



▶ WordPress Is for Authors

By Yael K. Miller

If you've read the article "Why Book Authors Need Their Own Websites" by my business partner Phyllis Zimmler Miller, you know why if you're a book author you need a website.

And if you've read my post "What You Should Know About Web Design for Books," you have a basic idea of what the website should look like.

Now comes the tough part — getting the website. You could hire a web designer who will create the look in Photoshop and then either send it out to be coded or turn that look into website code himself/herself. I know a lot of web designers who can do this for you and it will look very pretty. But there's a problem with this.

You're an author, which is a fancier way of saying writer. You're a writer. You like to write. And here's the problem with those lovely Photoshop-to-coded websites. Everything is so rigid that even a minor change might have you hiring that very expensive, very good web designer to fix it for you.

You could say not a problem. But as a writer myself, I know we consider, fuss, obsess over whatever we write. And our brains and fingers itch over our desire to change something. But such a hyper-designed site will serve as a roadblock to our natural creative desires.

What if something is out there that allows you to easily change any copy you write? Any copy, anywhere on the site and, yes, easily.

Is there such a unicorn out there?

Yes, there is and it's called WordPress.

Wait a minute you say. I've heard of WordPress. Isn't it for blogging? I want a website.

Yes, you can blog with WordPress. But WordPress is in a fact a Content Management System (CMS), meaning you can have a website or a blog or both with the same software.

Now this part is very important. You do NOT want WordPress.com – that's WordPress blogging on a hosted side.

You WANT the WordPress which you get from WordPress.org – which is FREE. You have to get your own URL (domain name), but you would have to get one anyway for a designer website.

While there are steps you need to take to get WordPress setup on your own URL, once the WordPress site is up it is very easy to use and the text editor works like Word.

To control the look of a WordPress website, you use what are called WordPress themes. Some are free and some you have to pay for. Different themes have different looks, different built-in features, different advantages and disadvantages.

I truly believe if you are an author (writer), WordPress will satisfy that creative urge within you to be in control of the content of your site. And you'll love being able to make immediate changes without having to wait for your web designer to get back to you.

Yael K. Miller is the co-founder of Miller Mosaic, LLC, building WordPress websites for authors and other small businesses. She also does social media marketing and helps people self publish their books.

▶ A Definition of Author Platform

By Jane Friedman

Platform is one of the most difficult concepts to explain, partly because everyone defines it a little differently. But one thing that I know for sure: Editors and agents are attracted to authors who have this thing called "platform."

What editors and agents typically mean by platform

They're looking for someone with visibility and authority who has proven reach to a target audience.

Let's break this down further:

Visibility. Who knows you? Who is aware of your work? Where does your work regularly appear? How many people see it? How does it spread? Where does it spread? What communities are you a part of? Who do you influence? Where do you make waves?

Authority. What's your credibility? What are your credentials? (This is particularly important for nonfiction writers; it is less important for fiction writers, though it can play a role. Just take a look at any graduate of the Iowa MFA program.)

Proven reach. It's not enough to SAY you have visibility. You have to show where you make an impact and give proof of engagement. This could be quantitative evidence (e.g., size of your e-mail newsletter list, website traffic, blog comments) or qualitative evidence (high-profile reviews, testimonials from A-listers in your genre).

Target audience. You should be visible to the most receptive or appropriate audience for the work you're trying to sell. For instance: If you have visibility, authority, and proven reach to orthodontists, that probably won't be helpful if you're marketing vampire fiction (unless perhaps you're writing about a vampire orthodontist who repairs crooked vampire fangs?).

What platform is NOT

- It is not about self-promotion.
- It is not about hard selling.
- It is not about annoying people.
- It is not about being an extrovert.
- It is not about your qualifications, authority, or experience, although these are tools for growing or nurturing a platform.
- It is not something you create overnight.
- It is not something you can buy.
- It is not a one-time event.
- It is not more important than your story or message (but hopefully it grows out of that).

Platform is not about bringing attention to yourself, or by screaming to everyone you can find online or offline, "Look at me! Look at me!" Platform isn't about who yells the loudest or who markets the best.

To read the rest of this post, visit

<http://janefriedman.com/2012/03/13/author-platform-definition/>

Jane Friedman (@JaneFriedman) is web editor of the Virginia Quarterly Review, and the former publisher of Writer's Digest. She has spoken on writing, publishing, and the future of media at more than 200 events since 2001, including South by Southwest, BookExpo America, and the Association of Writers and Writing Programs.

