



News & Views

▶ Empowering authors and publishers to create and market books

APRIL 2011

April 13 meeting at Brentwood Community Center Beyond the blog: increasing your internet presence

Having a blog is an excellent way to introduce your audience to your writing style and promote your book. In addition to blogs, many other opportunities exist on the Internet, such as virtual book launches, eblasts, blog tours, social networking, Amazon review campaigns, online media kits, article placement, and more. This interactive presentation will offer you great ideas to creatively market your book online.

Our Speakers:



Angela Atkinson has been a full-time freelance writer since 2005. She writes and edits content for several websites and online news sources, works with corporate clients and does basic website construction and design. She is passionate about helping other writers to succeed, partly because other writers have helped her in her own career. Atkinson's book, *The Practical*

Freelance Writer's Guide to Author Websites, was released in September 2010. She is the author of an award-winning personal development blog called *In Pursuit of Fulfillment* and the co-founder of The WM Network, which features The WM Freelance Writers Connection and three other niche blogs. Her website: angelaatkinson.com



Will Hanke is St. Louis' top independent Search Engine Optimization professional. His business, aptly named "WhereIsMyBusiness.com," helps small and medium sized businesses reach the top of search engines like Google, Yahoo! and Bing. Will is the founder of MarketSTL, an annual Internet Marketing conference held in St. Louis. He is

an avid SEO blogger and has authored several ebooks on Internet marketing. He speaks throughout the St. Louis area to local chambers, associations and other business groups on everything from link building to generating warm leads through your website.

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.

"Without the *New York Times*, there is no blog community. They'd have nothing to blog about."



— Malcolm Gladwell

staff writer with *The New Yorker* magazine since 1996

What's ahead?

May 11 - Is there an e-book in your future?

With the continued explosion of sales of e-readers and thus e-books, it is important to understand this technology. Find out what it takes to take a p-book to an e-book.

In This Issue

1. Beyond the blog: increasing your internet presence
1. What's ahead?
2. Book Marketing: Your Online Press Kit by Joel Friedlander
3. 11 reasons to pack your virtual bag for a blog tour by Sandra Beckwith
4. 5 tips for promoting your book with social media by Jesse Stanchak
5. Small Press Month workshops a success
5. Members in the news
5. Greater St. Louis Book Fair
5. Independent bookstores in St. Louis form an alliance
6. Donate your used books to library fundraisers by Linda Austin
6. Book learning

Book Marketing: Your Online Press Kit

by Joel Friedlander



When you're launching and marketing your book it can be essential to get attention from the media. It may be big media, niche market media, trade magazines, book reviewers, book bloggers, talent bookers or any number of other representatives of print, electronic, or broadcast media. It's your job to make their job easy.

There are many times you'll want to send information to media contacts. It's become common for authors to maintain their own media kit on their website, on the site for their book, or on their blog.

It makes sense. You can point inquiries to your Press or Media page, and make available lots of information to make it easy for busy reviewers, editors, reporters or researchers to get basic information on their own schedule.

I've been putting together a media kit for **A Self-Publisher's Companion**, and studying some of the others I've found online.

- For instance, Tim Ferris of *The 4-Hour Workweek* fame, has a full media kit with press release, book summary and sample interview questions. He also has a large assortment of photos of Tim Ferris to choose from.
- My doctor Marty Rossman just published a book with Crown, a major trade publisher. I took a look at his site for his new book *The Worry Solution*. In addition to photos of the author and a bio, this page is heavily weighted toward interviews. It features extensive sample subjects for 8 different interviews, and a list of 15 possible interview questions.
- Seth Godin's new publishing venture, *The Domino Project*, has, as you might expect, a robust Press page with excerpts, Q&As, and press releases for the enterprise as a whole and each title. Their media kit is a bold and effective 9-page PDF that tells the story of Domino in a compelling style.
- For a self-published author with a lot of experience I took a look at Susan Daffron's *Publishize* Press Page. Note that well after publication Susan went back to add awards her book had won so the press page was kept up to date and effective as a tool to sell her book.

What to Include in your Online Press Kit

You can get creative with your press kit, but keep in mind that reviewers will expect certain elements. These include:

- A press release, usually the one you write for the book's launch.

- Author bio, including previous publications and qualifications to write the book. Include author's platform information.
- Author photo, and it's smart to include high-resolution files for print and low-resolution for online use.
- Book photo, with the same resolutions as the author photo.

