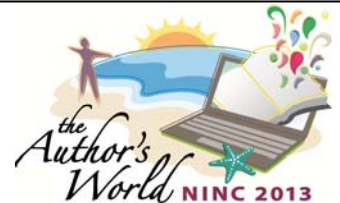


# NINIK

January 2014  
Vol. 25, No. 01

## You May Sleep But Your Marketing Doesn't Have To



BY TRACEY J LYONS

Presenter Randy Ingermanson's session covered how to think strategically and how to have a vision of where you want to go and how you're going to get there. His advice: stop doing all the things that wear you out. Your marketing should work for you, and if it's not, stop doing those things that are not yielding results. Think about why you do marketing rather than how you do marketing.

Think about marketing strategically, and then tactically use these Eight Commandments of Marketing.

- ▶ Do everything with a purpose.
- ▶ Focus marketing on your target audience.
- ▶ Measure everything you can. Get feedback on what you're doing. If it's not working, stop. If it is working, put more money into it.
- ▶ Compare everything you're doing against "doing nothing."
- ▶ Focus on doing things that work.
- ▶ Focus on doing the things you love, i.e, public speaking, writing articles.
- ▶ Ask yourself how can I help people? If you have something people need, then you can help people.
- ▶ Favor passive marketing over active marketing. Marketing that continues to work when you're not there is passive—things you can do once that will pay off forever.

The reason most of us hate marketing is we don't know why we're doing what we're doing. If you don't measure, you don't know how you're doing. If you do what you hate, you won't get good results.

Forget about the money, focus on how you can help people. We exhaust ourselves on active marketing. Facebook, Twitter etc. can wear you out if you need to be online all the time. Your target audience could be a tiny niche. Use your analytics from your website and Facebook pages to guide your marketing efforts.

Book marketing is about why a customer buys your book. First off they discover you exist, then they realize that you have something they want, and finally they buy your book and become your paying customer.

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## Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

### Founders

Rebecca Brandewyne  
Janice Young Brooks  
Jasmine Cresswell

Maggie Osborne  
Marianne Shock

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

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Complete committee member listings  
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Address changes may be made on the  
website.

Members without Internet access may  
send changes to the Central Coordinator.

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## Introducing...

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

**Membership Chair:** Tracy Higley  
tracy@tracyhigley.com

This Space  
Deliberately  
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\*

Proprietary  
Information

### **NINC has room to grow...**

Recommend membership to your colleagues.

Prospective members may apply online at  
<http://www.ninc.com>. Refer members at ninc.com.

Go to Members Only, "Member Services" and  
click "Refer a New Member to NINC." Take  
NINC brochures to conferences. Email Pari  
Taichert with your mailing address and requested  
number of booklets: ptaichert@comcast.net.

**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.

## A Big Deal ... Embracing Creativity and Risk



Meredith Efken

Happy New Year! This is going to be a year to remember for NINC—we're turning 25! We can rent a car! (Seriously, folks, after this, we're kind of out of milestones, so enjoy it!)

For an organization, 25 is a Big Deal. Lots of organizations never see 25. For others, 25 looks like the new 190—worn out, shriveled up, and stuck in the past. But not NINC. We are moving forward, lots of fresh faces along with ones so familiar they feel like family.

It's going to be a busy year, and you are all going to be asked to help out. To keep an organization 25 years young and counting, it needs all of us. And not just to volunteer—though we need that too. NINC also needs us to be supportive, creative, and flexible: in our careers and in how we approach NINC as an organization. You see, we're growing. It's great! But it means that NINC (i.e., we members) will need new ideas, new ways of doing things to keep the organization fresh and able to continue being the terrific resource for career novelists that it is.

Being creative takes risk—we all know that since we're creative professionals ourselves. I read an article on Slate.com recently, "Inside the Box: People Don't Actually Like Creativity" by Jessica Olien (12/6/2013). She states: "Uncertainty is an inherent part of new ideas, and it's also something that most people would do almost anything to avoid. People's partiality toward certainty biases them against creative ideas and can interfere with their ability to even recognize creative ideas."

I'm sure most of us have had that experience—whether it's trying to get a publisher on board with our marketing ideas, or trying to get an e-tailer to improve their services, or trying to convince readers to follow us down a new publishing path. We are afraid of the unknown. Avoiding risk and uncertainty means keeping things the same. It feels safer, but will we reach our full potential that way? Will we accomplish the things we dream of doing if we run from risk?

This year, professionally, personally, and as an organization, we all face a lot of unknowns. Some of us feel stuck in our careers, others of us feel as if the momentum of our careers will run us over. There are many of us dealing with personal challenges, too, and it seems that there's not enough time or energy to meet all the demands we're facing.

Embracing creativity and risk is, I believe, one of the most important ways for us to move forward and handle both the good and the bad challenges—in our writing, in our business, and as an organization. It's not always the most comfortable, but the rewards can be much greater than keeping the status quo. So that's my challenge for myself and for all of you as we start this new year together. Let's embrace creativity, with all its risk and uncertainty, to push us further than we thought we could go.

Happy Birthday, NINC! May it be a banner year for all of us.

— Meredith Efken  
2014 President

**Another Big Deal ... your renewal along with completion of the Authors Coalition form.  
Don't miss out on any of the membership benefits NINC is unique in providing.**

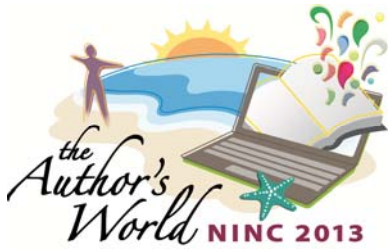


## **Let's Get Started: January Begins the NINC 25th Anniversary Social Media Wave**

**BY SALLY HAWKES**

Remember, we're asking NINC members to help spread the word about our organization and our milestone anniversary. Authors with last names that begin with A, B, C, D, or E get to take the lead in January and can begin the social media wave. (Everyone will get a turn in the coming month, but we don't want all 600+ members going all at once.) Blog, tweet, and send the messages out about NINC to friends, reviewers, or others in the publishing industry. Below are some set pieces you can use if you don't have something you want to write of your own. Tell them who we are! Take part in the celebration!

