



NINK

AUGUST 2016

Volume 27, Number 8

The official newsletter of Novelists, Inc.,
a professional organization for
writers of popular fiction.

Nink August 2016

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President's Voice

By Diana Peterfreund



In the last half decade, NINC has transformed. Our early adoption of digital self-publishing and embrace of indie-only and indie-first authors has helped the organization, and its members, grow by leaps and bounds.

We put on a world-class conference that is a model for many and a draw for top industry professionals, and publish a newsletter with cutting-edge information about craft, publishing, and book marketing.

We're also an extremely small organization—a tenth of the size of, say, RWA—and we are almost entirely volunteer-run. It's only in the last two years that we've taken on a part-time employee to handle some of our administrative work.

Almost everything NINC does, from vetting membership applications to handling our finances to making sure our speakers' planes get in on time, is handled by members who are volunteering their time and talents to the organization.

What's even more amazing is that we're doing all this work while running our own busy careers. Our president-elect, Erica Ridley, hit the *New York Times* bestseller list recently; our conference coordinator Julie Leto is putting the final touches on our conference while preparing to release gorgeous new versions of books she's just had reverted from her publisher; and our hardworking newsletter editor, Heidi Joy Tretheway, and yours truly just had a weekend brainstorming extravaganza for a book we're co-writing as soon as we both finish the final books in our respective series.

When I read the responses of our recent member survey, I was struck by two points: First, our members are not only bursting at the seams with talent, they have tons of ideas on how to make NINC a more useful and more inclusive organization for all. Second, a lot of members of NINC want to get more involved and become closer to their fellow members, but don't know how.

Here's how: volunteer.

Without the work of our member volunteers, NINC cannot provide the services we are known for. But we're all extremely busy with our writing.

That's why we've instituted the Just One Thing (JOT) volunteer system. With JOT, a member can offer to help out NINC with "just one thing." The activity might take only an hour or two, and will greatly benefit all members.

Are you new to NINC? JOT is a great way to get to know your fellow NINC members and exactly the kind of benefits this organization has to offer.

One example of a JOT job would be to keep our list of literary lawyers up to date. Lawyers change firms, focus areas, or retire, and it can be a matter of a few minutes to call up the lawyers we have on the list, ask for their rates (and any discounts they are willing to offer NINC members), and confirm that their information is up to date.

It's also an opportunity to find out about new lawyers who are great for authors but aren't yet on the list. Have you recently had the opportunity to work with a literary lawyer? Maybe this is the JOT for you!

As the conference approaches, our list of JOT jobs expands. We can definitely find one that suits your skills and available time. If this will be your first conference, JOT is a great way for you to meet other NINC members, stuff a few name tags in badges, and make friends.

Do you have an idea for how to make NINC great? It might be a JOT just waiting.

We are also at this time looking for someone to be the JOT volunteer coordinator. This person would compile list of available JOT jobs they receive from the board or other members. All it takes is an ability to answer emails and keep a list.

On the more involved side of things, the board is looking for an associate newsletter editor to work with Heidi Joy Tretheway.

In the past six months, Heidi Joy has revolutionized Nink, moving us to a digital publishing platform while vastly expanding our content scope and the speed with which publishing news reaches your inbox.

She is currently seeking someone to start working with her now in order to learn the ropes and be able to step in as her replacement in 2018. The associate newsletter editor should have an interest in writing and publishing news, and either knowledge of or willingness to learn about digital publishing and newsletter management.

Anyone who takes this job is going to come away with an unbelievable education in these topics. Every week, I am gobsmacked by how brilliant Heidi Joy is.

Taking this job would be the best way to prepare someone to step into the job of newsletter editor, an appointed position within the NINC Board.

Its benefits include being a voting member of the board, with the ability to shape the direction of NINC, as well as the content of Nink, and travel, hotel, and registration compensation for the NINC conference. They also get the opportunity for up close and personal communication with the industry professionals who grace the pages of our newsletter every month.

Want to be a true industry insider? This might be the job for you.

As you can see, there are many ways to get involved in NINC, meet fellow members, and help yourself and others. If you are interested in any of these positions, have questions, or would like to volunteer in any other way, please contact me at diananovelist@gmail.com and I will help find the position that is right for you.

Together, we can make NINC everything we want it to be.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana". The letter "D" is large and circular, with the rest of the name written in a cursive script.

Diana Peterfreund is NINC's 2016 president. She writes YA and middle grade novels as Diana and new adult romance as Viv Daniels.

NINC Member Notes

Love Nink in print? Buy *The Best of Nink* edition.

Do you prefer paperbacks to ebooks?

Want a digest version of Nink if you're behind on reading each issue?

Want a compilation of past Nink articles so you don't have to dig through past editions?

Nink is publishing a paperback edition of its best evergreen content on business, marketing, craft, productivity and writing life. It includes more than 200 pages of top content from the past year and a comprehensive directory of all articles.

Copies of the paperback edition are available for \$5 if you pick them up at the conference, or \$7.50 if you prefer to have them mailed to you. Check out [this form](#) to learn more.

NINC on YouTube

We're gradually building some video content to compliment our wealth of resources for NINC. You can [subscribe to get alerts](#) when we post new videos.

Opportunity to refresh your headshot

A photographer is offering author portraits during the NINC Master Class conference.

Joel Danto is a wedding and portrait photographer based in Los Angeles, Calif. His [portfolio can be viewed on his website](#). Danto will be setting up times throughout the conference for author portraits. He offers two options:

- 15-minute headshot session against a backdrop, with two final edited photos – \$50
- 30-minute outdoor session, with five to 10 final edited photos – \$100

Sign up [using this form](#) to indicate your interest. Nearer to the conference date, Danto will follow up with people who expressed interest to select timeslots for their shoots.

Nink Newsletter publication schedule

Nink is changing its distribution cycle to bring you great content faster after the conference. You'll receive the newsletters on the first day of each month as usual through September.

In October and November, look for super-sized issues arriving mid-month that pack in as much conference content as possible.

The lag time gives conference reporters an opportunity to write up their articles, and for editing, formatting, copy editing, and production—all just a few weeks after the conference.

That means we're skipping distribution Oct. 1, releasing extra-large newsletters approximately Oct. 15 and Nov. 15, and skipping a December issue. You can look forward to your regularly scheduled Nink resuming Jan. 1, 2017.

Additionally, **Nink is looking for an associate editor**. This person would train alongside the current Nink editor on editing, production, and distribution in 2017, in hopes of a seamless

handoff in 2018. The Nink editor serves on NINC's board of directors and is appointed by the NINC president. Contact newsletter editor [Heidi Joy Tretheway](#).

NINC Member Notes is a NINC member exclusive, and is not included in the public edition of Nink posted online.

NINC Master Class

The 2016 conference will accelerate your business and hone your craft

By Julie Leto



We are still looking for case studies for our First Word event. We have taken a risk by reaching out to the membership as the foundation for this day's programming, but we really believe it will be worth it.

Please consider submitting a case study scenario for our experts to tackle. For more information about what we're looking for, refer to last month's conference report or check [here](#) on the website. You can submit anonymously, or if you can't attend the conference, you can elect to present your question via Skype.

I'm in the final stages of communicating with our speakers about workshops. Unlike other conferences, where speakers "pitch" workshops, NINC works in reverse.

We select our speakers and then work with them to create a workshop specifically targeted toward NINC. This is why it takes us a little longer to get the information up for you to see.

But we are getting there, so here's a taste of a few of the workshops planned for the conference. And there is still time left to register!

Our friends at Draft 2 Digital will be doing two workshops, in addition to sponsoring one of our events and spending time in our Industry Suite (which means you can go there and meet them one-on-one.)

Here are their two workshops:

Avoiding Burnout: Self-care for the self-published author

(Dan Wood, Aaron Pogue) Independent publishing can provide enormous financial benefits, but those benefits come at a personal cost. Producing a professional product, tracking sales, and coordinating your own promotional efforts can be a lot of work.

Even traditionally published authors can feel overwhelmed by today's demands. Join Draft2Digital as they provide recommendations for getting the most out of your social media and marketing time, help you spot which initiatives are worth a lot of work and which you can

ignore, and discuss the value of using digital services like Draft2Digital to mitigate the time-costs of independent publishing.

This session is targeted toward first-time or beginner Draft2Digital users.

The Future is Wide Open

(Dan Wood, Kris Austin) The digital revolution has already caused massive shifts in the book market, and it's not finished. That's good news for authors.

Join Draft2Digital in discussing the new opportunities available to authors, with topics ranging from independent publishing and easy global distribution to free digital tools for writing and promoting your books. They'll share advanced tricks for getting the most out of existing services and special insight into the direction this wild industry is headed.

This session is targeted toward intermediate to advanced Draft2Digital users.

Also, our guest speakers have these verified workshops:

Three-Step Formula for Building an Author Platform

(Fauzia Burke) Through examples and case studies, authors will learn how to connect all elements of online marketing (website, mailing list, blogging, social media, advertising and publicity) into a cohesive, successful and sustainable author platform.

What Your Literary Lawyer Wish You Knew

(F. Robert Stein) Friend of NINC and popular presenter Bob Stein of Pryor, Cashman LLP returns to give you the rundown on what to look out for in contracts, and more importantly, how to manage the all-important relationships that govern this business.

While contracts typically control those relationships, the nuances of human interaction play a significant role in how those relationships evolve and, too often, deteriorate.

