



Publishers Association of Los Angeles
EDUCATION • NETWORKING • RESOURCES

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UPCOMING MEETING:

BOOK PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS THAT WORK

Monday, September 10, 2012 - 7:00 pm

How are you going to market your book or catalog of books? Do you know the best time and ways to contact reviewers and schedule media appearances? Does the media want print or electronic press documents? What social media should you use to get publicity?

Our experts will share their experience and step-by-step tips on how to build a prize-winning and sales-producing publicity campaign.

Please join us on September 10 for a panel discussion that will give you concrete tools to create and execute an effective publicity campaign that will attract attention to your books and authors.

COST: \$5.00 for PALA members; \$15.00 for nonmembers. Advance admission can be purchased until the day before the program with PayPal on our website: <<http://www.pa-la.org>>.

NOTE: OUR NEW LOCATION FOR MEETINGS

Veterans Memorial Building
4117 Overland Avenue
Culver City
Free parking. Entrance on Culver

QUESTIONS: Sharon Goldinger, Program Chair, pplspeak@att.net, 949-581-6190.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: EMBRACING CHAOS

The publishing world is not in chaos.

It may seem that way, but it is actually in an extended remodeling, reinvention, innovation mode.

If that seems chaotic, the best approach is to take it one day at a time, one issue at a time.

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PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES (PALA) <<http://www.pa-la.org>>

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Embracing Chaos (cont'd from page 1)

Learn what is current and master it in the simplest way possible, embracing one element at a time.

Take, for instance, the social network Pinterest. It's been around less than a year and is already the third biggest social network, although many folks have not heard of it yet. It's a potential promotion tool for publishers.

How do you know when things change? It can be subtle. Your best bet is to key into the PALA meetings, where the latest info, even the daily changes, is presented. Listservs on Google and Yahoo are helpful, as well as groups on Meetup and LinkedIn.

Webinars and teleseminars abound as well, and they can be informative, as long as you don't have your time wasted by endless sales pitches. If the seminar is heavy on sales pitches, this is obvious from the beginning. Most free seminars do contain a pitch but usually carry useful information. Fee-based seminars should not have a heavy sales message other than some suggestions at the end.

It's hard to find the time, but if you identify a few of the most important publishing topics, it becomes possible. Don't try to do everything at once because it's impossible. If you have full time to devote to the project, you still need to take it one step at a time.

On a completely different note, we are sad to say goodbye to Gemini Adams, who is moving to England this fall. She has been the PALA secretary and has been a very

valuable member of the publishing community and especially PALA.

We are very happy to confirm that Sanjay Nambiar has been elected to fill the position of secretary. Sanjay is a great addition to our board and has already contributed significantly to our brainstorming meetings and was this year's recipient of a grant to attend IBPA's Publishing University.

The rest of the board has been reelected—Gary Young, President; Sharon Goldinger, Vice President; David Evans, Treasurer—and we anticipate adding one or two at-large positions soon.

Finally, don't forget our twice-yearly brainstorming meetings, where you can easily address your specific publishing concerns before your fellow PALA members.

Relax and work hard.

Gary Young
PALA President



IBPA PUBLISHING UNIVERSITY 2012 RE- CAP: Foreign Rights

*By Sanjay Nambiar, CEO,
Umiya Publishing*

IBPA University offers more information, resources, and contacts than most independent publishers can fathom. With 16 breakout sessions, multiple general sessions and keynote addresses featuring industry legends, and countless one-on-one "Ask the Experts" meetings, the University is jam-packed with insights.

In my first report from the University, I focused on Steven Piersanti's wonderful opening keynote address in which he told us about the challenges of the publishing industry as well as the opportunities. In this report, I focus on details from one of the breakout sessions.

In the "Maximizing Foreign and Subsidiary Rights" session, which was organized by PALA's own Sharon Goldinger, Maria Jesus Aguilo (Berrett-Koehler Publishers) and Sarah Serafimidis (North Atlantic Books) provided an excellent overview of important subsidiary sales channels for publishers of all types.

The ability to offer foreign and subsidiary rights deals can help many publishers attract writers. Self-published authors need not worry, however, as these deals also can be accomplished on your own and without a dedicated rights person or attorney. It just takes smart strategies and hustle. Below are several insights and details to keep in mind when dealing with foreign and subsidiary rights.

Overview

- In a foreign rights deal, you contract with a foreign publisher who then manages all of the translation, printing, marketing, and sales of your book in a specific territory.
- Subsidiary rights often comprise 4%-10% of a publisher's revenue.

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Publishing University Re-cap ***(cont'd from page 2)***

Sample basic terms

- Determine how many books will be printed in the first run and at what list price.
- Example starting negotiations: Ask for a 7% royalty for the first 2,000 copies, with half of all payments in advance.

Advanced negotiations

- After the initial print run, you can ask for an escalator type payment. For example, you can request a 7% royalty for first 2,000 copies and 9% thereafter.
- Standard royalty rate for e-books is 25% of net.

Subagents

- Working with subagents is an alternative to working directly with foreign publishers.

Advantages

- Subagents have more contacts and experience.
- Less work for the publisher.
- Subagents give you a presence in a specific foreign territory.

Disadvantages

- How can you ensure your subagent is giving enough time to your title?
- 10% commission is standard. This is based on total value of the contract to the publisher.

Book fairs provide many opportunities to connect with subagents and foreign publishers.

The main fairs are in Frankfurt (October), London (spring), Book Expo America in New York (June), Guadalajara, Beijing, and New Delhi.

Subagents and foreign publishers are very busy during these fairs, so prepare ahead and make appointments four to six months in advance!

Managing subsidiary rights is paperwork heavy. You'll have lots of contracts, so make sure you are very organized!

Be patient. It can take about 18 months from the day your foreign rights contract is signed until first sales.

Foreign rights make up the majority of subsidiary rights strategies. Below, however, are other types of subsidiary rights that could be relevant to your sales plans.

Audio rights, book clubs (they typically want to see sales in other markets first), paperback rights (if you only publish hardcover books), gift shops and channels, graphic novel rights, hardcover reprint rights, film rights.

This level of depth and breadth of foreign rights knowledge typically would take a publisher years to acquire. Yet all of this was delivered in a 75-minute breakout session at IBPA University.

Next year, make sure you attend this invaluable conference. The amount of knowledge, access to contacts, and networking opportunities are unparalleled. In the meantime, you can get all the details from the 2012 University sessions by purchasing audio CDs or MP3s of the classes from www.vwtapes.com/ibpa2012.aspx. It's not as good as

being there in person, but it's a great way to get the information you need.