- ▶ This year, Novelists, Inc. (NINC) celebrates 25 years devoted to serving the needs of multi-published career novelists. Known throughout the industry for its professionalism and high standards, NINC's aim is and always has been the business of writing. If you're serious about your career, check out [www.ninc.com](http://www.ninc.com). Apply for membership today, and join us at the TradeWinds Resort in St. Pete Beach this October to celebrate a quarter century of excellence! (71 words)
- ▶ Novelists, Inc. (NINC) is the only writers organization devoted exclusively to the needs of multi-published novelists. Whether a two-book author or a 102-book author, if you're serious about your career, NINC is your lifeline. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the organization, and if you apply for membership now, you won't miss the October "Celebration of Excellence" conference. Check out all the info at [www.ninc.com](http://www.ninc.com)! (66 words)
- ▶ For 25 years, 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. Sound like something you and your career need? Join now at [www.ninc.com](http://www.ninc.com). (81 words)
- ▶ We're going to have a party! Novelists, Inc. (NINC), celebrating a quarter century of serving the multi-published career novelist, will gather at the marvelous TradeWinds Resort in St. Pete Beach, Florida this October. Along with fantastic speakers and the most forward-thinking workshops of any conference, there will be an anniversary party you won't want to miss. Check [www.ninc.com](http://www.ninc.com) today if you're serious about your career ... and if you like a good time! (72 words)



# You May Sleep But Your Marketing Doesn't Have To

Continued from page 1 ▶

## Note the three phases of marketing:

- ▶ Attract customer
- ▶ Engage interest
- ▶ Convert to paying customer

If you are not doing these things, then you are not marketing the right way. Your time, money, and energy are finite. If you spend them on things that are inefficient, then you are not going to see benefits via sales. Figure out how to work efficiently. How do you know how to do this? Measure your success in sales, measure your marketing efforts. Don't skip any of the three above steps. Do them in sequence

An example of this method would be to *attract* customer "A" on Twitter, then bring her over to your blog where you *engage* customer "A," and then get her to your Amazon buy page where you *convert* customer "A" in the form of a sale. This is the marketing pipeline. The real importance is what the data says. Look at how your readers are attracted, engaged, and converted to make the sale. We really don't have control over word of mouth. We can only control certain things, so worry about those things, and forget about the rest.

## Passive marketing and active marketing.

Passive marketing is work that you do one time, and it pays off forever. Active marketing is work you have to keep doing over and over in order to make it effective. Examples of passive marketing include writing articles and having your books listed on your website. Examples of active marketing include ads at places such as a BookBub email blast and social media postings like Twitter and Facebook. You should choose to focus on passive first, knowing that you cannot avoid active marketing.

Long term marketing (passive) happens by first attracting people, then over the course of months or years engaging them, then converting them to a sale. Branding is long term marketing. Short term marketing (active) happens over the course of a few minutes. Perhaps you're doing a book signing event where the reader discovers you quickly and then buys your book.

A good example of long term marketing is sending your newsletter with good content to people who are interested hearing about when your next book is coming out. Build an email list you can use to spike sales when you launch a book. Use this as you are close to launching the book, during launch week with a special on buying the book. Success builds on success, so if you launch a book well, it will continue to do well, contributing to your success over a long period of time. Put an email sign-up box on every page of your website. Your email list is your gold. Protect this, grow this, and focus your efforts on this for long term strategy. Twitter and Facebook are nowhere near as effective to get sales as a newsletter is.

**Attract** tactics—passive: search engine optimization on your webpage, blogging, a Goodreads page. Active tactics can be speaking engagements, Goodreads giveaways, social media.

**Engage** tactics—passive: email subscription box, blog subscription box, articles on your website. Active: Goodreads interaction, email newsletter sent out regularly, book signings.

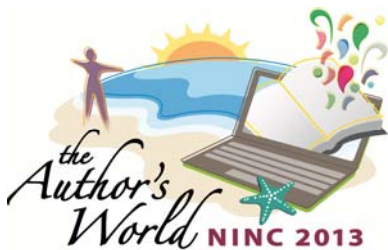
**Convert** tactics—passive: website sales page listing your titles, Amazon/B&N product description. Active: Facebook announcement of new release, Twitter announcement of new release, speaking and book signing events.

Once you attract the attention of readers, it's your job to engage them with good copy and then ▶

convert them with a call to action so they buy your book. The goal is steady sales over a long period of time. Remember, everything you do needs to attract, engage, and convert! If it doesn't work you did it wrong, the product sucks, or you don't have a target audience. When you have the right product targeted to the right people, it will work.

Check out [www.DitDat.com](http://www.DitDat.com), along with these four recommended books: *Inbound Marketing* by Brian Halligan and Dharmesh Shah (the attract phase), *Tribes* by Seth Godin (the engagement phase), *How to Sell Fiction on Kindle* by Michael Alvear (the attract and convert phase), and *The Copywriter's Handbook* by Robert Bly (the convert phase).

An Amazon Kindle top ten-bestselling historical romance author, Tracey has been writing romances for almost 30 years. Tracey writes historical romances under Tracey J. Lyons and her Wine Country Vixens contemporary romance series using the pseudonym Tracey Sorel. You can learn more about Tracey and her books by visiting her websites at <http://www.traceylyons.com> or [www.traceysorel.com](http://www.traceysorel.com).



## How To Keep Focused on Writing in a Changing World

BY KIERAN KRAMER

Panelists: Carrie Ryan, author; Mark Lefebvre, Director of Self-Publishing & Author Relations, Kobo.com; Jim McCarthy, Dystel & Goderich Literary Management; David Symonds, General Manager, CreateSpace; Lucia Macro, Vice President and Executive Editor, Avon Books; F. Robert (Bob) Stein, literary attorney; Pat Van Wie, author, editor with Belle Bridge Books; Lisa Erbach Vance, Aaron Priest Literary Agency.

The moderator asked what non-writing responsibilities authors should outsource to give them more writing time. Lisa Erbach Vance suggested that an author get an agent, who should be an aggregator about what's possible in both the traditional and indie worlds. Bob Stein said the agent can and should be a buffer between you and the rest of the world, including your editor. The agent provides an objective view and should be able to say what's tolerable and what isn't in a contract with either traditional houses or accounts like Amazon and Kobo.

Jim McCarthy said an agent can bring a lot to the self-published person as well as the traditionally published. His duties would be very much the same but in a different format. If you're an indie author, the agent can give you feedback on editorial advice, whether your cover designer has reasonable fees, etc. In traditional publishing, one of an agent's main roles is to negotiate that contract. But an agent should also establish relationships with places like Amazon to benefit his indie authors.

Lucia Macro said she does a lot that is *not* traditional. She has teams to work with the author, developing comprehensive plans to help an author with marketing her books and developing her career. David Symonds said do what you love to do and are really good at and find people to do the rest. Carrie Ryan remarked that nothing else matters if another book isn't coming out, so keep an eye on your production levels.

Mark Lefebvre said he advocates for individual authors at Kobo. But he wonders how the beginning writer finds advocates. Ryan suggested that there are professional writing organizations a beginner can start with and then branch out into more communities.

Lefebvre said he appreciates authors reminding him through promotion that they're around and named the Jewels of Historical Romance as an example. But Kobo also has someone from the merchandising team looking through catalogs for catchy covers and good synopses.

An audience member asked how writers can budget their creative energy. Pat Van Wie said she tries to remember what it's like to be on that side of the fence and suggests different ideas to her authors. Ryan said indie authors get quick feedback and so can tailor their creativity based on what's working and what's not.

Vance said that at the end of the day, you need a good product. Don't get so fixated on your promotion that you get behind on your book. Roll out your marketing campaign one step at a time. Macro said she's an in-house advocate who works to ensure that the publicist's demands don't overwhelm her authors. She suggested that authors focus on what they like and what's working.

Symonds brought up the point that outlets such as the NINC conference are great opportunities for authors to talk with each other about how they prioritize and focus on creativity. Lefebvre said to make a writing date with yourself and keep it. He goes to a coffee shop without wi-fi and writes for 40 minutes when he can, at least once a week. Ryan suggested that writers use apps such as Freedom and Self-Control to help curtail web browsing.

