



10 TIPS FOR
FUTURE-PROOFING
YOUR BUSINESS

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WHY AUTHORS
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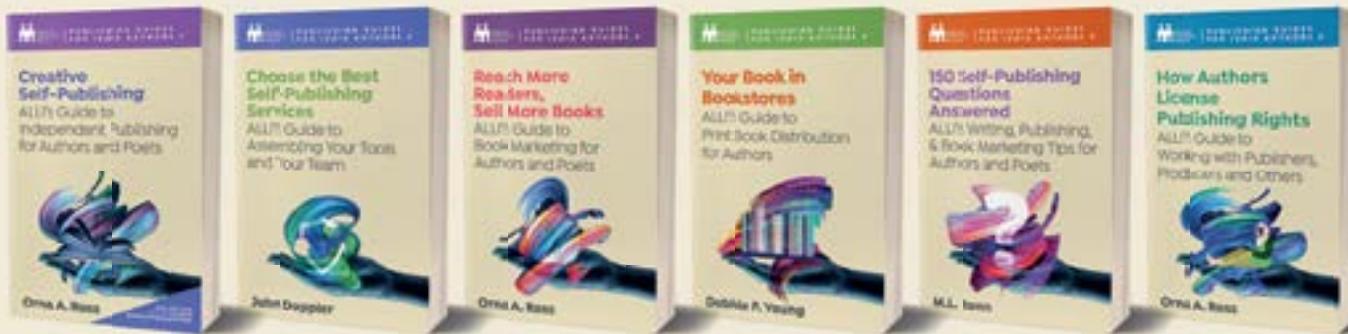
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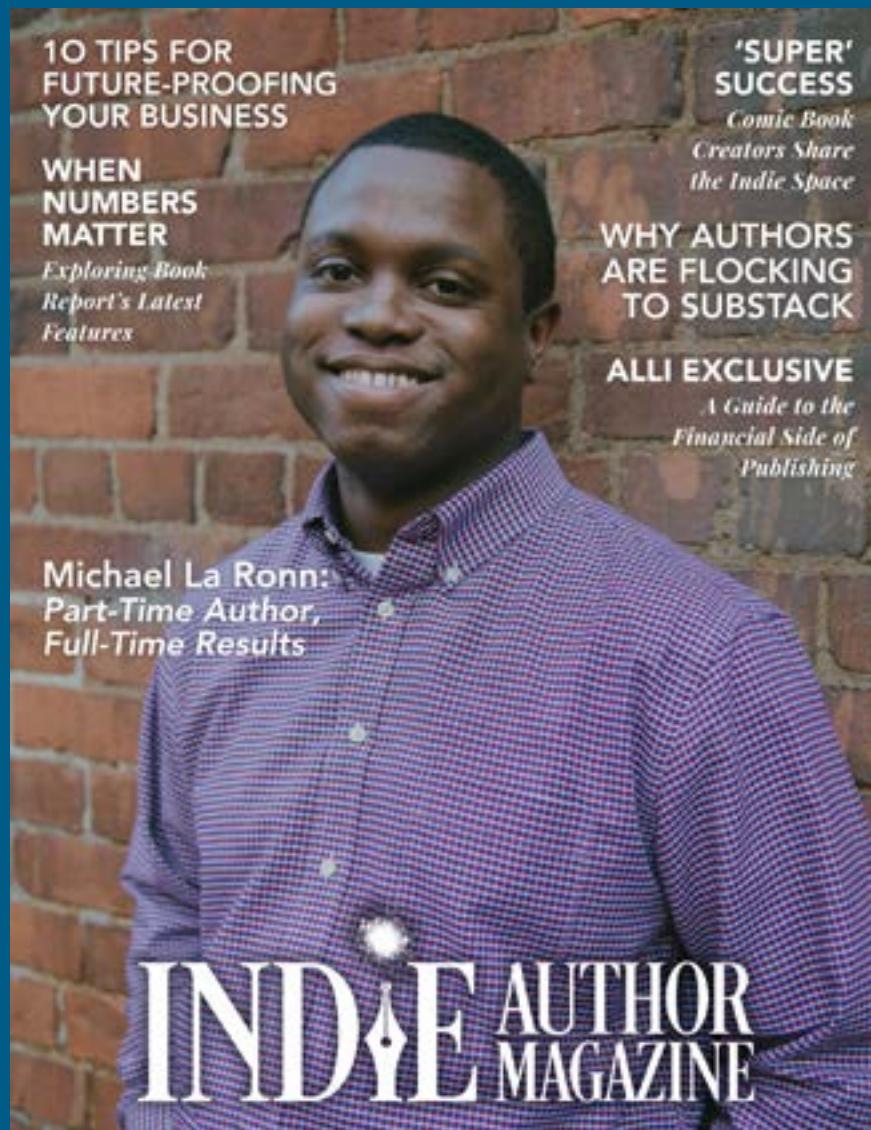
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‘SUPER’ SUCCESS: COMIC BOOK CREATORS SHARE THE INDIE SPACE WITH AUTHORS



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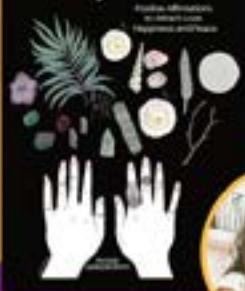
Authorpreneurs in Action



"I love Lulu! They've been a fantastic distributor of my paperbacks and an excellent partner as I dive into direct sales. They integrate so smoothly with my personal Shopify store, and their customer support has been top notch."

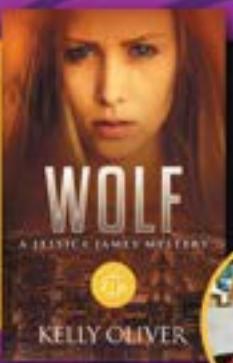
Katie Cross, katiecrossbooks.com

Daily Rituals



"Having my own store has given me the freedom to look at my creativity as a profitable business and lifelong career."

Phoebe Garnsworthy, phoebegarnsworthy.com



"Lulu has a super handy integration with Shopify. Lulu makes it so easy to sell paperbacks directly to readers."

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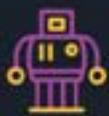
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WHEN WRITING MEANS BUSINESS

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Athenia Creative | 6820 Apus Dr., Sparks, NV, 89436 USA | 775.298.1925

ISSN 2768-7880 (online)–ISSN 2768-7872 (print)

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Nicole Schroeder
Editor in Chief

From the **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

A few years ago, my family started a tradition we dubbed “the office party.”

It was in the midst of the shift to working from home during the pandemic. We’d visited a new donut shop in town and had brought a box home for people to eat while they worked. We joked that it was like someone had brought a box of donuts for the company break room—only this time, the break room doubled as our kitchen.

The office parties have continued into today, but they’re far from the only tradition I’ve started around my work since leaving my traditional office job. In recent years, I’ve begun blocking out time in my calendar for accounting and planning my work week. I organize regular café trips with friends or family members to work, since I’ve found I focus better when I’m around other people. I’ll admit that I still struggle with setting work aside in the evenings and on the weekends, but I’m at least trying to find that elusive balance.

In our new advice column this month, our favorite agony aunt reflects on having made exactly these sorts of adjustments when she began her full-time author journey. Being your own boss is hard, as is finding a work routine that still allows you time away from your writing. The truth is that every author’s business looks different—because every author is different. Your personality may align better with some processes than others, as this month’s Mindset article explores. Some businesses may benefit from expanding into other mediums, but others may see more success simply following tried-and-true publishing strategies. Some authors may even prefer for their writing to stay a side hustle rather than become a full-time gig. Michael La Ronn, this month’s featured author, has proven you can still make a name for yourself doing so.

As indie authors, we get to decide every piece of our book business; that can sometimes feel like a blessing and a curse. But if you step back and consider what works best for you at every turn, you’ll build a business that’s not only successful but also sustainable—one that will keep you creating far into the future.

Now that’s an accomplishment that deserves an office party.

Nicole Schroeder

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Let's Chat

The Two Authors' Podcast Brings Laughter, Sheds Light on How Authors Succeed in the Industry

Two years ago, on Valentine's Day 2023, authors Nicholas Harvey and Douglas Pratt launched their podcast with a question: "What are we doing here?"

The two had crossed paths first in the Tropical Authors Facebook Group—both are Tropical Thriller authors—then at the Novelists, Inc. (NINC) conference in Florida. They'd both made drastic shifts in their author careers three years prior, and they'd both been interested in starting a reader-focused podcast to try to attract new fans and boost their books' readership.

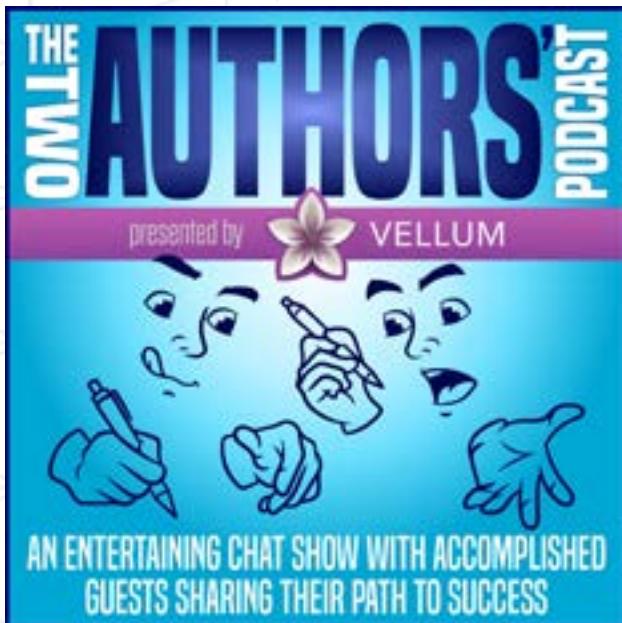
"We had a lot of fun coming up with some really bad names for it that never went anywhere," Pratt says.

"That was a great name, the goat one we had," Harvey interjects. "*Plotting Goats and Roping Murders*. That never would have caught on, but it was funny."

Eventually, the two settled on something much more straightforward.

The Two Authors' Podcast, now in its third season, has evolved plenty since it began. In its first six months, the show pivoted from a focus on readers to one directed at helping authors level up. Its hosts have evolved, too. Harvey and Pratt have grown far beyond where their careers were at the start of the podcast; the two are now six-figure authors, and the guests they've invited on are generally at their level of success or above—though that's not a strict rule, Harvey says.

They still seem to ask themselves the same question they asked in their inaugural episode. It may not be relevant, given the success of the podcast, the guests who've appeared on their show, or the number of episodes they've published—sixty, at the time of writing this article.



But regardless of whether the question is warranted, asking it is sort of the point.

“Our goal is really to make sure that newer authors who are coming in can kind of pick up something, because the whole purpose is to teach people some things,” Pratt says. “I think we could both say that we try to help people not make the same mistakes we made.”

“We’re a couple of idiots … but we have guests who do know,” Harvey says.

‘Dad Joke Central’

Harvey and Pratt are more than willing to admit the challenges they’ve faced in their author careers. For one, both made large leaps of faith around the same time in 2020. Pratt was adjusting to a full-time author career, and Harvey was shifting to a nomadic lifestyle with his wife after quitting a job in motor sports—all right before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold.

“All the planning—look at that timing,” Pratt says. “We should have a course on that.”

“It’s pretty easy, really,” Harvey jokes. “If there’s a large explosion happening and we run one way, run the other way, and you’ll be solid.”

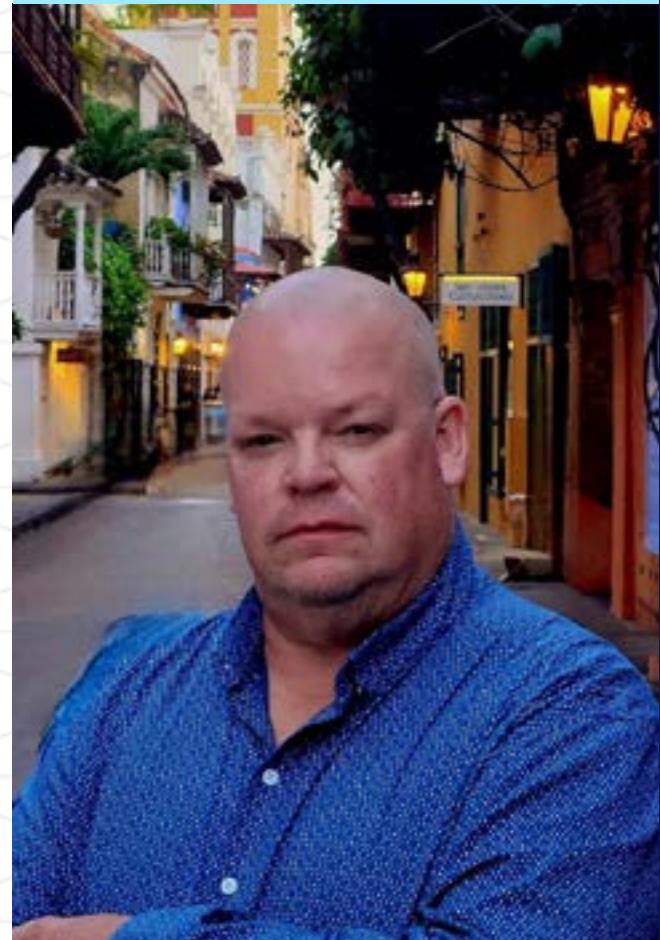
Initially, they’d started the podcast hoping to attract new readers to their work. The plan was to interview guest authors every other episode—but they soon found that fans of each guest author’s work would tune in for only that specific episode. The listeners who stuck around from week to week were the authors looking to learn from the authors’ careers. So six months in, they pivoted. “We kind of revamped the format and the show a little bit,” Harvey says. “We tightened it up a little bit. We’d learned stuff, and I think we improved it and evolved it.”

Since then, the format hasn’t changed much; it hasn’t needed to. New episodes air every other week, and each features a new interview with a guest author—some independently published, some traditionally published, and some who walk the line between both. Harvey compares it to a chat show—though the podcast’s website does warn listeners that there’s the occasional risk of R-rated language.

“It’s kind of dad joke central,” he says. “Like a



Nicholas Harvey (above) and Douglas Pratt are co-hosts of The Two Authors’ Podcast and full-time Tropical Thriller authors. “I think we mesh together, which helps us … keep an open mind about a lot of things, because we’re able to talk to a lot of different people,” Pratt says.



chat out by the tiki bar at NINC.”

Although the podcast hasn’t directly increased their readership, the two authors say it has boosted them in the indie author space—they’ve been recognized at author events and conferences and have had publicists for traditionally published authors reach out to them directly. Vellum even sponsors the podcast this season—and is shamelessly plugged at the beginning and end of each episode, Harvey confirms.