If you didn't have a chance to attend the IBPA University this year, go next year. Go. Go. Go.



PALA MASTERMIND GROUP BEING FORMED

Brainstorming is fabulous whether it's done one-on-one or in groups, for example when PALA members meet twice a year at our members' only brainstorming sessions.

So we've come up with an idea for a PALA mastermind group. If you're not familiar with mastermind groups, they are groups of people who come together to discuss what's going on in their business, for example, ways to achieve their goals or problems they are having. They meet on a regular basis, usually monthly, and their sessions are led by a facilitator.

This PALA mastermind group of small publishers will be facilitated by Sharon Goldinger, PALA Vice President. It will be a beta program, limited to no more than six publishers. These sessions will be offered for a significantly reduced fee of \$15/per meeting, which will be split 50-50 with PALA and Sharon. The beta test will be for six months, via telephone conference call.

If you'd like to know more about the group or to sign up, please contact Sharon by August 25, 2012 at 949-581-6190.

PALA LISTSERV

Have a question about publishing, marketing, or printing? Don't want to wait until the next members' only brainstorming session? Then use the PALA Listserv. It's a private group that lets PALA members and guests ask questions and share news, resources and information.

To sign up, go to <http://www.groups.yahoo.com>. If you're not already registered with Yahoo, you'll need to do that first (it's free). Then search for PALA (don't forget the hyphen). Follow the instructions for joining the list.



BLOG PR

Transcript of 11/9/11 Teleseminar

We're ready to start blog PR, and we're thrilled to have Steve O'Keefe with us this evening. Steve is a serial entrepreneur, a writer, a professor, and an Internet pioneer. He wrote the best-selling book Publicity on the Internet, which is wonderful, and I'm hoping that Steve will update it and release a new edition. He's taught Internet PR since the mid-1990s for IBPA Publishing University, Tulane University, and the Stanford Professional Publishing Program. He's the cofounder of the International Association of Online Communicators. And he was the president of AuthorViews and the executive director of Patron Saint Productions, where he launched online campaigns for over 1,000 books in many of the world's largest publishing brands.

Thank you very much, Sharon. I'm flattered to have such a good crowd here. We're focusing on blog PR, particularly for authors, publishers, and new books. I'm not saying that this is the best way to promote a book, but it certainly is, I think, one of the best ways to promote a book online. Still, getting onto the national television talk shows and into national media are the express lanes for book sales, but laying the groundwork for those appearances and national media comes now through being visible online. And these campaigns that we're going to talk about are designed to raise your visibility online both for a new book or a new product launch and also in the longer term for a publishing company or an imprint or a brand. A little about my company name: some people are still not aware that I started a new company with a former employee last year called SixEstate Communications. SixEstate was basically formed to spin off news blogging from Patron Saint Productions. News blogging is a form of blogging that we more or less innovated at Patron Saint Productions some five years ago. And it proved so successful that we had to take it beyond the publishing world and do it for other companies and organizations, and that's what SixEstate was formed to do. I still run Patron Saint Productions, which does online marketing exclusively for book publishers and authors. There's a white paper on news blogging that you can also get by e-mailing me. It's not up on our site. There's also a way to ask for it on our website, but you can't actually see it there. You have to ask for it.

The campaigns tonight divide basically into two parts: news

blogging, which I'll cover later, is better for a company or a brand or an imprint rather than just a product launch. We've done them for product launches. We've done 30-day blogs, 60-day blogs, and 90-day blogs to promote the launch of a book, but they're best suited to an ongoing publicity effort. For product launches, we're going to talk about pitching and commenting on blogs. These are better if you have a new book launch that you're trying to do.

A lot of what I do for clients is very meticulously organized. I prepare the materials in advance for the campaign, and I meticulously document the results of the campaign. You want to get authors to prepare these documents as much as possible in advance before launching a campaign. For example, you want an excerpt from the book online. We usually produce stand-alone excerpts that have an introduction to put the excerpt into context, then the body of the excerpt, and then the typical About the Book, About the Author, some blurbs, and, of course, how to buy the book, and a proper copyright notice. All of these things should be in an excerpt that is posted online somewhere in support of the campaign. It may sound like standard procedure, but I'm still able to download excerpts of books from many large publishers that do not say, for example, the name of the book. Many cases don't have copyright notices on the excerpts. I urge you to prepare these excerpts for the audience that's online and make sure that all that information is contained in a single-page excerpt.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 4)

It also makes it much easier to seek placements for the excerpt and get other sites and blogs to run the excerpt if you have properly formatted it and put it on your website or on a Facebook page—someplace where people can get to it. I also recommend writing the blog pitch in advance. We'll look at that in a few moments.

We also prepare a key words document. That document would identify the key phrases that are important for this book or project. It would identify up to 50 key words or key phrases—any key names, people that are mentioned in the book, allies, websites, key places, such as the author's hometown, or anyplace that is mentioned in the book, and a 20-word description of the book. That key words document is very helpful when you are setting up social networking sites for an author or for a book. They come in handy when you're doing the rest of the work in this campaign. When you go to the Patron Saint PR site, there are case histories of about 12 books or campaigns, including first-time fiction by unknown authors as well as very large-selling books like *RealAge*, nonfiction by very well-known authors. There are a dozen or so documents for each campaign, and there are also free templates for most of these documents that are available in the template section of the Patron Saint site. You should be able to just pull things down and repurpose them for your books.

I'm going to go into our first campaign, which is pitching bloggers. I want to step back for a second and say, why blogs? Why

should anyone care about what's on blogs, especially when *blog* itself is such a horrible word? It comes out of the mouth poorly, and I kept hoping for years that blogs would just disappear, and they started as just teenage diaries. And they were sort of designed to be diaries. *Blog* is short for *weblog*, which is a web diary. And RSS, Really Simple Syndication, makes the content that you pour into a blog easy for machines to see and easy for people and machines to share, so all the content that goes into a blog has the same architecture. There's the title of the blog post, the author, the date, topics related to it, and the content. And because all content is forced more or less into the same identical format, it makes it very easy for search engines to realize what's there and to index it and to send people to it and also for that content to be shared. For example, Amazon has made it very easy for authors to attach the blog to an Author Page at Amazon. Only the authors can do it. Amazon will not let the publisher or publicists do it. You can get around that if you're working in cahoots with the author and you can pretend to be the author to set up that Amazon page; I've done this for many people. There's nothing particularly illegal or immoral about it, but there is something very important about getting those blogs tied into your Amazon page.