Working With Book Fairs and Trends in Children's Fiction

(Ed Masessa, Carrie Ryan, Mari Mancusi) A buyer for Scholastic Book Fair and two authors who have had great success in the book fair system discuss what does well in children's books, what it's like working with the book fair, and selling in this unusual and rarefied environment.

Intelligent Marketing

(Porter Anderson, Fauzia Burke) Effective marketing takes time and costs money. What strategies work? What campaigns fail to make impact on the bottom line? Is there a way to evaluate the return on investment beyond immediate book sales?

Two experts share their observations on how authors can get the most marketing bang for their bucks—and effort.

Passive Voice/ Active Insight

(David Vandagriff) Popular lawyer and blogger David Vandagriff discusses hot publishing topics of the day, including technical disruption that is permanently changing the publishing

industry, the worst standard contract provisions, and if or how an author can terminate a fully executed publishing contract.

Covers and the Art of Author Branding

(Kimberly Killion): Kimberly Killion, founder of The Killion Group, discusses the visual power and philosophy behind effective cover art and author branding, particularly trends in marketing that are helping boost books onto bestseller lists.

The schedule is jam-packed right now—workshops for members and assistants during the day time, Night Owls at night, and a few special events we can't announce just yet. We're finalizing more workshops every day, and we'll be announcing them soon.

You don't want to miss out, so there's no time like the present to register. See you in St. Pete!

Julie Leto is the immediate past president of NINC, current conference chair, and a Florida native. She graduated with degrees in speech communication and English (creative writing) from the University of South Florida and has published nearly fifty novels.

Book Launch Strategy


Capitalizing on great tactics including “the year of video”

By Heidi Joy Tretheway
With Zoe York



Author Zoe York recently launched *Prime Minister*, an erotic romance penned as Ainsley Booth with her coauthor, Sadie Haller. We interviewed York to find out more about her launch, which hit the *USA Today* list in its first week.


This interview was also [recorded on video](#) and posted on [Nink's YouTube channel](#).

**Zoe York** with Sadie Haller.

June 8 at 5:19pm · London, ON, Canada · 🌐

March 30, 2016:
Zoe makes a cover for a book about a fictional PM
Sadie insists that needs to be written
Zoe adds Sadie's name to it and insists they'll write it together... [See More](#)

Prime Minister



USA TODAY BEST-SELLING BOOKS

# 130 this week	# - last week	1 weeks listed	# 130 best week
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Debuted: June 09 2016

Intern Ellie Montague has feelings for her boss, who happens to be the Prime Minister of Canada; first in series

[GOODREADS REVIEWS FOR PRIME MINISTER](#)

Prime Minister
by Ainsley Booth, Sadie Haller
(Booth Haller Books)

Start with a high-concept hook

York believes that a high-concept pitch is essential for launching a first book in the series. Prime Minister kicks off the “Frisky Beavers” series as a meaty standalone of more than 100,000 words.

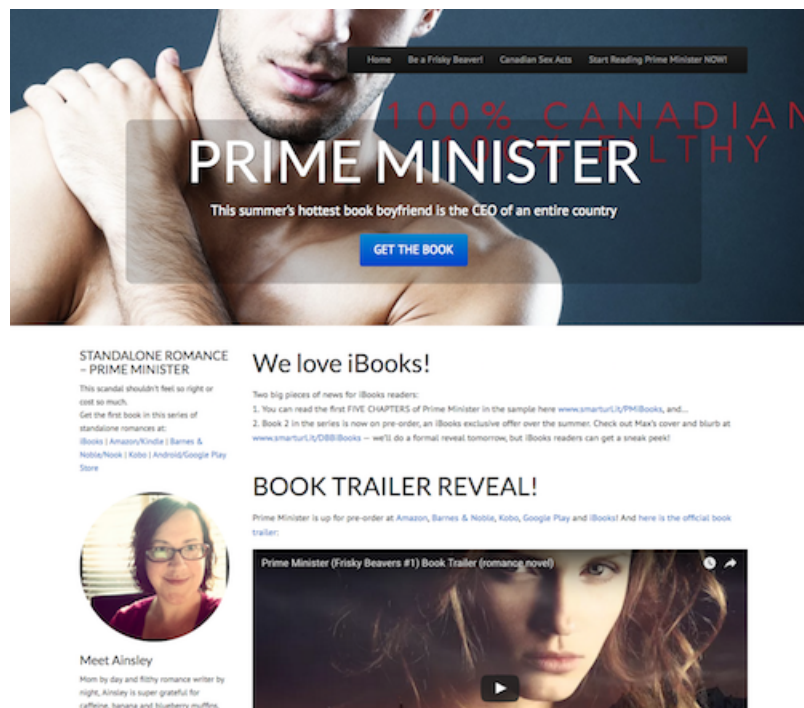
“You have less than a second for [readers] to look at it, know what it is, and if it appeals to them, convince them to one-click,” York said. That knowledge fed their strategy to name the book simply *Prime Minister*.

It didn’t hurt that the real Canadian prime minister is fodder for a few delicious fantasies. But York said this book isn’t about him.

“One you have that high-concept hook, [it’s important] that you don’t let that be the only thing that carries the story,” York added. “This is a book that we’re going to get readers to click with the title and pitch, but once they read it, they’re going to be surprised at the depth.”

Offer a large taste or teaser

As part of the book launch, York (or rather, her alter-ego Booth) and Haller set up a [website for the series](#).



She notes that HM Ward has evolved her book marketing concept of the “trifecta of awesomeness”—originally, a book’s title, cover and blurb that entices readers to buy—to also include the sample of a book.

That’s why the series website offers readers a substantial sample spanning five chapters. York said they not only got a good number of preorders from this sample, but they also set up a dedicated mailing list for the series.

When York imported that list into her own mail client, she noticed that 60 percent of the people who signed up were not on her current mailing list. “There’s definitely reader interest in a specific, targeted mailing list, so that was one thing we did differently that we’re very happy with,” she said.

Use many types of tactics for visibility—especially video

York said they didn’t come up with many new tactics, but they copied a variety of tactics currently in use by other authors, though many are used individually.

In addition to a book trailer (take a look at author Selena Laurence’s article in this issue to learn more about creating great trailers), York also produced live videos on Facebook.

When York and Haller went to Ottawa for a reader conference, they went to Parliament Hill (Canada’s government seat) and she read the first chapter on the steps. The also went to 24 Sussex, where Canada’s real Prime Minister Justin Trudeau lives, and took a video there.

“Social media, particularly Facebook, is really privileging video content over anything else,” York said. “I prioritize that. Everything we do, attach a video to it, and you get more of a lift.”

Take a look at the *Prime Minister* [book trailer on YouTube](#).



Using a dedicated website

York advocates creating the dedicated website to create a fully branded experience for readers. “It gives you so much control over data on who goes to your website so you can target them later on,” she said.

She believes the website is a better investment than a giveaway, for example. The cost included paying for a domain name and spending time to build out a simple Wordpress theme.

Release day checklist

Distribute advance review copies not very far in advance, York said, to avoid piracy issues, and because you want readers to be posting reviews as close as possible to when the book is released.

York and Haller posted the book in NetGalley and on various Facebook groups. The preorder also allowed them to establish also-boughts and buy links so they were ready to go before release day.

Another benefit of preorders, especially on iBooks, is an author's ability to offer a free sample for download before the book comes out. "It's [all about] giving them something that will make them want to keep reading," York said.

Measuring the success of launch tactics

"The most important thing that I like to see in a launch is that I have steady sales to my mailing list, because that means that my readers are responding to the [book] that I put out, and that I continue to see nice, steady baseline sales," York said. "And the way to do that is to build your author brand."

York sent release emails to both her Zoe York and Ainsley Booth mailing lists, on different days, staggering the announcement, and then hit both lists again at the end of the release week with a thank-you message.

Her co-writer did the same, and the book got another sales lift over that weekend to wrap up release week. Both authors are big fans of a personal, from-the-heart note of thanks, which underlines to their readers on the fence just how proud they are of the new release—and gives them another chance to highlight how well it is doing.

Asked about tactics that were less successful, York said she has mixed feelings about gift card giveaways and blog tours. "If you're a new author and you don't have access to reviews in any other way, then a blog review tour is actually a good investment as long as you pick a blog tour company that is a good match for your genre."

While York generally doesn't do blog tours anymore, she said a gift card that is attached to a value-added piece of content can give that promotion a boost in a way that sharing the content by itself might not.

She also advises authors to steer clear of a 99-cent release for a book that they might consider promoting with a BookBub ad in the future, because that limits the ability to discount the book.

"No author wants to get a reputation for being somebody who discounts their book soon after release," York said. Although some authors launch at 99 cents with the intention of favoring loyal readers and propelling a book up in the charts soon after release, she believes it's a strategy with limited, short-term success.

Trends and predictions: the year of video

York believes preorders will make a comeback, despite the recent trend toward more spontaneous releases.

That sentiment was echoed on panels at the recent RWA conference, where iBooks was especially favored for its long-term preorders (available for a year prior to release, while Amazon limits preorders to 90 days in advance) and for the ability to offer an "asset-less" preorder that doesn't require a cover image or dummy file of the book.

York makes her own book trailers, though she wouldn't necessarily invest money in

creating them. Live videos featuring authors that create a real connection with readers are the medium she thinks will be most effective.

