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President's Voice

By Diana Peterfreund



In 2013, I signed a three-book contract with HarperCollins, and also put out my first indie book. In 2014, I wrote three novels and published two. But in 2015 and 2016, life got in the way. I was pregnant, and then I had a baby, and it was all I could manage to finish the books I'd promised New York. I'll confess: when I came to the NINC Conference last month, it was as a writer with a very uncertain future. I was almost out of contract, and I hadn't put out a new indie novel in almost two years. I didn't know where my place was at the publishing table.

But at the conference, all that changed. With so many options for workshops, I made the command decision to focus my personal attendance on craft and creativity panels, because how can you market a book you haven't written? It paid off in spades. From Liz Pelletier's two-hour workshop on growth-hacking and editing your book to make the most impact (in this issue), to Professor Jennifer Lynn Barnes's game-changing lecture on the psychology of fandom (seriously, guys, don't miss the article about this one—it appears in the next issue), I felt my creative mind expand.

I listened to legendary editor Richard Marek tell stories about the good old days in publishing (in this issue), and got great tips on titles and covers that work from Ed Masessa (next issue), who knows from big data, as he runs 100,000 book fairs a year. I could go on and on.

At one point, my roommate and I skipped the rest of the afternoon panels and went back to our room and lay on our beds, staring at the ceiling and just talking about what we learned and what it meant for our works-in-progress.

By the time the conference was over, my two roommates and I had plotted out five new books. And in the weeks since the conference, I've written half a book, and completely plotted a new one. I got up the nerve to send my agent two proposals I'd been sitting on for months, and finally finished my contract.

Ladies and gentlemen, she's back.

Throughout the conference, I heard a similar refrain. I talked to writers who felt burned out from the constant drumbeat of "faster, faster" that has dominated indie publishing in the last

few years, and were looking for a path that would better nurture their creative soul.

I spoke to people who were looking to allow themselves a change, or a method to help them offload some of the administrative and marketing work so they can refocus on the creative side, or a way back into an industry they felt was changing too fast for them to keep up. At the Annual General Meeting, I asked if people came away with new ideas and new inspiration, and was greeted with a sea of hands.

And that moment made all the months of conference planning worth it. Since the conference, our newsletter editor and intrepid conference reporters have been hard at work compiling their notes from our slate of workshops and panels. Whether you had to skip the conference this year or are simply eager to see what you missed while you were at a different panel, I hope these conference recap articles help all NINC members in their careers and creative lives.

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

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

2017 NINC Board of Directors

Meet the NINC members proposed to lead in 2017

NINC members completed voting for their 2017 board of directors in early September, and the results were announced at the NINC conference.

NINC's board of directors includes the following six positions:

- President (the president-elect from previous year automatically becomes president): Erica Ridley
- President-elect (elected): Julie Ortolon
- Secretary (elected): Pauline Baird Jones
- Treasurer (elected): Mindy Neff
- Newsletter editor (appointed by the president): Heidi Joy Tretheway
- Advisory Council representative (appointed by the Advisory Council): Victoria Thompson

In addition to electing the board of directors, NINC members elect the Nominating Committee, and it will be their job to find candidates for 2017.

The members of the 2017 committee are:

- C.J. Carmichael
- Phoebe Conn
- Pam McCutcheon
- Laura Phillips
- Steve Womack

Changing Times, Changing Rhythms

How consolidation and the drive for profit have transformed publishing

By Tawdra Kandle



"The fact that there will always be stories has kept me going my whole professional life."
—Richard Marek

Richard Marek, a long-time New York writer, editor and publisher who over the course of his career worked for Macmillan, World Publishing and Dial Press, and who served as president of E.P. Dutton publishing, has been involved in the publishing process of more than three hundred books. Notable authors with whom he has worked include Robert Ludlum, James Baldwin, Peter Straub, and Thomas Harris.

Marek offered a view behind the scenes, drawn from his decades in the publishing industry and musing on the changes that have rocked that world in the past half-century.

In the beginning, there were the twenty-seven

Listening to Marek was something akin to time-traveling back to a lost age when authors and editors worked closely together over the course of a career, publishing books at a leisurely, genteel rate instead of the mad rush today's world. The editor painted a beautiful and compelling picture that captivated his audience.

When he began his career, there were twenty-seven major hardcover publishing houses in New York. Most of them were owned and run by the families who had founded them, or by experienced and seasoned editors.

Paperback publishers were a major source of income in the industry; foreign rights were significant to authors' egos, said Marek, but were not financially important. Book club rights, however, did add to both income and prestige.

Acquisition editors, such as Marek was in the beginning, who had a proven track record of success, were allowed to buy the works of unknown authors. Thus when a largely unknown actor by the name of Robert Ludlum approached Marek with his book *The Scarlatti Inheritance*, the editor took a chance on a story that had a great deal of action and some compelling

characters.

The author and editor worked together for more than two years, tightening the story, speeding up the pace and reducing the page count from fifteen hundred to five hundred. Marek noted that this sort of timeline would be nearly unthinkable in today's publishing climate.

Back in the old days, said Marek, the twenty-seven publishing houses were run by people who knew good books. Sure of themselves and admittedly snobbish toward the ideas of others, they still managed to cultivate the careers of established, well-known authors while at the same time taking the occasional chance on new and obscure authors.

The infamous slush pile was actually managed by lower-ranking editors or interns, but every submitted manuscript was read by someone at the publishing house.

Surprise hits, like Erich Segal's *Love Story*, were found this way and benefited big publishers, paperback companies and authors alike.

Focus shifts to consolidation and urgency

Decades later, the face of publishing has radically changed. Publishing houses were bought out by movie studios and other industries unrelated to books. Consolidation became the watchword, as the bigger publishers purchased paperback companies.

American and British publishers that had always been distinct and separate entities merged into larger publishing mega-houses. All of these moves were good for the bottom lines of the companies involved, but they did not benefit authors.

Marek posits that publishing was always an unpredictable industry, and businesspeople who were now running the big houses wanted guarantees. Attempting to force publishing into the confines of narrow business plans resulted in the loss of its charm, beauty, and sadly, the relationships that once existed between editors and authors.

Once upon a time, Marek said, the relationship between publisher, editor and author was nearly sacrosanct. The author was both obliged and responsible to the editor, counting on him or her to help tighten, mold and refine a book and then to guide the release, publicity and promotion as well. Such was their bond that authors rarely changed houses once they had been signed with a publisher.

However, with the changing times and shakeups in the large houses, money and greed came between that relationship. Agents began seeking the best financial deals for their author clients instead of the right fit in editorial/author matches.

Loyalty, Marek sighed, is a lost art.

The change from publishing house to publishing corporation was jolting to all involved, Marek explained. Editorial meetings, where the senior editors presented their projects, were no longer given the same weight.

Likewise, sales conferences, where bookstore reps from all over the country would meet with the editorial team who would pitch them books in the hopes of garnering placement in the stores, changed in that only one editor would present all of the companies' upcoming books. Often, the pitching editor hadn't read the books, in a drastic shift from the old days, when the editorial team had read each one.

Marek also pointed out that as publishers became more corporate, other negative changes

were made. The timing of book publishing was largely influenced by the bottom line instead of the needs of the author and the book itself; a book that wasn't quite ready to be released might be pushed ahead anyway in order to meet financial goals, meaning that an editor's work was often left unfinished.

The bottom line, according to Marek, is that publishing used to be a community of people who loved books. Now it is a company of people who love money.

Down to a handful of publishers, indies make their debut

In the end, after all the shake-ups and shifts, six disparate publishing houses remained (and now [there are five](#)), and in the wake of those seismic changes, indie publishing was born.

Marek remarked that discussing changing times and changing rhythms presupposes a changing future. In that spirit, he ventured to make several predictions about that time to come.

The editor expects that ultimately, there will be two major houses, both of whom only publish the books of salacious stars and so-called celebrities as well as the already-known huge authors.

However, Marek further believes that there will still exist smaller publishers who work with and produce midlist and lesser-known authors. There will be low advances that will nearly always earn out.

He also thinks that eventually, hardworking editors who are passionate about books will leave the traditional houses to launch their own publishing ventures. Thus perhaps there will once again be twenty-seven houses that publish quality and varied books.

It was a privilege to hear Richard Marek's tales of a bygone time. Those editors, authors and publishers who have endured over the years have a unique and valuable point of view to share, even (or perhaps especially) in this world of instant publishing.

Tawdra Kandle writes romance, in just about all its forms. She loves unlikely pairings, strong women, sexy guys, hot love scenes and just enough conflict to make it interesting. Her books include YA paranormal romance, NA paranormal and contemporary romance, and adult contemporary and paramystery romance. She lives in central Florida with a husband, kids, sweet pup and too many cats. And yeah, she rocks purple hair.

What Your Literary Lawyer Wishes You Knew

Clunky clauses and rights-grabbing can wreak havoc on future earnings and flexibility

By Caroline Linden



Every author needs to read and understand a contract in its entirety, and consult either a literary lawyer or a savvy agent who has legal counsel on any point that isn't clear.

Not only is it vital to be aware of your own rights and responsibilities under the contract, but the best time to get good terms is during negotiations, when everyone is eager to work together.

Most contracts are in force for the term of copyright, which is the author's life plus seventy years, and they are binding upon heirs. In his frank and rapid-fire talk on literary contracts, longtime literary attorney Bob Stein urged NINC members to take the time and effort—and expense, if necessary—to get it right before they sign.

Many of contract clauses come in complementary pieces: the author's responsibility or right, and the publisher's. For example, the author must deliver the manuscript on time, and in return the publisher must publish it.

But both pieces should be fair and reasonable to both parties, and since they are written by publishers, it's up to authors to look out for our own interests. Here's what to look for in key clauses:

Delivery—Never agree to a delivery date you cannot meet. Failing to deliver on time gives the publisher the option of terminating the contract and requiring repayment of the advance.

Publication—The publisher should be required to publish within a certain specified time (e.g., 18 months after the manuscript is accepted) or revert the rights to you. Otherwise, the publisher need never publish that book, and you will have no recourse.

Approval—The publisher should not be able to make any changes to a manuscript, except proofreading and copyediting changes, without your prior written approval.

Reversion clauses—Publishers want to hold onto rights as long as they can. The existence of so many different formats (print, digital, print-on-demand, foreign licenses) complicates this

clause, as many publishers consider a work “in print” if there’s even one format available for sale.

Limit as much as possible with language stating, “If the only editions available for sale are digital and/or print-on-demand, the work shall not be deemed in print unless at least X copies are sold, or you earn at least \$X from sales of the work, during a 12-month period.” The numbers of units sold or dollars earned should be as high as possible.

Request language that states the publisher must print a minimum number of copies per year to keep a book “in print.” This will prevent a publisher from printing 50-100 copies a year just to keep the book from reverting.

Regardless of “in print” status, you can reclaim your rights to a book 35-40 years after publication (US Copyright Law, Sec. 203, at www.copyright.gov). Delete any language that gives the publisher first rights to re-acquire those rights before you can sell them elsewhere.

Right to Audit—Big Five publishers generally include this, but not all small publishers do. You should have the right to examine the publisher’s books. Audits are expensive, but some auditors will work on contingency, including Gail Brooks.