You want to be able to blog once and then have it appear throughout your network. And that network is growing every day with Twitter and Facebook, and now Google+ is a very important part of people's networks. Plus, there are many sites like Goodreads and FiledBy that are

important for authors to have profiles on. Your materials can easily be shared at these special interest sites for authors and publishers. So the idea is do the work once and have it appear everywhere through your network. Google loves bloggers because bloggers make their content available to Google on very generous terms, whereas Google is being sued by News Corp and book publishers and newspapers who are upset about Google making advertising money off what they consider to be their content. They object to Google indexing even the headlines of articles. So where should Google send people to? Should they send people to the people who are suing them or should they send them to people who are making their content available on very generous terms through RSS in the form of a blog?

And so, this phenomenon of blogs—I always hoped would just get eaten up by websites and then we could stop saying the word *blog*, that hasn't happened. In fact, it has gone the other way. Blogs have almost eaten up websites. And now when I see author sites being created, 9 times out of 10 they're being created in a WordPress format, at least most of the ones that I'm seeing. So the website actually is a blog, or the blog is an important part of the content on a website. The dividing line isn't clear. What *is* clear is that content put out in this format is very share friendly. Reporters are going to blogs and looking for stories on blogs. That's one reason to be on them. Also, they're blogging themselves, which is one reason to get in their face on the reporters' blogs. So this whole phenomenon of blogging has really taken off.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 5)

There's breaking news about Google now indexing comments on blogs, which they didn't used to do very well or at all. Now they have finally decided to do that. So that gives you an idea why these blogs are so important. And to put it in financial terms, a review of a Wiley book on the blog *Slashdot* can lead to 300 sales of that book in half an hour. That's how important some of these blogs are. Now most sites don't have those kinds of results, but there are certain thought leaders that are in the field of any book you publish, and when those thought leaders recommend a book on their blogs, you can see the sales move immediately on Amazon. It's sort of like sugar, in that it builds up fast and goes down fast, in terms of number of sales that are generated by a strong recommendation. But the fact that it goes up is what everybody wants to see. So that's part of the financial bottom line of getting into these blogs. Blogs are a way to get in front of the mainstream media and to get them to cover you. So the bang may not come from the blog—it may come from them being quoted in a *Wall Street Journal* article or being asked onto a popular radio or television program.

So let me get back to Campaign 1: how do we pitch to bloggers? I'm going back to when we started doing news blogging for a pitch for a book called *Health Care Reform Now*, by George Halvorson, CEO of Kaiser Permanente. He'd written a book on health-care reform that he wanted to push in front of the candidates that were lining up for the presidential campaign in 2008. He wanted his platform on health care to be adopted

by the candidates. And so our campaign was to get his book in front of the media and hopefully in front of the candidates.

We start by writing a blog pitch—going out to the bloggers and asking for coverage. As publishers, you have something that other people don't have when you go to pitch a blogger. You have a product that's inexpensive enough that you can just give it away. So you can offer them a free review copy of the book, and that is usually in the subject line of my blog pitches and in the opening paragraph: "I'm writing to offer you a free review copy of the new book *Health Care Reform Now*." So hopefully that freebie will get them to continue to read the pitch. I'm not crazy about doing this with an e-Book. If they think that I'm going to send them a file instead of a printed book, they're less likely to say yes, but you can hedge that in the opening and just say "a free review copy of the new book." You didn't say it was a printed book. So it's possible sometimes to send them an e-Book, but often they're expecting a real printed book, and if you have one, I recommend offering that.

The next stage of the pitch sets your credentials for the book. You have a very brief window of time here. This cannot be as long as a typical printed news release. I usually go with a four-paragraph pitch. The first paragraph is the stroke, where you say something nice about the blogger: "You have a great site" or "That was a fabulous article on health care I saw on your site last week, and I thought you might want a free review copy of this book." So it's stroke, pitch, credentials, and then action alternatives. The pitch is to cut

to the chase. The credentials is to say why you or your author is qualified to write this book and what makes you the expert on this. And you only have one paragraph to get this in. And then the action alternatives—you don't want to force people into a yes or no answer. Try to give them a couple different choices: "If you're not the right person, could you tell me whom I should be talking to?" That's a very typical action alternative that you would enclose in the call to action.

So this four-part pitch has been universally useful to me in my work in all kinds of documents. But with a blog pitch, the main thing is brevity. Keep it as short as you possibly can. One action alternative I give is, "Would you mind posting an announcement on your blog about the new book?" And then beneath the signature, I give them the announcement that I want them to post: "I've been asked to post an announcement about the new book *Health Care Reform Now* in which Kaiser Permanente CEO George Halvorson offers a nonpartisan proposal for universal health care that he says won't cost taxpayers a dime. An excerpt is available at the book's companion blog." And then it points, in this case, to the blog. In many cases, I would just point to the excerpt that you should have prepared and online. Now you've got three alternatives here for the bloggers receiving this pitch. They can request a free review copy of the book from you, in which case they get a press kit. They can post this announcement on their blog. They can go to the excerpt and post the entire excerpt on their blog.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 6)

There's another alternative in here, and that's to interview the author. So I've given them four alternatives basically in one paragraph, and then I've given the actual text of the announcement we want to run.

When we go out and pitch that, we get a 25 percent success rate on the blogs that we pitch. One out of every four blogs is going to run the announcement or run an excerpt or do an interview or in some way give us some coverage for the book. So it's sort of a numbers game at that point. And when we do campaigns, we do 60 pitches in our basic blog outreach campaign—we call it a blog out, or a blog outreach campaign. We'll go to 60 top bloggers, and we'll usually get between 15 and 20 placements for the book. If some of those placements are big, it could be a big deal, if you get on *Slashdot* with a technical book or you get on *Huffington Post*. We had a campaign not long ago where the authors of *Freakonomics* posted an announcement, and they actually posted the entire blog pitch, which is a bit unusual. Whenever you're communicating with bloggers you don't know, they can just take whatever you give them and put it on a blog, so you can't say something stupid or underhanded or that sounds like skulduggery, like "If you put this on your blog, I'll send you \$20, how's that?" You might see that exact statement showing up on their blog somewhere and then have people humiliating you. So you have to be careful what you say to bloggers. They're a fast moving breed, they just grab, and they're always looking for posts. They just grab it and put it on their site, and they don't think too

much about it. The *Freakonomics* authors put the whole pitch on, but that made the entire campaign. That placement resulted in 200 sign-ups for the newsletter. So the client was very thrilled with that one placement. Oftentimes, getting to one opinion leader in the area and getting them to cooperate can make the whole campaign.

