



# News & Views

▶ Empowering authors and publishers to create and market books

JANUARY 2011

## January 12, meeting at Brentwood Community Center Start the New Year in style

Get your book publishing act together! Join us Wednesday, January 12 as we guide you in creating a book proposal, provide writing and editing tips, and get you on your way to a productive 2011.

The New Year is a fresh start, so what better time than now to make that book you've dreamt of publishing a reality? Turning your inspiration into a best seller requires planning, marketing and publishing a professional product. Join us as we explore the book proposal process, and why a proposal is important no matter how you intend to publish your book. Plus, dot your i's and cross your t's with expert advice on organizing and editing your manuscript. As always, our presenters will include savvy marketing strategies to help you create and market your best work!

**Our Presenters:** **Katherine Pickett** earned her bachelor's degree in English from Loyola University Chicago and has been involved in the publishing industry for more than ten years. Beginning with an internship, she spent five years as a production editor with McGraw-Hill Trade before moving on to the medical textbook publisher Elsevier Inc. in St. Louis.



In 2006, Katherine left Elsevier to start her own company, P.O.P. Editorial Services, and is now a full-time freelance copyeditor and proofreader. A strong believer in the collaborative approach to editing, Katherine adapts her style to fit the needs of her clients. Although the majority of her experience lies in nonfiction trade books, she has also worked extensively with children's, young adult, and adult fiction; academic books and journals; and global finance reports. She lives in St. Louis, Missouri, with her handsome and strong husband, Chris.



**Kim Wolterman** has a bachelor's degree in Family Environment from Iowa State University, and a Master of Education degree from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. A member of the Board of St. Louis Publishers Association, Kim formed Provenance

Publishing LLC in 2009 and published her first book, *Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed(room)? Researching a St. Louis County, Missouri Home* last year. She writes extensively on how to research the history of a home, and offers presentations on how to begin the research process. Kim lives in a 1902 Queen Anne home in Webster Groves, Missouri.

### SLPA meets on the second Wednesday of the month at:

**Brentwood Community Center**  
**2505 S. Brentwood Boulevard, Brentwood, MO 63144**

Doors open for networking at 6:30 PM, meeting begins at 7:00 PM. The formal meeting concludes at about 8:30 with networking continuing after the meeting.

Our regular meetings are free to Members.  
Guests - \$10.00 at the door, cash or check only.

*"When you publish a book, it's the world's book.  
The world edits it."*



— Philip Roth, American novelist

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## Ten surefire ways to get your book proposal rejected

by Patricia L. Fry

Every hopeful author who has conducted even minimal research into the publishing process knows the term “book proposal.” And



most authors shudder at the thought of writing one. I did when I was just starting out in this business. As soon as I realized that publishing IS a business, however, I understood the importance of writing a book proposal. A book is a product, after all, and a book proposal is a business plan for that book.

But what if you’ve written a book proposal and still you’ve been rejected by eighty-five publishers? Maybe you need to take a second look at that proposal. Perhaps you’ve committed one or more author’s deadly sins.

Following are some of the most common mistakes perpetuated by hopeful authors today. Avoid these ten mistakes and you have a tremendously greater chance of landing a publisher for your perfect project.

**1: Do not tell the publisher his business.** In other words, don’t say, “You really must add this book to your list if you hope to be successful.” Or, “This book will make you rich.” Rather than putting the hard sell on the publisher, demonstrate your manuscript’s worth through a well-organized book proposal.

**2: Don’t threaten the publisher.** It will do you no good to say, “If you don’t buy my book, I will kill myself.” Or, “You’re missing the book of the century if you pass on this one.” Instead, provide him with pertinent details which clearly demonstrate the value of your book project.

**3: Don’t claim that your book contains no mistakes.** Have you ever picked up a book that had no mistakes? I don’t think it is humanly (or even mechanically) possible to produce a book without a mistake. And from what I’m told by publishers, many authors who claim to have hired a professional editor for their books have been taken for a ride. So make sure that you hire a reputable editor before submitting your book proposal or manuscript to a publisher or agent. Strive for perfection.

**4: Avoid saying that everyone will buy your book.** Statements such as this serve to demonstrate your amateur status. You may hope that everyone will buy your book, but this is an unrealistic expectation. A publisher will be more impressed by an author who has done his homework and is quite clear as to the segment of the population who is likely to purchase a book of this sort.