Even if the podcast hasn’t brought them new readers, the lessons it contains has also helped launch them forward in their careers. Pratt says he hopes their listeners can say the same. “Ideally, the people who’ve been listening to us have been following along and have been leveling up,” he says. “Hopefully, they’re able to push it a little bit farther as they go.”



'No One Way to Do This'

Guests for the podcast so far have ventured into nearly every corner of the publishing industry, including names such as Becca Syme, Tanja Kappes, JD Barker, Sandra Brown, Kevin Tumlinson, Steve Higgs, and more. The hosts say they try to alternate between traditionally published authors and indie authors to vary the perspectives they feature on the show.

"Hopefully there's some nuggets in every one of them—I think that's kind of the goal that we want to get," Pratt says.

Talking to Harvey and Pratt about some of those nuggets showcases just how much each half-hour episode has to offer. There was Kiersten Modglin, who built her brand around publishing standalones instead of series. Charlaine Harris was the podcast's first hybrid author. Joseph Finder gave listeners the mantra "reverse, reveal, surprise" to keep up the pace of a story from chapter to chapter. Harvey says the two each make a point at the end of each episode to highlight their biggest takeaways to keep track of them all.

"We don't expect to teach everybody everything ... and we've interviewed a few guests who we're both kind of awestruck with how they're doing things and try to learn from them," Pratt says. "That doesn't mean we necessarily want to implement everything they're doing. We've had this discussion with people who are super prolific—that we don't necessarily

want to write ten books a month, per se, but what we can take from them is something that helps us move forward with what we're doing. And hopefully, we're passing that along to the listener as well."

Every author has different strengths, the two acknowledge, which is why they make a point within each interview to ask two specific questions. One is chosen from a prize wheel decorated with questions, which Pratt keeps in his office. The other asks authors about their writing superpower, which can result in some surprising answers—including from the hosts themselves.

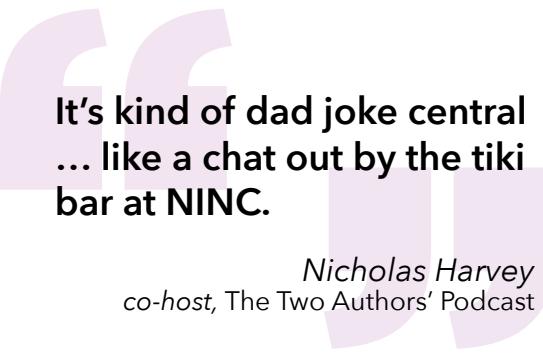
"I'll tell you, Nick's is organization," Pratt says.

"OK, what?" Harvey interrupts. "That is the most boring freaking superpower!"

"No, it's not, because I can't even keep up with the character names, and Nick is really good about keeping up with it," Pratt says. "I'll have to ask him a question sometimes, and he's got the answer right there. So he's on top of it."

The two bounce off of each other for a while, and though Harvey makes a case for characters as his strength, he agrees with Pratt when he offers action as his own superpower. "I was going to vote action," Harvey says. "I didn't care what you said."

Listening to the two of them is as entertaining as it is informative, which, fittingly, is



**It's kind of dad joke central
... like a chat out by the tiki
bar at NINC.**

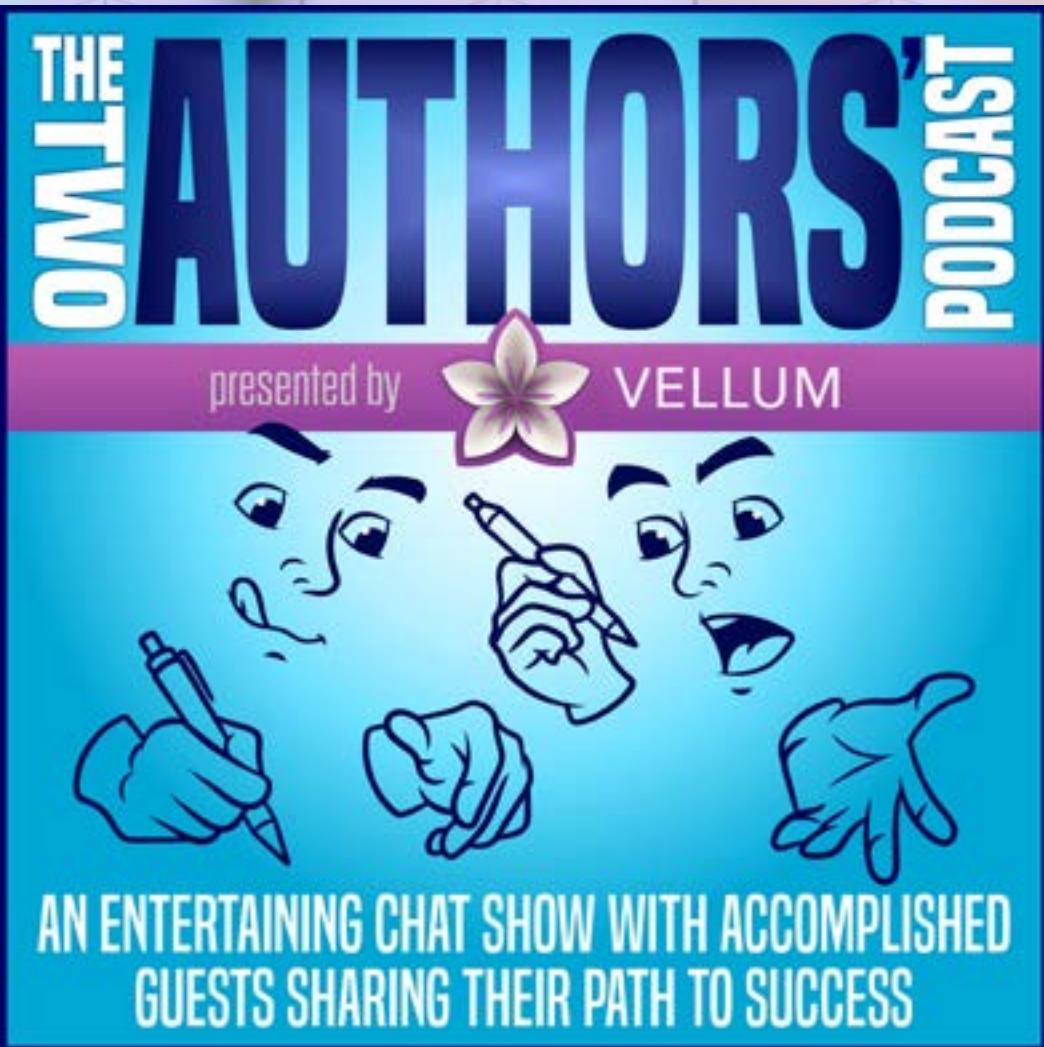
Nicholas Harvey
co-host, The Two Authors' Podcast

the entire goal of the podcast. Above all, Harvey and Pratt want authors to come away with the understanding that success in the industry happens differently for everyone.

“There’s no one way to do this,” he says. With *The Two Authors’ Podcast*, Harvey and Pratt are simply hoping to help authors do it the right way for them, one episode at a time. ■

Authors interested in reaching out to The Two Authors’ Podcast can contact the hosts at TwoAuthorsChatShow@gmail.com. New episodes air bi-weekly on your preferred podcast platform.





Nicole Schroeder

Nicole Schroeder is a storyteller at heart. As the editor in chief of Indie Author Magazine, she brings nearly a decade of journalism and editorial experience to the publication, delighting in any opportunity to tell true stories and help others do the same. She holds a bachelor's degree from the Missouri School of Journalism and minors in English and Spanish. Her previous work includes editorial roles at local publications, and she's helped edit and produce numerous fiction and nonfiction books, including a Holocaust survivor's memoir, alongside independent publishers. Her own creative writing has been published in national literary magazines. When she's not at her writing desk, Nicole is usually in the saddle, cuddling her guinea pigs, or spending time with family. She loves any excuse to talk about Marvel movies and considers National Novel Writing Month its own holiday.

ALLi Exclusive: Every Author's Guide to Managing the Financial Side of a Book Business



Navigating the world of self-publishing requires not only a passion for writing but also a keen understanding of financial management—you're not only a creator but also the CEO of your publishing business. In this article, the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) offers tailored advice for beginning authors, emerging authors, and experienced authors, focusing on essential business and financial best practices.



For Beginning Authors: Establish a Solid Business Foundation

Laying a strong business foundation early as an author can set the stage for long-term success. This means both understanding the intricacies of the business side of publishing and taking steps to organize your business's income and expenses early in your career.

Understanding Key Financial Terminology

Familiarizing yourself with basic financial terms empowers you to make informed decisions. Understand the difference between gross income—the total revenue generated from your book sales and related services before any expenses are deducted—and net income—the profit remaining after all business expenses have been subtracted from your gross income. When you hear someone describe themselves as a six- or seven-figure author, consider whether that number represents gross or net income—after all, heavy ad spending can inflate revenue without increasing true profitability.

Understanding the Mechanics of Publishing Income

Almost any type of business requires an upfront investment before the entrepreneur starts earning income. As an indie author, you need to invest money to make money—for example, paying for editing and cover design services, licensing a domain for your author website, or subscribing to a purpose-built email service. These expenditures pave the way to income through book sales, but the income from those sales will come after—sometimes long after—the investment. Even once your book is selling, you won't receive royalties for sales on third-party retail sites for thirty, sixty, or even ninety days after the sale.

Especially in the early stages of your author business, it's vital to control your expenses and to assess every potential expenditure. Might a limited free email plan serve your needs at this early stage? Might you swap proofreading services with another author, investing time rather than money to ensure your manuscript is error-free?

Separating Personal and Business Finances

Maintaining a clear distinction between your personal and author-related finances is crucial. Opening a dedicated business bank account simplifies bookkeeping and ensures accurate tracking of income and expenses related to your business. Keeping business finances separate from personal ones not only aids in financial clarity but also streamlines tax preparation.



Pro Tip:

If you live outside the US and earn income in USD, look for a bank account with low foreign transaction fees or services like Wise or Payoneer to save on conversion costs.

For Emerging Authors: Scale up with Strategic Planning

As your portfolio of books grows and your readership expands, strategic financial planning becomes imperative to sustaining and enhancing your success.

Create a Business Budget

Set aside a fixed amount each month for your author business. Whether that is a percentage of your income from your author business or another source or a fund you have earmarked for this purpose, make sure you know how much money you're investing in this business. After all, this is not a hobby anymore. Plus, if you've already separated your author and personal bank accounts, your personal finances will be kept safe from any hard times that might strike your publishing business.

Shorten the Payment Cycle with Direct Sales

The delay in royalty payments from third-party retailers can take up to ninety days—but as an emerging author, you can consider shortening that cycle to almost nothing by selling direct. Crowdfunding campaigns can even enable you to receive money before providing the product. As a bonus, direct sales and crowdfunding not only enhance revenue but also provide valuable insights into reader preferences and behaviors.

Hire a Pro

At this stage, consider working with an accounting or legal professional familiar with self-publishing to optimize tax deductions, such as writing-related travel or software subscriptions; ensure compliance with international tax treaties if selling globally; and advise on whether to register your business as a sole proprietorship, LLC, or other structure.

Diversify Your Income Streams

Relying solely on book sales can be limiting. Exploring additional revenue avenues can provide financial stability. Consider related offerings like editing, coaching, or speaking engagements; these can open new income channels and expand your professional network. Supplementary products like workbooks, courses, or merchandise that complement your books can also offer added value to your audience.

Diversification not only increases income but also mitigates the risks associated with fluctuating book sales.

Invest in Professional Development

Allocating resources toward honing your craft and business acumen can yield significant returns. Set aside money for workshops and conferences, since engaging with industry events facilitates learning from experts and peers, keeping you abreast of market trends and best practices. Enroll in online courses on marketing, financial management, and advanced writing techniques to enhance your skills at your own pace. Investing in yourself is a strategic move that can lead to improved quality, efficiency, and profitability.



For Experienced Authors: Optimize and Sustain Success

Once you have an established brand and a loyal readership, your financial focus should shift to optimizing operations and sustaining financial health. The following steps can help advanced authors secure their business success for the long term.

Analyze and Optimize Revenue Channels

Regularly review your sales data to identify trends and determine which books or products yield the highest returns. This analysis can inform future projects and marketing efforts. Experiment with pricing strategies, such as limited-time discounts or premium pricing for exclusive content, to maximize profits. Data-driven decisions ensure your efforts align with market demands and financial goals.

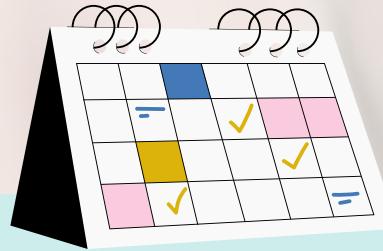
Plan for Long-Term Financial Security

At this stage, your publishing business and related offerings may be your sole source of income, and it's vital to ensure you have a safety net in place. As ALLi Director Orna Ross says, "As indie authors, we often focus so much on the creative process that we neglect long-term financial planning. But securing income for retirement or in the face of illness or injury is essential for sustaining a creative life. It's about protecting our freedom to create—today, tomorrow, and well into the future."

Set aside a portion of your income to establish a retirement fund and to cover expenses like health insurance. Proactive planning safeguards your future and provides peace of mind, allowing you to focus on your creative endeavors.

Regardless of where you are on your indie author journey, sound business and financial practices are integral to your success. By implementing these strategies, you not only enhance your current operations but also lay the groundwork for a prosperous and sustainable future. At ALLi, we are committed to supporting you every step of the way.





Looking for more information on the business of indie authorship? Check out these resources:

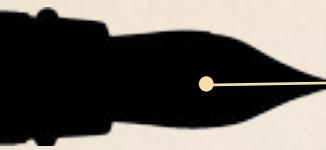
- ALLi's *SelfPub3 Author Business Campaign* booklet, downloadable from the ALLi bookshop, is available for free for ALLi members. Get it at <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/bookshop/selfpub3-author-business-campaign>.
- Part 2 of ALLi's blog series "Money Basics for Indie Authors" gives authors a list of financial terms and definitions relevant to self-publishing professionals and their businesses. Visit: <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/money-basics-for-indie-authors-part-two-the-top-financial-terms-indie-authors-need-to-know>.
- ALLi's October 2024 blog post "Planning for Retirement: Financial Strategies for Indie Authors" includes advice on how authors, as self-employed creatives, should build a safety net for themselves with their current business practices: <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/planning-for-retirement>.
- Read about various business models authors can employ, including supplemental income stream options such as affiliate income or sponsorships, in this blog post from ALLi: <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/business-models-for-authors>.