The moderator asked Lefebvre about a bug in the system from Kobo involving indie books being re-categorized from romance erotica to religious fiction. Lefebvre replied that a bug in the mapping is being addressed and to email [writinglife@kobo.com](mailto:writinglife@kobo.com) if you're experiencing a problem.

An audience member asked Symonds how to get CreateSpace to help her advertise her books. Symonds said that if your ranking increases, it moves farther up a search. In KDP Select, there isn't a path to put your book on the front page of Amazon. Discovery is the thing. Barriers have gone down. It's much easier for everything to get published. Algorithms help as does building communities.

An audience member asked McCarthy if money is exchanged when he works with Amazon to promote a client. And how does McCarthy get things for his authors that the author himself can't get? McCarthy said money doesn't change hands and that it's his job to nurture productive relationships with accounts across the board to benefit his authors, who are branded by their association with his agency.

An audience member asked if legal issues crop up as authors attempt to work together to promote themselves. Stein said there's no need to formalize those relationships. However, if 12 people are going to produce something in the same income stream, they might need a written arrangement as to who gets the money.

Ryan said that upon entering contracts, everyone is happy. But there needs to be something in writing when things get rough. Stein said that contracts are like a pre-nup.

An audience member said The Indie Voice formed a 10-member LLC. All the income goes to the company. They felt it was necessary. Stein said an operating agreement would have accomplished the same purpose. An audience member remarked that her 45-member author team just did a major deal with Audible.

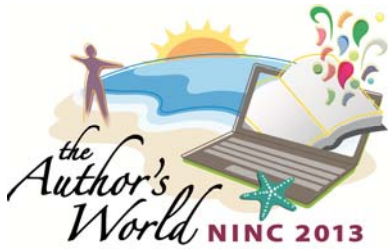
An audience member asked at what point is it a good time for an author to incorporate. Stein said to do so only when your accountant tells you. Incorporation won't protect you in a lawsuit; however, an insurance policy will.

An audience member asked Symonds why she should go to CreateSpace. Symonds suggested authors publish in any format they can—digitally, in print, and audio. Authors run the risk of missing sales by neglecting those additional opportunities.

An audience member remarked to McCarthy that his agency and others get 15 percent from their self-published authors for an hour's worth of the agency's time prepping a book for publication. McCarthy said that for some people, he understands that going with an agent isn't worth it. He said that his firm helps with promotion and does accounting and career planning. It's a question of an author's preference.

Stein said traditional publishers and large internet retailers of e-books have provisions about royalty statements. If you have a problem with the accounting, and you wait too long to address it—usually two years in traditional, and in Kindle, Nook, or Kobo, six months to a year—you can't get your money back. So it's a good idea to have someone looking at those statements for you.

*Kieran Kramer's new release, Sweet Talk Me, a Southern contemporary romance coming in April 2014 from St. Martin's Press, is available for pre-order now.*



# Kobo Means Book

BY JANIS SUSAN MAY PATTERSON

The official title of the presentation was “The Secret to Success at Kobo.” The actuality was trying to keep up with the rapid fire delivery of Mark Lefebvre, Director of Self-Publishing and Author Relations, who gleefully calls himself Booknerd. In a torrential mixture of facts and surprisingly funny jokes usually aimed toward himself, Lefebvre said that the name Kobo is an anagram for “book.”

Formerly a bookseller as well as being an author himself, Lefebvre works to partner Kobo with brick and mortar stores, especially those who hand-sell books about which the staff feel passionately. Kobo partners with the ABA and also believes that its authors are its partners.

One of the cornerstones of Kobo was the belief that their books should be able to be read on any device. When it began, Kobo did not sell an e-reader, nor had any desire to have one. A demand for one grew quickly, so Kobo has now released an e-reader that is Android-based, so owners can download any other company’s apps. Sales have been very good.

**Regarding self-publishing:** the Kobo dashboard is geared to an author’s needs. It can be customized and has features that show such things as sales time, geographic stats on books, and a global snapshot of an individual author’s sales.

Publishing at Kobo is a very simple setup, similar to that of Kindle Direct Publishing, Barnes & Noble, et al. Kobo will accept and convert .doc, .docx and other platforms to EPUB. There is a WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) editor so the author can check their converted book and clean up any formatting glitches. The author can also choose which regions and content rights to exercise, as well as set their own price.

**Royalties:** From \$2.99 up the royalty is 70 percent. Anything else is 45 percent. The author can make his book free at any time without hassle or strings. Kobo pays its authors by electronic fund transfer in the currency of their choice 45 days after the end of the period, but only if the author has a minimum of \$100 due.

Kobo now sells in 190 countries and is available in English, German, French, Italian, and Dutch platforms.

Lefebvre said several times that Kobo recognizes and respects the importance of authors and their need to have their books available on all retailer platforms.

Christina Munroe is the Kobo U.S. manager. Kobo also has managers in Europe.

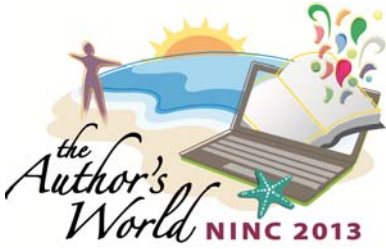
Lefebvre stressed that Kobo has a sense of fun as well as a sense of responsibility, and is constantly trying new things to increase sales and visibility. Kobo Writing Life offers tips, craft, various articles, trends, and thoughts directed toward making the Kobo author’s life a little easier. In a spirit of experimentation, prolific Kobo author Steve Vernon has begun doing a podcast every two weeks. Also, author collections/box sets are of growing importance.

**Pricing:** Lefebvre talked at length about pricing—authors should price deliberately and measure results. They should price responsively and be prepared to react to their market—in other words, to price different markets differently. He also recommended that authors change prices often—price is a verb, not a noun, according to Lefebvre—but don’t devalue or undervalue your work! He also suggested pricing countries separately.

Pricing is an art, but with science behind it. A \$2.99 book will outsell a \$1.99 book four times. \$2.99, \$3.99, and \$4.99 are considered the “sweet spot.” Pricing strategy is also important. Lefebvre told of a popular author who raised her prices by \$1.00. B&N and iTunes sales went up. Kobo remained the same. Amazon went down, but after 1 ½ weeks stabilized to the same numbers as before.

*Continued on page 10* ▶





# Format Complete: A Guide to Indie with Amazon

BY CHERYL BOLEN

Amazon's Dan Slater stressed at the NINC conference that authors must make their books for sale on every platform—print, audio, as well as e-book—and in every country they possibly can to maximize their reach as well as their income. Amazon now happens to offer all three of those publishing platforms.

Not only have 14 indie authors sold over one million units through Amazon, he said, but an additional 23 indie authors have sold more than 250,000 units. Even at Amazon's lowest royalty rate of 35 percent, that's a significant revenue stream. Both print and e-book sales at Amazon have grown by double digits every year.

Readers with devices buy 4.6 times as many books (print as well as e-books) at Amazon as they purchased before they had a Kindle.

What else can authors do to boost their indie publishing experience at Amazon? Slater's answer sounds suspiciously like the keys to success at traditional publishing. Write a great book. Have a professional looking, eye-catching cover. Make sure the book is well edited.

