a larger portion of each day. As one panelist said, "I use the time I was previously wasting online for my street team."

Does having a street team create a measurable difference in sales? Across the board, the answer to that is a resounding "YES!" especially if there are booksellers and book bloggers on the team. Jana DeLeon saw a 300 percent sales increase in the year since her street team was formed.

The important thing to remember is that street teams are volunteers. They are your most loyal fans. They might even have a tattoo of your book covers as Kristen Painter's did. Treat them well, show appreciation for their support, and reward them for their efforts. They love to chat and interact. As Rene DeLeon says, "You will get back what you put in." ▲

Take My Job(s) Please ...

Set limits, define your agenda, assess strengths and outsource—yes, outsource—to meet your writing, marketing, and sanity goals.

REPORTED BY TRACEY LYONS

Presenter: Joan Schulhafer

How do you hit the ground running with promotion and marketing? It's hard to get straight answers from anyone because everyone does it differently, and there are a lot of choices out there. You need to find what works for you and your work. Facebook and blog postings can be overwhelming. Draw boundaries to save yourself because no one else will. It's okay to say no.

Create an agenda.

Make a list for marketing, in order of what needs to be done and how it needs to hit the reader. Decide whether you can do all this yourself or if you need to outsource, which will cost you money. Do you have the infrastructure to support your efforts? If you're doing all of this, who are you talking to and are they listening? If you're going to use social media, are you there all the time? Are you leading and building up to your release? Do you have an audience for your work?

Define your goals and be realistic. Your book will not be a bestseller, but maybe you are trying to double your audience. What are the goals you can attach to next publication? Play to your strengths, and know your weaknesses. Set your goals by listing three things you want your promotion to say, then make a second list of other things you need to do. Everything on the second list has to support your first list. Draw a line from goals on the first list to goals on the second list. Take off or rethink anything that doesn't match.

There are no right or wrong ways to get things done. Don't compare yourself to the mega bestsellers.

Getting ready to implement your marketing plans.

Work in advance, doing this while creating your agenda. First off, sort all of your book release information into separate computer files: cover copy, book covers, ISBNs on your titles. Put buy links together in one place. Always include Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, iBooks, and IndieBound if your books are listed there. Add in print book links, i.e. Createspace, if you have that available to you.

Get all your images together, and get this done early so you can start working on guest posts and reviews. Use both high and low resolution with any images. These should include book covers and author head shots. Use book specific headers. For your cover copy, pull excerpts early, and have both shorter ones and longer ones available—700 words or so for short ones. If you are a traditionally published author and your publisher has a book catalogue page, do a screen shot of that so you have it.

Using book communities

Keep a file of all the places where you want to promote your books: Goodreads, Fresh Fiction, Night Owl Reviews, etc. Even if the only change you're making is a new book title, have all your other info ready. Look at the internet-book bloggers and book sites that do reviews. Make a decision about what content you can offer to them. Perhaps you could do a contest if not a review. Think about guest posts. How many blog posts can you do in a given time? Be clear in what you're able to take on. Bloggers love if you can give them content. Online interviews are very easy to do. Excerpts can be offered for bloggers to post.

Have more than one bio. Your long bio can be more detailed, a feature piece, and relate back to the book. Keep it personal, but journalistic in tone, and three to four paragraphs in length. Then have a shorter three-sentence bio.

If you are planning to do giveaways, think about what you are going to offer. When seeking reviews with ARCs, tell them where it's available for review. Be sure to send an author image, book cover image, and bio. Think about what resources you are going to share with them. Reviewers will want to

Continued on page 39 ▶

Audible, Audiobooks, and You

REPORTED BY JANIS SUSAN MAY PATTERSON

Audible is part of ACX—Audiobook Creation Exchange. The workshop was given by Hannah Wall and Nicole Op Den Bosch, who said that the average listener hears 17 audio books a year. Audiobooks are now available on just about every device, including cellphones. ACX supplies eBooks and also does podcasts.