Licenses—Request that the publisher send you copies of all contracts they enter into regarding subsidiary rights, so you know what rights were granted and for what time period. Before requesting a reversion of rights to a work, you may need to wait for, or invoke, a reversion of subsidiary rights first.

Option on Next Work—The publisher should only have the right to see and negotiate for rights on your next work, and only for a limited time. Any language that requires you to accept an offer should be deleted, as should any requirement that you submit a completed manuscript for the option.

If the publisher declines an option proposal and no other publisher buys it, you may still be bound by the option clause to submit another proposal to your publisher.

Look for, or add, language stating that you have “no further obligation to the publisher” if they decline your submitted option proposal. To date there is no case law covering the circumstance where an author submits an option work, then goes on to self-publish it, but that clause will clarify the issue.

Competing Works—Limit this clause, if you can’t delete it entirely, to book-length works in the same genre as the books covered by the contract, and exclude any sequels and prequels to those books.

Reps and Warranties—These are easy to overlook—they’re complex—but can be very significant. Read carefully and try to limit as much as possible, especially where you represent that your book doesn’t violate any law.

Reserved Rights—You should reserve all rights to TV or film adaptations, merchandising, or any commercial tie-in. You should also reserve all “rights yet to be created.” This is not the same as new formats yet to be created; publishers will want the ability to exploit new formats for ebooks, for example.

Interminable Agency—This grants your agent’s agency a right to commission on your book even after you terminate the agency contract. One court case suggests the typical version of this clause won’t stand up in court, but if you see the phrase “as an agency coupled with a

security interest in the work,” seek legal advice.

Seeking professional advice

If you have an agent, you may want to hire a literary attorney to review your agency contract. Although you hire an agent, your contract is with the agency. Look for the termination clause; if your agent leaves his agency, you will need to terminate before you can follow the agent.

Most agency contracts terminate their right to receive commission on a book once it has reverted to the author and the publishing contract is terminated. The interminable agency clause is a counterexample of this.

Most agency contracts also terminate upon the author’s death (or the agent’s, if the agent is the agency), but your heirs can ask the agency to continue representation. If there is anything uncertain or vague in your current agency contract, ask for an addendum clarifying the matter, such as explicitly excluding self-publishing income from any claim of commission.

When looking for a literary attorney, lawyers in NY and LA will have the most experience in literary practice. NINC members can apply for up to two hours of legal assistance on current contracts, but not those under negotiation. A list of attorneys, including Mr. Stein, can be found [here](#).

Interview a few attorneys, which will be free, to find one who suits you. The cost will vary, but expect to pay \$1,000-\$2,000 for review of a 10–12 page publishing contract. Turnaround should be no more than a few days, and you will get a mark-up of your contract in response.

An attorney can also negotiate with the publisher for you, at additional hourly cost (\$500+/hour).

Estate planning—Your trusts and estates lawyer must be made aware of your copyrights and contracts that will endure after your death. Consider appointing a literary executor who is able to handle those for your heirs. As must be clear, contracts are complex legal documents with long-lasting terms and consequences.

Caroline Linden is a USA Today Best-selling author of historical and contemporary romance. She earned a math degree from Harvard University and wrote computer code before turning to fiction. Since then, her books have been translated into seventeen languages and won the NJRW Golden Leaf Award, the Daphne du Maurier Award, and the RITA Award. Find her online at www.carolinelinden.com, or on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

First Word: Business

From pseudonyms to cowriting, “new” editions and handling brand confusion

By Leigh Duncan



Part of the 2016 NINC Conference First Word sessions centered on business issues currently facing several members of Novelists, Inc.

Porter Anderson moderated a lively attempt to resolve these sometimes thorny, sometimes perplexing, but always interesting situations. On hand to provide insight and advice were three people who stand at the forefront of today’s publishing marketplace—[David Vandagriff](#), [Jon P. Fine](#) and [Liz Pelletier](#).



When to use a pseudonym

The first case study came from an anonymous *New York Times* and *USA Today* best-selling author. This author has developed a new project that is outside of her current genre. She asked for help in identifying the pros and cons of using her own, well-established name versus a pseudonym when submitting this work to various publishers.

Best known for his popular blog, [The Passive Voice](#), David Vandagriff was the first of the panelists to respond. He suggested that, while the author should mention her desire to publish under a pseudonym in her submission, she should present the work under her own name to take advantage of her notable sales record.

A consultant focused on helping authors and publishers navigate the current media landscape, Jon Fine agreed with Vandagriff's assessment and cited a similar situation involving a historical author.

In that case, the author went through the process of getting the contract under her own name. Later, she and the publisher cooperatively reached the decision to use a pseudonym.

This is where the importance of an author's platform comes into play, according to Liz Pelletier, co-founder of Entangled Publishing and currently its chief executive officer and publisher. She proposed that a pseudonym might not be a bad choice if an author has fewer than 25,000 followers.

However, if an author has a reach of more than 100,000 readers, publishers will require some assurance that the author's readership will stick with them. Especially since studies show that only 10 percent of romance readers will follow an author into another genre, and only 20

percent of those will make their purchases during the first, critical release week.

In summary, the decision of whether to use a pseudonym when venturing into a new genre depends on what kind of crossover the author will expect from their readership.

The pitfalls of co-writing with a friend

Over her three-year publishing career, romance author Heidi Joy Tretheway has published eight novels. She is currently exploring a co-writing project with another author who is agented and traditionally published. Tretheway requested help in identifying the pitfalls of co-writing with a friend.

Everything is amicable now, Vandagriff pointed out, but an attorney considers both the good and bad times and will draft a contract that designates a tie-breaker while protecting the rights of each author. This is especially important since the copyright extends seventy years after the death of the longest-lived co-author. Formalizing the partnership in a written contract now will eliminate or minimize future problems between the authors' heirs.

Pelletier added that special consideration should be given to determining how the expenses will be divided and how the discrepancy will be handled if one author spends \$2,000 on marketing and the other doesn't spend a dime. Partners also should consider what they'll do if one wants to stop writing in the world and the other doesn't. Or, if the venture becomes highly successful.

"In which case," Vandagriff said, "be sure your contract covers follow-on items like movies, toys, and games."

When Tretheway asked whether or not she needed an agent to represent her interests in this project, both Vandagriff and Fine expressed concern over the complications that might arise if a second agent were involved during contract negotiations. They suggested using the co-writer's agent, though both also recommended that the agency agreement be amended, narrowing its scope to just this one book or project.

As an alternative, Pelletier recommended letting the co-writer's agent take the lead on the negotiations, then hiring an attorney to look over the contract. By doing so, Tretheway could protect her own interests while minimizing her costs.

Will bad blood mean a missed opportunity?

The third case study was presented anonymously for an author who had had an acrimonious relationship with a previous publisher. To this day, rancor leads to heated discussions and threats of litigation from both sides whenever royalty statements land in the author's mailbox.

While the author has gone on to create a successful hybrid career, the editor at the epicenter of the disagreement has also risen to a leadership position within the publishing house. Now that a film company wants to build a television series around her books, the author would like to write more in the series and be involved in the filming and scripting of the show. But she's concerned that the bad blood between her and the publisher will cost her this opportunity.

Fine recommended trying to resolve the issues without going to court. While it might be tempting to sue, an attorney's job in such situations is only 50 percent law. The rest of the time,

the lawyer acts as a rabbi, a confessor, or a priest.

According to Vandagriff, the author has some leverage in this case because studios will often abandon a project if they learn there's litigation between an author and the publisher. The threat of leaking that news might be enough to force the publisher to come to terms on the aspects of the contract that are at the heart of the author/publisher dispute.

Speaking from the floor, literary attorney Robert Stein suggested a less contentious solution might lie in a willingness to present an offer to buy the author's way out of the contract. Heeding the well-respected negotiator's advice, the panel determined that presenting a smart, reasonable offer to the publisher was the best way to resolve any of the author's outstanding contractual issues.

What constitutes a new edition?

In the next case study, *New York Times* bestselling author Maggie Shayne explained that, just as her rights were eligible for reversion, Harlequin had changed the covers on several of her ebooks and re-issued them as new editions, a move that extended the publisher's contractual hold on the rights by another five years. She asked if simply changing the cover constituted a new edition and, if not, what options did she have in getting her rights back?

A speaker from the floor advised authors to persist in their efforts to regain control of their rights and suggested that Harlequin, in particular, might be open to returning partial (worldwide English) rights, even if they retain the foreign language rights.

After a lively discussion, Pelletier pointed out that the author or publisher must add a substantial amount of new information before releasing a second edition of a textbook or non-fiction work, and the panel recommended that the author and her attorney closely examine the definition of new edition as defined in her publishing contract.

Brand confusion

The final case study was presented by Phyllis Towzey, who expressed concern that accepting an offer from a small press for her 110,000-word book-of-my-heart thriller might dilute the brand she is trying to establish as an author of contemporary romance.

Phyllis admitted that the premise of the thriller is slightly dated. Also, because she broke a few of that genre's rules, she is uncertain how well the book will be received. She asked for advice in deciding whether it would be better to delay publication of the thriller until her career in contemporary romance is on a firmer footing.

Building and maintaining careers in two different genres, for two different brands, requires more time than most full-time authors can devote to the task. Because the offer for the thriller was from a small house, this author is more emotionally invested in the book than she is financially invested, she should not divide her energy, advised Pelletier.

Others on the panel agreed, suggesting that the author back-burner the thriller ... unless it is the best book she's ever written. In time, the author could write another—even better—thriller and publish that book as the lead in a new series.

No matter which approach the author takes, all the panelists advised her to evaluate the thriller away from the fact that she wrote it and loves it.

The opportunity to obtain advice from some of the top names in the industry apparently resonated with attendees of NINC's First Word sessions. Despite the late hour, people remained in their seats, and many favorable comments were overheard as the crowds dispersed.

*Leigh Duncan is the award-winning author of more than two dozen novels, novellas and short stories. An Amazon best-selling author and a National Readers' Choice Award winner, Leigh lives on Central Florida's East Coast where she wrote *Pattern of Deceit*, a complex, heart-warming and emotional women's fiction that resonates with her readers. Contact Leigh through her website (www.leighduncan.com), Facebook ([LeighDuncanBooks](https://www.facebook.com/LeighDuncanBooks)) or on Twitter ([@leighrduncan](https://twitter.com/leighrduncan)).*

The Many Paths Through the Changing Media Landscape

By Sandra McDonald



"Ten years from now, it's not going to be called self-publishing."

After years of applying his legal expertise at NBC, Random House, and Amazon, Jon Fine is an expert on contracts, copyrights, marketing, e-commerce, and publishing.

Now specializing in consulting for the creative community, he sat down with writer and Emmy-award winning producer Marianne Mancuso to discuss the future—but he quickly invoked the past.

"In those old Andy Rooney and Judy Garland movies, kids would put on a show in the barn on Saturday night. *They* were amateurs," Fine said. NINC members, on the other hand, represent the epitome of sophisticated authors today: commercially savvy, reader-driven, and keenly aware not just of what they are writing but who they are competing against.