Many other items can and are added, but keep in mind that throwing more information at people is not always a good strategy to get them to pay attention to your message. Some great additions might be:

- Sample review. These can be very helpful to writers who are in a time crunch, and who isn't?
- Sample chapter
- Interview questions
- Photos that can be used in a story about the book or its subject
- Reprints or transcripts of interviews about the book
- Testimonials from early readers with authority or celebrity

The easiest way to make your press kit available is to put all the documents into a PDF or a ZIP file and put a download link to the file on your book's Press or Media page. This page works best when it's in your navigation, or you provide a link on the home page of your site. The idea is to make it easy to find.

I was surprised to find that a number of writers with books out right now didn't seem to have a press kit at all. Or it may have been that it was really, really hard to find.

Since we rely on publicity and spreading the word about our work through other people's networks, it makes sense to me to make sure your press kit is obvious and easy to download.


Links

Tim Ferris, *The 4-Hour Workweek* Pressroom

Seth Godin, *The Domino Project* Press Page

Martin Rossman, M.D., *The Worry Solution* Press Kit

Susan Daffron, *Publishize* Media Kit

Joel Friedlander, *A Self-Publisher's Companion* Media Kit Page. 

Joel Friedlander is a book designer, blogger and the author of *A Self-Publisher's Companion: Expert Advice for Authors Who Want to Publish*. Visit his blog at www.theBookDesigner.com.

11 reasons to pack your virtual bag for a blog tour

by Sandra Beckwith




A book blog tour (also known as a virtual book tour) is a popular book marketing tactic because it lets authors reach their book's target audiences in ways that lead to online conversations, reviews, guest blog posts, and book excerpts.

All of these options come to life on the blogs that are popular with the people we want to buy and read our books. Some will write a review, others will publish a Q&A with you, many will ask you to write a guest blog posting (as I'm doing here), and still others will want you to share a short book excerpt with their fans and followers.

Here are 11 reasons you will want to consider planning and executing a blog or virtual book tour by contacting the blogs that are read and enjoyed by your book's target audiences:

- You will reach the people who should read your book. There's a blog (or 20) for just about every niche imaginable, so no matter how small (or large) your market is, you'll find a way to connect with them online.
- Readers can enjoy instant gratification. Most bloggers will add a link to your book that takes the reader to an online purchasing site, whether it's a retailer like Amazon.com or a purchase page on your website. People will be able to purchase your book immediately, while they're interested and before they forget.
- Publicity begets publicity. Once you start doing blog interviews, other bloggers will notice you and invite you to participate on their blogs, as well. One opportunity leads to another – and yet another. The exposure can also lead to publicity in traditional media outlets as well as speaking invitations.
- Your interview, column, review, etc., remains online indefinitely. In-person book tour connections are fleeting – you talk to a group in a bookstore or another venue and then everyone moves on, with no record of the conversation left behind. But the content of online conversations is typically archived and accessible for months and years.
- You will reach far more people than you would in person. How many people attend the typical, non-celebrity book signing event? Most authors are underwhelmed—even discouraged—by the turnout. Moving your tour to the virtual world significantly increases the number of people you can reach with information about your book.

- It's less stressful. Most authors I know would rather be at their computer writing than talking about their book at a signing event. With an online blog tour, there are no worries about stage fright or forgetting what you wanted to say.
- You save a lot of money. A virtual book tour completely eliminates all travel expenses associated with in-person book and media tours. And you don't have to deal with flight delays or other transportation snafus.
- You don't have to worry about what you're going to wear. In fact, you can do your interviews wearing pajamas and fuzzy slippers if you want to. Seriously—who wants to dress up for a public appearance when they can settle in for a relaxed e-chat anywhere they want, wearing anything they want?
- You'll make it easier for people to find you. People are using search engines today more than ever before to find information they need. Sharing information from and about your book on multiple sites makes it more likely that people who have never heard of you and your book will find it—and buy it—when you show up in a search engine.
- You'll enhance your topic knowledge by connecting with people who are interested in it. Blog readers often share anecdotes and ask questions that better prepare you for other interviews or that can contribute to your next book on the topic.
- It's easy. Identifying the blogs, learning what kind of information they use, and contacting them with a relevant and interesting offer is easy to do. It does take time, but it's not hard. It's so easy in fact, that you can outsource it to a smart college student or intern.

Use a blog tour to not only sell more books, but to expand your online network while showcasing your expertise or storytelling skills. When you target the right blogs and contact them in an appropriate way, you'll be pleased with the outcome. 

Sandra Beckwith is a former national award-winning publicist who now teaches authors how to be their own book publicists. Get her free special report, *Beyond the Press Release: 10 Exciting Book Buzz Ideas That Will Take You to the Top*, when you subscribe to her free Build Book Buzz e-newsletter at www.buildbookbuzz.com. Sandra is also the author of three books, including one about publicity for small businesses and another on publicity for nonprofits.