Here's an example of her use of live Facebook video that was for an unboxing of swag she gave away.



“Honest, authentic video of you connecting with your readers ... I think that’s what we’re going to see,” York predicts. “Maybe video countdowns, or live broadcasts every day in the week before the release. Getting readers and bloggers to engage through video as well. I think that’s going to be the best strategy an author can figure out how to use.”

Don’t miss the rest of this video [interview with Zoe York](#).



New York Times and USA Today bestselling author Zoe York is a busy mom of two young boys and the creator of modern, sexy, small town contemporary romances. Her debut novel, *What Once Was Perfect*, started the popular Wardham series, and her first military romance, *Fall Out*, was released as part of the international bestselling SEALs of Summer super bundle. She lives in London, Ontario and is currently chugging Americanos, wiping sticky fingers, and dreaming of heroes in and out of uniform. Learn more about your books at her websites for [Zoe York](#) and her alter ego, [Ainsley Booth](#).

Heidi Joy Tretheway is the Nink newsletter editor and a member of the NINC board of directors. She lives a double life—part tech marketer, part racy romance author—and the other soccer moms aren't sure what to make of either one. A recovering journalist and frequent traveler, Tretheway is working on her ninth book from her home near Portland, Oregon.

Marketing with Book Trailers

How to design short video clips to drive sales

By Selena Laurence



Book trailers are flashy, fun, and one of the “accoutrements” of book marketing that capture writers’ attention like double espressos and free internet.

However, their usefulness is often overlooked, and measuring that usefulness can be difficult. So how do you get a book trailer that’s not only fun and pretty, but also an effective marketing driver?

Step one: short, short, short

Step one is designing the trailer for how it will be used from the start. The single most effective way to use a book trailer is as an ad on Facebook. That bears repeating: *The single most effective way to use a book trailer is as an ad on Facebook.*

To make your trailer work as a Facebook ad, you need to insure that it is designed to be as close to 30 seconds (or less) as you can get it. That means that using most back cover copy won’t work, so your first step is to strip down that fabulous cover copy that you worked so hard on.

Here’s an example of how I reduced the cover copy on one of my books for its book trailer. First, the original copy:

Joss Jamison is the sexy, brooding lead singer of the nation’s hottest rock sensation, Lush. He prides himself on his control—of the music, the business, and his feelings. But, when emotions overtake him and he loses control for one fateful night, he jeopardizes everything he loves.

Mel DiLorenzo has waited her whole life for the chance to prove her talents in photojournalism. When her older sister invites her to document the world tour for Lush, Mel jumps at the chance. But she quickly finds herself in the middle of a band on the edge, and an incredibly hot lead singer on her case.

With sparks flying on tour buses, hotels, and auditoriums, Mel and Joss are about to find out that rock and roll can be a very wild ride.

Now, here’s the text used in my book trailer:

She’s his best friend’s little sister.

*He's the rock star she shouldn't want.
On a tour bus full of secrets.
Can they survive the ultimate betrayal?*



[Click here to see the trailer on YouTube.](#)

Yes, that's all of it!

Remember, you have 30 seconds, and in that time you have to hook them, tell them a bit about your book, and remind them where to buy it. If you write in a genre like I do where tropes are popular, make sure you convey the trope or tropes ("best friend's little sister"), if your book has mystery or suspense, tell them so ("on a tour bus full of secrets"), describe your hero/heroine ("she's his best friend's little sister" "he's the rock star"), and leave them wanting more, "can they survive the ultimate betrayal?").

Step two: images and music

Step two is a little easier, unless you're a romance writer like me. Finding the right video clips and static images for your trailer isn't necessarily difficult, and a lot of trailer producers can help you with that if you give them a good idea of the feel and look of your book.

But if you write romance, there's a catch: remember that you're designing this specifically to be an ad on Facebook, and Facebook is very particular about certain things, including partial nudity, things that promote a certain body image, and anything to do with sex.

For cozy mystery writers, these rules are not a problem—for romance writers? A constant problem.

So, if you think you might find yourself in that situation, try to use images that hint at things but don't actually show them. I recently used a clip of a man's hand sliding down a woman's bare arm, it implies something sexual without actually being sexual.

When you contract with your trailer producer, be clear up front how changes and remakes

will occur (and at what price) should Facebook reject your video the first time you try to run it.

Book trailers can be a conglomeration of moving and still images, and should also have some sort of music to accompany those images.

I would assume most of you reading this know the rules, but if you don't, take note: do NOT use moving images, still images, or music that you have not obtained the appropriate rights for.

You don't want your books pirated? Don't pirate someone else's art.

Once you and your trailer designer have found a great site with images or music to purchase, what's important in making your selections?

Keep it simple. A few seconds of a couple holding hands, a flower blowing in the breeze, the profile of a woman's face. You want strong, simple images because they won't be on screen for long. No complicated movements, nothing that can't be identified easily.

Next, you want your images and music to fit the mood of your book. Is it a dark thriller? Then don't use images and music that are sunny, light, silly, or cute. I suggest people avoid audio narration because the video should make sense without audio narration. That way, even if the sound is off by default on Facebook, the video will auto-play and you'll make an impression.

Finally, make sure that your captions (the super short blurb we talked about earlier) are in a font and color that can be clearly seen over your images. My trailer producer uses the same fonts that are found on the book cover for the trailer. It keeps things consistent with the overall look and feel of the book.

The last two to three frames of your trailer should be your name, any "bestseller" title you might have, and a purchase information graphic. The graphic should have an image of the book cover (my trailer producer uses a 3D version of my books for this), along with the icons for any retailers where the book is for sale (Amazon, iBooks, etc). I caution against using things like release dates or special sales prices in the actual trailer including this end graphic, because it limits the usefulness of the trailer.



Step three: submit and celebrate

Once your thirty seconds of perfection are locked and loaded on your Facebook ad, it's time to gauge its effectiveness. Facebook's click to cost data can help you do that. My best earning trailer ad has had click to cost ratios as low as \$0.04/click and usually about \$0.08/click.

These are very good stats. My most recent trailer ad is running at somewhere around \$0.20/click, which normally isn't exceptional, but it seems most of those clicks are converting to sales, because it's still earning triple what I pay for the ad each day. I've found that the video that works best for me is a combination of the permafree and the trailer.

[See all of Selena's trailers on her YouTube channel.](#)

Those of you who are only traditionally published won't be able to see your earnings on a daily basis, but you can assess your trailer's effectiveness as an ad by the click/cost ratio and your book's rankings on Amazon.

Make sure to watch your book for about a week before launching the ad so you have a baseline for your rankings, then run your trailer ad for a week and see if those ranking numbers go down.

Trailer ads on Facebook have been a marketing boon for me. Done right, they seem to hit all the desired Facebook algorithms and perform very well and very consistently. I hope that you can find your marketing rhythm with trailer ads as well!

Selena Laurence is a USA Today Bestselling author who loves Putting the Heat in Happily Ever After. In 2014 she was awarded the Reader's Crown Award for Contemporary Romance of the Year. Selena lives in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains with her kids, Mr. L, "Goldendoodle" and "Demon Cat." When she's not writing she can be found at soccer games and tennis matches, or one of her favorite coffee shops.

Amazon Affiliates Under Fire

Amazon targets discount ebook sites

By Nate Hoffelder



This article was originally published in [The Digital Reader](#). Hugh Howey also weighed in on this topic [on his website](#).

When Amazon-owned Goodreads [launched its discount ebook service](#) last month, I wondered whether Amazon would find reasons to prune back its competition.

The first to lose its affiliate status with Amazon was Fussy Librarian, which went [under the axe](#) the week before Goodreads announced. At the time it looked like that was an isolated incident, but now it has been followed by two more sites, [Pixel of Ink](#) and [eReaderIQ](#).

Fussy Librarian continues to operate, but the fate of the other sites is less certain.

Pixel of Ink announced June 15 that they have shut down. They didn't give a specific reason, but did say that "due to changes in the eBook world and in our life, it is time for us to move on, and Pixel of Ink must now end."

I'm still following up with PoI, so I can't tell you the specific reason for its closure, but I do know that it wasn't the only casualty. [eReaderIQ](#) has made a similar, albeit more detailed announcement. They've posted a notice on their homepage:

"As of June 10, 2016, eReaderIQ is no longer eligible to participate in the Amazon.com affiliate program. What this means is that we are no longer able to monetize this site simply by having users click on our links.

"Because of this, we will need to rely on our users' support to keep the site running. Our short-term goal is to generate enough user support to cover the costs of operating the site."

The notice goes on to ask for donations, and say that the site may relaunch as a subscription-based service in the future.

I spoke to eReaderIQ founder Christian Hupfeld and he told me that Amazon terminated the site's affiliate account for various violations of Amazon's ToS [terms of service].

Like Fussy Librarian, eReaderIQ offered an email service where users could be notified of deals in the Kindle Store, and it also had a Chrome extension. Both are violations of Amazon's

ToS, but rather than give eReaderIQ a chance to correct the violations, Amazon has instead cut the site off.

And that's not all.

Hupfeld told me that Amazon didn't just disable eReaderIQ's affiliate account; they also terminated all of his other unrelated affiliate accounts with Amazon sites in other countries (Italy, Germany, etc.) even though they had nothing to do with eReaderIQ.

He has effectively been blacklisted by Amazon.