**5: Don’t claim that this is the only book of its kind.** This, too, implies that you’re an amateur. A well-organized book proposal includes a competitive analysis of books similar to the one you propose. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate a need for your book. If there is nothing to compare it with, how will you convince the publisher of its worth? If you can’t find other books just like it, dig deeper, my friend. Evaluate popular books from the same category and point out the similarities and the differences. Publishers want facts and figures, not wishful thinking.

**6: Do not state that this is the only book you’ll ever write.** Publishers prefer working with authors who are likely to produce more than one good book. If your book is successful and you are a pleasure to work with, the publisher would just as soon accept another book from you than someone unknown to him.

**7: Don’t reveal that you’ve been working on the book for the last 25 years.** There is nothing impressive in the fact that you have not been able to complete a 12-month project in more than two decades.

**8: Do not try to bribe the publisher.** Unless you can offer the publisher an impressively large sum of money or a vacation home in the Bahamas, don’t bother to entice his favor through bribery.

**9: Don’t contract with an unprofessional, unqualified agent.** A bad agent is worse than no agent at all. What is a bad agent? One who charges you for her services, who either sends your manuscript to publishers who are inappropriate for the project or doesn’t send it out at all, and who does not maintain reasonable communication with you. Choose an agent who is appropriate for your project and who is sanctioned by the Association of Authors’ Representatives ([www.aar-online.com](http://www.aar-online.com))


**10: Never try to write a book without first writing a book proposal.** I tell people that the first step to writing a book is to write a book proposal. Without a book proposal, you are at risk of using the wrong slant for your book and/or writing for the wrong audience. Of course, there are two types of authors—those who have something to say and who are going to say it regardless of whether anyone ever reads the book, and those who want to be widely read. Let your expectations be your guide. If you are the former, do it your way. If you are the latter, you’ll have a greater chance of success if you follow industry protocol. And this means, write a book proposal as a first step to writing a nonfiction or fiction book.

Your excellent, honest, thoroughly researched book proposal is your key to success. Publishers today are more interested in the marketability of your project than your writing skill. They

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## Ten surefire ways... *continued*

need you to identify your target audience and explain how to reach them. They want to know about your competition. A well-organized, complete book proposal will help to sell a publisher on your project.

Writing a book proposal is not a walk in the park. But once you've completed it, you can go take that walk in the park. If you avoid the ten mistakes listed above, you may not have time to take a walk because you'll be too busy showing off copies of your new book. 

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Patricia Fry is the author of 32 books, including *The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book*. [www.matilijapress.com](http://www.matilijapress.com). She is the executive director of SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network) [www.spawn.org](http://www.spawn.org). Visit her informative blog daily: [www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog](http://www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog).

## E-Readers vs. old fashioned books— which is greener?

by Jennifer Schwab

A relatively new phenomenon is the E-Reader, be it Kindle, iPad, or a number of other new competitors coming into the marketplace. When you think about it, these devices would seem to be more environmentally friendly than your typical paper and cardboard book, even a paperback.



There is a certain tactile value to “real” books, just feeling the paper, turning the pages. I find that I miss this when using an e-reader. But on the surface, the e-reader would seem to be much more green. In fact, my colleague “Mr. Green” at *Sierra Magazine* recently explored this dilemma and came to a surprising conclusion, which I will reveal momentarily.

E-reader vs. paper book is a provocative question, one that could just as easily have been “do you prefer flying cars or conventional road going cars” a few short years ago. The key to the answer is that basic tenet of sustainability, life cycle analysis. We must consider not only the trees needed to make paper versus the manufacturing of electronics products, but the shipping costs, fuel, and ultimately, the energy needed to recycle these materials at the end of their days. Not to mention, what ultimately happens to e-waste? Where do the non-recyclable remains end up?


Mr. Green's conclusion—as well as a recent *New York Times* piece on the same subject—was that unless you're a fast and furious reader, the energy required to manufacture and then dispose of an e-reader is probably greater than what's needed to make a traditional book. If you're reading 40 or more books per year on your e-reader, that would be the right choice. But if you use it only occasionally, probably better to stick to a “regular” book. This conclusion is reinforced by a study referenced on the website of TerraPass, a carbon offset business. Unfortunately, the study itself is not available for publication but its authors said e-readers are the more environmentally responsible choice only if you are reading in excess of 23 books per year ([www.terrapass.com/blog/posts/digital-books-greener-than-real-books](http://www.terrapass.com/blog/posts/digital-books-greener-than-real-books)).

