Carla King is an adventure travel journalist, web professional, author, and self-publishing expert. In 1995 she pioneered the art of the real-time online travelogue with her American Borders dispatches, now called blog posts, sent from the saddle of the Russian Ural sidecar motorcycle she was testing for an American importer. That just sounds fabulous.

In 2010, Carla founded the Self-Pub Boot Camp program of books and workshops where she taught writing for the web and building author websites for several years. Carla’s career has focused on technology, starting in 1985, writing repair manuals for mainframe computers. Can you think of anything more exciting? Over the years, Carla has produced and published dozens of websites, online magazines, booklets, and book-like publications using a wide variety of desktop and cloud-based tools.

She’s published seven books, including the *Self-Publishing Boot Camp Guide for Authors* and *How to Self-Publish Your Book*. Carla’s going to tell us all about these publishing tools to sell your books. Welcome her, and I’m going to pass out her handout!

Thank you, Sharon. And thank you, all. I’m really fascinated to be in the presence of the small press, as well as authors, because I’ve always talked with authors and because I came from a writer perspective, I’ve never been very interested in going with the large publishers. I’m a do-it-yourself kind of gal.

But I’ve been more and more interested in maybe becoming a small press, publishing other people’s books. When Sharon invited me to this, I thought, “Oh this is going to be great,” because then I’ll get your perspectives as well. I know a lot of these tools that I’m going to tell you about are actually aimed at small presses as well as to the self-published author, whether they just published one book or ten books.

So, first of all, I wanted to ask: how many of you are a small press, in that you do publish other people’s work? A few of you. So how many are in publishers’ co-ops of some sort? Author co-ops? Nobody. That’s interesting. I had a feeling that that’s being revived now. You know, like Ginsberg and the beat poets and all that, they used to get together and publish their little chat books for City Lights. I’ve been seeing a little bit of a revival—at least an interest, if not in practice.

So, of the authors, how many of you are one-book authors so far? Two books? Three? Keep your hands up. Four? Five? Six, seven, eight, nine, ten? Okay, good.

Q: You’re talking self-published?

A: Yeah, how many of you have self-published? Half of you. Okay, how many of you have been published with a publishing house? Okay, another half. That’s really interesting. How many of you want to be published with a publishing house? A small press, perhaps? So, how many of you feel that self-publishing or being a publisher is a grand adventure?

I’m an adventure travel writer, and I think that writing, and the writing process, is a grand adventure. The publishing process is a crazy adventure because you have to start all over. It’s like going to a new country and learning a new language. It doesn’t stop when you learn the language. It all starts all over again, right? The new technology and the tools have evolved. And the good news is, I’ve been in technology for an awfully long time, and I’ve just seen it get easier and easier and easier. Because I was a tech writer, I always knew how to publish myself, even way back!

So, let me get to the new tools that—whether you’re a one-book author or a ten-book author or a small press who wants to grow your author base—will help you sell more books and boost your platform, or help you boost your authors’ platforms as well. Or maybe you can start thinking of gathering—someone said they wanted to maybe do a group blog or get together with similar bloggers so you can co-opt and support each other.

So, you may have heard of some of these tools. Here they are. I’m going to go over this in four parts:

1. The tools that help you sell more books
2. The tools that help you make money by crowd funding your books in advance, and your work, making money proposing to the public that they might buy your book
3. Creating subscription-based books in slices
4. Then updated information about tools you may have already heard of and maybe have used

What’s exciting is that a lot of these tool makers have been around for a long time. I think the ones that were going to fail have failed, and now the people who have been in the self-publishing industry, small press services industry, have been stable for a while. In 2008, Smashwords was super new, right? I had no idea if it was going to fail in 2010, and now it’s 2014, and they’re going strong. So there are a lot of companies like that who are leaders and who are evolving and who are now the old publishers in the neighborhood.

So, the tools that help you sell more books, right now, are Selz, Gumroad, Liberio, IngramSpark, O'Reilly Atlas, and BitLit. So these are things you can do right now.

So, Selz is a way to sell your book on your website to your customers directly, without them leaving your website. This is not PayPal. How many of you have a PayPal account, where people pay you. Now, do they go to a blank screen when it says, “Buy this book?” How many of you have had that experience? How many of you have an integrated PayPal site where the user stays on your website as they’re putting their credit card in? Yeah, so those are a little bit difficult to configure. It was difficult for me, and I’m a tech person.

Selz is this cool little widget, and you can put your book cover and the “buy now” directly on your website. The user gets this experience: The background of your website kind of fades away into the dark, and the book cover gets all highlighted and sparkly and nice, and the customer says, “Buy it now,” and this is a signed copy, an autographed copy. I don’t sell books normally on my website unless they’re autographed, and normally they cost more. So this one is $18.95. It’s just an autographed copy, right?

So, the user or the customer says, “Buy it now,” and this little book widget gracefully turns around, just flips over like the queen’s wave and asks for the credit card number. It’s very friendly; it’s a very nice experience. The user doesn’t get jarred by having to go to Amazon or B&N or the horrible blank PayPal screen. It’s been shown that 50 percent of buyers drop off when they have to leave the website to buy a product. And this is so dead easy. I believe they take a very reasonable amount. Something like 8 percent and a 15-cent transaction fee, and it’s a no-brainer. You can do this tomorrow; you’ll be done with it in about half an hour.