Slater also showed a book page as it comes up on the Amazon site and circled two items that are important to readers and which, if done, will help maximize sales. First, it needs to say "IN STOCK" and secondly, if it's a series book, that needs to be in the book's title. He demonstrated this with Bella Andre's *The Look of Love: The Sullivans, Book 1*.

In order for an author's book to show up as IN STOCK, the author must make it available through Amazon's print publishing arm, CreateSpace, which is essentially a print on demand.

Slater's colleague, Nicole Op Den Bosch, who handles the audio side, enumerated the benefits of offering titles in audio. These include easy enrollment, fast to market, free global reach, authors' ability to maintain control as well as rights, and, most importantly, to earn high royalties.

While these Amazon prophets expounded their company's virtues, such as the tailored virtual hand selling that Amazon does so well, they also explained some aspects of Amazon's site that directly affect authors.

Of primary concern to many NINC members is why—even after they've made their backlist titles available in print through CreateSpace—the covers of their old out-of-print titles keep coming up.

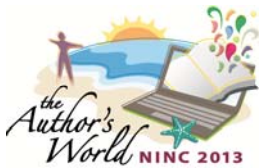
The reason for this is because Amazon's searches are geared to relevance. Therefore, if that original '90s print book sold a ton of units on Amazon, that's the edition which will come up first because of its relevance.

For those authors who may not be aware of all the features offered at Author Central, Slater also explained that authors' sales history in terms of where, when, and how much they've sold is all available there.

Another tidbit he announced is that every word in the book is scanned and can come up in search engines.

Metadata—those key words which describe your product—are important and need to be relatively narrow. Amazon's site offers authors a list of key words to use to help bring up their books in search engines. Authors can experiment with these and make changes to determine effectiveness. A caution here: don't put your author name or another piece of information that is already in the book description into the key words, because it's redundant.

Another interesting and potentially profitable feature available to those who have audio availability is the Audible bounty program. When your audio book is available at Amazon, it will show up on the site as either free or for a price. To get it free, the "buyer" clicks on a free trial through Audible audio book club, and if that buyer becomes an Audible member for more than 61 days, the author gets a \$25 bounty for each new Audible customer driven from the author's product page. The neat thing for authors is they are automatically signed up for the bounty and don't have to do a darned thing to qualify for and receive the bounties. ▶



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## AMAZON

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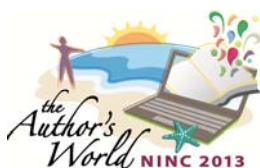
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Audible members (subscribers) buy an average of 18 titles a year.

Bosch said the 135,000 audio books available on Amazon's site represents but five percent of total Amazon books. The takeaway for authors here is that it's a good time to get in on this potentially lucrative source of income while there is still little competition.

Slater said Amazon is always trying new things to improve the experience not only for the Kindle Direct Publishing author but also for the customer. Case in point: the newest Kindle being rolled out has a customer support button which will put the customer in immediate contact with an Amazon representative.

*A former journalist, Cheryl Bolen is the award-winning author of more than 20 titles (mostly historical) for Harlequin, Kensington, and Montlake as well as indies, and her books have been translated into seven languages. Her popular series include the Stately Homes Murders (Montlake), the Regent Mysteries (indie), and the Brides of Bath (hybrid). More details are available at [www.CherylBolen.com](http://www.CherylBolen.com).*



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## KOBO

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Continued from page 8 ▶

**Free:** Lefebvre said Free sometimes works, but only when done strategically.

Free is a "gateway drug," but free downloads don't last. After being "lost" when the website was revamped, Free is coming back soon. Referencing the stats on one popular Kobo author, Lefebvre showed that 54 percent of people who finished (not downloaded) the free test book went on to buy other books in the series.

**Scattershots:** Discoverability is important. KoboBookHub.com is free. There are other places, both paid and free, such as BookBub and StoryFinds. The important thing is that people see your book.

Another important thing is metadata. It is also important when uploading to enter the imprint and series title, if applicable.

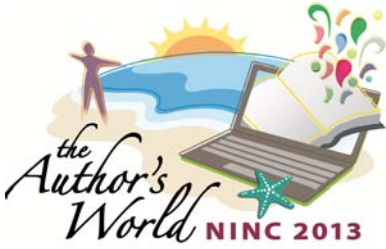
Kobo does have an affiliate program. Coupon codes are coming—they are already in Beta testing. Price scheduling is also coming, as is tracking of pre-orders. While pricing higher doesn't work for everyone, Kobo has no pricing cap.

Every week KWL titles represent 18 to 20 percent of sales.

Lefebvre did not mention the recent problems with WH Smith and Kobo pulling great numbers of self-published books and all books from certain distributors in what some have termed a "witch-hunt" because of some pornographic content. Because the presentation ran quite long there was no opportunity to ask questions, so no statement was available.

Lefebvre's contacts are [markl@Kobo.com](mailto:markl@Kobo.com), [mlefebvre@Kobo.com](mailto:mlefebvre@Kobo.com), [writnglife@Kobo.com](mailto:writnglife@Kobo.com), @MarkLeslie, and @KoboWritingLife. Christine Munroe can be reached at [cmunroe@Kobo.com](mailto:cmunroe@Kobo.com) and @munroechristine.

*Writing romance and horror as Janis Susan May, cozy mysteries as Janis Patterson, children's as Janis Susan Patterson, and non-fiction/scholarly as JSM Patterson, Janis Susan is a seventh-generation Texan, a founder of RWA, a member of MWA, Sisters in Crime, and Authors Guild as well as NINC. You can find her at [www.JanisSusanMay.com](http://www.JanisSusanMay.com) or [www.JanisPattersonMysteries.com](http://www.JanisPattersonMysteries.com).*



# Secrets to Success at Apple

BY ELISSA WILDS

Speaker: Mark Coker, Founder & CEO, Smashwords

Mark Coker, Founder & CEO of Smashwords, presented a wonderful session chock full of tidbits and tips for authors. Smashwords is a free e-book publishing platform with distribution through Apple, Barnes & Noble, Sony, Kobo, and libraries. Smashwords has been working with Apple since day one when Apple launched the iPad in 2010. Coker recommends getting your book on iBooks for many reasons, which are covered in this article.

Apple (iBooks) has millions of customers who are loyal to iBooks and only utilize their iPhones and iPad to read books purchased through Apple's iBooks application. There are over two million books in the iBooks store. iBooks operates in 51 countries and 45 percent of the sales are outside the U.S. iBooks was the #2 global e-book seller in 2012. iBooks was the #3 U.S. e-book seller in 2012. Coker predicts iBooks will be the #2 U.S. e-book seller in 2013. Apple iBooks has much to offer by way of merchandizing opportunities for the author.

Apple's ambition is to do for digital books what they did for digital music: be #1. Although Coker has no quarrel with Amazon and believes they are super intelligent, he makes comparisons between Apple and Amazon to give a better idea of what Apple offers.

Here's how they differ:

**Financially:** Apple's stockholder equity is approximately \$120 billion. Amazon's is approximately \$9 billion. Apple's current assets minus current liabilities: \$34 billion. Amazon's is \$4 billion. Amazon's business model is to operate as a low margin competitor, and they do it well. Apple's model is different but equally effective.