Matty Dalrymple, ALLi Campaigns Manager



The Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) is a global membership association for self-publishing authors. A non-profit, our mission is ethics and excellence in self-publishing. Everyone on our team is a working indie author and we offer advice and advocacy for self-publishing authors within the literary, publishing and creative industries around the world. www.allianceindependentauthors.org





Author Inklings

... on Taking a Leap of Faith

Welcome, my pretties, to my new column. **W** “Where is our beloved Indie Annie?” I hear you cry. Well, last month, those who were paying attention will have noticed that our gorgeous agony aunt was rumored to have checked herself into a spa in the wilds of Yorkshire, England.

The truth is that others who believed our Indie Annie to be an AI-generated avatar forced her into hiding. These unfounded accusations hurt her feelings. Although she masked her true identity behind a cartoon persona, she was very human.

I know, because she was me.

When we began this magazine, I was a novice writer with only a couple of well-reviewed but slow-selling titles under my pen name. I wrote in my spare time. I had a demanding full-time job. Although writing consumed me, I considered myself an amateur.

So when I was invited to play this role of Indie Annie, I did so only on the condition that I remained incognito.

Times have changed. I have changed. And now I am making enough money to quit my day job. It took a leap of faith.

Don’t get me wrong. Being a full-time author is one of the most rewarding, creatively fulfilling things I’ve ever done—but it also nearly broke me. Emotionally. Mentally. Spiritually. Even my dog gave me side-eye at one point, as if to say, *You quit your job for this?*

For years, I wrote in snatched hours before breakfast, during lunch breaks, on weekends. Writing was my secret world, my escape from the stress of everyday life. But when I decided to take the leap and write full time, that world turned upside down.

The Emotional Hangover

Nobody talks about the existential crisis that hits the day you no longer have a boss, a schedule, or an office snack cupboard. Suddenly, you are the boss. And spoiler alert: Your new boss, you, is your worst nightmare.

There’s a strange sort of grief that comes with turning your hobby into a hustle. Writing used to be playtime. Now, it’s a deliverable. A

deadline. A “why haven’t you hit your word count today?” guilt trip delivered by your own inner voice, which has taken on the tone of a disapproving PE teacher.

I remember my first week as a full-time author. I cleaned the kitchen six times. I reorganized the spice rack alphabetically. I dived into the literary merit of *Midsomer Murders*. Did I write? Barely. The pressure to make every word count paralyzed me because now they literally had to pay the bills.

Mental Health: The Unedited Draft

The mental strain of this transition is no joke. The freedom is intoxicating, yes, but it comes with a side order of anxiety, impostor syndrome, and a mild existential crisis that kicks in every time you check your Kindle Direct Publishing dashboard and see zero sales.

I talked to other indie authors when I felt like I was losing the plot—pun intended. Turns out, I’m not the only one riding the emotional roller coaster; it’s the ride we’re all strapped into. Here’s what a few of those other passengers told me.

- **“Keep the joy sacred.”** Always have one “just for fun” project on the go—something no one will see but you. It’ll remind you why you started.
- **“Treat your brain like a battery.”** Schedule rest as if it’s a non-negotiable part of your job. Burnout sneaks up like a ninja, so be warned. When your creativity is your income, that’s dangerous.
- **“You’re not lazy; you’re scared.”** Procrastination is often fear in disguise. Fear of not being good enough. Fear of no one reading it. Fear of people reading it! Work through the fear—but be kind to yourself.

The Pitfalls No One Prepares You For

You think you’ll have more time as a full-time author, but somehow, time will become soup. Without structure, days blur into each other, and suddenly it’s Thursday, you’ve written three hundred words, and your snack consumption has hit gremlin levels.

You think you’ll be wildly productive, but you’ll spend more time learning how to market, format, and run Facebook ads than you ever anticipated. And you still won’t understand what a pixel does. Don’t worry; none of us do.

You think you’ll be living the dream, but the dream sometimes involves working weekends, dealing with negative reviews, and comparing yourself to the indie author who just posted their tenth six-figure income screenshot on Instagram.

Here's the thing: Writing full time is not a magical transformation. It's still you. Still your voice. Still your cluttered desk and half-finished ideas. But now, the stakes feel higher.

Tips from the Trenches

Since this column is meant to be useful and not just a live reading of my breakdown, here are some practical nuggets from both my experience and fellow indie warriors.

- Create a schedule—and stick to it (mostly). Your future self needs boundaries. Create a working day that suits your life and energy. Mine? Mornings are for admin, afternoons for writing—but I know, for many authors, it's the other way around. Evenings are a spiced rum and a juicy Murder Mystery. (Well, at least they are in my house.)
- Celebrate the small wins. Did you write five hundred words today? Amazing. Did you upload your book without crying? Hero. Every tiny step deserves confetti.
- Don't go it alone. Find community—in online groups, through writing sprints, or with Zoom accountability sessions. Writing is lonely, but it doesn't have to be, and shouldn't be, isolating.
- Outsource what you hate. If formatting makes you want to eat your own hand, pay someone to do it. Budget accordingly, and protect your sanity.
- Define your own success. This is a big one. Success isn't just making six figures or hitting a bestseller list. Maybe it's paying your bills by doing what you love. Maybe it's publishing a book a year. Maybe it's having time to walk your dog in the middle of the day. You do you.

Final Thoughts (or the Bit where I Get Philosophical)

Turning your passion into your profession is not for the faint of heart. It asks a lot of you—creatively, emotionally, and mentally. But it can also give back tenfold, if you can ride out the rough bits.

And remember, writing doesn't have to be a full-time profession for you to make a very successful side hustle from your words. In fact, many need the balance of keeping writing as another income stream rather than throwing all their eggs into one proverbial basket. For many of you, the idea of being a writer full time isn't tenable or even desirable, and that's okay.

I am still working toward a happy place. Some days, I still miss the simplicity of writing for fun. But then I remember: I still get to write for fun. I just have to carve out the space, protect it fiercely, and remind myself that I'm not a machine. I'm a storyteller.

Publishing can feel like a mystery you have to solve, but you don't have to do it on your own. Whether you have questions about the indie author world or just want to air your writing woes, send your thoughts to: feedback@indieauthormagazine.com and include "Author Inklings" in the subject line. I'd love to hear from you!



If you've made this leap—or you're standing on the edge of it—I salute you. Bring snacks. Bring self-compassion. And maybe bring a friend who'll remind you, on the tough days, that this is the crazy writer life you wanted. It's still your dream. You're just living it out loud now.

On that note, it is time to put aside my disguise and live this part of my writer life out loud, too.

You can still send in questions. I would love to continue to offer you the best advice I can muster. But we will be changing things up a little.

This column will chat about stuff that's hot in the author world. Here, you will find my take on current issues. Some months, I will hand the reins over to a guest writer because, as I mentioned above, it's important to take a break from time to time.

Until then ...

Happy writing,

Susan



Susan Odev

Susan Odev is the co-author of the Mike Atwell Cozy Mystery series and several other successful whodunnits involving vicars, Shakespeare, and suspicious cake. A lifelong list-maker, deadline-dodger, and one-woman writing retreat (complete with dog), she wrote her first best-selling nonfiction book in 2010. She lives in Kent, England, dreams of the Portuguese hills, occasionally tidies her desk, and is always five minutes late for her own ideas. Susan has written for numerous magazines, spoken at international conferences, and contributed to workshops on a range of personal development topics, and yet can still get lost in her own bathroom.

10 Tips for Future-Proofing Your Business



The world of indie publishing has been evolving at a breakneck pace, and today, authors are more cognizant of the future of their business than ever before. Old strategies are being renewed, newer strategies are being restructured, and all around, authors are not only considering the future of their book business but also how to add a few levels of security to their business model.

As algorithms and policies shift and third-party platforms make decisions that ripple outward to affect the indie authors who use them, many authors are choosing to protect their businesses by moving away from “rented land.” Instead, they are shifting toward a direct sales model, where they have the control, where revenue streams are expanded, and where they can be less susceptible to sudden changes in the industry. But securing your business for the future doesn’t have to happen all at once. Read on for ten steps you can take to begin future-proofing your business today, no matter what the road ahead has in store.

01

Write for Merchandise.

Today, more authors are looking beyond the book as they write. What was once considered an afterthought is now becoming a model for pre-planning the success of a particular story. Authors are writing books with merchandising in mind. If a book attracts enough attention, it can broaden into amusement parks, clothing lines, movies, video games ... all designed after the wild success of books.

Indie authors are seeing the book as not the start of their customer's journey but the overarching theme. Willow Winters's subscription book boxes are stuffed with merchandise that reinforces the message of sex positivity shared in her books. Authors should look for opportunities to sell beyond the book, using their IP as a guide for producing things readers want, so they are creating not just a book but a world.

02

Build Your Business Savings Account—of IP.

Indie authors are no stranger to writing quickly, but who's to say a book has had its time and is no longer capable of finding new customers or generating cash flow? Authors focused on direct sales have a massive opportunity to present the curious reader with what they believe they will most enjoy, and this means pushing their backlist titles on their sales platforms as well. Upsells ("Would you like fries with that?"), down sells ("Too expensive? Here's a bargain.") and cross-sells ("Readers also bought this.") are all tools you can utilize to push your backlist titles to frontlist customers and generate more revenue and readership overall.

03

Your Ads Still Matter. All of Them.

Which platform is king of the ads? X? Meta? Pinterest? What about all of them?

Just as an author should diversify their marketing methods, they should also diversify their advertising methods. Nothing in the terms of service on any of these platforms says their ads won't work for authors or that Facebook and Amazon ads are the only options. There are two key factors to keep in mind when examining other-than-usual advertising platforms.

First, each of these platforms has a financial incentive to get more of your advertising dollars. They want you to succeed, make sales, raise your budgets, and grow. The advertising platforms are on your side, and that is a good feeling when it comes to testing out new avenues for finding readers.

The second factor is the one wholly in the author's control: the messaging. What message are you sending the reader that would make them want to buy your book? If the platform is on your side, then all you're lacking is the right messaging.

04

Leverage Your Biggest Winners.

Double down on what's working. If it's not broken, don't fix it. Follow the money. These phrases all mean the same thing: If something is working, keep at it. Nothing future-proofs your business more than recognizing something is working and allowing it to do so. But what you do after you realize something is working is what's most important. When you notice something boosting your business, study and learn why it is working. Is it the style of writing? The ad copy? The cover? Try to put yourself in your reader's shoes, and ask why they bought this book above all others. Then, double down on that thing.

05

Create New and Improved Offers.

Why should a reader pick your book? If you sell exclusively on third-party retailers, there are likely dozens like it, all on the same page.

Authors selling direct have the opportunity to do what others exclusive to third-party retailers cannot—and that's modify the offer. On your website, offer your readers deals that are so good they'd be dumb not to take them. Is that 15 percent off? How about a free ebook and audiobook with every purchase? What about a "buy one, get one free" deal? Authors selling direct need to find the offer that best speaks to their readers to ensure they keep coming back to them.

06

Generate Endless Ideas.

What if you told your story through letters? What about animated comics? How about if your novel came disassembled, and the reader had to put it together like a puzzle? Generating endless ideas is not about having a bunch of good ideas; it's about having a lot of bad ideas until you find one that sticks, then using that to diversify your cash flow. Authors everywhere are starting subscriptions, alternate-reality games (ARGs), story letters, and more. Then, they're writing the book on top of it as another product. There are endless possibilities for what authors can create with their stories, and each one of them has the potential to future-proof their business by being one of many products based on a single piece of IP.

07

Outsource the Time-Sucks to Focus.

An author's greatest opportunity is in their ability to create worlds no one else can. Sometimes, however, they get so caught up in the minutiae that this part of them takes a step back.

Creating worlds is your point of greatest leverage and impact on a reader. If something is taking away from that, don't be afraid to outsource it. Hire an assistant or team to perform the mundane time-sucks that keep your business running, so you can focus back on what matters most: telling great stories.

08

Create in Public; Sometimes the Process Is Worth More than the Product.

Authors are interesting creatures. Most are introverted, creating in a vacuum and only coming out of their writing cave when necessary. But there's missed opportunity in the time they've already invested in their writing, and that's putting that interest on display. Scroll social media for a few minutes, and you'll stumble upon a small business owner power-washing a sidewalk or mowing a lawn. Those acts alone may pay the bills, but there's also a reason they're spending the time recording themselves: because it's interesting. Interest means attention, and attention means opportunity to monetize that attention.

Authors should consider following suit and creating in public. Document your journey, your process, and your joy in writing, and not in a way that's meant to instruct but in a way that brings you and your viewer closer. In doing so, your channels and opportunities to create alternative sources of income will grow as well. Plus, you may find some new readers in the process.

09

Partner and Collaborate to Dominate a Space.

What's better than one author? How about multiple authors? Years ago, authors could band together to dominate the top charts and nail that *USA Today* bestseller title through the use of strategic marketing and large anthologies. That strategy is no longer viable for making a bestseller list, but collaborating with other authors can still lead to greater success in both businesses.

One way for direct authors to future-proof their businesses together is to work collaboratively to sell their products to the benefit of them both. How about a special: Buy my book and get my friend's book free? Nothing is out of reach for the direct author who has total control over his customer's journey, and this includes collaborating with other authors to offer products in ways third-party retailers don't or can't offer. Collaborations should be seen as a long-term investment in your brand, and in your collaborator's brand, as both of you seek to benefit from the growth and recognition provided by the other.

10

View Persistence as a Tool.

Nothing is more of a surefire way to tank your business than to give up. The publishing industry can be unforgiving, but your persistence is a tool that can be utilized. Write a book, then another, then another, and try to improve each time. Try one advertising channel, then another, then another, and keep trying until you get the results you want. Persistence isn't a trait; it's a mindset. Authors need to be thick-skinned, persistent, and unwilling to give up when it gets hard, because only then will the world get more stories.

The Wrap-Up

Authors, specifically those selling direct, are always keeping an eye on their business. And when there's more control in their hands, there's also more opportunity to diversify, strengthen, and grow their business than when under the thumb of an algorithm with diminished control. Authors should see every facet of their business as a way to connect with the reader, show them what they want, and offer it to them in a way that beats out all else. Eventually, buying from them won't be up to chance; instead, it will be such a good opportunity they'd be dumb not to take it. Future-proofing an author business requires an eye toward the future, and not just at the single sale in front of them. Make this mindset shift, and you'll allow yourself to look at your business as a long-term investment in your own success rather than a fly-by-minute sales-generating machine. ■



David Viergutz

David Viergutz is a disabled Army Veteran, Law Enforcement Veteran, husband and proud father.

He is an author of stories from every flavor of horror and dark fiction. One day, David's wife sat him down and gave him the confidence to start putting his imagination on paper. From then on out his creativity has no longer been stifled by self-doubt and he continues to write with a smile on his face in a dark, candle-lit room.