The other one is Gumroad. I love this little store. I tried it with some suspicion. It came out before Selz, and I thought, “Hey, I’ll just try it,” because I try everything. You can sell your books or your music or your coffee cups or your t-shirts or your pens or whatever, your software, your game, directly to your readers. They’re an online store. They don’t have a little widget like Selz does. I wouldn’t be surprised if they soon had it integrated that way with their product, because everyone is copying each other right now. You can sell a physical book or automatically sell an EPUB or a PDF, a digital file, a MOBI file for Amazon, for instance.

They take, like Selz, only 5 percent and a 25-cent transaction fee. So it’s better if you don’t have a 99-cent product, right? Like with Selz, you keep your customer data. They’re not going off to Amazon with that (only Amazon knows your customer data), which is awesome, to have your customer data, if you can get it. And it has what’s called “transactional social media.”

Has anyone heard that term yet? You’ve done it probably. When you buy something, there’s a little widget that pops up and says, “Thanks for buying Carla King’s book. Would you like to tell your friends about it on Twitter and Facebook?” It knows you already, so you can just click Twitter or Facebook or both, and all your friends know that you bought *Self-Publishing Boot Camp Guide for Authors,* and hopefully they’re all writers, and they’re all going to buy it because their friend bought it.

So this is very, very valuable. You can get some buzz going too, with your social media. You just go to their website and give them all the information. Like Selz, they lay it out very clearly. They also do preorders. So, if you know that your book is going to be published on July 4—maybe it’s a historical book—you can start selling it now. People will put their credit card information in, but their credit card will not get charged until July 4 when you actually push that button to deliver the goods, so they feel safe about that. In the PDF, I have a link to a little demo video for Gumroad.

I tried this with a bunch of products. Somebody was asking about social media for authors earlier. I have a 99-cent (which is terrible, because I only get 70 cents, or even less, less than 50 cents) product. But I narrated a social media marketing for authors presentation—much like this one—and I just put it up for 99 cents to see what happened. I sold so many of those! I’ll show you on the next screen. I also posted a free little book that I made, just to create interest in my other books, my motorcycling books. And you don’t get charged for that. If it’s free, it’s free.

So if you have a little free booklet you can upload, upload it. Gumroad doesn’t charge you a fee when people download it. I put my *American Borders* book, a PDF, up there for $6.99; my *Self-Publishing Boot Camp Guide for Author*s; and a little book of stories I did. And I was really surprised. I made over a hundred dollars from that social media marketing for authors presentation and hardly any from anything else.

I think Gumroad is really good for those of you who do presentations. How many of you are nonfiction writers? So you have a lot of opportunity to share your knowledge. Even if you’re a fiction writer, and you’ve done some historical research, you may want to do a presentation on your topic and sell it like I have.

Liberio. So, those of you with books now, you can go to the Liberio’s website (<liber.io>) tonight and just upload your EPUB and/or the PDF of your book, that you’ve already created using Lightning Source or CreateSpace or IngramSpark, or whatever you’ve done. Microsoft Word, you know, will print to PDF. Anything will print to PDF. And Liberio is an indie-only bookstore, which means indie authors and small presses.

If you’re a small press, you might want to list your catalog of authors here. I think you can sign up as a small press, so you can have a mini-catalog. Yes, you can, they have a bulk upload that just came out of beta. You get 80 percent royalties to your PayPal account monthly, so it’s a lot better than Amazon. They have a really nice-looking website.

My friend Jason Matthews—have you heard of him? He writes a lot about self-publishing and small press, but he also has some fiction books. This is what his page looks like. So it’s a really nice little store. And here, it’s 80 percent, rather than the 55 percent he gets from Amazon and other stores. Again, super easy.

Now, that said, Liberio vets their books, so if your book doesn’t look professional or if it’s badly edited, you will not get into Liberio. So this is important. And this is of course what makes your book stand out and compete in the general marketplace. It’s a professionally designed cover, good editing, a copyright page—all that formal book stuff that beginning authors don’t do.

Q: Is this a simple ISBN number?

A: If you’re an indie publisher or an indie author, you need to buy ten ISBNs from Bowker directly, in your name. Otherwise, it’s not portable. Even the well-meaning companies like Smashwords or BookBaby or Vook, who will give you an ISBN, their free ISBNs will show your book as published by BookBaby or Vook. Now if you think the bookstore is going to take that book—they’re not. So buy your own, $250, the best investment you can make in a publishing company.

You’re going to need two, three, four ISBNs per book. One for your print edition—this is such a common question, and I answer these common questions in my newsletter and my blog. One for print, one for EPUB, one for MOBI. Then if you want, you can have another one for an audiobook, one for a multimedia version, etc. That said, you really don’t need ISBN numbers anymore, if you don’t want, but then you can’t use them. You can’t track your book. I’m going to talk more about this when I talk about Vook.

So, you’ve all heard of Ingram, right? Yay, biggest distributor in the world for books. How many of you have used Lightning Source? Yeah, we’re all forced to use Lightning Source. It’s been so hard to use it, to get a customer service rep and a sales rep, and you have to adhere to their FTP stuff, and you have to get a book cover spine calculator thing. It can be a mess. It’s a very high learning curve for a new author. Finally, thankfully, they came out with IngramSpark.