**E-book retailing:** Amazon is still the best at this but Apple is getting better and better.

**Hardware:** no one does this better than Apple, but Amazon is investing a lot in hardware and can't be ruled out as a contender in this area.

**Reading applications:** Amazon's Kindle Cloud works on any device. Apple iBooks requires use of their application and is limited to Apple devices.

**Partnership strategies:** Both Apple and Amazon are fanatical about customer service. Amazon tries to limit authors with exclusivity such as with the KDP select program. Exclusivity is central to Amazon's indie author strategy. Apple has no such exclusivity requirements. Apple is more open to working with partners. Amazon cuts the middle man out. Amazon requires price equality across all channels. Apple does not.

Apple iBooks provides huge discovery and sales advantages to the authors. They have programs that are equivalent to "front-of-the-store" placement. This provides greater visibility to the customer, increases sales, and triggers additional automated discovery.

Apple has a global team of people (actual human beings) who are their merchandising professionals. This team searches books, finds those they believe will please readers, and then does a lot to help promote them. The kicker is that they must have confidence their selections will indeed please readers. It should be noted that Apple has no preference between indie and traditionally published authors when it comes to promotional opportunities. There are a lot of promotions at Apple and this, as well as with specific price points, is where indie authors are dominating the market.

The merchandising professionals at Apple look for the following to promote: customer-driven factors such as your book already selling at Apple, preorder success tracking, what's selling well at other ▶

retailers such as Smashwords, customer ratings and reviews, and most downloaded free titles (but you do need to have “priced” titles as well and not just free.) Apple may do promotions just based upon a lot of 5-star reviews on your book at Apple.

Apple helps you get discovered via automated merchandising, customer search by title or author name, web search, “also bought’s,” “other books by author,” and “buy this” tags at the end of book samples. Of note, Apple can only promote a small number of books each week. You have about a one in 20,000 chance of being one of the promoted. However, Apple refreshes their promotions and merchandising weekly. This gives you multiple chances to make the cut.

Apple’s promotional programs include a “Featured Books” selection. These books are in the “front of the store” on the iBooks home page. They are listed in sub-catalogs, often with custom artwork attached. Apple has a regular newsletter sent to readers where various books are featured. In late 2012, Apple iBooks launched their “Breakout Books” feature. This is an ongoing promotional opportunity that only features indie authors. Apple also promotes “Breakout Authors” on their site and in their newsletter. There are hundreds of books featured. On the iBooks front page is a top of the store “book rotator” which is regularly updated. There is a “major theme” feature and multiple “mini-theme features” in horizontal rows.

Apple provides “Sneak Peeks,” which are early excerpts of top preorder books. They do a “Book of the Week” prompt, too. There is additional discoverability via their bestseller lists (both storewide and category bestsellers). Some ways the author can take the initiative and drive discoverability in iBooks include using free book promotions (rotational and permanent). Free books yield 91 times more downloads than even a .99 or 1.99 book. Promote with direct links on your book page at Apple to your blog and website and social media. Link back to Apple from all of these as well.

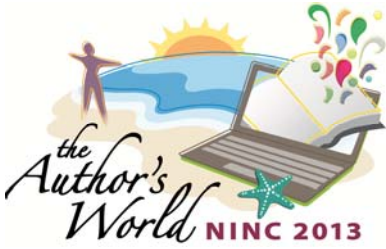
Apple has a number of helpful online tools to help you promote your books on Apple. There is a widget builder, a link maker, and a banner builder, as well as badges and buttons you can create on the Apple site to put on your other sites and social media. You can Google to find the links to these items, but here are two web addresses: <https://banner.itunes.apple.com/bannerbuilder>, [www.apple.com/itunes/affiliates](http://www.apple.com/itunes/affiliates). Note: joining the Apple iBooks affiliate program earns you an extra seven percent back on all sales of all media products for 24 hours. You can embed an affiliate code into your hyperlink when you send readers to the iBook store for your books.

Preorders are available on iBooks and highly recommended (but not for free books). The preorders credit all at once on the day your book officially releases and is a tool for catapulting your book into the bestseller lists. Also, once the book is up on preorder, the first ten percent becomes available for a free sample the customer can download. Coker highly recommends putting your upcoming releases on preorder. If preorders are doing well, this gives Apple confidence in the product and they will then often do their own promotion of that book. You should have your preorder up, at minimum, four to eight weeks prior to your release. Promote heavily during the preorder period. Remember, platform building takes time; each store has its own loyal audience. Maintain consistent, long-term focus to build your platform. A great book plus a great cover, great price, and great promotion are all needed to be successful. Promote your Apple titles everywhere you can.

Things you should know about Apple: The Apple team reads books! They notice cover design. They track records on previous books. They pay attention to author platform. They solicit input from publishers and distributors and partners, such as Smashwords. Having a good Smashwords track record helps. If you have a good track record at Smashwords and have a new release coming out, email Coker ([mc@smashwords.com](mailto:mc@smashwords.com)), and he’ll brainstorm with you to see how to maximize your new release.

Coker’s final word of advice—get your book on iBooks!

*Elissa Wilds is an award-winning author of paranormal romance. She is also a Board Certified Coach specializing in creativity, intuition enhancement, and wellness. Her first foray into indie publishing begins with her novella “Snowman,” in One Enchanted Season, a paranormal romance anthology with three other award-winning and bestselling authors, including New York Times bestseller C.L. Wilson.*



# Lifeboat — Generation Y

BY JENNIFER STEVENSON

Jana DeLeon and Terry Odell shared stories of the first year of their two separate author lifeboat groups. They characterized their lifeboats as “the QE2” and “the dinghy”—one composed of bestselling authors, well-funded from the beginning, the other composed of authors with fewer resources to put into their lifeboat.

## Booklovers Bench

Terry Odell described her lifeboat, Booklovers Bench, as “the dinghy.” When she blogged about the lifeboat workshop from last year’s NINC conference, many authors expressed interest. They started with two people and built up to eight. Their goals were small and simple: improve their discoverability, increase newsletter signups, and broaden their Facebook and Twitter reach with minimal time and financial investment.

One author is a web designer who designed their Booklovers Bench site for free. They aren’t incorporated. The most they spend is \$25 on an Amazon gift card for a monthly contest. Authors also donate books. Once every eight months they collect for the Amazon card. They gave away a Kindle upon launch. Not all of them have indie books.

They have a Yahoo group, a secret Facebook group for the eight Booklovers Bench authors, and hold occasional Skype meetings. They read and review one another’s books. They retweet and share each others’ posts at Twitter and Facebook. Their newsletter list has grown by several thousand. They’ve seen an increase in shared readers. They have a bigger social media footprint.

## The Indie Voice

Jana DeLeon’s lifeboat, The Indie Voice, has 10 members, many of them bestsellers. Like Terry’s lifeboaters, they got excited at last year’s NINC presentation. Originally all they wanted to do was crossmarket. Then they decided to meet face to face and held a summit in Cancun in February 2013. They met eleven hours a day, energy and synergy were very high, everyone had bigger ideas. All voted to “go big or go home.”