The method here is to draft the pitch letter in advance, so you have it, and you can just customize it for each. Then locate the top blogs, find contact information for the bloggers, then pitch them, and document the results.

On locating the top blogs, there's no good directory line, so almost any directory that you find stinks. Technorati is supposedly a directory of top blogs. I find Technorati to be virtually useless in searching for blogs for these campaigns. The best tool that I use is Google Blog Search. Maybe you are not familiar with this, but when you go to Google and you're searching, you can confine your search to images or news or videos, but for some reason Google buries the fact that you can also search blogs. On the Google homepage, it appears as a "More" button on the site and on the top navigation bar. And either of those will say, "Do you want to just search blogs?" And the answer is yes. There's a direct URL to it, blogsearch.google.com, but the easiest way is just to go through the Google homepage and then say that you want to confine your search to blogs. Google comes up with what it calls its related blogs. There are up to five blogs that appear on the page that they say are blogs that are specifically about this topic. And

below that are blogs that have covered this topic. In other words, if you are looking for blogs on health care, there would be three top blogs about health care, and then there would be blogs underneath that have covered health care but aren't necessarily about health care. And those posts tend to weight chronologically. Who covered health care today or yesterday or the day before? And they're not strictly chronological; they're doing some sort of reputation weighting as well as a chronological reading on these results. The top three blogs may not have written about that subject recently, but because they're related blogs, they appear there.

Of course, when we talk about building your own blog, our goal is to get your blog into being one of the top related blogs for the subjects related to your books, and we have a remarkable track record of doing just that. The health care reform blog that we produced for Halvorson was the number two blog on health care reform within 30 days, and it never gave up that position in the two years we ran that blog. So this is very powerful stuff. You're going after the top bloggers, and you can use Google Blog Search to find those. The other excellent way to find blogs to pitch is to use the blog rolls that appear on the side of the top blogs.

So if you're looking for a blog on health care, you find that Dr. Katz's blog is the number one blog on health-care reform, and he has a list of blogs he likes on the side of his blog.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 7)

That groomed list, which is called the blog roll, is often the best guide for what are the top blogs rather than what's appearing in a search or certainly on any of the sites that claim to have a list of the top blogs. There's a marketing opportunity out there for a sharp publisher who wants to put out a book or website on top blogs because people just simply can't find them. And Technorati is not really very useful. They're too selective and not up-to-date. If you search in Google for directory of blogs or top blogs, it invariably brings you to this list compiled by Forbes, which actually was compiled in 2005. But most of the blogs on it are dead. Again, the best place to look for blogs is Google Blog Search and blog rolls of popular blogs. And you can work those and usually find about 50 top blogs on any given subject, and on some broad subjects, you can find hundreds of top blogs. But I would say that once you've gone 50 pitches, you'll often find your result rate is starting to go down. The blogs are starting to get kind of marginal. I'd want to do the top 50 to 100 blogs for every book that I work on. You might have that as a goal too.

The next hardest thing is finding the contact information. Although the net is supposedly a vehicle for facilitating communication, it's remarkable at hiding communication or stifling it. These bloggers in many cases don't want to be pitched, and they don't want to reveal their e-mail address, so they make you use a form to communicate with them. You really don't want to go that way. You want to find the personal e-mail address of the person in charge of

that blog. Often the e-mail addresses they put on their site are generic e-mail addresses such as info@ or letters@, and those are just not going to cut it. You want to get in the inbox of the person who runs that blog. So one of the sneaky things to do is to take the blogger's name and run that name through Google with some other words like *e-mail* or *contact*, and you'll often turn up an alternative e-mail address. This is how we got on the *Freakonomics* blog. One of the *Freakonomics* authors is a professor—you'll find many opinion leaders are professors or adjunct faculty or regular faculty at some university, and if they are, they almost always have a faculty address, and they almost always see messages sent to the faculty address.

For example, *Food Rules* author Michael Pollan is a professor in the San Francisco Bay area. I have had success pitching him at his university address as opposed to the one he puts on his website for his generic address. So that's a really good tip. Look for an alternative e-mail address for the bloggers that you're pitching and try to break through that way.

Once you have done that pitching, then you should have the materials ready to send if someone responds to the pitch. If you say, "I'm offering you tickets to an event," you better have tickets to the event ready. If you say, "I'm offering you a book and a press kit" and they say yes, you better get that book and press kit into the mail right away and not go down to FedEx Kinko's and decide you need to make a press kit now that somebody asked for it. Again, prepare the materials in advance and be ready to respond when somebody

asks, and then you can often turn it into a larger installation. You can offer them artwork, particularly if it's a photography book or a book of images or recipes, like a cookbook. Images are often popular. You can offer them an interview to grow the size of the placement that you're securing on the site. You can go from an announcement to an excerpt to an author appearance on some of these larger sites. But you have to get your foot in the door, and that blog pitch will help you get there. We found in some cases that a blog pitch is just too long. For example, on some books, I'm getting up to 50 percent of my responses from bloggers that say "Sent from my iPhone" or "Sent from my iPad" at the bottom, and I realize that they are reading this pitch on the phone. It's true that a tweet is the ultimate pitch. If you can get it down to 140 characters when you're pitching, that's great. But you should realize that many people are reading your pitch or your e-mail on mobile devices, and sometimes it's just better to skip the announcement. You can just say, "Do you want a review copy of this book, yes or no?" If they say yes, then you can come back and say, "Would you mind posting an announcement?" So it's really important to get your foot in the door with a short message, and you may have to trim the blog post in order to increase your acceptance rate. So that's the campaign on how to pitch bloggers.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 8)

Q: My publisher sent out blog pitches for the blog tour, and I got the addresses for them and the names of the blogs. But so often the addresses I got were info@, and I didn't get a very large response. Is it possible for me to go back and send them again? Is it better to come from the publisher or can the author also do it?

A: I think you need to let your publisher know that you want to do a second pitch and that you're going to try yourself. I don't think it's a good idea for you to work behind the back of your publisher on this, but I do think it's a good idea for you to use this technique of looking up their personal e-mail addresses and making a personal pitch yourself. So the answer is yes, you should be pitching them, and you should be looking for a personal address, not a generic address.