You know, CreateSpace, which is part of Amazon—I love Amazon, because Amazon has really pushed and allowed authors to self-publish and take control over our books and sell them ourselves without going through the gatekeepers, as we call them. For those of us who write good books and attend to quality and really want to be professional about it, that’s great. It is too bad that so many self-published authors have sloppy books, and we have to be in the same bucket with all those hundreds and thousands of millions of people. But really, you can rise to the top by following the rule of a good design, hire it out, and good editing, hire it out.

Well, Lightning Source, we don’t use them anymore. X it out! Because IngramSpark came along, and IngramSpark competes with CreateSpace. IngramSpark is Ingram’s answer for self-publishers, Ingram’s self-publishing tool. They don’t want you to go to Lightning Source anymore. I have a legacy account with Lightning Source, and I’m actually transferring it over to IngramSpark because I’m tired of talking to actual people! I want to do everything online. The other thing is that—I’m a writer, ok? I come out every once and a while. Here I am. But usually I’m in front of my computer.

The great thing about IngramSpark is—unlike CreateSpace—they do both e-book and print. With Amazon, you have to go to CreateSpace for your print book creation and distribution, and you have to go to Kindle Direct Publishing for your e-book creation and distribution. With IngramSpark, it’s all in one dashboard. So everything is tracked through IngramSpark; everything is done. It’s new, and it still has a few little buggy things happening, but I would urge you to go use them now, and create an account. Because, well, they’re Ingram. They distribute to Amazon, they distribute to Barnes and Noble, Kobo, etc. And the other nice thing about it—thank you for making me remember—is that you can exclude Amazon and you can exclude Apple, if you want.

It’s really good to have a one-on-one relationship with Amazon CreateSpace and Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing. And some tools and services don’t let you exclude those vendors. They want to distribute to all the vendors, and so your book has a risk of being shown as out of stock in print on Amazon, because they’re not hooked to the database. Some people say they’re not really hooked to the database; some people say they’re punishing you for not using CreateSpace. So, you don’t want to get the dreaded “it’s going to be two weeks until you can get this book” message. So I use IngramSpark to distribute all my print books and e-books—the major distributors—except for Amazon. And I use Kindle Direct Publishing and CreateSpace to sell and display my books directly in the Amazon Kindle and <amazon.com> stores. Does that make sense?

Q: So, I’m assuming that it’s different for mass, because it’s like an EPUB for Lightning Source?

A: Yes and no. Print is print. PDF is PDF. Except for the silly spine size, because you’ve got the different paper thicknesses, etc., so CreateSpace might be supplying a different thickness of paper than IngramSpark. So, your basic cover will look the same, and it may turn out to be exactly the same spine width, but all of these services have a cover design template generator on their websites. So you can say, “I want cream. I want a matte cover, 12 pt stock, 6x9.” And they’ll give you a Photoshop PDF that you can just plug in. It might be easier for some than others.

This is the other important thing about cover design. It is a little bit complicated with print. If you have a professional book cover designer you’re working with, whether it’s for $100 or $1,000, that person should be able to help you through that process for another $20 or so. It’s not rocket science for them. It might be rocket science for you, but not for them.

Q: Does IngramSpark publish only nonfiction or both?

A: IngramSpark is not a publisher; they’re a distributor.

Q: My question was really about the e-book. For Kindle—

A: For Kindle, it’s MOBI, and for everyone else it’s EPUB. You need to generate your MOBI as well as your EPUB.

Q: So, like IngramSpark is—

A: When you work with IngramSpark, they will help you generate an EPUB and a MOBI, so you can ask them to generate a MOBI, and then take the MOBI and upload it yourself to the Kindle Direct Publishing, if you’d like. That said, you’ll be able to generate a MOBI and an EPUB with some of these other tools that I’m going to be talking about as well.

Q: Sort of her question about the e-book—so, you don’t take the PDF file, you have to go to a MOBI file with IngramSpark?

A: PDF is for print only. EPUB and MOBI are for e-books.

Q: And they take all those platforms on Ingram’s part?

A: They do, yeah. And they do as well on BookBaby and Vook and several others.

Okay, let me move on. O'Reilly. This is for those of you who have a small press, not for the self-publisher. O'Reilly is the big computer book company. They have a new product—like Ingram and IngramSpark, I have been waiting so long for this to come out. They have been using this wonderful publishing engine on their own, and they’re tech geniuses, right? I think what happened is they were awaiting perfection, and so finally, I guess it’s perfect. So O’Reilly Atlas has happened.

With O’Reilly Atlas, you can write, design, and publish your books using their engine that uses—for all you geeks—the Git Version Control System. Is anyone a software person here? So, if I were going to start a publishing company, I would use O’Reilly because it would allow me to work with a whole host of professionals, and everyone can work on the same file, and you can see who did what when, and you can revert, etc. Because you aren’t doing that, I won’t go into it anymore, but it’s very nice. If you want to see the cutting edge of publishing, you should look at it.

One of the wonderful things about it is that it allows you to create a multimedia book all in one step with a print book, and when the print version gets created, the interactive, multimedia elements default to an image. So, these are two or three separate processes in a self-publishers world, but now they’ve created a very wonderful engine with a learning curve.