They have to be. The industry changes every day, with no time to rest. Writing and publishing are still not easy ways to make money, and only a handful of properties achieve lightning-hot success, but he is excited about opportunities that didn't exist before and which continue to evolve.

Big changes in traditional publishing

Certainly the world of New York publishing has been rocked by upheaval since he entered it after graduating from Cornell University and the University of Virginia School of Law.

If traditional publishing were a table, three of the four legs (advances, editorial, marketing, and distribution) it offered authors in decades past are in the process of being sawed off:

- Most editors at large houses are not editing, but instead acquiring content. In order to make their work the best it can be, traditional authors are having to seek out editorial development the same way independent writers do.
- Those authors are also increasingly being asked to market themselves, develop their own audiences, and bring those audiences to the table.

- Publishing houses still handle distribution exceptionally well, but are tortured by being increasingly dependent on Amazon.

The distribution problem is especially troubling, Fine said, because lack of diversity in channels hamstrings a publisher's ability to drive its own businesses.

Since leaving Amazon, he's talked to every one of the Big Five publishing houses about their struggles with developing new paths. Because technologies such as the Espresso Book Machine have not taken off, even houses that have not been fans of Amazon are focusing new initiatives to embrace the giant instead of trying to compete.

The murky waters of a shifting industry

As a result of these changes, there is an increasing convergence of needs among writers no matter what publishing platform they choose—individual imprint, small presses, or big publishing. Pipelines have continued to proliferate.

The growing demand for editorial, marketing and cover design services is being met by a pool of talent disrupted out of their careers in the publishing industry and services such as Reedsy, which connects creators with consultants and experts. Many of the gates that have kept independent authors from the best resources in editorial and marketing are falling everywhere.

Yet the industry itself still maintains barriers to high-end resources and remains biased against the individual author model. Many agents, for instance, are very good at selling books. They are exceptionally good at getting advances and taking their fifteen percent of a large sum of money.

They are less successful in developing brands. Few have succeeded in adapting their business models around independent authors, for instance, because those up-front advances are no longer part of the equation.

Some of this is a timing issue, in that it takes a while for institutions to change. A good deal with a good house is still, for most authors, an easier road to travel than any other route. It is especially useful if the publisher maintains the in-house resources and strong relationships with booksellers that the author needs, and if authors can sell their own foreign rights.

Yet many publishers are increasingly modular, and continue to cling to contracts and models that do not favor a publisher-author partnership:

- Option clauses that do not involve continuing characters simply ending up warehousing and frustrating authors. They can be circumvented, but it takes effort.
- Likewise, non-compete clauses don't recognize the author's need to write and make a living. Such clauses might be necessary when it comes to enormous deals—Bill Clinton's biography deal with Knopf, for example, required careful control of speaking engagements and other deals—but are not helpful for authors on smaller stages.
- Trying to grab all rights and sitting on royalties for long periods of time are practices that do not foster strong relationships.

The future puts authors in the driver's seat

Fine's advice to publishers is to put customers first. And by customer he means the author, not the booksellers who sell content to the readers. Amazon's past success with authors was

based on addressing their pain points. With reports and royalties, for instance, they were able to get money out faster and with more transparency because they were not stuck waiting for print returns from booksellers.

In the competitive marketplace of finding great talent, being author-centric can make a huge difference. At the end of the day, the biggest challenges for any publisher are cultural: treating the author as the most important asset in the process.

That Fine is so supportive of authors is not a surprise. As one of the most popular and accessible figures at Amazon, he was key to establishing and administering the Author Grant Program (now known as the Amazon Literary Partnership). Since its inception, the program has distributed millions of dollars to organizations that support reading. Recipients include Girls Write Now, Lambda Literary Foundation, Poets & Writers, the Asian-American Writers' Workshop, Clarion West, and PEN American Center.

For the future, Fine sees a rise in independent consulting publishers who can partner with writers in finding resources, developing strategies, and shaping the process. Someone who can intersect with publishers and distributors yet also serve as "legal advisor, shrink, rabbi, confessor, and consigliere" in order to let writers follow their passion for creating.

With his own business, he hopes to work with authors to take advantage of new channels in holistic ways: not as an agent or lawyer, but as a problem-solver helping writers reach their individual goals.

Write well, market well, rise above the tide

As a First Amendment lawyer by training, Fine loves the idea that anyone these days can tell a story. That freedom is incredibly important and amazing from a cross-cultural standpoint. Platforms like Amazon and Kobo make that possible. He sees incredible talent rising up in this tsunami wave of books and opportunities proliferating across all kinds of publishing.

From the audience, a question: Having discussed what publishers should be doing, what should authors concentrate on?

- The most important thing is to write well.
- The second most important thing is to remember you aren't always the best judge of whether you're writing well.
- The third most important thing is that, to be commercial, you need very professional packaging, and that's just as important as what's inside the book.

Overall, when Fine thinks about where the industry has been and where it's going, he is full of optimism. Some knotty problems remain, as with licensing independent YA and children's literature products the way traditional content often succeeds.

Getting independent content into libraries has also been a problem, but he sees progress. Libraries are a terrific match for independent authors even as they redefine their community roles. The nationwide Indie Author's Day on Oct. 8 involved more than 200 libraries participating with local events and a live webcast Fine moderated.

At the Frankfurt Book fair a few years ago, Fine was asked what self-publishing will look like in ten years. He thinks that term might not even be in use. It will instead be seen as one of several ways authors reach readers depending on their goals, who their audience is, and where

that audience can be found.

“You are storytellers, not bound to any one medium,” he said. As authors continue to embrace their identities as creators and publishers in the new publishing landscape, more and more top-notch resources and opportunities will rise up to meet them.

Sandra McDonald's first collection of stories, Diana Comet and Other Improbable Stories, won a Lambda Literary Award and was a Booklist Editor's Choice, ALA Over the Rainbow book, and Rainbow Award winner. Her Florida Keys adventure Mystery of the Tempest won a Silver Moonbeam award for children's literature. She is currently writing military romance (SEALs!) and served eight years in the United States Navy. She lives in Florida.

Growing Sales on iBooks

Maximize visibility on this vendor by carving out iBooks-specific promotional opportunities

By Rochelle Paige



Roxanne St. Clair kicked off the iBooks session at the NINC conference by explaining why growing your readership on this retailer is important to authors.

There are over one billion Apple devices in the world, and they have a very active customer base. Phone reading is on the rise, with fifty percent of people using their phone as their primary reading device. As she put it, “It’s the way of the future.”

The iBooks app is pre-installed onto iPhones and cannot be deleted. Authors shouldn’t underestimate the power of a factory-installed app, considering that iBooks is the second largest bookseller in the world with sales in fifty-two countries and a strong presence in the United Kingdom and Australia.

How to grow your readership on iBooks

Tanya Anne Crosby recommended to the attendees that if you want to get attention at iBooks, then you have to put in as much effort as you are asking of them.

She stressed how iBooks notices everything and they will look to make sure you’re encouraging your readers to go to their platform. She learned this firsthand when she reached out to them and one of the first things they asked her about was where the iBooks links were on her website.

As she explained it, you have to work to find iBooks readers. You should promo iBooks if you are asking something of them.

- Post iBooks-specific links on social media, but don’t put all the retailers in one post. Do separate posts for each vendor and rotate through them. And if you do choose to post them all at once, then at least rotate the top link.
- Run iBooks-specific ads so you are encouraging your readers to go to iBooks.
- Announce new releases to iBooks readers. Make them feel special.
- Put permanent links and widgets on your website.

- Do iBooks-specific author cross-promotion.
- Do *not* jump in and out of Kindle Unlimited.

iBooks has a great presence on Facebook and Twitter. If you want to reach them, promote them! Plus, if you're competing for a promo spot, they're going to be more likely to pick you if you've been pushing iBooks on your platform.

It's important to give the vendors where you're trying to grow your readership more attention. If iBooks is your second-best retailer, then you should give them your second-best effort.

What does an ideal iBooks campaign look like?

Cristin Harber offered some much-needed advice for running your iBooks campaigns:

- Set up a preorder one year out. Preorders count twice when it comes to the book's rank in the iBooks store. Each sale during the preorder period will drive it up on the lists, and then they count again all at once on release day. The dates can also be adjusted without penalty if needed.
- Make it an exclusive preorder. iBooks offers the longest preorder period, so you can take full advantage of possible merchandising for an exclusive preorder during all that time when you can't even preorder anywhere else. Then when you're ready to do a preorder on other retailers, iBooks will let you get out of the exclusive preorder. Just notify them and they're okay with it. They don't punish you for it.
- Consider an iBooks early release, even if it's a day or week early.
- Reveal the cover on iBooks.
- Offer an exclusive sample on iBooks.
- Utilize the free promo codes during the preorder period as an ARC distribution method.
- If the release is in an existing series, first in series free would be the way to drive new readers into the series now if you haven't already.

This should all be done separately because it benefits you to drive clicks separately on their algorithm. It's important to constantly drive clicks to your book. So repeatedly send people there for different reasons.

Advertising to iBooks

Running iBooks-specific ads can be a moneymaker, so it's worth it to figure out how to do it well. You can run iOS specific social media ads by selecting iOS behaviors and devices on Facebook ads. You can also choose iOS devices & Apple products on Twitter.

One link will work for all countries, and you're allowed to use affiliate links. So many ads are Amazon links which iBooks readers click and are disappointed when they don't end up at iBooks. Send them a signal by putting iBooks specific wording in the text of the ads.

You can use reporting functionality to monitor ads in order to retool and reinvest. Program your reports by series, by loss leader, or by whatever you're advertising at the time so you can drop the money and then see where your ad is starting. Then you can see the impact to know if

it's working. Facebook ads and iBooks are easy to correlate:

- Put your money in.
- Look to see what your click through is.
- Go into iTunes Connect and see what your reporting is and see what your percentage is.
- This is a really good reason to go direct because you don't quite get the same analytics going through a third party.
- A more advanced, but easy, method is to use iBooks pixels on Facebook and Twitter with a remarketing landing page.

Roxanne, Tanya and Cristin have all successfully built their iBooks readerships by putting effort into it. You don't need a rep to grow over there, but they will find you if you're performing well.

Cristin shared a story about how she met a rep at an event and never thought she'd hear from her again. Then she got an email from a different rep but thought it was spam because it was just an attachment. She replied back to tell them she thought they'd been hacked.

Funnily enough, the attachment was safe to open. It was a screen grab of how one of her permafree book was performing in the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. It was ranked first in all three countries, and the paid book after it was also performing well. She'd worked to push it on iBooks, and that effort paid back enough that the iBooks staff noticed.

After that, she was able to catapult to the next level. If you'd like to reach out to them yourself, you can contact iBooks at www.apple.com/bookmarketing or itunes.com/affiliates.

Rochelle Paige is a best-selling author of romance in a variety of sub-genres: contemporary, new adult, paranormal and romantic suspense. Although she holds a BA in Economics, her career was mainly spent as a marketing professional. She lives in West Palm Beach, Florida, with her two sons. Contact her at me@rochellepaige.com.

The Future is Wide Open

Draft2Digital unveils new author tools including universal book links

By Cheryl Bradshaw



Since its founding in 2012, Draft2Digital's sales have nearly doubled. And with each year in business, both CEO Kris Austin, and Dan Wood, director of operations and author relations, said they have seen a slight uptick in a global direction for the company.