Q: Is it good to enclose a picture of the book in the announcement, as a pitch, either as an attachment or in the body of the e-mail?

A: Absolutely not. There should be no attachments whatsoever to the pitch. You can't attach a news release, a PDF, or anything else. In many cases, they will block the e-mail from even getting received by the person and will oftentimes cause you to be bozo filtered—dropped from their e-mail list in perpetuity. So you never attach anything to an unsolicited pitch or e-mail. You always have to get your foot in the door and get them to say, "Okay, I'm interested." Now you can offer them artwork, games, software, puzzles—the sky's the limit. But you can't do any of that

until you have them agreeing to talk to you.

Q: My book is a self-help book, and I just started pitching bloggers. Some of the people I'm pitching have popular websites, and they also have their own books. Is it appropriate to pitch someone else that has a blog site that is popular who has a book on my subject, or would you say that's a bad move?

A: In most cases, people who have a book similar to yours are a good source for an endorsement or for coverage. Often, it's "the more the merrier" in the attitudes. If someone comes to me and they're pitching a book on Internet publicity, yes, I'm going to promote that book because I think that it dovetails with what I'm doing, and I would want a free copy of it. So your pitch is always going to offer a free copy of the book. I would want a free copy of anything that has to do with my field. So yes, I would say you can pitch people who seem to be competitors and have their own books, particularly if they show a generous attitude on their site. If they are a top blog or top website, they are probably very generous about pointing to other resources.

Q: Does this blog thing work for fiction?

A: Yes, it does. There are some sample campaigns on my site for fiction. Of course, it works better if the author is a well-known fiction author or an award-winning author. But even fiction from unknown authors has worked this way. All fiction has hooks in it, whether it's about horses or it's about the medical field or it's a thriller or it's a mystery. There are important blogs to all of

these genres and, yes, they're receptive to these kinds of pitches and receptive to posting excerpts.

How to comment on blogs—

Campaign 2. A blog buddy report is basically a commenting report. On a blog buddy campaign, one of our experts on blogging talks with the author every day, and they go and slay the Internet together. The blog buddy is both helping with the work and teaching the author how to do this work. So a blog buddy report is just a list of sites that we've gone to and what we did on those sites. It's great to ask the author to talk up the book on websites, but the problem is that they often don't do it. And they mean to do it, and they want to do it—just like they mean to blog, and they want to blog—but it just takes time, and it's a pain. And one of the biggest pains when commenting on other people's blogs is that you must be registered to comment. So you have to go through registration, then you have to go back to your e-mail and do the confirmation, and then maybe a half hour after you've started, you actually have the permission or authority to post this comment on the blog. You post it, and maybe it doesn't appear until it's approved if it's a moderated blog. You're not sure if they will let you put the URL in your comment or not. And so you have to go back the next day and find out whether it's there.

With the blog buddy, our researchers research the targets ahead of time. You give them the topics, usually a key words document, and they find three target sites every day, maybe three to five.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 9)

They go to those sites, preregister the author, and get a username, a password, and an ID. Then when they're on the phone with the author, they say, "Okay, here's the next target" and pass the URL to the author through Skype, and the author goes to that target. And then he can customize that comment, drop it onto the blog, and you move on to the next target. So we're using an assistant to make the author more time effective in their commenting campaign. Now when you don't have an assistant, you just have to do this yourself and be patient about user names and passwords and IDs, which you'll want to keep in a file somewhere. And we set up a generic username and a generic password when we start the campaign. In most cases, we're able to use those on almost every site, and the author is able to comment quickly. But this is something that takes patience.

However, if you are organized, you can do this. If you approach this like you're just going to go out and do some commenting today, you're going to be frustrated that you only get one comment out for every half hour that you're working. If you approach it in a more systematic fashion, you're going to get three to five comments out every day within an hour or less. So the way to approach it is to write a sort of generic comment. The generic comment is simple: "I'm the author of the book *The Oil and the Glory*, and I really like what you say in this post." And you maybe point out one thing you want to applaud or clarify or correct. And then you want to have a standard signature at the bottom with your name, the title of

your book, and the link to the excerpt or to the book site. Some places will allow you to put a link in, and some won't. So you just have to be ready to customize on the fly. But places like the *Huffington Post* allow you to put a link in. We had one author, and there was a list of the 10 best books on spotting trends. I was working on a book called *Minitrends*, and I thought that our author belonged on that list. So I commented that I think they missed our book on minitrends, and then I put a link into it. They ran the comment and we got into *Huffington Post* through the comments. So it's sort of through the back door.

We catalog every single place that we go. If you look at our blog buddy report for *The Oil and the Glory*, over the course of a month, we commented four times on *Businessweek* articles. We commented on the *Financial Times*. We got several comments in the *Wall Street Journal's* energy blog. In many of these cases, you're commenting on a reporter's story, and you're bringing your book to the attention of that reporter, so the next thing you know, your book is being reviewed in the publication you're commenting on because reporters like having comments on their stories. So it's a back door into it, as long as you're not just spamming the comments. As long as you're making some intelligent remark before your signature, your comment will usually stay up, and the link will usually be included back to your site.

This is a really good campaign—very effective. You'll use Google Blog Search to find sites to comment on. And I also recommend using Google Alerts. Google Alerts send you every

day the top five blogs, webs, and news stories related to the key word you put in. So if you put in a Google Alert for technology trends, it will send you the top five blog hits every day for the phrase *technology trends*. So that's one way of finding sites that you want to be on. If Google is telling everyone these are the top sites for the subject, then those are sites that are important for you to be on. So you can just Google the phrase *Google Alerts*. You don't even need a Gmail account to set up Google Alerts. So they're very easy, and they're also a good way to monitor mentions of your book and your authors by setting a Google Alert for the titles of the books and the authors. We set this up on every campaign with four or five target phrases for the book, and we monitor them daily.