5 tips for promoting your book with social media

by Jesse Stanchak



In the age of the Kindle and the iPhone, text is more ubiquitous than ever, but that doesn't mean users are lining up to pay for content. Readers often need a push, in the form of a strong personal brand, to get them to open their wallets.

Social networks can provide an ideal platform for budding authors looking to bring their brand to the masses. A recent Social Media Week panel brought together a best-selling author, a literary blogger and a pair of publicists to discuss how social networks are changing the way authors promote their work—and how writers of all stripes can use social tools to get ahead.

Make connections before you need them. You can't start a Twitter account the day your book launches and expect to be an instant success, said Natalie Lin, online publicist at John Wiley & Sons. You need to start developing your audience long before you have something to market to them, she said. New writers have the most to gain from social networks, said literary blogger Levi Asher, since a social presence can help an up-and-coming author prove to a publisher that their work has an audience. Asher cited author Tao Lin as a rising talent who is gaining a cult following through his use of social networks.

Join conversations that aren't about you. You can't build meaningful connections with fans by just talking about yourself all the time, Lin said. If you want to make authentic relationships, trying joining in conversations about other topics that interest you, she suggested. Lin also suggested using your social presence to reach out to bloggers and other influencers that you respect. Asher agreed, noting that when an author approaches him about reviewing their book, he's more likely to consider the request when the author can send him a personal note and demonstrate a little familiarity with his work.

Use social media to feed your work. Your Twitter account isn't just a promotional vehicle, said A.J. Jacobs, author of *The Year of Living Biblically* and other memoirs. Your social-networking experiences can actually help you develop ideas. Jacobs recently tweeted about his wife waking up in a bad mood after she had a dream about him flirting with another woman. Jacobs told the panel that after he sent this message, several of his followers responded that they'd had similar experiences with their spouses. What seemed like a freak occurrence at first might actually be a common problem that Jacobs could explore in an article.

Use your social presence to support other promotions.

Asher said he doesn't see social media as a platform for driving direct sales so much as for building buzz and promoting events. The publishing business is changing, and part of that transformation may mean that Web events and nonbook merchandise may become a larger part of an author's income, he noted. Publicist Meryl L. Moss said having a strong social presence can make it easier for an author to score a guest appearance on a TV or radio program. Moss pointed out that when new authors have a strong YouTube video under their belt, it can go a long way toward allaying a television producer's fears that they won't be able to hold up their end of an interview. Several panelists pointed out that many of the bulwarks of traditional publishing—media appearances, live events and even books themselves—are in a state of flux or even decline. Having a healthy personal brand online may be a vital part of surviving and adapting in this new publishing environment, they said.

Stick with it. Shifting from the private process of writing a book to the public process of promoting it can be a jarring experience for a writer, said Asher. Many writers become frustrated when they don't develop an online following right away, he noted—or worse yet, when the people they connect with first aren't fans, but harsh critics. Developing a real following takes time, and even then, your fans may still be critical of your work. Jacobs said he routinely received notes from fans alerting him to factual errors in his books. Authors need to be willing to open themselves up to critics and trust that their fans will take care of them in the long haul, Lin noted. "You need real stamina to make it work," she said.

Reprinted with permission. "5 tips for Promoting Your Book with Social Media" originally appeared at SmartBlog on Social Media.com. <http://smartblogs.com/socialmedia/2010/02/17/5-tips-for-promoting-your-book-with-social-media/> Jesse Stanchak writes and edits *SmartBrief* newsletters on leadership, entrepreneurship, social media and other topics. Before joining SmartBrief, he worked as a Web producer at *Congressional Quarterly*. His work has also appeared in Slate.com, MSN.com, the *Washington City Paper* and other publications.

Small Press Month workshops a success

In March each year throughout the United States events are held to raise awareness about the valuable work produced by independent publishers. St. Louis is no exception and on the last three Saturdays of the month, workshops were held at area Borders stores. The St. Louis Publishers Association sponsored the two-hour long meetings, and attendees were treated to speakers discussing the different types of publishing, book design and marketing techniques. 📖