And he's not the only one, nor will he be the last. Hupfeld told me that another ebook site had also been blacklisted, even after it cleaned up its act and tried to use other affiliate accounts, and as the weeks go by we will surely hear of additional sites shutting down.

Amazon's affiliate system is one of the retailer's great strengths. It's easy to use, and gives websites a financial incentive to send their visitors to Amazon.

This system, and the bevy of ebook sites that grew up around it, helped make the Kindle the biggest ebook platform by giving it lots of cheap advertising.

But now that Goodreads has its own discount ebook service (and now that Amazon has no ebook competitors left), apparently the retailer has decided that it no longer needs the help of the ebook sites.

And so after turning a blind eye to rules violations for many years, it has now decided to crack down.

That is certainly Amazon's right, but let's not pretend that Amazon is motivated by anything other than a desire to squash their competitors.

Amazon has demonstrated in the past that they can take a milder approach if they so choose. Remember, in 2013 Amazon [took steps to discourage](#) these same ebook sites from promoting the download of free ebooks.

eReaderIQ, for example, was generating one hundred free ebook downloads for each ebook purchased, and then was profiting off the affiliate fees generated when a free ebook downloader went on to buy other items. This cost Amazon money without generating any real sales for Amazon, which is why Amazon took action.

Even though these sites were violating Amazon's ToS at the time, Amazon didn't ban any of the sites, but they did hit the sites in the pocketbook and force them to start promoting more paid ebooks deals and fewer free ebooks.

But that was back when Amazon still needed the ebook sites to keep the Kindle on top. Now that Amazon has no real competition in the ebook market, the sites are superfluous.

And they have been given the boot.

Nate Hoffelder is the founder and publisher of The Digital Reader, a leading independent digital publishing news blog. He's been into ebooks since 2004, and has been reporting on ebooks and digital publishing since 2009. He also hangs his hat at Valiant Chicken Digital, a web design firm. Nate lives in Northern Virginia.

Writing for Kindle Worlds

The ins and outs of borrowing another author's world—or lending your own

By Magan Vernon



You've seen the chatter about Kindle Worlds, so what is it? In a nutshell, it's writing a short story set in another author's created world.

Before you dive headfirst into writing fan fiction for profit, there are some rules.

A key issue to consider is that the authors and Amazon own these characters—both the ones in the world you're writing in *and the ones you create*.

For example, I wrote in Melissa Foster's Remington World. In her book *Read Write Love*, Foster created a character, Leanna, who is a jam maker, and Kurt Remington, a writer.

I decided to write a story about Willa Stowe, who goes to New York where the Remingtons live. She wants to be a writer like Kurt Remington, but ends up being scammed out of her apartment. She finds a job working for Leanna and making jam.

My heroine, Willa, and all of the other characters and situations in this book are now owned by Kindle Worlds and can only be used again if I write another book in Melissa Foster's world.

For NINC member Susan Stoker's upcoming world, I can actually still keep my characters, I just cannot use any of Susan's characters or fictional locations in another book.

I came up with the idea of a Undersea Medical Officer and a SEAL shifter who works at Ace's. If I kept writing these characters, I would not be able to mention Susan's characters or their location.

How to get started in KW

If you have an idea for a story and you know which author's world you'd like to write for in Kindle Worlds, what happens next?

I suggest contacting the author directly through email or their personal assistant. You can ask for more information about the author's Kindle World (since some do have specific rules) and ask when their next launch is.

A lot of the authors have private Facebook groups that you can be a part of and talk to the

other authors involved in the launch. Together, you all can read each other's work and support each other as you launch in this world.

Next, consider the length of what you're writing. Most of the books in Kindle Worlds are novellas ranging from 25,000 to 35,000 words.

You can aim for longer word counts to be at a higher price point, but you have to think about what you *really* want to write and how much time you want to spend on this story.

For the Melissa Foster launch, I wrote one of the longer books (about 50,000 words), so it was priced at \$3.99. While getting paid 35 percent at \$3.99 was better than the other authors contributing to the launch, I also missed out on a promo opportunity: the other books, originally priced at \$1.99, were each discounted to \$0.99 while mine stayed at full price. As a result, I wasn't able to promote my book with everyone else's 99-cent promo.

Getting paid: royalty splits

I'm guessing the money part in that last paragraph really stuck out? Yes, you only make 35 percent off each book, and the author who owns the world makes the other 35 percent.

It's their world and they do a lot of promotion to support this world. In my experience, most authors who provide a world for Kindle Worlds earn their royalty share with all of the help they give.

Aside from the different royalty structure and the fact that Amazon is the official publisher, writing for Kindle Worlds is a lot like independently publishing a title. You have to pay your own editor, cover designer, and formatter.

In both Kindle Worlds I've been in, the author has paid for a lot of promotion, but all of the authors writing in a world have gotten together and paid a small fee to do review tours or giveaways within our Kindle World author group.

This is another reason why I suggest contacting the author. Once you become a part of their launch groups, a lot of the other authors are there to help with cover design (so you can create consistent branding across your books) and can help by recommending editors.

Creating your own Kindle World

I assume that a lot of authors in NINC, given the membership's substantial track record in publishing, are reading this and thinking, "My books would be great for a Kindle World. I want to offer my own world and let other authors write in it!"

How do you make this happen?

You should be an established author with a clear brand, reader base, and a unique world. You should also have a good relationship with Amazon and strong, continuous sales.

If all of the above describes you, talk to your Amazon representative. If you have a sell sheet or media kit on your series, present that to your rep and discuss why you think you would be a good fit for a Kindle World.

An author's perspective on a borrowed world

Now that you understand the mechanics of writing for KW and the compensation/rights

structure, there's a final, more personal question.

Why should you write for them?

For me, personally, it was about being stuck. Sometimes it's hard to get into my own words, and I needed a breather to work on something else.

I also like the fact that KW still allows you to write within your own brand. For example Bella Andre/Lucy Kevin has her sweeter romance, and Susan Stoker has her SEALs.

You can also use the KW model to branch out and try something new, which is especially appealing if you're looking to break into a new genre.

I've found that Kindle Worlds is a great way for newer authors to gain experience by working in someone else's world, for more established authors to expand their own brand and reader base, and for veteran authors to get un-stuck or jump genres and categories.

If you want more information about writing for Kindle Worlds, check out their [website on Amazon](#).

Magan Vernon has been living off of reader tears since she wrote her first short story in 2004. She now spends her time killing off fictional characters, pretending to plot while she really just watches Netflix, and she tries to do this all while her two young children run amok around her Texas ranch.

Tropes with a Twist

Breathe new life into familiar storylines

By Delancey Stewart



You've heard the adage, "there are no new stories." But there are fresh ways of telling them. One thing that makes creating a story easier is the ability to draw on tropes.

Every genre has tropes—familiar and repeated plots, themes, and conflicts. Romance might be the genre most identifiable by the concept of tropes.

Tropes are so essential to romance that most publishers' category romance guidelines specify the use of one or more tropes as a must-have for acceptance. A trope can be a narrative journey, a character archetype or a relationship arc. In other genres, it can be a symbol, a literary device or a style.

It's tempting to shake our heads and sigh. After all, tropes are old hat, cliché, and boring, right?

Wrong. Tropes are infinitely useful because they define reader expectations and they contain an innate conflict. A love triangle, secret baby, or alien invasion—the conflict is apparent.

Just because stories that use tropes have been written (again and again!) doesn't mean they can't be fresh. Think of tropes as scaffolding on which you can build your story. Just because most buildings are created the same way does not mean the end result is identical.

And your stories won't be either...if you *twist* the tropes.

Identifying common tropes

To get started, let's identify a few popular tropes in films that most readers have seen. See if you can match the movie to the romantic arc trope.

A. When Harry Met Sally	1. Forbidden romance
B. The Empire Strikes Back	2. Marriage of convenience
C. Twilight	3. Enemies to lovers
D. Romeo and Juliet	4. Love triangle

E. Superman	5. Friends to lovers
F. My Fair Lady	6. Mistaken identity
G. The Proposal	7. Boss/subordinate

How did you do? If you got tripped up because a couple of the examples actually contained more than one trope, you're thinking in the right direction!

For example, *Superman* could also be considered a love triangle, or in this case, what we call a "two-legged love triangle." That's because Lois is torn between two men (Superman and Clark Kent) who are actually the same man.

The Proposal, with Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds, contains both marriage of convenience and boss/subordinate tropes.

Twist your conflicts and romantic arcs

Now comes the fun part—twisting the tropes. There are plenty of ways to freshen up a much-used storyline. For example, it's possible to combine tropes, flip traditional character roles or genders, or swap settings.

Think about the Sandra Bullock movie *While You Were Sleeping*. In the movie, a tollbooth worker is infatuated with a man who takes the train every day, even though she's never spoken to him. She saves his life, but when she checks on him in the hospital where he is in a coma, she is mistaken for his fiancée and embraced by his family.

Then she falls in love with his brother! We've got mistaken identity, "marriage" of convenience (as she continues the charade of being his fiancée) and a love triangle all working together.

Another great example is *The Intern* with Robert DeNiro and Anne Hathaway. DeNiro plays a retired widower who takes an internship at a company run by a demanding, workaholic mom whose marriage is on the rocks.

Gender and age roles are flipped here—she's the twenty-something power player, while the older man is her intern. There's also a second-chance romance storyline that runs parallel for both characters.

