



**Publishers Association of Los Angeles**  
EDUCATION • NETWORKING • RESOURCES

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## UPCOMING MEETING

# Get Answers to Your Most Puzzling Publishing Questions

**7PM, Tuesday,  
January 24, 2017**

Want some feedback on potential titles or cover designs for your next book? Need help finding a distributor? Not sure if you should spend money on exhibiting at an upcoming trade show? Your questions can be answered at the next PALA meeting. Our January meeting will be a gigantic brainstorming session. Bring your books, cover design drafts, marketing ideas, requests for referrals, and anything else related to publishing, and get answers from the other members in our group. Take advantage of the collective wisdom of your fellow publishers and publishing colleagues.

**Location:** A private home near the San Diego Freeway, Pico exit. Details will be provided a few days before the meeting.

**Cost:** Free for PALA members

See our [website](http://www.pa-la.org) for more details.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Happy New Year

Dear PALA members:

As the New Year brings hope for good things and hints of challenges to come in the publishing industry, the best advice I can offer would be to regularly peruse the publishing Listservs and the Internet to keep abreast of the constant changes in the industry. The changes have been coming often, and sometimes they are far-reaching.

Another obvious way to keep on top of things is to attend our meetings and carefully read your newsletter! I always learn at least one thing at our meetings, often more, either from the meeting itself or from the interactions before and after. Often both!

Our information-packed meetings are more than worth the price of admission, which I must remind you *is now back to \$5* for members due to additional costs of doing business.

I wish you the best for 2017. I'll be seeing you at our meetings.

Cheers,

Gary Young

PALA President

**PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES (PALA)**

<<http://www.pa-la.org>>

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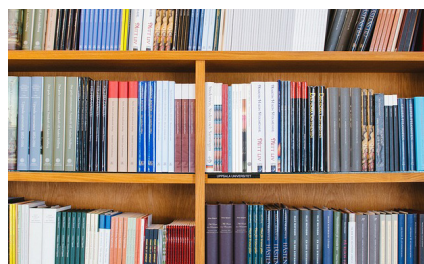
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## INDUSTRY NEWS

## Book Readers Live Longer

A recent study found an association between the reading of books and longevity. Compared to people who read no books, those who did experienced a 20 percent reduction in mortality. Is this effect real? It's well known that people with a higher IQ tend to live longer, and these people could be expected to read more books. To test whether reading books had a direct effect on longevity, the authors adjusted "for relevant covariates including age, sex, race, education, comorbidities, self-rated health, wealth, marital status, and depression." Read more about their results in [this article](#).



## Why Indie Presses Are Opening Bookstores

Suddenly, an increasing number of independent presses are going into the retail book business, morphing into full-service community hubs for book browsing and expanded literary programming. Some see retail floor space as an opportunity to bring more customers and supporters to their front doors. Others see it as an important source of income to support the publishing. All say it fulfills their missions as the literary hearts of their communities. Learn more about this bookselling trend at [LitHub](#).



## Help Readers Find You with Book Discovery Tools

Book discovery tools—sites and apps that introduce your book to readers who may not know about your website or social media platforms—are all the rage. There are many tools out there, but finding the right ones for your book can be a bit of trial and error. [This article](#) features a dozen free and paid options, ready to help you get your words out to an ever-expanding audience.

## October 2016 Author Earnings Report



With each quarterly Author Earnings report over the past two and a half years, we learned something new and unexpected about our rapidly changing industry. But this October we were surprised to see that after two and a half years of quarter-over-quarter growth, the indie e-book market share shrank significantly, dropping back to early 2015 levels. In addition, traditional publishers regained some lost e-book ground, and Amazon publishing imprints grew a lot. Read an in-depth analysis at [Author Earnings](#) to understand the context of these market changes.

## Amazon Searchability Tip for Authors

Do you want your book to be seen by more people on Amazon? Improve its Amazon searchability. This will help your book show up near the top of the Amazon search results when people are looking for a book like yours. Amy Collins of New Shelves has a [great strategy](#) for making this happen.

## How to Automate Your Book Marketing

We have amazing tools at our fingertips to help us get our message and our books into the world, but it can be overwhelming to figure out how to use these tools and how they can all work together. The best tools available are the ones that you set up once and let run, so they continue working automatically on your behalf. This is the kind of tool that saves you from having to repeat the same action over and over to keep getting the same results. In [this article](#), Tim Grahl shows you how to set up a system that will automatically sell your books for you—and how all the pieces of that system work together seamlessly.

## Favorite Ways to Promote a Virtual Book Tour

Over the course of D'vorah Lansky's previous six virtual book tours, she has promoted these tours in a variety of ways. In [this article](#), she shares her five favorite virtual book tour promotion strategies.



