

N I N K

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Your Literary Legacy—Part Three: Archival Ways and Means

BY SANDRA KITT

A three-part article, related to the need for oversight of your writing career, became necessary when I realized that there are writers who will prefer to hold onto every scrap of paper relating to their published work. Perhaps the intention is to leave everything to an estate, thereby passing along a legacy to offspring. As such, if you're a highly successful writer (i.e., you've made a living from your writing), said offspring can benefit financially from work that continues to be available in one form or another down through the years.

Hopefully, you've all gained a basic knowledge of a) how to deal with hundreds of contract copies of your novels, and b) how to donate your papers to any organization/institution capable of housing your boxes of papers as well as archiving for use by researchers, no matter the reason. So now we head into the third and final area of consideration: the ways and means of protecting your papers for prosperity against mold, mildew, pest droppings, water damage, and other potential disasters.

Below are simple and, in the long run, inexpensive means of archival protection of your years of work as a writer. These are standard library and archival methods. The key phrase in using any of the methods and materials listed is *acid free*.

General considerations:

All materials should be stored between 65 and 70 degrees F, and humidity between 35 and 45 percent, away from sunlight or heating elements. Avoid attics, basements, garage spaces, and any location easily accessed by pets or children.

Use a regular filing system in archival filing cartons or a metal filing cabinet.

Although staples and paper clips are now stainless steel, remove them from your papers. Metal materials more than 20 years old will rust and leave indentations on papers.

Do not store newsprint items against other materials. Use individual envelopes or sleeves.

Use firm dividers in file boxes or file drawers so that individual folders do not sag toward the bottom, distorting and bending pages.

Preserving digital files:

This can be a daunting task as your digital assets are going to continue to grow *Continued on page 5* ▶

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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:

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Information

NINC has room to grow...

Recommend membership to your colleagues.
Prospective members may apply online at
<http://www.ninc.com>. Refer members at
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Rethinking Frontlist



Do you remember the old “death of the midlist” conversations? No one would blame you if you didn’t, but in the pre-Kindle/iPad/NOOK days many of us were terribly concerned about a huge number of novelists being “middled out” because they didn’t write blockbusters or straight genre books and because publishers and booksellers seemed to have no idea what to do with them. Many of us believed that the audience was still there, but that the means of reaching the audience had eroded. We were right. As e-books proved, readers had no desire for an exclusive diet of blockbusters and genre books; if your book was good and you could get attention for it, there were people who wanted to buy it. All that was necessary was a new system to connect the books and the market.

It might be instructive to keep this in mind as we consider something else: the decline of the frontlist. For longer than I’ve been in publishing (and that’s quite a while at this point), most fiction (and just about all commercial fiction) was defined by the activity that happened immediately following its publication date. Success, failure, and the ability for a book to develop “legs” derived from the performance of the book in the first month/two weeks/week. This was when the book had its highest profile—that stack at the front of the store, that endcap display, those pockets in supermarkets and airports. If a book couldn’t sell then, it was unlikely to sell later, so publishers threw all of their support—which was, admittedly, mostly the effort involved in getting those stacks, endcaps, and pockets in the first place—into a book’s launch.

But then something happened. Increasingly, readers stopped buying books at physical retail outlets and started buying them online. At this point, a considerable majority of books (both print and digital) are sold through online retail. That majority is even greater for commercial fiction. And online bookstores don’t have fronts, endcaps, or pockets. At the biggest online retailer, my pages are different from your pages, and even home page placement with other retailers doesn’t have nearly the same consumer pull that a stack at the front of the store once had. Meanwhile, the most effective promotion at the online retail level comes from bookseller price promotions chosen largely by the quantity and quality of a book’s customer reviews—which requires the book to have been around long enough to generate those reviews.

Then there’s the matter of co-op. For the overwhelming majority of the time I’ve been in the business, co-op advertising had been the primary way that publishers marketed books. The shorthand way it went was this: as part of their terms of sale with publishers, booksellers had a pool of money derived from the previous year’s sales that could be used for the bookseller’s marketing programs. For key titles, publishers would add to this pool on a per-copy basis (maybe \$1.00 a book for a hardcover, \$.50 a book for a trade paperback, and \$.15 a book for a mass market paperback), so if the bookseller bought certain titles in bulk, there would be a large amount of extra co-op money. This money was then used to buy into bookseller marketing efforts such as high-profile placement in the store, newsletter features, position on a wholesaler bestseller card, etc. Back in my Avon days, I would take my senior staff out of the office for a few days before every season so we could put together our marketing plans. I would start every meeting with some variation of, “I don’t want all of our marketing plans to be ‘extra co-op.’ I want us to come up with truly distinctive programs for every title.” At the end of each meeting, though, nearly all of our marketing plans revolved around offering extra co-op money. This didn’t happen because my team lacked creativity—they were a

tremendously talented and creative group. It happened because the only thing that really sold books was *encouraging the booksellers* to sell the books. Advertising didn't work. Publicity only worked for nonfiction. Very few outlets reviewed fiction, and even fewer reviewed commercial fiction. We were in a B-to-B industry; we sold to the bookseller and the bookseller sold to the consumer.

That system worked, though it also probably contributed to the death of the midlist, as the divide between the haves (books getting feature positioning) and have-nots grew. Whether it worked or not is no longer the issue, though, because co-op doesn't operate the same way with online booksellers. You can't say, "I'll give you an extra dollar a book for an e-mail blast on this title." What one does now—whether traditionally published or indie—is offer books up for promotion. In nearly every case, the promotion, if it comes, will happen well past a book's publication date. And if it happens at Account A, it's highly unlikely that it will happen at Accounts B, C, and D at the same time.

Therefore, the entire notion of frontlist is becoming less meaningful. Does this matter? It does and it doesn't. It matters if you're not already a name-brand author and you hope to be one some day. It's going to be considerably harder for writers to achieve name-brand status as long as frontlist is in decline because there won't be an extended moment when all eyes are on you.

If you're not concerned about this sort of thing, then you're not affected nearly as much, but it does require you to think differently. The pub date becomes considerably less meaningful. It's more like Memorial Day than your birthday—it's sort of the start of something, but only sort of, because the best part is coming at some future point. It also means that you need to plan to spread out your resources. Getting consumer reviews up is important, so doing that blog tour early and getting your street team mobilized might make sense. You might want to hold off on some of the other things you have planned, though, because there might be a better moment later if/when a bookseller chooses to promote, and if you've expended your budget (either time or money), it's an opportunity lost. You also need to define success differently. If your book isn't selling now or anywhere near pub date, it doesn't mean that it won't, because the promotional opportunities will continue to exist. And just as readers have shown that they don't only want blockbusters and genre books, they've also shown that date of publication doesn't mean much to them—they're just as likely to buy a five-year-old book as they are to buy one that went on sale yesterday.