One more example—*Shrek*. You've got it by now, right? It's a reverse ugly duckling trope, and the character archetypes are all flipped around. Our "prince" is grumpy ogre, and Fiona's "ugly" form is being trapped in the guise of a beautiful princess.

Twist your character archetypes

From these examples, you should have a pretty good idea how tropes can work in terms of romantic arcs and conflicts. But you can also twist up the traditional hero/heroine archetypes to put a fresh spin on your story, as in *Shrek*.

Think of some of the traditional archetypes we see all the time—the bad boy, the hooker with a heart of gold, the outlaw, the ingénue, the playboy, the spunky girl, the CEO, the spinster, the alpha, the protector and the boy or girl next door.

Now let's look at the kinds of barriers these archetypes typically face in finding their happy

ending. They may be restricted by class differences or differences of race, ethnicity, or religion. Their families might be keeping them apart, or they might have a dissonant identity, where they cannot pursue a love interest without coming into conflict with their previously stated identity.

An example of these external forces might be a woman falling for her father's sworn enemy, or a Catholic priest falling for a parishioner. One identity stands in the way of the other.

There are hundreds of ways to freshen a well-loved trope. Consider *Romeo and Juliet*, a story of forbidden romance that has been done thousands of times. You can twist the trope by changing the setting, time period, gender, social norms, external conflict and more. Try these:

- Romeo and Julian (both male) are paperboys in NYC circa 1889
- Romeo and Juliet are rival fishing boat captains in Alaska
- Romeo and Juliet are entrenched in a planetary turf feud in 2250
- Romeo and Juliet are the leaders of rival biker gangs
- Juliet, the military translator, meets Romeo the spy
- Juliet, the jewel thief, has to steal back the object Romeo took from her family
- Romeo and Juliet deal with the ramifications of their secret baby

You've got this now. Go forth and twist some tropes!

Delancey Stewart writes contemporary romance from her home outside Washington D.C. As a military spouse and the mother of two boys, her house is pretty much all Legos and wrestling, all the time. Writing romance is her escape, but she has a habit of weaving a bit of the quirky feistiness of little boys into her heroines' personalities. After all, you can take the writer out of the wrestling pit, but you can't take the wrestling pit out of the writer! Stewart is represented by Nalini Akolekar at Spencerhill Associates.

Answers: A-5; B-3; C-4; D-1; E-6 and 4; F-7 and 3; G-2 and 7

Handling Toxic Types

Grace, grit and great comebacks to help authors handle obnoxious people

The following NINC members contributed to this article:

Denise A. Agnew, Chéré Coen, Claudia Dain,

Susan Lyons, and Heidi Joy Tretheway

How do you handle toxic types? You probably know a few—people who hinder your writing, shake your confidence, or zap your enthusiasm for writing.

We asked NINC members to share their strategies for dealing with difficult people and situations with grace, humor and old-fashioned grit. We'll bet some of these great comebacks inspire you the next time someone's rude question or obnoxious action makes you want to commit murder (in fiction, of course).

For the purpose of this article, a single first person account is used.

The person who wants you to read/edit/launch their first book

I not only write books but I teach creative writing at the local university's continuing education and write a weekly book column for the local newspaper. As a result, people are constantly asking me to tell them how to get published, edit their entire book, or meet them for coffee to explain the whole business.

I'm pretty nice and I used to grind my teeth in private after those meetings, but there came a time when I couldn't take it anymore.

Now, I politely say I'm working on a major project (not a lie, the major project is *my* books) and that I don't have time. If it's someone who's pushy, I tell them I will try to carve out an hour or two and that I will send them my price schedule. Usually, when I mention a fee, they disappear.

If it's just a general question, I usually send them something along the lines of "join a group, get the Writer's Market, etc." If you get a lot of those questions, it's good to make up an info sheet and keep a copy on hand or in a file so you don't have to write it all over again.

I've had people who have acted put out by me not meeting them for free and showing them how to write and get published. One was a lawyer, so I asked him if he would meet me for coffee and write up a will for me, for free. He got the message.

The person who thinks being an author is a hobby

You know that friend who has a bad boyfriend that everyone hates, but your friend defends him anyway? She'll say something like, "I know he's a jerk, but really he's good guy underneath it all."

I call bull on that. Stop defending your art and work. NINC members are all sufficiently

sophisticated that even if writing is “only” one of their jobs, it’s far more than a hobby.

My favorite comeback is to say, “Oh, writing used to be a hobby for me, back when it took me eight years to finish my first novel. But then I got serious about it and now it takes me two months to write a book. My next book comes out in September.”

I also sometimes compare writing a novel to running a marathon. There’s the race, and then there’s hundreds of hours of training behind it, with absolutely zero glory. Anyone who just dabbles in running simply won’t make it to the finish line.

I have a day job, so a lot of people still think I write as a hobby, not as a second job, even though I calculated that I spent 900 hours writing (or other author tasks like marketing) in the last year.

A former work colleague knew I was an author and used to tease me about it. She was in charge of social media for our company (my day job). Then she realized my author profile had ten times more followers than our company, and she started seeking me out for help on Facebook ads.

That’s when I reminded her that my author business is not a hobby.

The person who belittles your choice of genre

When people belittle my genre, which is romance, I say, “If you ask most people, ‘If they could have one wish, what it would be?’ their answer is usually ‘world peace’ or ‘to love and be loved.’ I write about the second one.”

“And, by the way, if we all had love, there would be world peace.”

I write romance so I hear “bodice ripper,” “fluff,” and the worst, “trash.” I always ask if people have read one, and almost all of them say they haven’t—and would never—read “one of those.”

I reply, “Then how do you know what kind of writing it is?” If nothing else, it puts them on the spot.

When people ask what I write, I tell them “racy romance,” “dirty romance,” or my favorite, “smart smut.” I grin and own it, and find that it makes most people curious (and those who are repelled, so be it—they’re not my target market).

That often leads to a conversation about what my books are about, and I love when people are genuinely surprised that *there are actual plots and characters* involved, not just rippling abs and heaving bosoms.

It’s an opportunity to educate someone rather than just being offended. Count me as a Romance Ambassador.

When my books started coming out in 1999, I would get snarky or backhanded comments about the fact that I wrote romance. I was fortunate no one in my family did this, but other people did, including some so-called friends. At that time I wasn’t great at handling it.

Then, in 2002, I started getting snarky comments from people about the level of heat in my

books. I was beginning to write erotic romance. I think on some level I was giving off a lack of confidence vibe ... something that said, "You can attack me and I will care what you think."

What helped me was when I owned the fact that yes, I write romance, I sometimes write erotic romance, and I write under my own name. I rarely if ever get snarky comments now from anyone about what I write.

All I can attribute it to is that I had to change my thought process from caring what people thought to *not* caring what they thought about what I write. It's been a fantastic result.

The person who wants to know how much money you make

Dead stare. "How much money do *you* make?"

They often ask this question in a roundabout way, like, "is there a lot of money to be made in books?" I love to talk macro trends. I say, "My genre alone sells more than a billion dollars each year. I'm all in to get a slice of those readers."

They ask, "how's your book doing?" Other authors get it if I say I'm in the Amazon top 200, or 2,000, or 20,000. But that stat means nothing to non-authors.

So I say "it's great!" even if actual sales suck at the moment. And that's no lie. It *is* great, because every new book is another to add to my backlist, an opportunity to win more readers, and an opportunity to build my career.

The person who disrespects your writing time

I'm often asked what I'm writing on airplanes and in waiting areas. Sometimes it starts innocently, like "wow, you type really fast!" but then it progresses into them talking about the memoir they mean to write, and hey, why don't I ghost write it?

When I'm on deadline, my strategy is to keep headphones on and wear sunglasses, especially at the beginning of the flight when people are boarding (and most apt to interrupt). By avoiding eye contact, I can generally avoid Chatty Carl in 12C asking where I get my ideas for romance stories, wink wink.

I used to make writing the last thing I did—after handling family obligations, household management, cleanup, bills, author marketing, emails, social media ... you get the idea.

The worst part? That led everyone else to prioritize my writing at the bottom of the list too. No one would say, "Don't bug Mom, she's writing," or "Will doing this extra thing mess up your deadline?"

Now I make writing the first thing I do when I sit down with my computer. Social media and emails can wait. Bills I can handle once I get this chunk of 700 words done.

We call it the "blood or fire" rule. Basically, unless something is on fire or someone is bleeding, I ask my family not to bother me for a certain period of time, I set my alarm, and get typing.

The person who is trying to get your goat

My responses have changed as people have become more combative in this age of anonymous posts. I believe that most people who say offensive things or come at you in a combative way want you to be combative in return.

They got you to do what they wanted. They got a hard reaction and they glow with victory, no matter what you say.

So now I don't attempt to defend myself or what I write. I sit firmly on the throne of self-confident assurance that my opinion of myself (high!) is the only opinion that matters. Your low opinion is of interest only to you. In other words—you can't touch me.

This attitude comes across in your body language and the gleam in your eyes. When a bully sees it, they normally choose not to engage. Bullies want a reaction. Don't give it to them.

It looks like this:

- They say: "I don't like romance novels."
- I say: "I don't like them all either. Not everyone likes everything. I don't happen to like horror novels, but Stephen King sure has a huge fan base. What kind of novels do you like to read?"
- They say: "I think romance novels are porn."
- I say: "Some are. Some aren't. The field of variety is huge. Have you read many? Which ones?"
- They say: "How much do you make?"
- I say: "It varies from year to year and author to author. But really, I was taught that to talk about money was in poor taste, and that lesson took."