The D2D team told NINC members that the top three countries they've been doing business in are the United States (70% of their business), Australia (9.6%), and Canada (8.8%). Wood added that they've been especially excited to see the continued growth and expansion in Australia.

Conversely, there's been a decline in the UK. Dan stated this is largely due to the fact Barnes & Noble pulled out of the UK, which caused a change in the landscape and has now affected the market for books in the United Kingdom.

On the retailer front, Kobo and Tolino are the two fastest-growing retailers on Draft2Digital. Wood pointed out that they have an interest in continuing to seek out other vendors to add to their growing list of partners.

Currently Draft2Digital distributes 91,000 books from 26,000 authors, but this number is always changing and rises every month. At the moment, retailers D2D partners with include:

- iBooks
- Barnes & Noble
- Kobo
- Tolino
- 24Symbols
- Scribd
- Inktera (formally Page Foundry)
- CreateSpace

Preorders and uploading files is easier than ever

One of the benefits of publishing through Draft2Digital's platform is the ability to set up

preorders before a book is finished or ready to be published.

D2D makes the preorder process simple by allowing authors to choose a release date on the acquisitions page of their site. Even if the author is not sure of the exact release date, the author can enter an estimated date. This date can be moved or changed at any time, and books can be added up to a year in advance.

One of the best parts of this feature is that there's no penalty to set up a book or change the date when necessary. All an author needs to set up a preorder is a title and a basic description of what the book is about, and the description can also be revised when the book gets closer to its release date.

Kobo, iBooks, and Barnes & Noble are three vendors that allow authors to set up a preorder before the book has a finished cover. A generic graphic is displayed until the permanent cover is uploaded. Once uploaded, the generic cover is then replaced by the new one.

When an author uploads the word file of their book to Draft2Digital's site, the book gets converted into a high-quality ePub, mobi, and PDF file.

If the file has errors, Draft2Digital's system automatically searches for them and makes changes when needed, repairing any formatting issues detected when the file is reviewed. Wood said authors could download converted files at any time as one of their free, value-added services.

Draft2Digital's platform offers several features that benefit the author. One of those features is the ability to add optimized end matter in the back of the author's book by inserting links at the end of the book.

D2D also offers new release notifications. If an author uploads a preorder, Draft2Digital sends a notification to announce the new book's preorder status, and then a second email is sent out when the book is officially released.

Universal Book Links: the latest D2D tool to help authors

A majority of the session was spent with Wood and Austin discussing a new tool they're excited to roll out for authors this year. The tool is called Universal Book Links.

To get started, authors sign up for an account on the [Books2Read](#) web page. Universal Book Links allow authors to create one custom master link for each of their books. The custom link can be used every place an author's book appears online. It's also a free service, and the process to sign up is simple.

Universal Book Links can be created for an author's entire collection of books regardless of whether the books go through Draft2Digital or directly through a vendor. Wood used Amazon as an example, stating Draft2Digital doesn't partner with Amazon at this time, but authors can still create a clickable link through their site that opens in the Amazon store.

The links are easy to create and share anywhere authors place their links, including books, blogs, social media outlets, in interviews, newsletters, and even as part of an email.

Wood took class attendees through the process of setting up book links. To get started, authors need to create an account for their books on the Books2Read site.

After creating an account, authors select the universal links tab at the top of the page. On this page, the author pastes in all the links to their books. Once this happens, a universal link is

generated.

Using an example of my book *Stranger in Town*, I pasted in all of my vendor link landing page URLs and created a universal link that looks like this: <https://books2read.com/u/bxzNqm>.

At this point, I have two options. I could choose to use the link provided, or I could customize the link by clicking on the Custom Name URL tab and adding the name of my book to the end of it. This gave my book a more personalized title.

Once I added the title *Stranger in Town* to the end of the link, the link changed to <https://books2read.com/StrangerinTown>. I'm then able to use either book link since they're both directed to the same landing page.

Claim your URLs now and include affiliate links

No two authors can share the same personalized URL, and for this reason, Wood highly recommended authors claim their URLs when they add their books to the site.

When entering a title for the first time, the Books2Read's system runs a check to see if the name is already in use. If it is, the author is prompted to choose a different name. When I tested my book collection only one title had already been claimed. This is why Wood suggested authors add their custom book link titles as soon as possible.

Another personalized option offered by Draft2Digital is the ability for each author to include affiliate links on the Books2Read pages. Wood and Austin stressed the importance of signing up for affiliate links for any author who hasn't done so already as a way to earn extra revenue when a reader clicks on the author's book links to make a purchase. Any author with existing affiliate links can enter those links onto each one of their book's pages by clicking on the Affiliate Codes tab.

The class ended with Wood showing what happens when a reader clicks on an author's universal link. The reader is first directed to the book's landing page on the Books2Read site. The page includes the title of the book, the cover, and every store the book is available.

When the reader clicks on one of the store links, a box pops up on the page asking the reader if the store they selected is their preferred store. If it is, they can choose the option to make it their store.

Once they've locked in which retailer they prefer, the system automatically remembers them the next time they return, and the store they've selected becomes their default bookshop.

Cheryl Bradshaw is a New York Times and USA Today best-selling author writing in the genres of mystery, thriller, romantic suspense, women's fiction, and paranormal suspense. Her novel Stranger in Town was a Shamus Award finalist for best PI novel, and she was the only female to receive the nomination in this category.

Maximizing Your Discoverability on Amazon

Using metadata and multiple formats; plus pointed questions from attendees

By Trish Milburn



Based on the Q & A session that occurred at the end of the presentation led by Daniel Slater from Amazon Independent Publishing and David Symonds, general manager of Amazon's CreateSpace, authors often have mixed feelings when it comes to the commerce giant.

While Amazon undeniably brings authors' books to millions of readers around the world and its self-publishing platform is an integral part of most indie authors' careers, there are policies that confound and frustrate authors who want to make even better use of Amazon's offerings as well as programs they could be making available to authors.

Even with issues that could be debated at length, maximizing one's discoverability on Amazon is extremely important to the author's bottom line. According to a report on the book market from AuthorEarnings.com, in October of last year, 74 percent of all ebook purchases in the United States were made through Amazon when you take into account the books from indie-published authors that don't have ISBNs.

The remaining 26 percent of sales came from Apple, Barnes & Noble, GooglePlay, and Kobo combined. With figures like that, the necessity of making sure Amazon's large pool of book buyers sees the books that authors have available is obvious.

David Symonds began the session by pointing out a fact of which NINC members are well aware—authors increasingly feel they have a choice of whether to go through a traditional publishing house or publish on their own.

The statistics reflect that over the course of the past four years, the number of authors indie publishing only or going hybrid has increased and the number traditionally publishing only has decreased.

For example, among the top 5,000 authors on Amazon, 67 percent were only traditionally published in 2011. That number dropped to 46 percent four years later.

During the same time period, the number of indie-only authors grew from 10 to 21 percent, and authors with a hybrid career grew from 23 to 30 percent. Among the top 500 authors on Amazon, the drop-off of traditional-only was even wider, from 72 percent in 2011 to 42 percent

in 2015. The jump in indie only wasn't as drastic, from 3 to 8 percent, but the number of hybrid authors doubled from 25 to 50 percent.

Daniel Slater then moved into a presentation of the tools and services that can be used to get books in front of customers. These fell under the three headers of Automation and Personalization, Free Tools, and Select.

Automation and Personalization (A&P)

Slater said that automation and personalization are what Amazon as a platform does well. They can identify what customers buy and what they browse in order to place the right products in front of the right customers at the right time.

Everyone's Amazon storefront page looks different based on their activity while on Amazon's site. He said the system takes a person's interests in a certain author and opens up discoverability for another.

As to how customers find authors' books on Amazon, there are several different ways that an author's name and books can get in front of potential buyers:

- On-device promotions (Kindle Daily Deals, lists of books such as 20 Kindle books at a certain price point, etc.)
- Email campaigns
- Amazon site campaigns
- Search—all about relevancy
- "Customers who bought X also bought Y" lists
- List of books related to an item customer has viewed
- "Recommended for you" lists

How to improve A&P results for your books

What can authors do to improve the automation and personalization results for their books? Slater said it's important to have complete content. That means making books available in all formats—digital through KDP, print through CreateSpace, and audio through ACX.

Mathematically, having more formats means potential readers are more likely to find your book. It provides more surfaces to attract customers. Slater also challenged the idea that romance readers only read digital books. By only making your books available in digital format, you can block customers from finding your work in their preferred format. Slater suggested using all formats and letting the customer decide which one (or more) they want.

If authors have heard it once, they've heard it a thousand times, but the importance of metadata was driven home again—things like product description, title, reviews, categories, keywords and series. Slater encouraged authors to make their categories and keywords in the metadata very specific and to focus on what makes a book unique. He gave an extemporaneous example of "paranormal romance" being broad and "strong female leads" as specific.

Authors who are writing books in a series can have series pages if the books have been identified as being in a series. When this exists, every detail page for each book shows an identifier like "Books in this series (10 books)." Customers can click to see the whole series on a series page and even use a 1-Click button to buy the entire series without having to go to each

individual one and hit the buy button.

Amazon's system also has some built-in End Actions that encourage readers to rate a book right after they read it—while it's still fresh in their minds, recommend the book to a friend, and encourage the next purchase by showing more books from that author.

How you can benefit from A & P tools

Symonds told the audience that encouraging people to follow you on Amazon's Author Central can result in increased sales. Having followers on Amazon converts to a high purchase rate of books by that author when those customers receive the emails sent out by Amazon when the author has a new book release.

He suggested that authors make sure they have a compelling bio on Author Central and take advantage of tools such as Amazon Giveaways; pre-orders; and Kindle Matchbook, which allows readers to get a digital version at a significant cost reduction if they already have the book in physical form.

He also mentioned embeddable "Instant Book Previews," a widget you can upload to your site. See the link under Sources at the end of this article for a link explaining how this option works.

Slater then went into a quick overview of KDP Select, the KDP Global Fund, Kindle Countdown Deals and Kindle Unlimited. He said KU came about when they looked at how customers engage with other digital content such as Hulu, Netflix, Spotify, Tidal, HBO Now and others, all of which are subscription-based. He said that there was a 30 percent increase in the time spent reading by Amazon customers after KU was introduced.

"It's fantastic when people are reading more," Slater said. "Also spending more. It's a huge win."

He shared a case study for author CD Reiss who used KU to promote the third book in a three-book series, the first two books of which had been out more than a year. Reiss enrolled in KU after her initial launch and her royalties "absolutely spiked," Slater said. "They were almost two times the royalty she was making before."

Slater said that authors should consider KU for books in a series, backlist titles to give new life to an older book, and highly rated but low-velocity books. He said that for the books that have good reviews but aren't selling for some reason, KU can give visibility to these titles. Their positive ratings will be seen as quality indicators by KU readers.

Symonds closed out the prepared part of the presentation by giving an overview of what CreateSpace offers to authors, noting that it enhances discoverability for a book if it's also available in print. Authors can reach more readers and expand their brand; titles can be ordered by bookstores; and physical copies can be purchased for giveaway and book signings. He mentioned the free cover creator and the professional services that can be purchased.