The *New York Times* article also explored this subject, with a slightly different conclusion (<http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/31/are-e-readers-greener-than-books/>). Using similar data, an outfit called Cleantech did a study which looked at the question sort of in reverse, saying if you were to read three books a month over four years, the e-reader would significantly outperform conventional paper books in carbon emitted.

Clearly, like many green subjects, ours is a young industry, and as such, definitive answers are hard to come by. At least, subject to interpretation. Either way, I hope that today's generation will read more and watch less, be it through paper or electronic means.



Here's the best answer, though: go to the public library next time you are downtown. Borrow three or four books, finish them all, then return 'em next time you're near the library. This is truly the most sustainable way to read: the good old fashioned public library. At Sierra Club Green Home, we preach “reduce, reuse, and recycle” and library books can be read by dozens of people over their lifetime.

And once they are finally too dog-eared and beaten up to grace library shelves, they can be easily recycled since they are generally all paper (even the leather on deluxe bound editions can be recycled). 

Jennifer Schwab is Director of Sustainability for the Sierra Club. She is responsible for all environmental information, education, and initiatives at Sierra Club Green Home.com. Jennifer holds a Master's in Urban Planning and Sustainable Design from the University of California–Irvine and is a LEED Accredited Practitioner. She is a widely quoted media analyst and you can find her innermost green thoughts as a weekly contributor to the *Huffington Post*, *LOHAS*, *BlogHer*, *Healthy Home Institute*, *Intent.com*, as well as on the home page of [www.sierraclubgreenhome.com](http://www.sierraclubgreenhome.com).




## Is Google's head in the 'cloud'?

by Kim Wolterman

On December 6, 2010, Google unveiled its new service for buying and reading digital books. Going by the un-inventive name Google eBooks, this service is cloud-based, which means that you don't need a dedicated device to read books since they are stored in an online book shelf in the digital cloud. As long as you have access to a web browser, you can read on your desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone. Google offers free mobile apps for Android and iOS devices. Books can also be transferred to eReader devices that run Adobe Digital Editions. Using Google's mobile apps or eReaders that support Adobe's eBook platform, you can download books to your app or device for reading offline. It is worth noting that Google eBooks are not compatible with the Kindle.

The Google eBookstore offers hundreds of thousands of paid titles and more than 2 million free titles. In addition to purchasing books through Google eBooks, you can also buy directly from one of its bookseller partners. Regardless of where you buy, your books are all kept in the same place with unlimited storage, and they will automatically sync between all of your devices.

Amazon, in the meantime, entered the cloud-based market as well a day after Google's launch of eBooks. Similar to eBooks, Kindle for the Web allows anyone with a web browser to buy and access Kindle books on almost any device. Let the games begin...

The obvious winner in all of this is the consumer, who can now access e-books anywhere, anytime. As authors and publishers it would appear that we need to get on the e-bandwagon. Our job is to get our books into the hands of readers in whatever format they desire. Judging by the sales of e-books, the desire is huge. 

Kim Wolterman is Communications Manager for St. Louis Publishers Association. She formed Provenance Publishing LLC in 2009 and published her first book, *Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed(room)? Researching a St. Louis County, Missouri Home*, last year. She writes extensively on how to research the history of a home, and offers presentations on how to begin the research process.

## What's Ahead?

**February 9 is the next monthly SLPA meeting: Is an agent right for you?** Are you interested in submitting your book to an agent for representation? Learn how to find reputable agents for publishing your book, and how an agent can help you obtain foreign rights for your book. Mark your calendar!

## Why authors need an editor

by Dana Lynn Smith

*The first step in successfully marketing your book is to create a quality product. In today's guest post, writer and editor Yvonne Perry shares her thoughts about working with editors.*

### **Welcome Yvonne and thanks for sharing. Why is it so important for authors to hire an editor?**

An editor who knows the book industry is an asset to any author, but first, let's talk about the different types of editing. A copy editor looks for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage errors, and will note awkward transitions, redundancies, and hyperbole. Think of a copy editor as the teacher with a red pen, who is ready to grade your paper.