In every case where I reply with a "soft" answer, the person literally blinks, leans back, and has to mentally regroup. They never attempt more than one more attack after the initial salvo.

This proves, to me, that they didn't want information or a conversation; they wanted only to provoke me into rage or an aggressive self-defense. Getting neither, they lost interest entirely and walked away, leaving me with my pleasant smile and them with a scowl of frustration and confusion.

Perfect ending.

Nink thanks the following authors for contributing their stories and advice to this piece.

Chéré Coen (aka Cherie Claire); Claudia Dain (aka Claudia Welch); Denise A. Agnew; Susan Lyons (also writing as Susan Fox and Savanna Fox); and Heidi Joy Tretheway.

The Chunky Method

Let a Chunky Method to-do list power your work

By Allie Pleiter



Award-winning author Allie Pleiter has been teaching her Chunky Method of time management to writers across the country for several years. In this fourth-in-a-series article (see also Nink's February, April, and June issues), she shares her popular method with NINC.

By now you're getting a glimpse of how the Chunky Method writing plan will help you step up your productivity to reach your long-term goals.

But what about the day-to-day work of getting tasks done? The secret is in the Chunky Method list.

These days, we all know writing is just *part* of the job. Writers are now much more like entrepreneurs than artists. Couple all this with the reality that artistic personalities tend towards, um ... disorganization, and you see a real problem.

It's rare to find an artist who is also an administrator—yet that's exactly what today's publishing market requires.

And what about the rest of your life? All that stuff that happens off the page? You might still need to tend to a rent-paying job. You need a clean place to live, food to eat, clothes to wear, insurance to keep you healthy, and a host of other practicalities.

Your Chunky Method writing plan might feel like it's under siege. Lucky for you, you have a powerful ally in this battle:

The Chunky Method List

Research has proven that lists help our brain function. Once you recognize the power in making a list, it's hard to dismiss it as simplistic or unnecessary. Here's why:

- Lists create measurability. The very act of writing tasks down makes them real and measurable.
- Lists discount emotions. It's tough to argue or ignore a list. It's hard to tell a list you are too tired or would rather go play a video game.

- Lists manage your muse. Getting your writing goals and tasks down on paper sends a command to your creative self that it's time to "get to it."
 - Lists aid good decision-making. Seeing concrete evidence of your workload helps you make smart decisions about how to spend your time.
- Simply put: Lists are smart, and you should use one. But how?

Are You a Marlin or a Dory?

Hand any person multiple tasks, and you will find out a lot about their personalities very quickly.

Some of us determinedly hammer at a single, linear task batch until it surrenders. Others nimbly shift from one task to another depending on where we see possible progress.

I have found the clearest model for Chunky productivity was handed to us by Disney/Pixar in *Finding Nemo*. Ask anyone if they are more of a Marlin or a Dory, and they usually know. That's the power of a brilliant story—we can easily see ourselves in the characters.

Marlin had one goal in the film—finding his son Nemo. Nothing else mattered until that goal was met. Side tasks were distractions and irritations.

Dory, on the other hand, was open to new adventures. Life was a series of multiple lines heading off in dozens of directions. Dory thrived on variety and was highly adaptable.

Marlins are usually big chunk writers. They maintain focus over a long period, dislike interruptions, and are results-oriented. Dorys, however, tend to be small chunk writers. They enjoy a variety of tasks, welcome interruptions, and love the process as much as the results (if not more).

Many of us are a little bit of both, but most of us tend toward one type or the other.

What do these fishy archetypes have to do with to-do lists? Marlins are going to want to get all of their writing tasks done in large batches—retreats, whole writing days, hours locked away in their study, etc.

Dorys are happiest if writing tasks come throughout their day or week—every morning before breakfast, on lunch and coffee breaks, etc. This knowledge helps you know how to fit your chunks into your world.

The Weekly List

I have found it useful to batch to-do tasks by week. We wake up in different moods and facing different demands every morning, so waiting until the "day of" hands our emotions too much authority over our list.

When breaking a large task down into bite-sized pieces, weeks are a good planning mode because days can get a bit too detailed if handled all at once. And, if you've done your Chunky work, you know how many chunks you want to get in each week.

As an exercise, start with two sheets of paper. On the first page, list everything you know is on your docket for this week. Don't worry if it feels massive—we'll fix that.

The Daily List

Next, divide the second page into seven daily sections. Take those tasks from the first page and portion them out over the days of your week. Put yourself in control of how it portions out, and look just enough ahead to do some basic troubleshooting.

This second list helps you start each day with a list that fits one day's work. It isn't so large that it chokes you, nor is it so small that you can't get in gear.

Marlins will probably be happiest batching all of their writing tasks for any given day together. Dorys are happiest if writing tasks are scattered throughout their day.

The Magic Numbers

A to-do list for any day is good, but a numbered to-do list is awesome. Numbering your daily list—what do I do first, second, etc.—forces you to think about what must be done and compare that with what can get done if you have time.

The power of focusing on “what's next”—and only on “what's next” (instead of two weeks away or a month from Thursday)—will yield amazing results in your days.

Yes, it's simple, but the most powerful ideas often are the simplest.

Why bother with a system?

I wish we could all sashay up to our desks and produce consistent brilliance.

We can't.

Life loves to take our plans and twist them into stress-producing knots. Still, our profession is worth doing well and at a pace that can lead you to sustainable success. That's what the Chunky Method system can do for you.

Some final thoughts as we wrap up this series:

A Chunky Truth: Good intentions are always bolstered by best practices. A system ensures that the time you devote to your writing yields the maximum results.

A Chunky Goal: Control what you can. We all know that once you've created the best product you can, you end up handing your baby off to myriad external factors beyond your influence. Still, whether you make your next deadline is entirely up to you. Isn't that where you want to spend your energy?

A Chunky Conclusion: This is what makes a professional. Sales and fame are fickle things, and an author who is dependable, easy to work with, and consistent will have much greater shot at success. Ask anyone in a creative field; the world is thick with talent, but skimpy on professionalism. Be the one who delivers, and you place yourself ahead.

With the Chunky Method, that's who you can be: someone who delivers.

There's a lot more to the Chunky Method than what I've shared here, so if you'd like to know more, feel free to contact me at allie@alliepleiter.com. I'm delighted to help you join the Chunky Nation.

Allie Pleiter spends her days writing four books at a time and buying yarn to knit. Both a RITA and Carol Award finalist as well as a RT Reviewer's Choice and RomCon Reader's Crown Award winner, Pleiter recently celebrated

her millionth book sold. She speaks nationally on writing, faith, women's issues, and time management. To obtain a free copy of the Chunky Calculator, visit www.alliepleiter.com or text the word CHUNKY to 22828.

Forensic Files

What type of injuries result from a shotgun loaded with birdshot?

By D.P. Lyle, MD



Question: How long would it take a healthy 50-year-old man in excellent shape to get back home and be up and around and taking care of himself after a 12-gauge birdshot wound to the side of his chest? How much and what kind of damage would he suffer? Would he likely suffer arm damage, too? Would that part require physical therapy? Is three months reasonable?

Answer: A shotgun is not like a rifle or pistol. It fires shells that contain several small, round projectiles, called shot. The exception is what is called a “deer slug.” This is a single, large, cylindrical hunk of lead. It has tremendous “knock-down” power.

Shotguns come in several gauges. The lower the gauge number, the larger and more powerful the shotgun is. At the low end of the spectrum would be 410 and 20 gauges. Middle would be a 16 gauge. Larger would be 12 and 10 gauge shotguns.

Where does this number come from? The gauge is the shotgun equivalent of a rifle or handgun caliber, which is simply a measurement of the barrel’s internal diameter. A shotgun’s gauge is a measure of the number of lead balls matching the diameter of the barrel that would weigh one pound. So, 12 balls the size of a 12G would be one pound while it would take 20 balls the size of a 20G barrel to weight the same.

The shot comes in varying sizes, which are classified by numbers 00 through 9. Double 00 buckshot is large and is used for deer hunting. No.2 shot, which is approximately 0.15 inches (3.81 mm) in diameter is also often used for deer and larger animals.

No.8 shot is 0.09 inches (2.29 mm) in diameter and it, along with No.9 shot, is used for dove and other birds—thus it is called birdshot. In between would be sizes such as No.4 shot, used for duck and geese, and No.6 shot, used for rabbit and squirrel.

Most of these “shots” come with a choice of “load.” The load is the amount of gunpowder packed into the shell. The more powder, the more power (muzzle velocity) that is imparted to the shot.

Loads are typically light, standard, or magnum, in increasing order of explosive power. Duck hunters might use No.4 magnums, since ducks are tough and have thicker feathers, while a dove hunter might use No.8 lights. Doves are easier to kill and a heavier load and/or a larger shot might damage the flesh and render it unusable.

In your scenario, the nature of the injury depends upon the location of the wounds, the distance between the muzzle and his chest, the size of the shot, and the type of load used. As mentioned above, bird shot is typically No. 8 or No. 9 lights.

If your attacker was five feet away, the shot could do a great deal of damage. It could penetrate the chest wall, collapse a lung, damage his heart, and could kill him. If he survived, he would need surgery, several days in the hospital, and several weeks of healing. Highly variable, depending upon the exact nature of the injuries he suffered.