Some narrators at ACX are big-name stars; all narrators are professional and screened. If a narrator is reported as unprofessional, ACX will investigate. Both Wall and Op Den Bosch stressed that ACX is committed to audio books; they do lots of promotion, including ads and such.

Currently ACX has 45,000+ books on WhisperSync Voice. WhisperSync will track the reader's place on their Kindle so if the reader moves to a different device the book will begin where the reader left off.

Once your book is on sale, you will get an email and 25 free downloads (and you can request more if needed). Use these downloads for giveaways and to generate reviews. Review sites include Audiofilemagazine.com, Audiogals.net, and Books for Ears. Unfortunately, the code is like an Amazon gift card—you give the code yet they can buy someone else's book. However, you can download the book to your account and then gift the book itself. ACX offers writers a bounty: if someone joins Audible and purchases your book first, then stays active for three billing cycles, you get \$50. Also, promo codes are available.

Putting your book on ACX is simple and can be done several ways. If you already have an audio recording (and some authors like to narrate their own books), you must first make sure your book is ready for upload by checking the specs on the website. Once it is approved, you upload, and the book is live in an average of six weeks.

ACX has more than 20,000 narrators, each capable of producing a finished book. To begin, you post two to three pages maximum of your book and say you want a narrator. Be sure to select a sample that is part of the best and most varied section of your book—be sure to include dialogue and narration, and if there are several main characters, hopefully including all of them.

When narrators send you auditions, listen carefully and consider if their reading is too fast, too slow, cartoonish, or just right? In general, it is better to err on the side of too slow than too fast. If you are doing a series, continuity of voice is essential. If you wish, you can use multiple narrators; this is not as popular, but can be done and is sometimes spectacular. In this case, the primary producer sub-contracts out the other voices and the author's royalty is not affected. If you are paying for the recording (i.e., not doing the 50/50 split), the royalties can be negotiated. Use of sound effects are on the decline, as they make the book ineligible for WhisperSync. The audio file has to match the e-book file at least 97 percent, though it is advised to cut a lot of the "he said/she said" tags.

There are two ways to pay; you split the income 50/50 with the narrator, and you are not out of pocket any upfront money, or you can simply hire the narrator at his going rate and all the royalties are yours.

At the 15-minute point in the narration, you must judge. You can request up to two rounds of revisions; if these do not work, you can back out of the deal. If the 15 minutes are great, the narrator is under no obligation to send you more until the project is complete. However, some authors prefer—and this can be negotiated—that the narrator send the file chapter by completed chapter. If the final product is not up to the original 15 minute sample, it can be appealed to ACX and, depending on their decision, there might not be a charge to you.

There is no official rating system for narrators, but you can check how many books and what sales they have had. Audio clips are downloadable as PC clips.

If the recording turns out badly, but you don't want to appeal to ACX, there are two options. If you are paying, you can take it down. If you are doing a royalty share, talk to the narrator about re-recording. The narrators want to make money too, and you must both have your best work out there.

Series rates are negotiable—this is a marketplace. If you are unfamiliar with the narrator, start with one book. Don't rush and make sure it is right. Then do the rest of the series.

If you are paying for the recording, \$200-\$400 per finished hour can get a great *Continued on page 36* ▶

Working with a Cover Designer

BY JANIS SUSAN MAY PATTERSON

Tammy Seidick is a perky, articulate blonde who has been a graphic designer for 18 years. A background in advertising has given her a good appreciation of what will sell. She offers writers logos, brochures, websites, business cards, and book covers. She has been doing book covers for four years and has designed the NINC conference logo for the past seven years. She is happy to tell you she loves cats ... and authors.

One thing she does not like is the Amazon cover designer tool. It does not, in her opinion, do the best for an author.

So what should an author do if she wants a fantastic, selling, evocative cover? The answer is, not surprisingly, to find a good cover artist. To help do that, she gave a series of questions that every writer should ask a potential cover artist.