Audience Q & A

The first couple of questions posed during the Q & A part of the session revealed some frustration by authors in particular areas. One author asked how she could quantify how well a giveaway does when she can't see the number of followers she has on Amazon. She was told

that Amazon has to balance author data with customer data.

An Australian author asked a question about Kindle Unlimited that drew enthusiastic applause from the audience, indicating that others have been wondering the same thing. She said that when comparing her sales after the implementation of KU to what they were before, she saw a 30 percent drop, and that it feels as if authors who choose to not give Amazon exclusivity are being punished.

Slater responded that books in KU get some lift and that anything Amazon does can't come at the expense of customers being able to find a book.

Another author asked if uploading a new format of a book triggers an additional "new release" email to customers? The answer was that it doesn't; those emails only go out when the first edition in the first format is made available.

One audience member detailed her experience with some of her readers not receiving the new release emails when she has a new book out and that after talking to several different people at Amazon she was told that these emails were being sent only on a selective basis. Slater seemed surprised by this and said that it wasn't true, that it's an automated system.

When asked if Amazon has any plans to change the royalty on bundles priced above the cap of \$9.99, Slater said there were no plans to change this because of reader engagement and suggested making mini-bundles.

The last question had to do with how other retailers offer authors opportunities for promotion such as coupons and discounts and whether Amazon had any plans for anything similar. Slater said that they were always looking at what authors want, but there was no firm commitment to anything new in this regard.

Sources:

[October 2015 – Apple, B&N, Kobo and Google: a look at the rest of the ebook market](#)
[Kindle Instant Book Previews](#)

Trish Milburn is the author of more than 30 books for Harlequin, Razorbill/Penguin and Bell Bridge Books as well as self-published titles. She's a two-time winner of Romance Writers of America's Golden Heart Award and a former newspaper and magazine reporter. You can follow her on Twitter @TrishMilburn or [Facebook](#) and learn more about her books at www.trishmilburn.com. She's a fan of visiting national parks, binge-watching cool shows, and attending fan conventions where she occasionally cosplays.

Pronoun Offers Author-Centric Platform

Making the most of metadata, keyword popularity/attainability, and price analysis

By Laura Marie Altom



Pronoun.com is an intuitively designed, user-friendly, one-stop site that allows authors to simultaneously publish books on Amazon, Kobo, iBooks, B & N, and Google. It's a "publishing platform created expressly to empower authors," said Jeff Feldman, director of product for Pronoun.

"Our mission is to build a new model for publishing that puts authors first. We believe that independent authors deserve a better way to publish, so we're creating the tools, technology, and information they need to succeed in today's digital market," Feldman said. "In May 2016, Pronoun joined Macmillan Publishers. Together, we are investing in growing our self-publishing platform while also bringing new technology and data to an industry leader."

Metadata made easy

All for no cost, Pronoun claims to, "take the mystery out of metadata" by inviting authors to use their extensive data catalogue to optimize keywords and price.

"Before you publish," Feldman said, "we show you real reader searches for your keywords, the prices of best-selling books like yours, and the information you need to position your book for readers."

They use their data mined from millions of books to:

- Identify trending authors, titles and genres
- Find optimal prices for different kinds of books
- Experiment with metadata changes, and
- Assess different marketing methods.

They will deliver daily sales and performance updates to your inbox and also provide custom marketing pages for each book published. These pages can be used as a landing page for social media links.

"After you publish, your book gets a gorgeous promotional page with built-in analytics," Feldman said. "You'll see how potential readers are finding your book, where they're coming

from, and which of your marketing efforts are paying off.”

Pronoun platform is author-friendly

Megan Frampton, community manager, Pronoun user, and author of *Hero of my Heart*, discussed the platform from an author’s point of view, and described it as being extremely user-friendly.

“‘It’s remarkably easy to use’ is one the top compliments we get,” said Frampton. “Creating a professionally designed ebook takes minutes; choosing smart metadata is quick and clear; and your book is on five retailers with the click of a button.”

What sets Pronoun apart?

Free platform. “There are no fees, and we don’t take a cut of your sales. How? Down the road, we plan to offer a premium program with additional services based on author feedback and requests. For today, we’re focused on building the best publishing platform in the market and making it available to all,” said Frampton.

Resources of a traditional publisher. Feldman and Frampton used slides to show how the site’s data helps authors determine the right price for their books. Much like in Goldilocks’s tale, they say it’s important to not set prices too high or too low, but rather to hit that all-important sweet spot that allows for maximum earnings.

They also cautioned to be aware of retailer policies. Upon publishing, the site’s data takes into account how similar books are priced, what readers are used to paying, and how the market has changed since an author’s last published book.

Keywords 101: How to win at Amazon search/keywords:

- Use common phrasing
- Put yourself in the reader’s shoes
- Learn from similar books
- Create phrases that readers would search (e.g. science fiction vs. fiction science).

Even without fully publishing, by simply starting the process, authors will be able to play with Pronoun’s keyword tools to gain insight into how readers actually search, discover which terms are most popular, and find categories where they can actually compete. Feldman reported that one-word keywords are essentially useless. It’s important to enter search phrases.

Once entered, these phrases will then show users numbered rankings with a scale of 1-100 in the form of Popularity and Attainability. Platform users are encouraged to find a balance of popular and attainable searches and to experiment often.

The importance of Popularity and Attainability

Upon this author’s use of the system, the meaning of the terms Popularity and Attainability were unclear. Elissa Bernstein, Pronoun’s “Author Happiness Advocate,” promptly answered all questions via email. Here is her response:

Popularity refers to how often readers search for this keyword—closer to zero means rarely,

and closer to 100 means frequently. For example, "fiction" (a commonly searched term) has a popularity score of 100, whereas "Washington cardiology" (a more uncommon term) has a popularity score of 8.

Attainability refers to how easy or likely it is for your book to rank well in a search for this keyword. Closer to zero means the search is really competitive, and closer to 100 means your book has a good chance of ranking highly in the results. For example, "romance" (a keyword used for many books) has an attainability score of 1, whereas "orange rhino" (a term associated with very few books) has an attainability score of 100.

"Putting keywords in the description does *not* help in [discoverability]. Title, author and keywords are the only way to get searched. Book Category is related to search, because it is filterable, but is not in search results," said Feldman.

When a title published on Pronoun hits a ranking milestone, the service emails authors fun social media badges for use in celebrating with readers.

Pronoun supports preorders on all platforms but Amazon, and ARCs can be sent in PDF form directly from the book page.

There is an author community at: theverbs.pronoun.com

Follow on Twitter at: [@pronoun](https://twitter.com/pronoun) and [@_theverbs](https://twitter.com/_theverbs)

Find Pronoun on Facebook at: facebook.com/publish.at.pronoun

Laura Marie Altom is a hybrid author of over 50 books in three different genres. She's been happily married to her college sweetheart (Go Hogs!) for 25 years and believes their boy/girl twins actively plot to drive her crazy! Find her on [Facebook](#).

Intelligent Marketing

Explore a host of tools to accelerate your online and social media marketing

By Lisa Verge Higgins



Effective, intelligent marketing takes time and costs money. Two experts, Porter Anderson and Fauzia Burke, spoke about how authors can get the most marketing bang for their bucks—and effort.

According to Burke, author of *Online Marketing For Busy Authors* and president of FSB Associates, an internet marketing firm, the only way to get your book noticed in the tsunami of content is to embrace marketing and promotion. That means taking advantage of online tools that will amplify your message with the least amount of effort, and give you the data you need to make smart marketing and promotion choices.



Discoverability's biggest hurdle

The Wall of Content is a major publishing and marketing problem. There is too much material for everyone to absorb, and that includes not just books but also TV, film, videos, etc.

To rise over that wall of content, creativity in marketing is as important as creativity in writing. To balance both, it's necessary to take advantage of online marketing tools to use your time more effectively and efficiently.

Online tools for blogging

Though many folks think blogging is a dead marketing technique, a blog generated from your website can increase SEO because renewing data makes your website rise in search engine searches. Also, if you blog on other people's sites, your name gets out to an audience that isn't yours.

[Portent's](#) content idea generator will take the subject of your next blog post and then generate a SEO-loaded title that will play well with search engines. It's a fun tool and it may increase your reach or even make your blog go viral.

[Medium](#), which is similar to Tumblr, is a blog-posting site started by the same people who invented Twitter. It was in this space where Amazon responded to workplace complaints and the NYT responded in kind.

It's free to post your blog here, and you'll be exposing your writing to a built-in audience that is not your own. Consider posting your blog on your website first and then re-blogging onto medium.com to get traffic to your website as well as greater exposure.

Online social media scheduling tools

There are many online scheduling tools that make posting a single comment across numerous social media venues a very simple process. Which you choose depends on your comfort level with technology.

[Hootsuite](#) is a favorite for posting across multiple social networks.

[Tweetdeck](#) is a great way to keep track of your followers as well as schedule posts for Twitter.

[Buffer](#) is simpler to use than many others. It's the compact car to Hootsuite's Cadillac.

It is often worth a monthly fee to upgrade your online scheduling tool to take advantage of perks, such as being able to post on more social media platforms, better timing tools, and better data gathering.

Online graphics tools

Since content with relevant images gets 94% more views and is 40 times more likely to get shared, using graphics on social media is important. But for many, Photoshop is a complicated program with a steep learning curve.

Fortunately, there are a number of great graphics programs online that will help make professional-looking graphics, often for free.

[Pablo](#) is great for quote cards, this graphics program is fast and easy and allows for social sharing.

[Canva](#) is Burke's favorite graphics program. The upgraded, paid program allows easy resizing of an image with a button called Abracadabra, which can produce multiple iterations of the same image for different purposes. Plus, a lot of the graphics elements are sized already.

[Snagit](#) was mentioned by the audience as a graphics program that snags graphics from a web page and allows for screen-capture editing.

[Picmonkey](#) was mentioned by the audience as a program very good for photo editing.

Stock photos and where to find them

Finding the right stock image is another hurdle that authors face, whether making graphics for ads or considering elements for a cover. Here are some places where you can find great images:

[Deposit Photos](#) features royalty-free images. Periodically they have sales where you can buy 100 images for \$100 or less.

[iStockPhoto](#) is more expensive, but also has great images.

[Shutterstock](#) is Anderson's favorite stock image site.

Google's [advanced image search tool](#) allows you to search for specific images—say, a red truck or a blue flower—and then check on the rights for that image.

Online data marketing tools

The best and worst of online marketing, says Burke, is the amount of data available. There are plenty of online tools that will help you collect relevant data so that you can make better choices about where to put your marketing time and money.

Anderson warns not to get too addicted to the data, and Burke suggests that you check analytics intermittently, perhaps once every three months.

[Surveymonkey](#) is a free polling tool that also gives you data on engagement. It can be used to poll newsletter subscribers to help you pick a character name, a book title, etc.

Everyone who has a website should be using Google Analytics to track traffic and gauge the effectiveness of various campaigns to bring people to your website. This can help you know what blogs have worked, which social platforms your audience is on, etc.