## Estate Planning Tips for Authors

You might not be thinking about estate planning as you launch your literary creations into the world, but if your books are successful, your characters may live forever alongside Elizabeth Bennet, David Copperfield, and Frankenstein. The copyright in your books also lives on. Under current law, a copyright lasts for the creator's lifetime plus seventy years. So if you publish a book in 2016 and live another forty years, the copyright will last until 2126. That's 110 years, and it's certainly something to think about and plan for. [Helen Sedwick](#) discusses how authors' intellectual and digital assets can be managed following their death to keep their work in publication and income-producing.

### IBPA NEWS

## Publishing University Online

Can't make it to Publishing University this April—or just can't wait until then? You're in luck: several PubU Online classes are open for registration. From "[How to Turn Podcast Appearances into Profits](#)" to "[Vital Questions to Ask in Seeking Your Dream Book Production Partner](#)," you're sure to find something that helps you accomplish your publishing goals. Check the [events calendar](#) to see all of the upcoming sessions.

## Get to Know SocialLink

Last month, IBPA unveiled its new website and community portal based on SocialLink technology. The new online social networking platform offers IBPA members the ability to build detailed member profiles and connect with one other across an integrated online networking platform. Increased community collaboration links members with relevant discussion forums, experts, and membership benefits. On Wednesday, January 25, there will be a free orientation to get to know IBPA's new SocialLink technology. Full details [here](#).

### MEMBER & CHAPTER NEWS



## 805 Writers' Conference Recap

*PALA member Brenda Avadian recently presented at the 805 Writers' Conference, which PALA sponsored. Here is her report about the event:*

I presented on the small publishers panel ("What Independent Publishers Want from New Writers") with Zhenya Muzyka of Enliven Books, an Imprint of Atria/Simon & Schuster; Mark E. Cull of Red Hen Press; and Christopher Meeks of White Whiskers Books.

There was enough difference among us, ranging from a larger publisher affiliated with one of the Big Five to smaller pubs all the way down to micropublisher North Star Books, with one book or less per year. Our diversity made for a fun and lively session with lots of Q & A afterward. The panel photograph features Zhenya asking me about STUFFology 101.

Following this was a ninety-minute lunch and "Ask the Experts" session. My table was the first one filled. Participants said they liked my personal one-on-one approach and wanted more information. I spent the entire time talking with attendees and barely had time to attend other sessions. I continue to follow up with a handful of attendees via e-mail. Here is a photo by one of the attendees showing most of the eight of us, followed by a photo of Kathleen Kaiser in the opening general session:



I asked for the survey results to share with you the outcome of the conference, but I have not received them yet.

## Do You Have News?

The PALA newsletter is a great place to share your events, blog posts, books, and other news. Send a link, a



title, and a short description, and we'll share your announcements with other members. E-mail Sharon Goldinger, [pplspeak@att.net](mailto:pplspeak@att.net), with your info, and we'll announce it for you.

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## PALA Listserv

The PALA Listserv is a private group where PALA members and guests ask questions and share resources. It's a great way to tap the knowledge shared by our diverse group. 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 PA-LA (don't forget the hyphen). Follow the instructions for joining the list.

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## PALA Online

The [members-only page](#) of PALA's website is user friendly and full of useful information you won't want to miss. As always, your questions, and thoughts about our website are welcomed.

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## Recordings of Past Meetings

If you missed a meeting or need to hear the information again, we have recorded each of our meetings in MP3 format. If you would like to receive a copy via e-mail, please contact Gary Young ([artsy12@earthlink.net](mailto:artsy12@earthlink.net)) with the subject line: PALA RECORDING.

Please indicate which *date AND program* in your e-mail. He will get back to you with the simple procedure.



## MEETING TRANSCRIPT:

# How to Publish with Amazon

### A Webinar with Neal Thompson

*Here is a brief excerpt from our April 19, 2016, webinar with Neal Thompson, director of author and publishing relations at Amazon. Click [here](#) to read the full transcript, which includes lots of information about Amazon's many programs and opportunities for authors and publishers; services like KDP, CreateSpace, and ACX; promotional and sales-tracking tools; and how to improve your presence on Amazon.*

**Neal:** We talked a little bit briefly, and I'll try to go through this quickly so we can get to questions, but we talked about the changing of the digitization of books and how e-books are skyrocketing, sales are skyrocketing, and how that's created all these opportunities for self-published writers, or for writers who are interested in self-publishing.