► News You Can Use

The following is a selection of articles, resources, and information to help you CREATE, PRODUCE, and MARKET your books. Visit the SLPA website at www.stlouispublishers.org to find the live links!

CREATE

How to Establish the Right Priorities to Grow a Blog

By *Nathalie Lussier, November 28th, 2012*

"Here's a harsh nugget of truth for you; you don't need more how-to's or to-do's... You need priorities."

<http://www.probblogger.net/archives/2012/11/29/how-to-establish-the-right-priorities-to-grow-your-blog-and-profits/>

PRODUCE

7 Things I've Learned So Far

By *Trebtor Healey, November 26th, 2012*

"...you might be surprised to find your boldest voice is often your most attractive one."

<http://www.writersdigest.com/editor-blogs/guide-to-literary-agents/7-things-ive-learned-so-far-by-trebtor-healey>

MARKET

The Importance of Your Personal Brand

By *Maria Elena Duron, November 28th, 2012*

"The more people know about you and are willing to endorse your brand, the more likely they are going to share you and your brand through word of mouth."

<http://blog.marketingtipsforauthors.com/2012/10/the-importance-of-your-personal-brand.html> 

BONUS BLOG SIGHTINGS:

► Publishing Options

By *Jan B. King*


If you are not sure how best to get your book published, check out the advantages vs. disadvantages of "traditional publishing" vs. "independent self-publishing" vs. "vanity/subsidy publishing" in this recent blog by Jan B. King. Jan is a book coach, publishing strategist and author advocate with more than 30 years' experience in the publishing industry, including many years as President & CEO of a traditional mid-sized publisher.

<http://assistedselfpublishing.com/publishing-options/> 

► How To Sell Self-Published Books: Read This First

By *Catherine (Caffeinated) Ryan Howard*

Just because you wrote a book does not mean people are going to want to read it. Sounds suspiciously like common sense, but as I've said before, common sense isn't as common as you might think.

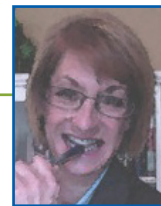
<http://catherineryanhoward.com/2012/12/01/replay-2012-how-to-sell-self-published-books-read-this-first/> 

► KDP Select: Is it worth it? (6 Takeaways From My Experience)

As if it wasn't difficult enough for us to keep up with our social media accounts, emails and writing — the authors' life also calls for us to stay on top of ever-changing technology.


<http://selfpublishingteam.com/author/shannon/> 

► What's Ahead, January 9, 2013: Plan & Organize a Successful Book Launch Event




It's common knowledge that books don't sell themselves, and savvy authors know they must be the key promoter. Our guest speaker, Nancy L. Baumann of Stonebrook Publishing will share her experience from a recent book launch event that drew over 300 people and garnered media attention. Learn the key components to planning a successful event and the steps you can take while finalizing your book:

- Is a book launch ALWAYS the right thing to do? How do you decide?
- When should you start planning your book launch; i.e. should book content dovetail into your marketing plan?
- How to launch a book on a shoestring budget
- A simple 5-step plan for a successful book launch

Nancy is owner of Stonebrook Publishing, an independent press dedicated to publishing high-impact nonfiction works that will either save lives, change lives, or have a positive impact on society. 


► The SLPA Mission

The St. Louis Publishers Association empowers authors and publishers to create and market quality products and books. A nationally recognized organization, the SLPA provides educational, informational resources on publishing. Through its monthly meetings, the organization provides networking opportunities for people involved in all aspects of the publishing industry. 

► SLPA Meetings

SLPA meets on the second Wednesday of the month:
Brentwood Community Center
2505 S. Brentwood Blvd., Room 101
Brentwood, MO 63144
(Enter through the door closest to the flagpole)

Doors open for networking at 6:30pm and meeting begins at 7pm. The formal meeting concludes at about 8:30pm with networking continuing after the meeting.

Our regular meetings are free to members. Guests – \$10 at the door, cash or check only. 

► Questions about SLPA?

Contact Membership Chair:

Kim Wolterman, membership@stlouispublishers.org

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Members: Get your article featured in the SLPA newsletter and posted on our blog. E-mail Maria Rodgers O'Rourke at vp@stlouispublishers.org for more information. 



Join us January 9, 2013, 7pm for

"How to Organize a Successful Book Launch on a Shoestring Budget"