

In today's material, we'll continue to build your author's platform. Probably, you already have part of the platform built. This lecture assumes all the ideas examined here are new to you.

Website Page

As a new author, you have to face the fact your book is published in the 21st century. Readers search for and find books by using the internet. The implication of the last statement is that you and your book need a website. The simplest way to establish a web presence is to use a program like Wordpress or Blogger or Weebly.

Blogger can be found at <https://www.blogger.com/about/?r=2>. It is an app from Google and is fairly simple to use. You can find Weebly at <https://www.weebly.com>

Wordpress comes in two versions. One, Wordpress.com, uses a Wordpress server that is common to many, many bloggers and the second, Wordpress.org, uses a server that you rent from a service provider. In this latter case, you have to decide on a host server and obtain a URL.

The shared version of Wordpress uses a combined URL like <http://wordpress/your name>. The other version of Wordpress requires you to buy a URL to establish your own website. Whichever Wordpress version you use, you can build a complete website with it including a blog. My website hankquense.org/wp uses Wordpress. I use the second type of Wordpress, the one that isn't shared with others.

Websites such as Wordpress, Blogger and Weebly have two essential types of content: pages and posts. Pages are static in that they don't change unless you deliberately set out to change them. Once you establish a page on the website, it stays there, doesn't move and doesn't change.

Posts are for blogging and these aren't static like pages. A new blog post will appear at the top of the website once you publish it. When you write a second post, the initial one will move down to make room for the new post.

So what do you do with a website once you have it up and running? You use it to pimp your book. There should be a dedicated page for the book and it should be easy to find. Don't make a visitor search for the book page.

Initially that page should have a picture of the cover, your book blurb and buy links. You can also put your short synopsis on it.

Use your blog to write blog posts. The blog posts can be about anything: your grandkids, writing anecdotes, vacation plans and pictures. The important thing is to issue blog posts periodically so that people will build up an interest in the blog and revisit it. It will be important to write blog posts about the book also. Tell the readers why you wrote the book, what problems you had to overcome, what you liked about the process. You can also interview your characters.

If this section doesn't make sense to you, I'd advise you to invest in a book on blogging. You may find one in your library, but check the publication date. If it was published a few years ago, it already has outdated information. Read a book that was published no more than a year ago.

No matter how you come about getting your website, once it's up and running, ***use it!*** Start writing blogs and post material about your book.

Amazon Central

Once your book is available for sale or pre-order on Amazon, you can start an Author Page. If you have a publisher, it may have started this page for you. In this case, you should look at it to see if you can add content to it.

You'll find Author Central at: <https://authorcentral.amazon.com/gp/home>

After you login with your password, you can add your bio and other information to the page. One of the great features of the Author Page is you can add a wealth of information about the book that you couldn't do when you uploaded it to Kindle.

The book topics include *Editorial Reviews*. These are reviews that Amazon won't allow to be posted on the book page because Amazon won't allow paid reviews. If you receive a review from a prestigious site like *Publishers Weekly*, this is the place to post it.

Another topic is *From the Author*. Here you tell readers why you wrote the book. Or the problems you encountered in writing it. Or anecdotes from the writing process.

You can also upload videos to the page (i.e. a trailer) and you can set up an RSS feed so your blog posts show up on the Author Page.

Taken together, the Author Page is a great marketing tool.

A FAQs page about Author Central can be found at: <https://authorcentral.amazon.com/gp/help?ie=UTF8&topicID=200799660#emailsig>

I suggest you make the Author Page link part of your email signature. Email signatures will be discussed under Marketing Content.

For what an author's page looks like, go to mine: <https://www.amazon.com/-/e/B002BM76IE>

Media Kit

The purpose of a media kit is to let folks in the media and other interested parties know about your writing credentials. If the book is your only writing project so far, there won't be a lot of material, but start it anyway. If you published short stories, articles or other material, add it to plump up your resumé. The media kit lives on your website or blog and

must be available to anyone who wants to download it. For that reason, you may want to consider not putting personal information in it like your home address, or your phone number.

So, what goes into a media kit? Here is a list of items that make up your kit:

- ◆ Bio.
- ◆ Press releases.
- ◆ Website links.
- ◆ Body of work.
- ◆ Book descriptions.
- ◆ Book reviews.

Make sure the media kit is a doc or pdf file so it can be downloaded and opened by everyone.