1. What is their availability? Some can do a book cover in a month, some need several months' notice, and sometimes it all depends on circumstances.
2. Can you see their portfolio or cover samples?
3. What is their normal turnaround time?
4. What is their pricing? (According to Tammy, \$100-300 for custom is a good range.)
 - a. Do they have premades?
 - b. What changes can you make?
 - c. Do they resell premades?
 - d. Can they do special pricing for a series?
 - e. What do you receive? The cover only, or paper and e-book cover, promo web covers, and in what sizes?
 - f. Do they charge more for finding/using stock pictures? Or is there a price break if you hunt for and find the pictures?
5. What other services do you receive?
 - a. How many changes are you allowed?
 - b. If you want out of the deal, are there kill fees involved?
 - c. Who owns/holds the copyright on the cover?
6. What if I have edits later, such as an award blurb?
7. If you start with an e-book cover and then decide to go to POD, can the image be upgraded? Is there a charge for this?
8. Do they offer other promotional services, such as banners, bookmarks, and business cards? How much do they cost?
9. Can you use the cover image on merchandise items and, if so, do you need to upgrade any licensed stock photos? (Tammy said free giveaways to fans are usually okay, but it is always best to check.)
10. Are they awesome? Seriously. And are you? You need to build a rapport with your cover designer. To get the best results, artist and author should be a good fit.

Covers say a lot about you. Tammy asked if you as an author are going to trust her with the design process. Authors should have input in every stage of the design process. The cover designer should make a mock-up, which might or might not work. If it does, the fine-tuning begins there.

A cover designer should ask the author:

1. The title, author name, and any other information (series title, blurb, image-heavy or not, genre, general mood, special characters, objects, etc.).
2. Does the author have other books and have/need a brand?
 - a. If the author is continuing a series that was begun by a traditional publisher, they cannot

copy the existing style, but can create something similar. Be careful not to be too different, as it is difficult to predict how the cover/series will be received.

b. If the author doesn't have a brand, look at bestselling covers in your genre for ideas.

3. What are the author's general likes/dislikes? Do they hate any particular color, layout, use of models or not?

4. What cover format do you need—e-book, print, bundle, audio?

Print covers must bleed—i.e., the image must run off the edge. If you are doing an e-cover, leave extra image in case a print edition might come later. Most covers are now done in 300 dpi (high-resolution) and will do for both e- and print editions. Some premade e-covers are done in low-resolution and these cannot be used for print; you must be sure to ask. Be very aware of the size—Barnes and Noble has slightly different size requirements.

If you are changing/updating an existing cover with a new designer, there is no need to notify the original designer if the author owns the cover.

Color is important, as not all colors work well in thumbnails. You must think of a cover as a whole.

Most edits and tweaks are fairly minor, and do not rate a full re-charge.

A design should be able to go across all formats. Discuss this in the beginning, as it usually rates better pricing.

The cover process is where the magic happens—first the stock photo sites are searched. Be careful, as some have both free and charge areas, and some pictures are only licensed (rented) for a time. Start your search with long descriptive phrases, then narrow the search to find the exact photo. Once you have 20 or so possibilities, then start to play with it. The artist will do a rough with a program like Photoshop and play with text placement, fonts, and colors. Tammy sends up to five roughs for review, then refines. Once the image is set, she buys the stock pictures, makes high-resolution files, and sends appropriately sized images to the author. Artists generally do not supply the .psd (Photoshop file) to the author.

Unless the artist buys all rights to a stock picture (generally very expensive) the stock picture remains available and can be reused by others, including traditional publishers. This is becoming a problem. One solution is to hire models and do your own photo shoot, but this can be very expensive.

Tammy concluded with, "A good cover is the final layer placed on your labor of love—your book." ▲

Audible, Audiobooks, and You

Continued from page 34 ▶ performance; \$200 per finished hour can get a good performance—on average.

You can review chapter by chapter; some prefer to do this as it is easier to fix problems than when the entire book is done.

Now is the beginning of the audiobook revolution. Discoverability is relatively easy and the criteria for promotion are pretty much the same as other books. Is your cover just right? Not too plain or too steamy? (And covers for audio books have to be square—be sure you talk this over with your cover designer.) Reviews are a necessity, as is author self-promotion.