If he were 50 or more feet away, the shot would likely embed in his skin and muscles. If he were 100 or more feet away, the shot would likely only enter the skin.

In these situations, the shot would be removed in the operating room or perhaps the emergency room. He might be admitted to the hospital overnight for observation or even for a couple of days. He would be treated with pain meds and antibiotics and after leaving the hospital would rest at home for a few days but likely be none the worse for wear.

If the shot were from close range and directed at his arm or shoulder, for example, it could severely damage the arm or shoulder joint and possibly the blood vessels in the area. This might require surgery of an orthopedic or vascular nature and a prolonged recovery period.

In this situation, he would likely need physical therapy for a few weeks or months after his wounds healed. Again, depending on the exact nature of his injuries.

D.P. Lyle is the Macavity and Benjamin Franklin Silver Award-winning and Edgar, Agatha, Anthony, Scribe, Silver Falchion, and USA Best Book Award-nominated author of many nonfiction books, including Murder & Mayhem, Forensics for Dummies, Forensics & Fiction, More Forensics & Fiction, Howdunnit: Forensics, and ABA Fundamentals: Understanding Forensic Science. He is also author of numerous works of fiction, including the Samantha Cody thriller series; the Dub Walker thriller series; the Jake Longly thriller series; and the Royal Pains media tie-in novels. His essay on Jules Verne's The Mysterious Island appears in Thrillers: 100 Must-Reads and his short story "Even Steven" in ITW's anthology Thriller 3: Love is Murder. Along with Jan Burke, he is the co-host of [Crime and Science Radio](#). He has worked with many novelists and with the writers of popular television shows such as Law & Order, CSI: Miami, Diagnosis Murder, Monk, Judging Amy, Peacemakers, Cold Case, House, Medium, Women's Murder Club, 1-800-Missing, The Glades, and Pretty Little Liars. Learn more about his work on his [website](#) and [blog](#).

The Mad Scribbler

Patronizing

By Laura Resnick



*"The entertainment industry, reflecting the world at large, had been obsessed with the wrong question:
How do we make people pay for content?
What if we started thinking about it the other way around:
How do we let people pay for content?"
—Amanda Palmer, The Art of Asking*

A couple of months ago, science fiction and fantasy writer N.K. Jemisin announced that she had raised enough money on Patreon to quit her day job and write full time.

[Patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com) is a crowdfunding site, founded in 2013 on the same basic principle as the well-known [Kickstarter](https://www.kickstarter.com). These are business models in which many individual financial backers support artists and creators directly, often for as little as \$1 per backer.

The companies that establish and manage such crowd-to-creator funding platforms earn income by taking a percentage of the money that changes hands; a total of 5 to 10 percent in fees seems to be what typically gets culled before transferring the money to the creator.

Unlike Patreon, Kickstarter is set up to crowd-fund specific projects. For example, musician Amanda Palmer famously raised \$1.2 million on Kickstarter for her album *Theatre Is Evil*.

Less famously, I've lately had short stories in three different science fiction/fantasy anthologies published by small presses that all used Kickstarter campaigns to fund those volumes.

Nebula-winning science fiction author Catherine Asaro used a Kickstarter campaign to raise the funds to produce an audiobook. Tobias Buckell, whose science fiction has been nominated for multiple awards, has funded the writing and production of multiple books via Kickstarter.

When crowdfunding via Kickstarter, you set up a page for a specific project, you run the campaign (usually 30 days), and then it's over. You have to set up a new page and launch a new campaign to raise money on that platform for a different project.

Additionally, if you do not meet your stated funding goals for a project, you get nothing. So if I launch a Kickstarter campaign to raise \$10,000 and only \$9600 is pledged by the time the campaign closes, I get \$0. A similar crowdfunding site, [IndieGoGo](#), offers an option that allows the creator to keep the money that's been pledged, even if the funding goal hasn't been met.

Although I've been in one anthology that blew past its essential funding goals and subsequent stretch goals so fast on Kickstarter that we had to brainstorm additional rewards for backers in the final week of the campaign, I've also been in an anthology that achieved its essential funding goal only minutes before the Kickstarter campaign ended—which was nerve-racking!

Patreon, by contrast to Kickstarter, was created to support the artist rather than to fund a specific project. A Patreon page establishes a perpetual presence for the creator, rather than a one-shot campaign, and it offers a long-term funding relationship between her and the backers.

Patrons can pledge to donate a specific amount of money every time the creator produces a piece of work (and they can set a monthly maximum limit on their donations). Alternately, patrons can just pledge a monthly amount for the general support of the creator and his or her efforts.

I was already aware of Patreon and interested in its possibilities when I learned that N.K. Jemisin had launched a Patreon page one Friday afternoon in May and, by the following Monday, had already raised so much money in monthly pledges that she announced she would quit her job, which she did on July 1.

Jemisin's stated goal was to raise \$2,000 per month, which she estimated was the minimum Patreon income she needed before she could leave her day job. As of this writing, she has 886 patrons who have pledged to her a total of \$4,893 per month.

That is to say, these backers have authorized Patreon to charge monthly fees to their credit cards or PayPal accounts, for payment to Jemisin. Award-winning editor, author, and podcaster Lynne M. Thomas says, "The support that Patreon provides is steady monthly income. It arrives like clockwork ... it is one of several revenue streams, and definitely a reliable one."

Moreover, more than 830 of Jemisin's patrons have each pledged \$10 or less per month; so the "burden" on them of patronizing her is very slight. And since these modest pledges comprise the bulk of the author's monthly Patreon income of nearly \$5,000, dozens of them would have to cancel their patronage before she'd feel any disruption in her earnings.

Four patrons have each pledged \$100 or more per month to her, and ten have pledged \$50 or more per month. The loss of all these fourteen patrons would be a blow (at least \$900 per month), but the loss of any one or two of them would be minor.

And, of course, this is a perpetual fund-raising effort, not one that closes its doors at the end of a project or on a specific calendar date, so more people can sign on over time to patronize Jemisin, which might well offset any future attrition among her current backers.

Naturally, these backers are not paying Jemisin merely to exist. They're paying her to produce. Her Patreon campaign offers them, depending on their level of financial contribution to her, at least one brand new fiction story or chapter each month, new blog content, photos of her cat, a monthly Q&A video in which she responds to backers' questions and comments, and signed copies of her new and upcoming published works.

Also, as you might have guessed, not everyone who launches a Patreon page gets nearly \$5,000 per month of income from it. N.K. Jemisin, whose seventh novel is due out this year, has been nominated for the prestigious Nebula and Hugo Awards multiple times, and her 2015 release, *The Fifth Season*, is on the *New York Times* Notable Books list.

She is also active and well-known in social media in the science fiction/fantasy community, and she has been the Guest of Honor at various SF/F conventions.

But if every little bit helps—and in my world, that’s certainly true—then Patreon is feathering the nests of many writers, even if they aren’t all getting enough from patrons to replace day-job salaries.

Author Cat Rambo, who is the current president of the Science Fiction/Fantasy Writers of America, has structured her Patreon page so that patrons pay her \$196 (her goal is \$250) each time she produces a short story.

MCA Hogarth, who was an early adopter of new business models for writers, earns \$338 per month on Patreon for maintaining a busy blog of serialized novels, personal anecdotes, and “silly pictures.”

A writer named O. Westin, who posts very short short stories on Twitter and other social media, is making \$196 per month from 74 patrons.

Nebula Award-winning short story writer Rachel Swirsky makes \$670 per month on Patreon.

Enjoying heavier patronage, traditionally published fantasy author Saladin Ahmed, who has more than 47,000 Twitter followers, earns over \$1,700 per month on Patreon. Hugo Award winner Kameron Hurley gets \$2,100 per short story from patrons.

Patreon is not limited to supporting fiction, of course. Author Juliette Wade raises money there (she’s currently about halfway to her goal of \$100/month) to fund her *Dive Into Worldbuilding* videocast, on which she hosts panel discussions with SF/F writers.

Novelist Emma Newman, whose books are under contract to British and American publishers, has a Patreon page that specifically supports her Hugo-nominated podcast, *Tea and Jeopardy* (currently receiving \$423 per month).

Hugo Award-winning author Mary Robinette Kowal fundraises on Patreon (\$177 per month) for her “Month of Letters” project.

The publisher of *Clarkesworld Magazine*, which has won three Hugo Awards, a British Fantasy Award, and a World Fantasy Award, fund-raises on Patreon (currently at \$1,650 of its \$1,800/month goal) to supplement the magazine’s subscription income.

The SF/F magazine, *Uncanny*, which has published numerous award-winning writers, is also on Patreon. Co-publisher Lynne M. Thomas says, “We launched Patreon in response to folks who missed the Kickstarters and wanted to support us, especially people with no interest in ebooks because they read us online or listen to the podcast.”

Speaking of podcasts, one of my favorites is *The Bowery Boys*, produced by two guys who research and recount the history of New York City. They’ve increased their output thanks to the \$2,400 per month they’re getting on Patreon.

And my honorary niece’s favorite webcomic is *Lackadaisy*, whose creator is able to work on it full-time thanks to the \$5,500 per month that her patrons pay her.

As the site's banner announces, creators on Patreon are producing games, art, writing, videos and films, podcasts, music ... and everything else! And writers on Patreon can connect directly there with readers who want to support them and their various projects.