The platform that Amazon created is called Kindle Direct Publishing. That's a self-publishing platform for digital books. Kindle Direct Publishing, 100 percent free. I think one of the questions we already got earlier from one of the attendees was, How much does it cost to self-publish. And it's, for digital, completely free. You do it yourself. There's sort of an asterisk there. If you want to do it right, there are some best practices that I've heard about and other authors have experienced themselves:

Hire an editor; don't just get your aunt or your spouse to read your manuscript for you and provide some feedback. I've heard from a lot of self-published authors who hire multiple editors. They hire developmental editors to help them get the story right. They hire a line editor once they get down to the nitty-gritty of line editing. And they hire a copyeditor. Sometimes that's one person, sometimes it's three. But because self-publishing

means you're doing it yourself, you don't have that team of editors that you would if you published with Random House or Soft Skull Press or whomever. So a lot of that extra burden is on the writer, on the author.

Similarly, with creating your own cover. The KDP platform has a tool that allows you to create your own cover. They have some stock images that you can use and play with, and different fonts. It works fine, but I think it works best if you invest a little money and hire a designer who's experienced in creating covers. Because so much shopping is done, especially for digital books, online, you really need that cover to pop in a tiny space on people's screens—including screens that are now handheld, more than anything. We see a lot of people buying their books off their devices. So the cover needs to look great in all formats.

Amazon also has this self-publishing platform for print books called CreateSpace. It's on that handout. It's also free, but there are some services that you can pay for at CreateSpace, again to get help with formatting or editing or even some marketing assistance.

I think a couple of the cool things about self-publishing are the royalty rate that you get for your book. For digital books, it's 70 percent. Currently, for my books I get, like most authors, a 15 percent royalty rate for my hardcover sales and 10 to 12 percent for my paperbacks.

For self-publishers, they get 70 percent. Now the price point is much lower, obviously, for the Kindle books. But if you're selling more of them and you're getting higher royalty, some authors are finding that they're doing really well with self-publishing and are really excited about it. It's an option.

Another thing I wanted to talk about real quickly is the tools that Amazon offers to help authors get their stuff out there. I think it's one thing—and a good thing—that we've helped create this ability for authors to self-publish, but it

*(continued on page 5)*

*Publishing with Amazon (cont'd from page 4)*  
also means that it's easy to self-publish. There's a lot of books out there. Each author is now fighting for the reader's time against the larger pool of competing authors.

So the challenge for everyone, no matter how you're published, is to figure out how to reach your readers. There's some tried and true methods to do that. Book tours still work. Readings still work. Maintaining your own blog, maintaining your own e-mail newsletter, all of these things play into it. But Amazon has offered a few things that should be part of every writer's toolbox, especially when you're launching a book, but also over the long term. I'll mention a couple of them real quick, and then we'll get to some questions.

I think every author should know about Author Central on Amazon. It's this portal where, if you've published a book and it's available for sale on Amazon, you get your own author page. You can use that page to upload your mug shot, you can upload your biography, you can link to a blog if you've got one and the feed automatically shows up on your author page. You can upload other images and videos and your book tour schedule, all kinds of stuff. So it gives you this home page on Amazon.com.

And if it's available you can even use a vanity URL. It's a nice thing to have in your newsletter, on your website, wherever. Just send people directly to Amazon, where they can buy your book.

One of the questions sent in earlier I already touched on: "What's the cost to publish with Amazon?" Zero, but I should point out a couple things.

The answer is zero if you're self-publishing your book with KDP. We have a couple of other publishing platforms, but they operate differently than the self-publishing platform. Many of you probably heard of Amazon Publishing, which is really just like a traditional publisher. Like a Random House, like a Harper Collins, which means your book has to be submitted by an agent. They're

not taking unsolicited manuscripts at the moment. If you've got an agent, Amazon Publishing is for you.

There are two kind of cool programs right now: one called Kindle World, and one Kindle Scout.

Kindle World is fan fiction. It has all these different worlds you can choose from, and you can write a short story or a whole novel based on that world. There's the Kurt Vonnegut world, the Gossip Girl world, the Veronica Mars world, and I think some authors are finding it's just kind of fun. Try something, if you're just looking to stretch your muscles a little bit and try something new. It's kind of a fun outlet. The way it works is you split that 70 percent royalty with the world owner, the rights owner of that world. So still a pretty good royalty rate for books sold in that program.

Kindle Scout is crowdsourced. You upload your manuscript. The group of readers that belong to the Kindle Scout group votes on a group; I think it's monthly. I need to check my fact on that. And the winner—or sometimes multiple winners—gets a book contract, a small advance, but pretty good terms and some marketing support from Amazon.

*Check out the [full transcript](#) for more of Neil Thompson's excellent insights on soliciting Amazon reviewers, experimenting with pricing, being an active member of the self-publishing community, and making the most of Amazon's self-publishing opportunities.*

## PALA Officers and Board

Your PALA officers and chairs are

President: Gary Young,  
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Vice President/Membership Chair:  
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