[Bitly](#) creates smaller links from larger ones, and those links are tracked. The data available on bitly.com includes information on where the clicks came from, helping you determine the effectiveness of different marketing platforms.

Social Media Analytics. Twitter has built-in analytics to show impressions and reach. Facebook has Facebook Insights that show the demographics of your audience, which posts are performing best, the over-time growth of your audience, and when during the day most of your audience is active online.

Twitter Data. There are a number of online tools to help you gauge the effectiveness of this particular platform:

[Warble](#) will send you daily email alerts from Twitter for the people, mentions, keywords, and hashtags that you are following.

[Tweetreach](#), according to Burke, could “change your life.” This is a free program with upgrades that uses a tremendous amount of analytics. She uses it to help find the influencers in a particular topic, who she will then engage.

[Audiense](#) is one of Anderson's favorite sites. It's a program that helps you target a segmented audience that you wish to gain access to, or search for influencers within.

[Twitter Counter](#) shows how your Twitter audience is progressing, and offers lots of analytics to see how your account compares to other authors.

Online tools for mailing lists

Managing email lists are vital, so choosing the right email list subscriber service is important. Burke and Anderson recommend [Mailchimp](#) and [Mailmunch](#).

Online tools for building websites

Easy, intuitive website building programs include [Wordpress](#) and [Squarespace](#).

Note that the number of users of smartphones is expected to near 200 million by the end of 2016, so having a mobile-friendly website is critical. [Test](#) whether your website complies.

Both moderators warned against getting overwhelmed by marketing tasks and data analytics. Even if you pick three of the above tools, it will help you save time and money in your efforts.

Focus on writing your books while eyeing data every few months, except when you're in launch mode. Burke emphasized that authors should not be in launch mode at all times.

Engaging your subscribers on a regular basis is more important than the constant hard sell. For a list of Burke's favorite digital tools as well as updates, contact her at fauzia@fauziaburke.com.

Lisa Verge Higgins is the RITA-nominated author of eighteen novels who also writes as Lisa Ann Verge. A Golden Leaf and Bean Pot winner, she has twice cracked B&N's General Fiction Forum's top twenty books of the year. She'd love to connect with fellow writers on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), [Instagram](#), or even through her [website](#).

BookBub Launches New Ad Platform

No need to wait for a Featured Deal—just target your audience and start bidding

By Tawdra Kandle



BookBub, one of the largest and most recognized email promotion companies for authors and publishers, introduced its newest product, BookBub ads, at NINC's conference. Katie Donelan, director of business development, shared information and details on what she referred to as the company's newest and biggest product launch.

Donelan described BookBub ads as a “very distinct, very different” product from the Featured Deals Bookbub ads, with which most authors are familiar.

BookBub Ads vs. Featured Deals

Both the location and appearance of the ads differ from those of the Featured Deals. Ads are 300 x 250 pixels and are placed at the bottom of the daily BookBub email, under the last Featured Deal. The creative is designed by the advertiser, not by BookBub.

FEATURED DEALS

ADS

1. Placement in BookBub's Email



While Featured Deals include limited information and must promote a book that is discounted or free, ads can include any details the advertiser chooses and can promote a book of any price level. Additionally, ads launch almost immediately, while Featured Deals can take up to thirty days to run.

Ads are open to novellas and audio books, and an advertiser can promote the product as often as possible within a six-month time frame. Featured Deals are limited to full-length books and cannot be run more than twice a year on any one title.

Featured Deals are sent out in an email to all BookBub subscribers who have indicated interest in that genre. There is no guarantee of a number of opens of those emails. Ads, on the other hand, are live-served and hard-coded; advertisers only pay for actual views in opened emails.

The targeting for BookBub ads is also more nuanced, as the advertiser can choose to focus on specific authors' followers, including anyone who has ever clicked on that authors' books on a BookBub email or the site itself. Different ads are thus served to different readers.

Pricing and bidding

When setting up the promotion, the advertiser chooses a pricing model that determines who will see it. Each ad competes against others that target the same authors and/or genres, and the cost per mille (CPM) bid (how much the advertiser is willing to pay for one thousand impressions) determines which ad is served. How often readers see the advertisement depends

on how much the advertiser pays, who else is in competition for that audience, and the CPM set.

In a Featured Deal campaign, BookBub controls every element, but with ads, there is more flexibility, as the CPM bid can be scaled up and down. While the results are less predictable, there is more variety in the ad campaign. Since only about twenty percent of authors seeking Featured Deals are selected, there are approximately eighty to ninety percent who are not running those deals. The ads program offers those authors a more flexible way to reach readers with different content on a wide variety of budgets.

How to run a BookBub ads campaign

First, clarify the goal. Putting this new tool into action begins with figuring out what the advertiser hopes to accomplish. For instance, is it crucial to see a positive return on investment (ROI), or can ROI be sacrificed for increased branding and visibility?

Donelan offered two examples of this: author Lauren Blakely maximized her exposure to romance readers and earned back between 75 and 80 percent of her ad spend. Author Mark Dawson had a two-fold goal of increasing visibility for a box set of books and achieving positive ROI. He met these goals and gave his books valuable exposure.

Design the creative. Putting together an appealing graphic is extremely important, as this will strongly influence how many clicks the ad receives once it is delivered. Best practices here include a clear call-to-action button, displaying the book cover in the picture, inserting a call-out (tag line, a quotation from a reviewer, or another kind of hook) and almost never mentioning the price. Using a professional design is also necessary.

BookBub will offer automated creative building, taking the guesswork out of this part of the process, for advertisers who prefer having help.

Set the bid, the budget and the schedule. These are largely subjective and dependent on the needs and resources of each individual advertiser. BookBub offers help in this area so that each promoter can find the right set of numbers for the campaign. The setup section on the website shares what other authors are paying for CPM to help figure out the right price point.

Targeting. There are several options for targeting an audience for the advertisement. Authors may select their own followers and interest group (those who have clicked on their books via BookBub in the past) as well as those of other similar authors.

Donelan suggested that those new to BookBub ads should first experiment by focusing on their own following first with a small budget and then add comparable authors later.

4. Targeting Options

TARGET BY CATEGORY. BookBub's editorial team determines final category selection.



TARGET BY ANY COMBINATION of categories, regions, retailer preferences, and author interests.





Advertisers can also narrow the audience through retailer preference, which is most effective when the ad links to a specific retailer.

Category interest is another option, allowing the author to broaden the customers served to an entire genre interest. This is not recommended if specific author audiences are also targeted. A barometer at the bottom of the page will gauge how broad or narrow the selected audience is.

Optimizing results

Donelan suggests that there are several ways to make the most of a BookBub ad campaign. Running A/B tests through test campaigns can help determine an effective audience and budget. Checking the results regularly by logging into the BookBub dashboard and adjusting budget, targeting, CPM bids and the creative accordingly is also important. She also recommended tracking conversions and reallocating budgets to ads performing well.

Your Ads							Create New Ad +
<input type="text"/>							Show Filters
NAME	STATUS	DATE RANGE	EFFECTIVE CPM	REMAINING BUDGET	IMPRESSIONS SERVED	CTR	ACTIONS
Diana Urban	Completed	09/25/15 - 09/29/15	N/A	\$100.00 (Total)	0	N/A	 

Closing the Loop

Donelan pointed out that this new tool allows authors and publishers to “close the loop” by reaching readers who may have found them in a previous Featured Deal by presenting them with follow-up books. The BookBub ads are a new marketing tool; they are not designed to replace Featured Deals. However, considering the over nine million BookBub subscribers willing to buy books, the ads could be a valuable tool for author promotion.

The onus is on the author or publisher to make these campaigns work. While the ads are less predictable than the sometimes-elusive Featured Deals, the advertisers willing to test, experiment and understand variable results will usually find that their promotions perform the best.

BookBub plans to build in support and education for this new program, and in the meantime, Donelan suggested that reaching out to the BookBub team with questions and for more information.

Learn more details on how to launch your own BookBub ad campaign [here](#).

Tawdra Kandle writes romance, in just about all its forms. She loves unlikely pairings, strong women, sexy guys, hot love scenes and just enough conflict to make it interesting. Her books include YA paranormal romance, NA paranormal and contemporary romance, and adult contemporary and paramystery romance. She lives in central Florida with a husband, kids, sweet pup and too many cats. And yeah, she rocks purple hair.

Growth Hacking a Bestseller

How to edit your book for sales success, plus line-editing tips to refine the story

By M. Louisa Locke



Liz Pelletier, co-founder of [Entangled Publishing](#), a boutique romance publisher, presented a delightful and fast-paced double session of practical advice on what we can do as authors to make our books bestsellers. I found this presentation particularly refreshing because her advice was not about how to sell our books, but how to edit them so that they will sell.

She started the talk by pointing out what series such as *Twilight* and *Harry Potter* have in common—their authors are great storytellers and entertainers, and their stories are “sticky” (the characters and plots in their books stuck in people’s heads, making it easy for readers to share their passion about the books with others).

She then said that in this talk she was going to teach authors how to “Growth Hack” our books (a term initially coined by [Sean Ellis](#)) by editing our novels to create stories that would “go viral.”

How to go viral: Six factors

Keep it simple. First, Pelletier recommended practicing writing simple, catchy book blurbs, giving a taste of your voice but not telling the whole story, even before starting to write. Use simple concepts like “*Veronica Mars* meets *Pretty Little Liars*.”

Do the unexpected. Come up with new ways to say the same thing with interesting characters and unexpected endings. “For a story to be surprising, it can’t be predictable, but to be satisfying it must be ‘postdictable.’”

Make it concrete. Naturally sticky stories are full of specific images that the reader can remember. For example, we all can call up an image of the *Mona Lisa* or the house where we grew up, but not something vague like “truth.”

Make it credible. Avoid “jump the shark” moments, such as characters who are too far-fetched and situations that seem too coincidental. Sticky ideas have “triggers that connect your story to audiences’ real life experiences.”

Make it emotional. Make them cry, laugh, and engage their sympathy to engage their

passion for the book and their desire to tell others about it.

Tell a riveting story. Create memorable scenes—particularly at the start of the book—that will be easy for readers to describe to others. The ending can be more complex.

Focus on what matters: Growth of your readership

Pelletier challenged authors not to be afraid to rework or repurpose anything from early drafts—using the example of Instagram’s startup strategy. Again, start early by shadow-testing blurbs and synopses before even starting to write. She used the DropBox example of first targeting the “geek” audience. Authors need to know their target market and what attracts them.

Use a three-pass editing process

Pelletier got very specific at this point in her presentation and over the next hour and a half (with a short break between sessions), she gave authors a practical, detailed, and very entertaining lesson in editing to achieve the above six factors needed for a book to go viral.

She recommended that authors do three different edits. The first pass should focus on editing the story as a whole, the second pass should be a line-edit of the story, and the third pass (which she did not include in this talk) would be a line-edit specifically for craft.

First pass: Edit the story, not the book

Pelletier suggested altering the manuscript in some fashion for this edit (change formatting, font, etc.) and reading straight through, taking notes in a document other than on the manuscript to make sure the comments are on the full story—not specific lines. Authors shouldn’t just edit what is on the page—they should look for what’s missing as well.