A manuscript that needs further development is not ready for a copy editor. It needs a developmental editor who can coach or guide an author's work to the next level by offering suggestions to strengthen the author's writing and develop the story to its best potential.

This "writing mentor" may work with an author on all elements of book development including front matter, back matter, and citing references. After a book goes through a development process with an editor, it may still need a copy edit.

So, why should an author hire an editor? After several rewrites and re-reading, an author can easily get so close to his own writing that he is not be able to see his own errors. Some may not even be aware of the mistakes they are making because they are not familiar with style guides or grammar rules. For example, there are several different style guides and while most agree on the basics, there are acceptable word usages and punctuation that make writing a book different than writing for the Web.

Additionally, we see so many typos and grammatical errors on the Web and in books that are self-published (or brought to market by publish-on-demand companies) that after a while, these mistakes become so commonplace, many people view them as acceptable. To an avid reader, these errors are sure signs that the book was either written by an amateur or by someone who did not care about preserving the foundation upon which good books have always been built. That is not the image an author wants to portray.

Devoted readers are accustomed to a high standard of quality in the writing, layout, and physical properties of a book. They will not tolerate blatant errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar, nor will they be inclined to backtrack to locate what they missed when they are confused by what an author has written.

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## Why authors need an editor... *continued*

Another reason authors should have their books edited is because an unedited or poorly written book is a legitimate reason for a publisher to reject it. It is difficult enough to get a book accepted by a conventional publisher without having to further reduce your chances with a book that an agent can't "sell" to a publisher or acquisition editor.

And, speaking of selling, from a marketing standpoint, good books are recommended by word of mouth to others who have read them. Poor books are not! In fact, an author may have a difficult time getting someone to write a review for a book that didn't read well. Even if a book is self-published or published on demand, an author must have a great product to offer in order to sell books—especially in a declining economy.

A developmental editor knows more about current word usage, punctuation, grammar, book layout (front and back matter), character development, writing dialog, creating good transitions, setting and plot, and overall flow than the average high school English teacher.

### What advice can you give to authors about hiring and working with an editor?

- Pick the right kind of editor. Most of the manuscripts I see need a developmental editor to at least review the manuscript before moving on to a copy editor.
- Check to see what types of work the editor does most often. An editor who edits mostly fiction may not know how to format a bibliography or cite reference sources; an editor who works mostly with non-fiction may have less ability to develop characters, plot, and scenes.
- Ask to see a list of clients the editor has worked with. Don't be afraid to ask how many books the editor has edited, particularly in your genre
- Ask what style guide the editor uses. Books published in America are typically edited using *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *Strunk and White's The Elements of Style*, or the *MLA Handbook for Writers*. APA Style is preferred for behavioral sciences and research books.
- Ask to see samples of the editor's work. While I work under a non-disclosure agreement which prevents me from sharing a client's before and after manuscript, I offer (at no cost) to edit two pages of the prospective author's work to demonstrate my skills.
- Check the editor's references. If an editor cannot or will not provide references, run the other way and don't look back while you find someone else to help you. 📖

Yvonne Perry is the owner of Writers in the Sky Creative Writing Services. She has authored twelve titles and written or edited more than thirty (some bestselling) books for her clients, Writers in the Sky provides developmental and copy editing and publishes a monthly e-zine of articles and information about the craft and business of writing, publishing, and book marketing. Article Source: [http://www.bookmarketingmaven.typepad.com/book\\_marketing\\_maven/2009/03/why-authors-need-an-editor.html](http://www.bookmarketingmaven.typepad.com/book_marketing_maven/2009/03/why-authors-need-an-editor.html)

Dana Lynn Smith is a book marketing coach and author of *The Savvy Book Marketer Guides*. Drawing on her 15 years of publishing experience and degree in marketing, she specializes in developing marketing plans for nonfiction books and helping authors learn how to promote their books online.