BitLit. Now how many of you have print books that are out there and published before the e-book revolution came along? Awesome, you’re going to love this. What you do is you sign up with BitLit. It’s a Canadian company. It allows readers to download an e-book version of your print book. Now, you can sell it to them, or you can give it away.

For self-publishers, I would recommend giving it away, because you now have their e-mail address when you give it away. It’s just data, right? You use it as a marketing booster. You already have people who like you who have your book; somehow they may be able to find you. If they bother to ask for the EPUB or MOBI version, you know that you have a repeat customer, someone who wants your next book. These are high-quality mailing list customers; they already love you. You get 65 percent; BitLit gets 35 percent. And people don’t just get it for free, because there’s a Google+ validation process in order to get it for free. Google+ is the only social media platform that has a real name policy.

So I send Carla King in to Google+, and they have ways of checking that. On Facebook or Twitter, I can be Lulu Lacrosse. It doesn’t matter who I am. But the customer writes her name on the title page, takes a picture, and downloads the BitLit app. So as a reader with the BitLit app, I sign my name on the title page, take a picture—I think I also take a picture of the ISBN number—and log in via Google+, and BitLit will validate. Now, at that point, if someone wants to do all that to get my EPUB for free—go for it! I get their e-mail address, and I can sell future books to them.

Q: If this is a print book, do they have to scan it?

A: No, they take a picture of all this, and then, once they do that, they push the “this is my book” button on the BitLit app. Then BitLit sends them the EPUB. So you upload your EPUB to BitLit.

Q: Oh, okay, but if you don’t have an EPUB because it was written in ancient days—

A: Sure, but you’re going to make an EPUB. You’re going to create an EPUB. You want those people; they already love you.

Q: So I’m going to do that by scanning?

A: Well, a PDF you could do by scanning, but there are a lot of services like Vook or BookBaby or IngramSpark that can now, for about $100 I think, make an EPUB out of your PDF. It’s a little bit complicated, because a PDF is really like a copy from a copy machine. I’m really not sure how they do that well; I think there’s some proofreading involved. So you could go do that right now. It’s awesome. I love it.

I’m going to say this again. You need to publish with your own ISBN numbers. Always. Always. Don’t use anybody else’s, or they’re the publisher, and you’re not the publisher. Not all of these platforms allow you to use your own ISBN numbers. If you use their ISBN, they’re the publisher of record, and you’re trapped with them forever and ever.

Q: You were talking about O’Reilly Atlas, and you mentioned a multimedia book. Can you explain that more?

A: Okay, I’m going to go over multimedia books in the third section. Those are great.

Q: Can you talk about the library catalog number?

A: I cover that in the *Self-Publishing Boot Camp Guide for Authors*. The Library of Congress catalog numbers are kind of going out of style. They really don’t want you unless you publish five books a year or more. They really want publishers. That said, I found out that if you actually apply, they will usually give it to you. So, it’s easier now. But I’m not sure—there’s no data so far about how advantageous it is. If you sell through Baker & Taylor, you really have to have them.

Q: With O’Reilly Atlas, you’re recommending that, and it sounds great. But IngramSpark links you to a distribution channel, and O’Reilly Atlas doesn’t necessarily.

A: Okay, so, does O’Reilly Atlas have the same kind of distribution that others have, like Lightning Source and IngramSpark and others? I don’t know yet. I’m sure they will, but not at this point, I don’t believe so.

Q: I had a couple questions on IngramSpark. Is there any difference in terms of the market . . .

A: What’s the difference between IngramSpark and Lightning Source? IngramSpark runs on the Lightning Source engine. So, it’s pretty much the same. Are you on Lightning Source now? How many books do you have on them? Two? Yeah, I had a few books. I’m ready to change over, because when I registered for IngramSpark, it said that my e-mail was already in use, because it’s used with the Ingram database.

So I called Robin Cutler, who’s the head of IngramSpark and who helped build CreateSpace, which was an Amazon acquisition of BookSurge. Amazon bought BookSurge, and Robin Cutler created CreateSpace from BookSurge, along with Thomas Kephart, who’s still at Amazon CreateSpace. Robin left, and then she reentered the publishing world, and then she got hired by Ingram to create IngramSpark. She spoke at my Self-Publishing Boot Camp, and she spoke at the San Francisco Writers Conference with me. So I called her and asked what to do, and I gave IngramSpark my Mac address, but I didn’t really want to do that, so they’re helping me convert.

Q: You said something about percentages being different?

A: That’s right, IngramSpark has simplified profit margins, but they do let you price at price points that are attractive to bookstores, plus they let you set the returns program, so bookstores will buy. The discounts are very limited, so if you’re concerned about, and you’re very sophisticated with, discounts—I’m not, I use very standard discounts—but yeah, obviously you are. I’m so happy not to have to go through that complex system anymore.

Q: And then my last question . . .

A: Is there any issue with delays going through IngramSpark, through Apple, similar to Amazon? Not that I know of. Apple doesn’t sell print books, and the out-of-stock message only happens with print books.

Q: You mentioned earlier, about the ISBN and buying two or three for every book.

A: Buy ten ISBNs and use them as you need—ISBN numbers are $150 for one and $250 for ten.

Q: Buy ten for every book?

A: Just buy ten once, and when you use them all up, buy another ten. You need one for print, one for EPUB, and one for Kindle.