Their attorney member formed their LLC. They developed an operating agreement covering how to handle anthologies and box sets and the equity capital contribution of \$500 each. One member handles tax ID, bank accounts, and publisher accounts on Amazon, Smashwords, Kobo, and Apple. Their lifeboat has a website, a Facebook page, and a private FB loop where indie authors can ask questions. Their newsletter is only for the Indie Voice; they did not try to bring reader subscribers from their own lists. They hold a contest every month; for their launch they gave away a Mac Air. They put out an anthology.

The Indie Voice had the first multi-author box set to hit the *Times* list. That money paid for the Black and White party at RT and a virtual assistant. They also co-wrote *The Naked Truth*, a POD nonfiction book about self-publishing describing how they achieved all this. They have done book tours, group signings, and podcasts.

All the Indie Voice authors have seen huge increases in sales and newsletter subscriptions.

The Indie Voice box set is no longer available. According to the operating agreement, the authors agreed to lend a pre-released book to the LLC for a limited time. The plan was to fund everything the LLC would need with the box set sales. Oddly, sales on each author’s lent release still increased, even though ▶

those books were at regular price and the box set was only 99 cents. The box set began at 99 cents for a month and then was bumped up to \$10.99. The group decided to leave the box set available at \$10.99 until sales or ranking dropped to a certain level. Then they took the set down.

### **How do I find authors to form a lifeboat?**

O'Dell said, "You get one member, and then you ask who else do you know who might be good? We had a one-page email defining expectations. Every eight months, someone picks up the tab. We promised a low work load. You have to retweet and share FB posts. We use a hashtag that's just for us. You don't have to do every task every day, and if you have a life intrusion or a book release or a deadline, that's understood. Everybody has to check the Facebook secret group and do the work asked for ('tweet this?') Every day it's something new, even if it's only five minutes. But even if only six more people are retweeting, that's six times your normal reach."

DeLeon said, "We were fortunate. We got an attorney, a website designer, a graphic designer. But the most important thing when selecting members is to establish goals—at the Cancun summit when we decided 'go big or go home,' two members bailed, no hard feelings. You must establish up front what you will all do—100% or none. We have an agreement and a voting system. Those agreements protect us from silliness. We point it out up front. *We expect you to do this.*"

An audience member commented, "I'm a member of Indie Voice. We were incredibly lucky. If I were to do it differently from scratch right now, I'd still pick the same women. I'd evaluate them as hard working, successful women, who know how to set goals and stick to them. They know how to make things happen. That's the first thing you're looking for. *Not* someone who is drifting and clueless—though we are all clueless somewhere—but someone who is functioning in their life. They get results. The second thing is intuition. At Cancun, we had a huge intuitive feeling that this is right, these people are right. If your intuition says this person isn't right, don't do it."

Both lifeboat representatives agreed:

Get eight or ten people who are willing to try anything once. Once one tries it, if it fails, the rest know not to do it. Then you only need an eighth or a tenth of the time to accomplish a lot more.

Every member must agree on your scope in the beginning. "We can do this, but do we want to?" Require full agreement.

When one author has a life intrusion, the rest cover for her.

The #1 rule is, everyone leaves the ego at the door.

Spread out genrewise to crosspollinate readerships. You miss opportunities by recruiting in one genre.

### **If members aren't pulling their weight, do you have a method in place to make them leave?**

DeLeon said, "Yes, but it takes 100 percent vote to add a member or get rid of a member." They also have a bunch of strong personalities. Nobody has a problem with public shaming to get someone to ante up their work. Often it's not a case of not wanting to do the work—everyone is just really busy.

O'Dell suggested that lifeboats keep their goals simple and grow organically. Examples of small goals: Read each other's books. Put Smashwords coupons in one another's newsletters. Give away excerpts and run contests. With rafflecopter it takes 90 seconds to set up a raffle contest.

### **What is rafflecopter?**

Rafflecopter.com creates a contest and helps you run it automatically. You fill out a template. Rafflecopter supplies the widget to paste into your site. The widget tells you when the contest is over, and it even picks your winner(s) for you. It provides the fine print—"You agree you are 18 years or older, no purchase necessary, we can use your name in our website if you win." Entrants must agree to subscribe to the newsletter, but they can opt out when they get the first issue. Rafflecopter also has a good "help" button.

### **Do lifeboat members' jobs rotate or do individuals have their own jobs?**

In both lifeboats, each person does what they're good at. You can have a party planner, an accountant, an attorney, a web designer, a Photoshop specialist, a keywords/metadata specialist, a cat herder, a rafflecopter

expert, a Word file prep expert, an e-book formatter, or other expert. Members also give each other favors on a personal basis.

### **Do you employ street teams?**

Neither lifeboat has its own street team for the entire lifeboat. Several members of Indie Voice have their own street teams. They're a lot of work. You need to keep them motivated and focused, deal with them daily, track who's actually doing the work. It's best to start with a small set of highly motivated, rabid fans.

### **Takeaway:**

Start with do-able goals.

From the beginning, agree 100 percent on those goals and the level of time and money commitment to avoid mismatches.

Choose committed authors with a proven track record of success in at least some areas—if not bestselling, then hard-working, try-anything people with a can-do attitude—no slackers or whiners.

The higher the level of your most successful member, the higher and faster your group can soar—but only if everyone works hard, works together, and agrees to commit to the same level of effort.

*Jennifer Stevenson writes sexy romantic comedy, with or without paranormal elements. She lives in Chicago with a husband and two brand new, totally insane kittens. She's easy to find on Twitter <http://twitter.com/jenstevenson> or Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/JenniferStevensonAuthor>.*



## **Meet the 2014 Publicity Chair**

Lacy Williams, your friendly Publicity Chick here. It's wintry in Oklahoma today: snowing with temps in the 30s. After spending several Christmases with in-laws in Florida, I can't tell you how excited I am to be visiting for the 2014 NINC conference next October.

And that's just the weather.

I'm even more excited about connecting with you in person, listening to our fabulous lineup of speakers, and those special events I keep hearing about ...

Yes, this will be my first NINC conference, but not my first writers' conference. I'm hoping that this will top them all!

If you haven't already registered, what are you waiting for? Go to [http://ninc.com/conference\\_center/](http://ninc.com/conference_center/) and sign up today. You can even split the (very reasonable!) conference fee into three easy payments and still book your hotel.

If you are planning to come to the conference but haven't registered yet, sign up for the conference-specific email loop so you can keep up with the things we have planned.

Send a blank email to: [beachninc2014-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:beachninc2014-subscribe@yahoogroups.com), and we'll get you subscribed.

And (... you knew it was coming!) if you would like to join our team of volunteers, please let me know at [lacyjwilliams@gmail.com](mailto:lacyjwilliams@gmail.com). Help make our 2014 anniversary event the best yet!

— Lacy Williams, Publicity Chick



**WRITING is  
TAXING**  
By Diane Kelly

# 2014 Adjustments

It's a new year, and that brings new tax laws and adjusted figures for many tax benefits that are linked to the cost of living and indexed for inflation. Be sure that you are informed so that you can make wise financial decisions and pay in the appropriate amounts of estimated taxes.