From the Stacks

Book Club Summary

The 48 Laws of Power

Robert Greene

<https://indieauthortraining.com/courses/the-48-laws-of-power-by-robert-greene>

Power isn't just for world leaders and corporate CEOs. As an indie author, you are constantly navigating power dynamics, whether it's building your audience, marketing your books, or protecting your creative voice. Understanding how power works, and learning how to wield it, can mean the difference between struggling in obscurity and making your mark in the literary world.

The 48 Laws of Power by Robert Greene is an essential guide for indie authors who want to take control of their careers. Greene's insightful breakdown of historical strategies for gaining influence applies directly to the challenges faced by today's self-published authors.

Take a look at this book through Indie Author Training's Book Club Summaries to find

- an audio deep dive into the material,
- a synopsis geared toward indie authors,
- a discussion forum to connect with other readers, and
- questions to help you apply what you learn to your business.

Visit <https://indieauthortraining.com/course-category/book-club-summaries> to learn more and explore other titles.

Tool

Tertulia

<https://indie-author-training-product-tours.heysummit.com/talks/tertulia-product-tour>

Writing books takes time. Your author website doesn't need to. Explore Tertulia with Indie Author Training's Product Tour to learn how to build and keep your author website updated in minutes.

TERTULIA | for Authors

Webinar

“Direct to Readers—What If Selling Books Didn’t Mean Giving up Control?”

<https://webinars.indieauthortraining.com/talks/direct-to-readers-the-new-way-to-reach-readers>

Most platforms make you choose: their way, their rules, their cut. But as indie authors, we deserve better. That's why we, the team at Indie Author Training and *Indie Author Magazine*, built Direct2Readers.

This new discovery and sales platform lets you decide how and where each book is sold. No storefront to set up. No coding. No exclusivity. Just a smarter, author-first way to connect with readers and keep more of what you earn.

Podcast



<https://open.spotify.com/show/1MjZYaA5iClRL2JMtEiY12>

The *Indie Author Magazine* podcast has been refined and focused for bite-size listening, giving you just what you need to know about some of the biggest topics in the industry. Here are the latest episodes you may have missed.

“How Kevin McLaughlin Built a Sustainable Writing Career by Mastering Covers and Storytelling”

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/3h51otYu79EM6Glu7omxNw>

Learn how *IAM*'s own Kevin McLaughlin built his career by perfecting his covers, examining his storytelling, and embracing the community within the independent publishing world.

“Leveraging Organic Engagement to Optimize Paid Book Advertisements”

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/26dUoXIXc4KMmELbZBDpVM>

Authors looking to grow their readership face two paths: building an audience organically or through paid opportunities and advertising. But the best approach may be to find a balance between the two—after all, that organic audience may be the key to making your paid marketing pay off. ■

Karen Guyler

Karen Guyler

Always being the new girl at nine schools on two continents was no fun at all so books became the only constant in Karen Guyler's life, even if they didn't help her get out of sports days. Now settled in Milton Keynes, England, Britain's best kept secret, she juggles reading with writing twisty thrilling stories, her children, husband and two grand-puppies - a much nicer mix! She also teaches Creative Writing for Adult Education with lots of laughter in amongst the word wrangling and discovery.



Michael La Ronn Blows Us All Away

The Part-Time Author Gets Full-Time Results That Would Make *Hamilton* Jealous

Michael La Ronn's writing schedule looks like something inspired by Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *Hamilton*. He's published over one hundred books, posted 445 advice videos on YouTube, and filmed 161 episodes of his podcast, *The Writer's Journey*. With a catalog like that, as well as a day job in the insurance industry, you might think he lives up to the description Miranda's chorus gives its titular character; truly, "the man is nonstop."

But although his tutorials include titles like *Be a Writing Machine*, *Power Hour*, and *Beast Mode*, La Ronn takes mental health seriously, and over the years, he has found ways to balance his writing career with family and rest.

Stay Alive

La Ronn writes Science Fiction and Fantasy novels about underdogs, and their stories are hopelessly optimistic. “I love to tell stories about characters whose odds are stacked against them,” he says. As an author taking law school courses, maintaining a full-time job, raising a young family, and holding a position as an outreach manager with ALLi, La Ronn might seem like a candidate for one of those stories himself. But he carries his characters’ optimism through everything he does, as he has from the very beginning.

He describes himself as always having been a writer, but his publishing story begins in 2012, when a near-death experience forced him to re-evaluate his priorities. After a month in the hospital, La Ronn emerged with a new ambition: to become an author.

“I thought my first book was going to allow me to quit my job and retire to the beach and just chill for the rest of my life, and that is not at all what happened,” he says, smiling at his early naivety. He describes his experience with writing and publishing his first book as falling on his face, but he doesn’t regret that failure. “I think it’s a good thing, because it’s humbling. It’s almost like a rite of passage. You have to make all those mistakes to learn how to do it correctly.”

La Ronn believes that the first book shows everything you would want to know about what kind of writer someone is. “It encompasses all of your hopes and dreams and fears,” he says.

According to La Ronn, the biggest mistake he made early in his career was one most new writers make—forgetting what they love to read. “You know, we are all avid readers before we be-

come writers. But when we become writers, and we publish that first book, we forget everything that we learned as readers,” he says. Moving forward, he found that the key to success would be minimizing “that disconnect between becoming a writer and an avid reader.”

It didn’t take long for him to realize that the lessons he was learning might be helpful to others. With Author Level Up, which he started in 2015, La Ronn shares his experience in the hopes of giving back to the community and supporting others looking to make writing a career. “I’m not a bestseller yet, but I’m doing some things right and sharing my success as I go,” he says. Author Level Up provides videos, courses, and several writing advice series available in ebook, paperback, and audiobook formats.

Between these nonfiction guides and his novels, La Ronn hit the twenty-books mark in five years and spoke at the 20BooksTo50K® conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2018. His talk, “Part-time Author, Full-time Results,” not only shared relatable stories and actionable writing tips but also showcased the public speaking skills he’d already honed through his podcast and YouTube videos.

By then, he’d also joined the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) in 2014 and had begun contributing to their podcast in 2017. In 2020, he added the title of outreach manager for ALLi to his list of jobs. “My role at ALLi is really just to help authors know what’s going on out there,” he says, “but also to bring in reputable service providers that other authors should know about.”

Any one of these jobs might keep someone else busy without adding writing and selling one hundred books to the mix. But La Ronn says he is “someone who is always going to write. It’s part of the fabric of who I am.”

***“The only thing I know when I start a story
... is a hero in a setting with a problem.
Beyond that, anything can happen.”***

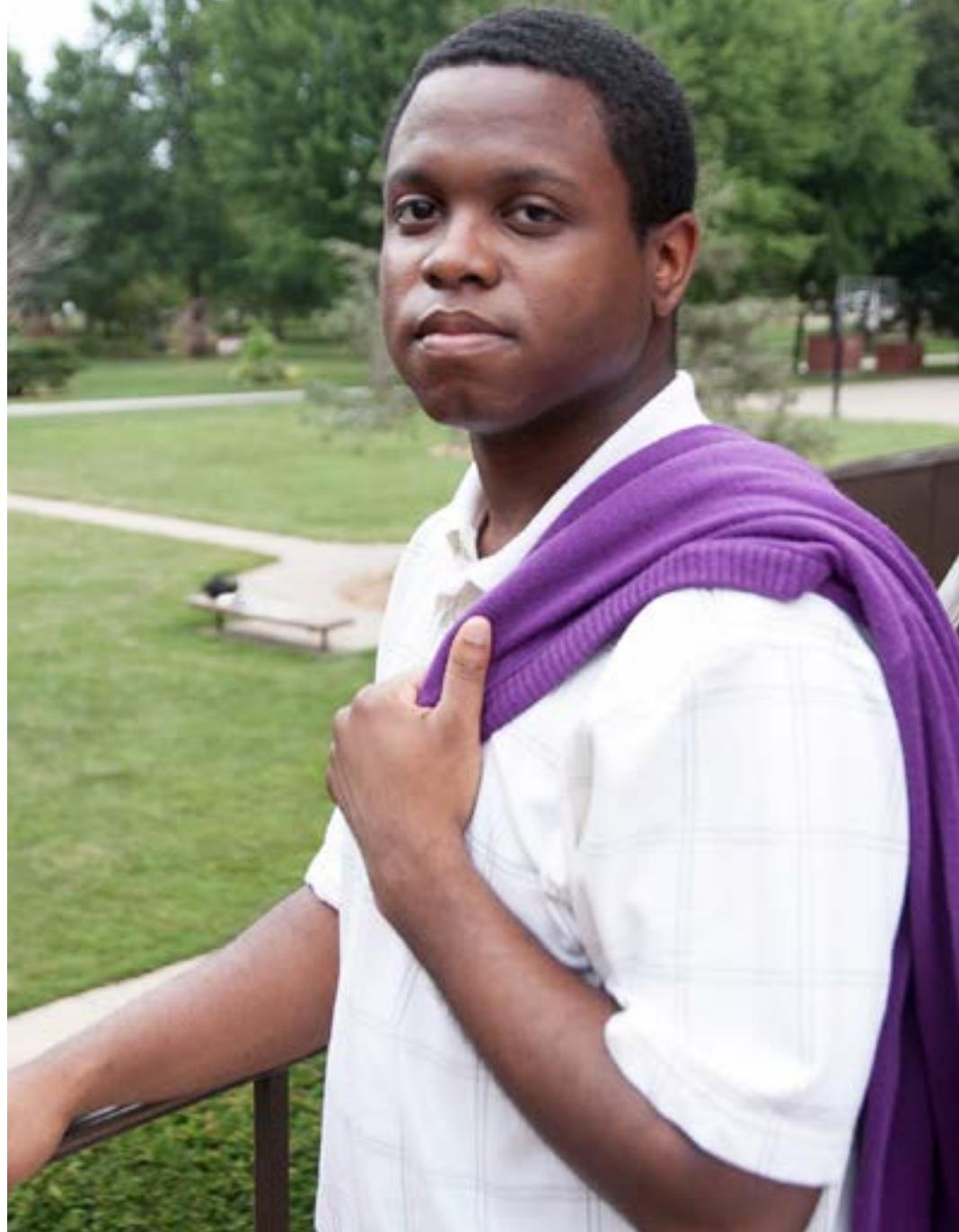
— Michael La Ronn

The Room Where It Happens

The prolific author hasn't achieved his extensive backlist in a traditional way. Balancing his writing alongside so many other responsibilities has required a certain level of flexibility from La Ronn. As a result, the author of *The Pocket Guide to Pantsing* writes novels, short stories, and self-help books for writers on the go. Fitting in five minutes here and twenty minutes there, he has "found that all of those little times add up over the course of the day," he says.

Family, especially, has always been at the top of his priority list. During that talk in Las Vegas, he shared that one of his "whys" for writing was that it was "a way of counteracting that negative energy" from having been abandoned by his father when his parents divorced. As a result, La Ronn made sure to build his writing career around his family rather than trying to fit family time around another job.

The "room where it happens" has become whatever room La Ronn happens to be in when he gets a moment to work. In 2018, he was writing as much as 60 percent of his



manuscripts on his phone, using Scrivener's iOS app without a keyboard. La Ronn writes while standing in line at Costco, while sitting in the waiting room at the doctor's office, or while walking the dog. That last example has been improved by adding a new skill to his repertoire: dictation. According to

an interview he did with Hank Garner for Dabble in May 2024, La Ronn spent two weeks practicing by dictating the same two chapters over and over until he could do it with 98 percent accuracy. Switching to dictation has benefited La Ronn's writing schedule, his physical and mental health—and his dog, he jokes, as his walks have gotten longer.

“I just think life is too short to stress out about writing.”

– Michael La Ronn

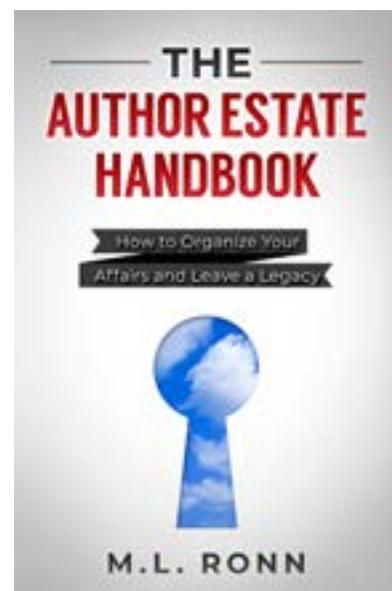
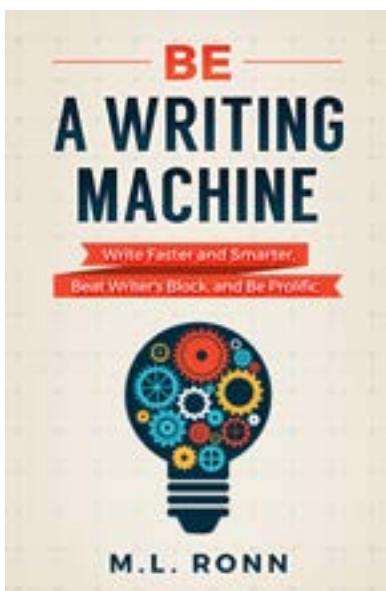
What Comes Next?

In the past few years, La Ronn's day-to-day has become a little less busy but no less full. He graduated from law school in 2021. His daughter has grown a little more independent. His day job has shifted to a different company and a position that includes more flexibility. But he's still not a full-time writer, even though his book business has become self-sustaining. “Writing full time is definitely an ambition, and I already make enough to do that. However, I'll make that leap when the timing and personal circumstances are right,” he says.

In the meantime, La Ronn follows a schedule that varies around the needs of his family and his day job. He continues to write during downtimes, in the spaces between work and activities. He says he “had to learn to pivot and change my writing, to mold whatever my schedule is at the time. It's different in the winter than it is in the summer.”

He plans out when he will write day by day, with the goal of writing more days than he doesn't. Some days, no words get written, but others, he goes into “beast mode” and writes 4,000 words in a day. Either way, he doesn't stress about it. “I just think life is too short to stress out about writing. Writing is supposed to be the thing that you come to to relax,” he says.

La Ronn's flexible scheduling extends into his writing style. Unlike Hamiton, La Ronn has never written “like he's running out of time.” Instead, he says writing each book “takes as long as it takes.” When writing fiction, he follows the vibes both in terms of what genre he will write—Sci-Fi, Fantasy, or nonfiction—and the stories he tells. “The only thing I know when I start a story, for the most part, is a hero in a setting with a problem,” he says. “Beyond that, anything can happen.”