## Book learning

### "What did you take away from tonight's meeting?"

Members and guests of SLPA were asked this question following the December presentation on *The Entrepreneurial Author*. Here's what a few folks had to say:



"The book is not the end, it is the beginning" really resonated with me.  
— Doug Schneider



"I learned that to have a book be successful is more about marketing it, thinking outside the box and being true to who you are."  
— Kelly Ross



"I was reminded to be patient with my book, and that you spend many years promoting it and deriving success from it."  
— Diane Sanford 📖

## Time to renew your SLPA membership!

Full member fee: \$72 per year

2nd member of company: \$48 per year

Student fee: \$48 per year

[www.stlouispublishers.org/membershiplevel.php](http://www.stlouispublishers.org/membershiplevel.php)

Membership Chairman: Linda Austin

[membership@stlouispublishers.org](mailto:membership@stlouispublishers.org)



## Improve your plan for the New Year by understanding a goal and a purpose

by Kevin Hocker

A goal is a precise, measurable outcome that you wish to attain; it has a specific beginning, middle and end. Goals have deadlines. That is one of the main distinctions between a goal and a purpose. Deadlines are important because when we don't commit to a deadline, we tend to procrastinate.

What would happen if Christmas Day wasn't on a calendar? What would happen if you were told to just have Christmas every year when you could fit it in your schedule? Can you imagine how messed up the holidays would be? Instead, a wonderful holiday happens every year because December 25 is a firm deadline on the calendar. You should do the same with your goals.

Finally, the object is not to go to your goals, but rather for your goals to take you to your dreams or purpose. A purpose is less specific. It may have intangible aspects to it and therefore is not always as easy to measure. It can be an ongoing and unfolding intention or desire. It will almost always encompass specific goals, but a purpose in and of itself has no end. It continues unless you modify it or decide to change it completely. The biggest indicator of a purpose is that it is tied to the service of others. If it does not serve others, then it is not actually a purpose and is simply a goal.

### Some Examples of a Purpose:

- To add value to others
- To lead others to spiritual maturity
- To advance the gospel
- To help the less fortunate
- To feed the hungry
- To wake people up
- To encourage people
- To be wealthy
- To be healthy
- To be happy

I think goal setting has gotten so much hoopla over the years that a lot of people no longer take it seriously. I think the main reason for this is most people don't really understand what they're doing when they set goals. As a result, they don't think goal setting is important. If you simply think of setting goals (destinations) as programming your GPS, you may have a different perspective on the importance of goal setting as a practice in your life.

For instance, if you had to figure out how to navigate to a strange address in a big city, wouldn't you program the GPS? Would you say, "Oh, I know what my goal is, I don't need to write it down"? No way. The act of programming the destination is simple but critical to get the "universal GPS of your mind" to calculate your route.

You should view goal setting in much the same way. If you're one of those people who never fill out worksheets or set goals, that may tell you something about why you haven't reached some of your destinations by now. You haven't arrived where you want to be or something in your life isn't going as you'd like.

### Some Examples of Goals:

- Finances: To earn \$100,000 a year; to become a millionaire; to retire by age 40
- Physical Health: To reduce my weight to 175; to lose 5 inches around my waist
- Relationships: To go on two dates a month with my spouse, to attend one social function every other week
- Career: To get promoted to sales manager in two years; to finish college; to go back to school
- Spiritual: To pray every day; to go to church every week
- Possessions: To buy a new home by the end of next year; to buy a black Lexus LS460

Surely, it can't be as simple as writing things down, can it?

Well, I won't say that it's that simple, but I will say it is mandatory. If you program a destination into your GPS, you still have to pay attention in traffic and you still have to stop at red lights and turn left when it's time. You still have to maintain your vehicle, change the oil and get regular tune-ups, etc. But the whole trip starts with programming the destination.

I like to think of it this way: you don't set goals because of how your mind works; but it's because of how your mind works that you set goals. Perhaps Zig Ziglar put it best when he said, "If you want to reach a goal, you must 'see the reaching' in your own mind before you actually arrive at your goal."

Kevin Hocker is the author of *The Success Compass: Your Roadmap for Results* and creator of the Aspiring Author Academy seminar, coming up in March, 2011. Learn more about Kevin Hocker and his seminar at [www.TheSuccessCompass.com](http://www.TheSuccessCompass.com).

You are invited to submit items and articles to *SLPA News and Views*.

**Next deadline: January 20**  
**Don't be late – no kidding!**

Get your news and articles in EARLY! Send your information, articles and announcements to [Editor@stlouispublishers.org](mailto:Editor@stlouispublishers.org).

### Questions about SLPA?

Contact **Membership Chairman:**  
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