As long as we're discussing the media kit contents, it's a good time to write your bio. Write two bios, a long one of several pages and a short one, a single paragraph or two. The long one goes in the media kit and the short one can be used in guest posts on blogs and in other places.

Bios are written in third person, not first person. Include your photo in the bio and make sure it's a good picture. Preferably, you should be smiling. Don't use a picture in which you are frowning, glaring, snarling or otherwise looking unfriendly or hostile. You don't want to scare away potential customers.

Social Media Accounts

Social media is an essential part of your marketing plan and your branding. However, be warned. Social media is a major time suck and many sites are next to worthless when it comes to marketing and selling your book. Nevertheless, you must persist.

Create a Goodreads Account

Goodreads is a place for readers and authors to interact. You can find it by using this link: <https://www.goodreads.com>.

The great thing about the readers on this site is that many of them write book reviews. Once you have your account set up, start using it by joining the author program. This will enable you to establish an author page with a bio, book listings and other information. You'll find the author program here: <https://www.goodreads.com/author/program>

After you get the book cover and develop the blurb and short synopsis for your soon-to-be released book, add them to Goodreads and list the expected publication date. If your book sounds interesting (i.e. you have added compelling material), other members will start to list the book as 'want to read.' Send a 'friend request' to those members because your Goodreads friends will get a message when you post a review, run a book sale or schedule an event.

Goodreads has numerous groups covering just about every conceivable aspect of reading and publishing books. Join a few of these groups and participate in the threads. You can schedule events such as a book launch and send a message to your friends about the event.

Goodreads is one of the better social media sites.

Another site for readers and authors is Librarything, but it isn't as robust as Goodreads. You can find it here: <https://www.librarything.com>

Create a FaceBook Account

You may already have a Facebook account; it seems most people do. If so, what you have is called a personal account. If you don't have one, go to <https://www.facebook.com> and start a personal account.

Facebook also has an option called 'Pages' and you want one, but you can't start it until after you have a personal account. Pages can be started for businesses, music groups, community groups and even authors. You can start one for your book or, better yet, start it for yourself as an author. That

way you can add information about your second book without starting another page.

Once you start the page, add your book cover, your book blurb and new reviews as you get them. On your page you'll have the ability to post content similar to the way a blog operates. Use this feature to post new reviews and other content.

On your personal account, ask friends to like the page. This will increase the number of potential buyers who see the page.

Establish a Twitter Account

Twitter is quite different from the previous social media sites discussed. You can find Twitter here: <https://twitter.com>

On Twitter, you post short messages that are 280 characters or less. There are a lot of authors and writers on Twitter, and you should spend time finding ones that write in your genre and connect with them.

You can post tweets (as they're called) on just about any possible topic, and as you add people to follow you'll start to see some strange stuff in your feed. You'll also see messages that are relevant to your book and writing career. You can reply to these and that can be the start of a conversation on the topic. It will take some time for you to adjust to Twitter and to get comfortable with it.

An important part of Twitter (and many other sites) is hashtags. These are words or phrases preceded by a #. Hashtags are Twitter talk for keywords. You can add one or two hashtags (or more) to your tweet so people interested in that hashtag can find it. If you click on a hashtag in a tweet, you'll see a list of current tweets on that subject.

Some of the hashtags I use are:

#fantasy

#scifi

#humor

#satire

#amwriting

#publishing

#Selfpublishing

#bookmarketing

There are many, many more hashtags you can employ. As you use Twitter, you'll come across more or them and become comfortable using them.

Join LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a site for professionals from all types of businesses including the writing and publishing industries. It's quite different from Facebook. You'll find it at this web location: <https://www.linkedin.com>

After you sign up, browse the site to gain an understanding of it, then search for writing and publishing groups. There are a lot of them, so be selective. Don't join them all or you'll be overwhelmed with emails. The value of these groups is that you can ask questions and get useful information from the other group members. Most importantly, you can ask for names of editors or cover artists. The names you get will be ones who have been used by the other LinkedIn members and aren't likely to be scam artists.

You can also ask questions on almost any aspect of writing and publishing and you'll get responses. If, as you browse the web you come across an 'interesting' marketing offer, ask in the groups if anyone has experience or has interacted with the offerer. The responses may clarify if the offer is legitimate or not.

LinkedIn uses hashtags similar to Twitter.

Other Social Media Sites

There are many more social media sites and you can explore them on your own. Use them or not as you see fit. Perhaps there is a better way to

use your time then joining too many social media sites, but that is a personal choice.