

The Internet – Not So Scary!

ONLINE PROMOTION

Website

Your website is your most important marketing tool, as after your books, it will most likely be the first point of call from your readers. Some tips for an effective website:

- * make sure it looks professional
- * keep it simple and easy to use
- * necessary pages – *list of your books currently available* plus one page for each. If you have a series, have a page for the series. *About You. Coming soon/Upcoming. Blog. Contact.*
- * desirable pages – *FAQ, extras, newsletter.*

Free websites

Wordpress - <http://www.wordpress.com>

Blogger - <http://www.blogger.com>

These will give you a website of "[http:// username.wordpress.com](http://username.wordpress.com)" To have your own domain name, you will need to buy the domain name. I use Network Solutions, but there are hundreds of companies out there. You will then need to purchase URL redirection, available through your free website. If not, a quick Google search will find you a company who can help!

Social media sharing websites (for your blog)

Networked Blogs - <http://www.networkedblogs.com/>

Twitterfeed - <http://twitterfeed.com/>

Sites such as these post your new blog posts to your social media so you don't have to. Always a bonus!

Picture editing website

Picmonkey - <http://www.picmonkey.com/>

There are two options - the free version, which allows you basic editing, and the paid version, which gives you more options.

Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com>

I would recommend having a personal profile AND an author page.

Personal profile—required to join groups, create events while also being great interaction with fellow authors and your publishers. You can link to your author page via the "works at" bit.

Page—Use for announcements and the like, but makes sure you personalise it, aligning it with the themes you've chosen for your website, ie similar colours, the same banner, pictures, etc.

You can create or add apps to your page to help promote and personalise. You can also use Facebook ads to grow your likes.

Apps

AuthorApp - <https://apps.facebook.com/authorapp/>

Thunderpenny - <http://www.thunderpenny.com/>

Bookpulse - <http://bookpulse.heroku.com/website/index>

How tos

Custom Facebook Apps - <http://www.labnol.org/internet/create-custom-facebook-pages/17957/>

Twitter - <http://www.twitter.com>

Immediate interaction with people and a great way to promote. You can join numerous groups where you 'share' promotional tweets, however be careful of spamming. Make sure it's a mix you're comfortable with – most seem to recommend a 70/30 split.

Managing Twitter

These website help to manage your twitter feed and also schedule tweets.

Hootsuite - <https://hootsuite.com/>

Tweetdeck - <http://tweetdeck.com/>

Twuffer - <http://twuffer.com/>

How tos

Personalised Twitter Backgrounds - <http://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/how-to-make-a-twitter-background/>

Other Social Media

Tumblr - <http://www.tumblr.com>

Tumblr is almost a mini-blog, a place where you can post pictures, video clips, links and text. I find I use it to obsess about trailers for movies and tv shows ☺

Pinterest - <http://pinterest.com/>

Pinterest is like a giant pinboard, where you can ‘pin’ pictures to various ‘boards’. It’s great for research, as each picture retains a link to where you found it. However, beware of copyright infringement – a lot of photos are not available for sharing.

Instagram - <http://instagram.com>

I like photography, and thus love this app. If you enjoy taking photos, it’s a great app to connect with people who might not otherwise see your work.

LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/>

I must admit, I don’t know about this one! However, I have a LinkedIn account and people seem to want to add me to their networks. Once I figure it out, I’m sure it will be useful.

Goodreads / Shelfari / LibraryThing

<http://www.goodreads.com> / <http://www.shelfari.com> / <http://www.librarything.com>

This is a fantastic way to interact with readers, as it allows you to put your books out there for people to share and comment on. It’s also allows you to share your own reading tastes, perhaps garnering new readers through similar tastes in books.

Google+ - <https://plus.google.com>

This seems to be Google’s version of Facebook. I’ve yet to figure it out completely, but I believe it will gain in popularity as more and more people discover it.

Google Hangouts

I’m really intrigued by this one as I think there’s a lot of potential. Google Hangouts is like a video chat, where people who are invited can chat ‘face-to-face’ provided they have a web cam. It’s a great way to conduct interviews across distances.

Australian Romance Readers Association (<http://www.australianromancereaders.com.au>) utilise Google Hangouts to facilitate author chats, as do one of my favourite online shows, Vaginal Fantasy Book Club (<http://www.vaginalfantasy.com>).

ONLINE MARKETING

Free

Bloggers

There are a myriad of bloggers out there who would be delighted to have you guest on their blog. You could do an interview, a blog post, or any of a million ideas. Most blogger will have a point of contact.

Review sites

Again, there are quite a few reviewing sites out there. Your publisher will submit your book to some of them, but you should contact a few too. On the reviewing sites will be their preferred mode of contact – make sure you adhere to their guidelines.

Requesting interviews from fellow authors

A lot of your fellow authors will have blogs and they'll be looking for content just as much as you. If you have a relationship with the author, ask them if they would be willing to host you on their blog and offer to host them on yours. It's great for cross promotion!

Author/publisher groups

Yahoo Groups is a great place to meet and interact with other authors. Additionally, your publisher will have an 'author group', most likely through Yahoo Groups, where you can chat about all sorts of things with your fellow authors. I've gleaned a lot of promotional tips from these group interaction and find them highly valuable.

Not Free

Blog hops

Blog hops are a great way to build a potential audience. Organised by one person, you sign your blog up and then on the appointed day, you post about the theme of the blog hop. The only catch – there must be a giveaway. This is where the cost of the promotion comes in. You can giveaway whatever you like – copies of your books, signed postcards, magnets, Amazon gift cards, etc. However, this does incur a cost, and will include postage. All these things must be considered before you decide upon what you're willing to giveaway.

Also, the thing the person must do to qualify for a giveaway should be done with an eye

towards growing your readership. The simplest is for entrants to leave a comment on your blog, but this may not give you the exposure you require. I've experimented with newsletter sign ups, and you could request them to like your Facebook page, follow you on Twitter, or whatever. Play around and see what works for you.

However, keep in mind the legalities surrounding giveaways. You must put terms and conditions on any giveaway you do. There are examples on the internet of what to include, however a lot of authors choose to use services such as Rafflecopter (<http://www.rafflecopter.com>) which take care of the legalities for you.

Examples of blog hops

Carrie Ann Blog Hops – <http://carrieannbloghops.blogspot.com>

Swag

While this isn't online per se, it does facilitate a lot of online marketing. Offering prizes in blog hops and such is great, and it's even better when it's stuff that has your book on it! Sites like Vistaprint <http://www.vistaprint.com.au> offer cheap and easy ways to produce merchandise such as postcards, magnets, keyrings, etc. The sky's the limit!

PR companies

There are quite a few PR companies who specialise in online promotion. They have several options, including online blog tours.

Examples of PR Companies

Goddess Fish Promotions – <http://www.goddessfishpromotions.blogspot.com>

Sizzling PR – <http://www.sizzlingpr.com/>

Review sites/bloggers/etc

Review sites and some blogs offer advertising on their site for a price. Some also offer a 'featured member' option, where you pay a nominal monthly amount and are given access to a wide range of promotional opportunities.

Some sites will also feature 'events', a set period similar to an online party with prizes and giveaways and the like.

Finally, your very best promotion?

Write the next book!