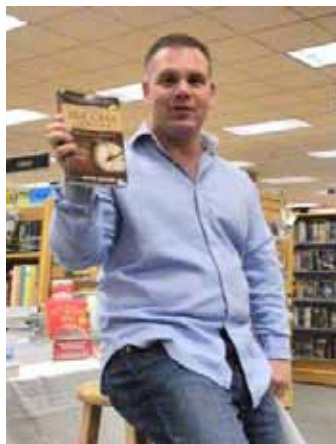
Bob Baker



Linda Austin



Sue Sylvia



Kevin Hocker

Members in the news

On April 10, 2011 the Kaufman Center in New York City will offer the Passover musical *Shlemiel Crooks* at Merkin Concert Hall. The play is based on two children's books by St. Louis Publishers Association member Anna Olswanger. *Shlemiel Crooks*, a Sydney Taylor Honor Book and PJ Library Book, grew out of a 1919 Yiddish newspaper article the author discovered about the attempted robbery of her great-grandfather's kosher liquor store. *Chicken Bone Man*, which won the F. Scott Fitzgerald Short Story Contest, is the charming tale of the author's father, who dreams of becoming a blues piano player. Congratulations to Anna! 📖

Greater St. Louis Book Fair

The Midwest's largest charity book sale returns April 28 – May 1, 2011 at the lower level of Macy's east parking garage, West County Center. For over 60 years, book lovers and collectors have enjoyed bargain prices on a diverse and quality selection of new, gently-used and rare books. Fair proceeds benefit local non-profit education and literacy programs. Visit their website at www.stlouisbookfair.org for more information on hours and admission fees. 📖

Independent bookstores in St. Louis form an alliance

In an effort to remain competitive in a constantly changing book marketplace, four independent bookstores in the St. Louis metropolitan area have formed an alliance. Owners from **Subterranean Books** in University City, **Left Bank Books** in Clayton, **Pudd'nhead Books** in Webster Groves and **Main Street Books** in St. Charles have stated that their mission is "to support the creative and literary efforts in our city; to share our love of knowledge and storytelling; to not only keep up with the times, but to stay ahead of the curve so that our customers get the best service, the best events, and books that fill their souls." Additional bookstores have expressed interest in joining the alliance. The local bookstores in St. Louis have been very supportive of independently published, local authors and we wish them success with their endeavors. 📖

Donate your used books to library fundraisers


by Linda Austin

April is the month of book fairs in St. Louis, and local library Friends groups are gathering stock for their annual fundraisers. These sales are major sources of funds that help enhance library services, providing the extras such as computers, landscaping, equipment, special events and programs. The St. Louis County Library announced recently that over 70 author events were funded during 2010 by their Friends group, making it one of the top libraries in the country for hosting authors, many of them world famous. In these days where governments are reducing funds to libraries, many need all the help they can get just to keep the doors open.

Webster Groves Public Library, independent of the county library system, is in the process of remodeling, so their fundraiser this year is particularly important. Book donations can be dropped off at the library's temporary location in Webster Groves at 3232 South Brentwood Blvd (the old Seiler building). Those wanting to donate boxes of books should call Nancy at 314-962-4846 to schedule a time when Friends volunteers can help unload.

Kirkwood Public Library is also independent of the county system and has finished a major renovation to allow for modern technology, handicapped access, and more books and programs. Book donations can be dropped into a slot at the circulation desk inside the library or into a bin at the outside back of the library (enter off Taylor Avenue). To receive help unloading boxes of books, call the Friends office at 314-821-5770, extension 1023, to schedule a time. Their fair will be held in the old CompUSA store off South Lindbergh, just south of Watson.

These libraries would like your new or gently used books—nothing moldy, torn up or scribbled across. No encyclopedias or magazines.

Webster Groves Public Library (book fair April 28-May 1)
3232 S Brentwood Blvd, Webster Groves, 63119
Kirkwood Public Library (book fair April 27-May 1)
140 E Jefferson, Kirkwood, 63122 

Linda Austin is an author and publisher and a board member of the St. Louis Publishers Association. She keeps an eye on area book and writer events and the big publishing picture.

Book learning

“What will you take away from tonight’s meeting?”

Members and guests of SLPA were asked this question following the March presentation **Book Marketing Made Easier**. Here's what a few folks had to say:



“Each member of the panel saw a need that they could fill, went after the niche and didn't spend a lot of money marketing to be successful.”

—Anne Ledbetter



“It inspired me to get going to finish my book.”

—John Dudleyzinke



“I thought it was interesting. I came just to learn and it has given me encouragement.”

—Angela Campbell

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

Next deadline: April 20

Don't be late – no kidding!

Get your news and articles in EARLY! Send your information, articles and announcements to

Editor@stlouispublishers.org.

Questions about SLPA?

Contact **Membership Chairman:**

Linda Austin membership@stlouispublishers.org

SLPA News & Views is edited by: SLPA Communications Manager
Kim Wolterman, kimwolterman@gmail.com and designed by
Peggy Nehmen: pnehen@n-kcreative.com

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