Is this the state of the industry for the conceivable future? I'd like to think not, but change is going to require something as dramatic as the Kindle/iPad/NOOK emergence. It's going to require sustainable, scalable tools to appeal to consumers directly. There have been plenty of clever tools developed in the past few years, especially in the indie publishing world, but they haven't really proven either sustainable or scalable. As more use them, their effectiveness diminishes. That wasn't true in the front-of-store/endcap/pocket days. Those tools declined because of a change in the retail environment, not because they no longer worked.

Do I have any suggestions? I'm working on a few, but it would be ludicrous to suggest that I'm even close to having an answer. I do think NINC might play an important part in reviving the frontlist because of the quality of the minds in this organization and the commitment to professionalism. After all, we played a meaningful role in breathing life back into the midlist. Why can't we do the same for the frontlist? ▲

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.

Your Literary Legacy—Part Three

Continued from page 1 ▶ exponentially. Establishing a system now will benefit you in the long run.

- ▶ You can make duplicate back-ups and store them separately from your main files on your computer, an external hard drive, using Internet storage, or a thumb drive.
- ▶ Put a copy of your digital inventory in with your important papers.
- ▶ If you store your files on a website remember that *nothing is forever*. Be sure to store as well on CDs.
- ▶ Go to <http://digitalpreservation.gov/personalarchiving>, sponsored by the Library of Congress, for a wealth of information on this topic.

Scanning:

When making scans consider the end use. Is it for reprints? Reference? These questions should narrow your decision regarding what resolution you use to scan your materials.

- ▶ Archival copies should be at least 300 dpi at full size.
- ▶ Scan the image at 100 percent of its actual size or at least five inches on the shortest side.
- ▶ Save your image as a TIFF file to capture the most detail.

Items that can be scanned include color and black and white photographs, negatives, letters/correspondence and other documents, advertisements, and slides.

Materials/Resources: (remember the key words are *acid free*).

- ▶ Mylar or other archival quality sleeves to hold and protect photos.
- ▶ Archival bond paper (acid-free, buffered) for photocopying or layering between documents and photographs.
- ▶ Acid-free, lignin-free boxes and folders.
- ▶ Archival pencil and paper for labeling and note taking.
- ▶ www.archival.com (request a catalog and samples!)

This may seem like a lot of work, taking up an overwhelming amount of time. But the choice is always yours. How much is it worth to you to protect and save a lifetime of work?

Sandra Kitt has published 40 novels, including Fearless Men, her current release from Open Road Media, as well as The Color of Love, Significant Others, and Close Encounters. She is the recipient of RWA and Romantic Times Lifetime Achievement Awards, and the Zora Neale Hurston Literary Award. She is also the former managing director of the Richard S. Perkin Collection in Astronomy and Astrophysics at the American Museum of Natural History.

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

Barnes & Noble and NOOK to separate

The Barnes & Noble board voted to split the company into two separate public companies with retail stores in one and the e-reader division and college bookstores in the other. The change is expected to occur in the early part of 2015. There seems to be some doubt about the success of the venture.

PW Daily

Slate of Officers for NINC 2015



President-Elect

Diana Peterfreund is the author of ten books for adults and children, including the Secret Society Girl series and the Killer Unicorns series, and has been a member of NINC since the week she was eligible. She's written adult, young adult, and middle grade fiction and been published by Random House, Harper Collins, Simon & Schuster, Penguin, and a variety of small publishers. In 2013, she went hybrid and began self-publishing new adult romances under the name Viv Daniels. Her short stories have been published in a variety of markets, including *The Best Science Fiction and Fantasy of the Year, Vol. 5*, and the NINC collection, *Cast of Characters*. Aside from NINC, she belongs to RWA and SFWA, and has served both on the board and on committees for several RWA chapters (TARA, WRW, and Chick Lit Writers of the World) as well as for RWA National's PRO committee. Diana lives outside Washington DC with her husband, her young daughter, and her dog, Rio. <http://dianapeterfreund.com>.



Treasurer

Pamela E. Johnson (aka Pamela Dalton) is the author of romantic suspense and romantic comedy novels, originally published by Harlequin. She has a four-year accounting degree and has served as president, treasurer, long range planning chair, bylaws chair, and finance chair for a variety of local and national organizations. In her other life, she is bookkeeper and marketing manager for the family business. She is currently writing a thriller.



Nominating Committee Candidates for 2015

Cynthia Pratt (aka C.B. Pratt) has lived all over the United States, including California, New York, and many stops in between. Having been a professional writer for over 20 years, she is ill-suited to any normal work and hopes to continue writing for the rest of her life. Independent publishing has allowed her to write the things she has always wanted to, including fantasy and steampunk. She is the author of numerous traditionally published books, as well as the Eno the Thracian fantasy-adventure series. *Rivers of Sand* will be released late summer, 2014.

A NINC member since year one and former NINC treasurer, **Ruth Glick** (who writes fiction as Rebecca York), is the author of more than 125 novels and novellas as well as 16 cookbooks. Her first book was on making dollhouse furniture. She went on to publish a kids' SF novel with Scholastic in 1982: *The Invasion of the Blue Lights*. Since then, she has become a multi-published romance, romantic suspense, and paranormal romantic suspense writer for Silhouette, Harlequin Intrigue, Berkley, and Sourcebooks, with excursions into science-fiction romance, YA, and cookbook writing. She's now a hybrid writer, continuing her traditional career while indie-publishing paranormal romantic suspense, science-fiction romance, and cookbooks. She lives in Maryland with her husband and four cats, travels frequently, and cooks and gardens for fun. For more about her, see www.rebeccayork.com.



Jody Lynn Nye has published 45 books and more than 120 short stories. Her novels include her epic fantasy series, *The Dreamland*; a humorous contemporary fantasy series, *Mythology*; and three medical science fiction novels. She also wrote *The Dragonlover's Guide to Pern*, a guide to the world of international bestselling author Anne McCaffrey's popular books. She collaborated with McCaffrey on four science fiction novels and wrote a solo sequel to the fourth, entitled *The Ship Errant*. Jody co-authored the *Visual Guide to Xanth* with bestselling fantasy author Piers Anthony and edited an anthology of humorous stories about mothers in science fiction, fantasy, myth and legend, entitled *Don't Forget Your Spacesuit, Dear!* She wrote eight books with the late Robert Lynn Asprin and continued his Dragons series with *Dragons Deal* and *Dragons Run*. Her newest book (September 2014) is *Fortunes of the Imperium*. Upcoming is *Myth-Fits*, which continues the *Myth-Adventures* series begun by Robert Asprin. Jody has taught in numerous writing workshops and participated on hundreds of panels at science fiction conventions. She has also taught fantasy writing at Columbia College Chicago and consulted as a script doctor. Her website is www.jodylynnnye.com.