**New Tax Tables:** The tax rate tables have been adjusted to reflect cost-of-living adjustments. The following rates will apply to the noted taxable income figures for each filing status for the 2014 tax year. Taxable income is total earnings less the standard deduction or itemized deduction, personal exemptions, and adjustments such as the deductible portion of self-employment tax, SEP-IRA contributions, and the self-employed health insurance deduction.

TAX RATE	SINGLE	MARRIED JOINT OR QUALIFYING WIDOW/WIDOWER	MARRIED FILING SEPARATELY	HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
10%	Up to \$9,075	Up to \$18,150	Up to \$9,075	Up to \$12,950
15%	\$9,076 to \$36,900	\$18,151 to \$73,800	\$9,076 to \$36,900	\$12,951 to \$49,400
25%	\$36,901 to \$89,350	\$73,801 to \$148,850	\$36,901 to \$74,425	\$49,401 to \$127,550
28%	\$89,351 to \$186,350	\$148,851 to \$226,850	\$74,426 to \$113,425	\$127,551 to \$206,600
33%	\$186,351 to \$405,100	\$226,851 to \$405,100	\$113,426 to \$202,550	\$206,601 to \$405,100
35%	\$405,101 to \$406,750	\$405,101 to \$457,600	\$202,551 to \$228,800	\$405,101 to \$432,200
39.6%	\$406,751 and higher	\$457,601 and higher	\$228,801 and higher	\$432,201 and higher

These new rates mean that a married couple who earns taxable income of \$100,000 and files jointly will pay \$145 less in taxes for the 2014 tax year as compared to 2013. A single filer with \$50,000 in taxable income will pay \$72.50 less in taxes in 2014 versus 2013.

**Standard Deduction/Itemized Deductions:** For the 2014 tax year, the standard deduction increases to \$6,200 for those filing under single or married separate status, up from \$6,100 in 2013. For those filing a married joint tax return, the standard deduction is \$12,400, up from \$12,200. Head of household filers will see a \$150 increase, going up from \$8,950 to \$9,100. In addition, the limitation on itemized deductions will begin to apply at incomes of \$254,200 for single, married separate, and head of household filers, and at an income level of \$305,050 for married joint filers.

The additional standard deduction for taxpayers who are age 65 or older or who are blind will stay at \$1,200 for 2014 for married individuals and surviving spouses, but will increase to \$1,550 for single filers aged 65 or older or blind filers.

**Personal Exemption:** The personal exemption increases by \$50 to \$3,950. The exemption begins to phase out at the same income levels as the limitation on itemized deductions (\$254,200 for single, head of



household, and married separate filers, and \$305,050 for married joint filers). The exemption phases out entirely at income levels of \$376,700, or \$427,550 for married couples filing jointly.

**SEP-IRA Contributions:** The contribution amount that can be made to a SEP-IRA remains at 25 percent of net earnings. However, the maximum limitation has increased from \$51,000 to \$52,000, which represents \$204,000 and \$208,000 in net earnings respectively.

**Annual Gift Exclusion Amount:** The gift exclusion amount remains unchanged at \$14,000 for 2014. This provision allows a taxpayer to make cumulative gifts valued at \$14,000 or less to each individual recipient during a calendar year without having to report the gifts on a gift tax return. A married couple may make a total of \$28,000 in gifts to each individual recipient in a given calendar year without having to file a gift tax return.

**Estate and Gift Tax Exemption:** This amount increases from \$5,250,000 for the 2013 tax year to \$5,340,000 in 2014. The exemption amount represents the total value that a taxpayer may transfer via lifetime gifts and bequests upon death without being subject to gift or estate tax. Amounts above the exemption limit will be subject to gift or estate tax.

**Exemption Amount for Alternative Minimum Tax:** The Alternative Minimum Tax exemption amount for tax year 2014 is increased to \$52,800 (\$82,100, for married couples filing jointly). The 2013 exemption amount was \$51,900 (\$80,800 for married couples filing jointly).

**Earned Income Credit:** The maximum Earned Income Credit amount for 2014 will be \$6,143 for taxpayers filing jointly who have three or more qualifying children, up from a total of \$6,044 for tax year 2013.

The maximum credit amounts for other categories, income thresholds, and phaseouts can be found at: [http://www.irs.gov/irb/2013-47\\_IRB/ar11.html](http://www.irs.gov/irb/2013-47_IRB/ar11.html).

**Education Credits:** Adjustments have also been made with respect to education credits. For tax years beginning in 2014, the Hope Scholarship Credit will be an amount equal to 100 percent of qualified tuition and related expenses not in excess of \$2,000 plus 25 percent of those expenses in excess of \$2,000, but not in excess of \$4,000. Thus, the maximum Hope Scholarship Credit allowable for tax years beginning in 2014 is \$2,500.

For tax years beginning in 2014, a taxpayer's modified adjusted gross income in excess of \$80,000 (\$160,000 for a joint return) is used to determine the reduction in the amount of the Hope Scholarship Credit otherwise allowable. A taxpayer's modified adjusted gross income in excess of \$54,000 (\$108,000 for a joint return) is used to determine the reduction in the amount of the Lifetime Learning Credit otherwise allowable.

**Standard Mileage Rate:** At the time this article was written, the 2014 standard mileage rate figure had not yet been released. It is unclear whether this amount will increase, remain the same, or decrease. This information will be available at the IRS website upon its release.

*Diane Kelly is a retired CPA/tax attorney and the author of the humorous Death and Taxes romantic mystery series and a self-published romantic comedy.*

## Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

### Amazon New York Sales Tax Appeal Refused

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the appeal request of Amazon and Overstock on the March decision that imposed an online sales tax in the state of New York. The "no physical presence" argument was rejected. Amazon pays sales tax in 16 other states at this point. *PW Daily*

### StoryFront: Amazon Short Fiction

This is a short fiction, all-genre imprint that is digital/Kindle only. It will incorporate original works by new and veteran authors, as well as stories from the literary journal, *Day One*. Launch titles include *Sheila*, by Rebecca Adams Wright, (*Day One* story); *A Bite of Strawberry* by William Lashner; *Museum of Literary Souls* by John Connolly; and *Farmer One* by Christian Cantrell. *PW Daily*

## The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



# Longevity

*“We are the endurance athletes of the imagination.”*

— Laura Resnick

Another January is here, which means it's time for me to take stock, once again, of my annual New Year's resolution to start meeting my deadlines.

Frankly, 2013 was a mess in this respect. I fell so far behind schedule that I missed almost every deadline all year, including several of my column deadlines (which I used to be very reliable about). I'm also still running behind on self-publishing my backlist. And I was so late with my most recent novel that I think the production manager must have been tempted to fling himself (or, more likely, *me*) off a tall building when he found out the publisher had signed me for four more novels.

Which brings me to the *good* news from 2013! Despite my perpetually late delivery, my publisher nonetheless re-upped me for four more books in my urban fantasy series about Esther Diamond, a struggling actress in New York City who wrestles with supernatural misadventures while pursuing her acting career. This was a major milestone for me, since this is a series that gathered dust and rejections for years, was declared unsaleable by various agents who represented me or whom I queried, and then got dumped by its first publisher after one book.