Part One: The beginning

The beginning of the book should hook the readers in the first 10 pages, make the reader wonder what is going on, and establish a unique and interesting voice for the narrator and lead characters with deep POV.

A book shouldn’t have too many characters (more than two or three) at the start, provide too much backstory, be clichéd, have the meeting between main characters be too convenient or coincidental, give too much exposition or description, or provide too much set-up.

Part Two: Characters

Sympathy. Authors need to create relatable main characters with whom readers can sympathize, giving them recognizable and relatable obstacles. If characters on the surface aren’t likable enough, give them a “pet the dog” moment, soften the verbs describing their actions, have them do something selfless, and provide internal thoughts that counteract harshly spoken dialogue or actions.

Empathy. Engaging a reader’s sympathy means getting them to care about a character. Getting them to empathize takes this a step further. Readers should actually experience a character’s emotions. Pelletier cautioned authors to start small and build the drama and obstacles, otherwise readers will find the whole story too overwhelming and not attach to the

characters. Empathy can be elicited by providing more visceral reactions on the part of characters—physical reactions to feelings.

Believable and consistent. For characters to be relatable, the author has to provide believable motivations for their actions and reactions need to be consistent with the character.

Three dimensional and unique. Authors should use internal dialogue to show unique thought processes or reactions for characters. To make them more three-dimensional, authors can apply Jungian personality types to them. Have the main characters answer a personality test, and then make sure they remain consistent with the rules of that personality type.

Part Three: Plot versus story

Pelletier talked about how to construct a plot to tell a great story. She recommended [Blake Synder's beat sheet](#) from *Save the Cat*, then went through a very clear description, with graphics, of a typical W-shaped storyline in three acts based on many of Snyder's concepts.

How to Fix a Misshapen Plot

In her description of the standard W plot format, Pelletier described the major story driver in the second act as “fun and games,” saying the word count for this should be similar to the word count for the “bad guys close in” section of this act.

If this isn't happening, and the story seems to be moving too quickly, an author should add more “fun and games.” However, if the last part of the second act, “the dark night of the soul,” isn't working, she recommended making the midpoint of the act higher (when all seems to be working out) so that when everything goes wrong in the “all is lost” section, it means more to the reader.

Authors can improve story pacing by including some sort of ticking clock, such as a deadline or a literal time bomb, to keep the pace going, reminding the reader of this urgency frequently.

Authors also need to pay attention to how they string scenes together, as well as what actually happens in the scenes. The ending needs to be memorable. For example, a character's grand gesture should demonstrate how the character had grown and what they were willing to sacrifice.

Second Edit Pass: Line edit the story

Look at voice and style. In the second edit, authors should pay attention to voice (word choice) and style (phrasing) to ensure each character has a unique vocabulary, unique phrasing, and will have quotable lines.

Believable motivations. Every motivation for a character needs to be on the page. For example, if a character answers the phone, the phone must ring. Pelletier warned that authors should avoid making characters too autobiographical. (If a beta reader asks what the motivation for a character's action is—the response should not be, “I would act that way.”)

Refining characters. If readers are not connecting with a character, she suggested this usually means the author needs to provide more internal dialogue and change the verbs to help create more visceral reactions in the readers or make the verbs softer or harsher as a way to distinguish characters.

Telling details. Sentences should provide details that tell a larger story and produce a sense of emotional connection with the reader. The most important details should come at the end of a sentence or a paragraph.

Showing versus telling. According to Pelletier, the important consideration is when an author needs to show versus tell. Authors should *show* the reader when they want to provoke more emotion, when the details matter, or when the pacing of the story has sped up too much. But they should *tell* the reader when they need to speed up the pacing, when the details are less important, and in action scenes.

Dialogue and setting. Characters need to interact with the setting so that they aren't just talking heads. Have characters use props provided in the setting to give movement to a scene and reveal more about each character.

Dialogue should generally reflect the expected gender differences—men's dialogue tending to be succinct and goal-oriented, while women's dialogue tends to be lengthier, emotional, and process-oriented. Pelletier suggested sticking to simple "he said" tags and reserving action tags for when the pace of a scene needs to be faster.

Hooks and prompts. Scenes should start as close to the main character as possible, starting with a question and ending with a disaster, leaving readers dying to know what will happen next.

Bad writing habits. Finally, Pelletier concluded her thoroughly entertaining presentation by suggesting that the second pass edit gives authors the chance to recognize and wipe out bad writing habits, which are like a virus, "constantly mutating."

She suggested authors ask a series of questions:

- Do most sentences begin with similar word types (pronouns, "ing" verbs, articles) or have same number of syllables?
- Do many sentences have a similar structure?
- Are there many filler words such as so, just, only, sometimes, or nearly?
- Are sentences only slightly reworded?
- Is there redundancy?

Pelletier shared [her slides](#) for the presentation online, and I would recommend that authors take a look at them, because I feel like I was barely able to skim the surface of the enormous amount of information she conveyed.

I can assure you that regardless of whether my next book goes on to be a viral bestseller, I know I took away two hours of very practical advice that will definitely improve my storytelling and editing skills.

M. Louisa Locke, a retired professor of U.S. and Women's History, has a successful second career as the author of the best-selling Victorian San Francisco Mystery series. These books feature Annie, young boarding housekeeper, who supplements her income as a pretend clairvoyant, and her lawyer beau, Nate Dawson. Not just content with writing about the past, Locke has recently started writing science fiction in the open source collaborative world of the [Paradisi Chronicles](#) that she helped found. Locke is also a director of the [Historical Fiction Authors Cooperative](#).

More about her work can be found at www.mlouisalocke.com.

First Word: Creativity

Writing your way out of a rut—emotional, professional, or within the story itself

By Ann Christopher



During the Case Studies in Creativity session as part of First Word, several NINC members presented case studies pertaining to creativity issues they've experienced in their careers. The panelists included Jennifer Barnes, PhD, a leading expert in the cognitive science of fiction and the psychology of book fandom, Nancy Cassidy, freelance editor and owner of The Red Pen Coach, and Debra Holland, PhD, psychotherapist and corporate and grief counselor. All of the panelists are multi-published authors.

Sparkling creativity for veteran authors

The first presenter, Sylvie Kurtz, asked how she could push her work past the plateau that comes from writing for years. She also wondered about advanced craft techniques and continued learning rather than complacency.

Barnes suggested three approaches for sparking creativity.

The writer as scientist. The writer could come up with theories, ask questions, and evaluate the answers. For example, what's the thing you could remove from the book to ruin it? What made it special? What did people love about it? What makes some characters so compelling? Why is the market going in this or that direction?

The writer as teacher. Could the writer design writing exercises to teach someone about voice or conflict? Then the writer could make these things explicit and apply them to his/her own work. Craft conversations with colleagues are also helpful, as are verbalizations and checklists.

For her research, Barnes discovered that authors often do something for first books that they don't do later: **writing for the id**, which is the desire-driven part of the writer. Early books have lots of id and can be fun to write. But the more authors learn about craft, the more they edit the id out of the books.

Authors need to write with high levels of craft *and* id. Barnes suggested making an "id list" of beloved tropes for characters, plot and locations. These are tropes the author loves so much it

doesn't matter how often they've been done, they still feed a visceral desire of the author.

Examples? Identical twins. Teens living together. Organ donation. Separated at birth. Rooftops. Tunnels. Hidden passageways. Authors must stay in touch with and write about the things they love, Barnes said.

Cassidy said that as careers develop and goals change, authors need to reevaluate their goals with each book and find the meaning and internal theme of their books. Coaching may also help authors looking for a new approach because it offers accountability, goals and exercises.

Two books with writing exercises that can also help writers reconnect with existing readers and attract new readers are *Writing For Emotional Impact* by Karl Iglesias, and *How To Write a Damn Good Novel II* by James N. Frey.

Holland wondered how Kurtz concluded that her craft was stagnating. Did she get this feedback from readers? Editors? Is this her perfectionism talking? Her writing may be fine. Is she bored? Too self-critical? Writing too fast and losing quality?

It's hard to believe that someone who's writing book after book is stagnating because people learn all the time. Holland suggested other things that may help, such as new editors and/or critique partners, or entering contests for feedback rather than awards. She also suggested screenwriting books by Snyder, McKee and Fields.

Holland felt that something else was going on and wondered whether Kurtz was in touch with her inner little kid/id?

An audience member who is a writer and writing coach mentioned that she often sees a theme: anxiety attached to the process of writing because so many people are depending on the writer's professional income. This often happens with authors who are supporting their families. Is anxiety an issue for Kurtz?

Holland said that authors often create their own fear fantasies about what could go wrong. With vivid imaginations and physical responses (heartbeat speeds up, etc.), authors really think their fear is real. Authors need to identify the fear fantasy and release it.

Focus on the moment, Holland said. Don't catastrophize.

What to do when a WIP triggers grief

The second presenter was an anonymous writer who started out on the traditional side. Following the painful discovery that her husband had a secret existence and a year of great turmoil in her personal life, she wondered if she should give up on finishing the indie romance series she's started.

Other pertinent factors in her dilemma? She'd modeled the hero after her husband, hired models and spent money on a custom photo shoot. Now she's lost money and her preorder status at Amazon because she didn't turn the book in on time. What should she do?

Barnes identified the sunk-cost fallacy, i.e. you believe you can't walk away from something you've spent money on. But walking away is *always* an acceptable option and should never be taken off the table. Be aware that writing is a choice. This idea gives you control. If you choose not to write, do so without guilt.

Barnes added that being emotional is okay—allow time to mourn. If the writer continues,

she could change the way she writes (go nonlinear; different POV structure; change writing locale or times, etc.). She could write happy-for-now stories, or tragic love stories à la Nicholas Sparks.

She could go meta and write a series around a writer/heroine, like *Romancing the Stone* or *Murder She Wrote*. Maybe the heroine goes on the first date and the guy turns up dead. Build a world *around* the book instead of *inside* the book.

Cassidy suggested that now might not be the time for the indie romance series project. The author might need to give it a year or three. Grief is a process, and the author has lost the image of what she had. She needs to say goodbye to it, even if she winds up staying with her husband. Maybe in the process she'll learn to write a different type of story, like Elizabeth Gilbert's *Big Magic*.

Holland noted that a year is a short time to recover from this kind of trauma. People don't allow themselves to grieve because they think they should move on. But think of it as a physical wound with a big gash; these things don't go away in a month. Therapy, journaling, and pouring the emotions into a book (women's fiction?) can all help.

Discovering new happy endings

The third presenter, Erica Ridley, asked about a way to end her historical romance novels and give her characters the happiness they deserve without always using epilogues with weddings and babies.

Barnes suggested giving the characters a dose of high-concentration happiness. For example, getting a puppy. Or maybe a big family scene, because readers like to feel they belong there. Anything that will make the readers smile hard will work. Or, make a narrative promise and fulfill it in way that puts readers in on the joke. For example, the heroine says she'd sooner jump out of a plane than hook up with the hero, then the epilogue is them skydiving.

Cassidy suggested putting the black moment closer to the end of the book for higher impact, or resurrecting the issue that kept the characters apart initially.