Denise A. Agnew is the author of over 60 novels. *Romantic Times Book Reviews* calls her romantic suspense novels "top-notch," and she's received their coveted TOP PICK rating. Denise has written paranormal, romantic comedy, contemporary, fantasy, historical, erotic romance, and romantic suspense. Archaeology and archery have crept into her work, and travels through England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have added to a lifetime of story ideas. A paranormal investigator, Denise looks forward to exploring the unknown. Visit Denise's website at www.deniseagnew.com.



Candidates Continue ► ► ►

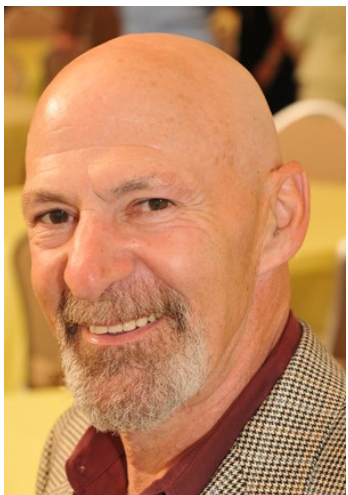
Nominations Committee Candidates, Cont.



With more than 50 published books under her belt, **Vella Munn** no longer has any other marketable skills (except for carpenter ant eradication, which she doesn't want to repeat). She has worked with traditional publishers, small e-publishers, and is self-published and proudly wears her hybrid hat—or she would if she could find it. No rose-colored glasses here and lots of publishing scars. A self-proclaimed hermit, the only people she knows are other writers, mostly NINC members. Attending the conferences (mostly in Florida so her sister-in-law can take her fishing afterward) keeps her semi-sane.



Olivia Rupprecht (aka Mallory Rush) began her career as a novelist with Bantam Books in 1989 and joined Novelists, Inc. in its early years. After many novels later for Bantam, Harlequin, and Doubleday, Olivia became a *Nink* columnist/reporter, then *Nink* Editor in 2003, and went on to work in traditional publishing as a copywriter, ghostwriter, book doctor, and developmental editor. As Series Developer for True Vows, the reality-based romance series from HCI Books, she enlisted fellow NINC members for the launch titles before returning to where it all began: the business of writing novels. *There Will Be Killing* is an October 2014 release from The Story Plant. The one constant throughout this very long and crazy ride is Olivia's belief that Novelists, Inc. is the most valuable, informative, and supportive organization in the industry for publishing professionals of quality fiction.



David Wind is the author of 35 novels. He began writing in 1979 and has published novels of suspense, adventure, science fiction, and historical fiction. David's newest novel, *The Cured*, is a legal medical thriller written with Terese Ramin. His novel, *Angels In Mourning* won the April 2009 Reader's Choice Book Award from thebookawards.com. David's thrillers, originally released under the pen name David Milton, include *The Hyte Maneuver*, (a Literary Guild alternate selection), *As Peace Lay Dying*, and *Conspiracy of Mirrors*. David worked with his wife and even borrowed her maiden name, Bonnie Faber for three mystery/suspense novels. *Queen of Knights*, a medieval fantasy, and *The Others* were his entry into fantasy and science fiction. In 1988, David was honored by science fiction writer and Hugo Award Grand Master Andre Norton, who, after reading *Queen of Knights*, asked David to write a short story for inclusion in her "Andre Norton's Tales From The Witch World 2" Anthology Series. David also wrote the novelization of the ABC seven-day miniseries, *The Last Days of Pompeii*.

Sally Hawkes has a day job as the Manager of Network Services (that means she's a librarian who works with technology). In the NINC world, she has two evil twins who write contemporary romances and historicals with Regency settings. Sally Falcon is the contemporary author, and Sarah Eagle is the historical writer (she does more research). As Sarah, she was nominated several time for Best Regency Comedy by *Romantic Times* and once by the Colorado Romance Writers. Currently she's looking into historical mysteries and steampunk. She contributes Business Briefs to the NINC newsletter and is currently working on 25th Anniversary activities.



A *New York Times* bestseller, **Kathryn Shay** has been a lifelong writer and teacher. She has written 53 books—16 self-published original romance titles, 36 print books with the Berkley Publishing Group and Harlequin Enterprises, and one mainstream women's fiction with Bold Strokes Books. She has won five *RT Book Reviews* awards, four Golden Quills, four Holt Medallions, the Bookseller's Best Award, *Foreword Magazine's* Book of the Year, and several "Starred Reviews." Her novels have been serialized in *Cosmopolitan Magazine* and featured in *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *People Magazine*. There are over five million copies of her books in print, along with hundreds of thousands downloaded online. She lives in upstate New York with her husband and children.



Business Briefs

2013 Sales Results Reported as Flat

Overall sales were down less than 1 percent in the last report from BookStats. The trade segment was down 2.3 percent. Adult nonfiction was the only gain for the year with a 5.4 percent increase. Adult fiction was down 7.1 percent, which was attributed to a decline in sales of the 2012 bestseller *Fifty Shades* trilogy. Juvenile fiction with a 4.9 percent decrease also had similar fallout from the 2012 *Hunger Games* trilogy. However, juvenile nonfiction didn't do any better with a 5.8 percent decrease. Mass market paperbacks were down 6.7 percent. In e-books, overall sales were down slightly with a big dip in juvenile fiction sales. Adult fiction went up 3.3 percent. The results come from the 1,616 publishers with adjustments made for non-reporting publishers.

PW Daily

E-book Price Settlement Issues Continue

Simon & Schuster and Macmillan filed suit in late June over the final decision in the Apple case, stating that it interferes with the return to their original agency pricing model. The order has Apple negotiating separately with each of the Big 5 with six months in between. The first talks will be with Hachette but would take place in the fall of 2015. Two years have already passed for the publishers who participated in the 2012 settlement agreement. The result is four years before a return to normalcy while Amazon will have an advantage in negotiating with publishers without the restrictions placed on Apple.