So being signed through book ten (10!) of this series, for good advances, at a house where it's being packaged and published well, has been a tremendous personal and professional victory for me. I consider it proof of the power of perseverance—which I have long believed is *the* single most important quality for a writer to possess. Talent matters, and good luck (of which I've had very little) is nice; but perseverance is what makes it possible for us to write book after book after book, year after year after year—and to keep publishing, one way or another, despite all the slings and arrows of this profession.

In fact, while wearily condemning myself for yet another year of missed deadlines, I've also lately encountered some reminders to pause a moment in my self-scolding, take a breath, and think about what I've accomplished.

Today, for example, another writer—one who's got two mystery series under contract, after having previously sold a number of romance novels—asked me how long I've been a full-time, self-supporting novelist.

Answer: 25 years.

I've sometimes had to fill in the income gaps with temporary or part-time work over the years, but writing has been my full-time profession and my primary or sole source of income for 25 years.

As my friend pointed out to me, being a full-time, self-supporting novelist for twenty-five (25!) years is rare. And it's rare because it's hard. Every aspect of it is hard: writing books, selling books, and making enough money from one's work to thrive (or at least survive).

One reason I'm perpetually late on delivery is that I don't manage my time well. Another reason, though—the reason I often tend to dismiss, forget, or shrug off—is that writing a book is hard. And writing book after book after book, year after year after year, is even harder.

As a friend of mine who's been a self-supporting novelist for about 20 years once said to me, when I was in despair about how late I was (yet again) with a book: If it were just a matter of typing, I'd always deliver on time. I'm an efficient typist, after all. But writing a book is actually a little more complicated than that.

Whenever strangers or casual acquaintances ask how many books I've written, and I tell them (I don't keep an exact count, but it's around 30), their eyes usually pop. *Thirty books? (30!)* Most people, I am reminded by these encounters, think of a writer as someone who writes *a* book, i.e., one. Even if they read Agatha Christie, Nora Roberts, Stephen King, Elizabeth Peters, Dick Francis—that is, even if they read authors who've produced dozens of books—many people are, nonetheless, astounded by the idea of *all those books* when you tell them that *you* have written five or 20 or 70 novels.

Writing book after book, year after year, is not only hard, it's also pretty amazing. I tend to forget that.

One obvious reason I forget it is that my own father, Mike Resnick, has been writing professionally for about 50 years. So I think of this as a normal career. From my perspective, writing novels is the kind of job that, boringly, a person's grumpy old dad has always had. And writing book after book, year after year, is just *what you do* when you're a writer. In the way that filling cavity after cavity is what you do when you're a dentist, cooking meal after meal is what you do when you're a chef, and filing brief after brief is what you do when you're a lawyer.

My dad has produced over sixty (60!) science fiction novels and more than 30 volumes of his collected short fiction and collected essays. (In his copious spare time, he has also sold several screenplays and edited about 40 short fiction anthologies, and he currently edits a fiction e-zine.) *Writing* is what a writer's job entails, after all, so the numbers are bound to mount up if you keep doing it for years. No one meets a doctor and assumes he has treated only one sick person in his career; but as writers, we often get to see amazement in people's expressions when we clarify that we have written more than one book in the years we've been doing this professionally.

At a party recently, someone asked me why I feel I have to go on writing book after book. Why do I work all the time?

Well, the pragmatic answer to this question is that I neglected to inherit a fortune or marry well. Therefore, I have to work for a living. If I didn't write book after book—if I ceased working hard as a writer and instead just dabbled occasionally at this craft—I would lose my home within months and have to live in my best friend's basement, hoping the family would feed me in exchange for housework. Since that's an unappealing fate, I continue to work hard, completing book after book, year after year.

But that question, which I doubt this person would have asked of a dentist, chef, or lawyer (essentially: why do you go to work every day, year after year?), again made me realize how rare it is to write book after book after book for two or three or five decades, and how few people—even if they read writers who've done exactly that—realize that's the path of a career novelist, of someone who does this as a long-term profession.

Yet since it's what we do in NINC, the organization for career novelists, and what so many of our friends (and at least one of our fathers) do ... I think we too often forget that what we do is unusual, remarkable, and hard. In particular, the longevity of the career novelist is rare: 15, 40, 80 books produced over the course of 20, 30, 50 years.

Sure, we do it because we love to tell stories, we're haunted by characters, we're driven to share a perspective, we want to be read, and art is its own reward. But we also do this despite financial problems and pressures, abusive or incompetent editors, dishonest or inept publishers, apathetic or vindictive literary agents, vicious or dismissive critics, menacing readers or snide bloggers. We show up at the keyboard again and again on days when we're ill or exhausted or depressed, when we'd much rather be spending time with loved ones, when we're supposed to be on vacation, when we'd rather be *reading* a novel than writing one, and when we just don't bloody feel like it.

Moreover, the marathon of a writing career is seldom run at one steady unbroken pace that reliably endures for years. I'm not the only writer I know who's struggled with periods of complete collapse in ▶

my process wherein I've been unable to write for long stretches (in my case, the worst one lasted 18 months) and wondered if I'd ever be able to get "it" back.

Many writers find that their output gets slower at various times in their lives, or with age. Sometimes experience greases the wheels and enhances your pace; and sometimes you just feel *tired* from the 40 books you've already written (or the three books you just wrote in a single year; or the big book you've recently finished that was so demanding you feel as if you've killed a billion brain cells), and so book number forty-one (41!) flows about as easily as molasses in sub-zero weather.

We experience all of this and more, and yet we keep writing. Because this is our profession. It's what we do. We are career novelists. We are the endurance athletes of the imagination.

So although it's necessary for me to focus on strategies for overcoming my persistent problem of late delivery, it's also good for me to pause every so often to recognize that it's a real accomplishment to have spent 25 years writing 30 books and supporting myself as a full-time writer. And whatever the specifics are of your own accomplishments as a career novelist, I urge you to take a moment, too, this New Year to recognize and respect them.

*Laura Resnick is currently working toward timely delivery of Abracadaver, the seventh book in her Esther Diamond series.*

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## *Business Briefs*

### **Authors Guild v. Google Scanning Case Dismissed**

Judge Denny Chin of the U.S. District Court ruled in favor of Google, citing the scanning of library books as a benefit to the public and copyright holder. This dismissal came after eight years. The judge said Google met three of the four fair use criteria, and that the Authors Guild's claim of a negative impact on the book market wasn't true. Chin stated, "To the contrary, a reasonable fact finder could only find that Google Books enhances the sales of books to the benefit of copyright holders." The full 30-page decision of the U.S. District Court, Southern District, can be read here: <http://tinyurl.com/p3y238a>. *PW Daily*

### **Association of American Publishers reports for January – August**

Adult trade sales were down 1.1 percent (August alone was up 8.9 percent). Children's/YA sales were down 3.2 percent. Paperbacks were down 11.6 percent, and e-books were up 4.8 percent. Hardcover sales were up 11.5 percent. (This includes a 47.8 percent jump in August.) Figures are taken from AAP's StatShot program, which includes information from 1,102 publishers. *PW Daily*

### **New Canadian Trade Show**

Inspire!: The Toronto International Book Fair will be targeting the consumer, November 13-16, 2014. The location is the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Organizers are in discussion with government funding sources to keep the entrance fee low. *PW Daily*