Q: Do you need to have separate ISBNs for each version of the eBook? I thought you could get by—

A: Each format. It’s by format. So there’s PDF format, there’s EPUB format, there’s Kindle format, which is MOBI format.

Q: Now with MOBI and the EPUB, Bowker was saying that it would just be one ISBN as an EPUB. But you’re saying get two?

A: No, no. MOBI and EPUB are different. They’re both e-book formats. Buy ten, and assign one to print, one to EPUB, one to MOBI. So, don’t get confused. Everybody says something different. I talked to Linda Dawson at Bowker, and this is what she told me. She runs the ISBN department.

Q: I keep hearing different things about that. The other thing is, for people who are members of the IBPA, I think you get a 15 percent member discount for purchasing items from Bowker, like the ISBNs.

A: That’s really nice! So if you’re an IBPA member, you get a discount with Bowker and many other services. It’s a great organization to belong to.

Q: My question was, if you buy ten of them, and I have some old ones—I have about 4 left.

A: Go ahead and use them!

Q: But can I use the same batch? You buy ten, can you use one for each of these different publications, or do you need a specific ISBN number for e-books and a specific one—

A: Okay, you know, you can use any unused ISBN numbers. I’m going to stop the ISBN conversation right now, because I’ve written so much about it, and it’s all free on my website, and it’s in my book.

Q: I had an issue with Lightning Source and Amazon when I specified a production date or an in-stock date and street date. Lightning Source was treating it as informational only. But a lot of the distributors were treating it as—it was like I didn’t really have control over it. Is this just a bogus date, or is this real? Do you have any opinions on that?

A: It seems like you used Lightning Source and specified release dates in the future, which you can. I go right to Bowker, by the way, and I specify. Book buyers were confused or irritated?

Q: Amazon actually set the future date correctly, but then they wouldn’t enable their preorder button. And they said no, because the book wasn’t published yet.

A: Oh, because you’re with LSI. Right, this is what I was saying. Amazon is not Ingram. They’re separate companies. So, yeah, they don’t get the data feed from Ingram-Bowker that Ingram gets. They get a delayed data feed, or they’ve set it up to punish you for not using CreateSpace.

Q: That’s more like it.

A: Okay, so, one or the other. I don’t know; I’m Switzerland on that. What I’m going to say is don’t use LSI anymore. Use IngramSpark and use CreateSpace.

Q: You can’t do hardcover.

A: You can. You can do your trade on CreateSpace.

The question is, the tools and services I’m going over today—are they exclusive or nonexclusive? These are all tools and services you can use.

The only caveat is that you can’t ask Vook to distribute to Barnes & Noble and ask IngramSpark to distribute to Barnes & Noble and ask Smashwords to distribute to Barnes & Noble. Vook doesn’t allow you to make a choice; they’re all or nothing. IngramSpark distributes to everybody, unless you want to exclude Apple and Amazon, which you can. BookBaby, I think, lets you exclude Amazon, but I’m not sure.

Now, all these other stores: Liberio—Ingram, Vook, and Bookbaby don’t distribute to Liberio. Liberio is just for indie authors. Slicebooks and all these other places, they’re not the normal distribution channels. Barnes & Noble, Apple, Amazon, Kobo, etc. are the normal distribution network. These I’m talking about now will allow you to create books that let you upload to distributors who will distribute throughout that ecosystem.

The other services I’m talking about are below that radar. So you can—in addition to having global distribution—use these more minor distribution channels that will reach people who don’t shop in those stores. And you can do it all! There’s no conflict.

I think I’d better move on, in the interest of time.

Okay, subscriptions and slicing. Who’s heard of Leanpub? Who’s heard of PressBooks? Slicebooks?

Leanpub is a company that started publishing conveyor books. And they’ve created this iterative publishing system because programmers didn’t care if the book was perfect. They didn’t care about spelling errors. They didn’t care if it wasn’t finished. They needed that information so badly that they would buy it for $2, $5, $10, $20 to read it as it was being written. So every time the author updated the book, added a chapter, made a correction, Leanpub e-mailed all the buyers and said, “There’s an update.” Now, eventually, Leanpub discovered that other people wanted that too. I’m a travel writer. I wrote *American Borders* as an Internet series.

Today, I might decide that I didn’t want to blog this book. Maybe I wanted to sort of crowd fund my book, get people to pay me in advance for the entire series. I’m on a motorcycle, going through America, and my Russian sidecar bike is breaking down every two seconds. I’m staying in the garages of Canadian Harley riders, etc. There’s a buzz, and people start tweeting about it—I say, “Okay, here’s the book!” For $20, they get the book; they get to follow my adventure. It’s got the capability to include some pictures. It’s mostly for text-geek sort of books. And then at the end, they get my print books, if I want them to, if I set it up that way.

This is actually kind of a beta-reader capability. A blog. You get your customer information, you get the e-mail addresses so you can add them to your newsletter and offer special perks, and then, at the end, they have a perfect book, and it outputs to EPUB, MOBI, and print. So when I’m finished, and maybe some of my readers are really enthusiastic and wonderful and love me so much that they’re helping me write a book—they’re pointing out errors and places where I started talking about something that never got completed. That’s what beta readers do. They’re developmental editors. So, I love this. This could work with lots of models. Think about it. You’re all smiling; I love it! I can see all the light bulbs going off!