PW Daily

Selling Books on Google Play

BY JASON MATTHEWS

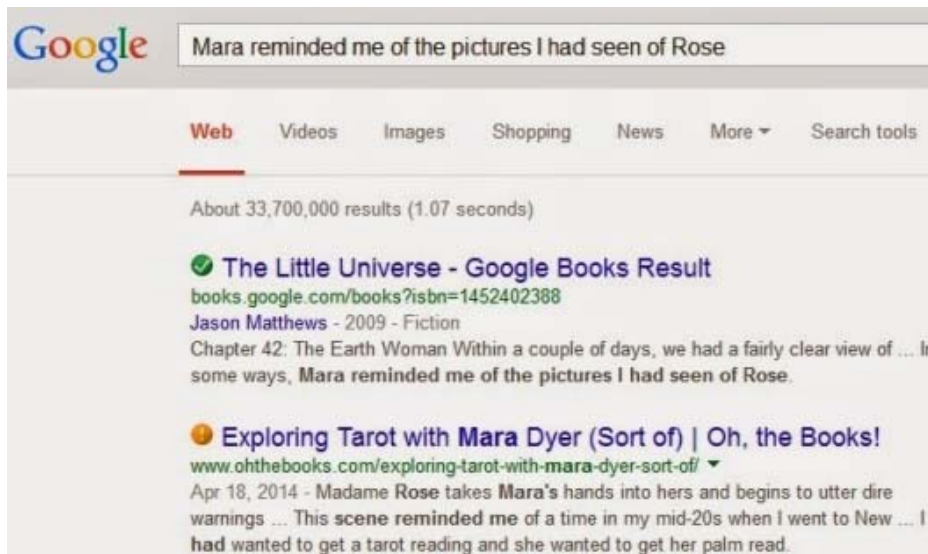
The official name for interested authors is the Google Books Partner Program. It launched in December 2010 as Google Editions, then became Google Ebooks, then got engulfed in the massive Android supermarket known as Google Play. How would I describe the experience of uploading and selling e-books there? It reminds me of a movie title: *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*.

The Good

They actually sell e-books. Over the past two years I've sold more with Google than at Barnes & Noble or Kobo. That was a pleasant surprise since Google doesn't depend on book sales to stay afloat or make a dedicated device for reading as the others do. My prediction is for sales to continue to grow though I'm no Vegas insider.

Purchases can be made in 44 countries with ongoing expansion. That's quite an audience. In 36 of those countries, authors (called partners) can upload e-books. In 20 of the 36, Google will pay partners with direct bank deposits (EFT) as is the case for North America and most of Europe. Otherwise payments are with wire transfers.

Searchability is Google's forte. They scan your entire document and factor that into the world's largest search engine. I've tested this by copying random sentences from deep within my books and pasting them into a Google search. For example, try this sentence in a search: *Mara reminded me of the pictures I had seen of Rose*.



Lo and behold, the Google Books result appears at the very top of the list, and not one other retailer shows up further down. It also works with character names and subject matter, though for popular search terms you may have to scroll down a few pages. This is especially helpful for authors with rarer subjects or names within their books. Remember that Google searches can be tailored just for book results (though the example above is a general Web search).

EPUB files on Google Play support enhanced e-book features (EEBs) such as embedded audio and video. They also support fixed layouts and give advice on how to implement the HTML code for that.

Perhaps the best reason to publish there: less competition exists from other indie authors at Google Play than at Amazon and other retailers. Smashwords, a distributor that sends e-books to major retailers and li-

brary channels, doesn't ship to Google Play. Neither does Draft2Digital. The only way I'm aware of is to upload directly. This eliminates a lot of indie authors presumably for the bad and ugly reasons listed below.

The Bad

Uploading there is challenging. It's as if the bookstore engineers decided to reinvent the wheel without taking a peek at how Amazon, B&N, Kobo, Smashwords, and other retailers handle the art of receiving cover images and interior files.

Instead, Google Play requires you to do things that feel odd. Until recently, they required ISBN-related titles for your files. For example, one of my Google books has a cover image and interior file that are called 9781452402383_frontcover and 9781452402383_content respectively. If I had tried to upload them with the file names I'd used for every other retailer, it wouldn't have worked. You no longer have to name your e-book file with an ISBN when you upload it, which is great because that made the process much more difficult. (I'm still doing it the old way from habit.)

You'll need to upload interior documents as EPUB and/or PDF files. Google recommends that you send both types since they offer two display modes: original pages and reflowable text. Providing the PDF will ensure that readers can view the book in its original layout, while the EPUB will allow a more customizable experience. Many authors are unfamiliar with EPUB conversion techniques, having only worked in Microsoft Word and uploaded that format or saving it as HTML Web Page Filtered. There are free and paid solutions for making EPUB conversions including Calibre, Sigil, 2epub, and others. You can even download and save an EPUB file if you've uploaded Microsoft Word files directly at Kobo or Barnes & Noble, which they convert to EPUB for their devices.

Unfortunately there is no preview mode, which irks me. Amazon has an amazing previewer, and the others have made dramatic improvements in this arena. The only way to preview your book at Google Play is to wait until it has processed and then view the sample.

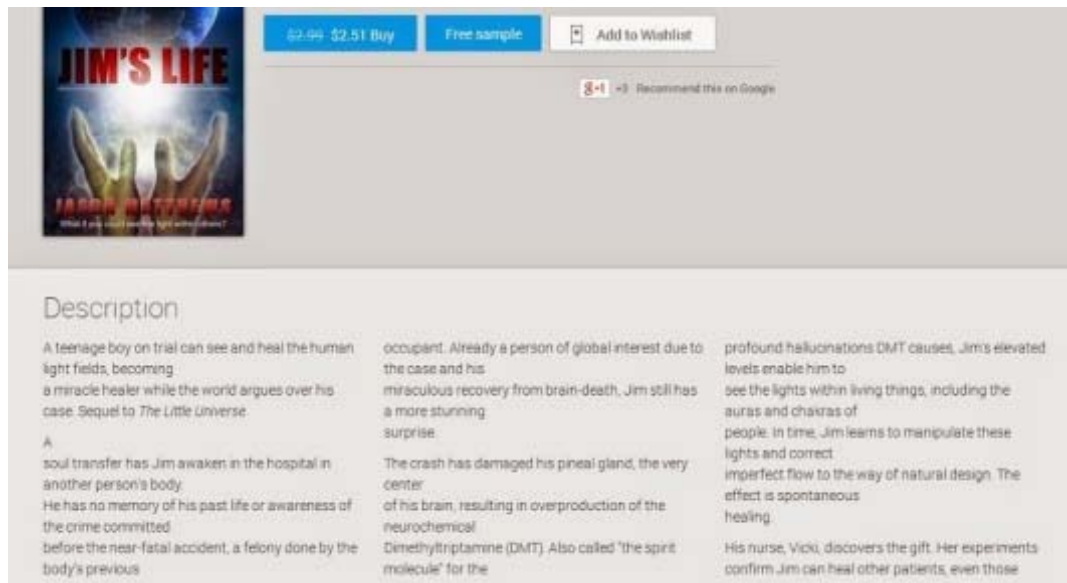
There is little customer support, although it has gotten better. An email to support leads to this automatic reply: *Thanks for contacting us. We'll follow up with you only if we need more information or have additional information to share.* (Feels like they're copping attitude.) In the past I've waited a week or more for a response. Recently I tested the service with an email and got a reply within a few hours when I included a screen-share of the problem, which is recommended.

Tip: include screen-shares in correspondence to entertain bored Google Books employees.