Other tips:

- ▶ Consider adding teasers to your book. They must be after the credits, though.
- ▶ Maximize your relationship with your narrator; your narrator can voice promos for you.
- ▶ Leverage SoundCloud for audio clips, and put links to your book there. You can use clips totaling up to 10 percent of your book.
- ▶ Be sure to dedicate space on your website to your audiobook.
- ▶ Op Den Bosch announced that the market is expanding, as ACX has opened up a UK market.

The Future of Publishing: Take Two

Where Will Publishing Be in Five Years?

REPORTED BY CHERYL BOLEN

The “digital disruption” in publishing is a good thing. Or not. Opinions varied broadly among the ten members of the panel, composed of two authors, publishers, and other major players in digital delivery of content.

Longtime agent Steven Axelrod said, “It is not to be celebrated that you can self publish ... If it’s anything like what’s happening in the music business, it’s near fatal.” He cited a *New York Times* article that reported a Ringo Starr song that sold millions only earned \$80 for the writers.

“That was bad data,” countered indie author Hugh Howey, the phenom whose bestselling book, *WOOL*, is being made into a movie. Howey maintains that some surveys “show what they want to show rather than a curiosity for the truth.” Howey himself maintains a quarterly Authors Earnings site.

Axelrod forecasts that five years from now there won’t be any agents sitting on NINC panels.

Other panelists speculated on changes that will occur in the industry in the next five years. Carolyn Pittis, who has extensively studied the publishing industry at the graduate level, says future innovations in the industry will not come from incumbents but from innovators such as Uber. Her opinion was one of the few that panelists agreed upon.

One of the more recent innovations, according to ACX’s Nicole Op den Bosch, is Whispersync, the collaboration of Amazon and ACX which allows readers to read the same work on both their e-readers and listening devices with no disruption.

Kobo Writing Life’s Mark Lefebvre said the publishing industry over the next five years will see more collaborations, like Draft2Digital, ACX, and author cooperatives.

Author Kelly Armstrong, who writes novels for a major publisher and indie publishes shorter works, said she expects to see growth in Payhip, a site where indies can sell their books at very low cost. Payhip provides analytics and does discounts for authors who tweet, she said.

“Disruption can create opportunity and power for writers,” said Dan Slater, who handles author and vendor relations for Amazon’s Kindle Direct Publishing program. He sees globalization of content, fan fiction, and content delivery continuing to increase and improve.

Dominique Raccah, CEO and publisher for Sourcebooks, says the industry’s new retail markets are “exciting,” and her own company, by embracing the changes in the marketplace, has grown by more than 20 percent in two consecutive years.

She would like to see the industry adopt a rating system like that Netflix has designed. “They do a great job of forecasting my affinity for British TV.”

Pittis concurred. “We [publishing industry] really don’t have book discovery.” She cited Netflix’s prize for making its system 95 percent accurate and said the publishing industry needs to see an emergence of “peer retailing.” And that forecast tool, she said, will not come from incumbents.

She suggested, too, that NINC do reader research, saying that authors could have a system like United Artists that actors established in Hollywood many decades ago.

Raccah said the industry does have the Book Industry Study Group.

One area ripe for growth is the children’s e-book market. Amazon’s Jon Fine said the fact that only two percent of children’s picture books are available digitally “is a huge white space.”

Howey cited a Stanford University study that showed children are reading more than ever, but they are not necessarily reading books. Online content, like blogs, is garnering a huge share of their reading time.

Armstrong summed up what authors need to do to stay viable in the coming years. They need diversification, innovation, and flexibility. ▲



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane Kelly

Year-End Wrap-Up

As we bid goodbye to 2014 and usher in 2015, it can't hurt to take a little time to consider the tax implications of the end of one tax year and start of the next.