Satisfied

Despite his prolific career, La Ronn has found a balance that includes time to relax and enjoy his life outside of writing. And that has led him to enjoy writing even more. “I used to be so busy that I just was busy all the time. And I really didn’t have anything outside of writing and work. And now, I’m just kind of chilling. Now I’m kind of enjoying where I’m at,” he says.

La Ronn doesn’t spend hours locked down in front of a computer or shuffle through a tabbed and highlighted series of outlines. He has no set goal for how many books he’d like to publish nor a competitive publishing schedule filled with anticipated preorders. “I define success as being able to write the books I want to, achieving enough income to sustain the business, and having a great network of author friends to help me keep my sanity. I met those goals a long time ago, so now my focus is on sustaining it and never losing sight of how fortunate I am to be here,” he says. ■



Jenn Lessmann

Jenn Lessmann is the author of *Unmagical: a Witchy Mystery* and three stories on Kindle Vella. A former barista, stage manager, and high school English teacher with advanced degrees from impressive colleges, she continues to drink excessive amounts of caffeine, stay up later than is absolutely necessary, and read three or four books at a time. Jenn is currently studying witchcraft and the craft of writing, and giggling internally whenever they intersect. She writes snarky paranormal fantasy for new adults whenever her dog will allow it.



Why Authors Are Flocking to Substack

**Guest Author J.D. Barker Explores the Shift to
the Subscription Platform Being Made by Indie
and Traditionally Published Authors Alike**



How do we, as authors, build meaningful connections with our readers? Of course, the first bonds we form are through our books—but in the age of the internet, more authors are fostering those relationships between releases as well, letting readers in on the secrets of the writing process and sharing pieces of themselves with readers to go along with the stories they write. For many years, social media has offered a perfect outlet for finding and growing these communities, but as platforms' algorithms have started to shift in unexpected ways, internationally best-selling author J.D. Barker explores how newsletter subscription platform Substack, and platforms like it, are taking authors and their readers in a new direction.

substack

The literary landscape is undergoing a seismic shift as authors of all stripes—from blockbuster bestsellers to indie darlings—migrate to Substack, the newsletter platform once dominated by journalists and political commentators. This digital exodus represents more than just another social media pivot; it's a fundamental rethinking of how writers connect with readers in an age of algorithm-driven publishing.

Joe Hill, the bestselling Horror novelist and son of Stephen King, migrated his longstanding newsletter *Escape Hatch* to Substack, where it now reaches over twelve thousand subscrib-

ers. Others have serialized novels, published back catalog titles, or cultivated new readers with short stories available exclusively on the platform. Substack has more than twenty million active subscribers and over three million paid subscribers, all looking for fresh content—a readership as broad as the writers who fuel it. The platform hosts literary fiction writers like George Saunders alongside genre novelists, debut authors, and even publishing's ultimate commercial titan, James Patterson, who recently joined.

“Substack interested me because I hadn’t done a lot of interviews (of other people) and

I like the challenge, like doing something new that I might suck at,” Patterson explains. “The interviews gave me the opportunity to spend half an hour to an hour with people who interested the hell out of me: Bob Woodward, James Carville, Stevie Van Zandt, S. A. Cosby, Gillian Flynn. I could go on and on, but then somebody would accuse me of name-dropping.”

For Patterson, who has sold more than 375 million books worldwide, the appeal clearly isn’t financial necessity. It’s the creative freedom—a sentiment echoed by authors across the publishing spectrum.

Direct Connection in a Disconnected Age

Traditional publishing still operates largely as it has for decades: authors submit manuscripts, wait months or sometimes years for publication, then hope marketing departments champion their work. Between book releases, communication with readers is mediated through social media platforms that increasingly throttle reach unless creators pay to promote posts.

Substack disrupts this model by enabling direct, unfiltered connections. When Chuck Palahniuk shares writing advice or Roxane Gay publishes an essay, it arrives instantly in subscribers' inboxes—no algorithm to please, no corporate parent company to appease.

The Economics of Independence

Although creative freedom drives many authors to the platform, the financial model has proven equally compelling, particularly for writers who already have an established audience.

Established authors can convert even a modest percentage of their existing readership into paying subscribers. With subscription rates typically between \$5 and \$7 monthly, the math becomes attractive: one thousand paying subscribers generate \$60,000 annually, with Substack taking a 10 percent cut plus processing fees.

For midlist authors who've watched advances shrink while publisher profits grow, this direct monetization offers a path to sustainable income that doesn't hinge on hitting bestseller lists.

The model works differently but perhaps even more powerfully for independent authors, who have always needed to be entrepreneurial.

"Every author gets the advice that they need a

platform, and particularly an email list," explains indie author Kevin Tumlinson. "What Substack offers is a free tool that lets you have all the key pieces—a website, a blog, a newsletter, even a home for a podcast. But bigger than that, or beyond all that, is the fact that it comes with a bit of built-in discoverability. People find you on Substack, and if they like what they see, they subscribe. The platform gives you greater reach. Add to all of that the ability to monetize the content you create, while owning both that and the mailing list you're building, and Substack becomes the perfect home base for writers."

That built-in discoverability sets Substack apart from personal websites or email services like Mailchimp. The platform's recommendation algorithms help writers find new readers—a critical advantage in a media landscape where attention is the scarcest resource.



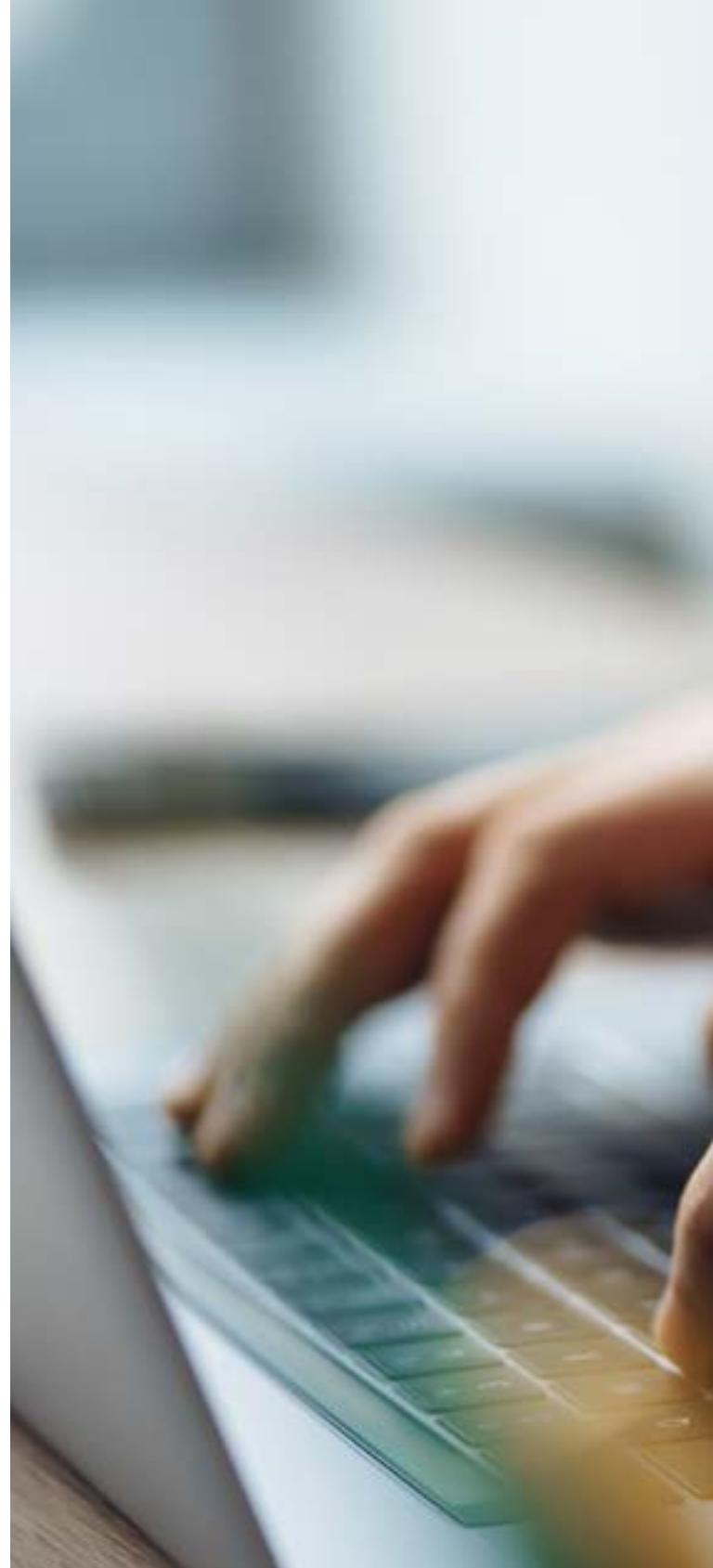
Building Literary Communities

Perhaps most significantly, Substack has transformed the relationship between authors and readers from transactional to communal. Comment sections become vibrant discussion forums. Paid subscribers receive exclusive content or invitations to virtual events. The conversation flows both ways, with readers offering feedback that shapes future work.

The Hybrid Future

Despite this migration, few authors are abandoning traditional engagement entirely. Instead, most are creating a hybrid approach: books through publishers, newsletters direct to readers, or perhaps audiobooks through yet another channel. This diversification provides both creative and financial stability.

Publishers are watching this shift closely. Some have launched their own newsletter initiatives or adjusted contract terms to retain authors tempted by platform independence. But for now, Substack has captured the momentum by offering what writers have always valued most: creative control, direct reader connection, and ownership of their work. ■





J.D. Barker

J.D. Barker (Jonathan Dylan Barker) is a New York Times and international bestselling American author whose work has been broadly described as suspense thrillers, often incorporating elements of horror, crime, mystery, science fiction, and the supernatural.

Market Smarter

How to Shift Your Strategies to Sell More at Every Stage of Your Book's Life

As independent authors, we often need to juggle a mix of old and new books, but understanding the difference between your frontlist and backlist—and when to promote each—can be confusing. Although traditional publishers coined the terms “frontlist” and “backlist,” the way they categorize and market those lists can differ from how an indie author does.

The digital era has given indie authors the power to promote any of their books at any time. Still, strategic timing and smart marketing matter. Knowing when a book transitions from frontlist to backlist and how to adjust your marketing strategy accordingly can help boost sales and promote long-term success for your author business.

When Does a Book Move from Frontlist to Backlist?

Every preorder or new release starts its life on the frontlist—fresh, exciting, and ripe for promotion. Typically, a book remains on the frontlist for the first thirty to ninety days; consider the time in which it enjoys placement on Amazon's New Releases lists and basks in the buzz of launch marketing. After that, many authors will transition the book to their backlist—books previously published but still available for readers to buy—though this certainly isn't a one-size-fits-all approach, nor should it mean you forget about those books in your marketing strategies.

Although each list will include different titles at a given time and benefit from a different marketing strategy, both are equally essential to building a strong book business. Separating your books into a frontlist and a backlist helps you prioritize and keep your marketing efforts strategic instead of scattered. Think of it this way; your frontlist relies on building momentum, requiring you to push hard and make noise to sell your book to new readers. Your backlist, on the other hand, offers stability between releases and requires you to nurture the titles and optimize your approach to sharing them with an interested audience.

This division also helps avoid marketing burnout. By focusing your energy differently based on where each book is in its life cycle, you maximize returns without exhausting your creative and financial reserves.

So what do these individual marketing strategies look like?



Marketing Frontlist Titles: Buzz, Visibility, and Momentum

Frontlist books often get the red-carpet treatment. When your book is a new release, it is at its most visible, so you may want to invest heavily in promotions such as:

- newsletter announcements and swaps;
- advance reader copy teams;
- paid ads on platforms such as BookBub, Facebook, and Amazon;
- social media blitzes or author takeover events on social media pages related to your release; and
- book signings or launch events.

Focusing on these types of promotions not only helps get your newest book in front of your established reader base; it also helps generate buzz that can expand your audience to new readers eager to find their next favorite author.

Pro Tip:

If your book is the first in a series, consider that you're not just launching a book; you're launching a franchise. As such, this is the best time to build momentum, drive preorders, and get reviews. As the old saying goes, nothing sells your old books like your newest one. Every new release boosts the visibility of your earlier titles, especially if they're part of a series.

Marketing Backlist Titles: Evergreen Strategies for Long-Term Sales

Once a book slips into the backlist, your marketing shouldn't stop. Instead, your energy should shift from promotions that encourage large bursts of sales to those that generate long-term, consistent income. Here are a few ways you can keep these titles selling.

- Promote first-in-series titles as low-priced or permafree loss leaders.
- Rotate promotions seasonally or around themed sales.
- Run occasional ad campaigns on first-in-series or stand-alone books to keep visibility up.
- Use reader magnets and autoresponders to direct readers toward older books.
- Update book covers, blurbs, and categories in keeping with market and/or genre trends.
- If you write series, set up an Amazon Series page to direct readers to the earlier (backlist) books in the series.

Although most of your promotional budget and marketing effort should stay focused on your newest titles, it's also important to understand the reader lifetime value (RLTV) your backlist represents. This is the amount of profit you gain through sales and/or page reads each time a new reader consumes your backlist. Knowing this key metric can help you determine how much of your budget and effort you want to put into driving readers to your backlist by incorporating one or more of the above marketing tactics into your overall marketing plan.

Backlist titles also shine in bundles, box sets, or special editions. These tactics can offer great return on investment (ROI) with far less pressure than a launch campaign.

How Publishing Speed Affects Marketing Timelines

The speed at which you publish can also affect how long a title remains in the spotlight. If you release a new book every month, last month's book may quickly become part of your backlist. But if you only publish once or twice a year, those books can remain your frontlist focus for much longer. There's no hard cutoff; it's about when your attention, and your readers', shifts to something newer.

Those who publish on a rapid-release cycle may move through their frontlist quickly. If you release a book every few weeks, the promotional window can be short. Your frontlist cycle might be thirty days or less.

Authors who release slowly can stretch their marketing over a longer period. With fewer books competing for readers' attention, a new release stays fresh longer in readers' eyes. Adjust your timeline based on your publishing pace, and don't be afraid to bring backlist titles into the spotlight during release lulls.

Refresh, Repackage, Relaunch: Keeping the Backlist Relevant

As mentioned earlier, your backlist should form the backbone of your steady, long-term income. Alongside specific marketing strategies tailored to keeping up the attention your backlist receives, there are also dozens of ways to give your previ-

ously published titles a facelift and further boost their sales. Try one of the following:

- Redesign outdated covers.
- Rework blurbs with stronger hooks or keywords.
- Add new formats, such as hardcovers, audiobooks, or translations.
- Launch a rebranded edition or box set.
- Create special collector editions for superfans.