The campaign is just to go out to people who are covering your stuff in a systematic way, maybe spending an hour a day, and trying to get those comments, particularly when the book is new in stores. Because Google is now indexing comments, it's so much more valuable to do this campaign than it was before. In fact, we were so frustrated with our commenting not showing up in search engines that we switched to just pitching the bloggers and asking them to post instead of commenting because their posts were showing up in search engines and our comments weren't. But now the comments are also going to show up in search engines, so this is a really valuable campaign.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 10)

I'm going to move on to Campaign 3, which is a blog tour. There are several ideas behind a blog tour. One is that the author is just going to answer questions on the tour sites. The second main idea is that the leave-behinds on those sites and the promo for the blog are much more important than what actually happens on the tour. You need to get the sites to install promotions for the author tour, and you need to have leave-behinds on those sites that stay up after the author tour. The tour itself is actually just a little blip in the middle of a large PR presence on blogs that matter to the target audience. Again, we use Google Search and Google Blog Search, which is at blogsearch.google.com, to find blogs, and then once we find some top blogs, we work off the blog rolls on those sites to find other blogs that might participate in the tour. You begin by producing. Sometimes I'll produce a tour profile, but usually the excerpt from the book will work just fine as a tour profile, which is basically to pitch a host and say, "Look at this excerpt page. Would you be willing to have the author on to answer some questions on your site?" Again, it's a very short pitch. There's a blog tour pitch somewhere on my site. In the template section of my site, there's a chat tour profile and a chat tour pitch. A chat tour is another variation of a blog tour. There aren't so many chat rooms online anymore, so I've mostly shifted to doing blog tours.

You have a short pitch—no attachments on this pitch. Again, you're going to find the host and try to find a personal e-mail address, not the generic e-mail address, for the

host. You going to do this by running their names through Google with words like *e-mail* or *contact* attached to their name and see if you can get a personal e-mail address to pop up. If you can get a personal e-mail address, then you make the pitch and ask them if they would be willing to have your author on as a guest for a blog tour. You keep that pitch as short as possible because you would ideally like to have phone conversations. You can't really build a good tour schedule just through e-mail. It takes too much back and forth. So if you can get the host to say, "Yeah, I'm interested," then as quickly as possible, get their phone number and just talk to them about it. People often try to do too much in an e-mail, and when you're scheduling any kind of the tour, it's a bad idea. It can be handled in just a matter of seconds if you get them on the phone.

So I'd recommend you do the tour at least 30 days out from when you're doing the pitching. When we do tours, we promise at least three to five top blogs. It can be like pulling teeth to get the bloggers to cooperate with us, and they have to be excited about the guest and willing to do something different. If they haven't done blog tours in the past, it may be a new concept for them, so it can be difficult to book a tour. You don't want to say, "How about next week?" and then not have anything else lined up so the tour ends up being a one-site tour. You'd like it if you can line up three to five of them about a month out. I start pitching three months in advance of when the tour is going to be scheduled, and I hope to have the schedule locked down one month in advance so that I can start the promotion of the tour 30

days ahead.

We talked about building the tour schedule, and then you need to make sure that the author knows where they're supposed to be, when they're supposed to be there, that they have any user IDs or passwords that are required to post, and that they know what format it's going to be in.

Almost always, I'm going to post an opening statement, and then I'll take questions for as long as they keep rolling in. That might be one day, two days, up to five days.

Beyond the promotions on their sites, you also want to promote the tour in other ways. You can put out a news release, tweet about it, put it into your social networking sites, put it on your website, add a post to your own blog. And in some cases, you can get retail outlets to promote the tour. They might actually put a little note up on the shelves or put it in their store newsletters. So if you have enough lead time, you can really push this tour schedule around. I used to do a lot of chat tours, and one year when I was doing the Random House children's author chat series, Target stores put out fliers in their stores with the schedule of when our authors were going to be on which sites. We got so many people coming to these chats that we literally crashed the software. It didn't ruin the chat for the people that were in the room, but it just locked out everybody after the first 900 people that had come to the chats when Target did that. And you can get retail outlets to even cooperate in promoting these tours.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 11)

Then what happens when you do the tour? Usually, you submit an opening statement. It might be something short and provocative. Maybe you ask people a question about them. And then you just field questions after that. That statement might be delivered as a Word document, it might be written as a blog post. But you should be careful about it, go over it, and know what format you're going to be working in. And then anything can happen.

I'll give you an example. I did a tour for Goldman Sachs' vice president, Robert Hormats. This was before the financial meltdown, fortunately, so I didn't have as much grief as I would have had nowadays trying to put out his tour. That tour is highlighted on my website, and there are quite a few sample documents, including summary reports of the results of that tour. It was a book on paying for war, and we'd received a lot of brushback. And this guy was driving around California in a limousine during the tour week, and he was BlackBerrying his comments to his assistant, who was faxing them to me. Then I was keyboarding them and putting them in on the sites. So it was a really interesting process. At the end of each day, I would fax him all of the comments and questions that people had made on the site, he would choose the ones he was going to answer, ignore the one he didn't want to answer, consolidate similar ones, respond, and then I would clean up his responses and post them on the site. People can be quite ugly on blog tours, so I stopped doing them for a lot of controversial books because it's like putting a big bull's-eye on your author and it's a digital dunk tank. It's

just people throwing things at you to see how long you can take it. But it sells books.

We documented that there were four things that happened that were important in the life of that book: a *Wall Street Journal* review, a *Washington Post* Op-Ed, a review in the *Financial Times*, and this blog tour. In terms of sales, nothing moved the online sales more than the blog tour. The second was the *Wall Street Journal* article, and the effect of the *Washington Post* Op-Ed and the *Financial Times* piece was negligible. In terms of offline or bookstore sales, nothing was more important than the *Wall Street Journal* review, which clobbered everything else. But second place was the blog tour, third place was the *Washington Post* Op-Ed, and fourth place was the *Financial Times*. So the blog tour was more valuable, both in online sales and offline sales, than the *Washington Post* Op-Ed and more valuable than the *Wall Street Journal* review in terms of the Amazon sales. At one point, the author said, "Why am I doing this? People are just being mean and ugly, and I can't believe that this is effective." But the results came in, and it sells books. Controversy often sells books.

Authors can book these tours themselves—they're usually just not as organized as you or publishers or publicists working for publishers, in terms of making sure that you book that tour far enough in advance that you have time to promote it and recognizing that it is the promotion of the tour that really matters, not what actually happens during the tour. It's getting those advance promos up and getting the word out.

If you get *USA Today* to say that your author's going to be on a blog tour, it really doesn't matter whether anybody shows up or not. It matters that the *USA Today* put that in their cyberlistings column and that you've got the name of your book and your author's name in a major national publication during the months after its release.

Q: My question is on how to schedule blog tours versus getting on people's blogs. I wasn't clear on the timing. Would you suggest doing a blog tour before trying to get on other people's blogs?