First, it's important to note that, as cash-basis taxpayers, we can only deduct expenses actually paid during the 2014 tax year on our 2014 return. To reduce your 2014 tax liability, it might be wise to go ahead and pay for any pending expenses. For instance, if you know you'll be traveling to a conference in April, you could benefit from buying your plane ticket now, before the end of the year, so that you can take the deduction on your 2014 return. It doesn't matter that the conference doesn't take place until 2015. It's the date that the payment is made that matters for tax purposes.

Keep in mind, too, that the IRS treats a payment by credit card or check as a cash payment. If you stock up on printer cartridges in December and pay for them via a credit card or check, you can deduct the cost in 2014 even if you don't pay the credit card bill until 2015 or the check doesn't clear your bank until 2015.

In some instances, it might be a better course of action to postpone payments. For instance, if your earnings in 2014 were modest but you expect a windfall in 2015, it might be better to postpone paying expenses until 2015.

The same logic applies to charitable contributions. If you are considering a significant contribution, time the payment so that it takes place in the year in which your earnings will be the highest.

A reverse form of logic applies to income. If you intend to release a self-published book around year-end, it could be beneficial to wait until January to put the book up for sale, thus moving that initial high revenue into the subsequent tax year. Or, if you incurred an exceptional amount of expenses in 2014, it might be preferable to release the book as soon as possible so those front-loaded earnings appear on your 2014 return.

Making contributions to a retirement account can substantially reduce your tax liability. Don't forget that you can make contributions to your SEP-IRA up to the due date of your return for the given tax year, which, for 2014 and most tax years is April 15. (If April 15 falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or the Emancipation Day Holiday, the due date is extended until the next weekday.)

You also have until the due date to set up a SEP-IRA for a given tax year. Don't know how to set up a SEP? You can find instructions here: <http://www.irs.gov/Retirement-Plans/Establishing-a-SEP>.

If you make a contribution to a retirement plan after the end of the tax year, be certain to make it very clear to the custodian of your account that the deposit is intended to apply to the preceding year. If the contribution is attributed to the wrong year, you could find yourself facing a steep excess contribution penalty. Note, too, that SEP-IRA contributions are limited to the lesser of 25 percent of net earnings or \$52,000 for 2014/\$53,000 for 2015.

As with SEP-IRA contribution limits, many other tax benchmarks and benefits are adjusted at year end to account for changes in the cost of living, including the tax brackets. The standard deduction for singles goes up from \$6,200 in 2014 to \$6,300 in 2015. For married couples filing joint tax returns, the standard deduction amount increases to \$12,600 in 2015, up from \$12,400 in 2014. Those who file as head of household will be allowed a \$9,250 standard deduction in 2015 as compared to \$9,100 in 2014. The personal exemption amount will also increase for 2015, up to \$4,000 from the 2014 amount of \$3,950. The exemption(s) will begin to phase out in 2015 at adjusted gross income levels of \$258,250, or \$309,900 for married couples filing a joint tax return. Itemized deductions will also begin to phase out at these income levels.

More details about the inflation adjustments can be found here:

<http://www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/In-2015,-Various-Tax-Benefits-Increase-Due-to-Inflation-Adjustments>.

Remember, too, that certain life changes can affect your taxes. For instance, the child tax credit is no

longer allowed for children who turn 17 by year end. The ability to claim tax benefits for higher education can significantly affect your tax liability, as can the loss of such benefits. The receipt of Social Security or other retirement benefits can also increase your tax bill, while the loss of income resulting when you or your spouse retire from a day job can reduce taxes.

A relocation can affect your taxes in several ways. One, the moving expenses could be deductible if certain requirements are met. Two, the sale or purchase of a house could significantly affect your taxes, particularly if you substantially downsize or upsize. The resulting changes in deductible mortgage interest and real estate taxes could be large. Taxes will also be affected if the sale of your primary residence results in a gain in excess of the \$250,000 exclusion (\$500,000 for married couples).

A change in family status, such as marriage, divorce, or the birth of a child may reduce or raise your taxes, as could the death of a spouse.