Pro Tip:

Try adding a Kickstarter campaign to your backlist marketing plan for things like box sets and special collector editions. Information on how authors are using the platform can be found here: <https://www.kickstarter.com/publishing>.

If your book doesn't fit the market visually, it might be time for a refresh. Review Amazon Best Seller lists, or use AI tools like ChatGPT or Claude, to identify books similar to yours, and examine how their covers and blurbs compare. The EBSCO NoveList, which is often available through your local library, can also showcase comparative titles. Once you've gotten a feel for the current cover trends, consider whether your covers need a refresh. Republishing a backlist title with a new cover can spark excitement and attention the same way a new release would, as well as increase long-term interest in a series by making it more appealing to modern audiences.



Common Pitfalls: What to Avoid

Ignoring older titles once they're no longer "new" can be a costly mistake, as these titles are often less expensive to market because the initial production costs are already covered. A well-maintained backlog also encourages binge-reading as new fans find your work. Keeping a book's metadata updated can also help increase discoverability.

Over-marketing, meaning running ads or saturating social media channels with too many of your books at once, can confuse

readers by splitting their attention. You also place yourself in a position where your titles can end up competing against one another.

Forgetting to update your books' metadata or back matter to include your backlist titles is the marketing equivalent of leaving money on the table. You owe it to yourself, and your backlist, to never give a reader a reason to reach the end of your book and just walk away. Make sure they don't

have to look far to discover more of your books.

Letting series go unfinished and making backlist titles feel incomplete can have a negative impact on your future success. Some readers will avoid authors who have a habit of starting series they never finish.

Strategic focus and maintenance keep your catalog working for you. This is one place where working smarter, not harder, can really pay off.

One Business, Two Strategies

As an author, your frontlist is where the spotlight shines, but your backlist is your real foundation. By shifting your mindset and marketing accordingly, you can build a business that doesn't depend solely on constant launches. The goal? Create a reader journey that begins with your newest title and guides them smoothly through your entire catalog.

Your frontlist and backlist shouldn't be at odds with each other; allow them to work in concert to attract readers, and your efforts will pay off—literally. Your frontlist might be a reader's first exposure to you, but if you market your backlist right, it won't be their last. ■



Jenn Mitchell

Jenn Mitchell writes Urban Fantasy and Weird West, as well as culinary cozy mysteries under the pen name, J Lee Mitchell. She writes, cooks, and gardens in the heart of South Central Pennsylvania's Amish Country. When she's not doing these things, she dreams of training llama riding ninjas. She enjoys traveling, quilting, hoarding cookbooks, Sanntangling, and spending time with the World's most patient and loving significant other.

When Numbers Matter

**Book Report Continues to Add
Features as It Grows**



BOOK REPORT

If you hate crunching numbers in spreadsheets, or if you tend to get lost in the blur of compiling data in order to understand sales trends among your titles, you'll be happy to know there are solutions available that will do the hard work for you. And if you like visualizing that data in the form of graphs and choosing what data you want to see, with categorization options such as by series, by book, by platform, or even according to collaborator, Book Report might be a specific solution fit for your business.

A lot has changed over the years since the Book Report app launched with the goal of helping indie authors track their sales and Kindle Unlimited page reads. In September 2024, Liam Gray, Book Report's founder and sole staff member, officially expanded the app to track ten publishing platforms, including not only Amazon but also Draft2Digital, Google Play Books, Kobo Writing Life, ACX, Barnes & Noble Press, IngramSpark, Findaway Voices, Apple Books, and Smashwords via Draft2Digital. Now, having listened to feedback and feature requests through the years, Gray has made additional updates to the platform that broaden its capabilities even further.

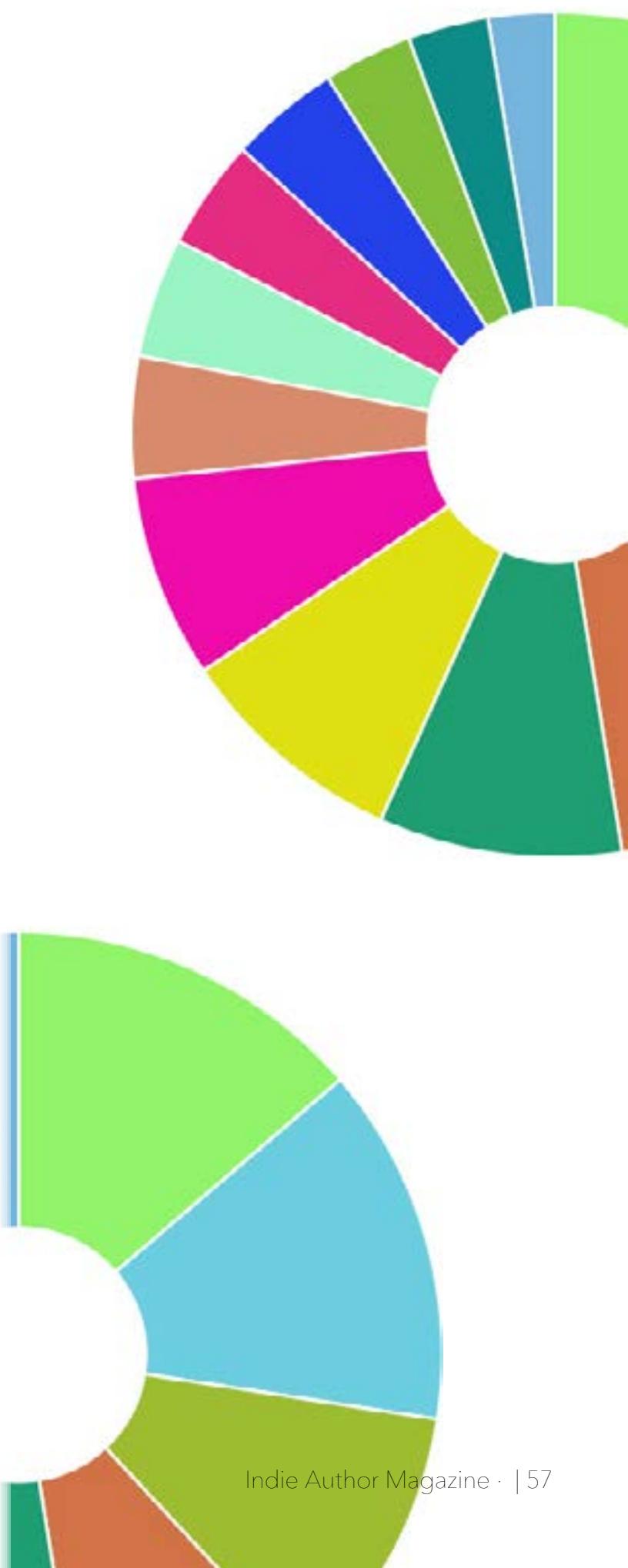
Getting Started

The Book Report app can only be used within the Chrome or Firefox Web browsers, but it's relatively easy to install and set up. Once it's installed, log in to your Amazon account.

Pro Tip:

According to Book Report, users have to have the app installed on the device they're using, but I have found I can access stats on my Android phone using Chrome as long as I've recently signed into the app elsewhere. Note that this may not work for everyone.

To read reports from Draft2Digital or individual platforms through Book Report, you will need





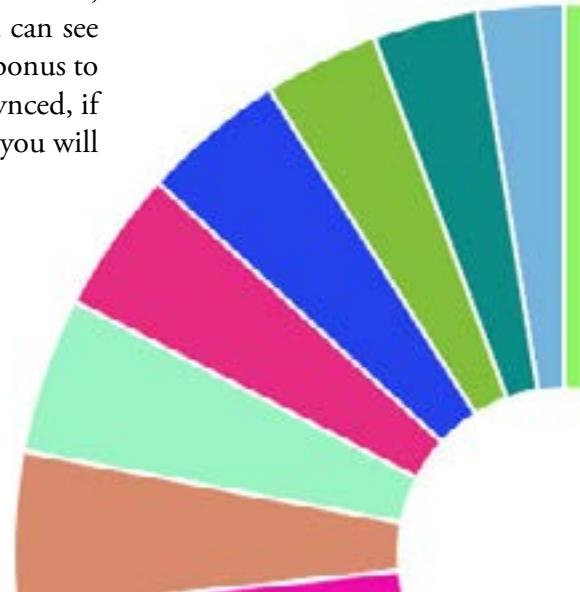
to connect to those accounts through the settings tab. Additionally, you will have to open extension options for Book Report and grant it additional permissions for each platform you want to connect.

If you get logged out of Amazon or other platforms, you will have to log back in and sync reports to download the latest data to the app. However, Book Report does let you know whether you have to log back in to sync data by telling you on the front page when you load the app.

Book Report's pricing is based on an author's earning; the app is free for everyone who makes less than \$1,000 a month. There is a free fourteen-day trial for anyone making more than that. Past the trial, the platform has five paid pricing tiers based on how much you make per month—up to \$5,000, \$10,000, \$25,000, or \$100,000, or any amount over \$100,000. Paid plans range from \$19 a month to \$249 a month, though if you pay for a subscription for a year, you get two free months in the year.

If your income fluctuates, so does the pricing, so if you make \$10,000 for a few months, then drop back to \$5,000 a month, pricing will change accordingly. Users aren't required to put in a credit card until they hit the \$1,000-per-month mark—and when they do, Book Report sends a congratulations message and a request to add your information. All plans, including free, have access to the same features.

Within the app, Book Report offers a clear-to-see pie chart for sales of multiple books and a bar graph for daily sales states, with clearly defined colors for Kindle Unlimited page-read royalties, book sales royalties, and paperback royalties, as well as preorders and returns. You can also see each book's stats as actual numbers, and the reports screen is customizable, so you can see as much or as little data as you want. Another bonus to using the app? Once you have your accounts synced, if you leave the app running in the background, you will hear a cha-ching every time you make a sale.



Pro Tip:

Book Report provides a helpful guide for those who aren't tech savvy to help you set everything up. Visit <https://www.getbookreport.com/docs/getting-started>.

App Improvements

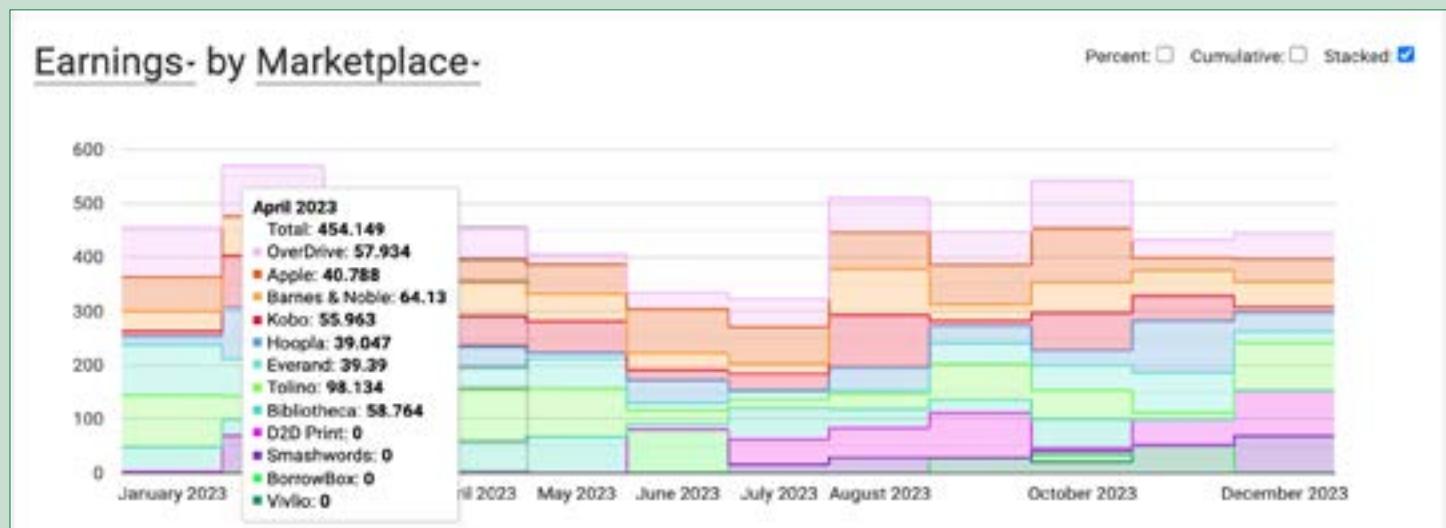
In October 2024, Gray upgraded Book Report with performance improvements, which allowed the app to generate reports of any size. Previously, some publishers who used Book Report could not view their full sales history at once because the report would not load or the browser would crash; according to Book Report's press release on the update, reports containing sales data amounting to \$50 million or more now load without issue.

December 2024 brought about another requested feature: rank tracking. Following the update, users can track the Amazon Best Sellers ranking for specific books in any format and on any marketplace under the Amazon umbrella. The feature automatically updates results every fifteen minutes and includes a book's rankings in subcategories too.

But new features didn't stop being added at the end of the year. Gray launched Saved Reports in January, allowing users to configure and save a report without having to reselect customizations every time. Users can switch between custom reports with a couple of clicks. Along with dates and

| Ranks | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Book | Kindle | Marketplace |
| The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes | #175,548 in Kindle Store | Amazon.com |
| The Valley of Fear | #281,528 in Kindle Store | Amazon.com |
| His Last Bow | #480,848 in Kindle Store | Amazon.com |
| The Return of Sherlock Holmes | #599,228 in Kindle Store | Amazon.com |
| The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes | #415,480 in Kindle Store | Amazon.com |
| The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes | #494,270 in Kindle Store | Amazon.com |
| The Sign of the Four | #681,843 in Kindle Store | Amazon.com |
| A Study in Scarlet | #798,858 in Kindle Store | Amazon.com |

| Ranks | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------|
| Book | Kindle | Kindle Subcategories | Marketplace |
| The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes | #209,208 in Kindle Store | #484,743 in Classic Literature #832,138 in Historical Fiction | Amazon.com.au |
| The Valley of Fear | #481,471 in Kindle Store | #38,821 in Historical Fiction #41,112 in Literary Fiction | Amazon.com.au |
| His Last Bow | #544,710 in Kindle Store | #53,467 in Public Domain Classics #57,145 in Classic Literature | Amazon.com.au |
| The Return of Sherlock Holmes | #532,472 in Kindle Store | #17,334 in Literary Fiction #50,848 in Public Domain Classics | Amazon.com.au |
| The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes | #501,582 in Kindle Store | #19,863 in World Literature #57,145 in Classic Literature | Amazon.com.au |
| The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes | #550,912 in Kindle Store | #11,871 in Classic Literature #11,827 in Historical Fiction | Amazon.com.au |
| The Sign of the Four | #798,299 in Kindle Store | #10,426 in Historical Fiction #11,748 in Literary Fiction | Amazon.com.au |
| A Study in Scarlet | #731,390 in Kindle Store | #18,873 in Public Domain Classics #19,842 in World Literature | Amazon.com.au |
| The Hound of the Baskervilles | #532,738 in Kindle Store | #14,049 in Literary Fiction #18,824 in Public Domain Classics | Amazon.com.au |
| The Last World | #538,577 in Kindle Store | #11,280 in World Literature #18,824 in Classic Literature | Amazon.com.au |



custom attributes, Book Report also detects sixteen attributes of your sales data, and you can filter your data based on as many of those attributes as you want.