The other thing, you see that PWYW thing? That’s the new buzzword, the new acronym—“pay what you want” pricing. So, I have a bank of books and a lot of fans, and so I might use a slider on the payment system. I can set a minimum of $20 and a maximum of $500. And I might have some superfans that will slide it on up, right?

Q: For the same book?

A: For the same book! This is crowd funding in action. I actually have had that happen for *American Borders*. I have been writing for the adventure travel industry for a while. And I’m also a mechanic, so I test-drive all these motorcycles. And I have all these fans who are mechanics and who I’ve actually consulted while I’m on the road, to help me calibrate the jets in the carburetor or something. And they have a lot of money, or they’re retired, or whatever, and they just really want to support me.

Have you heard of Kevin Kelly of *Wired Magazine*? He wrote an article called “1,000 True Fans.” It’s a blog post. I don’t have it on my handout, but write it down. He created *Wired Magazine* because he figured out that if you, as an artist—a songwriter, guitar player, author, painter—have 1,000 true fans (you can handle knowing and communicating with 1,000 people fairly intimately), then you can make a living. Because these superfans will buy every book you ever write, they’ll go to every concert, they’ll buy your DVD, they’ll buy the boxed set, the hard cover, the soft cover, the e-book, the Kindle, the enhanced version, the audiobook.

Don’t you inspire passion in your readers? So many artists do! Think about the artists that you love. Who comes into town, and you will not miss that concert? What gallery opening will you not miss, to go meet that person or see that person’s work?

Q: I have a question about Slicebooks. Is that only e-book?

A: That’s my next slide, I think. Now, I’m not just talking about Leanpub for the crowd sourcing and pay what you want. But I like to introduce Leanpub like this because I get to talk about 1,000 true fans and the importance of an e-mail newsletter. Who has an e-mail newsletter?

Number one on my handout is go out and get an e-mail newsletter because if someone is visiting your website, they’re not going to remember to come back next month when your book’s done. You want to capture their interest right this second. And MailChimp is free for the first 2,000 e-mail addresses, and it’s very easy to use. You can write to them—even if you don’t have anything to write to them about now, you can wait six months. Really, you should welcome them and thank them for signing up for the e-mail, maybe give them a story or something, once a month at least. You should send them something—an update on what you’re doing, how you’re doing, news, any awards you’ve won, or any articles that have come out, your new Facebook author page and a Google+ group, etc. You’re writers!

Q: You’re a travel writer who doesn’t like to go out?

A: It’s true. I just zoom through towns. When I break down, then I have to stay and talk for a while, hopefully in some other language that I don’t know. Writers are introverts. You get your energy from being alone. You recharge by being alone. I love speaking with people and hanging out with people for a little while. But it doesn’t reenergize me. It makes me tired. Even though I love it, and I get great stories from people, and I love teaching, but it’s only for a few hours.

So, PressBooks. PressBooks is a publishing system—a book publishing system—that is based on the free and open source WordPress blogging software. Who has a WordPress blog? Awesome. So, with PressBooks, for under $100, you can create PDF for print, EPUB and MOBI, and web books, in HTML. Who knows Nina Amir, *How to Blog a Book* (<howtoblogabook.com>)? This is a good one to write down too. She’s a friend, and she speaks at my Self-Pub Boot Camp workshops often. She recommends that you blog your book. Kind of like Leanpub.

So, I just happen to have this little website. I wasn’t traveling for a while. I lived in the San Francisco Bay Area, and I motorcycled all over the place, and I had a bunch of friends who also motorcycled and were also authors, writers, journalists. So I started a group blog, which was great. It also helped us create awareness about each other, for people who knew me but not these other writers, or vice versa.

Then I heard about PressBooks—they say that they’re and honest-to-god publishing platform. You don’t have to have a blog to use them, but you can. They said they could create a book from my blog, so I’m like, “Okay, I have to test this out.” So I looked at my website, and I saw that I had a lot about wine country, so I chose the articles that were about wine country, since I had used categories and keywords correctly in my WordPress blog. Who uses them on their WordPress blog? You really should. It’s a very good thing to do because people can find you better, and you’re more organized. Your website becomes more sophisticated. You can use categories to create the tabs along the top, the navigation system.

And so I told PressBooks to grab all of the XML code, to make it easier, from my category of wine country and make it a book. And this is what the back end of a WordPress blog looks like. And, within five minutes, I had a booklet that I called *Motorcycling in Wine Country in Northern California*. I had to add the front matter and the back matter and put a cover on it. But literally, I pushed the button, and I went to go get a cup of tea, thinking, “I’ll leave this running for an hour. I’ll go for a run.” And I come back and think it must be stalled, because I’m thinking, “They can’t really do that.” I’ve been lied to so often by blog software companies so far. But I realized that it hadn’t stalled—it was finished! So I actually wrote a two-part blog post for Nina Amir about using PressBooks to create a book from your WordPress blog. You can find that if you Google it. How to Blog a Book is very good.

How many of you have a bunch of books? A few books on the same topic? You can make e-books out of books. How many of you might take some of the stories from one book and mix them with stories from another book and make a new book? How many of you have stories you want to sell separately, just in little pieces, for 99 cents? So, Slicebooks was created by a couple who had worked for O’Reilly & Associates, the smart publishing company, for a long, long time. They created this product. You upload your e-book or your PDF. So, you all have PDF files, right? And you tell it to slice it by chapter or section. And it was kind of the same experience as PressBooks. I went away, and I came back, and it had found the chapters and made separate files out of them.