A: If I had advance notice that a book was coming, I would want the blog tour to run ideally when the author gets home from the real world tour. If the author's actually going on the road to promote the book, you don't want to do a blog tour at the same time. You'd like it to happen just after they get off the road. If that's a consideration, make sure the author's going to be around the week that you select for the blog tour. And you sort of push the sites into accepting the date you want rather than asking them what would be convenient for them. So you say, "We would like to have you on this blog tour the week of March 7 through 15. Is that going to work for you?" So you kind of impose that and try to get them all to line up on that. But then I would do the commenting after I have the tour set up because then in my commenting campaign, I can say that the author will be on tour. So I would say commenting would come after organizing a tour so that you can use the comments in some way to promote the tour.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 12)

Q: Is Google going to start indexing new comments or is it going back over old comments?

A: I don't know the answer to that question. I'm hoping that they're going to go back and that there won't be any difference on it, but that article on mequoda.com is a very detailed article on Google indexing the comments. Honestly, I haven't had a chance to read the full article myself yet.

Q: I'm a little lost on the very basics of why you do a blog tour and why someone who has a blog would want to participate in blog tours. I just kind of missed the opening concept of why it's done.

A: Ultimately, this is about selling books. So coverage on the blogs that are the important to your target audience is going to move sales of your books. And when you do a blog tour, you don't just get a little bit of coverage on the blogs that are important to your target audience. You get a ton of coverage on the blogs that are important to your target audience. You get promos in advance, excerpts posted, artwork, and interaction with the target audience—and all of this usually stays behind. There are leave-behinds on the site that send people to Amazon and other bookstores to buy the book. So it's important to be on the media that your target audience is reading. Those top blogs for your target audience are a form of media that your audience is reading, and you want your books mentioned there.

Why would the bloggers do this? Well, they're desperate for posts, for

one thing. If you run a top blog, you have to post every day. You're always looking for a story or a post. Your guest gets them out of possibly even a whole week of work. They might just turn the whole blog over to you and go on vacation. So they're getting free content, free artwork, and free excerpts from the book. They're getting something that engages their audience, and they're getting some celebrities in some cases. And the author is a de facto celebrity or an expert. They're getting all this for free. And in many cases, they get a cut of the revenue. If they have an Amazon affiliate program or an associate program or a Barnes & Noble affiliate, they're going to get a piece of the action. So they have a financial incentive. If they have an advertising base on their site, the blog tour is going to increase their traffic. Once the blogger or the publisher is promoting it, they have a financial incentive to have the authors on, both for advertising revenue and for a share of the sales. Sometimes you have to mention these things in the pitch to the blogger, so it's a good question you asked. They may ask, "What's in it for me?" And you want to be able to tick off all of these things. Content, sales, ad revenue—what's not to like? So that's how you sell the tour to bloggers. And it does work reliably well.

Campaign 4: how to produce the top blog. This is what we call news blogging. *Childhood Obesity News* is a blog that we produced for an author in Seattle, Dr. Robert Pretlow, who has a book out on childhood obesity. Dr. Pretlow wants to be at the top when you Google *childhood obesity*. So we produced this blog for him. Again, you're in a situation where

your authors say that they're going to blog, but then they don't actually blog. That is more or less how we came up with news blogging. We said okay, the audience wants to hear from the author, but the author doesn't have the time or the knowledge to blog effectively. So we found a middle path that works. We hire journalists, and the journalist blogs the news—they just follow the news. Our journalist is a registered nurse, an experienced journalist, and a former editor of *Salon*. She researches the news every day for childhood obesity, finds the top stories on it, and summarizes those on the blog. So every single day, there's a news post that contains a citation to a respected news source, a quotation from that source, and a story. And this post then goes to an editor, the editor cleans it up, and it goes into an optimizer. The optimizer tweaks the headlines, tweaks the sentence length, and adds tags and other SEO stuff. And then the art department adds a piece of artwork. We have copyright permissible artwork that we have licensed or that is copyright free that we use on the post, and then the post goes live at 6:00 a.m. And this happens every day; it's like an assembly line.

If you post like this every day for five days a week, then in 30 days, you're going to become a top blog for your topic. And you're probably going to stay there as long as you keep blogging like that. Not all authors are going to be able to keep up that kind of a schedule. And it's great if they blog two or three times. You're just not going to pop up on the top page of Google Blog Search unless you're hitting it five days a week.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 13)

So we produce these news blogs, and we've done them for 30 days, 60 days, 90 days. We've done them for books on fiction, architecture, technology, current events. This blog is a good example. Within 30 days, we were the number two blog for childhood obesity in the world. And we've retained that now for over a year.

Two weeks ago, we searched for the term *obesity*, and for the first time, we were a top blog for just the word *obesity*, not *childhood obesity*. It's pretty phenomenal to get up there. On Google Search, not Blog Search, *childhood obesity* rates right around with *Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign*. Now we're talking about an author who's paying \$3,200 a month for this campaign, and I'm sure that Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign is spending a lot more money than that. And we've succeeded in putting this author right into the mainstream of the debate on childhood obesity. Also, he's getting several speaking engagement offers each month off his website. The book isn't particularly selling well, but the book has problems that make it not a very successful book. It has a horrible cover, and it's poorly edited. But book sales aren't what he's really after. He's produced an app, and he's looking to sell that app. And he's looking for thought leadership. This is how you get thought leadership now—you produce a top five blog. And you do that by covering the news. If you can teach your authors to quit chitchatting about what they have for lunch on their blogs or what they thought about the latest movie and instead just cover the news, that is what people primarily want. And

whenever you cover the news, you have another opportunity to stitch your author's point of view into the main stories that are breaking today. And when you do this day after day, the content accumulates.

News blogging is an asset rather than an expense. As the posts build up on your site, they match more long-tail key words. So the traffic graphs on these blogs are always going up. The more content you accumulate on the site, the more key words you match for and the more traffic you get. I have a white paper on blogging that is available to anybody that sends me an e-mail asking for it. It will describe this process in more detail. You can engineer the same thing with your authors if you can teach them how to do this. We do some training for authors, too. We have a blog buddy that does the blog commenting with your author, sets up their social networking sites, and puts all this stuff together so that when they post on a blog, it automatically goes to Twitter and Facebook and Google+. We use TweetDeck and HootSuite. These are two sites that you can use to automate Twitter tweets and Facebook status updates when you do a blog post.