The Ugly

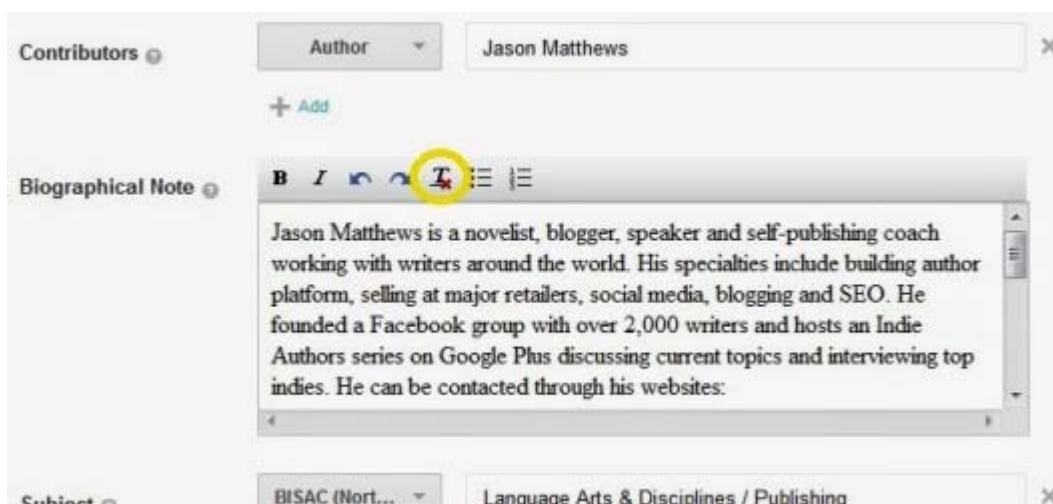
It feels like a wild-goose chase searching for info to accomplish things. I've reread tutorial articles many times only to find myself back at the starting point, wishing Google allowed comments following the article that likely would help me solve issues. Instead they just offer a rating system if the article was helpful or not. To understand my frustration, play around at their Help Center for a while: <https://support.google.com/books/>.

Worse than that, it's a serious chore to get the book's description and author bio to display in proper formatting, even using the simplest formatting. The description may look awful once posted as this one did:



It appears the best way to make formatting behave is to retype it on the editing page, which is annoying if you have multiple books and all that stuff is already written. For the 99 percent of us who want to copy and paste the info from elsewhere, it's necessary to hit the *remove formatting button* in the description box and then manually re-enter the formatting such as for paragraph returns and bold type.

The remove formatting button is highlighted in the yellow circle below:



I had to play around with multiple formatting changes for the description and author bio boxes, then wait about six hours to see how those changes appeared, then repeat until everything was acceptable. It took five days and over a dozen attempts, which is either embarrassing for me or a sign that Google needs to fix this.

Another ugly aspect, and this may be improbable, is the off-chance Google might dump the whole book program. There's a trust issue with Google that doesn't exist at other behemoths like Amazon. Google has scrapped plenty of programs as they did with Reader, Wave, Videos, Buzz, and more. These dead programs are referred to as the Google Graveyard, and their numbers rise as Google experiments with software and the convenience of really deep pockets.

My concern for selling e-books is that they don't make a dedicated e-reading device. In the past they had a partnership with the iRiver Story, but that device didn't integrate into the formation of Google Play, and the iRiver has since been discontinued.

Who buys Google books? My guess is people who read on cell phones and various tablets. Does Google really want to compete with Amazon, Apple, and others for the long term? We'll see. The fact that they are selling e-books and making money on each sale suggests they won't dump the program. But if they did, it wouldn't be a shock.

The Verdict

What kind of author should upload to Google Play? Those willing to go the extra mile, knowing it's a bit more technical, less intuitive, far more annoying, and the risk/rewards are still embedded in a gray area. Selling e-books there may turn out to be a prosperous alternative or a total waste of time. (Sadly, I just described myself.) Royalties are 52 percent. Not a great royalty but still worth doing if more sales platforms are better.

Also note that price gauging at Google Play is about 23 percent, which means they'll reduce whatever price you set it at. Remember to bump up your price by at least 23 percent or be subject to Amazon price matching to match their lower price.

If you're interested in getting started, visit this link: <https://play.google.com/books/publish/signup>.

This article was previously published on The Book Designer blog and is reprinted with the author's permission. Jason Matthews is a novelist, blogger, and self-publishing coach. He works with writers around the world through every phase of book creation and marketing and can be contacted through his website, www.thelittleuniverse.com.



Celebrating the Best of NINC

Tradewinds Hotel, St. Pete, FL
October 22-26, 2014

News and Notes on the Conference

Yes, yes, we all know—record attendance has closed registration for the first time in our history. But there is a waiting list, and openings happen all the

time, so if you want to be put on the list, simply email me at KCMi@aol.com.

In the meantime:

We are revising and updating the *NINC Binder: A Comprehensive Guide to the New World of Publishing* (available for download on the NINC website home page). Go take a look, and see if you'd like to either help with the project and/or submit something to appear in the revised edition. Contact Kelly McClymer for this one: kelly.mccllymer@gmail.com.

As mentioned in last month's *Nink*, the conference has a hashtag: #NINC2014.

We also have an Epilogger up and running, all set to "catch" social media about the event. Please visit: <http://bit.ly/1rjki10>.

Five of our own will be putting on a fantastic workshop in Florida. How does this sound:

The Naked Truth About Self-Publishing

Join the *New York Times* bestselling authors of *The Naked Truth About Self-Publishing* in this candid workshop about the business of publishing, the pitfalls, the changing market, and how to be successful going it alone. Also includes a Q&A.

Speakers: NINC members Liliana Hart, Jana DeLeon, Colleen Gleason, Debra Holland, Jasinda Wilder

That's a "Can't Miss" workshop for members and Author Assistants!

Julia Coblentz, Senior Marketing Manager at NOOK Press (<https://www.nookpress.com/>) will also be joining us for First Word and a workshop.

Kelley Armstrong has agreed to be one of the NINC members representing us on a First Word panel (frankly, I don't know where she finds the time ...).

And there's still that Surprise Industry Guest who, no, will not be speaking, but will be on site for the entirety of the conference.

Menus, costs, and an email address to sign up your spouse/companion for meals of your choice will be on the BeachNINC2014 Yahoo group.

If you're not yet on the loop, send an email to beachninc2014-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

I'm looking for bloggers to blog "live" from the conference to our NINC Blog. Share informal reports, playfully harass everyone who couldn't be in Florida with us this year, write one yourself, pen one with pals, just post photos with captions—whatever floats your boat (or floats in your umbrella drink, I guess). We have to reserve those blog dates asap, so please email Lacy Williams, NINC's Publicity Chick, at lacyjwilliams@gmail.com, and join the list of Happy Bloggers. With the Epilogger, those blogs will automatically also be posted on that page—technology pulls a new trick every time I turn around. Love it!

NINC is about to put on the most ambitious conference in its 25-year history, so let's show the writing world and the publishing industry why we're so proud to be members!