Holland suggested including updates on characters from previous books in the series. Couple from book two gets married or has a baby in book three. After a while, the readers trust you and know they'll get more happiness. It's normal for readers to want more. Don't always give them what they want—give them what's satisfying.

Don't fall into a writing rut

Longtime author Victoria Thompson wants to continue writing but expressed concern that her readership is aging and she's not sure how to appeal to a younger audience, although she has started a new historical series with younger characters.

Barnes suggested that she revisit some of the universal themes of evolutionary relevance in her stories: sex, death, hierarchy, alliances, competition, family, instinct, survival, etc. Age doesn't matter; it's how long you've been doing the same thing. If she wants to rejuvenate her writing, Thompson might try to think about writing differently, such as with a new POV or plot structure.

Cassidy also suggested changes to POV, including using first person, which is popular with

younger audiences.

Holland felt that this is a fearful presumption that Thompson created. Her stories are doing well, so maybe she doesn't need to change anything. Authors should focus on what's on our plates and stop being afraid. Stop making things up!

A recovering lawyer formerly published with Harlequin and Kensington, Ann Christopher is now solely indie and writes contemporary romance, romantic suspense and young adult horror. She lives in Ohio with her husband and over-scheduled teenagers. If you'd like to recommend a great book, share a recipe for homemade cake of any kind, or have a tip for getting your teens to do what you say the first time you say it, Christopher would love to hear from you via [Facebook](#) or through her [site](#).

Balancing Two Careers

Putting dueling demands in perspective with self-care, tech and a fresh mindset

By Tyra Burton



Sometimes, we end up exactly where we need to be. This was true for me when I walked into the NINC 2016 panel on balancing two careers presented by panelists Jennifer Barnes, Debra Holland, and Heidi Joy Tretheway.

To say that I balance two careers is probably an understatement and I needed all the advice they could offer. In our hour together, they shared tools and tips for dealing with everyday life, handling anxiety, saying yes or no for our future selves, and why self-care is important.

Our panelists' daily lives

The panelists' backgrounds ranged from highly structured to unpredictable. For Holland, every day is different and her life is not nine-to-five, making it difficult for her to maintain a set writing schedule. Both she and Barnes, a tenure-track professor, use writing dates with fellow writers to help them find time for writing.

Tretheway works a structured eight-to-four day in tech marketing and travels twice per month. She relies heavily on technology to help her create time for writing by subtracting things from her to-do list. She shares a family-organizing Google calendar, Gmail, Dropbox and Trello account with her husband and nanny to ensure they are all on the same page without having to send additional emails or forward information.

[Trello](#) is an app available for desktop, iOS and Android that helps you visually manage projects on drag-and-drop lists, from a book release to a grocery list. It syncs across devices and multiple people, including author assistants, can be included on a project.

Handling anxiety: Staying in the moment

When juggling multiple careers, there is a constant feeling there is never enough of you to go around, which invokes a feeling of inadequacy. As writers, we create vivid mental pictures of things that need to be done.

Holland refers to this as "future fear" and will ask clients she counsels, "What are you

making up in your head that makes you stressed and anxious? Are you telling yourself something that isn't real?"

This future fear amps up anxiety. Holland suggests being present in the moment, staying focused on what's *real* and what's on your plate right now.

Barnes acknowledges that she doesn't have control over many aspects of publishing her novels. Because of this, she switched from performance goals, which are related to an outcome, to mastery goals, where the focus is on growth and learning.

By doing this, it allows Barnes to focus on the craft instead of beating herself up over things she can't control.

If you have two careers, such as a writing career and a day job, you can't do either at the level you would if you only had one. What you can do is give 100 percent to what you're doing *at that moment*.

Barnes said this means that when you finish work and move on to the next project, you must not revert back to the original work.

"All we have is right now," Holland said, and by focusing attention on the present, you can lower anxiety and not borrow future fear.

Weighing the cost of doing more

For many of us, when asked to do something, the word yes comes out before we consider thoroughly what we are getting ourselves into.

"If you say yes to something you have to say *less* to something else," Tretheway said. She asks herself what must she subtract from her life to make the new obligation fit.

"We think of our future selves as we think of other people. If you ever thought, 'Why did I agree to do this thing?' It was because you were signing someone else up for it," Barnes said.

We engage in temporal discounting in regard to future activities, she explained. When asked to do something, Barnes suggests thinking about the request as if you are being asked to do it tomorrow. If you don't want to do it tomorrow, you most likely will feel the same in the future.

If you aren't good at saying no, Holland suggests saying, "Let me think about that," then emailing or texting a no without the face-to-face conflict.

Holland also suggests listening to your intuition. Ask yourself if something 'feels right' before making a commitment. Busy people need to weigh the cost of doing more and look for moderation.

For writing deadlines, before she says yes, Barnes negotiates them for both herself and the publisher upfront. Deadlines are important to indie author Tretheway to be productive and focus. Before she sets a deadline, she gets buy-in on it from her family, because she needs to carve out extra time but the laundry still needs to be done.

The importance of self-care

When you're working two careers, making time for one's self can be a foreign concept. Writers must learn to take care of themselves, which can be difficult in a profession where we are constantly being externally evaluated.

Leaving the worry and guilt about not being able to do everything is an important first step. Barnes, a new mom, doesn't let work follow her into the time she has with her baby. By approaching activities with an "all in" mentality, she gives herself permission to immerse herself in writing when it's writing time, and be present with her family when it's family time.

To be inspired, we need to fully embrace self-care and time off from our careers. Self-care is about refilling the tank of inspiration and energy, but not everyone is rejuvenated in the same way.

Holland cautions that for introverts, that time alone is important to replenish energy and creativity. For extroverts, the opposite is true. Pay attention to what refuels you, and make sure to have time scheduled to do that.

Making time for your health is also important. Whether that is planning out a week of meals to save time and eat healthy, or scheduling walks and exercise, we can't forget to keep our bodies in working order.

Barnes tricks herself into free time by watching TV with a notebook where she can jot down random thoughts. I use commercial time to send off a quick emails. Tretheway uses time waiting for conference calls to start to clean out her in-box or catch up on social media.

Self-care goes beyond taking time to do leisure activities. It means examining the language that you use with yourself, Barnes added. Instead of saying, "I have to write," we should be saying, "I *get* to write." Writing can be the cherry on top of the sundae.

Transitioning from performance goals to mastery goals can also help you be kinder to yourself.

After the workshop, I reset the password on my Trello account, attempting to add a little structure to my chaotic, unconventional life. I'm also asking myself what both feeds my soul and helps me progress in my careers.

I've actually even said, "Let me think on that." I still need to send the email to say "no" but at least I'm halfway there. My future self will thank me.

Marketing professor by day, gamer geek gadget girl by night, Tyra Burton is a social media strategist and co-author of Socially Engaged: The Author's Guide to Social Media. An award-winning professor, Tyra is a frequent workshop facilitator, presenter, and panelist on topics ranging from social media to gaming gender issues. She lives in metro Atlanta with her husband and their three socially engaging fur babies.

Avoiding Burnout

Self-care for the self-published author, with tips for a long and satisfying career

By Ann Christopher



There has never been a better time to be an author, said Draft2Digital executives Dan Wood, director of operations and author relations, and Aaron Pogue, president and co-founder, in the session Avoiding Burnout: Self-care for the Self-published Author.

Digital sales will continue to rise, and audio has also grown. Nevertheless, authors can't pursue all the opportunities available.

Wood and Pogue have traveled to many of the industry conferences (London, RWA, RT, NINC, BEA, SFWA) and met many authors. They listen to authors and watch author trends. Additionally, D2D was founded by authors and employs authors on staff. The result? They hear author frustrations. Currently, authors are overwhelmed with marketing and social media obligations.

Their best tips?

Publish strategically.

Don't try to be all things to all people.

Don't aim too broadly with your books—think of one ideal reader to please.

Don't be afraid of controversy.

Be yourself on social media.

Find your tribe. Connect with other writers. Connect with your readers where they already are. Connect, don't sell. Don't try to do every social media; find what you like to do and do it.

Cut out the negative; haters gonna hate. Pogue said that some things look positive (e.g. write and release a new book every 90 days) and it works until it turns really negative (you get burned out and never write again). The number one thing that'll help you be successful is to still be writing in five years.

Prepare for change.

Diversify risk. Should authors go all-in with Amazon? Pogue and Wood believe in diversifying. Maybe producing a series specifically for KU. But authors should also build up

readership on other channels. Or perhaps accept a traditional contract if it works for your needs at the moment.

Narrow your focus. Know your readers and give them what they want. Patterson and Childs have nailed this and are real genre pleasers.

Take time to think about the big picture. Publishing doesn't exist in a vacuum.

Think critically about advice and comparisons. So many decisions in publishing depend on your circumstances. Not all advice you hear will be good for you right now. If you have to compare, make sure it's to your peers.

Take time to relax.

Take time to be inspired. Read. Try new things. Get out of your comfort zone. Try new food. These things may all go into your books.

Make more time for writing.

Pace yourself. Only you know your limits. Think long-term.

Outsource what you can.

Choose your partners wisely. "It's dangerous to go alone!"

The skinny on Draft2Digital

Their sales pitch? D2D is an Oklahoma-based private company founded in 2012 that has distributed 91,000 books from 26,000 authors. D2D makes the tools to save time and help sell books. The company has grown primarily from word of mouth. They've recently hired a new director of marketing. And they have a lot of super-nerds working for them!

How does D2D work? There are no hidden fees. You make money, they make money. They pay monthly. Authors retain all rights and can list or delist whenever they like. The entire system is opt-in. They offer great terms of service. They keep 10% of retail list price while a book is listed with them. With all their current sales partners, this works out to authors retaining about 60% of the retail list price per sale.

What do authors get for the money? Digital conversions from Word docs. It takes about ten minutes to set up your first book. You can download a sample of the conversion to proof. You can also provide them with formatted ebooks for distribution. Conversion is free even if you don't use D2D for distribution.

Pogue and Wood say they've been told they have the best customer service in the industry. They offer prompt email responses and have a toll-free phone number to use during business hours. They work with authors at all stages of their careers and offer management tools. They email authors a link when their books go live on most vendors. Other perks? A user-friendly dashboard, territorial pricing options so you can set prices in other currencies, and monthly royalty reports with raw vendor data and scalable information.

Additionally, they have no problems with authors using any of their free services. They want to be useful and familiarize people with their systems. They audit to ensure books are up correctly and metadata is optimized for each channel, and offer quick responses for issues along with optimized end matter to make it easier for readers to buy other books with links at end of an ebook.

Finally, they've recently begun to offer discoverability with universal book links (UBLs).

D2D offers one master link that delivers readers to every place your book appears online. The master link includes affiliate codes, where applicable. Readers may select their preferred store and the UBL will direct them there. UBLs are also shareable on social media.

A recovering lawyer formerly published with Harlequin and Kensington, Ann Christopher is now solely indie and writes contemporary romance, romantic suspense and young adult horror. She lives in Ohio with her husband and over-scheduled teenagers. If you'd like to recommend a great book, share a recipe for homemade cake of any kind, or have a tip for getting your teens to do what you say the first time you say it, Christopher would love to hear from you via [Facebook](#) or through her [site](#).



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

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Complete committee member listings are available on the website.

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