Of course, the blog must be connected to the author's Amazon page. Only the author can do that; the publisher cannot do that for the author. Then everything they post on this blog will appear on the Amazon Author Page. The idea is to build a personal network online with your social networks and Amazon, post once on your blog, and have it appear in all of your network's news channels. So when you get to the state that we're at, we have the editors hired and optimizers in house,

so it's a wonderful machine in that the journalist writes, the editor cleans, the optimizer tweaks. We have a bunch of tricks to help these things pop a little higher online. We have an SEO pack—a WordPress plug-in that you can get and attach to your WordPress blog that boosts your search engine visibility. You have to put tags in the description of the post inside of it, but it's a tool to boost your visibility for your blog posts. And then we track the results in a meticulous way, and you'll see some of our reports on the white paper.

Google, for a while, changed how they do the Google Alerts, and for some time our blogs dropped out of the Google Alerts for no particular reason. And then about six weeks ago, Google changed the algorithm on Google Alerts again, and our stuff was suddenly appearing in Google Alerts. We have a blog on plastics testing, if you can believe that. It's not related to a book. But, of course, in 30 days, we were the top blog on plastics testing. We have a journalist who wrote for *Analytical Chemistry* magazine, and now she writes for us. She has a PhD from Johns Hopkins, and she's blogging the news every day for us on this blog. In 30 days, we were a top blog for plastics testing, and ever since Google redid their alerts, our blog traffic has doubled from an average of 75 people a day coming to the post to 150 people a day. So the Google Alerts are very powerful, and I suggest that you investigate Google Alerts and set some up so that you understand how they work.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 14)

Campaign 5, blog backs, involves going back to the people whose stories we mention and commenting that we blogged about them on our blog. It's a way of getting into the journalists' faces because they're looking at the comments on their own blogs and their own stories, and you can go there and say, "Hey, we wrote about you," and maybe that journalist will take a look at what you said and write about you. So that's what's known as a blog back. It's the same technique as a blog commenting campaign. It doesn't have to be done by the author, though; it can be done by a journalist if you have a hired gun.

Helping authors blog effectively—you want them to cover the news on their blogs, and you want to make sure that their blogs are hooked up to their social network so that they blog in one place and it appears everywhere. They should know about the value of commenting on other blogs, and they should have a generic comment ready to go at any time. Touring—they can do that themselves, but they have to give themselves plenty of lead time and gang up three to five appearances in one week so that they can promote the whole tour. And finally, it's very hard for authors to keep all these user IDs and passwords that you get when you're doing these campaigns in order, so have one document, like an Excel spreadsheet, that has it all. The nice thing about hiring a freelance blogger is that they get the job done. I can't blog on our blog at SixEstate. I just can't make the time to blog on my own blog—I'm just as bad as the authors. So I have hired journalists to blog and cover the topics that are

important to our target audience. They're just very reliable, and that way I'm sure I've got something up there every day. We look for people with an advanced degree in the subject that they're blogging about. We look for them to have blogging experience. And we like it if they know WordPress in particular, which is the dominant blogging platform. Finally, you want to be sure that your contract with any writer that you hire is work for hire and that you own all the blog posts. All of our contracts are work for hire, so the client owns the blog posts 100 percent, and several clients have ganged up these blog posts and put them into e-Books that they then sell or give away as promotions.

Q: I wonder how you promote the blog tour. What are the channels of promoting that?

A: The main thing is to make sure that the site that you're touring on installs promotions, such as an excerpt, cover art, the author's photo, and a link to buy the book. We put out a news release with the tour info and try to get coverage in publications that don't have long lead times—newsletters, online newsletters, other blog sites. Newspapers will actually print a news release about an author's blog tour. And then we put it on our own blog. We tweet about it and put it on Facebook. And so you have your own network you pitch to, the sites you are going to be on you pitch it to, and then you could actually send releases out to the media and get them to promote the tour.

Q: I have a website that's now online, and they have put the blog on my website that is one where you go

through the dashboard, you put your information, somebody looks at it and checks for key words, and so on and so forth. It just seems like it so unmanageable to me. Should I just put together a WordPress blog separate from my website?

A: Yes, I would say you can do a WordPress blog separately. Ideally, you'd like to have it on the same website, but there are advantages to each way. Having a stand-alone blog at first is a disadvantage because you don't get the traffic coming to the author's site and you don't get the Google page rank that goes with that. But after the blog starts building up content, it's actually an advantage because when your blog is linking to your main site, Google says, "Oh, this popular site likes your site." It doesn't really recognize that the two sites are owned by the same entity, so the popularity of both sites goes up when it's a stand-alone. Even WordPress is difficult to work with. It's probably the best platform out there, but all the blogging platforms feel like you're typing with mittens on. All of our bloggers have been trained to constantly be copying their work to the clipboard so that if it crashes or loses your post, you don't lose an hour or two of work. Blogs hate Microsoft, and Microsoft hates blogs. Any time you try to go from a Word document into a blog, it drags all this Microsoft crap code, as we call it, into the blog. And it creates horrible formatting problems on the blog. If you see a formatting problem on the blog, chances are that you have some Microsoft crap code in one of the posts somewhere, and you have to excise it.

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Blog PR (cont'd from page 15)

It's such a bad problem that WordPress has a "Paste from Word" button that automatically cleans the file when you're doing a paste into a WordPress document from a Microsoft document.

Q: In selecting a client or book, what value do you personally place on the content? That is, friendly regardless to the reason as opposed to something that you personally don't agree with?

A: I have a problem with certain content, but most of my issues are just personal. For example, I won't do any pornography books or something that could be construed as that. I also at one time refused to promote Chicken Soup for the Soul books. So I have standards, but those are personal matters. The thing to keep in mind about the Internet is that it's a wide world of very niche communities. I've had to promote books on repairing catalytic converters, and I've promoted books that reached ridiculously small target audiences—books with prices of \$299. And I promoted first fiction, which is probably the toughest thing that you can take on online, and promoted it successfully. Several of the first fiction books that I've promoted online have gone on to become award winners, in part because of the visibility that was raised through online campaigns. And usually when they start winning awards and getting the attention of people, the authors are able to get contracts with larger publishers, and the money may not come through sales of the books but through an advance (when they used to have those!) on the next book. So it's a niche world out there. Actually,

I've had the hardest time promoting a book that *anybody* would want—nobody wants to put it on their sites. If it's a book on stress relief or something, I can't get any traction. It has to have a very focused target audience to get people really excited about the book.

You've been a great audience. I really appreciate it. It's a lot of fun for me to go through this.



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