Q: Do you get to do any editing on that?

A: Okay, so I have all these travel books, and I have these articles that I have the copyright to. So, I wrote about Morocco here, I have this China story here, and this India story. I have all my *American Borders* stories. I have my cycling the French Riviera. I have all these stories in *Stories from Elsewhere*. I published some stories in *Travelers’ Tales of Food,* *Travelers’ Tales of France*. And I get to sell them separately. I, as the author, get to remix my own books, put a new cover on it, and brand it and price it how I want, as a whole new book, a new ISBN. I also say, “Readers can buy all these stories separately for 99 cents or a dollar, or whatever.”

So readers go to the Slicebooks store, and they see your story, and your story, and your story. And let’s say they’re really interested in Greece. They see the *Lonely Planet Guide to Greece*, and they see this story on Greece, and maybe they only want to go to Crete, so they take this chapter, and they make their own book. And you all get paid your little slice. They can actually, in Slicebooks, create their own book cover. And you get a cut. I think Lonely Planet has a deal with them, and some other people. This is a separate store. This excited me, because I’ve got so many travel stories that I’m excited about jumping on the Lonely Planet bandwagon.

Q: So, I’m also a travel writer. I have magazine articles that I’ve written, and I have rights to some of them. If I want to use that service, I submit those to them?

A: No. I think they do vet for quality. I don’t know if they take separate stories or not. I believe so far that they’re slicing up books, but I don’t know why they wouldn’t allow you to upload stories. They’re pretty new. They’re just recently out of beta. But go to their website, [slicebooks.com](Slicebooks.com). They have really clear instructions. This is one of the wonderful things I love about new technologies and services. You get in early with these people, and you’re some of their first customers. If you want something, you just e-mail them. I have picked up the phone and called the number and been talking to the founder and the main programmer, and they’re like, “Hey, that’s a really good idea.” Within an hour or a day, it’s happening, because they want to sell to more people like you. It’s pretty exciting. Also, you get in their catalog or their social media engine. They get my audience; I get their audience. There’s a lot of co-marketing going on when you’re at the early end of a product or service.

Q: I see a lot of photographs up there—

A: They do cookbooks, yeah. They’re very visual as well. They take PDFs and EPUBs and fixed-format EPUBs.

Q: Are you limited to them or can you sell to Kindle?

A: No, you can make your own book.

Q: So this is only for sale in the Slicebooks store?

A: You could take the end product and sell it elsewhere. But you‘re creating a book for sale as a whole or in pieces in the Slicebooks store. And you perhaps have been selling it elsewhere, via Lightning Source or IngramSpark or Vook, but you can take the end product of your remixed book and use that, slap an ISBN on it.

Q: Is this a print book?

A: Print, EPUB, and MOBI.

Q: So, for example, I’m a photographer as well as a writer. I can send them an article that has illustrations and photos?

Slicebooks does illustrated books and text books. It’s pretty easy. It’s pretty cool.

Okay, so Tugboat Yards. I first found out about this through Jane Friedman. She’s a very well-known author, writer, commentator, blogger. You should look her up, <janefriedman.com>. She has a magazine that she writes with a partner on how writers can monetize their writing, a topic dear to all our hearts. And she charges money for it. It’s called *Scratch*. It’s a really good magazine. One just came out yesterday. She sells it, using [tugboatyards.com](Tugboatyards.com). It’s also a crowd funding model. You can pay $5, $6, $20, $100, $200. I would put a $500 option on that, just in case she has a superfan or two. So you can do the same thing. They take a reasonable amount of money. They take the money; they create the store. You just create the magazine or the event—they actually allow you to sell events. There’s a woman on here who does wine-tasting events, and she uses Tugboat Yards as a store, as well as an informational website. So check that out. You can create the magazine in Word or whatever you want.

Q: How is that distributed?

A: They have your e-mail address. I believe they send it, and they send it as an update through their engine. I believe you could sell physical items, as well as digital items, if you are very clear about your customers providing their mailing information.

So, Pubslush. Who’s heard of Pubslush? It’s Kickstarter for books. It’s just books. I’ve written about crowd funding for books a lot. I write a column for PBS *Mediashift*, and my editor and I actually created this book in PressBooks, because it was a WordPress blog. We tested it out together. I took all my old columns since 2010, updated them, since there was a lot of old information. He looked at it, did some developmental editing, made all the appropriate editorial changes, all in the cloud, and they sell this. This is my only non-self-published book. PBS sells this book.

It’s a funny thing though—I redid the cover. The first cover had a white frame around it. It was very interesting. You know, it’s a digital media company, not a print book company. It didn’t have anything on the back either—it still doesn’t have anything on the spine. It’s a funny thing—even the big boys don’t know how to do everything.

So check out Pubslush. For small presses, they have a publisher area. You can help your authors crowd fund. You can crowd fund for your authors, and if your authors don’t make it, you know. You can test them out before you publish them.