— Kasey Michaels
Chair 2014



Photo by Sabrina Ingram

Not Your Usual Writing Advice

By JoAnn Grote

The Secret to Success

“Happiness is the center, and success revolves around it.”

— Shawn Achor

Many theories as to the secret of success have been offered through the years, including: hard work, intelligence, a college education, choosing a career proven to be lucrative (i.e., not in any of the arts), choosing your parents well, goal setting, devotion to one career area, and just plain luck.

Now it turns out the secret to success might be happiness.

Shawn Achor studied and taught happiness at Harvard for over a decade. He has spoken to schools and businesses—including Google, Federal Express, Morgan Stanley, and the international accounting firm KPMG—in over 50 countries on the part happiness plays in success. According to his book *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology that Fuel Success and Performance at Work* (Crown Business, 2010), “New research in psychology and neuroscience shows that ... we become more successful *when* we are happier and more positive.”

Neuroscience. I like that. The word means “the scientific study of the nervous system,” according to the *Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary*. When I hear “scientific study,” I think of terms like “objective,” “controlled,” and “quantifiable.” According to Achor, over 200 scientific studies performed worldwide on over 275,000 people *prove* that happiness causes success in every area of our lives—including our careers. Happy people are more productive, make more money, produce higher sales, are ill less often, and are less likely to experience burnout.

I stumbled upon Achor’s work when I checked out the Xerox Return on Optimism project which, similar to Xerox’s *Chief Optimist* magazine, extols the effect of optimism in business. Achor was one of the experts involved with the project. I first saw the Xerox project mentioned in an article recommended by NINC member Pauline Jones, so I asked her how she feels optimism and happiness affect her life and work.

“Eleven years ago, when we moved to Houston, it felt like life was coming at us from all sides,” Pauline responded. “In the midst of it all, I had a book due. By the time things settled down enough to write, I had three weeks to get it from *one* chapter to done. Yeah, you read that right. Three weeks. I did it, but it was my lone gothic, mostly-without-humor novel. Fast forward about five years and life hit again, only bigger this time. My 22-year-old son was diagnosed with cancer. He was so brave and so funny. One day we were driving back from a radiation treatment. We went past the mall, and I commented that something smelled good. My son said, ‘I think that’s me. I got cooked today.’”

“My son is healthy and happy now, but that six months was a *huge* reminder to me that Life is easier to take with humor, hope, and yes, optimism. I vowed that I would not lose my sense of humor ever again and that I would bring all of it—hope, humor, and optimism—to my writing and my life. It is knowing this and bringing it to my process that supercharges my writing. Everything doesn’t have to be ‘okay’ for it to be a good day. If I’m breathing and the family is breathing, then life is good. And if I have a little bit of angst swirling around in there, well, there are always some characters I can hose.

“Optimism also helps me on the business side, because we all know how tough this business is. I was recently on a panel at a conference and I was, as always, optimistic about the future for writers and readers. I

noticed a distinct spike in my sales that evening and for a few days after the conference. I also had people approach me and ask questions. I love that, because so many people helped me when I started out. I love that I can pay it forward *and* be excited about it. It's such a great time to be a writer and a reader. A great time!"

Denise Agnew is another NINC member who has adopted an optimistic lifestyle, and adopted happiness as a guide for her writing choices. "Happiness is waiting out there for many of us, but we allow society, our peer group (whether it be social or professional), and family members to tell us what 'should' make us happy. We listen to other people's definition of 'success' even if it isn't our definition. Anything outside of that mainstream box is frowned upon. We ignore the internal feeling, the intuition that says, 'I am happy when I do this.' We decide if we get the big publishing contract from a particular publishing house, or we get a certain agent, we will be in seventh heaven. We haven't examined deep enough to define what truly gives our lives meaning.

"Many experiences over the years have taught me that my happiness is in my hands, and therefore I'm responsible for how things turn out in my life. Evidence for this occurred many times in my life as a writer, but it took me eons to get a clue. In 1999, when I published with a small press/electronic publishing house, I was told by other writers that the publishing path I was on was a mistake. In the back of my mind I couldn't understand how writing what I wanted, when I wanted, and being very happy while doing it was a mistake. Very few people I knew were writing things outside of the box.

"When I wrote stories that didn't conform to the soup *du jour*, I was practically ecstatic. I felt like I was writing the stories I was meant to write. Those books would often get the best reviews. They were the books traditional houses wouldn't look at.

"Sure, I could write inside a box. I even published some stories that would be considered 'inside the box.' Writing these stories was okay, but it didn't give me a thrill. I ignored that internal dialogue that said, 'Fool. You are happy writing what you *want*. Stop trying to fit inside that box.'

"Often I was told if a book was good enough it would find a home in a traditional house. Imagine my excitement when one day my agent told me that the editor at Time Warner was very impressed and wanted to buy my erotic fantasy romance trilogy I'd been tweaking, changing, molding into what the market wanted. It reached the marketing table and was shot down because they didn't know where to put it. The editor had loved the books, but it didn't matter. The books would not be traditionally published.

"That day I started to realize (and have had to remind myself on occasion) that if I write what makes me happy, the book of my heart, then I *am* on the right path. Remembering this ensures that I get the most satisfaction from writing. Being true to myself and writing what I love is also a huge boost to not only my creativity but to my positive outlook. The more I do what I want creatively, when I write the books that call to me, the better all of my life becomes."

Sharing her philosophy adds to Denise's satisfaction. "I think many writers would be happier if they paid attention to what made them happy rather than what other people say *should* make them happy. As a creativity coach I'm helping writers to discover what makes them happy in their writing life; to discover if being in the box makes them truly happy, or if stepping outside of that realm is where their meaning and ecstasy lies."

Achor says, "Our brains are literally hardwired to perform at their best not when they are negative or even neutral, but when they are positive," and "positive brains have a biological advantage." This doesn't refer only to logic, but to creativity. People who felt amusement or contentment came up with more ideas during experiments than people feeling anxious or angry. Studies show that when people think about something positive or that makes them feel happier before engaging in a project, they work faster, come up with more ideas, and are more productive than those who think of something negative or engage in mental activity that's neither positive nor negative.

Now that's information that's useful to a novelist. If you tend to have a more Grinch-like attitude toward life than a Pollyanna-like attitude, you don't need to change your entire personality overnight to benefit from this research. Make the choice to think about something that makes you happy or amuses you before you start writing for the day. It doesn't have to relate to the publishing world, or to your

Continued on page 17 ▶



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane Kelly

Alternative Minimum Tax

Several decades ago, legislators realized that, due to various tax breaks and loopholes provided by law, a significant number of people with very high incomes were paying little or no federal income tax. As a result, Congress enacted a secondary tax computation system, known as the Alternative Minimum Tax or AMT, which establishes a tax floor.