The best way to avoid unwelcome surprises is to keep these myriad financial variables in mind and to be meticulous when computing your estimated taxes.

Wishing you a Happy New Year and an uncomplicated tax season!

Diane Kelly is a retired CPA/tax attorney who writes romance and humorous romantic mysteries.

Editor's Note: *Diane has opted to retire as Nink's tax columnist after this issue so she can spend less time researching tax law and more time writing.*

Take My Jobs ... Please

Continued from page 33 ▶ know about timing, when is the best time to post the review. You want to build buzz for the book's release.

Things to set up that are not specific to your book.

Sign up for things like socialbro.com so you can track your audience and best time to post. Take a step back to see where you've put your info and promo. Look at Facebook, Twitter, Google+. What's different about Google+? When you search on this site, you could be in the first page of results. You can copy your Facebook post and put it up on Google+. On Pinterest you can share without getting too personal. Talk about stuff that's ancillary to your book. You can post public domain photos about topics related to your book. When doing research, you can post photos of your setting. You can pull a lot of stuff out of your life that doesn't reveal your life.

YouTube is a great tool because so much is enhanced by having a video. We're not talking about a book trailer, but as a way to be active and reach out to readers. Put up videos of places where you do research. When captioning the video, think about what would attract people to that video. Videos should be about 45 seconds. Instagram—teens, millennials are here, so check your book graphics for age of readership.

Managing your subscriptions

Put all of your usernames and passwords for all social media sites you're on in one place for easy reference. Keep a file with the icons you use on Facebook, blogs, and Twitter. Use an Excel spreadsheet for your contact list. Include all the people you keep in touch with—agent, editor, other writers, etc.—and their names, phone numbers, email, URLs. Most importantly, note where you met them, who they are, and what they did for you. These could be your first contact people for promo on your next book. Track television and radio contacts if you've done interviews there. If you can only do one thing, keep track of people who have done anything to help spread the word about your books. Your email sign-up list is the most important list you have. Always have sign-up links on all promo.

Recap: Remember you are taking this information from book to book. You will use a lot of this information over and over again. Have it handy! Always consider your website content, think about key social media that works for you, be selective with your appearances, always have a printed piece that has book news and buy information. ▲

Not in My Name

Continued from page 1 ▶

▶ Price Waterhouse predicts that e-books will surpass print in 2017.

Anderson then asked where the publishing industry is headed. He predicted a “networked book,” a publication that lives entirely in cyberspace with highly individualized content accessed by multiple readers simultaneously. He called for the “architecture of collaboration,” urging authors to make contradictions work for us. (JK Rowling’s *Pottermore* is an example of such an architecture, where a publisher partners with Amazon to distribute new materials to a specific market.)

Anderson added a multimedia aspect to his presentation when he played the second movement, *Aenigmata*, of Kevin Keller’s three-movement suite, *Not in My Name*. He urged authors to protest, “Not in my name!” when publishers forget their inherent decency and attempt to monetize work, dumbing it down to reach readers. In the energy of distribution, content is fuel and audience is oxygen. We need a tremendous amount of oxygen to survive; therefore, we must resist publishers’ dumbing down.

Authors’ power is increasing in the marketplace.

Citing Hugh Howey’s reports on author earnings, Anderson noted that authors’ power is increasing in the marketplace. As more self-published authors earn more money, our voices get louder.

Anderson ended his presentation with pleas for authors to take action. First, he advocated for no genre to be left behind. Literary writers put down genre writers (and, sometimes, vice versa), but we’re all trying to preserve a cultural heritage.

Second, Anderson argued that we should leave behind arguments between traditionally published and self-published authors, taking on the far greater challenge that half the population—males—aren’t reading as much as they could and should be. He encouraged authors to create gripping material for boys, so that those children mature into men who read.

Finally, Anderson suggested we should talk less about “what’s selling” and more about books in general, focusing on the stories in them. He urged each listener to ask, “Have you read a good book?” By listening to the answers, we can rebuild sociohistorical awareness. NINC can be a force for clarity and coherence in the days to come. ▲

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