February saw Data Sharing added to the app's list of features. Whether you're a publisher wanting to share sales data with your authors, a collaborator wanting to share data with your collaborator(s), or an author wanting to share information with your marketing team, the app allows the account owner to filter specific reports to share with any email address. As long as the recipient has an email address and an Amazon account, they can access your selected data in Book Report. Shared data updates automatically, so the recipient can view data in real time alongside the account owner.

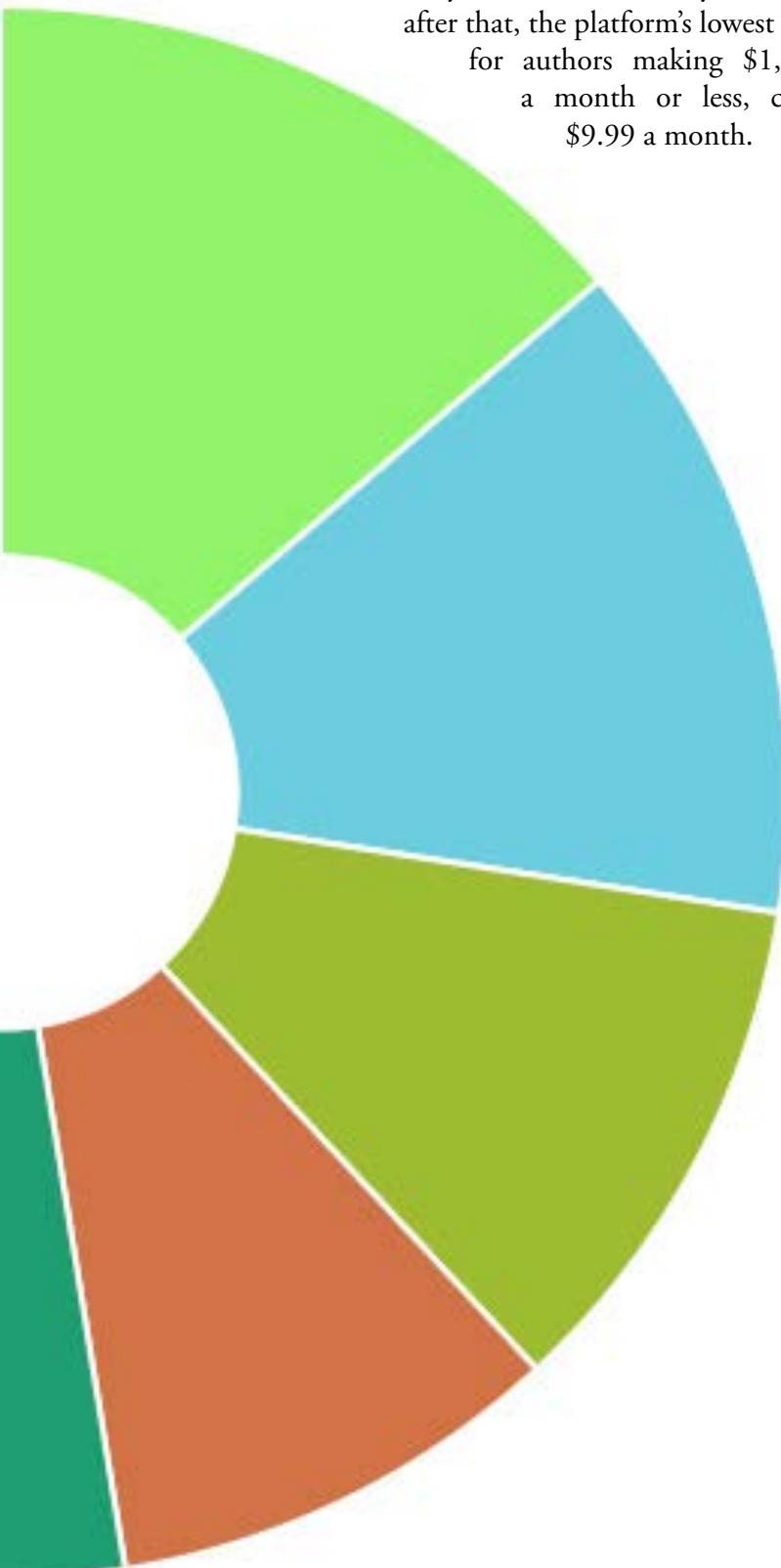
And if you have a suggestion for an improvement, Gray welcomes feedback and feature requests. Just send an email to hello@getbookreport.com. Even if you think a feature has already been suggested, go ahead and suggest it again; the more emails Gray gets about a specific feature being requested, the quicker it will potentially be added, according to the Book Report website.

How Does It Stack up to ScribeCount?

As a sales data aggregator, Book Report focuses primarily on tracking sales and the data associated with that. ScribeCount, one of Book Report's primary competitors, looks not only at that data but at a lot more as well. ScribeCount has tools built in to allow you to track performance of your ad campaigns and Book-Bub campaigns, the stats on your personal email campaigns, and more. In addition, the tool has features for revenue forecasting, cal-

culating return on investment (ROI), calculating read-through, tracking direct sales, and can integrate with BookFunnel, Shopify, and other tools authors regularly use. As of right now, there is no ability for Book Report to connect with an author's direct sales platform or for the app to track sales through their website, though when you set up your first wide connection with the app, it does ask about integrations you would like them to add in the future, and there's a variety of





options, including BookFunnel, StoryOrigin, and Shopify. Gray is also dedicated to adding new features to Book Report on a regular basis.

Book Report offers an unlimited free trial until you hit \$1,000 a month in sales. Scribe-

Count only offers a fourteen-day free trial; after that, the platform's lowest tier, for authors making \$1,000 a month or less, costs \$9.99 a month.

Would You Benefit from Book Report?

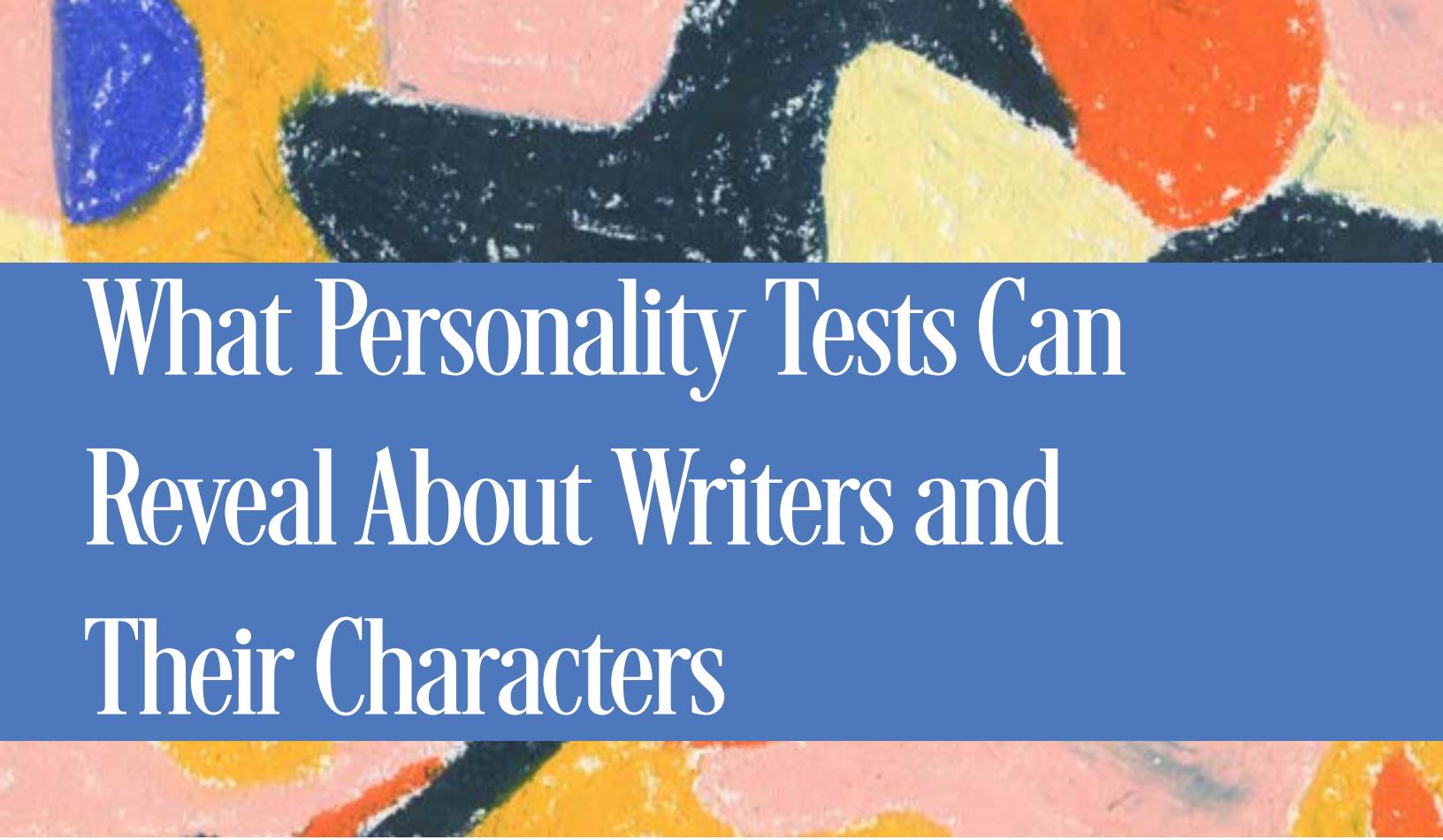
For authors who are earning less than \$1,000 a month but still want to begin tracking their sales data and identifying trends, Book Report comes at no additional cost. Additionally, if you don't have direct sales or aren't interested in tracking the ads and other features provided by ScribeCount, Book Report might be for you.

You might be surprised how much fun it is to see sales trickle in over a day or week. Plus, if you leave the browser window open and have the sound turned on, hearing the cha-ching noise every time a sale happens can result in a nice little dopamine burst. ■

Grace Snoke



Grace Snoke is a 42-year-old author and personal assistant residing in Lincoln, Nebraska. Having been a corporate journalist for more than a decade and a video game journalist for even longer, writing has been something she has always enjoyed doing. In addition to non-fiction books, she is currently working on a paranormal romance series, and two urban fantasy series under her real name. She has also released more than a dozen illustrated children's books and several non-fiction books. She has been publishing erotica under a pen name since 2017. For more information about her personal assistant business visit: <https://spiderwebzdesign.net>. Her author site is: <https://gracesnoke.com>.



What Personality Tests Can Reveal About Writers and Their Characters

At some point, every writer wonders whether their characters are too flat or too much like themselves. The plot might be moving along, but the scenes feel hollow. The middle sags. Dialogue loses direction. Often, the real issue isn't pacing or structure but a lack of clarity around what your characters want and why.

We spend so much time thinking about what characters do that we can overlook what shapes those choices internally. That same blind spot can affect our own writing process. When motivation and behavior feel unclear, it's easy to get stuck or lose direction.

Personality typing can help break through that by offering clear insights, both into your characters and into how you work as a writer.

Personality tests identify patterns in human behavior: how people solve problems, respond to conflict, make decisions, and relate to others. Most are rooted in psychological theory, influenced by thinkers like Carl Jung. Over time, researchers observed consistent tendencies in how people navigate the world and developed practical tools based on these patterns.

Thanks to the proliferation of these assessments on the internet, writers can now use them to diagnose issues in their writing process and to develop richer, more relatable characters.

Assess Yourself

Before applying personality tests to your characters, it's worth understanding your own creative style. Gaining clarity on your natural tendencies can reveal why certain parts of your process feel easier than others.

Lauren Sapala, author and creativity coach, highlights the value of personality typing for writers in several of her books and courses. "Personality typing offers a way to recognize your intuitive strengths and tendencies, which can be a game-changer for writers who don't follow a linear or 'typical' process," she says. "It's less about fitting into a box and more about understanding your unique creative flow."

Taking a personality test, even a free online one, can reveal unexpected strengths or blind spots. Although some tests are designed for a clinical setting, they can shed light on your own tendencies from a relatively objective outside perspective.

Your results, whether you agree with them or completely disagree, are a starting point for deeper personal inquiry and growth, ultimately improving your writing style and your practice.

Assess Your Characters and Plot

Personality tests can also be powerful tools for building nuanced characters and stronger plots. Taking a personality test for your characters early in the drafting process helps clarify how they think, feel, and react throughout your story.

Kristen Kieffer, author and writing coach, writes that, for her, personality typing "cuts through the noise of possibility, making it easier to determine how your characters would realistically and cohesively think, speak, and act at each moment in your developing story line."

Author Sarah Siedenburg agrees. "Typing the protagonist of my medieval fantasy novel, *Beneath a Mourning Sky*, revealed to me that Cliana Goddan was much more emotionally driven than I had originally conceptualized her to be," she writes. "Rather than being evidence of her coldness, Cliana's social detachment was driven by a strong emotional desire to protect herself from further grief."