While AMT was intended to affect only high-income taxpayers, because the thresholds for the application of AMT were not adjusted for inflation, more and more taxpayers found themselves owing AMT. Although a “patch” has been enacted to prevent the application of the tax to middle-class taxpayers, you could find yourself owing AMT if you earn a high income. Given that an author’s income can vary significantly from year to year, even if AMT has never applied to your income you might find yourself owing AMT in a year in which you receive a large advance or have exceptionally good sales.

AMT is reported on Form 6251, which is filed along with the taxpayer’s regular return.

How does the AMT system vary from the regular tax system? In several important ways.

Deductions. The usual deductions don’t all apply when computing AMT.

If you took the standard deduction when computing your regular tax, this deduction is denied for AMT computation purposes.

If you claimed itemized deductions, you will be required to make several adjustments for AMT purposes.

Medical expense deductions are subject to a 10 percent adjusted gross income (AGI) floor for regular tax purposes, or a 7.5 percent AGI floor if you or your spouse is 65 or older. For AMT purposes, however, medical expense deductions are subject to an additional 2.5 percent AGI floor. Thus, if you claimed a significant amount of medical expense deductions, there’s a greater chance AMT could apply to you.

For AMT purposes, taxpayers cannot deduct state and local income taxes, personal property taxes, or real estate taxes. These amounts are added back into taxable income. The higher these amounts, the more likely that you will owe AMT. On the bright side, however, because the deduction for state income taxes is denied, taxpayers do not have to include any state sales tax refund in income for AMT purposes.

For regular tax purposes, interest on a home equity loan of up to \$100,000 is allowed regardless of how the taxpayer spent the loan proceeds. For AMT purposes, however, interest on a home equity loan is deductible only if the loan proceeds were used to build, buy, or improve the taxpayer’s home.

Personal exemptions. Personal exemptions are disallowed when computing income for AMT purposes. As a result, many married couples who have multiple children, and thus claim several personal exemptions for regular tax purposes, could find themselves being hit with AMT.

Depreciation. While taxpayers are allowed to claim accelerated depreciation for regular tax purposes, depreciation under the AMT system requires that the cost of an asset be spread over a longer time period, resulting in a lower deduction.

Other Adjustments. A number of other adjustments apply, including, but not limited to, adjustments for:

- ▶ IRA contribution deductions and distributions
- ▶ Self-employed health insurance deduction
- ▶ Passive activity deductions and losses
- ▶ Net operating loss deductions
- ▶ Income or losses on the disposition of property
- ▶ Investment interest deduction

Computing the amount of some of these adjustments can be complicated, since the deductible amount is based on AGI, which is calculated differently for regular tax and AMT purposes.

What can you do to make sure AMT doesn't sneak up on you? Compute your AMT on Form 6251 each year, even if you know you won't owe AMT. It's important to see how close your tax liability under the regular tax system is to the tax computed under the AMT system. The closer the AMT amount is to your regular tax liability, the greater chance you could owe AMT in the future. You can also find out whether you are subject to AMT by using the AMT Assistant feature on the IRS website: [http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Alternative-Minimum-Tax-\(AMT\)-Assistant-for-Individuals](http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Alternative-Minimum-Tax-(AMT)-Assistant-for-Individuals)

Keep in mind that you must file a Form 6251, even if you won't owe AMT, if you received any of the following types of income during the tax year or claimed any of these deductions on your regular tax return:

- ▶ Accelerated Depreciation
- ▶ Stock by exercising an incentive stock option and you did not dispose of the stock in the same year
- ▶ Tax exempt interest from private activity bonds
- ▶ Intangible drilling, circulation, research, experimental, or mining costs
- ▶ Amortization of pollution-control facilities or depletion
- ▶ Income or loss from tax-shelter farm activities or passive activities
- ▶ Income from long-term contracts not figured using the percentage-of-completion method
- ▶ Interest paid on a home mortgage NOT used to buy, build or substantially improve your home
- ▶ Investment interest expense reported on Form 4952
- ▶ Net operating loss deduction
- ▶ Alternative minimum tax adjustments from an estate, trust, electing large partnership or cooperative
- ▶ Section 1202 exclusion
- ▶ Any general business credit in Part I on Form 3800
- ▶ Empowerment zone and renewal community employment credit
- ▶ Qualified electric vehicle credit
- ▶ Alternative fuel vehicle refueling property credit
- ▶ Credit for prior year minimum tax

Diane Kelly is a retired CPA/tax attorney and writes humorous romantic mysteries, including the just-released Paw Enforcement K-9 cop series.

Not Your Usual Writing Advice....

Continued from page 15 ▶ work-in-progress. You don't need to spend an hour in meditation. Even three minutes thinking about anything that makes you happy or something for which you feel grateful can improve your work results. A few minutes listening to music that lifts your spirits can do the trick. (I like to listen to the 1980s song *Don't Worry, Be Happy*.) If the choice improves your work even a little, you might think it worth a few minutes spent in your happy place.

For a quick introduction to the ideas of Shawn Achor, check out his 12-minute Ted talk on Youtube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLjsdqxnZb0>.

JoAnn Grote is the award-winning author of 40 books, including inspirational romances, middle-grade historical novels, and children's nonfiction. Contact her at jaghi@rconnect.com.

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



Fan Fiction: Part One

“Fan fiction is what literature might look like if it were reinvented from scratch after a nuclear apocalypse by a band of brilliant pop-culture junkies trapped in a sealed bunker.”

— Lev Grossman, critic, journalist, and bestselling novelist

My house was recently burgled—which is, I gather, an old-fashioned word that’s not used around here. When I called 911 to report the theft, they didn’t know what I was talking about—which was quite disconcerting—until I agreed with their suggestion that I might mean “burglarized.”

I had left my back door wide open while gardening around the house, mistakenly believing that my six-foot privacy fence, locked gate, and a large dog, combined with the fact that I was *right here*, made this safe. But (the cops surmise) a junkie passing through the alley behind my fence saw his opportunity and decided to risk it. Fortunately, his intrusion was brief, no one was hurt, and only one item of value (my beloved iPad) was taken. I never even saw the thief, only the noisy wake of his departure over my fence.

I never saw him, but I have since then been repeatedly reminded of this stranger’s intrusion in my private space. He entered my bedroom, opened my closet (and took something), opened my dresser drawers (and took stuff), opened my jewelry box (ditto), and searched the surfaces of the bedroom furniture (from which he took things). Only a few hours ago, I discovered that yet another item is missing from my bedroom, and I realized that he stole that, too. Like most of the things he took from me, it has no monetary value and won’t do him any good, since he was presumably looking for cash and items he could pawn.

Discovering yet another thing missing immediately renewed my feeling of violation. It reminded me vividly again that a total stranger entered my home without my permission, crept into my bedroom, touched my belongings, and took my stuff. It creeps me out. It also really pisses me off.