As a small press, you might have ten authors that you’re thinking about publishing. Or five. And you think, “Well, I’m really sure about this one and this one. These three, I’d love to, but I’m not sure there’s an audience.” So, together with them, you can agree on how much money you need and they need, and create a crowd funding campaign around that and see if it flies.

Inkshares and Unbound. Inkshares is based in San Francisco. Unbound is based in London. They are publishers who always crowd fund their authors. So, I, as an author, would approach Inkshares. Inkshares, like any other publisher, is interested in only certain kinds of books, and Unbound is interested in certain kinds of books. So I would say to Inkshares that I want to do this, and I need this much money. And they would either say “good idea” or no. If they said “good idea,” then they would also—together with you—craft a crowd funding campaign. If the goal was met, they would publish you. You would get 50 percent, and they would get 50 percent. They are a publisher. These people are actually publishers. So for you publishers here, this is actually a model you can create with the right software. There are a lot of software companies who will also do this for you.

Beacon (<beaconreader.com>). If you’re a travel writer or a journalist, Beacon has a funding engine as well, and your fans can follow you on that platform. Right now, they only fund and work with journalists and travel writers. You launch a project, and you create your project or your series of articles on their platform only. Readers pay $5 to get to you, but they also can read everyone else on Beacon. It’s another way to crowd fund. Look for more of this stuff coming out. You also get your e-mail list.

Smashwords now has an agent and publisher area for bookstores. They also let you preorder and allow you to create a book for preorder. The one thing about Smashwords, or their preorder strategy, that’s not great is that when your book is launched with Apple and Kobo, and it comes out on July 4, they count everyone who’s preordered as buying on that day, so your numbers go way up.

Someone asked about multimedia. Aerbook Maker is an automatic multimedia, beautiful, art book maker. It’s easy to use. It’s cloud-based and has keynote and PowerPoint. You create text boxes, and you slap images in. It publishes on iBooks and Kindle Fire, and they’ve got automatic sharing with all your social media elements. Your readers or potential readers can find out about your book on Facebook from one of their friends, and they can preview the book without leaving their social media environment. They’ll say “buy,” and they’ll go to PayPal. So they can actually look without interrupting their Facebook time.

Aerbook also allows you to upload PDF marketing material, a teaser, a story, etc. as a social flyer that you can share. So if I just had an announcement about my new book, *Stories from Elsewhere* or *Self-Pub Boot Camp*, and I just wanted to share it and send it down the social stream, I could create that using a PDF. So I’m going to encourage you to look at that.

And the note about the social stream is that it goes both ways. The Internet used to be destination-based, with an address URL, but now it’s a stream. Think about this. This is kind of like the 1,000 true fans moment. I’m just standing here, and Twitter and Facebook and Pinterest, etc., are coming to me. I’m getting a newsletter from you to me. But I can also launch things down the stream. So I’m not having to go to URLs anymore. This is why it’s so important to be in that stream. You want to be able to launch it. You don’t want to have to go fishing in a fishing hole. You want to be in the river. Think about that. I usually talk more about that.

Scribd is a social document–sharing site that publishes books. So you can upload your PDF for sale or for free. It’s just like DocuShare, but the people at Scribd have made their focus publishing books, and they’ve attracted a lot of big publishers. If you’re a publisher, you can put your books on Scribd. They also have a subscription program for their readers. It’s the Netflix model for books. So for $8.99 a month, I can read any book on Scribd that is in that program. So when they did that program, I opted in with my books. I make more money through that program than I did selling my books one by one on Scribd.

That’s a great comment, Sharon. So Sharon’s clients put previews of their books—or you do that for them? You do that for them—on Scribd. Also, on Scribd, people can follow you and can comment on your books. It’s another good place to get beta readers. I had 87,000 people following me on Scribd. I had 87,000 reads on one of my books, so that actually helps me if I wanted to sell to a publisher. It would help them realize that I’m someone that they want to publish.

And finally, Vook’s author control dashboard. Vook is really smart. They’re the ones who are the distribution service. So, you upload your books to Vook, and they will distribute them through the Ingram network and elsewhere. They don’t let you opt out of Amazon, unfortunately. I think they probably will, sooner or later. But they created an author control dashboard. So you go and enter up to ten ISBN numbers, of your books. I can upload all the ISBN numbers for all my books. And they have figured out how to grab the data and tell me how many books sold today, last week, in the year, forever.

So all of a sudden, now, I can create a Twitter campaign or a Facebook campaign or an e-mail newsletter, or I can be on a radio or television show, and I can go, within an hour or so, and see if it had any effect. So, I used to just scattershot a book promotion campaign. We’d go on the radio, we’d try to be on television, Twitter—we’d do everything possible. Now I’m tempted to try the different social media platforms separately, week by week, to see what happens.

Vook doesn’t keep that data. They just offer you a window into that data.

Q: I know they do multimedia publishing. I’m just wondering what their business model is in doing that.

A: They want more people to know who Vook is. This is a brilliant marketing strategy, to offer something so valuable for free to every self-published author. Then those authors will come to Vook, and they’ll say, “Vook is going to create a print book for distribution for $300 and an EPUB book? I’m going with them!”

Q: That data is amassed from Amazon?

A: It’s amassed from the Ingram database . . . I interviewed someone about this for PBS *Mediashift*, and the blog post should be coming out soon. You can sign up for my e-mail newsletter at <selfpubbootcamp.com> and find out more about that.