The anecdotal results and descriptions given in a personality test can be effective starting points to

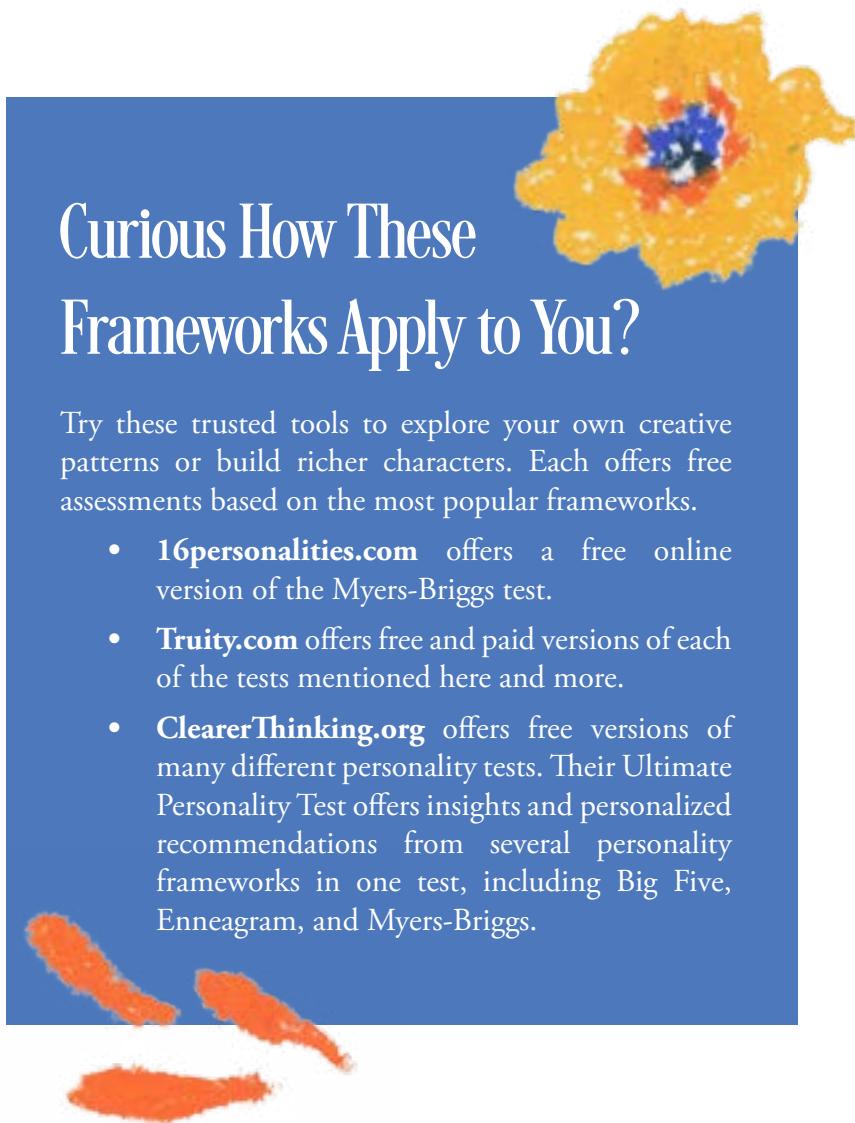
explore extremes and move toward nuanced portrayals shaped by your characters' histories and experiences, making your story feel more authentic and compelling.

Incorporating personality insights into plot development also highlights natural sources of tension between characters as well as within each character's individual arc. Knowing what drives your characters lets you craft conflicts that resonate and move the story forward, eliminating the muddy middle syndrome so many writers face.

Curious How These Frameworks Apply to You?

Try these trusted tools to explore your own creative patterns or build richer characters. Each offers free assessments based on the most popular frameworks.

- **16personalities.com** offers a free online version of the Myers-Briggs test.
- **Truity.com** offers free and paid versions of each of the tests mentioned here and more.
- **ClearerThinking.org** offers free versions of many different personality tests. Their Ultimate Personality Test offers insights and personalized recommendations from several personality frameworks in one test, including Big Five, Enneagram, and Myers-Briggs.



The Main Tests, Explained

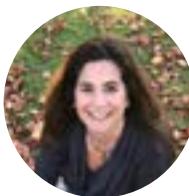
Which test is right for what you need? We've broken them down for you based on what they're used for, what traits they measure, and what authors may want to use them for.

| Test / System | Created By | Influenced By | Core Purpose | What It Measures | Best for Writers Seeking... |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) | Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers (1940s) | Carl Jung's psychological types | Understanding how people perceive the world and make decisions | Cognitive preferences, such as introverted versus extraverted or thinking versus feeling | Understanding of their writer workflow and decision-making; shaping how a character processes the world |
| Enneagram | Óscar Ichazo; expanded by Claudio Naranjo (1960s-70s) | Sufi mysticism, Jung, Gestalt therapy | Revealing core fears, motivations, and growth paths | Nine archetypes based on fear and motivation dynamics | To build emotional arcs and deepen character transformation |
| Big Five (OCEAN) | Lewis Goldberg; Costa and McCrae (1980s) | Empirical psychology, factor analysis | Describing one's personality using five universal dimensions | Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism | To create psychologically realistic characters or map behavior patterns |
| CliftonStrengths (Strengths Finder; High 5) | Donald O. Clifton (1999), with Gallup | Positive psychology movement | Identifying and leveraging personal talents and strengths | Thirty-four strength "themes," such as ideation, empathy, and strategic | Understanding of their writing process and strengths as an author |
| DISC | William Moulton Marston (1928; adapted in 1950s) | Emotions in behavior and social roles | Categorizing behavior styles in teams or relationships | Dominance, influence, steadiness, and conscientiousness | Understanding of group dynamics; writing teams, friendships, or antagonistic pairs |

Try It Out

When we impose traits or motivations that don't line up with a character's core, the story suffers. Although personality tests won't solve that for you, they can help you see what's already there, just below the surface. The more you uncover the real drives, fears, and contradictions that shape both you and your characters, the more honest and compelling your storytelling becomes.

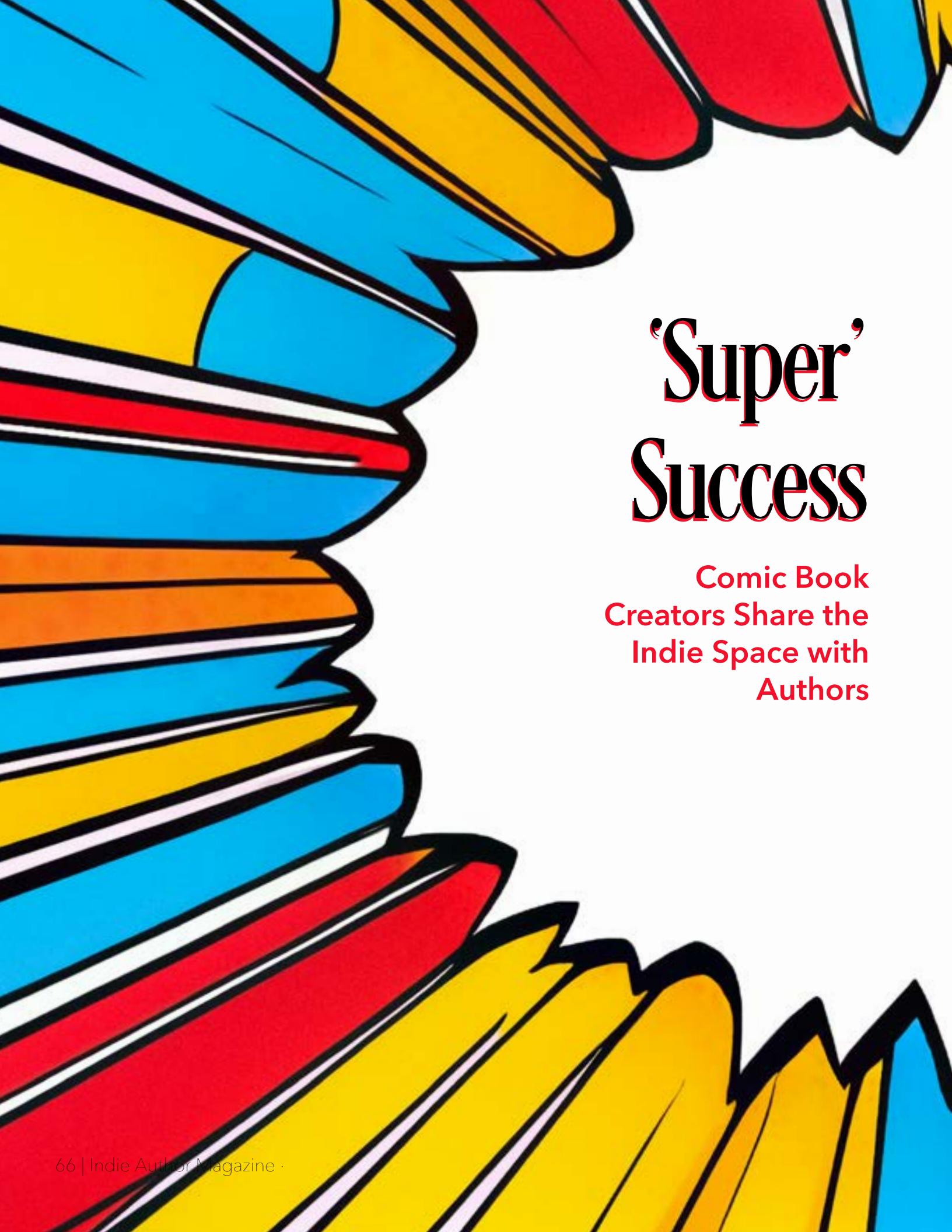
The next time you feel stuck, try using a personality test as a writing exercise, or turn it into a fun activity with your writing buddies. Compare results, explore surprises, and use what you learn to add depth and texture to your characters and your process. ■



Cara J. Stevens

Cara J. Stevens is an author, editor and book coach. She's written more than 85 books for young readers. She has two grown-ish children and lives in Los Angeles with her husband and a small, fluffy dog named Oliver. Her book *Write, Teach, Spark: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing a Book that Matters* is due out in March, 2025. Learn more at www.writeteachspark.com.





'Super' Success

Comic Book
Creators Share the
Indie Space with
Authors



If you've ever needed a reason to save your brainstorming documents—yes, all of them—let Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird offer one.

In the middle of a brainstorming session in 1983, Eastman jokingly sketched a humanoid turtle wearing a ninja mask. By the end of the evening, Eastman's sketch had been joined by three similar turtles. As the story expanded, the two wove in parodies of a few favorite comic stories at the time. The radioactive waste from *Daredevil* gave the turtles their mutated forms, and the rat who became their master bore a similar name to the hero's master in the comics.

A year later, in May 1984, Leonardo, Donatello, Raphael, and Michelangelo kicked and flipped across the page and kick-started the “Turtlemania” craze that continues even today.

But the origin story of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles in the publishing world was not so straightforward. The first comic to include the turtles was printed in black and white, funded by a tax refund from Eastman’s uncle. Eastman and Laird created Mirage Studios to independently publish what they assumed would be a single-issue comic.

Today, that single-issue comic has spawned so many movies, comics, video games, and other spinoffs it’s hard to count them all.

Eastman and Laird are far from the exception in comic book publishing—and why would they be? As with novels, authors who have independently published comics, either as unique projects or to expand their fictional story worlds through transmedia, have seen titles launch their careers to new and impressive levels of success.

“What’s happened, which I find fascinating—and I talked about this at Author Nation, when I did my panel last year with Tony [Lee], and at the final 20Books, I did a panel with Kevin J. Anderson and some other creators—there’s so many ways that comics can now be self-published that didn’t exist when I started doing that in 1997,” says Robert Napton, senior vice president and publisher at Legendary Comics.

One Medium, Many Genres

Napton, a comic book writer and editor himself, began his career at Image Comics in the 1990s—a company formed by seven artists who had left Marvel Comics and DC Comics to form their own independent movement within the industry. Napton then worked with a friend to self-publish his first comic. “I think that gave me a perspective on comic publishing that was like, ‘Okay, you can sort of make a go of it, and you don’t necessarily have to be working for one of the Big Two,’” he says, referring to Marvel Comics and DC Comics. “So it’s kind of the same mentality, almost, as indie authors have. You know, it’s like traditional versus kind of going your own way.”

Today, Napton says, comic book creators, also like indie authors, turn to platforms like Kindle Direct Publishing or

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— Robert Napton
senior vice president,
Legendary Comics

crowdfunding sites like Kickstarter to launch their titles while maintaining ownership and control over their stories.

They aren't just for superhero stories, either. When Japanese manga became popular with the comic book audience in the United States in the 1990s and early 2000s, Napton says, the range of genres represented in the medium exploded. "Manga really kind of blew that open, in the same way that I think indie authors can get really focused on a very narrow genre and really make a success of it."

Today, the range of genres popular in comic books and graphic novels is as broad as their text-focused counterparts, spanning from Horror to Slice of Life, Fantasy and Sci-Fi to Boys' Love. "Comics aren't just like Superman and Batman, which I love," Napton says. "But there are other things. There's lots of other genres and subgenres now that just didn't exist ten years ago."

Different Brushstrokes

Comic books and graphic novels share many of the same spaces as novels, and have the ability to see just as much success within independent publishing. But Napton emphasizes they are still a separate medium. Stories are told differently, with different pacing and audience expectations. In comic books, for example, stories are told episodically, meaning creators must focus on short story arcs that end in cliffhangers to keep readers invested.



Nicole Schroeder

Nicole Schroeder is a storyteller at heart. As the editor in chief of Indie Author Magazine, she brings nearly a decade of journalism and editorial experience to the publication, delighting in any opportunity to tell true stories and help others do the same. She holds a bachelor's degree from the Missouri School of Journalism and minors in English and Spanish. Her previous work includes editorial roles at local publications, and she's helped edit and produce numerous fiction and nonfiction books, including a Holocaust survivor's memoir, alongside independent publishers. Her own creative writing has been published in national literary magazines. When she's not at her writing desk, Nicole is usually in the saddle, cuddling her guinea pigs, or spending time with family. She loves any excuse to talk about Marvel movies and considers National Novel Writing Month its own holiday.

Some people may view comics as a cheaper way to visualize a story than transforming it into a movie or TV show, Napton says, but he emphasizes that comics take a lot of work to produce as well. Many authors will need to hire an artist to create the imagery to go with the story, for example, requiring a long-term collaborative partnership. "It's very important to love comic books for their own sake," Napton says.

In spite of the differences, however, Napton wants to encourage authors to explore the medium—whether it's to tell a new story or expand on one they've already published as a novel. Visual mediums can make stories more accessible, attract new readers, and expand your business. Plus, there are countless examples of comics and graphic novels opening doors to other visual storytelling opportunities down the road—just look at the superhero titles filtering through the box office later this year, scroll through the anime adaptations available on streaming services, or consider where Eastman and Laird's weapon-wielding mutant turtles have ended up.

As with novel writing, read comics and graphic novels in your genre, reach out to other creators, and research the medium as its own form of storytelling rather than through the lens of being an author. Most importantly, remember "it's exactly like being unpublished and approaching the idea of writing your first book and learning everything," Napton says. "You know, there's a learning curve for sure, but it's absolutely doable, achievable."

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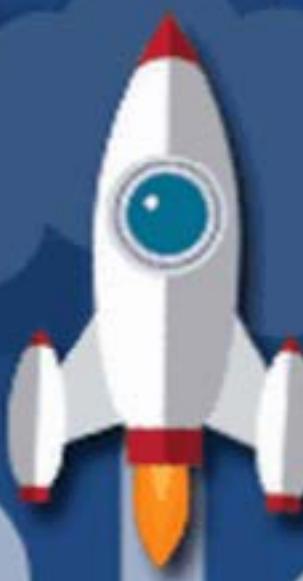
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