Laura Resnick, author of about a dozen fantasy novels, is pondering what to offer on a Patreon page.

Not Your Usual Writing Advice

Resolutions gone south

By JoAnn Grote



Resolutions.

The word is most often associated with January and the beginning of a new year rather than the days of summer, yet resolutions are often made at the beginning of the year with the intent of reaching a goal by summer. More often, resolutions are abandoned long before this time of year.

Has one of your resolutions gone south? A couple of mine have bitten the dust since the first of January.

I begin to prepare for New Year's resolutions around Thanksgiving. My thought process goes something like this: I'm going to enjoy the holiday season; then I'll diet, begin the new exercise program, start the new writing project, or get to work on the house repair.

In other words, when I get through the fun time (defined as ignoring the healthy diet and exercise, and spending time enjoying friends, family, parties, shopping, and decorating instead of working on writing or things like house repairs) I will punish myself with a New Year's resolution.

How can that attitude possibly produce a successful resolution? Yet I've been trying to make it work for years.

Maybe a change in definition would help.

A resolution is commonly thought of as a decision to do or not do something. The online Merriam-Webster Dictionary also defines resolution as "the act of finding an answer or solution to a conflict, problem, etc."

Finding a solution; I like that. I'd like to expand on that, make it more positive with the following addition: the act of finding a path that helps to manifest a desired outcome.

That makes a resolution sound like a flexible process toward a chosen goal rather than a strict list of must-dos and must-not-dos.

Resolutions often seem based around *shoulds* rather than the desired outcomes included in the above restated Merriam-Webster definition. I haven't looked into research on the subject,

but I expect resolutions based on desires instead of *shoulds* or must-dos have the longest lives.

There are a lot of possible *should* resolutions in a writer's life: to write more on a regular basis; to fit that book of the heart in amongst the other writing projects; to spend more time on social media; to spend more time standing or walking on a treadmill while writing; to figure out how to self-publish to get into the new publishing world; to learn more about marketing self-published books; or to spend less time writing in order to find more balance in life and spend more time with loved ones.

It's likely everyone reading this has at least a couple writing life *should* resolutions.

Sometimes toughing out a *should* resolution makes a writer feel overwhelmed. I suggest that when that happens it's time to re-examine the resolution. Maybe the sense of overwhelm suggests the resolution is better set aside for the moment. Perhaps a reordering of priorities is indicated.

A resolution, including a writing-related resolution, which one has allowed to fall by the wayside, is not a reason for guilt or shame. Maybe the time wasn't right for that resolution. Maybe life intervened, as it so often does, with unexpected situations.

If anything was learned from the experience, it's not possible a resolution not followed through was a failure.

Perhaps, as with a manuscript, the resolution just requires fresh eyes. Some simple, logical element may be the reason for not sticking with a resolution when a failure of willpower was thought to be at blame.

For instance, I tend to add resolutions to my life without remembering that they may require the removal of something else.

A resolution to spend more time on my novel each day can't be successful if I don't remove something else from my already busy schedule. There isn't a place or time to just slip more writing in between the already-filled minutes and hours of the day.

It seems obvious, yet I've made resolutions without such a basic plan more than once, with the expected results.

A resolution can be resurrected at what seems a better time logically or emotionally. Maybe August is the perfect time to re-examine a set-aside resolution, redefine it, figure out what needs to be added to one's life, or what should be set aside to make the resolution a flexible path toward the desired end.

Perhaps a new perspective will result in the revelation that a resolution one has been following tenaciously (or has been wallowing in guilt for giving up) isn't a necessary—or even desirable—resolution at this point in life.

Is now the time to get up, brush yourself off, and begin anew on a writing resolution?

Or is it time to get up, brush off the resolution, and get on with some other writing priority?

JoAnn Grote is the award-winning author of 40 books, including inspirational romances, middle-grade historical novels, and children's nonfiction. Contact her by [email](#).

NINC Q&A

Answers to frequently asked questions about our organization

By Victoria Thompson



Novelists, Inc., is unique among writers' organizations in that it only admits multi-published authors of all genres of popular fiction. We do things differently here, and you might have wondered why. This column seeks to provide some answers.

Why doesn't NINC have contested elections?

The five women who founded NINC had held leadership positions in other writers' organizations, and they observed firsthand how difficult it was to get qualified people to run for office in a contested election.

In theory, having a choice—as we usually do in our government elections—can be a good thing. It allows voters to choose the candidate who best represents their interests.

On the other hand, competition can also foster ill-will and result in a lot of ugliness, as we see every year in our national elections. This occasionally happens in organizations as well, and it can bring out the worst in some people.

In Novelists, Inc., our members tend to have pretty similar interests, so it's unlikely that candidates will have radically conflicting agendas. Our Founders also observed that authors who were the most qualified to serve in volunteer positions were also the least likely to run in a contested election where they might be the victims of character attacks.

Writers rely on their good reputations in this business, so why put yourself in the position of being vilified in front of the entire industry?

One solution to this is to follow a system many organizations use, which is to have current board members appoint their replacements without holding elections at all. The disadvantage of this system is that people tend to choose people they know, and after a while, the process becomes a bit incestuous and elitist, and the board becomes sort of a cliquish, old-boys' (or girls') network.

Our Founders wanted to avoid this as well.

To allow NINC to recruit qualified leaders without subjecting them to the ordeal of a

contested election, and to prevent NINC's board from becoming too inbred, the Founders devised this system:

Each year, NINC members elect five members of a Nominating Committee from a slate of at least nine candidates. Consequently, each year a new group of individuals serves on the Committee.

This allows NINC members to choose who will select the leadership candidates and prevents the type of elitism that comes from having boards appoint their own successors.

The current NINC president appoints a member of the Advisory Council (composed of NINC Founders and past NINC presidents) to chair the committee, ensuring that the chair is someone who understands the inner workings of NINC and the skills needed to lead it.

The Nominating Committee meets and discusses potential candidates and prepares the slate of officers. The elected members usually know a diverse assortment of members, which provides a large pool of potential candidates.

The Committee also asks the membership at large to suggest potential candidates for consideration.

The Committee nominates one candidate each for president-elect (who will automatically become president the following year), secretary, and treasurer.

The Committee vets potential candidates and recruits them. Candidates know they will be running unopposed so they will not be subjected to any electioneering from opposing candidates.

The Committee also selects nine candidates to run for the following year's Nominating Committee. Five of these will be elected, starting the process all over again.

But the Founders also built in a 'fail safe' backup system, in the unlikely event that something went wrong with their carefully wrought procedure.

If, by some unfortunate set of circumstances, the Nominating Committee presented a candidate (or more than one) who was, for whatever reason, unqualified, or whose agenda might not match that of the majority of NINC members, our bylaws allow for a remedy.

The Committee must present the proposed slate of officers to the entire membership thirty days prior to the start of the election process. If members feel the entire slate or anyone on it is not satisfactory, the bylaws provide a process by which they may nominate an opposing candidate:

Article IX, Section 4: Additional nominations may be made in writing if signed by the nominee and at least ten active members who have not signed the nominations of any other person for the same position. Such nominations must be made within twenty days from the presentation of the list of nominations.

I'm happy to report that this process has never been used in NINC's twenty-seven year history, which proves how well our system works. While qualified leaders may choose not to serve because of the demands of their careers, they will never have to decline out of reluctance to endure a contested election.

Do you have a question about NINC? [Send it to me](#) and we'll answer it in a future issue!

Winner of the Career Achievement Award for Mystery from RT Book Reviews, Victoria Thompson is the best-selling author of the Edgar®- and Agatha Award-nominated Gaslight Mystery Series. Her latest is Murder on St. Nicholas Avenue. She has published 19 mysteries and 20 historical romances and contributed to the award-winning textbook Many Genres, One Craft. She currently teaches in the master's degree program for writing popular fiction at Seton Hill University. Thompson is a founding member and past president of Novelists, Inc., and a co-founder and past president of both PENNWRITERS and New Jersey Romance Writers. She lives in Indiana with her husband and a very spoiled little dog.



Founded in 1989

NINC Statement of Principle

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

Founders

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

2016 Board of Directors

If you have questions regarding Novelists, Inc., please contact a member of the Board of Directors.

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2016 Committees

Complete committee member listings are available on the website.

- 2016 Conference Chair: Julie Leto
- Authors Coalition Reps: Pat Roy & Leslie Thompson
- Blog Coordinator: Patricia Rosemoor
- Membership Chair: Mallory Kane
- Nominating Committee Chair: Victoria Thompson
 - JoAnn Grote
 - Eve Gaddy
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 - Debra Holland
 - Charlotte Hubbard
- Technology Chair: Erica Ridley
- Volunteer Jobs List Coordinator: Open

Central Coordinator

Novelists, Inc. c/o Terese Ramin

P.O. Box 54, Hartland MI 48353

admin@ninc.com

Address changes may be made on the website. Members without internet access may send changes to the Central Coordinator.

Nink Newsletter

August 2016 edition – Vol. 27, No. 8

Editor: [Heidi Joy Tretheway](#)

Copy editor: Eve Henry

To request reprint rights or to submit an article proposal, please contact ninkeditor@gmail.com.

Publication: 10 to 12 issues annually. Available in PDF, mobi and epub formats. Public issues redact NINC members-only information. To change subscription preferences, please contact admin@ninc.com.

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