Which is the reaction (here’s the segue) that some writers have to fan fiction—though, obviously, without the *fear* inspired by realizing a random junkie has gotten into one’s house.

In fan fiction, a fan takes characters and a universe created by another writer and uses them for stories of her own. A well-known example when I was a child was *Star Trek* fan fiction, wherein fans of the show wrote and shared (in mimeographed fanzines) their own continuing adventures about the crew of the starship *Enterprise*. Modern-day TV shows and film franchises tend to be mined the most widely for fan fiction, since they’ve got the biggest fan bases. Enormous fanfic communities also spring up around bestselling book series, particularly in science fiction and fantasy.

One of the key aspects of fan fiction is that it’s social and interactive. Like most storytellers, fanfic authors usually like to share their writing with other fans, who in turn enjoy discussing the works. If, by contrast, fans wrote in secret and kept their stories hidden away, no one would ever know about it—and thus there would be no conflict with authors or media companies. It is in the sharing of these stories that fan fiction becomes a public matter and attracts the concern of copyright owners upon whose work the fanfic is based.

The World Wide Web has drastically changed the fan fiction landscape in our era, making fanfic communities much easier to find, grow, and participate in than was the case back in the Dark Ages when small

groups of fans circulated hard copies of their work via snail mail. Some articles I've read estimate that there are by now over one million fan fiction sites (not authors—sites) on the Internet.

So this is a hugely popular pastime with a mass following that has expanded far beyond the mental image you may have of fanfic being the hobby of a few misfits living in their parents' basements. In fact, with that many people engaged in fanfic, it seems likely that you and I both have friends or relatives who participate in fanfic. Some NINC members may currently write fanfic for fun or may have developed their writing skills by writing fan fiction early on.

Indeed, one of the most high-profile novelists of the past few years got her start that way: E.L. James' bestselling *Fifty Shades* trilogy began life as fan fiction based on Stephanie Meyer's bestselling *Twilight* series.

Fan fiction is a hot-button topic for many people. I have been shocked on a number of occasions by how incredibly vitriolic fanfic authors and communities can be toward the creators of the works they love enough to mine for their own use. And I suppose that fanfic authors are sometimes shocked by how hostile to them the creators can be.

My work has never been the subject of fan fiction, so I don't have a pony in this race, but I have been following the subject for several years. My interest initially arose out of exasperation, since so many people who attack or defend fan fiction focus on irrelevancies (ex. whether works of fan fiction are high quality or embarrassingly bad) or misinformation ("E.L. James' series was *Twilight* fanfic, so obviously it's okay to sell and publish fan fiction!").

There are two key questions with regard to fan fiction, only two things that really matter. And these are both often ignored, dismissed, or completely misunderstood in the heated debates that arise about fan fiction.

Is the original work under copyright?

If so, do you have the copyright holder's permission to create derivative works?

If the work is under copyright, then any work directly based on it is considered a derivative work, and derivative rights are typically held by the copyright owner—and can be licensed for exploitation, such as a dramatization or a game. If you create a derivative work of copyrighted material without a license or permission, then you may be in violation of copyright.

Actually, I'd say you're *definitely* in violation of copyright, but my opinion is based on ethics rather than on law. I am not a lawyer and do not play one on the Internet. So I consulted several attorneys about this before appearing on a discussion panel about fanfic a few months ago.

The right to create derivative works is one that copyright law expressly grants to copyright holders, so a case for copyright infringement is a serious risk with any unlicensed or unauthorized derivative work. But the legal aspects of copyright infringement, derivative works, fan fiction, parody, and fair use are so vague and complicated that none of the attorneys I queried would make a general legal statement defining fan fiction as a copyright violation. It's something that has to be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Meanwhile, fan fiction doesn't compete with an author's sales or impinge on her earnings, and fanfic authors typically share their work gratis rather than selling it. So there's rarely any incentive to sue, while there is, meanwhile, plenty of deterrent. Lawsuits are time-consuming and ruinously expensive, after all, and very few writers want to alienate readers by suing their own fans. So legal vagaries surrounding fan fiction might remain unresolved for many years, in the absence of lawsuits that could lead to precedent-setting decisions.

However, there are some clear boundaries we can rely on. To return to a previous example, Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* is a paranormal young adult novel about a teenage girl's romance with a century-old vampire who can pass as a high schooler. E.L. James' *Fifty Shades of Grey* is a contemporary erotic romance about a college graduate and a twenty-something business magnate. As you may have noticed, these two things are not identical. Whether or not *Fifty Shades* was a derivative work in its early drafts (ex. a story about a sparkling vampire named Edward), the book that was published is *not* a derivative work.

Works that are inspired by, similar to, or even shamelessly imitative of other books are also not derivative works. Books that jump on trends and bandwagons are not derivative works. Nor are books that follow well-worn genre conventions or use common tropes. ▶

Moreover, returning to key question #1 about fanfic, there is an entire field of fan fiction which is entirely excluded from concerns about derivation or infringement: If the original work is in the public domain, then it is not under copyright and is not anyone's intellectual property (anymore). Creating works based on public domain stories is much like Dumpster diving: the stuff is sitting out there on the curb for anyone who wants to take it. This is so acceptable that, for example, very polished fan fiction based on the works of Jane Austen accounts for dozens of novels in the current publishing market, including *Death Comes To Pemberley* by P.D. James, *Mr. Darcy Takes A Wife* by Linda Berdoll, and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, a book which incorporates Austen's own prose.

The angrily triumphant argument of fanfic enthusiasts that such works are fanfic, too—gotcha!—is correct. But that argument completely ignores the relevant point, which is that it's fan fiction for which *no permission or authorization is needed*, and therein lies the crucial difference.

In the second half of this two-parter, we'll look at some interesting new developments in the world of fan fiction. Meanwhile, Laura Resnick is busy writing her next urban fantasy novel and researching security systems for her house.

Business Briefs

No Fifth Year for BookStats

The Book Industry Study Group (BISG) board voted not to renew the agreement with the Association of American Publishers (AAP) for the statistics program. The board considered that the "BookStats has run its course." They will look at other options and listed other currently available sources, including *Digital Books and the New Subscription Economy*, *Student Attitudes toward Content in Higher Education Volume 4*, and *Faculty Attitudes toward Content in Higher Education Volume*. The last edition of BookStats was out in mid-July. AAP is continuing with the monthly StatShots that captures data from 1,200 companies in a range of categories.

PW Daily



Angry Robot Minus Two Imprints

U.K. Angry Robot Books is discontinuing two imprints: Strange Chemistry YA and Exhibit A mysteries. The reason given was "market saturation." Originally part of HarperCollins UK, the publisher became independent in 2010.

<http://angryrobotbooks.com/2014/06/news-about-strange-chemistry-and-exhibit-a/>

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